

THOMAS, ROWLAND (c. 1887 - 1959), newspaper proprietor

Name: Rowland Thomas
Date of birth: c. 1887
Date of death: 1959
Spouse: Elizabeth Thomas (née Parry)
Child: Eric Lionel Thomas
Parent: William Thomas
Gender: Male
Occupation: newspaper proprietor
Area of activity: Business and Industry; Printing and Publishing
Author: Mary Auronwy James

Born c. 1887 at Oswestry, Salop, son of William Thomas and his wife. He was educated locally before entering the newspaper business, returning from World War I to succeed his father as director of the Caxton Press and chairman of Woodall, Minshall, Thomas and Co. Ltd., Oswestry, who originally produced only *The Border Counties Advertiser*. He founded the *Wrexham Leader* in 1920, later took over the *Montgomeryshire Express*, and in 1932 developed the Welsh language newspaper *Y Cymro* (formerly of Dolgellau) as a national weekly paper for Wales. In 1921 he acquired the Welsh book publishing company of Hughes and Son, and the Principality Press, Wrexham. Although he did not speak Welsh, he did all in his power to sustain the language. On the advice of a panel of leading Welsh scholars and authors he printed and published a constant supply of Welsh books, periodicals and newspapers, work which was recognized by his election as a member of the Gorsedd of Bards in 1947. He also developed the musical publishing activities of the press; both he and his wife, Elizabeth (née Parry), were organists of Oswald Road Chapel (Presb.), where he was an elder. He was a J.P. and became vice-chairman of the Oswestry bench. The publishing business had been transferred to his son Eric Lionel Thomas before he retired to live in Llandegfan, Anglesey. He died suddenly, 17 May 1959, at Harrogate.

Author

Dr Mary Auronwy James

Sources

Thomas Bassett, *Braslun o hanes Hughes a'i Fab* (Wrexham 1946), 51-5

Y Cymro, 21 May 1959

The Times, 19 May 1959

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