

EVANS, MARY (1735 - 1789), an impostor, known in her day as 'Whitemantle' (y Fantell Wen),

**Name:** Mary Evans  
**Pseudonym:** Whitemantle, Y Fantell Wen  
**Date of birth:** 1735  
**Date of death:** 1789  
**Gender:** Female  
**Occupation:** an impostor  
**Area of activity:** Religion  
**Author:** Robert Thomas Jenkins

is generally believed to have reached Merioneth from Anglesey c. 1780 - some have it that she came as a maidservant to Maentwrog rectory, others that she lived at Breichiau, on the Maentwrog border of Llandecwyn parish; there are suggestions that she hailed from Cardiganshire. She had left her husband (probably before leaving Anglesey), and cohabited with another man. But she asserted that she was betrothed to Christ; arrayed in a red mantle she led a long procession to her 'marriage' in Ffestiniog church, after which there was a 'marriage-feast' in a tavern in that village, and Mary received many bridal gifts. On Sundays, she and her followers wore white mantles, and held ceremonies on Manod mountain and other hills. The sect spread far and wide around Ffestiniog, Penmachno, and Harlech - it seems to be agreed that apart from their credulity her followers were quite harmless and indeed good-living folk. Mary ended her days at Talsarnau. She had announced that she would never die, and accordingly her body was kept unburied for a long time; but eventually it had to be buried (28 October 1789), in Llanfihangel-y-traethau churchyard - the tombstone gives her age as 54. For some time, her followers preserved scraps of her clothing as relics; but the sect soon died out.

## Author

Emeritus Professor Robert Thomas Jenkins, (1881 - 1969)

## Sources

Robert Jones (Rhoslan), *Drych yr Amseroedd (Trefriw 1820)*, 152-3

*Gweithiau Gethin sef casgliad o holl weithiau barddonol a llenyddol* (Llanrwst 1884), 257-8

D. Tecwyn Evans, *Atgofion Cynnar* (Tywyn 1950), 19

information from Mr. John Lloyd, Llanbedr, Meirionnydd

## Further Reading

Wikipedia Article: [Mari'r Fantell Wen](#)

## Additional Links

Wikidata: [Q18535799](#)

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