

## The Gilchrists, saddlers

**William Fowler Mackenzie Gilchrist!** He was one of five sons (and one daughter) of **John Gilchrist**, a tailor and his wife **Christiana Mackenzie**. John and the family lived in Tain, a small coastal town north-east of Inverness, nearly 400 miles north of Settle! After John died during the 1860s three of the siblings moved south of the border, later followed my mum, Christiana. Daughter **Annie Gilchrist** appeared to take the lead, marrying **John Constantine**, ten years her senior, in Leeds in December 1871. John was a farmer's son from Coverdale, near Middleham who described his occupation as a *'bookkeeper at Leeds Infirmary'* which may have been a bit of an exaggeration as, at the time of the census a few months before, he was described as a hospital porter. Either way, upon their marriage, John and Annie were appointed Master and Matron of Tadcaster's eastern workhouse at Barwick-in-Elmet. They took some of Annie's siblings with them.

In 1865 the workhouse for western Tadcaster made headlines due to the atrocities [1] caused by the Matron **Catherine Leivers**. The newspapers reported on the *'laxity of supervision, and the cruelties inflicted upon the miserable paupers and pauper children'* due to a *'systematic course of cruelty on the part of the Matron.'* It all came to light at the funeral of pauper **Elizabeth Daniel** whose body was taken to the churchyard on a chimney sweep's donkey cart. This was followed by a horse drawn cart carrying an effigy of the workhouse Matron which was later burnt on a bonfire. The procession was accompanied by the Tadcaster Drum and Fife band with a crowd of some 1500 to 2000 people. Mrs Leivers was eventually dismissed after being found to be guilty of drunkenness and exceeding the punishment laws of the Board relating to cruelty to the elderly inmates and abuse of the children.

As a result, a new combined Tadcaster Union workhouse was opened in 1872 [ph1] and John and Annie were offered the lifelong position of Master and Matron. On the night of the 1881 census they cared for 140 inmates. More than half of those were 'vagrants' who came along for just one or two nights and then moved on. They had to deal with all the usual problems of an inadequate welfare and penal system — fights, inmates refusing to work, mental illness and tragic deaths. In September 1900 inmate James Scott was charged with assaulting another inmate, Albert Silverwood and using obscene language. James had 58 previous convictions against Albert Silverwood and this was the sixth conviction in the past 15 months. James was sent to prison for a month with hard labour, as if that would do much good!

### THE ATROCITIES AT THE TADCASTER WORKHOUSE.

CHARLES DICKENS commences his touching narrative of the sufferings of "Oliver Twist," by stating that "among other public buildings in the town of Mudfog, it boasts of one which is common in most towns, great and small, to wit, a workhouse." The town of Tadcaster too, can boast of a similar establishment, but there is this difference—that it far exceeds even that of the renowned Mudfog for its want of proper accommodation, for the laxity of its supervision, and for the cruelties that have been inflicted upon the miserable paupers and pauper children who have been lodged within its walls. The inquiry which has taken place during the present week has revealed a systematic course of cruelty on the part of the

Matron, which throws into the shade anything which has hitherto transpired in reference to the management of workhouses, and which, for the sake of humanity, we trust, has not a parallel in the records of any similar establishment in the kingdom.



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As in most years, in 1893 John and Annie 1893 put on a Christmas concert as a treat for the paupers at the workhouse, funded by donations from local tradespeople. *'The poor people, as well as the visitors, appeared to thoroughly enjoy themselves.'*[2]

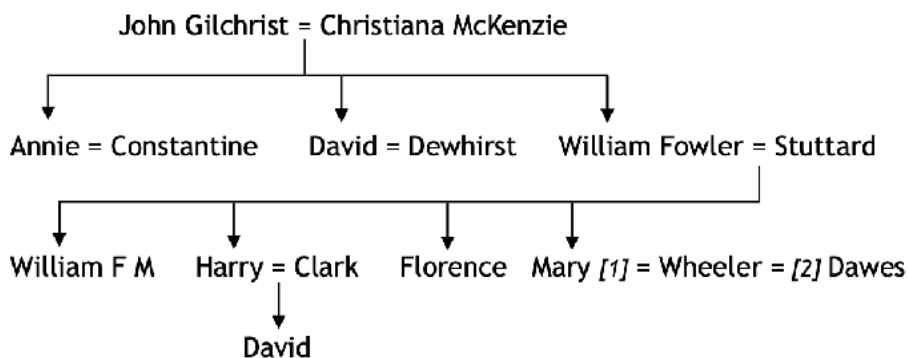
The Christmas tree, which was well-laden with reasonable gifts, including shawls, umbrellas, gloves, scarves, work-boxes, etc., was stripped at the close of the entertainment. The poor people, as well as the visitors, appeared to thoroughly enjoy themselves, and a pleasant evening was spent.

In 1895 Annie was awarded a huge 40% increase in salary, from £25 to £35 per annum. Perhaps she had overturned the perceptions of the errant Mrs Leivers and proved herself worthy of this salary increase or perhaps she took on extra responsibilities from her husband?[2]. John and Annie retired in 1901

The Visiting Committee had considered the application for an increase of salary by the Matron (Mrs Constantine), and recommended that her salary be increased from £25 to £35 per annum. On the motion of Messrs Scriven and F. Riley-Smith this was agreed to.

having worked for the board for almost 30 years and generated a decent pension. John died in 1906, aged 70. Annie lived for another 30 years, dying in 1927, aged 80. Annie and John had five daughters and two sons, but, as the workhouse was not the ideal environment for bringing up children, several were brought up by grandma, Christiana Gilchrist. Little Henry died an infant. Four of the daughters remained spinsters.

### Gilchrist family



John and Annie employed some of Annie's siblings at the workhouse. Annie's youngest brother, **David Gilchrist** was working as a porter at the workhouse when he married **Margaret Dewhirst**, the 'submatron' in 1877. David and Margaret became 'wardrobe dealers' in London.

In 1876 Annie's brother **William Fowler Gilchrist** married **Mary Wilhelmina Stuttard** in Leeds. She was the daughter of a servant, **John Stuttard** who may have looked similar to his son, **William Stuttard** [ph2, next to family tree]. The Stuttards came from Wighill, a few miles north of Tadacster but Mary Wilhelmina's mother **Alice (Bilborough) Stuttard** was originally from Gargrave which may have been a reason to move in that direction?

William Fowler and Mary Wilhelmina started out running a tobacconist's shop in Leeds but, during the 1880s, moved to Settle where William worked as a saddler and harness maker [LSA]. In later years he employed **Herbert Close Procter**, probably following an apprenticeship. They lived at what is now the Little House Restaurant. For some reason it was seven years before William Fowler and Mary Wilhelmina had

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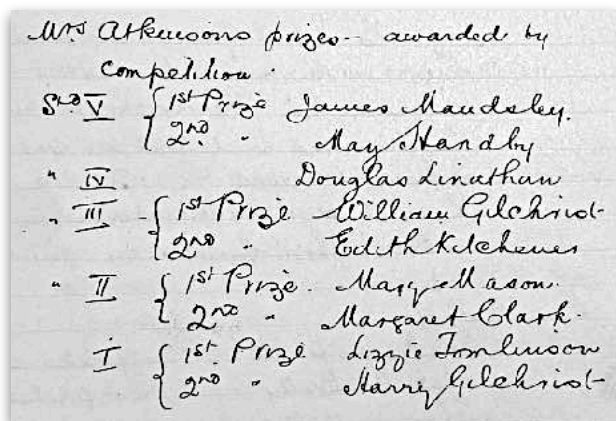
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any children. In the end they had two sons, **William Fowler Mackenzie Gilchrist** and **John Henry (Harry) Gilchrist**, and then two daughters, **Florence Gilchrist** and **Mary** obviously deciding against middle names by then. Mary Wilhelmina died in 1926, aged 72. William retired to 7 Station Road where he lived with spinster daughter Florence until he died in 1943, aged an impressive 93! Sons William and Harry won 'Mrs Atkinson's prizes-awarded by competition' in their respective year groups at school in 1896 [ph4]. Mrs Atkinson was the wife of **Dr Francis Edward Atkinson** and a school governor.



William Fowler and Mary Wilhelmina's youngest daughter Mary Gilchrist began a career in teaching at an elementary school at Keasden. However, in October 1925 she married **Allan Davison Wheeler** who was the son of the vicar of Rathmell, **Rev Tom Davison Wheeler** and his wife **Mary Annie Ellen de Loecker**. (Mary Ann Ellen's Dutch father, **Cornelius de Loecker** was a clerk to a wood broker in London.) Sister Florence Gilchrist was a witness. Rathmell was the Rev Wheeler's last post having previously ministered in Peckham, Bingley, Guisley, Haworth and Arkengarthdale near Richmond. They had been in Rathmell since 1908.

Allan Davison Wheeler's older sister, **Erica Littlewood Wheeler**, is well known for marrying **Morton Buck**, the son of **Dr Charles William Buck** in 1913 [ph6]. It was a fine exhibition of hats and the ceremony was 'an unusually pretty one'! Morton had recently been living in Hamilton, Canada, and worked as the 'representative for the North of England of the Cheseborough Company of New York'. The chemist at the head of the international company, **Robert Augustus Cheseborough** [ph3] made his name by manufacturing kerosene from the oil of sperm whales and then invented Vaseline, the same product we know today but, in those days, traded under the brand name 'Luxor'. In 1940 the London premises sustained considerable damage in a WW2 air raid. They recovered but were later bought out by Unilever. After the wedding Morton and Erica 'motored to Hellifield' (very unusual in 1913), en route for London and the Continent. Unfortunately Morton died in 1921, aged 35 and his best man (and brother-in-law) Eric Marlor (*far left*) was killed in the war too. Widow Erica

**RATHMELL**  
**Marriage of the Vicar's Daughter.**  
 On Tuesday this old-world village was "en fete" on the occasion of the marriage of Miss Erica Littlewood Wheeler, daughter of the Rev. T. D. Wheeler, to Mr. Morton Buck, of "Garstangs," Giggleswick (late Hamilton, Canada), representative for the North of England of the Cheseborough Company of New York, and only son of Dr. C. W. Buck, of Giggleswick. The ceremony, an unusually pretty one, was per-



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qualified as a radiographer at Guy's hospital and worked at Richmond Royal Hospital for many years.

Meanwhile, Allan Davison Wheeler and wife Mary (Gilchrist) stayed local and, a year after the wedding, had a daughter, **Elizabeth de Loecker Wheeler**. Unfortunately, Mary died on 2 March 1937, aged 38. It's possible Mary was a very understanding wife who had been ill for a while, or she had a very naughty husband. With incredible speed, widower Allan Davison Wheeler married **Ada Dawes** by the end of March 1937 and in July that year Ada gave birth to a son **Michael Davison Wheeler**. Blimey.

William Fowler and Mary Wilhelmina's eldest son **William Fowler Mackenzie Gilchrist** began working life at the age of 19 as a postman in Skipton and then at Lytham St Anne's. During the war he served as a Lance Corporal in the Military Mounted Police, Duke of Lancaster's yeomanry. At the time of the 1921 census he was in Hull working as a commercial traveller for none other than the Cheseborough Manufacturing Company, based in London. It's not difficult to imagine how he got that job! After his father died, William retired back to Settle to live with his sister, Florence at 7 Station Road. He lived to the age of 76 and died at 2 Ribble Terrace which his brother had previously occupied.

For some reason when William (Snr) died, he left his modest estate of £143 to second son John Henry (Harry) Gilchrist rather than his eldest son William. Harry began his career as an assistant teacher for Torquay Borough Council. During the war Harry served as a Lance Corporal in the 20th Battalion County of London Regiment and was later commissioned to the Machine Gun Corps back in Duke Street, Settle. At the time of the 1921 census John Henry was a welfare supervisor for the James Pascall Confectioner based in Blackfriars Road in London. **James Pascall** worked as an agent for Cadbury's before establishing his own business. For a while Pascalls were the largest sugar confectionery manufacturers in Britain. Pascalls merged with RS Murray (who were best known for Murraymints) and went on to invent the chocolate éclair. Eventually Cadbury took over the business, completing the circle.

By 1936, aged 47, John Henry returned to Settle and married 30 year old **Emma Louise Clark**. Emma was the granddaughter of **Robert Clark** who had, amongst many other achievements, built Ribble Terrace by the river in Settle with his father. At the time of the 1939 register John Henry lived in 2 Ribble Terrace with Emma and her father, James Clark. After James died in 1952 John Henry and Emma Louise moved to 1 Craven Cottages which was known as Gilchrist House. Emma Louise died in 1990 and they were buried in Giggleswick graveyard close to Emma Louise's family. Unfortunately, no-one added her name to the memorial.

#### ***In memoriam John Henry Gilchrist 1889 – 1959***

William Fowler and Mary Wilhelmina's daughter Florence Gilchrist enjoyed performing with the Settle Amateur Operatic Society, here (*left*) with **Doris Procter**, sister of Herbert Close Procter (*centre*), William (Snr)'s employee and **Lucy Hoyle** [*ph5*]. Florence worked as a schoolteacher at a boys' school in Morecambe for a while but then returned to look after her aging father. She retired to Morecambe where she died, aged 78.



Mum Mary Wilhelmina Gilchrist is buried in *Old H23* with her daughters Mary (Wheeler) and Florence. Dad William Fowler Gilchrist was buried in an unmarked grave *New GX9* (even though

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there was space in his wife's grave at that point) and son William Fowler Mackenzie Gilchrist joined him later in 1962.

***In Loving Memory of Mary Wilhelmina Gilchrist Died 10th August 1926 aged 72 yrs. Her daughter Mary Wheeler Died 2nd March 1937 Aged 38 yrs. Also her daughter Florence Gilchrist Died 11th July 1964 aged 78 yrs. Old H23***



There is one other Gilchrist buried in Settle — **David Michael Gilchrist** was the adopted son of John Henry Gilchrist and his wife Emma, possibly related to the Howse and Hyslop families. He married and had children but the marriage fell apart and his wife remarried. He lived at 2 Ribble Terrace until he died in 2011, aged 64 and is buried in the council extension to the graveyard. He gave the house to his neighbour at 1 Ribble Terrace who eventually sold it and used the proceeds to buy a motor home.



*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'.*

*Newspaper cuttings with the kind permission of the British Newspaper Archives: 1 — York Herald, 2 — Boston Spa News, 3 — Skyrack Courier*

*ph1 — credited to [workhouses.co.uk](http://workhouses.co.uk), ph2 — credited to family descendants via [Ancestry.co.uk](http://Ancestry.co.uk), username [keithparke1](#), ph3 — Wikipedia, ph4 — with the kind permission of Settle Primary School, ph5 — with kind permission go the Settle Amateur Operatic Society, ph6 — credited to the Bill Mitchell collection, in Mr Elgar and Dr Buck, a musical friendship by W R Mitchell, ph7 — with thanks to Mike Howarth*

*LSA - Lambert's Settle Almanac with the kind permission of the Museum of North Craven Life*

*Marriage documentation via [ancestry.co.uk](http://ancestry.co.uk), originally from The National Archives.*