

JAMES, IVOR (1840? - 1909), first registrar of the University of Wales

Name: Ivor James
Date of birth: 1840?
Date of death: 1909
Spouse: Margaret Elborough James (née Pruen)
Parent: Mary James (née Arnold)
Parent: Robert James
Gender: Male
Occupation: first registrar of the University of Wales
Area of activity: Education; History and Culture; Literature and Writing; Scholarship and Languages
Authors: William Llewelyn Davies, Prys Morgan

Born Ivor James, or IVOR BARNOLD ROBERT JAMES, as he called himself, 21 September 1840, at Britannia, in the village of Rock, and the parish of Bedwellte, Monmouth, son of Robert James and Mary (Arnold), his wife. Hence, on the distaff side, he had connections with the [Arnold](#) family of Llanthony and The Court, Llanfihangel Crucorney. The family moved to Llansamlet where the father was schoolmaster. Ivor James was a journalist in London for a while and he was also interested in reading documents at the British Museum before going to Queens' College, Cambridge; he also tried the law and started preparing for holy orders. He married, c. 1870, Margaret Elborough Pruen, daughter of Dr. Henry Pruen, rector of Ashchurch, Gloucestershire.

He was settled near Swansea at the time when the movement for the establishment of a university college for South Wales was in its stride. He threw all his energies on the side of Swansea as the site, and although the decision went in favour of Cardiff he became the first registrar of the new college in 1883, the advocates of Cardiff realizing that his value as fighter might be of much service to the new institution. He was instrumental in securing the [Enoch R. G. Salisbury](#) collection of books relating to Wales and the Border counties for the college at Cardiff. With [W. Cadwaladr Davies](#) he was joint secretary of the University of Wales Charter Committee, and he became the first registrar, in March 1895, of the new university, holding the fort until he retired in 1906.

Throughout the years Ivor James had shown that he had the instincts of the researcher and the scholar. He believed that the hero of S. T. Coleridge's poem, 'The Ancient Mariner,' was a Welshman, Captain Thomas James (*D.N.B.*), and published (Cardiff, 1890), *The Source of the Ancient Mariner*. He devoted special attention to a study of the history, literature, religion, and education in the Wales of the 16th and 17th century, and published in 1887 a pamphlet *The Welsh Language in the 16th and 17th Centuries*. He wrote to the *Traethodydd* in 1886, and contributed four articles to *Wales* (ed. [O. M. Edwards](#)) in 1894 and 1895 on [Maurice Kyffin](#). He died 13 April 1909 at Cardiff, aged 69.

Authors

Sir William Llewelyn Davies, (1887 - 1952)

Prys Morgan

Sources

Western Mail, 14 April 1909

The Nationalist, May 1909

NLW Archives: Ifor James Manuscripts: NLW MSS 4301-39

NLW Archives: [NLW MS 3482D: The Welsh Book of Common Prayer](#)

South Wales Daily Post, 14 April 1909

W. Samlet Williams, *Hanes a Hynafiaethau Llansamlet (History & antiquities of Llansamlet)* (Dolgellau 1908)

Works

Ivor James, [Y Ficer Pritchard, Beibl 1630, a "Charwr y Cymry" \(Y Traethodydd 1893?\)](#)

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