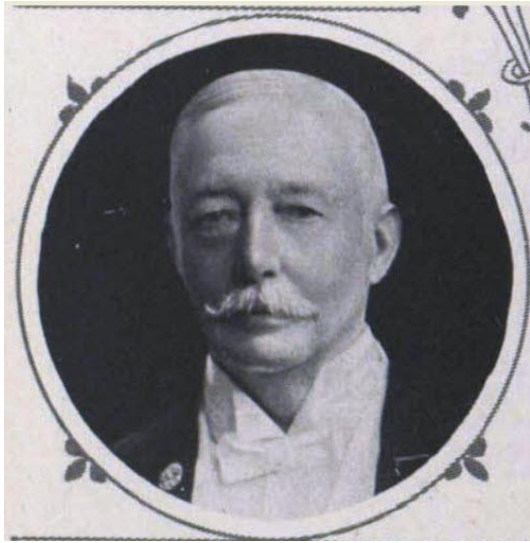


Sir Thomas Ratcliffe Ellis (1842-1925)



Thomas Ellis was born in 1842, his father also Thomas was a timber dealer and stone mason in Standishgate. His mother Elizabeth was the only child of Thomas Ratcliffe, a wealthy farmer in Haigh.

Thomas Ellis would subsequently change his name to Ratcliffe Ellis, as part of an inheritance of the Ratcliffe family. He attended Wigan Grammar School.

In 1861, Thomas is living with his widowed mother at 12, Wigan Lane and working as an articled clerk. He qualified as a solicitor around 1865 and went into partnership with Richard Leigh at 26, King Street.

He married Mary Dean Barton on 25 Feb 1868 at Standish and they would have eight children.

Richard Leigh commissioned the building of an Arcade in King Street along with Manchester & County Bank and the practice moved to the Arcade building in 1872, now known as Grimes Arcade.

In 1877, Thomas and his family moved from Dicconson Street to The Hollies, an imposing house adjacent to the Plantation Gates, following the death of the previous owner James Fairclough, a former resident of the Street,

Sadly, on the death of Richard Leigh in 1879 the partnership was dissolved and Thomas went into partnership with Edward Scott, brother of [Sir John Scott](#), as Scott & Ellis, also based in the Arcade. The partnership became one of the most extensive and important legal practices in Lancashire.

Tragically, Edward Scott passed away in February, 1883, leaving Ratcliffe Ellis with the unenviable task of finding another solicitor with the gravitas to replace Scott.

Maskell & Ellis was formed in the partnership with Maskell William Peace, the highly respected and well-known figure locally and nationally. With Peace on board the practice grew to national prominence and additional premises were acquired at 18, King Street

In 1893, Thomas would again experience the loss of a third partner with death of Maskell Peace. He would continue in the name of Peace & Ellis, with his sons Thomas, Arthur and Henry. Interestingly Thomas "Tom" would not include "Ratcliffe" in his name.

Thomas Ratcliffe Ellis held some very prominent and important positions in the following organisations: -

1882 – Law Clerk and Secretary to the Mining Association of Great Britain.

1906 – Member of the Royal Commission on Mines.

1907 & 1911 – Member of Royal Commission on the Railways Conciliation Scheme.

1909 – Member of the Industrial Council.

1911 – Secretary of the Lancashire and Cheshire Coal Owners' Defence Association.

1922 – President of the Manchester Geological and Mining Society.

and 26 years as Clerk to Wigan Magistrates.

Also, Captain of the Lancashire Rifle Volunteers.

Thomas was knighted in June 1911, Sir Thomas played a prominent part in all negotiations for many years concerning the big mining disputes, and he was looked upon as an authority on arbitration involving issues in dispute within the industry.

Thomas died in 1925 and left £68,548 in his will.

After his death the practice of Peace & Ellis continued until probably the late 1950's and would become Ellis, Sayer & Henderson also based in the Grimes Arcade building.

The children of Thomas.

Thomas Ellis 1869-1936 died at The Hollies, probate to Arthur Ratcliffe Ellis and Henry Ratcliffe Ellis, solicitors.

Mary Ellis 1871-1929 married name Dawson, died in Broadstairs, probate to daughter Anita Mary O'Callaghan.

Arthur Ratcliffe Ellis 1872-1945 died at Christopher Nursing Home, probate to District Bank Ltd and brother Henry Ratcliffe Ellis (solicitor). 1939 lived at the Hollies, single, solicitor. 5 servants.

Elizabeth Ellis 1874-1913 married Godfrey Woodford Mansel Baker 1908 at St Michaels and All Angels, Wigan. Died in Hertfordshire, estate to husband.

Madge Ellis 1877-1965 married Arthur Edward Fair in 1904 at St Michaels and All Angels, Wigan. Died in Hampshire in 1966, estate to daughters both spinsters Elizabeth Mary and Helen Margaret.

Ruth Ellis 1879-1968 married Bastian Stubbs Brown in June 1909 at St Michaels and All Angels church, Wigan. Died at 253 Wigan Road, Thornhill Standish.

Dorothy Ellis 1881-1982 married Harry Esmond Henderson Dec 1908 at Bhamo, Burma. Died in 1982 in Ewecross North Yorkshire.

Henry Ratcliffe Ellis 1886-1973 married Grace Wall in Oct 1913 at Holy Trinity Church, Southport. Had 2 sons and one daughter all born The Gables Spencer Rod, Wigan. Died May 1973 in Wigan at The Woodlands, Wigan Lane, Wigan. Son Thomas Ratcliffe Ellis married Mary Bridge in 1941 Ormskirk Freemason from 1905 at St Georges Lodge. 1950-1952 President of Wigan Law Society.

Jan Bannister 2022