

## EVANS, THEOPHILUS (1693 - 1767), cleric, historian, and man of letters

**Name:** Theophilus Evans  
**Date of birth:** 1693  
**Date of death:** 1767  
**Spouse:** Alice Evans (née Bevan)  
**Child:** Elinor Jones (née Evans)  
**Parent:** Charles Evans  
**Gender:** Male  
**Occupation:** cleric, historian, and man of letters  
**Area of activity:** History and Culture; Literature and Writing; Religion; Scholarship and Languages  
**Author:** Enid Pierce Roberts

He was christened in Llandygywydd church, Cardiganshire, 21 February 1693, son of Charles Evans of Pen-y-wenallt, near Newcastle Emlyn, by his second wife, and grandson of Evan Griffith Evans — the ‘Captain Tory’ of Charles I's army. It is not known where he was educated. There is no record of him at Shrewsbury school nor is there any certainty that he attended the grammar school at Carmarthen. It is doubtful whether he ever went to a university, for in 1714-16 he was at home and at Shrewsbury, preparing books for the press. He was ordained deacon, 14 August 1717, and priest, 9 November 1718, by the bishop of S. Davids, and became curate of Llanlleonfel, and afterwards (under [Moses Williams](#)) of Devynnock, both in Brecknock. On 14 August 1722 he was made vicar of Llandyfriog, near Newcastle Emlyn. In 1728 he resigned and was made rector of Llanynys cum Llanddulas, Brecknock. In 1738 he resigned and was given the living of Llangamarch, Brecknock, which was joined with Llanwrtyd and Abergwesyn. About the same time he was made domestic chaplain to [Marmaduke Gwynne](#) of Garth. In 1739 Llanfaes, Brecon, was added to his other livings. In 1763 he made over Llangamarch to his son-in-law Hugh Jones (father of [Theophilus Jones](#)), but he held Llanfaes until his death, 11 September 1767. He was buried in Llangamarch churchyard. The hymnist [William Williams](#) of Pantycelyn was appointed his curate in 1740 but, as Theophilus Evans refused to recommend him for ordination as priest, he left in 1743.

He married 1728, Alice, daughter of Morgan Bevan of Gelligaled, Glamorganshire, and they had five children, three sons and two daughters [see under [Pritchett](#)]. Theophilus Evans is said to have been the means of discovering the properties of the water at Llanwrtyd Wells by drinking it when everybody said it was poisonous, and thus curing himself of scurvy.

He published a number of books on history and religion. Two prime objects are to be found in all his work — the glorification of the nobility and antiquity of the Welsh nation and the upholding of the Church of England form of Protestantism as the true Christian religion. His most celebrated works are *Drych y Prif Oesoedd* [↗](#), 1716, 2nd ed. 1740 (many subsequent editions), a prejudiced and uncritical but very entertaining version of the early history of Wales, and *A History of Modern Enthusiasm*, 1752, 2nd ed. 1757, where he seeks to prove that all who turn their backs on the Church of England are secret Papists. Because of its lively style and its wealth of incisive phrases and striking metaphors, the *Drych* is regarded as one of the classics of Welsh prose.

### Author

Dr Enid Pierce Roberts

### Sources

*Eminent Welshmen: a short biographical dictionary of Welshmen... from the earliest times to the present (1908);*

*Drych y Prif Oesoedd (Bangor 1740, 1927)* (ed. S. J. Evans), 1902;

R. T. Jenkins, *Yr Apêl at Hanes ac ysgrifau eraill (1930);*

Theophilus Jones, *History of the County of Brecknock* (3rd ed.), ii, 246-8;

T. Parry, *Hanes Llenyddiaeth Gymraeg hyd 1900 (1944)*, 204-5, 226-7.

### Further Reading

Theophilus Evans, [Drych y prif oesoedd yn ddwy ran](#) [↗](#)

Wikipedia Article: [Theophilus Evans](#) [↗](#)

### Additional Links

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Published date: 1959

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