

## John Druville Slaytor, aged 12

**John Druville Slaytor only son of the late John Slaytor of Doncaster died 23rd March 1915 Aged 12 years, Old F61**

This unique memorial stone commemorates the life of a 12 year old boy and reflects a wealthy background. Despite the innocence portrayed in the sculpture — the cross symbolises salvation, there were plenty of unusual and rather naughty goings on in his ancestry too.



The inscription tells us he was the son of the late **John Slaytor** — he had died in 1909. John Druville Slaytor's widowed mother was **Miriam Elizabeth Little** who, for some unknown reason, came to Settle by the time of the 1911 census, living at 'Cragholme' near the Post Office in Duke Street. John Druville Slaytor and his father were both born in Doncaster and Miriam was a vet's daughter from Lincolnshire. Miriam was 25 years younger than her husband, less surprising considering she was his third wife. Despite three marriages John Druville Slaytor was the only child of John Slaytor.

John Slaytor was the eldest of three sons of **Charles Pantin Slaytor** [ph3, left], a respected medical practitioner and his wife **Mary Drabwell** [ph3, next left]. Descendants discovered that Charles missed one of his medical exams and had to sit it again later, but he obviously recovered from that indiscretion! Relations believe that John Druville Slaytor's middle name is a corruption of Mary's



surname, to give a hint of a Norman surname and ancestry. The Drabwells were wealthy — Mary's mother, **Harriet Drabwell** [ph3, both right] was painted in 1823 before she was married when she was Miss Harriet Burks. As an indication of the family's status, the painting with the pony is by J. F. Herring who began his career in Yorkshire painting the gentry. He later became a painter of animals for Queen Victoria. Harriet is with her pony Taffy and her dog Blucher. Her brothers fought at Waterloo. Meanwhile, Mary's father **John Drabwell**, made a fortune as a corn merchant in Doncaster and bought Thurcroft Hall estate in Rotherham with the proceeds. The etching [ph3] belonged to John Slaytor. The hall is



now a Grade 2 listed building. Charles came from Woolpit, Suffolk but worked in Bawtry, Doncaster for several years before relocating to Devon. Charles died in 1872 leaving a substantial inheritance to his sons.

John began his life working as a civil engineer and draughtsman in Sheffield. When he was 22, on 20 May 1875, he married **Eliza Henrietta Booth**, a wood turner/timber merchant's daughter. Oh dear, oh dear, some things just aren't meant to be and things quickly went pear shaped. In November 1878 John took Eliza Henrietta to the divorce courts on the grounds of her adultery with **Richard Liddell** and it all got very messy [1]. Divorces were only really possible since the Divorce and Matrimonial Causes Act of 1857 — before that only the extremely wealthy were able to influence the church to annul their marriage or to initiate a private bill to go through Parliament. The 1857 Act made divorce a secular court action. It was still very expensive as it required several months of lawyers' wages and could only take place in London, so not much use for a northern labourer.

John stated, *'I have been informed and believe that between the 3rd day of June 1878 and the 15th day of August 1878 the petitioner frequently met Richard Liddell at the house of Samuel Hodgkinson in Attercliffe Road Sheffield and committed adultery with the said Richard Liddell'*. Richard Liddell was an 18 year old banker's son whose real name was **James Henry Liddell**. The house of **Samuel Hodgkinson** was an inn. John also stated *'She has committed adultery at Sheffield, Handsworth, Liverpool and other places with men whose names are unknown to me'*. James Henry Liddell went to court to say that John Slaytor had made it all up.

Eliza Henrietta denied John's claims and, in retaliation, claimed that, *'in the month of August 1878 John Slaytor committed adultery on several occasions with Phoebe Morley.'* **Phoebe (Eyes) Morley** was from Guisborough near Middlesborough and was the wife of **Thomas Morley**, a miner.

For some reason Thomas had thrown her out. Eliza Henrietta had felt sorry for Phoebe and took her on as a domestic servant in May 1878. However, by September she suspected John had *'behaved badly to her'* which is an interesting way of putting it. Eliza Henrietta, *'a woman of lady-like appearance'* [2] admitted that she *'chucked her out and gave her a good hiding.'* Soon afterwards Eliza coincidentally met Phoebe in the street. Eliza Henrietta said, *'Well, Phoebe'* and *'then rushed upon her and struck her violently several times with an umbrella and made use of disgusting language. She further said that it was through her that her husband was to have a divorce from her and she threatened she would not rest until she had got her under the sod.'*

Unsurprisingly, Phoebe took Eliza to court for assault. The court acknowledged provocation on both sides. Eliza had to pay costs plus £20 sureties to keep the peace for six months. At the time of the 1881 census Phoebe was a patient in Sheffield hospital, hopefully not due to injuries caused by an umbrella, but was back with her husband in Birmingham by 1901. She died in 1902, aged 47.

Eliza Henrietta also alleged that John had *'committed adultery in a house of ill fame kept by Annie Buckley in Paradise Street, Sheffield with a person unknown to the respondent'*. Since 1824 prostitution was illegal and women could be punished with a month's imprisonment with hard



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labour. As a result, Annie can be found in the census return two years later at 14 Paradise Street (appropriately enough) describing her occupation as a 'tobacconist shop keeper' with four young girls, 'servants' and 'boarders', just as she had been at the time of the 1871 census. Annie was from Welshpool, Montgomeryshire but most likely changed her name while running her house.

14 Paradise Street	1	Connie Buckley	Head	Woman	18	Tobacconist Shop Keeper	Wales
		Eliza Perkins	Serv.	Woman	12	Servant Domestic	Yorkshire Sheffield
		Made Wright	Serv.	Woman	12	Servant Domestic	Yorkshire Sheffield
		Fanny Barney	Boarder	Woman	19		Lancashire Salford
		Marianne Gilbert		Woman	34		Lancashire Doncaster

The Victorians were a hypocritical bunch and prostitution is thought to have been at its highest level during that era. Understandably, it was almost impossible to know the number of women working as prostitutes. Some studies suggest that, in London, prostitution was the fourth largest female occupation, most women driven to it by desertion, widowhood, poverty and desperation.

Eliza Henrietta also claimed that 'on the 14th day of September 1878 he (John Slaytor) did violently threaten her, eject her out on the street and refused to allow her to return.' In those days for a man to claim divorce he just had to prove his wife's adultery whereas women had to prove adultery plus further offences such as physical cruelty, bigamy or incest. Scorned spouses of both sexes went to extreme measure to get proof of adultery, paying good sums of money to 'witnesses'.

It's quite clear that John and Eliza Henrietta both wanted a fresh start without each other but couldn't possibly admit that was the case. There were 58 pages of documentation attached to this divorce case as the court gathered statements to decide whether or not the couple were colluding in order to obtain a divorce. In the end the decree nisi was granted on 12 June 1879 and finalised in January 1880. As the wife was essentially the man's property she had no assets of her own, John was obliged to pay her costs, some £40 as part of the divorce. Interestingly, on 14 July 1879 in Rotherham Eliza Henrietta, declaring herself a spinster married **William Sellars**, a widowed gentleman — he was actually a colliery agent and she was, technically, still a bigamist. Did he know about John? They appeared to live happily ever after in Rotherham.

Marriage solemnized at the Parish Church, in the New Parish of *Hecley*, in the County of *York*.

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.
14th July 1879	William Sellars	25	Widower	Gentleman	Albert Rd.	William Sellars	Colliery Steward
	Eliza Henrietta Booth	28	Spinster	—	Albert Rd.	George Booth	Timber Merchant

Meanwhile, in March 1880 John married widow **Mary (Armitage) Fisher**. Her first husband, **Thomas Robert Fisher**, a butcher, had died in 1874. For some reason John and Mary took on the licence for the Elephant Hotel in St Sepulchregate in the centre of Doncaster [ph1]. It had a distinctive elephant over its porch! It had opened in 1850 and operated until the 1970s. It was knocked down to build a modern shopping centre, of course.



John and Mary didn't have children and stayed in Doncaster, although gave up tenancy of the Elephant Hotel. John turned his engineering talent to inventions and gadgets. In 1888 he took out a patent on 'an improved automatic apparatus for checking and registering coins inserted in weighing and measuring machines where checking and registering of payments are required'[3]. In

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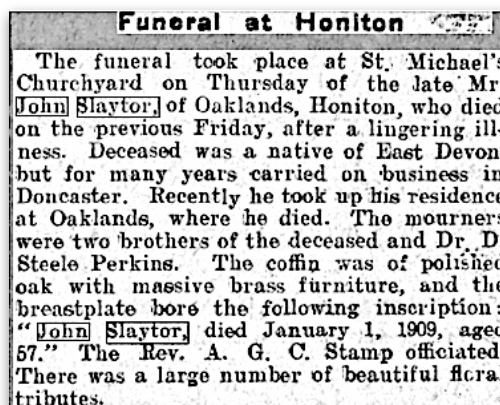
1889 John worked with his brother **Charles Henry Slaytor** on 'An improved cartridge extractor for sporting guns'. In 1891 it was 'an improved method of ventilating rooms, chambers, coal mines, tunnels, malt kilns and places where impurities are to be removed from the air.'

The rest of John and Mary's life together was uneventful, thank goodness. Mary died in 1898, aged 47 and was buried in Doncaster with a fine memorial stone.

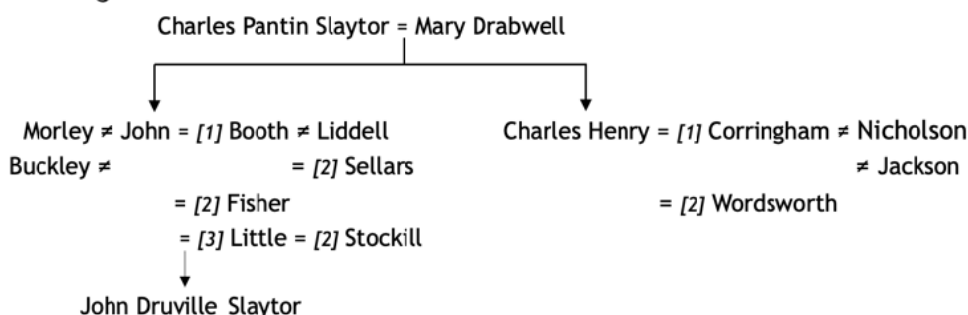


***In affectionate memory of Mary, wife of John Slaytor, who departed this life Sept 18th 1898***

It was on 15 October 1901 that John married Miriam Elizabeth Little in Market Weighton, just north of Beverley on the east coast. John was 50 and Miriam just 25. Son John Druville Slaytor was born two years later. John died in 1909 in Devon, aged 57 'after a lingering illness'[4]. He had a polished oak coffin with 'massive brass furniture'. The mourners were 'two brothers of the deceased and Dr Perkins' — there was no mention of Miriam, nor his son, as it was just not seemly to have women and children at funerals but he left them an enormous estate of over £6,000.



### The Slaytors



This wasn't the end of the trials and tribulations in the Slaytor family. John's brother **Frank Slaytor** became a solicitor and lived a very comfortable life in Guernsey with his wife and son. However John's brother **Charles Henry Slaytor**, the co-inventor and an analytical chemist also experienced the challenges of the divorce court. Charles Henry had studied for his PhD in Heidelberg University, Germany under Robert Bunsen of the Bunsen Burner fame and had potential for a successful career as a Chemist. On 13 October 1883, aged 23 he married **Julia Isabella Corringham**, aged 21, the 'spoilt only child of elderly wealthy parents' who were landed proprietors. Once married Julia persuaded Charles to give up Chemistry and take up farming in Haxey, Lincolnshire. They moved in to Round House, Graizelound [ph3] to live with Julia's parents and had two daughters, **Mary** born in 1884 and **Violet** born in 1892. There were some red flags here! In 1897 things had got so bad that Charles Henry took Julia to the divorce court for her alleged misconduct in 1893 with **Arthur Nicholson**, a local doctor with whom she played tennis, and subsequently with **Samuel Edward Jackson**, Violet's violin teacher[5]. Both men went abroad to avoid having to appear in court for the divorce proceedings. There was quite a bit of excitement caused by this case. One



reason was that Arthur Nicholson, the first 'co-respondent' had, unfortunately, died before the hearing raising legal questions as to whether a dead man could be included in the divorce case. He had '*succumbed to malarial fever while serving as a duly-qualified medical man in the expedition to Ashantee*'. (Ashantee is now Ghana in Africa and Arthur's visit was during the colonial wars against the natives.) As a result, '*leave was given to proceed without making him a co-respondent*' [6]. The other alleged co-respondent, Samuel Edward Jackson, was an ironmonger by trade but also a music teacher. At the time of the alleged affair he was a 24 year old single man. Julia was 35. Mr Jackson was persuaded by his father to go to Europe where he stayed until after the divorce.

A pivotal piece of evidence in the divorce case was a love letter between Julia (calling herself Diana) sent to Samuel Jackson '*her own darling Billy*'. On 25th September 1896 Julia, who was living with her parents at that stage, wrote the letter to Samuel and, at 7.20pm, put it in the letter box. The family servant, **Alice Teale**, left the house and waited for the postman and persuaded him to let her retrieve the letter which is how it came to be used in evidence [7]. Julia denied asking Alice to retrieve it so who did? The prosecutor, Mr Buszard, said '*It was not altogether a proper letter for a married lady to write to a man who was not her husband and the accused was put up to it, he did not doubt, by some greater offender*' [8]. She was not a snitch so we'll never know! Unfortunately for Alice, retrieving a letter was (and still is) a criminal offence but she was found not guilty — '*The verdict was received with great applause.*'

The divorce was finalised in November 1897 and, again, Charles Henry paid Julia's costs although family remember it was financially disastrous for her and she relied on the support of her husband's aunt **Harriet Drabwell**. Julia retired to Dorset with her two daughters, neither of whom married. Violet travelled the world and settled in Australia with her son. Charles Henry Slaytor, aged 44 married again in 1904. His wife was 27 year old **Helen Piercy Wordsworth**, a Wakefield farmer's daughter and they immediately left for Tasmania and then Euston, a small town in New South Wales, Australia where Charles Henry made a good living in his original occupation as an Instructor of Chemistry and developed several commercial processes. He died out there in 1927, aged 67. He left his generous estate, including the remnants of his first wife's substantial inheritance to '*widow Gwendoline Mackintosh*' and her son. Gwendoline was his second wife's sister. He left nothing to his own two daughters, much to their annoyance.

Meanwhile, back in Settle at the time of the 1911 census, Miriam and John Druville Slaytor lived at Cragholme near the Post Office and **Alfred Stockill**, from Northallerton, worked as the bank manager in the Market Place bank building (now a solicitor and Bank). They married in October 1911 with **Dr Lovegrove** being a witness and moved to live at Bankwell, Giggleswick. A son, **Philip Alfred Stockill** was born a year later — he became an editorial journalist. 12 year old John

A case which will excite some interest is that of "Slaytor v. Slaytor and Jackson," in regard to which two or three applications have been before the court with reference to making a dead man a second co-respondent, who had died before the divorce proceedings were commenced. Upon proof of his having succumbed to malarial fever while serving as a duly-qualified medical man in the expedition to Ashantee in December, 1895, leave was given to proceed without making him a co-respondent.

#### IMPORTANT POST OFFICE PROSECUTION.

letter in question was written by a Mrs Slaton, of Graizeland, to a Mr Jackson, and addressed to him at 37, Silver-street, Gainsboro'. She posted it about 7.20 in the evening. It was not altogether a proper letter for a married lady to write to a man who was not her husband, and the accused, who was in her service, and was put up to it, he did not doubt, by some greater offender, went to the wall box in which the letter was posted. She waited there until the mail-cart came along to clear the box, and, by representing that she had just posted a letter which she did not wish to go, she was allowed to turn over the letters and take out the one she wanted. He believed that in consequence of her stealing that letter Mrs Slaton's husband was successful in getting a divorce.

#### GIRL GOES FREE.

STOLEN LETTER AND **HAXEY** DIVORCE

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Druville Slaytor, a pupil at Giggleswick school, died on 23 March 1915. His obituary in Giggleswick School Magazine described *'His honest nature and quiet courage earned him the friendship and respect of boys and masters.'*<sup>[ph3]</sup> He had been suffering from influenza, pneumonia and a middle ear infection. A private nurse from Bradford cared for him in his final days. His death was certified by **Dr Hyslop** and the registrar was **James Parker**.

### JOHN DRUVILLE SLAYTOR.

After only a week of illness, John Druville Slaytor died at Bankwell on the evening of March 23rd, aged 12 years. Whatever we can say must be but little consolation to his parents in their bereavement; and yet there was taken away from us a boy of considerable promise and singular uprightness of character. His honest nature and quiet courage earned him the friendship and respect of boys and masters; and if his life has been a short one, he has made Bankwell a better place for his having been there. We are the poorer by his death, but rich in the memory of his life, for it was a brave heart and a generous spirit that we were privileged to have among us for a few short years.

Twenty Third March 1915 Bankwell Giggleswick K.S.	John Druville Slaytor	Male	12 Years	Son of John Slaytor of Independent Means 'Deceased'	1 Influenza 2 Acute Lobar Pneumonia 3 Acute Otitis Media Certified by R. S. Hyslop. M.B.	M. Pearson Hospital Nurse present at the death 3 Camden Terrace Rotherham Bradford	County York March 1915	James Parker Registrar
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A year later Miriam and Alfred had another son, **Roger Stockill**, who became a lawyer. The family relocated to Nottingham.

Miriam's own family had refreshingly scandal free lives. Twin sisters **Susanna** and **Margaret Little** died soon after they were born. Her remaining eight siblings had respectable careers and families, several brothers working as butchers or drapers. Her brother **John Clapham Little** <sup>[ph2]</sup> was a tailor, his business called *'Little the Great'* Tailor and Cutter — no job too large or too small! His adverts proclaimed *'Mr Little is great in both stature and in knowledge of things sartorial. He is a man who cannot help being popular!'*

**'Little the Great,' Tailor and Cutter**



*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](http://ancestry.co.uk) includes the families buried in the graveyard. The project is ongoing and welcomes queries and information on [settleresearch@gmail.com](mailto:settleresearch@gmail.com). Latest news and events are on the Facebook page 'Settle Graveyard Project'.*

*With thanks to relation Mike Slaytor for his help with this account and fabulous photos.*

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