

The Dilleys, serving the railways for 85 years

John Dilley and his wife **Mary Ann Hills** were from Clifton, Bedfordshire and worked, with their seven children, as straw plaiters, for use in hat-making. Most of the children stayed in the area to continue as straw plaiters or agricultural labourers. Youngest daughter **Rebecca Dilley** married her uncle **James Hills** but died soon after their marriage, presumably with child birth related issues. Two sons chose a different path.

When he was 20, youngest son **John Dilley** signed up to the Royal Navy where he spent 20 years as an engine stoker and engine cleaner for steam ships — a horrible, hot, dirty and dangerous job. His papers describe he was 5 foot 7¾ inches tall with brown hair and blue eyes. His conduct was 'very good' throughout. He travelled the world. His wife, **Alice Emma Glover** was born in India and three of their four children were born in Ireland. John retired on a navy pension and, for five years, ran the Three Crowns Inn at Shaftenhoe End in Barley, Hertfordshire [ph1]. Very nice!



Son **Henry Dilley**, born in 1855, had a good reason to leave the area. At Biggleswade Petty Sessions in 1871, 16 year old Henry Dilley of Clifton was fined 2 shillings plus 8 shillings costs for being drunk and riotous at Shefford, a nearby village. In 1874, Henry married a local agricultural labourer's daughter, **Jane Cooper** and they had three sons, **Walter Henry Dilley**, **Roger Frederick Dilley** and **Ezra Ernest Dilley**. Fantastic names!

BIGGLESWADE.
PETTY SESSIONS, WEDNESDAY, APRIL 12.
2s. and 8s. costs.—Paid. **Henry Dilley**, labourer, Clifton, was charged by Police-constable Butterworth for a similar offence, at Shefford, on the 11th inst. Fined 2s. and 8s. costs.—Paid.

The railways were to give Henry a life long career. His first appointment, as a porter, was at Luffenham Station, near Rutland and then he worked as a signalman at Horton-in-Ribblesdale and at Legrave Station near Luton. In 1888 Henry was appointed to work at Hawes Junction Station (now Garsdale Station) and that's where the family were to be found at the time of the 1891 census.

In 1895 Henry became the relief signalman man in Settle. Henry and Jane lived at 5 Railway Cottages at Cammock Lane with neighbours **Robert Moore**, **William Henry Freeman**, **Mark Bolt** and **James Silcock**, all railway signalmen or inspectors. Henry's big break came on 15 January 1903 when he eventually became a Station Master at Ribbleshead with a salary of £70 rising to £75 in 1906.



In February 1904 Henry would have had to deal with the consequences of a tragic accident when bandsman and innkeeper **Hartley Stott**, 47, 'fell out of the compartment, through the sudden opening of the door' as the train was passing through Bleamoor tunnel near Ribbleshead Station [2].

47. Found dead in Bleamoor Tunnel with bruises on his person, caused by
sudden opening of a railway carriage door.

Three fellow band members woke up when they felt a draught in the carriage, to find Hartley missing. Hartley had been a soprano cornet player in the Black Dyke Band for about 20 years. The band was travelling from Accrington to Glasgow to perform in a concert.

Hartley Stott was an 'interesting' character, having deserted from the military in 1875 and been imprisoned for a month for deserting his wife and two children, due to the effects of alcohol. Then he became an innkeeper at the Queen's Head Hotel, Queensbury!!! [3, ph4].



During the construction of the Settle to Carlisle Railway church services were held in a purpose built wooden chapel to save the workers having to walk miles to the nearest church. Once the railway was built residents asked for local worship to continue so Henry Dilley made arrangements to hold church services in the waiting room at Ribbleshead Station every alternate Sunday. The clergyman came up from Chapel-le-Dale 'acting as his own organist'. Was there an organ at the Station? 'The minister's discourse is occasionally drowned by the thundering of passing trains' and earned the headline 'Sermons in Queer Places' [4].

Henry's wife Jane died six months after Henry's move to Ribbleshead in July 1903 — she was still living at the Railway Cottages in Settle when she died. Henry continued to work at Ribbleshead until his death of 'cardiac failure following pleurisy' on November 13th 1913, aged 58. He left an estate worth over £100,000 in today's value. Jane and Henry were both buried at St Leonard's church at Chapel-le-Dale in adjacent graves, just inside the lych gate. Perhaps they didn't like being together?

In loving memory of Jane, the beloved wife of Henry Dilley of Ribbleshead who died July 3rd 1903, aged 51 years. Deeply lamented by all.

In loving memory of Henry Dilley of Ribbleshead who died 5 Nov 1913, aged 58 years. His end was peace.

Henry and Jane's sons all worked on the railways too.

Bandsman's Tragic End.

Mr. Hartley Stott, soprano cornet player in the famous Black Dyke Band, took part in the two performances given on Sunday last in the Prince's Theatre, Accrington, and on Monday he was killed while travelling with the band to Glasgow to fulfil an engagement there. As the train was passing through Ribbleshead station, near Carlisle, deceased fell out of the compartment, through the sudden opening of the door, striking his head on the rails, and was instantly killed. The deceased, who was landlord of the Queen's Head Hotel, Queensbury, had been a member of the band about twenty years.

WIFE DESERTION.—At Halifax on Saturday Hartley Stott, Rastick, was placed in the dock charged with deserting his wife and family, leaving them chargeable to the Halifax Union. Mr. C. H. Reeve, relieving officer, stated that the defendant had lost several situations through drink, and he would not work. The prisoner was sent to prison for one month.

SERMONS IN QUEER PLACES.

It may interest "Northern Weekly Gazette" readers to know that at Ribbleshead Station, between Settle and Carlisle, the authorities of the Midland Railway Company have given permission for service to be held in the waiting-room every alternate Sunday, the clergyman coming up from the neighbouring church of Chapel-le-Dale, and acting as his own organist. The congregation, which numbers about thirty, joins in the hymns with true Yorkshire vigour. Although the station is closed to traffic all Sunday, the minister's discourse is occasionally drowned by the thunder of passing trains, which, together with excursion bills on the walls, a seat on the weighing machine, and a cap for collecting, give a bizarre touch to the proceedings. Another interesting custom is observed



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Henry and Jane's second son **Roger Frederick Dilley** began working as a railway clerk in Rowsley, Derbyshire. In 1906, aged 25, he married **Eleanor Alton** back in Garsdale. From there Roger Frederick worked as a booking clerk in Buxton, Derbyshire and eventually became the Station Master at Spetchley Station, three miles from Worcester on the Birmingham and Gloucester Railway. Initially, at great expense to the railway, coaches took passengers 13 at a time into Worcester in a journey taking 40 minutes. There were many complaints and passenger traffic stopped after just 15 years. By the time Roger Frederick took over it was just used for goods and livestock.

Roger's wife Eleanor was the daughter of **Reuben Alton** a local gamekeeper-cum-coal merchant. Reuben had worked as gamekeeper for Lord Wharnccliffe [5, ph2], who was a Tory politician (for Yorkshire during the 1840s) and served as Under-Secretary of State for War and the Colonies in the 1830s. The Wharnccliffe family seat was at the very grand Wortley Hall near Barnsley [ph2] but Reuben would have managed the Lord's lands in the Garsdale area where he probably spent time hunting. After Lord Wharnccliffe died in 1855, Reuben became a coal merchant.



Reuben Alton, now a coal dealer, but formerly a game-watcher in the employ of Lord Wharnccliffe, said that they used to treat Foedale Moas just the same as any other part of his lordship's estate.



As a Methodist preacher, Reuben was also treasurer to the Trust Fund established to build a new Primitive Methodist Chapel at Hawes Junction (Garsdale) to serve the increased population of railway workers [CH]. Reuben laid the foundation stone on 1 May 1876, the same date as the opening of the Settle and Carlisle line to passengers. The chapel was painted in the maroon and cream of the Midland Railway and is thought to be the only place of worship to be built by railway contractors [ph2,3]. Regular services continued until 1999. After Reuben died his widow **Elizabeth (Boon) Alton** ran the Temperance Hotel in Garsdale.



HAWES.

OPENING OF A NEW PRIMITIVE METHODIST CHAPEL AT HAWES JUNCTION.—For the last six years a considerable number of workmen have been employed here on the works of the Settle and Carlisle railway; and to make spiritual provision for themselves and families, Messrs. Benton and Woodiwiss, the contractors, with their accustomed liberality, erected a wooden building, which has been used as a school, reading room, chapel, &c. For several years the Sunday services have been supplied by the Primitive Methodists of the Middleham circuit. To meet the growing requirements of the neighbourhood, it was considered desirable that a new permanent erection should be provided, so in the spring of the present year a body of trustees was formed, and through the kindness of Thomas Davies, Esq., of Skipton, a very eligible site was secured. The foundation stone was laid on the 1st of May, by Mr. **Reuben Alton**, the treasurer to the trust fund, and on Sunday, October 7th, the opening services were held, when two excellent sermons were preached by the Rev. J. Calvert, of Ripon. The new chapel is a neat and substantial

Henry and Jane's youngest son, **Ezra Ernest Dilley** eventually brings our story back to Settle. He started worked as a railway porter in Halton, Lancaster, as a clerk at Wennington Station and then at Keighley. In 1905, aged 18, Ezra Ernest married **Dora Jane Lambert** at Giggleswick

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Church. Dora was from Askrigg in Wensleydale, the illegitimate daughter of **Sarah Jane Lambert** who died soon after Dora's birth. Dora was brought up by her grandparents and came to the Settle area for a post as domestic servant at Close House, Giggleswick.

Ezra Ernest worked at Settle Station, initially in the goods department and then as a clerk where he stayed for nearly 50 years, retiring in 1950, having worked with eight stationmasters including **Benjamin Ash**. Upon retirement he was presented with a gold watch. Ezra would *'be much missed for his cordial manner and readiness to assist passengers with information'* [6]. Ezra Ernest recalled how times had changed during his post, that 1700 loaded cattle trucks left Settle Station each year in 1912 and 1913, but only 100 by 1950. The family lived on New Street (Station Road) next to **Anthony Horner's** photography business (now a hairdresser). Later they moved to 9 Mains View off Church Street overlooking the railway. Ezra and Dora had two daughters although little **Mabel Dilley** died in infancy.

Dora Jane died, aged 74 and Ezra, aged 75. They are buried with their infant daughter Mabel in *Old E59* overlooking the railway embankment, of course, and the opposite side of the railway to their house in Mains View.



In Loving Memory of Dora Jane wife of Ernest Ezra Dilley who died on January 8th 1958 aged 74 years. Also Mabel their daughter who died in infancy. Also the above Ernest Ezra Dilley who died July 28th 1961 aged 75 years. Old E59

Ezra and Dora's other daughter, **Jane Dilley**, married **William Anthony Hancock**, *'an officer in the mercantile marine'* and they moved to Sowerby, Halifax.



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

The lives of people with italicised names have been researched as part of the graveyard project.

Fifty Years' Service

AFTER half a century in the employ of the Railway service, Mr. E. E. Dilley, of Mains View, Settle, has this week retired from his position as clerk in the booking office of the passenger department at Settle.

Beginning his career as a porter at Halton, he was transferred to Wennington as a booking clerk six months later. Within a year he had moved to the parcels office at Kelghley and in April, 1902 went to Settle, where he was engaged in the goods department for ten years, later moving to the department where the remainder of his service was completed. During his long service, Mr. Dilley has served under eight stationmasters. A popular figure, Mr. Dilley will be much missed for his cordial manner and readiness to assist passengers with information. Tribute to his efficiency and pleasing manner was paid by Mr. W. Lee, stationmaster, who presented Mr. Dilley with a watch, on behalf of the railway staff and friends, in recognition of his services. Mr. Dilley, recalling changes in the railways, referred to the fact that in 1912 and 1913 more than 1,700 loaded cattle trucks left Settle Station each year. Now the average was about a hundred—due to the increase in motor transport.

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