

## HUGHES, GRIFFITH (fl. 1707-1750), cleric and naturalist

**Name:** Griffith Hughes  
**Parent:** Bridget Hughes  
**Parent:** Edward Hughes  
**Gender:** Male  
**Occupation:** cleric and naturalist  
**Area of activity:** Nature and Agriculture; Religion; Science and Mathematics  
**Author:** Robert Thomas Jenkins

Born in 1707 (christened 29 April) at Towyn, Meirionnydd, son of Edward and Bridget Hughes; matriculated from S. John's College, Oxford, in May 1729, and was ordained deacon and priest (London) in 1732. In that year, he was recommended to the S.P.G. for the Anglican mission in Pennsylvania, and began his ministry at S. Davids, Radnor, Pa., from which he also itinerated. He reported to the society in 1734 and (three times) in 1735, describing his success as a missionary among the Welsh Quakers, and calling for a supply of Welsh books. In 1735, he himself published a reprint, with additions, of *Myfyrdodau Bucheddol ar y Pedwar Peth Diweddaf*, by **John Morgan** (1688? - 1734?), brother of his former vicar at Towyn; this edition was printed by Andrew Bradford at Philadelphia, and was the fourth (not the third) Welsh book printed in America. In 1736, however, Hughes complains that his health is breaking down under the strain of long journeys and other hardships - on the other hand, members of an outlying congregation complain that he 'seldom comes near us,' and call for another missionary with 'much more solidity and conduct.' In September 1736 he was appointed rector of S. Lucy, Barbados, where however we again read of 'some difference of opinion with his congregation' - possibly a growing interest in natural history interfered with his parochial work. In 1743, and again in 1748, he returned to England; in 1748 he took his B.A. and M.A. degrees, and on 9 June was elected F.R.S. Though he appears to have been still nominally in office down to 1750, it seems doubtful whether he ever actually returned to his cure; certainly it was in London, in 1750, that he published his *Natural History of Barbados*, a work which was praised by Linnaeus, but is unkindly described by an American writer as 'one of the scientific frauds of the age.' Nothing at all seems to be known of his subsequent career; his name is absent from lists of colonial clergymen during the years 1745-81.

### Author

**Emeritus Professor Robert Thomas Jenkins**, (1881 - 1969)

### Sources

Foster, *Alumni Oxonienses: the members of the University of Oxford*

List of Clergy of S. Davids Radnor (obtained through Prof. A. H. Dodd)

*Journal of the Historical Society of the Church in Wales*, iv, 30-2 (by J. A. Thomas)

John Clement, 'Griffith Hughes,' in *Historical Magazine of the Protestant Episcopal Church* (of U.S.A.), June 1948, 151-63

*The National Library of Wales Journal*, iii, 19-22

### Further Reading

Wikipedia Article: [Griffith Hughes](#)

### Additional Links

VIAF: [37258937](#)

Wikidata: [Q3116627](#)

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