

## Superintendent Thomas Whincup and his talented brother

Thomas Whincup had an impressive career. He was the 34th recruit to the West Riding Constabulary at its commencement in 1856/7 and was the first detective appointed to it. He was later promoted to the role of Superintendent, having a long career of 46 years in the force.

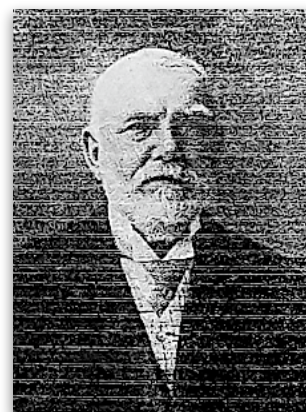
**Thomas Whincup** was the son of **John Whincup**, and his wife, a widow **Harriet (Avison) Bastow**. John was a master wool-stapler in Leeds who became deputy governor of Kirkdale Gaol in Liverpool and also owned and managed a number of quarries – a busy man. When he signed up to the West Riding Constabulary in 1857 Thomas was not the only man to lie about his age – he said he was 25 although was only 23. He was described as 5ft 8¼ inches tall, had light brown hair, blue eyes and worked as a wheelwright at Brighouse. After training, Thomas set to work as a divisional clerk in the Settle area, where he stayed for seven years working under Superintendent Cockshott. His records show regular promotions and several good conduct awards.

In Settle in 1859 Thomas married **Jane Dickinson**, the daughter of **John Dickinson** and **Sarah Smith** who farmed at Cow Bridge near Wigglesworth for decades. At the time of the 1861 census Thomas and Jane lived in Chapel Street in Settle. They had three sons: infant **John Whincup** is buried in an unmarked plot in Settle Churchyard, **Richard Whincup** became an accountant after resigning as a policeman, and **John Thomas Whincup** became an inspector on the tramways in Leeds.

During his time in Settle Thomas dealt with all sorts of petty crime, including burglary and robbery, enforcing regulations at inns and lodging houses, traffic offences, attending dead bodies and being the '*inspector of weights and measures*' to ensure fair trading. He had to enforce additional regulations during the Cattle Plagues of the 1860s. In 1865 Thomas provided a wonderful example of his detective work as explained in an article 'Larceny from Settle Post Office'. Thomas '*with the directions of Mr Superintendent Cockshott secreted himself early in the morning in a cupboard*' in the Post Office. Then, at 6.30am Thomas heard 47 year old widow **Betty Shepherd** entering the shop and getting into the cash box. '*On cautiously creeping from his hiding place he saw the prisoner hurriedly close the door*' and later found a cash box containing stolen items including marked coins [SC]. Betty had been working as a charwoman for **Mrs Margaret Wildman**, the widow of printer **John Wildman**, who ran the Post Office. Betty was, unsurprisingly, found guilty and sentenced to Wakefield House of Correction for three months with hard labour. Upon her release she moved to Carnforth with her daughters. Understandably, a year after this incident Mrs Wildman resigned and the family emigrated to Australia.

prosecuted. T. Whincup, P.C. deposed, that in accordance with the directions of Mr Superintendent Cockshott, he secreted himself early in the morning of the 27th in a cupboard in Wildman and Son's shop. The prisoner came into the shop about half-past six o'clock, and after looking round the counters, passed through the door communicating with the Post Office. He then heard the cupboard door being unlocked, and a sound as if a cash box was being stirred; on cautiously creeping from his hiding place he saw the prisoner hurriedly close the door and lock it, on the prisoner gaining the door communicating with the house he stopped her, and after some resistance on her part he obtained possession of the key: she said it was the key to a box in her bedroom at home. He took the prisoner in charge for entering the office with felonious intent, and after taking her to the lock-up, he searched her house, and found the key opened a box containing between £2 and £3 in silver and copper, amongst which were the marked half-crown and florin which had been stolen on the morning of the 25th.

Thomas was transferred to Bolton By Bowland and then to Halifax, York and Saddleworth. In 1878 Thomas [ph1] was promoted to the position of Superintendent of the Upper Osgoldcross Division in Pontefract and took over the County Force when local divisions merged. Unsurprisingly, the family were able to employ a servant after this. In 1897 Thomas was awarded a bronze medal for bravery by the Prince of Wales (Bertie) and so was promoted to the role of Superintendent the following year. Despite sustaining long lasting internal injuries, Thomas saved the life of a woman who had slipped down under the foot-board of an excursion train at Baghill Station in Pontefract.



As we know, Thomas was the first detective appointed to the West Riding Force, soon dealing with *'the arrest of some Fenians in Manchester'*. Following this he was on the team of detectives for the Phoenix Park Murders on 6 May 1882. These were the fatal stabbings of **Lord Frederick Cavendish** and **Thomas Henry Burke** in Phoenix Park in Dublin. Cavendish was the newly appointed Chief Secretary for Ireland and this was his first day in Ireland. Burke was the Permanent Undersecretary. The assassination was carried out by five members of the rebel group Irish National Invincibles, radical activists for Home Rule who were subsequently found guilty and hanged. Thomas also investigated several high profile murders.

Thomas retired in 1903 and was *'presented with handsome bunting by his superintendent brothers'* having served for 46 years. Upon retirement Thomas was the oldest serving officer in the country. Thomas and Jane celebrated their Golden Wedding in 1909. Thomas died in 1911, aged 78 and Jane in 1916, aged 80. Thomas' obituaries indicate Thomas, *'of kindly disposition and a most popular officer'* was highly regarded by colleagues and even criminals and rioters during the Featherstone Riots [2,3].

46 YEARS IN THE FORCE.

DEATH OF PROMINENT WEST RIDING  
POLICE OFFICER.

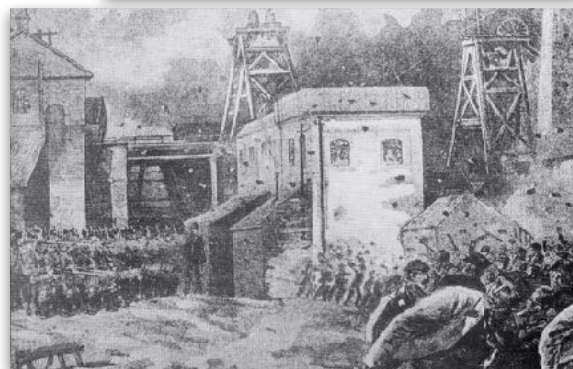
The Featherstone Riots [ph3] took place in 1893 near Wakefield – the miners at were locked out of the mine due to the the overproduction of coal. Soldiers fired on a crowd who were demonstrating at the colliery gates, killing two instantly. However, due to his reputation as a fair man, a gang of rioting miners chose not attack Thomas and a few of his colleagues when they found them in a lonely lane. They even offered to make a presentation to him when he retired.

A few years after Thomas' marriage to Jane, his brother **Richard Whincup**, married Jane's sister **Betsey Dickinson**. Richard had taken over his father's quarrying business in Shipley. Unfortunately, Betsey died in 1871, aged 31, perhaps with issues related to childbirth. She is buried in Long Preston graveyard, near the church door, with a fine memorial stone.

*In Affectionate Remembrance of Betsey the beloved wife of Richard Whincup of Shipley and youngest daughter of John & Sarah Dickinson of Wigglesworth who departed this life November 10th 1871, aged 31 years*

Richard married again, this time to **Ellen Brown**, from Malton. They moved to Pateley Bridge where Richard managed Scotgate Ash Stone Quarry. They had ten children [ph4] brought up with the help of Ellen's mother, **Mary (Bulmer) Brown**, who lived with them until she died in 1901. This is surprising because Ellen and her younger brother, **John Bulmer Brown**, were not brought up by their parents but by **Ann Thackry**, a postmistress in Whiston, in Rotherham – they had been adopted. In 1856 Mary, aged 23, was six months pregnant with Ellen when she married 17 year old **Charles Sokell Brown**, a gardener. The marriage didn't work. Charles got a post with the police force but was dismissed for being drunk and absent from his beat. By the time of the 1881 census, Charles lived with **Mary Ann Gambles**, *'as man and wife'*, with a son and working as a gamekeeper. Naughty Charles. However, in the style of *'Long Lost Family'* Ellen, who had worked as a schoolmistress was able to reunite and live with her daughter again, describing

During the Featherstone riots he was met by a body of rioters one dark night in a lonely lane at Purston. The Superintendent was accompanied by several Metropolitan policemen, and it would have gone hard with them but for the fact that Mr. Whincup was recognised with the remark, "Oh, it's all right. It's the old superintendent; let him go." Mr. Whincup was decorated by King Edward (then Prince of Wales) in 1897 for an act of bravery at Baghill station, Pontefract. He rescued a young woman, who had been caught by an incoming excursion train and dragged between the carriages and the platform. By jumping on to the line he held her clear of the metals until the train had passed through the station.

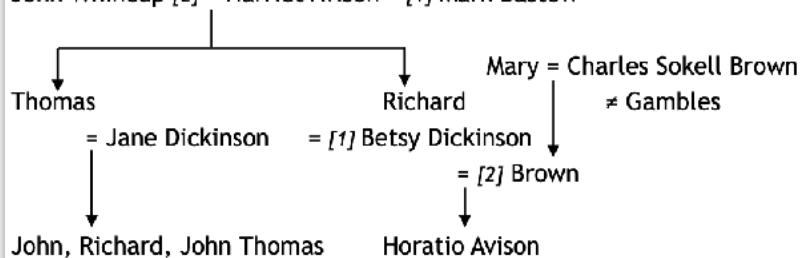


## Settle Graveyard Project



### The Whincups

John Whincup [2] = Harriet Avison = [1] Mark Bastow



herself as 'a widow'. Her son, John Bulmer Brown stayed with postmistress Ann Thackry for the rest of her life, even after he married.

Richard's Pateley Bridge quarry had fluctuating fortunes but, at one point, employed over 150 men. It was a national business – Richard was one of the main contractors involved in building the Hartlepool tramway. Richard had 'Woodlands' built [ph5], overlooking Bewerly Park, close to the quarry. Richard was at the heart of the community, being the honorary treasurer for Nidderdale Conservative Association, the 'Lighting Inspector' for the town, a member of Pateley Bridge Improvement Association, which coordinated action to promote the village, and a member of Yorkshire Naturalists Union. In 1875 Richard was a steward at the 'Nidderdale Feast', otherwise known as the 'Nidderdale Rant' a traditional annual gathering at which relatives and friends met up and those who left the village returned. Several thousand people attended a day of sports. *'It will to some leave regrets, while others will look back at it as being a time of pleasure, spent among their friends and relatives and a happy revisit to the scenes of their childhood, which they have left, having to go forth to some distant place to fight the battle of life.'* [5] Richard and Ellen retired back to Leeds.



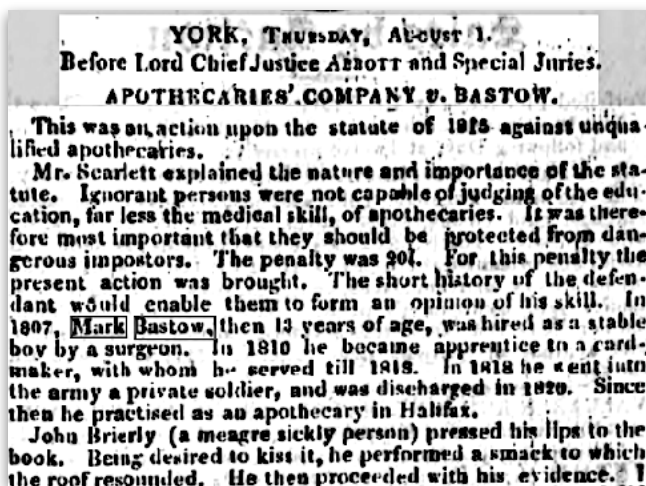
What a talented pair of brothers! Richard and Ellen's son, Horatio Avison Whincup, and then his son, Claude Horatio Whincup, ran several 'picture theatres' in Headingley and in Briggate, Leeds throughout the golden age of the cinema industry. However, like his maternal grandfather, 35 years after marrying, Horatio found himself with a different 'wife' and daughter, working as a laundry salesman in London while his actual wife and sons stayed in Leeds. Oh dear.

Incredibly, Clive Whincup, a descendant of Richard Whincup, lived in Settle for a few years recently, initially unaware of PC Whincup's importance here. Clive is the proud owner of Thomas' truncheon.



Thomas and Richard's mother was Harriet Avison. Before she married John Whincup, the wool-stapler, Harriet had married Mark Bastow from Halifax. As a boy Mark was hired as a stable boy working for a surgeon and, being a curious lad, helped out with surgery, learning the trade.

Mark joined the army in 1818 but was discharged for some reason in 1820. Being a bit of an entrepreneur, Mark reinvented himself as 'Dr Mark Bastow'. Unfortunately, in 1822, thanks to the new 'Statute of 1815 against unqualified apothecaries', Mark was found guilty of trading as an apothecary without appropriate qualifications [4]. He was



## Settle Graveyard Project

fined a penalty £20 for every act of unqualified practice which, understandably, wiped him out. As the Act was relatively new Mark may well have been used to set an example to other potential miscreants. A year later Mark found himself in York Castle debtor's prison. He would have had to stay there until some generous relation or benefactor paid off his debts.

Six years later, in 1828, Mark married Harriet Avison and they had a daughter, **Nancy Bastow**, but Mark died two years later. Harriet married John Whincup three years later, and little Nancy was brought up as part of the Whincup family.



*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. Life stories can be found on [dalescommunityarchives.org.uk](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'.*

*With thanks to relatives Clive and Pauline Whincup for their help with the compilation of this story.*

*Newspaper cuttings with the kind permission of the British Newspaper Archives: 1 – Lancaster Gazette, 2 – Sheffield Daily Telegraph, 3 – Leeds Mercury, 4 – Leeds Intelligencer, 5 – Hartlepool North Daily Mail  
ph1,4 – with thanks to Clive and Pauline Whincup, ph2 – thanks to Sarah Lister, ph3 – photo credited to Yorkshire Historic facebook page, posted by Edward Downes, ph5 – credited to onthemarket.com*

*SC – Settle Chronicle newspaper with the kind permission of the Museum of North Craven Life*

*Some of the material in this account has been published by Yorkshire Dales Millennium Trust in the book 'Meandering down the Ribble, Born and Bred in the Long Preston Floodplain'. They have given permission for it to be included in this account*