

COTTON, JAMES HENRY (1780 - 1862), dean of Bangor cathedral and educationist

Name: James Henry Cotton
Date of birth: 1780
Date of death: 1862
Spouse: Mary Laurens Cotton (née Fisher)
Spouse: Mary Anne Cotton (née Majendie)
Child: H.J. Cotton
Parent: Catherine Cotton (née Tomkinson)
Parent: George Cotton
Gender: Male
Occupation: dean of Bangor cathedral and educationist
Area of activity: Education; Religion
Author: John Williams James

Born 10 February 1780, second son of [George Cotton](#), dean of Chester, and Catherine, daughter of James Tomkinson of Dorfold Hall, Nantwich. Educated at Rugby school and Trinity College, Cambridge (matric, 1797, LL.B. 1804), he was ordained in 1803, became curate of Stoke, 1803, Thornton, Chester, 1806; rector of Derwen, Denbighshire, 1809, junior vicar of Bangor, Caernarfonshire (by exchange), and precentor of Bangor cathedral, 1810-38, rector of Llandyfyrdog, Anglesey, 1814, and Llanllechid, 1821, dean of Bangor and rector of Gaerwen in Anglesey and Gyllin, Conway, 1838. He married (1) 14 April 1810, Mary Anne, daughter of bishop Majendie of Bangor (she died October 1823 leaving one son, afterwards the Rev. H. J. Cotton, rector of Dalbury, Derby); and (2) 6 June 1826, Mary Laurens, daughter of Samuel Fisher, M.D., of Bath. (She died 1828, leaving two daughters, of whom the younger married [Evan Lewis](#), afterwards dean of Bangor cathedral, 1884-1902.) Dean Cotton died 28 May 1862, and was buried in Bangor cathedral churchyard.

Cotton entirely identified himself with every aspect of Church work in the diocese of Bangor; he was secretary of the Christian Knowledge Society, chairman of the Bangor auxiliary of the British and Foreign Bible Society, a founder of the Bangor Church Building Society in 1838 and of the Caernarvon and Anglesey Hospital in May 1814. From the first he was regarded as an apostle of education; in 1810 he opened a Sunday school in the cathedral, and National schools at Pentir and Vaynol, then both in the parish of Bangor, and later also in the town of Bangor and the parishes of Llanllechid and Gaerwen; his activities embraced every side of school work - he founded schools, taught in schools, inspected schools honorarily, and defended the schools fearlessly in the press; when the celebrated Government education commission of 1846, whose report in 1847 earned the epithet 'Brad y Llyfrau Gleision,' inspected North Wales schools, he trenchantly exposed their methods as those of cross-examining counsel in the law courts and not of school inspectors.

In 1848 he became a member of the newly-founded Bangor Diocesan Board of Education to co-ordinate the work of various bodies in the diocese. As vicar of Bangor and cathedral precentor, the fabric of the cathedral and its services, English and Welsh, were his chief care, and in 1824-7 he effected a restoration and rearrangement of the interior, dividing it into a western church for Welsh parochial services and an eastern church for English cathedral services, and giving each language its full place, thus inaugurating the system still in force, although the restoration under Sir Gilbert Scott reversed his architectural arrangements.

Author

Chancellor [John Williams James](#)

Sources

William Hughes (ed.), *The Life and speeches of the Very Rev. J. H. Cotton, B.C.L., Dean of Bangor, and Rector of Llanllechyd with a brief sketch of the period in which he lived, to which is added an appendix containing a chronological list with biographical sketches of the Deans of Bangor, from 1162 to the present time* (Bangor 1874) (Bangor, 1874)

A. Ivor Pryce, *Diocese of Bangor During Three Centuries, seventeenth to nineteenth century inclusive being a digest of the registers of the bishops*(1929)

Further Reading

Wikipedia Article: [James Cotton](#)

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