

## HARRIES, HYWEL (1921-1990), art teacher, artist, cartoonist

**Name:** Hywel Harries  
**Date of birth:** 1921  
**Date of death:** 1990  
**Gender:** Male  
**Occupation:** art teacher, artist, cartoonist  
**Area of activity:** Art and Architecture  
**Author:** Brynley Francis Roberts

Hywel Harries was born in Tumble, Carmarthenshire, 7 October 1921, the son of David John Harries and his wife Sarah Ann. He was educated locally and at Gwendraeth grammar school. He showed his artistic talent early and went to Llanelli Art School but he joined the RAF at the start of World War 2 in 1941 and served for five years. On his release in 1946 he attended Cardiff Technical College where he obtained his diploma in 1947.

He was art master in a school in Ealing for a year in 1948 and he married Caroline Thomas of Pontypridd the same year: they had two children, David who died young, and Carol. He returned to Wales as art master at Machynlleth secondary school in 1950 and in 1954 he became head of the art department in Arwyn grammar school, Aberystwyth, and then, following local reorganization of secondary education, at Penglais school. He was an inspiring, if a sometimes unconventional, teacher who succeeded in nurturing the talents of generations of students and through his art history lessons in deepening the awareness and appreciation of art in all his pupils. He retired in 1981.

He began drawing and painting at an early age and revealed his talent and great promise as examples of his work in his portfolios among his papers at the National Library show. In spite of the heavy demands of his teaching posts, Hywel Harries was an energetic and productive artist throughout his life. He himself referred to the creative tension between his teaching and the need to paint and he showed his commitment not only in his consistent output but in his constant exploration and experimenting in style and medium. Though he has some abstract paintings (e.g. 'River scene' and 'Humoresque') and one or two in cubic style (e.g. 'Salem re-visited'), he was most comfortable and effective in his landscapes and townscapes - mostly in Aberystwyth and Ceredigion; some, however, especially dock scenes in Cardiff, Swansea and Port Talbot, are darker and more impressionistic than his usual warm, naturalistic palet. He also produced a few portraits, e.g. **E. D. Jones**, **E. G. Bowen**, and friends and acquaintances.

He developed as a magazine illustrator (for *Urdd Gobaith Cymru* especially) and a book illustrator (including *Llyfr Eiry* (1955) by his sister, Lilian Rees, mother of the calligrapher Ieuan Rees) and he produced scores of dust jackets for various publishers. He discovered his gift for humorous art while in the RAF in the 1940s. He studied and mastered the craft of the cartoonist, a craft that he held in high regard. Over the years he produced cartoons regularly for magazines and newspapers, e.g. *Cambrian News*, *Y Goleuad*, *Cristion*, *Y Faner* - any fees were to be paid to charities - and he published several collections, always for the benefit of charities. He also sent many personal cartoons to friends as greetings cards on special occasions.

He was ever generous in his assistance to voluntary groups. In his desire to share his enthusiasm for art and to encourage talent he established the Ceredigion Art Society in 1963. He served as Vice-president of the Royal Cambrian Academy, chairman of the Art and Craft Committee of the Council of the National Eisteddfod, and chairman of the North Wales Federation of Art Groups.

Hywel Harries was a man of broad culture, in music especially. He held firm convictions and was a staunch chapel member who saw the humorous aspects of traditional chapel life, gently revealing them without malice in his cartoons. He was a hardworking elder at Salem, later Morfa chapel, Aberystwyth. He died at Morryston hospital 26 November 1990 and was buried in Aberystwyth 3 December.

He published *Cymru'r Cynfas: pymtheg artist cyfoes* (1983, bilingual, 1988), *Wales on Canvas* (1990), *Arlunio* (1975), and collections of cartoons, *Cambrian News Cartoons, 1956-1964* (1964), *Mentra! Gwena!* (1969), *Gwenwch gyda'r 'Goleuad'* (1978), *Smile with Hywel* (1985), *Tra-la-laugh* (sd). He held a retrospective exhibition, 'Forty years Review', in the National Library of Wales, 12 May-24 June 1989; the catalogue lists much of his work.

### Author

Dr Brynley Francis Roberts

### Sources

Collections of his work and sketches at the National Library of Wales

'Forty years Review' Catalogue

'Mid-Wales Hall of Fame' website

*Blodau'r Ffair*, 1953

*Y Wawr*, Winter 1986

Colli hwy! Hywel, *Cristion*, January 1991

Information from the family

### Works

ArtUK: [Hywel Harries 1921-1990](#)

### Additional Links

Wikidata: [Q20746798](#)

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