

LLOYD GEORGE, DAVID (1863 - 1945), the first Earl Lloyd-George of Dwyfor, statesman

Name: David Lloyd George
Date of birth: 1863
Date of death: 1945
Spouse: Margaret Lloyd George (née Owen)
Spouse: Frances Louise Lloyd George (née Stevenson)
Child: Richard Lloyd George
Child: Mair Eluned Lloyd George
Child: Olwen Elizabeth Carey Evans (née Lloyd George)
Child: Gwilym Lloyd George
Child: Megan Arfon Lloyd George
Parent: Elisabeth George (née Lloyd)
Parent: William George
Gender: Male
Occupation: statesman
Area of activity: Politics, Government and Political Movements
Author: Edward Morgan Humphreys

Born 5, New York Place, Manchester, 17 January 1863, son of William George, Tre-coed, Pembrokeshire, and Elizabeth daughter of David Lloyd of Llanystumdwy, Caernarfonshire. On his father's death in Pembrokeshire in 1864 his mother moved with her children to Llanystumdwy, to live with her brother, **Richard Lloyd** (1834 - 1917). Lloyd George was educated at the Llanystumdwy National School and passed the Preliminary Law Examination in 1877, taking his final with honours in 1884. Beginning practice as a solicitor in Cricieth in 1885 he gained a reputation as a fearless advocate and eloquent speaker, and came into prominence in 1888 as solicitor for the defence in what became known as the Llanfrothen Burial Case, an action which he won on appeal. In November 1888, he was adopted prospective Liberal candidate for the Caern. Boroughs; he was returned by a majority of 18, at the general election, 1890 (10 April), taking his seat on 17 April and making his maiden speech on 13 June. During his first period in Parliament his interests were mainly Welsh, especially disestablishment and land reform, and in 1894 he led a revolt of four Welsh members (himself, **D. A. Thomas**, **J. Herbert Lewis** and **Francis Edwards**) against the Rosebery Government because of its attitude on Welsh disestablishment. In Wales during the same period he campaigned for the Cymru Fydd movement and for the amalgamation of the two Liberal Federations, north and south.

He opposed and criticised the conduct of the South African War (1899-1902) in Parliament and in the country; attempting to address a Liberal meeting in Birmingham in December 1901, he was threatened by the mob and his life was in danger. He went through a period of great unpopularity, but was again returned in the 1900 election with an increased majority. Upon the introduction of Balfour's Education Bill in 1902 Lloyd George became the leader of the Radical and Nonconformist opposition to the measure, and in Wales he initiated the policy according to which the county councils refused to administer the Act. When the Liberals came into power in 1905 he became President of the Board of Trade with a seat in the Cabinet, showing exceptional administrative ability with constructive talent and a gift for mediation in industrial disputes. In October and November 1907, he succeeded in averting a stoppage on the railways. Amongst the important measures for which he was responsible at the Board of Trade were the Merchant Shipping Act, 1906; the Patents and Designs (Amendment) Act, 1907; and the Port of London Act, 1908.

In April 1908, when H. H. Asquith became Prime Minister, Lloyd George succeeded him as Chancellor of the Exchequer, and piloted through the House of Commons the Old Age Pensions Bill already introduced by Asquith. In 1909 he introduced his first Budget, designed to finance measures of social reform, and described as the most controversial budget of modern times. Its rejection by the Lords led to the passing of the Parliament Act in 1911. In August 1910, Lloyd George made an unsuccessful attempt to form a coalition of Liberals and Conservatives. On 4 May 1911, he introduced a National Insurance Bill, which included both health and unemployment insurance and which received the Royal Assent in December of the same year. In the 1911 Budget payment of members of Parliament was introduced. In a speech at the Mansion House on 21 July in that year Lloyd George warned Germany that Britain would not tolerate aggression in Morocco, a speech for which the Kaiser demanded his dismissal. On 29 June 1912, he launched his campaign for land reform, which included the setting up of a Land Enquiry Committee. In the same year a Select Committee of the House of Commons was set up to investigate allegations made respecting certain Ministers, including Lloyd George, in connection with share holdings in the American Marconi Co. All the persons involved were acquitted of acting otherwise than in good faith.

When war with Germany was declared in August 1914, Lloyd George as Chancellor of the Exchequer had the task of stabilising the country's finances in difficult circumstances. In May 1915, on the formation of the first Coalition Government, he became Minister of Munitions. On the death of Lord Kitchener, Secretary for War, in May 1916, Lloyd George was appointed his successor. In December 1916 Asquith resigned and Lloyd George became Prime Minister. One of the most important acts of his Premiership during the war years was the establishment of unity of command of the allied forces. In 1918, after the Armistice, he appealed to the country and was returned to power as head of the Coalition Govt. with a majority of 345 over all other parties. On 18 January 1919, the Peace Conference opened, with Lloyd George as one of its three most prominent figures. In December 1921 he succeeded in carrying the Irish Treaty through after prolonged negotiations. In October 1922 the Conservative members of the Coalition Government resigned which made it impossible to carry on the Coalition, and Lloyd George resigned. Although he remained politically active for some years, he never again held office. In 1926 he set in train the Liberal Industrial Enquiry. In January 1934, in a speech at Bangor, he outlined his programme for re-establishing national prosperity-the 'New Deal' policy-to be carried out by the Council of Action. From 1933 to 1936 he wrote his *War Memoirs*: his *The truth about the peace treaties* was published in 1938. In August 1936, he visited Germany and met Hitler. When war came in 1939 he took no part in its direction but remained a member of the House of Commons till January 1945, when he resigned his seat and was granted an earldom, taking as his titles Earl Lloyd-George of Dwyfor and Viscount Gwynedd. He was given the Order of Merit in 1919 and the Légion d'honneur in 1920. He was Constable of Caernarfon castle from 1908; hon. LL.D. (Wales) 1908, hon. Fellow of Jesus College, Oxford, 1910, hon. D.C.L., Oxford, and hon. LL.D. of Edinburgh, 1918, Sheffield, 1919, Birmingham, 1921. In 1944 he had come to his home, Ty Newydd, in

Llanystumdwy, where he died 26 March 1945. He was buried according to his own wishes in the wooded slope above the river Dwyfor near his home.

He married (1), 24 January 1888, **Margaret** (died 20 January 1941) daughter of Richard and Mary Owen of Mynydd Ednyfed, Cricieth. They had five children: **Richard**, (1889 - 1968), **Mair Eluned** (1890 - 1907), Olwen Elizabeth (1892 - 1990) (who married Sir Thomas John Carey Evans), **Gwilym** (1894 - 1967), and **Megan** (1902 - 1966), (2) 23 October 1943, Frances Louise, daughter of John Stevenson of Wallington, Surrey, his long-serving personal assistant and companion.

Author

Edward Morgan Humphreys, (1882 - 1955)

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NLW Archives: *Etholiad 1895: Fotiwch i Mr. Lloyd-George*

NLW Archives: *General Election, 1900: To the Free & Independent Electors of the Carnarvon District Boroughs*

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NLW Archives: *Unity or Disruption? A Clarion Call to Wales.*

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Images

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Sound and Film

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NSSAW: *Angladd David Lloyd George yn Llanystumdwy Grogllith 1945*

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