

PRICE (or PRYS), Sir JOHN (1502? - 1555), notary public, the king's principal registrar in causes ecclesiastical, and secretary of the Council in Wales and the Marches

Name: John Price
Date of birth: 1502?
Date of death: 1555
Gender: Male
Occupation: notary public, the king's principal registrar in causes ecclesiastical, and secretary of the Council in Wales and the Marches
Area of activity: Law; Public and Social Service, Civil Administration; Religion
Author: Evan David Jones

Little is known of his early years. He was the son of Rhys ap Gwilym ap Llywelyn ap Rhys Llwyd ab Adam, of Brecknock, and his wife Gwenllian, daughter of Howel Madoc. He was, therefore, of the same family as the Welsh poet **Hywel ap Dafydd ap Ieuan ap Rhys Llwyd**, and in the midst of the bustle of his comparatively short life he maintained a close contact with the Welsh bardic tradition. It is fairly certain that he was the John Pryse who obtained the degree of B.C.L. at Oxford, 29 February 1523/4, and the 'Apprise' who was admitted to the Middle Temple, 5 November 1523. By about 1530 he was one of Thomas Cromwell's officials, and, in that way, came into the employment of the king. He was servitor at the wedding of Henry VIII and Anne Boleyn. As a notary public and principal registrar of the king in causes ecclesiastical, we find him during the next few years busily engaged in recording and attesting documents relating to the abrogation of the papal power (e.g., he took Thomas Cromwell's oath, as chancellor of the University of Cambridge, acknowledging Henry VIII as Supreme Head of the Church, 23 October 1535), reports of commissioners and visitors of the monasteries, being himself a visitor, arrangements for the dissolution, testimonies and confessions of bishop John Fisher, Sir Thomas More, and leaders of the rebellions in East Anglia and the North of England, divorce proceedings of queen Anne Boleyn, and arrangements for the marriage of queen Jane Seymour. In spite of its imposing title, his office brought him little direct profit, but it enabled him to secure grants from the king. He was appointed registrar of Salisbury cathedral, 1534, and obtained leases of the rectory of Llanfihangel 'Orarth' (Iorath), Carmarthenshire 1536-7, and Brecon priory, 1537-8, and he purchased S. Guthlac's priory, in Hereford, where he took up residence. He was made secretary of the affairs of the Crown in Wales and the Marches in 1540, holding the office until his death. A dispute arising out of this appointment, the privy council ruled that he should be secretary of the Council in Wales and the Marches. He was placed on commissions of the peace in Monmouthshire and all the March shires, on the chantries commissions of North and South Wales, 1546, and on commissions for church plate and properties in Herefordshire, 1552-3. He was sheriff of Brecknock, 1543, and Herefordshire, 1554; Member of Parliament for Hereford, 1553, and Ludlow, 1554. On Shrove Tuesday, 1546-7, following the coronation of Edward VI, he was knighted. In 1551 he was made a member of the Council in Wales and the Marches. He died at Hereford 15 October 1555. He is believed to have been twice married, for in his will, 1555, he names a married daughter, Elizabeth. There is a record of his marriage to Johan, daughter of John Williamson by his wife Johan, who was sister to Elizabeth, wife of Thomas Cromwell. It took place at Cromwell's house in Islington, 11 October 1534, he being 32 and she 18 years old. They had eleven children. The heir, GREGORY (born 6 August 1535), was named after Cromwell's son. (He was Member of Parliament for Herefordshire, 1557-8, and for the city, 1572, 1584-97; sheriff for that county thrice, 1567, 1576, 1596, and for Brecknock twice, 1588, 1595). One of the daughters, Johan (born 14 November 1542) took as her second husband, **Thomas Jones** ('Twm Siôn Cati,' c. 1530 - 1609).

Sir John Price took an intelligent interest in Welsh history and literature; he was one of the first collectors of manuscripts of Welsh interest; he left his Welsh books to Thomas Vaughan of Glamorgan; his manuscripts of divinity to Hereford cathedral, and his manuscripts of histories and humanities to his son, RICHARD. Some manuscripts which once belonged to him are in the National Library of Wales, the British Museum, and other libraries; and in Balliol College library there is a manuscript in his autograph containing transcripts of Welsh poetry, including eulogies addressed to him by **Lewys Morgannwg**, Thomas Vaughan, and **Griffith Hiraethog**, a Welsh bardic grammar, proverbs, and miscellanea. According to **bishop Richard Davies**, it was he who caused the Paternoster, the Creed, and the Decalogue, to be printed in Welsh, i.e., he was responsible for the publication of the Welsh primer *Yn y Lhyvyr hwnn* of 1546/7. He entered into the controversy provoked by Polydore Vergil's attack on the **Geoffrey of Monmouth** tradition in 1534. Price defended the authenticity of the Brutus legend, the Trojan origin of the Britons, and the account of **Arthur's** empire. An early draft (written before 1545) of his defence is preserved (B.M. Titus MS. F., iii), but before the death of Edward VI he had composed a fuller answer, and he charged his son, Richard, with its publication, which he undertook in 1573 under the title of *Historiae Britannicae Defensio*. He also wrote in Latin a description of Cambria, which **Humphrey Llwyd** translated, and which **David Powel** included in his *Historie of Cambria*, 1584. A manuscript treatise on the restitution of the coinage, 1553, is also attributed to him.

Author

Evan David Jones, (1903 - 1987)

Sources

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Wikipedia Article: [John Price](#)

Works

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