

DAVIES, JONATHAN CEREDIG (1859 - 1932), traveller, genealogist, and folk-lorist

Name: Jonathan Ceredig Davies

Date of birth: 1859

Date of death: 1932

Parent: J.C. Davies

Gender: Male

Occupation: traveller, genealogist, and folk-lorist

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

Author: William Williams

Born 22 May 1859, at Llangunllo, Cardiganshire, son of J. C. Davies, he traced his descent from Walter Morgan, of Tangogoyan (born 1729), who is recorded as a landed proprietor in the parish of Llanddewi-brefi. At the age of 16, in 1875, Davies went to the newly-founded Welsh colony in Patagonia. He returned to Wales in 1891 [and in 1892 was editor of *Yr Athrofa*, in which 'Anturiaethau yn Nhir y Cewri,' which was published in English as *Adventures in the Land of Giants*, appeared as a serial]. In 1898 he visited western Australia, where he spent four years. In both countries he made a study of the native populations, but also did much to further the spiritual and cultural movements among the English and Welsh colonists. On his return, apart from a brief visit to western Australia in 1907 and a visit to Spain and France in 1924, he spent the remaining years of his life in Wales, devoting himself entirely to the study of Welsh history, folk-lore, and genealogy. He died at Llanddewi-brefi, 29 March 1932. Davies was a keen observer with a retentive memory. His works are a mine of information on the folk-customs of many countries, but his conclusions must be accepted with caution. His chief works are: *Darlith ar Patagonia* (Treherbert, 1891); *Patagonia: a description of the country* (Treorky, 1892); *Adventures in the land of giants: a Patagonian tale* (Lampeter, 1892); *Western Australia: its history and progress* (Nantymoel, 1902); *Awstralia Orllewinol* (Treorchy, 1903); *Folk-lore of West and Mid-Wales* (Aberystwyth, 1911); and two privately printed books, *Welsh and Oriental Languages* (Llanddewi Brefi, 1927) and *Life, travels, and reminiscences of Jonathan Ceredig Davies* (Llanddewi Brefi, 1927). The first of these privately printed books was reprinted in the *Life, travels, and reminiscences*.

The story of the latter book is a remarkable one. Judged by ordinary standards it cannot be compared with the work of the trained craftsman, but it would be difficult to find a finer example of dogged perseverance. Old age, failing health and sight, and fear of poverty, all made it seem impossible for him to achieve his purpose. His equipment consisted of a small quantity of type and a platen press. Setting up and printing off one page at a time, he grimly held on until the book was finished, a quarto work of 438 pages, 'written, set up, printed off and published by himself.' Apart from the mechanical aspect of its production the book bears the impress of a man who had travelled much, read widely, and was possessed of much courage and tenacity of purpose.

Author

William Williams, (1885 - 1950)

Sources

Life, Travels, and Reminiscences of Jonathan Ceredig Davies (Llanddewi-brefi 1927), 1927

West Wales Historical Records (1910–29)

Annual Report of the National Library of Wales

press notices and information supplied by friends of J.C.D.

information from the late W. J. Gruffydd

Further Reading

Wikipedia Article: [Jonathan Ceredig Davies](#)

Additional Links

VIAF: [38955673](#)

Wikidata: [Q18535570](#)

Published date: 1959

Article Copyright: <http://rightsstatements.org/page/InC/1.0/> 

The Dictionary of Welsh Biography is provided by The National Library of Wales and the University of Wales Centre for Advanced Welsh and Celtic Studies. It is free to use and does not receive grant support. A donation would help us maintain and improve the site so that we can continue to acknowledge Welsh men and women who have made notable contributions to life in Wales and beyond.

Find out more on our [sponsorship page](#).

