

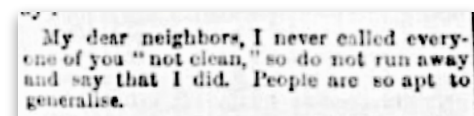
Theodore Percy Brocklehurst, a controversial vicar

Theodore Percy Brocklehurst was the Vicar of Giggleswick from 1900 until his death in 1933. Historical documents paint a picture of an eccentric, opinionated man who was not afraid to say what he thought, even if he upset his congregation and authorities. He caused particular exasperation to **Thomas Brayshaw**, the gifted amateur historian who described him as a *'lying blackguard'* and a *'dishonourable cad'*. In his book *'Gossip from Giggleswick'* Bill Mitchell suggests that Theodore's *'originality of thought and action meant that he was at odds with influential people'*, including Thomas Brayshaw, although it is very clear that the way he spoke often made a bad situation worse and conflict is completely understandable. Bill Mitchell also described him as *'a man of sturdy intellectual independence'* with *'a flair for self-publicity'* and you can't disagree with that! [A] With his most positive pants on Theodore was as a progressive breath of fresh air, unafraid to tackle problems and embrace alternative solutions to serve the community.

Theodore was born in 1854 in London but was brought up around the country as his father, **Thomas Hall Brocklehurst** was a Wesleyan minister. Whilst in Lincoln he learned from the Cathedral organist which instigated a deep knowledge of organs and choral music. After graduating at Cambridge, he became an assistant master, organist, choirmaster and French teacher at Woodhouse Grove school near Yeadon, Leeds and then Headmaster at Roundhay School in Leeds for ten years. He was ordained in 1892 and then served in Folkestone, Jesmond, Northumberland and South Mersham in Surrey before arriving in Giggleswick in 1900.

Whilst at South Mersham Theodore supervised the installation of an organ. He had an idea to tackle a local problem of vagrants, proposing a new public house to increase social interaction and decrease drunkenness [1]. This is typical of his thinking outside of the box. Theodore was only at South Mersham for a couple years before moving to Giggleswick. The official reason for his departure was that the Giggleswick post offered far more *'with seating for a thousand worshippers and in the parish is a large public school, for which a new chapel, costing £40,000 is in the course of erection.'* However, another reason could have been the response to his poor choice of words, which transpired to be a common problem, after complaints about another another good idea a few months before. Theodore had suggested that a doctor should attend services to preach on the gospel of fresh air to compliment his spiritual ministry. He said, *"It is almost a farce to come and talk to you you on spiritual matters when all the while my fingers itch to clean and open your windows, scrub your woodwork and wash your children"*. The parishioners were up in arms that he was calling them unclean. His explanation really didn't help — *'My dear neighbours, I never called everyone of you 'not clean' so do not run away and say that I did. People are so apt to generalise.'* [2]

Theodore arrived in Giggleswick, replacing **Rev Addison Crofton**, and bought the very grand Well House as his residence, and from then on called it 'The Well House' claiming a link to the

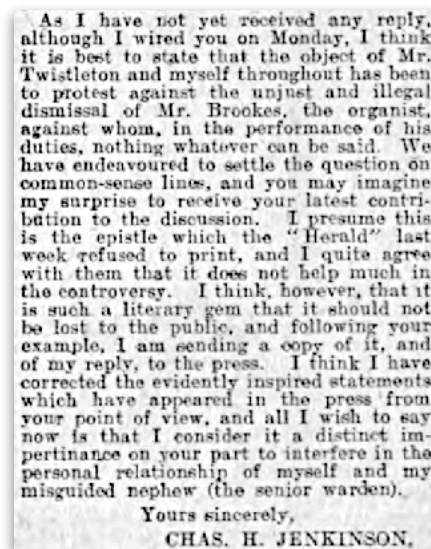


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Ebbing and Flowing Well at Giggleswick. In his first issue of the Parish Magazine, on 1 September 1930, Theodore said, *'our sole wish is to do our duty not in the way of eye-service as men-pleasers but as servants of Christ. Whatever your religious or political opinions may be will make no difference to us in our social intercourse with you and we shall remain outside any cliques or coteries that may possibly obtain in this place. Time alone can and will prove this.'* The Parish was warned!

One of Rev Theodore's early decisions was that the church should save money by having bell ringers and organists on a voluntary basis rather than paying them and anyone who wanted to practise on the church organ should pay for the privilege! In 1896 the church had appointed **John Goddard Barker** who was an outstanding organist and choirmaster. Despite Theodore's excellent reputation in organs and music this decision could be why, in 1903, John Goddard Barker moved to Holy Ascension church and was paid £25 for his services. The dispute about paid organists rolled on and there were many services held without an organist. Churchwarden **Charles Henry Jenkinson** responded in the papers, protesting *'against the illegal and unjust dismissal of Mr Brookes, the organist'* and also *'I wish to say that I consider it a distinct impertinence on your part to interfere in the personal relationship of myself and my misguided nephew [B].'* Oh dear. To ease the situation **Mr Ernest Brookes** was replaced by Theodore's wife, on a voluntary basis, between 1913 and 1924. After she stopped, due to health reasons, Theodore said he would play the organ, on the condition that he was paid £25!! In the end the parishioners raised money to pay for an organist, **Andrew Warren**. The vicar said, *'Some of you have been participators in a very old English game of baiting the badger. You have had a good run for your money and you have not yet drawn 'Old Brock' [3]*

Over at Holy Ascension the new vicar, **Rev Walter Edward Linney** had been appointed in November 1902. This is something else through which Theodore managed to make himself unpopular. In August 1901, just as Theodore arrived in Giggleswick, **Rev Richard Craven Garnett** resigned from Holy Ascension. Some 33 candidates applied to take his position and the Trustees decided to ask five to their next meeting and several others also followed in the following weeks. However, the appointment appeared to be delayed and the reason became apparent. As the vicar of Giggleswick church, Theodore was a trustee of Holy Ascension Church. On 8 October 1901 Theodore [B] wrote, *'I have decided to take no further part in the appointment of an incumbent in the present vacancy.'*[C] Oh dear, perhaps Theodore wasn't getting his way? The Trustees decided to write to the Chancellor of the Diocese to confirm they had the power to nominate a minister without the Vicar of Giggleswick's agreement, which they did as long as the Vicar of Giggleswick signed a disclaimer. The Trustees



As I have not yet received any reply, although I wired you on Monday, I think it is best to state that the object of Mr. Twistleton and myself throughout has been to protest against the unjust and illegal dismissal of Mr. Brookes, the organist, against whom, in the performance of his duties, nothing whatever can be said. We have endeavoured to settle the question on common-sense lines, and you may imagine my surprise to receive your latest contribution to the discussion. I presume this is the epistle which the "Herald" last week refused to print, and I quite agree with them that it does not help much in the controversy. I think, however, that it is such a literary gem that it should not be lost to the public, and following your example, I am sending a copy of it, and of my reply, to the press. I think I have corrected the evidently inspired statements which have appeared in the press from your point of view, and all I wish to say now is that I consider it a distinct impertinence on your part to interfere in the personal relationship of myself and my misguided nephew (the senior warden).

Yours sincerely,
CHAS. H. JENKINSON.



VICAR'S REPLY TO CRITICS.
"BAITING THE BADGER" AS AN
ANALOGY.
TROUBLE OVER ORGAN PLAYING PAY.



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prepared a disclaimer however, on 2 November it was reported that the Vicar of Giggleswick had returned the form of renunciation unsigned but had said *'under all the circumstances the only way in which I am able to help you in this if you will be good enough to let me know as soon as you have unanimously decided upon a suitable nomination ... then I can give my preferred confirmation'*.

This appointment rolled on for months. Eventually the remaining Trustees gave up and the Bishop was asked to

That the Clerk be instructed to write to the Rev. T. P. Brocklehurst as follows :—

"I am instructed by the Governors of Giggleswick School to inform you that at their meeting, to-day, they unanimously resolved that they could not accept your offer of a prize."

intervene, appointing Rev Walter Edward Linney over a year after Rev Garnett's departure. Theodore was certainly making his presence felt! It's not surprising that in 1901, when Theodore offered to present a prize for practical work in physical science to Giggleswick School pupils his offer was refused, *'I am instructed by the Governors of Giggleswick School to inform you that at their meeting today, they unanimously resolved that they could not accept your offer of a prize.'*

Spinster **Lady Elizabeth Stansfeld** lived at Bankwell in Giggleswick with her brother-in-law **Charles Henry Charlesworth**, a solicitor and she had a housemaid called **Agnes Ann Arkwright**. Elizabeth incurred the wrath of Theodore because she refused to let him visit Agnes Ann in the final months of her life. He wrote in the Parish Magazine under the title *'Puzzle—to find the Christianity'* that this state of affairs was *'cunningly engineered by a spinster who gave strict order to the nurse-attendant who was too frightened to disobey the stern injunctions of this domineering individual, that when the Vicar or his wife called to see the lonesome widow (whom for two years was kept 'in coventry' by this splenetic person because she dared to marry against an old maid's whim) they were on no account to be allowed to see her!'* In the following Parish Magazine Rev Brocklehurst had to *'unreservedly withdraw all the charges contained therein'* and apologised after being threatened with libel by Elizabeth via her brother-in-law Charles Henry Charlesworth [B]. Rev Brocklehurst also had to pay all her costs!

Theodore was not supportive of female suffrage and wrote in The Giggleswick Parish Magazine of 1906, *'Our sympathies fully go out with those public men who have had such lively experiences with screeching suffragettes. The gyrations of these eccentric huffees are very droll. These weaker sexites would be more dignifiedly employed in not neglecting their households in the shape of husband (feeding the brutes!) and children, or even of poodles and pussies, than in pirouetting in front of the public for their own vanity and self-effulgency (the quality of being radiant), degrading earth's noblest creation — a woman perfected. . . A woman who affects masculine ways and forgets what is becoming in her sex, has no right to complain if men do not show her the respect which a womanly woman is always able to command.'* Ouch.

In 1913 Theodore was not afraid to speak as he thought upon the death of **Charles Alured Swale** who had taken his own life. Charles had recently sold some land to Settle Rural District Council and some members of the public suggested he had a particular pecuniary interest. Theodore wrote to the papers to say that Charles had been *'morally murdered'* by mischief makers who were iniquitous and cruelly mean [4]. Over the years Theodore sent hundreds of letters to the newspapers covering all topics from spiritual matters, how the war was being managed and social reform.



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Well regarded antiquarian, **Thomas Brayshaw**, 'a sober minded and methodical man' who happened to live almost next door, had particular grievances. Over many years Thomas criticised almost every aspect of Brocklehurst's ministry, getting more personal as the years went by.

'Mr Brocklehurst has recently adopted the title of 'Rector' — he has not the slightest right to this as he owns no rectoral tithes.'

Thomas compiled a summary of Brocklehurst's 'deliberate falsifications to bolster up his newly invented style of 'Giggleswick-in-Craven'. [5]

'The leaflet issued by Brocklehurst under the title 'A walk around the church' is a bare and dishonourable literary theft of which only a dishonourable cad would be guilty. It is obviously intended to convey the impression that he compiled the leaflet.' Brayshaw had compiled a remarkably similar version a few years previously and Thomas wrote pages of anger and annoyance about this. In the end Thomas moved away from Giggleswick to live in Settle and was buried in a secluded spot in Settle graveyard instead of with his ancestors in Giggleswick graveyard.

However, Theodore was credited with enhancing the strong music tradition of the church, arranging for a performance of *The Messiah* annually. He openly referred to his churchmanship as 'broad church' in both words and actions. He invited a Jewish Rabbi and a minister of the Primitive Methodists to come and preach from the pulpit, much to the dismay of some parishioners. Theodore held special services for cyclists, having arranged free parking at the Hart's Head. He is also known for allowing dogs to church services to be kept under the pews. Theodore regularly tutored individual students who struggled to pass exams, at Well House.

Theodore was happy to help out behind the bar if the Black Horse or the Hart's Head was short of staff. Well House had a large garden and if a traveler turned up at the door Theodore offered them half an hour's work in the garden in reward for tea and sandwiches. The *'Disappearing Cherries'* story is well known. On one occasion some local lads stole cherries from the garden so Theodore preached from the pulpit and wrote in the Parish Magazine that a reward would be given to catch the culprits! [A] He was a keen gardener and took flowers to church each week to give to a parishioner of his choosing. Theodore's gardener was **Charles Green** who only had good things to say about him in his diary. *'Mr Brocklehurst's garden was chiefly tennis courts, flower borders and orchard. Mr Brocklehurst loved order and tidiness and would sacrifice anything to have his garden tidy. He worked hundreds of hours with me and a jolly good chap*

THE VICAR'S CHERRIES.
The Vicar of Giggleswick is a Vicar generally of forthright, and not infrequently of original, phrase. He is a Vicar, also, who owns a very charming garden in which, it would appear, are cherry trees bearing fruit. Some of the cherries have been garnered, seemingly, by alien hands, and the Vicar has found out. He is interested in the identity of the offenders, for he has caused the following notice to be circulated:—

NOTICE.

£2 REWARD
Will be paid to anyone who, in strict confidence, gives information about the SNEAK who stole T'OWD VICAR'S CHERRIES on the Eve of St. Swithin's Day. A 'kid's trick' and 'no class.'

This report has been so evidently written and despatched by Mr. Brocklehurst himself (probably before the sermon itself was delivered), that I feel bound, in the interests of historical accuracy, to make a slight correction. The preacher therein describes himself as "Rector of Giggleswick-in-Craven." This description is correct except that he is not "rector," and the name of the village where he ministers is not "Giggleswick-in-Craven." He receives no rectorial tithes and has not a shred of right to the title of rector, being merely a vicar, whilst the old village is simply "Giggleswick."

I have no criticism to offer on the sermon itself but (like everyone else in this locality) I have a great dislike to these recent inventions, and if Mr. Brocklehurst can substantiate either of these innovations I shall be glad to contribute £5 to his Church funds.

Yours, etc.,
THOS. BRAYSHAW.

Settle,
3rd June, 1924.



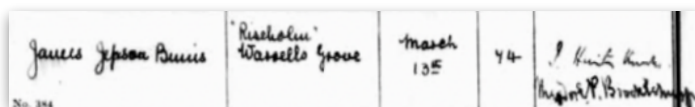
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was he. He had his faults, as we all have, but we were always splendid friends.' [D]

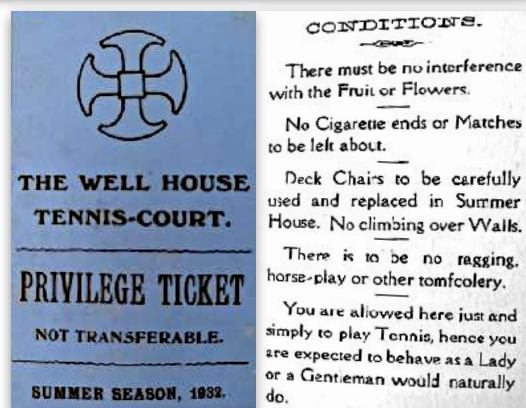
During the war, in his sixties, Theodore worked with the YMCA for four months at Marseilles, supplying the troops with food and cigarettes, and for three months chaplain at Broadmoor Lunatic Asylum. Thomas Brayshaw found fault in his report about this too, 'A most glaring thing is that an article purports to be written from the British Expeditionary Force, France. As a matter of fact Brocklehurst did not go to France for some time after the article was written.' In 1921 Theodore organised the Chapel of Remembrance to be built, commemorated with a wooden memorial.



In 1913 Holy Ascension church had a new organ built and installed by **James Jepson Binns**, a premier organ builder of the day — the organ is still in use today. Theodore had a very favourable impression of James' skills and talents. Writing in 'The Organ' quarterly, in July 1929, Theodore reported that: 'There was at that period a very fine musician in Leeds, namely J. W. Broughton, who had a Schulze chamber organ in his music room, which was tuned by Mr Binns on behalf of Messrs Abbott & Co. Mr Broughton became so interested in young Binns, that learning of his great ambition to start organ building on his own account, said to him: "If you can make a pipe and put it into one of the diapason stops so that I cannot detect the difference between your pipe and the rest, I think I might be able to put you in the way of starting."' The upshot of this was that Mr Binns was able to start the Bramley Organ Works in Leeds in 1880. When James Jepson Binns died in 1929, aged 74, Theodore was involved in his funeral service.



The choir were regularly invited to play on his tennis courts. In 1932, and probably in other years too, Theodore allowed local people to use his tennis court on Thursday and Sunday evenings and on Sunday afternoon. To do this they needed a 'privilege ticket' and agree to certain terms and conditions including 'no interference with fruit or flowers in the garden, no cigarette ends or matches to be left about, no ragging, horseplay or other tomfoolery' and the expectation 'to behave as a Lady or Gentleman would naturally do'!



In later years Theodore delighted in calling himself T'Owd Vicar. In the spring of 1933, aged 78, he decided to retire 'in favour of a younger man' [5]. He died in July that year and was replaced by **Guy Walmisley-Dresser**. As a life member of the cremation society, similarly controversial and progressive in those days, Theodore was cremated in Leeds and there is no burial stone in the graveyard. After Theodore died, his widow moved south and died in 1949, aged 86.

The Rev. **Theodore P. Brocklehurst**, Vicar of Giggleswick for 33 years, who is contemplating retirement "in favour of a younger man."

What do we know about Theodore's family?

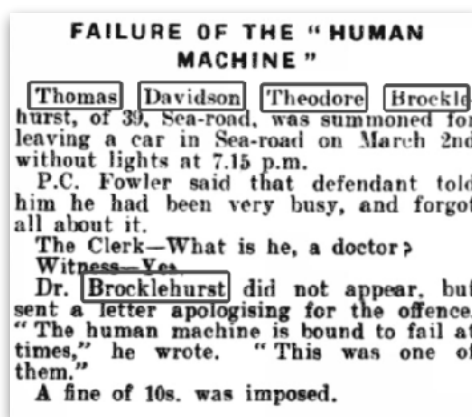
Theodore was the eldest of four children of **Thomas Hall Brocklehurst**, Wesleyan minister from Cheshire and his wife **Lucy Ann Ive**. Lucy Ann's father, **George Henry Ive**, was a London jeweller. Lucy Ann's brothers were **Simon Ive**, a Cambridge graduate who also became a clergyman, and the wonderfully named **Trumplett Ive** who, appropriately enough, emigrated to Texas, USA.

Theodore's brother, **George Henry Brocklehurst** was another schoolmaster. He married **Emily Norton** and they ran a school together in Edinburgh with Emily being the 'Lady Superintendent'. They had two daughters but then lived apart for the rest of their lives. Impressively, whilst bringing up the daughters Emily ran Oakley Lodge School, which later became Coombrook House School, in Hemel Hempstead for about 45 pupils of primary age. Her daughters later helped to run the school [ph1]. She was known as 'Brocky' by the pupils. The school continued until 1960, 30 years after Emily died. Emily left a healthy estate to her daughters. Meanwhile George Henry went back to live with his mother in Kent and worked as a tutor.

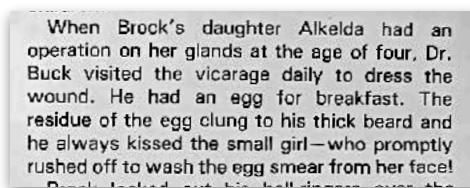


When he was 42 Theodore Percy Brocklehurst married a younger widow, **Elizabeth (Davidson) Beavis** who was from Northumberland. She already had a son and a daughter with her first husband **James Beavis**, a bank clerk who died aged 33, and she had three more children with Theodore. They were all brought up in the Brocklehurst home and all ended up living in the South of England.

Stepdaughter **Lena Beavis** married **Gerald Morton Dunn** who was an architect. He was killed on the Western Front on 13 October 1918, aged 33. Their only child, **James Raymond Dunn** was also a victim of war — he was killed on 2 November 1945 when he was 32. Poor Lena. Theodore and Elizabeth's son **Thomas Davidson Theodore Brocklehurst** became a doctor, working in Surrey. His only misdemeanour was in 1935 when he received a minimal fine for leaving his car without lights on at 7.15pm which he put down to an honest human mistake! [6]. He spent his last years in South Africa.



Theodore and Elizabeth's youngest child, a daughter **Enid**, was given the middle name **Alkelda** after Giggleswick church, and was actually known as Alkelda. According to Bill Mitchell [A], when she was four Alkelda had an operation on her glands after which she had a close encounter with some egg on Dr Buck's beard![A] She married and divorced **Victor Charles Vinson** and then made a living as a dance teacher. She married again in 1945 and died aged 91!



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 includes the families buried in the graveyard. The project is ongoing and welcomes queries and information on settlresearch@gmail.com. Latest news and events are on the Facebook page 'Settle Graveyard Project'.

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A — Some information from this account is credited to 'Gossip from Giggleswick' by Bill Mitchell

B — with thanks to the church for access to 'Brayshaw's red book' and the Giggleswick Church Archives

C — with thanks to Holy Ascension for their Trustees minute book

D — the diaries of Charles Green with thanks to the Museum of North Craven Life.

Newspaper cuttings with the kind permission of the British Newspaper Archives: 1 — Epsom Journal, 2 — Morning Leader, 3 — Lancashire Evening Post, 4 — Bradford Daily Telegraph, 5 — Yorkshire Post, 6 — Bexhill-on-Sea Observer

Baptism documentation via ancestry.co.uk, credited to The National Archives.

ph1 — credited to hertfordshire-genealogy.blogspot.com, ph2 — with thanks to Pam Jordan, via the Back in Settle Facebook site