

## ROBERTS, JOHN JOHN (Iolo Caernarfon; 1840 - 1914), Calvinistic Methodist minister, poet, and prose-writer

**Name:** John John Roberts  
**Pseudonym:** Iolo Caernarfon  
**Date of birth:** 1840  
**Date of death:** 1914  
**Spouse:** Ann Roberts (née Williams)  
**Child:** John Roberts  
**Parent:** John Roberts  
**Gender:** Male  
**Occupation:** Calvinistic Methodist minister, poet, and prose-writer  
**Area of activity:** Eisteddfod; Literature and Writing; Poetry; Religion  
**Author:** Robert Thomas Jenkins

Born at Tir-bach, Llanllyfni, Caernarfonshire, son of a John Roberts who had moved to that district in 1824 from Amlwch, on the decline of the Parys Mountain copper works. He had very little early schooling, and when quite young worked with his father in the Nantlle slate quarries.

He began to preach in 1867, went to Clynnog school and thence (1868-1872) to Bala Calvinistic Methodist College. In 1873 he became pastor at Trefriw, was ordained in 1874, and in the same year married Ann Williams (1846 - 1910) of Castellgoed in Eifionydd. In 1879 he was called to Tabernacle Calvinistic Methodist church at Portmadoc, and remained there till his retirement in 1909. He died 5 November 1914, aged 74.

He had been moderator of the Calvinistic Methodist General Assembly in 1900, moderator of the North Wales Association in 1906, and 'Davies Lecturer' in 1907, and indeed figured conspicuously in the administration of his connexion; but he was at his best as a preacher and a public speaker.

He wrote much poetry, won the crown at the national eisteddfod twice (1890, 1892), and quite a number of prizes for poems of various kinds; and he adjudicated in the 'crown' competitions on several occasions. He was of the school to which the designation 'the New Poets' was applied [on this matter see [T. Parry](#), *History of Welsh Literature*, tr. [H. I. Bell](#), 359-61], and his work is typical of that school.

He published seven books: *Oriau yng Ngwlad Hud a Lledrith*, 1891; *Ymsonau*, 1895; *Myfyrion*, 1901; *Breuddwydion y Dydd*, 1904; *Cofiannau Cyfiawnon*, 1906; *Crefydd a Chymeriad* (the 'Davies Lecture'), 1910; and a biography (1912) of [Owen Thomas](#).

### Author

**Emeritus Professor Robert Thomas Jenkins**, (1881 - 1969)

### Sources

Notes written by his son, the Rev. Dr. John Roberts, Cardiff

T. R. Jones, *Y Parchedig J. J. Roberts (Iolo Caernarfon)* (Caernarfon 1915?)

### Additional Links

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