

BRADFORD, JOHN (1706 - 1785), weaver, fuller, and dyer

Name: John Bradford
Date of birth: 1706
Date of death: 1785
Child: Richard Bradford
Parent: Richard Bradford
Gender: Male
Occupation: weaver, fuller, and dyer
Area of activity: Business and Industry
Author: Griffith John Williams

Son of a Richard Bradford who lived in Y Pandy, Betws Tir Iarll, Glamorganshire. The tradition in the family was that the Bradfords came to Betws from Bradford-on-Avon during the first half of the 17th century; they bore a coat-of-arms.

We know little of John Bradford, but it is evident that he began in his youth to pay attention to the Welsh bardic traditions and to the task of collecting manuscripts. Several things suggest that he came to own some of the volumes that had been the property of the Powels of Tir Iarll; moreover he was acquainted with the works of English writers and literary critics, and it is said that his collection of works in English was in the possession of his family in the 19th century. He was one of the most prominent figures in the history of the literary renaissance in Upper Glamorgan in the first half of the 18th century. Nevertheless, only a few of his poetic works are extant, and these do not reach a high standard.

He corresponded with [William Wynn](#), Llangynhafal and [Lewis Morris](#), and he was elected a member of the Hon. Society of Cymmrodorion, London. He was also of some repute as a rationalist, and, although we do not know the details, it can be concluded that he interested himself in the religious controversies which were a feature of the age. [Iolo Morganwg](#) was one of his pupils; after the death of Bradford, [Iolo](#) invented all kinds of stories about his learning and about his connection with the system of the bardic 'gorsedd' - that druidic and Unitarian system which, according to [Iolo](#), had persisted throughout the centuries in Glamorgan, and particularly in Tir Iarll. [Iolo](#) maintained that it was in Bradford's manuscripts that he had obtained details about many of those things which we now know were forged by [Iolo](#) himself. It is, therefore, essential that all that was written and printed about Bradford in the 19th century should be discounted. According to the diary of [William Thomas](#) (1727 - 1795), Bradford was buried 6 June 1785. The Bradford family continued to be represented in Betws until comparatively recently.

After John Bradford's day his son, Richard Bradford, continued to work as weaver and fuller. He had a workman named David James who was fairly prominent in the history of Unitarianism in the neighbourhood and who married a niece of Richard Bradford. A great-granddaughter became the wife of the late John Kyrle Fletcher, bookseller, etc., of Newport, Monmouth.

Author

Emeritus Professor Griffith John Williams, (1892 - 1963)

Sources

G. J. Williams, *Iolo Morganwg a Chywyddau'r Ychwanegiad* (1926), 163-6

G. J. Williams, *Traddodiad Llenyddol Morgannwg* (1948), 237-40, 267-72

Cylchgrawn Cymdeithas Hanes y Methodistiaid Calfinaidd, 1949, 47

Further Reading

T. Morgan, *Enwogion Cymreig 1700-1900* (1907), p.31

Wikipedia Article: [Siôn Bradford](#)

Additional Links

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