

JONES, WILLIAM (1726 - 1795), antiquary and poet

Name: William Jones
Date of birth: 1726
Date of death: 1795
Parent: Catherine David
Parent: William John David
Gender: Male
Occupation: antiquary and poet
Area of activity: History and Culture; Poetry
Author: Enid Pierce Roberts

Son of William John David and Catherine his wife. The father was a guard on the coach which ran between Shrewsbury and Machynlleth but also farmed Dôl Hywel, Llangadfan, Montgomeryshire, where William Jones lived all his life. He was christened in Llangadfan parish church, 18 June 1726.

The only education he had was when one of [Griffith Jones](#)'s schools was set up for a short time in the neighbourhood, but he set to work to educate himself. He wrote good English although he spoke it with difficulty. He mastered Latin and translated portions of Horace and Ovid into Welsh verse. He corresponded with the Gwyneddigion and contemporary men of letters and collected folk-songs and country dances for [Edward Jones](#) (Bardd y Brenin), and poetry, together with notes on the metres, for [Owain Myfyfyr](#). He also collected the pedigrees of the old Welsh families with a view to their publication. Descriptions which he wrote of the parishes of Llanerfyl, Llangadfan, and Garth-beibio were published by [Gwallter Mechain](#) in the *Cambrian Register*, 1796.

He was greatly influenced by the works of Voltaire, wrote articles and delivered speeches in favour of national independence, and sought to persuade the local inhabitants to emigrate to the U.S.A. and set up a Welsh colony in Kentucky. In this connection he wrote to Sir William Pulteney, M.P. for Shrewsbury, to ask him to raise the matter in Parliament, and also to Mr. Pinckney, the American ambassador in 1792 and 1794, but nothing came of his plan.

He loathed all forms of oppression and every kind of adulation of the English. In 1786 he wrote on behalf of the tenants to [Sir Watkin Williams-Wynn](#) complaining of the tyranny of his stewards. As he was one of the supporters of the French Revolution, Government ordered his letters to be opened and examined, and to avoid this he had them addressed to John Jones of Stonehouse. For all that, he was a zealous Churchman, pouring scorn on the Methodists. He was a churchwarden in 1769 and again in 1787. He succeeded in curing himself of scrofula and was frequently in demand as a physician. He had planned to publish his book of household remedies, but abandoned the idea when a law was brought out prohibiting those who were not licensed from practising as physicians. He died 20 August 1795 and was buried in Llangadfan churchyard.

[Evan Breeze](#) (Ieuan Cadfan), schoolmaster and Wesleyan lay preacher, author of two books of carols, and [Evan Jones](#) (Bardd y Nant), a fine example of a witty country poet, were his grandsons.

From time to time, he used the pseudonyms Cadvan, Gwilym Cadvan, and W. Cadvan.

Author

Dr [Enid Pierce Roberts](#)

Sources

T. R. Roberts, *Eminent Welshmen: a short biographical dictionary of Welshmen... from the earliest times to the present* (1908)

Cambrian Register (1795â€“1818), 1796

Cymru (O.M.E.), 1913

R. Williams, *Montgomeryshire Worthies* (1894), 164-5

Llangadfan parish church registers

NLW Archives: [NLW MS 1641B](#), [NLW MS 1806E](#), [NLW MS 1891E](#)

Further Reading

Wikipedia Article: [William Jones](#)

Additional Links

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