

## PIOZZI, HESTER LYNCH (1741 - 1821), author

**Name:** Hester Lynch Piozzi  
**Date of birth:** 1741  
**Date of death:** 1821  
**Spouse:** Gabriele Mario Piozzi  
**Spouse:** Henry Thrale  
**Parent:** Hester Lynch Salusbury (née Cotton)  
**Parent:** John Salusbury  
**Gender:** Female  
**Occupation:** author  
**Area of activity:** Literature and Writing  
**Author:** William Llewelyn Davies

A friend of Dr. Samuel Johnson. Born 16 January 1741 at Bodfel, near Pwllheli, Caernarfonshire, only child of **John Salusbury**, Bachygraig, Flintshire, and Hester Maria (died 1773), daughter of **Sir Thomas Cotton, bart.**, of Combermere and Lleweni. Her inordinate pride in her Welsh ancestry can be understood if it be remembered that on the paternal and the maternal sides she was a descendant of **Katheryn of Berain**; her father was a descendant of **Katheryn's** second and her mother of the first marriage. Her career is described in the *D.N.B.* and other works, and, more recently (Oxford, 1941), by James L. Clifford in *Hester Lynch Piozzi (Mrs. Thrale)*, a work based on an exhaustive study of much 'Piozziana' and 'Thraliana,' including the material in the Henry E. Huntington Library, San Marino, California, the John Rylands Library, Manchester, and the 'Brynbellia Piozziana' and other smaller groups in the National Library of Wales. Hester Lynch Salusbury was precocious, with a gift of writing, for journal-keeping, and with a considerable amount of aptitude for learning modern languages. Her father, whose means were slender and who spent some time in Nova Scotia and Ireland, died in 1762, almost a year before she was married, on 11 October 1763, against her father's will and somewhat against her own judgement, to Henry Thrale, brewer, of the Borough (London) and Streatham. The greater part of her life before her marriage Hester had spent partly in London, but mainly at Lleweni or at Offley Park, Hertfordshire, the home of Sir Thomas Salusbury, her father's brother. Fairly soon after her marriage, Mrs. Thrale came to know Dr. Samuel Johnson, Oliver Goldsmith, David Garrick, Sir Joshua Reynolds, and others; it is her friendship with Johnson which largely accounts for her fame. Johnson accompanied the Thrales on a journey to North Wales in 1774 - for his journal of this Welsh tour and Mrs. Thrale's journal, see A. M. Broadley, *Doctor Johnson and Mrs. Thrale* (London, 1910). Johnson also accompanied the Thrales on a journey to France in 1775 - for an account, see *The French Journals of Mrs. Thrale and Doctor Johnson* (1932, a John Rylands Library, Manchester, publication). Thrale died 4 April 1781. The friendship with Johnson continued until Hester married, much against the wishes of Johnson and numerous other people, including her two eldest daughters, an Italian music master, Gabriele Piozzi, in July 1784. After this second marriage Mrs. Piozzi and her husband visited Italy. On their return, in March 1787, she found that the resentment hitherto felt against her in some quarters had largely diminished. They left Streatham for Wales at the end of 1795; they repaired Bachygraig and afterwards built **Brynbellia**, not very far from Bachygraig. Piozzi died at Brynbellia, March 1809. Their adopted son, John Piozzi, later became Sir John Piozzi Salusbury (died 1858), and Mrs. Piozzi made him her heir.

Mrs. Piozzi's publications were (a) 'Preface' and nine poems contributed to the *Florence Miscellany* (Florence, 1785); (b) *Anecdotes of the late Samuel Johnson, LL.D., during the last twenty years of his life* (London, 1786, and many subsequent editions); (c) *Letters to and from the late Samuel Johnson ...* (London, 1788); (d) *Observations and reflections made in the course of a journey through France, Italy, and Germany* (London, 1789; another ed., Dublin, 1789; German trans., Frankfurt and Mainz, 1790); (e) *The Three Warnings* (Kidderminster, 1792); (f) *British Synonymy: or an attempt at regulating the choice of words in familiar conversation* (London, 1794, Dublin, 1794, Paris, 1804); (g) *Three Warnings to John Bull before he dies. By an Old Acquaintance of the Public* (London, 1798); (h) *Retrospection: or a review of the most striking events, characters, situations, and their consequences, which the last eighteen hundred years have presented to the view of mankind* (London, 1801). She had a very large circle of acquaintances or correspondents in England and Wales (see J. L. Clifford, op. cit.) - members of the aristocracy, writers, dramatists, antiquaries, historians actors, etc. Among her Welsh friends were **Thomas Pennant**, the 'Ladies of Llangollen,' Lewis Bagot, bishop of St Asaph, **Margaret Owen** of Penrhos, and **Mrs. Siddons**. She spent much of her later years at Bath. She died at Clifton 2 May 1821, and was buried at Tremeirchion, Flintshire, on 16 May.

### Author

Sir William Llewelyn Davies, (1887 - 1952)

### Sources

To the references already given add K. C. Balderston (ed.), *Thraliana the diary of Mrs. Hester Lynch Thrale (later Mrs. Piozzi) 1776-1809* (Oxford 1942)

*Annual Report of the National Library of Wales, 1943-4* (brief account of the Brynbellia Piozziana)

NLW Archives: [NLW MS 1577C: Miscellany](#)

NLW Archives: [NLW MS 1593E \(iv\): Miscellany](#)

NLW Archives: [NLW MS 4734B: Hester Lynch Piozzi: Letter, &c.](#)

NLW Archives: NLW MS 5664C: Selina Fitzroy Birch: Translation  
NLW Archives: NLW MS 6432E: Eleanor Charlotte Butler & Sarah Ponsonby: Letter  
NLW Archives: NLW Rolls: Boxes 9-11: File 110. - Henry Thrale And Hester Lynch Thrale (marriage settlement)  
*Cornhill Magazine*, September 1939

## Further Reading

Samuel Johnson, Adrian Bristow (ed.), *Dr Johnson & Mrs Thrale's tour in North Wales 1774* (Wrexham 1995)  
Michael John Franklin, *Hester Lynch Thrale Piozzi* (University of Wales Press 2020)  
ODNB: Piozzi [née Salusbury; other married name Thrale], Hester Lynch (1741-1821)  
Wikipedia Article: Hester Thrale

## Images

J. Baker, J. Bluck, Brynbella the seat of G. Piozzi Esqr

## Additional Links

NLW Archives: NLW MSS 11099-11102A: Diaries, 1797-1802  
NLW Archives: NLW MS 13936C - Hester Lynch Piozzi: Letters  
NLW Archives: Brynbella 'Piozziana'  
VIAF: 24645296  
Wikidata: Q291322

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