

## SAMUEL, HOWEL WALTER (1881 - 1953), judge and politician

**Name:** Howel Walter Samuel  
**Date of birth:** 1881  
**Date of death:** 1953  
**Spouse:** Annie Gwladys Gregg (née Samuel)  
**Spouse:** Harriott Sawyer Samuel (née Polkinghorne)  
**Parent:** Thomas Samuel  
**Gender:** Male  
**Occupation:** judge and politician  
**Area of activity:** Law; Politics, Government and Political Movements  
**Authors:** Evan David Jones, Mary Auronwy James

Born 1881 in Fforest-fach, Swansea, son of Thomas Samuel, a rollerman at Cwmbwrlia Tinplate Works. He left Cockett elementary school at the age of 11 to work at Charles colliery, Fforest-fach. A colliery accident in 1906 left him lame and affected his health for the rest of his life. It was this accident that changed the course of his life, for he took to reading when he was bedridden. He recommenced work in Garn-goch pit 3, where **David Rhys Grenfell** (later a Member of Parliament for Gower) was one of his workmates. He took an interest in socialist activities and was one of the secretaries of Swansea Labour Society. In a Socialist holiday school in Caister-on-sea he met Harriott Sawyer Polkinghorne, a London schoolmistress. They were married in 1911 and she strongly urged him to devote himself to his studies. Her efforts were rewarded when he was called to the Bar by the Middle Temple in 1915 and he was elevated a K.C. in 1931, recorder of Merthyr Tydfil (1930-33), and a judge on the Mid-Wales circuit in succession to **Ivor Bowen** in 1933. Following his appointment he and his wife moved to Llandrindod Wells. In the meantime he became the first Labour Member of Parliament for Swansea West, defeating Sir Alfred Mond by 115 votes in December 1923, but losing the seat to Walter Runciman in October 1924, regaining it in May 1929, and losing it once again by more than six thousand votes to **Lewis Jones** in October 1931. He became one of the foremost barristers of his day in Wales. He gained prominence in workers' compensation cases and was chairman of the South Wales conscientious objectors' tribunal for some years. He was exceptionally competent and courageous, and had a great gift of friendship with people in all walks of life.

His wife died in Swansea, 19 August 1939, and he married (2) in Llandrindod Wells, 24 April 1941, Lady Annie Gwladys, widow of Sir Henry Gregg and daughter of David Morlais Samuel, Swansea. As ' Morlais ' she was a member of the Gorsedd. He died 5 April 1953.

### Authors

**Evan David Jones**, (1903 - 1987)

**Dr Mary Auronwy James**

### Sources

*Who was who?*

*The Times*, 7 April 1953

*The Biographical Index of W. W. Price, Aberdŵr*

### Further Reading

Wikipedia Article: [Howel Walter Samuel](#)

### Additional Links

Wikidata: [Q15998437](#)

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