

REES, WILLIAM (1808 - 1873), printer and publisher

Name: William Rees
Date of birth: 1808
Date of death: 1873
Gender: Male
Occupation: printer and publisher
Area of activity: Printing and Publishing
Author: Selwyn Jones

Born 8 July 1808 at Ton near Llandovery - for his family see the article **Rees** of Ton. He learned the printer's trade at Hereford, but in 1829 he and his uncle, **D. R. Rees**, set up a press at Llandovery; **D. R. Rees** gave it up in 1835 but William Rees continued the work and this press became one of the most celebrated in Wales and probably the best of all in respect of craftsmanship. It was here that **Alun's** (John Blackwell) *Cylchgrawn* was published in 1834.

The connection between the Reeses and **Brutus** (David Owen) is also interesting. The latter had been editing *Lleuad yr Oes*, which was printed by Jeffrey Jones. When Jones died in 1830, the Reeses took over his press - and **Brutus** with it - and *Yr Efanglydd* (1831-May 1835) was started. **Brutus** changed his political and ecclesiastical opinions; the *Efanglydd* died and, in its place, the Reeses started the very well known Anglican periodical, *Yr Haul*, with **Brutus** as its editor.

But it was after his uncle's retirement that William Rees, with the help of David Jones Roderic, took the plunge and became a printer of the highest rank. In 1848-9 he published the three splendid volumes of **lady Charlotte Guest's Mabinogion**. It was from this press, too, that the publications of the Welsh MSS. Society, 1836, were issued, among which may be mentioned **Lewis Dwnn's Heraldic Visitations**, 1846; *Llyfr Llandaf*, 1850; *Iolo MSS.*, 1852; *Lives of the Cambro-British Saints*, 1853; *Dosparth Edeyrn Davod Aur*, 1856; *Meddygon Myddfai*, 1856; and *Barddas*, 1862. Among a host of other books published by the Llandovery press we need only mention **Robert Williams's Eminent Welshmen**, 1852; **Carnhuanawc's Literary Remains** (jointly with Longmans, London); and **leuan Gwynedd's** book, 1848, directed against the report of the education commissioners, 1846-7.

With all this, Rees took a leading part in the public life of the town, and was the organizer of the fund to build **Thomas Phillips's** (1760-1851) school at Llandovery. He died 13 July 1873 and was buried at Llandinog.

Author

Selwyn Jones, (1906 - 1981)

Sources

Tonn Manuscript at Cardiff City Library in Cardiff City Library

J. Ifano Jones, *A history of printing and printers in Wales to 1810, and of successive and related printers to 1923* (Cardiff 1925)

Further reading

Coflein: [Tonn House](#)

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