

EVANS, WILLIAM (fl. 1768-1776), Presbyterian minister, and lexicographer

Name: William Evans

Gender: Male

Occupation: Presbyterian minister, and lexicographer

Area of activity: Religion; Scholarship and Languages

Author: Robert Thomas Jenkins

Hardly anything is known about him (see the rather confused correspondence in *Ymofynydd*, December 1887, [268-70](#), [275-6](#), January 1888, [19-20](#), and February 1888 [43-4](#)), except that he hailed from Cefn-gwili, Llanedy, Carmarthenshire, and according to [W. D. Jeremy](#) was at Carmarthen Academy 1768-72. At the beginning of 1776 he was minister at Sherborne, but in March he accepted a call to Moretonhampstead; he arrived there, according to the congregation records, on 29 March, but left, owing to illness, on 12 May - 'we paid him for seven weeks.' In 1771 he had published at Carmarthen [A new English-Welsh dictionary...](#), of which a 2nd ed. appeared in 1812. Not unnaturally, it has been doubted whether a third-year student could have produced such a book, but his nephew's statement (see below) seems pretty definite proof; it is possible that Evans was already a man of mature age and previous good education before he entered the Academy. A copy of this dictionary was among the books bequeathed by [Richard Morris](#) to the Welsh Charity-school (*Add. Morris Letters*, p. 808), but [Morris](#) himself nowhere speaks of the book. [William Richards](#) (1749 - 1818) used Evans's dictionary when preparing his own - see his preface.

A nephew of William Evans's, of the same name (1769-1847), son of his brother John, of Cefn-gwili, inherited the uncle's library. He was for nearly fifty years minister at Tavistock, and kept school nearby, in the house in which (according to local tradition) Sir Francis Drake was born. A letter (17 October 1845) by [Timothy Davis](#) of Evesham quotes these words from a letter written to him by Evans of Tavistock 'your father was my father and grandfather's friend, and fellow-student of my late uncle and namesake, Revd. William Evans, author of the English and Welsh Dictionary published about eighty years ago' (letter printed in *Cymru, O.M.E.*, xxviii, 223).

Author

Emeritus Professor Robert Thomas Jenkins, (1881 - 1969)

Sources

Oxford Dictionary of National Biography

Cambrian Bibliography

Catalogue of Printed Literature in the Welsh Department, Cardiff Free Libraries (1898)

and the above references

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](#).

