

THOMAS, JOHN (Ieuan Ddu; 1795 - 1871), musician

Name: John Thomas
Pseudonym: Ieuan Ddu
Date of birth: 1795
Date of death: 1871
Gender: Male
Occupation: musician
Area of activity: Education; Music; Performing Arts
Author: Robert David Griffith

Born in the farmhouse called Pibwr Lwyd, near Carmarthen. He received a good education, the intention being that he should become an artist, like an uncle. As the uncle died, however, John Thomas opened a school at Carmarthen. He moved to Merthyr Tydfil, Glamorganshire, where he kept a school for fifteen years. He left for Machen, Monmouth, again as schoolmaster, but he returned to Merthyr Tydfil. In 1850 he started a school at Pontypridd, moving thence to Treforest where he spent the remainder of his life. Ieuan Ddu showed an interest in music when he was quite young and became a good musician - he had a good bass voice. He held music classes at Merthyr Tydfil and Pontypridd and thereby gave a start to many promising musicians. He was a pioneer at Merthyr Tydfil in regard to choral singing; a choir which he conducted took prizes at the Abergavenny eisteddfodau, 1838-45. In the Abergavenny eisteddfod of 1838 he was awarded the prize for an essay on the music of Wales and Ireland and at the 1840 eisteddfod, for an essay on the history of the harp of Gwent and Morgannwg; for the latter essay see *The Cambrian Journal*, 1855. In 1845 he published *Y Caniedydd Cymreig*, which contained 104 Welsh airs together with pieces by himself, with Welsh and English words. He contributed to various periodicals; he is also said to have helped **Thomas Stephens** of Merthyr Tydfil with the chapter on music in *The Literature of the Kymry*. He died 30 June 1871 and was buried in Glyntaff cemetery, Treforest.

Author

Robert David Griffith, (1877 - 1958)

Sources

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

T. R. Roberts, *Eminent Welshmen: a short biographical dictionary of Welshmen... from the earliest times to the present* (1908)

David Morgan, *Music and musicians of Merthyr and district: Together with a list of eisteddfodau to the year 1901* (Merthyr Tydfil 1922)

Y Cerddor, February 1891

Robert Williams, *Enwogion Cymru. A Biographical Dictionary of Eminent Welshmen* (1852)

Works

William Thomas, *Anerchiad i Ryddid,' Yr awen lawen; sef, Casgliad o ganiadau dewisol* (Caerfyrddin 1851), pp.34-35

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