

Brockbanks and Tathams, talented Quaker businessfolk

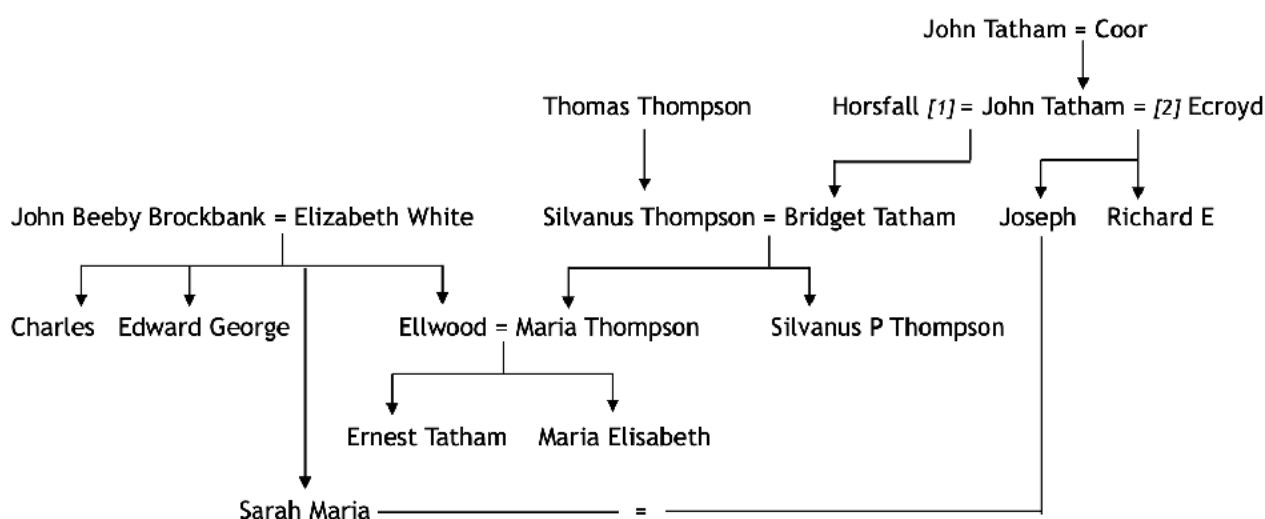
Charles Brockbank, from Salford, aged 20, had his photo taken by the Settle Horner Studios in 1868. Five years later he was dead and buried in the Quaker burial ground in Settle. What was he doing here and how did he die?

Charles' older brother was **Ellwood Brockbank** who chose Settle for his apprenticeship with Quaker **John Tatham (Jnr)** whose family ran a drapery, chemists, druggists and a grocery department store on Cheapside. Charles and Ellwood Brockbank were two of at least ten children of Quakers **John Beeby Brockbank**, a stone and timber dealer and his Scottish wife **Elizabeth White**. The children were all born in the Manchester/Salford area but managed to elude most census returns, perhaps visiting Scotland. There were several links between the Brockbank and Tatham families. In 1880 Ellwood married **Maria Thompson**, a granddaughter of **John Tatham (Snr)**. Ellwood's sister **Sarah Maria Brockbank** had also married into the family, becoming the wife of **Joseph Tatham** in 1866. Ellwood and Maria remained in Settle, living at Bond End and then Marshfield until 1893.



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

Brockbank and Tatham families



So, Ellwood established himself in Settle and his widowed mother came to live with him in Settle too. Charles worked as a 'metal agent', as did many of his siblings, and will have visited Settle, including the time he had his photo taken. In 1873 Charles had worked in Birmingham but decided to go back to his maternal roots for a holiday in Scotland with a Quaker friend, **Richard Cadbury Gibbins**. Richard was the son of another metal agent and worked as an engineer, specialising in cranes. Richard's mother, **Emma Joel Cadbury**, was the sister of **John Cadbury** who set up the

famous chocolate business. On holiday Richard and Charles went canoeing together in the River Tay, near Pitlochry and Charles' canoe struck a rock, capsizing him. Richard was further ahead so was unaware of what had happened and Charles' body was not discovered until much later that day [1].

Charles was brought back to Settle for burial but was also remembered on a memorial in Scotland. Unfortunately, four years later a man called **Duncan Walker** 'maliciously destroyed' the monument and was fined £2 or faced prison for 30 days [2]. The stone pictured is on Grandtully Bridge so may be a replacement for the original memorial.

Charles Brockbank of Birmingham, died 28th of 7th month 1873, aged 25

In memory of Charles Brockbank (of Birmingham) who was drowned here 28 VII 1873. His body lies buried in Settle in Craven.



AN ENGLISH TOURIST DROWNED IN THE TAY.

A melancholy boat accident occurred in the Tay at Grandtully, in the parish of Dull, on Monday morning. Two Englishmen from Birmingham, who were on a tour through Scotland, were proceeding down the Tay in canoes, on purpose of going to Perth. When at a point about 300 yards distant from Portnasallan Ferry, one of the tourists, named **Charles Brockbank**, a medal agent, aged 25 years, was thrown into the river by his canoe having struck on a rock and capsized. The other gentleman was sailing in advance of **Brockbank's** canoe, and had passed over the same place safely. The unfortunate man was drowned, and his body was not recovered until about eight o'clock on Monday evening. The body was conveyed to Birmingham yesterday.

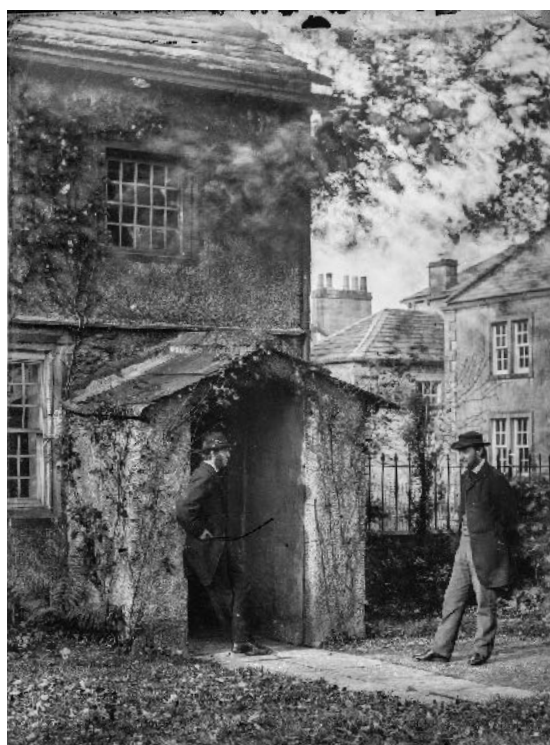
CASE OF GROSS VANDALISM IN PERTHSHIRE.

Before Sheriff Barclay, at Perth to-day, Duncan Walker was charged with having maliciously destroyed a monument erected at Grandtully by Mr. **Brockbank** of Birmingham, in memory of Mr. **Charles Brockbank** of Manchester, who was accidentally drowned in the Tay while sailing a canoe. The prisoner was found guilty.



So, what did Ellwood Brockbank [ph9] get up while he was in Settle? 12 year old Ellwood was called home from Ackworth Quaker school, near Pontefract, when his father suddenly died. Should he continue his education? Until 1871 universities only accepted Anglican students which is probably one reason that so many early Quakers became businessmen. Ellwood decided to earn his own living instead, initially at the Iron Works at Whitehaven where his family would already have had an interest. In 1855, aged 13, he took up his apprenticeship with John Tatham and eventually, in 1863, took over the business with his brother-in-law **Joseph Tatham**.

The Quakers had a significant influence in Settle. In 1860 Ellwood and his relation **Richard Ecroyd Tatham** planned and set up an adult school in Settle which became more successful than they could have ever hoped [sc]. Richard died the following year, aged just 22, and so Ellwood and business partner Joseph Tatham led a team of workers to teach over 100 men, women (progressively) and children each week at the Mechanics Institute and the school attached to the Friends' Meeting House, all free of charge. The Horners caught a photograph of them outside the Friends Meeting House [ph4]. As time went by these numbers were boosted, especially with the influx of



Portrait 2 young men, photograph by the Horner Studio. Horner Collection©NCBPT (CC-BY 4.0)

SETTLE ADULT SABBATH CLASSES.
Established 14 years ago Held in the New School House and in rooms attached to the Friends' Meeting House. Hours of attendance, morning 9 to 10 15, afternoon for youths 1 to 2 30, and for men 2 to 3 30. Elementary Class 1 to 2. Classes for young women. Monday evening at 7-15. Good free library and all writing materials also free. C. H. Nevill, Secretary; E. Brockbank, Treasurer.

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navvies who arrived to work on the Settle to Carlisle railway, learning basic literacy and numeracy, science and life skills, as well as religious instruction. *'The influence which the Quakers have exercised on the life of the community in Settle is incalculable. The Tathams, Brockbanks, Thompsons and their co-workers have left such a mark on Settle and district as will never be effaced. The adult class and Institute (they set up) were forerunners of the educational facilities and social intercourse in the town. Under the able direction of Ellwood Brockbank and his helpers, classes have flourished. There were many intellectual feasts provided. Industrial art thrived transforming hobbies into livelihoods – wood carving and metal working.'* [3]

Unfortunately Joseph Tatham died in 1873, aged just 31, and so then Ellwood ran the business and the adult classes single-handedly, with the help of friends and colleagues, of course [LSA].

Ellwood was also a stalwart of the Temperance movement [3] and was on the committee organising

the presentation of the second (of six) lifeboat to the RNLI in 1875. Ellwood was known to be a great speaker with clear expression and humour to motivate his learners. By 1893 Ellwood was exhausted and the family moved to the Clyde, near relations and then to Syria. In 1895 he began a

stretch of nine years as Secretary to the national Quaker 'Home Mission' in London and then retired to Southport in 1904 after several doses of rheumatic fever. He was buried in Settle's Quaker graveyard on 14 January 1914, aged 71, joining his mother who had been buried there in 1870, aged 66. Wife Maria, [ph9] born in York, also attended Ackroyd school but left within a year to become a teacher. One of her pupils was **John Wilhelm Rowntree**, the eldest son of **Joseph Rowntree**, another Quaker chocolate manufacturer. Apparently, Maria had a good collection of British shells and coins. Once married, she assisted Ellwood in Adult Classes and Temperance work. She died in Southport in 1914, aged 61 but was brought back to Settle for burial.



Ellwood and Maria had four children but twins **Christina** and **Frederick** died in infancy in 1885 and were buried in the Quaker graveyard. After attending Bootham school in York son **Ernest Tatham Brockbank** [4] emigrated to seek his fortune in Saskatchewan Canada. In the late 19th century millions of international immigrants arrived, encouraged by the Canadian authorities, displacing indigenous people to establish key industries including agriculture, mining and oil. On 31 May 1907 Ernest and a colleague, **Edward Hanson**, were boring a well and were smothered by gas. Ernest *'was suffocated in a heroic attempt to rescue his associate'*.



In those days Mr. Elwood Brockbank played a great part in public functions at Settle. On Band of Hope days he generally provided the scrambling fun with nuts, etc. All the children liked Mr. Brockbank. A lot of good things could be said of Mr. Brockbank by anyone who knew him. He was a very public-spirited man—popular in the Adult School movement.

Smothered by Gas the Fate of Well Diggers

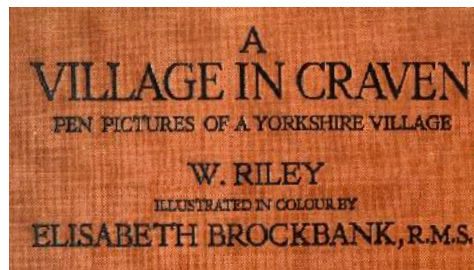
Free Press Special.

CUPAR, Sask., June 3.—On Friday morning **Ernest Brockbank** and **Edward Hanson**, two men engaged in boring a well on the farm of **A. Beeman**, a mile and a half south of here, lost their lives, being smothered by gas. **Brockbank** was suffocated in a heroic attempt to rescue his associate.

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Ellwood and Maria's daughter, **Maria Elisabeth**, sometimes known as 'Elsie' for some reason, was a talented artist specialising in portraits and water colour. In 1913 she was elected an Associateship in the Royal Miniature Painters' Society [LSA] and then, in 1918, became a member. In the 1920's she was asked, alongside other prominent artists of the day, to paint a miniature for the Queen's dolls' house. In 1925 Maria went into partnership with W Riley to illustrate a wonderful book, *'A Village in Craven, Pen Pictures of a Yorkshire Village'* [A] which portrayed thinly disguised caricatures of the area's

30. Miss Elsie E. Brockbank (only daughter of the late Mr. Ellwood Brockbank, of Southport, and formerly of Settle), was elected to an Associateship in the Royal Miniature Society, and had two of her Miniatures accepted for the Royal Academy for 1913.—Marriage at St. John's Church, Langeliffe, of Miss



fondly remembered folk. Elisabeth's illustrations are integral to the tales and include life-like paintings of **Jim Spencer**, known as Blackie White, and the three fishermen, **William Capstick**, **Matthias Nowell** and **James Hartley** for example. You can still buy the book today.

Being a prominent Quaker Ellwood was given a detailed obituary detailing a lifetime of generous benevolence. So generous was he that, despite his excellent business acumen, when he died in 1913, aged 71 his estate was worth just £60.

Charles and Ellwood's siblings all had or married into profitable careers in the metal industry, engineering or similar mercantile business, mostly in the Manchester area. Their brother (**Edward**) **George Brockbank** had also visited the Horner Studios in 1866 [ph2], aged 24, at the beginning of his career as a metal agent.

Ellwood's wife, Maria Thompson was the daughter of the wonderfully named **Silvanus Thompson** and **Bridget Tatham**. Silvanus was a teacher at the Quaker Bootham School in York, the same school that Ellwood's son, **Ernest Tatham Brockbank** had attended. Maria's brother **Silvanus Phillips Thompson** [ph7] was a talented man who became an physicist, electrical engineer and author, appointed to the



Mr G Brockbank, photograph by the Horner Studio. Horner Collection©NCBPT (CC-BY 4.0)

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Royal Society. You'll be glad to know his most famous publication of 1910, *'Calculus Made Easy'* is still available today. You can read about his spectacular academic achievements on his Wikipedia Page.

So what about the Tatham family?

Silvanus' mother, Bridget Tatham, was the daughter of **John Tatham (Jnr)** and his first wife **Maria Horsfall** who ran their chemist, druggist and grocery department store on Cheapside [ph6]. Maria died two years after her seventh child was born and John married again, this time to **Susanna Ecroyd** and they had a further three sons. John's sister, **Elizabeth Tatham**, was the first (of three) wife of Susannah's brother,

William Ecroyd, but died after the birth of her first child. There was a weak gene in this family as all but two of John's children, both daughters predeceased him and had died by the age of 31. One son, **Rathmell Tatham**, named with his grandmother's maiden name, died an infant.



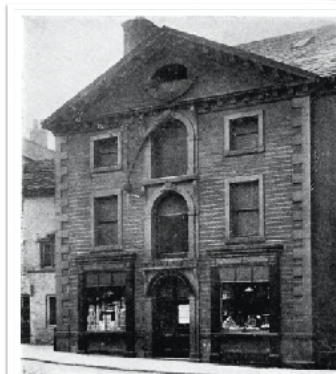
John Tatham (Snr) had arrived in Settle from Wray in the late 18th century and established a drapery business on Cheapside [3]. He owned several properties on Castle Hill, Cheapside and the Back Stables behind Cheapside. His cousins ran successful businesses in the wool trade in Headingley Hill in Leeds. John Tatham (Jnr) diversified through an apprenticeship to a pharmaceutical chemist with none other than **Thomas Thompson** of Liverpool, the grandfather of the physicist Silvanus Phillips Thompson. John returned to the family business in 1816 now able to incorporate a pharmacy and grocery into the drapery business. Both Johns regularly traded with and mixed socially with diarist William Lodge Paley who reported that in 1844 the shop was broken into and silk handkerchiefs, needles, plaids and Miss Tatham's watch were stolen. A £10 reward was offered [WLP].

As we know, in 1863 the business was transferred to Ellwood Brockbank and John's son Joseph Tatham. Over the years it became a full department store selling everything from furnishing to food and homeopathic medicines [ph7]. The store, under the Tatham name, operated for well over a century. At one time it was managed by **Charles William Dickinson** and **Adam Cokell** [ph8].

John (Jnr) was a busy man outside work too. He was one of the founders of the Settle Savings Bank in the Town Hall in 1818 and worked for it as the actuary (measuring the probability and risk of developments) and secretary until 1870. He also *'formed a company to illuminate the town with fish oil gas in the 'forties'* [3] which was located in the grounds of what is now Victoria Hall and was a proprietor for Settle Water Company. He chaired the meeting of the Rate Payers and was an Overseer of the Poor.

TO THE FLOCK MASTERS OF CRAVEN.
JOHN TATHAM & SON,
DRAPERS, DRUGGISTS, & GROCERS,
SETTLE,
Have just been appointed Local Agents, for this district,
for the Sale of
LONG'S PATENT SHEEP AND CATTLE
DRESSING COMPOSITIONS,
Prepared without Mercury or Arsenic, for the Cure of the
SCAB AND MANGE.
Also their new Lotion for the cure of the Foot Rot in Sheep.

April 24.—Tatham's shop was broke into at back window last night. Silk handkerchiefs worth £25 taken and needles £13. Some plaids and Miss Tatham's watch. Bills out offering £10 on conviction.



Tatham & Son
PHOTOGRAPHERS: C. W. DICKINSON & A. COKELL.

What an excitement there must have been in Settle when John Tatham and other friends formed a company to illuminate the town with fish oil gas in the 'forties.

John Tatham was another character who played an important part in the life of Settle. He was a shrewd Quaker, founded the business of "John Tatham and Son," grocers, etc., which is still a thriving concern. The influence

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He had several positions of responsibility with the Settle Auxiliary Bible Society storing their Bibles and Testaments in his home. John's prime hobby, in which he excelled, was as a botanist to which he had been introduced to during his apprenticeship. John was a member of the London and Edinburgh Botany Societies and spent much of his time identifying and cataloguing local flora and submitting his reports to authors of botany books [B]. He even discovered a new fern which was named after him — '*Tatham's Fern*'. John's copy of '*A compendium of the English flora*' and his notebooks were presented to Kew Gardens after his death by grandson Silvanus Phillips Thompson. Unsurprisingly, John was on the committee for the North Craven Horticultural Society.

John died in 1875, aged 81. *'His kind and genial disposition, the large fund of information he possessed, which he was ever ready to impart to the enquirer, his readiness to oblige, and pre-eminently his well-known character as a peace lover and peace maker, combined with his sterling integrity made him highly respected throughout the district.'* [5] Unlike Ellwood Brockbank, when John died, he left an incredible £10,000, worth millions today.

In 1868 John's second wife Susanna, aged 70, had her photo taken at the Horner Studios [ph3]. Incredibly, it was another 25 years before Susanna died, aged 95, '*the oldest inhabitant of Settle*'. She was still living on Cheapside with four servants to care for her. [LSA]



30. The oldest inhabitant of Settle passed away in the person of Mrs. Susanna Tatham, widow of the late Mr. John Tatham, at the age of 95.—Tea-party and Entertainment at the Wesleyan School, Langcliffe.

Susanna left her relatively modest estate of £6,000 to Ellwood Brockbank. The Brockbank and Tatham gravestones were originally located just beyond the end of the old Quaker residents house, to the right, around the tree [ph10].

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



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

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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'.

Newspaper cuttings with the kind permission of the British Newspaper Archives: 1 — Edinburgh Evening News, 2 — Manchester Evening News, 3 — Craven Herald, 4 — Ottawa Free Press, 5 — Lancaster Gazette

A — 'A Village in Craven, Pen Pictures of a Yorkshire Village' John Reid

B — John Tatham of Settle, Quaker Botanist by John Beckett, North Craven Heritage Trust Journal 2017

ph1 — Image 2022.1.68.39, ph2 — Image 2022.01.68.41, ph3 — Image 2022.1.68.13, ph4 — Image 2022.1.8.54, ph10 — Image 2022.1.61.3 from the Horner Photographic Studio Collection provided courtesy of the Museum of North Craven Life



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ph6 — A Cyril Harrington photo submitted to the Back in Settle Facebook site by Mike Howarth, ph7 — credited to Wikipedia, from the Proceedings of the Royal Society Obituary, ph8 — kindly provided by John Reid, ph9 — credited to family descendants via Ancestry.co.uk, username mbrockbank93,

LSA - Lambert's Settle Almanac, SC — Settle Chronicle, WLP — the diaries of William Lodge Paley with the kind permission of the Museum of North Craven Life