

ELLIS, TECWYN (1918-2012), educationalist, scholar and author

Name: Tecwyn Ellis
Date of birth: 1918
Date of death: 2012
Spouse: Elin Valerie Ellis (née Jones)
Parent: Margaret Jane Ellis (née Edwards)
Parent: David John Ellis
Gender: Male
Occupation: educationalist, scholar and author
Area of activity: Education; Literature and Writing; Scholarship and Languages
Author: Arwyn Lloyd Hughes

Tecwyn Ellis was born on 24 April 1918 at Cae Crydd, a smallholding on the Pale estate in Caletwr, Llandderfel, Merionethshire, the only child of David John Ellis and his wife Madge (née Edwards). As a native of Penllyn, and later of Edeirnion, his knowledge of these commotes - their history, traditions and families - was inexhaustible.

He was educated at Llandderfel council school; the boys' grammar school, Bala; and the University College of Wales, Aberystwyth, where he graduated with honours in music (1939) and Welsh (1940). After working on the land during 1940-46 (he was also a WEA tutor in Penllyn, Edeirnion and Uwchaled at the time), he returned to the 'College by the sea' in 1946 and took the DipEd (first class) the following year. This was followed in 1951 by a notable MA thesis in Welsh on the subject 'The life and work of Edward Jones (the King's Bard)', published six years later by the University of Wales Press.

He held teaching appointments at the Queen Elizabeth grammar school, Carmarthen, 1947-51, and at the boys' grammar school, Bala, 1952-58. During 1958-60 he was a Research Officer in the Faculty of Education at UCW, Aberystwyth. The purpose of this research, in his own words (translated from the Welsh), 'was to analyse the Welsh language from the standpoint of modern linguistics and organize sentence patterns in the language to meet the needs for teaching Welsh as a second language'. (This was a temporary post for two years and he was released from his post in Bala to undertake the work.) Afterwards, he turned to administration for the rest of his career, firstly as Deputy Director of Education for Merionethshire, during 1960-73, and as Gwynedd's first Director of Education from 1974 until his retirement in April 1983. During his period as Director he championed the cause of bilingualism in schools at a time when Gwynedd Council's LEA was formulating and implementing its official language policy.

In addition to his professional commitment to education, he was also a prolific and accomplished scholar. He published the following works: *Edward Jones Bardd y Brenin 1752-1824* (1957); *Canu Cynnar* (2000); *Gyda'r Godre* (2000) - an autobiographical volume; *Ymlaen â Ni...* (2002); *Tonau Derfel* (2012). He contributed to the *Dictionary of Welsh Biography down to 1940* (1959) and to *Atlas Meirionnydd* (1974) and published numerous and important articles in various periodicals on aspects of the language, literary history and music of Wales, mainly during the 18 and 19c. A list of his publications between 1946-99 appears in *Gyda'r Godre* (pp. 149-51).

As 'Tecwyn Derfel' he was a member of the Gorsedd of Bards (Druidic Order). He served for many years as a lay preacher, chapel organist, conductor of a band and cymanfaoedd canu and as an esteemed music adjudicator at many eisteddfodau - local, regional and national. He was a faithful member of the Merioneth History & Record Society and served as chairman of its Council, 1986-2000, and as vice-president from 2000 onwards.

A genial, kind and unassuming person, Tecwyn Ellis was highly respected for his zeal for bilingual education and Welsh culture, and also for his scholarly and musical contributions over the years.

He married, 21 December 1963, Elin Valerie Jones of Mynytho, who was a music teacher at Ysgol Botwnnog at the time. Three children were born to them, a son and two daughters. He died on 17 September 2012 aged 94 and was buried in Llandderfel's new cemetery on 21 September. A Memorial Service was held at Pendref Chapel, Bangor, later on the same day.

Author

Arwyn Lloyd Hughes

Sources

Information from his widow, Mrs E. Valerie Ellis, Penrhosgarnedd, Bangor;
personal knowledge;

Tecwyn Ellis, *Gyda'r Godre (2000)*;

Journal of the Merioneth History & Record Society, xvi (iv), 2013, 335-9;


Barn, November 2012, 36;

Y Cyfnod, 21 September and 5 October 2012;

Y Cymro, 9 October 1979.

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