

GRIFFITHS, EDWARD ('Eddie'); (1929-1995), industrial chemist and Member of Parliament

Name: Edward Griffiths

Date of birth: 1929

Date of death: 1995

Gender: Male

Occupation: industrial chemist and Member of Parliament

Area of activity: Politics, Government and Political Movements; Science and Mathematics

Author: David Lewis Jones

Born 7 March 1929, the son of Robert Griffiths of Treuddyn, near Mold. He was educated at Mold Grammar School and the University College of North Wales. Returning to Flintshire in 1951 after graduating, he obtained a post as industrial chemist, first at the John Summers steelworks at Shotton, and later at Caerphilly and at the Dalzell works in Scotland. Following his election to Flintshire County Council in 1964, Griffiths became, like his father, a Labour county councillor. He had, however, wider political ambitions but he came a poor third when he stood for the Denbigh parliamentary constituency in 1966. Another opportunity presented itself in 1968 when Griffiths stood in the by-election in the Sheffield Brightside constituency on 13 June. Griffiths was elected but the Labour government's unpopularity resulted in a sharply reduced majority of 5,248 votes.

In his maiden speech during a debate on the steel industry on 12 July 1968, Griffiths noted that he had been appointed one of the twelve part-time directors of the British Steel Corporation but, with reluctance, he had to resign following the by-election and before his first board meeting. While his remarks on the steel industry were acceptable, the Biblical reference in the speech was less well chosen. At the 1970 general election, Griffiths had an increased majority of 15,369 votes. He was less frequent in his attendance of the House after 1970 and this has been attributed to the effects of a physical assault he suffered on leaving the House of Commons late at night. However, he continued as a Member of Parliament and was re-elected in February 1974 with a further increased majority of 20,567 votes. His contributions to debate in the House of Commons were largely devoted to the steel industry; his last speech in February 1973 supported, to the dismay of his Labour colleagues, the Conservative government's plans for the steel industry.

At the request of Ernie Money, the Conservative member for Ipswich, Griffiths agreed to preach at a harvest festival in Suffolk towards the end of August 1974. A keen football supporter, Griffiths and Money attended a match between Ipswich Town and Sheffield United; both men went to a formal occasion in the evening. The news that Griffiths was socialising with a Conservative was brought back to Sheffield by returning football supporters and provided ammunition for the left-wing activists in the Brightside constituency party. The ostensible reasons for removing Griffiths as the constituency's candidate at the forthcoming general election were his failure to live in the constituency, his infrequent contributions in the House of Commons, and his support for the European movement. The constituency party had become highly politicised and left wing while Griffiths remained on the right wing of the party. There was great antipathy between Griffiths and the leader of the local party. Griffiths made a bad mistake when he did not keep an assurance, given more than once, to move his home from Shotton to Sheffield. He was not involved in the life of the constituency and he did not give enough attention to the small gestures which would have helped in making friends within the local party. Between the two de-selection meetings, he moved to a house just outside the constituency but it was too late to retrieve the situation. Eddie Griffiths was de-selected in favour of Joan Maynard, a left-wing politician. At the October 1974 general election, Griffiths stood as an Independent Labour candidate and polled 10,182 votes, a respectable total which reduced Maynard's majority significantly. Griffiths remained in Sheffield and worked in the steel industry. He became a member of the Social Democratic Party.

When he first entered the House of Commons, Griffiths was thought to be a man likely to rise within the Labour Party. The son of a miner, he had a working class background and he had given a good impression at his selection meeting. However, he limited his contributions in the Commons to the steel industry and he viewed the industry's problems as an industry insider rather than a politician. After he lost his seat, Griffiths expressed his dissatisfaction with government's tendency to interfere in the operation of the industry. A tall man, Griffiths did not make friends easily, either in his constituency or in Parliament. His personal reticence is shown in the bare details he provided for his *Who's Who's* entry. He was a man of deep Christian faith and a regular lay preacher. In his brief retirement, he returned to Treuddyn and pursued his interests in local history and genealogy.

In 1954, Griffiths married Ella Constance, the daughter of William Leigh Griffiths of Shotton; they had a son and a daughter. Eddie Griffiths died on 18 October 1995 of a stroke while recuperating in intensive care following an operation; he left an estate of £145,000.

Author

David Lewis Jones

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Further Reading

NLW Archives: [General Election 1966 Denbigh Constituency. Griffiths](#)

Wikipedia Article: [Edward Griffiths](#)

Additional Links

Wikidata: [Q5343188](#)

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