

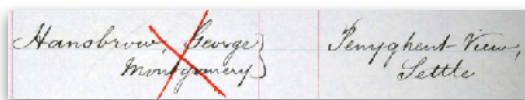
The Hansbrows, an unlucky family

The dashing and dapper brothers, **Louis William Hansbrow** and **Percy Edward Hansbrow** [ph1], were sons of **William Thomas Hansbrow** from Ireland and **Sarah Ann Fryer**, a wealthy surgeon's daughter from Rastrick near Halifax (home of the Brighthouse and Rastrick Brass Band). William



Thomas, a vicar's son, had come over to England during the 1850s. He was obviously an entrepreneur. In 1856 he dissolved a cotton spinning business partnership with Mr J Ellison, at Hurst Brook near Ashton-under-Lyne [1], turning his hand to become an oil and soap merchant in Salford. He also sold Gold Bonds and was an agent for Ordnance Survey Maps.

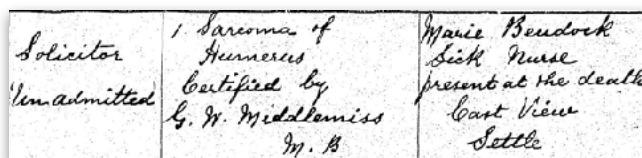
William and Sarah Ann married in 1866 and brought up their three sons within the Quaker faith. They could afford a couple of servants to help with the household chores. Their eldest son, **George Montgomery Hansbrow**, a talented artist, established the link with Settle. After an education at Manchester Grammar School, School of Art and then university, in 1887 George was articled to the solicitor **A W Grundy** in Salford. As part of his training, during the early 1890s George had a placement in Settle, lodging with other professionals at **Elizabeth Poole's** lodging house at 2 PenYghent View. Unfortunately, George's final examination results were by far the worst of the cohort, in all disciplines, probably accounting for the cross through his name.



In remaining census returns George worked as a law clerk in Rochdale and Cheadle, so not quite making the grade to become a lawyer in his own right. As an example of his status, in 1894 George was involved in a hunt for a lady's gold lever watch [2].

WATCHMAKERS, Pawnbrokers, and Others.
REWARD for Information respecting Lady's GOLD LEVER,
No. 81,547.—Apply G. M. HANSBROW, Charlton Drive, Sale.

At the time of the 1911 census George had a lodger, **Maria Burdock**, boarding with him, no doubt doing a bit of housekeeping for him. Maria had split with her husband, **Thomas William Burdock**, a grocer's assistant who lodged elsewhere with their son. After this George returned to Settle and was living at East View when he died of '**Sarcoma of Humerus**' (cancer in his arm bone) in 1916, aged 49. His death certificate described his occupation as '**solicitor unadmitted**' and that his sick nurse, none other than Maria Burdock, was present at his death. George left his modest estate of £60, worth about £4,000 in today's value, to lucky Maria. George was buried in *Old H30* with a kerbstone memorial.



Settle Graveyard Project

In Loving Memory of George M Hansbrow died November 12th 1916 Aged 49 years

George's younger brothers, Louis and Percy, were incredible sportsmen, frequently making their name representing Sale in tennis and hockey matches. Census returns describe Louis William Hansbrow working as a commercial salesman based in Sale and Rochdale. However he must have spent time in Settle with brother George as he became general secretary of the Settle Mechanics Institute 1889 under the presidency of **Ellwood Brockbank**. Also, in 1889 Louis, aged 20, took part in a swimming competition 'open to amateurs within a radius of six miles of Settle'. The race was one of 100 yards above the 'Paper Mill Wear', the only drawback being that competitors were not able to dive in at that point. There were 'three small prizes in value to about 13 shillings' and about 200 spectators were present [3]. Louis came third, completing the race in 2 minutes and 14 seconds. **Thomas Holden** officiated as the judge and **Israel Jackson** as the timekeeper.



Swimming Contest.—Considerable interest was excited in Settle and Langcliffe by the announcement that a swimming race would take place on Friday evening, July 26th, open to amateurs residing within a radius of six miles of Settle. On account of the unsettled weather the event was postponed until Monday the 29th, when the evening was all that could be desired. The place selected for the race was the reach in the river Ribblesdale above the Paper Mill Wear, which, when the water is full to the brim, as it was on this occasion, affords a splendid straight course for a hundred yards race, the only drawback being that unless artificial means are resorted to the competitors are not able to dive in for a start. Three small prizes amounting in value to about 13s were given. It is estimated that about 200 spectators were present. The following competitors started, viz.:—J. A. Braithwaite, Wm. Bullock, L. W. Hansbrow, J. Herd, and H. Sticke. S. S. Burlingham also swam

Louis William died in 1903, aged just 33. Unfortunately he died in the Dearnley Workhouse in Rochdale, suffering from 'General Paralysis of the Insane'. This phrase was used to describe the severe neuropsychiatric disorder caused by the effect of late-stage syphilis. Oh dear. Louis' obituary at the Sale Hockey Club indicates that youngest brother Percy also met a premature and tragic end four years earlier, 'killed by an incoming train' [ph1].

Hansbrow, Louis W.—Died on the 5th June, 1903, in his 34th year. Played in the early days of the Club in several positions, mostly on the Second Team.

Hansbrow, Percy E.—Died on the 30th June, 1899, in his 29th year. A good inside right on the Second Team, and captained the side in Seasons 1895-96 and 1896-97. His tragic death came as a great shock to all who knew him. Falling off the platform at Brooklands Station, he was killed by an incoming train.

On 27 June 1899 Percy Edward Hansbrow, a 28 year old banker's clerk fell off the platform at Brooklands Station, Sale in front of an approaching train and a large number of people [2]. At the inquest Percy's housekeeper stated that he was cheerful, as usual, and had never suffered from fits or depression. Brother Louis William explained that they had played tennis for Sale Club at the weekend. Louis William said Percy had no financial worries and didn't take drugs but had suffered a bout of flu a few years before. However, the engine fireman said Percy definitely jumped in front of the train. The article gave graphic descriptions of his many injuries. The coroner told the jury that it was for them to decide whether it was a case of accident or suicide. They decided Percy 'met his death accidentally, loss of sleep probably caused an attack of giddiness, leading to a fall'.

Lewis [William] Hansbrow, brother, stated he stayed with the deceased at week-ends and came home on Saturday. He played tennis that afternoon at the Sale Club, and he went home all right. They both went on the 8 21 train on Monday morning, getting out at Knott Mill. He left him at the end of John Dalton-street. Deceased was a bank clerk, and he was then on his way to his duties. There was nothing to cause alarm, but he had not been sleeping well of late. He complained of his work at the bank. Some two or three years ago he had the influenza, and a small thing affected him. He was not aware that he took any narcotic, and it was the last thought in the world that he would take his life or even express any thought of doing so. There was nothing troubling him financially, and he was highly thought of at the bank—in fact, he was beloved by everyone. He had not heard of his brother suffering from giddiness. He was not a teller at the bank, but a clerk in the day book department.

The jury returned a verdict that deceased met his death accidentally, loss of sleep having probably caused an attack of giddiness, leading to a fall into the four-foot.

THE BROOKLANDS FATALITY.

The following statement has been forwarded for publication:—

We, the doctors, who attended Mr. Percy Edward Hansbrow, of 172, Marslands Road, Brooklands, immediately after the accident which occurred to him at Brooklands Station, on the morning of Tuesday, the 27th ult., are unanimously of opinion that the deceased gentleman was suddenly attacked by a fit or seizure immediately before the accident. This conclusion we speedily arrived at from the unmistakable symptoms of the deceased before death. We are, therefore, convinced that the sad affair was a pure accident, and we entirely reject any supposition of suicide.

H. CLARKE, M.R.C.S., &c.
J. HAROLD RENSHAW, M.B., Ch. B.

A week later the newspaper published a statement from doctors who 'are unanimously of the opinion that the gentleman was suddenly attacked by a fit or seizure immediately before the accident' and entirely rejected any supposition of suicide. Victims of suicide were regarded as scandalous sinners, often refused burials in consecrated ground and life insurance payouts, as well as causing families immense stress, in addition to the usual grief.

So how did Percy's parents cope? William Thomas Hansbrow had died before the brothers' deaths in 1888, aged 51. He was a passionate man! A year before his death William Thomas gave a speech at the Stratford Parliamentary Society supporting the motion, 'That this House censures the Tory Government in connection with their policy in Ireland and declares that such policy in unconstitutional, tyrannical and exasperating and is calculated to widen the breach that already exists between the people of Ireland and this country.' [2] For the best part of a century the Irish people had their human rights removed via a series of Coercion Acts to ensure British control. They enabled the British landowners to charge whatever rent they chose. Persons suspected of crime could be arrested and imprisoned without charge and sentenced to death or transportation or military courts. People could be imprisoned until they gave evidence against others, whether or not it was true. The latest 1887 Coercion Act decided that suspects could be imprisoned by a magistrate without a trial by jury and 'dangerous' associations (promoting the rights of the Irish) could be banned. The motion was defeated by a majority of 21.

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Meanwhile, the sons had returned from boarding schooling and started upon their own careers, living with widow Sarah Ann. However, Sarah Ann found the trauma of Percy's death in 1899, on top of her husband's, impossible to cope with. In 1900 she was admitted to The Retreat in York, a Quaker facility for the mentally ill. It had a reputation for leading the world in the humane treatment of mentally ill patients. It had been set up by Quakers, for Quakers, because of the appalling conditions in York Lunatic Asylum – see *Slinger, Old*. The Retreat stopped the use of chains, preferring to use straitjackets instead and refrained from beating the patients. They tried to use 'a loving family environment to bring patients back to reason and recovery.'

As the years went by Sarah Ann's two remaining sons predeceased her and she stayed in The Retreat until she died in 1922, aged an incredible 86. She was a very unlucky woman but was in good company at The Retreat – Joseph Rowntree was buried there.

Sarah Ann was the youngest child of Simeon Fryer, a surgeon, who died six months after she was born, and so was brought up by her mother Ann (Cooper) Fryer. The Fryer family made a fortune from woollen manufacture, quarrying and as tea dealers. For generations the family owned Lower Goathouse in Brighouse [4, ph3].



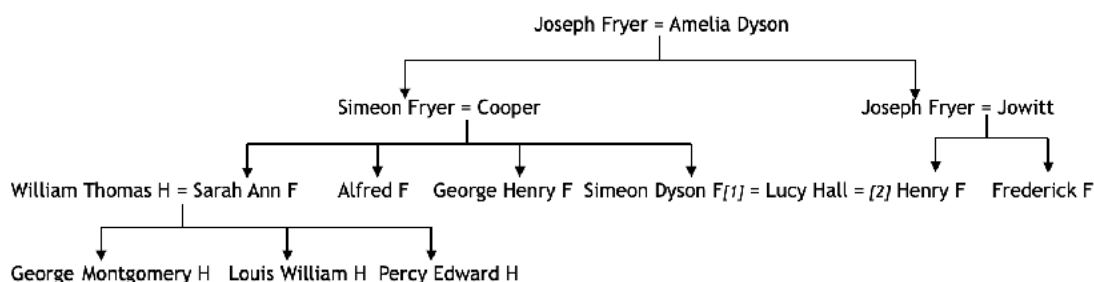
Milcom Bull's Calderdale Companion

Sarah Ann's brothers Simeon Dyson Fryer and George Henry Fryer and their cousin Frederick Fryer were successful tea dealers with branches in Leeds and Cheshire [ph4]. Simeon Dyson Fryer's wife,

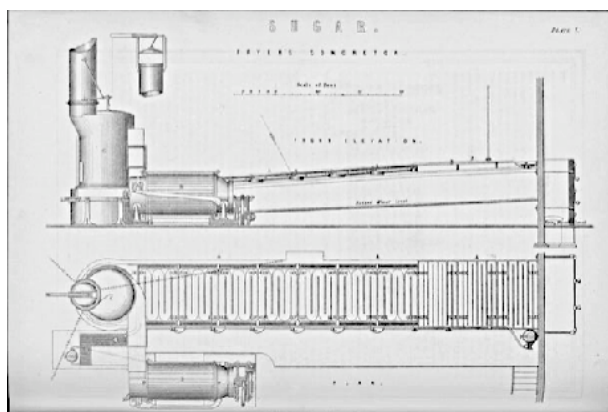
LOWER GOATHOUSE
By J. H. PRIESTLEY.
PART IV.
John died on August 14th, 1821, and was buried at Brighouse. Edward Fryer died February 13th, 1824, and Robert Fryer became entitled to an annuity of £15, and sold it to Simeon for £150, and the latter then assigned it to Charles Fryer. Simeon however still owned Lower Goathouse, for by his will dated June 1st, 1827, he bequeathed it to his nephews Joseph Jowitt Fryer and Charles Fryer and his brother-in-law Emmanuel Cooper, in trust for his son Simeon Dvson Fryer, Leeds, tea dealer. Failing the latter, then to George Henry Fryer, Manchester, tea dealer, and failing him to Alfred Fryer, Manchester, sugar refiner. He died in April, 1836, and his son Simeon Dvson Fryer died on December 10th, 1855, and by his will dated the 1st of the same month, ordered the estate to be sold to the use of his executors.

Settle Graveyard Project

Hansbrow/Fryer family



Lucy Hall was the daughter of James Hall, a wealthy cotton manufacturer in Salford. The weak gene continued – Simeon Dyson Fryer was only 30 when he died. 20 years later Simeon's widow, Lucy married his cousin, Henry Fryer, Frederick's brother.



Sarah Ann's brother Alfred Fryer was quite a star. He started off as an apprentice tea dealer but, after marrying Ann Eliza Ord set up a sugar-refining company, Fryer, Benson & Forster, operating in Manchester and Antigua, employing 200 men. In 1865, he invented the 'Concretor'^[ph5] to solidify cane sugar and therefore make it less bulky for shipping and also the Refuse Destructor to convert refuse into cement and paving blocks. Alfred wrote several books, including *Peculiarities of Vital Statistics of the Society of Friends*, *Floating Lightships*, *Influence of Forests on Rainfall*, *Balance of Trade*, *Cost of Living in Various Countries*, *The Silver Question*.

Newspapers [5] and the Quakers published a generous obituary his life when he died in 1892, aged 62. His estate was worth over £1million, today's value.

THE DEATH OF MR. ALFRED FRYER.—The death is announced of Mr. Alfred Fryer, at Elm Hirst, Wilmslow, on the 13th inst., in his 63rd year. He was the third son of Simeon Fryer, surgeon, of Rastrick, near Brighouse, and at an early age showed signs of considerable inventive genius. For several years he was a member of the firm of Fryer, Benson, and Forster, sugar refiners, of Manchester. The "concretor" was perfected in 1865, an invention by which Mr. Fryer conferred a great boon on Colonial industries, and effected a vast saving in the carriage of sugar to Europe. Mr. Fryer took great interest in the question of the sugar duties, and was at one time invited to stand as candidate for Parliament to represent the sugar refiners, but considerations of health prevented his acceptance of the proposal. The question of the treatment of town refuse brought Mr. Fryer's name prominently before the public, and his "destructor" is in use in many towns throughout the country.

Throughout his life he was keenly interested in the progress of astronomical research, and in 1870 he was invited to join the Solar Eclipse Expedition to Sicily, and, in conjunction with a brother astronomer, succeeded in obtaining an extremely fine photograph of the corona, which has been reproduced in many astronomical works.

Alfred Fryer's life was a continuous effort to realise for himself and those around him a lofty moral and intellectual ideal. He was an incessant worker; and the highest principles of rectitude marked his character, and created in the minds of those who were associated with him a feeling of deep respect which was akin to affection. At the close of a too brief career, he passed away, with calm tranquil faith in the old words—"Underneath me are the Everlasting Arms."



Settle Graveyard Project

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. 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 Teresa Gordon for the sketch and to Michael Riley of Sale Civic Society for sharing photos and resources

Newspaper cuttings with the kind permission of the British Newspaper Archives: 1 – Blackburn Standard, 2 – Manchester Evening News, 3 – Craven Herald, 4 – Halifax Evening Courier, 5 – Huddersfield Daily Chronicle

ph1 – with thanks to Michael Riley of Sale Civic Society, ph2 – Painting by Henry Brown at York Art Gallery, credited to historyofyork.org.uk, ph3 – credited to Malcolm Bull's Calderdale Companion, ph4 – credited to family descendants via Ancestry.co.uk, username [myk-morris98](https://www.ancestry.com/#!/myk-morris98), ph5 – sciencehistory.org

Death certificate credited to the General Records Office, Crown Copyright