

WOODING, DAVID LEWIS (1828 - 1891), genealogist, historian, bibliophile and shopkeeper

Name: David Lewis Wooding
Date of birth: 1828
Date of death: 1891
Spouse: Marianne Wooding (née Jones)
Parent: Susannah Wooding (née Davies)
Parent: Benjamin Wooding
Gender: Male
Occupation: genealogist, historian, bibliophile and shopkeeper
Area of activity: Business and Industry; History and Culture; Literature and Writing
Author: B. A. Mark Williams

Born 13 December 1828 at Penybont Cottage, Llanfihangel Abergwesyn, Brecknockshire, eldest son of Benjamin Wooding (died 1861) of Beulah, near Builth Wells, Brecknock, a shopkeeper and farmer, and his wife Susannah (née Davies). He was educated at Beulah Chapel school, 1834-36, and then boarded at a small school at Cefnllanddewi run by Thomas Price, 'Twm Cork', 1837-38, after which he attended Ffrwdfâl Academy, Carmarthenshire, under the direction of Dr. William Davies, 1838-44, with a brief interval at Hay Academy in 1842. In 1844 he moved to a school in Hills Lane, Mardol, Shrewsbury for one term. At the age of 16 he was apprenticed to a draper in Newtown, Montgomeryshire, for one year but did not complete his period due to the draper not fulfilling the conditions of his agreement. He moved briefly back to Ffrwdfâl Academy but left October 1845 to assist his father in the family business, travelling extensively in both England and Wales. He married Marianne, daughter of Peter Jones, at Llanddewi Abergwesyn parish church on 18 June 1858. He died on 2 May 1891 after a brief illness and was buried in Beulah (Congl.) cemetery.

In 1861 he took over responsibility for the shop. This enabled him to develop what had already become his life-long interest. He was contemporary of David Lloyd Isaac, vicar of Llangamarch and author, eventually purchasing all of his MS works and notes. He was nominated by Egerton G.B. Phillimore and became a member of the Honourable Society of Cymmrodorion. Wooding corresponded with Morris Davies of Bangor, a noted hymnologist and musician, and he became a leading authority on the authorship of Welsh hymns. His library was given into the care of John Ballinger, chief librarian of Cardiff Free Library (and later of the National Library of Wales, by councillor Ben Davies of Beulah. In addition, a proportion of his MSS, in particular his note-books, were handed over to the care of the library. His work is characterise by attention to detail and an endeavour to obtain information first-hand. He was renowned for his knowledge of Welsh history and in particular of matters relating to the Hundred of Builth. According to Evans' *Guide to Wales* (1888), 'His library is good and select, but Mr. Woodings' real library is carried a little above his neck. He is much admired and respected in all circles'. He contributed to *Yr Haul* and assisted in other publications. Regrettably he left no published books of his own and those few MSS that remain in private hands indicate what has been lost to the public by his failure to go to print. The MSS are of special value in that they furnish ample material for describing Wales and especially Mid-Wales. He succeeded in recording information from people of all classes. He was a close friend of James Rhys Jones ('Kilsby') and although he was no match for him in imaginative genius, he was incomparably his superior in historical accomplishments. After an encounter with him in Llangamarch Wells he was heard to say that 'truth is life's a torch, the more it's shook, the more it shines'. His main MSS are: the trial and execution of Lewis Lewis; autobiographical works; Jemal; historical pedigrees of gentry in Builth Hundred; Welsh hymn authorship.

Author

B. A. Mark Williams

Sources

MSS of D. L. Wooding in Cardiff Central Library a private hands

The Brecon and Radnor Express, 8 and 15 May 1891 and other papers

Evans, *Guide to Wales* (1888)

autobiographical material and letters

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