

WILLIAMS, ALICE MATILDA LANGLAND (1867-1950), otherwise Alys Mallt, but more generally known as Y Fonesig Mallt Williams author and celtophile

Name: Alice Matilda Langland Williams
Pseudonym: Alys Mallt, Y Fonesig Mallt Williams
Date of birth: 1867
Date of death: 1950
Parent: Jane Williams (née Robertson)
Parent: John James Williams
Gender: Female
Occupation: author and celtophile
Area of activity: Literature and Writing; Patriots
Author: Evan David Jones

Born in Oystermouth, Gower (though some sources say in Aberclydach, Tal-y-bont on Usk, Brecknockshire), 4 October 1867, fourth child of John James Williams, M.D. ('Brychan'), one of two sisters of **William Retlaw Williams**. She came in her youth under the influence of **Lady Llanover**, and throughout her long life she retained her interest in Welsh and Celtic cultural and political movements. Her name with that of her sister GWENFRIDA ('Cate ', ' Gwenffreda ferch Brychan'), is linked with that of **Lady Llanover** in a poem entitled ' An Diou Vag ', which François Jaffrennou ('Taldir' composed after the national eisteddfod held at Cardiff in 1899, and published in *Gwerziou gant Abherve ha Taldir*, St. Brieuc, 1899. The two sisters were ' Y Ddau Wynne', joint authors of the novels *One of the Royal Celts*, London 1889, and *A Maid of Cymru*, London 1901. Gwenfrida died in 1914. As Maud Williams of Aberclydach (Llanfigan, Brecknockshire), Mallt was the second person to join Urdd y Delyn founded by **Owen M. Edwards** in 1896. For years this League offered prizes for penillion singing, harp-playing, reading Welsh books and speaking Welsh. Later she used to present prizes for the harp, under the name of ' Gwobrwyon Aberclydach ', at national eisteddfodau. She was the founder and leader of Ysbiwyr y Frenhines in Byddin Cymru under the auspices of *Cymru'r Plant* from 1911 to 1916. The members took an oath to serve Wales with heart, mind, tongue and hand. By then she had moved to live at Plas Gwynnon Dôl in Llanarthne, Carmarthenshire In 1915 she moved again, this time to Plas Pantsaeson near St. Dogmaels, Pembrokeshire, where she spent the remainder of her life.

She lived there with her younger brother

FREDERICK GEORGE ROBERTSON 'Jim', WILLIAMS

He had left Aberclydach when his elder brother inherited the estate. He first settled at Capel Isaf near Llandeilo, but in 1916 he purchased the Plas Pantsaeson estate and went to live there with his wife 'Daisy' or 'Modie', Hylde Marguerite, daughter of Major Penry Lloyd. Robertson Williams was interested in afforestation and as part of his endeavour to improve the estate he planted trees extensively. Like his sister Mallt he was conspicuous at Celtic gatherings on account of his dress modelled on the conjectured style of a Welsh lord of the thirteenth century. He died at the age of 75 on 11 January 1945 and his body was borne on a gambo to his resting place in Monnington churchyard. He is described in the inscription on his tombstone as Hollgelt ('a complete Celt'). His widow died at the same house on 2 February 1952. They had two sons and one daughter.

The elder of the boys Ioan Penry Brychan Robertson, co-operated with his aunt Mallt in the publication of a Welsh birthday book, *Llyfr Penblwydd*, in 1929. Mallt attended meetings of Welsh and Irish national movements zealously and stood firm for Welshness in speech and dress. In her annual address to Ysbiwyr y Frenhines she urged the members to imitate the zeal of the Irish, but after the Easter Rising of 1916 she was more subdued. Throughout the years she consistently supported the National Eisteddfod, Urdd Gobaith Cymru and Plaid Cymru. In her latter years her hundred pounds headed the list of subscriptions to the annual St. David's Day fund of the Blaid. She was a stalwart supporter of the campaign against the establishment of a training camp for the Royal Air Force at Porth Neigwl and Penyberth; and it was she who coined the name Ysgol Fomio ('bombing school'). She was a strict vegetarian and a disciple of Mary Baker Eddy. She died 28 October 1950 at Plas Pantsaeson and was cremated at Pontypridd; her ashes were scattered in the churchyard at Llansanffraid, Brecknockshire. Her portrait can be seen on p.44 of *Cymru*, XXIX, 1905.

Author

Evan David Jones, (1903 - 1987)

Sources

Cymru (O.M.E.), *Cymru'r Plant* (Aberystwyth 1892-1987), passim

Cardigan and Tivyside Advertiser, 26 January, 1945, 3 November, 1950

information from W. W. Price, Selwyn Jones, J. E. Jones, G. M. Roberts, and Maureen Patch

Marion Loffler in *Planet*, no. 121 (1997)

Published date: 2001

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