

REYNOLDS, JONATHAN OWAIN Nathan Dyfed (1814-1891), author

Name: Jonathan Owain Reynolds
Pseudonym: Nathan Dyfed
Date of birth: 1814
Date of death: 1891
Spouse: Martha Reynolds (née Reynolds)
Child: Llywarch Owain Reynolds
Parent: Mary Reynolds
Parent: Dafydd Reynolds
Gender: Male
Occupation: author
Area of activity: Eisteddfod; Literature and Writing
Author: Edward Ivor Williams

Son of Dafydd and Mary Reynolds, born 28 April 1814 in the parish of Llanwinio, Carmarthenshire. He could read Welsh when 5 years old, having been taught by his mother. Nine weeks at a day school was all the education he had. At first a farm labourer, he afterwards became a wheelwright, with his father, and practised that trade at Merthyr Tydfil until his death. He left home to work near Llanelly, and moved to Merthyr in 1835, where he married Martha Reynolds (not related) in 1842, and had nine children. Welsh movements had his ready support, and he was secretary of the Cymreigyddion Society that met at the White Lion Inn. For many years he edited the Welsh columns in weekly newspapers, including the *Merthyr Express*. He was an ardent eisteddfodwr, and gained over 100 prizes, chiefly for englynion and tribannau, of which he made a large collection. His compositions contained an excessive number of obsolete words. He translated some of Shakespeare's tragedies into Welsh. He died 17 July 1891 and was buried in Cefncoedcymer cemetery.

His eldest son, LLYWARCH OWAIN REYNOLDS (1843 - 1916), was a Celtic scholar, whose professional work was of secondary importance to him. He was educated at Llandovery College, was articled to a firm of Merthyr solicitors, and in 1868 proceeded to Jesus College, Oxford, where he graduated in 1875. Then he returned to practice with the same solicitors, afterwards practising on his own. He was clerk to Rhymney District Council. The most notable of his valuable collection of books and manuscripts was *Llyuyr Hir Llywarch Reynolds* (Merthyr Tydfil MS. 1, now N.L.W. MS. 970), a 17th century collection of Welsh poems in the hand of [Llywelyn Siôn](#), Llangewydd; they are described in [J. Gwenogvryn Evans's Reports on MSS. in the Welsh Language](#), II, i, 372-94. Besides the above volume, twenty-seven other volumes belonging to Llywarch Reynolds and his father came to N.L.W. in 1916; see *N.L.W. Handlist of MSS.* i, 77-9 (these should be studied side by side with the [Thomas Stephens](#) MSS. described on pages 66, 71-7 in the same volume). These manuscripts are evidence of Reynolds's great services to Welsh and Celtic studies. He was on friendly terms with [\(Sir\) John Rhys](#) (see, e.g., N.L.W. MS. 988) and other Celtic scholars. It was he who saw through the press (1893) the famous essay written in 1858 by [Thomas Stephens](#) on the Madoc legend. N.L.W. MSS. 986-7 contain hundreds of letters written to Jonathan and Llywarch Reynolds. Llywarch Reynolds and his wife Elsa Irene copied much Welsh poetry and prose, and also translated much German literature. He died at Brislington, Bristol, on 12 March 1916, when on a visit, and was buried there.

Author

Edward Ivor Williams, (1885 - 1958)

Sources

Y Geninen (Gwyl Dewi), 1894, 31

South Wales Daily News, 20 July 1891

T. E. Clarke, *A Guide to Merthyr-Tydfil, and the traveller's companion, in visiting the iron works, and the various interesting localities of the surrounding neighbourhood ... with brief notices of Glamorgan, and its antitquities* (Merthyr Tydfil 1848), 74-5

The Merthyr Express, 16 March 1916

NLW MSS 970-97

Published date: 1959

Article Copyright: <http://rightsstatements.org/page/InC-RUU/1.0/> 

The Dictionary of Welsh Biography is provided by The National Library of Wales and the University of Wales Centre for Advanced Welsh and Celtic Studies. It is free to use and does not receive grant support. A donation would help us maintain and improve the site so that we can continue to acknowledge Welsh men and women who have made notable contributions to life in Wales and beyond.

Find out more on our [sponsorship page](#).

