

## Richard Thompson, a real mixed bag

**Richard Thompson** from Kirkby Stephen married **Isabella Metcalfe** from Hawes in 1824. They lived for many years at Outhgill, Mallerstang running the King's Head Inn before moving to Garsdale Hall [ph1] in Gardsale village which Richard ran both as a farm and an inn. The farm is next to St John's Church which, a few years after Richard's death in 1867, became the burial ground



**SEDBERGH PETTY SESSIONS**—On Wednesday last, before J. B. Wilson, T. Weering, and John Dover, Esqs., Mr. John Thompson, of Garsdale Hall, was charged with having three pints of brandy in the bar of his house contrary to the tenor of his license as a wine and refreshment house keeper at Garsdale aforesaid. Mr.

**CORONER'S INQUEST**—An inquest was held at Garsdale Hall Inn, near Sedbergh, on Tuesday last, before the deputy of T. Brown, Esq., coroner, on view of the body of a little boy named Winn, who met with his death from an injury received in one of the Garsdale coal pits on the preceding Tuesday, when a verdict of accidental death was returned.

for navvies and their family members during the building of the Settle and Carlisle Railway. Richard's son John was running the Hall at that time. Both Richard and John were good, honest innkeepers with just an occasional infringement for diluting ale and 'having three pints of brandy in the bar, contrary to the tenor of his license' in 1868 [1].

Times were tough. In 1851 Garsdale Hall Inn was the venue for an inquest into the death of 'a little boy named Winn' who was killed in a coal mining accident [1] — **Thomas Winn** was just 12. The mine owners, Messrs Inmen and Sewart paid for the boy's funeral 'with all other incidentals'. Garsdale Hall Inn was used for all the usual meetings and auctions, including some arranged, and in this case, later cancelled, by **Dawson Watson**, the brother-in-law of Settle solicitor **Christopher Edmondson** who was buried in our graveyard [2].

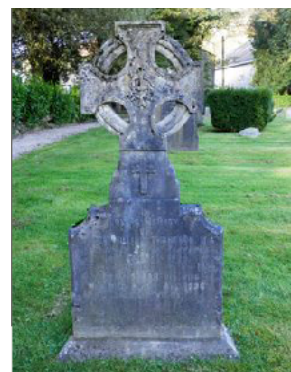
Notice is hereby given,  
**THAT** the SALE BY AUCTION of the ESTATE called "THRUSHGILL," situate in GARSDALE, in the Parish of Sedbergh, in the West Riding of the County of York, advertised to take place at Garsdale Hall Inn, on Thursday, the 25th day of October instant, WILL NOT TAKE PLACE.  
DAWSON WATSON, Solicitor, Sedbergh.  
Sedbergh, 11th October, 1860.

Richard and Isabella had four daughters and four sons. Aside from son John who inherited the Inn, most of the children married or worked as farm labourers across Yorkshire but two sons had an education and found something different to do. Incredibly, youngest son **William Thompson**, born in 1843, had an education at Sedbergh School and went from there to Oxford University [2]. He became assistant curate at Tunbridge Wells before returning to Sedbergh to pick up both a wife and the curacy. His wife, **Sarah (Anderson) Smith**, was the widow of a Sedbergh solicitor, **Richard Smith** and the daughter of an architect, **William Anderton**, from Gargrave. When they married William Thompson was 32 and Sarah was 38 and

**SEDBERGH GRAMMAR SCHOOL.** — We are glad to observe in the Oxford University honour list, lately issued, the name of W. [Thompson] Esq., scholar of Queen's College, son of Richard [Thompson] Esq., of Garsdale Hall, and late of Mallerstang. Mr. W. [Thompson] entered at Sedbergh School under the Rev. J. H. Evans, M.A. On the retirement of the latter he was transferred to the care of the Rev. H. G. Day, M.A., the present head master of the school, under whose instruction he remained until his departure for the University in the year 1862, when he was first in the competitive examination for the Lady Hastings exhibition. He was shortly afterwards elected scholar of his College and succeeded in placing himself in the second class in Moderations. After eminently distinguishing himself in the College examinations he has eventually obtained a second class in Literis Humanioribus. Mr. [Thompson] is the third pupil from this school that has taken honours at the Universities within the last year.

## Settle Graveyard Project

they had two sons. Sarah had inherited Guldrey Lodge in Sedbergh from her first husband and that's where the family stayed [ph2]. It's since been used by Sedbergh School as a music teaching centre. In his latter years, William was also a magistrate. Descendants of the family say that on 2nd June 1895, after taking morning service at Killington, he suddenly broke down while driving home, and died four days later, aged 52. Sarah stayed at Guldrey Lodge until she died in 1926, aged an impressive 89. They have a gravestone in Sedbergh churchyard. Their sons had military careers.



Meanwhile Richard and Isabella's eldest son, another **Richard Thompson**, born in 1830, also pursued an academic career although didn't go to university. He began his working life teaching classics at Osmotherley, near Ulverston in Cumbria. By the age of 31 he was back in Kirkby Stephen still working as a schoolmaster but also as a watchmaker. He earned enough to employ a house servant. In 1863, aged 33, he married 19 year old **Mary Wilson**, a farmer's daughter. By then he described himself solely as a watchmaker — perhaps this was becoming more lucrative than teaching? Soon afterwards they moved to Settle, initially living in one of the small houses on Kirkgate and then moving to the shop at the corner of Church Street and Duke Street [LSA], now occupied by Cottontail Crafts.

Richard and Mary had a daughter and then two sons. Mary died, aged 33, in 1877 perhaps in issues related to childbirth and is buried in the Ancient graveyard. Richard did his best to continue bringing up the children, but things began to go pear shaped.

Daughter **Julia Thompson** married **Alfred Richard Bilton** who descended from the successful family of Settle saddlers. Alfred worked as a family grocer with a shop selling delicious sounding produce in Duke Street [LSA], perhaps in the same building as Richard Thompson's shop. However, they lived in High Hill Grove Street with their two daughters, **Ethel Sarah** and **Mary** who remained spinsters. Ethel Sarah was a school teacher and Mary took over from dad at the grocer's shop. So far, so good. Alfred, Julia and daughter Mary were buried in grave *Old EX10* and Ethel Sarah was buried in grave *New LX32*.

The death of a mother can have disastrous effects on young children and, with no provision for any type of

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bereavement counselling, Richard and Mary's two sons certainly had less conventional lives. Eldest son **Richard Wilson Thompson** followed his father to become a watchmaker and jeweller and found himself in Manchester working for watchmaker and jeweller called **Joseph Penny**. Joseph had been brought up by his widowed mother **Maria Penny** who ran a fancy goods shop to make ends meet. Joseph had a younger sister, another **Maria Penny** who Richard married in 1890. Joseph died in 1893 and Richard continued the business alone. Richard and Maria had five children but by the time of the 1901 census Richard was living alone and Maria was running a fancy goods store, just as her mother had done, with the five children. Oh dear.

By 1905 three of the children, **Pearl, Evelyn** and **Herbert** had died. In 1906 an article entitled a '*Painful Case at Eccles*' described the tragic circumstances that Richard Wilson Thompson had been taken to court to force him to pay maintenance money for his wife and son, **Arthur Leonard Thompson**, who were residing in the workhouse. Sadly, entry into a workhouse was one of the desperate measures taken by women to force errant husbands to pay maintenance money. Even worse, Richard's defence questioned the paternity of Arthur — Maria had registered the birth but Richard went back later '*and made an addition to the Christian name of the child*'. Richard was ordered to pay 10 shillings per week towards their maintenance [3]. By the time of the next census, Maria was still in the workhouse and Richard Wilson had son Arthur living with him. It's not clear what happened to the other surviving son, another **Richard Thompson**. Richard Wilson Thompson was 82 when he died in 1949.

**PAINFUL CASE AT ECCLES.**

The magistrates were occupied over two hours this morning in hearing a prosecution brought by the Barton Board of Guardians against Richard W. Thompson, watchmaker and jeweller, Church-street, for the maintenance of his wife and child, who have been inmates of the Patricroft Workhouse since August 3 last.

The question was raised by Mr. P. Myers, solicitor, as to the paternity of the child, which was born so far back as 1898. After its birth was registered by the mother, the father went and made an addition to the Christian name of the child, and the Bench held that the question of paternity ought to have then been raised, as it was admitted that the father cohabited with the mother for some time prior to and after the birth of the child.

The Bench ultimately made an order that Thompson contribute 10s. per week towards the maintenance of his wife and child.

Going back a generation, Richard and Mary's youngest son, **John William Thompson**, was nine when his mother died and perhaps this contributed to his subsequent behaviour . . . At the time of the 1881 census it seemed that John William was already in trouble — Richard, widowed, was looking after the children but John William was unusually described as '*not allowed to attend school*'. Why was this?

Richard Thompson	Head	Wid.	54	Watchmaker
Julia do	Wife		15	
Richard W do	Son		14	
John W do	Do		12	Not allowed to attend school <small>(Time Feb 1883)</small>

On 4th December 1883 John William, aged 15, was brought up in court, charged with having stolen the sum of £17 which his father had asked him to deposit at the Yorkshire Bank. It's quite incredible that a father should take his own son to court, but perhaps illustrates how desperate the situation had become? The court case report, entitled '*Juvenile Depravity*' explains that Richard '*was greatly affected in giving his evidence.*' John

Juvenile offender stealing £17	15	Printed to Calder Farm Reformatory 3 Feb 1884
2 Cal man's H. Imp.	5/2s	
and 3 years to a Reformatory School	Brown	

<p><b>JUVENILE DEPRAVITY.</b>—At the Police Court on Wednesday last—before Rev. H. J. Swale and J. Birkbeck junr., Esq.—John William Thompson (15) son of Mr. Richard Thompson, watchmaker, was charged in custody with having on the 28th ult. stolen the sum of £17 with which his father had entrusted him to deposit at the Yorkshire Bank. Francis Banton (23), labourer, Lancaster was also charged with having received part of the stolen money. Richard Thompson, the complainant was greatly affected in giving his evidence. Having stated the facts as to sending the boy to the bank he said that on the 30th he received back the bank book which had been posted at Lancaster. P.C. Lax deposed that on Saturday he apprehended both prisoners at the Appletree Inn, Cockermouth, where Thompson was playing billiards. On charging the latter with the theft he replied "I</p>	<p>think it will be a Reformatory for me this time." Upon Thompson the sum of £11 0s. 0d. was found, also two watches and other articles he said he had bought at Cockermouth. He had paid the railway and other expenses of himself and his companion from Lancaster. To Banton he had given his trousers and waistcoat procuring new ones and a shirt for himself. Banton's old clothes were sold for 3d. Supt. Inman in reply to Mr. Swale stated that he could not report very favourably upon Thompson's character. Their worships sentenced him to two months' imprisonment with hard labour, to be followed by three years in the Reformatory. The charge against Banton was dismissed, a severe reprimand being however administered to the prisoner.</p>
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William and an accomplice, **Francis Banton** were found at the Appletree Inn at Cockermouth, playing billiards. John William was found with £11 and ½ pence, 2 watches and other purchases and both of them were wearing new clothes. John William said 'I think it will be a Reformatory for me this time' — so it wasn't the first time. Superintendent Inman 'could not report favourably on Thompson's character' and he was sentenced to two months in prison with hard labour, followed by three years in the Reformatory [1].

John William Thompson's accomplice Francis Banton was from Bentham and already had a criminal conviction for 'unlawfully fighting'. Francis's prison records described him as being 4 foot and 8 inches tall, which is quite short, with light hair. John William's prison records tell us he was 5 foot 2½ inches tall and had brown hair and that after his imprisonment he was moved to Calder Farm Reformatory. This establishment in Mirfield, near Dewsbury was one of the earliest Reformatory Schools in the country, set up to try and prevent youngsters from spending a lifetime of crime. It housed 110 boys of school age allocated via a West Yorkshire 'Youthful Offenders' Scheme. It was run on along strict military lines. John William was discharged on 31st December 1886. The reformatory records tell us his conduct was 'Well' whereas many others were described as 'honest' or 'good'. It also told us that he left there to find employment with the Royal Artillery, Limerick in Ireland during a very unsettled period of Irish history.

Royal Artillery Limerick, Ireland Well  
Soldier

But this didn't last long. In 1892, aged 23 John William married **Ada Goodall**, a coal miner's daughter from Leeds. When they married, John William described himself as a farmer but the baptisms of their three children showed he didn't stick with anything for long, listed as a miner, groom and agricultural labourer.

Did John William live happily ever after? Sadly not. At the time of the 1901 census this troubled man was a patient at Leeds General Infirmary and died in 1906, aged 37. Oh dear. John William and Ada's daughter **Annie Thompson** died in 1912, aged 12 and Ada died in 1915, aged 44. Son **John William Thompson** managed a clock warehouse with a wife, **Ethel Johnson** and several children and son **Charles Thompson** was a cloth miller with his wife, **Maud Midgley** and a daughter. They all lived in Bramley, Leeds

Poor father Richard died in 1900, aged 70 and was buried in *Old EX10*, later joined by Julia (Bilton) and her husband and daughter. They didn't have a gravestone.



## *Settle Graveyard Project*

*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](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'.*

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