

HUMPHREYS, EDWARD OWEN (1899 - 1959), educationalist

Name: Edward Owen Humphreys
Date of birth: 1899
Date of death: 1959
Gender: Male
Occupation: educationalist
Area of activity: Education
Author: Bedwyr Lewis Jones

Born 2 November 1899, in Hendre, Cefnddwysarn, Merionethshire. He was educated in Sarnau school, Bala grammar school, and Bangor University College, where he graduated in chemistry and agricultural science in 1922. From 1923 to 1928, he taught in Banks Road elementary school, and Lister Drive Technical Institute in Liverpool. He was awarded an M.A. by Liverpool University in 1930 for a thesis on the influence of sociological conditions on schoolchildren. In 1928, he became a lecturer in the Normal College, Bangor, chiefly in Agricultural Science, and then, in 1935 he became Director of Education for Anglesey.

In Anglesey, he worked to realise his ideals. He believed passionately that as the result of the Welsh Intermediate and Technical Education Act of 1889 Wales lost a golden opportunity to establish a system of secondary schools which would fulfil the needs of every child and reflect the life of the whole community, being content instead to imitate English grammar schools and to provide for the needs of the few. Humphreys was determined to make a fresh start in Anglesey on the basis of the 1889 Act. In 1936, he obtained from the county education committee a declaration in favour of the principle of many-sided secondary schools to cater for every child. The next step was to persuade the authorities to put it into practice. When the Butler Education Act was passed in 1944 he saw his opportunity, and secondary education in Anglesey was reorganised to form four comprehensive schools - the first county to take this step. (See his article on ' Chwyldro Addysg Môn ' in the periodical *Môn*, August 1957). Because of his determination to see his vision come true, he is considered the ' creator of the comprehensive school '.

He was a co-editor of *Môn*, and a fervent supporter of Anglesey Rural Council, the Anglesey Eisteddfod Society, and the National Eisteddfod.

He died on May 11th 1959, leaving a wife, two sons, and two daughters, and was buried in Llangristiolus.

Author

Bedwyr Lewis Jones, (1933 - 1992)

Sources

B. B. Thomas, 'The man who created comprehensives', *Education*, 13 June 1975, 658
Percy O. Jones, *Mŷn* (1954-), October 1960

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