

DAVIES, JONATHAN CEREDIG (1859 - 1932), traveller, genealogist, and folk-lorist

Name: Jonathan Ceredig Davies

Date of birth: 1859

Date of death: 1932

Parent: J.C. Davies

Gender: Male

Occupation: traveller, genealogist, and folk-lorist

Area of activity: History and Culture; Literature and Writing; Scholarship and Languages; Travel and Exploration

Author: William Williams

Born 22 May 1859, at Llangunllo, Cardiganshire, son of J. C. Davies, he traced his descent from Walter Morgan, of Tangogoyan (born 1729), who is recorded as a landed proprietor in the parish of Llanddewi-brefi. At the age of 16, in 1875, Davies went to the newly-founded Welsh colony in Patagonia. He returned to Wales in 1891 [and in 1892 was editor of *Yr Athrofa*, in which 'Anturiaethau yn Nhir y Cewri,' which was published in English as *Adventures in the Land of Giants*, appeared as a serial]. In 1898 he visited western Australia, where he spent four years. In both countries he made a study of the native populations, but also did much to further the spiritual and cultural movements among the English and Welsh colonists. On his return, apart from a brief visit to western Australia in 1907 and a visit to Spain and France in 1924, he spent the remaining years of his life in Wales, devoting himself entirely to the study of Welsh history, folk-lore, and genealogy. He died at Llanddewi-brefi, 29 March 1932. Davies was a keen observer with a retentive memory. His works are a mine of information on the folk-customs of many countries, but his conclusions must be accepted with caution. His chief works are: *Darlith ar Patagonia* (Treherbert, 1891); *Patagonia: a description of the country* (Treorky, 1892); *Adventures in the land of giants: a Patagonian tale* (Lampeter, 1892); *Western Australia: its history and progress* (Nantymoel, 1902); *Awstralia Orllewinol* (Treorchy, 1903); *Folk-lore of West and Mid-Wales* (Aberystwyth, 1911); and two privately printed books, *Welsh and Oriental Languages* (Llanddewi Brefi, 1927) and *Life, travels, and reminiscences of Jonathan Ceredig Davies* (Llanddewi Brefi, 1927). The first of these privately printed books was reprinted in the *Life, travels, and reminiscences*.

The story of the latter book is a remarkable one. Judged by ordinary standards it cannot be compared with the work of the trained craftsman, but it would be difficult to find a finer example of dogged perseverance. Old age, failing health and sight, and fear of poverty, all made it seem impossible for him to achieve his purpose. His equipment consisted of a small quantity of type and a platen press. Setting up and printing off one page at a time, he grimly held on until the book was finished, a quarto work of 438 pages, 'written, set up, printed off and published by himself.' Apart from the mechanical aspect of its production the book bears the impress of a man who had travelled much, read widely, and was possessed of much courage and tenacity of purpose.

Author

William Williams, (1885 - 1950)

Sources

Life, Travels, and Reminiscences of Jonathan Ceredig Davies (Llanddewi-brefi 1927), 1927

West Wales Historical Records (1910â€”29)

Annual Report of the National Library of Wales

press notices and information supplied by friends of J.C.D.

information from the late W. J. Gruffydd

Further Reading

Wikipedia Article: [Jonathan Ceredig Davies](#)

Additional Links

VIAF: [38955673](#)

Wikidata: [Q18535570](#)

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