

DAVIES, WILLIAM HENRY (1871 - 1940), poet and author

Name: William Henry Davies
Date of birth: 1871
Date of death: 1940
Spouse: Helen Davies (née Payne)
Parent: Mary Ann Davies
Parent: Francis Boase Davies
Gender: Male
Occupation: poet and author
Area of activity: Literature and Writing; Poetry
Author: Lawrence William Hockey

Born 3 July 1871 at Pillgwenlly, Newport, Monmouth; son of Mary Ann and Francis Boase Davies, iron-moulder. He received an elementary education and, at school, became interested in poetry. On completing his apprenticeship as a carver and gilder, he tramped in U.S.A. and Canada, but lost his foot in a train-jumping accident in March 1899. He returned to England, determined to succeed as a poet. After many difficulties and setbacks, he published his first book, *The Soul's Destroyer and Other Poems*, in March 1905. Other books followed and, by 1911, he was an established poet and author, with eight books to his credit, and was the recipient of a Civil List pension. In 1923 he married Helen Payne. In 1929, for his services to literature, he was awarded the honorary degree of D.Litt. by the University of Wales. When he died, at Nailsworth, Gloucestershire, 26 September 1940, he was the author of about fifty books. His prose works are chiefly autobiographical, written in a simple natural style, after the manner of Defoe. In poetry, he ranks as a master of the English lyric, his main themes being nature and love; and, at his best, his poems compare favourably with the finest lyrics of the English language. His chief works are: *The Complete Poems of W. H. Davies*, 1944, and later, in prose, *Autobiography of a Super-Tramp*, *Beggars*, and *Later Days*.

Author

Lawrence William Hockey

Sources

Davies's own prose

The Welsh Review, 1946, 1948

South Wales Argus, 21 and 22 September 1938 and 11 October 1946

Thomas Moul, *W. H. Davies* (London 1934) (but this contains some inaccuracies)

Further Reading

NLW: [W H Davies Manuscripts](#)

Wikipedia Article: [W. H. Davies](#)

Images

William Rothenstein, *W. H. Davies*

Additional Links

NLW Archives: [NLW MS 23960B: 'Leisure' by W. H. Davies](#)

NLW Archives: [NLW MS 23875B: A Boy's Sorrow by W. H. Davies](#)

NLW Archives: [W. H. Davies manuscripts](#)

NLW Archives: [NLW MS 21629B: Holograph poems by W.H. Davies](#)

NLW Archives: [NLW MS 19408C: Two holograph poems by W. H. Davies: 'Molly' and 'The Force of Love'; two autograph letters; and a review of W. H. Davies's poetry by Herbert Edward Palmer](#)

NLW Archives: [NLW MS 16571B: W. H. Davies: Forty New Poems, with autograph postcard](#)

NLW Archives: [NLW MS 18432A: Two poems by W. H. Davies](#)

NLW Archives: [NLW MS 23806D: W. H. Davies letters](#)

NLW Archives: [NLW MS 22003E: Letters of Anglo-Welsh writers](#)

NLW Archives: [NLW MS 23699E, ff. 60-65: W. H. Davies letters](#)

NLW Archives: [NLW MS 23807E: Letters relating to W. H. Davies](#)

VIAF: [76333044](#)

Wikidata: [Q985138](#)

Published date: 1959

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APA Citation



Hockey, L. W., (1959). DAVIES, WILLIAM HENRY (1871 - 1940), poet and author. *Dictionary of Welsh Biography*. Retrieved 12 Nov 2024, from <https://biography.wales/article/s-DAVI-HEN-1871>

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