

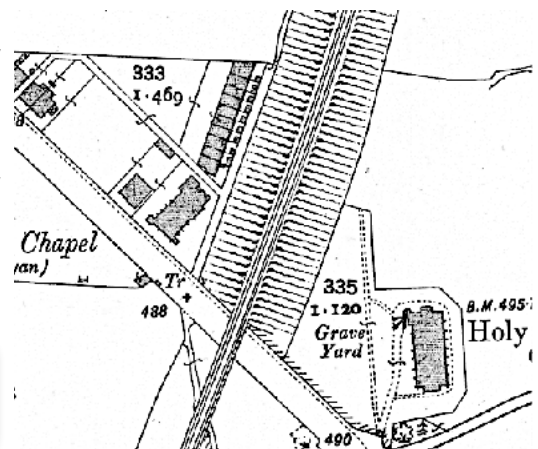
Beck Wildman of Mains View

This exceptionally grand tombstone sits on top of the walled grave of **Beck Wildman**, his wife **Mary Ann Speak** and their spinster daughter **Annie**. Who could possibly merit such a grand tombstone?

In Loving Memory of Beck Wildman who died Sept 3rd 1904 aged 54 years. Also Mary Ann Beloved wife of Beck Wildman who died January 29th 1933 aged 77 years. Also of Annie their beloved daughter who died Oct 30th 1960 aged 81 years, Old F31

Stonemason Beck Wildman was the youngest of six children of **John Wildman**, a mason and his wife **Sarah Beck** who lived in various addresses around Bradford. Sarah died a year after Beck's birth, aged 43 and John married again. His second wife, **Mary Kitson**, had another six children so it was a busy household. Several of the siblings from the first marriage lived together as soon as they were old enough.

Beck met Mary Ann Speak, an illegitimate daughter of **Mary Speak** from Halton West near Long Preston. Mary Ann had found a job as one of many servants of a Bradford silk and wool merchant. They married in 1877 at Bradford Cathedral and, almost exactly nine months later, a son **William Wildman** was born and **Annie** followed in 1880. For some reason, during the 1880s, Beck and Mary moved to Settle and lived at the bottom of Church Street. In 1894 Beck was given planning permission to build ten houses near the (recently demolished) Wesleyan Chapel [1] and, as a result, the family lived at number 1 Mains View, alongside the railway for the rest of their lives, making a tidy income from rent from the other nine cottages. When Beck died his estate was worth a quarter of a million pounds at today's value. Mary Ann stayed in Mains View until her death and then spinster daughter Annie moved in Craven Terrace.



BUILDING BYE LAWS.—Plans for the erection of ten houses near the Wesleyan Chapel, Settle, to be built by Mr. Beck Wildman, were approved. Mr. John Lord, of

Beck and Mary Ann's son, William, had a career in workhouses. At the age of just 24 he was the 'labour master' at Great Ouseburn workhouse, north of York and Harrogate, coordinating the 'labour' for the inmates and ensuring they worked sufficiently hard to deter them from staying in the workhouse if at all possible — that's quite a responsibility requiring incredible resilience and authority. Somehow he met **Annie Lea** from Liverpool, who had worked as a nurse at Blackburn workhouse. They married in Lewisham, London. Perhaps they had both worked in a workhouse there? Annie's father was a bookkeeper but her maternal grandfather worked as 'neats-foot oil manufacturer and tripe dresser.' No, I hadn't heard of it either! *Wikipedia* tells us 'Neatsfoot oil is a yellow oil rendered and purified from the shin bones and feet (but not the hooves) of cattle. "Neat" in the oil's name comes from an Old English word for cattle. It is used as a conditioning, softening and preservative agent for leather. It was also used medicinally as a topical application for dry scaly skin conditions.' Can you imagine the smell? William and Annie settled in Liverpool and had four children. When Annie died, aged 52, William married the much younger **Mary**

Maude Williams and had a daughter **Alys Mary Patten Wildman**. Alys married **John Kenneth Barry Segger**, the son of Settle's **James Woodcraft Segger** and they emigrated to Australia. After all his adventures William returned to live in PenYgent View in Settle and was buried in an unmarked grave, New JX44 when he died in 1958, aged 80. Widow Mary Maude set sail for Australia to spend the rest of her life with her daughter.

The success of Beck and Mary Ann is even more incredible when you consider the lives of his siblings. At least three of them married with disastrous consequences and were rarely found living with their spouses in subsequent census returns because they had separated. Beck's brother **John Wildman** married widow **Amelia (Peel)**

Northrop, who had inherited property from her husband and they lived in Shipley. The marriage just didn't work. In 1878, just two years after the wedding, John put a notice in the papers saying he was not responsible for his wife's spending and, as a joke, allegedly, added '*The above Amelia Wildman is now on sale.*' [2] Even John's sister gave evidence for Amelia! The court decided to make John provide sureties of £20 (quite a sum) to keep the peace for 12 months. '*The court was crowded during the hearing of the case and the examination of several of the witnesses created considerable amusement.*'! After this John and Amelia had a pair of twins to add their two other children but then went their separate ways, the children being brought up by an aunt.

Meanwhile Beck's brother, **Samuel Wildman**, was a bookkeeper at Fletcher and Easby's coal merchants. He married **Elizabeth Lund** and they had seven children, also in Shipley. In 1878 there was a sign of things to come when Samuel was brought to court for being intoxicated and, therefore, aiding and abetting the landlord of the Oddfellows Hall for permitting drunkenness in his house. Elizabeth had gone to find him and complained to the landlord for permitting him to drink so much and later reported it to the police [3].

In 1881 Elizabeth's father died and she inherited some money. Samuel got hold of the money, gave up his job and travelled around the country buying drinks for people he met. Oops. He got into debt and lived with other women. It all came to a head when he returned home, drunk

OFFERING A WIFE FOR SALE AT SHIPLEY.—*John Wildman, a mason, of Shipley, was charged by his wife with threatening to do her bodily at Shipley, on*

Wildman, of St. Paul's Road, Shipley, hereby give notice that I will not be responsible for any debt or debts my wife, Amelia Wildman, may contract after this date." This pertion was written in ink, and the following was written in pencil underneath:— "The above Amelia Wildman is now on sale, and further particulars may be obtained from John Wildman, as above." This was written for a lark; and

of £5 each.—The Court was crowded during the hearing of the case, and the examination of several of the witnesses created considerable amusement.

A SHIPLEY PUBLICAN HEAVILY FINED.

At the Bradford West Riding Police Court to-day, Robert Hill, landlord of the Oddfellows' Hall public-house, Shipley, was charged with having permitted drunkenness in his house; and Samuel Wildman, bookkeeper, was charged with having aided and abetted in the committal of the offence. Inspector Symonds stated that on Thursday, at six o'clock, he visited the house kept by Hill, and found nine or ten men in the room. Samuel Wildman was asleep in the room; and on being roused up it was evident that he was intoxicated. He was assisted home by a person

DISGRACEFUL CONDUCT OF A HUSBAND.

At the Bradford West Riding Court, Samuel Wildman, bookkeeper, Hall-lane, Shipley, was summoned for assaulting his wife, Elizabeth Wildman. As was stated for Mrs. Wildman, the parties have been married for sixteen years, and until within the last six months had lived together happily. About that time his wife came into possession of some money, which the defendant managed to get into his own hands. He then threw up his situation, and travelled about the country treating everybody he met to drink. He never once afterwards attempted to provide any food for those at home, but left his wife to bring up six children on the paltry sum of 9s per week. His conduct became worse and worse, and after he had spent all the money they possessed, he got into debt, went to live with other women, and a few evenings since he returned home the worse for liquor, and in the presence of his children struck his wife several blows and knocked her down. Prisoner was sentenced to three months' imprisonment with hard labour. A judicial separation would be granted, and the prisoner would have to contribute £1 per week towards the maintenance of his wife.

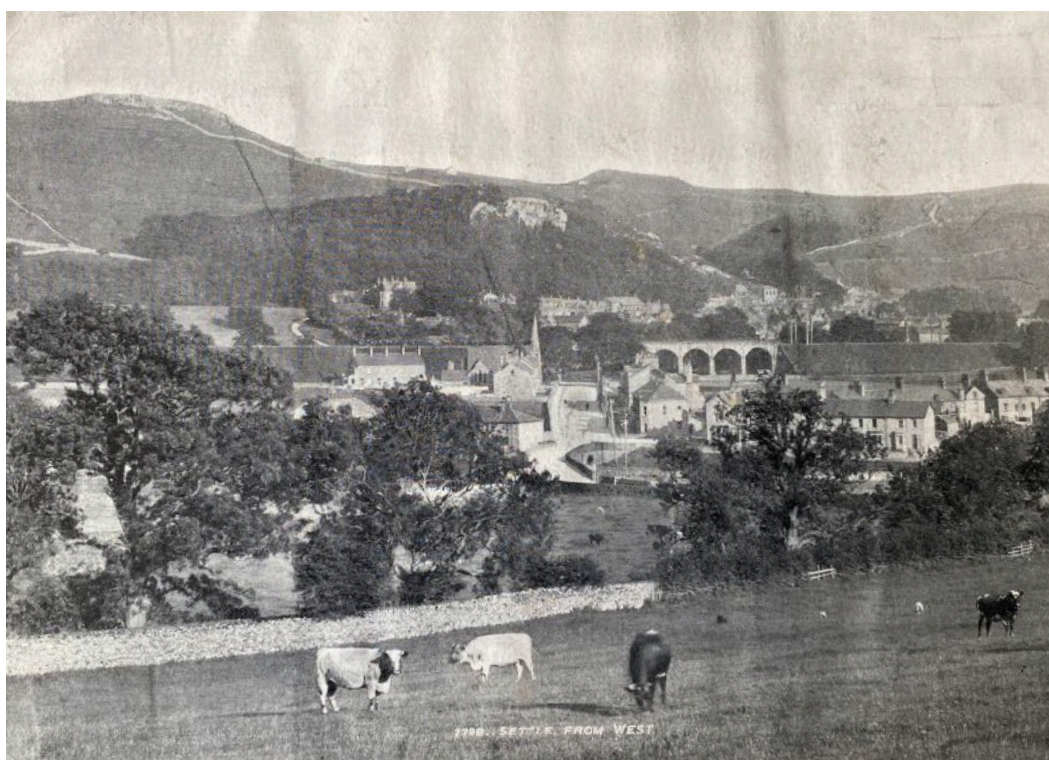
Settle Graveyard Project

and assaulted Elizabeth in front of the children. Samuel was imprisoned for three months with hard labour, a separation was granted and Samuel was ordered to pay £1 a week for maintenance [4]. At the time of the 1911 census, Samuel was described as *'formerly clerk, now supported by family'* which was good of them, considering.

Beck was unrelated to the many other Wildman families in local graveyards.



Mains View is the row of houses to the left of the viaduct alongside the railway. This was before the Northfield estate was built and there are hardly any of the houses on the left of Church Street. Ribble View can be seen alongside the river to the right of the road.



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 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'.

Newspaper cuttings with the kind permission of the British Newspaper Archives: 1 – Lancaster Guardian, 2 – Shipley Times and Express, 3 – Bradford Daily Telegraph, 4 – Liverpool Echo

ph1 – credited to the Back in Settle site, posted by Mick Harrison.

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