

## OWEN, DAVID (Brutus; 1795 - 1866), editor and littérateur

**Name:** David Owen  
**Pseudonym:** Brutus  
**Date of birth:** 1795  
**Date of death:** 1866  
**Spouse:** Anne Owen (née Jones)  
**Parent:** Rachel Owen  
**Parent:** David Benjamin Owen  
**Gender:** Male  
**Occupation:** editor and littérateur  
**Area of activity:** Education; Literature and Writing; Medicine; Printing and Publishing  
**Author:** Thomas Jones

Born towards the end of 1795 (he was christened on 25 December 1795) in the parish of Llanpumpsaint, Carmarthenshire. His father, David Benjamin (Owen), was a shoemaker and a sexton, and his mother, Rachel (Owen), was a Baptist. He received a good education, including instruction in the classics. He intended becoming a physician and was apprenticed to John Thomas of Aberduar, near Llanybyther. During his apprenticeship he became a Baptist and decided to enter the ministry. He spent a year at the Baptist Academy at Bristol before settling at Aber, between Bangor and Llanfairfechan, as a schoolmaster and lay preacher. After three years he moved to Llyn to take charge of the chapels of Tal-y-graig, Galltraeth, Tyndonnen, and Rhoshirwaun, and he was ordained as a minister. He made his home at Llangian; and in addition to his ministerial office, he served also as a country doctor and a schoolmaster. About 1820 he married Anne, daughter of Thomas Jones, Rhandir, a local farmer and an Independent deacon. It was presumably poverty and his rashness that drove him to appeal for financial aid from the Unitarian Association, claiming that his congregations had accepted Unitarian beliefs. His deception was unmasked and he was expelled by the Baptist Association at Pwllheli.

That which brought him to prominence in Wales was his letter (under the pseudonym Brutus) in *Seren Gomer*, March 1824, attacking the Welsh language. Henceforth it was as 'Baptists, he became a member of the Independent church, Capel Newydd, and kept school at Llangian. He was allowed to preach amongst the Independents, but he did not become popular. Later, he moved to Tyddyn-sweep, Maenaddfwyn, near Llannerch-y-medd (Anglesey); but he was not very successful there either, and soon afterwards he moved to Bontnewydd, near Caernarvon, and kept a school there.

In 1828, after being appointed editor of *Lleuad yr Oes*, a journal published at Aberystwyth, he became a schoolmaster at Llanbadarn-fawr, but when the copyright of the magazine was bought in 1829 by Jeffrey Jones, the Llandovery printer, Brutus moved to Pentre-ty-gwyn. When Jeffrey Jones died in 1830, *Yr Efanglydd* was launched, as successor to *Lleuad yr Oes*, by a committee of Independent ministers, with Brutus as editor, and Messrs. D. R. and W. Rees, Llandovery, as printers. Under the editorship of Brutus the new magazine became more political than had been intended, with a tendency towards political and ecclesiastical conservatism, and Brutus was threatened with expulsion from office. To resolve this conflict, Messrs. Rees launched a new journal, *Yr Haul*, with Brutus as editor, to serve the Established Church, and the Independents launched *Y Diwygiwr*, with D. Rees (1801 - 1869) as editor, in 1835. Brutus returned to the Anglican church, at Llywel, and moved to Pwllmadog, near Pentrebach, between Llandovery and Trecastle. Later, he resided at Bronarthen, near Half-way. To the end of his life he continued to edit *Yr Haul* very ably, but he would occasionally attend Horeb, the Baptist chapel at Cwm-dwr. It is remarkable that he never received holy orders in the Church. He died 16 January 1866, and was buried at Llywel, where there is a tablet to his memory.

He was a prolific writer, and published many religious and theological books, amongst them - *Athrawiaeth Bedydd Babanod*, 1828; *Cwypm Babilon Fawr*, 1829; *Breinniau Babanod*, 1830; *Daearyddiaeth Ysgrythyrol*, 1835; *Allwedd y Cyssegr*, 1835 (2nd ed. 1839); *Christmasia*, 1840 (2nd ed. 1861; 3rd. ed. 1887); *Gweithrediadau yr Eglwys Sefydledig*, 1841; *Gwaedd Uwch Gwlad*, 1843; *Eliasia*, 1844; *Darganfyddiadau yn Ninefeh*, 1852 (a translation of an English book by A. H. Layard); *Brutusiana*, 1855, a selection of his writings from *Yr Haul*, and *Cofiant y Diweddar Barch. Thomas Williams*, 1861. His importance lies in his work not as a scholar and theologian but rather as a satirist. The chief object of his satire was quackery, in particular the quackery of the worst Nonconformist preachers, the 'Jacks,' as they were called. It is these who are reviled in numerous articles, essays, and reviews; in the conversations of *Bugeiliaid Epynt (Yr Haul, 1835-66)* (Selections by T. Jones, 1950); and in *Wil Brydydd y Coed* (ibid., September 1863-December 1865), also published separately in 1876 and 1896.

### Author

Professor Thomas Jones

### Sources

Josiah Thomas Jones, *Geiriadur Bywgraffyddol o Enwogion Cymru (Aberdŵr 1867-70)*, ii, 353-5

*Y Traethodydd*, 1867, 213, 421

*The Red Dragon*, iii, 385

*Seren Gomer*, 1898, 1

introduction by T. Jones to *Wil Brydydd y Coed Cofiant Siencyn Bach y Llwywr a Chofiant Dai Hunandyb* (new ed. 1950)

### Works

David Owen, *Eliasia; neu Rai sylwadau ar gymeriad areithyddol a phregethwriaethol y diweddar Barchedig John Elias*(Merthyr Tydfil 1844)

### Additional Links

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