

## REES, EBENEZER (1848 - 1908), printer and publisher

**Name:** Ebenezer Rees  
**Date of birth:** 1848  
**Date of death:** 1908  
**Spouse:** Jane Rees (née James)  
**Child:** David James Rees  
**Gender:** Male  
**Occupation:** printer and publisher  
**Area of activity:** Printing and Publishing  
**Author:** Huw Walters

Born 1848 in Sirhowy, Monmouthshire. He was orphaned and brought up by relatives of his mother- David Clee and his wife in Cwmtwrch. He received little education and commenced work in one of the local collieries when he was seven years old. He left Cwmtwrch aged 18 years and worked in coalmines in Aberdare and Mountain Ash, returning to the Ystalyfera district in 1868 when he married Jane, the daughter of Dafydd and Rachel James (she died on 18 September 1916). Labour trade unionism was growing in the valleys of Glamorgan at this time and Ebenezer Rees was prominent in this movement in the upper Swansea valley. He was dismissed and persecuted because of his convictions and he fled to Carbondale, Pennsylvania in 1869. He returned to Wales in 1872 and kept a bookshop for a time until in 1877 he opened a printing works in Ystalyfera. He established a new weekly newspaper, *Y Gwladwr Cymreig* in 1885. The first edition appeared on 22 January but it terminated on 24 September of the same year. [D. Onllwyn Brace](#), Ystalyfera, J. Dyfrig Owen, Glantwrch and J.T. Morgan (Thalamus) were each, in turn, his editors. Ebenezer Rees had a great interest in social issues and he was prominent in the labour movement in the Swansea valley at the turn of the century. He was also friendly with the socialist leaders of the time such as Keir Hardie, [R.J. Derfel](#) and John Hodge. In his office was printed and published *Cwrs y Byd* ' to investigate society in its various aspects ' from January 1891 to 1895. Among other periodicals published by him were *Yr Oes Newydd* (1886) and the *Cenhadwr* (1894-97), two of the publications of the Swedenborgians in Wales. He also printed the *Celt* for a period.

Probably his most important contribution was to establish on 22 January 1898, *Llais Llafur* (later the *South Wales Voice*) as a weekly newspaper to serve the industrial areas of West Glamorgan and the east of the former Carmarthenshire. This publication was a vehicle for promoting the Labour movement in these districts. The last issue appeared on 2 December 1971. Ebenezer Rees published scores of ballads and pamphlets, the majority of which contained the works of minor poets and authors from the Swansea and Aman valleys. He died at his home in Ystalyfera on 30 September 1908 and he was buried in the graveyard of Beulah, Cwmtwrch.

### Author

Dr Huw Walters

### Sources

*Llais Llafur*, 10 October 1908

*Llenyddiaeth fy Ngwlad* (1893), 41, 175

*South Wales Voice*, 12 August 1965

### Additional Links

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