

THOMAS, ALBAN (died 1740?), cleric, poet, and translator

Name: Alban Thomas
Date of death: 1740?
Child: Alban Thomas
Gender: Male
Occupation: cleric, poet, and translator
Area of activity: Literature and Writing; Poetry; Religion; Scholarship and Languages
Author: William Llewelyn Davies

A native of Rhos, Blaen-porth, Cardiganshire; curate of Blaen-porth and Tre-main, 1722-40. He was a prominent figure in a remarkable literary revival which characterised Newcastle Emlyn and the surrounding countryside at the end of the 17th and the beginning of the 18th centuries; for details, see [Ifano Jones](#), *Hist. of Printing and Printers in Wales*, and the references given therein. To bibliographers Alban Thomas is of interest as the author of *Cân o Senn i'w hên Feistr Tobacco*, 1718, one of the two first works (both of them in ballad form) to issue from the first permanent printing press established in Wales, viz. that of [Isaac Carter](#), Trefhedyn (Adpar), Newcastle Emlyn. 'A.T.,' i.e. Alban Thomas, together with 'J.L.,' was responsible for the publication of a 1722 book printed by [Carter](#), viz. *Dwysfawr Rym Buchedd Crefyddol ... Gwedi ei Cyfieithu i'r Gymraeg*; Alban Thomas being also the translator of the work. In 1729 another translation by him was printed by [Carter](#), this time at Carmarthen, whither he had removed his press; this was *Llythyr Bugeilaidd oddi wrth Weinidog at ei Blwyfolion*. Poems by him, in free and strict metres, are preserved in [Llanstephan MS 133](#) and [Llanstephan MS 145](#), [NLW MS 5A](#) and [NLW MS 19B](#), and in (Cardiff) Tonn MS. 16 in the Cardiff Public Library.

His son,

ALBAN THOMAS (1686 - 1771), physician in London

He appears to have practised under the auspices of Sir Hans Sloane. He matriculated in the University of Oxford as from Jesus College. He was librarian of the Ashmolean Museum, Oxford, c. 1708; whilst in 1713 he was assistant-secretary of the Royal Society, London. In 1719 he graduated M.D. at Aberdeen. It was this connection with Aberdeen which led some persons in Government circles to suspect that he had Jacobite leanings; it is known that he left London suddenly in March 1722 and was obliged to stay away from the capital for some time before he could venture to return. After his return, however, he was unable to resume his medical work and had to retire to his native district where he practised until the end of his life. Just as the father had been prominently connected with the literary revival in south Cardiganshire, so also was the son connected with the efforts made by [Moses Williams](#) to preserve and publish Welsh manuscript material. This probably explains why he was prepared to receive subscriptions ('Subscriptions taken in by Mr. Alban Thomas at the Royal Society's House in Crane-Court, Fleet Street,' London) in 1719 towards the '*Collection of Writings in the Welsh Tongue, to the beginning of the Sixteenth Century, to be printed in several Volumes in Octavo*,' which [Moses Williams](#) hoped to see published. Extracts from two letters written by him from Newcastle Emlyn to Sir Hans Sloane are given in *West Wales Hist. Records*, vii, 218-9; he also published, 1718, *A List of Fellows of the Royal Society of London*. [S. R. Meyrick](#) (*The History and Antiquities of the County of Cardigan*) tells how Thomas came to marry the woman whom [Moses Williams](#) had hoped to make his wife; his second wife was Margaret Jones, Tyglyn Aeron, Cardiganshire, daughter of the high sheriff of Cardiganshire.

Author

Sir William Llewelyn Davies, (1887 - 1952)

Sources

To the references given above add

NLW Archives: [NLW MS 309E](#)

John Davies, *Bywyd a Gwaith Moses Williams, (1685-1742)* (1937)

D. Silvan Evans, *Gwaith y Parch. Walter Davies (Gwallter Mechain)* (Carmarthen 1866-1868)

J. H. Davies, *A Bibliography of Welsh Ballads printed in the 18th century* (London 1908-11)

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