

OWEN, JOHN (1807-1876), known as 'John Owen of Tyn-llwyn' Calvinistic Methodist minister, and writer on agriculture

Name: John Owen
Pseudonym: John Owen Of Tyn-llwyn
Date of birth: 1807
Date of death: 1876
Spouse: Jane Owen
Child: Margaret Owen
Child: Ellen Owen
Child: William Owen
Child: Jane Owen
Child: Thomas H. Owen
Child: John Owen
Child: Catherine Owen
Parent: Margaret Owen
Parent: William Owen
Gender: Male
Occupation: Calvinistic Methodist minister, and writer on agriculture
Area of activity: Literature and Writing; Nature and Agriculture; Religion

Born 1 August 1807 at Gwindy, Llecheiddior, Eifionydd, son of William Owen and his wife Margaret, who was a niece of **Robert Jones** (1745-1829) of Rhos-lan. He was an early and a wide reader, and as a youth wrote in *Seren Gomer* on behalf of Catholic Emancipation. He went to several schools, including that kept by **Evan Richardson** and a school at Chester where **Glan Alun (Thomas Jones, 1811 - 1866)** was his schoolfellow. At home, he turned in the literary circle of Eifionydd, which included such men as **Dewi Wyn, Robert ap Gwilym Ddu, and Ellis Owen**. He began preaching in 1836, married, and went to Bala C.M. College, but had to leave on the death of his father. He was ordained in 1842, but never undertook a pastoral charge, for he held that such an institution had no place in Methodism. In 1853 he removed from Gwindy to the large (and run-down) farm of Tyn-llwyn, Pentir, near Bangor. But his landlord was a Tory, and turned John Owen out (1869) for voting for **Love Jones Parry of Madryn** in the 1868 election. Failing to get a suitable farm, he took to banking at Portmadoc. He did not succeed as a banker, so he resumed farming, at Caenewydd in Llanybi. But in 1873 he was placed in the large and good farm of Penyberth on the Madryn estate. There he died, 17 May 1876; he was buried in the Tai-duon burial-ground, Pant-glas, Eifionydd.

Owen was esteemed a good preacher, though 'dry' and doctrinal. But he is described as a man with too many irons in the fire. As the story of 1868-9 shows, he was a zealous Liberal of the old individualistic kind; and in his native county his name has become a symbol of the emergence of that Liberalism. But possibly his pioneer work in scientific farming is his greater claim to remembrance. He devoted himself to the improvement of the soil and to more careful stock-breeding. He enclosed and built, 'drained scores of acres and improved scores more' at Tyn-llwyn, all at his own cost - and had to abandon the profits to his landlord. He paid great attention to improving Welsh Black cattle, and here again, after he had left Tyn-llwyn, stock-raisers all over Wales profited more than he did by his improvements. He wrote on agriculture in the *Traethodydd*, and in 1860 published *Detholiad, Magwraeth, a Rheolaeth y Da Byw mwyaf priodol i Dywysogaeth Cymru*. He is described as a tall, long-striding man, serious and taciturn.

His youngest son

JOHN OWEN (1849 - 1917), minister, author and farmer

was born at Gwindy in July 1849, and died at Criccieth 15 April 1917. From Garth school at Bangor and the Liverpool Institute, he went to Bala C.M. College in 1867, began preaching, and went up to Edinburgh, where he graduated. On 30 March 1875 he was inducted as pastor at Criccieth, and remained there till his death, though his pastorate was rather stormy. He, too, wrote a good deal - e.g. he co-operated with **Alaw Ddu** (W. T. Rees) in a biography of **Ieuan Gwyllt**, 1880. But he also inherited his father's interest in scientific farming, having indeed worked much on his father's farm - 'at bottom,' it was said of him, 'he was a farmer.' He went to Canada to seek openings for Welsh emigrants. From 1892 till 1896 he was on the teaching staff in agriculture at University College, Bangor, and he lectured to farmers in the North-west Wales counties.

Sources

Y Gwyddoniadur Cymreig (1889-96) 2nd. edn.,. viii., 122 P-5

J. Jones ('Myrddin Fardd'), *Enwogion Sir Gaernarfon* (1922)

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