

## THOMAS, WILLIAM DAVIES (1889 - 1954), Professor of English

**Name:** William Davies Thomas  
**Date of birth:** 1889  
**Date of death:** 1954  
**Spouse:** Edith Mary Thomas (née Edwards)  
**Parent:** Hannah Thomas  
**Parent:** William Thomas  
**Gender:** Male  
**Occupation:** Professor of English  
**Area of activity:** Education; Scholarship and Languages  
**Author:** Mary Auronwy James

Born 5 August 1889, son of William and Hannah Thomas, Abermule, Montgomeryshire, where his father was a blacksmith and postmaster. He was educated at Newtown County School and at the University College of Wales, Aberystwyth, where he obtained a first-class honours degree in English in 1910. He was a valuable player in the college and town football teams. After a year as student assistant at Aberystwyth he proceeded to Jesus College, Oxford, gaining an M.A. in 1913. He was appointed lecturer at Trinity College, Toronto, Canada, becoming senior Professor of English at the University of Saskatchewan in 1919, after serving in France during World War I. In 1921 he returned to Wales as the first Professor of English language and literature at the newly founded University College at Swansea, a post he filled with distinction until his death. He helped nurture the college through its early life, being wise in committee, and serving as vice-principal of the college 1927-31. He was an excellent teacher, generous in encouraging his students, and a master at the art of examining, both at setting question papers and evaluating the scripts. He was sensitive to style and ideas, and wrote lively articles, full of grace and polish, but, being over-critical of his own work, very few of his writings were published. For many years he held highly successful extramural classes on English literature at Neath and elsewhere. He gave many radio talks on poetry and literature and various other topics. He married Edith Mary, daughter of Richard Edwards, Maescymer, and died at home, 11 Clarendon Road, Sketty, Glamorganshire, 6 March 1954.

### Author

Dr Mary Auronwy James

### Sources

*The Biographical Index of W. W. Price, Aberdâr*

*Western Mail*, 8 March 1954

*The Times*, 9 and 17 March 1954

### Further Reading

Wikipedia Article: [William Davies Thomas](#)

### Additional Links

Wikidata: [Q8007648](#)

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