

GRIFFITH, JOHN OWEN (Ioan Arfon, 1828 - 1881), poet and critic

Name: John Owen Griffith
Pseudonym: Ioan Arfon
Date of birth: 1828
Date of death: 1881
Spouse: Ann Griffith (née Roberts)
Child: Robert Arthur Griffith
Parent: Owen Griffith Owen
Gender: Male
Occupation: poet and critic
Area of activity: Eisteddfod; Literature and Writing; Poetry
Author: Griffith Thomas Roberts

Born at Fronllwyd, Waun-fawr, Caernarfonshire, son of Owen Griffith Owen, a quarryman. He learned to read at the Moriah Independent chapel Sunday school and, after attending the local day school for two years, went to work at the Dinorwic quarry. He was then 12 years of age. [Huw Tegai](#) and [Caledfryn](#) encouraged him to study Welsh literature and in 1865 he won the chair at the Bethesda eisteddfod for an awdl on 'Adam.' His cywyddau to 'Night,' 'Hope,' and 'Home' are his best poems. He also wrote an elegy upon [Glasynys](#) (Owen Wynne Jones). His wife, Anne (Roberts), came from a small farm in Waun-fawr called Ala-bawl. They had six children, the eldest being [R. A. Griffith](#) (Elphin). After his marriage he went to school for six months. He then opened a grocer's shop at 23, High Street, Caernarvon, opposite the then office of the Herald Cymraeg and this shop soon became the centre of the Caernarvon literary coterie, most of whose members are noticed elsewhere in the present volume, — [Llew Llwyfo](#) and [Alfardd](#), editors of the Herald, were regular visitors; Gwilym Alltwn, [Cynddelw](#), John Morgan (Cadnant), and [Y Thesbiad](#) were frequently there; [Hwfa Mon](#), [Mynyddog](#), and [Ceiriog](#) would call when they happened to be in the town; while 'Bro Gwalia,' the doggerel verse-writer, received the same welcome. Ioan Arfon was accounted a considerable geologist in his day and published in 1864 a book on the subject, *Traethawd Ymarferol ar Lechfeini Sir Gaernarvon*. He and his friends, [Alfardd](#) (John James Hughes) and Gwilym Allt-wen, were members of the first committee set up by the North Wales Quarrymen's Union and attended its inaugural meeting, 21 March 1874. [Alfardd](#) consulted him before publishing his articles attacking judge Homersham Cox and others who were anxious to ban the use of the Welsh language in the local courts. Ioan Arfon edited *Barddoniaeth Cynddelw*, published in 1877, and *Lloffion y Flwyddyn*, a collection of poems printed in Yr Herald Cymraeg in the year 1878. He died 22 November 1881 and was buried in Bryn-'r-odyn cemetery. The pall-bearers were [Clwydfardd](#), [Ceiriog](#), [Llew Llwyfo](#) and Elidirfab. [Daniel Owen](#) wrote an elegy upon him in the Geninen, 1883, 143.

Author

Griffith Thomas Roberts

Sources

Carnarvon and Denbigh Herald, 26 November, 3 December, 1881;

Y Geninen (Gwyl Dewi), 1904, 47-51;

Yr Eisteddfod, ii, 267.

Darllen Pellach

[Mr John Owen Griffith \(Ioan Arfon\)](#), *Y Darlunydd*, rhif XXXIV, Cyfrol IV, Ionawr 1879

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Published date: 1959

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