

Three Men — on a Horner photo

This photo [ph1], from the Horner collection at The Museum of North Craven Life portrays three dapper young men positioned in a relaxed pose, suggesting they are good friends. They are in front of a backdrop of a rural scene and leaning against a wooden style fence. Neither the backdrop, nor the fence, appear in any other photos remaining in the collection. They are well dressed with bowler and straw hats. Men's fashions are generally harder to date than women's but the Horner records say it was taken in 1879. Sadly the glass slide has been damaged over time but we can still appreciate the final image which is great, isn't it?

The longer you look at the photo, the more questions arise. Who were these men? How did they know each other? Why did they have this photo taken together during this year? Why the dramatic setting?

The photo was originally listed as 'Three Men' with a subtitle of 'Messrs Clark, Bygrave and Crowe' which is nearly correct. A closer look at the original glass slate reads 'Messrs W Clark, Bygrave, J Crone'. From other photos we know that they are standing right to left, W Clark, J Crone and C Bygrave.

The stories of the families of each of these men are provided separately as part of our project but they don't answer the questions above, yet.



Three Men, Messrs Clark, Bygrave and Crowe, photograph by the Horner Studio. Horner Collection©NCBPT (CC-BY 4.0)

William Firth Clark, left of photo



The Clarks were from Wharfe, Austwick and Clapham areas. William's father was **Thomas Clark** and he was the fourth and youngest child of **Robert Clark**, a joiner and his wife, **Agnes Leeming** [ph2]. Robert died before Thomas reached his first birthday and Agnes quickly remarried. Her second husband was **Christopher Parsons**, another joiner, and she had six sons and a daughter with him. Unfortunately, Christopher couldn't cope with family life. Criminal records show he was a naughty boy, 'an incorrigible rogue, by neglecting his family at Austwick.' He had a record for assault, failing to pay sureties (to guarantee good behaviour) and three cases of neglecting his family, all of which resulted in imprisonment. Legally, an incorrigible



rogue was someone who, having previously been convicted of vagrancy, then committed further offences or violently resisted arrest. Poor Agnes was left with all those children to care for and, unsurprisingly, died in 1845, aged 44. The younger children were cared for by relations. After his release Christopher moved to Giggleswick and lived alone and eventually died in the workhouse in 1883, aged 75.

You'll be glad to know that while all this was going on young Thomas was brought up by his aunt **Mary Leeming**, who was a grocer in Chapel Square, Settle and she gave him a useful business education. Initially, Thomas made a living as a gentleman's footman. In 1850 Thomas married **Thirza Smith**, the daughter of **John Smith** who was a successful, wealthy cotton manufacturer from Colne. Thirza was from fertile stock — she was one of at least ten and she had 13 children with Thomas. Just one infant, **George Clark**, died in 1866 and is buried in an unmarked grave somewhere in the Ancient graveyard. Thomas had his photo taken at the Horner studios in 1868 when he was 42 [ph3].

THOMAS CLARK,
SEEDSMAN, FRUITERER, AND GREEN GROCER,
Pegs to inform the public that he has constantly on hand Almeria Grapes, French Stewing Pears; French, and Portugal Apples, Normandy Pippins, Newtown Pippins, the best imported. The Finest Eleme Figs, selected and packed in layers in boxes of two pounds and upwards; Lisbon and St. Michael Oranges, Cocoa Nuts, Naples and French Walnuts; Portugal and English Onions, &c., &c.
KITCHEN-GARDEN and FLOWER SEEDS. Generally cheaper and in much better condition than last year's seeds.
Pea-sticks, Bass Matting, Cuba Bass, Faro Baskets suitable for tool-kits, &c.
A lot of Window Plants expected about the 10th, comprising,—Acacias, Camellias, Genistas, Fuschias, Geraniums, &c.
Every article in the trade on the shortest notice.
A few live **TORTOISES** on sale. These animals are very useful for the destruction of insects in gardens, and require little or no care. There is one in the College Gardens at Cambridge, which has been there a great number of years.
Settle, Feb. 28th, 1862.



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

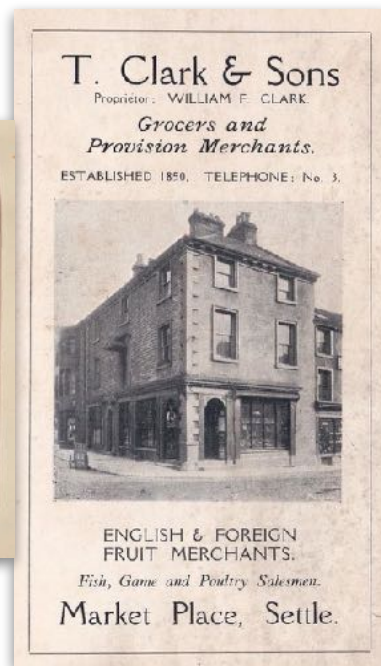
With the financial support of Thirza's father, Thomas was able to establish his own grocery business on the corner of Cheapside and Duke Street, known as 'Clark's corner'. He sold English and Foreign fruit, fish, game, and poultry, clotted cream and even tortoises which 'are very useful for destruction of insects in gardens, and require little or no care' and Craven. Thomas' successful business continued for decades [sc] and the premises is still used as a convenience store today. The family lived on Kirkgate, very close by.

Thomas was a good man; a church warden, a Parish Councillor and Vice President of the Bowling Club when it opened on the Ashfield Hotel green (now the Social Club). Thomas and Thirza both died in 1909. Vestry records tell us, 'A vote of thanks was given for his long and faithful service to the Church. During his period of office, the Church Yard was extended and the bells hung in the tower of the Church. We laid him to rest in the churchyard, in the spot he had chosen himself in sure and certain hope of the resurrection to eternal life. The flag half-mast high, the



choral service, the muffled peal, and the church well nigh filled with sorrowing friends, all testified to the way in which he was regarded.'

Thomas and Thirza's sons remained in the grocery trade or became medical men. Their daughter, **Lucy Clark**, married **William Hayton**, a Settle plumber. Their fourth son was our William Firth Clark who was 20 when the photo of the Three Men was taken. William married **Lucy Batty** of Stainforth and they had two children, **Thirza Mary Clark** and **Stanley Firth Clark**. William took over his father's business at Clark's Corner [LSA] but lived at Halsteads, on Duke Street, towards Skipton. Fabulous photos from the Settle Amateur Operatic Society show their children performing together with their cousin, Lucy Clark's son, **John (Jack) Francis Hayton**. This may have been a release for Stanley as he was known to suffer from a stutter. So, there was a musical, theatrical talent in this family.



Stanley initially stayed in the grocery trade. However, at the time of the 1939 pre-war census Stanley worked as an 'Oxo representative' in Ilkley. Did you know the first 'Oxo cubes' were produced in 1910? During the war 100 million Oxo cubes were provided to the armed forces, all of them individually hand-wrapped. William Firth Clark is buried with his wife in the family plot.

John Mann Crone, centre of photo

Despite his youthful appearance, John Crone was the same age as William Clark and so was also 20 when photo taken. He was the eldest of four children of **Eleanor Emma Bickerdyke** and **Thomas Mann Crone** who was a Liverpool bookkeeper. Thomas was from a line of wealthy merchants and Eleanor Emma [ph5, far left, back row] was the fifth out of ten children of **Robert Bickerdyke**, the manager of a Lancaster cotton mill. The mill was owned by the



Greg family who also owned Quarry Bank Mill and were known for their (relatively) generous treatment of workers. So Eleanor had wealthy roots on both sides.

Unfortunately, Thomas Mann Crone died, aged 28, just before his youngest daughter was born and when John was just five. However, he left a generous estate for Eleanor Emma and the children. So, what would you do in Eleanor Emma's position? For some reason she decided to bring her family to Settle and they lived on the Market Place in the building which is now a bike shop. Eleanor Emma and her two daughters spent the summer seasons travelling and staying in guest houses around the country. Very civilised.

John's brother **Thomas Arthur Crone** stayed in the area and became a schoolmaster at Giggleswick School but, unfortunately, just like his father, had a premature death and died aged just 24. There was definitely a weak gene in the male line of this family. However, before he died, he was a talented musician and was in the band of Settle Choral Society — another musical talent. He was buried in an unmarked grave at Giggleswick churchyard.

Meanwhile, after the photo, was taken in the Horner studio, John moved back to Lancashire to work as a salesman of leather and oil cloths for **James Helme and Co**. This company had close links with the Bickerdykes so this was a case of 'keeping it in the family'. When he was 36 John married **Cora Sheard**, the daughter of a printer/bookbinder who was 15 years his junior. They had two sons who followed their father into the world of commercial travelling/salesmen.

Life was going well and uneventfully until July 1924, when John was 64 when he was killed in a tragic accident. It seems he may have gone to the toilet on the train as it was going into a tunnel. There were no lights in the corridor and he opened the wrong door with fatal results [1]. Oh dear, oh dear. John's son, who travelled on the same train was unaware of his father's death until later in the day, which was probably a good thing.

John's mother and spinster sisters all died in their seventies and are buried in Settle graveyard.

FALL FROM TRAIN.
Manchester Business Man Found Dying in Tunnel.

After travelling regularly for twenty-two years from St. Annes-on-Sea to Manchester to business, Mr John Mann Crone, aged 64 years, met his death yesterday morning by a fall from the train.

On the arrival of the train at Pendlebury railway station a door was found open, and investigation led to the discovery of Mr Crone lying grievously injured in the tunnel near the station. His head was smashed, and both his legs and his right arm were broken. But it did not appear that he had been run over. He was carried to the station and a doctor summoned, but Mr Crone died very shortly afterwards.

A business card in his pocket showed that he was an agent for Messrs James Helme and Co, oilcloth merchants, of Lancaster, with an office in Spear Street, Manchester. His home address was Wyndhurst, St. Annes. His son, who travelled on the same train, was unaware of his father's death till later in the day. Usually they walked to the office together, but yesterday morning they missed each other. Mr Crone had no business worries.

It was stated by a railway employe that there were no lights in the corridor, and it would be very dark when the train entered the tunnel.

Charles Edward Bygrave, right of photo

Charles was born in 1858, so was 21 when the photo was taken. He was the only son of Warwickshire plumber so had the most humble roots of the three friends. He was also musically talented and newspaper reports show that, by the age of 18, he was a lead performer of his local 'Amateur Amusement Club'. He was also secretary to the local 'Excelsior Rowing Club'.



Charles trained as a solicitor's clerk and obtained a post in Giggleswick. Once here, in 1880, Charles married **Kate Armistead**, the daughter of **Henry Armistead**, the landlord of the Golden Lion. Therefore we can assume he liked a drink! Charles and Kate lived on Duke Street, initially next to **Titus Nelson's** shoe shop and later at Halsteads. At Halsteads they lived three doors away from William Firth Clark's family so knew each other as neighbours as well as friends. Charles and Kate had one son, **William Bygrave**, who was a bright lad. He attended Settle National School won a Shute Exhibition together with **Sydney Smith** [ph6]. As a result, they won a free place at Giggleswick School. **Mr Frank Stanley**, the headmaster was congratulated. Mr Stanley would have been glad to know that William became a schoolmaster and then Headmaster in Devon.

SHUTE EXHIBITIONS.

Two boys (Sydney Smith and William Bygrave) from our National School have again been successful in gaining Shute Exhibitions. We congratulate Mr. Stanley.

Professionally, Charles was appointed Clerk to the Settle Board of Guardians in 1894, taking over from the long-serving and well respected **John Lister**. Charles coordinated the council business including the provision of poor relief and the running of the workhouse. In November 1901, Charles gained promotion to work for Blackburn Board of Guardians and was presented with a silver tea-service, silver salver and ornamental brass time-piece as a token of the Settle Union's appreciation [2]. Whilst in Blackburn Charles wrote numerous papers on poor law provision, with a special interest in 'mental defectives'. Charles retired in 1924 and moved to Bournemouth, where he died in 1936, aged 78, followed by Kate four years later.

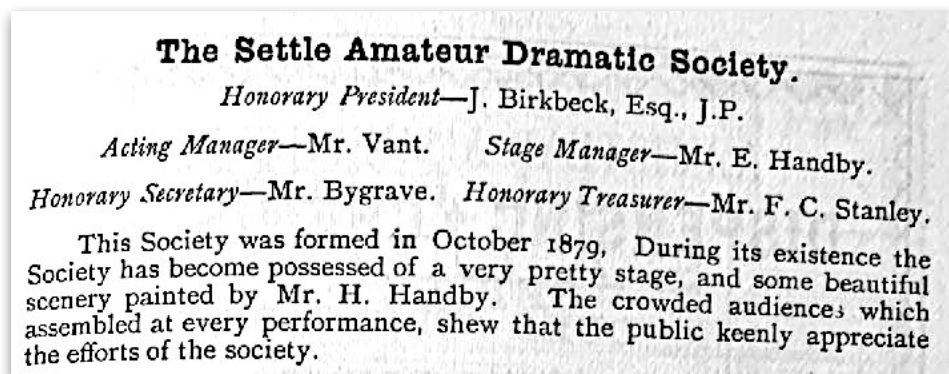
SETTLE OFFICIAL'S APPOINTMENT.
There was a remarkable gathering of Poor-Law Guardians, officials and others at Settle on January 14, to bid farewell to Mr. C. E. Bygrave, who was leaving the Union to take up the post of Clerk to the Blackburn Union. Mr. Bygrave was the recipient of many presents.

Back in 1909, when Thomas Clark passed away Charles was chosen to be an executor of his generous estate. The two families must have known each other well.

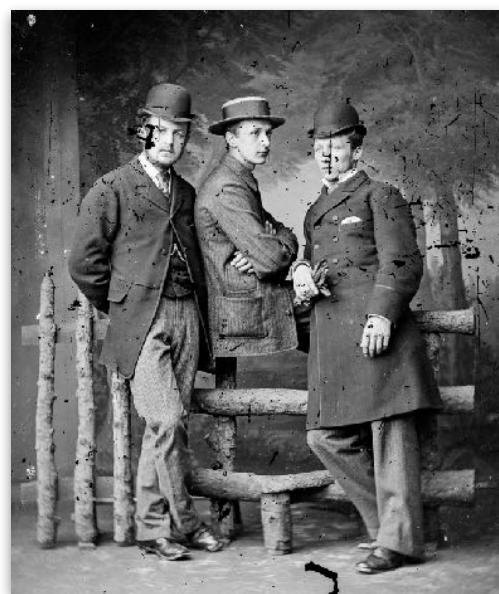
CLARK Thomas of Settle Yorkshire genral dealer died 17 April 1909 Probate Wakefield 3 November to Frederick Henry Smith merchant and Charles Edward Bygrave clerk to the Blackburn poor law guardians. Effects £5487 8s. 1d.

It's always good to make links, especially when they can explain a photo like this. Charles Bygrave also makes an appearance in the local Almanac in a feature about the Settle

Amateur Dramatic Society [LSA]. It transpires that the Society was formed in 1879, the year the Horner photo was taken and performed at Victoria Hall. It became Settle Amateur Operatic Society in 1908 and is still performing to this day.



The advert tells us that the Honorary Secretary was Mr Charles Edward Bygrave and the Honorary Treasurer was none other than Mr Frank Stanley, the headmaster of of the National School. They had their photo taken for the Operatic Society [ph7], also in 1879, Charles, left, Frank, centre and **Mr Edmund Handby**, the Stage Manager on the right. Edmund painted the fire screen which is still in use at Victoria Hall today.



The similarities between the two photos, taken in the same year, are obvious. In the Operatic Society photo, the three men are in a relaxed pose, leaning on a central plinth and balcony type bench, perhaps a stage prop. Their clothing is obviously from the Society wardrobe.

We know the three men were from families who were talented musical performers. William Clark and Charles Bygrave were neighbours, as well as friends, and Thomas Clark

Settle Graveyard Project

chose Charles Bygrave to be an executor of his will. So, it seems likely that these three young friends had a link through theatrical performance, probably through the Settle Amateur Dramatic Society. The fence and backdrop in their photo may well have been provided by the Dramatic Society. The formation of the Society may even have been the motivation to have this photo taken!

In one further coincidence, we know that Charles and Kate Bygrave retired to Bournemouth which is also the retirement residence for headmaster Mr Stanley.



This account has been compiled 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.

Life stories 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 settlerearch@gmail.com. Latest news and events are on the Facebook page 'Settle Graveyard Project'. The life stories of people with italicised names have been researched as part of the graveyard project.

Newspaper cuttings with the kind permission of the British Newspaper Archives: 1 – Shields Daily News, 2 – Yorkshire Post

ph1, ph3 – Image from the Horner Photographic Studio Collection provided courtesy of the Museum of North Craven Life, Three men – Image 2022.1.68.57, Thomas Clark – Image 2022.1.68.35



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ph2 – credited to descendants on ancestry.co.uk, [johnburgess198](https://www.ancestry.co.uk/people/details?i=104828&cat=9357), ph4, ph7 – with the kind permission of John Reid and the Settle Amateur Operatic Society, ph5 – photo credited to the descendants of the family on ancestry.co.uk, username [sineadpnolan](https://www.ancestry.co.uk/people/details?i=104828&cat=9357), ph6 – with thanks to Giggleswick Church archives

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