

Arthur Holmes, inadvertently bringing gymnastics to Settle

James Holmes was born in 1824 in Slackhead, a small village behind Arnside, north of Morecambe. He was the youngest child of **Arthur Holmes**, a joiner and **Sarah Hudson**. Their eldest daughter, **Betty Holmes**, was 26 years older than little James. James, also a joiner, married **Alice Camm** from Whassett, the next village and they had five daughters and four sons including a pair of twins, **George** and **Arthur**. They spent most of their married lives in Beetham, close to Slackhead with a spell of about six years in Manchester.

In 1857, James and his eldest daughter **Mary Anne** were the main witnesses in the prosecution of gamekeeper **John Brennand**. They saw him with a gun and two dogs climbing over a wall, stamping on a valuable cat and cutting off its tail. What a horrible man. James and his family had come over from Manchester to visit his parents (in their 80s) unannounced and went over to the farm to buy some rabbits for a meal. It was here they saw the gamekeeper do his worst. The gamekeeper had bribed the farmer's daughter to lie about the time of their visit but they were caught out. *'There was the grossest perjury in this case, and it was melancholy that for such a trumpety matter as the killing of a cat, any person should act as they had done.'* [1] The gamekeeper was fined 40 shillings. Not put off, James' daughter Mary Ann later married a gamekeeper, **John Dobson**.

mony. Plaintiff is a blacksmith at Slackhead, and brought an action against defendant, a gamekeeper in the employ of G. E. Wilson, Esq. Dallam Tower, for killing a valuable cat of his on the 1st of August last. A number of witnesses were called, who deposed to seeing defendant with a gun and two dogs near the spot, about seven in the evening, and one witness swore expressly to his climbing over a wall and watching defendant stamping on the cat, and cutting off its tail, in a plantation. Defendant, on

rafter. There was the grossest perjury in this case, and it was melancholy that for such a trumpety matter as the killing of a cat, any persons should have acted in the way they had done. As to the damages, he thought too high a value had been placed on the cat. But, at the same time, in such cases, the value to the owner might be more than to an indifferent person. He (the Judge) might, for instance, have a dog for which he would not take £20, for which another man would not give him 20d. Five pounds was too much for the cat, and the order he would make would be for 40s.

Alice died in 1870 when their youngest child, **Thomas** was seven. A year later, in November 1871, James married again, this time to **Margaret Cornthwaite**, the daughter of another joiner from Milnthorpe, a few miles away. Within a couple of years James, Margaret and the youngest children were in Chapel Street in Settle. Why had the family suddenly moved to Settle? Second wife Margaret's sister was **Nancy Cornthwaite** who, in 1852, had become the second wife of the stonemason and church sexton **William Perkin**. Unfortunately Nancy died in 1868, three years before Margaret's wedding but perhaps they came to Settle in her memory? It did not last very long — James and Margaret had moved back to Beetham by the time of the 1891 census and stayed there until they died aged 80 and 84 respectively.

However, while they were in Settle a son **James**, another joiner, married **Maria Hardacre**, a labourer's daughter from Giggleswick. They lived in the Black Horse Yard at Giggleswick. Maria's sister married into the extraordinary **Duxbury** family. James and Maria returned to Lancashire at the same time as his father.

James and Alice's son George, born in 1858, the other twin, was also a joiner. He married **May Jane Graham** from Bolton-le-sands [ph1] and brought her over to live in Settle at the same time as his father. They lived in Bowskills Yard but returned to Beetham to have the majority of their ten children. There do not seem to be any other twins in this family which suggests that George and Arthur were not caused by genetic inheritance which would have resulted in non-identical twins. Therefore it's possible, even probable, that George was an identical twin to Arthur.



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Arthur, also born in 1858 and another joiner, was the only child to stay in Settle, and for good reason. In 1878 Arthur married **Mary Ann Bulcock**. Mary Ann was one of three illegitimate children of **Pathanea Bulcock**. The Bulcocks were very fertile. Pathanea and her sister Jane had six illegitimate children between them and their two brothers had 16 children between them. Arthur and Mary Ann lived in what would have been small houses on Castleberg Hill and Well Hill and had 'just' three children. Later they moved to the south end of Duke Street. By the time of the 1891 census Arthur had become a 'rural postman' rather than a joiner. Why would he have given up a post as a skilled tradesman for a more working class occupation?

Unfortunately, on 25 June 1883 Arthur had a potentially fatal accident [2]. Arthur worked for **Robert Grime**, a cabinet maker. Arthur had been working at a band saw and was accidentally pulled up by the band saw belt to the ceiling. **Dr Francis Green** and **Dr Richard Ernest Williamson** had to amputate his right arm just below the elbow. *'Much sympathy is expressed for the sufferer who is an excellent workman and bears an exemplary character.'* No wonder Arthur had to stop working as a joiner, especially if he was right handed. As a rural postman Arthur would have delivered post to surrounding villages, either by foot — a very long walk every day, or possibly on horseback. This would still have been quite a challenge without a right hand.

SERIOUS ACCIDENT—About four o'clock on Monday last an accident of a serious character, which might very easily have proved fatal, happened to a joiner named **Arthur Holmes**, in the employment of Mr. R. Grime, cabinet maker, **Settle**. The unfortunate young man had been working at a band saw, and having finished threw off the belt and was placing it over a beam for safety when by some means or other which cannot be ascertained, **Holmes** was caught by the strap and lifted up to the roof of the building amongst the shafting where his right arm was so dreadfully broken and crushed that Drs. Green and Williamson deemed it necessary to amputate the limb just below the elbow. As if by a miracle the belt from the main driving wheel was thrown off by the occurrence, otherwise **Holmes** must inevitably have lost his life. Much sympathy is expressed for the sufferer who is an excellent workman and bears an exemplary character.

Arthur's exemplary character was rewarded in an amazing act of 'Seasonable benevolence' [2] which provided one of the most amazing spectacles Settle will have ever seen. **Dr Charles William Buck** had the idea of raising funds for Arthur through a day of entertainment. Two months after the accident, on the afternoon of 25 August 1883 this amazing event took place on the Marshfield cricket ground. (The cricket club had moved to Marshfield from Northfield just the year before.) The Bradford Gymnastic Society, free of charge, provided a full range of athletic entertainment with boxing, swordsmanship, single stick fights, Indian club exercises and performances on the parallel bars and horizontal bar by three gymnasts including Mr F P North, the amateur champion of England. *The really marvellous feats of strength and skill exhibited by Mr North on the horizontal and parallel bars were worthy of a special mention.'* This was **Francis Phillip North**, the son of a tailor from Bradford who

SETTLE.
SEASONABLE BENEVOLENCE.—A well-timed act of benevolence was carried out on Saturday last, when a gala and concert were held at **Settle** with the object of raising a sum of money to be handed over to Mr. **Arthur Holmes**, joiner, who was unfortunate enough to lose his right hand under circumstances already made known some few weeks ago. We believe that Dr. Buck was the originator of the venture of Saturday, and he certainly worked hard in promoting its success, his efforts being ably seconded by others equally ready to do what they could in a good cause. The gala was held on the cricket ground, Marshfield, during the afternoon, but owing no doubt to counter attractions elsewhere was not so successful an event as one might have expected it to prove. The united bands of the **Settle** Volunteers, the quadrille band, and the Giggleswick band were present, and discoursed a capital programme of music, including as well as selections dance music. The chief attraction, however, centred on the performances of the members of the Bradford Church Institute Gymnastic Society, who, with a generosity for which they deserve unlimited praise, made no charge for their services. The programme of events gone through by them comprised a single stick encounter between Messrs. W. Shepherd and H. Clayton; Indian club exercises by Messrs. Hodgson and

C. Storey; performances on the horizontal bar by Mr. F. P. North (the amateur champion of England), H. Howroyd, and C. Storey; boxing by Messrs. M. Walsh, H. Clayton, Fearnley, and Garnett; feats of swordsmanship by Mr. Tom Ashley; performances on the parallel bars by Messrs. Howroyd and Clayton; and a sword v. bayonet assault by Messrs. Shepherd and Clayton. Although each of these events was witnessed with keen interest and great satisfaction by the spectators the really marvellous feats of strength and skill exhibited by Mr. North on the horizontal and parallel bars were worthy of special mention, and Mr. Ashley's clever feats with the sword drew forth universal praise. The pugilistic encounters created no little diversion. In the combat between sword (Shepherd) and bayonet (Mr. Clayton) the latter appeared to have the advantage. "Aunt Sally" was of course present and attracted a good deal of attention as all good ladies should. Dancing was kept up with considerable zest until dusk. Messrs. R. and W. Clark provided refreshments, the profits of which were generously given to the benefit fund. A concert was held at the Music Hall in the evening, and all things considered was well attended.

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had a career as a physical exercise instructor with fantastic reviews wherever he went. *'Aunt Sally was of course present and attracted a good deal of attention as all good ladies should'*— this was a game in which the public throw sticks or balls at a wooden dummy for prizes. The united bands of Settle Volunteers, the quadrille (dancing) band and the Giggleswick band discoursed a *'capital programme of music'*. Dancing continued until dusk and there was a concert at Victoria Hall in the evening.

Can you imagine the excitement in Settle on that day? — this was 1883! It is likely to have raised a good amount of money for Arthur and perhaps contributed to his decision not to return to Beetham with the rest of his family, together with Mary Ann's thoughts on the matter of course. To bring us back to earth, in 1891 Arthur supplemented his income by being an agent for a piles remedy! [3]. Mary Ann did her bit to supplement Arthur's income as Caretaker of Settle Technical Institute and, in 1911, 'was presented with a pair of Silver-mounted Salts and a Silver Jam Spoon in recognition of her contribution services to the Settle Cooking Classes [LSA]. Mary Ann was a woman ahead of her time — the Women's Institute was established in the UK during the 1920s.

PILES.—A safe and certain Remedy. Medicine and Ointment, 2s. 6d. post free.—A. B. C., c.o. Mr. Arthur Holmes, Settle.]

3 Mrs. Arthur Holmes, Caretaker of the Settle Technical Institute, was presented with a pair of Silver-mounted Salts and a Silver Jam Spoon, in recognition of her services to the Settle Cooking Classes.

Arthur died in December 1925, aged 67. Perhaps he still had a smile on his face from memories of that day in 1883? Mary Ann stayed in Duke Street and eventually died in 1949, aged 90! Unfortunately, the first person in the grave was their five year old son Ernest. The family must have paid well to have such a skilled stonemason to carve that stone.

In Loving Memory of Ernest only son of A and M A Holmes born May 9th 1885 died Feb 23rd 1900. Also of the above Arthur Holmes who died Dec 22nd 1925 aged 68 years. Also Mary Ann his wife who died March 13th 1949 aged 90 years, Old E40

Arthur and Mary Ann's daughters? Eldest **Margaret Alice** began working in settlresearch@gmail.com



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domestic service at Taitlands, Stainforth. In 1907 in London she qualified as a nurse before taking up a post as superintendent nurse in Epping Union Workhouse, Essex working for 'the workhouse, male and female tramp wards, the mental wards and the infirmary'. The workhouse farm bailiff was **Francis Farquharson**, a farmer's son from Forfarshire in Scotland and they married in 1912. Margaret Alice continued to work as a State Registered Nurse once married and at the time of the 1939 pre-war register Francis was a 'Borough farm bailiff and parks superintendent for Hertfordshire.' Their son **Francis Keith Farquharson** was an engineer.

Daughter **Sarah Jane** started working as a kitchenmaid for Walter Morrison, MP, at Malham Tarn Hall, alongside coachman **Robert Battersby** - see *Duxbury*. In 1905 she married a groom/footman **James Henry Hunter** from Appleby who may also have come to work at Malham Tarn Hall. They lived in Skipton and had two daughters.

Mary Ann's mother Panathea spent her life scraping a living together, ending up in the Albert Hill poor houses. She was buried in the unmarked *Old BX21* with her sister Jane and two of Jane's grandchildren. Mary Ann's brother **Ishmael**, a groom, died in Blackburn aged just 37. Her sister **Ruth** married a Settle labourer, **John Marsden** and had ten children. In another reminder of 19th century reality, John's younger brother, **George Allan Marsden** was a victim of one of the many smallpox outbreaks to hit Settle, this one in 1871 when he was just seven [2]. The case prompted an immediate raft of disinfection measures, on the advice of **John Lister** and **William Altham**. George Allan was buried in the Ancient graveyard.

SMALL POX —We regret to have to announce the outbreak of small pox here, by which a boy aged 7 years, the son of Mr William Marsden, fruit dealer, has had to succumb to this direful disease. The deceased, who had only been ill about five days, died on Wednesday last and was interred the same day. Information was immediately given to the local authorities here, who without delay took every precaution to prevent the spread of the disease. The premises, clothing, &c., have been thoroughly disinfected; and it is to be hoped that the prompt measures taken by the advice of Mr. Lister, the Clerk to the Guardians here, aided by Mr. Altham, the medical attendant, will effectively put a stop to any further outbreak.



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'.

Thanks to Teresa Gordon for the wonderful sketches

Newspaper cuttings with the kind permission of the British Newspaper Archives: 1 – Kendal Mercury, 2 – Lancaster Gazette, 3 – Yorkshire Post

ph1 – credited to family descendants via Ancestry.co.uk, username Elisabeth Gillett

LSA – Lambert's Settle Almanac with the kind permission of the North Craven Buildings Preservation Trust

