

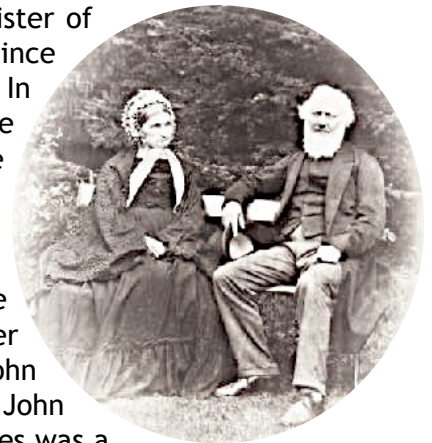
The Tennants, good and gentlefolk

On the hillside between Long Preston and Settle we find The Riddings farm [ph1], the home of a wealthy family, surely? Yes, indeed and generous too.



John Tennant (1) and his wife **Agnes Hird** arrived in this area from Kirkby Malham during the 1780s. The Tennants farmed over 500 acres over their time at Riddings, most used for pasture, a small amount as meadow (for hay) and even less for oats. They also had 80 sheep. (The Riddings' farming history is well documented by the Long Preston Heritage Group.) The Tennant family were involved in the droving trade, providing grazing for cattle, sheep and even geese being driven overland from the North to the markets. Obviously, the railways brought an abrupt end to that trade but, by then, the family had found other ways to make money, investing in the railways so successfully that the younger generations could live entirely on the proceeds and rent their land to hardworking tenants.

John Tennant (2), born in 1755, married **Margaret Wilkinson**, the sister of **William Wilkinson**, the owner of the Stocks-in-Bowland estate (since flooded to build Stocks Reservoir) and founder of Dalehead church. In the 1803 muster roll, put together in case of recruitment for the Napoleonic Wars, John was the only 'gentleman' listed, indicating he didn't need to work. John and Margaret had a son, another **John Tennant (3)** and four daughters. The daughters remained spinsters except for **Agnes Tennant** who married the **Rev Canon John Burton Birtwhistle** in 1835 [ph2]. The Birtwhistles ran the main droving route through the area on the top of the hills towards Airton along Langber Lane. However, Agnes and John Birtwhistle lived in Beverley as John served as the perpetual curate of Beverley Minster for 35 years. John was also credited with establishing schools for the poor in which Agnes was a schoolmistress.



John Tennant (3) married **Mary Ann Crossland** from Huddersfield in 1823 and they took over The Riddings with the help of seven sons and two daughters. Unfortunately, two sons and a daughter died in infancy/childhood. This John Tennant, together with his uncle, **William Wilkinson** and their spinster sisters donated £500 to start the effort to build Holy Ascension Church in Settle in 1835.

John was the owner of a book, '*Portraits and Characters of the Kings of England*', which includes a couple of Queens too. He signed it in 1827 [ph3]. Obviously, the book only covers Kings and Queens up until George III. It includes a rhyme to celebrate each monarch. For example, for Henry VIII: 'Now comes the eighth Henry in royal array, The blue beard of England, historians

say, Who by passion incited, or
jealously led, Thought nothing of
shortening his wives by a head.
Divorces and murders astonished
the nation, The monks lost their
cash in the new Reformation,
Great Cardinal Wolsey was left in
the lurch, And the king lived and
died "supreme head of the
church".



Queen Mary got a particularly stinging account. 'In Mary, the consort of Philip, are seen, A furious bigot, a merciless queen, The Duke of Northumberland, Lady Jane Grey, With her lord, to the scaffold were all led away, And Ridley, and Cranmer, and Latimer died As martyrs, with hundreds of subjects beside. But heaven interfer'd bleeding England to save, And Mary, detested, sunk into her grave.'

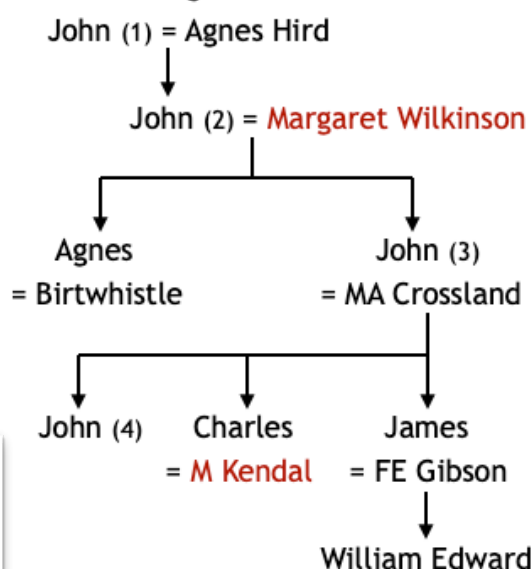
At the time of the 1839 Tithe survey, widowed Mary Ann was at The Riddings, the largest farm recorded in the Long Preston township with some 557 acres. John and Mary Ann's daughter Margaret Tennant married a surgeon Edgar Fenton and they lived in Huddersfield. Most of the Tennant sons stayed in the area, farming and living off investments. Eldest son, John Tennant (4) was praised for his 'generous conduct' at the time of the cattle plague in 1866, donating £15 to Stephen Dawson of Wham and £10 to John Bradley of Field Gate, amongst others [1].

GENEROUS CONDUCT.—Mr. John Tennant, of Riddings, has made the following handsome presents to some of the farmers who have suffered the greatest losses from the cattle plague in this neighbourhood:—Stephen Robinson, Rathmell Green, and to Thomas Wigglesworth, Higher Sheepwash, each a valuable calving heifer; to Stephen Dawson, Wham, £15; and to John Bradley, Field Gate, £10.

Fifth son, Charles Tennant, was a young man starting his career farming at Arnford [ph4], south of Cow Bridge. In December 1855 he married Margaret Kendal from Lawkland.



Tennant Family Tree



Settle Graveyard Project

On Saturday 22nd November 1856, Charles spent the afternoon at a farm auction, a quarter of a mile from his home. *'He got too much liquor and was taken home at about six in the evening.'* He had a hearty meal and went to bed to be woken by the screams of his wife who was close to the birth of their first child. Charles, being a good husband, immediately left his home in Wigglesworth at 10.30pm to fetch someone from Wigglesworth Hall to tend to his wife. It was very dark and he never returned. The river was searched without success. The family put out a description of Charles, *'about 5 feet, 6 or 7 inches height, of proportionate make, light complexion, light curly hair and whiskers, and was dressed in a dark brown cloth shooting coat, a pair of grey mixture cloth trousers, with a dark stripe down the sides, a white cotton shirt with a red and black spotted front.'* That seems a very progressive fashion for 1856! *'... a pair of Blucher shoes, with three holes on each side,'* a formal dress shoe, not ideal for hiking across fields *'and a grey mixture cloth cap. Had with him a common stable lantern with horn lights.'* A *'handsome reward'* was offered for information given to PC Cockshott [2]. On 1st December, eight days later later Charles' body was found in the Ribble *'having unfortunately missed his way and walked right into the river.'* The alcohol probably didn't help.



Can you imagine what Margaret must have been going through? Newly widowed Margaret gave birth to a son, **John William Tennant** and returned to Clapham. In 1865 she became the second wife of a wealthy Bentham farmer, **Richard Butterfield**, and had many more children. John William Tennant died in 1880, aged 23, and has a most elaborate gravestone at Bentham. Margaret died in 1884, aged 41 and was hopefully buried with him.



Only one other of John and Mary Ann Tennant's sons married. Third son, **James Tennant**, was a solicitor in Liverpool and in 1852, aged 25, married **Frances Elizabeth Gibson**, a clergyman's daughter from Suffolk. They had one son, **William Edward Tennant**, before James of died of phthisis (tuberculosis) on 19th April 1854 in Devon. James had probably gone to Devon for

<i>Wigglesworth April 1854 Early Fridge Frogway</i>	<i>James Tennant</i>	<i>Male</i>	<i>25 years</i>	<i>Solicitor (from Liverpool)</i>	<i>Phthisis Certified</i>	<i>Mary Row Mabon Present at the Death Breddons Cottage Frogway</i>
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health reasons. Frances brought up William with the children of her second marriage. Her second husband was **William Atkinson**, a magistrate's physician. Despite never having lived in Long Preston, William Edward Tennant became the sole heir to The Riddings estate when John and Mary Ann's eldest son John Tennant (4) died, unmarried, in 1886.

William Edward Tennant was educated at Brasenose College, Oxford and became a solicitor. He married **Eliza Jane Lancaster**, a London merchant's daughter in 1884. At the time of the following census William and Eliza were visiting *'Buxton Hydrotherapeutic Establishment'*. Let's hope this was a purely recreational visit. William Edward was a *'thorough-going Conservative'* and President of the Long Preston Conservative Club for several years, *'a zealous worker in the Unionist cause.'* He was a Trustee and life member of the Mechanics' Institute. William Edward and Eliza Jane sang and played at fundraising concerts for causes such as purchasing music for the church choir. William Edward was asked to speak at meetings of



Settle Graveyard Project

the Agricultural Associations and at presentations to Dr Lazonby and a vicar who were leaving the area.

William Edward died in 1897, aged 43 from heart failure. He was taken ill just as he was about to partake of dinner at The Riddings. There were no children to this marriage and so this was the end of the Tennant family at The Riddings. The enormous estate was split between William Edward's widow and relations on the maternal Gibson side of the family. Widow Eliza Jane moved to London and lived with nieces until her death 42 years later. Her life is commemorated on William's gravestone which is next to the other Tennant graves.

The (very wordy) Tennant gravestones are close together. The first stone on the left, invaded by ivy, commemorates the families of John (1) and (2). The second table-top stone was not erected until the man of the house, John Tennant (3) had died and includes commemorations of the lives of most of their children. The third tomb-like stone commemorates the lives of William Edward Tennant and his wife.



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'.

Sketches kindly provided by Teresa Gordon. Map reproduced with the permission of the National Library of Scotland

Newspaper cuttings with the kind permission of the British Newspaper Archives: 1 – Leeds Intelligencer, 2 – Lancaster Gazette

ph1 – kindly provided by the Ben McKenzie collection, ph2 – credited to family descendants via Ancestry.co.uk, username Chris Ward, ph3 – photo with the kind permission of Linda Duxbury, ph4 – photo with the kind permission of the Long Preston Heritage Group

The material in this account has been published by YDMT in the book 'Meandering down the Ribble, Born and Bred in the Long Preston Floodplain' who have given permission for it to be included in this account