

EVANS, EVAN (later Sir EVAN VINCENT EVANS) (1851 - 1934), eisteddfodwr, and secretary of the Honourable Society of Cymmrodorion

Name: Evan Evans

Date of birth: 1851

Date of death: 1934

Spouse: Annie Elizabeth Evans (née Beale)

Parent: Ann Evans (née Lewis)

Parent: Lewis Evans

Gender: Male

Occupation: eisteddfodwr, and secretary of the Honourable Society of Cymmrodorion

Area of activity: Eisteddfod; History and Culture

Author: Thomas Jones

Born at Nancaw in the parish of Llangelynnin, Meirionnydd, 25 November 1852, according to one record, or 18 November 1851, according to another. His father was Lewis Evans; his mother was Ann Lewis of Arthog — she died in giving birth to her second son William. Evan was brought up from the age of 4 in the remote village of Trawsfynydd by his father's mother, Beti Evans, a woman of strong personality who moulded her grandson's character. He found employment in the village as pupil teacher, shop-assistant, and clerk. Attracted to London, he arrived there on S. David's Day, 1872, and remained there until he died, 13 November 1934. He joined the staff of a firm of chartered accountants, and then became secretary and, later, managing director of the Chancery Lane Land and Safe Deposit Company, a post which he held to within a few months of his death. It was a post which allowed him leisure for other activities, most of which were connected with the cultural advancement of Wales. He was an indefatigable journalist, a member of the Whitefriars Club, on the lobby list of Parliament, a constant frequenter of the dining-room and the smoking-room of the House of Commons, a representative of the South Wales Daily News (Cardiff), and a contributor to the Manchester Guardian. He also wrote a weekly article to *Baner ac Amserau Cymru*, and, under the pseudonym of Nancaw Hen, for many years he wrote the weekly article in *Y Brython*, entitled 'Yn Syth o'r Senedd.' In his capacity as journalist he was of considerable service in building up the reputations of Welsh Members of Parliament, especially that of [David Lloyd George](#), with whom he early formed a friendship which was to prove lifelong.

The two institutions with which the name of Vincent Evans was to be the most closely associated for half a century were the Honourable Society of Cymmrodorion and the National Eisteddfod Association. The former was born in 1751, went to sleep periodically, and was finally awakened in 1873 by [Sir Hugh Owen](#), [Stephen Evans](#), and other London Welshmen. 'Vincent' (a name added by himself) was elected a member of the society in October and of its council in December 1886. In the report of the society for the year ending 9 November 1887 it is stated that he had been elected to succeed C. W. Jones, who had held the office of secretary 'almost from the time of its revival.' Some years later Vincent Evans became editor of its *Transactions*, and in the double role of secretary and editor he greatly increased the society's membership and produced a hundred volumes to which he induced the leading Celtic scholars of his day to contribute. They are his most impressive memorial. Without pretensions to scholarship himself, he provided a medium through which the labours of specialists could reach the intelligent public.

He had a similar influence on the national eisteddfod, as secretary of its Association and editor of its publications from 1881. He brought much-needed order into the proceedings of the ancient festival and into its finances.

His services to these two bodies and his membership of the council of every important educational institution in the Principality over many years resulted in giving him a unique position of authority and leadership, and his advice on the launching of new movements was sought and usually followed. During the first world war he was the organizing centre of many patriotic activities — chairman of the executive committee of the London Welsh Battalions, 1914-18; honorary treasurer of the National Fund for Welsh Troops, 1915-18; trustee of the Welsh Troops Children Fund; treasurer of the London Welsh Belgian Refugees Fund, 1914-15. His archaeological interests were recognized by his appointment as president of the Cambrian Archaeological Association, chairman of the Royal Commission on Ancient Monuments in Wales and Monmouthshire, and member of the Royal Commission on Public Records. He was a J.P. for Merioneth and high sheriff of the county, 1919-20. For many years he was a member of Jewin Welsh Calvinistic Methodist church, London, and closely associated with the London Welsh Charitable Aid Society; he was also a Freemason.

This enumeration of a few of the offices he worthily filled shows him to have been one of the most useful and representative Welshmen of his generation, and this truth was acknowledged by his countrymen in two national testimonials, 1899 and 1922, in the honorary LL.D. bestowed on him by the University of Wales in 1922, and in the award to him in the same year of the Cymmrodorion medal. He was knighted in 1909 and in 1922 was made a Companion of Honour.

He was a man of massive and dignified bearing, with a leonine head and a genial smile. His wife, Annie Elizabeth, daughter of Thomas Beale, Oxford, died in 1898, and he was survived by a son and daughter. He died 13 November 1934 and was cremated at Golder's Green on 16 November

Author

Thomas Jones, (1870 - 1955)

Sources

Y Cymmrodor, 1951 (1925, 223-4);

W. E. Davies, in *The Welsh Outlook*. January 1920;

The Times, 15 November 1934;

personal knowledge.

Further Reading

Wikipedia Article: [Evan Vincent Evans](#) 

Additional Links

Wikidata: [Q13128332](#) 

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