

EVANS, ANNIE FLORENCE ('Florrie') (1884 - 1967), revivalist and missionary

Name: Annie Florence Evans
Date of birth: 1884
Date of death: 1967
Parent: David Owen Evans
Parent: Margaret Evans (née Jones)
Gender: Female
Occupation: revivalist and missionary
Area of activity: Religion
Author: David Pike

Florrie Evans was born on 15 December 1884 in New Quay, Cardiganshire, the second of the four children of David Owen Evans (1853-1918), a mariner, and his wife Margaret (née Jones, 1853-1929), who were living at 5 Marine Terrace in 1881, and at 4 Lewis Terrace ten years later. By 1901, following her father's promotion to captain, the family moved to 12 Marine Terrace which remained their home.

Florrie Evans attended the local board school, and was brought up in Tabernacle Calvinistic Methodist Chapel. She was converted there in February 1904 through the re-invigorated preaching of the minister **Joseph Jenkins**. A little later in an evening meeting, Florrie made a simple, heartfelt declaration of love for Christ: 'Yr wyf fi'n caru Iesu Grist à'm holl galon!' ('I love Jesus Christ with all my heart!'). This made a deep impression on those present, and the result effectively marked the start of the Revival in Wales. Joseph Jenkins subsequently took groups of young people across Cardiganshire to spread the revival, Florrie Evans being prominent among them. He said that her example was instrumental in helping 'deliver him from self and philosophy'.

When **Evan Roberts** came to Newcastle Emlyn that September, he had a powerful spiritual experience in a meeting in Blaenannerch chaired by **Seth Joshua**, and Florrie Evans was one of those present who encouraged him. She was invited to be part of Evan Roberts's team of travelling revivalists. When Evan Roberts travelled to Loughor to begin his revival campaign, he wrote to Florrie Evans to ask her to pray. Florrie Evans and Maud Davies, a singer from Tabernacle, later followed Evan Roberts to Gorseinon as the Revival fires began to take hold, and they both took part in some of the meetings there.

Florrie Evans began travelling with other revivalists, especially Joseph Jenkins, and also went on one tour with Seth Joshua. She worked all over Wales with Maud Davies of New Quay as a partner, and also in London in August 1905. Florrie would do the speaking, and Maud the singing, and Florrie Evans shared her testimony boldly and fearlessly, read scripture, preached, prophesied, sang powerfully, prayed passionately, often with tears, and was involved in ministering to seekers and those coming under conviction. By the end of 1905, after another visit to North Wales, the travelling came an end.

In the summer of 1908, influenced by news of the revival then going on in the Khasia Hills, Evans applied to serve the Foreign Mission of the Calvinistic Methodists in India. Supporting her application, the **Rev. John Thickers** of Aberaeron wrote that she was 'a very exceptional lady, possessed of deep convictions and of insight into the truth.' Florrie Evans left Liverpool on the steam ship '*City of Karachi*' on 19 November 1908, and was in Sylhet by Christmas. She served there as a nurse, but in 1909 she became unwell and was unable to continue her work. In 1910 she was transferred to more suitable conditions further south. However, a dispute led to her being back in New Quay by September 1911. She remained there in the Evans family home for the next twenty years.

On 28 August 1918 Florrie Evans's father was drowned when his ship the '*Auckland Castle*' was torpedoed in the North Sea. Florrie looked after her mother until she died in 1929. After this, she moved to Cardiff, and by 1935 she was living alone at 11 Cefn Carnau Road, Heath, where she remained for the rest of her life. Park End, which she probably attended, was the nearest Presbyterian church, and it was there that Evan Roberts worshipped in this period after he returned to Wales in 1927. The old friends lived less than a mile from each other until Evan Roberts's death in 1951.

Florrie Evans died in Glanely Hospital, Cardiff on 11 December 1967, aged 82. A brief announcement in the *Western Mail* made no reference to her role in the Revival. The funeral was held in New Quay rather than in Cardiff, and she was buried at St. Llwlchaïarn's there on 14 December.

Author

David Pike

Sources

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Brynmor Pierce Jones, *An instrument of revival: the complete life of Evan Roberts (1878-1951)* (New Jersey 1995)

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Karen Lowe, *Carriers of the Fire: The Women of the Welsh Revival 1904/05* (Llanelli 2004)

D. Ben Rees, *Vehicles of grace and hope: Welsh missionaries in India 1800-1970* (Pontardawe 2002)

Sue Passmore, *The Streets of New Quay* (2015)

Various local newspapers

Florrie Evans: *The Girl Who Started a Revival*

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