

WILLIAMS, DAVID JAMES (1870 - 1951), schoolmaster

Name: David James Williams
Date of birth: 1870
Date of death: 1951
Spouse: Mary Williams (née Evans)
Spouse: Selina Williams (née Evans)
Parent: Thomas Williams
Gender: Male
Occupation: schoolmaster
Area of activity: Education
Author: Robert Tudur Jones

Born 18 February 1870 in Caerphilly, Glamorganshire, one of the 13 children of Thomas Williams, collier, and his wife. Though he began work as a boy in the mines he showed early ability and in 1882 he won the Gelligaer Scholarship to Lewis' School, Pengam. The register of that school notes Bargod Board School as his previous school and his father's address as Greenfield Terrace, Bargoed. He was placed in the middle school, and moved to the senior school in 1883-84 where he was second out of 24 in the summer examinations. He was at the top of the list of 27 in the 1885 summer examinations, having succeeded in the Cambridge Local Board the previous Christmas. He sat the same examination Christmas 1885 and in 1886 he won a scholarship to Llandoverly College where his gifts as a mathematician flourished. He won a mathematics scholarship worth £80 a year for 4 years at Worcester College, Oxford, and gained prizes for his work in classics, divinity and mathematics. He took a first in mathematics in 1893.

Immediately after graduating he obtained a post at his old school in Pengam but soon moved to Tettenhall College, Wolverhampton. In 1895 he was appointed the first headmaster of the new county school in Bethesda, Caernarfonshire, a post which he held until his retirement in 1933. Religion was a major interest. He was a deacon at Bethesda chapel (Congl.) and then at Bethania, Bethesda. He contributed a great deal to the work of the Sunday school and he was one of the editors of the new, modern handbooks for children published by the Union of Welsh Independents. He was one of the secretaries of the Union from 1924 to 1927 and Chairman 1944-45. He was general secretary of Bala-Bangor College from 1932 to 1951 and over a period of some 20 years he compiled a biographical dictionary of all the professors and students of the college. There is a copy of the work at N.L.W.

He married twice; (1) in 1897 Selina, daughter of John Evans, Minafon, Blackwood, Monmouth, and (2) in 1929 her sister Mary. He had a daughter and 3 sons. D.J. Williams was an unassuming man whose shyness concealed his great ability and his acquaintance with many prominent figures, but he left his mark heavily on the community in the Ogwen valley. He died 1 October 1951 and was buried in Coetmor cemetery, Bethesda.

Author

Reverend Principal Robert Tudur Jones, (1921 - 1998)

Sources

D. J. Williams, *Hanes Coleg Bala-Bangor* (typescript)
College Report for 1951-52
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information from the librarian, Lewis' School, Pengam

Additional Links

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