

# Owen Owen Roberts

Born 1870.

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*Note: The 1871 Census records Owen Owen Roberts as being aged 1. His parents Thomas and Elizabeth Roberts were 31 and 25 respectively. They were residing in the Parish of Llanbeblig.*

## X. Death of a Popular Tradesman



*Caernarvon.*

*The following sections are archived, with acknowledgement and thanks, from the local Caernarvon newspaper. They are transcribed from a newspaper clipping in the possession of Owen Owen Roberts' grand-daughter Mary Rigg. The name of the newspaper and its date (probably 1931) are unknown.*

It is with deep regret that we announce this week the death of Mr Owen O. Roberts, (managing director of Messrs. Griffith Jones and Co. ironmongers and house furnishers, Caernarvon) which took place on Monday at his residence, Penarth, Llanbenlig Road, Caernarvon, at the age of 61 years.



*Bridge Street, Caernarvon, early 20th century.*

Mr Roberts had not been well for some time, but was able to attend daily to business till within the last fortnight. Some time ago, he went for a sea voyage for the benefit of his health, and returned greatly improved and with an increased zest for work. He was a native of Caernarvon (a son of the late Mr Thomas Roberts, ship carpenter, Chapel Street) and took great interest in every movement for the welfare of the town. After leaving school he was apprenticed to Mr. Griffith Jones, ironmonger and house furnisher, who established the business in Pool Street, and

with which Mr. Roberts had been connected for a period of 45 years. During those years he had seen the business progressing, until to-day it is one of the largest of its kind in Wales, and the progress made was due in a large measure to the energy and activity of Mr Roberts.

As a business man he had a way with him. He knew how to deal with customers. He would humour the dissatisfied ones and interest the diffident ones, and it needs diplomacy to be able to do this. He had one important qualification for a successful tradesman, namely an equitable temper. He was never flurried; on the contrary, he was methodical and painstaking. In brief, he was a man with whom it was a pleasure to do business, and that must have been the opinion of the many travellers who had come into contact with him.

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## 2. On Public Bodies



*Caernarvon Town Hall.*

It was only natural that so active and energetic a business man should have become a member of local public bodies. First of all he became a member of the Caernarvon Chamber of Commerce, and in that capacity was keenly interested in two or three trades exhibitions held at the Pavilion, at which Messrs. Griffith Jones and Co. were prominent exhibitors. Moreover, he used his influence as a member of that body to advance the interests of Caernarvon, of which he was proud to call himself a native. He had great faith in the town as a shopping centre, and it must be admitted that he himself had a large share in popularising it in that respect he believed that judicious advertising was the keystone of success, and it was by such advertising that the firm with which he was so long and honourably connected became so well known.

About three years ago Mr. Roberts was elected a member of the Caernarvon Town Council, and that was a proud day for him. He felt highly honoured by being made a member of the governing body of the town he loved so well. It was true that he did not take a prominent part in the deliberations of the Council. There were two reasons for it. His health had not been robust for some time and he preferred to say what he had to say on any matter of importance in committee, where the real work of every local authority is done.

As a member of the Health Committee he was able to give advice on questions affecting building and sanitation and on the General Purposes Committee and the Pavilion Committee his services were appreciated to the full. On one occasion he made a protest in open Council against interfering with old Welsh place-names. He strongly objected to the substitution of “Y Glyn” for “Cae Carreg” in Bethel Road, and described the former name as not only inappropriate but absurd.

He made a humorous speech, the whole point of it being that the Council, by making the unwarranted substitution referred to, had become the victims of melancholy, for in the Welsh mind the word “glyn” is generally associated with gloom and sadness. But the wiseacres had decided on the change and the lugubrious

word to which Mr. Roberts objected so strongly has been retained although the natives still persist in calling the district in question 'Cae Cerreg' and much more euphonious and suitable name than the one that has replaced it.

Mr. Roberts tenure on the town council terminated at the end of last month. Ill-health had dogged his footsteps and he had intimated that he would not seek re-election. The end came on the last day tht he could be called 'Councillor'. His death coincided with the official severance of his connection with the Council.

It should be stated that Mr. Roberts was also a manager of the Boys' Council School and a member of the Rotary Club.



*Caernarvon between the Wars.*

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### 3. The Drama

But it was outside public bodies that Mr. Roberts was seen at his best. He was the life and soul of a gathering of acquaintances. He was both a wit and a humorist and a company at which he was present was soon transformed. Instead of being dull it would be cheerful. Many were the innocent practical jokes he played upon his friends, but it was all taken in good part, always being a case of 'all is well that ends well'. There were occasions however when he was repaid back in his own coin. One Sunday morning two motoring friends met Mr. Roberts as he was leaving chapel. They invited him into the car and said they would drive him home. The first stop was Bettws-y-y-Coed, whence the car proceeded as far as Gloucester! But Mr. Roberts contrived to be at Llandudno the following day, where he had an important business engagement.

He was greatly interested in the Welsh drama and was a member of the Caernarvon Red Dragon Society. In fact he was one of the founders of that society. It was a minor part that he generally took in a public performance and one reason for that was that little scope for humour had been allowed in Welsh drama until quite recently. But the little he had to do he did well.

There was no straining after effect as far as he was concerned; all was quite natural. In Gwynfor's drama 'Trem yn O' - which by the way was performed on Thursday by the Red Dragon Society - he took the part of John Dafis and those who saw that successful play will remember how Mr. Roberts had equipped himself with a somewhat antiquated umbrella to which was attached a label bearing the name and address of John Dafis. 'My father', he said, 'has lost hundreds of umbrellas but this one keeps coming back'. And that, of course, was because it bore a label. He made interesting a part that might have proved dull in other hands.



*Engedi Chapel*

Mr. Roberts was an active member of Engedi Chapel, where he acted as Sunday school superintendent and Sunday school teacher for many years.

Much sympathy is felt for his widow, his son (Mr. Emrys Roberts, LL.B., who is completing his studies in law at Cambridge) and his daughter (Miss Gweno Roberts, a pupil at Dr. Williams's School, Dolgelley). The funeral (public for men) took place today (Friday), at Caeathro Chapel cemetery.



*Caeathro Cemetery.*

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## 4. The Funeral

The funeral (public for men) of the late Mr. Owen Owen Roberts, Penarth, Llanbeblig Road, Caernarvon, a managing director of Messrs. Griffiths Jones and Company, ironmongers and house furnishers, Caernarvon, took place on Friday afternoon. The interment was at Caeathro Cemetery. The funeral was largely attended, representatives of the Town Council (on which the deceased served) and other public bodies being present.

The Rev. Robert Williams BA, Engedi, and the Rev. J. Owen MA Morfa Nevin (former pastor of Engedi) officiated at the house, and the Rev. W. Llewelyn Evans MA, Siloh, and the Rev. Robert Williams at the graveside. A hymn was sung.

The mourners were:

First car: The Rev. Robert Williams BA; J. Owen MA; W. Llewelyn Evans MA; and Mr. E. P. Evans BA.

Second car: Messrs. John Williams, Hugh Roberts, J Rowlands and Hugh Llewelyn Jones (deacons at Engedi).

Third car: Mr J. Jones Williams and W. Roberts (deacons ditto).

Fourth car: Mr. Emrys Roberts LIB (son) Mr John G. Williams Gwynfryn (brother-in-law), Master Glyn Williams ditto (nephew); Messrs. John Morris, Tithebard Street, Hugh Roberts, Constantine Terrace, and R. J. Adams, Abererch (relatives).

Fifth car: Mr Tom Davies (a managing director of Griffith Jones and Co.), Mr. John G. Roberts, Mr. George Peace (Liverpool) and Mr. T. O. Jones (Gwynfor).

Sixth car: Messrs. O. J. Elias, Pool Street, Sam Jones, Gwilym Williams, Cricceth, R. Roberts, Bryn Eirian.

In other motor cars: Mr. W. E. Webster JP (Midland Bank), Mr. R. Lloyd Jones (The Nelson), Mr Humphreys, Bron-y-garth, Mr. W. Owen, Barmouth, Mr. J. T. Williams (Inspector, Ministry of Health), Mr. Ellis W. Davies, Mr. H. R. Phillips, Mr. John Bryan, Pool Street, Mr. Richard Jones, Bryn Rhedyn,

Motors were also sent by Mr. Griffith Jones, Cefn Hendre, and Mrs. Davies Ceiriog Villa.

Among those present were: The Revs. Richard Thomas BA, Bontnewydd, Eamor Owen BA, Llanberis, David Hughes MA.

The members of the Caernarvon Town Council present included Aldermen Nath Roberts, John Owen, W. H. Williams, Eleazer Owen, Councillors Griffith W. Jones, Win Jones JP, R. A. Jones, W. J. Matthews, J. W. Pritchard, J. L. Harris, W. Parry, David Edwards, Nefydd Jones, Henry. H. Jones, The Borough Treasurer (Mr. A. Victor Evans), The Sanitary Inspector (Mr. R. Roberts).

Captains Henry Thomas (Maes y Porth), H. Jones (Goodwin), Llewelyn Davies (Bryn Dewi), H. Pugh (Dinorwig Street), Richard Jones (Marine Superintendent). Messrs. William Jones (Crugun), J. T. Jarrett CC, Nevin, John Hughes (Treasurer



County Education Committee), Ellis H. Jones (County Land Agent), J. R. Jones JP (Messrs. Aston and Son Ltd), R. Ll. Jones (Endcliffe), Ieuan G. Jones (Editor, 'North Wales Observer'. H. O. Jones (Eryri Ltd), Dr. Lloyd Williams, Segontium-terrace, Richard Jones (Isallt), W. Jones (Lloyds Bank), David Thomas (solicitor), Griffith Williams, Dinorwic Street, do, D. E. Pritchard, do, T. E. Griffith, do, D. E. Roberts Bryn Deulyn, Percy Evans, Pool Street, O. Llew Owain (Editor of 'Y Genedi'), R. Hughes, Nelog House, O. Owens and Rees Hughes, Maesteg, Vaynol Road, John Owen, coal merchant, G. Owen, Bron Dinas, Richard Roberts, High Street, Robert Jones, Market Street, J. Wynne Parry, Tithebarn Street, T. Griffiths, Islwyn, Vaynol Street, D. Roberts, Tremydon, T. G. Jones, Dinorwic Street. J. Jones, draper, Pool Street, J. Roberts, jeweller, do, W. Roberts, Drakelow, Owen Humphreys, Pengelli, J. T. Jones, Hafern, Segontium Terrace, Robert Williams, High Street, J. O. Parry, Victoria Street, J. Lewis Evans, Gwendolen, High Street, W. J. Jones, Edward Street, Capt. Jones, Chapel Street, Llewelyn Griffith, Vaynor Street, H. W. Jones, Marcus Street, G. John Pritchard, LLainbypur Terrace, R. Trevor Jones, Tithebarn Street, Lewis Jones, Ardwyn, D. Thomas (Hepworth), Edward Hughes, Bro Derwydd, R. J. Hughes, Pool Lane, O. P. Griffith, Berwyn, R. D. Owen, Tanybryn, John Evans, Greengate Garage, William Griffith, Shop Mount, W. T. Owen, Rhiw, R. O. Morris Llanberis Road, Osborn Hughes, Penybryn, H. Gough Jones, Palace Café, J. E. Ethall BA, Pool Street, Arthur Davies, Bronfa, Harry Owen, G. Roberts, Glan Don, Porthaethwy, Dr. Lloyd Williams, Mr. Hugh M. Jones, Ynysfa, Hugh Owen, Dinorwic Street, Evans, Olgra House, D. J. Williams, Tronoh, J. Roberts, Mona Hotel, J. Eastman, Pool Street, E. Williams, Minfor, John Griffith, Bron Seiont, W. Thorman, Bangor Street, W. Williams, Bryn Meirion, Frank Thomas, Vaynol Street, A. Vaughan Evans, Uxbridge Square, A. E. Wright (Goods Manager, LMS), Thomas Jones, Vaynol Street, T. S. Ingham and Ted Ingham, Church Street, John Parry, Dinorwic Street, Richard Parry, New Street, John Nanney, Moriah Terrace, D. R. Williams, Bron Caerog, R. S. Williams, Argoed, Clarke Terrace, Rowland Williams, Pool Street, Capt. Griffiths, Nefyn, W. O. Hughes, High Street, R. C. Jones, Llanbeblig Road, Evan Owen, Church Street, Norman Evans, Dinorwic Street, W. Owen, Bronallt, Segontium Road South, W. Watkin Jones, Quantan, do, Evan Jones, Cefnhengwrt, J. Jones, do, W. J. Williams, Bethel, Morris Hughes, Pool Street, R. Davies, Segontium Terrace, R. Griffith, Gelert Street, Hugh Williams, 27 Pool Hill, R. H. Jones, Castle Mineral Works, Charles Bracegirdle, 31 Margaret Street, O. Simms, The Barracks, D. H. Thomas, Maple House, Dinorwic Street, David Thomas, solicitor, John Owen, Hafod Terrace, W. Jones Williams, Pool Street, Thomas Jones, Llanmor, Gelert Street, William Hughes, Gwynlla, do, T. Lloyd Jones, Snowdon Street, G. J. Roberts, Trem Arfon, Bontnewydd, R. Edwards, Y Cartref, do, Robert Williams, Marcus Street, W. Williams, Wynn Street, Robert Jones, Caer Mawr, John Roberts, 48 Hendre Street, Griffith Jone, Cefn Emrys, Jones, Tros Terfyn, and Owen Jones, 20 Gaol Street, Pwllheli,

Staff of Messrs. Griffith Jones and Co. viz: Misses K. M. Roberts, Parry, K. Jones, Greta Evans, Bessie Roberts, M. Griffith, B. Griffith, Dora Roberts and Eirian Pritchard. Messrs. John Williams, R. Pritchard, J. O. Roberts, J. Emrys Jones, W. H. Jones, Wilfrid Roberts, Hugh Parry, William Griffith, Ifor Thomas, J. Davies Jones, Thomas Roberts, T. J. Griffith, E. M. Jones, Gwylfa Roberts, R. M. Williams, Idwal

Owen, Albert Griffith, W. O. Griffith, Willoughby M. Williams, George Fitter, Thomas Williams (brother-in-law), W. M. Howell and R. J. Ellis. Also Messrs. S. Edwards, Helena Terrace, J. G. Williams, Marcus Street, W. J. Williams (former members of the staff).

The bearers were Messrs. R. Pritchard, J. Williams, W. P. Williams, Hugh Parry, Tom Williams, and T. J. Griffith; and on the graveside Messrs. Gwilym Williams, Criccieth, Tom Davies, H. R. Phillips, T. O. Jones (Gwynfor), O. J. Elias, and Robert Jones.

Wreaths were sent by the following: Teulu Bronfa, All at Birmingham House, Deiniolen, Capt. And Mrs. Thomas, Maesyorth, Mr. T. H Williams, a'r teulu, Kingswood, Mr. & Mrs. Iorwerth Hughes, Abergele, Mr. A. J. Wilkins, Glinllifon, Mrs. D. W. Davies, Cissie a Mair, Moss Bank, Mr. & Mrs. H. O. Jones, 19 Victoria Street, Bryn Dinas, Dinorwig Street, Misses M. W. Woodward, Brynial, Mr. George A. Peace, Liverpool, Mrs. Jones, Beulah Square, Maggie Griffith Jones, Cefn Hendre, Miss Williams, Mama, Nain, Emrys a Gwenno, Gwenno bach, Nell, Henfaes, Madge Gwynfor, Teulu Gwynfryn, Teulu Craignos, Mayor, Aldermen and Burgesses of the Borough of Caernarvon.

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