

WILLIAMS, DAVID LLEWELYN (1870 - 1949), surgeon

Name: David Llewelyn Williams
Date of birth: 1870
Date of death: 1949
Spouse: Margaret Ann Williams (née Price)
Child: Eric Llewelyn Williams
Child: Enid Llewelyn Jones (née Williams)
Parent: John Williams
Gender: Male
Occupation: surgeon
Area of activity: Medicine
Author: Alun Llywelyn-Williams

Born 3 February 1870 at Tal-y-bont, in the Vale of Conwy, where his father John Williams was Calvinistic Methodist minister. The family moved to Old Colwyn in 1882. Llewelyn Williams was educated at the Tal-y-bont primary school and at Old Colwyn (where he was a contemporary of **Thomas Gwynn Jones**) and at a private residential school at Llandudno. In 1885 he was apprenticed in a chemist's shop in Rhyl, but at the age of 25 he entered Surgeons' Hall, Edinburgh where he had a brilliant career. He graduated in 1900 and after obtaining a fellowship of the Royal College of Surgeons, Edinburgh, by examination, he specialized in the field of public health. After holding posts in Edinburgh and Leith hospitals and as a ship's doctor with the P. and O. Line, he was appointed borough medical officer for Wrexham in 1905. He married in 1906, Margaret Price of Rhyl, and they had two sons, Eric and **Alun**, and a daughter, **Enid**. In 1907 he became county medical officer for Denbighshire, being the first holder of such a post in Wales. When the National Insurance Commission was set up in Wales in 1912 he was invited to serve as its deputy medical officer, and he moved to Cardiff. During World War I he joined the R.A.M.C., and served in France for a considerable period of time with a body of men whom he himself recruited, viz. the 77th Medical Corps of the 38th (Welsh) Division. He won the M.C. for his gallantry in the battle of Mametz. After the war he returned to Cardiff, and was promoted to the office of chief medical officer of the Welsh Board of Health in 1920. He retired in 1935, and was honoured for his services with the award of the C.B.E. In 1939 he returned again to Old Colwyn. He died in Liverpool, 12 May 1949 and was buried, with his wife who had predeceased him a year earlier, in the C.M. Chapel cemetery at Tal-y-bont.

Llewelyn Williams's chief contribution was in public health and in the organisation of medical education. He was a pioneer in his endeavour to convince local authorities and the Welsh people of the importance of preventive medicine. Much of the initial success of the health insurance scheme in Wales can be attributed to his labour and skill, despite great difficulties. He travelled widely in Wales to address meetings on health problems, temperance and morality and wrote extensively in Welsh on these subjects. The results of his labours were not confined to Wales.

He worked hard in France during World War I in the interest of the medical welfare of people living on the edges of the battle-fronts, and his services were acknowledged with the awards of the Médaille des Epidemics and the Médaille de la Reconnaissance Francaise. He was equally enthusiastic in the cause of medical education. From the outset he was a zealous supporter of the movement to establish a school for the training of doctors in Wales, and when the Medical School was set up in 1930, he was made a member of its Council. Soon afterwards he was elected deputy chairman of the Council, an office which he held until his death. He was a member of the council of the Welsh National Memorial for the Prevention of Tuberculosis from its establishment in 1912. He was awarded the degree of LL.D. (honoris causa) by the University of Wales in 1947.

At one time Llewelyn Williams intended to become a missionary in India, and though this did not become possible, he retained throughout his life his interest in the Foreign Mission of the Presbyterian Church in Wales in Assam. He was one of the three commissioners sent to inspect the Mission Field in 1935, and he did much to bring the good work done in the field by the Mission's hospitals to the attention of his fellow-countrymen.

Author

Alun Llywelyn-Williams, (1913)

Sources

Personal knowledge

British Medical Journal, 28 May 1949

Who's who?

Works

David Llewelyn Williams, *Wrexham Rural District Council: Public Health Act, 1875* (Wrexham 1875?)

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