

BERWYN, RICHARD JONES (1836 - 1917), colonist and man of letters

Name: Richard Jones Berwyn

Date of birth: 1836

Date of death: 1917

Gender: Male

Occupation: colonist and man of letters

Area of activity: Literature and Writing; Scholarship and Languages; Travel and Exploration

Author: Richard Bryn Williams

Born at Glyndyfrdwy, his original surname being Jones. He went to London as a young man – he is listed as a student at Borough Road teacher training college in 1852 – and then emigrated to New York. Here he was one of the two who accepted the invitation of [Michael D. Jones](#) to emigrate to Patagonia. Returning to Wales he went out to the Welsh colony in 1865 with the first batch of emigrants. He now adopted 'Berwyn' as a surname. When Tommy Dimol ([Ceiriog's](#) friend) was lost on the ship Denby in 1867, Berwyn married his widow, and several talented sons were brought up in his home.

He was the first to hold official positions in the colony: secretary to the council, secretary to the Welsh courts, postmaster, registrar, and schoolmaster, and was also the colony's first postmaster under the Argentine Government and private secretary to the first governor, but was imprisoned in 1882-3 for organizing an agitation to secure the rights of the Welsh colonists.

In 1868 he edited and published *Y Brut*, a manuscript monthly. In 1878, with the help of Thomas Pugh, a young man from Llandderfel, he published *Gwerslyfr i ddysgu darllen Cymraeg* (a Welsh reader). This was the first book printed in the colony and the first Welsh book to be printed in South America; a revised and enlarged edition was published in 1881. He continued to publish almanacs for the colony yearly until 1905. There is an article by him, 'Gwib i Chili,' in *Cymru* (O.M.E.), 1905. His articles were signed not with his name but with the sketch of a hand. He died on Christmas Day 1917.

Author

Reverend Richard Bryn Williams, (1902 - 1981)

Sources

The archives of The British and Foreign School Society, Brunel University, London;

Personal knowledge.

Further Reading

Wikipedia Article: [Richard Jones Berwyn](#) 

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