

## DYER, JOHN (1699 - 1757), poet

**Name:** John Dyer  
**Date of birth:** 1699  
**Date of death:** 1757  
**Spouse:** Sarah Dyer (née Ensor)  
**Parent:** Catherine Dyer (née Cocks)  
**Parent:** Robert Dyer  
**Gender:** Male  
**Occupation:** poet  
**Area of activity:** Art and Architecture; Poetry  
**Author:** Herbert Gladstone Wright

Second son of Robert Dyer, a solicitor, living in Abersannen, Llanfynydd. (He bought Aberglasney, in the nearby parish of Llangathen in 1710). John was christened in Llanfynydd church 13 August 1699 and it is likely that he was born at Abersanen shortly before that date.

Educated at Westminster, he entered his father's office. After the death of Robert Dyer, John became a pupil of Jonathan Richardson (1665 - 1745), author of *Theory of Painting*, 1715. Later Dyer rambled through South Wales and the neighbouring English counties, as an itinerant painter. To develop his artistic skill he visited Italy, where the ruins of the Baths of Caracalla recalled the oaks 'On Merlin's mount, or Snowden's rugged sides,' with their branches strewn by the storm. In 1726 he returned to England and made the acquaintance of Aaron Hill and his circle, which included James Thomson and Richard Savage.

In *A New Miscellany*, which is presumed to have been published in that year, 1726, there appeared Dyer's 'Grongar Hill' in octosyllabics; also in 1726 it came out in a pindaric version in *Miscellaneous Poems and Translations*, ed. Savage; and finally, in *Miscellaneous Poems*, ed. D. Lewis, yet another version in octosyllabics was printed this year. A manuscript version was in lady Hertford's possession. Both Dyer and Thomson belonged to her circle, and they were excellent friends. A poem deploring their separation may have originated in an attempt on Dyer's part to become 'a practical agriculturist' at Mapleton in Herefordshire. However, his plans were changed. He married a Miss Ensor and was ordained. From 1741 onwards he held various livings in Leicestershire and Lincolnshire. He took up his duties at Coningsby in 1751, and there he was buried on 15 December 1757.

His most famous poem, 'Grongar Hill,' was inspired by the scenery near Aberglasney. A Welsh rendering by Thomas Davies of Crickhowell, Brecknock, was published at Llandoverly in 1832. Other notable poems of Dyer's are 'The Ruins of Rome,' 1740, and 'The Fleece,' 1757, the last being full of memories of Wales. As a painter-poet Dyer is of some importance. His study of Claude affected his poetic work, and there are grounds for regarding him rather than Thomson as the pioneer of descriptive landscape poetry. Wordsworth paid tribute to him in his sonnet 'To the poet, John Dyer.'

### Author

**Emeritus Professor Herbert Gladstone Wright, (1888 - 1962)**

### Sources

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Additional information from Mr Denys Smith, Llandeilo

## Further Reading

Wikipedia Article: [John Dyer](#)

## Additional Links

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