MORE CONCERNING THOMAS ELLIS

by John M Ellis[1]

ABSTRACT

In 2006 I wrote an article relating to Thomas Ellis, gentleman and merchant, Alderman and Mayor of Doncaster, which was published in Foundations [2(1): 47-53]. In addition to an explanation of his life and work, the article attempted to determine his parentage and family, noting that nothing authentic had so far been discovered despite considerable research effort. The present article has the same objectives in view and explores the possible relationship of Thomas Ellis to the Ellis family of Bilham.

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Thomas Ellis was a gentleman and merchant, Alderman and Mayor of Doncaster (Ellis, 2006). In the 16th century he was one of the most important residents of Doncaster, in the West Riding of Yorkshire, and on 5 Feb 1548/9 he received a Confirmation of Arms from Norroy King of Arms stating that he was "*descended of an ancient house of long time bearing Armes, Neverthelesse he uncertaine under what sorte his Ancestors beare their said Armes*". The arms "*Gold on a plaine cross sable five Cress silves*" were confirmed to him. Those were the arms of Ellis of Kiddal Hall in the parish of Barwick-in-Elmet, an ancient gentry family and the most prominent of all the Ellis families in Yorkshire. The published pedigrees of that family do not reveal any connection with Thomas Ellis. He made his will 4 April 1562, proved at York 2 Dec following. He died 17 July 1562, and was buried on 17th of that month in the Lady Choir near St Thomas's altar in the parish church of St George, Doncaster, in accordance with his wish as stated in his will (Gibbons, 1893). In his deed of founding and endowing the Hospital of St. Thomas the Apostle in Doncaster, dated 10 Oct 1557, he described his wife Elizabeth as "*my now wife*", (Jackson, 1881, Appendix p.ix), and in his will he described her as "*Elizabeth now my wife"* which appears to indicate that he had had a previous wife.

Jackson·stated that nothing authentic so far concerning the parentage and family of Thomas Ellis had been discovered though considerable research had been employed in the endeavour to do so (Ellis, 2006, p.47). It would appear that that remains the position. This article is an attempt to carry such research forward.

John Elles, of Bilham in the parish of Hooton Pagnell, whose will dated 12 Sept 1534 and proved at York the 13 Nov following, named (in that order) his sons Sir Percevall Ellis (presumably a prient), William Ellis, John Ellis and Thomas Ellis, and daughters Katryne and Alice (Gibbons, 1891).[2] If his sons were named in his will in order of seniority, then Thomas was the fourth and youngest son. Unfortunately the sons were born well before the introduction of parish registers in 1538, so their dates of baptism cannot be known, and all that can be certain is that they were born at the end of the fifteenth century, or at the beginning of the sixteenth.

The arms confirmed to Thomas Ellis by the said Confirmation dated 5 Feb 1548/9, are differenced with a mullet in the docket in the College of Arms, which would indicate a third son (Ellis, 2006, pp.47-48). On his original gravestone in the parish church of St. George, Doncaster, his Arms bear a mullet indicating a third son, and possibly one

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2 The original will mentions no properties and does not help with chronology.

of his brothers had died sometime between the date of his father's will 12 Sept 1534 and the date of the confirmation 5 Feb 1548/9, in which case the mullet would be the appropriate difference.

In the Public Record Office there are three Fines, the first was in the Michaelmas Term, 1532, Thomas Ellis being the Plaintiff (purchaser), and Robert Amyas and others deforciants (sellers), and concerned lands at Marr, Bilham, Bentley, Doncaster, Balby, Carhouse and Wheatley. The second, in the same term of 1532, Thomas Ellis being the plaintiff and Robert Turneour deforciant, and concerned lands at Doncaster. The third was in the Easter Term, 36 Hen VIII, 1544, Richard Ellis being the plaintiff, and Thomas Ellis and Elizabeth his wife deforciants and concerned divers messuages, lands, etc., in Bilham.(Jackson, 1881, Appendix p.xviii). Richard Ellis has not been identified, but, being the purchaser in 1544, of divers messuages, lands, etc., in Bilham from Thomas Ellis and Elizabeth his wife, would suggest that Thomas was the Thomas Ellis, of Doncaster and Elizabeth his wife, and a son (probably the third) of John Elles, of Bilham. In his will John Elles made no mention of any property, but possibly he had made arrangements regarding its disposal to his sons before his death.

In my article of 2006, (pp.47-48), I set out four paragraphs containing grounds for submitting that Thomas Ellis of Doncaster did, in all probability belong to the Ellis family of Kiddal Hall, or the Ellis family of Lepton and Barnburgh, and that he and those families were very close, and intermarried with the families of Anne of Frickley and Scargill, indeed John Elles of Bilham appointed "*maister John of Anne*", supervisor of his will. This would be John Anne, of Frickley, the father of Martin Anne. It is possible that John Elles and the Ellis family of Bilham also descended from Ellis of Kiddal Hall, or the Ellis family of Lepton and Barnburgh.

References

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