

# HARRIES, HENRY (died 1862), astrologer, medicine-man, and conjurer

**Name:** Henry Harries  
**Date of death:** 1862  
**Parent:** John Harries  
**Gender:** Male  
**Occupation:** astrologer, medicine-man, and conjurer  
**Area of activity:** Medicine; History and Culture; Space and Aviation  
**Author:** Emrys George Bowen

Son of JOHN HARRIES, Pant-coy, Cwrt-y-cadno, Carmarthenshire. Henry Harries and his father (who died in 1839) are considered to be among the most famous of Welsh conjurers of modern times; they are known to have been consulted by people from all over South Wales and the borderland. The father had received a formal education considerably in advance of the community in which he found himself, while his extensive library contained all the important medical books of the day, together with works in Greek and Latin; some books from the library are today in the National Library of Wales. Father and son later worked together, and Henry Harries issued shortly before his father's death a short prospectus of their trade in which he claimed to calculate nativity; to tell the fortunes of all who consulted them; to tell 'friends and enemies, trade or profession best to follow; whether fortunate in speculation, viz. lottery, dealing in foreign markets, etc., etc., of marriage, if to marry - of children, whether fortunate or not, etc., etc., deduced from the influence of the Sun and Moon, with the Planetary Orbs at the time of birth. Also, judgment and general issue in sickness and diseases, etc. ...' They could also charm away pain, detect thieves, counteract the effect of witchcraft, and summon spirits to appear. There can be no doubt that men like John and Henry Harries played an important part in the life of the rural community of their day. It was a community that had little access to orthodox medical aid, or to an efficient police force to detect crime, or to veterinary surgeons in cases of illness among the livestock. The conjurers offered help under all these headings.

## Author

Professor Emrys George Bowen, (1900 - 1983)

## Sources

- T. Morgan, *Enwogion Cymreig 1700-1900* (1907), i, 269-75  
J. C. Davies, *Welsh Folklore* (1911), 252-62  
E. Jones, 'A Welsh Wizard,' *Transactions of the Carmarthenshire Antiquarian Society and Field Club*, 1945-6, 47-8  
Penardd (i.e. J. H. Davies, *Rhai o hen ddewiniaid Cymru* (1901))

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