

JAMES, EVAN (Ieuan ap Iago; 1809 - 1878), author of the words of 'Hen Wlad fy Nhadau', and his son JAMES, JAMES (Iago ap Ieuan; 1833 - 1902), who is said to have composed the air

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**Name:** Evan James  
**Pseudonym:** Ieuan ap Iago, Iago ap Ieuan  
**Date of birth:** 1809  
**Date of death:** 1878  
**Child:** James James  
**Gender:** Male  
**Occupation:** author of the words of 'Hen Wlad fy Nhadau'  
**Area of activity:** Literature and Writing; Music  
**Author:** Watkin William Price



Evan James was a weaver and wool-merchant who kept the Ancient Druid Inn at Argoed in the parish of Bedwellty, Mon., and it was there that his son James was born. The family moved shortly afterwards to Pontypridd, where Evan James had a woollen factory in Mill Street. The father had some skill in writing Welsh verse; a few of his poems were printed in *Gardd Aberdar*, 1854, Cymru (O.M.E.), 1915, and elsewhere. According to Taliesin James, grandson of Evan James, it was the son James who, in 1856, composed the melody and the father who wrote the words. The subject is fully discussed by Percy A. Scholes, in the National Library of Wales Journal, [iii, 1-10](#); see also the portraits of father and son reproduced there together with facsimiles of manuscript and printed versions. A later article in N.L.W. Jnl., [viii, 244-57](#) shows reasons for doubting the ascription of the air to James James.

James James included the air, entitled 'Glanrhondda', in the collection of unpublished airs which he submitted for competition at the Llangollen national eisteddfod of 1858 under the pseudonym 'Orpheus' ([Minor Deposit 150B](#)). The adjudicator, [John Owen](#) (Owain Alaw), harmonized it and included it in the third volume of his *Gems of Welsh Melody*, 1860. The tune became popular immediately; it was sung at the Aberystwyth national eisteddfod, 1865, by [Kate Wynne](#), and at the Chester national eisteddfod, 1866, by [Lewis W. Lewis](#) (Llew Llwyfo).

Evan James d. 30 September 1878 and was buried in the graveyard attached to Carmel Baptist chapel, Pontypridd. James James kept public houses at Walnut Tree Bridge (below Pontypridd) and Mountain Ash; he also lived for a time with his son at the Swan Hotel, Aberaman. He died 11 January 1902 at 6 Hawthorne Terrace, Aberdare, and was buried in the Aberdare cemetery. A memorial to father and son, the work of [Sir William Goscombe John, R.A.](#), was unveiled in Ynysangharad Park, Pontypridd, 23 July 1930.

## Author

Watkin William Price, (1873 - 1967), Aberdare

## Sources

Trevor Herbert, '[James, Evan \[Ieuan ap Iago\] \(1809-1878\)](#)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* [00174N.L.W. Jnl., iii, 1-10](#), and references cited therein

South Wales newspapers

*Y Cymro*, 17 July 1943

[NLW Evan James MS 1](#) containing the earliest copy of 'Hen wlad fy nhadau' in the handwriting of the composer  
Meredydd Evans, 'Who was "Orpheus" of the 1858 Llangollen Eisteddfod?', *Welsh Music History*, 5 (2002), 65-71

## Further Reading

Wikipedia Article: [Evan James](#)

Wikipedia Article: [James James](#)

## Sound and Film

NLW: [Welsh National Anthem Manuscript- one of the treasures of The National Library of Wales](#)

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