

The 'New' Primitive Methodist Chapel

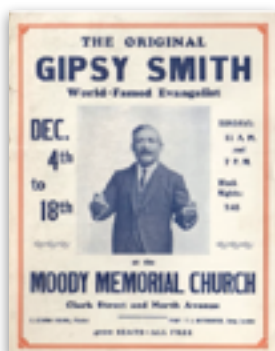
The Graveyard Project was contacted Mr Bennett, a relation of one of the people mentioned on the Foundation Stones on the front of what was the Primitive Methodist Chapel on Duke Street, constructed in the early 20th century. With thanks to the generosity of the Pastor at the current day church, the archives tell us quite a bit about the construction of this building [ph1].

The internet tells us that Primitive Methodism was a working-class revivalist movement within Methodism, originating in Staffordshire in 1807, and known for its emphasis on open-air preaching and camp meetings. They were known for their enthusiastic and sometimes boisterous preaching style, leading to the nickname 'ranter's'. It aimed to return to the original, fervent practices of early Methodism, as founded by John Wesley. Primitive Methodism was particularly popular among the working classes especially miners, mill workers, and farm labourers and played a role in the development of the trades union movement. Different branches of Methodism were united in 1932 to become the modern Methodist Church.

The 'Old' Primitive Methodist Chapel was on Commercial Street in Upper Settle and was officially named '*Settle Commercial Road Ebenezer Primitive Methodist Chapel*'. It was opened on 5 October 1841 and housed 100 free seats and 100 other seats. As with many others at that time, it was built in the '*cottage style*' so that the building could be easily converted into a dwelling if no longer needed, which is indeed what happened later on. Up until then the Chapel was the head of the Settle and Halifax Mission and, later, part of the Skipton Primitive Methodist circuit. In 1895 the Settle Primitive Methodist cause was enhanced by the arrival of

George Warner [ph2], originally from Warwickshire. George was known for special evangelical work including the conversion of a gipsy boy, **Rodney Smith**, who he found selling clothes pegs. He was known as '*Gipsy*' Smith because he was born into a Romany settlement in Epping Forest. His father, **Cornelius Smith**, was converted to the cause after a gospel reading from a prison chaplain whilst serving the last of his many sentences for petty crime. You couldn't make it up! Gipsy spoke to thousands of people, in audiences of 4,000+ across the world [ph3].

The Primitive Methodist Chapel developed a thriving and vigorous congregation and the largest Sunday school in the town. Unfortunately, George's health broke down and he died in April 1899, his obituary describing him as '*one of the best known Primitive Methodist*



ministers' [1]. He was buried in Settle churchyard, the only local burial place available for Primitive Methodists.

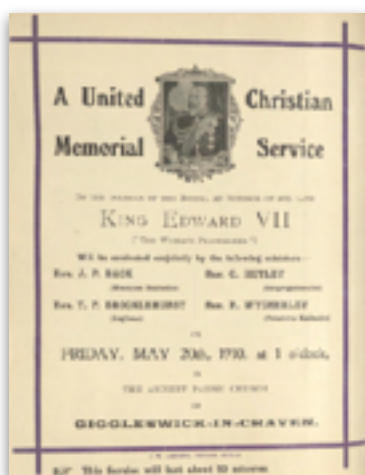
In memory of Rev George Warner, for 50 years primitive methodist preacher, born Nov 8th 1829, touched the coal April 14th 1899. He is not here, he is risen. Also of Charlotte his wife born Nov 1st 1853, fell asleep July 7th 1943, Old E12.



DEATH OF A WELL-KNOWN METHODIST MINISTER.—The death is recorded at Settle of the Rev. George Warner, one of the best known Primitive Methodist ministers. Mr Warner was for several years the Connexional evangelist on the banks of the Tyne and elsewhere. Many people came under his ministry, and he had wonderful success, one of the best known of his converts being "Gipsy Smith," the present evangelist for the Evangelical Union of Free Churches.

PRESENTATION.—Mrs. Warner, widow of the late Rev. Geo. Warner, who has held the position as Sister of the People here for three years in connection with the Primitive Methodist Society, left for Harrogate last week, and was the recipient of a splendid photograph of the town, and also a reading lamp from the members and friends. Mr. Yeoman in presenting them to Mrs. Warner expressed on behalf of the members their high appreciation of her services in connection with the Chapel and its surroundings and that her work, they were convinced had proved beneficial to those amongst whom she had laboured.

George's second wife, **Charlotte (McCartney) Warner** [ph4] and daughters continued his work as 'Sisters of the People' for three years. Charlotte left Settle for Harrogate in 1902 and was presented with a 'splendid photograph of the town, also a reading lamp from the members and friends' [2]. Charlotte had been under the supervision of supernumerary ministers from the Skipton circuit. Amongst these was **Rev Richard Wycherley** [ph4] who served in Settle from 1907 and led the drive for a new, larger Primitive Methodist Chapel. Richard, originally from Shropshire claimed descent from the Restoration playwright **William Wycherley** [ph5] and clearly inherited his nose! Richard lived at Park View in Upper Settle during the planning and construction of the Church. In 1910 Richard helped to deliver a memorial service for Edward VII 'The World's Peacemaker' along with the ministers of the Wesleyan Methodists, Congregationalist churches and the Vicar of Giggleswick church [ph6]. Richard left for Wakefield in 1913. Over the years he had 12 children with his two wives.



Richard's youngest son, **Robert Bruce Wycherley** [ph7], lived with his parents in Settle, working as an education clerk. His skills provided valuable support to the Trustees and he was also the Assistant Organist at the Chapel. He won the Military Cross for active service in WW1 and had an outstanding career in the international building society world. He was later knighted and Sir Bruce led the church's Jubilee Rally on 7 May 1959.

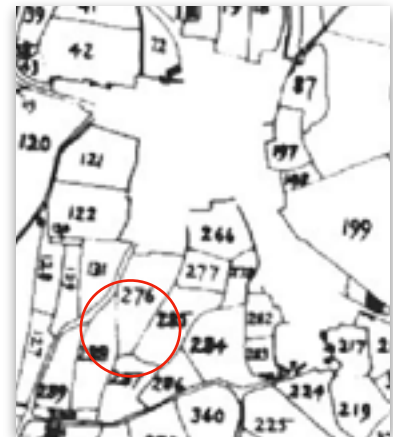


The second Mrs Wycherley, **Mary (Bruce) Wycherley** paid to

have her name inscribed on one of the Foundation Stones at the front of the Chapel: *'Mrs Wycherley for sewing committee'*.



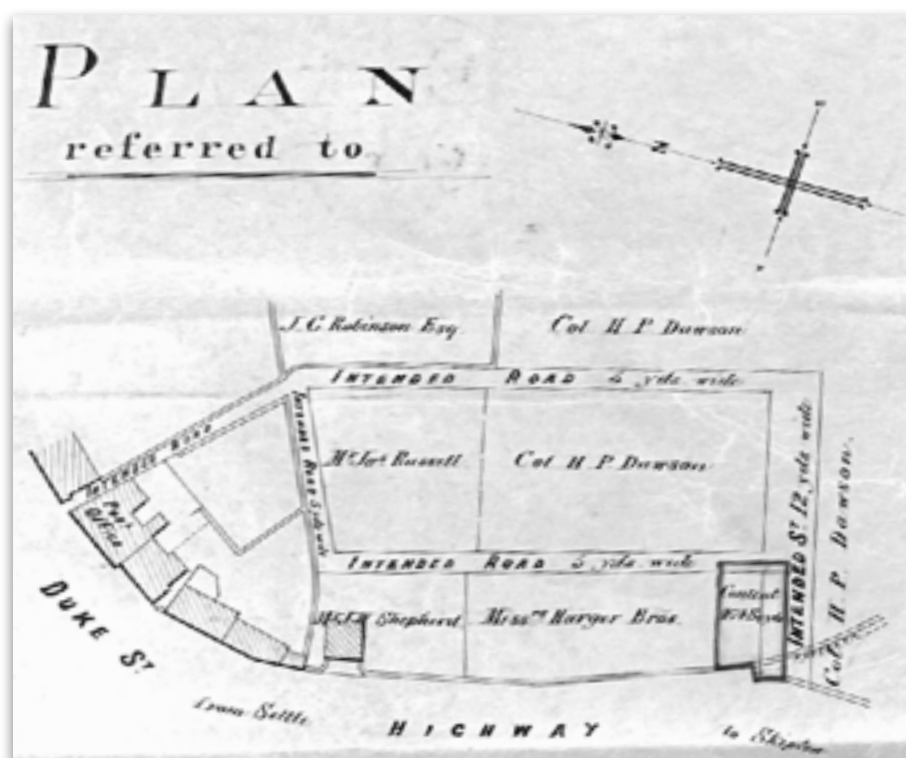
The land at the edge of town, south-east of Duke Street, Settle was in the process of being developed. **Thomas Harger** had recently built the Halsteads terrace of houses. The land straddles two areas of agricultural land which, at the time of the 1841 Tithe Survey, were owned by the **Dawson family**. They are Batty Croft and Low Raceakiln, numbered 276 and 288 respectively on the 1844 Tithe Map. The white shape at the centre of the map represents the town centre.



Who were the Dawson family? The Dawsons were long established land owners in and around Settle, owning more land than anyone else at the time of the Tithe Survey! **William Dawson**, who lived in Berkshire, died in 1829. As was the norm, after accounting for his funeral expenses and the care of his wife, **Sophia Aufrere** [ph8] for her lifetime, he left the majority of his generous estate to his eldest son, another **William Dawson**. However, William (Jnr) died in childhood and so the estate went to second and third sons **Rev Henry Dawson**, the rector for the parish of Hopton in Suffolk, and **Frederick Dawson**, a London Barrister. Between them, in 1844, the brothers owned over 500 acres of land in and around Settle. As the years passed by the estate passed to descendants of eldest son, Henry Dawson and so his grandson **Henry Philip Dawson** was the land owner from 1890 onwards.



By 1902 the plans for the development of the area were confirmed. Chemist **John William Shepherd** and the **Harger brothers** had bought some of the land beside Duke Street but the Dawsons still owned most of High Hill Grove and the land for



the Chapel. On 2 June 1902 an indenture was signed between **Henry Philip Dawson**, **Rev John William Lancaster** of Skipton, the Superintendent preacher at the time, and the Trustees of the Primitive Methodist Church. The indenture legally confirmed that the land of 474 square yards, formed part of 2 closes of land called *Batty Croft* and *Low Raceakiln*, and was to be sold to the Trustees at the value of £50. The Trustees would have a free right to lay sewer gas water and other pipes. *'At his own cost the vendor, on or before 13 January 1905 make and complete the intended roads with suitable provision for taking top water and make repairs to the road'* so they could be adopted as public roads.

Who were these signatories? The landowner, **Lt Col Henry Philip Dawson** was, obviously, an aristocratic man having served in Her Majesty's Royal Artillery. From the turn of the 20th century he lived at Hartlington Hall, near Burnsall [ph9] which he had built in 1895 for his retirement. Very nice! He lived there with his wife, two children and plenty of servants. The Dawsons had acquired the land in the 17th century and the Hall stayed in the family until Henry's son, **Henry Christopher Dawson**, died in 1970.



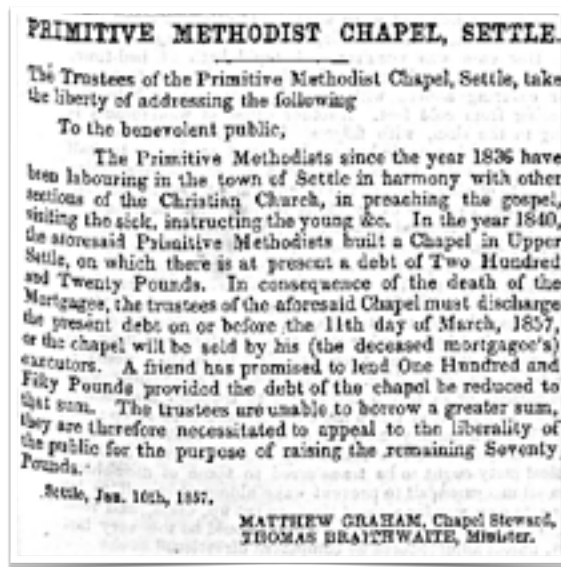
In contrast, **Rev John William Lancaster**, the Superintendent Preacher at the time, was born in Barnoldswick, the son of **James Lancaster** and **Martha Windle**. James died around the time John William was born so he and some siblings were brought up by his mum and her second husband, **Caleb Wilkinson**, a hawker (street seller). John William married **Emily Mary Dales** of Stamford Bridge, near York and this is when he became a full time Primitive Methodist preacher. Emily Mary was the third of six children of **Thomas Teville Dales** and his wife Mary, the innkeepers at The Fleece in Bishop Wilton, east of York which still operates today. For some reason, Emily was the only one of the siblings brought up by her uncle **Levi Dales** and his wife Sarah, who were farmers, along with their own family.

John William and Emily Mary had six children and their births indicate that John William had served in Greenland, near Halifax, Market Rasen, Lincolnshire, the Isle of Man and then Skipton, around the time of the indenture, before a final move to Cheshire by 1911. Despite leaving just a modest estate they have a high-quality memorial stone in Northwich cemetery [ph10].

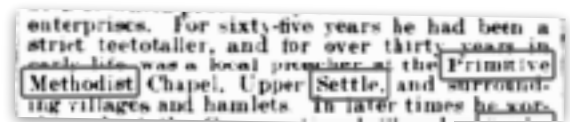
In treasured memory of Emily Mary, treasured wife of Rev J W Lancaster, Methodist Minister, born March 13th 1865, died April 27th 1939. 'She lived for others' Also the above Rev J W Lancaster, born Feb 24th 1860, died April 18th 1942.



Before the sale could proceed the Trustees of the Primitive Methodist Chapel needed to register themselves as a Charity. This was not organised until the end of 1908 when **Henry Brassington** and **John Hardy** (both builders) and **William Graham** of Burnley, sewing machine agent, submitted the paperwork. It's not surprising Henry Brassington and John Hardy invested the time and energy to get this right as they were the contractors who built the chapel, at a cost of £1450. William Graham of Burnley had been born in Settle and had several links to the Settle Primitive Methodist Chapel. He was the nephew of Settle's successful Market Place grocer, **Matthew Graham** and cousin to **John Graham**, a well

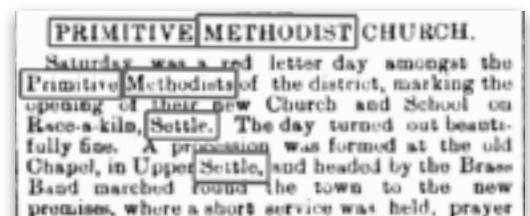


known society entertainer performing across the country, including London. Matthew Graham was a steward at the (old) Primitive Methodist Chapel and in 1857 had to advertise to try and raise money to overcome £220 debts [sc]. In his obituary in 1901, it transpired that he was also a preacher at the Chapel for over thirty years and a strict teetotaler for 65 years![3]. Before moving to Burnley during the 1880s, William, his wife and son's address was 'back of Primitive Chapel' in Upper Settle and he obviously retained links afterwards.



On 19 March 1909 the Charity Commission decreed that the Trustees could sell the Old Primitive Methodist Chapel for not less than £275 (to Mr **Edward Redmayne Morphet**, an ironmonger) and the proceeds could be used to buy the new Chapel. The old chapel still stands as a private residence and is known as Wapping Hall. In addition, the Trustees could borrow and raise a sum 'not exceeding £500 upon security of a mortgage at a rate not exceeding 4%, to be repaid within 30 years of borrowing'. The order was posted near the outer door of the chapels. There were no objections received and so the application was approved. The subsequent mortgage application of 22 June 1909 allowed them to borrow £550 with half yearly repayments. Additional funds were raised from the public and the Chapel Aid Association.

And so the building could begin! Actually, it had already been built. The first stones were laid on 17 October 1908 before a great crowd. It was officially opened on 15 May 1909. The Primitive Methodists were not known for blowing their own trumpets in the press but the occasion did get reported in the *Lancaster Guardian* [4]. The weather was good and the Brass Band paraded around town. After speeches and presentations, tea was provided in the schoolroom for 300 people! There was a meeting in the evening, presided over by **FH Brock** of Skipton, with more speeches and anthems sung. **Robert Bulcock** was the conductor, **Miss Oakden** the organist and **Bertha Graham** (niece of Matthew Graham) sang a solo. The first two services, on the next day, were 'to overflowing congregations'. The article described that the church was built in Gothic style with seats for 225 people, 'and is a notable addition to the public



buildings of the town'. The chapel featured in the 1910 Primitive Methodist magazine as 'a feeble cause revived, a handsome stone structure, attractive in architecture, substantial in appearance, well lighted and finished in every way an artistic manner. It included assembly hall, kitchen, minister's vestry and classrooms. Generous help was provided by WP Hartley, R & T Fletcher and J Brearley'

Due to the position on the side of the hill the building has an extra floor downstairs at the back of the building. Over the years the Primitive Methodist movement merged into the Methodist Church and so the Settle Church became Skipton Road Methodist Church. It closed in 1979 and, in 1980, following a loan application for £8,000, became the Skipton Pentecostal Church. It is now in the capable hands of Settle Christian Fellowship. The adjacent cottages were built in 1990 to provide a little income.

So, who were the people who signed the indenture, the Charity Submission submission, and the people whose names are inscribed on the Foundation Stones at the front of the Chapel? We'll find out in part 2.



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.

With thanks to Settle Christian Fellowship for their generosity in sharing archives

Newspaper cuttings with the kind permission of the British Newspaper Archives: 1 – Shields Daily Gazette, 2,3 – Lancaster Standard, 4 – Lancaster Guardian

ph1 –with thanks to Settle Christian Fellowship, ph2,4 – photo credited to descendants via ancestry.co.uk, username Allgriffs, ph3 – photo credited to www2.wheaton.edu, ph4,7 – photo credited to descendants via ancestry.co.uk, username Dave Sexton, ph5 – Wikipedia, artist Peter Lely, ph6 – Skipton Rd Methodist Church Jubilee Souvenir, 1959 with thanks to Mike Howarth, ph8 – credited to descendants via ancestry.co.uk, username Rachel-Bulmer, ph9 – credited to Wikipedia, submitted by Chris Heaton, ph10 – image and inscription credited to findagrave.com

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