

THOMAS, EDWARD (Cochfarf; 1853 - 1912), carpenter, politician and Mayor of Cardiff

Name: Edward Thomas
Pseudonym: Cochfarf
Date of birth: 1853
Date of death: 1912
Spouse: Thomas (née Hughes)
Parent: Llewellyn Thomas
Gender: Male
Occupation: carpenter, politician and Mayor of Cardiff
Area of activity: Business and Industry; History and Culture; Public and Social Service, Civil Administration
Author: William Llewelyn Davies

Born 9 March 1853 in the farmhouse of Nantywith, Betws, near Maes-teg, Glamorganshire, the son of Llewellyn Thomas and his wife (the latter a member of the Bryncethin-fawr family). He was educated at a school in Betws. His father died when the boy was about 10 years of age and the family moved to Melin Ifan Ddu. In 1876 he went to Hengoed to work as a carpenter, going to Cardiff two years later. He worked at his craft on the (old) Cardiff town hall in S. Mary Street, a building which he was to enter frequently afterwards as an elected representative of Cardiff ratepayers. He served as one of the secretaries of the national eisteddfod held at Cardiff in 1879. In 1880 Cochfarf joined the staff of the Cardiff Coffee Tavern Company. When, however, that company decided to open its houses on Sundays, Cochfarf, who disapproved of Sunday opening, opened his own coffee tavern - in Custom House Street; later he opened the Metropole, opposite the Taff Vale Railway station, and the Red Dragon in the docks district.

His career as a Cardiff boro. councillor began in 1890; he was elected mayor in 1902. He was deeply interested in history and antiquities; he was a most useful member of the Cardiff Free Library Committee; he was also the chairman of the sub-committee of the boro. council which arranged for the boro. records to be examined and described by **John Hobson Mathews**; he frequently contributed to the local press and to periodicals. He was a Baptist and a staunch Liberal; he worked for the disestablishment and disendowment of the Church in Wales. He was a member of the Society for the Preservation of the Welsh Language. It was at his Custom House Coffee Tavern that the society known as ' Cymmrodorion Caerdydd ' was formed; Cochfarf was one of the most influential members of that society.

Cochfarf married (1) a daughter of Dr. Cook, Ynyspenllwch, and (2) a daughter of the Rev. Richard Hughes (Tremrudd), Maes-teg. The second wife, Madame Hughes-Thomas, became very widely known because of her Welsh ladies' choir which toured in the U.S.A., Canada, South Africa, etc. Cochfarf accompanied the choir to the U.S.A., and was, therefore, able to be of considerable help when arrangements were being made, later, for an international Welsh eisteddfod held at Pittsburg, Pennsylvania, U.S.A., in 1913. He died 18 November 1912.

Author

Sir William Llewelyn Davies, (1887 - 1952)

Sources

Western Mail, 19 November 1912

Seren Gomer, 1913, 142-7

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