

WATERHOUSE, THOMAS (1878 - 1961), industrialist and public figure

Name: Thomas Waterhouse
Date of birth: 1878
Date of death: 1961
Spouse: Doris Helena Waterhouse (née Gough)
Child: Ronald Gough Waterhouse
Parent: Thomas Holmes Waterhouse
Gender: Male
Occupation: industrialist and public figure
Area of activity: Business and Industry; Public and Social Service, Civil Administration
Author: John Gwynn Williams

Born 21 March 1878 at Holywell, Flintshire, second son of Thomas Holmes Waterhouse, an industrialist of Bradford and Holywell. He was educated at Oswestry High School under **Owen Owen**. At his father's death in 1902 the responsibility for the Holywell Textile Mills fell on his shoulders and between 1909 and 1957 he was successively manager, director and chairman of the company. In 1920 he was elected president of the Welsh Textile Manufacturing Association. From 1925 to 1935 he was a valued member of the Court of the University of Wales and especially of the University's committee to promote the interests of the ailing woollen industry. In 1943 he was elected chairman of the North Wales Industrial Development Council. He was very prominent in local government. In 1905 he was elected to Holywell urban district council and by 1919 he was on the county council, the main field of his public activity. He was created an alderman of the county council in 1931 and was a most effective chairman, 1938-40. In 1920 he became J.P. and in 1945 vice-chairman of the court of Quarter Sessions. He was High Sheriff for Flintshire in 1942-43 and in 1945 he was appointed a C.B.E.

Always a staunch Liberal, he objected to those Liberals who joined the coalition under **David Lloyd George** in 1918 though by 1933 he won the warm commendation of **Lloyd George** for unequivocally affirming that it was the duty of a Liberal to leave the Coalition Government. During World War II he actively supported the campaign for a Secretary of State for Wales and his proposal to that effect was unanimously passed at a conference of local authorities at Shrewsbury in June 1943.

Thomas Waterhouse was a good example of a person of wholly English stock who became rooted in Wales, which he then served skilfully and tirelessly. Since there was no English Wesleyan cause at Holywell, the family joined the English Congregationalist Church to which they gave substantial support. Trim and dignified, Thomas Waterhouse had a clear mind; he was tough yet fair, and those who knew him well realised that he also had a warm heart and a lively sense of humour. A fearless, independent man, he upheld for over half a century the highest standards in the public life of his county and country. He married Doris Helena Gough, Olton, Warwickshire, in 1915; they had four sons and one daughter. He died 3 July 1961. There is a portrait of him in Clwyd county council office at Mold, and another at the home of his son, Sir Ronald Waterhouse, High Court Judge.

Author

Professor John Gwynn Williams

Sources

Who was who?

David Lloyd George papers in the House of Lords (G/34/1/12)

personal knowledge

Further Reading

NLW Archives: [Ronald Waterhouse Your Labour Candidate](#)

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