



Hugh Owen 1804-1881: Hugh Owen was an Anglesey man of little formal education who had gone to London in his early twenties and made a considerable career in the civil service. In the 1840s he stipulated the flurry of school-building by the British and Foreign Schools Society in North Wales and was active in educational work on behalf of deaf and dumb children in Wales. By the 1850s he turned his attention to the question of Welsh higher education. Unlike others, he had no inhibitions about utilising public funds for educational purposes. Hugh Owen's importance within the committee behind setting up the first Welsh University College is evident in manuscript minutes and he was made honorary secretary. He wrote English and Welsh versions of the appeal for funds, he negotiated on behalf of the committee with the Education Department; he was the link with the Welsh MPs and spoke publicly throughout North Wales. E. L. Ellis described him as a "first-rate man of business: adroit, assiduous, painstaking, with a good eye for essentials and a remarkable talent for button-holing the half-interested and engaging their enthusiasm". He played a central role in the founding of the first Welsh University, and actively fought for it from the 1850s. Thus, in recognition the University's central library built on Penglais Campus was named the Hugh Owen Library.