

## ELLIS, ROBERT (Cynddelw; 1812 - 1875), Baptist minister, preacher, poet, antiquary, and commentator

**Name:** Robert Ellis  
**Pseudonym:** Cynddelw  
**Date of birth:** 1812  
**Date of death:** 1875  
**Gender:** Male  
**Occupation:** Baptist minister, preacher, poet, antiquary, and commentator  
**Area of activity:** Eisteddfod; History and Culture; Literature and Writing; Poetry; Religion; Scholarship and Languages  
**Author:** John Thomas Jones

Born 3 February 1812 at Ty'n-y-meini near Pen-y-bont-fawr, Montgomeryshire. He was a farm labourer from 1822 until 1835. His interest in literature and antiquities and his knowledge of poetry were probably kindled by his mother and rustic literati such as Richard Morris, the turner of Pentre-felin, James Jones the tailor, and **Humphrey Bromley**, the Unitarian preacher. These interests absorbed him until he joined the Baptist church at Gefail-rhyd (1832) and began to preach in 1834. The following year he had some ten months' schooling under **John Williams** (1806 - 1856), author of *Yr Oraclau Bywiol*, at Llansilin. He was minister at the following places: Llanelian and Llanddulas 1836-8, Glynceiriog 1838-42, Sirhowy 1847-62, Caernarvon 1862-75. He died 19 August 1875 at his old home, Gartheryr, between Oswestry and Llanrhaeadr, when he was on a preaching and lecture tour.

He was a man of many parts. He was an exegetical, doctrinal, and practical preacher, a considerable master of the pulpit Welsh of his day, speaking roundly, clearly, and with a natural fluency. He carried weight in bardic and eisteddfodic circles. It was his *awdl* 'Yr Adgyfodiad' in *Seren Gomer*, 1849, which brought him to notice as a poet and gave him his bardic name. His masterpiece is probably 'Cywydd y Berwyn,' but his 'Awdl ar Ddistawrwydd' is also charming. He had a national reputation as an eisteddfod adjudicator (on poetry mostly), conductor, and orator. In *Tafol y Beirdd*, 1853, he discussed the 'twenty-four metres'; he edited the 2nd impression of *Gorchestion Beirdd Cymru* (by **Rhys Jones**), and **Isaac Foulkes**'s reprint of *Barddoniaeth Dafydd ap Gwilym*. He also compiled *Blodau Arfon* (the work of **Dewi Wyn**) and edited *Geiriadur y Bardd*. He delighted in lexicography and produced *Geiriadur Cymreig Cymraeg*, 1868. His poetry - *Barddoniaeth Cynddelw* - was published under the editorship of **Ioan Arfon** by H. Humphreys, Caernarvon, in 1877. He was interested in every kind of antiquarian lore, published *Manion Hynafiaethol*, 1873, and contributed eighteen chapters to *Hanes y Brytaniaid a'r Cymry* (by **Gweirydd ab Rhys**). His wit, his natural gift for public speaking, and the wide range of his knowledge, made him one of the outstanding lecturers of his time - if, indeed, he was not the most outstanding; his subjects were extremely varied, but his chosen field was Wales in history and literature, and all his lectures were linked up with his genius for rummaging in the past. He was a great benefactor to the press of his denomination: he edited *Y Tyst Apostolaidd*, 1846-50; *Y Tyst*, 1851; *Y Greal*, 1852-3; and continued to edit the poetry which appeared in *Y Greal* until the end of his life; he also edited the poetry column in *Seren Gomer*, 1854-9. He wrote biographies of his teacher **John Williams** and of **Ellis Evans** of Cefn-mawr. His commentary on the New Testament (*Esboniad ar y Testament Newydd*) continued to appear in parts from 1855 until his death. He contributed articles to *Enw. F.* and to the *Gwyddoniadur*, not to mention numerous periodicals. Nor was he indifferent to the theological discussions of his time, particularly the Maclean-Campbell controversies. Frequent reference is made to his handsome appearance, his wonderful memory, his vivacity and wit; and, to his contemporaries, the diversity of his genius and the encyclopaedic extent of his knowledge, were alike remarkable.

### Author

John Thomas Jones

### Sources

D. Williams, *Cofiant y Parch. R. Ellis (Cynddelw) Caernarfon*

T. R. Roberts, *Eminent Welshmen: a short biographical dictionary of Welshmen... from the earliest times to the present* (1908)

### Further Reading

Wikipedia Article: [Robert Ellis](#)

### Images

John Thomas, [The Reverend Robert Ellis, 'Cynddelw'](#)

Hugh Humphreys, Robert Ellis, 'Cynddelw'

Hugh Humphreys, Robert Ellis, 'Cynddelw'

Rev. Robert Ellis (Cynddelw)

Hugh Humphreys, Robert Ellis, 'Cynddelw'

Hugh Humphreys, Rev. R. Ellis, 'Cynddelw'

Y diweddar Barch. Robert Ellis (Cynddelw)

John Thomas, Er cof hiraethlawn am Parch. Robert Ellis, (Cynddelw), Caernarfon Ganwyd Chwefror 3ydd, 1812. Bu farw Awst 19eg, 1875. Gorphwysa yn Mynwent Glyn Ceiriog

## Works

Robert Ellis, *Darlith ar hanes y Bedyddwyr* (Llangollen 1850)

Robert Ellis, *Cofiant y diweddar Parch. John Williams, Rhosllanerchrugog* (Llangollen 1871)

Thomas Edwards, Robert Ellis, *Hanes bywyd Richard Robert Jones, neu Dic Aberdaron: Cymro nodedig am ei dalent a'i archwaeth at ddysgu ieithoedd, yr hwn, yn wyneb pob anfantais, a weithiodd ei ffordd nes dyfod yn hyddysg mewn pedair ar ddeg o ieithoedd!* (Caernarfon 1870?)

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