

GWYNNE (GWINNE, GWYN or WYNNE), ROBERT (JOHNS) (fl. 1568-1591), - Roman Catholic missionary and writer

Name: Robert (Johns) Gwynne
Parent: John Wyn ap Hugh
Gender: Male
Occupation: Roman Catholic missionary and writer
Area of activity: Literature and Writing; Religion
Author: Arthur Herbert Dodd

He probably came of the **Bodvel family** and may have been a son of **John Wyn ap Hugh** (since he subscribes one of his writings ' Robert Johns gwyn '). He entered Corpus Christi College, Oxford, graduating B.A. in 1568. About three years later he was persuaded by his neighbour **Robert Owen** of Plas Du, Caernarfonshire, to absent himself from Anglican worship and to flee overseas. He entered Douai seminary in 1571 in company with Thomas Crowther, a Welshman from the diocese of Hereford, who graduated about the same time as Gwynne and **Robert Owen**. He took his B.D. and was ordained priest in 1575, and was sent on the English mission in the following year. He made at once for his native haunts, and was sheltered in the secret chamber at Plas Du by **Owen's** brother Thomas. Tales soon reached Douai of the phenomenal success of his mission, especially among the women of the neighbourhood, and of the discomfiture of the bishop **Nicholas Robinson** when he tried to take proceedings against these converts. He wrote extensively in Welsh for the propagation of the faith, among other things translating Robert Parsons's *Christian Directory* (its Welsh version was entitled *Llyfr y Resolution*); he has been suggested as the possible author of the savage *marwnad* on the death of William the Silent, also attributed to **Richard Gwyn**. In 1578, when no Romanist bishops were left at liberty in England, pope Gregory XIII conferred on him certain quasi-episcopal powers to bridge the gap. Nothing is known of his later life, except that he seems to have been alive in 1591.

Author

Emeritus Professor Arthur Herbert Dodd, (1891 - 1975)

Sources

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Anthony Wood, *Athenae Oxonienses* (1813â€"20) (ed. Bliss), i, 586
Oxford Historical Society, i, 271
First Douay Diary, 5, 7, 24, 100, 108, 259, 288
Reports of the Historical Manuscripts Commission R.W.M., ii, 309
The Transactions of the Honourable Society of Cymmrodorion, 1936, (177), 1937 (117-18, 128)
Oxford Dictionary of National Biography, xxiii, 399

Further Reading

Y drych Cristianogawl yn yr hwn y dichon pob Cristiw'n ganfod gwreidhin a dechreuad pob daioni sprydawl
R. Geraint Gruffydd, *Argraffwyr cyntaf Cymru* (1972)
R. Geraint Gruffydd. 'Gwasg ddirgel yr ogof yn Rhiwledyn', *Journal of the Welsh Bibliographical Society*, Vol. 9, no.1, July 1958, pp.1-23
Philip Henry Jones and Eiluned Rees (eds), *A nation and its books: a history of the book in Wales* (Aberystwyth 1998)
Wikipedia Article: [Robert Gwin](#)

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