

DAVIES, DAVID JACOB (1916 - 1974), minister, author and broadcaster

Name: David Jacob Davies
Date of birth: 1916
Date of death: 1974
Spouse: Ann Lee Davies (née Lewis)
Child: Amllyn Davies
Child: Einir Davies
Child: Hawys Davies
Child: Heini Davies
Parent: David Davies
Parent: Mary Davies (née Lewis)
Gender: Male
Occupation: minister, author and broadcaster
Area of activity: Religion; Literature and Writing; Performing Arts

Jacob Davies was born on 5 September 1916 at Pen-lôn in Tre-groes near Llandysul, Ceredigion, one of five children of David Davies, a stonemason, and his wife Mary (née Lewis). He had one brother, John Herbert (Jac) and three sisters, Annie, Hannah and Maria (May).

He was educated at Tre-groes Primary School and Llandysul Grammar School (1929-36), choosing to specialise in the sciences for his higher certificate. He fractured his right arm whilst playing rugby in 1933 and as a result was unable to write for some time. This caused him to give up his education and he spent a year working as a farm hand in the Dihewyd area and with his father as a stone mason.

In 1937, he entered the Presbyterian College, Carmarthen, training to become a Unitarian Minister. He gained entry to the University of Wales, Aberystwyth in 1941 to study Education and Welsh. He was elected president of the Students' Union in 1944. During his time at Aberystwyth he served as pastor at the Unitarian chapel in New Street, preaching twice every Sunday. As a result of his success in a burlesque recital competition at the Inter-Collegiate Eisteddfod in Cardiff in 1941 he began broadcasting and writing scripts for the BBC.

He married Ann Lee Lewis from Talgarreg at Bwlchfadfa Chapel in 1944, and they had four children, Amllyn (1946-1965), Einir (b. 1948) and twins Hawys and Heini (b. 1965). In 1945 he accepted an invitation to become the minister at Highland Place English Unitarian Chapel in Aberdare, and from then on he began to take more interest in social matters. Later, in 1952, he took on the ministry of the Welsh Unitarian Chapel in the town, yr Hen D Cwrdd ('the Old Meeting House'). The family lived at 2 Tudor Terrace on the Gadlys.

He worked closely with Lilian Davies, a Welsh teacher at the Girls' Grammar School and member at yr Hen D Cwrdd, to

establish a Welsh-medium school in Aberdare, and the school was opened at Cwmdare in 1949. He established the Carw Coch literary society in the town and at the instigation of this group the National Eisteddfod was invited to Aberdare in 1956. He directed and introduced a film, 'Queen of the Hills', as an introduction to the Cynon Valley for the Eisteddfod. He became active with the Pensioners of Wales organisation, speaking annually at their conferences for many years.

After twelve years in Aberdare he wanted to return to Ceredigion, and in 1957 he took on the ministry of three Unitarian chapels, Alltyblaca, Capel y Bryn in Cwrtnwydd, and Cwmsychbant. The family made their home in the Manse, Alltyblaca, and he worked tirelessly to improve the buildings of the three congregations. He became a popular lecturer at the invitation of various organisations all over Wales. Opportunities came for more broadcasting and he became a very well known personality on radio and television.

He was much in demand as a compere at eisteddfodau, including the National, the Urdd and the Llangollen International Eisteddfod. He was a member of the Gorsedd and of its Board and served on both the Drama and Literature committees of the National Eisteddfod. He won numerous prizes at the National Eisteddfod, especially in short story competitions. He became a member of the Board of Governors at Aberystwyth University and at Manchester College, Oxford. He was invited by both the Labour Party and Plaid Cymru to stand for Parliament but always declined.

He became a well-known Welsh-language broadcaster on radio programmes such as '*Sut Hwyl*' from 1941 onwards, as well as programmes for schools. He scripted for series such as '*Teulu T Coch*' and '*Teulu'r Mans*', writing over three thousand scripts in total. He introduced the first programmes televised by Teledu Cymru in 1962. In his later years he chaired the popular radio show 'Penigamp'. Two records of his lectures were made by the Cambrian Company, 'Dyn Bach o'r Wlad' (1968) and 'Jacob ar ei Orau' (1971).

During the war Jacob and his brother Jack published a collection of songs and recitations suitable for concerts for soldiers, and also the volume *Cerddi'r Ddau Frawd* ('Poems of the Two Brothers', 1940). Many of his humorous recitations were used at local eisteddfodau, 'Plwm Pwddin' and 'Cynhaea Gwair ym Mhwlygeletsh' being among the favourites. He excelled in the short story, of which the collection *Dyddiau Main* ('Hard Times', 1967) contains the finest examples, showing his talent for satirical comedy and use of rich dialect. He was editor of the Unitarian periodical *Yr Ymofynnydd* from 1949 until his death, as well as being editor of Pensioner of Wales for 18 years from 1955.

The family suffered a harsh blow when Amlyn died at the age of nineteen in 1965 whilst a student at Aberystwyth. Jacob had included a sonnet by Amlyn, 'one of the children of Aberdare', in the volume *Cyfoeth Cwm* published in the same year.

Jacob Davies was elected president of the Unitarian and Free Christian Association of the British Isles in April 1973, but died suddenly whilst in office on 11 February 1974. He was buried in Bwlchfadfa Cemetery, Talgarreg.

Author

J. Eric Jones

Sources

Notes by Jacob himself

J. Eric Jones (ed.), *Dyn bach o'r wlad: cyfrol deyrnged i D. Jacob Davies* (Caernarfon 1984)

D. J. Goronwy Evans, '[Cofio Jacob](#)', *Cambrian News*, 25 March 1983

Personal acquaintance

Further reading

Wikipedia Article: [D. Jacob Davies](#)

Images

Geoff Charles, [Proclaiming Bangor National Eisteddfod, 1971](#)

Geoff Charles, [Yr Eisteddfod Genedlaethol, Aberafan 1966](#)

Geoff Charles, [Cwmni Cambrian's new records](#)

Geoff Charles, [National Eisteddfod of Wales 1958, Ebbw Vale](#)

Geoff Charles, [Eisteddfod Genedlaethol 1963, Llandudno](#)

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