

## THODAY, DAVID (1883 - 1964), botanist, university professor

**Name:** David Thoday  
**Date of birth:** 1883  
**Date of death:** 1964  
**Spouse:** Mary Gladys Thoday (née Sykes)  
**Parent:** Susan Elizabeth Thoday (née Bingham)  
**Parent:** David Thoday  
**Gender:** Male  
**Occupation:** botanist, university professor  
**Area of activity:** Education; Nature and Agriculture; Science and Mathematics  
**Author:** Evan David Jones

Born 5 May 1883 at Honiton, Devon, the eldest of the six children of David Thoday, schoolmaster, and Susan Elizabeth (née Bingham) his wife. The family moved to London where he attended Tottenham grammar school, 1894-98, before entering Trinity College, Cambridge in 1902. He specialised in botany under the direction of H. Marshall Ward, A.C. Seward and F.F. Blackman, gaining first class in both parts of the Tripos in 1905 and 1906, and he won the Walsingham Medal in 1908. After serving as university demonstrator in botany at Cambridge for two years (1909-11) he was appointed a lecturer in Physiological Botany in Manchester University in 1911 and became Harry Bolas Professor of Botany in Cape Town University, South Africa in 1918. In 1923 he succeeded Reginald W. Phillips as Professor of Botany at the University College of North Wales, Bangor, where he remained until he reached the age of retirement in 1949. After retiring he became Professor of Plant Physiology at the University of Alexandria, Egypt, but returned to Bangor in 1955.

He obtained a Sc.D. degree at Cambridge, was elected F.R.S. in 1942 and received an hon. D.Sc. of the University of Wales in 1960. He published *Botany: a textbook for senior students* (1915 : 5 editions) and many important articles in his field, including a series on succulent plants, *Kleinia articulata*, particularly on their acidic metabolism. His presidential lecture to the British Association, Section K, in 1939, on ' The interpretation of plant structures ' was seminal.

He was assisted in much of his work by his wife whom he married 15 June 1910, and who, as Mary Gladys Sykes of Girton College and a research fellow of Newnham College, was author of a number of papers on botanical subjects. She was the daughter of John Thorley Sykes of Rossett, Denbighshire. They had four sons. His wife died in 1943, and he died at Llanfairfechan 30 March 1964.

### Author

Evan David Jones, (1903 - 1987)

### Sources

*Biographical Memoirs of Fellows of the Royal Society*, xi (1965), 177-83

see *ibid.*, 184-5 for a bibliography of his scientific papers, 1905-63

*The Times*, 1 April 1964

### Further Reading

Wikipedia Article: [David Thoday](#)

### Additional Links

Wikidata: [Q5240334](#)

Published date: 2001

Article Copyright: <http://rightsstatements.org/page/InC/1.0/> 

to life in Wales and beyond.

Find out more on our [sponsorship page](#).

