

HUGHES, THOMAS ROWLAND (1903 - 1949), poet and novelist

Name: Thomas Rowland Hughes
Date of birth: 1903
Date of death: 1949
Spouse: Margaret Eirene Hughes (née Williams)
Parent: May Hughes (née Owen)
Parent: William Rowland Hughes
Gender: Male
Occupation: poet and novelist
Area of activity: Eisteddfod; Literature and Writing; Poetry
Author: Katherine Williams

Born 17 April 1903, at 20 Goodman Street, Llanberis, Caernarfonshire son of William Rowland Hughes and his wife May, daughter of Thomas Morydd Owen. He was educated at Dolbadarn primary school, Brynrefail county school, and the University College, Bangor, where he graduated in 1925 with first class honours in English and Welsh. In September 1926 he became a teacher at the county school for boys in Aberdare, where he remained for two years. He took his M.A. and with a fellowship awarded by his old college he proceeded to Oxford where he obtained the degree of B.Litt. for research on English periodical literature in the 19th century. He was lecturer in English and Welsh at Coleg Harlech, 1930-33. He married, 26 August 1933, Eirene, daughter of Tom Williams, Ogmoredale, and his wife. In the summer of 1934 he was appointed principal of the Mary Ward Settlement, London, and in 1935 organiser of feature programmes for the B.B.C. in Cardiff.

He won the chair at the Machynlleth national eisteddfod in 1937 for an ode ' Y Ffin ' and that of the radio national eisteddfod (which was to have been held at Mountain Ash) in 1940, on an ode ' Pererinion '. About this time he composed his drama, *Y Ffordd*, on the Rebecca riots, which was translated into English : he was the first to write a radio play in Welsh. He also edited *Storiâu'r Henllys Fawr*, a collection of short stories by W.J. Griffith (1938). He adapted R. Hughes Williams's *Yr Hogyn Drwg* as a radio play. About 1937 he contracted multiple sclerosis, but he continued to work for several years hoping for a recovery. During his illness he began to write novels. The first, *O Law i Law*, appeared in 1943 and it was clear that a novelist of extraordinary stature had made his appearance. This novel was followed by others, published every Christmastime - *William Jones* (1944), *Yr Ogor* (1945), *Chwalfa* (1946) and *Y Cychwyn* (1947). With the exception of *Yr Ogor* his novels are based on life in the slate quarries of north Wales, but *William Jones* also describes life in the Rhondda valleys during the Depression. At Christmas 1948, when he was very ill he published *Cân neu Ddwy*, a volume of poems. In 1949 the University of Wales awarded him the degree of D.Litt. honoris causa, and in the same year he was granted a civil list pension. He died 24 October 1949. The following summer an English translation of *O Law i Law* was published and it was very well received by some English critics. After Daniel Owen he was Wales's most productive novelist and a 'best-seller'. His work is characterised by gentleness, geniality, and kindness and by the courage of his chief characters.

Author

Katherine Williams, (1891 - 1985)

Sources

Personal knowledge

date of birth from his sister

Edward Rees, *T. Rowland Hughes, Cofiant gan Edward Rees* (Llandysul 1968)

Further Reading

Wikipedia Article: [Thomas Rowland Hughes](#)

Additional Links

NLW Archives: [NLW ex 2108 - Papurau T. Rowland Hughes](#)

VIAF: [40618537](#)

Wikidata: [Q7793653](#)

Published date: 2001

The Dictionary of Welsh Biography is provided by The National Library of Wales and the University of Wales Centre for Advanced Welsh and Celtic Studies. It is free to use and does not receive grant support. A donation would help us maintain and improve the site so that we can continue to acknowledge Welsh men and women who have made notable contributions to life in Wales and beyond.

Find out more on our [sponsorship page](#).

