EVANS, THOMAS JOHN (1894 - 1965), local government officer and an administrator within the Baptist denomination

Name: Thomas John Evans
Date of birth: 1894
Date of death: 1965
Spouse: Margaret Gwendoline Evans (née Hodges)
Parent: Mary Ann Evans (née Williams)
Parent: David Evans
Gender: Male
Occupation: local government officer and an administrator within the Baptist denomination
Area of activity: Public and Social Service, Civil Administration; Religion
Author: Benjamin George Owens

Born 30 March 1894 in Carmarthen, one of twin sons of David Evans (died 16 August 1926 aged 55 years), prison officer, and Mary Ann Evans (née Williams, died 24 December 1895 aged 25 years). About three months after his birth the family moved to Shepton Mallet, where his father had taken employment, but following his mother's death the son returned to Carmarthen to be raised by his grandmother, Eliza Williams. His uncle David Evans Williams, M.A., (1876 - 1947), the Baptist minister of Salem, Blaenau, was a member of the same household. His uncle had a marked influence on his upbringing, and it was the nephew's privilege, in 1948, in association with E.T. Samuel, to produce a volume in his memory entitled, *Through suffering to triumph*, which commemorated his lifetime of affliction.

He received his early education at Pentrepoeth Boys' Council School. On 17 February 1908 he commenced his lifetime's work in the education finance section of the County Council offices at Carmarthen. His first post was as a junior clerk, culminating with his appointment, from 5 November 1924 onwards, as Associate County Treasurer with sole responsibility for education. He retired a year early on 5 April 1958 in order to facilitate the integration of the treasury functions within the County Council. He was married at Tabernacl, Carmarthen on 23 November 1923 to Margaret Gwendoline Hodges (27 June 1894 - 22 March 1951), a childhood acquaintance in the church, who bore him one daughter. The small volume, *Gwen - A tribute of love and remembrance* (1951), that he published privately, was his personal tribute to his wife.

Throughout his life he gave remarkably active support to numerous good causes in the town of Carmarthen and in his church, where he was a deacon and church secretary (1921-64). His annual reports were punctual and detailed. One of his most important benefactions was to preserve the church records by placing them on deposit at the National Library of Wales (NLW MS Mân Adnau 746-71, 813-14, 817). His part in presenting to the National Library the diaries of two former ministers, Hugh William Jones, ('Yr Utgorn Arian') and Evan Ungoed Thomas (NLW MS 1896-7E , NLW MS 1898D , NLW MS 1899C , NLW Minor Deposits 791-816, 827-866) was consistent with his efforts to preserve the sources of the history of Tabernacl church.

He published the fruits of his own research many times in the literature of the denomination, e.g. in the programme of the annual conference of the Baptist Union of Wales held at Tabernacl in 1937, and in his volume *Fragrant memories: the story of two ministers, The Rev. John Thomas (1875-1891), The Rev. Evan Ungoed Thomas (1892-1930)* (1941). He was treasurer of the county association (1939-55), and thereafter the treasurer of the Union; the president of Urdd y Seren Fore 1936-37 and president of the Union of Young Baptists of Wales, 1952-58; president of the county association 1951-52 when he delivered an address from the chair on the subject ' In the midst of time '. In the November before his death he had been elevated to become the vice-president of the Welsh section of the union. The annual conference (the conference celebrating the centenary) had been invited back to its original home in Carmarthen.

Throughout the years he was a fervent supporter of the Baptist Missionary Society. In 1959 it was he who was responsible for collection of the contributions from Wales towards the Thomas Lewis (1859 - 1929) memorial hospital in Angola and for organising a meeting to celebrate his centenary in his old home at Pontyfenni near Whitland. There is a clear indication of his radical nonconformist stance in his volume of tribute *Sir Rhys Hopkin Morris ... The man and his character* (1958).

He spent the closing years of his life at the home of his daughter and son-in-law at Parson's Lodge, Clunderwen where he died on 9 March 1965. He was buried on 12 March in Tabernacl graveyard. He had just completed his autobiography, *Golden strands: Some memories along life's pilgrimage* (1965). Tradition has it that the manuscript arrived at the printers on the morning of his death.

Author

Benjamin George Owens

Sources

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