

Dr James Walker Edgar, Medical Officer

James Walker Edgar was born in 1848, the son of a draper in Dryfesdale, near Lockerbie in Dumfriesshire. He studied medicine in Edinburgh. By the age of 33 he had moved to Settle and was working as a GP. He lived in Duke Street, just next to **Titus Nelson's** shoe shop. His servant at the time of the 1881 census was **Annie Hayton**, the son of **John Hayton**, our bookbinder. Spinster Annie must have been inspired by this experience – she spent the rest of her life running a boarding house for doctors, with lodgers including **Dr Oliver Scattergood**, son-in-law to **John Lister**, and young **Dr Balfour Stuart Hyslop** (also from Scotland).

Soon after arriving in Settle James wrote a letter, thought to be to his parents, about a particularly hazardous trip on his horse, Jack, to see a patient at Darnbrook on the Malham moors in the proper cold winter of 1880.

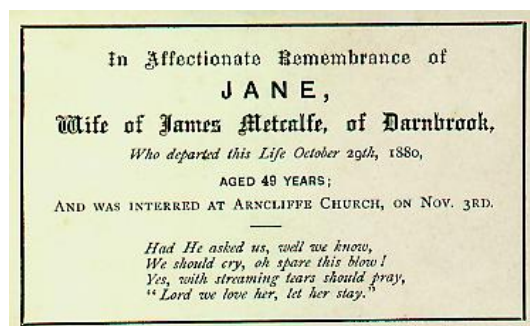
Oct 29th, 1880 9.30pm

....after the storm we experienced here, I was not surprised at your graphic description of that on the coast. It must have been very exciting for those on shore. If you had only seen your dear little boy this day you would have been sorry for him.

It was comparatively fine down here and no snow. I was on my way to Stainforth when I met a man at Langcliffe coming for me to go to Darnbrook so I started there for first as I thought. However going up the brow I discovered there was more snow than I had dreamt of and a good deal more than was pleasant for either Jack or me. At the top of the gate there was a biggish wreath which we scrambled thro pretty well and got on pretty well till Kenside Lane was reached – got to the top of it where the sign post is and there Jack for the first time was beat and lay down in it. I got him up and crawled on close by the wall till I came to a mass right across the road, about six feet high. Very fortunately there were three men cutting it. They said I must turn as the road beyond was quite impassable. However they rushed me a wall and I struggled on through a field till I got to Capon Hall and just there was another lot which I got a man from the house to cut for me and persevered till I got to the Tarn, and was going on but the horse fell so often I had to send him back and walked three miles forward with the carter as a guide.



I should think what we walked through averaged little less than two feet so you may imagine the trouble I had especially when I got to my destination to find that that Mrs Metcalfe had died somewhat suddenly. I set off at 9.30 and after going by the hostel got home at 4.30 not very anxious for any more work but particularly so for something to eat. I feel all right now and am enjoying telling you of my day's adventure.



Poor Mrs Metcalfe was **Jane (Petty) Metcalfe**, the wife of farmer **James Metcalfe** who died aged 49 [ph4]. She was buried in Arncliffe graveyard with daughter-in-law **Jane Ann (Coates) Metcalfe**, the wife of Jane's son **James Metcalfe (Jnr)** who was a wine and spirit merchant in Duke Street, Settle [ph4]. This James (Jnr) died on 29 June 1927, the day of the total solar eclipse with the viewing at Giggleswick Chapel apparently overshadowed by news of his death. He is buried at Giggleswick with his second wife.



In 1883 James married the 'very eligible' Susanna Isabella Clayton [ph1]. Susanna's mother was *Susanna Bolland* of the family who resided in the Townhead estate in Settle. Her father, *William Clayton* had been the vicar of Bentham for just over a year, but he died suddenly, aged 45, when Susanna was 19. James and Susanna lived at 'Hillside' on Constitution Hill in Settle and, once Susanna's mother had died in 1892, James and Susanna took over Townhead. Lucky James and Susanna. They had a son and a daughter.



James threw himself into life in Settle. James was medical officer to the Settle Board of Guardians for nearly 31 years. As well as being a doctor and attending to the sick he was a sidesman at the church and a senior manager of the National School [8]. In 1900 James welcomed *Rev R C Garnett's* second wife to Settle straight from their honeymoon [1]. He was 'chiefly instrumental in setting up the North Ribblesdale Habitation of the Primrose League' (the Conservative Association) in 1886 [9], joined by local worthies including John Birkbeck, John Lister, Arthur Brewin and Frank Charles Stanley.

PRESENTATION TO THE VICAR.

On Friday last a crowded meeting, consisting of scholars, parents, and invited guests, assembled in the National School to receive the Rev. R. C. and Mrs. Garnett, who had just returned from their honeymoon. Dr. Edgar, the senior manager of the school, took the chair, and then the Vicar introduced Mrs. Garnett to the assembly. The Chairman, in a hearty manner, welcomed Mrs. Garnett to the schools, and on behalf of his co-managers hoped she would take as great an interest in the children as her husband did.

A meeting to inaugurate the North Ribblesdale Habitation of the League was held in the Court House, Settle, on Saturday afternoon. The gathering was a large and influential one, comprising representatives from all parts of the district.—Mr. John Lister opened the proceedings by explaining the objects of the League, and subsequently moved the appointment of Dr. Edgar as Ruling Councillor, the latter gentleman having been chiefly instrumental in the establishment of this local branch.—The

James also provided accommodation for *Effie (Ellice) Anderson* who worked as the first nurse for the Giggleswick, Settle and Langcliffe District Nursing Association, 'intelligent nursing for the poor', from 1892 until her death in 1898. Susanna's sister *Mary Clayton* was on the committee. By far the most newspaper articles relate to James and Susanna's success in archery [ph2]. James was the Captain of the Ancient Silver Arrow Society, also known as the Scorton Arrow. James won numerous trophies [1,6]. He was also good at golf.

NATIONAL ARCHERY COMPETITION AT SETTLE

Yesterday the 216th annual meeting of the Ancient Silver Arrow Society, sometimes called the Scorton Arrow, took place on the ground of the North Ribblesdale Archers, at Settle, under the captaincy for the year of Dr. Edgar, the honorary secretary of the latter association. Associated with the Ancient Arrow are several quaint customs. The whole of the shooting is at 100 yards, and instead of the usual three arrows at an end, two only are shot. Naturally this restriction makes the trial of mark-manship more severe, for the archer, if feeling his way with his first shaft, has only the second with which to make a score. The contest

man. The gold medal for highest score (171) passed into the hands of Dr. Edgar, of Settle. The Rev. C.



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In the early 1900s James went into partnership with young **Balfour Stuart Hyslop** who had recently qualified. On 19th December 1909 James slipped and broke his leg in the snow and then died three days later of a heart attack, which was probably related to the accident, aged 62 [LSA]. The gravestone suggests he died on Christmas Day. Either way, he was buried on the 29th December. James and Susanna are buried in grave *Old E54*. When he died the vicar wrote, *'Probably the death of no-one in Settle would have been more deeply or more widely felt, for he was esteemed by all and beloved by many. He was Chairman of the Trustees of the Benefice, one of the Vicar's sidesmen, and a Foundation Manager of the Day School.'* Locally he was remembered for being willing to treat the poor for nothing and for taking as much care of them as he did of his wealthier patients. James' appearance didn't change much over his 29 years in Settle [ph1].



To the loving memory of James Walker Edgar MD of Townhead who fell asleep on Christmas Day 1909 aged 62. RIP. Susanna Isabella, his wife who fell asleep August 1st 1930 aged 84. Grant them Lord eternal life, Old E54

The Edgar stone and inscription are of an unusual Celtic style. The only other stone of this style is that of **Rev Walter Linney** who died suddenly in 1921 and is buried very close by. The style suggests that the Edgar gravestone was inscribed and erected upon Susanna's death in 1930, so of a similar era to that of Rev Linney. Susanna reached a good age of 84. The Holy Ascension church altar table was provided in Susanna's memory *'This altar table is given in memory of Susanna Isabella Edgar by the Mother's Union.'*

James and Susanna's daughter **Mona Jean Edgar**, always known as Jean, married a teacher, **Ralph Barcham Green**, officiated by her brother **Rev Maurice Clayton Edgar** at Settle church in 1915. The vicar of Settle church, **Rev Walter Linney**, assisted. Ralph was an army officer, Second Lieutenant of the 9th Battalion Queen's Own Royal

West Kent Regiment [ph1]. He served on the Western Front in the Army Cycling Corps and in the Military Police and won a Military Cross.

At the wedding Jean wore white satin trimmed with old Limerick lace and a strip of orange blossom and white heather. Her bridesmaids included **Miss Helen Tottie**, a cousin and the daughter of **Colonel Tottie** at Coniston Hall – an incredible family story.

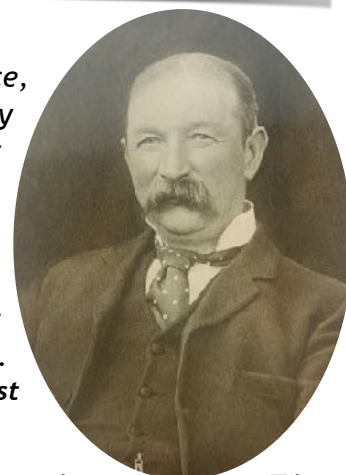
Ralph and Jean lived at various times

of members. Dr. **Edgar** won the gold medal for the highest score, and the silver cup and sweepstakes for the best gold was won by the Rev. C. Hutton Coates (Burton Agnes), while Mr. Foster took the sweepstakes for the most "golds." The ancient horn spoon for the worst white in the last round was taken by Dr. J. W. **Edgar**, of **Settle**. The Thirsk

19. Severe snow-storm passed over Settle, accompanied by a high wind, which drifted the snow considerably.—Whilst on his way from Giggleswick to Settle, Dr. Edgar, of Townhead, Settle, had the misfortune to slip and break his leg.

22—Dr. Edgar, of Townhead, Settle, aged 62 years.

JANUARY, 1910.



in Kent, Devon, Norfolk, Scotland and briefly in Surrey. Although a reasonable teacher, the family remember Ralph was not the best businessman, so never really succeeded. Descendants remember that at some of the schools, Jean was required to fill the role of matron or housekeeper. She was, however, far more interested in breeding cats and was particularly proud of her show winning marmalade. They had four children. Jean is pictured with her mother, Susanna and eldest child, Daphne.



James and Susanna's son **Maurice Clayton Edgar**, born in 1886, became a vicar. He served in Leeds at the time of his sister's wedding in 1915. By 1930 he found a position in the 'North of England' having served for just eight months as assistant priest at Golder's Green [3]. Whilst there he gave 'excellent tuition to the choristers and the choir has improved out of all recognition' [3].

Carols have been a great feature of the music at St. Michael's Church, Golders Green-road, during the festive season, and have been exceptionally well sung. This is, in a large measure, due to the excellent tuition given to the choristers by the **Rev. Maurice Edgar** since he took over the duties of predecessor recently, and the choir has improved out of all recognition.

Rev. Maurice Edgar for a Northern Living.

We are informed, although no official announcement has yet been made, that the Rev. **Maurice Clayton Edgar**, assistant priest of St. Michael's, Golders Green, has been offered and has accepted a living in the North of England, and will be leaving the district shortly. While his congregation will congratulate him on his preferment, his departure will be a great loss to the parish. For Mr. **Edgar**, besides being an excellent preacher, has made the training of the choir his special work, and has effected a great improvement in the music of the church.

Back in Settle, Maurice lived at Townhead [ph3] He was known to be a collector of cuckoo clocks and descendants still own some of them. He didn't marry until 1943 when he was aged 57. His 27 year old wife, **Joan Atkinson**, was quite literally, a foundling. She was found as a newly born baby, abandoned anonymously on the doorstep of a house occupied by an Order of Anglican nuns. She was christened and raised by the nuns and although she never formally entered the order she followed its ethos and conduct for the whole of her life.



Family remember that 'in the late 1930s Joan was sent to Canada or North America to do 'good works'. Quite out of the blue, she was peremptorily summoned back to England at the behest of the Rev Maurice Edgar who had suddenly decided that he had to marry Joan as soon as was humanly possible. Joan, who had always obeyed the commands of her clerical superiors without demur, agreed as soon as he popped the question on her arrival back in England.'

Unfortunately, and perhaps unsurprisingly, the marriage was not a happy one. There were no children. By the end of the second world war they were rattling around in the huge Townhead mansion which had become dilapidated and bereft of servants. Joan tried to run a B&B business without much success or assistance from Maurice who was increasingly frail. Maurice died in 1947, aged 60 and was buried with his parents and an engraved foot stone.

Maurice Clayton Edgar, priest, died July 13th 1947 aged 59 years, RIP

'Now Joan was left in sole possession of a large Victorian house in poor



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repair which was filled with the possessions of many deceased Claytons and Bollands. Nothing in her previous upbringing prepared her to deal with the task of disposing of the house contents in a way which would have satisfied her deceased husbands relatives. Joan did not know what to do. Tot Lord came to the rescue, buying the house. The contents were disposed of at public auction in February 1949 [4]. To Joan, Tot Lord was a rescuing angel but some of my relatives regarded him as the absolute opposite. The anger felt at the manner of the disposal of Townhead and its contents was directed at Joan primarily and was particularly strong among male members of my family but was shared to a slightly milder extent by the womenfolk. Happily the story of Joan has a positive ending. She returned to the world of clerical good works and, after a decade or so, successfully buried the hatchet with sister-in-law Jean and her youngest daughter Elspeth. Joan lived a plain and frugal life and was a kind, well meaning and very decent person.'

AUCTION SALES
By RICHARD TURNER & SON.

IMPORTANT SALE OF VALUABLE ANTIQUE FURNISHINGS, etc.

TOWNHEAD, SETTLE.

RICHARD TURNER & SON will Sell by Auction the whole of the contents of the above residence on behalf of the Trustees of **REV. MAURICE EDGAR, dec.,** on

THURSDAY and FRIDAY,
February 24th and 25th.

There are many items of valuable Antiques, China, Electroplate, Silver, Glass, etc.

The antiques will be sold on **February 24th,** and the remainder of the Household Goods on **February 25th.** Descriptive lists forwarded on application.

On view Monday, February 21st, from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. The sale will be held in a marquee.

RICHARD TURNER & SON,
Bentham, Auctioneers.
Near Lancaster.

Many occupants of the graves in our graveyard are indebted to Dr Edgar. In 1886 James was present at the death of **Joseph Jackson**, plumber and cave explorer. Joseph died of heart disease. A year later James attended **Mary Anne (Annie) Woolerton** in the hours before her death [5]. Annie, aged 17, had a tragic accident in 1887 whilst working as a servant on Prospect Terrace. Her dress caught fire on the gas stove and, in her panic, Annie ran from room to room which would have made her dress burn faster. She survived for 40 agonising hours. **Edith Copley Davies** was the governess to James and Susanna's children before she died, aged just 24. **William Tomlinson** was the coachman for James and Susanna at Townhead, serving for 45 years. His son **Richard Mason Tomlinson** married **Ellen Davis** (unrelated to the governess). James was also the executor of the estate of **William Ellis** who had worked in York as a chemist but whose fascinating family remained in Settle.

Susanna's spinster sisters, **Annie Elizabeth Clayton** and **Mary Clayton** lived with James and Susanna at Townhead. Mary outlived Susanna but continued to live at Townhead with nephew Rev William Clayton Edgar until she died in November 1943. This was just a couple of months after William married Joan Atkinson and perhaps these two events are related? Annie Elizabeth and Mary are buried together in **Old L30** with an impressive cross headstone and their details on a foot stone.

R.I.P. Annie Elizabeth Clayton April 20th 1850 January 29th 1927.
Mary Clayton died Nov 14th 1943 aged 91 years. Jesu, Mercy



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.

Life stories can be found on dalescommunityarchives.org.uk/settle-graveyard-project. The 'Old Settle' family tree on ancestry.co.uk includes the families buried in the graveyard. The project

Settle Graveyard Project

is ongoing and welcomes queries and information on settleresearch@gmail.com. Latest news and events are on the Facebook page 'Settle Graveyard Project'.

Many thanks to descendant Robert Munday and a relation Peter Metcalfe for information and photos for this account. 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 Gazette, 2 – Lancaster Guardian, 3 – Hendon & Finchley Times, 4 – Clitheroe Advertiser, 5 – Shields Daily News, 6 – Bradford Observer, 7– Golf 29, 8 – Lancaster Standard, 9 – Morning Post

ph1 – kindly provided by descendant Robert Munday, ph2 – with the kind permission of Mike Howarth, ph3 – with the kind permission of Tom Lord, ph4 – with the kind permission of relation Peter Metcalfe

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