

## Robert Hill Ellis

..... is the most likely person to have played with Wests between 1908 and 1910, but who is he and how was that conclusion drawn? The first task was to look closer at Royle Ellis and determine what additional information there might have been to either prove or disprove him as a candidate.

There was an R. Ellis recorded playing for Campsie A Grade Rugby League Club and also a possible v probable trial match for the St George Rugby League Presidents Cup team in 1911. R. Ellis was then selected as an emergency for the St George Presidents Cup team.

The St George district was part of Wests territory in 1911, so players in the St George district would have made their way to the Grade ranks through Wests.

Given that Royle Ellis was a resident of Campsie and would have been about 19 years old in 1911, it is most likely that Royle Ellis found his way to senior rugby league via this pathway. There is no indication that Royle Ellis played First Grade rugby league but he was likely to be talented enough to have played lower grades.

Unfortunately team lists from this era were rarely recorded but it may explain why descendants thought that he had played for Wests.

A further search was undertaken to try and find R. Ellis who lived in the Ashfield area between 1903 and 1909. Three candidates were found. The first was Russell Ellis who was too young and did not fit the necessary profile.

The second candidate was Robert Francis Lata Ellis. He was a plumber who lived on Liverpool Rd Ashfield. He later moved to the suburb of Belmore until he died in 1952. Robert Ellis was a similar age to Ted Mead and Bill Elliott.

The third and most likely candidate was Robert Hill Ellis who lived in Charlotte St Ashfield from 1899 until 1910. Again, he was of a similar age to Ted Mead and Bill Elliott. Unlike Ted Mead and Bill Elliott, R. Ellis the Wests player appears to have severed ties with the Club by the end of 1910.

This is important to note as there is no record of Robert Hill Ellis living at Charlotte St Ashfield after 1910. It is noted that his marriage was registered at Petersham in 1913 and it was likely that he had left the district and was living at Leichhardt around this period.

It is most likely that Wests player R. Ellis, was Robert Hill Ellis.

### **Background:**

To assist in understanding how this point was reached, it is necessary to explain the tangle of names. There were two men with the name of Robert H Ellis that lived in the Ashfield/Summer Hill area from the late 1880's until 1910.

To further compound this confusion, it appears that Robert Hill Ellis was also recorded as just Robert Ellis. In 1900 there was a recording of Robert Hill Ellis and Robert Ellis at 56 Charlotte St Ashfield. Robert Hill Ellis was a Scottish immigrant with no apparent family in Australia. It was subsequently concluded that the recording in 1900 was not for two different people.

In addition to the above there was a Robert Hawkes Ellis, also recorded as Robert H Ellis who lived in the Ashfield/Summer Hill area in the late 1880's/ early 1890's. Robert Hawkes Ellis was a much older man and he can be traced to the suburb of Lindfield from about 1913 until his death. He is clearly not the Wests player, but it was necessary to work out who he was so that he could be untangled from Robert Hill Ellis.

**Robert Ellis / Robert Hill Ellis 1881-1960** (married Mary Greig Ainslie, Petersham 1913)

56 Liverpool Rd Ashfield (Robert H Ellis)

56 Charlotte St Ashfield 1899, 1900 (Robert Ellis and Robert H Ellis), 1901, 1902, 1903, 1904, 1905, 1906, 1907, 1908, 1909, 1910

56 Gladstone St Leichhardt 1930 (Robert Hill Ellis)

St Annes St Ryde 1943 (Robert Hill Ellis)

Robert Ellis made his First Grade debut in round two of the 1908 season. It was a tough introduction to First Grade rugby league as Wests had the biggest loss of the season going down to Souths 7-42. Nevertheless, Robert stuck with it and played six of the remaining seven competition games. Unfortunately for him he missed Wests only win of the season, an historic event for the Club.

In 1909, Robert played nine of the ten First Grade competition games. He missed the last game of the season against Newtown. That was the infamous match where Wests had to "borrow" three Newtown players as the team was short of players due to illness. Robert no doubt was one of the players on the sick list.

There is no further record of Robert Ellis playing First Grade football after 1909, however he did play Reserve Grade in 1910 and served on Wests General Committee that year. There is also no further record of Robert Ellis having any further connection with Wests after 1910, which might suggest that he had left the district.

Robert Ellis died at Ryde, NSW in December 1960.