

RICHARDS, FREDERICK CHARLES (1878 - 1932), artist

Name: Frederick Charles Richards
Date of birth: 1878
Date of death: 1932
Parent: Edwin Kemp Richards
Gender: Male
Occupation: artist
Area of activity: Art and Architecture
Author: Thomas Jones

Born at Newport, Monmouthshire, 1 December 1878, the youngest of the three sons of Edwin Kemp Richards, butcher. He attended an elementary school and remained on as a pupil teacher under Abraham Morris, a well-known headmaster. He took classes at the local school of art and spent summer holidays training in studios at S. Ives and Bruges. In 1909 he cut loose from school teaching and with a scholarship went to the Royal College of Art, South Kensington. Hitherto he had thought of himself as a painter in colour, and it was a surprise to his friends when he turned to etching as his chief interest, a decision largely due to his teacher, Sir Frank Short. In 1911 Richards exhibited for the first time at the Royal Academy; then followed the diploma of the Royal College of Art and the Fellowship of the Royal Society of Painters-Etchers.

In 1911 he was commissioned by [Sir Alfred T. Davies](#), permanent secretary of the Welsh Department of the Board of Education, to copy Sir Edwin Poynter's cartoon of [S. David](#) for the Ceiriog Memorial Institute, and in 1913 Messrs. Adam and Charles Black invited him to make drawings for the *Oxford Sketch Book*. This was the first of a series of reproductions of pencil drawings of great delicacy and refinement which embraced Eton and Windsor, Florence, Venice, Rome, and other places, and attained wide popularity. Richards had notable skill in lettering, especially in adapting the Roman type of the Trajan Column to printing, and he executed many S. David's Day booklets for the Board of Education, rolls of honour, certificates issued to soldiers by the Army Council, and work for the Baynard Press. In 1918 he prepared a report for the Central Welsh Board on the teaching of art in the intermediate schools of Wales. In 1920 he joined the staff of the College of Art, conducting courses for intending teachers. In 1927 he left the college and made his headquarters in Egypt and for the next four years he worked at subjects in the Near East, holding exhibitions at Alexandria and Teheran and presenting twenty-one of his Oriental etchings to his native town. He returned to London in the autumn of 1931 and in a few months wrote *A Persian Journey*, issued in November with forty-eight illustrations drawn during his nine months in Persia. The strain of his travels by car, camel, and plane, and the rapid preparation of his book, proved too great for his strength and he died in Hampstead General Hospital, 27 March 1932.

Richards was a true artist, who lived simply in a modest Chelsea flat, was much beloved and extremely generous. He is commemorated by collections of his work in the Newport Art Gallery, the National Museum of Wales, Cardiff, and the Victoria and Albert Museum, London.

Author

Thomas Jones, (1870 - 1955)

Sources

W. J. T. Collins, *Artist-Venturer the life and letters of Fred Richards* (Newport 1948)
personal knowledge

Further reading

Suffolk Artists: [RICHARDS, Frederick Charles, 1878 - 1932](#)

Additional Links

VIAF: [75925913](#)

Wikidata: [Q20000736](#)

Published date: 1959

Article Copyright: <http://rightsstatements.org/page/InC/1.0/> 

The Dictionary of Welsh Biography is provided by The National Library of Wales and the University of Wales Centre for Advanced Welsh and Celtic Studies. It is free to use and does not receive grant support. A donation would help us maintain and improve the site so that we can continue to acknowledge Welsh men and women who have made notable contributions to life in Wales and beyond.

Find out more on our [sponsorship page](#).

