

## SPURRELL family, of Carmarthen printers

The first Spurrell to settle at Carmarthen was JOHN SPURRELL, Bath, an auctioneer who also became agent for the estate of one of the branches of the Mansel family. He and his wife Sarah (Singers) settled in the Lower Market Street (later Hall Street) during the last quarter of the 18th century. They had a son, RICHARD SPURRELL, who was clerk to the Carmarthenshire county magistrates and who married Elizabeth Margareta, daughter of Thomas Thomas, Frowen, near Llanboidy.

### WILLIAM SPURRELL (1813 - 1889), printer and publisher

The third son of Richard and Elizabeth Spurrell, was born 30 July 1813 at 13 Quay Street. From 1821 until 1829 or 1830 he was a pupil in the Queen Elizabeth grammar school, Carmarthen. He was apprenticed, 1 November 1830, to John Powell Davies, 58 King Street, Carmarthen. On 27 July 1835 he went to London to work for Bradbury and Evans, printers and publishers. He returned to Carmarthen in 26 August 1840 and opened his own printing works in Spurrell Court before the end of that year and in King Street in 1841. Thenceforward he was busy printing and publishing, and establishing a high reputation as a printer. Some substantial works issued from his press, including *A dictionary of the Welsh and English language*, 1848, and an *English-Welsh dictionary* in 1853. He also published a Welsh grammar (2nd ed. 1853). He became the editor and the owner of *Yr Haul* in 1857 (first number January 1857) and continued to publish that journal until 1884; in 1862 he had begun to publish *Y Cyfaill Eglwysig*. Another work worthy of mention was *Carmarthen and its Neighbourhood*, 1860 (2nd ed. 1879). As he was now a substantial printer and publisher it is not surprising that he was well acquainted with such writers as **Daniel Silvan Evans**, **Morris Williams** (Nicander), **John Rowlands** (Giraldus), etc. He married, 1846, Sarah, daughter of Evan Walter, Bryn-bach. Two of his sons became clergymen, a third was a doctor, whilst a fourth, Walter Spurrell (below), joined him in the business. He died 22 April 1889.

### WALTER SPURRELL (1858 - 1934), printer and publisher

Born 19 September 1858, son of the above William Spurrell. He also was educated at the Queen Elizabeth grammar school, Carmarthen, going afterwards to the S. Davids cathedral school and to Liverpool college. He joined his father in the business and soon showed that he was actuated by the same high ideals of craftsmanship. He married, 19 September 1893, Florence Mary, daughter of Frederick William Turner, Stoke Newington. Like his father, Walter Spurrell took an active part in Carmarthen and west Wales affairs; he also maintained the publishing connection with the Church in Wales established by the father. He was one of the founders of the Carmarthenshire Antiquarian Society. Among serial publications issued by Walter Spurrell were the *West Wales Historical Records* (14 vols., 1911-29) and the *Journal* of the Welsh Bibliographical Society.

To many Welsh people the name of Walter Spurrell is associated with the term ' *Geiriadur Bodfan*,' i.e. **John Bodvan Anwyl**'s edition, completely revised, of the dictionaries first published by William Spurrell. The first **Bodvan** edition of the *Welsh-English dictionary* appeared in 1914 (it made the sixth edition of the original work); the 'first Anwyl edition,' 1916, of the *English-Welsh dictionary* represented the 7th edition of the work first published in 1853. There have since been several new editions or impressions together with a 'pocket edition' (first published in 1919). Walter Spurrell died 23 April 1934.

## Author

Sir William Llewelyn Davies, (1887 - 1952)

## Sources

Main source has been *The House of Spurrell. By the Spurrell Family, with its cover-title of W. Spurrell and Son, 1840-1940*

## Further reading

Richard E. Huws, *A history of the House of Spurrell, Carmarthen, 1840-1969*

Wikipedia Article: [William Spurrell](#)

## Additional Links

NLW Archives: [Spurrell Family Papers](#)

VIAF: [76688835](#)

Wikidata: [Q20823531](#)

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