

WALTERS, JOHN (1721 - 1797), cleric and lexicographer

Name: John Walters
Date of birth: 1721
Date of death: 1797
Child: Henry Walters
Child: Daniel Walters
Child: John Walters
Parent: John Walters
Gender: Male
Occupation: cleric and lexicographer
Area of activity: Religion; Scholarship and Languages
Author: Griffith John Williams

Born 22 August 1721, son of John Walters, timber merchant, Llanedi, Carmarthenshire. His parents died when he was a young lad. He went to Bassaleg, Monmouth, as schoolmaster, and afterwards was a pupil at Cowbridge grammar school. He then went to Margam to keep a school and, in 1750, was ordained. He was curate at Margam and afterwards received the perpetual curacy of Llanfihangel Ynys Afan. He remained there until 1759 when he became rector of Llandough, near Cow-bridge, and vicar of S. Hilary. In 1795 he was given a prebend in Llandaff cathedral. He died 1 June 1797, and was buried at Llandough. He had five sons, two of whom, **John** and Daniel, attained considerable eminence as poets and scholars.

It was probably John Walters who persuaded **Rhys Thomas**, printer, to set up at Cowbridge the first printing press in Glamorgan. He published *A Dissertation on the Welsh Language*, 1771, and *Dwy Bregeth*, 1772, but his chief work was the large *English-Welsh dictionary*. This was based on the unpublished dictionary of **William Gambold**, but Walters was assiduous in collecting material of all kinds. The work was printed at the Cowbridge press, part one appearing on 5 April 1770. Fourteen parts were issued between 1770 and 1783, but the remainder could not be printed until 1794, when **Owen Jones** (Owain Myfyr) arranged for the work to be completed in London. Walters coined a large number of words which have become established in the Welsh vocabulary, and he sought to show how to translate English idioms into Welsh. Two editions were published during the last century and this was the work which **Daniel Silvan Evans** had at his elbow when he was compiling his *English-Welsh dictionary*.

Author

Emeritus Professor Griffith John Williams, (1892 - 1963)

Sources

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

Geirlyfr Bywgraffiadol o Enwogion Cymru (1870)

Oxford Dictionary of National Biography

Ifano Jones, *A history of printing and printers in Wales to 1810, and of successive and related printers to 1923* (Cardiff 1925), 85-9

Further Reading

Wikipedia Article: [John Walters](#)

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Published date: 1959

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