

RICHARDS, THOMAS (1754-1837), cleric

Name: Thomas Richards
Date of birth: 1754
Date of death: 1837
Spouse: Jane Richards (née Lloyd)
Child: Elizabeth Richards
Child: Jane Richards
Child: Mary Richards
Child: Lewis Richards
Child: John Lloyd Richards
Child: Thomas Richards
Child: David Richards
Child: Richard Richards
Parent: Jane Thomas
Parent: Richard Thomas
Gender: Male
Occupation: cleric
Area of activity: Religion
Author: Thomas Iorwerth Ellis

Born at Hirnant, Pont Erwyd, Cardiganshire, 24 April 1754, son of Richard Thomas and Jane his wife. At the age of 19 he went to Ystradmeurig, where he met **Thomas Jones** (of Creaton) (1752 - 1845). The two men formed an intimate friendship which lasted all their days. Richards kept school at Tal-y-bont, Cardiganshire, for three years, and in 1779 he married Jane, daughter of David Lloyd of Cymerau, in the parish of Llanbadarn Fawr. In September of the same year he was ordained deacon by bishop Warren of S. Davids and licensed, in succession to **Thomas Jones** (above), to the curacies of Llangynfelyn and Eglwys-fach. He received priest's orders in 1780. While he held this curacy he often went to Llangeitho to hear **Daniel Rowland** preaching. In 1784 he went as curate to Llan-ym-Mawddwy, succeeding **Thomas Charles**, and he served there for fifteen years at a stipend of £30 per annum. He augmented this pittance by keeping a school. After representations made by his friend **Thomas Jones** and others, he was appointed vicar of Darowen, near Machynlleth, by bishop Bagot of S. Asaph, and instituted to the living in August 1800. He laboured there devotedly till his death on 2 December 1837; he is buried at Darowen, and there is a memorial there to him and his wife (1756 - 1841).

Thomas and Jane Richards had five sons, each of whom was brought up to the priesthood, and three daughters.

RICHARD RICHARDS (1780 - 1860)

The eldest son, born 21 November 1780, was educated at Ystradmeurig. He was ordained deacon by **bishop Burgess** of S. Davids in September 1808, and licensed to the curacies of Llanddeiniol and Nantcwnlle in Cardiganshire; he also kept school at Nantcwnlle. He received priest's orders in 1809, and in 1811 he went to Llanbryn-mair as curate and schoolmaster. In December 1816 he moved to Caerwys in Flintshire, and after ten years as curate there he was appointed rector and stayed there till 1849. In that year he went as vicar to Meifod, Montgomeryshire, and died there, 3 April 1860. He was buried at Llangynyw. In addition to his work as parish priest and preacher he gave great support to cultural and missionary movements and published sermons, tracts, and translations.

DAVID RICHARDS 'Dewi Silin' (1783 - 1826)

The second son, was born 12 April 1783, and educated at Dolgelly grammar school and Ystradmeurig. He was ordained deacon by **bishop Burgess** in 1809 and licensed to Pembrey, near Llanelly. Ordained priest in 1810, he served as curate at Newtown, Nantglyn, Llys Meirchion (?), and Llansilin, becoming vicar of Llansilin in August 1819. He married Eleanor Williams at Shrewsbury, 19 June 1823, and they had a son and a daughter. He died 4 December 1826, and was buried at Llansilin. He was known as Dewi Silin and took an active part in the resurgence of the eisteddfod in the eighteen-twenties; he was also secretary of Cymreigyddion Powys, and kept greyhounds.

THOMAS RICHARDS (1785 - 1855)

The third son, was born 3 June 1785, ordained deacon in September 1810 by bishop Cleaver of S. Asaph and licensed to the curacy of Llan-ym-Mawddwy. He received priest's orders in July 1811, and matriculated in the University of Oxford from Jesus College, December 1812, but did not proceed to a degree. He began to keep school at Berriw, Montgomeryshire, March 1813, and also served as curate of Montgomery. He was in touch with many literary Welshmen of his age, and **John Blackwell** (Alun) and **Evan Evans** (Ieuan Glan Geirionydd) were pupils of his. He was local secretary of the Bible Society and a promoter of the publication of Welsh magazines. When his father declined the benefice of Llangynyw, owing to his age, the son accepted it, and was instituted in April 1826. He remained there till his death on 27 November 1855, and was buried there.

JOHN LLOYD RICHARDS (1790 - 1854)

The fourth son went to S. Bees College, and was ordained deacon by bishop Law of Chester, October 1833, to serve the curacy of Nun Monkton, near York. He received priest's orders in December 1824, and, in April 1825, was appointed vicar of Llanwddyn, Montgomeryshire. He served there till his death on 28 March 1854, and was buried at Llangynyw. He took a great interest in agriculture.

LEWIS RICHARDS (1799 - 1860)

The fifth son, was born 31 December 1799. He went to Jesus College, Oxford, and took his B.A. in June 1824. He was ordained deacon the same month by bishop Pelham of Lincoln, and priest in January 1825 by bishop Luxmoore of S. Asaph. He became curate of Rhuddlan, Flintshire, in May 1826; in July 1837 he was instituted as vicar of Llanerfyl, Montgomeryshire, and remained there till his death on 20 July 1860. He, too, was buried at Llangynyw.

Of the three daughters, MARY (1787 - 1877), Jane (1794 - 1876), and Elizabeth (1797 - 1840), the eldest was a noteworthy personality. In 1821 she was made an honorary member of the Society of Cymmrodorion 'as an acknowledgement of her zeal in the cause of Welsh literature.' She corresponded with a number of prominent literary Welshmen, she copied much poetry and many letters, and she was interested in music. She was buried at Darowen.

Author

Thomas Iorwerth Ellis, (1899 - 1970)

Sources

H. B. Thomas, *A History of the Diocese of St. Asaph* (1874), under Llanerfyl, Llangynyw, Llansilin, Llanwddyn, Meifod

A. O. Evans, *A Chapter in the History of the Welsh Book of Common Prayer; or, the letters which were written preparatory to the revised edition of 1841. Annotated, with biographical sketches* (Bangor 1922), iii, 320-4

R. Williams, *Montgomeryshire Worthies* (1894)

Foster, *Alumni Oxonienses: the members of the University of Oxford*

Episcopal registers of S. Davids (N.L.W.)

Cwrtmawr MS 266B, Cwrtmawr MS 284B, Cwrtmawr MS 285B, Cwrtmawr MS 287A

J. H. Davies in *Cylchgrawn Cymdeithas Hanes y Methodistiaid Calfaidd*, i, 29

J. Jones ('Myrddin Fardd'), '*Adgof uwch Anghof: Llythyrau lluaus o Brif Enwogion Cymru* (1883)

personal enquiries

Journal of the Historical Society of the Church in Wales, iii and iv

Images

NLW: Mair Richards (1787-1877)

Works

National Museum Wales: Patchwork bedcover: 66.48

Additional Links

NLW Archives: Cwrtmawr MS 265E: Llyfr Hir Mair Richards

NLW Archives: Dr J. Lloyd Williams Music MSS and Papers AH1/29: Mary Richards Commonplace Book

NLW Archives: Dr J. Lloyd Williams Music MSS and Papers AH1/35: Mair Richards Music Book

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