

Humshaugh Churchyard Story

Names – William Charlton, Hannah Charlton, Richard Charlton, Sarah Charlton

Grave – Facing the south-west corner of the church, not far from the vicarage path.

Text on Grave – In loving memory of William Charlton, who died 2nd March 1934, aged 85 years.
Also Hannah, his wife, who died 3rd March 1934, aged 81 years.
Also Richard, their eldest son, who died 6th August 1912, aged 31 years.
And Sarah, their daughter, who died 29th November 1934, aged 56 years.
Until the day break.

William Charlton was born in 1849, in the Haydon Bridge area. He was the son of farm labourer, Richard Charlton and his wife, Ursula. As a child, he moved around the Haydon area with his family, as Richard took employment at different farms.

In 1875, William married Hannah Southern, a shoemaker's daughter from Colwell. They were married at Chollerton Church. By 1881, the couple were living in Humshaugh with their 2-year old daughter, Sarah, who had been baptised at St Peter's on 18th August 1878. William was described as an agricultural labourer. Ten years later, the Charltons were still in the village, William's occupation now being described as a general labourer. Besides the 12-year old Sarah, the couple now had two sons, Richard and Joseph William. The boys were both born in Humshaugh and baptised at St. Peter's, Richard on 7th August 1882 and Joseph William on 5th December 1887.

By 1901, the Charlton family were still living together in the village. Both William and his son, Richard were general labourers, whilst Sarah is described as a general domestic servant. In 1911, Sarah, Richard and Joseph William were still single and living at home with their parents. William and Richard were still described as general labourers, although Richard's occupation is qualified with the words 'at freestone quarry'. Sarah no longer had independent work, but is described as helping at home. Joseph William was working as a gardener.

The following year, Richard Charlton died, at the age of 31. As the headstone tells us, he died on 6th August 1912. No further details have been found relating to his death. It has not been possible to find any other references to this family except for the the deaths, in 1934, of William and Hannah, who died on the 2nd and 3rd of March respectively. Despite their advanced ages, their deaths on consecutive days makes one wonder if this was a mere coincidence. It must have been a huge strain their daughter Sarah, having a double bereavement and burial to cope with. Sarah, herself died later in the same year at the age of 56. She is recorded as having died on 29th November 1934.

No records, beyond the 1911 census, have been found relating to Joseph William Charlton. Had he died before 1934, one would have expected him to have been mentioned on the headstone, even if he wasn't buried at Humshaugh. Joseph William Charlton does not appear on the 1939 register for Humshaugh, suggesting that he had, by then, moved away from the village.

