

Chapter 2.29

A GENERATION OF LAWYERS

THOMAS GOFFEY (1877 – 1952)
WILLIAM GOFFEY (1884 – 1979)
ARTHUR GOFFEY (1877 – 1913)

Chapter 2.29. A Generation of Lawyers

When prominent Liverpool solicitor Thomas Goffey died in 1915 his estate was valued in excess of £42,000 even though his wife Clara's estate on her death three years earlier had been more than £7,000, of which much had been passed directly on to their children. Taking into consideration the effect of inflation over the intervening ninety years, a couple with assets of £49,000 in 1915 would put them comfortably into what we would in 2005 call the millionaire category. By comparison Thomas's eldest brother, James, after a successful and one might even say distinguished career as a shipowner and businessman, can only really be considered to fall into the "seriously wealthy" category, having left an estate about one quarter of the size of Thomas's.

Thomas and Clara's wealth would probably have been evident from their lifestyle for many years and one assumes that their son, Thomas Jr., would have been keen to follow in his father's footsteps. Chapter 2.18 recounts the impression that Thomas Goffey (and his fees) made on David Lloyd George and his brother William during their schooldays in Liverpool. In the event Thomas Goffey was followed into the legal profession not only by the future Prime Minister but by several Goffeys, namely his son, Thomas Jr., and by two of his nephews, William Jr. and Arthur Jr.

Thomas Goffey (1877 – 1952). In a letter from the Law Society to the late Kevin Goffey of Bellmere, Queensland :-

...Thomas was admitted as a solicitor in November 1901. His first practicing certificate is indicated as 16 November 1901. Between 1901 and 1908 he was a member of McKay, Taylor and Goffey who later became McKay and Goffey. Between 1908 and 1915 he practised alone. Between 1915 and 1939 he was a member of Goffey and Wheeldon. Further records indicate he was President of Southport or Ormskirk Law Society. He practised in Liverpool between 1901 and 1908 and in Southport between 1908 and 1952.

Thomas died in 1952 at 26, Hesketh Road, Southport. The well-known Merseyside law firm of Goffeys, based in Southport, was originally Thomas's practice and continues in business to this day although there have been no Goffeys in the firm since 1952.

William Goffey (1884 - 1979). William Goffey became a partner in Hill Dickinson, a prominent Liverpool practice specialising in international maritime law. References can be found on the internet to some of his cases, most notable of which was on behalf of the White Star Line, owners of the *Titanic*, following claims arising from the sinking of the vessel in the North Atlantic in 1912. At the age of 28 William would not have long been qualified and appears to have been a junior member of Hill Dickinson's "Titanic" team in a case which would have drawn a lot of publicity. Records of an interview with William concerning the activities of J & W Goffey Shipowners are held by the Merseyside Maritime Museum and are described in Chapter 2.20. William was by far the longest-lived of his generation; he died aged 95 on 25 June 1979 at Denehurst, Clementina Road, Blundellsands – the same house where his father had died in 1917, and his mother in 1934. As might be expected for a member of the legal profession, William left a large estate valued at £269,968. Beneficiaries were Theresa Olive Benyon of 47, Bidston Avenue, Birkenhead, Sidney Kent Richardson of 14, Westwood Court, Birkenhead, with no less than three freehold houses being bequeathed to three ladies: 41, Howden Drive, Roby, to Mrs Elizabeth Curran and her daughter Dorothy, 27, Coral Avenue, Roby, home of Mrs Rose Hart, to her sister Dorothy Curran and 231, Teehay Lane, Bebington to Beryl Moss.

William's residual estate was to be shared between the children of three cousins named as Geoffrey Plint Young, Alan Tate Whitson and Ronald Shires Whitson. These three could only be cousins by marriage, i.e. these are presumably the surnames of married female Goffeys, namely William's sisters Sybil and Beatrice.

Arthur Goffey (1877 - 1913). To date no information has been found about Arthur other than that he practised as a solicitor in Wigan and died in his mid-thirties. No children are named as beneficiaries of his estate, from which I have concluded that he died childless.

Not one of the three lawyers of this generation left a male heir, indeed William never married and with the early death of Arthur in 1913, the survival of the name Goffey in the north-west of England, at least as far as the descendants of Arthur and Sophia Goffey are concerned, was in the hands of James and Alfred Jnr., two of the three sons of Alfred and Mary Goffey. James died in Liverpool without issue in about 1915 (?) and Alfred Jnr. moved to the south of England to join his brother Harry in business in the 1920s, but married late in life and had no children. At some point in the 1920's therefore the name Goffey, as far as the descendants of Arthur and Sophia Goffey are concerned, died out completely in the Liverpool area. That is not to say that there are no descendants of Arthur and Sophia Goffey in the north-west, but it means that these descendants will have followed a female line, making them difficult to trace. None of these descendants have yet been identified; the names of Young and Whitson (above) are the only clues we have.