

## WATKIN, WILLIAM RHYS (1875 - 1947), Baptist minister

**Name:** William Rhys Watkin  
**Date of birth:** 1875  
**Date of death:** 1947  
**Spouse:** Jane Watkin (née Williams)  
**Parent:** Barbara Watkin (née Rhys)  
**Parent:** William Watkin  
**Gender:** Male  
**Occupation:** Baptist minister  
**Area of activity:** Religion  
**Author:** Dewi Watkin Powell

Born 10 December 1875 in Ynys-Tawe, Glamorganshire, one of the six children of William and Barbara (née Rhys) Watkin : the father was one of the Grove family of Swansea, and the mother one of the Rhys's of Tŷ'n y Waun, and the Morgans of Cwmcilie. **Professor Morgan Watkin** was one of his brothers. He left the school at Pen-clun, Rhydypanyd, at 12, and went to work in the local colliery and then in the tin works. After a short period in the Old College School, Carmarthen, he went to University College, Bangor, where he graduated in 1899 with honours in Welsh : and in 1909, he was awarded the degree of M.A. for his work on **Bedo Brwynllys**, the first Baptist minister to gain that degree in the University of Wales. He served as minister in Tabernacl chapel, Maesteg, from 1900 to 1910, and in Moreia, Llanelli from 1910 until his death.

He was the editor of *Seren Gomer* from 1921 to 1930, and from 1933 until 1947 (with **John Gwili Jenkins** for a year, and then with David Hopkins as co-editors). He was a notable administrator - he was President of his cymanfa, President of the Union of Welsh Baptists, 1939-40, and Chairman of the Baptist Missionary Society, 1944-45. He contributed many articles to *Y Genhinen*, *Seren Gomer* and to the transactions of the Historical Society of Welsh Baptists, as well as a volume on the history of the Baptists in Clydach, and one on the history of the parish of Llangyfelach.

His theology was that of the orthodox tradition of the old Nonconformity of the 18th century, but he became profoundly influenced by the Cymru Fydd movement, and believed firmly in the importance of the Welsh language - he held classes in Welsh in his church in Maesteg, a rarity at that time. He won the prose medal at the Llangollen eisteddfod in 1908, and, when the *eisteddfod* came to Llanelli in 1930 he was the secretary of the Literature Committee, and deputy secretary of the eisteddfod. He was a member of the Gorsedd, under the name of 'Glanlliw'. He was the chairman of the Poetry and Music Club of the town for many years, and during World War II he was Chairman of Undeb Cymru Fydd in the area. He owned a wide-ranging and valuable library, and was an authority on first editions.

On 12 September 1905, in Tabernacl, Maesteg, he married Jane, the daughter of David and Elizabeth (née Jenkins) Williams. She died on 14 December 1936 and he on 16 December 1947, and they were both buried in the Box cemetery, Llanelli. They had one daughter.

### Author

**His Honour Dewi Watkin Powell**

### Sources

*Seren Gomer*, March-April 1948

details from Enid Watkin Jones

and personal knowledge

### Further Reading

Undeb Bedyddwyr Cymru: **Watkin - William Rhys (1875 - 1947)**

### Additional Links

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