

Thornbers, talented entrepreneurs

In 1858 **Patrick 'Pat' Lambert**, his wife **Catherine Carthy** [ph1,2] and 11 of their many children arrived in Sabden, near Clitheroe from County Waterford in Ireland. Pat had been serving with the Royal Irish Constabulary for 20 years and had been promoted to the role of Sergeant before taking his pension of £25 per year. The RIC had been set up by the British government in 1822 when the whole of Ireland was part of the United Kingdom. It was an armed force intended to quell the civil unrest of the Irish nationalists. It was a difficult job in violent times. Despite the stigma against the Irish at the time, exacerbated by the behaviour of railway navvies, Pat's skills were probably seen as a useful asset for the post of High Bailiff for the local area, chasing up debtors. He was appointed in 1864 and was in post for 32 years, which the newspapers rounded up to 35! [1] Pat and Catherine were buried with an impressive memorial stone in the Catholic cemetery in Clitheroe with several members of their family.



50 YEARS AGO
County Court bailiff, Mr. **Patrick Lambert**, of Chatburn-road, Clitheroe died suddenly at the age of 82. Uncertain as to his place of birth, because no registers were kept where he first saw the light, "Pat" came from Dungarten, Co. Waterford, where for 20 years he served in the Royal Irish Constabulary and saw rough times during the Agrarian outrages. When pensioned off, he came to live at Sabden, and while there obtained the position of bailiff, which he held for 35 years—almost up to the time of his death, having missed but one court. The office of bailiff died with him.

Pat and Catherine's second daughter **Johanna Lambert** married **James Thornber** in January 1875 very soon after the birth of a daughter, **Kate Thornber**. James was the son of **Thomas Thornber** and his second wife, **Catherine (Myers) Thornber**. Before marrying, Catherine had an illegitimate son, **Thomas Myers**, who married **Ellen Gifford** of Settle's successful butchering family. Thomas and Catherine were innkeepers in Clitheroe, most likely to have been at the Brownlow Arms in the Market Place [ph3], later run by their daughter **Mary (Thornber) Whittaker** and her husband William Whittaker.



James Thornber began his career as a tailor but then took over the Engineer's Arms Beerhouse/Inn in Clitheroe. Contemporary newspaper articles present a colourful picture of life in a rural market town. As well as being a venue for several corner's inquests the Engineer's Arms hosted football matches, flower and agricultural shows, and an Almanac show [4,5]. Before radio and TV, regularly produced Almanacs provided useful information for local residents including market dates, festivals, opening and closing times, sunset times and adverts for local businesses etc. There were up to 100 entries and James often won the prize in at least one of the categories. Every August James and Johanna hosted an annual dinner for about 40 of their patrons.

MARIGOLD SHOW.—On Saturday, a show of French marigolds was held at Mr. Thornber's **Engineers Arms**, Whalley-road. There was a large number of entries, and the show was very successful. The following were awarded prizes:—1st Wm. Nutter, 2nd Wm. Brennan, 3rd Henry Tomlinson. There was also a show of buttonhole flowers, which was considered to be the best ever held in Clitheroe, and the prizes were awarded as follows:—1st R. Blezard, 2nd P. Cook, 3rd John Sladen. The judges were Mr. Cox for the marigolds, and Mr. Wm. Blezard for the buttonhole flowers.

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ALMANAC SHOW.—An almanac show was held on Saturday at the **Engineers Arms**, Whalley-road, when prizes were offered by the proprietor, Mr. James Thornber, for the best almanac shown. The exhibition was divided into four classes, viz., best almanac with calendar for 1884; best comic almanac; best tradesman's almanac; and best framed almanac. In the first class Mr. Schofield, Barrow, gained the first prize with "Jack's Yarn;" Mr. John Lofthouse, second; and Mr. W. Airey, third. Mr. George Robinson exhibited the best comic almanac, and Mr. Sweetman was successful for the best framed almanac. Mr. Richard Spear gained the tradesman's prize. There were 75 entries and about 200 visitors attended the show.

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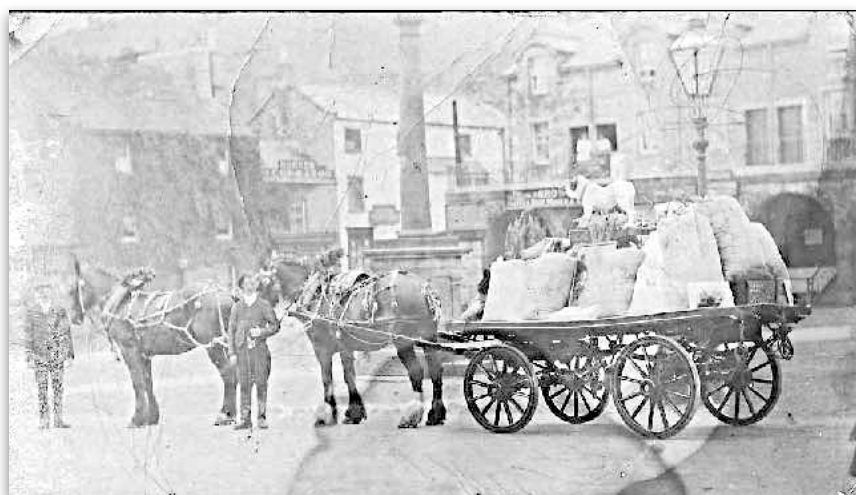
While all this was going on Johanna had another three children but died in 1885, aged 38, three years after the birth of youngest son, **James Thornber**, who was brought up by Lambert grandparents. Johanna and their eldest daughter, Kate, who died aged 7, were buried with Johanna's parents. James continued to run the Engineers Arms until 1894 and became a 'coals and grocery porter'. He had a housekeeper, **Rebecca Parry**, with whom he had four more children. They couldn't marry because Rebecca's husband, **Llewellyn Parry**, a stonemason from Caerwys in Wales, was alive and well living in Liverpool with his parents and then with another woman. Rebecca and Llewellyn had both been just 18 when they married and Rebecca was pregnant with a son, later brought up by Rebecca's parents. Llewellyn and Rebecca didn't appear to live together for long. Llewellyn didn't die until 1941 but James and Rebecca married in 1912 anyway. It's unlikely they could have afforded a divorce.

James and Johanna's children? Sons **Thomas Patrick Thornber** and **James Thornber** had careers as weavers in Clitheroe. This left **William Walter Thornber** who had perhaps inherited the business sense of his Lambert grandfather.

In 1900 William Walter married **Annie Langstreth**, the daughter of **William Langstreth**, the host at several hostleries in Clitheroe. Soon afterwards William Walter and Annie had the first of nine children. William worked as a grocer and tea dealer and then insurance agent in Clitheroe. By 1903 the expanding family had moved to live at 21 Craven Cottages in Settle. William Walter [ph4] became the manager of the Castle Hill corn mill for **Edwin Towler** dealing corn, linseed and cotton cake to supplement the diet of farm animals. The advertising sign is still in place in the warehouse today [ph5]. To drum up trade he walked and cycled up and down the local valleys, towns and villages including the Malham Tarn estate, dealing with **John Winskill**, the land agent for **Walter Morrison**, MP. William Walter progressed from a push bike to a motor cycle, allegedly the second one in Settle, the first perhaps belonging to **Billy Slinger**!



Later William Walter bought out the business in partnership with **William Hunter** of Cowside but then, in the early 1920s, bought the whole business and moved to the impressive Rock House on Castle Hill. During the war the Castle Hill warehouse was requisitioned as a storage space for animal feed for rationing out to farmers. After WW1 William Walter bought his first lorry to make deliveries, replacing his horse and cart [ph5]. This lorry was also used by the fire service, before the



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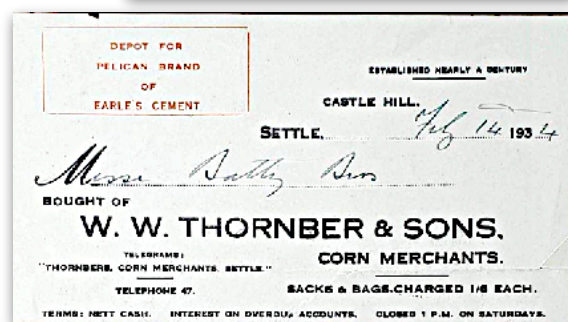
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days of a dedicated fire engine to transport equipment and men to the scene of a fire. The lorry was also used to deliver 10 ton loads of coal to the farms.

William Walter was passionate about education for rural children, encouraging them to study rather than just go straight into farming. William Walter was on the Settle and District Education subcommittee for 41 years and chair for several years. He was asked to lay the foundation stone for the new Settle High School after previously being a governor at the old school [3]. In addition he was the chair and a governor for Ingleton County Secondary School, a manager of Settle C of E School and a governor of Keighley Technical School. William Walter was the secretary of the North Ribblesdale Agricultural Show, processing entries in the dining room of Rock House. As if that didn't demonstrate enough talent William Walter was an accomplished violinist and the choirmaster at the Catholic Church in Settle. He also made a few appearances in the Settle Light Opera Company performances, advertising in their programme [ph6]. Thornber's Lodge at Town Head was built by the family. Thornber's Croft was built by Arthur Graham. Originally, they were used for storing the wagons. Later Barry Brewster converted them to cottages.



Obviously behind every good man there is a good woman and Annie brought up all their nine children as well as doing all the domestic duties. Annie died in 1933, aged 58. William Walter remarried a year later. His second wife was a farmer's widow, **Lucy Ann (Ladds) Russell**, originally the daughter of a Westmorland railway worker, **James Ladds**. They retired to Oak Leigh on Church Street. William Walter died in 1970, aged an impressive 91! He was buried with Annie and their two year old son **William Douglas Thornber** in *Old H58*.



To the dear memory of William Douglas son of William Walter and Annie Thornber died Dec 22nd 1919 aged 2 years and 8 months. Gods holy will be done and also of Annie Thornber who departed this life Jany 11th 1933, aged 58 years R.I.P. William Walter Thornber 1878-1970. Old H58



Second wife Lucy Ann had died in Settle in 1965 and was buried in *New F26* with her father who was an even more impressive 93 when he died in 1949.



In loving memory of James Ladds 1856-1949. Lucy Ann Thornber 1886-1965

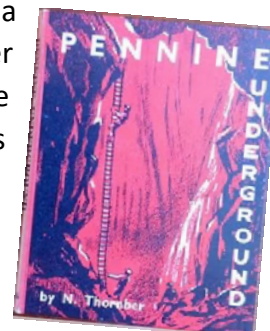
After William Walter remarried, son **Norman Patrick Thornber** and sisters **Phyllis Mary**, a schoolteacher, and **Catherine Lucy** moved to 11 Ingfield Lane. Their lodger at the time of the 1939

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register was **Robert Hamilton**, an agricultural engineer who became the husband of sister **Annie Thornber**. Robert and Annie are buried in *New F46*

In loving memory of Anne Hamilton July 1912 - January 1988, Robert (Bob) Hamilton December 1906 - June 1996, Peace Perfect Peace

Several of the children worked in the family business. Norman started off working for Delaneys and then took a leading role in the family business with Catherine Lucy working as the secretary before marrying **James Kirby** from Rotherham. Like his father, Norman took a leading role in the community. After several years as a committee member Norman was elected chairman of the Northern Area Committee of the Federation of Young Farmers. Norman was a broadcaster and writer who was heavily involved with cave exploration and rescue, leading him to maintain a card index of cave information to help with potential underground incidents. As a result, Norman compiled the 'Potholer's Bible', properly called '*Pennine Underground*' listing every important local system with details of its location, dimensions and equipment needed for exploration. It has been reprinted numerous times and is still available today. In October 1934 a member of the Moor and Fell Club fell and broke his leg in Ginging Pot. He was successfully rescued after spending 29 hours underground, but shortly afterwards, a meeting was convened in Norman Thornber's house to discuss the establishment of a rescue corps to handle future incidents. And so the Central Rescue Organisation was established, the first rescue organisation of its type, with Norman Thornber being appointed one of the first wardens. It changed its name to the Cave Rescue Organisation in 1938 and the rest is history!



Norman died at Rock House in 1970, aged 69, in the same year as his father, William Walter Thornber. He was buried with his sister Phyllis Mary who was 88 when she died in 1994 back at 11 Ingfield Lane. The mill was taken over by the Robinsons.



Norman Patrick Thornber 1901 – 1970 RIP. His sister Phyllis Mary Thornber 1905 – 1994 RIP, New I71

William Walter and Annie's **James Arthur Thornber** worked as a commercial traveller for the business in Skipton. William Walter and Annie's daughter **Gertrude 'Greta' Thornber** trained as a nurse but then worked in the shop for J W Garnett on the Market Place. She



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was an exceptionally talented performer with Settle Amateur Operative Society and then also a successful Producer/Director [ph6]. Daughter **Florence Mary Thornber** was a clerk at an engineering company in Leeds before marrying a doctor, **John Roderick McKay Johnstone**, originally from New Zealand. Daughter **Edith Johanna Thornber** married **Harry Cowgill** who was a painter and decorator in Long Preston. **Edith Johanna Cowgill** died aged 97 and is buried in the newest section of Settle graveyard. None of the other children were buried in Settle graveyard although could have been cremated.



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 – Clitheroe Advertiser, 3 – Lancaster Guardian, 4 – Preston Herald, 5 – Blackburn standard

ph1, 2 – credited to family descendants via Ancestry.co.uk, username Martha47tree and username david lambert, ph3 – closedpubs.co.uk, ph4 – Dalesman June 1987, submitted to the Back in Settle facebook page by Jeanne Carr, ph5 – credited to the Back in Settle facebook page by Jeanne Carr, ph6 – with thanks to John Reid