

GITTINS, CHARLES EDWARD (1908 - 1970), educationalist

Name: Charles Edward Gittins
Date of birth: 1908
Date of death: 1970
Spouse: Margaret Anne Gittins (née Davies)
Parent: Frances Gittins (née Rabbit)
Parent: Charles Thomas Gittins
Gender: Male
Occupation: educationalist
Area of activity: Education
Author: Evan David Jones

Born in Rhostyllen, near Wrexham, Denbighshire, 24 January 1908, son of Charles Thomas and Frances (née Rabbit) Gittins. He was educated at Rhostyllen Infants School, 1911-15, Bersham Boys' School, 1915-20, Grove Park County School for Boys, Wrexham, 1920-25 and at the University College of Wales, Aberystwyth, 1925-31. He entered energetically into student life at Aberystwyth, and became president of the Debates Union and of the Students' Representative Council. He graduated in 1928 with a well-merited first class in History, and then pursued the secondary school training course in the department of Education leading to the University of Wales Diploma in Education in 1929. From 1929 to 1931 he held the Eyton Williams postgraduate studentship which led to his Master's degree with a dissertation on 'Condorcet as an educationalist' in 1935. During this period he represented Wales three times at the Geneva Postgraduate School.

The years from 1932 to 1945 took him to the north-east of England, where he gained teaching and administrative experience as senior history master at King James' Grammar School at Bishop Auckland, 1932-38, being deputy headmaster from 1937, assistant officer for secondary and higher education for the county of Durham in 1938 and deputy director of education for the West Riding of Yorkshire in 1942. As tutor under the University of Durham he had experience of extra-mural and W.E.A. work.

In 1945 he became director of education for Monmouthshire and for the rest of his life he applied his rich academic training, his practical experience and his extraordinary energy unsparingly towards education and public service in Wales. From 1956 to 1970 he found a larger field for his leadership and influence as professor and dean of the faculty of Education at University College, Swansea. From 1966 to 1970 he was vice-principal of the college, and in order to devote his energies more fully to that office he gave up the headship of the department of Education over the last two years of his term. His tact and wisdom in the administration of college affairs won for him the admiration and the willing co-operation of students and staff. Under his guidance the department of Education grew in importance and widened its academic and training appeal. He became involved in national committees on youth activities and youth employment services. He was a member of the Welsh Joint Education Committee, the executive committee of the National Foundation for Educational Research, a governor of the National College for the Training of Youth Leaders, chairman of the Statutory Committee on Youth Employment, treasurer of the Standing Conference of Studies in Education, a member of the Local Government Boundary Commission for Wales under the chairmanship of [Sir Guildhaume Myrddin-Evans](#), a member of the Swansea Art Galleries Committee, and a member of the Educational Advisory Council of the I.T.A., the Schools Broadcasting Council, the Welsh Committee of the Arts Council, etc. He acted as external examiner in education for several English universities. His inaugural lecture, *Educational Opportunity* (1957) was published and he edited *Pioneers of Welsh Education* (1954).

He was chairman of the Central Council on Education (Wales) which was commissioned by Sir Edward Boyle in 1963 to consider the whole subject of primary education in Wales. The report was published in 1967 in Welsh and English editions. It has become known as the 'Gittins Report' and is an important document in the history of Welsh education, which recommended the principle of a completely bilingual system of education in the schools of Wales in as much as the Welsh language is the medium for an important part of the historic tradition of Wales. Gittins always stressed the importance of the 'language of the hearth' and of the heart. Concurrently he was a member of the corresponding English Council under the chairmanship of Lord Plowden. Gittins firmly believed with Condorcet that 'education is the need of all' and that 'Society owes it equally to all its members'. He was made C.B.E. in 1968.

He married on 28 December 1934, Margaret Anne, daughter of John Lloyd Davies and Eliza Mary (née Wheale), in Llanfaredd church, Radnorshire, and they had a son and daughter. He died as the result of an accident during a fishing trip at Oxwich Bay on 6 August 1970, and was cremated following a funeral service at St. Teilo's church, Bishopston, Gower.

Author

Evan David Jones, (1903 - 1987)

Sources

Information from his widow

Western Mail, 7 August 1970

The Times, 7 and 14 August 1970

Additional Links

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