

## **Notice of death of Dr John Edwards, Obituary and Appreciation**

**The Glasgow Herald, Thursday 4<sup>th</sup> February, 1937, p. 13**

### **-A Glasgow man of Scholarship-**

-Death of Mr John Edwards, LL.D.-

-Studies in History and Antiquities-

We regret to announce the death of Mr John Edwards L.L.D., which occurred yesterday at his residence, 4 Great Western Terrace, Glasgow. Over a long period of years he was actively associated with many of the learned societies in the city.

Towards the end of last year Dr Edwards underwent a minor operation, and he had been in frail health for some considerable time.

Dr Edwards, who was born in 1846, was the son of the Rev. John Edwards, who for over 50 years was minister of what was originally the Relief Church at Greenhead, Glasgow.

He was educated at the High School, then situated in John Street, and was one of the few survivors of the period when Dr Bryce, the distinguished father of an illustrious son, was one of the masters.

-Authority in Historical Fields-

From the High School he proceeded to the the old College in the High Street, where he matriculated in 1863. His original choice of profession was the law, and he spent 10 years in a law office, and was admitted as a notary public.

Although qualified for admission to the Faculty of Procurators, he was induced by family considerations to become a partner in the well-known Glasgow firm of Dyers, Alexander Harvey and Son. He became the senior partner, and continued to control the business until 1902 [2 might be 8], when changing conditions in manufactures and southward tendency in the dyeing industry led him to retire.

He married in 1899 Margaret, daughter of the late John Burnet, the distinguished Glasgow architect, by whom he is survived.

From early days Dr Edwards had cherished an ambition to emancipate himself from the toils of business at the age of 50, and to devote the remainder of his life to what he described as his hobbies. He had, in fact, passed his self appointed limit by 6 years when he found himself free to pursue his studies in history and antiquities; but fortune was kind to him, and though he never enjoyed robust health, he was rarely ill.

In the course of almost 35 years of leisure he was able to make himself an authority in some historical fields and at the same time to render valuable service to the intellectual life of the city. His main interests lay in the records of the religious orders, and especially of the Templars, the Gilbertines and the Greyfriars.

-Learned in Glasgow Lore-

The Latin which had been drilled into him in his youth, and had not been forgotten in the years of his active life, laid the foundation of a serviceable knowledge of mediaeval Latin, and he taught himself to read with ease the calligraphy of mediaeval documents.

Of the Templars and the Gilbertines in Scotland he knew more than probably any other scholar, and his papers upon these topics in the Transactions of the Glasgow Archaeological Society and elsewhere were original contributions to the elucidation of obscure historical episodes.

He read widely in mediaeval history, and kept himself, to the end of his life, abreast of the results of modern investigations into ecclesiastical records of the later middle ages.

A loyal son of Glasgow by birth and by education, he was learned in Glasgow history, and he retained a warm affection for the High School and the University.

His Alma Mater's recognition of his scholarship by the conferment of an honorary LLD degree in 1919 gave him great pleasure. The Dean of the Faculty of Law, in presenting him for his degree, spoke of him as 'a writer rich in ancient lore, and a guide, philosophyer, and friend to his generation.' The fruits of his wisdom and experience were generously lavished upon learned societies and institutions.

-Interest in many institutions-

At different times he was president of the Athenaeum, the Royal Philosophical Society, the Archaeological Society, and the Glasgow Humane Society, and in each instance his presidency followed and crowned many years of loyal and faithful service in committee or in council.

He was a vice president of the Glasgow Savings Bank. Outside Glasgow he was a Fellow of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland, a member of the Antiquaries Club, and for some years a member of the council of the Scottish Text Society.

His interest in these institutions did not cease with the relinquishment of office, and he was always ready to give advice and assistance to his successors. The intellectual life of Glasgow is much poorer by his loss.

Dr Edwards had been for many years a member of Belhaven Church.

-An Appreciation-

In an appreciation of Dr Edwards, an intimate friend writes:-

'The honourable record of Dr Edwards's devotion to scholarship and to the learned societies of Glasgow is easy to narrate. It is more difficult to convey to those who knew him only slightly the impression of a singularly charming, if somewhat elusive, personality. A shyness which was part of the essential modesty of his nature tended to conceal both the extent of his knowledge and the resources of a quiet and delicate humour.

'He took his share in general conversation, but it was only in the intimacy of his happy and hospitable home that his gift of good talk was fully revealed or the vigour and shrewdness of his

judgement. Kindly and genial and an admirable host, he entertained many visitors to Glasgow, but not all of them realised the force that lay behind his gentle manner or gauged the enthusiasm of which he was capable.

'Yet he was a man of many friends, and he retained to old age the power of making friendships as he retained also the freshness of his sympathies. When I first knew him he was approaching the Psalmist's limit of human life but age was never 'labour and sorrow,' and I cannot picture a happier way of growing old than his.

'It was not merely gratitude for a friendship of many years that led me to regard John Edwards as a type and a model of that cultured and public spirited citizenship which is a noble Glasgow tradition'.