

## Stephen Parker, an incredible businessman

Stephen Parker was born in 1801 in Parkers Yard, behind the Black Horse in Giggleswick, one of ten children of John Parker and Rebecca Green. Stephen's occupation at the time of census returns was modestly described as a 'farmer and lime burner' but he was actually one of Settle's most successful businessmen, a builder with a nose for success. Unfortunately his family was also one of the unluckiest but they just kept going in the face of several tragic twists of fate.

In 1823, diarist **William Lodge Paley** noted that Stephen, aged 22, 'has broken his thigh, loading wood up'[WLP]. A day later he visited Stephen for half an hour and left him something to read. A year later, fully recovered, Stephen married **Elizabeth Blackwell** from Gisburn and set up his farming business. They had at least nine children – sons **John, Richard, Stephen** and **Joseph** and daughters **Rebecca, Ann, Elizabeth, Sarah** and **Eliza**. The younger children were baptised at the Baptist Chapel in Long Preston. Daughters **Sarah** and **Elizabeth** died in infancy, and **Rebecca** died of scarlet fever aged 13.

Stephen took over the tenancy of the wonderful Lodge Farm, up the track from Anley on the outskirts of Settle [ph1]. He worked 200 acres, renting most of it from the **Birkbecks** and **John Moore** of Eldroth, both Quaker families. In 1854/5 Stephen and his landlord won awards from the North Ribblesdale Agricultural Association for the monies invested and their success with improving the cultivation of the land. During the previous four years £710 had been spent, with £608 from Stephen, to improve stone walls, drainage and lime. 2500 loads of lime had to be carried up 'Highfill Lane', a very steep and rugged road' [3].

However, Stephen had many other projects on the go. He had built Pendle View, next to the Hart's Head in Giggleswick and the five dwellings in Sutcliffe Buildings in Settle [ph2] completed in 1841 with a date stone 'SEP' – Stephen and Elizabeth Parker. In the early 1850s Stephen had bought New Butts farm in Bentham to set up a business making drainage tiles for farmers. At the end of 1854, Stephen treated his workers to a New Year dinner of roast beef and plum pudding, 'at the conclusion of which his workmen wished him "A happy new year" desiring that other masters may follow his example' [2]. This must have been out of the ordinary to reach the papers – Stephen was a good man. Unfortunately during the long, hot summer of 1859 the farm was struck by 'electric fluid' during a storm and 'an ornamental stone, weighing nearly 2cwt, at the top of the building was split in two, whirled to a distance in two directions. Slates were stripped off and the door

March 28.—Sorry to hear that Stephen Parker has broken his thigh, loading wood up. Twenty-seven or eight children said Catechism at church, chiefly from Meth. Chapel Sunday School.

March 29.—Did sit ½ hour with Stephen Parker, who seems much resigned and left him my largest volume of tracts to read.



The 1st award to Mr. Stephen Parker of Lodge, who jointly with his landlord has laid out upon his farm during the last four years upwards of seven hundred and ten pounds, of which sum £608 was expended by himself. The whole of the work is done in a most judicious and permanent form. The improvements consist of stone fences, stone draining, and lime. When the situation of the land which he has limed is taken into consideration, he will be found to have overcome great difficulties, inasmuch as 2500 loads had to be carted up Highfill Lane, a very steep and rugged road. The 2nd prize we award to Mr. Matthew Hutchinson



TREAT TO WORKPEOPLE.—On Tuesday last Mr. Stephen Parker, of Lodge, near Settle, who has for some time been employing a number of labourers on his estate near Bentham, in draining and other improvements, treated them with an excellent dinner of roast beef and plum pudding, at the farm house of the estate belonging to him, at the conclusion of which his workmen wished him "A happy new year," desiring that other masters may follow his example.

cheeks were splintered' [1]. The cows escaped uninjured, fortunately. 'The family had retired to rest, but were not aware of their proximity to danger until the morning.'

There were more business dealings! In 1853 Stephen was reported to have engaged *Mr John Brown*, a blacksmith living on Belle Hill in Giggleswick, to make a ton of iron into horseshoes, for Australia. So far Mr Brown had made 1016 shoes from 12 cwt of iron and the rest to be finished in time for the steam ship *Great Britain* to sail [1]. Several young men of Settle, including *Edward Duckett*, the son of beerhouse keeper *Charles Duckett*, emigrated to Australia in 1848-50. Edward set up his ironmongery business, '*The Golden Horseshoe*', and it's quite possible/likely Stephen was working with him.

By the way, the SS *Great Britain* was designed by Isambard Kingdom Brunel, initially as a passenger ship, the largest ship in the world at the time. However, at the time of the Australian Gold Rush, she took on a new route from Liverpool to Melbourne, carrying emigrants (and the first English cricket team to tour Australia in 1861) and some cargo, including Stephen's horseshoes. The journey took around 64 days. The ship carried gold back to England on the return journey. The ship's final voyage was in 1886 when a fire broke out en route from Penarth, South Wales to Panama, transporting coal. She limped to the Falkland Islands where she was found to be damaged beyond economic repair. In 1970 the wreck was brought back to Bristol by pontoon to be restored and can now be visited at Bristol dry dock [ph5].



also the shippon door. The cows were in at the time, but fortunately escaped uninjured. The family had retired to rest, but were not aware of their proximity to danger until morning.

**THE DIGGINGS.**—Mr Stephen Parker, of Lodge, near Settle, has engaged Mr John Brown, of Giggleswick, blacksmith, and Mr Wm. Lee, of Stainforth, to make a ton of iron into horse-shoes, for Australia. Mr Brown has manufactured upwards of 12 cwt. of the iron into 1016 shoes, and the other will be finished in time for the sailing of the *Great Britain*, which, we hope, will be as fortunate with the shoes, as she has been with her cargo from other ports.

This wasn't Stephen's only connection with John Brown – Stephen also sublet some of the land associated with the Lodge, '*Far Lodge*', to John between 1861 and 1866. John paid rent to Stephen but Stephen paid John 4 shillings a week to do maintenance work on the land. In 1866 Stephen gave John notice to quit as he was behind with his rent to the sum of £11. However, a year later John took Stephen to court for failing to pay £29 expenses for repairs to fences, manure etc. The judge dismissed the case, saying it was an afterthought and '*had no foundations whatsoever*' [2]. John had to pay costs. It's shame when relationships break down like that, isn't it?

His Honor observed that it was clear this demand was an afterthought and never intended to be made until August last, and that it had no foundation whatever. Plaintiff was nonsuited with costs.

As an indication of the level of respect given to Stephen by his fellow farmers, in 1872 he was appointed as valuer for the Settle area in accordance with the Contagious Diseases Act, to estimate a value to animals lost by Cattle Plague, Foot and Mouth etc for insurance purposes.

Despite this immense success with the business, it certainly wasn't plain sailing at home. In 1846 (not 1848 as on the gravestone), teenaged sons Richard and John went to play with the sons of *David Hall Dale* from Cleatop Farm. Neither brother could swim and tragedy struck – after being dared, Richard got out of his depth and John went in after him to help. They were just 15

and 17. Appropriately, they *'were followed to the grave by the largest concourse of people ever seen at a funeral in Settle'* [1].

of bathing. The youngest boy, about fifteen years of age, undressed himself, and went into a very deep part of the river called "Wall-end Dub," and not being aware of its depth, which then was about six yards in the middle, waded up to his neck, and having been asked if he dared go no farther, he replied "Yes," when his foot slipped off the stone and he went to the bottom, but came to the top twice, and called for help to his brother John, a fine young man about 19 years of age, who was with him. His brother John then threw off nothing but his hat and leapt into the river, and as neither of them could swim, they both immediately sank; and, the distance to Settle being about a mile and a half, before any assistance could be rendered, the unfortunate youths were both drowned. Their bodies were got out of the river about four hours after the accident occurred.

were drowned, as neither of them could swim. A verdict of "Accidental death" was returned.—The bodies were interred on Wednesday evening, and were followed to the grave by the largest concourse of people ever seen at a funeral in Settle.

**SETTLE.**

**INQUEST.**—An inquest was held on Tuesday last, before Thos. Brown, Esq., coroner, on the body of Elizabeth Parker, aged 58, the wife of Stephen Parker, of Settle, farmer, who was found dead on Monday morning, in a small rivulet. On Sunday evening, deceased before going to bed, complained to her husband of pain in her head, and the husband on awaking about one o'clock found his wife missing, he procured assistance, but could find no trace of her, till it was light, when her footsteps were traced to a small stream, called Lodge Gill where they found her. The water was so shallow as not to cover deceased, who was found laid on her back, with only her night dress on. Wm. Altham, surgeon, was immediately sent for, but life was found extinct. Though no marks of violence, or any external injury were found on the body, still the depth of the water (only 6 inches), rendered drowning almost impossible, but exposure to the cold for several hours without clothing, would have caused death. The Jury, returned

As if that wasn't enough trauma, Stephen's wife Elizabeth also met a tragic end in 1860, at the age of 58 [2]. She was found on a cold February night in a shallow stream wearing only her nightdress. Perhaps Elizabeth never got over the deaths of her 2 sons? One of the reports said, *'it is a singular coincidence that the deceased is the fourth member of her family whose deaths have been the subjects of a coroner's inquest, and the other three were children'* although we can't find any evidence of the fourth case.

Poor Stephen. After Elizabeth's death he lived in Bentham with some of his children, but just a year later, married a butcher and farmer's widow, **Margaret Dugdale** and spent the rest of his life with her in Sutcliffe Buildings. Stephen died aged 85, an incredible age considering the events of his life, and left a generous estate to his surviving children. Stephen's wife Elizabeth and sons Richard and John were buried in *Anc E15* with a flat, peaked gravestone, the only one like it in the graveyard.

*Sacred to the memory of Stephen Parker, of Sutcliffe House, Settle, who died January 23rd 1886 aged 85 years, also of Elizabeth wife of the above who died at Lodge, near Settle, February 20th 1860 aged 58 years.*

*Also of John, and Richard their sons both of whom were drowned whilst bathing in the River Ribble, on Sunday evening June 26th 1848 aged respectively 18 and 16 years. Also of John their nephew who died at Morecambe, December 30th 1885 aged 53 years, Anc E15*



Stephen is commemorated on this stone but was buried in the unmarked *Old AX53* as he died after the Ancient graveyard was closed. The stone also commemorated the life of Stephen and Elizabeth's nephew, **John Parker**, a farm labourer, who they brought up after his parents, **William Parker** and **Isabella Towler**, died during his teenage years. Stephen's second wife, **Margaret**, died in 1889 and is buried with her first husband, **William Dugdale**, at *Kirkby Malham*.

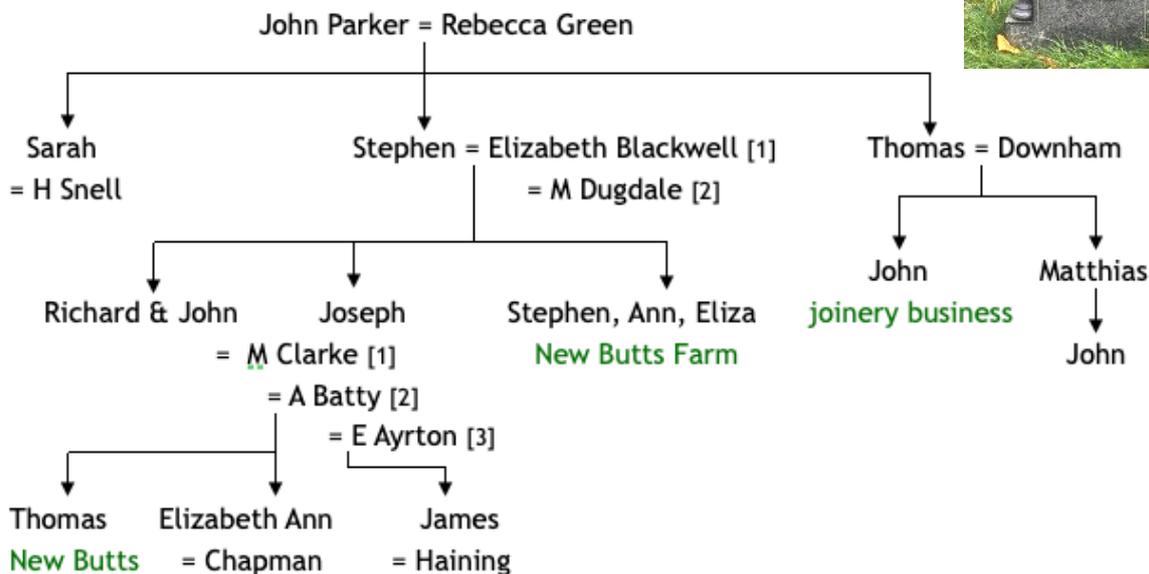
Stephen and Elizabeth's unmarried children **Stephen**, **Ann** and **Eliza Parker** lived together at *Butts Farm* in *Bentham* making a living from farming and making drainage tiles. Their neighbour was **George Hall**. In 1879 some of their geese trespassed onto a Mr Hall's land causing some damage – you know what geese are like! Stephen was fined £1 instead of the £3 claimed for damages [2]. Stephen, Ann and Eliza are buried together in the *Old grave A65*.

**DAMAGE BY GEESE**—The plaintiff Mr. [Stephen Parker] farmer, Newby Moor, sought to recover from Mr. Geo. Hall, farmer of the same place, the sum of £3 for damages sustained by the defendant's geese trespassing upon his land. The sum of £1 had been paid into court and defendant's wife submitted that some 30 geese had trespassed, but argued that the plaintiff's land was poor, and that £3 was in excess of the actual damage done.—Verdict for £1, in addition to the sum already paid into the court, and costs.

*In Loving Remembrance of Stephen Parker of Butts Bentham, son of the late Stephen Parker of The Lodge Settle, who died January 1st 1889 aged 54 years. Also of Ann sister of the above. Died at Butts Bentham August 30th 1912 aged 85 years. Also Eliza sister of the above who died at The Butts Bentham Feb 14th 1921 aged 77 years.*



### Parker Family Tree



### Son Joseph Parker took over Lodge Farm

Understandably, after the tragic death of his wife, Stephen moved out of Lodge Farm. However, by the time of the 1881 census, youngest son, **Joseph Parker**, was back there, again renting from the Birkbecks. Joseph, born in 1845, was the only child of Stephen to marry and have a family of his own, justifying the Victorian principle of having many children in order to ensure surviving family heirs.

Joseph married **Mary Clarke** in 1872. During their very short marriage, Mary gave birth to twins who survived just 16 and 17 days. They were named **John** and **Richard**, the same as Joseph's brothers who had drowned. Mary survived that birth, however, two years later, the effort of giving birth to **Joseph Clarke Parker** killed her. Childbirth was a risky business in those days — in our Ancient graveyard around one out of ten burials for women were childbirth related.

A couple of years later, Joseph married **Alice (Batty) Ayrton**, daughter of **Thomas Batty** and the widow of **John Ayrton**. Alice had a further three sons before she also died. Joseph's first wife, Mary, her twin sons, second wife Alice and her toddler son Stephen are buried together in *Anc E14*.

*In loving memory of Mary the wife of Joseph Parker, The Lodge, Settle who died Dec 30th 1874, aged 32 years. And two children, twin sons of the above, also in remembrance of Alice the beloved wife of the above Joseph Parker who died Oct 7th 1883 aged 40 years. Stephen son of the above who died Dec 21st 1883 aged 4 years. The Lord's will be done. Anc E14*



Joseph and Alice's daughter **Elizabeth Ann Parker** married **John Carr Chapman**. John Carr Chapman's sister, **Alice Chapman**, married **Henry Dugdale**. John Carr Chapman and Henry Dugdale, 'brother-in-laws by marriage', if that's a thing, successfully farmed together at Cleatop for many years as '**Dugdale and Chapman**' and then retired together to Banstead on Stackhouse Lane. In some ways, it's surprising they should choose to go back to Cleatop, the scene of Elizabeth Ann's

## Settle Graveyard Project

uncles' death. Joseph and Alice's son **Thomas Parker** took over the running of New Butts farm in Bentham with his family when his uncle Stephen was ready to hand over the reins.

Not one to give up, in 1886 Joseph married widow **Elizabeth Marsden Ayrton** who was already pregnant with their son **James Parker**. Elizabeth was the sister of **John Ayrton**, the first husband of Joseph's second wife Alice. There are numerous complex family links in the small town of Settle. Elizabeth had experienced her own share of tragedy with the death of her first husband **John Cowburn** at the age of 39.

Joseph (pictured right) and his first cousin once removed, John Parker were both on the first Settle Parish Council in 1894 [ph3]. Joseph died in 1908 and is buried in the *Old grave E65* with his third wife Elizabeth and son of his first wife, Joseph Clarke Parker who died aged 24. The style of the gravestone matches that of Joseph's siblings.



*In Loving Remembrance of Joseph Parker of the Lodge, Settle who entered into rest May 2nd 1903 aged 58 years. Also of Joseph Clarke Parker, son of the above Joseph and the late Mary Parker who died Sept 3rd 1899. Also of Elizabeth M Parker, widow of the above Joseph Parker who died July 1914 aged 69 years. Old E65*



As we know, Joseph's son, Thomas Parker, farmed at Butts Farm and daughter Elizabeth Ann (Parker) Chapman was at Cleatop. Youngest son James learnt the trade from 'work experience' with Dugdale and Chapman at Cleatop and then took on Fairhill Farm at Dalehead, now consumed by Gisburn Forest which was planted when Stockdale Reservoir was created in the 1920s. In 1909, Joseph married **Hannah Elizabeth Haining** and they had two children. Farming was a reserved occupation, but James was persuaded to enlist for the war by the Birkbeck family. James [ph4] died of dysentery on 6th July 1918 in Salonica, Greece aged just 32. With the law being as it was in those days, Hannah Elizabeth's financial affairs were managed by Henry Dugdale and John Carr Chapman for the rest of her life.



Hannah Elizabeth (Bessie) was the daughter of **Joseph Haining** and **Jane Hartley (Ratcliffe)**. Her father Joseph died in 1906 aged 51 and her mother Jane (Jinny) [ph6] died in 1940. Tragically she was killed by a car on Penny Bridge, Giggleswick on Christmas Eve 1940, when she was walking home during a black out [3]. There was no footpath in those days and, because of the war blackout, cars had to cover headlights so just a slit remained.

Hannah Elizabeth was buried with her parents in *Old E15* after a service by Rev George Moffatt at the Zion Chapel for whom she had been an active worker. There is no mention of James Parker on the gravestone, nor of Hannah Elizabeth's spinster sister Nelly, a school teacher, who is also buried with them. James is commemorated on the Settle war memorial.

*In Memoriam Joseph Haining 1855 - 1906 and of his wife Jane 1863 - 1940 also Hannah Elizabeth Parker their daughter, 1888 - 1950, Old E15*

**SETTLE**  
**LATE MRS. J. HAINING.**  
The funeral took place at Settle Parish Churchyard on Monday of Mrs. Jane Haining, of Reedley, Cammock Lane, Settle, who passed away on the previous Friday after being knocked down by a motor-car in Station Road, Settle, during the blackout. The service at the graveside was preceded by a memorial service in the Zion Congregational Church,

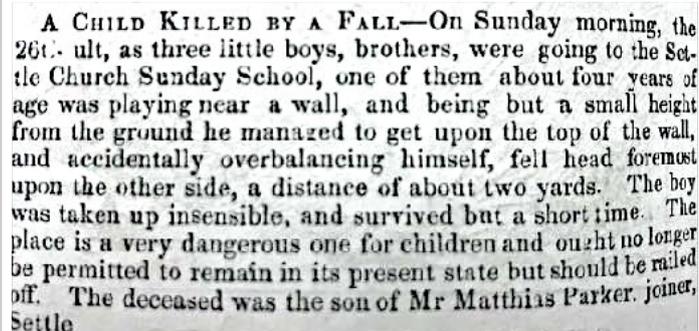


## Settle Graveyard Project

The Parkers were a fertile family, many staying in the area working as joiners and farmers. Inevitably they are related to many other Settle born-and-bred families through marriage.

Stephen's sister **Sarah Parker** married **Henry Snell**, an immensely successful tailor in Settle who also worked as the land agent for the Duke of Devonshire. She died, aged 47, after giving birth to eight children. After Sarah died, Henry developed a very dark side which is reported below.

Stephen's nephew, **John Parker**, son of brother **Thomas Parker**, and his sons ran the joinery business just below the green in Upper Settle. In one last disaster for this family, Stephen's great-nephew, four year old **John Parker**, son of **Matthias Parker**, was killed when he fell about two yards from a wall on the way to Sunday School with his brothers Richard and Thomas in 1866 [SC]. Little John was buried in the Ancient graveyard.



A CHILD KILLED BY A FALL.—On Sunday morning, the 26th ult, as three little boys, brothers, were going to the Settle Church Sunday School, one of them about four years of age was playing near a wall, and being but a small height from the ground he managed to get upon the top of the wall, and accidentally overbalancing himself, fell head foremost upon the other side, a distance of about two yards. The boy was taken up insensible, and survived but a short time. The place is a very dangerous one for children and ought no longer be permitted to remain in its present state but should be railed off. The deceased was the son of Mr Matthias Parker, joiner, Settle

This was such an unlucky family but one of the most successful in Settle too. Hats off to them.

The account of naughty Henry Snell:

[https://www.dalescommunityarchives.org.uk/content/catalogue\\_item/settle-graveyard-project/people-with-settle-connections-remembered-in-other-graveyards/burials-in-giggleswick-st-alkeldas/snell-2](https://www.dalescommunityarchives.org.uk/content/catalogue_item/settle-graveyard-project/people-with-settle-connections-remembered-in-other-graveyards/burials-in-giggleswick-st-alkeldas/snell-2)

The Parkers' joinery business:

[https://www.dalescommunityarchives.org.uk/content/catalogue\\_item/settle-graveyard-project/the-old-graveyard-1839-1949-holy-ascension-church-2/surnames-beginning-with-n-r-in-the-old-graveyard/parker-3](https://www.dalescommunityarchives.org.uk/content/catalogue_item/settle-graveyard-project/the-old-graveyard-1839-1949-holy-ascension-church-2/surnames-beginning-with-n-r-in-the-old-graveyard/parker-3)



*This account has been compiled as part of the Settle Graveyard Project which has recorded gravestone inscriptions, updated church records and researched the lives of those buried. Life stories can be found on [dalescommunityarchives.org.uk](http://dalescommunityarchives.org.uk), 'settle graveyard project'. The 'Old Settle' family tree on [ancestry.co.uk](http://ancestry.co.uk) includes the families buried in the graveyard. The project is ongoing and welcomes queries and information on [settleresearch@gmail.com](mailto:settleresearch@gmail.com). Latest news and events are on the Facebook page 'Settle Graveyard Project'.*

*Thanks to descendants Robert Currie, Jim Parker and Pamela Jordan for their help with the compilation of this account.*

*The life stories of people with italicised names have been researched as part of the graveyard project.*

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