

## WILLIAMS, JOHN OWEN (Pedrog; 1853 - 1932), Congregational minister, and poet

**Name:** John Owen Williams  
**Pseudonym:** Pedrog  
**Date of birth:** 1853  
**Date of death:** 1932  
**Spouse:** Rose Ellen Williams  
**Parent:** Martha Williams  
**Parent:** Owen Williams  
**Gender:** Male  
**Occupation:** Congregational minister, and poet  
**Area of activity:** Eisteddfod; Poetry; Religion  
**Author:** Idwal Lewis

Born at Gatehouse, Madryn, Caernarfonshire, 21 May 1853, the youngest of the four children of Owen and Martha Williams. He was brought up at Llanbedrog, the home of his aunt, Jane Owen, his parents having died when he was very young. The only education he received outside the Sunday school was imparted to him by friendly neighbours. He started to work when he was 12 years of age, and at 16 he became a gardener, first at Gelliwig Hall, near his native village, later at Machynlleth, and at Messrs. Dickson, the Chester nurserymen. In 1876 he moved to Liverpool, and for eleven years was in the employ of William Williams, provision merchants, Button Street. He joined the Welsh Wesleyan church in Chester Street, where he was active in many spheres, particularly the literary society. He was frequently encouraged to enter the ministry and from 1878 served as a Wesleyan local preacher for four years. In 1881 he joined the Congregationalists, becoming a member at Kensington church, Liverpool. Three years later he accepted the pastorate of that church, and was ordained in May of that year. He remained there until he retired in 1930. In 1927 he was made chairman of the Union of Welsh Independents, and was editor of *Y Dysgedydd*, the connexional monthly, from 1922 to 1928.

Pedrog, who took his bardic name from his native parish, Llanbedrog, was at an early age in the front rank of Welsh poets. His eisteddfodic record is probably unequalled. At the Portmadoc eisteddfod, 1887, he first came to notice by winning the chair for his *awdl*. In 1889, he won the gold medal at Utica eisteddfod and he took the premier honour at the national eisteddfod at Swansea in 1891, Llanelly 1895, and Liverpool 1900. For many years he was one of the chief adjudicators at the national eisteddfod. He was a prolific contributor to the Welsh press and had acted as poetry editor of the *Cymro*, *Cronici*, *Celt*, and *Tyst*. Over a long period, up to the time of his death, he had regularly contributed a series of weekly articles to the *Brython*. He was archdruid from 1928 to 1932. In 1917 the University of Wales, conferred on him the honorary degree of M.A. He received two national testimonials, once in 1917, when he received £500, and again in 1930 the Cymmrodorion Society collected £750 for him. His wife, Rose Ellen Williams, died 21 June 1916. Two sons and three daughters were born to them. He died 9 July 1932.

### Author

Idwal Lewis

### Sources

John Owen Williams, *Stori 'Mywyd* (Liverpool 1932)

### Further Reading

Wikipedia Article: [John Owen Williams](#)

### Images

NLW: Parch. J. O. Williams, M.A. (Pedrog) golygydd

### Additional Links

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