

## The Irvines, serving the country

Minto in Roxburghshire is a village just north of the Scottish border, southeast of Edinburgh, originally serving the needs of Roxburgh Castle and close to Minto House, the seat of the Earls of Minto. The village's claim to fame was that between 1827 and 1831, the whole village was moved so the 2nd Earl wouldn't be able to see it from his mansion! The current village was planned to have *'no paupers, no toll-bars and no public houses'*. The new school was established in 1838 with 112 pupils. Unsurprisingly, Minto village is now a conservation area. Minto House [ph1] was demolished in 1992 having been derelict and dangerous for years, much to the annoyance of the Lord of Minto at that time.

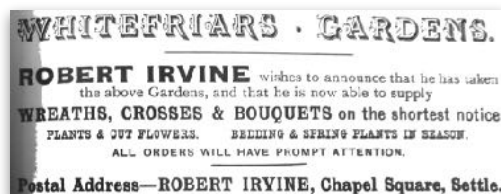


Before, during and after this rebuild **Robert Irvine** worked as a carpenter on the estate to earn the money to feed his large family and wife **Betty Telfer**. On 10 May 1840, their son, another **Robert Irvine** was in Perth, north of Edinburgh for his wedding to **Susan Robertson**. Almost exactly a year later, on 6 June 1841, at the time of the 1841 census, Robert was at Far Cattleside in Rathmell working as a *'gardener domestic servant'* with the Geldard family. Where was his wife, Susan? She was at Trinity Gask, just south of Perth, probably with her parents as she had given birth to their daughter, **Mary Irvine**, on 24 May. Susan and Mary joined Robert in Rathmell and, from the birthplaces of their other five children, the family appeared to stay there until 1877 when they moved to Thornton-in-Craven before finding themselves in Settle in 1881. Robert had landed the job of domestic gardener for the Birkbeck family at Anley.

Many of the Birkbeck's servants that we have researched stayed for life, but not Robert. By 1883 Robert had been replaced at Anley by **Joseph Harrison**. That year, the North Craven Horticultural Society reported that, at their first *'autumn show of vegetables, chrysanthemums and primulas and caged birds'* at the Drill Hall, Mr Harrison of Anley was the judge for vegetables, chrysanthemums and primulas and Robert was on the management committee. You will be glad to know that Robert also won the first prize for the category *'20 Brussels Sprouts'*! [1]

Robert later worked for Joseph Harrison. Joseph moved from Anley to manage the Ashfield Nurseries on behalf of the owner **Thomas Clark**. Joseph employed a young man called **Charles Green** who wrote in his diaries *'I remember when I came back to Settle to work at Ashfield Nurseries under Mr Harrison who was the manager for Thomas Clark of the firm Thomas Clark and Sons. Mr Harrison wanted a man to take over from Robert Irvine and I wanted a job.'* Perhaps the wages were not enough for Robert and his family? Charles reported, *'The wage was very small but my house rent was very low. We had returned to our beloved Settle so I was prepared for sacrifice'* [A]

By the time of the 1891 census the family lived in Chapel Square and Robert was a *'jobbing gardener'*. However, by 1899 Robert was advertising his own business, having just taken over Whitefriar's gardens from **Mr Kingswell** [LSA].





### Settle Graveyard Project

William John Ion, born in 1905, worked at Giggleswick workhouse during the early 1930s. By the time of the 1939 pre-war register William and his wife **Olive Birtle** were '*Institution Master and Matron*' of Eden House Public Assistance Institution in Kirkby Stephen with around 80 'inmates'. This typically foreboding building was originally set up in 1836 as a workhouse to provide for the poor of the county of Westmorland [ph3]. In 1930 the workhouse evolved into the Eden House Public Assistance Institution providing for sick men and women as well as pregnant women and the destitute. This was another forward looking institution with inmates doing the work to run the institution — cleaning rooms, washing up, preparing vegetables, gardening, shovelling coal and chopping sticks which were sold to the community to raise funds. William John lived to the age of 86 and his wife to the age of 88.



Meanwhile Robert and Susan's eldest son, **William Irvine**, started a long career working for the Post Office as a sorting clerk and telegraphist. In 1901, aged 29, it was reported that William, aged 29, '*had a hearty 'send off' on the occasion of his leaving for South Africa, to take up duties in the Post Office department*' [LSA]. Between 1904 and 1910 he served in the Army as a telegraphist, still in South Africa. However, in 1910 William was back and married **Sarah Mellard Outram**, a Rotherham miner's daughter who was a much younger bride. They lived in the Halsteads Terrace on Duke Street and William became head clerk at the Post Office. They had two sons, **Robert Henry (Harry) Irvine** and **Peter Irvine** and then, ten years later had another son, **John Donald Irvine**. They retired to live at Ivy Dene until William died in 1926, aged 54.

17. Mr. W. Irvine, of Settle, had a hearty "send-off," on the occasion of his leaving for South Africa, to take up duties in the Post Office department.

William's widow, Sarah, moved to run the Castleberg (Temperance) Hotel at the foot of Constitution Hill with her son Peter [ph4]. The hotel was in business by 1911 but was replaced by the Cinema in 1931. Sarah died in 1937 aged 52 and was buried in *Old K23* and their commemorations stone seems to have been added more recently.



*In memory of William Irvine 1872 - 1926 and his wife Sarah M Irvine 1885 - 1937.*



The three sons were educated at Giggleswick School. Son Peter became a dentist in Leeds. During WW2 Peter served as a Lieutenant in the Royal Indian Army Service and fought on the Burmese border. In 1941 he married **Esme Isherwood** in Leeds and stayed there until he died, aged 92. Youngest John Donald Irvine worked in a bank before his military service and survived the war.



Unfortunately, eldest son Robert Henry (Harry) Irvine [B] was not so lucky. He was employed by **Anthony Horner** photographers in Settle but left there in

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1933 to serve with the Army, with some time in Singapore. After a few years he joined the West Riding Constabulary photographic section in Wakefield where he met and married **Molly Steel** in 1943. When war was declared Harry joined the RAF and trained as a navigator in Rhodesia. He became a Flying Officer navigating in Halifax bombers based at RAF Tiree in the Inner Hebrides. On 28 January 1944 Harry was reported missing during a training expedition, thought to have had an accident in low cloud. He was 32. Harry is remembered on Settle War Memorial and Giggleswick School Roll of Honour.



*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'.*

*A – The diaries of Charles Green with thanks to the Museum of North Craven Life*

*B – Wartime sacrifice in the Yorkshire Dales, by Keith Taylor*

*Newspaper cuttings with the kind permission of the British Newspaper Archives: 1 – Lancaster Gazette*

*ph1 – Photograph of a postcard from William Ritchie & Sons, Ltd, Wikipedia public domain, ph2 – with thanks to John Reid, ph3 – credited to the excellent [workhouses.org.uk](http://workhouses.org.uk), ph4 – photo credited to the Back in Settle Facebook site, submitted by Janet Mitchell*

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