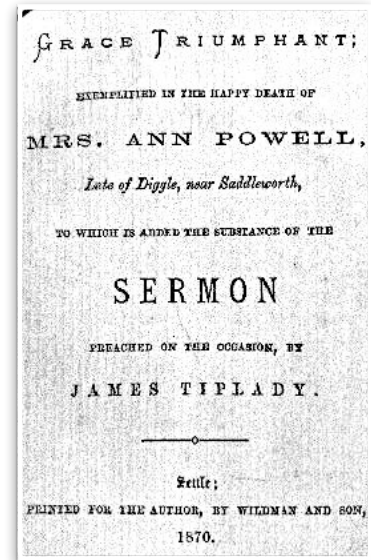


Ribblehead Tales . . . **James Tiplady**, the Missionary

The thousands of railway workers who built the Settle to Carlisle Railway lived in appalling, chaotic conditions and contractors recognised the need to provide some welfare and spiritual support. **James Tiplady** has been celebrated as the Missionary and Scripture Reader for navvies between Settle and Dent Head. He was appointed by the Midland Railway in July 1870, in collaboration with the Bradford City Mission 'for the moral and religious benefits of the inhabitants'. Very soon after his appointment, on 5 August 1870, six year old **Annie Wall** became the first death associated with the railway after an appalling accident on the tramway. Annie's aunt, **Ann Powell** died three weeks later from burns acquired in the same accident. James gave the oration at a funeral service for Aunt Ann. Mr Tiplady was so proud of his sermon that he had copies printed by Wildman's printers in Settle! [ph3] In it he said, 'Mrs Powell's pain was intense in the extreme, indeed such was the severity of his suffering that it may please the Infinite One to speedily take her; it would prove to her a happy release. She was thankful that her little niece was taken so quickly and thus spared the pain she had to endure... The remains were followed by the husband, father, sister and other friends, also some 15 or 16 couples of the neighbours.' [ph3]



James worked with the Settle Temperance Society to encourage the navvies and their families away from the evils of drink and 'sign the pledge' to restrain from alcohol, although water off the hills may not have been very safe either. For those who were shy of signing in public James provided a quiet private welcome in his hut.

James had the use of a purpose built hut in which to hold services [2]. On 11 March 1871, 'Mr Ashwell, the main contractor erected and fitted up a comfortable wooden chapel for his work people. Last Sunday the [Sunday] school was opened in this wooden temple when 44 children and 5 teachers met. In the afternoon there were 60 children and 6 teachers.' [9] On 18 March it was reported, 'Mr Tiplady, railway missionary and friends made great provision for a tea party and entertainment on Monday last. An excellent tea was partaken of by a numerous company and in the evening the new mission room was crowded with an attentive audience. Rev W Harpur of Chapel-le-Dale ably filled the office of Chairman.' Entertainment was provided by **Miss Ellis** and **Mr Wilman**, 'The entertainment was a great success and interest kept until 10 o'clock. The proceeds will be devoted to the Sunday School.' James also travelled the service tramway to minister, care for and educate the families further up the line. The *Lancaster Guardian* reported, 'Mr Tiplady, the pushy railway missionary, is well provided by the railway company with 150 books and useful and sterling periodicals to give to the young and old if they have a taste for reading. He has weekly editions of *Lloyd's newspaper*, *news of the World*, *Weekly Dispatch*, *Illustrated News* and the *British Workman*.' Another mission hut, Sunday and day school were later provided at Jericho.

So, James was a good man, wasn't he? In fact, James Tiplady was a convicted criminal, a most interesting yet unsettled character. He was the youngest of at least eight children of **Richard Tiplady**, an agricultural labourer and his wife **Hannah Hudson** who lived in Leathley near Otley. James started working life as a travelling salesman for a Leeds draper, **Ben Johnson**. In November

Settle Graveyard Project

1862 Ben took James to court for stealing goods from him, after first suspecting him just three days into his employment — in James' trunk and carpet bag police found three silk handkerchiefs, three chenille hair nets, a quantity of buttons and ribbons to the value of 13 shillings. James *'ultimately pleaded guilty and was summarily committed to prison for a month.'*[3]. It's quite a conversion for James to find himself doing missionary work at Ribbleshead by 1871.

BRADFORD.
ROBBING AN EMPLOYER.—On Monday, at the Borough Court, a young man named **James Tiplady**, who had been a month in the employ of **Mr. Ben Johnson**, draper, Kirkgate, was charged with having purloined several articles belonging to his master. Mr. Johnson said he had occasion to suspect the prisoner's honesty three days after he had been engaged, but saw nothing to warrant him in taking any active steps against him till Saturday last, when he informed him of his suspicions, and requested him to give up the keys of his trunk and carpet-bag, which he did at once. Mr. Johnson then went with him, and found in the bag three silk handkerchiefs, three chenille hair nets, a quantity of buttons, and some ends of ribbon, the whole amounting in value to about 13s. The prisoner ultimately pleaded guilty, and was summarily committed to prison for a month.



In November 1871 James held a private baptism for infant **Elizabeth Potter**. Her father **John Potter** was a life long miner/tunneller and the family had come over to this side of Bleamoor tunnel from Cowgill, Dent. Private baptisms were run, often at short notice, if a child's survival was at risk. Little Elizabeth was six months old when she was baptised and died the following May. Elizabeth's brother **Frederick Potter**, aged two, also died in July 1872. The family moved away after that, understandably. John and wife **Anna (Bancroft) Potter** had several other children.

Nov 19 th 1871	Elizabeth John & Anna Potter	Bleamoor Miner Tunnel	Rev. J. Tiplady
Baptized by Rev. J. Tiplady privately.			



James [ph1] didn't stay long at Ribbleshead — it must have been incredibly challenging. On 29 February 1872 he was presented with a cruet stand on his departure to a post with the Midland railway at Chesterfield. A testimonial included an acknowledgement of his *'arduous and successful labours as a missionary in this neighbourhood.'* Just a fortnight before, on Valentine's Day he had married **Ann Cox**, a gardener's daughter and the testimonial wished them *'many years of happy union on earth.'*

Mr **Henry Hancock** was appointed to replace him at the railway — Henry had previously been the missionary at the Settle and Carlisle Railway Contract number 2, north of Dent.

In 1874 James was appointed by Newport Temperance Society in South Wales, as *'a man of large experience in Mission work to visit the*

committee had engaged **Mr Tiplady**, a gentleman of large experience in mission work; and appealed to Christian philanthropists of every denomination for sympathy and co-operation. The missionary will visit the homes of the degraded and fallen, the workshops, lodging-houses, and other places where access can be obtained, and will seek, by words of kindly counsel and Christian sympathy, to promote their social and spiritual interests. From the testimonials in the hands of the committee, every confidence is felt in the ability and fitness of the gentleman engaged for carrying on the important work to which he has been assigned.

homes of the degraded and fallen to seek, by kindly counsel and Christian sympathy to promote their social and spiritual interests.' James certainly had experience of that! His testimonials 'appealed to philanthropists of every denomination' and 'every confidence was felt in the ability and fitness of this gentleman for carrying on the important work'[4]. He must have been a very charismatic man.

However, by July 1876 James had decided to move on again. We know this as James appeared in court to give evidence against two policemen who were accused of assaulting a labourer. James was described as an 'ex-temperance agent' who witnessed the assault although his version of events was at odds with all the other witnesses, including the complainant himself. During the hearing it emerged that James had previously appeared to give evidence against a drunk policeman accused of assault. The clerk

POLICE-OFFICERS CHARGED WITH ASSAULT AT NEWPORT.

In answer to the clerk witness said he was before the magistrates on a former occasion against a policeman, when his evidence was contradicted point blank by another witness, named Bland. Possibly he would be contradicted again to-day. On the occasion referred to he swore that a police officer was drunk, and another witness swore that the constable was sober. He did not represent the Temperance Society. Had left them three months, and was about to leave the town. Nobody had a right to ask him why he was in Cross street at that time of night. He had a perfect right to go into the streets.
The Clerk: Mr Sinclair, the superintendent, wishes me to ask you how it is that you are continually watching policemen in this way?

asked, 'How is it that you are continually watching the police?' to which James replied, 'I don't know that you have any right to ask me that question'. He was also asked why he was leaving the Temperance society but refused to answer that question either [5].

By the time of the 1881 census James and Ann and their rapidly expanding family of 11 children were found in Walsall and James worked as a postal messenger — a postman. By the 1891 census they were in Shipley, north Bradford and James was a mineral water salesman, having ceased a partnership with *Moore and Hartley*[6]. Around this time there are reports of James officiating at meetings of the Saltaire Primitive Methodist Chapel, passionate advocates of Temperance. James, who had become a carter, was fined 6 shillings and 6 pence for 'having at large a dog that was ineffectually muzzled' [6].

At the time of the 1901 census the family were in Baildon, just north of Shipley and James described his occupation as a poultry keeper although this was also short lived. Soon afterwards the Shipley Highways, Building and Sanitary Committee told James he was no longer allowed to keep fowls in his dwelling house [7]. Some people never catch a break, do they?! At the time of the 1911 census the family had moved to Derbyshire where James worked as a gardener.

However, in April 1912 James had another unconventional court appearance, described as 'a scene' back in Shipley. Two Shipley boatmen were charged with assaulting a policeman (does this ring some bells?). One of the men, **Stephen Noble**, resisted arrest for being drunk and disorderly resulting in a struggle and, in the process, became 'naked down to his loins'. Several constables corroborated the story but Stephen Noble called James Tiplady as a witness. James' contribution became the focus of the newspaper report, headlining as 'Witness's strange outburst'[8]. James 'a well known Shipley gentleman,...became somewhat heated in his evidence. He had lived in a drink sodden town for years but he had never seen such a disgraceful scene and such shameful work by the police as he had seen in this case.' When warned by the Chair not to make a speech James replied, 'I lived neighbour to you for many years and I am not going to be browbeaten by you' to which

SEQUEL TO A SHIPLEY ROW.
Witness's Strange Outburst.

the Chair told him not to get excited and step down. In the end James was detained because of his behaviour in court and later asked if he wanted to apologise to which he replied 'briefly and emphatically "No"'. James clearly had an issue with the Police — did this stem from that first foray into the criminal world? Stephen Noble was fined 12 shillings for being drunk and disorderly and 20 shillings for the assault.

James eventually died in 1924, aged 80, 'a big temperance worker and well known and highly respected. He proved himself a man of much originality and force of character etc' [ph1]. However, we can agree he was a man of originality and of strong character. How easy would he have been to live with?

" A SCENE."

After several constables had corroborated this story the prisoner called a couple of witnesses, the first being Mr. James Tiplady, a well-known Shipley gentleman, who became somewhat heated in giving his evidence. He had lived in a drink-sodden town for years, but he had never seen such a disgraceful scene and such shameful work by the police as he had seen in this case.

The Chairman (Dr. W. H. Ellis): Please, address your remarks to the Bench, and not to the Court. You are not making a speech.

Witness: I know what I am doing, and I know you well. I lived neighbours to you for many years, and I am not going to be browbeaten by you.

The Chairman: Don't get excited, Mr. Tiplady. You may go down.

THE LATE MR. TIPLADY.
The remains of the late Mr. J. Tiplady, of 223, Mansfield-road, were quietly laid to rest in the family grave at the Nottingham-road Cemetery on Saturday last. Deceased was a big temperance worker and well known and highly respected. He proved himself a man of much originality and force of character, etc.



Ann lived another five years and lived with her children and grandchildren [ph2]. Five daughters remained single and worked as schoolmistresses. **Ada Jane Tiplady**, aged 40 and **Annie Margaret Tiplady**, aged 26 were buried with their parents in Chaddesden, Derbyshire and a gravestone was erected [ph2]. James and Annie's sons worked as a saddler, LNER joiner and a photographer.

Obviously education and spiritual welfare were closely linked. At the time of the 1871 census, on 2 April, James Tiplady lived in a hut at Inkerman, Batty Wife Hole with his occupation described as 'Home Missionary Midland Settle & Carlisle Railway Company'. **Jane Herbert**, the 21 year old Batty Green schoolmistress, lived in the same hut and, possibly to reduce the scandal of a single man and a single woman living together, they had a servant too. They lived alongside other important resident staff — subcontractors, surgeons, bookkeepers, innkeepers and the Hollands who ran the Tommy Shop.

Batty Wife Hole	1	James Tiplady	Head	Wm	76	Home Missionary Midland Settle & Carlisle Railway Company	Yorkshire & Railway
		Jane Herbert	Wife	Wm	21	Schoolmistress	Yorkshire & Railway
		Miss E. Womb	Servant	Wm	16	Servant - Womb	Yorkshire & Railway

Settle Graveyard Project

Jane's school had been opened weeks earlier, initially with 43 pupils. She had quite a job on her hands as some of the young people of Ribblehead would probably have had little experience of education, routine or structure. She was an Essex girl but had been brought up in Nottingham where her father worked as an engine fitter. Considering the proportion of young, single men at Ribblehead, it is not surprising that Jane's head was turned and she married **Arthur Geeson** at St Leonard's church in Chapel-le-Dale on 23 December 1872. Arthur was a grocer from Baslow, Derbyshire who had come up to Ribblehead to make money from his grocery business at the shanty town. Arthur was a lodger at 23 Batty Wife Hole, Inkerman, with **George Wright**, a 'warehouseman' from Lincolnshire and his wife Sarah, making a living trading in the community. He was probably Arthur's boss. In July 1871 George was at the 'Ingleton Fells Hospital' in attendance at the death of navy **George Hughs**. George Hughs was one of the 12 navvies who died right in the middle of the 1871 smallpox outbreak so it was risky for George Wright to be in such close proximity — see *Infectious Diseases, Smallpox*.

George and Arthur's fellow lodger was **Abraham Slimm** from Hathersage, Derbyshire, also a grocer's assistant. Abraham was one of the witnesses to Arthur and Jane's wedding. After their wedding Jane and Arthur stayed at Ribblehead for the birth of their first child, **Herbert William Geeson** but he died, aged 8 months, and was buried on 21 October 1873 at St Leonard's at Ribblehead. Jane and Arthur had two more children back in Baslow where they worked as grocers. Unfortunately, after Jane died in her forties Arthur was admitted into Bakewell workhouse. He died in Baslow in 1929, aged 77.

The number of people (including children) at Ribblehead increased after the time of the 1871 census so more schoolteachers were required. Jane was replaced by a schoolmaster and there were additional schoolmistresses at Jericho and Sebastopol, financed by nominal fees and the main contractor, Mr Ashwell [10].

the treasury. Mr. Ashwell has organized a school system along his contract. At Batty Wife-hole there is a schoolmaster, and at Jericho and Sebastopol schoolmistresses. A nominal school fee is charged, and he sustains the rest of the expense.



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 settlerearch@gmail.com. Latest news and events are on the Facebook page 'Settle Graveyard Project'.

Sketch thanks to Teresa Gordon

Newspaper cuttings with the kind permission of the British Newspaper Archives: 1 — Lancaster Gazette, 2 — Lancaster Guardian, 3 — Leeds Times, 4 — Cardiff Times, 5 — South Wales Daily News, 6 — Wharfedale and Airedale Advertiser, 7 — Shipley Times, 8 — Bradford Weekly Telegraph, 9 — Craven Weekly Pioneer

ph1 — credited to family descendants via Ancestry.co.uk, username david garrett, ph2 — credited to family descendants via Ancestry.co.uk, username davisonsteve, ph3 — with thanks to Nigel Mussett

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Other sources: The Railway Years in Chapel-Le-Dale 1870 - 1877 and The Chapel of the Fells both by Gerald Tyler, The New Railway To Scotland by David Occomore, Shanty Life on the Settle-Carlisle railway and How they built the Settle-Carlisle Railway both by W R Mitchell, The Railway Navvies of Settle: the end of the line by Sarah Lister.

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