

## The Slingers, clever folk

**Matthew Proctor Slinger**, born in 1790 in Clapham, was a farmer. In 1819 he married **Ellen Lawson** from Bolton-le-Sands, near Morecambe. Matthew and Ellen had four sons and a daughter although youngest son, **Matthew Slinger**, died an infant.

Matthew farmed in Stainforth, then at Skirbeck [ph7] between Long Preston and Settle, before settling at New Field House, on the road between Helwith Bridge and Austwick. Matthew died in 1875, aged 85. At the time of the next census Ellen had moved to live in the Market Place in Settle with their unmarried daughter **Elizabeth Slinger**. Ellen died in 1881, aged 84 and Elizabeth followed in 1903, aged 80. Why had Ellen and Elizabeth moved to Settle? It was probably because third son **Robert Slinger** was there.

In 1860 Robert had a very favourable marriage to **Isabella Harger**, one of the seven daughters of respected farmer **William Harger**. They had a son and two daughters living at Far End Farm, next door to his parents towards Austwick. After his father died, Robert and Isabella took over New Field House.

In 1878, perhaps with some of his father's inheritance, Robert bought some land in Upper Settle beyond the Catholic Church [2]. The land had belonged to Isabella's father William who had died in 1854 but was not sold until the death of her mother, **Mary (Holden) Harger**, in 1878. So, at the time of later censuses, Robert and Isabella lived at 'Haggletree cottages' on the old Long Preston road junction by the Catholic Church. At the time of the 1881 census Robert described himself as a retired farmer, probably making a good rental income from his land. Isabella died in 1902, aged 73 and Robert died in 1907, aged 81. They are buried in the grave *Old E64*.

*In memory of Isabella wife of Robert Slinger late of Springfield Settle born November 20th 1826 died February 26th 1902. Also Sarah their daughter born December 4th 1863 died January 11th 1880. Interred at Horton Church. Also Robert Slinger born December 14th 1825 died September 1st 1907. Also Eleanor their daughter born January 28th 1868 died September 12th 1918. Also William their son born April 27th 1862 died October 23rd 1926, Old E64*

The grave commemorates the lives of their three children. Their daughter **Sarah** died aged 16 and was buried at Horton. Well after her parents died, in the summer of 1917, aged 49, **Eleanor** became the second wife of **Tom Smith**, a chauffeur who had been working at Stainforth. Tragically she died just a year later. This just left son **William**.

In 1895, William, born in 1862, married **Jessie Ellis**, the daughter of Settle bank clerk **Francis Ellis** and his wife **Annie Robinson**. Both Jessie and William were teachers at the church Sunday



**SALE OF PROPERTY.**—The sale of the property of the late Mr Harger, of Duke-street, Settle, took place on Tuesday afternoon at the Lion Hotel, in Settle, when the different sums realised were considered good prices. Lot 1, consisting of two cottages, a garden barn, and yard, in Duke-street, were purchased by Miss Tristram for £610. Lot 2, consisting of Low Riddings, and baru, and High Riddings was knocked down to John Birkbeck, Esq, of Anley, at £770, and lot 3, consisting of Scaleber, New Field, East New Field, West New Field, Middle New Field, and Great New Field, after reaching the sum of £1700, was knocked down to Mr Robert Slinger, of Newfield House. Mr John Wray was the auctioneer, and Mr W. Hartley the solicitor for the vendor.

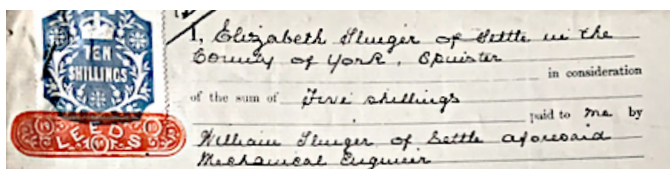
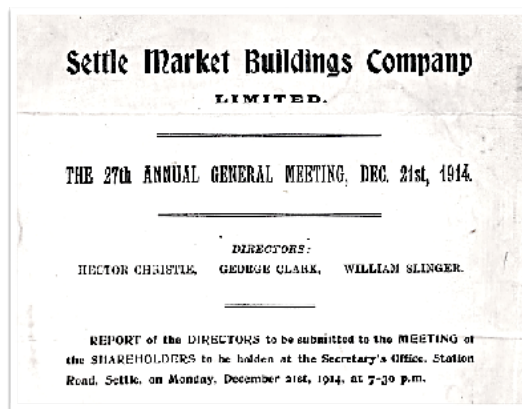


## Settle Graveyard Project

School. The Vestry records made a note of their wedding, 'Sunday School will be reopened Sunday 8th December after being closed for many weeks. The marriage of two of our teachers, Mr W Slinger and Miss Jessie Ellis, was an event of great interest to the other teachers, who all joined together to make a little wedding present on the occasion. We are requested on behalf of Mr and Mrs Slinger, to say that they return their most sincere thanks for the kind and generous present and good wishes.'

William was a brilliant mechanic. William earned his nickname 'Electric Billy' after putting on an electric lighting display, the first ever in Settle, to commemorate Queen Victoria's Golden Jubilee in 1887. William had a shop in the Green and then in Bishopsdale Court just behind the Market Place specialising in electrical repairs and later steam car maintenance [LSA]. He became the agent for the Beeston Humber Tricycle which cost £36 with extra for tyres. He serviced traction engines for travelling show people and was also the millwright at Kings Mill. A busy man who became quite a wealthy man.

In 1894 William invested in the Settle Market Buildings Company, who had built the second floor and then ran the Shambles, buying 20 shares of £10 from his aunt aged Elizabeth Slinger and later became a director alongside **George Glark** and **Hector Christie** [ph6]. He was also a director of the Craven Printing and Stationery Company.



William turned his attention to improving motor cars and cycles and took six years to build 'the Slinger Motorcycle', taking out a patent in October 1901 [ph1,2]. Its registration plate was C46. It was very unusual looking with three wheels in line. The rear of the machine appeared like a conventional bicycle, whereas the front wheel and forks were replaced by a small French manufactured De Dion Bouton engine mounted between two small wheels. The engine was water-cooled with the radiator surrounding the cylinder. Moving forward was relatively easy but moving in reverse was similar to backing a car with a trailer attached. It travelled at 22 miles



per hour! He 'tired' of it by 1910, leaving it in a shed with a broken frame and turned his interest to four wheeled vehicles instead. However, Settle's Tot Lord rescued it and sold it to Mr James P Smith of Keighley in 1950. He restored it and took part in a number of rallies in 1953 and 1954, including the London to Brighton Rally [3,4]. He also drove it back on a sentimental expedition to its birthplace of Settle. They don't build them like that any more!

## Veteran motor cycles won in gruelling test

**TWENTY-THREE** motor cycles left Morecambe yesterday on a gruelling course through Garstang, Scorton, Marshaw, Jubilee Tower, Hornby and back. Steep hills and a 2ft. deep water splash they took in their stride.

An ordinary motor cycle rally? Hardly—the newest machine was 24 years old, the oldest 52.

The occasion was the North-West's answer to the London to Brighton veterans' rally—and it was a triumph for the organisers, the North Lancashire Car Club.

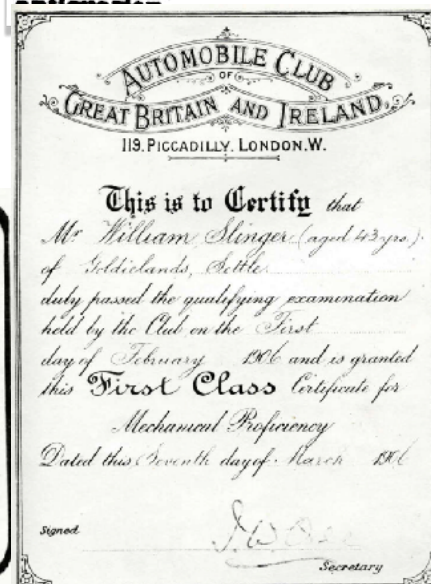
The oldest machine was a 500c.c. three-wheeled Slinger, built in Settle in 1901. Before being ridden in the London-Brighton rally two years ago it was last on the road in 1910.

It belongs to Mr. J. P. Smith, of Oakworth, near Keighley, who is only the second owner after its designer, William Slinger.

### Historic Motor-cycles

**FOUR** machines built in the reign of Queen Victoria will be among the record entry of 231 taking part in the pioneer run for motor-cycles of historic interest from London to Brighton on Sunday. The riders, some of them veterans themselves, will come from 27 counties, including Warwickshire, Staffordshire and Worcestershire. This "run" is not a race. Each rider completing the 60-mile journey non-stop receives a pioneer run plaque. A tankard is awarded to the successful rider with the largest total of years for himself and his machine.

The most extraordinary entry is the original machine invented and patented by William Slinger, of Settle, in 1901. It has three wheels in line—two small ones in front and a rear wheel of normal size. On the handlebar above the two small front wheels is a small motor and petrol tank. Its present owner, Mr. J. P. Smith, of Keighley, obtained the Slinger three years ago from a Settle



William didn't build any copies of his bike to make money, lucrative as this could have been. William was more of a tinkerer and inventor. 'Electric Billy' was the first man in the district to cut grass by motor-powered mower. In 1906 he received his certificate of First Class mechanical proficiency from the Automobile Club and a driving certificate to handle 'small power petrol cars' [ph2]. Unsurprisingly William also owned a car. At the beginning of WW1 he was the only car owner beside the town's three doctors.

Walter Morrison, local benefactor and MP resided at Malham Tarn Hall. Walter grudgingly decided to buy a car. He bought a Fiat from 'a Settle mechanical genius and eccentric known as Billy Slinger. Walter Morrison was a big chap so it was a great big car. Walter didn't intend to drive it himself and so he sent his coachman, Robert Battersby, aged 75 to have driving lessons. Billy soon lost his patience, and if he was not driving well, he would rebuke Robert by kicking his foot off the clutch. After 2 or 3 circuits of the town Battersby was judged proficient at driving a car. It is said that when he arrived at the place where the horses usually turned, he shouted 'Whoa lass!' at the car which travelled straight into a gatepost.' [A]

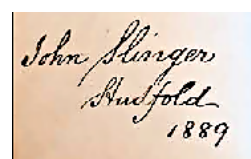
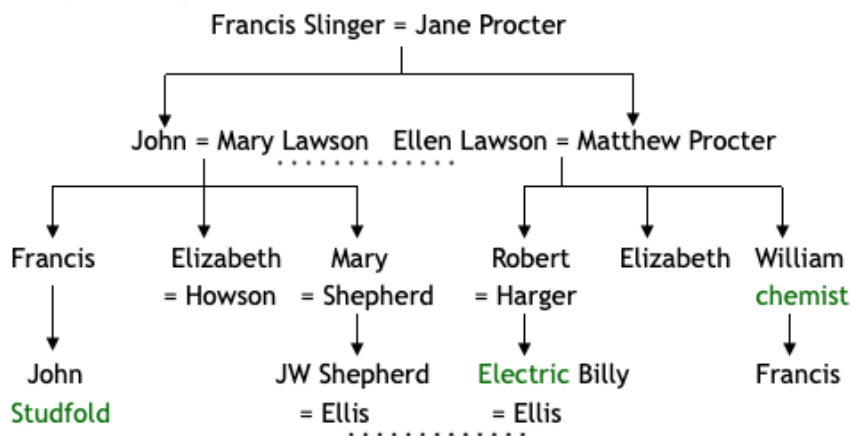
It's possible that this tricycle-style-tandem was another of Billy's inventions, with him photographed testing it out in the Post Office corner of Duke



Street<sup>[ph8]</sup>. William and Jessie lived at Goldielands but didn't have children. Jessie died in 1936, aged 75 and is buried with her parents in *Old B62*. William was buried with his parents in *Old E64* when he died in 1926, aged 63.

Going back a generation, what happened to the other children of Matthew Procter Slinger and Ellen Lawson?

### Slinger Family Tree



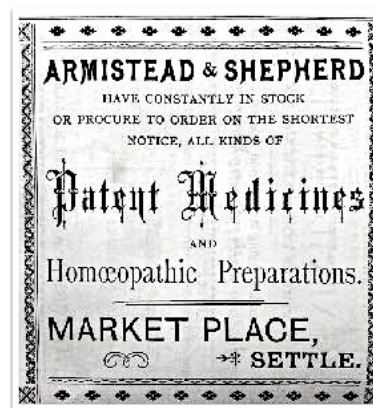
Their eldest son was **Francis Procter Slinger** who died aged 30. Matthew's brother, **John Slinger**, had married Ellen's sister **Mary Lawson** three years before Matthew and Ellen. They lived at the large Studfold Farm near Horton-in-Ribblesdale. They also had also a son called **Francis Procter Slinger** who became an immensely successful farmer of some 800 acres near the Queen's Arms Inn in Littondale. This Francis had a son **John Slinger** who was brought up by his grandparents back at Studfold Farm and he took it over once they had died. John's signature has been found in two books, *The Monkey's Frolic* and *Burns Poems*, by someone who used to work at Studfold after he had died <sup>[ph5]</sup>. John and Mary's daughter **Elizabeth Slinger** married **William Howson**, son of **Rev John Howson** of Giggleswick school and they have their own fascinating life story. Elizabeth was buried in *Old C75*

**Elizabeth Howson born May 16th 1821, died June 24th 1893, Old C75**



Matthew and Ellen's second son was **William Slinger**, born in 1824. At the time of each census William gave his birth place as Stainforth Hall. Giggleswick school records describe that William studied there from the ages 14 to 19.

In 1850, aged 26, William married **Martha Jane Pinder** from Hull and they lived with her aunt **Sarah Pinder** in York. William worked as a chemist and druggist. There was logic to this. William's sister in-law **Isabella (Harger) Slinger** had a sister, **Maria Harger**, who had married Settle chemist **William Armistead**. Also, William's cousin **Mary Slinger**, daughter of Matthew's brother John, had married Settle chemist **William Shepherd**. William Shepherd and William Armistead established 'Armistead and Shepherd' chemist in Settle <sup>[LSA]</sup>, a successful business which would run for generations, albeit with a name change to Shepherd and Walker later on. It wouldn't be surprising if William got the taste for pharmacy from his two relations.



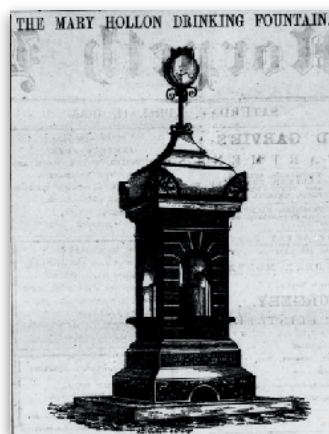
At the time of the 1861 census William and Martha Jane still lived in York and William stated he was part of the company *Hollon and*

*Slinger Chemists* which employed 10 men. William had served an apprenticeship and then became a partner to **Richard Welch Hollon** from Newcastle and **Samuel Barker Barnett** from Rugeley. This was quite an achievement for William as, in 1856, Richard Welch Hollon had been the Lord Mayor of York.

They had substantial premises on the site of an old church behind High Ousegate and Parliament Street in the centre of York [8]. They had a crushing mill and warehouse, stables, office, storeroom and a yard. In 1871 Richard retired and so the partnership was dissolved and William continued the business '*Slinger and Barnett*' with Samuel Barker Barnett.

In subsequent census returns Richard Welch Hollon described himself as an alderman and retired druggist. He had married **Mary Trotter** whose family originally came from Morpeth. Mary's father, a military man, served in India which is where she was born but soon afterwards both her parents died and she was brought back to Morpeth to live with relations. When Mary died in 1871, aged 51, Richard set up a trust fund in her name to provide for '*the relief of persons resident in Morpeth of benefit who are in need, hardship or distress.*' In return the 'people of Morpeth' arranged for the building of an enormous water fountain, seven feet square, built in Morpeth Market Square [6,ph3]. In 2013 the fountain was demolished after a car drove into it but the council paid for an extravagant renovation, moving it to a more convenient position in front of Morpeth clock tower in the process. The trust fund still operates today, with a variety of annuitants aged 60+ who meet for an annual dinner each November. When Richard died with no heirs he left his substantial estate to charity.

Falconer; another and much greater portion is covered by a warehouse built forty years ago and at first occupied by Mr Hollon, then by Messrs Hollon and Slinger, and now by Messrs Slinger and Sor, wholesale druggists; their drug store warehouse and crushing mill is built on the old foundations of the church; on the north and south side, and their stable and office are built on the site of the churchyard, whilst the house formerly erected inside the churchyard, as already indicated, is occupied by them as a store room; whilst a portion of the churchyard is used by them as an open yard. In digging



In the meantime, William's partner Samuel Barker Barnett, although aged just 50, died in 1879 in York Lunatic asylum. The 'notorious' York Lunatic Asylum had a chequered history with scandalous mistreatment of inmates followed by a mysterious fire which destroyed all records in the early 1800s. After that conditions improved considerably. It was an NHS psychiatric hospital until 2015 but was closed being 'unfit for purpose'. After Samuel's death William became a governor of the York Lunatic Asylum and regularly donated to it [8] – a nice mark of respect.



**THE Treasurer of the York Lunatic Asylum has received from Mr William Slinger, York, a donation of £20 towards the general purposes of the institution.**

William Slinger continued to run his chemist and druggist business with his only son, **Francis Slinger** with the company becoming '*Slinger and Son*'. In the 1870s William was on the committee and a steward for the annual York Regatta, a weekend of rowing contests along the River Ouse. The Regatta was established in 1775 but went out of fashion. William was part of the team who brought it back in 1863 and would be pleased to know that it still continues attracting over 3000 athletes. Son Frank was Secretary of the York Amateur Rowing Club and was also a steward [9]. Frank was a keen amateur musician and actor [9]. He was secretary of York Musical Society. Frank married a surgeon's daughter, **Jane Maria Oliver**, in 1879 but died just four years later, aged just 31 without children.

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YORK REGATTA.

STEWARDS—Mr Ald. Wade, Mr Ald. Steward, Mr William Slinger, Mr J. Blenkin, Mr T. Cooper, Mr J. L. Foster, Mr T. F. Wood, Mr W. A. White, Mr W. P. Husband, Mr W. S. Cadman, Mr T. G. Mann, Mr H. Steward, jun., Mr Frank Slinger, Mr Chas. H. J. Lawton. UMPIRES.—Rev. Bryan Walker, LL.D., Corpus Christi, Cambridge; Heaton Cadman, Esq., Worcester College, Oxford. STARTER—Mr W. Kinneavy. JUDGES—Mr Hill. SECRETARY—Mr J. Robinson.

Regattas a decade ago were scarcely known in their connection with this ancient city; now, that which, under the excellent management of the Committee whose names are given above, is given annually upon the Ouse, is gradually growing in its popularity as an institution, and to the rowing man—let him be professional or amateur—there is no greater treat than to spend a couple of days on the banks of our noble river, and to witness the contests which are included in the programme of the York Com-

MUSICAL ENTERTAINMENT AT THE HEWORTH SCHOOLS. —On Tuesday evening last a party of amateurs gave a concert in the School-room, the proceeds being devoted to the funds for warming the church. There was a good attendance. The programme was divided into two parts, the first consisting of songs, glees, pianoforte solo, &c.; the second a Christy minstrel entertainment. In the first part Mrs. Stone, Messrs. Humphries, E. and W. Barton, and Master Wilson sung very well, and in the second part (which seemed to create the most interest among the audience) a troupe of some fourteen young gentlemen, vocalists and instrumentalists, gave a very agreeable Christy minstrel entertainment. The songs and choruses were effectively rendered, the dialogues were amusing and well delivered, and the comic part was ably sustained by Mr. W. A. Mawson as "Tambourine," and Mr. Frank Slinger as "Bones."

Martha Jane died in 1891, aged 60, followed by William in 1899, aged 75. William's obituary said *'he was a well known and respected citizen, it being in a commercial capacity rather than as a public man that he was familiar'*[8] – he kept himself to himself. The executor of William's substantial estate was Settle surgeon James Walker Edgar who arranged for his properties to be sold. William and Martha Jane lived at the extremely generous 44 Monkgate just outside the city walls. It had three reception rooms, five bedrooms and attics [9]. Very nice.

OBITUARY.

MR. W. SLINGER, OF YORK.

We much regret to announce the death of Mr W Slinger, which occurred at his residence, 44, Monkgate, York, on September 15th, aged seventy-five. He was a well-known and respected citizen, it being in a commercial capacity rather than as a public man that he was familiar. The firm of Slinger and Sons (formerly Slinger and Barnett), of whom he was the head, have their premises off High Ousegate. The business is an old-established one, and we understand that the drug stores are the oldest in England, the successive ownerships dating back to a period some three hundred years ago. Mr Slinger was born in the neighbourhood of Settle, and eventually he became a partner in the firm with whom he had served in his youth. For many years the deceased gentleman was a churchwarden for All Saints', Pavement, along with the late Sir Jos. Terry. In politics he was a Conservative. The funeral took place on Tuesday at Acomb.

Miscellaneous Sales.

Re MR. WILLIAM SLINGER, DECEASED.  
 IMPORTANT TO WHOLESALE CHEMISTS AND DRUGGISTS.  
 TO BE SOLD BY PRIVATE TREATY,  
**THE VALUABLE OLD-ESTABLISHED**  
 BUSINESS of Messrs. SLINGER and SON, Wholesale Druggists, York, including the STOCK-IN-TRADE, BOOK DEBTS, GOODWILL, and EFFECTS.  
 The Business of the late Firm, which is of high repute throughout the Kingdom, has been conducted solely with the Medical Profession, Hospitals, and other Public Institutions.  
 Full particulars may be obtained on application at the Warehouse, in High Ousegate, York; or to Dr. EDGAR, Settle, the Executor of the Deceased; or to Messrs. B. and K. P. DALE, Solicitors,  
 1099 25, Blakenhall Street, York.



This family had talent and entrepreneurship in bucketfuls but unfortunately there were no descendants to continue the gene pool of Matthew Proctor Slinger and Ellen Lawson. However, there was another opportunity for Lawson/Slinger genes. Matthew's brother John Slinger and Mary Lawson had two sons and two daughters. Son Francis Procter Slinger had two daughters. Son William Lawson Slinger and daughter Jane Slinger didn't marry. Daughter Mary (Slinger) Shepherd had ten children with her husband William Shepherd, the chemist, but, out of those ten, only one son, John William Shepherd, married and his wife had just one child. John William's second wife was Mary Ellis, sister of Jessie Ellis who had married 'Electric Billy'.



## Settle Graveyard Project

*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. 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.*

*Life stories 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'.*

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

*Newspaper cuttings with the kind permission of the British Newspaper Archives: 1 – Lancaster Guardian, 2 – Lancaster Gazette, 3 – Morecambe Guardian, 4– Lancashire Evening Post, 5 – Morning post, 6 – Morpeth Herald, 7 – Edinburgh Evening News, 8 – Yorkshire Gazette, 9 – York Herald*

*Vestry records with the kind permission of the church*

*A - Bill Mitchell's Walter Morrison: A millionaire at Malham Tarn*

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

*ph1 – with the kind permission of Nick Delves, descendant on [nickdelves.co.uk](http://nickdelves.co.uk), ph2 – credited to [icenicam.org.uk](http://icenicam.org.uk), ph3 – credited to [pinterest.com](http://pinterest.com), ph4 – credited to [outofcharactertheatre.squarespace.com](http://outofcharactertheatre.squarespace.com), ph5 – kindly donated by Linda Duxbury, ph6 Kindly provided by John Reid, ph7 – credited to the Back in Settle facebook site, ph8 – credited to the Back in Settle facebook site submitted by Mick Harrison*