

NOWELL, THOMAS (1730? - 1801), principal of S. Mary Hall, Oxford, and Regius professor of history

Name: Thomas Nowell

Date of birth: 1730?

Date of death: 1801

Parent: Cradock Nowell

Gender: Male

Occupation: principal of S. Mary Hall, Oxford, and Regius professor of history

Area of activity: Education; History and Culture

Author: Robert Thomas Jenkins

son of Cradock Nowell, of Cardiff. Wherever the Nowells may have sprung from, it is certain that the name 'Cradock' associates them with Nottage, Glamorganshire. More than one 'Cradock' is named in a will from Newton Nottage in 1504, and a freeholder named Thomas Cradock is found there in 1634 ([H. H. Knight](#), 'An Account of Newton Nottage,' in *Archæologia Cambrensis*, 1853, 179, 246). In the 17th century Nottage Court was mortgaged by the Loughers to a William Jones, an apothecary of Cardiff, but in 1777 this William Jones's grandson, Cradock Nowell ([Knight](#), op. cit., 256) - either the father or the brother of Thomas Nowell - sold it back to the then owners of Tythegston, the [Knight family](#). Newton church has a memorial tablet to the widow of some Cradock Nowell. It may be remembered that R. D. Blackmore gave the title *Cradock Nowell* to one of his novels.

Thomas Nowell's career is described in the *D.N.B.* He went up to Oriel in 1746, aged 16 according to Foster, *Alumni Oxonienses*; he graduated in 1749 (D.D. 1764), was elected Fellow of Oriel in 1753 and held various offices there, became principal of S. Mary Hall in 1764, and professor of modern history in 1771; he was public orator, 1760-76. He died 23 September 1801 - he was then said to be 73, which does not tally with the entry of his matriculation. He was a strong Tory, and as such earned the warm approval of Samuel Johnson. He was also strongly anti-Methodist, and was involved in debate with Sir Rowland Hill when the University expelled six Methodist undergraduates. Hill's attack, *Pietas Oxoniensis* (1768) was translated into Welsh by John Thomas of Llanfihangel-Aber-bythych in 1769 under the title *Duwioldeb Rhydychain* - see the account of the matter in [D. E. Jenkins](#), *Thomas Charles*, i, 64-6.

Author

Emeritus Professor Robert Thomas Jenkins, (1881 - 1969)

Published date: 1959

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