

## Williams, Evan Owen 1890 - 1979



Evan Owen Williams was born in Tottenham, London, England on 20 March 1898. Whilst serving an apprenticeship with the Metropolitan Electric Tramways Company, he attended evening classes at the Northern Polytechnic Institute from where he graduated with a first-class honours degree in engineering in 1911. He then worked briefly for the Indented Bar and Concrete Engineering Company, and an architect and engineer for the Trussed Concrete Company in London from 1912 to 1916. In 1916–17 Williams worked for the Wells Aviation Company and in 1917-18 with the Admiralty where he explored the possibility of constructing concrete ships, something he was to return to during World War Two.

Following World War One, he opened an office in London and was in private practice from 1919 to 1939 when he commenced a partnership, first with T.S. Vardy, and later with O.T. Williams. He was consulting engineer for the British Empire Exhibition held in 1924-25.

From 1945 to 1969 he acted as Consulting Engineer for Motorway Construction to the Ministry of Transport from 1945 to 1969.

Williams received a knighthood for his services to architecture and engineering in 1924. He died in Hemel Hempstead, Hertfordshire on 23 May 1969.

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See also: British Listed Buildings [*link below*]

Worked in  
UK  
Works

Projects by Williams included the Walls Factory in Acton, London (1919), a tannery in Runcorn, England (1920), Ice-making plant in Hull, England (1921), the Palace of Industry for the British Empire Exhibition held in Wembley London 1924-25 (1923), the Parc des Attractions at the Exposition des Arts Décoratifs et Industriels Moderne in Paris (1925), Lea Valley Viaduct, London, and the Montrose Bridge, Wansford River Spey and Findhorn bridges in Scotland (all 1925-30), Cumberland Garage, London (1930), the Boots Factory in Beeston, Nottingham (1932 and 1937), a cement factory in Thurrock, England (1933), the Pioneer Health Centre in Peckham, London, Sainsbury's warehouse in Southwark, London, and the Empire Swimming Pool and Sports Arena in Wembley, London (all 1934), Lilley & Skinner's warehouse in Pentonville, London (1935), Odhams printing works in Watford, England and a synagogue in Dollis Hill, London (both 1937), installations at Wembley Stadium in London for the Olympic Games (1948) and the British Overseas Airways Corporation Maintenance Headquarters and Hangers at London Airport - Heathrow (1950-54).

## Bibliography

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Foot, Royston. 'The Life and Work of Sir Owen Williams 1890-1969' in British Architecture and Design in the 1930s. Edited Suannah Charlton, Elain Harwood and Alan Powers. The Journal of the Twentieth Century Society, no. 8, 2007 pp.80-88

Gold, Michael. 'Sir Owen Williams, KBE'. Zodiac vol. 18, 1968 pp. 11-30

Harwood, Elain. Art Deco Britain: Buildings of the Interwar Years. London: Batsford, 2019

'Obituary'. The Builder vol. 216, 30 May 1969 pp. 22, 61

Parlmutter, Roy. 'Engineer's aesthetic vs architecture: the design and performance of the Empire Pool, Wembley'. Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians vol. 31, March 1972 pp. 56-60 [The Empire Pool (also known as Empire Pool and Sports Arena) was built for the 1934 British Empire Games at Wembley and designed by Evan Owen Williams]

Powers, Alan. Modern. The Modern Movement in Britain. London: Merrell, 2005

Ritchie, Thomas. 'A new restaurant at Wembley Stadium'. architect and Building News vol. 153, 25 February 1938 pp. 249-251 [Restaurant opposite Wembley Stadium designed by Evan Owen Williams and built in 1937-38]

#### Links

- Wikipedia [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Owen\\_Williams\\_%28engineer%29](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Owen_Williams_%28engineer%29)
- David Cottam. Williams, Sir (Evan) Owen Grove Art Online. Oxford Art Online [Subscription service] <http://www.oxfordartonline.com/subscriber/article/grove/art/T091682?q=Williams%2C%20>
- Great Buildings Online [http://www.greatbuildings.com/architects/Sir\\_Owen\\_Williams.html](http://www.greatbuildings.com/architects/Sir_Owen_Williams.html)
- Andrew Saint. Williams, Sir (Evan) Owen. Oxford Dictionary of National Biography Online [Subscription service] <https://doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/51931>
- Grace's Guide to British Industrial History [https://www.gracesguide.co.uk/Evan\\_Owen\\_Williams](https://www.gracesguide.co.uk/Evan_Owen_Williams)
- The National Archives <https://discovery.nationalarchives.gov.uk/details/c/F64793>
- National Portrait Gallery, London <https://www.npg.org.uk/collections/search/person/mp06454/sir-ewan-owen-williams>
- British Listed Buildings - 30 listed buildings by Evan Owen Williams <https://britishlistedbuildings.co.uk/site-search/?q=%22Owen%20Williams%22>
- Historic England - Building D34 (fire station) at Boots Factory Site, Beeston, Nottinghamshire <https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1247933>
- Historic England - Building D6 at Boots Factory Site, Beeston, Nottinghamshire <https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1278028>
- Historic England - Building D10 at Boots Factory Site, Beeston, Nottinghamshire <https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1247927>
- Engineering Timelines [http://www.engineering-timelines.com/who/Williams\\_O/williamsOwen.asp](http://www.engineering-timelines.com/who/Williams_O/williamsOwen.asp)