

OWEN, DAVID (Dewi Wyn o Eifion; 1784 - 1841), farmer and poet

Name: David Owen
Pseudonym: Dewi Wyn O Eifion
Date of birth: 1784
Date of death: 1841
Gender: Male
Occupation: farmer and poet
Area of activity: Eisteddfod; Nature and Agriculture; Poetry
Author: William Rowlands

Born in June 1784 at Gaerwen, Llanystumdwy, Caernarfonshire - Gaerwen is a farmhouse situated on the right-hand side of the road leading from Ynys station to Llanybi, in Eifionydd. He received his early education in private schools at Llanybi, Llanystumdwy, and Penmorfa, and, after a short period in an English school at Bangor-iscoed, he returned home to Gaerwen. His brother, Owen, kept a shop, named Gaerwen, at Pwllheli, and owing to his brother's ill-health, Dewi and his mother moved to Pwllheli in 1827. He still held the farm at Gaerwen, and when his brother died in 1837, he returned home, and remained there to the end of his days.

His bardic tutor was [Robert Williams](#) (Robert ap Gwilym Ddu), his neighbour, who lived at Betws Fawr, near Gaerwen. At the age of 21 Dewi won the Gwyneddigion medal for his awdl on the Isle of Britain, and in 1811 he won the prize at Tremadoc eisteddfod for his *awdl* on agriculture. His masterpiece, which caused a great deal of controversy, was his *awdl* 'Elusengarwch' ('Charity'), which he entered for the Denbigh eisteddfod in 1819, when the award was made to [Edward Hughes](#) ('Y Dryw,' 1772 - 1850), vicar of Bodfari. Dewi and his friends regarded this as a misjudgement; he became embittered, and in letters to friends and in satire he fiercely attacked the two adjudicators, [William Owen Pughe](#) and [Robert Davies](#) (Bardd Nantglyn). He was now sorely offended and composed but little afterwards. He was a master of the strict metres in Welsh, and wrote some excellent *englynion*; amongst the best are the series on the Menai Suspension Bridge, which were written in 1832. He was regarded as one of the chief bards of his day. He had considerable influence on the development of the *awdl*, and *englyn*, and his series of *englynion* on the Menai Bridge formed a pattern for the 19th century poets in Wales. His main defect as a poet was his habit of amassing meaningless words, and his lack of artistry which made many of his compositions obscure.

For the last five years of his life he suffered ill-health and mental depression. Shortly before his death he became a member of the Baptist church at Capel y Beirdd, Eifionydd. He died 17 January 1841, and was buried at Llanybi.

In 1842 his poems (with a biography), entitled *Blodau Arfon*, were published by [Edward Parry](#), Chester, and these exercised great influence on the works of 19th century bards in Wales.

Author

William Rowlands

Sources

Y Gwyddoniadur Cymreig (1889-96), viii, 156-60

Enwogion Sir Gaernarfon (1922), 37-8

Blodau Arfon (1842-1869) (Cofiant, ix-xl)

W. J. Gruffydd, [Dewi Wyn o Eifion](#) *Y Llenor: cylchgrawn chwarterol dan nawdd cymdeithasau Cymraeg y colegau cenedlaethol*, iv, 9-24

T. R. Roberts, *Eminent Welshmen: a short biographical dictionary of Welshmen... from the earliest times to the present* (1908)

[Llythyr David Owen, 'Dewi Wyn o Eifion', at John Jenkins](#), *The National Library of Wales Journal*, ii, 59-61

Further Reading

Wikipedia Article: [David Owen](#)

Images

[Mr. David Owen o'r Gaerwen, neu Dewi Wyn o Eifion](#)

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