

WILLIAMS, DAVID PRYSE ('Brythonydd'; 1878 - 1952), minister (B), writer, and historian

Name: David Pryse Williams
Pseudonym: Brythonydd
Date of birth: 1878
Date of death: 1952
Spouse: Annie Lydia Rhys (née Morgan)
Parent: Elizabeth Williams (née Jones)
Parent: Ivor Pryse Williams
Gender: Male
Occupation: minister (B), writer, and historian
Area of activity: History and Culture; Literature and Writing; Religion
Author: Benjamin George Owens

Born 1 March 1878 and brought up in Y Wenallt, parish of Troed-yr-aur (Trefdreyr), Cardiganshire. His father Ivor Pryse Williams (1850 - 1920) was the son of the writer priest **Benjamin Williams** ('Gwynionydd'; 1821 - 1891) and his mother Elizabeth the daughter of a Baptist family of Bethel church, Dre-fach Felindre, whose two brothers, David Phillip Jones (1850 - 1884), Felin-gwm and Llanfynydd, and Samuel Jones (1875 - 1935), St. Mellons, were ministers. The son followed his mother to the Baptist fold, began to preach in 1903 and passed the denominational examinations with distinction the following year. In 1908 he entered the Dunoon Evangelical College (Baptist mainly) in Kirn, Argyllshire, and at the end of the two-year course he was ordained, 21 May 1910, minister of Ffynnonhenri, and registered for two years as a part-time student at Carmarthen Presbyterian College under **M.B. Owen** (1875 - 1949). He moved in 1913 to Philadelphia, Swansea (he was with the Y.M.C.A. in Kent for a short while during World War I), and thence to Libanus, Treherbert, in 1920 where he remained for the rest of his life, greatly influential and highly respected.

The first 30 years of his life were spent at home, writing and following eisteddfodau and researching the history of the country between Newcastle Emlyn and the sea in the parish of Penbryn, and despite frequent attacks of infirmity, undoubtedly the first ten years of the 20th c. were the most fruitful for his researches. He published a constant flow of poems, articles and notes in the Cardigan and Aberystwyth weekly papers and in periodicals such as *Seren Gomer*, *Yr Athraw*, *Archæologia Cambrensis*, *Byegones* and *Y Geninen*, but his essay on the History of Cenarth which won the prize under the adjudication of **Sir John Rhys** at Newcastle Emlyn eisteddfod in 1902 was not published. During this period he corresponded with a number of contemporary Welsh scholars. While at Treherbert he succeeded in safeguarding the official archives of the chapel and wrote *Canmlwyddiant Libanus ... braslun o'r hanes* (1950). From his early days he was active in rescuing the libraries of famous men and contemporaries, and at times using the material as a basis for biographies, e.g. his grandfather '**Gwynionydd**'; **David James**, 'Defynnog' (1865 - 1928), Lewis Jones, the musician of Treherbert (died 1882), William Evans Davies (1861 - 1945), Dre-fach, Rees Price (died 1896), Cilfowyr, **John Gomer Lewis** (1844 - 1914), and David Price (1865 - 1931), both of Swansea, and Anthony Williams (1845 - 1913), Ystrad Rhondda; and also Rhys Jones Lloyd (1827 - 1904), the son of Bronwydd mansion, Llangynllo, the rector of Troed-yr-aur, and his troubled Independent neighbour Thomas Cynfelyn Benjamin (1850 - 1925), Pen-y-graig, upon whose grave in Llethr-ddu cemetery Trealaw D.P.W. played a part in arranging for a tomb-stone to be erected.

He married, 1 October 1941, in Tabernacl, Cardiff, a member of his church, Annie Lydia, only daughter of David and Jane Morgan, Cedrwydd, Treherbert, deputy headmistress of Penyreglyn Primary School and secretary of Treherbert Cymrodorion Society. He died suddenly in Church Village Hospital, 27 October 1952 and was buried in Glyn-taf Crematorium.

Author

Benjamin George Owens

Sources

His manuscript collection, **NLW MS 15622-15963** and **NLW MS 15985-16039**, and photographs, 347-401, listed in a typescript catalogue

Benjamin Williams ('Gwynionydd'), 1821-1891, *Ceredigion*, 5 (1967), 347-401 (containing the family pedigree)

Sidney Jenkins, *Hanes Eglwys y Bedyddwyr, Ffynnonhenri* (1930)(1930), 60

Walter J. Evans, **NLW MS 10330B**: *Carmarthen Presbyterian College roll of students* 261

Seren Cymru, 21 November 1952, 11 February 1955, 20 August, 10 September, 1965

The Baptist Union of Wales Handbook and Diary, 1953, 180-1

Baptist Handbook, 1954, 341

Trafodion Cymdeithas Hanes Bedyddwyr Cymru, 1964, 40-1, 48-9, 1967, 38-48, 1976-7, 42, 1987, 45-56

Western Mail, 31 July 1965

Rhondda Leader, 1, 8 November 1952, 6 August 1965

information from his brother-in-law, Rev. T. Haydn Morgan, Ystradmynach

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