

WILLIAMS, WILLIAM ('Crwys'; 1875 - 1968), poet, preacher, archdruid

Name: William Williams
Pseudonym: Crwys
Date of birth: 1875
Date of death: 1968
Spouse: Grace Harriet Williams (née Jones)
Parent: Margaret Williams (née Davies)
Parent: John Williams
Gender: Male
Occupation: poet, preacher, archdruid
Area of activity: Eisteddfod; Poetry; Religion
Author: William Rhys Nicholas

Born 4 January 1875 at 9 Fagwr Road, Craig-cefn-parc near Clydach, Glamorganshire, son of John and Margaret (née Davies) Williams. His father was a shoemaker and for some years the son learned the craft, but decided to change the course of his life and become a minister. He began preaching in Pant-y-crwys (Congregational) church, and after two years in the school of **Walcyn Wyn** (Williams, Watkin Hezekiah), Ammanford, he entered Bala-Bangor College in 1894. Under the auspices of that college he was a student at the University College, Bangor for a year before embarking on his theological course. In 1898 he was ordained minister of Rehoboth (Congregational), Brynmawr, Brecon, which at that time was one of the Welsh churches of Monmouthshire Association. In the same year he married Grace Harriet Jones (died 22 December 1937), a fellow-student at Bangor, and they had two sons and two daughters. In 1915 he accepted an invitation to succeed **Dr. John Cynddylan Jones** as the agent of the Bible Society in south Wales, and he retained the post until his retirement in 1940. Between 1946 and 1953 he was in charge of Rhyddings church (English Congregational), Swansea. He died 13 January 1968 and was buried in Pant-y-crwys cemetery.

He was prominent in the activities of the National Eisteddfod for many years. He won the crown in 1910 on the subject ' *Ednyfed Fychan* ' and in 1919 on ' *Morgan Llwyd o Wynedd* '. But the *prydeist* ' *Gwerin Cymru* ', which won him the crown in 1911, is his best-known work. He was elected archdruid in 1938 and held the office until 1947. The University of Wales conferred on him an hon. M.A. degree and he was honoured by Swansea Borough Council in 1968 when his bust was placed in the Town Library. He was one of the most prolific and popular poets of his time. He published four volumes of poetry: *Cerddi Crwys* (1920; 5 eds.), *Cerddi Newydd Crwys* (1924; 3 eds.), *Trydydd Cerddi Crwys* (1935), *Cerddi Crwys, y pedwerydd llyfr* (1944), and two selections of his poems (1953 and 1956). His recitation pieces for children and adults were very popular at *eisteddfodau* in the second quarter of the twentieth century, but he is chiefly remembered as the author of well-known lyric poems such as ' *Dysgub y Dail* ', ' *Melin Trefin* ', ' *Siôn a Siân* ', ' *Y Border Bach* ', and ' *Y Sipsi* '. He is one of the poets who succeeded in freeing himself from the fetters of the 'New Bard'. He also published *A brief history of Rehoboth Congregational Church, Bryn-mawr, from 1643 to 1927* (1927), and two volumes of reminiscences, *Mynd a dod* (1941) and *Pedair Pennod* (1950). Among his surviving MSS. is the material for an English volume, ' *Hither and thither* ', which corresponds, more or less, to *Mynd a dod*.

Author

Reverend William Rhys Nicholas, (1914 - 1996)

Sources

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D. Ben Rees, *Cymry adnabyddus, 1952-1972* (Liverpool 1978)

Meic Stephens (ed.), *The New Companion to the Literature of Wales* (Cardiff 1998)

personal acquaintance

W. Rhys Nicholas, *Crwys y Rhamantydd* (Bargoed 1990)

Further Reading

Wikipedia Article: [William Williams](#)

Additional Links

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