

REES, SARAH JANE (Cranogwen; 1839 - 1916), schoolmistress, poet, editor, temperance advocate

Name: Sarah Jane Rees
Pseudonym: Cranogwen
Date of birth: 1839
Date of death: 1916
Partner: Jane Thomas
Parent: Frances Rees
Parent: John Rees
Gender: Female
Occupation: schoolmistress, poet, editor, temperance advocate
Area of activity: Education; Eisteddfod; Literature and Writing; Philanthropy; Poetry; Printing and Publishing; Religion
Author: William Llewelyn Davies

Born 9 January 1839 at Llangrannog, Cardiganshire, daughter of a master mariner. She received her education at first in the village school kept by one Hugh Davies from whom she, later, learnt some Latin and astronomy. She also attended schools held at Cardigan, New Quay, and Liverpool. She went to sea on her father's ship and so made practical acquaintance with the subject of navigation, which she was afterwards to teach (in the school which she conducted herself, after a course of navigation in London, at Llangrannog) to sea-faring men and others. She became an ardent supporter of the Tonic Sol-fa system of music notation, becoming, in time, a local examiner for the Tonic Sol-fa College.

She won her first notable success as a poet at the Aberystwyth national eisteddfod, 1865, the subject of the winning poem being 'Y Fodrwy Briodasol!'; at this contest she beat *Islwyn* and *Ceiriog*. She also became a public speaker, lecturer, and preacher; in 1878 she began to edit *Y Frythones*, a Welsh journal devoted to the interests of women which continued to appear until 1891. In 1901 she founded the Women's Temperance Movement which is still known as 'Undeb Dirwestol Merched y De.'

She died 27 June 1916. There is a 'Cranogwen Scholarship' tenable at the University College of Wales, Aberystwyth, in commemoration of her.

Editorial note 2020:

Cranogwen lived for the last twenty years of her life with her partner, Jane Thomas, in Llangrannog.

Author

Sir William Llewelyn Davies, (1887 - 1952)

Sources

Sarah Jane Rees, *Caniadau Cranogwen* (Dolgellau 1870)

Sarah Rowlands, *NLW MS 2142D: Cranogwen*

David Glanaman Jones, *Cofiant Cranogwen* (Caernarfon 1932)

Further Reading

Beryl H. Griffiths, *Mamwlad* (Gwasg Carreg Gwalch Llanrwst 2016), pp.59-85

Death of Caranogwen, *The Carmarthen Journal and South Wales Weekly Advertiser*, 30 June 1916, p.5

Elen Haf Jones, *The extraordinary life of Cranogwen: From mariner to poet and so much more ...*, National Library of Wales blog, 15 March 2019

Jane Aaron, *Cranogwen* (Caerdydd 2023)

Wikipedia Article: [Sarah Jane Rees](#)

Images

John Thomas, Sarah Jane Rees, 'Cranogwen'

NLW: Cranogwen

Additional Links

NLW Archives: NLW ex 2935: Cerddi i Maggie Euronan gan Cranogwen, [1905]

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