

DAVIES, RHISIART MORGAN (1903 - 1958), scientist and professor of physics

Name: Rhisiart Morgan Davies
Date of birth: 1903
Date of death: 1958
Spouse: Elizabeth Florence Davies
Parent: Rhys Davies
Gender: Male
Occupation: scientist and professor of physics
Area of activity: Education; Science and Mathematics
Author: Melfyn Richard Williams

Born in Corris, Merionethshire, 4 February 1903, only son of the Rev. Rhys Davies (Congl.) who came from Gwynfe, and his wife. He was educated in Machynlleth and Dolgellau grammar schools, and won a scholarship to the university college at Aberystwyth in 1921. He graduated with first-class honours in physics in 1924, and was appointed a member of the research staff in H.M. Signals school at Portsmouth, but the following year he returned to Aberystwyth as an assistant lecturer in the physics department and was made a lecturer in 1928. In 1937 he obtained a D.Sc. (Wales) degree for important work on the measurement of dielectric and elastic constants under dynamic conditions. In 1938 he was awarded a Leverhulme research fellowship, which enabled him to work in Cambridge. During this period he developed an interest in stress waves, and became one of the leading specialists in this field. The results of his work were published in 1948 and this is now regarded as being basic to this branch of physics. He received a Ph.D. degree at Cambridge for his research work. He was released from his post during World War II to study under-water explosives for the Admiralty.

At the end of the war he returned to Aberystwyth college where he became professor of physics in 1946. Over the years he gathered a team of scientists to his department to study the innumerable problems relating to stress, and his department became world-famous. He served a successful term as vice-principal of the college from 1954 to 1956. He was visiting professor to the California Institute of Technology and the Reusselaer Polytechnic Institute, 1956-57. He contributed a large number of articles to various scientific journals, the most important being 'A critical study of the Hopkinson pressure bar' in *Trans. Roy. Soc.* in 1948. He was also co-editor and contributor to *Surveys in Mechanics* (1956), and was responsible for a series of radio lectures on modern science during the 1930s.

He had many recreations. He was organist and deacon for many years at Baker Street chapel, Aberystwyth. He kept a record of the hymns that were sung, so that the congregation seldom sang the same hymn more than twice a year. He was interested in the college sports and was treasurer of the town's football club. He married in 1928 Elizabeth Florence, daughter of Thomas Davies, Aberystwyth, and they had one son who died young. He died 18 February 1958 aged 55.

Author

Melfyn Richard Williams

Sources

Who was who?

The Courier, 4 February 1956

Y Dysgedydd, June 1958

Ellis, *The University College of Wales, Aberystwyth, 1872-1972* (1972)

Further Reading

Wikipedia Article: [Rhisiart Morgan Davies](#)

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