

The Wildmans, Settle pioneers

The Wildmans were one of Settle's most influential families of bygone days. Hundreds of them have populated local graveyards over the years. The Settle branches descend from **William Wildman**, born 1696 and his wife **Elizabeth Frankland**, born 1704. It's probable that they were related to **John** and **Elizabeth Wildman** whose datestone 'IEW 1664' adorns Underberg/Primrose Cottage in Victoria Street in Settle. The family and their descendants farmed successfully around the Long Preston Floodplain and in Malhamdale. In 1804, 26 year old **Matthias Wildman** married **Susannah Preston** from a wealthy family at Cleatop and they settled in Settle to have seven sons and four daughters, although five died in infancy. Matthias was a shoemaker and they lived at Well Cottage, between the Folly and the King William. Originally Matthias rented this property from the Duke of Devonshire but, somewhere along the line, bought it out.

Matthias and **William Driver** established the first Methodist Sunday School in 1809, inspired by watching great numbers of children playing in the Market Place. The following Sunday 200 children assembled in the Methodist Chapel! Slightly non-plussed Matthias and William raised funds to buy books, Testaments and Bibles *'in such ample store as to need no application for funds during the next 20 years'* [SC]. Matthias was, for many years, the Overseer of the Poor in Settle. Matthias made sure his sons benefitted from *'the advantage of vicinity to a Free Grammar School to give them a better education than they could otherwise have afforded.'* Son **John Wildman** often spoke with grateful remembrance of the sacrifices his father had made to keep his sons at school [SC].

WESLEYAN SUNDAY SCHOOL.—On Sunday, January 18th, Two eloquent Sermons were preached in the Wesleyan Methodist Chapel, Settle, when Collections were made on behalf of this old established School. It was originated by William Driver and Matthias Wildman in the year 1809. The thought was suggested to them passing through the Market Place one Sunday afternoon, on seeing great numbers of Children occupied in various games, and immediately was the noble thought acted upon, and the result was that on the following Sunday upwards of 200 children assembled in the Methodist Chapel. The originators were at a nonplus by the numbers, as, in that day books were scarce, but by short addresses the day was spent very profitably. Some few are now living who on that day offered themselves as Scholars. During the following week the lack of books was nobly supplied. The Conductors having received subscriptions, and Bibles, Testaments, and other Books in such ample store as to need no application for funds during the next 20 years.

Susannah died in 1839, aged 56 and Matthias died in 1845, aged 67. In his later years Matthias handed over most of his property and business dealings to his eldest surviving son, **John Wildman**. Son **Robert Wildman** had worked his way up to become the bank manager of the Craven Bank in Colne and had a large family there. He was a conscientious member of the Wesleyan Methodist church. Robert's sister, **Mary Wildman**, lived with him for a number of years. Matthias and Susannah's son **Matthias Wildman** became a currier/tanner in Leeds but died aged 43. Matthias and Susannah's son **Thomas Wildman**, another shoemaker, married **Margaret Thomson**, daughter of **James Thomson** of Settle's Zion Chapel and they lived in Leeds.

Son John, born in 1812 was apprenticed to an ironmonger, a trade which would have served him well in the industrial decades ahead. However, from the age of 15 to 18 he had a *'lame leg from which he suffered extremely'* thought to be caused by sitting in a damp cellar sorting nails. He had several portions of bone extracted by Dr Sutcliffe, without anaesthetic, which helped reduce the pain, but he had a stiff ankle for life. After this he was appointed schoolmaster at the National School on Kirkgate and also sold books and undertook small-scale printing and bookbinding. This change in career transpired to be most fortuitous. John's experience of illness combined with his

intelligence and cheerfulness led to him *'being considered as a sort of general adviser and counsellor by persons in difficulties of any kind.'*

When John was 25 he married **Margaret Horner** whose mother, **Betty Whittam**, was from the family who ran the Upper Settle tannery for generations. Margaret had eight sons and two daughters. Once married John gave up teaching and concentrated on his printing and bookbinding business. He gave lectures on his business at the Settle Mechanics Institute of which he was the Vice President and librarian — a handy link. In 1841 John published his first *'Settle Almanack'* which, he said, *'need not shrink from comparison with even the most respectable Almanacks in London. The cover is exceedingly tasteful and pretty and the contents are at once appropriate, useful and amusing.'* He declared it was for the characters of Settle who possessed *'clear and shrewd understandings, great humour and naïveté in their conversation, fondness for old stories, rusticity often affected and a dialect which heightens and sets off every other peculiarity.'* Some things never change!

THE SETTLE ALMANACK.

THE SETTLE ALMANACK; FOR THE YEAR OF OUR LORD 1841; THE FIRST AFTER LEAP YEAR.—Settle: Printed and Published by John Wildman, Bookseller, &c., Duke-street.

AN Almanack from SETTLE! If that is not a *settle*, we do not know what is! Aye, and a very pretty little Almanack it is too. In point of printing and general getting up, it need not shrink from comparison with even the most respectable Almanacks produced in London. The cover is exceedingly tasteful and pretty; and the contents are at once appropriate, useful, and amusing. The author, who has exhibited considerable tact as well as ability (the two are not always to be found together) gives his reasons for publishing, and wherefore it is called the Settle Almanack:—

“The Inhabitants of the rugged and remote tract of Craven have, like other mountaineers, a character more strongly marked than their lowland neighbours; from which Paley derived an early tincture, which no intercourse with the world ever wore off, or produced an inclination to wear off.—They possess clear and shrewd understandings, great humour and naïvete in their conversation, fondness for old stories, rusticity often affected, and a dialect which heightens and sets off every other peculiarity.”

In February 1854 John published and printed the first edition of the monthly publication of the Settle Chronicle, very much along the lines of the yearly Almanack, *'enriched with gems of literature of a miscellaneous, but instructive and entertaining character; and with the thoughts and sayings of great men will be given, from time to time, columns of entirely original and valuable matter.'* It cost one penny! The first edition sold 700 copies [SC]. John continued to publish the

PRINTED AND PUBLISHED BY JOHN WILDMAN, CHRONICLE OFFICE, DUKE STREET, SETTLE.

Our pages will be enriched with gems of literature of a miscellaneous, but instructive and entertaining character; and with the thoughts and sayings of great men will be given, from time to time, columns of entirely original and valuable matter.

“THE CHRONICLE.”

Our success has been beyond our most sanguine anticipations, the sale of No. 1 having very nearly reached 700 copies. We thank our friends for their liberal support and trust we shall not be wanting in shewing our gratitude for their kindness. We think

Chronicle until 1858 when it was taken over by young **John Battersby** until the last edition in December 1866, albeit with a price of *'three half-pence'*. It is now an essential component of any respectable local historian's library and has provided vast amount of material for this graveyard project.

In 1860 John issued an invoice to **John Birkbeck** at Anley for various items totalling £5 0s 2d. These included the Congregational Year Book for James Thomson (at the Zion Chapel) and a copy of some volumes of Fronde's History of

POSTMASTER—JOHN WILDMAN.

... ARRIVALS.

Mail with Bags from London, Lancaster, North-Western Railway Post Office, Leeds, Skipton, and Clapham, at 8.30 a.m. Delivery commences at 9.15 am.

... DEPARTURES.

Mail with Bags for Leeds and Skipton, 4.5 p.m. Box closes at 3.45. By this mail are sent the Letters for nearly the whole of Yorkshire, and parts of Northumberland, Durham, and Lincolnshire.

Mail with Bags for London, Lancaster, North-Western Railway Post Office, and Clapham, at 7.28 p.m. Box closes at 7 p.m. No Letters are detained in the Office after the dispatch of this Mail, except those for delivery within the Settle District.

Letters intended for Registration, must be delivered at the window half-an-hour before the box closes for each mail.

Settle Graveyard Project

England [ph3]. **James Anthony Froude** was a highly controversial clergyman-turned-historian who made numerous contentious and forthright claims in his writing, across the globe.

John gave up the Settle Chronicle to become the Postmaster, replacing **John Gibbins** (see **Bordley**). He advertised in the Almanack, of course! He was a busy chap. There were sufficient funds to send the sons to Giggleswick School and for them to continue their studies after he had died. John died in 1862, aged just 51, having suffered for three years from a series of paralytic attacks — strokes? Naturally, a life story and glowing obituary were printed in the Settle Chronicle. John's youngest child, **Margaret Wildman**, was just two when he died. John was buried in Giggleswick churchyard with three of the eldest four sons, two of them just infants. Youngest son, **Horner Wildman**, had his own gravestone in the newer section of the graveyard when he died, aged 19.

Settle, May 30th 1860


J. Battersby Esq

To JOHN WILDMAN, Dr.
BOOKSELLER AND STATIONER, &c.

1859

July	1	4000 Papers backing Cheques & Binding	5	-
Aug	1	West Riding Old Book & Catalogue	16	8
Jan 1860	7	2000 Engraving Dies, Cast Die	1	1
"	"	2000 do do do do	15	.
"	"	1 Penn Ocean Guid note	13	.
"	10	Enggall Year Book 12 for Thomson	1	6
May	8	Howell's Hist of England Vol 5th	1	8
			5	0 2

Settled 31st May 1860
J. Wildman




In memory of John Wildman of Settle who died November 14th 1862 aged 51 years. Matthias Preston Wildman died December 12th 1840 aged 2 years. John Wildman died September 6th 1844 aged 3 years. Robert Wildman died October 22nd 1863 aged 18 years.

In memoriam. Horner, youngest son of John Wildman of Settle died 20th Sept. 1874 aged 19.



It was quite acceptable for a widow to continue her husband's business and, although the Post Office and Settle Chronicle were taken over by John Battersby, Margaret continued to print and sell books with the help of sons William, Thomas and James. In 1865 Margaret found that her till was going short and suspected that her charwoman, 47 year old widow, **Betty (Allan) Shepherd**, was to blame. She alerted the police. In a wonderful example of 1865 undercover policing, **PC Thomas Whincup** 'concealed himself in the shop . . . ready to pounce upon his customer if such an opportunity presented itself.' [2] He 'had not been long in ambush before the prisoner made her appearance.' PC Whincup found over £2 of copper and silver in a box in Betty's bedroom, together with a marked coin which had disappeared from the shop the day before. Betty was, unsurprisingly, found guilty and sentenced to Wakefield House of Correction for three months with hard labour. After her release Betty moved to Carnforth to live with her daughters.

Saturday morning found to be missing. It was suspected that the person committing the theft had gained access to the post-office through the shop of Mrs. Wildman, which adjoins it, and calculating upon the possibility of something of the kind being attempted again, it was arranged that P. C. Whincup should conceal himself in the shop early on Monday morning, ready to pounce upon his customer if such an opportunity presented itself. P. C. Whincup accordingly secreted himself in a cupboard in the shop, and had not been long in ambush before the prisoner, who is Mrs. Wildman's charwoman, made her appearance. She

In 1876 eldest son William was taken to court on the evidence of a Factory Inspector, **WC Taylor**, for contravention of the 1833 Factory Act which aimed to improve conditions for children in

factories. Children could not work under the age of nine, aged 9-13 could not work more than 9 hours and children aged 13-18 no more than 12 hours. They were not allowed to work at night and had to receive two hours schooling per day. William was charged with employing a boy beyond the time specified and failing to keep a register in accordance with the Act. He was fined the minimum £2 for employing the boy plus 10s costs so it was obviously not regarded as too serious a crime. Factory Inspectors had quotas to fill!

Christie, Esqrs. :—*Infringement of the Factory Act*: Mr. William Wildman, printer, was summoned on the information of Mr. W. C. Taylor, Factory Inspector, for having employed a boy beyond the time specified in the Act of Parliament. He was also charged with having neglected to keep a register as provided by the same Act. A fine of £2, being the lowest fine that could be inflicted, was imposed, with 10s. costs, in the latter case. The other information was withdrawn.—

In 1879, when Margaret was 61 and son William was 36, the remaining family decided to emigrate to New Zealand. William had suffered from poor health and a fairer climate was considered beneficial. There were several fundraising events, including a concert by the Choral Society [CH], which, between them raised £200 guineas — a fortune! A reminiscence in the Settle Chronicle of 1894 records 'the presentation of an address and a purse of 200 guineas to our old friend William Wildman, one of the most popular men ever resident in Settle.' The Settle Almanac, now printed

Death of Mr. WM. WILDMAN.

IT is with sincere regret that we have to record in our present issue the death of Mr. William Wildman, who, twenty years ago, was one of our best-known townsmen, but who since 1879 had been resident in New Zealand. Mr. Wildman, when a young man, took the management of his father's business and carried on that business on the premises now occupied by the Craven Printing and Stationery Co. His genial nature made him many friends; and it was felt that one of its worthiest citizens was gone when he left the town to make for himself a home across the seas. He had found that his physical strength was not equal to the wear and tear of an English business, and in 1879 he, with his mother and the other members of the family, emigrated to New Zealand.

The first prospectus of the North Craven Horticultural Society shows an imposing list of over twenty patrons and patronesses, with the Rev. Rowland Ingram as its first president. Overleaf is a memento of one of the most popular men ever resident in Settle. It records the presentation of an address and a purse of 200 guineas to our old friend, William Wildman.

His fellow-townsmen showed their appreciation of his character by making him a present of a purse of 200 guineas. During his life in New Zealand he did not forget his old friends or lose his interest in the affairs of his native-town. Nothing delighted him more than to have news of the old place. In the Colony his health was never robust; and after a brave struggle with physical weakness he was compelled to retire into private life. We reprint obituary notices that appeared in New Zealand journals. Many of our readers will be glad to see these. They speak of the same genial qualities that were known so well at Settle. They also show that Mr. Wildman's influence in the colony was an influence for good; and that out there, as here, he has left many friends to cherish in affectionate remembrance his name. Mr. Wildman died on August 2nd, 1897, at the age of 54.

SETTLE CHORAL SOCIETY.

COMPLIMENTARY CONCERT TO
MR. WILLIAM WILDMAN
 (who is leaving England),
 Will be given in the MUSIC HALL,
 On TUESDAY, the 29th APRIL, 1879.

by **James Wilcock Lambert** printed a glowing obituary for William when he died in 1897, aged 54, suggesting his health never really improved. Margaret had died in 1892, aged 74. William's brother **Thomas (Tom) Wildman** had a photo taken in a studio before they left for New Zealand [ph1]. Tom was 29 when they emigrated. The printing works were taken over by the Craven Printing and Stationery Co, run by **Thomas Tomlinson**.

John and Margaret's daughter, **Susannah Wildman**, died a few years after her marriage to a Sussex medical practitioner **Bryan Holme Allen** leaving two sons who were brought up by Bryan's second wife.

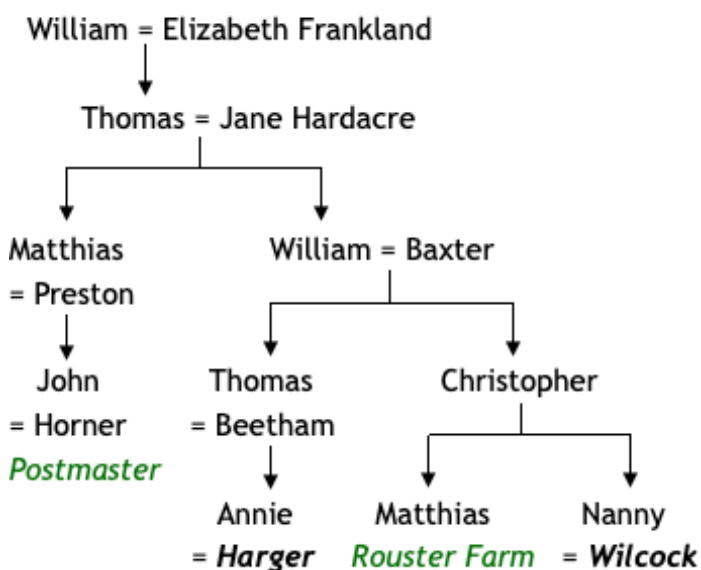
John Wildman's cousin, **Thomas Wildman**, was a farmer in Giggleswick. He died just a year after marrying widow **Mary (Simpson) Beetham** and would never have seen his daughter,



Anne (Annie) Wildman. Mary brought up Annie and another daughter, **Hannah Beetham**, from a previous marriage with some inheritance and the proceeds of a successful millinery and dressmaking business which she ran from Duke Street in Settle. They advertised their business in the Settle Chronicle and the Almanac and had presumably had favourable advertising rates?



The Wildman Families of Settle



Miss Annie Wildman, photograph by the Horner Studio. Horner Collection©NCBPT (CC-BY 4.0)

In 1867 daughter Annie Wildman, aged 20, had her photo taken at the Horner Studios, subtly showing off a fine hat from her millinery business! In 1872 she married **Thomas Harger** of the successful furnishing and fretwork business. They lives at Goldielands, next to the business and then Halsteads. Thomas had built the Halstead row of houses (and Prospect Terrace) a few years previously. Thomas and Annie didn't have children but adopted **Harriet Gertrude (Gertie) Dalby** who had been born in Burley, Leeds. Harriet Gertrude Dalby was the youngest of eight children of **George Dalby**, a coke foreman and his wife **Sarah Ann Harrison** in Leeds. George died when Harriet was about nine months old and Sarah Ann followed when Harriet was two. It's not clear how Harriet ended up with the Hargers as her older siblings were all looked after by aunts and uncles, still in Leeds. Harriet married **William Eddy Dugdale** a very successful ventilating engineer. Eddy and Gertie Dugdale lived a few doors away at Overdale on Duke Street where they brought up three sons **Thomas Harger Dugdale**, **Norman Swindlehurst Dugdale** and **John Sydney Dugdale**, known as Tom, Norman and Sydney. Tom and Norman continued their father's successful business and Sydney became an internationally renowned Physicist, publishing numerous well regarded texts on the electrical properties of metals and alloys and thermodynamics.

Settle Graveyard Project

Annie died in 1913, aged 65. The following year, Thomas, aged 66, married 20 year old **Edith Elizabeth Irving** from Long Preston who was pregnant with the first of their three sons. Of these, youngest son **Roy Harger** died an infant and was buried in the unmarked grave *Old K50*, all by himself. Thomas died in 1925 and Edith Elizabeth married again, twice. Her second husband was **George William Chapman**, a relation of Settle's *Watkinson family* and the manager of *Alfred Pilkington's* shoe shop in Settle. Her third husband was *Alfred Pilkington*, the owner of the same shoe shop.

An obituary indicated that 77 year old Thomas Harger of 'Holsteads' had been the Chair of the Board of Guardians, a magistrate and a member of the Wesleyan Church [4]. Thomas and Annie were buried in the Old graveyard *G40*. The inscription refers to Anne, although she was always known as Annie and Thomas' death date was given as the 8th May when it was in fact the 6th. It's amazing how often gravestone inscriptions include mistakes!

The death has taken place of Mr. Thos. Harger, of Holsteads, Settle, until recently Chairman of the Settle Guardians, and a man well known in the Craven district. Seventy-seven years of age. Mr. Harger was a member of a well-known Settle family, which, many years ago, founded a wood-carving and fret-work business, which became one of the biggest concerns of its kind in the country. Mr. Harger was a magistrate, and a member of the Wesleyan Church.

In memory of Anne beloved wife of Thomas Harger March 20th 1913. Also of Thomas Harger May 8th 1925 aged 77 years, Old G40.



Unfortunately Hannah died, aged 39 and mum Mary Wildman died ten years later, aged 77. They were buried in the newer section of Giggleswick graveyard (not with Thomas Wildman) and had sufficient funds to pay for a gravestone.



In memory of Hannah Beetham died 3rd August 1879 aged 39 years. Also of Mary widow of the late Thomas Wildman died 22nd August 1889 aged 77 years B8/26

Thomas Wildman's brother was **Christopher Wildman**, who farmed at Rouser, near Giggleswick with his son, **Matthias Wildman**. In 1854 this Matthias found himself in court and in newspapers after being assaulted by **William Henry Cockshott**, the local superintending constable. When Matthias, 'a respectable farmer', came down a hill on his horse, quite fast, William Henry slapped him on his back, causing him to fall. William Henry alleged it was just friendly banter. Although 'PC Cockshott had acted under the impression that he had a right to do what he had done, the Bench considered he had exceeded his duty,' PC Cockshott was only fined one shilling, so the court obviously didn't think it was too serious a crime [3].

A CONSTABLE AT FAULT.
Mr. Cockshott, of Settle, Superintending Constable, was charged by Mr. Matthias Wildman, a respectable farmer, living at Roulster, near Giggleswick, with an assault committed on the 23d of May.

The Chairman, in announcing the decision of the Bench, said they believed that Mr. Cockshott had acted under the impression that he had a right to do what he had done; but the Bench considered he had exceeded his duty, and the Chairman then, at some length, stated the law to be as contended for by the complainant's advocates. The result was the defendant was fined 1s. and the costs.

Matthias seemed to have suffered no lasting damage, apart from his ego perhaps, and married **Rhoda Smith** from Clapham a few years later. Matthias' sister **Nanny Wildman** married **James Wilcock** and they are buried in Settle graveyard.



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'.

Thanks to Allan Gould for his help with this account

Newspaper cuttings with the kind permission of the British Newspaper Archives: 1 – Kendal Mercury, 2 – Leeds Intelligencer, 3 – Lancaster Gazette, 4 – Yorkshire Post

ph1 – credited to family descendants via Ancestry.co.uk, username Simone Neunz, ph2 – Image 2022.1.68.117 from the Horner Photographic Studio Collection provided courtesy of the Museum of North Craven Life, ph3 – credited to the Ben McKenzie collection, posted to the Back in Settle Facebook site.



Images from the Horner Collection are licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/).

CH - with the kind permission of the Craven Herald and Pioneer

WSA – Wildman's Settle Almanac, LSA - Lambert's Settle Almanac, SC – Settle Chronicle with the kind permission of the North Craven Buildings Preservation Trust