

The Clarks, an integral part of Settle's backbone (part 1)

Thomas, born in 1826 in Clapham, was the youngest son of **Robert Clark**, a joiner and his wife **Agnes Leeming** [ph3]. Dad Robert died the year Thomas was born and Agnes married again, to **Christopher Parsons**, a young carpenter in Austwick. Agnes was 27 but Christopher was only 20 so needed his father's permission to marry and this was granted. It's a good job as Agnes was already pregnant with a daughter also named Agnes. Agnes had six sons with Christopher as well as her daughter but, for some reason, Christopher deserted her, leaving her with all those children. His records show he was a naughty boy, '*an incorrigible rogue, by neglecting his family at Austwick.*' He had a previous criminal record for assault, failing to pay sureties (to guarantee good behaviour) and then three cases of neglecting his family, all of which resulted in imprisonment. Poor Agnes died in 1845, aged 44. After his release Christopher moved to Giggleswick where he eventually died in the workhouse in 1883, aged 75.



| | | |
|--|-------------------------|---------------------------------|
| <i>J. Birkbeck Esq.</i> | 8 | 2 Oct 1860 Assault 2 Cal Months |
| <i>Being an incorrigible rogue,</i> | <i>By 31 March 1861</i> | <i>do do</i> |
| <i>neglecting his family at Austwick</i> | <i>11 May 1861</i> | <i>Man of Family 12 Cal Mo</i> |
| <i>Christopher Parsons</i> | <i>155</i> | <i>do do</i> |
| <i>Discharged</i> | <i>157</i> | <i>do do</i> |
| | <i>159</i> | <i>do do</i> |
| | <i>161</i> | <i>do do</i> |

While all this was going on Thomas moved to Settle with his aunt **Mary Leeming**, who was a grocer in Chapel Square. Thomas made a living as a gentleman's footman. In 1850 he married **Thirza Smith**, [ph1], the daughter of **John Smith**, a successful, wealthy cotton manufacturer from Colne. Thirza was from fertile stock – she was one of at least ten and she continued, having 13 children of her own. Thirza's parents had given their children unusual first names, perhaps to add variety to the surname 'Smith', and Thomas and Thirza followed suit naming children **Cicero**, **Thirza**, **Clarissa** amongst more traditional ones. Just one infant, **George** died in 1866 and is buried somewhere in the Ancient graveyard. Thomas had his photo taken at the Horner studios in 1868 when he was 42 [ph1].



Mr Thos Clark, photograph by the Horner Studio.
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Once married Thomas worked as a market gardener in Spread Eagle Street (Kirkgate), perhaps inspired by his aunt. Later, as the family continued to grow, he moved to the shop on the corner of Cheapside and Duke Street where he sold English and Foreign fruit, fish, game, and poultry. It was known as Clark's corner. The building of the railways enabled him to supply fish too. In 1862, he even sold tortoises that '*require little or no care*' and Craven clotted cream and cream cheese. There are numerous adverts for his successful business which continued for decades [SC, ph2].

In 1872 Thomas' cart was involved in a serious accident. Thomas' servant, **John Riley**, was leading a horse and cart down the very steep





SERIOUS ACCIDENT AT SETTLE.—On Wednesday, whilst the horse and cart, the property of Mr. Thomas Clark, greengrocer, and which were in charge of John Riley, his servant, were coming down Constitution-hill, in Settle, the horse commenced kicking. On Riley ende-

MARCH 1st, 1862.

THOMAS CLARK,
SEEDSMAN, FRUITERER, AND GREEN GROCER,

Pegs to inform the public that he has constantly on hand Almeria Grapes, French Stewing Pears; French, and Portugal Apples, Normandy Pippins, Newtown Pippins, the best imported. The Finest Eleme Figs, selected and packed in layers in boxes of two pounds and upwards; Lisbon and St. Michael Oranges, Cocoa Nuts, Naples and French Walnuts; Portugal and English Onions, &c., &c.

KITCHEN-GARDEN and FLOWER SEEDS.
Generally cheaper and in much better condition than last year's seeds.

Pea-sticks, Bass Matting, Cuba Bass, Faro Baskets suitable for tool-kits, &c.

A lot of Window Plants expected about the 10th, comprising,—Acacias, Camellias, Genistas, Fuschias, Geraniums, &c. Every article in the trade on the shortest notice.

A few live **TORTOISES** on sale. These animals are very useful for the destruction of insects in gardens, and require little or no care. There is one in the College Gardens at Cambridge, which has been there a great number of years.

Settle, Feb. 28th, 1862.

Constitution Hill in Settle, probably returning from Langcliffe. The horse went out of control and charged down the hill injuring two young boys in the process. 'Great alarm was caused in the streets' [5].

Thomas was a Vice President of Settle Bowling Club when it opened in 1898, playing on the green of the Ashfield Hotel. Thomas was on the first Parish Council in the 1890s. Thomas was the vicar's churchwarden at Holy Ascension from 1878-1896. The vicar elected one of the churchwardens and the pew renters elected the other 'People's warden'. For many years Thomas worked alongside *John Handby*, the pew renters' choice [1]. Churchwardens were the vicar's right hand men (yes, always men) who managed the everyday life of the church. Churchwardens had to be 'fit and proper persons' and tended to be well respected tradesmen. Vestry records list their responsibilities: 'to perform and execute all lawful acts, matters and things necessary and requisite for and concerning the repairs, management, good order and decency of behaviour to be kept and observed in the church by the congregation. In the case of non-payment of Pew Rent, to enter upon and sell the same or else to sue for and recover the same by Action in the names of the Churchwardens of the church'. There was considerable controversy over pew rents in Anglican churches throughout the nineteenth century, especially as nonconformist churches were free to all, so Thomas had plenty to do.



Thomas and Thirza died within three months of each other in 1909. When Thomas died, the vicar wrote in vestry records, 'He was elected churchwarden in April 1878 and held this office until April 8th 1896 when a vote of thanks was given for his long and faithful service to the Church. During his period of office, the Church Yard was extended and the bells hung in the tower of the Church. In both these undertakings he was deeply interested and worked with unremitting diligence. On Wednesday 21st April we laid him to rest in the churchyard, in the spot he had chosen himself "in sure and certain hope of the resurrection to eternal life". The flag half-mast high, the choral service, the muffled peal, and the church well nigh filled with sorrowing friends, all testified to the way in which he was regarded.'

Thomas's carefully chosen grave is just inside the lych gate in what is described in the burial records as '4 spaces which are bricked graves owned by T Clark and sons'. This plot of land was made available when the church bought the land for the Old graveyard in 1885. The church lychgate was moved further out towards the road creating a convenient grave space. Thomas and Thirza were buried under the left hand stone. The three matching

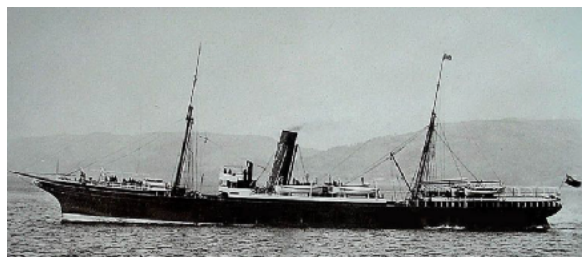


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gravestones would have been erected together at a much later date, probably by Thomas's spinster daughters.

In loving memory of Thomas Clark died April 17th 1909 in his 84th year, also of Thirza his wife died Sept 1st 1909 in her 82nd year. Also of John their son died Feb 23rd 1890 in his 34th year. Thomas Clark born May 29th 1862 died at Pietermaritzburgh Oct 22nd 1916. Also Dorothy Clark Hayton died June 7th 1927 aged 37 years. Also of Cicero their eldest son who died Nov 15th 1916, aged 65 years. Also of Mary his wife, died Oct 18th 1878, age 29 years, RIP, OLD 03

Third son **John Clark** died of pneumonia aged just 33. After education at Giggleswick school John had worked with the Settle surgeon **Charles William Buck** [1] before working on the state of the art steamship SS Rotomahana [ph6]. This ship, built in Scotland, was the first steel hulled steamer in the world and was known as the 'Greyhound of the Pacific' due to her great speed. She sailed from Sydney around New Zealand carrying passengers and cargo.

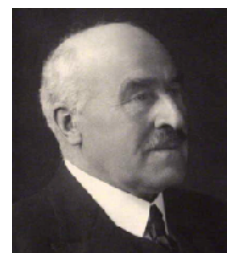


Son **Thomas** died in Pietermaritzburg, between Bloemfontein and Durban, South Africa and so is not in the grave. Daughter **Louisa** married **William Hayton**, a plumber, and son of **John Hayton**. **Dorothy Clark Hayton** was their 37 year old daughter and is buried in this grave. Louisa, inheriting her parents' business sense, ran a confectionery business which later became the Commercial 'Family Temperance Hotel' on Duke Street, opposite the Golden Lion, for a short while. In 1904, with three young children to look after, Louisa transferred the business over to her siblings **William Firth Clark** and **Thirza Clark** [LSA].

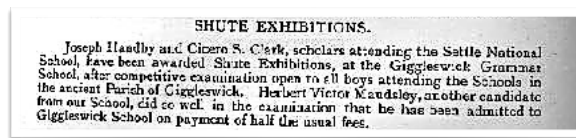


Louisa had a cousin, **Sir Frederick Henry Smith** [ph10]. Fred was a rubber and cotton factory owner, deputy chairman of Martins Bank.

The bank had 700 branches (that were later acquired by Barclays Bank). He was also a director of several railway companies. Fred was created a Baronet, of Colwyn Bay in the County of Denbigh, in 1912. In the 1917 Birthday Honours he was raised to the peerage as **Baron Colwyn of Colwyn Bay**. Impressive. Amongst his many other assets Sir Fred owned 1-10 Teme Street in Giggleswick which he sold to cousin Louisa in 1913.



When he was 13, Thomas and Thirza's eldest son, **Cicero Smith Clark**, won a scholarship to Giggleswick School, together with **Joseph Handby**, son of **John Handby**, the churchwarden [ph9]. Cicero, also a grocer, was very unlucky in marriage. His first wife, **Mary Hindle**, died in 1878, a year after their marriage at the birth of **Cicero Smith Clark**, who became a successful pharmacist in London. Mary is commemorated on this stone, but buried in the Ancient graveyard. Cicero (Snr)'s second wife **Kate Arnold** died a year after their marriage in 1881. Luckily, third wife **Florence Ann Maddocks** survived and they lived in London with son Cicero. In 1889 son Cicero was awarded the Royal Humane Society's



Bronze Medal for saving the life of a drowning man, **Edward Fairhurst**, in the Ribble at Long Preston. Edward named his eldest son 'Cicero' as a mark of respect. Unfortunately another man, **Herbert Clulow**, died [3].

Thomas and Thirza's second son **Robert** [ph3] trained at Edinburgh University to become a doctor, but had a tragic premature death with blood poisoning [2], aged 40, just four years after marrying **Mary Elizabeth Todd**. The reports were quite graphic. Robert's daughter **Elsie Vida** had a successful global life with her husband **Travers Pickmore**, an architect and military man. Colleague **Charles Forshaw** wrote a touching memorial to Robert [1]. Robert is buried under the central stone of the Clark plot.



DR. ROBERT CLARK.
 Good-night, old friend, we will not say good-bye,
 For thou art simply in a tranquil sleep:
 Nought to disturb thy slumbers calm and deep,
 Earth's rude awakings thou canst now defy.
 We will not ring a dull funeral knell,
 Nor chant in mournful lines a doleful strain,
 Thou shalt awake in lands that know no pain.
 Then wherefore bid thee now a long farewell?
 Good-night once more—all brief is worldly life,
 The morn is nigh that sees an endless day;
 The frame that holds the soul is worthless clay,
 And when 'tis freed there comes not care nor strife;
 Thou'lt say good-morning in the Realms of Light,
 So till we hear thee, once again Good-Night!
 CHAS. F. FORSHAW, LL.D., Bradford.

In loving memory of Robert Clark, born 12th October 1852, died 14th January 1894, so he gives his beloved sleep, OLD 04

Robert's grave also contains his sister **Sarah Jane Clark** and her husband **Joseph Bentham** although their lives are not commemorated on the stone. Joseph was a butcher. After working in Gargrave, Sarah Jane and Joseph moved to Colne. Back in Settle, Sarah Jane died in 1954, aged 89, a year after Joseph, also 89. In 1894 Thomas and Thirza's daughter **Mary** married **John Jackman**, a cycle mechanic from Long Preston. Cycling was becoming very fashionable, especially for progressive women. Mary and John moved to Reading with their daughter.

Thomas and Thirza's fourth son **William Firth Clark** took over the business from his father [LSA]. He had his photo taken [ph1, left] in 1879 with his chums **Charles Edward Bygrave** [right] who was a founder of the Settle Amateur Operatic Society, and **John Mann Crone** [centre]. He was on the committee of Settle Cricket Club and was also a bell ringer. Along with **John William Shepherd**, William worked for the Poor Law guardians [LSA]. William married **Lucy Batty** and had two children.

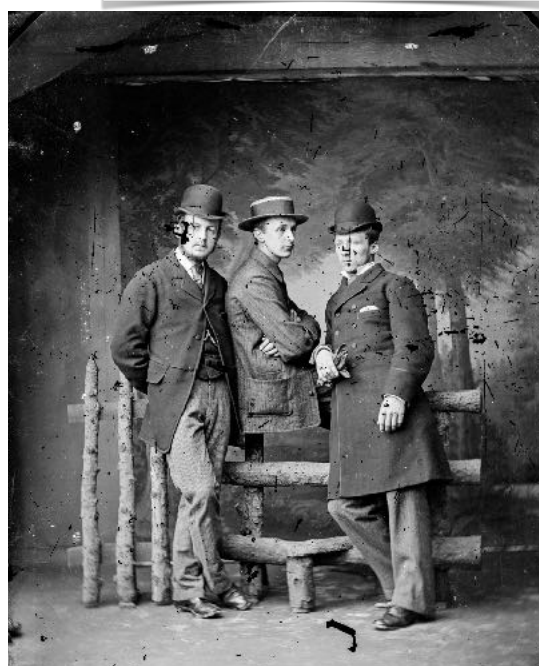
DROWNED IN THE RIBBLE.

A LUCKY RESCUE.

On Sunday afternoon a number of young men and boys were bathing in the Ribble at Long Preston, when two, named F. Fairhurst and Herbert Clulow, got into difficulties in the deep water, though they had been warned of their danger. It appears that they had been larking with a dog, and Fairhurst took hold of its tail, when it dragged him towards a deep pool. Clulow went to his assistance, though not a swimmer, and himself got out of his depth. A young man, named G. S. Clark, who was partially dressed, dived in and succeeded in bringing Fairhurst to the bank. He then returned for Clulow, and managed to get hold of him, but Clulow slipped from his grasp and sank. The body was recovered about an hour afterwards. Fairhurst was unconscious, but was eventually resuscitated.

EXTRAORDINARY DEATH OF A LANCASTER DOCTOR.

An inquest has been held by Dr. Holden, at Lancaster, concerning the death of Dr. Robert Clark, 40 years of age, who died on Sunday morning from blood poisoning. The Coroner said the sad death proved the truth of the maxim that doctors not only lived from their patients, but also had to die for them. The evidence showed that Dr. Clark last week had a small blister (or herpes, as the doctors call it) on his nose, and in the course of his visits to patients, dressed some cancerous bed sores, from which one of his patients was suffering. He believed that whilst doing so, or immediately afterwards, before washing his hands, he must have passed his finger lightly over his nose to relieve the tickling sensation produced by the blister, and in this way conveyed the poisonous pus to his system. However, symptoms of blood poisoning rapidly developed, and when Drs. Hall and Irvin, of Lancaster, were called in to see him on Thursday morning septic-pneumonia was apparent, as well as pleurisy. Inquiries led to the facts above stated being ascertained, but up to that time Dr. Clark had no idea he was suffering from blood poisoning, or of the serious consequences likely to follow the unconscious act of scratching his nose. He rapidly grew worse, and although Dr. Ward, of Leeds, added his professional skill and knowledge to that of the Lancaster medical men, Dr. Clark rapidly grew worse, and died on Sunday morning, after being delirious since Saturday. The jury returned a verdict of "Death from blood poisoning accidentally introduced into his system." Dr. Clark was formerly in partnership with Dr. Wingate-Saul, and after he started business for himself he married Miss Todd, of Ilkley. He leaves one child, a daughter. The funeral took place yesterday.



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

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Miss J. M. Clark as "Isabella"
Mr. J. Hayton as "Luzi"



Mr. S. F. Clark



Daughter **Thirza Mary Clark** and son **Stanley Firth Clark** performed with the Settle Amateur Operatic Society. This may have been a release for Stanley as he was known to suffer from a stutter. Thirza starred with her cousin **John (Jack) Francis Hayton** in the production of *The Gondoliers*. [4]. Stanley stayed in the grocery trade. At the time of the 1939 pre-war census Stanley worked as an 'Oxo representative' in Ilkley. The first 'Oxo cubes' were produced in 1910. During the war 100 million Oxo cubes were provided to the armed forces, all of them individually hand-wrapped. William Firth Clark is buried with his wife and spinster sister Clarissa under the right hand stone in *Old 005*.

In memory of Lucy, the beloved wife of William Firth Clark born Aug 27th 1859, died Dec 14th 1910, Thy will be done, also of the above William Firth Clark died Sep 25th 1929 aged 71 years, at rest. Agnes Clark born March 23rd 1873 and died Dec 24th 1945. Also Thirza Clark born June 6th 1867, died Sep 3rd 1946. Emily Clark born Aug 22nd 1860, died Sep 29th 1943. Also of Clarissa Clark died March 23rd 1951 aged 82 years, Old05



Four spinster sisters **Thirza**, **Emily**, **Agnes** and **Clarissa** lived together in Halsteads. Church records tell us that Agnes, Thirza and Emily and are buried in the plot next to William in *Old 06*, but are commemorated on William's stone.



This account has been compiled by Sarah Lister 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.

The life stories of people with italicised names have been researched as part of the graveyard project and 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'.

ph1 – Image 2022.1.68.35, Image 2022.1.68.57a, from the Horner Photographic Studio Collection provided courtesy of the Museum of North Craven Life

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Sketch thanks to Teresa Gordon

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