

SIBLY, Sir THOMAS FRANKLIN (1883 - 1948), geologist and university administrator

Name: Thomas Franklin Sibly
Date of birth: 1883
Date of death: 1948
Spouse: Maude Evelyn Sibly (née Barfoot)
Parent: Virginia Sibly (née Tonkin)
Parent: Thomas Dix Sibly
Gender: Male
Occupation: geologist and university administrator
Area of activity: Education; Nature and Agriculture; Science and Mathematics
Author: Brynley Francis Roberts

Born 25 October 1883 in Bristol, son of Thomas Dix Sibly and his wife Virginia (née Tonkin). He was educated at Wycliffe College, Stonehouse, and at St. Dunstan's, Burnham-on-sea, and gained a 1st-class hon. degree in experimental physics (University of London) at the University College of Bristol in 1903. He turned to geology at Birmingham University and he was Exhibition Research Scholar at U.C. Bristol 1905-07; he graduated D.Sc. London in 1908. He was lecturer-in-charge of geology at King's College London 1908-13, Professor of Geology, University College Cardiff 1913-18, and Professor of Geology at Armstrong College, Newcastle-upon-Tyne (University of Durham) 1918-20. He became the first principal of the University College of Swansea in 1920 and he played a crucial role in setting the new institution on a firm foundation. He was a firm and strong leader, a forceful advocate and a gifted administrator. It has been claimed that it was due to him that the new college was not allowed to harbour an inferiority complex in its relations with its older sister colleges in the University. In 1926 he was appointed Chief Officer of the University of London, a title changed at his appointment to Principal, and he became Vice-chancellor of the University of Reading 1929-46, where he did much to guide the development of the young university. His skills as a negotiator ensured that he was a leading figure in British university administration. He was chairman of the Committee of Vice-chancellors and Principals 1938-43, executive chairman of the Universities Bureau of the British Empire, and he served on the Advisory Council of the Dept. of Scientific and Industrial Research, and the Royal Commission in the University of Durham. Between 1905-1937 he published a series of articles on carboniferous limestones; he served on H.M. Geological Survey 1917-18 and he was chairman of the Geological Survey Board 1930-43. He was knighted in 1938 and he was awarded the degrees of D.Sc. Bristol, LL.D. hon. causa Wales, Liverpool and Bristol. He married Maude Evelyn Barfoot in 1918 and they had 1 son. He died in Reading 13 April 1948.

Author

Dr Brynley Francis Roberts

Sources

Who was who?

Oxford Dictionary of National Biography

D. Emrys Evans, *The University of Wales a historical sketch* (1953)(1953)

David Dykes, *The University College of Swansea: An Illustrated History* (Stroud 1992)(1992)

Further Reading

Wikipedia Article: [Franklin Sibly](#)

Images

ArtUK: [Sir Thomas Franklin Sibly \(1883–1948\)](#)

National Portrait Gallery (London): [Sir \(Thomas\) Franklin Sibly](#)

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