Anthony Close, with an extraordinary gravestone

You can never judge a life from a gravestone. However, this gravestone is exquisitely carved and there must be a great story behind it, mustn’t there?

Anthony Close (Snr) was baptised in a Wesleyan Methodist service on Christmas Day 1815 in Gunnerside, Swaledale. In 1837, when he was 21, he married 28 year old Agnes Metcalfe from Ingleton. They moved straight to Crosby Garrett, near Kirkby Stephen, where Anthony worked as a farmer and Agnes started on the production of eight sons and five daughters within 20 years. Wow! Just one son, William Close, and a daughter, Isabella Close died in infancy. They named a later son William, although his life ended tragically, as we shall see.

There was obviously some trouble with poachers in Crosby Garrett as, in 1863, Anthony, along with fellow farmers, placed a warning that trespassers in pursuit of game would be prosecuted [1]. Money was obviously tight with all those mouths to feed. In 1877 Anthony diversified to become a coal agent, a lucrative trade with the arrival of the railway, theoretically [1].

Two years later Anthony was found guilty and imprisoned for one calendar month for obtaining £5 under false pretences – he told butcher John Nicholson that his brother, William Nicholson, had agreed that John should give Anthony the money, but William hadn’t even been asked [2]. Later that year Anthony was fined 18 shillings for travelling on the Midland Railway (Settle and Carlisle) without a ticket [1].

Obviously, things were not going too well and they were about to get much worse. Agnes died on 7 February 1880, aged 71. Anthony was unable to cope with this and, just six weeks later, on 23 March, was admitted to the Cumberland and Westmorland Counties (Garlands) Asylum [ph1] on the outskirts of Carlisle. It had opened in 1862. It was closed in 1999 and you can now buy a nice apartment in the old admin block.

Anthony was discharged after six years, in June 1886, now able to face the world, having discovered religion. In 1887 he delivered a talk in the Temperance Hall in Kirkby Stephen, entitled the ‘Justification by Faith, and Holiness of Heart and Life’[1]. Unfortunately ‘Much sympathy was
expressed for the preacher, who is in destitute circumstances’. It’s interesting that none of his 11 children were able to support him. Hopefully the talk will have generated some funds.

Two years later Anthony was in court again. He tried to claim £4 8s 6d to compensate for clothes which he claimed had been taken by his lodging house keeper. It transpired that they took the clothes as he owed them 14 shillings. The judge was on the side of the lodging house keeper. Oh dear.

Anthony died in 1897 aged 81 and didn’t have the extraordinary gravestone so we’d better find out what the 11 surviving children did. Sons John Close and Septimus Close ran successful farms in the area with their families. Daughters Catherine Close and Agnes Close married Lancashire cotton warehousemen but Agnes died soon after her wedding, presumably due to child birth issues.

Son William Close moved to Liverpool to find work. In 1876 he married a widow, Martha Haygarth and they had two children. Unfortunately William died, aged 38, after being found in the street bleeding from his left eye. On the way to the Royal Southern Hospital William said he had fallen out of and been run over by a cart, causing severe internal injuries from which he died.

Eldest son George Close also decided against a career in farming. He started working as a grocer in Bainbridge near Aysgarth and while he was there met Elizabeth Milner. They married and George got a post as a bookkeeper to a carpet manufactory in Halifax and this is where they had the first five of their seven children. In 1880 they moved to Settle where George was the manager of Settle Coop and they lived in Tatham’s Yard behind Cheapside. After seven years he gave that up to run a business of his own as a grocer and draper, also selling boots, in Kirkgate in a house formerly occupied by Mrs Cowburn.

Elizabeth died, aged 37, in 1882 after the birth of their youngest child William Arthur Close who managed to live to the age of five. Within a couple of months of Elizabeth’s death, 44 year old George married his third cousin, 23 year old Elizabeth Close who had come to Settle to work as a servant for farmer Joseph Parker at The Lodge. They lived at 1 Craven Terrace keeping the business in Kirkgate. George died nearly 30 years later in May 1911, aged 73.

George and first wife Elizabeth are buried in Giggleswick graveyard. Elizabeth, dying in 1882, had to be buried at Giggleswick as Settle graveyard was full and so was closed until new burial space could be found. Their gravestone commemorates their son George William Close who had died in Halifax. Youngest child William Arthur Close and 10 year old daughter Amy Agnes Close
are buried at Giggleswick, probably in the same grave, although not commemorated on the stone.

In memory of Elizabeth, the beloved wife of George Close of Settle, who died Aug. 28th 1882 aged 37 years. Also of George William, son of the above, who died March 22nd 1877 aged 3 years and was interred at All Souls’ Parochial Cemetery, Halifax. Also of the above George Close died May 9th 1911 aged 73 years.

Unfortunately, a couple of months before George’s death, son Thomas Henry Close was admitted into the West Riding Asylum at Menston, another impressive building, obviously inheriting the weakness for mental health. Thomas Henry remained there nine years until he died. At the time of the 1939 pre-war register George and Elizabeth’s daughter Lily Annie Close was found in living in Cravendale, at the foot of Belle Hill in Giggleswick, describing herself as a ‘retired nurse’. She had nursed Dr Charles William Buck in his last few years before his death in 1932. Lily Annie lived in the back of the building in what used to be Dr Buck’s music room — there must have been a generous legacy from Dr Buck for Lily Annie to continue living there. She later moved to Scarborough to join brother George Augustine Close, an assurance clerk.

What happened to George’s second wife/third cousin Elizabeth? Incredibly, just four months after George’s death on 9 May 1911, Elizabeth married George’s widowed brother, Joseph Close. The wedding was in Mason County, Illinois (south of Chicago). They had sailed together as man and wife, with one of Joseph’s daughters from his first marriage to Hannah Winter, born in Illinois. Hannah had died the previous November. Perhaps Joseph had come back to Settle to see George at the end of his life and there was an instant attraction for Elizabeth?

Joseph, born in 1842, was one of four siblings to have moved to America. He had a significant dose of wanderlust, first travelling to Sydney in 1865 before moving to Illinois in 1870, marrying Hannah in 1876. He had at least four children with Hannah. Joseph’s passport was well worn. There are numerous records for him travelling the Atlantic, although second wife Elizabeth didn’t seem as keen. In December 1914, while he was visiting his children in Missouri Joseph wrote a letter to the mother of his first wife. It gave an unusual insight into 19th century travel!

‘I have been staying in England this year up till the third of October. I sailed for this country on that date [and it took] seven days and two hours. I have crossed the Atlantic nine times but this is the quickest trip I ever made. My wife remained in England. She was afraid to venture on the sea any more as we went over to England last year and she never ate one meal at the table. In fact she was never out of her berth. She was so weak we had to carry her off the boat at Liverpool. She got alright again in one week after we got on land.

We stayed in a town called Birmingham three months last winter. We left in April and travelled along the east coast of England and then we travelled all through Scotland which we enjoyed very much.

The war that is raging in France and Germany is a horrid affair. I intend to return to England in the last half of January if all is well. I am alone tonight. They all went to a Xmas tree at Walker’s Grove and the children are all well. Last Sunday there were 14 great grandchildren there belonging to you, all fine and healthy.
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I remain your affectionate son, Joseph Close."[A]

It’s possible that Elizabeth’s bad sailing experience was in November 1913 — they were found on the passenger list of HMS Lusitania (which was sunk by Germans in May 1915) returning to Liverpool. Joseph and Elizabeth both died back in England, Joseph, aged 76 in Kirkby Stephen, and Elizabeth, aged 74, in Middlesborough. We’ll hear more about Joseph later.

In 1882, Anthony and Agnes’ youngest son, Jarvis Close, aged 29, emigrated to Winnipeg, Manitoba in Canada where he made a living as a postman. He remained single and lived in Winnipeg until he died, aged 67. At the time of the 1891 census Jarvis had some boarders including his younger sister Mary Ann (Close) Bushby and four children.

At the time of the 1871, Crosby Garrett was a hive of activity due to the building of the Settle and Carlisle Railway and many families took on navvies as boarders to help with finances. Anthony and Agnes provided board and lodging for Henry Bushby who was an ‘inspector of railway works’. Henry’s son, Arthur Frank Bushby, was with him as his assistant. Later that year Henry was taken to court accused of manslaughter. A navvy, John Evans, along with many others, was suffering from smallpox and Henry decided to send him to the local workhouse to get some medical attention. John died soon after. The problem was that John was too ill to travel and the journey may have killed him. John had probably infected the workhouse too. Fortunately (for Henry) the case was dismissed [2].

In 1874 Mary Ann and Arthur Frank Bushby married in Lancaster declaring they were ‘full age’, 21, when in fact they were both 18. They found the money to have a wedding by licence so they could marry immediately without banns being read. Mary Ann’s brother Jarvis Close was a witness.

Despite their young age, this had the potential to be a successful marriage and four children suggest it had its good points. However, in 1883 Arthur Frank was working as a ganger, in charge of men engaged on permanent way work on the Cleveland Extension Mineral Railway. On June 23rd he was dismissed as his section of work had finished. Four days later he ordered some coal, payable to his employer which was usual practice for more senior employees of the railway. The delivery horse-keeper noticed a considerable quantity of coal in the cellar. A couple of weeks later an auctioneer was asked to sell Arthur Frank’s furniture and effects including the railway’s 2.5 tons of coal worth £2 10s and 6d. The prosecutor decided to drop the charges but ‘the Bench declined to make any comment as to whether the course prosecutor had taken was justifiable’ [4].
Whether it was or not, Mary Ann was not impressed and, after their fourth child was born in 1884, took her children to Winnipeg to live with brother Jarvis. Mary Ann died in 1902, aged just 46. The children all stayed in Canada, living together for many years, with eldest son Henry Thomas Bushby following his uncle Jarvis in a career in the Post Office. Arthur Frank Bushby continued to work as a ganger and died in 1919, aged 62.

This left brother Anthony Close (Jnr), born in 1846.

Anthony left for Illinois in his early 20s and joined up with John and Jane Tyson who had emigrated from Grasmere in the Lake District in the 1850s. Anthony worked for the Tysons as their Chief Herdsman for a large flock of Merino sheep [ph2]. Originating in Spain as far back as the 12th century, these prized hardy sheep are famous for their resilience and the quality of their wool, being some of the finest and softest of any sheep.

The Tyson family wanted land of their own and found that the land in Atchison County, Missouri was fertile and reminded them of England. They bought some land near Dale Township with an inheritance and, in 1871, one of the Tyson sons, Isaac Tyson, and Anthony Close drove their 1500 sheep across country from Illinois to Dale Township in Missouri. Even though these are adjacent states this was a journey of some 396 miles — quite an undertaking. The farm did well. Anthony encouraged his elder brother Joseph and family to join him and from their profits, both were able to buy their own plots of land too. Through word of mouth a number of other families from England migrated to Atchison and made a good living there.

The Tysons had joined the Episcopal Church in Illinois. As the nearest church was 50 miles away by rail the English farmers felt they needed their own church within their community and decided to raise funds to build one. It took a long time but with the help of donations from the Tysons and many others including $100 from Anthony and from a chap called Edward Huggins, the church was built and opened for public worship in October 1892. It was named St Oswalds Protestant Episcopal Church after the Tysons' church back home in Grasmere to which it bears no resemblance at all [ph5]. To this day it is listed as architecturally significant as an unaltered example of a gable front variant of the Shingle Style [ph3].

The church has remained at the heart of a community of English families, including descendants of the Tyson and Close families to this day. It is unusual in that it was built by a small group of English families who wanted a church, rather than a religious group of migrants aiming to establish their religion in a new area.

For some reason, Anthony travelled to Settle back in England in 1882. It’s possible he returned as brother George’s first wife had died and he had married again. Perhaps it was through those events that Anthony met Annie Lancaster Hardacre Lord. Annie was born in 1859 to Jane Hardacre just a few months before her marriage to Thomas Lord.

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Thomas and Jane went on to have another 11 children and Annie was brought up as part of the family. When 23 year old Annie married 36 year old Anthony on 22 January 1883 she listed her father as William Lancaster, a Settle shoemaker who never married.

Just over 2 weeks later, on 7 February, newlyweds Anthony and Annie had arrived back in New York on their way to Missouri. They took Anthony’s remaining sister Elizabeth Close with them. Anthony and Annie had a daughter and two sons in Missouri before returning to Settle where they had another daughter. Perhaps Annie missed home or was this for health reasons? In January 1895 Anthony was quoted in a paper thanking a hernia specialist for curing him with non-invasive surgery, no doubt helping the bank balance in the process. His address was given as Greenhead in Settle and electoral records register him in High Croft Street. However, Anthony was on board a ship to New York again in April 1896, perhaps checking on the progress of the new church and his land. Their youngest daughter, Agnes Close, was born in Settle in September 1896 and the family photo was taken soon after, perhaps at Greenhead.

Anthony died six years later on 2 March 1900, just three years after his poor father. The family employed stonemason John Hardy to carve that fabulous gravestone. John Hardy must have liked the design as it was remarkably similar to what he chose for his own gravestone.

Affectionate Remembrance of Anthony Close of Settle who died March 2nd 1900 aged 53 years, also Annie, wife, who died Mar 22nd 1942 aged 82 years, also Rose Bertha, daughter, died Oct 14th 1936, aged 52. Old D35

Annie was just 40 when Anthony died and at the time of the 1901 census lived with three of her children in Long Preston but moved to South Parade in Settle in 1903. By the time of the 1911 census she lived in number 8 Halsteads Cottages, just across the road from several members of the Grisedale family at the Ings.

What happened to Anthony and Annie’s children?

By the time of the 1901 census eldest son Charles William Close had taken a liking for animals and worked as a cowboy for John and Louisa Thwaite in Liverpool. Far from the Wild West, John and Louisa were one of the families who made a living as ‘cowmen’ providing milk for the expanding metropolis of Liverpool. From here it was just a skip and a jump for Charles William to step on board a ship bound for America, which he did at the age of 20. He made his way straight to Atchison County, Missouri where he farmed the very same piece of land that his father had bought.

In 1909 Charles William married Beatrice Huggins, the daughter of settlersearch@gmail.com
Edward Huggins who had joined Anthony in contributing to the new church, and granddaughter of John and Jane Tyson, the original pioneers. Charles William and Beatrice spent the rest of their lives in Atchison County running the farm and helping to manage the church for the community. It is their descendants who help to run the church today. Charles lived to the age of 81 — the outdoor life suited him. Charles William Close sailed across the Atlantic several times and on his return to Missouri in 1913 sailed to America with brothers John Thomas Woolgar and Albert Woolgar and 15 year old Charles Ward who all declared their occupation as farmers. Charles Ward was Charles William Close’s half-cousin, the son of Annie’s half-sister Margaret (Lord) Ward. After a few trips across the Atlantic Charles Ward eventually settled in Canada, working as an electrician and spent his last days in Toronto.

**Close Family Tree**

Anthony Close = Agnes Metcalfe (13 children)

- Ed Huggins = Bushby
- Mary Ann = Anthony

- Wm Joseph
- B Huggins = Charles William
- Agnes = Frederic


Incredibly John Thomas Woolgar married the sister of Charles William Close’s wife Beatrice, Maud Huggins and joined the Atchison County community. After having several children, Maud died in 1922, aged 45. In a further twist in the tale, John Thomas Woolgar then married a widow Hattie Mae Lawrence. Hattie’s first husband had been William Joseph Close, the son of our traveller Joseph Close and his first wife Hannah Winter. It’s a small world. Albert Woolgar ran a farm in Buchanan County, Missouri just 60 miles from Charles William Close’s farm.

Anthony and Annie’s youngest child Agnes Close married Herbert Grisedale, the furniture dealer in the Folly and their account is provided separately. After their marriage, Anthony’s widow Annie lived with Agnes and Herbert at the Folly until she died, aged 82. Anthony and Annie’s eldest daughter Rosalie Bertha Close worked in domestic service for an architect in Burnley but came back to Settle and lived at 20 Halstead Cottages. She died a spinster, aged 52 and is buried with her parents in Old D37.

Anthony and Annie’s second son Frederic Close was brought to England when he was just two. Anthony’s estate provided for an education for Frederic at Giggleswick School as a day student, and at Appleby Grammar School. From 1906 Frederic started working for John Delaney Ltd, later Settle Limes, as a clerk at the limestone quarry works and stayed there until his retirement in 1948. During the war he served as a Private in the 6th Battalion of the West Riding Regiment later being promoted to Sergeant [ph4]. During WW2 Frederic was a member of the 31st Home Guard Rifle Club and the British Legion. In Giggleswick Frederic was a member of several sports and horticultural societies.

In 1923 Frederic married Agnes Ann Gutteridge who was born in Tadcaster, the daughter of an innkeeper, Arthur Gutteridge, perhaps the Hart’s Head Inn? Frederic and Agnes Ann lived in Cravendale at the bottom of Belle Hill, for a while living with Frederic’s cousin Lily Annie Close before she moved to Scarborough. Agnes Ann’s sister, Elizabeth Ellen Gutteridge, married settleresearch@gmail.com
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Frank Cokell. The Gutteridge parents are buried in Giggleswick graveyard.

When Frederick died in 1955, aged 66 he was described as a modest, quiet and unassuming man. Agnes Ann moved straight to America to be with her daughter, Marion Bertha Close, for the last 13 years of her life. Marion Bertha had left for Missouri at the age of 21. The cremated remains of Frederic and Agnes Annie are in Giggleswick graveyard.

This account has been compiled by Sarah Lister as part of the Settle Graveyard Project which has recorded gravestone inscriptions, updated church records and researched the lives of those buried. It has been written in good faith with no offence intended. If I have inadvertently included errors or breached any copyright I apologise and would welcome corrections.

The life stories of people with italicised names have been researched as part of the graveyard project and can be found on dalescommunityarchives.org.uk/settle graveyard project. The ‘Old Settle’ family tree on ancestry.co.uk includes the families buried in the graveyard. The project is ongoing and welcomes queries and information on settleresearch@gmail.com. Latest news and events are on the Facebook page ‘Settle Graveyard Project’.

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