

Scissors Paper Stone

Blog 28:

The Man in Pew 62

If one delves into those who rented pews more closely, there may be a hidden life behind the respectable facade.

Joseph Bramhall Ellison was occupying Pew 62, 4th from the front, so a prominent person.

He was the son of Joseph Ellison, American representative of Wilson, Hawksworth & Moss, later Wilson, Hawksworth, Ellison & Co. Joseph senior married his wife Eliza or Elizabeth Bramhall in New York, and his two older sons Joseph Bramhall and William Carr were both born in USA. Joseph junior became a steel merchant, having joined his father's firm with brother William. With a new partner Charles Kayser, in 1860 the company became Kayser Ellison and Co., specialising in steel and wire drawing.



Signage for Kayser, Ellison & Co

In 1860 he married Helen Thompson, daughter of Robert Thompson of Ranmoor. They married at Fulwood church.

He and his wife were governors of the Deakin Institute for granting annuities to unmarried women and donated regularly - which seems very appropriate as we will see. In the 1891 Census, he was living at 12 Gladstone Rd with his wife and two servants. In 1901 they were at the same address with no children recorded. Helen died on 4th March 1911 but according to the 1911 Census, he appeared to still have a wife! In fact, he had remarried on 15th March 1911 less than two weeks after the death of his first wife, with a special licence, no family as witnesses - just their lodger.

1911 Marriage solemnized at <u>The District Register Office</u> in the District of <u>Ecclesall Bierlow</u> in the Counties of <u>Derby and Sheffield C.B.</u>							
No.	When Married.	Name and Surname.	Age.	Condition.	Rank or Profession.	Residence at the time of Marriage.	Father's Name and Surname.
89	Fifteenth March 1911	Joseph Bramhall Ellison	72 years	Widower	Retired Steel Manufacturer	12 Gladstone Road, Ranmoor, Sheffield	Joseph Ellison (deceased)
		Bertha Mountain	47 years	Spinster		23 Roland Gardens, South Kensington, London	Henry Mountain (deceased)
Married in the District Register Office according to the Rites and Ceremonies of the <u>Anglican</u> by <u>Decease</u> of me, <u>Joe B. Ellison</u> in the Presence of us, <u>Annie Eunice Milnes</u> <u>William Richard, Registrar</u> <u>Bertha Mountain</u> <u>Thomas David Gordon Williams</u> <u>Joseph A. Beard, Supt Registrar</u>							

Marriage register entry

The marriage certificate gives the new wife's name as Bertha Mountain, 47, from Sheffield, though her address is recorded as 23 Roland Gardens, London. Roland Gardens keeps cropping up as we will see. I thought this was quick. But I was even more intrigued when I came to his death in 1913. Joseph was buried in Brompton Cemetery, London - the home address is 23 Roland Gardens, again.



Joseph was recorded on the Electoral Registers as living there as early 1901, so it had been in his possession for a while. It was possible to have more than one vote prior to 1948.

The newspaper account of his funeral surprised me – it named those attending the funeral including two people I had not come across before: Joseph Bramhall and Peter Bramhall Ellison - his sons! What was also odd was that his nephew, the son of his brother William, was also there – another Joseph Bramhall Ellison. It struck me as odd that the two brothers each used the same names for their sons.

I was intrigued so tried to track down these two sons – and found them in the 1901 Census in Bexhill on Sea, aged two and under one.

First name(s)	Last name	Relationship to head	Marital status	Sex	Age	Birth year	Occupation	Birth place
Emily	Barker	Servant	Single	Female	26	1885	Housemaid domestic	Oakley Essex
Louise	Symons	Servant	Single	Female	18	1893	Between maid domestic	Gray Essex
Kate	Hands	Servant	Single	Female	26	1885	Parlourmaid domestic	Reading Berks
Joseph Bramhall	Ellison	Son	-	Male	12	1899	School	Kensington London
Peter Bramhall	Ellison	Son	-	Male	10	1901	School	Putney London
Emily	Eckett	Servant	Single	Female	23	1888	Cook domestic	Chelsea London

1901 Census

Here was a Bertha Ellison, apparently married and living on her own means whose birthplace is Sheffield. Her two sons are living with her plus four servants! The two boys were born in Kensington and Wandsworth. They were both baptised at St Margaret's Westminster in 1901.

In the 1911 Census, as we have seen, Bertha and her husband Joseph were in Sheffield but where were the two boys? I discovered them in the 1911 Census living at 23 Roland Gardens, Kensington with 4 servants, but no parents. The cook completed the census return.

First name(s)	Last name	Relationship	Marital status	Sex	Age	Birth year	Occupation	Birth place
Bertha	Ellison	Head	Married	Female	36	1865	Living on own means	Sheffield, Yorkshire, England
Joseph B	Ellison	Son	-	Male	2	1899	-	Kensington, Middlesex, England
Henry B	Ellison	Son	-	Male	0	1901	-	Wandsworth, Surrey, England
Constance H	Traven	Servant	Single	Female	23	1878	Nurse domestic	Liverpool, Lancashire, England
Charlotte	Clanke	Servant	Widow	Female	64	1837	Cook domestic	Silverton, Devon, England
Edith	Winchester	Servant	Single	Female	16	1885	Housemaid domestic	Sussex, England
Mary	Winchester	Servant	Single	Female	13	1888	Nurse domestic	Sussex, England

1911 Census

It seems unlikely that these are not his sons. Perhaps he was keen to have sons to inherit to carry on the family name and the business which was not unusual at the time. Or perhaps he was having a mid-life crisis when he met Bertha - she was twenty-five years his junior after all! But the sons didn't go into the business. Joseph studied medicine and the younger son went into the navy and ended up a commander with a DSO.

The younger son is also a bit mysterious – in the 1911 census and the report of his father's funeral. He was named as Peter but I can find no other evidence of a Peter. There is a Henry Bramhall Ellison, with the same birth year and birth place as we can see in his baptism record and in all the census records - apart from 1911.

The will of Bertha's second husband gives us a clue. In 1917 she married Edward Alvey Jennings, a barrister. In the 1921 Census the couple were living at 23 Roland Gardens with his stepson Joseph while Henry is in the navy. In Edward's will (he died in 1932) he urged her to give to each of her two sons "Bobbie" & "Peter" with his love, £500 each. Perhaps the inverted commas (his, not mine) indicate that these were nicknames – designed to disguise who they were when they were young and which stuck. There is another mention of these names in the Brighton Gazette of January 1905 which had regular listings of visitors to the various hotels and boarding houses. In the Harrisons Hotel there was a Mrs J. Bramhall Ellison, a Mr Henry Booth and Masters Bobbie and Peter Ellison. I am intrigued as to who Henry Booth was, of course!

It is fascinating that Joseph Bramhall Ellison, a pillar of the church community, should be leading a double life with a secret family. One wonders what the rest of the family thought when the two boys appeared at their father's funeral.

Sue Roe
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