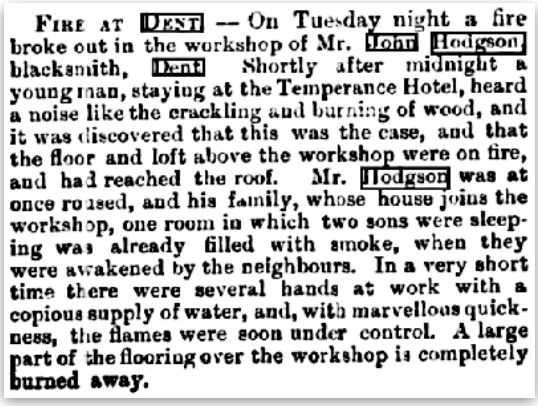
The Hodgsons, good honest folk, on the whole

Richard Hodgson, a blacksmith from Wray, had three sons with his fist wife **Jane Airey** and a couple of daughters with his second younger wife, **Ann Wilson**. They moved to Derbyshire. Richard's descendants ensured numerous towns and villages were provided with blacksmiths for generations to come!

When he was 21, Richard and Jane's eldest son, **John Hodgson**, a blacksmith, married **Mary Ellen Thornburrow**, a butcher's daughter from Kirkby Lonsdale. Three months later the first of their 11 children, **Richard Samuel Hodgson**, was born, and soon after, for whatever reason, they moved to live and work on the Main Street in Dent. Wennington and Wray probably have a limited capacity for blacksmiths! All went well until 1890 when a young man staying at the Temperance Hotel *'heard a noise like the crackling and burning of wood'* which transpired to be John's workshop *[1].* In a case of 'all hands on deck' the fire was soon put out and there were no casualties, apart from the workshop floor.



FIRE AT DENT — On Tuesday night a fire broke out in the workshop of Mr. John Hodgson, blacksmith, Dent. Shortly after midnight a young man, staying at the Temperance Hotel, heard a noise like the crackling and burning of wood, and it was discovered that this was the case, and that the floor and loft above the workshop were on fire, and had reached the roof. Mr. Hodgson was at once roused, and his family, whose house joins the workshop, one room in which two sons were sleeping was already filled with smoke, when they were awakened by the neighbours. In a very short time there were several hands at work with a copious supply of water, and, with marvellous quickness, the flames were soon under control. A large part of the flooring over the workshop is completely burned away.

Mary Ellen died in 1899, aged 54 and John followed year later, also aged 54. By then the older children had started their own lives either as blacksmiths or as Lancashire weavers. Seventh child, 22 year old **William Hodgson**, also a blacksmith took over his dad's business and looked after the four youngest siblings.

Eldest son **Richard Samuel Hodgson** was in Settle by the time of the 1891 census, working as a blacksmith for **Robert Taylor** who was running Springfield Farm on the hills behind Upper Settle. In 1894 Richard Samuel married Robert's eldest daughter **Sarah Ann Taylor** and they appeared to move straight into the smithy at the junction of Castle Hill and High Road/Castleberg Lane. Funnily enough Robert Taylor had been the blacksmith in the same property at the time of the 1881 census.

Hodgson blacksmiths

Richard Hodgson = Jane Airey

James = Briggs

John = Thurnburrow

John

Richard Samuel = Taylor

James

9 others

John Hodgson Taylor

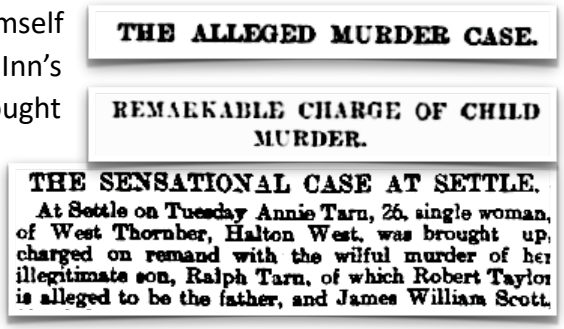
Robert = Ward

Elsie = Hardy

Reginald = Syers

Richard Stanley = Underhill

Robert Taylor was an unusual chap who had a different occupation at the time of each census. He was from Tatham and had married **Isabel Hoyle**. Straight after their wedding they came to Settle where they had their five children. After their spell at Springfield Farm, in 1896, Robert took over the tenancy of the Plough Inn at Wigglesworth, before returning to farming in Downham near Clitheroe. Throughout Robert won several awards at the agricultural shows for his horses and dogs.



THE ALLEGED MURDER CASE.

REMARKABLE CHARGE OF CHILD MURDER.

THE SENSATIONAL CASE AT SETTLE.

At Settle on Tuesday Annie Tarn, 26, single woman, of West Thornber, Halton West, was brought up, charged on remand with the wilful murder of her illegitimate son, Ralph Tarn, of which Robert Taylor is alleged to be the father, and James William Scott.

Whilst at the Plough Inn, in June 1898, Robert found himself at the heart of what must have been the Plough Inn's greatest scandal. Certainly the newspaper editors thought so *[2,3]*. **Annie Tarn**, aged 26, was charged with *'the wilful murder of her illegitimate son, Ralph Tarn of which Robert Taylor is alleged to be the father'.* **James William Scott**, a relation of Annie's was also charged. Annie Tarn had worked as a servant for Robert at the Plough Inn. Robert was 43 at the time and already had his five children. Annie gave baby **Ralph Tarn** to **Mrs Emmott** of Keighley, whose own baby had died, to care for him so that she could continue to work. Three months later, in March 1898 Annie collected the baby, telling Mrs Emmott that an aunt would look after him. Little Ralph was never seen again. At the beginning of June 1898 Annie wrote to Mrs Emmott admitting that the baby had been killed and this led to the arrests of Annie, Robert and James William Scott who were remanded in custody at Lancaster Gaol.

Superintendent Blanshard was the inspector in this case. When questioned, Robert Taylor said, *'No, I had nothing whatever to do with it'.* Annie said *'Well I've nowt to say; you know all the facts; you will find the body somewhere about the Plough Inn, if Taylor has not destroyed it' [4]*. A week later it was reported that the police had not been able to find Ralph's body, despite a diligent search, and therefore, the prosecution had no evidence and could not present a case. Together with a procedural technicality this resulted in the prisoners being discharged *[4].*

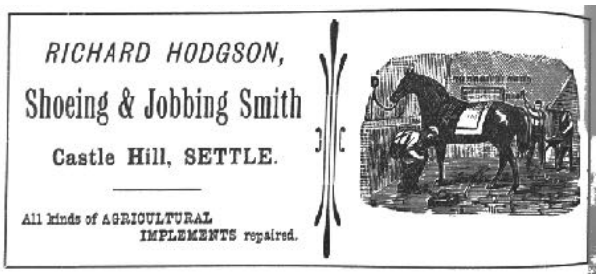
There are no more records for Ralph or Annie. To this day, there are rumours that a young girl committed suicide in the village after the birth of an illegitimate child. Perhaps this was Annie? Unsurprisingly, co-conspirator James William Scott quickly left the area and worked as a quarryman in Durham. Annie's father, **Jacob Tarn,** farmed at West Thornber, just south of Wigglesworth. He died just a few months later, aged 70, poor chap. He was buried with a memorial stone in Long Preston graveyard.

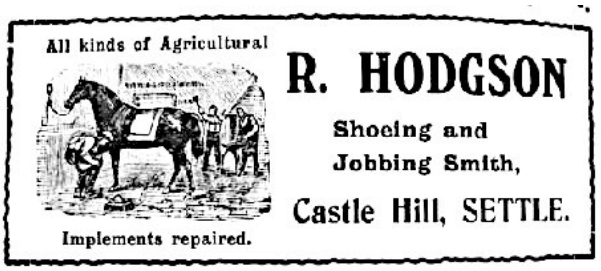
In Loving Memory of Jacob Tarn of West Thornber born Oct 21st 1827 died Aug 10th 1898 "Thy will be done"

At the time of the following census, Robert was still running the Plough Inn with his wife and family. His poor wife Isabella would have just had to put up with Robert's misdemeanours, as neither divorce nor living apart were financially viable options for a woman in her situation. Robert died in 1911, aged 56 and left an impressive estate of £3,000 worth a quarter of a million pounds at today's value. Isabella died nine years later.

Meanwhile, back in Settle, **Richard Samuel Hodgson** married **Sarah Ann Taylor** in 1894, before all this happened. She had already given birth to their eldest son, **John Hodgson Taylor** over a year

before their marriage and they had another three sons and a daughter. Richard Samuel Hodgson's younger brother **James (Jim) Hodgson**, another blacksmith, came to live with them too. Together with growing sons, the Hodgsons had a successful smithing business *[LSA]*.





Photographs *[ph1]* show farmers (and children) holding horses steady whilst the Hodgsons set to work. Aside from customers at the smithy, the Hodgsons looked after seven horses owned by local doctors as well as a dozen horses at the Golden Lion / Ashfield Hotels. They looked after the dozen horses which pulled the carts of lime between the Giggleswick Scar quarry and the station before the steam traction engines came along. The busiest time was in the winter when frosty roads caused horses to slip. On one winter day the Hodgsons repaired and replaced horseshoes on 28 horses. The Hodgsons were not just farriers but made and repaired numerous other agricultural implements and machinery. In the absence of regulated veterinary services the Hodgsons also cared for horses, filing down teeth. The smithy was also a social self-help centre for farmers who could come and discuss issues with the Hodgsons and other farmers whilst waiting their turn in the queue. In the photo, behind the horse the wicker gate leads to the Bowskill's Yard cottages and, to the left of the gate, the old, now demolished, houses on Castle Hill.

Wife Sarah Ann died on 4 April 1920, aged just 42 but Richard Samuel lived to the grand age of 80, dying in 1948. His brother Jim died in 1956, aged 82!

So, what happened to their children?

Eldest son **John (Taylor) Hodgson** *[ph2]* went to Giggleswick school and, during the war worked his way up to Second Lieutenant in the Durham Light Infantry. In letters home John reported, *'We have now been in the reserve trenches for a week, and my word! We have been getting it hot from shellfire. We have lost a few horses, and one of my comrades has been killed and two men wounded. Last night we did a move, and had been gone about ten minutes when a shell burst beside my horse, killing him instantly. My hat was blown off, although I had my chinstrap round my jaw, and a button was blown off my tunic. I can assure you things were warm. It is somewhat dreary with no newspapers to read to see how things are progressing.'*

John was killed on 27 October 1918, aged 25 in machine gun-fire *'whilst gallantly leading his men into action at the crossing of the Piave'* on the Italian front, north-west of Venice. John had

returned from leave just a few days before and had *'volunteered to go up to the front when he could have remained in the base.'*

Richard and Sarah Ann's second son, **Robert Hodgson**, worked in the family business before signing up to serve in the war. His war service, in France and Woolwich, was less eventful, aside from a moment of insolence to his commanding officer while *'trotting a heavy draught horse contrary to orders'* and *'neglect of duty in omitting to groom a pair of horses'* both of which resulted in him forfeiting a day's pay.

Back in Blighty, when Robert was 26 years of age, on 9 August 1922 he married **Elizabeth (Bessie) Ward** and a couple of months later their daughter **Margaret Eleanor Hodgson** was born. Bessie was pictured, front left, at her brother's wedding, with best man ***John Hunt***. The photo *[ph1]* was taken outside the building used by the Conservative club because her father **Thomas Ward** ran his tobacconist's shop on the ground floor, next to ***Charles John Lord***'s coal merchant shop *[ph3]*.

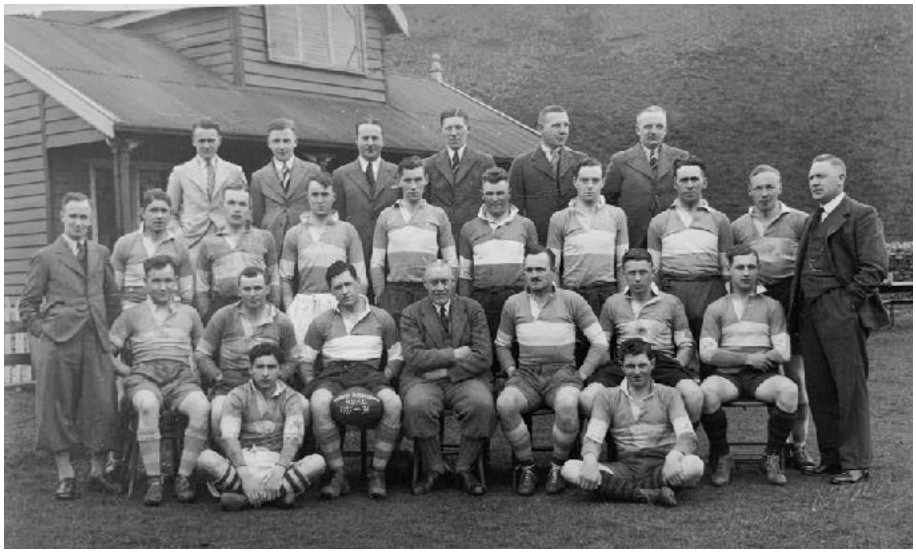
Tragically, just two months after their daughter was born, Robert died on 7 December 1922, aged just 27. Perhaps those years in the war took their toll on Robert too? Bessie spent the rest of her life back with her parents and then, when her daughter married re-located to Leeds. The lives of these members of the family life are commemorated on his parents' grave *Old H56*

In loving remembrance of Sarah Ann beloved wife of Richard Samuel Hodgson died April 4th 1920 in her 43rd year, also John son of the above killed in action Oct 27th 1918 in his 26th year, also Robert son of the above died Dec 7th 1922 in his 28th year. Rest in peace. Also the above Richard Samuel Hodgson died June 14th 1948 in his 81st year, also James his brother died Sep 11th 1956 aged 82 years.

Richard and Sarah's third son, **Reginald Hodgson**, helped to run the family business with his father and uncle and continued to run it after they died. The peak of horse use was around the time of WW1 after which horses were gradually replaced by machinery. So, Reginald diversified to become an expert in agricultural engineering and electric/oxy-acetylene welding and even did ornamental work.

On 20 August 1928 Reginald married **Edith Syers**, a quarryman's daughter who lived round the corner on Constitution Hill and they had a daughter. Edith had previously performed with Settle Amateur Operatic Society *[ph1]*. In his spare time Reginald was a keen rugby enthusiast and

became fixture secretary for North Ribblesdale after a knee injury stopped him playing and was pictured with the team of 1935, back row third right *[ph1]*.



Reginald died, aged 60 in 1956 and Edith died ten years later. ***Alf Limmer*** was apprenticed to the Hodgsons and took over the business after Reginald died. Reginald and Edith were buried in *New D9*

In Loving memory of Reginald Hodgson 1906-1962 and his wife Edith Hodgson 1905-1972

Richard and Sarah's only daughter, **Elsie Hodgson**, married ***John Hardy*** of the successful stonemasonry and memorial stone empire located on PenyGhent View on Church Street and they had a daughter too. Richard and Sarah's youngest son, **Richard Stanley Hodgson**, remained a bachelor and decided against the family business. He worked as an office clerk and lived with his sister Elsie (Hodgson) Hardy at PenyGhent View for a while before moving to Long Preston and then Skipton. There, aged 40, he married divorcee **Ivy Underhill**, originally from Sheffield. Richard was 54 when he died. Longevity was not a feature of this family, was it? However, hard work was *[CH]*.

Memories of a blacksmith hard at work

SIR - Your picture of the blacksmith shoeing the horse (above, Nostalgia, April 19) brought back many memories of watching this operation.

I lived in Talbot Yard, Settle, and I think this would be Mr Hodgson at his smithy, which was at the end of Castleberg Lane adjacent to the Drill Hall.

The wicket gate in the background is the entrance to Bowskills Yard.

The dustbin is at the end of the ginnel which went behind the then houses at the top of Castle Hill.

The man in the door was possibly the farmer, whose job it was to keep the horse quiet.

Across the road from the smithy was the warehouse for Mr Thornber's Provender (Provin) Mill, since converted to houses.

Alf Limmer was later the apprentice and I think he took over the smithy.

Mr Hodgson would make us a bowl and hook, which provided much amusement and exercise.

Peter Simpson, Penrith

A couple of generations back, John Hodgson was not the first member of the family to discover Settle. His younger brother **James Hodgson** had that honour. At the time of the 1871 census he was boarding with the ***Ralph*** family in Poole's Row, working as a stonemason and it's very probable that he had come to find work during the building of the Settle to Carlisle Railway. Two years later he married **Agnes Briggs**, the daughter of **William Briggs,** an ostler/omnibus driver (the horse and cart variety). James and Agnes had a son, **John Hodgson**, and then moved to Lancashire. Unfortunately, James died in Lancaster, aged 30, when son John was just one. Widow Agnes remarried and little John was brought up back in Settle by Agnes's mum. He became an inspector

of wagons on the railway but died in 1908, aged just 32. He was buried in the unmarked grave *Old EX33*.

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'.

Newspaper cuttings with the kind permission of the British Newspaper Archives: 1 — Westmorland Gazette, 2 — Lancaster Guardian, 3 — Kendal Mercury, 4 — Manchester Evening News

ph1 — photo with thanks to John Reid, ph2 — credited to Craven's Part in the Great War, ph3 — photo credited to the Back in Settle Facebook site, submitted by Mick Harrison

CH - with the kind permission of the Craven Herald and Pioneer

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