

DAVIES, EVAN (Myfyr Morganwg; 1801 - 1888), bard and 'archdruid'

Name: Evan Davies
Pseudonym: Myfyr Morganwg
Date of birth: 1801
Date of death: 1888
Gender: Male
Occupation: bard and 'archdruid'
Area of activity: Eisteddfod; Poetry
Author: Griffith John Williams

Born 6 January 1801 at Corneldy, Pencoed, Glamorganshire. It is said that he received no education. He devoted himself in his youth to the mastery of the Welsh bardic rules and to the study of mathematics and many other subjects. At first he called himself 'Ieuan Myfyr.' He also began to preach in Congregational chapels near his home. He came into prominence in 1842 by debating on the subject of temperance with [John Jones](#) of Llangollen (1801 - 1856), in a public meeting held at Llantrisant, Glamorganshire. About 1844-5 he settled in Pontypridd as a watchmaker, making that town his home henceforward. It was there also that he assumed the pseudonym of Myfyr Morganwg.

He came deeply under the influence of the Druidic 'fever' that affected some persons at that time, and read many books on the religions of the East; he believed that Christianity was but Druidism in a Jewish garb. In consequence, as he claimed to have succeeded to the post of archdruid after the death in 1847 of [Taliesin Williams](#), son of [Iolo Morganwg](#), he began, c. 1853, to hold religious and druidical services near the 'Maen Chwyf' (the Rocking Stone) at Pontypridd. These meetings were held at the time of the two equinoxes and the two solstices, and the practice continued to be a Glamorgan feature (much to the grief of some local ministers of religion) for about a quarter of a century. Myfyr Morganwg published several books dealing with Druidism. Nevertheless, he was regarded by several of his contemporaries as an authority on history and antiquities, and he was one of the persons appointed to adjudicate on the essays on the 'Madogwys' (the descendants of the Madoc who, it was alleged, had discovered America some centuries before Christopher Columbus reached the West Indies) at the Llangollen eisteddfod of 1858, where he appeared on the platform wearing a 'Druidical egg' on his bosom.

He died at his home at Pontypridd, 23 February 1888. Some of his manuscripts are in the Cardiff Public Library, whilst some letters sent by him to [Thomas Stephens](#) and [Jonathan Reynolds](#) are in the National Library of Wales.

Author

Emeritus Professor Griffith John Williams, (1892 - 1963)

Sources

Bye-Gones, relating to Wales and the Border Counties, 1888, 44-5

Morien, *History of Pontypridd and Rhondda Valleys* (1903), 82-92

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