

MADOCKS, WILLIAM ALEXANDER (1773 - 1828), industrialist and philanthropist

Name: William Alexander Madocks

Date of birth: 1773

Date of death: 1828

Spouse: Eliza Anne Gwynne (née Hughes)

Parent: John Madocks

Gender: Male

Occupation: industrialist and philanthropist

Area of activity: Art and Architecture; Business and Industry; History and Culture; Literature and Writing; Philanthropy

Author: David Thomas

Born 17 June 1773 (according to [NLW MS 10590C](#)), third son of John Madocks, Fron Iw, Denbighshire (J. E. Griffith, *Pedigrees* 315). He went to Jesus College, Oxford (1790), and became Fellow of All Souls, Oxford, 1794, Radical M.P. for Boston, 1802-18, and Chippenham, 1820-6. His scrapbooks display an interest in the careers of such men as Alexander and Columbus, Plutarch's heroes, engineers, inventors, etc. While living at Dolmelynlyn, near Dolgellay, he read in the *Tours* of [Thomas Pennant](#), of the plans of [Sir John Wynn](#) of Gwydir, to enclose Traeth Mawr, between Aberglaslyn and the sea.

Having inherited much wealth from his father, he bought Tanrallt Estate, Penmorfa, in 1798. He enclosed 1,000 acres of Traeth Mawr, and built Tremadoc; then obtained an Act of Parliament in 1807 to raise an embankment across the Traeth to enclose 3,000 acres more. He made a road alongside it connecting London and Portinllaen; he had obtained an Act in 1806 to construct a harbour at Portinllaen, but failed to have it adopted as mail packet station for Dublin. He projected a shorter road to London through Dolgellay, Welshpool, and Worcester. In 1821 he obtained an Act to make a port at the end of the embankment, and this was named Portmadoc. He planned a railway along the embankment to carry slates from Ffestiniog to Portmadoc, and this plan was accomplished in 1831 by [Samuel Holland](#). He was a pronounced Radical, and advocated Parliamentary Reform.

His affairs went wrong, and he went to Paris, where he died in 29 September 1828, and where he was also buried. His wife, Eliza Anne, whom he married in 1818, was the grand-daughter of [Joseph Harris](#) (1704 - 1764) of Trevecka.

Author

David Thomas, (1880 - 1967)

Sources

Walter Davies, *General view of the agriculture and domestic economy of North Wales containing the counties of Anglesey, Caernarvon, Denbigh, Flint, Meirionydd, Montgomery*. Drawn up and published by order of the Board of Agriculture and Internal Improvement, 1813

Oxford Dictionary of National Biography

Edward Davies, *Hanes Porthmadog* (1913)

NLW Archives: [NLW MS 10590C](#): The history of Traeth Mawr

D. R. Hughes, *Cylchgrawn Cymdeithas Hanes y Methodistiaid Calfinaidd*, xxiii, 118-23

Elizabeth Beazley, *Madocks and the Wonder of Wales*

R. T. Jenkins, 'Etifeddion Harrisiaid Trefeca' in *Yng nghysgod Trefeca: Ysgrifau ar hanes crefydd a chymdeithas yng Nghymru yn y ddeunawfed ganrif* (Caernarfon 1968)

Further reading

Rebecca Williams, *Cerdd o fawl i W. A. Maddocks, Esqr. M. P., am y daioni a'r lles-âd y mae yn ei wneud yn y Traeth Mawr a Thremadoc* (Caernarfon 18--)

Coflein: [The Cob; Traeth Mawr Embankment, Porthmadog](#)

ODNB: [Madocks, William Alexander \(1773-1828\)](#)

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