

Christopher Harrison, cattle dealer extraordinaire

Christopher was born in 1836, the eldest child of **John Harrison**, a farmer from Hesley Hall, Rathmell and his wife **Betsy Silverwood**, of Harrow Lodge, Slaidburn. He was baptised in Rathmell just two months after his parents' wedding. The family soon moved to Austwick where they stayed for the rest of their lives and John evolved to become a cattle dealer. To say this was a fertile family is an understatement. In the 23 years after their wedding Betsy produced 14 children - yes 14! Poor Betsy. She must have been worn out. Tragically, just two years after youngest daughter, **Grace Harrison**, was born, Betsy left their home in Austwick and her body was found three weeks later on South House Moore, having died of exposure. She was buried and given a memorial stone which is well preserved in Clapham graveyard^[ph3].



In memory of Betsy Harrison wife of John Harrison of Austwick who was found dead Nov 13th 1861 aged 48 years. Also of James Harrison son of the above who died May 23rd 1862 aged 4 years. Also of John Harrison, husband of the above who died May 11th 1870, aged 59 years.

Betsy was joined by her youngest son, **James Harrison**, who died six months later, aged just four and then John in 1870. The eldest children had left home long before Betsy died, most working as farm servants from the age of 11 or 12. Others lived together in Burton-in-Lonsdale until ready to start their own lives. With the exception of son **John Harrison**, who became a tailor and youngest daughter Grace who married a mason, the rest became, or married, farmers, butchers or cattle dealers. Most continued the tradition of having a large family.

Eldest son **Christopher Harrison** started working life as a butcher. When he was 32, in 1869, just before his father died, Christopher married **Mary Jenkinson** whose family were successful Giggleswick farmers. Christopher and Mary had 11 children ^[ph2] with just two, **Betsy** and youngest **Henry King Harrison** dying in infancy. They lived at several addresses in Giggleswick, including Ivy Fold, but settled in Tems House. Christopher's career took off and he became one of the best respected cattle dealers in the North, often trading around 50 cattle at fairs. He was, unsurprisingly asked to be a judge at many Agricultural Shows.



Christopher and fellow cattle dealer **Robert Preston** of Long Preston were some of the first traders to send consignments of cattle into the district via the Settle to Carlisle Railway, even before the cattle docks had been built at the stations. However, in 1885 Christopher and Robert were transporting 'fat cattle', ready for slaughter, south from Carlisle. As the train was passing south through Horton-in-Ribblesdale a number of wagons left the line. One animal died in the crash and four more had to be slaughtered. Christopher and Robert were in the guard's van

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and they received 'a very severe shaking, Mr Harrison's face also being injured'. In addition, 'a quantity of lace curtains and wearing apparel was scattered upon the permanent way'[1].

Christopher left a very generous estate of £2,300 when he died in 1901, aged 65. At that point the sons took over Tems House and Mary moved to Swabek until she died in 1929, aged 83. They are buried with an impressive stone with some of their children and several other children in the nearby graves.

In loving memory of Christopher Harrison the beloved husband of Mary Harrison who died June 2nd 1901 aged 65 years. Also of Mary the dearly beloved wife of the above who departed this life March 15th 1929 in her 84th year. To memory ever dear. Also of Mary Tate, daughter of Christopher and Mary Harrison who died March 13th 1946 in her 75th year. Also of Betsy Harrison who died November 1st 1874 aged 13 months. Also of Henry King Harrison who died December 26th 1891 aged 9 months. B7/81b.



slaughtered forthwith. Messrs C. Harrison, of Giggleswick, and Robert Preston of Longpreston, to whom the cattle belonged, were at the time in the guard's van, and they and the guard received a very severe shaking, Mr Harrison's face also being injured. The sides of one of the cattle trucks had been entirely carried away, whilst several others were almost entirely demolished, and a quantity of lace curtains and wearing apparel was scattered upon the permanent way, which, as might have been expected, was considerably damaged. Traffic was delayed for some time.

With Christopher's business acumen their children were set up for successful careers which they all achieved. However, youngest son William, sitting at the front of the photo, was the most famous. A great place to start is the account by Bill Mitchell in his book 'Gossip from Giggleswick'.

WHENEVER financiers met in the City of London, during the 1920s and 1930s, the name of William Harrison was mentioned. He was the man with the humble rural background who, in four short years, had risen through all the levels of Metropolitan business life until he presided over one of the largest paper manufacturing firms, had contacts in many lands and, in the 1920s, had spent an unbelievably large sum of £3 million to acquire for his company a number of influential magazines.

The life of Harrison had affinities with that of Dick Whittington, in the sense that he went to London, made his fortune and never forgot his native heath, to which he showed great benevolence. As far as we know, William Harrison did not own a cat, and, unlike Whittington, he did not have to think about his future thrice: once was enough for this Yorkshireman!

He was born in Giggleswick on November 23, 1885. His father, Christopher Harrison, had begun business in a humble way as a butcher at Settle; he moved to Tems House. Giggleswick, became one of the biggest cattle dealers in the North and among the first to use the new Settle-Carlisle railway to move stock from Scotland to the graziers' and markets of Yorkshire. The sheep he bought went as far as Smithfield.

His mother, Mary, bore nine children. On the death of Christopher they moved to Swawbeck. William, a lively lad, attended Giggleswick School, where he was good at Rugby and cricket. He left the village with £10 in his

WILLIAM HARRISON:
The Dick Whittington
of Giggleswick

pocket, became articled to Messrs Westwood and Howe, a firm of solicitors in Bradford, obtained a legal degree at Leeds University in 1910 and then, aged 21, began to make his mark in London as a junior partner in Fielder and Company.

He was to be described as a solicitor, businessman and cricket-lover. His financial deals, first with property, then in the paper and newspaper industries, became the talk of London. He presided over the Inveresk Paper Company and later of the Thomas Owen papermaking group. It was written of him: "He is always on the move between London, Edinburgh and Berlin, with occasional sudden dashes to America to consolidate and enlarge his interests there."

His passion for cricket usually meant that he arranged his many overseas business appointments to suit the dates of Test Matches. He employed some well-known Yorkshire cricketers in his enterprises. Neither did he forget Rugby. When an appeal was being launched for the building of the new Bradford Grammar School, he lent his support and was introduced to one audience as "the most cunning and slippery half-back." Whereupon,



MR. HARRISON AND RICHARD MOORE

Harrison related that when he left Giggleswick for London, his dear old mother told him there must be no more Rugby football for him. He would not be able to afford it. "So I ended up with a broken leg and two broken shoulders, which wasn't so bad." He founded two scholarships at Bradford in memory of his parents.

Giggleswick was ever in his thoughts. He provided funds for the holding of an annual treat for the old folk. Shortly after the 1939-45 war, he purchased a tract of open land, "The Fellins", and handed it over to the parish council for conversion into a recreation ground, later giving cash sums to provide amenities. A portrait of William Harrison hangs in the Parish Room.

His Yorkshireness impressed all who met him. A business associate described him as "a Yorkshireman and a genius." Asked the secret of his success, he replied: "Hard work—that is the only way to success." In 1958, Leeds University conferred on him the honorary degree of Doctor of Laws.

His business competitors were wryly amused when he employed Yorkshire cricketers in his business, yet he believed the qualities that made successful cricketers—the hard grind of practice, the will to win, the ability to make

quick decisions—also made good businessmen. Len Hutton worked for him; so did Herbert Sutcliffe and Douglas Jardine. It was through William Harrison that the Yorkshire cricket team regularly played a match against Settle; the match was followed by a dinner and in 1960 it was a special occasion. Herbert Sutcliffe and Maurice Leyland were present and greetings telegrams were read out from Wilfred Rhodes, Jack Hobbs, Percy Holmes.

William Harrison told the assembly that although he had lived in London for 50 years, and was a member of the Surrey County Cricket Club, he had never lost his pride in being a Yorkshireman. He retained a special affection for Giggleswick and Settle, "whose sturdiness and solidity are attested by Castleberg rock." He died in February, 1979. The funeral took place in a period of such heavy snow that mourners had difficulty in reaching Giggleswick Church for the service at 2 p.m. Arrangements had been made for the coffin to be transported north by rail. Through an error the van containing it was placed in a siding at Doncaster. The Church service went ahead at the specified time, but not until 4 p.m., on the arrival of the coffin, could the committal proceedings take place. The mourners dispersed in the wintry gloom. . .

A further summary of his career (and photo) was provided by the *Illustrated London News* in 1928 when William was the 'organising genius' assembling the 'Great Eight' newspapers at Inveresk House in London making him a leading figure in the newspaper world. William was only 42 at the time.

Mr. William Harrison, to whose organising genius is due the assemblage of "the Great Eight" at Inveresk House, became a leading figure in the newspaper world in 1926, when, as Chairman of the Inveresk Paper Company, Ltd., he purchased from Sir John Ellerman the control of a group including "The Illustrated London News," "Sketch," "Sphere," "Tatler," and "Eve." To these have since been added the "Graphic" and "Bystander." In 1927 he acquired the "Lancashire Daily Post" and, last July, the "Daily Chronicle," the "Sunday News," and three provincial papers. Mr. Harrison, who is under forty-five, was born in Yorkshire. He was educated at Giggleswick Grammar School and Leeds University, where he took his LL.B. In 1910 he was articled to a solicitor in Bradford; then, coming to London, he was admitted a solicitor, and became a partner in the firm of Harrison, Fielder and Co. Under his direction the Inveresk Paper Company, Ltd. has acquired numerous pulp and paper mills in Scotland, England, and Germany, and has large interests in North Africa.

Unsurprisingly there are numerous articles celebrating his success but one in the *Linlithgowshire Gazette* summed them all up, writing 'no man who has financial power and newspaper influence in England has had such a spectacular rise as Mr William Harrison, son of a Yorkshire hill farmer, pupil at a village school and lawyer with a small practice in property conveyancing. His climb from obscurity in the space of a few years has been to his immense energy and his inherent ability for carrying through a deal'.

MR. HARRISON'S CAREER.

No man who has held financial power and newspaper influence in England has had such a spectacular rise as Mr William Harrison, son of a Yorkshire hill farmer, pupil at a village school, and lawyer with a small practice in property conveyancing. His climb from obscurity in the space of a few years has been due to his immense energy and his inherent ability for carrying through a deal.



William was known to value his Yorkshire roots and that included entertaining the Yorkshire cricket team at the Savoy Hotel in London, during which he attempted to seal a deal with **Wilfred Rhodes**,

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who was approaching retirement as a professional, to coach at Giggleswick School. William even offered to pay his salary! [2]

William is still celebrated locally as he donated land to the Parish Council in 1949 to become the Harrison Playing Fields in memory of his parents, providing somewhere for children to play for perpetuity. There was a slight hiccup when **Tom Maudsley** from Stainforth refused to sell his land as he would lose valuable grazing but, as we can still see today, the Harrison Playing Fields are still enjoyed by young and old alike. In 1952 the Castleberg Hospital, which in those days specialised in mental illness requested to use the playing fields to support the rehabilitation of its patients. Unfortunately, William was not in agreement, 'Mr Harrison is utterly opposed to the use of these field by mental patients' and the relevant authorities 'will not be allowed to have anything to do with them.' [1] Ouch.

In his personal life William married **Margaret Simpson Nicoll** from Scotland and they had a son and a daughter. Their gravestone is just inside the lych gate in Giggleswick graveyard, in prime position for visitors to the church to walk by and remember them. William was 93 when he died! The burial records also state that a portrait of William Harrison was on display in the Parish Rooms [ph4].



In loving memory of Margaret Simpson Harrison beloved wife and companion for 54 years of William Harrison LL.D. of London, loving mother of her son Bill and daughter Mary Mollett, born 9th December 1885 died 28th September 1966. Also in loving memory of the above named William Harrison born 23rd November 1885 died 9th February 1979. A1h/8



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 settlerearch@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 – Yorkshire Post, 2 – Sheffield Daily Telegraph

ph2 – credited to the Back in Settle facebook site, submitted by Sheard Sumner, ph3 – credited to family descendants via Ancestry.co.uk, username Catherine Austin, ph4 – painted by Frank Ernest Beresford, credited to artuk.org, and on display at The Stanley & Audrey Burton Gallery, University of Leeds, uploaded by descendant via Ancestry.co.uk, username leroy10193

FUTURE OF RHODES.

Yorkshire Player to Keep in Touch with Game.

Wilfred Rhodes, the famous Yorkshire and England cricketer, who is retiring at the end of the present season, has formed no plans whatever for the future.

He certainly intends to keep in touch with the game somehow, either as an umpire, a coach, or even in league cricket. He is sure to get lots of offers, and it will be recalled that last season when the Yorkshire players were entertained to dinner at the Savoy Hotel by Mr [William Harrison] that gentleman said he would very much like Rhodes, when he retired, to coach at his old school, [Giggleswick], and would be very pleased to pay his salary.

The letter, written by Mr [Harrison's] secretary, says: "Mr. [Harrison] is utterly opposed to the use of these fields by mental patients, as suggested by certain local authorities, and he thinks it right to point out that such local authorities have nothing whatever to do with the Fellins properties and will not be allowed to have anything to do with them."



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Happy memories of **CHRISTOPHER HARRISON** [663] of Tems House Farm who passed away 4th August 1958 aged 76 years

AMY HARRISON [750] wife of the above who passed away 15th November 1968 aged 75 years¹

MARY ISABEL HARRISON [267] loving daughter of the above who passed away 23rd February 2003 aged 75 years

¹ Burial Register records her age as 74 years. B7/81b

A3/**C9**. Treasured memories of a dear and devoted husband and father **JOHN HARRISON** [674] who died 7th Aug. 1959 in his 84th year.

Also of **JANE** [34] wife of the above who died 27th Aug. 1979 aged 96 years.

And their only son **CHRISTOPHER HARRISON** who died 12th Sep. 2002 aged 81 years.

A3/**I18**. **CHRISTOPHER HARRISON** [209] Cherished memories of a loving husband and father. Born 22nd March 1916 at Tems House, died 1st October 1996. Home to rest.

B7/**79**. In loving memory of **SARAH ANNIE** dearly loved wife of Charles **HARRISON** [423] died Jan. 26th 1939 aged 55 years.

Also of **CHARLES HARRISON** [578] died Feb. 20th 1951 aged 70 years.

Peace, perfect peace.

B7/81a. To the dear memory of **HANNAH (JENKINSON) BECKWITH** [789] died January 16th 1900 aged 51 years.

MATILDA JENKINSON [168] died July 23rd 1915 aged 62 years¹

Also **CHARLES HENRY JENKINSON** [308] brother of the above, died May 4th 1929 in his 78th year*²

Also of **ELIZABETH** daughter of Christopher and Mary **HARRISON** [642] who died Feb. 1st 1957 in her 88th year.

¹ Burial Register records her age as 61 years.

² Burial Register records his age as 78 years.