

The Gomersalls

William Gomersall, 1821 - 1901, was a successful tenant farmer who lived at Hill House in Otterburn for over 70 years [ph1] and farmed around 320 acres of neighbouring land, 165 acres of which were rented from others. [1].



When William died in 1901, aged 80, his obituary provided some interesting snippets which required further investigation.

William regularly featured in reports of the local Agricultural Shows winning awards for his shorthorn cattle and later for judging that category. He was also a respected geologist with a notable collection of fossils, *'the best made by a private person in Yorkshire'* [2].

The Gomersall family originated in the village of Gomersall in the Parish of Birstall, south of Leeds. William inherited the Hill House farm from his father, William Gomersall (Snr), who died in 1845.

Just before that, in 1844, William married a local farmer's daughter Mary Lodge Beverley, the sister of successful brothers Anthony Taylor Beverley and Christopher Lodge Beverley who were Wakefield brewers. Unfortunately, Mary died of peritonitis, aged 32, nine years later. Her enormous gravestone and prime position just outside the church altar indicates the success of William's business as well as his feelings for her.



In memory Mary wife of William Gomersall of Otterburn who died February 20th 1853 aged 32 years.

In 1853 William [A] married a corn miller's daughter Agnes Shackleton [A]. They were together for 47 years until William's death and during that time Agnes gave birth to five daughters and six sons.



OTTERBURN,
In the PARISH of KIRKBY-MALHAMDALE.
TO BE SOLD BY AUCTION,
By Mr. CRAIG,
At the BLACK HORSE HOTEL, in Skipton, in the County of York, on TUESDAY, the 24th July, 1856, at THREE o'clock in the Afternoon, subject to the Conditions to be then produced,

ALL that valuable FREEHOLD ESTATE, situate at Otterburn, in the Parish of Kirkby-Malhamdale, in the County of York; now in the Occupation of Mr. WILLIAM GOMERSALL, as Tenant thereof, and divided into the several Closes or Inclosures, and containing the several quantities hereinafter particularized, (be the same more or less)

	A.	R.	P.
The Crossbar Hill, (including a small plantation)	25	6	29
The Great Humber	87	2	38
The Trantimber	53	2	25

A. 165 2 0

The death of Mr. William Gomersall, of Otterburn-in-Craven, which occurred last week at Skipton, is regretted by those in London who were privileged to know something of his attainments. He was the oldest representative of an historic Yorkshire family, and he himself lived at Otterburn-in-Craven for over seventy years. Lieut.-Col. Gomersall, as students of the Peninsular wars will remember, was a distinguished soldier under Wellington, and fought with him in almost every great battle against Napoleon excepting Waterloo. His brother was William Gomersall, of Gomersal, near Hirstal, and afterwards acquired property at Otterburn, to which place he removed, and where his son William, now deceased, was born. Mr. Gomersall was well-known locally as a breeder of shorthorns and as a judge at agricultural shows, but further afield we have heard of him most frequently as a practical geologist. Practically self-taught, he, nevertheless, was an extensive reader, and had a good library of standard works. His collection of fossils was one of the best made by a private person in Yorkshire, and it is now at the Philosophical Museum, Bradford. In 1889 he published a small brochure on hunting in Craven, and dedicated it to Sir Matthew Wilson, of Eshton Hall. He also read a paper on the formation of the Yorkshire hills at the meeting of the British Association at Bradford in 1873. His son, the Rev. W. J. Gomersall, who is a Presbyterian minister at Hampstead, is also a writer of verse, and has been humorously spoken of as "Craven's greatest poet."

The only blemish in William's career was in 1891 when he fell foul of the dog muzzling laws [3]. He was in the company of others who should have known better including *George Kenneth Charlesworth*, Settle solicitor and *John Brown*, a Settle blacksmith.

—The Muzzling Order.—The following persons were ordered to pay the usual penalty of 5s., including costs, for having infringed this order:—William Gomersall, Otterburn; Geo. Heardall, Settle; David Mallinson, Giggleswick; Thos. Heslton, Stackhouse; John Brown, Settle; George Kenneth Charlesworth, Settle.

William was known to enjoy sports, especially hunting. Unfortunately, these took precedence over his farming which suffered and eventually William went into debt and had to sell up. William and Agnes retired to a quiet terrace in Skipton but are buried together in Kirkby Malham Graveyard with daughters *Mary*, 29, *Agnes Hilda*, 28 and *Harriet*, 19, who all died within a year of each other, probably from a contagious disease. Their gravestone was normal sized – tiny in comparison to Mary's!

Mary daughter of William and Agnes Gomersall of Otterburn in Craven who died April 12th 1890 aged 29 years. Also Agnes Hilda who died December 1st 1890 aged 28 years sister of the above. Also Harriet who died September 17th 1891 aged 19 years sister of the above. William Gomersall of Otterburn in Craven born 26th November 1821 died 23rd December 1901. Agnes Gomersall beloved wife of the above interred November 25th 1918 aged 86 years.



Their children chose a variety of paths. The eldest three sons **William Joseph**, **Hubert** and **Frederick William** were privately educated until the age of ten and then attended Giggleswick School as weekly boarders.

Eldest William Joseph Gomersall [A], born 1855, studied Classics at Oxford and then worked as a tutor at a private school in Brighton where he met his wife-to-be **Fanny Woods**. They ran a school together. In 1885 William Joseph won a scholarship to study Holy Orders. He was ordained a Deacon in 1910 and took a curacy in Hampstead. In 1911 he wrote, "*One of Life's red letter days - On August 13th 1911, I had the pleasure and privilege of preaching in the Kirkby Malham Parish Church. Mr Morrison read the lessons. The parishioners did me the signal honour of 'turning out' en masse. Mr Morrison left the 'brace' in the vestry*" [A]. He founded and ran the 'Eligible Social Circle' for lonely middle class singles in London to meet at Whist Drives, Dances, Country Walks etc. and it became so popular that it achieved a membership of over 500.



William Joseph was also a prolific poet, '*known humorously as Craven's Greatest Poet*'. His poems regularly featured in the Craven Herald and other publications. He wrote several poems about Malhamdale including this one about Malham:

In wild retreat, sequestered far, From din of rail and dust of car, The Dale of Malham lies; The nursling waters of the Aire, From lake and spring foregather there, 'Neath bracing crags and skies.

By devious routes, two rugged roads, Lead onward to the famed abodes, Of Malham's scenic wonders, – The silent Cove, sublimely steep, And Gordale where the waters leap, In caverned, lonesome thunders [A]

William Joseph died of pneumonia in 1918 and his ashes were buried back in Kirkby Malham at the foot of his parents' grave with a memorial stone remembering his life as a poet:

Rev William Joseph Gomersall son of William and Agnes Gomersall died April 3rd 1917 aged 61 years. A poet of Craven.



Second son Hubert, born in 1856, used his education to work in the accounts office at the Silk Mill at Bell Busk. The Silk Mill was owned by the **Garforth/Tottie** family. When he was 18 Hubert had a terrible accident falling from a hay cart. A leg wound turned gangrenous and the leg had to be amputated. Hubert stayed in Otterburn until he married **Jean Eliza Wright** from Bell Busk in 1894. The Silk Mill closed in 1900, allegedly because the Tottie family refused to renew the lease but Hubert managed to find a post of Assistant Cashier in a partner company, Brocklehursts, in Manchester and this is where the family, with ten children, remained.

Having trained as an accountant, Hubert and Mary Eliza's son **William Ellis Gomersall** [ph3] had become engaged to his cousin **May Gomersall**, daughter of uncle Rev William Joseph Gomersall. But this marriage was not to be. As a Lieutenant of the 22nd Battalion Manchester Regiment William was killed in action in France on the first day of the Great Advance of the Somme, in the advance on Mametz on 1 July 1916. Out of 774 men involved in that advance, only 140 returned. May married Leonard Robinson Speakman, a merchant in 1921 but he died three years later. May worked as a midwife in London after that.



William and Agnes' third son **Frederick William Gomersall** became a travelling salesman who worked from Leeds, Sheffield and then settled in Eccles, Lancashire with brother John and his widowed mother. Frederick went blind in old age and died of a stroke.

Fourth and fifth sons **Edward Gomersall**, born 1865 [ph2] and **John Ellis Gomersall**, born 1866 attended the new Kirkby Malham school built by Walter Morrison. The school log book records that in 1876 '*Anne Peacock and other girls had penalties for waiting in the road last night so that Edward and John Gomersall overtook them, then chased them and finally John Gomersall kissed Anne Peacock. For this he and his brother were caned.*' [A] Edward became a forestry sawyer and travelled the UK doing his job. He was even thought to go to Argentina to work on the Argentinian Railway for Walter Morrison. He met his wife-to-be whilst working in Dorset. They settled in Hull with two children. Meanwhile John Ellis Gomersall attended Grammar School for a while before working as a butcher in Bradford and then Eccles, Lancashire.



The two surviving daughters both married. **Elizabeth Gomersall** moved to London and married **Joseph Genese**, a Jewish art dealer who died just three years after their wedding. Then she married a widow **John Palmer Dukes** who was a photography engraver. Daughter **Caroline Gomersall** moved to Skipton with her aged parents and there she met **James William Maxfield**, a cycle repairer. They lived in Burton-in-Lonsdale and ran the Post Office alongside cycle repairs. They didn't appear to marry but had three daughters.

William's obituary mentioned that his uncle was **Lt Colonel John Gomersall**, born in 1769, coincidentally the same year as Wellington and Napoleon. Being the son of a respected land owner and dyer, John purchased a commission in the 57th Rutlandshire Regiment and immediately saw action in the battles of Aboukir Bay. From this, despite being injured, he was promoted to Lieutenant and then Captain. He spent five years in Portugal, Spain and France and was one of 360 men invited to serve in Marshal Beresford's 16th Portugal Infantry having a pivotal role in the complex Peninsula Wars from 1810-1813. He died in 1920. He was remembered as a distinguished soldier who served and, allegedly, dined with Wellington. He was awarded the Companion to the Most Honorable Military Order of the Bath (CB) in 1815. John was

badly injured in 1813 and so could not serve again. His military records were kept with the Charlesworth Solicitors in Settle.

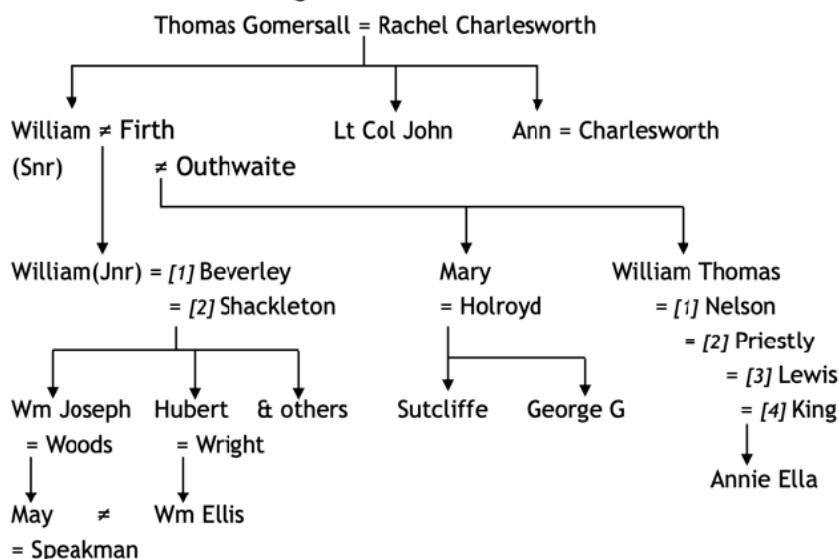
There is a tablet dedicated to his memory on the north side of Birstall Church [A]: **In Memory of John Gomersall Esq**

Companion of the Honourable Order of Bath. Major in the British Army and Lieutenant Colonel in the Portuguese Service in Egypt and in Spain under the command of Sir Ralph Abercrombie and the Duke of Wellington. He shared in the labour and triumphs of these memorable campaigns. Born at Gomersall June 11th 1769. He departed this life in London Feb. 8th 1820 and his remains were interred in Lambeth Church.



The Charlesworth family have had a couple of mentions in this story so far. Lt Colonel John Gomersall's parents were **Thomas Gomersall**, a land owner and dyer in Birstall near Leeds and his wife **Rachel Charlesworth**. As well as **William Gomersall (Snr)**, our original William Gomersall's father, and his brother Lt Col John Gomersall, Thomas and Rachel had other children including a daughter **Ann Gomersall** who married her first cousin **John Beedham Charlesworth**. Their descendants were to become the successful solicitors in Settle and Craven.

William Gomersall's family



William Gomersall (Snr), the father of our Otterburn William, born in 1773 in Gomersall, Birstall was an unconventional man. For most of his life he farmed from Hill House in Otterburn but also had property back in Birstall.

William didn't marry but still enjoyed relations with women, at least one of whom was his servant. He had three illegitimate children by two different women, one in Leeds and one in Otterburn. **Mary Gomersall Outhwaite**, 1811 and **William Thomas Gomersall Outhwaite**, 1822 were the children of **Ellen Outhwaite** in Leeds and **William Gomersall Firth**, 1821 (our Otterburn William) by **Margaret Firth** in Otterburn. The two sons were born within a year of each other. Ellen Outhwaite died in 1824 in Leeds but William must have made some provision for her children's upkeep as they led respectable lives. Who knows the arrangement going on there? At the time of the 1841 census William (Snr) lived with Margaret Firth as his servant while William (Jnr) lived in Otterburn at Hill House.

William Gomersall	68	N. Farmer
Margaret Firth	38	F. S.
John Beedham	18	F. S.

When he died William (Snr) split his 450 acre estate equally between his daughter and two sons although William (Jnr) acquired his siblings' shares at a later date.

William's daughter Mary Gomersall Outhwaite married **Joseph Holroyd**, a Halifax 'tailor, draper and undertaker'[4]. Their children certainly didn't lead ordinary lives. Sons **William Henry** and **Thomas** were chemists in London. Daughter **Harriet Jane Holroyd** married **Cajus Julius Knudson** [ph5], a merchant and the son of a Norwegian Magistrate. They lived in Norway, but Harriet later returned to live with her widowed mother.



Son **Sutcliffe Holroyd** went into the hospitality business, but with a preference for something special. He began his career in 1865 as the Secretary to the Whittington Club, 'a Bohemian experiment in middle class social reform' offering the advantages of a West End Club to lower middle class men 'and ladies' so they could share views and hear lectures on educational and recreational

WHITTINGTON CLUB, 37, Arundel-street, Strand (one minute from boat, railway, or omnibus). Subscription, £2 2s. Dinners provided daily at any hour. House dinner on Wednesday at Six o'clock.

SUTCLIFFE HOLROYD, Sec

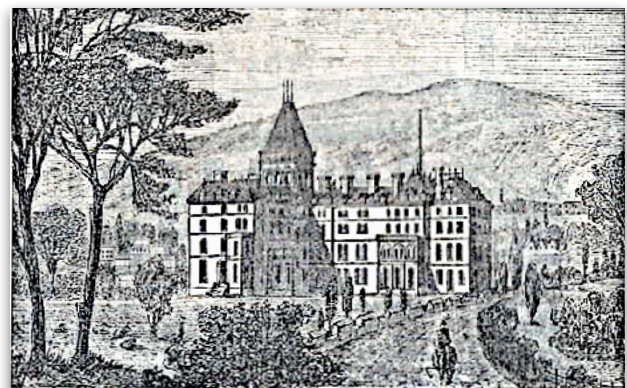
NORFOLK CLUB, ARUNDEL STREET, STRAND.

THIS CLUB possesses spacious Premises close to the Temple, the proposed new Law Courts, the Thames Embankment, &c. Gentlemen enjoy every Club advantage at an Annual Subscription of £2 2s., with an Entrance-fee of £5 5s. Further particulars on application to

SUTCLIFFE HOLROYD, Sec.

topics for self improvement. It attracted many literary and radical women who made up a third of the membership. In 1873 it was re-opened as the Temple Club. Nearby was the more conventional Norfolk Club and this is where Sutcliffe later moved [6]. He married **Elizabeth Walsh**, an innkeeper's daughter from Brackley, Northamptonshire and together they ran the Belgravia Mansion Flats on behalf of the Belgravia Mansion Company, employing 37 people. In those days the flats were occupied by very wealthy families.

In 1886 Sutcliffe and Eliza took over as proprietors of the Imperial Hotel in Malvern, the largest in town, with over 100 bedrooms. In those days Malvern was one of the most popular tourism destinations in the country as a spa and health town. The hotel was directly opposite the railway station with a dedicated tunnel to the basement of the Hotel. It was the first hotel to be lit by incandescent gas. It was equipped with all types of baths and brine brought in from Droitwich. It also had spectacularly beautiful scenery, pure water and salubrious (invigorating) air. Unfortunately, Sutcliffe was taken to court for 'refusing to serve food and reasonable refreshment' to Mr Ogilvie, a member of the New South Wales Legislature as it was late and the servants had already gone to bed. Sutcliffe was fined £5 and 5s [7].



MALVERN. THE IMPERIAL HOTEL, RAILWAY STATION, GREAT MALVERN.

THIS Hotel contains upwards of one hundred Bedrooms, Drawing-Rooms, Bed and Dressing Rooms and Closets *en suite*, a Ladies' Coffee-Room, a Gentlemen's Coffee-Room, Table d'Hôte, Reading and Billiard Rooms, etc. etc.

Sutcliffe and Eliza retired to the very nice houses on Cunningham Place, St John's Wood near Lord's Cricket Ground. However, he was tempted out of retirement to take over his brother William Henry's chemist business after his demise in 1910. Sutcliffe lived to the age of 87 outliving Eliza by three years.

MALVERN COUNTY COURT.

OBLIGATIONS OF HOTEL PROPRIETORS.

OGILVIE v. HOLROYD.—An action of considerable public interest was heard before Sir Rupert Kettle on Saturday. The plaintiff was Mr. E. D. Ogilvie, a member of the New South Wales Legislature, and the defendant was Mr. Sutcliffe Holroyd, manager of the Imperial Hotel. Plaintiff claimed £5 as damages for loss and inconvenience sustained by him by reason of defendant refusing to supply and provide him with food and reasonable refreshment at the Imperial Hotel, on the 31st of July last. Mr. Bentley represented the

In successful families there is often one sibling who let the side down. Mary and Joseph's son **George Gomersall Holroyd** became a book keeper. When he was 23, in 1860, he married **Sarah Ledger** from Limerick, Ireland and she quickly became pregnant with a daughter **Julia**. They moved straight to London and George secured a post as managing clerk for Bell and Black wax match makers. However, in 1867 George was summoned to the Old Bailey on a charge of embezzlement. This was not just a little bit but some £1500 from his employers along with colleagues David Allen, a travelling salesman and Frederick Foals, a clerk [5]. It transpired that George had also committed several forgeries by endorsing cheques made payable to the order of Messrs Bell and Black. Naughty George! He pleaded guilty and was imprisoned for seven years with hard labour. There are no more records for George after that so, if he survived, may have changed his name or moved abroad. Wife Sarah may have returned to Ireland or disappeared with George. Daughter **Julia** had a good life and family with an innkeeper **Charles James Carter** at the Duke of York, Marylebone which still operates today.

In 1875 tobacconists selling match boxes from Bell and Black, were taken to court for selling match boxes '*covered with semi-nude or indelicate representations*'[8] and were all fined 20 shillings or 14 days imprisonment. Bell and Black later merged with its main matchmaking rival Bryant and May.

OFFENSIVE PICTURES ON MATCH BOXES
On Saturday, at the Central Police Court, Glasgow, Bailie Young on the bench, a number of tobacconists were summoned for having sold, or publicly exposed, paste board match boxes covered with semi-nude or indelicate representations. The defenders in the first

William Gomersall(Snr)'s other son by Ellen Outhwaite was William Thomas Gomersall Outhwaite [ph6] who began his life with an apprenticeship to Mr Spence, a chemist in York. William Thomas set up his own Chemist business in Burton-upon-Trent in Staffordshire. However, Burton was the 19th century hub of the brewing industry, at one time exporting a quarter of UK beer and so William Thomas became a brewer. In 1881 there were over 30 brewing businesses in the town. William was busy outside work too. He had four wives and 14 children, 12 sons and 2 daughters.



First wife **Sarah Ann Nelson** had three children, **Harriet Priestley** had six, all sons, **Elizabeth Lewis** didn't have any children – she was 46 when she married William Thomas, and fourth wife **Elizabeth King**, 25 years younger than him had another five children. Of the 14 children five died in infancy or childhood, three died unmarried in their twenties, three sons became brewer's clerks, locally, and one became a law clerk. Daughter **Annie Ella Outhwaite** was 29 when her father died and this led her into a career in nursing. In 1902 the Central Midwives Board was established in an attempt to improve the proportion of successful births and Annie Ella was one of hundreds of women recruited to train for three months and qualify as a midwife in 1915. After her death, aged 77, her obituary describes '*Aunt Amy, a loyal Burtonian, an accomplished musician and a great lover of flowers*' [9].

MISS A. E. OUTHWAITE

The death of Miss Amy E. Outhwaite, J.R.N., affectionately known to many as "Aunt Amy," removes from the town a loyal Burtonian.
Miss Outhwaite turned to the nursing profession on the death of her father, many years ago, and brought to her work, competence and a love of service. Although having experience in several towns, her work pivoted on Burton.
She was an accomplished musician, and a great lover of flowers. She was a member of the George Street Church.
Some time ago she went to the Beattie Brown Memorial Home, and the friendliness of all around her was greatly appreciated by her, especially in her illness.
Miss Outhwaite was 77 years of age.

Despite never marrying, William Gomersall (Snr) became the grandfather of 32 grandchildren but, if he retained any contact with his illegitimate sons and daughters before he died, could only ever have met six of them,.

This account has been compiled 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.

Life stories 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'.

The life stories of people with italicised names have been researched as part of the graveyard project

A – The lives of this family, especially the exploits of Lt Col Gomersall, have been well researched and presented in gomersall.info. Much of this account has been made possible through this information for which the project is immensely grateful.

Newspaper cuttings with the kind permission of the British Newspaper Archives: 1 – Yorkshire Gazette, 2 – Yorkshire Post, 3 – Nelson Chronicle, 4 – Halifax Express, 5 – Pall Mall Gazette. 6 – Volunteer service gazette and military dispatch Norfolk Club, 7 – Worcester Journal, 8 – Dundee Courier, 9 – Burton Observer

ph1 – credited to Google Earth, ph3 – credited to descendants via ancestry.co.uk , username danklein|MA400223, ph4 – credited to Craven's Part in the Great War, ph5 – credited to descendants via Ancestry.co.uk, username TJ Ward , ph6 – username Taylorsuem14 , ph7 – username edouthwaite_1