



David Lloyd George

David Lloyd George was the only Welsh person and the only Welsh speaker to ever hold the office of Prime Minister. He is remembered as a man of great energy and an unconventional outlook in character and politics.

Born in 1863, David Lloyd George grew up in Llanystumdwy in Gwynedd under the care of his uncle, Richard Lloyd who was a shoemaker. David's father, William was teacher, and died when David was very young. His uncle kindly took the family in to live with him at Highgate cottage in Llanystumdwy. Richard Lloyd was like a second father to David, and was determined that he should do well.

Llanystumdwy was a close-knit community of around 50 small dwellings. Most of the area's needs were provided for within the village by local craftspeople, and their food was produced on local farms until the arrival of the Cambrian Railway line in 1868.

David's early life was simple and he was used to a life of frugality. He and his brother would fetch water, collect firewood and catch fish in the river Dwyfor for the family. David began attending the village school when he was three and a half years old. With his uncle's encouragement, he taught himself to read by studying his father William's old books, and learned about politics by listening to the discussions that took place in his uncle's workshop. He also learned about public speaking by listening to the preachers at the baptist chapel in Penymaes, Cricieth.

Despite being something of a rebel, David excelled in his studies at the village school and also learned Latin and French in order to qualify for legal training. In 1884, he passed his final law examination with honours and set up practice as a solicitor in Cricieth. In 1890 he was elected Liberal MP for Caernarfon, aged just 27.

In 1906 he was made President of the Board of Trade, and became recognised as a very able politician. He was later promoted to the role of Chancellor and was responsible for the introduction of the state pension and declared war on poverty with his people's budget of 1909. To pay for wide-ranging social reforms, as well as the expansion of the Navy, Lloyd George intended to introduce land taxation, much to the anger of landowners and aristocrats. His reforming budget only passed after the 1911 Parliament Act weakened the power of the House of Lords to block legislation from the Commons.

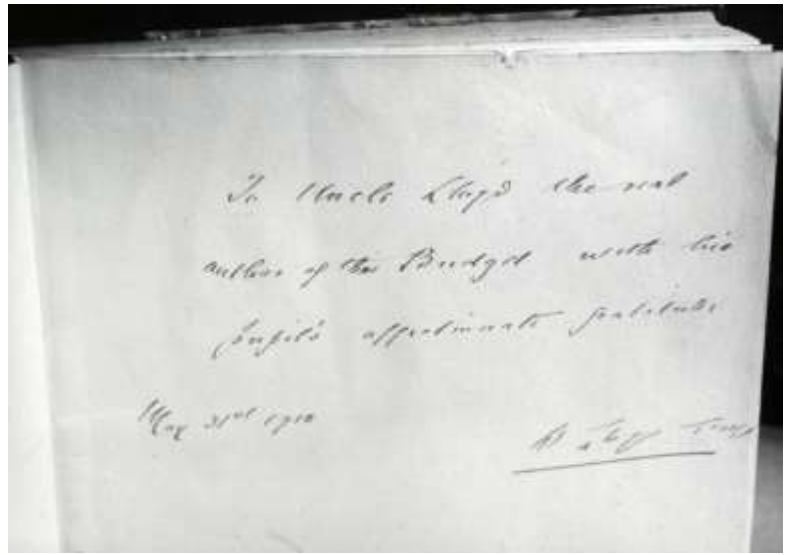


William George's book collection

DAVID LLOYD GEORGE



Thomas Thomas - first man to receive a state pension



Page from the 'People's Budget' - copy given to Richard Lloyd



Lloyd George and his uncle Richard



Lloyd George and daughter Mair (died aged 17)

DAVID LLOYD GEORGE

During the war, Lloyd George threw himself into the job of Minister for Munitions as part of the war effort and later accepted the invitation to form a government in December 1916. He was widely regarded as the right man to give Britain a much needed boost. At the end of the war on Armistice Day in 1918, he declared: "This is no time for words. Our hearts are too full of gratitude to which no tongue can give adequate expression." Lloyd George was widely acclaimed as the man who had won the First World War, and in 1918 the coalition party won a huge majority. It was also the first election in which women were allowed to vote.



Lloyd George's personal belongings on display at the museum

Despite his success, he was troubled by other problems. His agreement to the independence of the South of Ireland was reluctant, and he presided over a period of depression, unemployment and strikes. There were also concerns that he was eager for war in Turkey. As a result, his popularity faded. The Tories did not want him as Prime Minister and his own party could not decide whether to support him or abandon him, and the Liberal party never ran the government again.

When the Conservatives broke up the coalition in 1922, Lloyd George handed in his resignation, and spent the 1930s occupying himself with journalism, travel, and the writing of his war memoirs. He then moved to Pembrokeshire to live out his retirement.

In 1944 he returned to Llanystumdwy and was created Earl Lloyd-George of Dwyfor in that same year. He died the following year aged 82. Lloyd George had chosen to be buried in Wales on the banks of his beloved River Dwyfor, and the renowned architect Clough Williams-Ellis was commissioned to design the enclosure around it.



Lloyd George's grave at Llanystumdwy



DAVID LLOYD GEORGE



In 1951, largely due to the driving force of his second wife Frances, it was decided to build a small permanent museum at Llanystumdwy to house the growing collection of Lloyd George memorabilia. Designed again by Clough Williams-Ellis, the museum was finished in 1959, with the impressive entrance gates being a gift from the Royal Borough of Caernarfon, and the gates at the top of the drive were gifted by Pwllheli Borough Council.

This new museum was opened by Lloyd George's brother Dr. William George in 1960. It was originally run by the village trust until 1980, and is now run by Gwynedd County Council and is situated close to Lloyd George's original home of Highgate in Llanystumdwy

Highgate gardens – Childhood home of Lloyd George



The kitchen at Highgate



Lloyd George Museum – Llanystumdwy

Further examples from the collection at Llanystumdwy



Copy of the draft peace accord with silver seal and laurel wreath – the seal was a gift from his wife Frances

DAVID LLOYD GEORGE



Commemorative plate



Lloyd George's Prime Ministerial suit



Lloyd George Teapot

DAVID LLOYD GEORGE

Lloyd George Toby Jugs



Silver replica of Cricieth Castle – presented to Lloyd George – 1919



Manchester Casket – 1918

Further information:

<https://www.gwynedd.llyw.cymru/cy/Trigolion/Hamdden-Parciau-Digwyddiadau/Amgueddfeydd-ar-Celfyddydau/Amgueddfa-Lloyd-George.aspx>

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