

## John Turner, a hatter and property investor

Settle has had a market charter since 1249. In the 19th century, believe it or not, Settle markets were well known for their hat trade, with John Turner doing his fair share of business. The expression ‘mad as a hatter’ is based on fact – the mercury vapours produced in hat manufacture were poisonous.

John Turner, born in 1805, was the only child of **William Turner** and his wife **Elizabeth Blackburn**. Elizabeth died when John was just three, and dad brought him up alone. William and son John were both hatters and ran their business from a shop in the Market Place just at the bottom of Constitution Hill, on the site of the current Coop Store. They also owned and rented out the cottages in **Turner’s Yard** behind the shop fronts of the Market Place.

In 1835, John married **Betsy Wilman**, the illegitimate daughter of **Margaret Wilman** who ran a lodging house, next door at Jessamine Cottage, with her spinster sister Mary. They provided comfortable lodgings for several well-to-do residents including surgeon *Edward Harrison* and solicitor *George Dudgeon-Hartley*. John and Betsy had five children over the next ten years. Their daughter **Elizabeth Turner** was the first child to be baptised in the new Holy Ascension Church on 4th November 1838.

John Turner died aged just 47 after four days of the horrendous condition haematomesis – vomiting blood. The mercury vapours will not have helped. **John Lister** was the registrar and Elizabeth Houghton was present at his death. 66 year old widow **Elizabeth (Monkhouse) Houghton** lived in Upper Settle.

Twenty Second December 1852 Settle	John Turner	Male	47 years	Hat Manufacture	Haematomesis 4 days Certified	The Mark of Elizabeth Houghton Present at the death Settle	Twenty fourth December 1852	John Lister Registrar
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*In memory of John Turner who died Decr 22nd 1852 aged 47 years. For here have we no continuing city. Betsy beloved wife of the above who died Jany 11th 1901 aged 87 years. He giveth his beloved sleep, C14.*



Betsy sold off the hatting business in 1854 [sc] but continued to live off the rental income and helped her mum run the lodging house business. They must have run it well as they had the luxury of a servant in each census return. Betsy outlived her husband by 49 years and died with an estate worth £50,000 today. Well done Betsy! Their properties were eventually sold off to the Graham grocery business, based further along the row.

(An unrelated *Robert Turner* ran a hatting business in the market square during the 1890s – see *Johnson*)

John and Betsy’s youngest son **Joseph Turner** went to Giggleswick School and then worked as a druggist. He married **Hannah Wetherell**, the daughter of **Thomas Wetherell**, the innkeeper of the Golden Lion – the paper got it wrong! [1] Joseph

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**HATS, CAPS, &c.**

**MRS. TURNER, MARKET PLACE, SETTLE,**  
Begs to announce that she has commenced  
**SELLING OFF**  
THE WHOLE OF HER  
**STOCK - IN - TRADE,**  
Comprising Silk and Stuff **HATS, CAPS,** and Umbrellas.

**ALSO, TO BE LET,**  
**THE DWELLING HOUSE AND SHOP,**  
With or without the Workshops.

The House contains front Parlour, Kitchen, Scullery with hard and soft water, 2 good Cellars, and 5 Lodging Rooms; there is also a good Garden behind.

To be entered upon at Martinmas.  
For particulars apply to **MRS. TURNER.**

Giggleswick.—Recently, at the Parish Church, by the Rev. T. McIntyre, Mr. Joseph Turner, chemist and druggist, Settle, to Miss Hannah Wetherell, third daughter of the late Mr. Thomas Wetherell, of the Red Lion Hotel, Settle.

## Settle Graveyard Project

learnt Thomas' trade. They moved to Keighley with their five children and Joseph worked as an innkeeper before they emigrated to the States. Daughter **Elizabeth** took the plunge and went to find work in Manchester where she met and married Joseph Taylor, a hotel proprietor. Now, a few generations later, one of Elizabeth's descendants lives back in Settle.

Daughter **Margaret** married a grocer, **James Bentham** and they brought up their family in Lancashire. It seems son **William** died at Port Talbot, South Wales, aged 29, presumably working at the developing coal mines.



*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. Life stories can be found on [dalescommunityarchives.org.uk](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 [settlresearch@gmail.com](mailto:settlresearch@gmail.com). Latest news and events are on the Facebook page 'Settle Graveyard Project'.*

*With thanks to Rodney Hooper, a descendant for his help with the compilation of this account.*

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

*SC – Settle Chronicle, with the kind permission of the North Craven Buildings Preservation Trust*

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