

EVANS, IFOR (IVOR) LESLIE (1897 - 1952), principal of the University College of Wales, Aberystwyth

Name: Ifor (Ivor) Leslie Evans
Date of birth: 1897
Date of death: 1952
Spouse: Ruth Evans (née Jolles)
Parent: Mary Elizabeth Evans (née Milligan)
Parent: William John Evans
Gender: Male
Occupation: principal of the University College of Wales, Aberystwyth
Area of activity: Education
Author: Edward Lewis Ellis

Born 17 January 1897, son of [William John Evans](#) of Aberdare and Mary Elizabeth (née Milligan) his wife. He was educated at Wycliffe College, Stonehouse and studied in France and Germany where, in 1914, he was interned for the duration of the war at Ruhleben prison camp, where he learned Welsh and changed his given name Ivor to Ifor. He worked briefly in the coal trade in Swansea before going up to St. John's College, Cambridge, where he took first-class honours in economics and history. He was elected Whewell Scholar in International Law, and became university lecturer and Fellow of St. John's College (1923-34). A sometime member of staff of *The Economist*, he served on a League of Nations commission on economic conditions in Austria and travelled extensively in eastern Europe and Africa. He published *The Agrarian Revolution in Rumania* (1924), *The British in Tropical Africa* (1929), and *Native Policy in Southern Africa* (1934).

In 1934 he became principal of U.C.W. Aberystwyth where he displayed outstanding gifts of creativity laced with prudence: he redeemed a substantial College debt, attracted valuable benefactions and made shrewd purchases of property. The long-range planning and initial development of new college buildings on Penglais hill was almost entirely his work. He spent little time in social contact with students but strongly supported schemes to promote their welfare and instituted an advanced system of joint consultation between the authorities and the student body. Deeply interested and involved in what he called 'the sacred cause of agricultural education', in which Aberystwyth specialised, he published, in collaboration with [A.W. Ashby](#), *The Agriculture of Wales and Monmouthshire* (1944).

He rendered outstanding service to the University of Wales as vice-chancellor (1937-39, 1946-48, 1950-52), chairman of the Press Board and, notably for years, as chairman of the Estates Committee when large sums derived from the disestablishment of the Welsh Church became available for investment. He played a leading part in establishing the Royal University of Malta (which honoured him with a D.Litt. degree) and the development of University College, Ibadan.

Masterful, courageous and occasionally ruthless, he had a wide experience of the ways of the world and a cultivated understanding of other people and languages, with which he combined a passionate interest in Welsh culture. He published several anthologies and translations into Welsh of literary works, among them *Emynau o'r Almaen*, *Y Cybydd* (Molière's *L'Avare*), *Blodau Hyfryd*, *Chwedlau La Fontaine*, *Ffordd y Deyrnas* and *Mawl yr Oesoedd* (an anthology of the hymns of Europe).

On 11 November 1938 he married Ruth Jolles of Hamburg, by whom he had a son and a daughter. He died 31 May 1952.

Author

Dr Edward Lewis Ellis

Sources

A.D.R., 'Ifor Leslie Evans (1897-1952)', *The Welsh Anvil*, 4, 9-12

Who was who?

Ellis, *The University College of Wales, Aberystwyth, 1872-1972* (1972)

The Cambrian News and Merionethshire Standard, 6 June 1952

his papers, NLW ex 1837

Further Reading

Wikipedia Article: [Ifor Leslie Evans](#)

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