

ROBERTS, RICHARD (1769 - 1855), harpist

Name: Richard Roberts
Date of birth: 1769
Date of death: 1855
Gender: Male
Occupation: harpist
Area of activity: Music; Performing Arts
Author: Robert David Griffith

Since **John Parry** ('Bardd Alaw') referred to him in 1808 as a very good harpist who had been collecting the works of the poets for many years, 1769 should be accepted as his year of birth, as given by **R. Griffith** in *Cerdd Dannau*. According to M. Davies (Meurig Idris) he was born in the commote of Ardudwy, Merioneth, but **John Parry** (Bardd Alaw) said that his birthplace was Cefn-y-mein, Llŷn, Caernarfonshire.

He became blind at the age of 8, following an attack of smallpox. Taught to play the harp by the famous harpist William Williams ('Wil Penmorfa'), he became one of the most accomplished players on the triple harp in his period. He won the silver harp offered at the Wrexham eisteddfod of 1820, and the gold harp at the Denbigh eisteddfod of 1828. He adjudicated much - e.g. at the Abergavenny eisteddfod, 1843, and the Rhuddlan eisteddfod, 1850. *Cambrian Harmony*, which he published in 1829, contains thirty airs, twenty of them appearing for the first time. He was the teacher of several harpists who afterwards became well known.

He died 28 June 1855, and was buried in Llanbeblig churchyard, near Caernarvon on the 4 July 1855, aged 86..

Author

Robert David Griffith, (1877 - 1958)

Sources

Nicholas Bennett and D. Emlyn Evans, *Alawon fy Ngwlad* (1896)

M. O. Jones, *Bywgraffiaeth Cerddorion Cymreig* (1890)

R. Griffith, *Llyfr Cerdd Dannau* (Caernarfon 1913)

Llanbeblig register of burials

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