

## BELL, ERNEST DAVID (1915 - 1959), artist and poet

**Name:** Ernest David Bell  
**Date of birth:** 1915  
**Date of death:** 1959  
**Spouse:** Megan Hinton Bell (née Jones)  
**Parent:** Harold Idris Bell  
**Parent:** Mabel Winifred Bell (née Ayling)  
**Gender:** Male  
**Occupation:** artist and poet  
**Area of activity:** Art and Architecture; Poetry  
**Author:** Thomas Parry

Born 4 June 1915, son of [Sir Harold Idris Bell](#) 1879 - 1967) and Mabel Winifred (née Ayling). He received his education at a private school at Crouch End, London, and Merchant Taylors' School, where he was taught the classics and was given some instruction in art. He spent four years at the Royal College of Art, and gained the diploma. He joined the Egypt Exploration Society's expedition to the Sudan, and worked at Sesebi and Amarah in 1936-37 and 1937-38. After the outbreak of war in 1939 he spent some months at Llanfairfechan, Caernarfonshire, and then found employment with the cartographical section of the Admiralty, first at Bath and then at the National Library of Wales at Aberystwyth. He returned to London with the section, and remained there till the end of the war. In 1946 he was appointed Assistant Director (Art) under the Welsh Committee of the Arts Council, and in 1951 he became Curator of the Glynn Vivian Art Gallery, Swansea.

David Bell collaborated with his father on the translation of some of [Dafydd ap Gwilym](#)'s poems which appeared in 1942 under the title *Dafydd ap Gwilym: fifty poems* as vol. 48 of *Y Cymmrodor*. He was the author of 24 translations. He provided the English words for *Wyth gân werin* (Enid Parry) which appeared in 1947. In 1953 he published *The Language of Pictures*, a book (to quote the preface) 'not intended to increase anyone's knowledge of the world's masterpieces or of contemporary pictures ... but rather to enrich the experience of people, when confronted by a picture, with some understanding of what the painter is trying to say, and how he says it.' He published *The Artist in Wales* (1957), an attempt to awaken a response to art in Wales. In 1959 his father published 17 original poems by David Bell written between 1938 and 1954, in a private edition of 65 copies, under the title *Nubian Madonna and other poems*.

He married Megan Hinton Jones of Aberystwyth in 1944, and they had two sons. When he was 14 years of age David Bell contracted encephalitis lethargica, which left him slightly incapacitated throughout his life. He. died 21 April 1959.

### Author

[Sir Thomas Parry](#), (1904 - 1985)

### Sources

Ernest David Bell, *Nubian Madonna and other poems* (Aberystwyth 1959)

information supplied by his widow

### Further Reading

Art UK: [David Bell \(1915-1959\)](#)

Wikipedia Article: [David Bell](#)

### Works

Ernest David Bell, [Rowland Hughes \(1903-1949\)](#)

### Additional Links

VIAF: [88053957](#)

Wikidata: [Q5231277](#)

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