

Ribblehead Tales . . . St Leonard's graveyard extension

In the graveyard of St Leonard's Church, Chapel-le-Dale, 12 March 1871 saw the burial of ten month old **Thomas Smith** who lived with his family at Jericho. He was the 30th burial since that of **Annie Wall** in August 1870, the first of the burials during the building of the Settle to Carlisle railway. The graveyard was filling up quickly — previously there had been just two or three burials a year. There were fears that all these burials were becoming a hygiene issue and so, on 22 March 1871, a meeting was held at the National School in Ingleton to discuss how the graveyard could be enlarged. This was good timing as, on 28 April, **William Griffiths** was buried. William was the first of 12 navvies and up to 20 other family members who died in the smallpox outbreak of 1871/2.

A report on 29 July 1871 said that, *'The crowded conditions of the graves in the Churchyard, in consequence of so many deaths taking place at the railway works, rendered an extension absolutely imperative.'*[1]. Another observer said

THE CHURCHYARD AT INGLETON FELS.—The crowded condition of the graves in the Church-yard, in consequence of so many deaths taking place at the railway works, rendered an extension absolutely imperative, therefore, Lord Kenlis has presented the parish with a plot of ground adjoining the yard, which is being enclosed, and will shortly be consecrated.

you *'could not help but notice how the green mounds, which marked the resting places of the dead, had increased since the beginning of the Settle-Carlisle Railway. At the East end of the Chapel, twenty-six green mounds contain the dust of adults and children from the railway works.'* It would have taken quite a long time before the grass grew over the burial mounds to make them appear green, but we get the idea.

Demonstrating an incredible urgency and efficiency, the new extension to the burial ground at the West end of the church was consecrated on 7 August 1871 by **Bishop Ryan of Bradford**, acting for **Bishop Bickerstaffe**. This extension was at the opposite end to the modern graveyard memorial to the navvies. It was opened with due ceremony and Dr Ryan *'preached a very homely and excellent discourse, well suited to the occasion.'* Afterwards there was a slap-up meal at the Hill Inn for around 20 men involved in preparing the ground so quickly [1].



INGLETON.
CONSECRATION OF BURYING GROUND.—On Monday afternoon, the 7th inst., a portion of ground, which has been laid to the churchyard at Chapel-le-Dale, was consecrated by Dr. Ryan, Vicar of Bradford, and lately a colonial bishop. The day was remarkably fine, and as most of the mountain farmers were haymaking, the congregation was but small. The prayers were read by the Rev. E. Smith, the Vicar. The first lesson was read by Canon Marriner, of Clapham, and the second lesson by the Rev. R. Denny, Vicar of Ingleton. Dr. Ryan, after reading his text from the 90th Psalm, and 12th verse, preached a very homely and excellent discourse, well suited for the occasion. At the close of the sermon, the bishop, clergy, and most of the congregation walked over the new ground, which had been given by Earl Bective, repeating the 49th Psalm. The service was a very solemn one, very nicely adapted for impressing thoughtful minds with the importance of preparing for the grave by a well-spent life. At the close of the service an excellent dinner was provided at the Hill public-house, at the expense of Mrs. Smith, for the workmen who had been employed on the new burial ground, and others to the number of nearly 20.

Betty Harrington's painting [H] depicts a funeral at St Leonard's as we recognise it today. The graveyard to the left of the men (west end) was where the graveyard was extended and most of the gravestones illustrated on that side were erected after the 'navvy years'. The majority of navvies and family members were buried without gravestones. The lych gate to the church was

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thought to have been built at the same time as the extension. It was certainly there at the funeral of the Wardle twins in September 1871 — see *twins and triplets*, but the church porch wasn't added until 1922, designed by Settle architect/surveyor **Thomas Foxcroft** but completed by the **Brassingtons' firm**.

The burial records tell us that the first interments were two weeks later on 24 August 1871. They were the burials of 41 year old **Sarah Smith** and 7 week old **Elizabeth Goddard**. The burial record noted that Sarah was 'the first person buried in the newly consecrated ground'.

Sarah Smith No. 273.	Buried in the English Field	Sept. 24 th	1/2 year	E. Smith Hein
Elizabeth Goddard	Buried in the English Field	Sept. 24 th	7 weeks	E. Smith Hein

* The first person buried in the newly consecrated ground

Sarah Bridgwater, a labourer's daughter from Shropshire and her husband **James Smith**, a labourer from Rochdale, had five children together, their births indicating that James found work in Scotland, Middlesex, Chesterfield and Saddleworth in Yorkshire. At the time of the 1871 census the family lived in a navy hut in the Jordan community which seemed to be located beyond Batty Green towards the viaduct. Along with their family there were eight lodgers living with them making a total of 14 people in the hut. Only **Robert Holland** had more people staying in his hut and only **Samuel Cairns** had more lodgers. Almost two-thirds of the 143 inhabited huts had boarders/lodgers living in them. Where navy huts contained boarders/lodgers, the average number was 6.5.

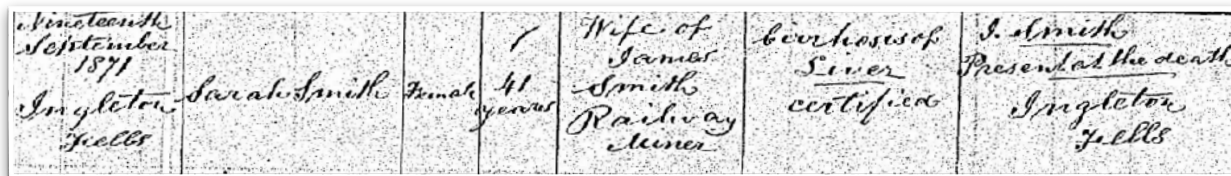
Location	1	Name	Relationship	Age	Occupation	Origin
Jordan		James Smith	Head	33	Railway Labourer	Lancashire, Rochdale
		Sarah Do	Wife	41		Shropshire
		John Do	Son	12		Scotland
		James Do	Son	11		Middlesex
		Charlotte Do	Daughter	4		Derbyshire
		Elizabeth Do	Daughter	3		Do
		Henry Harris	Boarder	16	Engine Driver on a Railway	Cheshire
		William Bolton	Do	41	Do Do	Lancashire
		Frank Farner	Do	28	Do Stoker	Yorkshire
		John Rush	Do	19	Railway Labourer	Hampshire
		James Holder	Do	23	Do Do	Do
		Edward Hargreaves	Do	22	Do Do	Derbyshire
		George Jones	Do	21	Do Do	Leicestershire
		William Turner	Do	19	Do Do	Buckinghamshire

James and Sarah's lodger, 19 year old **William Turner**, could well have been the errant **William Turner** involved in stealing goods from **John Jones** in Langcliffe a couple of months later. Just weeks after this census Sarah Smith died, on 19 September 1871, aged just 41 of cirrhosis of the liver. It takes some doing to drink enough alcohol to bring on cirrhosis of the liver by the age of 41, however alcohol was an integral part of navy life with no clean water to drink. Husband **James Smith** also liked his alcohol — just six months later he was fined 5 shillings for being drunk, although he can't be blamed for drowning his sorrows [3]. After Sarah's death



Jas. Smith and Hy. Hill, miners engaged at Black Moss Tunnel, were charged with being drunk on the 22nd ult. at Black Moss, and were fined 5s. and costs each.

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James found work in London with two sons. It's not clear where the younger children went from Ribbleshead but all survived to adulthood. Incidentally, the 10 month old Thomas Smith, who died in March 1871 before the graveyard was extended, was James and Sarah's youngest son. At that stage the family lived in Jericho — labourers would often move around the Ribbleshead site and elsewhere depending on work available.

Sarah Smith was buried on the same day, 24 August 1871, and possibly in the same plot as seven week old **Elizabeth Goddard**. Elizabeth's nine month old sister **Martha Goddard** died in May 1872, and four month old brother **William Goddard** died in May 1873. At the time of the 1871 census their parents, **William Goddard**, a railway miner and **Dora (Marsden)** lived by themselves in a navy hut in Jericho village — Dora will have been pregnant with Martha at the time. They came from Stoney Middleton and Baslow in Derbyshire. William and Dora Goddard had previously been in Settle — their son, **Joseph Goddard**, was born in Settle in February 1870 but he died at the beginning of April 1870 and was buried in Settle Church graveyard. So, William and Dora had four children who all died as infants. Can you imagine that?

On 22 June 1872, soon after the death of their third child, Martha Goddard, Dora was a witness in a court case. A navy **Thomas Jones**, usually known as 'Welch Knobby' was taken to court for stealing 15 or more articles from the window of **John Clark Garlick's** shop at the Victoria Tavern (see *Innkeepers*), including an oil lamp, scarves, laces and a box of scented soap [4]. Thomas sold the lamp to Dora Goddard for 1 shilling, saying that he was selling it on behalf of someone who had left the site. **PC Archie Cameron** was on the case! Thomas had only been at Ribbleshead for a few weeks. It's not clear what the outcome was but it didn't look good for Welch Knobby!

A report of a cricket match in August 1874 demonstrated William's excellent bowling ability. The Settle team included **David Plank**, **Dr Francis Green**, and both **Benjamin** and **John Woolerton**. Settle were the victors.

At the time of the 1881 census William worked as an iron miner working in the

stolen beside the soap and lamp.—Dorah Goddard, who lives at Jericho, said that the prisoner called at her house on Tuesday morning, the 18th inst., between seven and eight o'clock, and asked her to buy the lamp produced. When asked where he got it, his reply was that a man and his wife at Sebastopol who had parted gave him a few things to sell, and the lamp he offered her was the last thing he had left. He asked 1s. 6d. for it, but he let her have it for a 1s. She put the lamp in a bed room where it was kept until she gave it up to P.C. Cameron on Tuesday afternoon.—Mary Alice Thurnstone said that

a quart of ale before he went to work. He had known the prisoner for many years, and had worked with him at different works, but he did not know that his name was Thomas Jones. He had always been called Welch Knobby. The witness had not tasted drink; and he

BATTY GREEN.

CRICKET MATCH.—BATTY GREEN v. SETTLE.—A very pleasant game was played on Saturday last at Settle between those connected with or employed on the first section of No. 1 contract of the Settle and Carlisle Railway, and those similarly situated on the second section of the first contract.

1st Innings.		SETTLE.	2nd Innings.	
Reid c White b Goddard	4	b Goddard	.....	17
Plank b Goddard	18	run out	.....	9
Williams b Goddard	0	l b w Dr. Dobbie	.....	1
Gudgeon b Dr. Dobbie	3	run out	.....	2
Ashwell st Jones, junr., b Dr. Dobbie	1	not out	.....	5
Adams c Jones junr., b Dr. Dobbie	1	c Jones, senr., b Dr. Dobbie	.....	0
Ainsworth b Dr. Dobbie	0	b Goddard	.....	3
Campbell not out	3	b Goddard	.....	0
Dr. Green b Goddard	0	b Dr. Dobbie	.....	0
Clark st Jones junr., b Goddard	0	run out	2
Harrington b Dr. Dobbie	0	c Jones senr., b Dr. Dobbie	0
Extras	13	Extras	7
	43			46

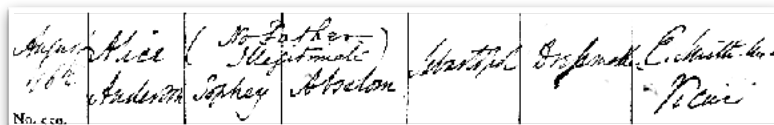
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expanding iron ore trade in Ulverston, near Barrow-in-Furness. By the 1891 census William had a new 'wife', **Eleanor Dundas**, although they hadn't married and they had a son, **William John Goddard**, who survived, married and emigrated to Australia. Meanwhile, William and Eleanor ran a lodging house, back in Stoney Middleton, Derbyshire.

What had happened to William's wife Dora? Funnily enough, at the time of the 1881 census Dora was found in Northamptonshire as the 'wife' of **Joseph Garnett**, a gas stoker, with a daughter, **Dora Ethel Agnes Garnett**. William and Dora were just one of many couples whose relationships didn't survive life at Ribblehead. William and Dora must have both been incredibly relieved to have a child who survived later in life.

William and Dora's next door neighbours at Ribblehead were **George Wilkins** from Runcorn with his wife and lodgers. George had a lodger, **William Griffiths**, who had been the first fatality of the smallpox outbreak.

The railway was open to the public from 1 May 1876 but, obviously, navvies were required to stay at the site for a number of years to make good. One of the last burials from the remains of the shanty towns was that of 3 month old **James Steel**, on 24 September 1878. Poor little James also had the honour of being the last child baptised at the Ribblehead shanty town on 30 August 1878 when he was two months old. It was a private baptism, indicating there were concerns about his survival. His parents were **Joshua Steel** and his wife **Sophia Absolom** who married in February 1877 at St Leonard's. Two years before the wedding Sophia gave birth to a daughter, **Alice Absolom**. On the baptism record Rev Ebenezer Smith made it very clear that Alice had '*no father, illegitimate!*' Sophia also had a son, **Charles William Absolom** born just before her marriage, who died, aged 3 months and was buried at St Leonard's on 18 April 1877. By August 1879 the family had moved to Settle for the birth of a son **Joshua Steel**, who also died, aged 8 weeks and was buried in Settle Graveyard. Then Joshua and Sophia moved to Bend Yate, Hellifield where they brought up five other children.



In 1873 Sophia's recently widowed father, **Thomas Absolom** had brought his two youngest children to Ribblehead from Berkshire. Thomas died on 24 April 1876, aged 49 from '*Rheumatic Inflammation of covering to brain*'

Little James Steel was the grandson of the '*wonderful workman*' Charles Steel who definitely deserves a mention. Charles was a railway labourer and Scotsman who was hailed as '*a wonderful workman*'. He was '*a man of 21 stones of bulky proportions, great strength and muscular development.*' During his seven years at Ribblehead '*this remarkable character has not lost a single day's work either from drinking, sickness or any other cause.*'[2] Even more impressive '*his amiable wife*', **Eden (Bibby) Steel**, had, allegedly, given birth to 20 children including three sets of twins! At the time of the 1871 census they had just five children living with them, including one pair of twins. It seems many of those 20 children had died, if they even existed in the first place. After the railway was built the family moved to Long Preston, near son Joshua where

A WONDERFUL WORKMAN. — There is now living at **Batty Green**, Settle and Carlisle Railway, Mr. Charles Steel, a man of bulky proportions, great strength and muscular development. Some idea may be formed of his physical powers by making it known that his weight is not less than twenty-one stones. His amiable wife has given birth to twenty children, on three occasions presenting her husband with twins. For seven years this remarkable character has not lost a single day's work either from drinking, sickness, or any other cause. — *Cor.*

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Charles continued to work as a railway labourer. Eden died there, aged 48 and she is buried in Long Preston graveyard.



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. 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'.

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H — Painting by Betty Harrington, with the kind permission of the Museum of North Craven Life and thanks to Nigel Mussett and Peter Thomson. Sketch kindly provided by Teresa Gordon.

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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