

BASSET, HULDAH CHARLES (1901 - 1982), teacher, musician and broadcaster

Name: Huldah Charles Basset

Date of birth: 1901

Date of death: 1982

Parent: David Bassett

Parent: Mary Hannah Bassett (née Charles)

Gender: Female

Occupation: teacher, musician and broadcaster

Area of activity: Education; Music; Performing Arts

Author: Rhidian Griffiths

Huldah Bassett was born on 8 June 1901 in Pen-parc, Cardigan, the daughter of the Rev. David Bassett, a Baptist minister from Ystalyfera, and his wife Mary Hannah (née Charles), from Fforest-fach, Swansea. She had a younger brother, Alun, who was an able mathematician and became head of the examination division of the Welsh Joint Education Committee. In 1914 her father moved to a pastorate in Aberdare, where she entered the Girls' County School and competed with great success in local eisteddfodau in both music and literary competitions.

In 1919 she was the first recipient of a prize offered by the Aberdare Cymrodorion to the candidate from the Aberdare County Schools awarded the highest marks in Welsh in the examinations of the Central Welsh Board; she was also placed second in Welsh through the whole of Wales in the same examination. She went to University College Cardiff to study Welsh under [Professor W. J. Gruffydd](#) and was one of the five pupils to whom Gruffydd dedicated his *Llenyddiaeth Cymru o 1450 hyd 1600* in 1922, the year in which she graduated with first class honours in Welsh.

Her first teaching post was in Cowbridge, from where she moved to the Girls' County School in Barry, where she collaborated with her colleague Rhyda A. Jones, who taught music: their carol, 'Ymdaenai cyfrin lenni'r nos' was published by Oxford University Press and the National Council of Music in 1932 and again in *Carolau Hen a Newydd* in 1954. It was in Barry also that she completed her research on the life and work of the poet 'Golyddan' ([John Robert Pryse](#), 1840-1862), and was awarded a University of Wales MA in 1935 for her thesis, 'Golyddan: ei fywyd a'i weithiau: gyda chyfeiriad arbennig at yr arwrgerdd Gymraeg' [Golyddan: his life and works: with special reference to the epic in Welsh].

In 1937 she was appointed the first head teacher of the Girls' County School in Gowerton, where she remained until her retirement in 1966, maintaining high academic standards and securing a very good reputation for the school. She also endeavoured to retain its Welsh character: the school was, for instance, a subscriber to the recordings of Welsh music issued by the Welsh Recorded Music Society at the end of the 1940s.

It was also during the 1940s that she began broadcasting alongside [Stephen J. Williams](#) in a series for Welsh learners, '*Dysgu Cymraeg*'; she later hosted her own programme, '*Rhigwm a Chân*' (Rhyme and Song), for which she wrote the script,

presented, sang and played the piano. The programme proved very popular with younger listeners, and she showed complete command of the medium.

She represented the National Union of Teachers (Wales) on the Schools Broadcasting Council for Wales and was also a member of the Council for Wales and Monmouthshire. An active supporter of Urdd Gobaith Cymru, she was a frequent adjudicator at the Urdd Eisteddfod and the National Eisteddfod. She was a member of the executive committee of the National Eisteddfod held in Swansea in 1964 and one of the Honorary Presidents of the Urdd Eisteddfod in Swansea in 1971.

Huldah Bassett died in Swansea on 15 July 1982, aged 81.

Author

Rhidian Griffiths

Sources

Aberdare Leader, 29 November 1919, 3

M. J. Williams, 'Huldah Bassett - un o'r rhai etholedig', *Y Faner*, 10 September 1982, 3

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