

John Cowburn and his son John Cowburn, unlucky men

John was born in 1810 in Skipton to middle class parents, **Richard Cowburn**, a schoolmaster and printer and his wife **Hannah Hardcastle**, the daughter of a woollen manufacturer. By 1832 he had married **Jane Cork** who was the daughter of **William Cork**, the Settle wig and hat maker. John and Jane lived in Duke Street opposite the end of (what would become) Station Road and a step exists outside the back of the house engraved with the Cowburn name. Later they moved to the exclusive residences of The Terrace on the opposite side of the road.



John was an educated man and become an attorney and solicitor. In the 1840s he attempted to take advantage of the investment frenzy, known as 'railway mania'. In partnership with **Edward James Norris**, 'Cowburn and Norris' was set up to manage the business of a railway planned between Lancaster and Newcastle upon Tyne [1]. The reality was that a third of all planned railways failed, including this one and so John lost his investment. Eventually John became insolvent [2]. The wrangling over his estate continued several years after his death. Despite all of this, John must have been well regarded as he had been elected to the prestigious position of High Constable for the West Riding in 1847. Before the establishment of regional police forces High Constables were appointed to oversee provision for keeping order. John had immense responsibility in this post.

LANCASTER & NEWCASTLE-UPON-TYNE
RAILWAY.

RUMOURS having been industriously circulated to the prejudice of this undertaking, we beg to assure the Applicants for Shares that the intention to Abandon the Line never existed, and that every exertion will continue to be made to bring the matter before the ensuing Parliament.

COWBURN & NORRIS
Solicitors to the Projected Company.

On the 7th Aug. 1850 John Cowburn, having become insolvent, executed a deed whereby he assigned all his personal estate, and covenanted to convey all his real estate to the defendant John Ellis, in trust for the benefit of his creditors. In the month

In 1850 John was taken to court by **John Johnson Hartley**, a local ironmonger for failure to honour a promissory note of £425 – a fortune in those days. [7]. Oops. In addition, between September 1851 and November 1852 an extraordinary series of letters were sent by **Thomas Birkbeck**, working as the solicitor for **Henry Robinson**, also a solicitor and John Cowburn's landlord. John had not paid his rent and 16 solicitor's letters were sent!

HARTLEY v. COWBURN.
The case was not defended. Mr. Martin and Mr. Overend were for plaintiff. Plaintiff, Mr. John Johnson Hartley, is an ironmonger at Settle, and defendant is a solicitor at the same place. This action was for a promissory note, value £425, with interest, dated 9th December, 1847. The signature of defendant was proved by Mr. Seed, clerk with Mr. Pearson, Kirkby Lonsdale, and the jury brought in a verdict for £425, with £51 interest.

May 14 Writing Mr. Cowburn again pressing him for payment of rent - - - - - 3

25 Writing Mr. Cowburn again for payment of rent and that no further time could be given unless he made a payment on Account - - - - - 3

Writing you hereon and that I thought Mr. Cowburn would not pay until he found you were serious in determining to make him - - - - - 3

John had a most unfortunate death in 1855 whilst skating on the ice at 'Birkbeck Wear', nearly Anley [3]. The severity of 19th century weather was frequently mentioned in newspaper reports. As was so common in those days, John died from infection rather than from the injury itself. John was just 44 and died.

John's widow Jane moved to much cheaper housing in Kirkgate and ran a confectionery

MELANCHOLY ACCIDENT. On Monday, February 12th, an accident, attended with fatal consequences, occurred to John Cowburn, Esq., of Settle. He had been skating on Birkbeck Wear, and was about to finish, when he unfortunately went against a piece of rough ice, and fell heavily. His cheek was cut through under the eye. He was out on the Tuesday and Wednesday, but on the following Tuesday he was no more. It is supposed that Erysipelatous inflammation had spread fatally to the brain. He held the offices of Clerk of the County Court and Chief Constable for the Division of Staincliffe West, for which offices his Son is a candidate.

business with her daughters Hannah and Martha Frances [LSA]. At the time of the 1871 census Jane, like most other households, provided accommodation for workers on the Settle and Carlisle railway. However Jane's lodger was someone special – **Robert Edward Wilson** who was the resident engineer overseeing the building of the Settle to Dent section of the railway, even though he was only 29. Jane was a widow for over 50 years before dying in 1906 aged 93. John and Jane are buried in Gisburn with John's parents.

John and Jane's daughter **Sarah Jane**, born in 1849, ran a confectionery business [WSA] before becoming the second wife of **Darius Ineson** who ran his tinning and brazier business at the end of Cheapside in the Market Place. Sarah Jane was nearly 30 years younger than Darius and they went to Scarborough to get married. Sarah Jane is buried in Holy Ascension graveyard in *Old L41* with her sister Hannah/Annie who remained a spinster.

H. & M. F. COWBURN,
CONFECTIONERS,
MARKET PLACE, SETTLE.
A good stock of all kinds of Cakes, Fruit Pies, Meat Pies, &c., always on hand. Brides' Cakes and Funeral Biscuits made to order. Agent for Horniman's Teas.

HORNIMAN'S TEAS
Are Sold in **SETTLE**, by
S. J. COWBURN,
Confectioner, Kirkgate.
AT THE FOLLOWING PRICES:—
2s. 4d., 2s. 8d., 3s. 0d., 3s. 4d., and 3s. 8d. per lb.
In Two Ounce, Quarter Pound, Half Pound, and Pound Packets

In loving remembrance of Annie Cowburn (of Settle) who died Nov 21st 1926 aged 47 years. Also Sarah Jane Ineson who died April 2nd 1937 aged 88 years. The day thou gavest Lord is ended, Old L41



John and Jane's son **Charles Henry Cowburn**, born in 1846, had a very different life. John had died when Charles was just nine, which may have had long term effects. In 1866 Charles Henry worked as a solicitor's clerk in Colne. He was arrested for stealing 17 shillings from **Senes Postlethwaite**, a servant at an ale and porter store and, controversially, was not granted bail despite having being a 'young man of highly respectable appearance and character'. After a three hour trial he was found not guilty [4]. However in 1873, in Manchester, he was charged with embezzling £40 from his employer. Charles Henry had been sacked but collected and pocketed rent from tenants and kept it in a flower pot. This time he was found guilty and imprisoned for six months [5].

POCKET PICKING AT BURNLEY BY A CLERK.—Charles Henry Cowburn, a young man of highly respectable appearance and connections, clerk in Mr. Hartley's office, solicitor, Colne, was charged with picking the pocket of **Senes Postlethwaite**, a servant in an ale and porter store at Blackburn, of about 17s. in silver. It appeared that about one o'clock on Sun-

dayed at Mr. Hartley's office, the prisoner, who was at the time under notice to leave, received the money and did not account for it. Shortly afterwards the prisoner left the service of Mr. Holmes, and went to two other of the tenants, from whom he received, on the false pretence that he was instructed by his employer to collect the rents, the sum of £40. With the whole of the money thus obtained he absconded, but on the 10th inst. he was taken into custody by Inspector Shandley, at Denbigh, where £40 of the money was found concealed in a flower pot in the house where he had been living. The prisoner was dealt with on the first offence

By the next census return in 1881 Charles was living with a 'wife' Lucy and two children. He eventually married **Lucy Leigh** just before her death in 1884. His young daughter **Hannah Cowburn** was brought up by sister Sarah Jane (Ineson) and son **Charles Cowburn** by Leigh relations. Charles Henry continued to work as a shipping clerk in Manchester and died aged 75.

John and Jane's son **John Cowburn (Jnr)**, born in 1837, was the son to continue the family business in Settle. He worked as an auctioneer, a Registrar of births, marriages and deaths, and a High Bailiff [1], working for the courts to execute warrants and court orders. As registrar John had the unenviable task of registering all the deaths of the navvies who died during the building of the Settle and Carlisle railway – there were 21 in Settle alone. John's position may have led to the resident

APPOINTMENT.—We have before omitted to state that Mr John Cowburn, of Settle, has recently been appointed High Bailiff of the County Court, at Settle, in place of Mr James Wilkinson. In that capacity, Mr Cowburn officiated in Court the first time on Thursday, the 15th inst.

Settle Graveyard Project

engineer choosing to lodge with his mother. When he was 30, in 1867, John married **Elizabeth Marsden Ayrton**, the daughter of **Henry Ayrton**, who had been the innkeeper of both the New Inn and the Royal Oak in Settle. Elizabeth had already proved she was fertile with a daughter **Margaret (Maggie)**, and they had four sons together. Sons John, aged 6, and Richard, aged 3, both died in 1873, presumably of an infection.

In 1876 John was involved in setting up Craven Pure Oil Cake and Corn Mill Co Ltd using Bridge End Mill [CH]. Tragically, like his father, John had a premature death later that year after a short illness, aged just 39. Just the week before he had held an auction of livestock for John Henry Dale after the death of his father **David Hall Dale** [CH].

Signature, Description, and Residence of Informant	When Registered	Signature of Registrar
John Cowburn In Attendance Settle	Twenty second May 1871	John Cowburn Registrar

The YORKSHIRE BANKING COMPANY, Settle.
Sec. (pro tem.)—**Mr. JOHN COWBURN.**
Office—**NEW-STREET, SETTLE.**

This Company is formed to lease the "BRIDGE END MILL," Settle, of **HECTOR CHRISTIE, Esq.**, who has offered it on very reasonable terms taking into consideration the admirable situation of the Premises and the Water Power in connection therewith.

The objects of the Company are to manufacture pure Oil Cake, also to carry on the Business of Corn Millers.

There not being any Manufactory of this description within a large radius, and there being a great and increasing consumption of Oilcake and Feeding Stuff in this neighbourhood, the promoters have every confidence of success, and anticipate that a great portion of the Shares will be taken up by consumers of the productions of the proposed Company.

CLEATOP, SETTLE.

Mr. John Cowburn

**Has received instructions from Mr. J. H. Dale, to
SELL BY AUCTION, on the premises as above,
on Thursday, 26th October inst.,**

THE LATE MR. COWBURN.—We record with very deep regret the sudden death of Mr. Cowburn, our esteemed correspondent, at Settle. He has not been well for a few weeks, and about a month ago consulted Dr. Allbutt, of Leeds, who detected slight congestion of the lungs, and prescribed a course of treatment. On

dearest to him, at an early hour in the morning. The deceased, besides being the correspondent to all the local papers for about ten years, also held the office of registrar of births and deaths for the Settle district for upwards of seventeen years, and during the two last elections acted as Liberal agent. He was also the Settle agent for the North Craven Building Society. His management of all these multifarious duties was always highly satisfactory, and his loss is very much felt by his employers, and all whose business brought them in contact with him. Mr. Cowburn was also an active partner in the firm of Smith and Cowburn, coal agents, of this town, and had made considerable headway as auctioneer. It is thought that the exposure and exertion necessary in the latter business have hastened the end which is so generally deplored.

John's obituary [7] described his involvement in the North Craven Industrial and Provident Building Society, 'a most efficient and trustworthy official'[8], and his active role in his partnership with **Abraham Smith** in **Smith and Cowburn**, coal and coke agents [LSA].

Elizabeth was left with children Maggie (Ayrton), Henry and Frank Cowburn and set up a confectionery business for the Ladies of the district [CH].

Ten years later Elizabeth became the third wife of **Joseph Parker** who ran the Lodge Farm, and they had a son **James Parker**. Elizabeth's daughter Maggie Cowburn married **William Henry Lambert** who was the illegitimate son of **Mary Ellen Lambert** and nephew of the Settle printer **John Wilcock Lambert**. Maggie and William Henry didn't have children of their own, but the church baptism records tell us that, four years after marrying, William Henry fathered a son, **Frederick Bulcock** with **Frances Amelia Bulcock**. Oops. Frederick was brought up by Bulcock relations and worked as a railway labourer.

John and Elizabeth's son Henry Cowburn embarked on a career in the navy. Tragically in 1889 when he was just 20, Henry took his own life, possibly because he had failed to pass an

Smith & Cowburn.
COAL & COKE MERCHANTS,
SETTLE.
Sole Agents for the Habergham, Flockton, Foxholes, Thorncliffe, Old Silkstone, and Glass Houghton Collieries.
Orders received at the Office, New Street, Settle, will be promptly attended to.

**NEW CONFECTIONERY BUSINESS AT
SETTLE.**
MRS. JOHN COWBURN
Respectfully announces to the Ladies of the district that she has commenced the above business in all its branches, on her premises in Duke-street, and hopes to be favoured with a share of patronage. A stock will always be on hand of the regular goods in the trade, and special orders will have prompt attention.
A choice variety of **Peak Frean & Co.'s Biscuits.**
TEA, COFFEE, & REFRESHMENTS.

examination [9,CH]. This reflects the intensity of expectation on middle class young men and the lack of mental health provision in those days.

after the fatal shot was fired. Deceased was the eldest son of the late Mr John Cowburn, of Settle, and his untimely end, which is said to be attributable to failure to pass an examination for second mate's position on his vessel, is universally deplored in the district. An inquest is to be held on the body at the Boar's Head Hotel, Long Preston to-day (Friday).

SUICIDE OF A SETTLE MAN.—ON Wednesday evening, shortly before five o'clock, a young man, aged 21, and who has since been identified as Henry Cowburn, of Settle, a midshipman, shot himself in the head with a revolver, behind the wall on the road between Hellfield and Long Preston. Two persons, who were passing at the time, immediately acquainted the police, who had him conveyed to Long Preston, Drs. Williamson and Lazenby being quickly in attendance. The bullet had entered the right temple. The unfortunate young man expired in a little over two hours. No motive can be ascribed for the deed.

John, his infant sons John and Richard and poor Henry are all buried in Giggleswick Graveyard.

I.H.S. In loving memory of John Cowburn died Oct. 30th 1876 aged 39 years. Also Richard son of the above died Dec. 17th 1873 aged 3 years. Also John son of the above died Dec. 23rd 1873 aged 6 years. Also Henry son of the above died Feb. 27th 1889 aged 20 years, B8/36



This left youngest son, Frank Cowburn. In 1892 Frank was on the committee for the Football club [LSA]. In 1895, aged 22, Frank married Mary Grime whose father *William Grime* had worked as the groom to *John Birkbeck* at Anley.

It seems that in some ways, Frank took after his uncle, Charles Henry Cowburn. Frank got a job in the London and Midland Bank and was relocated to the Pontefract branch. Frank and Mary had a son *Henry Cowburn*, named after Frank's brother. In 1904, Frank was arrested for embezzlement having caused his employer considerable trouble. After profuse apologies from Frank and his mother Frank was given a lenient sentence of two months imprisonment [6].

SETTLE FOOTBALL CLUB.

President—Walter Morrison, Esq.
Hon. Sec.—Mr. G. M. Hartley. Hon. Treas.—Mr. C. F. Armistead.
Captain—Mr. B. Ward. Vice-Captain—Mr. G. M. Hartley.
Committee—Messrs. T. Altham, F. Brown, W. F. Clark, F. Cowburn, Jas. Fletcher, Frank Irving, John Jackman, S. Parker, and J. Redmayne.
Head Quarters and Dressing Room—Golden Lion Hotel, Settle.
Ground—Bridge End. Colours—Dark Green.

Mr. Moron, in opening the case, said it was one of the most painful he had ever known. Accused had been cashier in this bank, and for some time had given the management considerable trouble. The bank, however, in an excess of kindness and leniency had given him every chance of reformation. He had abused these opportunities by embezzling money to the extent of close upon £250. The bank were

in which they had treated the matter. Mr. Cowburn had been in this bank since he was 16, for he left school to go there. Since he had been in this position of trust and responsibility, his character had been absolutely without blemish. When the question of bail arose, hundreds were willing and anxious to stand for him. Accused, who was a married man, with a child, attributed his fall to drink, and the difficulty of making both ends meet. There had been no betting or anything of that kind, and accused during the whole of his 15 years in the bank had never got into debt, and did not owe a penny to any tradesman. His mother had offered to recoup every penny to the bank, but they had very properly refused that offer. He urged the Bench to deal with accused as leniently as possible.

After about a quarter of an hour's retirement, the Chairman said it was a most serious charge, and they very much regretted that Cowburn had had to appear before them. Seeing that he and his family had offered to repay the money, and seeing the bank did not press the case, the Bench had taken a very lenient view of the case. But they had decided in the interests of justice, and of the public, to commit him to Wakefield for two months, in the second division.

By the next census Mary was back in Settle living with her sisters and describing herself 'a widow'. Frank seems to have run away to Toronto, Canada where he died of bronchial pneumonia in November 1906, aged 34 [LSA]. Mary is buried with two of her sisters in the unmarked *Old EX17*.

29. Free Coffee Supper and Social Evening in connection with the Women's Liberal Association at Settle.—Death of Mr. Frank Cowburn (late of Settle) at the General Hospital, Toronto, Canada, of bronchial pneumonia, aged 34 years.

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Young Henry Cowburn was the only heir of this line of Cowburns and Grimes. He made a living selling coal in Settle and married **Rose Martha Lord**, granddaughter of the Wesleyan Preacher **John Lord**. Henry is buried in the New grave K50 with Rose Martha and son Peter and his wife **Joan Asher**.

In loving memory of Henry Cowburn, died 23 August 1973 aged 72 years. Also his dear wife Martha Cowburn died 13th June 1980, aged 77 years. Also their son Peter Cowburn, died 21 July 1975 aged 49 years. Also his dear wife Joan Cowburn died 16th Sept 2005, aged 76 years, New K50



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'.

Thanks to descendant Steve Cowburn for his help with this account.

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CH - with the kind permission of the Craven Herald and Pioneer

LSA, WSA - Lambert's/ Wildman's Settle Almanac, with the kind permission of the North Craven Buildings Preservation Trust