

ELIAS, WILLIAM (1708 - 1787), poet

Name: William Elias
Date of birth: 1708
Date of death: 1787
Spouse: Ann Elias (née Williams)
Child: William Elias
Parent: Elias ap Richard
Gender: Male
Occupation: poet
Area of activity: Poetry
Author: Garfield Hopkin Hughes

According to **David Thomas** (Dafydd Ddu Eryri), he hailed from Clynnog - Elias ap Richard of Talhenbont smithy was his father, says **J. E. Griffith** (*Pedigrees*). He is said to have started life as a shoemaker, and the list of subscribers to the *Diddanwch teuluaidd*, 1763, and an occasional note in the manuscripts (e.g. Wynnstey MSS. 7, 105, 131, etc.), confirm this. Later, he became a farmer and land agent to the **Wynn** family of Glynllifon. He married Ann Williams, 19 January 1730, as is shown by a letter in Wynnstey MS 7, and ten of his children are mentioned in the pedigrees, among them the 'William Elias junior' whose name is found in Wynnstey MS. 7 and also in the *Diddanwch teuluaidd*. He moved to Plas-y-glyn, Llanfwrog, Anglesey, in 1774, died there in 1787, and was buried at Llanfwrog 2 July, at the age of 79. Elegies upon him were written by Dafydd Ellis of Holyhead and by **Twm o'r Nant**. He had been taught prosody by **Owen Gruffydd** - some of the latter's manuscripts, e.g. Llyfr Madryn (NLW MS 799D), had passed into his possession - and the elegy (a *cywydd*) upon his old master, 6 December 1730, is his principal poem. Several of his lyrics and *englynion* are to be found in manuscripts which formerly belonged to him - e.g. NLW MS 799D, NLW MS 7892B; Wynnstey MSS. 6, 7. He was on friendly terms with **Michael Prichard**, and there was correspondence between him and **Goronwy Owen**. See further the article **Hugh Williams** (1722? - 1779).

Author

Garfield Hopkin Hughes, (1912 - 1969)

Sources

NLW Archives: **Cwrwmawr MS 554B** - Myrddin Fardd's collection concerned with William Elias, including Twm o'r Nant's elegy

NLW Archives: *Mysevin Manuscript in the National Library of Wales, Aberystwyth 1* (452) - Dafydd Ddu's note

J. E. Griffith, *Pedigrees of Anglesey and Carnarvonshire Families* (1914), 253

The Letters of Goronwy Owen (1723-69) (Cardiff 1924), 203-4

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Published date: 1959

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