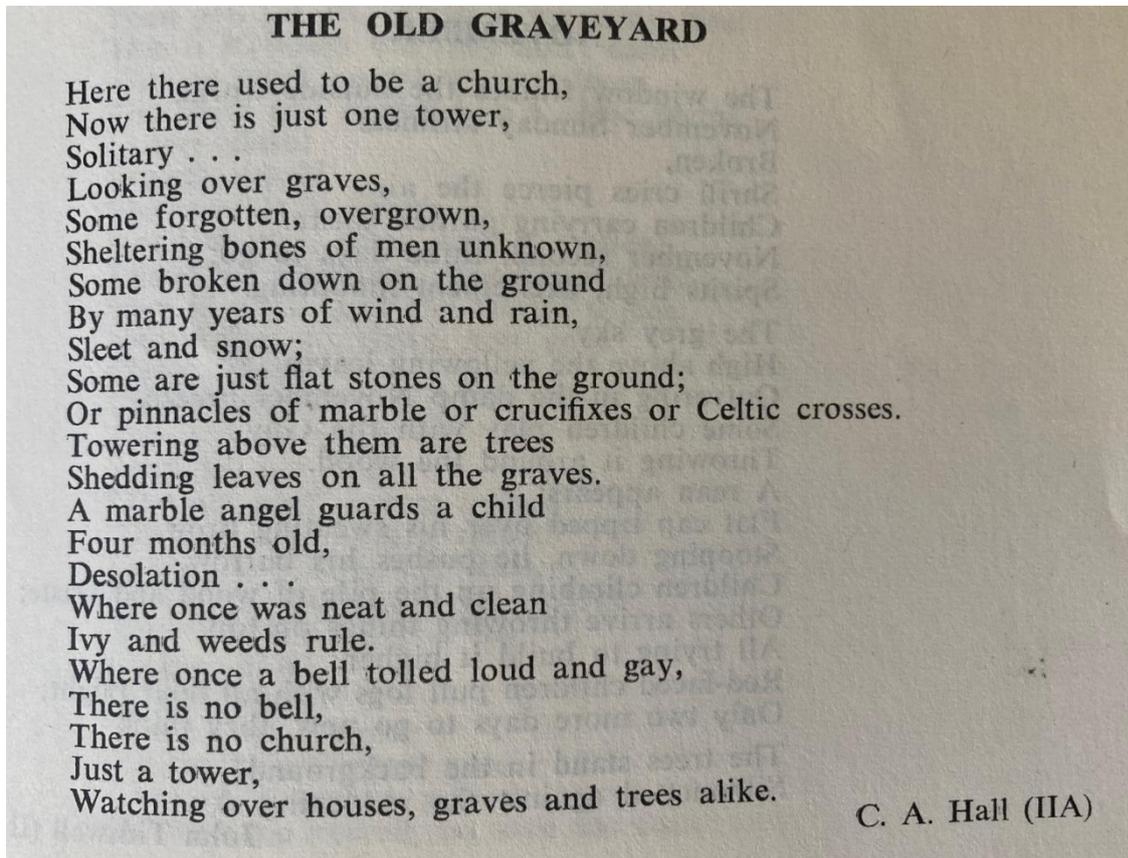


One, two, three little angels

Just before Christmas 2023 we were sent a poem with the title **THE OLD GRAVEYARD**. It referred to the overgrown state of the churchyard in the 1970s after the old church had been demolished leaving only the tower. The poem was written in 1976 by a second-former at Rastrick Grammar School.



In it there are the lines :-

A marble angel guards a child

Four months old,

Desolation....

But where was the angel and who was the four-month-old child?

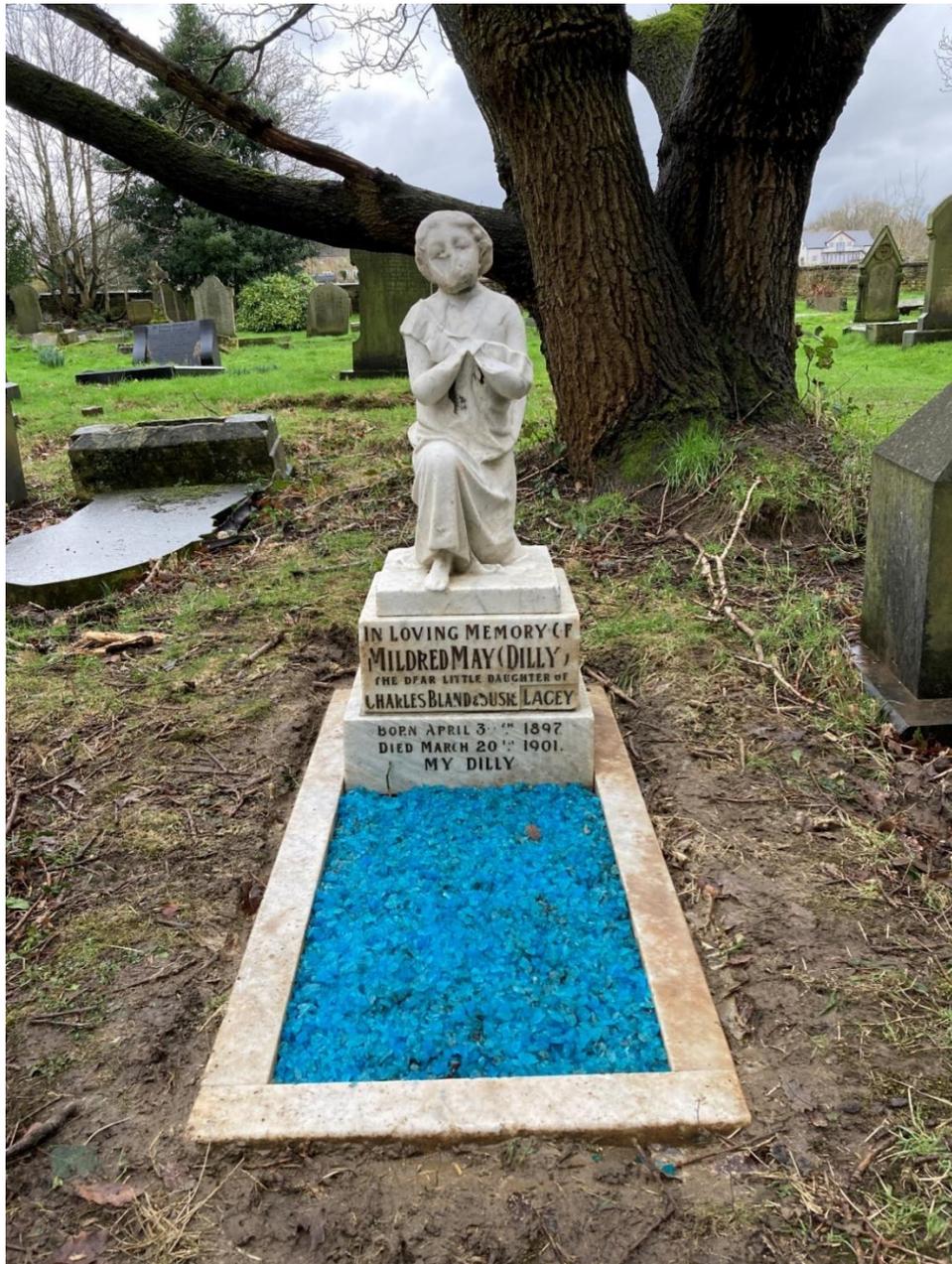
A search around the actual churchyard and then a search through the parish records did not come up with any obvious answers. We did have a headless angel, although she looked to be made of stone and not marble, and an Art Deco angel on a headstone. Neither of them, however, fitted the description in the poem and still don't.



One little angel

But it did prompt us to do something about the headless angel whose head was found nearby. A request was made to the Calderdale Council's Bereavement Services team to ask if they could stick her head back on when they were in lifting some fallen headstones.

This happened in the middle of February 2024. Not only did the angel get her head stuck back on but she also got a very good clean. The care which the Calderdale team leader took over this little plot is there for everyone to see now. The transformation is astonishing, and we are more than grateful for his efforts. And now the memorial inscriptions on the plinth can be read whereas previously they were largely hidden from view as you can see in the image above.



Dilly Lassey – another little angel

IN LOVING MEMORY OF MILDRED MAY (DILLY)
THE DEAR LITTLE DAUGHTER OF CHARLES BLAND & SUSIE LACEY
BORN APRIL 3RD 1897 DIED MARCH 20TH 1901
MY DILLY

Another memorial inscription was revealed on the left-hand side of the plinth.

ALSO VALERIE LACEY CHILTON AGED 18 DAYS
ONE FLOWER LESS ON EARTH
ONE FLOWER MORE IN HEAVEN



Valerie Lacey Chilton – a third little angel

Time for some genealogical digging!

It was easy to establish that Mildred May Lassey – yes that was the spelling – was born on 3rd April 1897 in the Hartlepool district of County Durham. She died on 19th March 1901 – the parish record disagrees with the memorial inscription - aged 3 years 11 months and was buried in this Lightcliffe plot, I36, on 23rd March 1901. Her death was registered in the Wortley district of the West Riding of Yorkshire. The parish record below says the owner of the plot was Susie Lassey, her mother. But more interestingly there appears to be an address ‘Lynwood, Romanby Rd, Northallerton’. At first, I thought the North?????, might have said Northowram but there is no Romanby Road in Northowram whereas there is a Romanby Road in Northallerton in the North Riding of Yorkshire. It is a pity that the note added on the far right of the parish record is unreadable as it may contain further clues.

36	March 19 th 1901	March 23 rd 1901	Mildred May Lassey	3y 11mo	Lynwood, Romanby Rd, Northallerton
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Victoria Lacey Chilton’s birth and death have both been found in the Newcastle-upon-Tyne district Q4 1935 agreeing with her Lightcliffe burial record below which says that she died on 17th December 1935 and was buried on the 20th December 1935 aged 2 weeks.

3094	36	Dec. 17 th	Dec. 20 th	Valerie Lacey Chilton	2 weeks
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The Lacey, or should it be Lassey, name suggests that these two little girls were related. But why was a Newcastle-upon-Tyne baby buried in Lightcliffe with a Hartlepool born youngster who may have lived in Northallerton but died in the Wortley district?

More proverbial digging was needed starting with the Lassey parents.

Charles Bland Lassey was born in Idle, West Riding of Yorkshire on 3rd April 1873 to parents John Lassey and his wife Elizabeth née Bland. By 1881 the family were living in Lightcliffe which no doubt explains the Lightcliffe burials.

1881 census

John Lassey Head 41 Blacksmith
 Elizabeth Lassey Wife 41
 Sarah Lassey Dau 16 Worsted Spinner
 Jonas Lassey Son 14 Wire Drawer
 Mary Lassey Dau 11 Worsted Spinner
 Charles B. Lassey Son 8 Scholar
 John Lassey Son 6 Scholar
 Tom Lassey Son 1
 Address Lightcliffe

1891 census

John Lassey Head 51 Blacksmith
 Elizabeth Lassey Wife 51
 Mary Lassey Dau 21 Carpet Setter
 Charles B Lassey Son 19 ditto Creeler
 Tom Lassey Son 11 ditto Bonder
 Elizabeth A Lassey Dau 9 Scholar
 Address Holme Terrace, Lightcliffe

In 1896 Charles Bland Lassey married Susannah Tindale in the Hartlepool district on a date between April and June. This almost certainly explains why a year later Mildred May Lassey was born in the Hartlepool district, Co. Durham. She died just before the 1901 census was taken in the Wortley district which was where her parents were on 31st March 1901. On 2nd February 1902 Charles Bland Lassey was appointed to the Prisons Department as a Subordinate Officer, Division One as announced in *The London Gazette*. Perhaps he then worked at H.M.Prison, Wakefield. Three more Lassey children were certainly born in Wakefield before the family moved to Northallerton before 2nd April 1911.

1901 census

Charles Bland Lassey Head 28
 Workhouse official porter
 Susie Lassey Wife 29
 Ada Scotson Sister-in-law 35
 Address Grenoside, Ecclesfield, Wortley, Yorkshire
 & Yorkshire (West Riding),

1911 census

Charles Bland Lassey Head 38 H.M. Prison Clerk
 Susannah Lassey Wife 39
 Eric Tindall Lassey Son 8
 Colin Bland Lassey Son 5
 Muriel Bland Lassey Dau 4
 Address Romanby Road, Northallerton

1921 census

Charles B Lassey Head 49 Clerk at H M Prison Prison Commission
 Susie Lassey Wife 50 Home Duties -
 Colin B Lassey Son 15
 Muriel B Lassey Dau 14
 Address Lynwood, Romanby Road, Northallerton, Yorkshire (North Riding), England

The daughter Muriel Bland Lassey married George Hector Chilton in the Northallerton district Q2 1927.

And then this announcement appeared in the *Newcastle Evening Chronicle* under Public Notices on 22nd October 1931.

Public Notices

NOTICE OF CHANGE OF SURNAME

I CHARLES BLAND LACEY of "Foggy Forze" Romanby in the North Riding of the County of York lately Clerk in His Majesty's Prison in the City of Durham now Retired, heretofore called and known by the name of Charles Bland Lassey HEREBY GIVE NOTICE that on the Tenth day of October 1931 I renounced and abandoned the use of my surname Lassey and assumed in lieu thereof the surname of Lacey.

AND FURTHER that such change of surname is evidenced by a Deed dated the 10th day of October 1931 duly executed by me and attested and intended to be enrolled in the Enrolment Department of the Central Office of the Royal Court of Justice.

DATED this 16th day of October 1931.

CHARLES BLAND LACEY

Witness

F. Mayson
Solicitor
Newcastle-upon-Tyne

This explains, what is now obvious when you look more closely at the plinth below the angel on to the right, the change of spelling of Mildred May's parents' surname.



It also explains the spelling of Valerie Lacey Chilton's middle name. But not why her 1935 birth and death were registered in Newcastle-upon-Tyne. As her father and her Chilton grandparents farmed in the North Riding of Yorkshire it looks as if her mother Muriel went to Newcastle-upon-Tyne for the birth. Was this to her parents' home – see below – or to one of the Newcastle hospitals. Without the GRO certificates, we will never know. What we do know is that the tiny baby was brought south to Lightcliffe for burial, with her Lacey grandparents' first-born daughter Mildred May (Dilly), on 20th December 1935.

For the September 1939 register these Lacey grandparents were visiting with their daughter, Muriel, and son-in-law in Eryholme, a tiny village near the Durham / North Riding border. Perhaps their home by then was in Newcastle upon Tyne and not Northallerton.

1939 register

George H Chilton	30 Jan 1908	Male	Farmer	Married	48	1
Muriel B Chilton	03 Mar 1907	Female	Unpaid Domestic Duties	Married	48	2
Zita L Chilton	27 Sep 1927	Female	At School	Single	48	3

The record for this person is officially closed.

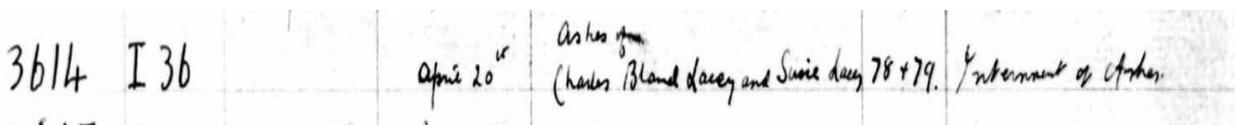
Charles B Lacey	06 Apr 1873	Male	HM Prison Clerk Retired	Married	48	5
Susan Lacey	12 Apr 1871	Female	Dom Dut Unpaid	Married	48	6

Address Carlingholme Farm, Eryholme Hurworth, Croft, Croft R.D., Yorkshire (North Riding), England

Both Charles and Susie Lacey died in 1951. The probate record below tells you more and explains why the first death was registered in the Newcastle district. Susie's death occurred in the same three-month period Q1 1951 but was registered in the Northumberland Central district. No probate record has been found for Susie Lacey.

LACEY Charles Bland of 33 Netherby-drive Fenham Newcastle-upon-Tyne died 3 January 1951 Probate York 3 July to Colin Bland Lacey local government officer Eric Tindale Lacey civil servant and Muriel Bland Chilton (wife of George Hector Chilton) Effects £2171

As the parish record below confirms, Charles Bland Lacey's and Susie Lacey's ashes were then interred in plot I36, of St. Matthew's Churchyard, Lightcliffe on 20th April 1951. This was fifty years after their first daughter, Mildred May (Dilly) had been buried there and where their baby granddaughter, Valerie Lacey Chilton, was also interred.



The Lacey parents' names were not added to the little angel's plinth but the names of their daughter and granddaughter, two more little angels, are now clear for all to see and read.

D.M.Barker
 February 2024

Are we still looking for a marble angel guarding a four-month-old child or is this it? Who knows!