

PARRY, RICHARD (Gwalchmai; 1803 - 1897), Independent minister, poet, and man of letters

Name: Richard Parry
Pseudonym: Gwalchmai
Date of birth: 1803
Date of death: 1897
Parent: Margaret Parry (née Williams)
Parent: Richard Parry
Gender: Male
Occupation: Independent minister, poet, and man of letters
Area of activity: Eisteddfod; Literature and Writing; Poetry; Religion
Author: Richard Griffith Owen

Born 19 January 1803 at Llannerch-y-medd. His father, Richard Parry, was a currier and leather manufacturer; his mother (Margaret Williams) was from Gwalchmai, and had inherited a fairly considerable portion from her family; **Thomas Parry** (1809 - 1874) was his brother; all were Calvinistic Methodists. He received a sound elementary education at a local church school, but left at the age of 12 to be apprenticed to a saddler. He was keenly interested in books, and played a prominent part in the work of the chapel; he was elected a deacon while still a young man, and during this period began to compete in the eisteddfodau. In 1829 **Caledfryn** became Independent minister at Llannerch-y-medd, and the two became great friends; it was **Caledfryn** who taught him the art of *cynganedd*. Before long he himself joined the Independents and began to preach in their chapels. In 1836 he was ordained as joint minister (with Robert Roberts of Treban) at Bryngwran; in 1838 he left to take charge of the churches at Henryd and Conway, where he remained for ten years. In 1848 he went to Llandoverly, but he does not seem to have been happy there, and in 1850 he returned to North Wales and settled at Ffestiniog, where he had charge of Llan-ffestiniog and Bethania churches. Four years later he returned to Conway. His mind was now set on establishing a church at Llandudno which was rapidly developing as a sea-side resort and, with this in view, he moved there. With the support of a number of wealthy English people he succeeded in building a chapel for both English and Welsh services. He retired in 1881, died 7 February 1897, and was buried in Llan-rhos churchyard, Llandudno.

He was one of the joint editors of *Y Dysgedydd* from 1853 to 1864. He won ten eisteddfod chairs and a great number of other prizes. He published: *Adgofion am John Elias*, 1859; *Enwogion Môn*, 1877; *Glan Geirionydd*, with notes; *Yr Adroddiadur Barddonol*, 1877; and *History of Ancient Eisteddfodau*. He was one of the most prolific Welsh writers of the 19th century, but not much of his work is of permanent value. He was a representative of his age, which regarded 'winning at the eisteddfod as an achievement in itself, and the proof of a poet's greatness as established by his photograph taken with a cluster of medals on his chest.'

Author

Reverend Richard Griffith Owen, (1890 - 1973)

Sources

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T. Parry, *Hanes Llenyddiaeth Gymraeg hyd 1900* (1944), 267

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Works

Richard Parry (Gwalchmai), *Dechreuad a chynnydd Ymneillduaeth yn MÃ'n* (Amlwch 1882)

Evan Evans, William John Roberts and Richard Parry (Gwalchmai) (eds.), *Geirionydd: Cyfansoddiadau Barddorol, Cerddorol, a Rhyddieithol y diweddar Barch. Evan Evans (Ieuan Glan Geirionydd). Wedi eu Casglu a'u Trefnu gan ei Nai, W. J. Roberts, Trefriw, gyda Nodiadau ar ei Fwyd a'i Weithiau Llenyddol* (1862)

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