

CHARLES, EDWARD (1757 - 1828), writer, whose pseudonym was Siamas Gwynedd.

Name: Edward Charles
Pseudonym: Siamas Gwynedd
Date of birth: 1757
Date of death: 1828
Parent: Margaret Charles
Parent: Edward Charles
Gender: Male
Occupation: writer
Area of activity: Literature and Writing; Poetry
Author: Robert Thomas Jenkins

He was born at Clocaenog, Denbighshire — christened there 23 September 1757 — son of Edward (yeoman) and Margaret Charles. Hardly anything is known of his early life; it is said that he was schooled by [David Ellis](#), curate of Derwen, and was afterwards apprenticed at Ruthin ([Jenkins, Thomas Charles](#), ii, 390). In 1789 at latest he was working in a draper's shop in London. On 5 April 1790 he was elected member of the Gwyneddigion Society; he was its secretary in 1796 and its official 'bard' in 1800 and 1810. As a poet, he is of little importance; but he was a copyist of manuscripts for [Owain Myfyr](#) (Owen Jones) in 1803-4, and further made a collection of letters (today most of them either at the British Museum or at Cardiff Free Library) which are of the utmost value to researchers on the history of London Welshmen and of their societies. Better known are his controversial writings. Though he was one of the closest friends of [John Jones](#), Glan-y-gors, he agreed not at all with the latter's political opinions, and in the *Geirgrawn*, edited by [David Davies](#) of Holywell, in 1796 he and others attacked [John Jones's](#) *Seren tan Gwmmwl*. Fiercer still was his hatred of Methodism. In 1793 he had attacked it (though without specifically naming it) in the *Cylchgrawn* edited by [Morgan John Rhys](#), and in 1797 he published a pamphlet, *Epistolau Cymraeg at y Cymry*, against it. Several of his friends, in London and in Wales, disapproved of this work, and in 1806 there appeared *Amddiffyniad i'r Methodistiaid*, by [Thomas Roberts](#) of Llwyn'rhudol, under the pseudonym [Arvonius](#). Charles was a lively and bitter critic, in a far too florid style. He served perhaps as model for [Brutus](#) (David Owen); and it is possible that the nickname 'Jacks,' which [Brutus](#) applied to the uncouth exhorters of his day, was suggested to him by the 'Jack-o'-Lantern' of Edward Charles. Charles died in 1828, in great poverty so it is said.

Author

Emeritus Professor Robert Thomas Jenkins, (1881 - 1969)

Sources

Leathart, *Origin and Progress of the Gwyneddigion Society of London (1831)*;

Cambrian Bibliography, under 1799, 35;

D. E. Jenkins, *Life of Thomas Charles (Denbigh 1908)*, ii, chap. 38;

J. Hubert Morgan in *Y Llenor*, 1931, 25-34;

Y Cymmrodor, 1951, chap. iv.

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