

## PHILLIPS, JOHN ROLAND (1844 - 1887), historian

**Name:** John Roland Phillips  
**Date of birth:** 1844  
**Date of death:** 1887  
**Spouse:** Mary Elizabeth Phillips (née Hargreaves)  
**Parent:** David Phillips  
**Gender:** Male  
**Occupation:** historian  
**Area of activity:** History and Culture; Literature and Writing  
**Author:** David Williams

Born at Kilgerran, Pembrokeshire, in June 1844, (There is no baptismal entry in the parish register). He was the son of David Phillips. In writing of **Katherine Philipps**, the 'Matchless Orinda', he said that her husband, **James Phillips** of the Priory, Cardigan, was 'a member of the same branch of the family of Phillips of Cilsant as the writer.' He entered a solicitor's office at Cardigan, and soon showed his interest in antiquities by winning the prize at the Cardigan eisteddfod of 1866 for an essay on the *History of Cilgerran*. This was published in London in 1867. He entered Lincoln's Inn in November 1867, and was called to the Bar on 10 June 1870. In 1873 he married Mary Elizabeth, daughter of A. Hargreaves of Nebraska, U.S.A. He was made a magistrate in the county of Essex, and on 22 June 1881, he became the first stipendiary magistrate for West Ham, but he died six years later, on 3 June 1887, at South Hampstead, after a long illness.

His main interests were historical, and his chief work is his *Memoirs of the Civil War in Wales and the Marches*, 1874, in two volumes, the first of which gives a narrative account, while the second is a most valuable collection of original documents. This was a remarkable production for so young a man. He also wrote *Historical Notes on Newcastle Emlyn*, 1867; *A List of the Sheriffs of Cardiganshire*, 1868; *An Attempt at a Concise History of Glamorgan*, 1879 and 1888; *Memoirs of the Ancient Family of Owen of Orielton*, 1886. At the time of his early death he had in preparation a history of Wales in the Tudor period and a history of the castles and of the abbeys of Wales. His knowledge of the manuscripts relating to Wales at the Public Record Office and the British Museum was said to be unique in his day. He was the first secretary of the Cymmrodorion Society when it was revived in 1873, but resigned in 1876. [*Cymm.*, 1951, 182-3.]

### Author

**Emeritus Professor David Williams**, (1900 - 1978)

### Sources

*Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*

*Bye-Gones, relating to Wales and the Border Counties*, 1887, 323

*Catalogue of Printed Literature in the Welsh Department, Cardiff Free Libraries* (1898)

### Additional Links

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