

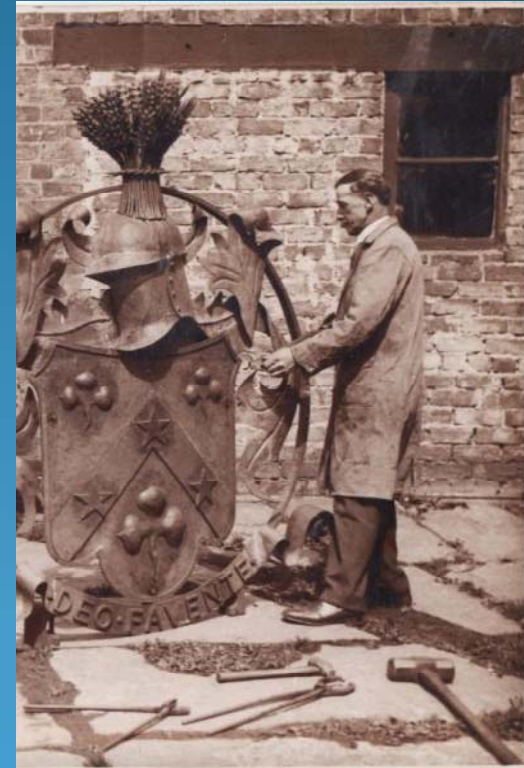
TWO MEN FROM CAERNARFON



Photo by Wickens, Bangor.

*The Right Hon. D. Lloyd George, Chancellor of the Exchequer
(Constable of the Castle).*

THE STORY OF DAVID LLOYD
GEORGE EARL OF DWYFOR AND
DAVID JOHN WILLIAMS MASTER
ART METAL WORKER.



TWO MEN FROM CAERNARFON

This is the story of David Lloyd George MP and David John Williams an art metal worker both local men from Caernarfon.

The story begins in 1909 at the National Eisteddfod, which was held at the Royal Albert Hall London. This was the year that the talents of DJ Williams, first came to prominence, he won first prize for the garden gate that he designed for Lady Turner of Caernarfon.

THIS IS THE GATE
CREATED BY D.J
WILLIAMS FOR LADY
TURNER. IT WON 1ST
PRIZE AT THE
NATIONAL EISTEDDFOD
IN 1909



At the same time another local man, David Lloyd George was Chancellor of the Exchequer and was emerging as one of the great social reformers of the twentieth century. He had already introduced the Old Age Pensions Act and was in the process of presenting the Peoples Budget to Parliament.

In 1911 the two men from Caernarfon embarked on their first joint venture. David Lloyd George was Constable of Caernarfon Castle and was instrumental in resurrecting the Investitures of the Prince of Wales at Caernarfon Castle. The castle required considerable work to ensure that it would be a suitable venue for the Investiture. DJ Williams was commissioned to create the railings for the outside of the castle, the lock and key for the Eagle Tower, the light fittings for the retiring rooms of the King and Queen, and the Ceremonial key that was to be presented to the King by David Lloyd George; in his capacity as Constable of the castle. The art metal work that was designed for the Investiture of the Prince of Wales in July 1911 can still be seen in the Castle

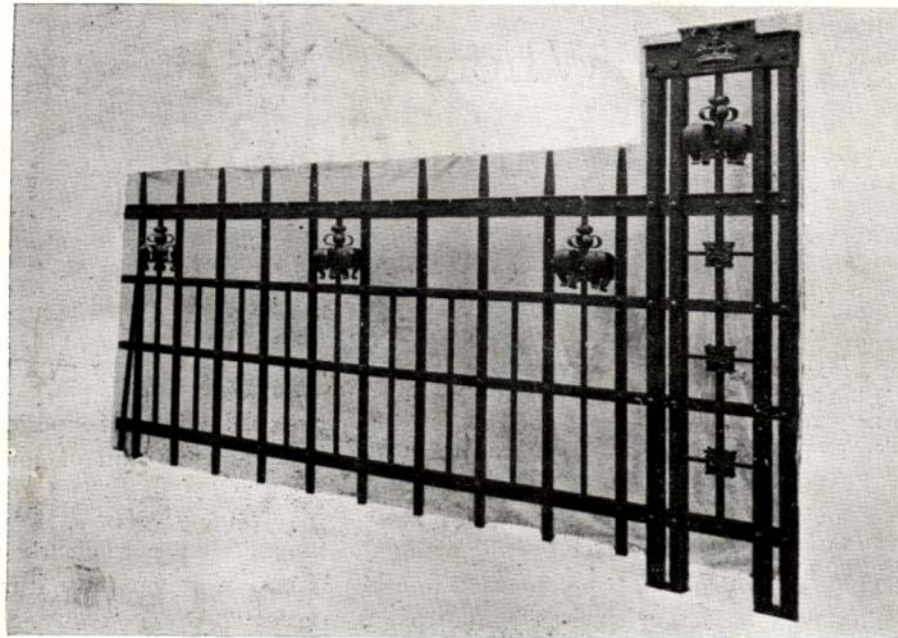
IRONWORK FOR CARNARVON CASTLE.
MADE BY D. J. WILLIAMS,



The two men from Caernarfon continued to work together. In 1913 DJ Williams was commissioned to create the wrought iron railings and gates for the Victoria Tower Gardens at the Houses of Parliament. These railings and gates were of a modern contemporary design and highlighted the skills of DJ Williams as a gifted art metal worker. Unfortunately, these gates and railings were taken for scrap during the Second World War and were melted down as part of the war effort.

WROUGHT IRON NEW RAILINGS

VICTORIA TOWER GARDENS, HOUSES OF PARLIAMENT
WESTMINSTER, S.W.



800 feet of these Railings were made, and 3 Gates to match. Hammered
Antique. Over 50 tons of Iron used.

David Lloyd George during this period was continuing with his social reforms, he had established himself as one of the longest serving Chancellors of the Exchequer. He had successfully introduced the Old Age Pensions Act and the National Insurance Act 1911.

However, it was not until 1920 when David Lloyd George was Prime Minister having gained victory over Germany during the First World War that the two men from Caernarfon collaborated on the Tomb of the Unknown Warrior. David Lloyd George had steered Britain to victory but the cost was high, 885,000 men did not return from the war. Many families could not mourn the dead, because in 1915 the decision had been taken not to repatriate the fallen. For many families this left a void that could not be filled, the cost of visiting the Battlefields was beyond the means of most families, but worse still many thousands had no graves; lost forever in the mud of Flanders Fields. However, in 1920 the Dean of Westminster Herbert Ryle suggested the creation of a grave in Westminster Abbey for all those men who never returned home. The idea had originated in 1916 when the Reverend David Railton a serving Padre during the war had seen a simple cross inscribed with the words;

AN UNKNOWN SOLDIER OF THE BLACK WATCH.

David Lloyd George was fully committed to the idea and even managed to persuade the King;

The king took some persuading but gave way to the enthusiasm of his Prime Minister Lloyd George.

With the support of Lloyd George, DJ Williams was the obvious choice as the art metal worker who would create the ironwork for the coffin of the Unknown Warrior. DJ Williams was sent a telegram in early November 1920 requesting his presence in London on a matter most urgent. He arrived in London was commissioned to create the handles for the coffin, the iron banding that would bind the coffin and to antique hammer the plaque that was to be placed on top of the coffin. The plaque was to carry the inscription;

**A BRITISH WARRIOR WHO FELL IN THE GREAT WAR OF 1914-1918
FOR KING AND COUNTRY.**

DJ Williams worked for two days and night to ensure that the work was completed in time, so that the coffin could be taken to France to bring home the body of the Unknown Soldier that had been selected for burial in Westminster Abbey on November 11th 1920. The Unknown Warrior was buried in Westminster Abbey in the presence of the King and Queen and Lloyd George in Westminster Abbey. The part that DJ Williams played in this act of national remembrance being acknowledged through a letter from Sir Lionel Earle the Secretary to H.M. Office of Works.



COFFIN OF THE UNKNOWN WARRIOR.
SHOWING THE IRONWORK MADE BY D.J. WILLIAMS

The two men from Caernarfon continued to work together. In 1923 DJ Williams was commissioned to create the ironwork for a wooden casket that was going to be presented to King George V to mark the reopening of Westminster Hall after the fire that nearly destroyed it. The casket was made from oak that survived the fire, and the metal work was created from melting down metal spikes from the original roof of Westminster Hall. The casket was presented to the King on July 17th 1923. Although by this time Lloyd George had resigned as Prime Minister and was taking a back seat in politics, but it is assumed that he was present at the ceremony in his capacity as the Member of Parliament for Caernarfon.



THE WESTMINSTER CASKET SHOWING
IRONWORK CREATED BY D.J WILLIAMS.

After his resignation as Prime Minister in 1922 the career of Lloyd George was in decline, whereas the reputation of DJ Williams was on the ascension. In 1926 DJ Williams worked for Lloyd George installing dog grates, electric light fittings and newel posts for the staircase in Lloyd George's new London home; 2 Addison Road Kensington.

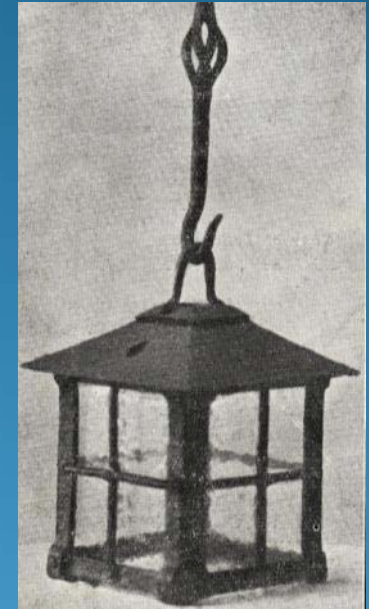


LIGHT FITTINGS
CREATED BY D.J
WILLIAMS FOR THE
HOME OF DLG IN
LONDON 1926

The two men from Caernarfon were to work together once again in 1937. Lloyd George was still Constable of Caernarfon Castle and was responsible for the visit of their Majesties, King George VI and Queen Elizabeth to Caernarfon. DJ Williams was commissioned to design and install antique lamps for the retiring rooms of their Majesties. The visit of King George VI and Queen Elizabeth marked the end of the working relationship between these two men from Caernarfon.

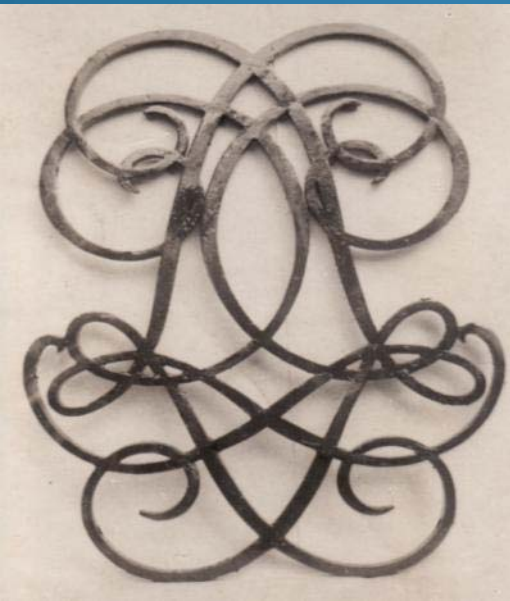


AS SUPPLIED TO CAERNARFON
CASTLE FOR THE RETIRING
ROOMS OF THEIR MAJESTIES
KING GEORGE VI. AND QUEEN
ELIZABETH, ON THE OCCASION
OF THEIR VISIT TO
CAERNARFON, JULY 15 1937



But this is not quite the end of the story. They worked together on one last commission, the burial of one and the recognition of the talents of the other as one of the most gifted art metal workers of the twentieth century.

Lloyd George died in 1945; his wish was to be buried beside his beloved River Dwyfor in Llandstumwdy close to his childhood home. In the death of Lloyd George the relationship between these two men from Caernarfon was to be immortalised. Sir Clough Williams Ellis was commissioned to create the designs for the tomb for Lloyd George; he designed a monogram and a set of gates. DJ Williams then transferred his designs into metal; Lloyd George was buried beside the river Dwyfor.



THE MONOGRAM AND GATES DESIGNED BY SIR CLOUGH WILLIAMS ELLIS FOR THE GRAVE OF DLG. THE DESIGNS BEING RECREATED IN METAL BY D.J WILLIAMS.



This is the end of the story of the two men from Caernarfon. A journey that lasted thirty six years, a time that saw great social reforms, two world wars and the emergence of a modern Britain. It is the story of how two men from Caernarfon in their own unique way, created a lasting heritage that reflected the changes that took place during their lifetimes.

POST SCRIPT.

During the next twenty one years DJ Williams continued to establish himself as a gifted art metal worker, teaching his skills to his son Harold who in turn passed the skills onto his son Meurig; who continues the family tradition.

DJ Williams died in October 1966 leaving behind a lasting visual record of his skill as one of the most talented art metal workers of the twentieth century. A heritage that is hopefully going to help to restore the fortunes of Caernarfon. It is envisioned that the story of the Two Men from Caernarfon will play a key role in helping to create a heritage centre for the town.

The above story emerged as part of my PhD research into the heritage of the Brunswick Ironworks in Caernarfon this was the company that was founded by DJ Williams in 1906.

My research has discovered the original letter from Lloyd George, thanking DJ Williams for the work at 2, Addison Road Kensington. This is the only piece of written evidence that I have come across that supports the working relationship between these two men from Caernarfon. I have also found a letter from Sir Clough Williams Ellis that confirms the final part of the story the work that DJ Williams did on the Tomb of Lloyd George.

However, in 2006 the Grandson of DJ Williams and I travelled down to Westminster Abbey to show them the artifacts that the Brunswick Ironworks have relating to the work undertaken by DJ Williams on the Tomb of the Unknown Warrior in Westminster Abbey. 2006 was the 90th Anniversary of the Battle of the Somme; the artifacts were exhibited at the foot of the Tomb of the Unknown Warrior in the Abbey over the Remembrance weekend.



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