

PHILIPPS, Sir JOHN (1666? - 1737), of Picton Castle, Pembrokeshire, religious, educational, and social reformer

Name: John Philipps
Date of birth: 1666?
Date of death: 1737
Spouse: Mary Philipps (née Smith)
Child: Richard Philipps
Child: John Philipps
Child: Erasmus Philipps
Parent: Catherine Philipps (née Darcy)
Parent: Erasmus Philipps
Gender: Male
Occupation: religious, educational, and social reformer
Home: Picton Castle
Area of activity: Education; Politics, Government and Political Movements; Religion
Author: Mary Gwendoline Ellis

Son of [Sir Erasmus Philipps](#) and his second wife Catherine Darcy (died 15 November 1713) daughter of Edward Darcy by his wife Elizabeth, daughter of Philip Stanhope, first Earl of Chesterfield. The year of his birth is not known. According to the inscription on his monument in S. Mary's church, Haverfordwest, he died 'January 5, 1736/7, in the 77th year of his age.' This suggests 1660, which cannot be correct, as his father married for the second time on 1 September 1660, and Sir John was the second child of this second marriage. He entered Westminster School as King's Scholar in 1679; as the usual age for this was about 13, it appears that he was born c. 1666. He was at Trinity College, Cambridge, 1682-4, and was admitted to Lincoln's Inn, 21 January 1683/4. His age is not mentioned in the registers of any of the above nor in that of the House of Commons. He left Cambridge without a degree and was not called to the Bar. A letter from [Sir Erasmus](#) to him at Cambridge suggests that he was extravagant in his expenses and warns him to have 'no more foolish frolics' (N.L.W. Picton Castle MSS., 30 April 1683).

Little is known of his subsequent career till 1695, when, in December of that year, he was returned Member of Parliament for Pembroke borough; he held the seat till 1702. He re-entered Parliament and was Member for Haverfordwest till 1722. His father died 18 January 1696/7, and on 12 December 1697, Sir John, as 4th baronet, married Mary, daughter and heiress of Anthony Smith, a rich East India merchant. She died 18 November 1722, leaving three sons and three daughters. His sister Elizabeth's daughter married Sir Robert Walpole in 1700.

From 1695 to 1737 Sir John was a leading figure in all the religious and philanthropic movements of the day - the Society for the Reformation of Manners, the S.P.C.K., the S.P.G., the East India Mission, and the Holy Club. He kept in constant touch with such religious reformers as A. H. Francke, A. W. Boehme, J. F. Osterwald, John and Charles Wesley, and George Whitefield, who was maintained by him for a while at Oxford. He was elected a member of the S.P.C.K. a month after it was founded, and remained its most influential member till his death. He made Pembrokeshire and Carmarthenshire the chief centres of the Society's work in Wales, founded twenty-two schools in the former county and several in the latter, and was chiefly responsible for the success of the early undertakings of his brother-in-law, [Griffith Jones](#), Llanddowror, husband of his sister Margaret.

Author

Mary Gwendoline Ellis

Sources

Registers of Westminster School, Trinity College, Cambridge, Lincoln's Inn

S.P.C.K. Manuscripts

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Further Reading

Wikipedia Article: [Sir John Philipps, 4th Baronet](#)

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