

PARCELL, GEORGE HENRY (1895 - 1967), musician

Name: George Henry Parcell
Date of birth: 1895
Date of death: 1967
Spouse: Irene Parcell (née Ackerman)
Parent: Elisabeth Parcell
Parent: Henry Parcell
Gender: Male
Occupation: musician
Area of activity: Music; Performing Arts; Religion
Author: Richard Leonard Hugh

Born 18 November 1895 in Carmarthen Road, Fforest-fach, near Swansea, son of Henry and Elisabeth Parcell. A miner like his father, he worked throughout his life in Garn-goch colliery, Gorseinon. From childhood he displayed a special talent for music and used his leisure time to develop his innate abilities. Despite the lack of any formal tuition or a tutor of any kind he was awarded two diplomas from the Curwen Memorial College, London : A.T.S.C. (1950) and L.T.S.C. (1952). He was organist (1922-27) and precentor (1927-65) in Saron (Congl.), Gendros, near Swansea, and according to a report in the *Evening Post* his selection for the latter post, from nine applicants, was enthusiastically received. He was also appointed choirmaster of the Fforest-fach male voice choir. He composed over twenty hymn tunes, many of them such as 'David', 'Wig', 'Yr Allt' winning prizes in *eisteddfodau*, and one short anthem, 'Duw sy'n noddfa a nerth'; all were simple and well-crafted without being ambitious. They were fashioned for church congregations whose vocal resources were known to the composer. He named one of his best tunes 'Irene' after his wife and his hymn tune 'Marchog Iesu', on words by [Williams Pantycelyn](#), 'Mae'r Iesu yn myned i ryfel', was highly esteemed in hymn-singing festivals both in Wales and the U.S.A.; it was recorded by Côr Godre'r Aran. A selection of his works was published as part of a special festival of praise held in Gendros ' as a mark of respect and indebtedness for his constant unpaid labour '. His home in ' Mile End ' was a true academy of music with an ever-open door to welcome students free of charge. Under his influence Fforest-fach developed as a centre of musical culture of the first order. People flocked from far and wide to the annual concerts in Saron chapel to listen to the choir and to world-renowned artists performing the works of the masters. But above all, he taught generation after generation to master the tonic sol-fa thereby enabling them to sing hymns and anthems in four-part harmony. One cannot consider church music in Wales without being reminded of the contribution which he and others like him have made. In this context he represents a generation of benefactors whose importance cannot be exaggerated. He married Irene Ackerman, 26 December 1929; died 8 March 1967 and was cremated in Morryston.

Author

Reverend Dr Richard Leonard Hugh, (1913 - 1983)

Sources

Predominantly based on the 'George Parcell File' held by the family reports in the *The Evening Post* minutes book Saron Church, Gendros, and *Rhaglen Sul o Fawl* (28 Mai 1950), 28 May 1950

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Published date: 2001

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