

PHILLIPS, JAMES (1703 - 1783), cleric and antiquarian

Name: James Phillips
Date of birth: 1703
Date of death: 1783
Spouse: Phillips (née Powell)
Parent: John Phillips
Gender: Male
Occupation: cleric and antiquarian
Area of activity: History and Culture; Religion
Author: John James Jones

According to **T. M. Rees** (*Not. W.*), he was born at Blaenau-y-pant, in the parish of Llandygwydd, Carmarthenshire (*sic* for Cardiganshire). **O. Jones** (*Cymru*) and *Y Brython* (1861, 162) state only that he was 'of Blaen-pant,' which does not necessarily imply that he was born there. Foster (*Alumni Oxonienses*) mentions a James Phillips who was the son of John Phillips of Lampeter Velfrey, Pembrokeshire, and of Colby in the same county. This James Phillips matriculated from Jesus College in 1724?, graduated B.A. 1727, M.A. 1729/30, B.D. and D.D. 1743, and died in 1783. 'Visitation Returns' show that Dr. James Phillips was made vicar of Nevern in 1730, where he died in 1783, having been also from 1738/39 rector of Llangoedmor. His connection with Blaen-pant was temporary only. He lived there for ten or twelve years during the minority of colonel Owen Brigstocke's father. He was thus able to make use of the excellent library collected there by Owen Brigstocke, the brother of William Brigstocke who had come into the estate of Blaen-pant on his marriage with the co-heiress. It was probably this library which stimulated him to take an interest in Welsh antiquities. He corresponded with Samuel Pegge, the English antiquarian, who referred to him on questions of Welsh antiquity. Phillips discussed matters raised by Pegge with **Evan Evans** (Ieuan Brydydd Hir) and **Edward Richard** of Ystradmeurig. **Richard**, in turn, showed both Pegge's and Phillips's letters to **Lewis Morris**. The latter, however, did not have a high opinion of Phillips, and once dubbed him 'a half-antiquary' ('darn o antiquary'). Although all the antiquarian letters of Phillips that are extant, or known of, are dated from Blaen pant, his correct appellation is Dr. Phillips of Llangoedmor, as he is called, for example, in D. G. Osborne-Jones, *Edward Richard of Ystradmeurig*, 44. James Phillips married a Powell of Nanteos, near Aberystwyth.

Author

John James Jones, (1892 - 1957)

Sources

Notable Welshmen (1700–1900) (1908)

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Cambrian Register (1795–1818), i, 1795

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Hugh Owen (ed.), *Additional Letters of the Morrises of Anglesey (1735-86)*(London 1947-9)

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