

HARRIS, JOSEPH (Gomer, 1773 - 1825), Baptist minister, and man of letters

Name: Joseph Harris
Pseudonym: Gomer
Date of birth: 1773
Date of death: 1825
Spouse: Martha Harris (née Symons)
Child: Hannah Stephen (née Harris)
Child: John Harris
Child: John Ryland Harris
Gender: Male
Occupation: Baptist minister, and man of letters
Area of activity: Literature and Writing; Religion; Scholarship and Languages
Author: William Joseph Rhys

Born, the son of a farm bailiff at Llanty Dewi, Wolfs Castle, Pembrokeshire, and baptized at Llangloffan about 1792/3. Fired by the revival at Puncteston in 1795, he began to preach and in 1796 published *Casgliad o Hymnau*, a supplement to a hymnbook he had already published in 1793. He married Martha Symons of Little Newcastle and in 1801 came to Back Street chapel after which he went for four months to Bristol Academy. Back Street was troubled by Arminianism in 1800, and Unitarianism was causing dissension in the Old Meeting House; to combat this he published *Bwyall Grist yng Nghoed Anghrist* in 1804. His *Traethawd ar Briodol Dduwdod ein Harglwydd Iesu Grist*, 1816-17, left its mark on the theological opinions of many people, winning the approval of Trinitarians of almost every denomination. He kept alive the tradition of the revivalist preachers and worked zealously for the Welsh language and for congregational singing. In 1821 he published *Casgliad o Hymnau*, which included many of his own hymns; it was sold in his own bookshop. He also kept a day-school. He may be regarded as the father of the Welsh newspaper, for his *Seren Gomer*, 1814-15, was the first all-Welsh weekly. Although this undertaking caused him serious losses and was a failure, as were *Great y Bedyddwyr*, 1817, and the *Drysorfa Efengylaidd*, 1806, which he sought to run in conjunction with Titus Lewis (1773 - 1811), his fortnightly *Seren Gomer*, 1818, was a success. He also published *Yr Anghyffelyb Broffeswr* (a translation), 1802; *Y Beibl Dwy-ieithawg*; Gill's *Commentary on the New Testament*, translated into Welsh by himself, Titus Lewis, and Christmas Evans; and *Cofiant Ieuan Ddu*, a memoir of his son, J. Ryland Harris. He died 10 August 1825 shortly after his fifty-second birthday.

Author

Reverend William Joseph Rhys, (1880 - 1967)

Sources

D. Rhys Stephen, *Cofiant Joseph Harris* (Gomer)

Cambrian Bibliography (Llanidloes 1869)

Trafodion Cymdeithas Hanes Bedyddwyr Cymru, 1930

Further Reading

Wikipedia Article: [Joseph Harris](#)

Images

NLW: [Joseph Harris, 'Gomer'](#)

NLW: [Y diweddar Barch. Joseph Harris, Abertawe sylfaenydd a golygydd Seren Gomer](#)

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