

# NANNEY (formerly ELLIS), DAVID ELLIS (1759 - 1819), attorney-general for North Wales

**Name:** David Ellis Nanney  
**Date of birth:** 1759  
**Date of death:** 1819  
**Parent:** Catherine Ellis (née Nanney)  
**Parent:** Richard Ellis  
**Gender:** Male  
**Occupation:** attorney-general for North Wales  
**Area of activity:** Law  
**Author:** Thomas Richards

Born in 1759, son of Richard Ellis, vicar of Clynnog - he lived at Gwynfryn by Llanystumdwy, on an estate acquired by one of his Bodychen ancestors through a lucky marriage in 1667 - and Catherine, daughter of the evangelical [Richard Nanney](#), also vicar of Clynnog (died 1767). David Ellis matriculated from Pembroke College, Oxford, in 1778, graduating B.A. in 1782; in the same year he was admitted to the Middle Temple, and was called to the Bar in 1787; eventually he became attorney-general for North Wales under the Great Sessions dispensation. He acquired a comprehensive knowledge of the Common Law, tempering it with sound common-sense, and no lawyer had a greater reputation than he in North Wales in the early years of the 19th century. His opinions on refractory cases are plentifully scattered over the estate papers of the period, always lucid, exact, neatly written with a fine economy of words. Excellent examples are the dicta on the intricacies of an Anglesey marriage settlement (Henllys 217), on the question whether goods could be distrained for rent if already sold in good faith (Lligwy 4A), and on the validity of leases with unusual clauses for re-possession, distinguishing between leases for lives and leases for years (Penrhyn 1848). He became squire of Gwynfryn by his father's death in 1805; in 1812 he inherited the Nanney lands of Bachwen and Eiernion by the will of a bachelor uncle on condition that he assumed the surname Nanney. He died on 5 June 1819, without issue, bequeathing his estate to his nephew, Owen Jones of Bryn-hir, on condition that he assumed the name of Ellis-Nanney. Owen Jones was the father of Sir H. J. Ellis-Nanney, the unsuccessful opponent of [D. Lloyd George](#) in the Caernarvon boroughs at his first election (1890).

## Author

Thomas Richards, (1878 - 1962)

## Sources

J. E. Griffith, *Pedigrees of Anglesey and Carnarvonshire Families* (1914), 164-5, 228

Foster, *Alumni Oxonienses*, 1715-1886, 420

*Register of Admissions to the Honourable Society of the Middle Temple* (1949), ii, 393

*Bangor Manuscripts at University College North Wales Library, Bangor* 683 (1-4), 3671-2

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## Images

NLW: [Hugh John Ellis Nanney](#)

NLW: [Etholiad Sir Gaernarfon, 1885](#)

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