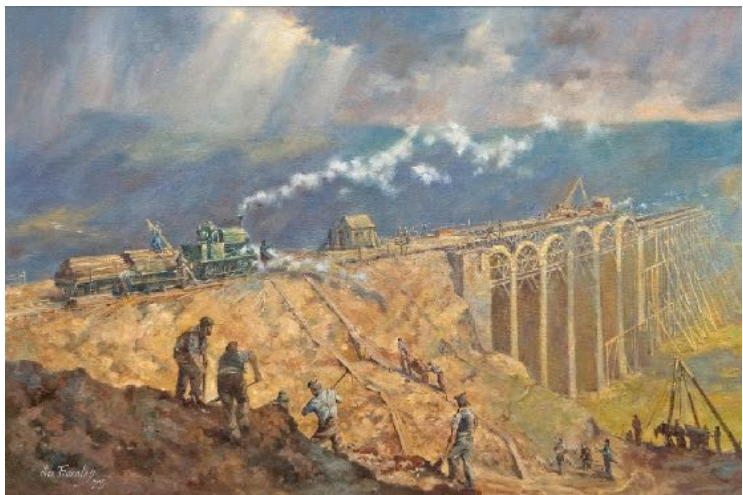


Ribblehead Tales . . . Job Hirst, Francis Moody, subcontractors

At 400 metres Ribblehead Viaduct is the longest structure on the Settle to Carlisle Railway and regarded by many as the most iconic structure in Yorkshire. To have survived over 150 years with many elements of original engineering it must have been built by talented engineers, contractors and exceptionally skilled tradesmen. These subcontractors were two of the most important people living at Ribblehead. **Job Hirst** had the responsibility of constructing Batty Moss Viaduct, now known as Ribblehead Viaduct and the aqueduct nearby. **Francis Moody** had the equally daunting responsibility for building the railway between Sebastopol and Denthead, which includes Bleamoor tunnel, regarded as the heaviest work in Contract number 1 (between Settle and Dent).

Job Hirst

To be trusted with the building of the Viaduct Job must have had a good reputation, proven experience and excellent man management skills. It was a massive job. In October 1871 the *Lancaster Guardian* reported, *'Batty Moss Viaduct, which is under the superintendence of Mr Hurst [sic] is an undertaking of considerable magnitude. This immense structure, once finished, will consist of twenty-four arches, each arch of 45 feet span and 18 feet rise. The piers which are being built of black marble dug out of a quarry on Mr Farrer's estate, will terminate at springing with a thickness of 6 feet, the batter on the face being 1 inch in 32. The North abutment and the piers for the first six openings are already raised to heights varying from 10 feet to 25 feet. The foundations are taken down to solid rock which is mountain limestone. The depth of the rail level of the viaduct to the bottom of the deepest foundation will be, when finished, 118 feet. The lime used at the works is Barrow lime, brought from the neighbourhood of Leicestershire... Stone is brought from two quarries under Whernside, 1¼ miles away, by steam locomotive. A steam crane is employed to unload the stone and two hand cranes and three travellers to turn the stone for setting it. A ten-horsepower engine is constantly employed for mixing mortar. About sixty masons and labourers are employed on this work; the number of workmen varies much, for though good wages are paid some of them leave after pay each day; sometimes as many as eight fresh hands are set on works in the day' [2]. At its peak, Job employed 150 men at the viaduct and 28 at the aqueduct [F]. The first stone of the viaduct was laid by Mr Ashwell, on 12 October 1870.*



At the time of the 1871 census Job lived in the Inkerman area of Batty Wife Hole alongside the other, most important resident staff with management responsibilities. The accommodation here *'improved on closer acquaintanceship' [3]* Job lived with his wife, **Mary Pickard** and five children.

Job was born and baptised on Christmas Eve

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.Returning to Batty Wife-hole, I explored with some deliberation that interesting collection of habitations, and found it in several respects to improve on closer acquaintanceship. There is a little sequestered colony of employes here; the surveyor and engineer of the company, the staff of the contractor, the doctor, and the clergyman,

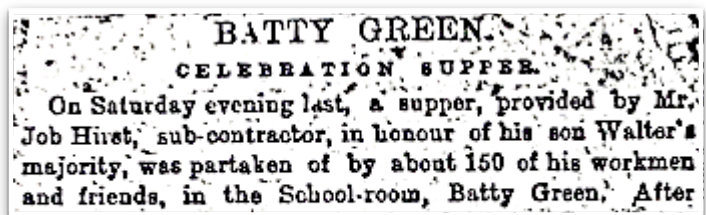
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1815, at Kirkheaton, three miles from Huddersfield, the son of stonemason **Joshua Hirst** and his wife **Ellen Horton**. This was not the luckiest family. Joshua and Ellen had two sons and seven daughters, but five daughters died in infancy and the surviving daughters became widows within months of marrying. Job's brother **John Hirst** worked as a labourer in Kirkheaton all his life.

Following in his father's footsteps Job worked his way up to become a master mason, in charge of other men. Between 1846-8, in his early thirties, he led a team building the Lockwood Viaduct [ph1] on the south-west of Huddersfield which carries the railway across the River Holme. This viaduct has been described as '*one of the most stupendous structures of ancient or modern times.*' Apparently, a local challenge had been to lob a cricket ball over the 136 foot viaduct, with some claiming that they have succeeded. The viaduct provided Job with valuable experience as a sub contractor. In 1847 Job married Mary Pickard, a woolcomber's daughter from Embsay, near Skipton but they married near Huddersfield. The births of their four sons and two daughters tell us they also lived in South Wales (while Job helped to build the Maesycwmmmer Viaduct '*stretching majestically across the Rhymney Valley*'), Trimpington in Cambridgeshire, Horsham in Sussex and then London, always working on the railways. In 1856 Job left his wife and first three sons for two years to build viaducts and tunnels for the first railway in India, on the Bombay-Poona line. He took all his equipment overland from Italy to India! Job had all the experience needed for his challenge at Ribbleshead and what a legacy!



Reports show that Job was not 'just a contractor'. He was known for his pleasant, good natured personality and had a genuine interest and care for his employees. He was the life and soul of concerts and readings. He played hand bells and regularly appeared at the mission rooms and on sports days! Job was the umpire for the race between **Arthur Rayson Kellam** and **James Barker** on a Monday in March 1872, detailed in '*A colourful life*'. As an illustration of this, at the beginning of 1872 Job organised a '*celebration supper*' for 150 of his workmen and friends on second son **Walter Pickard Hirst's** 21st birthday [2]. There was much singing, numerous toasts and applause for Job and Walter and seemingly everyone else involved with the railway. Walter was described as '*a young man of sterling integrity, upright, honest and strait forward and tempered by the law of kindness. He stands high in the estimation of all present.*' Job described his workers as '*the most respectable body of men that he had ever employed and good workers too. Only fancy 140 masons and labourers appearing on a Saturday night in a place like Batty Wife Green, dressed in their black cloth and such an amount of talent ready with their songs and recitations. I challenge all the contractors in Lancaster to produce such clever, industrious and respectable number of men.*' Job thanked Mr Hancock, the missionary for '*preaching, not of the fanatical sort but of the masculine type of religion*'. The evening finished with an upstanding audience singing '*God save the Queen*', of course.



Job had suffered from a weak heart for four years before his final attack on 7 December 1872 [1]. A descendant wrote, in 1963, that Job took his horse and trap down to Ingleton to collect the wages

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for the men, as he did every Saturday. On the return journey there was a blizzard and in the midst of that he was set upon by a gang of men who beat him up and stole the money and a gold watch. He recovered consciousness and found his watch dangling from a stile. Once back in his trap he fainted again and the horse found its own way back to the shanty town. Job's wife, Mary found him lying on the floor of the trap and tried to revive him with port. They went to bed but Mary found him



dead beside her in the morning. The doctor said he died of an apoplectic fit and the port was the worst thing he could have had! Job's death certificate described his occupation as a 'stonemason' which is a bit of an understatement. It also indicates that **Robert Holland** was 'present at the death' which is unlikely if this account is true!

For the funeral of this highly respected man at St Leonard's Church, Chapel-le-Dale 'there were two mourning coaches, six other vehicles and 130 other persons in attendance. All the shops at Batty Green were closed and the blinds of every window drawn down. Great was the sorrow of mourners and long will they remember the kindly deeds of their departed friend.' The quality and location of Job's gravestone, just beside the newly erected lych gate, was a reflection of the esteem in which he was held. Employees and friends raised £43 1s 5d towards the cost of the elaborately carved gravestone which was placed over his grave on 30 August 1873 [ph2].



Sacred to the memory of Job Hurst [sic] who died December 7 1872, aged 57 years. Deeply lamented by his beloved wife and family. He was subcontractor for Batty Moss Viaduct on the Settle Carlisle Railway. This tomb was erected to his memory by his employees and friends as a mark of respect and esteem.

Several sources and this gravestone inscription assign Job a surname of 'Hurst' but formal documentation throughout his life is spelt Hirst. When Job died the Viaduct was less than half built. Fortunately, his eldest two sons, **Charles Henry Hirst** and **Walter Pickard Hirst** were in their twenties and capable of finishing their father's work. A report in the *Lancaster Guardian* in 1873 explained, 'Batty Moss viaduct of 24 arches, will be perhaps the finest piece of masonry on the new line... About 100 men are employed on this viaduct and, as the weather has been for some time remarkably fine, the works under the able management of Charles and Walter Hirst have made great progress. The viaduct when completed will be the admiration of all the lovers of imposing and massive masonry, and no doubt generations unborn will look upon it with wonder and think how clever were their forefathers to rear such a structure.' Indeed we do.

On 6 September 1874 the viaduct was almost complete and Walter was 'determined to be the first to cross it' along with a few others [1]. Almost a year later the first goods train travelled from Carlisle to Settle in August 1875 and the first passenger train ran on 1 May 1876.

INGLETON.
BATTY GREEN.—The new viaduct on the Settle and Carlisle Railway, at Batty Green is almost completed. Determined to be the first to cross it, the following persons went over on Sunday last, on the engine "Diamond," viz: Messrs. J. Pilgrim, Thomas Bullock, Peter Marks, Walter Hirst, Thomas Lock, Richard Coveney.

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For some reason Mary realised that her youngest two surviving children hadn't yet been baptised so on 27 June 1875 **Rev Ebenezer Smith** performed the honours at St Leonard's, describing Job as the 'late subcontractor'. **William Broadbent Hirst** was 14 and **Nancy Ellen Hirst** was six. Another daughter, **Mary Hirst**, had been born but died in London in 1864.

After the railway was built Mary moved to Norton, Derbyshire and then Sheffield with eldest son Charles Henry and third son **Joshua Hudson Hirst**. They were both described as 'builder and mason.' Mary died in 1883, aged 58 and was buried in Sheffield because snow prevented the transport of her body back up to Chapel-le-Dale to be buried with Job. Daughter Nancy Ellen remained a spinster and worked as a governess and lady's companion.

Sons Charles and Joshua continued to work as a railway contractors and William worked as a cashier on the railway. Son Walter Pickard Hirst became an 'Inspector of Works' on the railway. On 2 June 1876, he married **Mary Jane Moody**, who, funnily enough, was the daughter of **Francis Moody**, forming a glorious union between these two families. They moved to live in Belfast. Two of their five children emigrated to the States.

76. Marriage solemnized at <u>the Parish Church</u> in the Parish of <u>West Hartlepool</u> in the County of <u>Durham</u>							
When Married.	Name and Surname.	Age.	Condition.	Rank or Profession.	Residence at the time of Marriage.	Father's Name and Surname.	Rank or Profession of Father.
June 20 1876	Walter Pickard Hirst	24	Bachelor	Inspector of Works	West Hartlepool	Joe Hirst	Inspector of Works
	Mary Jane Moody	24	Spinster		West Hartlepool	Francis Moody	Railway Workman.

ed in the Parish Church according to the Rites and Ceremonies of the Established Church, by Licence or after _____ by me,

arrage
nized
n us, Walter Pickard Hirst is the
Presence
of us, Some George Walter Hart Chas E Palmer
Mary Jane Moody Elizabeth Westchell Prier

There is another gravestone at St Leonard's in the name of Hirst — two year old **Mary Hannah Hirst** was buried on Boxing Day December 1873 and was the daughter of an unrelated **Edmund/Edward Hirst**. This Mr Hirst made money where he could and came to the area from Slaithwaite near Huddersfield to run a shop in Batty Green with his wife and six children. He found himself in court for breaking into a navy hut belonging to **George Drury** and stealing bedclothes

[1]. After the railway was built Edward and his family ran a shop in Hellifield.

FELONY.—Edward Hirst, of Batty Green, in the township of Ingletton, shopkeeper, was charged with having, on the 12th ult., at the township of Ingletton, feloniously broken into and entered the dwelling-house of one George Drury, and stolen therefrom two beds



Frank Moody

Francis (Frank) Moody was from Kyloe, inland from Holy Island in Northumberland. At the time of the 1871 census he lived at Inkerman with his second wife, **Phillis Young**, two sons from his first marriage and four boarders. Two of the boarders were **Richard Coveney** and his wife **Charlotte Pilcher**. Richard, a lifelong railway carter/horse-feeder and groom was one of the men to accompany Walter Hirst on the first train over the viaduct in 1874.

Francis was described as, 'a stalwart Northumbrian with a fine homely breadth of North-country accent and a profound pride in his navvies. Frank has the portion of line between Sebastopol and Denthead, the heaviest work on the whole section. Hither come all the best men where the work is all piece-work and best paid because it is the most severe.' [3] In the article Frank explained that

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piece-work involved specific jobs for set pay so the men did not need as much supervision — if they didn't work hard it would take longer to earn their pay. He explained there were no Irishmen, *'They'd take an Irishman by the back of the neck and throw him over the bank into the river.'* The Irish made up 2.5% of the total workforce at Ribbleshead and just four of our navy fatalities were from Ireland; **Robert Hempinstill** from County Wicklow died of tuberculosis aged 37 and **William Monks** from Dublin died of pneumonia, aged 46. **James Dawray** of Galway died of respiratory disease aged 36. All three lived in the Bleamoor tunnel huts, within Frank's territory. **Thomas Swanton** from Cork was the first navy to die, of epilepsy, aged 35, and he lived at Batty Wife Hole.

We again miss Mr. Ashwell by a hair's-breadth, but meet Frank Moodie, his benchman, a stalwart Northumbrian, with a fine homely breadth of North-country accent, and a profound pride in his navvies. Frank has the portion of line between Sebastopol and Denthead, the heaviest work in the whole section. Hither come all the best men, where the work is all piece-work, and best paid because it is the most severe.

The journalist was mesmerised, if that's the right word! by the physique of the navvies, *'they are the embodiment of physical force in its fullest development of concentrated energy. No man stops to mean for breath on the head of that pickaxe he wields so strenuously; the heave of the shovels is like clockwork. The navvies, bare-throated, their massive torsos covered but by the shirt, their strong lissom loins lightly girt and the muscles showing out on their shapely legs through the tight, short breeches are the perfection of animal vigour. Finer men I never saw, and never hope to see.'* Frank explained that his navvies ate 18 pounds of beef in a week, sent up from Settle *'on the hoof'* before slaughtering, with bacon to fill up.

ment of physical force in its fullest development of concentrated energy. No man stops to lean for breath on the head of that pickaxe he wields so strenuously; the heave of the shovels is like clock work. The navvies, bare-throated, their massive torsos covered but by the shirt, their strong, lissom loins lightly girt, and the muscles showing out on their shapely legs through the tight, short breeches, and the ribbed stockings that surmount the ankle jacks, are the perfection of animal vigour. Finer men I never saw, and never hope to see.

Frank's navvies lived together at Jericho, *'two rows of huts standing forlornly on the shoulder of perhaps the bleakest moor in England'* [3] not far from the tunnel entrance. The huts were full, each with many boarders and Frank said he could fill another twenty *'owing to the keenness of the men for the high wages for such heavy work and the propensity to work in the tunnel in the wet and cold weather.'*

Frank had gained his experience in Northumberland and in Guernsey in the Channel Islands where he had lived with his first wife **Mary Ann Blair** who died, aged 34. After the railway was constructed Francis and the family moved back to Durham, still working on railways. Francis died in 1905, aged 78.



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

settleresearch@gmail.com

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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'.

F — 'Ribblehead Under Construction' with the kind permission of the artist Alan Fearnley

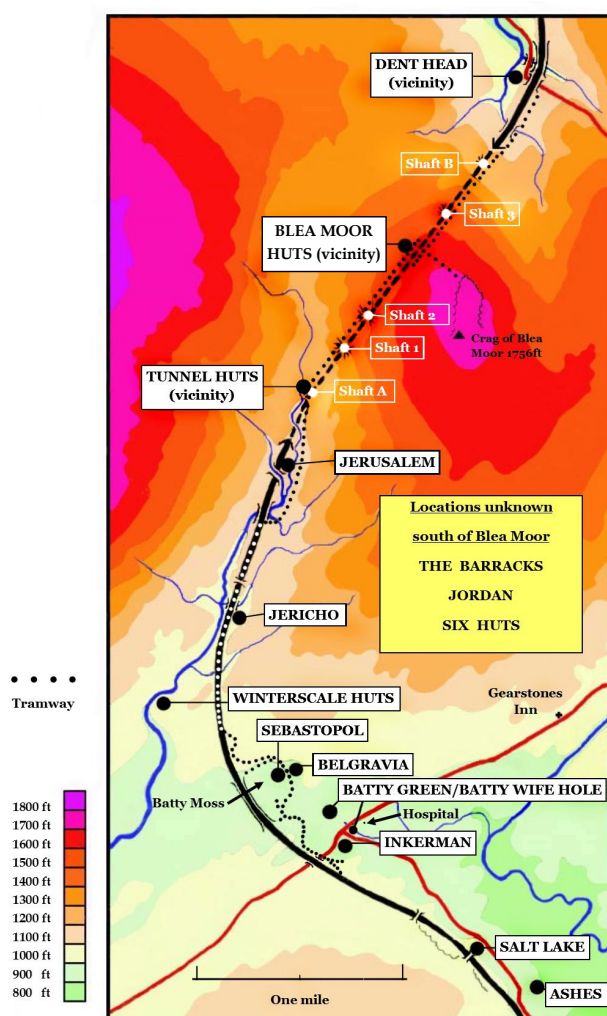
Newspaper cuttings with the kind permission of the British Newspaper Archives: 1 — Lancaster Gazette, 2 — Lancaster Guardian, 3 — Daily News

ph1 — photo credited to Wikipedia, ph2 — with thanks to Nigel Mussett

Barbara Watson contribution to FoSCL magazine, thanks to Nigel Mussett, Navy Settlements diagram with thanks to Nigel Mussett, archivist for FoSCL. Sketches 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.

Birth, Marriage and Death certificates provided by the General Records Office, covered by Crown Copyright. Census returns and baptism, marriage and burial records via ancestry.co.uk, originally from The National Archives.



Supposed locations of navy settlements between Ribbleshead and Dent Head.

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