

## SNELL, DAVID JOHN (1880 - 1957), music publisher

**Name:** David John Snell  
**Date of birth:** 1880  
**Date of death:** 1957  
**Spouse:** Elizabeth Snell (née Evans)  
**Parent:** Eliza Snell (née Lewis)  
**Parent:** Henry Snell  
**Gender:** Male  
**Occupation:** music publisher  
**Area of activity:** Music; Printing and Publishing  
**Author:** Rhidian Griffiths

Born 1 August 1880 at 44 Dyvatty Terrace, Swansea, son of Henry and Eliza (née Lewis) Snell. In 1900 he established a business in Alexandra Arcade, Swansea, selling music, musical instruments and records. Ten years later, on the retirement of the publisher Benjamin Parry (1835 - 1910) who had worked in Swansea since 1878, Snell bought his stock and copyrights and thereby began his great lifework. In 1916 he paid £1150 to the widow of [Joseph Parry](#) (1841 - 1903) for the stock and copyright of the works published by the composer, and about the same time he bought the business of [David Jenkins](#), Aberystwyth, who died in 1915. During the 1920s he augmented his catalogue by buying the output of companies which had closed down and the works of composers who published their own compositions, republishing the whole under his own name. He purchased, among other items, the musical output of the publishers Isaac Jones (1835 - 1899), Treherbert; Daniel Lewis Jones ('Cynalaw'; 1841 - 1916), Llansawel and Cardigan; John Richard Lewis (1857 - 1919), Carmarthen; the North Wales Music Co., Bangor; and the National Welsh Company, Caernarfon. By 1939 he had an extensive catalogue of fifteen hundred items, and he offered *eisteddfod* prizes to committees which chose his publications as test pieces. He republished popular works like ' Myfanwy ' ([Joseph Parry](#)) and ' Yr hen gerddor ' ([David Pugh Evans](#)), but he also published new pieces of high standard, including ' Bugail Aberdyfi ' ([Idris Lewis](#)), ' Paradwys y bardd ' ([W. Bradwen Jones](#); see [Jones](#), [William Arthur](#) above) and *Saith o ganeuon* and ' Berwyn ' ([D. Vaughan Thomas](#)). He also published books of cerdd dant settings by [Haydn Morris](#) and Llyfni and Malt Huws. He lost a large proportion of his stock during the air raids over Swansea in 1941, but he continued to publish after the war. Unlike some of his predecessors in the field, Snell was a publisher only, and never printed any works. He was regarded as one of the keenest of businessmen, and was known as 'Mr. Music' in his native town. He married in 1906 Elizabeth Evans (died April 1957) of Laugharne, and they had four sons. He died 13 January 1957.

### Author

Rhidian Griffiths

### Sources

MSS of Snell and Sons at N.L.W.

personal research

### Additional Links

Wikidata: [Q20748816](#)

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