

ELLIS, THOMAS IORWERTH (1899 - 1970), educationalist and author

Name: Thomas Iorwerth Ellis
Date of birth: 1899
Date of death: 1970
Spouse: Mary Gwendoline Ellis (née Headley)
Parent: Annie Jane Ellis (née Davies)
Parent: Thomas Edward Ellis
Gender: Male
Occupation: educationalist and author
Area of activity: Education; Literature and Writing
Author: Mary Gwendoline Ellis

Born 19 December 1899 in London, eight months after the death of his father, [T.E. Ellis](#), M.P.. His mother was Annie, daughter of [R.J. Davies](#), Cwrt-mawr, Llangeitho, Cardiganshire. He was educated at Aberystwyth grammar school, Orley Farm Preparatory School, Harrow, Westminster School (King's Scholar), University College of Wales, Aberystwyth (open classical scholarship), Jesus College, Oxford (Welsh scholarship in classics). He graduated B.A. 1920, B.A. (Oxon.) 1924, M.A. (Oxon.) 1927, M.A. (Wales) 1930. He served in the Royal Artillery 1918. He was classics teacher at Cardiff High School, 1924-28; lecturer in classics University College, Swansea 1928-30; headmaster Rhyl County School 1930-40; lecturer in classics, St. David's College, Lampeter 1940-41, and at the University College, Aberystwyth 1941-46.

At the beginning of World War II he was appointed honorary secretary of the Committee to Safeguard Welsh Culture, the movement which was to become Undeb Cymru Fydd in 1941. He remained its secretary until 1967. He was High Sheriff of Cardiganshire 1944-45. He was a member of the University of Wales Court, the council of University College of Wales, Aberystwyth, the court and council of the National Library of Wales. He was Warden of the Guild of Graduates 1943-47, a member of the Governing Body of the Church in Wales and the Representative Body. He was treasurer of the Welsh Council of Churches 1961-66, and a member of the Honourable Society of Cymmrodorion. In 1967 he was awarded the honorary degree LL.D. by the University of Wales, and the following year was created O.B.E.

It was his indefatigable work as honorary secretary of Undeb Cymru Fydd which brought him into prominence in the life of Wales. He was the leader as well as the secretary. He visited the House of Commons frequently to lobby Welsh members of all parties on issues affecting Wales and its life. He travelled throughout Wales to address meetings on education in the Welsh language, broadcasting, television and the reorganisation of local government. He visited Welsh societies in England regularly and initiated the publication of *Yr Angor* as a liaison between them and Wales.

He edited three volumes of *The Letters of T.C. Edwards* (1952-53). He wrote a biography of his father, *Cofiant T.E. Ellis* (vol. i, 1944; ii, 1948), *Cofiant J.H. Davies* (1963), *Cofiant Ellis Jones Griffith* (1969); and *Ym mêr fy esgyrn* (1955), a volume of essays on contemporary subjects. He was the author of *The Development of higher education in Wales* (1935) and a pamphlet *Blind guides?* (1942) under the pseudonym 'Timothy Stone', dealing with the future of the University of Wales. He was a member of the commission set up in 1960 to review the administration of the University of Wales. He was president of the Old Students' Association of U.C.W., Aberystwyth, in 1942.

At college in Aberystwyth he was greatly influenced by the Student Christian Movement and served on its central committee, and he was secretary of the Welsh Committee 1923-24. He was an active member of Urdd y Deyrnas, contributing articles to *Yr Efridydd*. He was a member of the new council of The Institute of Christian Education and of the Welsh branch of the movement. In August 1921 he attended the first Welsh Schoolboys Camp, which was organised on the lines of the S.C.M. camps. A natural leader, he was active in the movement for many years and kept in touch with it throughout his life. He organised boys' camps in Scotland and in Europe as well as in Wales. From his thorough knowledge of the Welsh countryside, gained by walking, cycling and travelling by car, he began writing travel essays, at first in *Y Ford Gron*, and then as books: *Crwydro Ceredigion* (1952), *Crwydro Meirionnydd* (1954), *Crwydro Maldwyn* (1957), *Crwydro Mynwy* (1958), *Crwydro sir y Fflint* (1959), *Crwydro Llundain* (1971), and *Dilyn Llwybrau* (1967).

He was a regular broadcaster in Welsh and English and was a member of the Welsh team of *Round Britain Quiz* (B.B.C.) for 20 years. He wrote scripts for radio and television and appeared on television. *Ateb parod* (1971), a book of questions and answers, is based on a television competition. The general knowledge questions and answers in the booklet *Canllawiau* (1942) first appeared in *Y Faner*. In the volume *Credaf* (ed. J.E. Meredith; 1943) he explains his conversion to Anglicanism from being a Calvinistic Methodist. He was confirmed at St. Asaph in November 1936, and the following year he was

licensed as a lay reader. He wrote regularly for *Y Llan*, and served as secretary to the Llan and Welsh Church Company for a short period. He contributed articles to *Yr Haul* (mainly as 'Timothy Stone'), *Y Llenor*, *Barn*, etc., and wrote many articles for *DWB*.

He married, 20 April 1949, Mary Gwendoline Headley, and they had one son and one daughter. He died at his home, 4 Laura Place, Aberystwyth, 20 April 1970, and was buried at Llanfair, Harlech.

Author

Mary Gwendoline Ellis

Sources

Who was who?

Portreadau'r Fficer, (1957), 9

Baner ac Amserau Cymru, 30 April 1970

Y Goleuad, 29 April 1970

The Cambrian News and Merionethshire Standard, 29 April 1970

MSS in the author's possession

personal knowledge

Further Reading

Wikipedia Article: [Thomas Iorwerth Ellis](#)

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