

The incredible tale of Charles Robert Archibald Millen

Charles Robert Archibald Millen arrived in Horton-in-Ribblesdale from London in the 1890s to find labouring work. With an accent like that he was known as 'Cockney Charley'. He was the second son of **Robert Arthur Millen** and **Amelia Read**. When they married Robert described himself as a '*pianoforte maker*' but then worked as a french polisher, both very skilled occupations. Robert and Amelia had ten children but five died in infancy/childhood. They gave all their sons the middle name Archibald after Amelia's father, **Archibald Read**, a shoemaker. Charles' father had died in 1884 when Charles was 16.

On 8 January 1898 Charles married **Sarah Ellen Parker** in Settle, the fifth child of **Robert Parker** and **Ellen Procter**. Robert worked with his brother **John Parker** to run the timber and joinery business on the Green in Upper Settle. In 1894 Robert was fined 5 shillings plus 5 shillings and 6 pence costs for being drunk but otherwise led an uneventful life [1].

DRUNK — Robert Parker, of Settle, joiner, was fined 5s. and 5s. 6d. costs for being drunk at Settle on the 9th inst. Mr. G. H. Charlesworth, solicitor, appeared for the defendant.

The wedding documentation gives no hint that just three days after their wedding, on 11 January, Sarah Ellen gave birth to their first of six children, a daughter **Lena Millen**. That was cutting it a bit fine. Perhaps one of them wasn't too sure about the idea of marriage? In the next six years Sarah Ellen gave birth to four more children so some things obviously went well.

1898. Marriage solemnized at <i>the parish church</i> in the <i>parish</i> of <i>Settle</i> in the County of <i>York</i>								
No.	When Married.	Name and Surname.	Age.	Condition.	Rank or Profession.	Residence at the Time of Marriage.	Father's Name and Surname.	Rank or Profession of Father.
278	<i>Jan 5th 1898</i>	<i>Charles Robert Archibald Millen</i>	<i>29</i>	<i>bachelor</i>	<i>Labourer</i>	<i>Horton-in-Ribblesdale</i>	<i>Robert Millen</i>	<i>French polisher</i>
		<i>Sarah Ellen Parker</i>	<i>24</i>	<i>spinster</i>		<i>Chapel Street Settle</i>	<i>Robert Parker</i>	<i>Joiner</i>

Married in the *parish church* according to the Rites and Ceremonies of the Established Church, *or* after *banes* by me,

This Marriage was solemnized between us, *Charles Robert Archibald Millen* in the Presence of us, *Sarah Ellen Parker* *Ernie Walker* *Lucy Smith*.

R. C. Garnett
Thomas Palmer

By 1892 Charles had persuaded his sister **Louise Nellie Phoebe Millen** to come up to Settle with her husband **Percy Marshall**. Percy was a labourer and a printer's son. Percy and Louise lived on Constitution Hill and Well Hill.

In 1901 Sarah Ellen's mother, Ellen (Procter) Parker died, aged 68 and was the first to be buried in the plot *Old D46*. Sarah Ellen's father, Robert, went to live in Bolton with Sarah Ellen's sister **Margaret (Parker) Derbyshire** and family and he died there four years later in January 1905. 1905 transpired to be an incredibly tragic year for the family. In April 1905 Sarah Ellen and Charles' third child **Emily Louisa Millen** died, aged almost exactly two. In November 1905 Sarah Ellen, now pregnant with a sixth child had an argument with Charles. Sarah Ellen decided to leave Charles and took the youngest two of the four surviving children to Leeds with her. She left the other two with Charles' sister Louise Marshall. Charles didn't seem to cope with this. A few days later, Charles

POISON FOR THE CHILDREN.
STRANGE SUICIDE AT SETTLE.

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decided to take his own life by poisoning and made a half hearted attempt to kill the two children living with his sister after taking them for their last meal of fish and chips. Fortunately, his sister intervened. However Charles took his own life by consuming potassium cyanide which was easily available from chemists in those days for use in photography [2].

At a late hour on Monday, at The Green, Settle, a mason's labourer named **Charles Millen** (27), known to his companions as "Cockney Charley," took his own life in a determined fashion, and it is thought that he had designs on the lives of two of his own children, but, fortunately, was thwarted in this purpose.

Millen's wife left him on Saturday, taking with her to Leeds two of the four children, who composed the family. The other two were left with a Mrs. Marshall, sister of the man. Early in the evening of Monday Millen asked for the two children, but his sister refused to let him have them. At 9.30 he went again to the house, and took for the children some chips and fish, which he declared would

be the last that they would ever get. He gave Mrs. Marshall two packets, which were labelled "poison," and she promptly destroyed them.

He had obtained from the chemists some cyanide of potassium, on the representation that it was wanted for photography. On saying "Good-bye" to all, his sister expressed the hope that he was not in earnest. He replied "I am," and went into his own house and locked the door. Two policemen were promptly called, and Millen opened the door to them, remarking "You are too late. I have taken it." Emetics were given, but proved of no avail, and the man died.

Sarah Ellen returned to Settle and gave birth to their last child, Louisa, in June 1906. She also managed to have another daughter, **Clarissa Millen**, all by herself in 1909. Sarah Ellen lived on Well Hill and then Chapel Street earning a living as a laundress. Sister-in-law Louisa Marshall returned to London with her family. Sarah Ellen died in 1953, aged 80.



Most of the children would have no memory of Charles as they grew up. Eldest son **George Robert Millen** worked as a farm servant before signing up to the 1st Battalion of the East Yorkshire Regiment. For 16 months he served as a 'runner', which is a particularly difficult and dangerous job taking messages to and from the Western Front. He was killed in action during the Battle of Arras on 23 August 1918, aged 19, but looking even younger [ph2].

Eldest daughter **Lena Millen** was pictured on Well Hill steps as a child [ph1]. When she was 23 she became the first wife of **Hector Percy Maunders**, the son of a railway labourer who worked as a clerk at the quarry office. They lived in Chapel Street, close to Sarah Ellen and had a son, **George Robert Millen Maunders**, presumably named after Lena's brother. Hector's grandfather, **John Maunders**, had moved to Settle from Berkshire for the building of the Settle and Carlisle railway and stayed after marrying local lass **Mary Thompson**. Lena died in 1962, aged 64 and was the last to join her family in *Old D46*. A gravestone was finally erected.

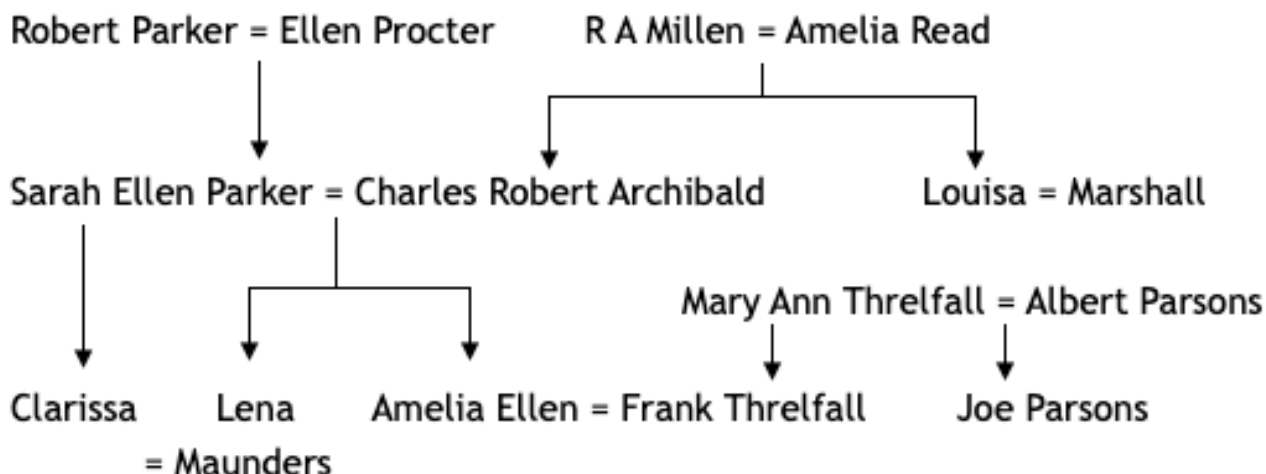


In memory of Lena Maunders, died Feb 24th 1962, aged 64 years.

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This was a full grave, containing Ellen Parker, Charles and Sarah Ellen Millen, their infant daughter Emily Louisa as well as Lena. Two years after Lena's death Hector Percy Maunders married widow **Lily (Marsden) Fletcher** but died two years after that. His widow Lily lived to the age of 98 and was buried in the *New graveyard 140* with her mother and first husband.

Millen Descendants



For some reason, perhaps related to Charles' mental health, Charles and Sarah Ellen's second daughter **Amelia Ellen Millen** was brought up by her uncle **Henry Parker**, a carpenter and his wife **Mary Ann Robinson**. They didn't have children of their own. Mary Ann had herself been brought up by her uncle, **John Lister**, the successful clerk to Settle Union and aunt **Isabella (Robinson) Lister**. Amelia Ellen married **Frank Threlfall**, a road stone quarrier and they had four children living at Jessamine Cottage in the Market Place for a while. This was a wonderful success story in which Frank also overcame a difficult start. Frank Threlfall was one of three illegitimate children of **Mary Ann Threlfall** who were all born in the workhouse, the only provision for unmarried mums in those days. Mary Ann's mum, **Isabella (Carr) Threlfall** had died soon after her birth and her father, **David Threlfall**, a book binder couldn't cope and resorted to the bottle, living in the common lodging houses on Albert Hill. In 1874 David was taken to court for stealing a tumbler worth 4d from the Craven Inn, opposite Giggleswick Station. He was defended by **Henry Duncan Robinson** and the case was dismissed. These days it seems incredible that a case like this even went to court [3].

Alleged Theft: David Threlfall, residing at Settle, appeared to answer a charge of having stolen a tumbler glass of the value of 4d. from the Craven Inn, near the Railway Station, on the 9th inst. After hearing the evidence in support of the charge, and Mr. H. D. Robinson, who appeared for the defence, the Bench dismissed the case.—Obstructing a Footpath: John

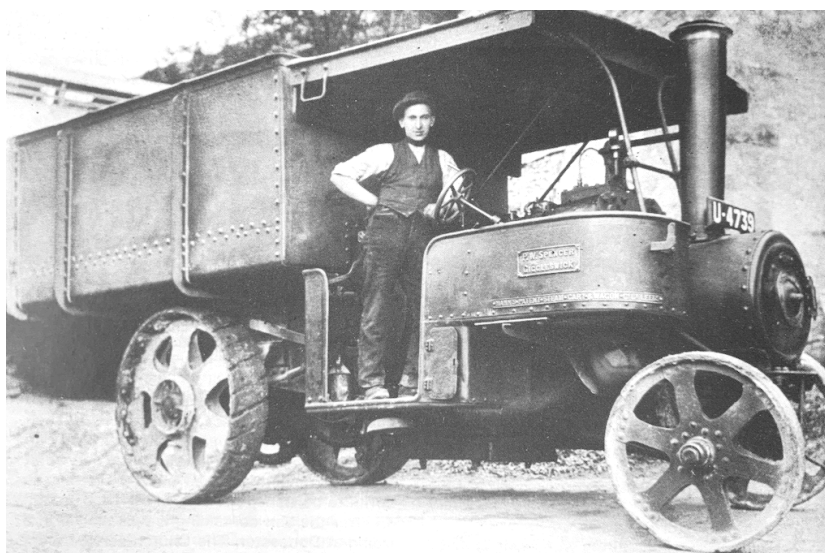
However, Mary Ann's luck took a turn for the better when she married **Albert Parsons** who was a stone breaker for Settle Rural District Council. The Parsons had lived through their own difficulties. In 1842, aged 35, Albert's grandfather **Christopher Parsons** had been imprisoned for 'being an incorrigible rogue, by neglecting his family at Austwick'. He had previously been imprisoned for assault, twice, failure to provide sureties to

Being an incorrigible rogue, by neglecting his family at Austwick.

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guarantee his behaviour (which he probably couldn't afford) and three times for neglecting his family of six sons and a daughter. Christopher died in Giggleswick workhouse, aged 75, which perhaps could have been predicted.

Albert and Mary Ann had a son, **Joseph Parsons**, who became a 'weigh-lad' at PW Spencer's Giggleswick Quarry, recording the weights of loads on steam wagons



being taken to Giggleswick Station. Aged 13, three years below the legal age, Joe first drove one of their Manns steam engines and later became a full time driver, being seen on his engine through the streets of Giggleswick for over 30 years [ph1]. His job was to deliver loads of at least 6 tons of burnt lime to Giggleswick Station. From there it was distributed to the steelworks at Barrow, Middlesborough and Sheffield. The steam wagons were noisy and dirty and ploughed up the roads and so, in the end, were replaced by an overhead bucket system, shown on maps published in the 1940s [ph4]. The council paid PW Spencer most of the costs to reduce the damage to roads! Joe

was also a member of the Settle Cricket



Club in 1939 when they became Craven Cricket League Champions [ph3]. He sat next to captain Frederick Gray who worked at John Robert's Langcliffe paperworks, having married the mill manager's daughter, Mary Catherine Roberts.

Albert and Mary Ann Parsons were buried in Giggleswick graveyard in an unmarked grave, together with Mary Ann's mum, Isabella Carr.

Meanwhile, Frank Threlfall, who played the tuba in Settle and Giggleswick Brass Band [ph3]



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and Amelia Ellen (Millen) Threlfall are buried the New graveyard, E32 with their son **Owen Threlfall** who died aged just 30. Other descendants of Frank and Amelia Ellen are still much loved, long lived members of the Settle community.

Owen Threlfall 1929 - 1959, Amelia Threlfall 1901 - 1978, Frank Threlfall 1898 - 1984.

Charles and Sarah Ellen's second son, **Charles Millen**, worked as a foreman at the quarry works. He married **Linda Robbins**, a coal miner's daughter from Tynemouth. They lived at Undercliffe on Duke Street and had a daughter who they named **Linda Robbins Millen**. Charles was buried in the unmarked *New KX52* when he died, aged 72. Charles and Sarah Ellen's youngest child **Louisa Millen** married **John Mackereth**, probably from Dent and they lived for a while at Scar View and John worked for Settle Limes at the quarry.

Sarah Ellen's daughter **Clarissa Millen**, born four years after Charles died, married **Henry Bond**, a railway shunter from Rotherham.



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 Denzil Threlfall for his help with this account.

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