

## LEWIS, DAVID WYRE (1872 - 1966), minister and administrator (B)

**Name:** David Wyre Lewis  
**Date of birth:** 1872  
**Date of death:** 1966  
**Spouse:** Eleanor Lewis (née Dodd)  
**Spouse:** Elizabeth Ellen Lewis (née Roberts)  
**Parent:** Jane Lewis (née Davies)  
**Parent:** John Lewis  
**Gender:** Male  
**Occupation:** minister and administrator (B)  
**Area of activity:** Religion  
**Author:** Benjamin George Owens

Born 13 May 1872 at Felinganol, Llanrhystud Mefenydd, Cardiganshire, son of the poet and musician [John Lewis](#) ('Eos Glyn Wyre'; 1836 - 1892), Tŷ-mawr, and Jane (née Davies; 1844 - 1917), Felinganol, and nephew of the musician [David Lewis](#) (1828 - 1908). He was educated in the church school in the village, and was apprenticed to a carpenter at Trawsgoed. Because of lack of work locally he moved to Maerdy, Glamorganshire, and then to Pen-y-graig, where he was baptised as a member of Soar church, Ffrwdamws and began preaching. Following a short period at night school in Porth and 14 months at Severn Grove Academy, Llanidloes (1893-94), he was accepted by Bangor Baptist College, but he postponed commencing his course until September 1895, spending the first year at the University College of Wales, Aberystwyth to matriculate, and the following four years at Bangor sharing the time between the University College and the Baptist College. On 3 July 1900 he was ordained minister of Nefyn and Morfa Nefyn churches, where he built a new chapel for the first and put the finances of the latter in order, and had 'totally inexplicable' experiences during the Revival of 1905. On 19 April 1910 he was inducted minister of Calfaria church, Llanelli, where he came face to face with the disturbances of the railway strike in August 1911. He moved 1 September 1913 to Penuel church, Rhosllannerchrugog, where he carried out his most mature work and where he was required from the beginning, as in Llanelli, to assimilate his personal ministry with the social gospel which was gaining ground among the church members. He retired 7 April 1946, but continued to live in the district.

He was an experienced conference man and a leading member of his denomination. He was secretary of Caernarfon Baptist Association, 1906-10, secretary of the Denbigh, Flint, and Merioneth Association, 1919-39, and took particular responsibility from 1934 onwards for the requirements of the Sustentation Fund. He was president of the Assembly (Cymanfa) twice (1930-31, 1954-55), and having previously addressed the Union (1910, 1920) he was elevated president 1938-39. He published his 1920 address, *Crist a'r werin* and the 1939 address, *Yr Eglwys a'i chyfle heddiw*. He was chairman of the Memorial Fund, the committee for the new hymnal, *Y Llawlyfr Moliant Newydd* (1955), and the Sustentation Fund committee (from mid-1950s until his death), and organizer in Wales for the Reorganizing Fund (Trysorfa Ad-drefniad; 1944).

He was a prolific writer and published a short memoir in [J.T. Rees](#) (ed.), *Detholiad o donau, anthemau a rhanganau Dafydd Lewis, Llanrhystud* (1930), and *Yr eglwysi a'r Undeb. Y weinidogaeth a'i pherigl heddiw* (1939). He was at the forefront in the revival of *Seren Gomer* in 1909, was editor of the periodical, 1910-16, laying special emphasis on his 'notes on books', and his articles down to the 1930s include biographies of contemporary Baptists of Wales, reports of annual conferences and substantial essays on various topics. He contributed much to *Yr Hauwr* (later *Yr Heuwr*) and its successor *Yr Arweinydd Newydd*, from 1904 to the mid-1930s.

He was awake to the needs of the nation as well as his denomination. He was secretary of Llŷn and Eifionydd Temperance Association. Being a pacifist through and through, he was a member of the group which initiated *Y Deyrnas*, October 1916, and secretary and recorder for the Peace Conference which was convened at Llandrindod 3-5 September 1917. In 1940-41 he was chairman of the Committee for safeguarding Welsh Culture, and when it joined the National Union of Welsh Societies in 1941 to form the New Wales Union (Undeb Cymru Fydd) he was from the beginning a member of the Council and several committees of the new body and later chairman and president. The University of Wales conferred on him an hon. D.D. in 1961, and many considered him to be the most important Baptist of the 20 c. in Wales.

He married (1), 13 April 1904, Elizabeth Ellen Roberts (1896 - 1941), Holyhead; (2) 20 May 1946, Eleanor Thomas (born Dodd), Pen-y-cae, Wrexham. Two sons were born of the first marriage. He died 9 May 1966 at his home, Tŷ Cerrig, Pen-y-cae, and his ashes were interred in his first wife's grave in his mother-church, Salem, Llanrhystud.

### Author

Benjamin George Owens

## Sources

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*Caernarfon Association Statement* (1905-06) Caernarfon Association, 1905-06, 7-9  
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S. Rowley (ed. Lewis Valentine), *Hanes Eglwys Penuel Rhosllannerchrugog* (Llandysul 1959), (1959), 124-33, 159  
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*The Cefn Chronicle*, 6, 13 September 1913  
*Rhos Herald*, 20 November 1943, 15 April 1946, and 22 April 1961  
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information from his daughter-in-law, Mrs. J. C. Lewis, Llanrhystud, and E. R. Morris, Llanidloes  
personal acquaintance

## Additional Links

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