

John and Caroline Richards and their fascinating son-in-law

John Richards and Caroline Elinor Burton were both born in Headingley in 1833 in the days when Headingley village was still separate from the city of Leeds. Both their fathers worked in the cloth trade, although Caroline's father was a pauper at the time of the 1851 census. John was already working as a solicitor's clerk by then. They married in Leeds in July 1853 and nine months later the first of eight children was born. In 1860 they moved to London and during the 1870s moved to Victoria Street, Upper Settle as John had found himself employment as a 'solicitor's managing clerk'. By the time of the 1891 census they lived in Pendle View, overlooking the church in Giggleswick and had a servant, suggesting they were doing rather well.

John was a busy man. He was the secretary to the 'Christmas Fat Stock Show' for several years during the 1870s and 80s in the good company of fellow committee members, **Thomas Holden**, **William Towler** and **William Dugdale**. This had entries from farmers, cattle dealers and butchers from several counties. John was a 'principal vocalist' in Settle Choral Society, his performance of 'The rebuke hath broken his heart' being 'one of the gems of the gems' in the society's successful rendering of *The Messiah*. John got into a couple of scrapes. In 1882 Harry Mathew, an ironmonger, took John to court for assault. The original hearing was delayed until Harry Mathew obtained legal aid. When the court reconvened John Richards failed to appear and the case was dismissed [2]. In 1889 John Richards took **John Cook** to court for using threatening language – John Cook had several fisticuffs over the years [5].

Matham.—The Adjourned Assault Case.—The adjourned hearing of the action by Harry Mathew, late of Settle, ironmonger, against John Richards, also of Settle, solicitors managing clerk, for assault, was to have taken place to-day. A fortnight ago Mr. Tilly

BOUND OVER.—John Cook, of Ivy Fould, Giggleswick, was ordered to enter into his own recognisance of £20 to keep the peace for six months towards John Richards, of Giggleswick, to whom he used threatening language on the 11th inst., the parties being directed to pay their own costs.

In the icy weather of January 1887, John, aged 53 was one of several locals sustaining injuries while skating at Hellifield – he fractured his wrist [6].

fell upon the ice and broke his thigh. Mr. John Richards, of Settle, who was skating at Hellifield on Saturday, had the misfortune to sustain a fractured wrist, and a similar mishap befel Miss Jessie Dodgson, of Longpreston, some time previously.

John died in May 1897, living at Goldielands in Settle and leaving an estate of just £162 and 5 shillings to widow Caroline Elinor. A 'solicitor's managing clerk' was a respectable occupation but not particularly well paid which probably explains why he was buried in an unmarked grave, *Old DX38*. Caroline Elinor [ph1] went to live in Manchester with her daughter **Louisa (Richards) Greenwood** (who we will come back to) but was brought back to Settle for burial with John when she died, aged 82.



Their children had very mixed fortunes. Two children died in infancy before the family arrived in Settle. At the time of the census in April 1871 eldest child **Elinor Sophia (Nellie) Richards** [ph1], aged just 17, was living next door to her parents in London with her husband **Alfred Hayman Guest**, aged 21 and a son, **Alfred Frederick Richards Guest** who was one month old. Alfred (Snr) was a solicitor's clerk and perhaps worked with John? Elinor and Alfred had married on 17 February earlier that year. In his spare time, Alfred was the manager of the 'Court Dramatic Club' and played a 'fascinating villain' in Byron's comedy 'War to the Knife' [3] which, as it transpired, was quite an appropriate role. The marriage didn't work out and little Alfred was brought up by John and Caroline Elinor in Settle before a career as a travelling stationer. Elinor Sophia worked as a



dressmaker and milliner in London, describing herself as 'married'. Meanwhile husband/dad/fascinating villain Alfred had another two sons, one also called Alfred, with 'wife' Florence Simmonds. Alfred died aged 38, leaving Florence to work as a washerwoman with her two sons. Naughty Alfred.

The members of the Court Dramatic Club gave their second performance in the same rooms on Monday evening. The piece of the evening was Byron's comedy of *War to the Knife*, in which the principal characters were by Mr. Alfred H. Guest (manager of the club) as the fascinating villain,

At the age of 14, John and Caroline Elinor's second son **William Burton Richards** became a railway clerk on the railway at Settle but soon moved back to London. Family photos suggest that William, like his errant brother-in-law, liked to perform! [ph1]. In 1886 he married **Lucy Alice Louisa Parton** and they had two sons. Unfortunately, William died in 1901, aged just 37 and the two sons were adopted while Lucy as a shorthand typist. The sons did well [ph1] – **Alfred John Richards**, a teacher, emigrated to Canada and had a family out there. **Philip Ernest Percival Richards** worked as a commercial traveller and retired to Somerset with his family. John and Caroline's eldest son, **Charles Burton Richards**, worked as a builders labourer in London and had a family with his wife **Alice Charlotte White**.



John and Caroline Elinor's third daughter, **Caroline Amelia Richards**, was due to marry **Horatio James Rand**, a commercial traveller from Bradford. However, he called it off and, in 1890, Caroline took him to court for a breach of marriage. She was awarded a generous £150 damages [4]. Incredibly, a woman could sue her fiancé for breach of promise of marriage until 1970 and could claim for the associated loss of financial security! A man was rarely able to sue his fiancée as it was seen as 'a woman's prerogative to change her mind' and it was less common for a man to be able to claim against the loss of a dowry. It's not clear what happened to Caroline Amelia afterwards, nor what she did with her £150! It may have been a lucky escape as Horatio appeared more than once in the petty sessions found guilty of theft.

BREACH OF PROMISE OF MARRIAGE.—The plaintiff in this case which was heard at the Leeds Assizes, Miss **Caroline Amelia Richards**, of Settle, sought to recover £500 as damages for breach of promise of marriage by the defendant, **Horatio James Rand**, commercial traveller, Manningham, Bradford. Mr



John and Caroline Elinor's second daughter, **Louisa Jane Richards** married a grocer, **Edward Greenwood**, in Giggleswick [LSA]. Edward was 13 years older than Louisa Jane, born in Settle, but spent his youth in Blackburn and Liverpool. It's not obvious how they met as Edward left Settle soon after he was born in 1851 and Louisa's family didn't arrive in Settle until the late 1870s. Louisa and Edward didn't have children which may be one of the reasons reason that mum Caroline Elinor lived with them after dad John died.

PRIVATE FAMILIES SUPPLIED WITH
GOOD TEA,
AT REASONABLE PRICES, BY
Edward Greenwood,
New Street, SETTLE.

As if this tale is not eventful enough, Edward transforms it into something remarkable, having the most incredible ancestry. Edward was the youngest child of another **Edward Greenwood (Snr)** who was born in Haworth but, after marrying **Jane Birch** from Clitheroe, came to Settle to run a grocer's shop in the house next to Charles Duckett's King William Beerhouse in the High Street. The family moved to Blackburn just after Edward (Jnr) was born which may have been

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linked to his court appearance for having two light weights in his shop for which he was fined 10 shillings [2]. With a tarnished reputation a fresh start may have been required. Edward (Snr) died in 1859, aged 50, when little Edward was just eight. Jane brought up the children and ran the shop by herself until she died, still in Blackburn, in 1873.

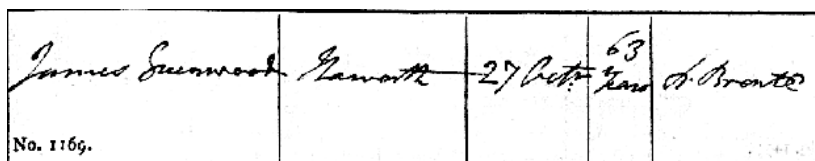
LIGHT WEIGHTS.—At the Settle Court House, on Tuesday last, before Thomas Clapham, and William Robinson, Esqrs., the following fines were inflicted against persons in whose possession light weights had been found, viz: Joseph Altham, butcher, Waddington, 2s. 6d.; William Hidding, huxter, Low Oaks, Marthwaite, near Bedberg, 2s. 6d.; John Swinbank, huxter, Whiney Hall, in Firbank, Westmorland, 2s. 6d.; Miles Mason, of Preston Richard, in Westmorland, 2s. 6d.; and Edward Greenwood, grocer, Settle, (2 weights) 10s. The fine and costs in each case were paid.

Edward (Snr) was the illegitimate son of Elizabeth (Betty) Greenwood born on 29th October, 1809, and baptised at Haworth Parish Church on 22nd January 1810. Elizabeth's parents, James Greenwood and Martha Clapham, were wealthy mill owners in Keighley. Despite a family bankruptcy after James had died, the family were one of the main players behind the Keighley and Worth Valley Railway.

The will of James Greenwood, written in 1819, contains "I give and bequeath to Edward Greenwood the natural son of my daughter Elizabeth Cannan, now about the age of ten years, the Sum of five hundred pounds to be paid to him on his attaining the age of twenty-one years." In addition, he stipulated that up to £100 may be used "for the purposes of putting him out to apprentice or otherwise for his benefit as my Trustees ... shall judge proper". Edward's mother Elizabeth married the surgeon William Cannan in 1818.



James Greenwood died in 1824 and was buried by Reverend Patrick



Bronte [ph4], father of the Bronte sisters. The Greenwood family vault was one of many squeezed into Howarth graveyard close to the parsonage. The inscription is one of the longest you'll ever find on a gravestone!

Sacred to the memory of James Greenwood of Bridgehouse who departed this life March 25th 1824 in the 61st year of his age. Having honourably discharged the duties of a husband, a father, a friend and a Christian; and having committed his soul into the hands of his God, he fell asleep in Jesus and his ashes here await that Glorious Resurrection in Eternal Life in the sure and certain hope of which he expired. Also of Mrs Martha Greenwood Relict of the above who departed this life Novr 23rd 1831 in the 66th year of her age. Having fulfilled all the duties of the domestic life with assiduity and uprightness, those of the social state in the spirit of pure philanthropy, and the sacred duties of Religion with unfeigned humility and unwavering perseverance. In her the cause of God had a munificent and constant supporter, the poor and distressed a patron and benefactor, the young a wise counsellor and a sincere friend. She lived universally respected and died deeply lamented, peacefully committing her soul into the hand of her much loved Lord and unchangeable Saviour. Also of John the eldest son of the above who died June 22nd 1833 in the 49th year of his age. He was a dutiful son and affectionate brother, a faithful friend and a generous Master, a man of inflexible integrity and distinguished magnanimity; he lived in the esteem of all, and died a humble penitent and sincere believer, in the cheerful hope of eternal felicity.

In the interests of protecting the

15 Joseph s. of George and Mary Mitchell aged 5 weeks ----- Luvertson
 22 Edward Greenwood born on the 29th day of October 1809
 22 Thomas s. of Thomas and Sally Wilson born November 1st ----- Millhill
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reputation of a young lady of a respected family, Edward's baptism records don't name his mother or father, however, his paternity was revealed in the will of **William Sugden** who was also a very wealthy woollen manufacturer in Howarth and died in 1834. The last bequest in his will was, "*I give and bequeath unto Edward Greenwood the Son of Mrs Elizabeth Cannan the sum of one thousand pounds ... clear of all deductions whatsoever.*" William Sugden's business success enabled him to purchase Steeton Hall and to build Eastwood House in Keighley [ph2] and Park House in Steeton. Very nice.



Coincidentally William Sugden was Elizabeth Greenwood's brother-in-law, the husband of her older sister **Mary Ann Greenwood**. They had married in 1806. Elizabeth had gone to visit her older sister at Howarth when the event took place. Oops. It wasn't as if Mary Ann showed any weakness in her wifely duties – she had 13 children. In a deleted passage in her 1857 book, *'Life of Charlotte Bronte'*, author Elizabeth Gaskell refers to the daughter of a wealthy "*Haworth woollen manufacturer*" who went to visit her older married sister and was seduced by her brother-in-law, a "*wealthy manufacturer beyond Keighley*". Bronte author **Sarah Fermi** maintains that she was referring to Elizabeth (Betty) Greenwood, the daughter of James Greenwood and Martha Clapham, who had an illegitimate son with her brother-in-law, William Sugden. She argues that both the size of William's bequest and absence of explanation for it strongly suggest that William Sugden was the father of Elizabeth's child, Edward Greenwood [A].

There were other links between the Greenwoods and the Bronte family in Haworth. Elizabeth's brother **James Greenwood** took over the mill business and it was James who was declared bankrupt in 1848. The mill, their residence Bridge House [ph3] and an estate of 325 acres was sold. James and his family moved to Melmerby, near Penrith. Author Elizabeth Gaskell later quoted Charlotte Bronte as saying, "*the oldest family in Howarth failed recently, and have quitted the neighbourhood where their fathers resided before them for 13 generations*".



Much of the estate was purchased by none other than William Sugden. The Greenwoods were non-conformists, and during the 1830s James Greenwood was the leading Dissenter campaigning against Rev Patrick Bronte in a bitter row against Church taxes and rates. James and his supporters were defeated and he was prosecuted for failure to pay his Church Rate. Nonconformists were still obliged to pay their taxes to the established church despite worshipping elsewhere which caused considerable resentment. However, things between them cannot have been too bad as, after James died in 1857, Patrick Bronte gave James' widow and daughter photographs of Patrick and Charlotte Bronte which are still in the family's possession today, together with a letter from Patrick Bronte to James' grandson John Greenwood on the occasion of his marriage in 1856. James and Martha's son, **James Greenwood (Jnr)** had married **Hannah Tetley** of the wealthy Bradford family and his sister **Rebecca Greenwood** married Hannah's brother, **William Tetley**.

Elizabeth and William Sugden's daughter **Sarah Sugden** was known to have had a long term relationship with one of Patrick Bronte's curates, **Rev James William Smith**. According to Charlotte Bronte "*she was quite smitten*", although it came to nothing and Sarah remained a spinster. Another daughter **Maria Sugden** married **Dr William Ruddock**, the Bronte's surgeon,

famously thought to have given Charlotte mercury pills to treat what was thought to be inflammation of the liver, as per medical opinion at the time. Obviously, this gave her mercury poisoning and she died within a couple of years.

Edward Greenwood (Jnr)'s eldest sister **Martha Elizabeth Greenwood** became the second wife of a professional musician, **James Threlfall**, who had excellent reviews as a pianist [2] and they had four children. They lived near Grange-over-Sands.

Martha Elizabeth made the headlines in 1883. She was taken to court by Mrs Eleanor Harrison for libel. Eleanor's husband, Major Harrison, had fallen out with James Threlfall and cut off his water supply. A little while later, Mrs Harrison and her husband had received several anonymous

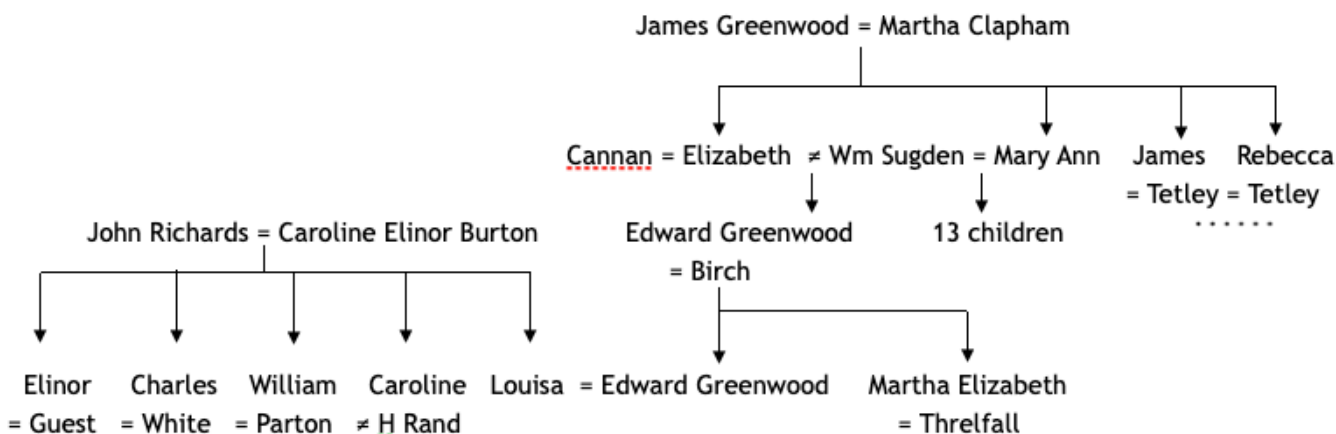
Saturday Evening Entertainments.
THIS EVENING, OCTOBER 31st.
A GRAND CONCERT will be given on the 31st October, in the Victoria Concert Hall, in which the Ulverston Amateur Negro Melodists will take part. A selection of new songs, couundrums, &c. The songs include "Come where my lovelies dreaming," "Tapioca" (by desire), "Mary Grey" (new), "Gone are the days," "Early in the morning," "Annie Liah," "Jenny Grey," "Going home to Dixie," &c., &c.
PIANIST.....Mr. JAMES THRELFALL.
 Doors open at half-past seven, to commence at eight o'clock.
 Admission: Reserved Seats, 1s.; Body of the Hall, 6d.; Gallery, 3d.
 For further particulars see programme.

tags to her. The pianist was Mr. James Threlfall, and his accompaniments were all that could be desired. He is a musician of considerable skill, and his playing was well calculated to assist the singer, instead of being a cause of annoyance—a result produced by a bad accompaniment. Part second was an entertainment by

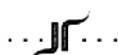
counsel for the prosecution, it appears the parties are near neighbours; that Major Harrison, who holds the office of surveyor to the Local Board and manager of the Board's water works, had had some trouble with defendant's husband, and had to cut off the water supply, after which several anonymous letters were sent to plaintiff's husband and to other parties in Grange. The letter constituting

letters questioning her fidelity and they suspected the letters were from Martha Elizabeth. Was there any truth in these allegations? A handwriting expert was unable to confirm the letters were written by Martha Elizabeth and in the end the case was dropped, subject to sureties of good behaviour of £100.

Richards and Greenwood Family Tree



After Martha Elizabeth died in 1901, James married widow **Agnes McCooey** who was 30 years his junior. Agnes had given birth to two children during her first marriage and then had four illegitimate children. Descendants of the family believe that James Threlfall had been unfaithful during his marriage and was the father of the illegitimate children. He was a creative man!



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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](http://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'.

Newspaper cuttings with the kind permission of the British Newspaper Archives: 1 –Ulverston Mirror, 2 – Lancaster Gazette, 3 – South London Chronicle, 4 – Yorkshire Gazette, 5 – Craven Herald, 6 – Leeds Mercury

A – Sarah Fermi (1992) A "Religious" Family Disgraced: New Information on a Passage Deleted from Mrs Gaskell's Life of Charlotte Brontë, Brontë Society Transactions. The information about the family links to the Bronte family were provided by Ancestry.co.uk, username rodmason35

ph1 – photo credited to descendants via Ancestry.co.uk, username vanmat5ts, ph2 – username timothy1284, ph3 – username Cranworth, ph4 – credited to Wikipedia, public domain