

DAVIES, GWILYM (1879 - 1955), minister (B), promoter of international understanding, founder of the annual Goodwill Message from the Youth of Wales

Name: Gwilym Davies

Date of birth: 1879

Date of death: 1955

Spouse: Mary Elizabeth Davies (née Ellis)

Spouse: Annie Margaretta Davies

Parent: D.J. Davies

Gender: Male

Occupation: minister (B), promoter of international understanding, founder of the annual Goodwill Message from the Youth of Wales

Area of activity: Politics, Government and Political Movements; Public and Social Service, Civil Administration; Religion

Author: Mary Auronwy James

Born 24 March 1879 at Cwmfelin, Bedlinog, Glamorganshire (where there is a memorial tablet to him), one of the sons of D.J. Davies, minister (B). He was a pupil teacher at Bedlinog when his father moved to the neighbourhood of Llangadog and he became a pupil at Llandeilo grammar school. He began preaching as early as 1895, and trained for the ministry at the Midland Baptist College, Nottingham, and at Rawdon College. There he won the Pegg Scholarship which enabled him to enter Jesus College, Oxford, where he graduated. Whilst at Oxford he edited *The Baptist Outlook*. In 1906 he was ordained minister at Broadhaven, Pembrokeshire, and the same year he married (1) Annie Margaretta Davies but she died 3 December 1906 and their baby son died four months later; they were buried in Cwmifor (B) cemetery, Maenordeilo, Carmarthenshire. Subsequently he served as minister at Carmarthen, 1908-15; Abergavenny, 1915-19; and Llandrindod Wells, 1919-22. He was one of the founders in 1911 of the Welsh School of Social Services and showed initiative as secretary, chairman and president of the organisation. He had already gained prominence by his championship of the rights of boys from reformatory schools, who were not always justly treated by their employers.

In 1922 he retired from the ministry to devote himself to the cause of international peace. He joined with [\(Lord\) David Davies](#) in creating the Welsh council of the League of Nations Union with its headquarters at Aberystwyth; he was its director, 1922-45. Conferences were held annually (1922-39) at Gregynog on international education until the collapse of the League of Nations. During World War II the Welsh Education Committee under his direction was asked to draft a model constitution for an international education organisation. The draft submitted by Gwilym Davies greatly influenced the creation of UNESCO. He is probably remembered best for initiating in 1922 the peace message of the youth of Wales to the youth of the world which is now broadcast annually on 18 May. By chance he became the first person to broadcast in Welsh - on St. David's Day 1923. He made good use of radio, the cinema and the press. Many important articles by him appeared in *The Welsh Outlook*, *Yr Efrdydd*, and *Y Drysorfa*; some of the Welsh ones were collected in *Y Byd Ddoe a Heddiw* (1938).

His article in *Y Drysorfa*, 1942, on the Welsh Nationalist Party aroused considerable controversy. Other publications include *International Education in the Schools of Wales and Monmouthshire* (1926), *The Ordeal of Geneva* (1933), *Intellectual co-operation between the Wars* (1943), and *The Gregynog Conferences on International Education 1922-37* (1952), as well as the annual reports of the Welsh national council of the League of Nations Union, 1923-39, and of the United Nations Association, 1943-46. He was appointed a C.B.E. in 1948, and the university of Wales conferred an honorary degree of LL.D. upon him in 1954.

He suffered from ill-health ever since his student days. He spent much of his life in Cardiff and Geneva, and his work took him to all parts of the world. On 24 January 1942 he married (2) Mary Elizabeth Ellis, Dolgellau (the second woman to be appointed an inspector of schools in Wales; she was granted permission to marry and to retain her post till 1943). They lived in 8 Marine Terrace, Aberystwyth. He died 29 January 1955 and his ashes were scattered at Lavernock Point, Penarth, where the first radio messages had been exchanged across water.

Author

Dr Mary Auronwy James

Sources

Ieuan Gwynedd Jones (ed.), *Gwilym Davies, 1879-1955 a tribute* (Llandysul 1972)

NLW Archives: [Lord Davies of Llandinam Papers: Rev. Gwilym Davies Papers](#)

information from D. Emrys Williams, Aberystwyth

Further Reading

Wikipedia Article: [Gwilym Davies](#)

Additional Links

NLW Archives: [Rev. Gwilym Davies Papers](#)

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