

MATTHEWS, JOHN HOBSON (Mab Cernyw; 1858 - 1914), Roman Catholic historian, archivist and solicitor

Name: John Hobson Matthews
Pseudonym: Mab Cernyw
Date of birth: 1858
Date of death: 1914
Spouse: Alice Mary Mathews (née Gwyn-Hughes)
Parent: Emma Mathews (née Hobson)
Gender: Male
Occupation: Roman Catholic historian, archivist and solicitor
Area of activity: History and Culture; Law; Religion
Author: William Llewelyn Davies

Born 1858 at Croydon, his father being from S. Ives and his mother (Emma Hobson) from Great Grimsby. Although not a Welshman, Matthews was connected with Wales by residence and otherwise for so long a period and wrote so much concerning the country that he merits inclusion in this dictionary. Educated at schools at Blackheath and Cambridge, he worked for a while for a shipping firm in Malta.

He entered the Roman Catholic church in 1877, became a solicitor in 1889, and practised at Cardiff for many years.

He was a good linguist and learnt Maltese, Cornish, and Welsh. He it was who first drew attention to the carols of the Welsh Catholic martyr, [Richard White](#) (*Catholic Record Society*, iv). He edited *Emynau Catholig*, was the translator of *Ffordd y Groes*, and became a member of the Welsh Bardic Gorsedd. He acted as archivist to the Cardiff Corporation and was the editor of the six large volumes entitled *Cardiff Records, being materials for a history of the County Borough from the earliest times* (1898-1911). He also made a report, 1905, upon records belonging to the Monmouthshire County Council. He published *A History of the parishes of St. Ives, Lelant, Towednack, and Zennor* (London, 1892), and edited Martin Cock's *Guide to St. Ives* (St. Ives, 1906). He had previously prepared *Yr Hen grefydd a'r grefydd newydd. Sef dadl ... am yr Eglwys Gatholig ... Wedi ei gyfieithu i'r Gymraeg gan ... J. H. Jones* (Cardiff, 1889), and *The Life and Memorials of Saint Teilo* (Preston, 1893).

He contributed to the transactions of societies, e.g. Cardiff Naturalists Society (see *Transactions*, xxxiii, for a study of place-names of the Cardiff district) and particularly to the Catholic Record Society, of which he was one of the original members (in 1906); many of the volumes of the latter contain valuable material relating to Catholics in south-east Wales, including Monmouthshire, contributed by him (see, e.g. vols. iv, v). *The Vaughans of Courtfield: a study in Welsh genealogy* (London, 1912) was based upon his examination of the family muniments of the [Vaughans](#) of Courtfield, a Herefordshire Catholic family (the muniments are now in N.L.W.). At the time of his death he was co-operating in the work of continuing Duncombe's *History of Herefordshire*.

He married, 1892, Alice Mary Gwyn-Hughes; they had four sons and two daughters. He died at Ealing, 30 January 1914.

N.L.W. MSS. 2851-3 contain some typical examples of his 'collectanea.'

Author

Sir William Llewelyn Davies, (1887 - 1952)

Sources

The Tablet a weekly newspaper and review, 31 January 1914

Handlist of Manuscripts in the National Library of Wales, i, ii

Cardiff Naturalists' Society, xxxiii

Further Reading

Wikipedia Article: [John Hobson Mathews](#)

Additional Links

Wikidata: [Q28360871](#)

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