

WILLIAMS, ROWLAND (Hwfa Môn; 1823 - 1905), Independent minister, and archdruid of Wales

Name: Rowland Williams
Pseudonym: Hwfa Môn
Date of birth: 1823
Date of death: 1905
Parent: Grace Williams (née Rowlands)
Parent: Robert Williams
Gender: Male
Occupation: Independent minister, and archdruid of Wales
Area of activity: Eisteddfod; Poetry; Religion
Author: Richard Griffith Owen

Born at Pen y Graig, Trefdraeth, Anglesey, in March 1823. When he was 5 years of age the family went to live at Rhos-tre-Hwfa, near Llangefni, where he was brought up as a Calvinistic Methodist until he was 14. He was apprenticed to John Evans, a Llangefni carpenter, and later worked at his trade at Bangor, Deiniolen, Port Dinorwic, and other places. In 1847 he returned to Anglesey and shortly afterwards was raised to the pulpit by Smyrna Independent church, Llangefni; he was admitted to the Independent College, Bala, the same year. When he had completed his course he received a call from the churches at Bagillt and Flint, where he was ordained 4 June 1851. He moved to Bryn Seion, Brymbo, in 1855 and for some time was in charge of the church at Wrexham. In 1862 he went to Bethesda, Caernarfonshire, and thence in 1867 to Fetter Lane church, London (later to become Tabernacle, Kings Cross), where he remained until 1881, when he returned to Wales as minister at Llannerch-y-medd. There he was unhappy and in 1888 moved to Llangollen. He retired in 1893 and went to live at Rhyl, where he died 10 November 1905; he was buried in Rhyl cemetery. He was a fluent preacher but was nowhere near the front rank, being phenomenally longwinded. It was in connection with the eisteddfod that he became most prominent, and that in the days when 'to win at the eisteddfod was considered a sufficient achievement in itself....' He was invested a 'bard' at the Aberffraw eisteddfod, 1849, and chose the name Hwfa Môn. At one time or another he had won a vast number of prizes at the eisteddfod, including the national chair at Caernarvon (1862), when he defeated **Eben Fardd**, Mold (1873), and Birkenhead (1878), and the crown at Carmarthen (1867). From 1875 to 1892 he was one of the principal adjudicators at the eisteddfod. As in the case of so many of his competitors, *cynghanedd* dominated him rather than serving him and, in consequence, he left little of enduring value. In 1894 he was elected archdruid and it is possibly in virtue of holding this position that he will be chiefly remembered. His belief in the antiquity of the Gorsedd of the Bards was unshakeable, and he did everything in his power to reform it. He published two volumes of his poetry.

Author

Reverend Richard Griffith Owen, (1890 - 1973)

Sources

W. J. Parry, *Cofiant Hwfa MÃ´n*

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

Oxford Dictionary of National Biography, Second Supplement, iii, 677

Y Geninen, 1906, 49; (Gŵyl Dewi), 39

T. Parry, *Hanes Llenyddiaeth Gymraeg hyd 1900* (1944), 267, 285

Further Reading

Wikipedia Article: [Rowland Williams](#)

Images

John Thomas, *Hwfa Môn*

Hubert von Herkomer, *Hwfa Mon, the Archdruid of Wales*, National Museum Wales, NMW A 24393

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