

MORRIS, Sir RHYS HOPKIN (1888-1956), politician, stipendiary magistrate, first director of the Welsh Region B.B.C.

**Name:** Rhys Hopkin Morris

**Date of birth:** 1888

**Date of death:** 1956

**Spouse:** Gwladys Perrie Morris (née Williams)

**Child:** Perrie Williams (née Morris)

**Parent:** Mary Morris (née Hopkin)

**Parent:** John Morris

**Gender:** Male

**Occupation:** politician, stipendiary magistrate, first director of the Welsh Region B.B.C.

**Area of activity:** Art and Architecture; Law; Performing Arts; Politics, Government and Political Movements

**Author:** David Alun Williams

Born 5 September 1888 at Blaencaerau farm, Caerau, Maesteg, Glamorganshire, son of John Morris (Congregational minister in Caerau) and Mary, daughter of Rhys Hopkin, Blaencaerau. He had one sister, Sarah, born in 1890. His parents died within three months of each other when he was 16 and he was then brought up by his uncle, another Rhys Hopkin. He was educated at home by his parents, the Cymmer Pupil Teacher Centre, and as a pupil teacher at Glyncorrwg school (under [Lewis Davies](#)) in 1902. In 1910 he entered U.C.N.W., Bangor as a theological student, but read Philosophy instead, graduating in 1912 and serving as student President in 1911. He taught in Bargoed for a few months after leaving College but enlisted in the Royal Welch Fusiliers on the outbreak of war in 1914; he was commissioned and served throughout the war. He was twice mentioned in dispatches and awarded the M.B.E. (Military Division) for action in which he was severely wounded and carried shrapnel in his leg for the rest of his life.

On 11 September 1918 he married Gwladys Perrie Williams (born 24 November 1889) daughter of Elizabeth (author of *Brethyn Cartref*(1951), etc.) and W.H. Williams, Llanrwst, whom he met at Bangor. She completed her D.Lit. in the Sorbonne in 1917 and returned to spend the remainder of the war as south Wales organiser of the Women's Land Army. After demobilization Hopkin Morris read for the Bar at King's College, London, during which time he was supported by his wife who was head of the day continuation school at Debenham's. He was called to the Bar in the Middle Temple in 1920 and practised in the South Wales circuit. He assisted [W. Llewelyn Williams](#) in his election campaign in Cardiganshire, upon whose death in 1922 he was invited to fight the seat for the Asquithian Liberals (the Wee Frees). He was not elected, but dented [Ernest Evans](#)' vote, was eventually returned for Cardiganshire in 1923 and remained as member until 1932 when he applied for the Chiltern Hundreds on being appointed a Metropolitan stipendiary magistrate. In 1936, he became the first director of the B.B.C.'s new Welsh Region, where he showed his characteristic independence of mind during the difficult war years, and gave valuable encouragement to a number of young men and women who became prominent in Welsh radio and television broadcasting. He strove to maintain the right to broadcast Welsh programmes during the war. He remained

at the B.B.C. until 1945 when Carmarthen West invited him to stand in the Liberal interest in the General Election. His was the only Liberal gain from Labour in that election and he kept the seat until his death, with increased majorities at every election. He took silk in 1946, was knighted in the New Year's honours list in 1954, received an honorary degree of Doctor of Laws of the University of Wales and was deputy chairman, Ways and Means, in the House. He was author of *Welsh politics* (1927) and *Dare or despair* (1950). He died suddenly in his home at Sidcup on 22 November 1956.

### GWLADYS PERRIE WILLIAMS (1889 - 1958)

published two books on education, *Welsh education in sunlight and shadow* (1918) and *The Northamptonshire composition scale* (1933), her thesis for a doctorate, *Li Biaus descouneüs de Renaud de Beaujeu* (1915) and *Le bel inconnu* (1929). She was chief external examiner for several county educational authorities. She died 13 July 1958.

They had one daughter, Perrie, born 1923, who married Alun Williams the B.B.C. commentator in 1944.

## Author

David Alun Williams, (1920 - 1992)

## Sources

Personal knowledge

Thomas John Evans, *Sir Rhys Hopkin Morris M.B.E., Q.C., M.P., LL.D. the man and his character* (Llandysul 1958)

John Emanuel and D. Ben Rees, *Syr Rhys Hopkin Morris* (1980)

NLW Archives: [Sir Rhys Hopkin Morris Papers](#)

## Further reading

NLW Archives: [General Election, Wednesday, November 15th 1922. Address of R. Hopkin Morris, The Liberal Candidate](#)

NLW Archives: [General Election, Thursday, December 6th 1923. Address of R. Hopkin Morris](#)

NLW Archives: [Reasons for supporting Mr. Hopkin Morris](#)

NLW Archives: [To the Electors of Cardiganshire. General Election, Tuesday, October 27th, 1931](#)

NLW Archives: [Carmarthen Constituency. Parliamentary General Election. Thursday, 26th May, 1955. The Election Address of The Liberal Candidate Sir Rhys Hopkin Morris](#)

Wikipedia Article: [Rhys Hopkin Morris](#)

Wikipedia Article: [Gwladys Perrie Williams](#)

## Works

Gwladys Perrie Williams, [Women's opportunity](#), *The Welsh Outlook*, Vol 6, no.3, p.60

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