

Joseph Coates, Hellifield entrepreneur

Joseph was one of at least seven children of **John Coates** and his first wife **Isabella Clark** who both came from successful farming families and married in 1861. John's parents, **Christopher** and **Elizabeth (Helm) Coates** farmed at Oliver's Farm in Tosside and Laneside at Wigglesworth and won numerous awards at the agricultural shows for their horses. However Christopher had a court appearance in 1866 for breaking regulations during the cattle plague, moving his cattle between his farms. Isabella's parents, **Adam** and **Margaret Clark**, farmed from Wham near Rathmell and that's where they started their married life and had their first three children. Six years after marrying, John and Isabella moved from Rathmell to farm at Chapel House at Dale Head [ph1] and to have their remaining six children including twins **Joseph** and **Mary Coates** who were born on 25 December 1868, yes, really!



For some reason, during the late 1870s the family moved to Hellifield, still farming. In 1932 the village of Dale Head was flooded to create Stocks Reservoir but this was too far into the future for them to use this as a reason to move! More likely, the move could have been because Hellifield was becoming an exciting place, full of potential. The Leeds to Lancaster railway line was opened in 1849 and a small railway station was opened quarter of a mile south of the current one. The Settle to Carlisle Railway was completed in 1876 and Hellifield was selected to be a stopping point for watering and servicing steam engines and to provide a large refreshment room for passengers on the long journey between London and Scotland. The new, much enlarged Hellifield Station was completed in 1880 and it became a very busy junction with the Clitheroe/Blackburn branch. Perhaps Hellifield seemed an attractive place for John's older sons to find employment? Isabella died in Hellifield in 1888, aged 51. At the time of the next census widow John described himself as a milk dealer and son Joseph was working as a butter and cheese dealer, a convenient side shoot of his dad's business. They lived on the 'Old Station Road'. Just weeks after that census return John married **Hannah Gainford**, 32 years his junior, who was a blacksmith's daughter from Calderbridge near Sellafield in Cumbria and they had another son and daughter.

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John died in 1907, aged 72 and left a reasonable sum to ensure Hannah could bring up the children — his youngest daughter, **Nellie Coates**, was just eight. John, Isabella and their son, **Edward Coates**, who died in 1890, aged 25, are buried together in Long Preston graveyard. Their gravestone is right next to that of Isabella's parents, **Adam and Margaret Clark**.



Three years after John's death widow Hannah married **William Soulsby**, a railway goods guard and they moved to Lancashire taking youngest daughter Nellie with them. In 1911 John and Hannah's son **Alfred Coates**, who described himself as a gardener, emigrated to Canada, aged 18. This was not as extraordinary or uncommon as it may seem. John's brother, **Thomas Coates** and several distant cousins had previously emigrated to Canada. **Robert Coates**, John's second cousin 1x removed was one of these cousins. Robert frequently came back to England to visit relations and the diary of one of his visits was recently published by the North Craven Heritage Trust. During a visit in 1901 he popped in to say hello to John and second wife Hannah — he described Hannah as '*a typical farmer's wife!*'^[ph2]. The rest of John's children stayed in the north of England. Twin Mary Coates married **Harry Hargreaves Hudson**, an engine stoker from Salford and they lived in Great Harwood near Accrington with their family.

Wed. Aug. 14th. Alfred and I left by train for Hellifield. Raining as usual. Found John Coates place. Glad to see me. Talked about Canada and his brother Thomas's family. He often spoke of Richards visit with them years ago. We had dinner with him. Mrs. Coates, his second wife was a typical farmer's wife. Took train back to Clitheroe. We will return next day.

Son Joseph Coates, the other twin, born in 1868, was just the right age to capitalise on the opportunities provided by the railway at Hellifield, and he certainly did that. The railway paved the way for the development of a substantial cattle market and associated trades and so the population of the village grew. In 1892 Joseph married **Martha Annie Smithson**, the daughter of a farmer from Slaidburn. Martha Annie began on the production of four sons and a daughter while

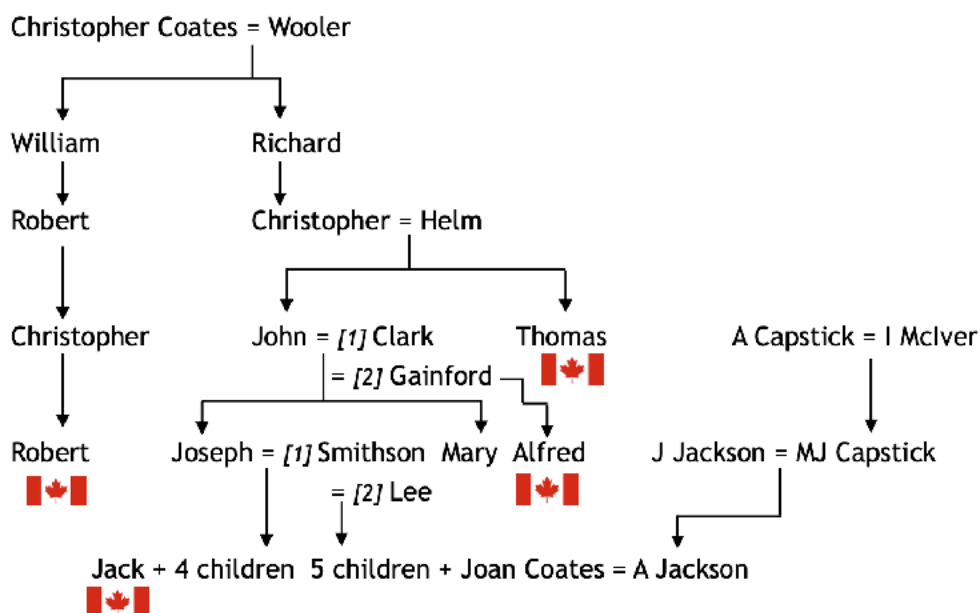


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Joseph set about making a fortune. As we know he started working as a butter and cheese dealer and listed that as his occupation on all subsequent census returns. He was successful, winning numerous awards for his butter at agricultural shows. However, it's likely that Martha and children did much of the work in the butter business because Joseph was busy with other things! Initially the family lived at 1 Peel Terrace in Hellifield, at the west of the village, but were later found on Central Mews, close to the railway. Joseph had been so successful that he had built Central Mews. The fantastic photo [ph1] shows the row of cottages and the family lived in the large double fronted property at the left end. The archway was the entrance to Joseph's yard and outbuildings which formed a square at the back of the property. The sign above the archway reads, 'Joseph Coates, Central Mews, Horses, Carriages, Hire, Carter, General Carrier.' He would transport anything anywhere — produce, people (as a taxi service) and also provided a black carriage as a hearse. There is a report of 21 year old Joseph driving his cart in Nelson — he accidentally drove into a child as he was bending down to avoid a clothes line. The carriage house was approached via a ramp to the left of the building and the whole family helped out with polishing all the carriages and horse tack. In the photo Joseph is sitting on one of his carriages with eldest son, **Jack Coates**, holding the horse. How had a butter dealer managed to achieve this? Joseph realised that, as well as farming, butter making and providing his carriage, at this point in the industrial revolution, the best money was to be made through dealing coal. The railways, business and domestic homes relied on coal for machinery and heating. Most coal dealers we have researched have become very wealthy and Joseph was no exception. Joseph's coal house was under his carriage house and opened onto the side street. He invested his wealthy proceeds in property, owning land across the Craven area and even owned the Station Inn at Ribbleshead. The carriage business declined during the 1930s as cars became more popular but Joseph's fortune had been made by then. Descendants remember he was a tall man who liked a drink and wasn't known for smiling but that didn't affect his business sense!



Unfortunately, Martha Annie died at Christmas in 1899, soon after the birth of their youngest son, another **Joseph Coates (Jnr)**. Many widowers would quickly remarry to have someone to look after the children but Joseph chose to employ a housekeeper, **Sarah Agnes Lee**,



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who had an infant of her own, **Eva May Lee**, [ph1] born soon after Joseph and Martha Annie's infant Joseph. Perhaps Sarah Agnes was employed to help as a wet-nurse as well as a housekeeper? Unfortunately, little Eva May died, aged five. In the following census returns Sarah Agnes remained with Joseph, as his 'housekeeper' with an increasing number of children, the first few given the middle name 'Coates' to confirm they were Joseph's children. In the end they had five daughters and a son.

When they eventually married in 1934, in their sixties, their wedding certificate indicated that Sarah Agnes' father was **William Lee**, a bootmaker who had already died. Their witnesses were Joseph's youngest son **Joseph (Jnr) Coates** and **Wilfred Bridges** who would become Joseph (Jnr)'s brother-in-law when he married Wilfred's sister **Henrietta May Bridges**. During WW2 Wilfred was awarded the British Empire Medal for his services with the Royal Engineers, working on the railway.

Marriage solemnized at <u>The Parochial Church</u> in the <u>Parish</u> of <u>Hellifield</u> in the County of <u>York</u>							
When Married	Name and Surname	Age	Condition	Rank or Profession	Residence at the time of Marriage	Father's Name and Surname	Rank or Profession of Father
March 31st 1934	Joseph Coates	66	widower	Engine Carpenter	The Mans Hellifield	John Coates (deceased)	Farmer
	Sarah Agnes Lee	62	widow	—	The Mans Hellifield	William Lee (deceased)	Bootmaker

solemnized in the Parochial Church according to the Rites and Ceremonies of the Church of England by licence or otherwise by me,
 Marriage solemnized in the presence of us, Joseph Coates Wilfred Bridges
Sarah Agnes Lee

Joseph had had a slightly disrupted childhood as his mother died when he was 20 and his father remarrying three years later. However, Joseph was old enough to have his own life by then. Sarah Agnes Lee's parents had a far more disrupted background and her life bore similarities to that of her poor maternal grandmother.

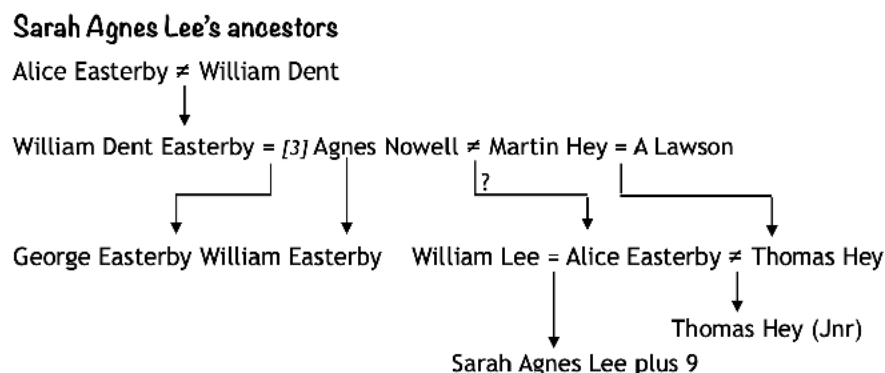
Sarah Agnes, named after her two grandmothers, was the eldest of ten children of **William Lee** and his wife **Alice Easterby**. William was born at Goosnargh, near Preston but his mother, **Sarah Parkinson** had died when he was three and his father, **Timothy Lee**, another bootmaker, had died when he was just eight. Such was the lottery of life in the 19th century. So, William was brought up by his elder siblings who lived in Upholland, near Skelmersdale, Lancashire and then lived with Uncle **Thomas Lee**, another shoemaker who had moved to the Ingleton Fells to make some money around the shanty towns while the Settle to Carlisle Railway was being built. It's here that he met **Alice Easterby** who was from Thornton-in-Lonsdale and they married in 1872. They settled in Long Preston to have their large family.

Alice Easterby had an extraordinary upbringing which clearly demonstrates the difficulties of life as a woman in Dales villages in those days. In March 1844 Alice's mother, **Agnes Nowell**, from Austwick, had become the third wife of **William Dent Easterby**, his first two wives having died during childbirth. Agnes helped with raising several children from William's previous marriages. William was originally the illegitimate son of another **Alice Easterby**, fathered by **William Dent**. This was to become a theme. A couple of months after the wedding Agnes gave birth to a son, **George Easterby**. William Dent Easterby died in January 1845 less than a year after the wedding. A year after that Agnes gave birth to another son, **William Easterby**. George and William were brought up by Agnes' parents for reasons which will become clear.

At the time of the following census in 1851, Agnes was in Thornton-in-Lonsdale working as a housekeeper to recently widowed **Martin Hey**, a farmer of over 32 acres who lived with one of his
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sons, **Thomas Hey**. She had her infant daughter **Alice Easterby** with her. William was more than 20 years older than Agnes. Agnes remained working as Martin's housekeeper for the rest of his life. During the 1870s they moved to live at Goat Gap Farm near Newby. Perhaps they had good coffee there? In the next few years Agnes had two more daughters, both fathered by Martin Hey. We have no proof that Alice was also fathered by Martin Hey but most descendants who have researched their family tree on Ancestry think she was. Martin and Alice never married for some reason. The good news is that, when he died in 1884, aged 80, Martin Hey left his modest estate to be equally divided between all his children, including Alice, '*wife of William Lee*'. After Martin died Agnes lived in Ingleton with her spinster daughter, **Betsy Easterby** until she died of 'senile decay' in 1902, aged 79.



So, this was Alice Easterby's background. However, in January 1871 Alice had given birth to an illegitimate son, **Thomas Easterby**. Baptism records show that the father of the son was none other than her step-brother, William Hey's son, **Thomas Hey**, who was 14 years older than her. This may raise eyebrows by today's standards but, in the days without contraception, it was just the way of life. Infant son Thomas was brought up by grandparents William Hey and Agnes Easterby. A year later in May 1872 Alice married William Lee and their witnesses were Alice's sister **Mary Easterby** and the father of her child, Thomas Hey. One has to wonder who knew about what? Thomas Hey (Snr) married a year later to **Jane Blamire**, also much younger than him, and they had a son named **Thomas Martin Hey**, confusingly. Alice must have felt happy to have had a relatively stable family life with her husband William Lee and her ten children. One of William and Alice's children was named **Martin Hey Lee** so she obviously had affection and respect for her father.

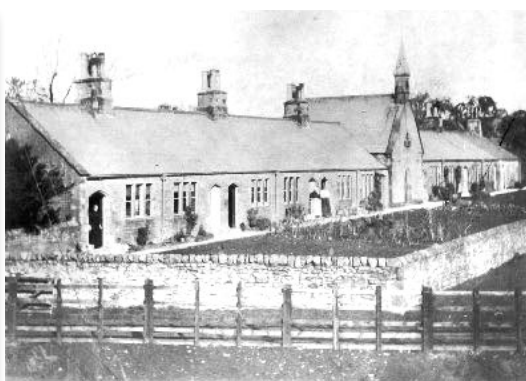
Unfortunately, William Lee also died young of influenza and pneumonia on 9 February 1892, aged 42 a year after the birth of their tenth child, **Timothy Charles Lee** who died in June 1892, aged about 16 months and perhaps from the same infection. So, Alice brought up the younger children alone, working as a laundress to make ends meet.

In December 1909 Alice wrote to **Mr Wildman**, who managed the admissions for the Almshouses in Long Preston [ph3]. The Almshouses provided cheap supported accommodation, originally established for the '*deserving poor*' and managed by charitable Trustees. Alice wrote that she '*read in last night's paper that Mrs Hodgson is dead at the Hospital*' [ph4] and enquired as to whether she could take her place at the Almshouses. The authorities asked her to answer some questions such as her age (60), number of years a widow (18), and living in Long Preston/Hellifield (27). She was accepted and spent her last twelve years there before dying of heart disease. William and Alice are buried with a simple stone in Long Preston graveyard. Hopefully little Timothy was in there too.

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In Loving Memory of William Lee, died February 9th 1892, aged 42 years. Also of Alice, wife of the above, died November 17th, 1921, aged 79.

To Mr. H. J. Waldman
 Sir, I enclose in last
 night's paper, that Mr. Hodgson
 is dead, at the Hospital,
 I apply for the house
 if you think I could come



William and Alice's eldest daughter Sarah Agnes Lee began her working life in service at The Riddings, just north of Long Preston. She may well have had to leave her position when she became pregnant but then fell on her feet when she lived with Joseph Coates, initially as his housekeeper and then as his wife. They had four daughters, including twins, **Jean Coates** (sometimes called Jane) who was born just before **Joan Coates** [ph1] and a son, **Mark Coates**. Sarah Agnes looks quite exhausted looking after those twins! At the time of the 1921 census they were still living and working at Central Mews in Hellifield but in the following years retired to 5 Mains View in Settle where they died within a year of each other. They were buried back in Long Preston where the remains of a kerbstone memorial commemorates Joseph's life. Hopefully he is buried in a new section of the graveyard with Sarah and his son. His first wife would have been buried in an older section of the graveyard.



Joseph Coates, (late of Central Mews, Hellifield) who died April 4th 1938, aged 69



COATES Joseph of 5 Mains View Settle **Yorkshire** died 4 April 1938
 Probate **Wakefield** 18 May to Joseph Coates licensed victualler
 and Charles Henry Charlesworth solicitor.
 Effects £4502 14s. 9d.

What happened to Joseph's children? Joseph's eldest three sons, **Jack (John William)**, **Fred** and **Major Coates** served in WW1. Descendants remember that, on their return, they insisted on smashing up the family's German manufactured piano, much to their step-mother's distress. Jack signed up to the West Riding Regiment as early as January 1911 when he had just turned 18. However, by 1913 he had married a nurse and emigrated to Canada and signed up to a Canadian regiment. His documentation tells us he was 5 foot 6 inches tall with brown hair and brown eyes. He had a 'curved scar one inch long on palmar surface of distal phalanx (the end) 1st left finger and vaccination marks.' After the war Jack remained in Saskatchewan, Canada with his family and worked as a farmer. Perhaps he managed to catch up with his uncle Alfred Coates, who was actually born in the same year as Jack?

Curved scar one inch
 long on palmar surface of distal
 phalanx 1st left finger.
 Also seven vaccination marks
 making a square scar two inches by
 1 1/2 inches on left upper arm.

When he died, Joseph's estate was split up between his sons who had remained in the area. Joseph and Martha's second son **Fred Coates**, who helped in the family business, served with the

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Lancaster Regiment in Italy. As the years went by he shared the coal business with his younger brother, **Major Coates**. Fred lived in Thorndale Street, Hellfield with his wife and family. He was remembered making deliveries with his horse and cart when petrol was rationed in WW2. **Major Coates** remained in Central Mews working as a coal merchant with his wife, **May Towler**, and children. Their spinster sister **Bella Coates** lived with them and worked as a shop assistant at the Post Office. Major had a nasty accident in 1927, aged 29, when he crashed his motorbike into the parapet of the bridge at Bridge End in Long Preston. **Frank Shorrock** was riding pillion and was thrown over the parade into the beck. They were both taken to Leeds Infirmary and, incredibly, recovered[1]. Unfortunately, Major died in 1942, aged 42, thought to be from contracting lung disease from his cattle.

Joseph and Martha's fourth son **Joseph Coates (Jnr)** inherited the Station Inn at Ribbleshead which had a farm attached. So, he became a farmer and licensee with his wife **Henrietta May Bridges** and family. Joseph and Sarah Agnes' youngest child, **Mark Coates**, pictured with his twin sisters [ph1], didn't miss out on the inheritance. He was given New House Farm, Bowland which he ran with his spinster sister, Jean Coates, the shorter of the twins, until he married **Eva Wilson** who had been working in domestic service for the vicar there.

Joseph told his daughters they had to marry into their money. As we know, Bella remained single and lived with her brother Major. Joseph and Sarah Agnes' daughter **Monica Coates** left school when she was 12 and was sent to work at the Westhead cotton mills in Clitheroe. In 1919 she went to stay with relations in Morecambe for a holiday and there she met and then married **Frank Clough** who was a partner in a bakery in Huddersfield. They settled in Huddersfield to have their family. Sisters **Norah** and **Mabel** also started life at the Clitheroe mills but later qualified as nurses. Norah found a job nursing in the Royal Albert Institution in Lancaster which had originally been called 'The Royal Albert Asylum for the Care, Education and Training of Idiots, Imbeciles and Weak-Minded Children and Young Persons of the Northern Counties'. By the time Norah worked there adults were cared for too. When she was 36 Norah met **Samuel Cokell** from Settle who had a career as a 'mental attendant' at Castleberg Hospital and they lived in Lancaster. Samuel's brother was the well known **Ernie Cokell** the decorator. Meanwhile Mabel became engaged to **Norman Kelly**. His family had come over to Bridge End cottages in Settle from County Cork and worked in Hector Christie's mills. Unfortunately, Norman, an apprentice mechanic at the mill, died in 1933, aged just 28. So, a year later Mabel married Norman's brother, **Dennis Kelly**, who was also a mechanic at the mills. They had their family living at 14 Procter's Row in Settle but retired to Bradford.

Joseph and Sarah Agnes' remaining daughter, **Joan Coates**, the taller and slightly older of the twins, worked as a piece examiner at Kings Mill in Settle, living with her sister Mabel (Kelly) in Procter's Row. In 1940, aged 27, she married 39 year old **Alexander Jackson**, the only child of **John Jackson** and his wife **Mary Jane Capstick**. John came from a long line of farmers, originating in



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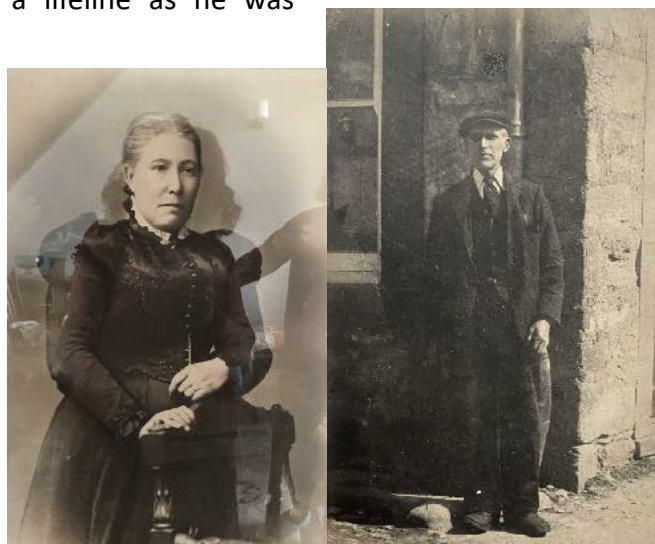
Horton-in-Ribblesdale. John Jackson [ph1] had acquired the tenancy of Barrel Sykes Farm just outside Settle and Alexander helped out with his dairy business. Descendants remember that Alexander had a limp because, as a child, he broke his leg whilst playing in the snow at Langcliffe. There was no surgery at that stage but, when Alexander was 49, he was offered corrective surgery at Leeds Infirmary. Tragically, the hospital didn't check on Alexander's history of diabetes and so he died because of the effect of the anaesthetic. Poor old Joan was left with two daughters to raise. Alexander's father had bought a house at The Ings in Settle for his retirement. Joan and the girls moved there with him and Joan cared for him until he died, aged 87, after a road traffic accident involving a bus. Joan also lived to a ripe old age of 88, dying in 2001, 52 years after her husband. Alexander, Joan and Alexander's parents are buried in Langcliffe graveyard.



Alexander's grandmother Mary Jane Capstick was the daughter of **Alexander Capstick** and **Isabella Mclver**. Isabella, the daughter of a railway porter, was from Liverpool, her parents having come over from Ireland. Unfortunately, both her parents died during her teenage years and so she and her sister, **Jane Mclver**, came to find work in the Langcliffe mills. Isabella married Alexander Capstick in 1873 when she was 21. Alexander was from a farming family in Horton-in-Ribblesdale but had travelled down the valley to find labouring work during the building of the Settle to Carlisle railway. At the time of the 1881 census Alexander and Isabella lived on New Street, Langcliffe with the first two of their three children. Isabella's sister Jane Mclver lived with them. Alexander was described as 'general labourer out of employ' and 'blind'. Isabella was working in the mills.

Alexander Capstick	Head	Mar	30	General Labourer (out of employ)	Horton	Blind
Isabella Do	Wife	Mar	29	Cotton Weaver	Lancashire, Liverpool	
Mary J Do	Daughter		7	Scholar	Yorkshire, Langcliffe	
Elizabeth Do	Daughter		3		Do Do	
Isabella Mclver	Boarder	Mar	23	Cotton Weaver	Lancashire, Liverpool	

The reason for this was an accident on the railway works in May 1874, just a year after their wedding. It is thought that Alexander went back to unlit dynamite at the Blea Moor tunnel at Ribbleshead and it exploded. Mr Newhouse and Mr Mitchell organised a collection for him and raised £38 13s 4d [2]. This is equivalent to £2,420 at today's value [A] and was worth over half a year's salary for a skilled tradesman and would buy 2 horses, 7 cows, 58 stones of wool or 19 quarters of wheat. This would have been a lifeline as he was unemployed at the time of the next census return. The good news is that after this Alexander started a greengrocery business which will have helped pay the bills! He was photographed wearing an eye patch over one eye. Mary Jane also had her photo taken, looking quite sombre [ph1].



SETTLE.
 THE ACCIDENT TO A. CAPSTICK.—Messrs. C. Newhouse and T. Mitchell, who had kindly undertaken to make a collection for the relief of Alexander Capstick, of Langcliffe, who had been deprived of sight by an accident on the works of the Settle and Carlisle Railway, desire, through our columns, to state that the sum collected by them amounted to £38 13s. 4d. They will also be thankful to acknowledge any further sums that may be forwarded to them.

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Another view of Joseph Coates' warehouse and home, dated around 1900. The building on the right is thought to be the last of the navy huts for workers building the 'Lanky Lane' (Lancashire and Yorkshire Line), running from Hellifield to Blackburn [ph5].



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 settleresearch@gmail.com. Latest news and events are on the Facebook page 'Settle Graveyard Project'.

Thanks to a descendant of the Coates family for their help with this account

Newspaper cuttings with the kind permission of the British Newspaper Archives: 1 – Yorkshire Evening Post, 2 – Lancaster Guardian

ph1 – photo with thanks to descendant Mary Faulkner, ph2 – credited to the North Craven Heritage Trust Journal 2023, ph3 – photo credited to the Long Preston Heritage Group, ph4 – credited to family descendants via Ancestry.co.uk, username Dolly-Daydreams, ph5 – credited to Paul Hammond via the Back in Settle Facebook site.

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A – currency conversion from the national archives website