

MORGAN, RHYS (c. 1700 - c. 1775), a poet

Name: Rhys Morgan
Date of birth: c. 1700
Date of death: c. 1775
Gender: Male
Occupation: poet
Area of activity: Eisteddfod; Poetry
Author: Griffith John Williams

living in the farmhouse of Pencraig-nedd in the parish of Cadoxton in the Vale of Neath. It is possible, although this cannot be proved definitely, that he was one of the descendants of **Thomas Llywelyn** of Rhigos. **Iolo Morganwg** says that he was carpenter, weaver, harpist, and a preacher with the Nonconformists. It is tolerably certain that he was a member at the 'Hen dŷ Cwrdd' ('Old Meeting-house') in Blaen-gwrach; two persons bearing the name of Rees Morgan figure in the list of members in 1734, the one an elder and the other a deacon. But it is as a poet that he earned a name for himself in the annals of Glamorgan. He was, doubtless, trained in the bardic craft by one of the pupils of **Edward Dafydd** of Margam, but the man who probably influenced him most was **Dafydd Lewys**, Llanllawddog, vicar of Cadoxton from 1718 to 1727, a man who knew **Iaco ab Dewi** and **Moses Williams**. It was thus that Rhys Morgan came into touch with the followers of **Edward Lhuyd**, and that provides one explanation for the poetic revival witnessed in the hill-country of Glamorgan during the first half of the 18th century. He also came into contact with **Siôn Rhydderch**, and this probably accounts for the fact that he and his fellows started to hold eisteddfodau similar to those arranged in North Wales. He sent some of his works to be published in the Welsh almanacks of the period. Rhys Morgan devoted himself to the mastery of the grammars of the bards; when **Siôn Rhydderch** was looking for a 'pattern' *awdl* for inclusion in his grammar published in 1728, he received one from Rhys Morgan. Nevertheless, few of his productions are extant, and they do not show overmuch merit; and yet Rhys Morgan was a fairly important figure in the history of the literary revival in Glamorgan.

Author

Emeritus Professor Griffith John Williams, (1892 - 1963)

Sources

Yr Ymfynydd, 1897

D. Rhys Phillips, *The History of the Vale of Neath* (Swansea 1925), 1925, 541-6

G. J. Williams, *Traddodiad Llenyddol Morgannwg* (1948), 1948, 230-1, 259-300

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