

Emma Crone, not your average Settle widow

This understated gravestone commemorates the lives of widow Emma Crone and three children with a fascinating family ancestry.

Emma, born in 1840, was the fifth out of ten children of **Robert Bickerdike** and **Elizabeth Milburn**. Emma is on the far left of the back row [ph1]. Robert, with an impressive beard, [ph1] was an immensely successful cotton mill manager in Lancaster. The family lived on the exceedingly nice Dalton Square [ph1, ph3]. The sketch was made by son Alfred, a talented architect and artist

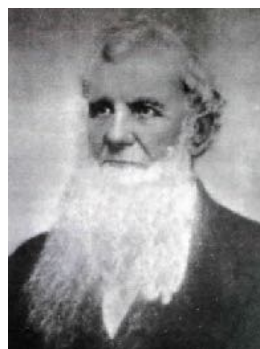


very gratifying mark of respect had been contributed entirely by the "hands," and consisted of a gold watch and chain, and an elegant silver tea and coffee service, the latter bearing the following inscription:—"Presented to Robert Bickerdike, by the workpeople of John Greg and Co., as a token of their affectionate regard.

The mill that Robert managed was owned by John Greg who was the son of Samuel Greg, the entrepreneur who famously built Quarry Bank Mill. John's mill had problems during the 1860s – the cotton industry was on the verge of collapse because of the cotton famine brought about by the civil war in America. Cotton was not reaching Britain because of action by black slave workers and many British mill workers supported them by striking. Despite this situation Robert's 'workpeople' presented him with a gold watch and chain and an elegant silver tea and coffee service in appreciation of his leadership over the past 29 years [1]. His acceptance speech hinted at the situation and that the absence of strikes or ill-feeling were a measure of his employees' approval of his stern style which may, or may not, have been the case.

spoken that evening. With respect to the testimonial, he must say that they had chosen a period of time which rendered it peculiarly acceptable; it seemed almost too much in these days of strikes and disaffection, for in no period during his experience had working men exhibited such independence as at the present time. (Applause.) During the thirty years he had been associated with them, he was happy to say they had had no strikes, combinations, or turn-outs. (Applause.) This was a great gratification to him. It had been said that he was stern, but they must know that a large concern like Messrs. Greg's could not be carried on properly unless he exercised that quality of his nature. There was one thing he had noticed for some time

Emma's siblings all had successful careers or married men in business, the military or the church. There is a full story waiting to be written about any one of them.



Brother William Edward Bickerdike worked in chemical manufacture and was joined by brother Joseph Bickerdike after he had to give up a career as a global mercantile mariner for health reasons. William had worked with eminent scientists such as Sir Edward Frankland, who discovered helium and was an expert on chemical valency and river pollution, and Joseph Storey who was a pioneer in flame retardant materials.

Joseph Bickerdike's death in 1890 prompted several reports, one strangely stating 'Mr Bickerdike is dead' [1].

the lobby, and expired in a few minutes. Deceased, who was a native of Lancaster, and who was one of four brothers, whose father was engaged in the cotton manufacture of that town, was for many years engaged in the mercantile sea-service, to which he was much devoted. He held for some years a sea-captain's certificate, but before he secured an appointment his health broke down, and he was compelled to abandon the sea. He travelled in every part of the globe, and was particularly well acquainted with Eastern countries. He came from Liverpool about sixteen years ago, and undertook the practical management of the chemical works in Oswaldtwistle, of which his brother, Mr. W. E. Bickerdike, Wilpshire, is the senior partner. Deceased was a most diligent student of science, and often gave lectures of a scientific character in the neighbourhood. In this capacity he

Mr. BICKERDIKE is dead. Right at the top of Oswald's boundary—commonly called Oswaldtwistle is the Eagle Chemical Works, with the names above—BOWDLER and BICKERDIKE. The deceased gentleman, Mr. JOSEPH BICKERDIKE, was one of the four sons of the late ROBERT BICKERDIKE, a gentleman at one time with the late Mr. GREG, cotton manufacturer. Mr. W. E. BICKERDIKE served an apprenticeship with Mr. STEPHEN ROSS, chemist, the same chemist with whom Professor FRANKLAND was apprenticed. He subsequently went to Manchester and some time afterwards, in conjunction with Mr. BOWDLER, succeeded in establishing the works above alluded to where carbolic acid is, I believe, one of the specialities manufactured. By Mr. JOSEPH BICKERDIKE'S decease the HELME family, closely related to the BICKERDIKES, will be thrown into mourning. Mr. W. E. BICKERDIKE, the principal partner of the firm, was at one time connected with the late Mr. JOSEPH STOREY.

So this was Emma Bickerdike's background. In December 1858, when she was 18, Emma married Thomas Mann Crone, a promising young bookkeeper from Litherland in the north of Liverpool. Thomas' family credentials were just as impressive as Emma's – moving in these circles it wouldn't be surprising if had been an arranged marriage.

Thomas was the son of John Crone, a Liverpool sugar refiner and his first wife Mary Biglands. John would have been a very busy and wealthy man as Liverpool was a thriving port in those days and sugar was in high demand. It goes without saying that John will have also profited from the slave trade. John's obituary explained that he took over the business from an uncle and made 'a handsome fortune' which he used to promote the Methodist cause. However, he used some of his handsome fortune to retire to the very grand Sandath House in Penrith.



DEATH OF MR AND MRS CRONE, OF PENRITH.

The Wesleyan Methodist cause in Cumberland and Westmorland has sustained a great loss by the death of Mr and Mrs John Crone, of Sandath House, Penrith. Mr Crone, who had almost completed his 85th year, was well up to Thursday last, but on Friday he was attacked by influenza and bronchitis, and died at an early hour on Saturday morning. Mrs Crone, his wife, who was on the verge of completing her 80th year, had been in poor health for a few days, and she expired about three o'clock on Sunday morning. Mr Crone was born in the Abbey

score years. At the age of 23 he removed to Liverpool and entered the office of his uncle, who was in business as a sugar refiner. He eventually succeeded to the business, which he carried on very successfully from 1841 to 1852, making a handsome fortune, much of which has been spent in furthering the cause of Methodism. He

Settle Graveyard Project

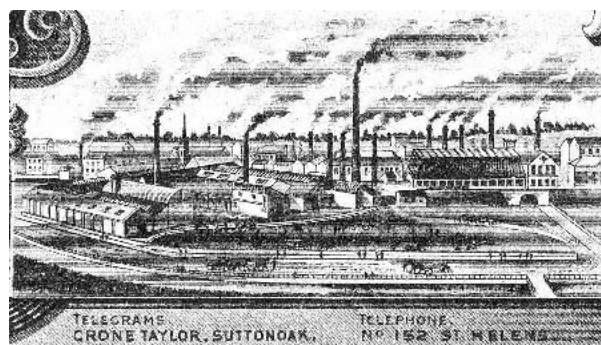
John died after an attack of influenza and bronchitis in December 1891, aged 84, at 12 o'clock on a Friday night. Just two days later his second wife, Eleanor Russell, died at 3 o'clock on the Sunday morning [2]. They had a double funeral [3].

THE LATE MR. AND MRS. CRONE.
A DOUBLE FUNERAL.
MEMORIAL SERVICE AND SERMON.
Amid every manifestation of sorrow, and in the presence of some hundreds of people from Penrith, the surrounding villages, and some from cities at a long distance, the remains of the late Mr. and Mrs.

In 1885 John and Mary's son **John (Jnr) Crone** [ph1] went into partnership with **David Taylor** and bought a business which became '*Crone Taylor Bone Crushers and Manufacturers of Blood & Bone Manures*' (fertilisers) [ph1]. The business in Sutton Oak, east of Liverpool, was operational for nearly 100 years. For some years Crone Taylor's storeroom served as the chapel for the non-denominational Welsh. They had branches in Cumberland, Lincolnshire and Wales, Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire.



So this was the background of Thomas Mann Crone, Emma's husband. Thomas worked as a book keeper and they lived in Liverpool and Emma had four children. There seemed to be a weak gene in the Crone family as three of Thomas's siblings died in their teenage years and Thomas died aged just 28, in 1864, just after the birth of the youngest child. Thomas left Emma a substantial sum probably worth half a million pounds in today's value and Emma and the children were also well provided for in the wills of her father and father-in-law.



For some unknown reason, Emma decided to bring the children to live in Settle. There were no relations in this area but you can't fault her judgment of a good place in which to live. They lived in the house next to the bank in the Market Place behind the Shambles, now a bike shop [ph2]. They were here by 1893 – the church vestry records report that '*Mrs Crone most hospitably entertained the members of her Mothers' Meeting on Wednesday 25th October. About thirty were present – a very pleasant evening was spent.*' She used the new 'Church House' which, at that time, was the central portion of the Folly.



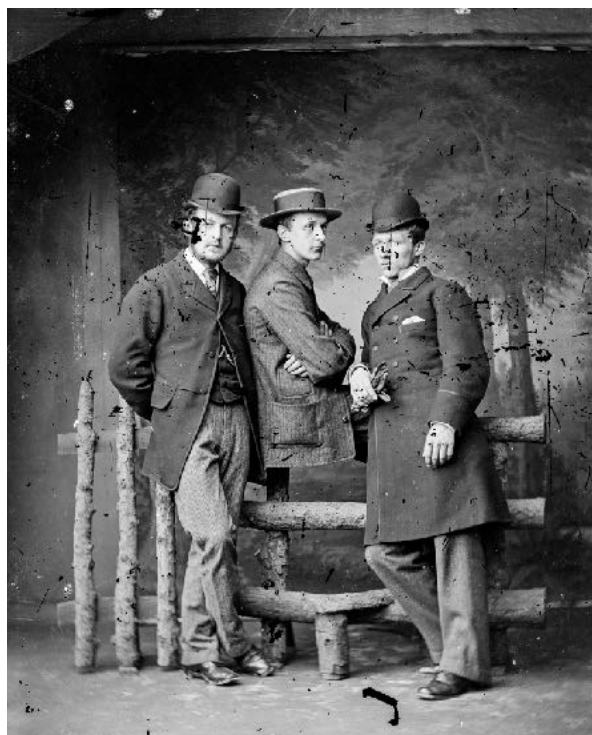
During the early 1900, Emma and her daughters spent their summers in guest houses around the country – this one in Whitby in 1905 [5]. Why not? Emma died in 1909, aged 69.

TRENT BOARDING HOUSE.
Crone, Mrs Settle
Crone, Misses (2) ...



What happened to Emma and Thomas' children?

In 1879 eldest son **John Mann Crone** had his photo taken at the Horner Studios with his good friends William Clark and Charles Edward Bygrave [ph4, centre]. John became a salesman of leather and oil cloths and returned to Lancashire setting up



Three men, photograph by the Horner Studio.
Horner Collection©NCBPT (CC-BY 4.0)

FALL FROM TRAIN. Manchester Business Man Found Dying in Tunnel.

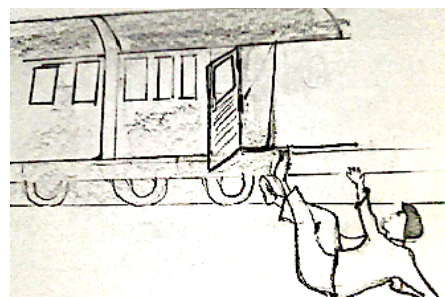
After travelling regularly for twenty-two years from St. Annes-on-Sea to Manchester to business, Mr John Mann Crone, aged 64 years, met his death yesterday morning by a fall from the train.

On the arrival of the train at Pendlebury railway station a door was found open, and investigation led to the discovery of Mr Crone lying grievously injured in the tunnel near the station. His head was smashed, and both his legs and his right arm were broken. But it did not appear that he had been run over. He was carried to the station and a doctor summoned, but Mr Crone died very shortly afterwards.

A business card in his pocket showed that he was an agent for Messrs James Helme and Co., oilcloth merchants, of Lancaster, with an office in Spear Street, Manchester. His home address was Wyndhurst, St. Annes. His son, who travelled on the same train, was unaware of his father's death till later in the day. Usually they walked to the office together, but yesterday morning they missed each other. Mr Crone had no business worries.

It was stated by a railway employe that there were no lights in the corridor, and it would be very dark when the train entered the tunnel.

home with his wife **Cora Sheard** and two sons in Ashton under Lyne. John died in a tragic accident on a train in 1929 when he was 64. It seems he may have gone to the toilet on the train as it was going into a tunnel. There were no lights in the corridor and he opened the wrong door with fatal results [4]. John's son, who travelled on the same train was unaware of his father's death until later in the day, which might have been a good thing. The report of John's death indicated he worked for Messrs James Helme and Co, oilcloth merchants. This company was also mentioned in the report the death of Joseph Bickerdike (above) so the families had close links.



Emma and Thomas' son **Thomas Arthur Crone** may have inherited the weak gene as he died when he was just 24 in 1887. Before his premature death Arthur worked as a schoolmaster at Giggleswick School. He was a talented musician and, as a result, the family socialised with **Dr Charles William Buck** and his friend, the composer **Edward Elgar**. The Crones were even on Elgar's Christmas card list! Arthur was remembered as a member of the band of the Settle Choral Society [CH].

After Emma died spinster sisters **Mary Gertrude** and **Emma Elizabeth Eleanor** moved to be with brother John in Ashton under Lyne but are both buried back in Settle with their mother and brother in *Old A31*.



Mary Gertrude Crone 1933. Emma Elizabeth Eleanor Crone 1937. In loving memory of our dear mother and brother Arthur Crone.



Settle Graveyard Project

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'.

Illustrations by Teresa Gordon. The life stories of people with italicised names have been researched as part of the graveyard project

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ph1 – photo credited to the descendants of the family on ancestry.co.uk, username sineadpnolan, ph2 – credited to the Back in Settle facebook site, ph3 – credited to LancasterCityUK facebook site, ph4 – Image 2022.1.68.57 from the Horner Photographic Studio Collection provided courtesy of the Museum of North Craven Life



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