

# WILLIAMS, WILLIAM MORRIS (1883 - 1954), quarryman, choir conductor, soloist and cerdd dant adjudicator

**Name:** William Morris Williams  
**Date of birth:** 1883  
**Date of death:** 1954  
**Spouse:** Mair Williams (née Williams)  
**Parent:** Jane Williams  
**Parent:** William Morris Williams  
**Gender:** Male  
**Occupation:** quarryman, choir conductor, soloist and cerdd dant adjudicator  
**Area of activity:** Business and Industry; Eisteddfod; Music; Performing Arts  
**Author:** Meredydd Evans

Born one of 7 children, 17 January 1883 in Tan-y-fron, Tanygrisiau, Meirionnydd, son of William Morris Williams, quarryman, and his wife Jane. His father was precentor in Bethel (CM) chapel, Tanygrisiau for 25 years and the son began to assist him when he was 17. He married in 1905 Mair, daughter of Daniel and Mary Williams, Conglog, Tanygrisiau and they raised a musical family of 3 sons and 2 daughters. The family emigrated about 1909 to Granville, NY, and he formed a children's choir there but they returned to Tanygrisiau in 1911 because of his mother's ill health. He joined Moelwyn male voice choir, conducted by Cadwaladr Roberts, and he re-established the children's choir which he had set up in the village in 1905. A slack period in the quarries led to the family moving to Abertridwr in 1915, where he established a successful choir before returning to his native area in 1921. He obtained work in Maenofferen quarry where he remained until his retirement in 1941, during which time he established mixed choirs, children's and cerdd dant choirs. The mixed choir and amateur orchestra performed a number of oratorios, including *Messiah*, *Judas Maccabeus* and *Creation*, and he used the vocal resources of the church to present cantatas, the operetta *Esther* and the opera *Blodwen*. The augmented *Blodwen* company visited 14 areas in Gwynedd between 1945 and 1947. But the choir which made his name best known as a director and conductor was Tanygrisiau children's choir which won first prize in the chief children's choir competition at the national *eisteddfod* several times - Bangor 1931, Aberavon 1932, Neath 1934, Caernarfon 1935. At the first three the choir won, and held permanently the Iorwerth Glyndwr John Memorial Shield for their singing of arrangements of folksongs. The choir also won first prize at the Urdd Gobaith Cymru national eisteddfod at Colwyn Bay in 1934. The choir became well known throughout Wales in *eisteddfodau* and concerts, and was one of the first to broadcast a Welsh programme in 1936. W.M. Williams enjoyed *cerdd dant* and he was successful as a soloist at the national eisteddfod in Caernarfon 1921, Mold 1923, Pwllheli 1925. He gained first prizes with Barlwyd harp-accompaniment choir in the national eisteddfod in Ammanford 1922, Mold 1923, Pwllheli 1925, Treorchy 1928, as well as successes in *eisteddfodau* in north Wales 1922-25, and giving many concerts in Wales and England. He adjudicated cerdd dant in eisteddfodau in north Wales and the national in Ystradgynlais in 1954; he was one of the founders of the Cerdd Dant Society. He trained many individuals and groups in his locality, and served his church as precentor, secretary and Sunday school teacher for a long period. He died 30 December 1954 and was buried in Bethesda cemetery, Blaenau Ffestiniog.

## Author

Dr Meredydd Evans

## Sources

Personal knowledge

## Additional Links

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