

PRICHARD (PRISIART), JOHN WILLIAM (1749 - 1829), man of letters, who also called himself ' John Williams ',

Name: John William Prichard
Date of birth: 1749
Date of death: 1829
Spouse: Gwen Prichard (née Owen)
Spouse: Catherine Prichard (née Roberts)
Child: Elizabeth Williams (née Prichard)
Parent: William Prichard
Gender: Male
Occupation: man of letters
Area of activity: Art and Architecture; History and Culture; Law; Literature and Writing; Medicine; Nature and Agriculture
Author: Robert Thomas Jenkins

Born in 1749 (apparently, judging from one of his letters, at the end of June), at Bodlew, Llanddaniel, Anglesey. He was the fifth child (the first of the second marriage) of **William Prichard** (1702 - 1773). Some have it that he had little schooling, others that he went to school at Liverpool - considering his excellent penmanship and the range of his general knowledge, the latter seems more probable. He married twice: (1) in 1775, Catherine, daughter of David Roberts of Llan-dyfrydog - she died in 1779, leaving a daughter; (2) in 1785, Gwen, daughter of William Owen of Crafnant near Harlech (afterwards of Fronolau, Penmorfa) - she died in 1797, leaving five children. Though his father had been an Independent, Prichard was a zealous Methodist. He farmed Boteiniol in Llantrisant parish, but on the death of his first wife he removed to Plas-y-brain in Llanbedr-goch, the house which is most commonly associated with his name. A little before the end of his life, he moved again, to Chwaen-wen-uchaf in Llantrisant. He died 5 March 1829, and was buried at Llangwyllog.

Prichard was a most versatile man - farmer, land-surveyor, almanac-maker, country physician, country lawyer, writer of prose and verse, sketcher, map-maker, sculptor. He was well-esteemed by the magnates of Anglesey, and was particularly friendly with **Paul Panton junior** of Plas Gwyn. The only separate publication by him was *Hanes Pibau'r Bugelliaid*, but some of his verse appeared in periodicals, while more remains in manuscript. University College, Bangor, has a number of his papers (Bangor MSS. 47, 538, 1249, 2123-32, 3765-7, 5338) - a few diaries, some accounts, medical prescriptions, notes on the family history, copies of letters and of poetry, etc. He was a collector - Bangor has several letters written by **Lewis** and **William Morris** which had somehow come into Prichard's hands (and Cardiff MS. 81 contains notes on **Lewis Morris** by him), and he possessed letters by **Goronwy Owen**. He was himself a diligent correspondent, with a large circle of men of letters: **Gwallter Mechain** (NLW MS 1808E, no. 6), **William Owen Pughe**, **Richard Llwyd** (the author of Beaumaris Bay), **Twm o'r Nant**, **Dewi Wyn**, **Robert ap Gwilym Ddu** (who was a kinsman of his), **Robert Roberts** the almanac-maker, etc. But he was not on good terms with **Dafydd Ddu Eryri**, and he abominated **Iolo Morganwg**, to whom he attributed all **W. O. Pughe's** literary lapses. He also corresponded with **Thomas Charles** of Bala, and with **Robert Jones** of Rhos-lan - the lengthy note on William Prichard in *Drych yr Amseroedd* is based on the son's information. Many of his letters were printed in *Y Traethodydd* in 1883 and 1884 (see also *Bulletin of the Board of Celtic Studies*, ix and x). *Cywyddau* to Prichard, by **Dewi Wyn** and **Robert ap Gwilym Ddu** will be found in the printed volumes of their works.

Author

Emeritus Professor Robert Thomas Jenkins, (1881 - 1969)

Sources

J. E. Griffith, *Pedigrees of Anglesey and Carnarvonshire Families* (1914), 9, 154, 246, but the order and dates of Prichard's children (and of other members of the family) are not wholly consistent with those given in the *Bangor Manuscripts at University College North Wales Library, Bangor* or with those entered by Prichard himself in his family Bible

details in the *Bangor Manuscripts at University College North Wales Library, Bangor*, in the printed letters, and in *Y Traethodydd*, 1883 (141-3), 1884 (14-8)
NLW MSS 1807, 4452

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