

OWEN, HENRY (1716 - 1795), cleric, physician, and scholar

Name: Henry Owen
Date of birth: 1716
Date of death: 1795
Parent: Jonette Owen
Parent: William Owen
Gender: Male
Occupation: cleric, physician, and scholar
Area of activity: Medicine; Religion; Scholarship and Languages
Authors: Robert Thomas Jenkins, Llewelyn Gwyn Chambers

Born in 1716 at Dyffrydan, about 3 miles from Dolgellau, son of William Owen (died 1767), a lawyer, and christened 29 January at Dolgellay. His mother's name was Jonet(te). According to *Powys Fadog* (vi, 463-72), he was of the family of **baron Lewis Owen** (died 1555). Henry was his father's second son; the eldest was Lewis Owen (died 1757), whose son was Henry Owen (1750 - 1827), a Dolgellay physician who married into the Quaker family of **Lewis and Owen** of Tyddyn-y-garreg and was himself a Quaker - it was he who, in 1786, sold land to the Calvinistic Methodists of Dolgellay for the building of their first chapel there.

Henry Owen was educated at Ruthin school and Jesus College, Oxford; he matriculated in April 1736 at 19, graduated in 1739 and again (in medicine) in 1746, and took his M.D. in 1753. He was ordained in 1746, and was curate and physician in Gloucestershire for three years, after which he gave up his medical practice on account of ill-health. He became chaplain to a gentleman, who in 1752, presented him to the rectory of Terling, Essex; he was also curate at Stoke Newington. He was elected F.R.S. in 1753. In 1760 he was appointed rector of S. Olave's, Hart Street, near the Tower (and therefore the Navy Office); and in 1775, while he was chaplain to bishop Barrington of Llandaff, the bishop gave him the additional living of Edmonton. He died at Edmonton, 14 October 1795. For his children and descendants, see *Powys Fadog*, loc. cit.

There is no doubt at all of Owen's scholarship - in mathematics, in classics, in Hebrew and Greek Biblical criticism. But he also interested himself in Welsh antiquities, and in the Welsh manuscripts belonging to **William Jones** (1675? - 1749). True, **Sir John Lloyd** was convinced that the attribution to Owen of the 1775 *History of Anglesea*, including an essay on **Owain Glyn Dŵr** attributed to **Thomas Ellis** of Dolgellay (these attributions are made in *Llyfryddiaeth y Cymry*), is erroneous - the *History*, says **Sir John**, was by **John Thomas** (1736 - 1769) of Beaumaris, and the essay was the work of **Robert Vaughan** of Hengwrt. Still, Owen certainly brought out the 2nd edition of *Mona Antiqua Restaurata*, by **Henry Rowlands** (1655 - 1723). He was a prominent Cymmrodor, and acted as reviser of the papers sent up to be read before the society. There is much talk of him in the Morris Letters. He was a neighbour and friend of **Richard Morris**'s - not that this prevented **Richard** from satirical references to his marriage to a woman very much younger than himself (and a bishop's daughter), or from telling his brothers that Owen was 'a miserly devil, who changed his maidservants almost every week.' All three brothers pestered Owen for advice in their frequent and varied illnesses. Owen himself was a sickly man - 'a thin man.' Other friends of his were **Silvanus Bevan** and **John Evans** (1702 - 1782).

Authors

Emeritus Professor Robert Thomas Jenkins, (1881 - 1969)

Dr Llewelyn Gwyn Chambers

Sources

Oxford Dictionary of National Biography

J. H. Davies (ed.), *The Letters of Lewis, Richard, William, and John Morris, of Anglesey, (Morrisiaid MĀ´n) 1728-1765 (1907â€“9)*, vol. I, vol. II (use indexes by Hugh Owen)

History of the Princes, the Lords Marcher, and the Ancient Nobility of Powys Fadog, loc. cit

Dolgellau parish registers in NLW

Further Reading

Wikipedia Article: [Henry Owen](#)

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