

EVANS, WILLIAM GARETH (1941-2000), historian and university lecturer in education

Name: William Gareth Evans
Date of birth: 1941
Date of death: 2000
Gender: Male
Occupation: historian and university lecturer in education
Area of activity: Education; History and Culture
Author: John Graham Jones

He was born at Cynwyd, near Corwen on 14 December 1941, the son of William and Mary Evans. He was educated at Cynwyd primary school and Ty Tan Domen School, Bala (the Bala Boys' Grammar School), which nurtured a number of notable historians including Professor Sir Rees Davies (1938-2005). He entered the University College of Wales, Aberystwyth in the autumn of 1960 and graduated with a very good Class II, division I, BA degree in history in June 1963. He undertook a course of teacher training, and then spent brief periods as a schoolmaster at Caerphilly, Hawarden in Flintshire, and Llandovery. He took up a position as lecturer at Trinity College, Carmarthen in June 1971. In 1972 he was awarded the degree of M.Ed. by the University of Wales for a dissertation on the history of Llandovery College. This was later published as a monograph by the Trustees of Llandovery College in 1981.

Meanwhile in the autumn of 1977 Gareth Evans had taken up a position as lecturer in the Faculty of Education at the University College of Wales, Aberystwyth. From the outset he was an accomplished lecturer, utterly devoted to the welfare of his students, and participated fully in the administrative work of his department. In 1981 he became a member of the working party of the WJEC General Certificate of Education Board set up to prepare subject specific criteria for a common system of examining at age 16 plus. In 1982 he began a career as examiner for the WJEC which extended for many years. He soon became chief examiner in history for the GCSE. He possessed an infectious enthusiasm for history as an academic discipline, to train and enthuse future teachers of the subject, and to ensure an adequate supply of teaching materials in the Welsh language. Hence the stream of publications which he wrote for the Centre for Educational Studies (Canolfan Adnoddau Addysg) within his department and his support for the external degree scheme through the medium of Welsh established by his university in the early 1980s.

At the same time Gareth Evans continued his academic researches with vigour and was awarded the MA degree of the University of Wales in 1981 and the Ph.D degree in 1987. A revised version of the latter dissertation was published by the University of Wales Press under the title *Education and Female Emancipation: the Welsh Experience, 1847-1914* in the summer of 1990 and was notably well received. He had also established himself as a much sought-after public lecturer who attracted substantial audiences whenever he spoke. Evans published widely on individual schools and educationalists from about the middle of the nineteenth century onwards and he was especially attracted by the history of the education of women, previously a woefully neglected subject of study. Such was his contribution in so many spheres that he was promoted to a richly deserved (and indeed long overdue) Senior Lectureship in 1991, and within three years he had again been promoted to the title and grade of university reader. There can be no doubt that, had he survived, Gareth Evans would soon have been awarded a personal chair by the University of Wales. He married on 15 October 1966 Kathleen Thomas, and they had two sons. Their Aberystwyth home was at 'Berwyn', 37 Cefn Esgair, Llanbadarn Fawr. The younger son Rhys Evans is the author of the highly acclaimed biography *Gwynfor: Rhag Pob Brad* published by Gwasg y Lolfa in 2005. Gareth Evans died at his home on 28 March 2000, after a long and brave battle against cancer.

Author

Dr John Graham Jones

Sources

The National Library of Wales Journal XXXIII (2004)
Annual Reports of the University College of Wales, Aberystwyth
personal knowledge
information from Mrs Kathleen Evans

Additional Links

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