

DAVIES, JOHN HUMPHREYS (1871 - 1926), bibliographer, man of letters, and educationist

Name: John Humphreys Davies

Date of birth: 1871

Date of death: 1926

Parent: Robert Joseph Davies

Parent: Frances Davies (née Humphreys)

Gender: Male

Occupation: bibliographer, man of letters, and educationist

Area of activity: Education; Literature and Writing; Scholarship and Languages

Author: Thomas Iorwerth Ellis

Born at Cwrt Mawr, Llangeitho, Cardiganshire, 15 April 1871, third son of **R. J. Davies**. He was educated at the local village school, at Lewis' School, Pengam, University College School, London, the University College of Wales, Aberystwyth, and Lincoln College, Oxford (B.A. 1893). He was subsequently called to the bar at Lincoln's Inn. Entering public life at an exceptionally early age, he became a J.P. for the county of Cardigan, and treasurer of the General Assembly of the Calvinistic Methodist connexion before he was 30.

His interest in Welsh life and literature was developed by his association at Oxford with **O. M. Edwards** and subsequently with **T. E. Ellis**, who became his brother-in-law. In 1905 he was appointed registrar of the University College of Wales, succeeding in 1919 to the principalship, which he held till his death. With **Sir John Williams** and others he was one of the chief workers in the movement for a National Library of Wales, and one of its chief supporters after its foundation. His (Cwrtmawr) collection of books and manuscripts is now in that library. He was appointed a member of the Welsh Church Commission in 1908; in 1911 he was high sheriff of Cardiganshire and chairman of its county council in 1917.

His main hobby was the collection of Welsh books and manuscripts, and in this field he was an authority recognized in the whole of Wales. Amongst his many publications the most important are *Hen Ddewiniaid Cymru*, 1901; *The Letters of Lewis, Richard, William, and John Morris of Anglesey*, (vol. I, 1907), (vol. II, 1909); *Gweithiau Morgan Llwyd*, ii, 1908; *A Bibliography of Welsh Ballads*, 1909-11; and his editions of the *Life and Opinions of Robert Roberts*, 1923, and the *Letters of Goronwy Owen*, 1924. His knowledge of Welsh public life during the first quarter of the 20th century was unrivalled, and there were few sides of it which he did not touch and adorn. He was one of the founders of the Calvinistic Methodist Historical Society, to the *Journal* of which he contributed extensively, and for ten years (1910-20) he was editor of the *Journal of the Welsh Bibliographical Society*. During his principalship his exceptional personal qualities and his varied experience contributed largely to the strengthening of the links between the college and the University on the one hand and the Welsh nation on the other.

He died at Cwm Cynfelyn, Aberystwyth, 10 August 1926, and was buried at Llangeitho.

Author

Thomas Iorwerth Ellis, (1899 - 1970)

Sources

Personal knowledge

Further Reading

T. I. Ellis, *John Humphreys Davies (1871-1926)* (Lerpwl 1963)

Wikipedia Article: [John Humphreys Davies](#)

Additional Links

NLW Archives: [Cwrtmawr Manuscripts](#)

NLW Archives: [Cwrtmawr Music Manuscripts](#)

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