ROBERTS, ABSALOM (1780? - 1864), poet and collector of penillion telyn

Name: Absalom Roberts
Date of birth: 1780?
Date of death: 1864
Gender: Male
Occupation: poet and collector of penillion telyn
Area of activity: Eisteddfod; Poetry
Author: Robert Roberts

Born at Trefriw, Caernarfonshire. He was a shoemaker by trade. He was married twice and had twelve daughters and two sons; it is said that his second wife was related to the family of Sir Henry Jones, *Old Memories*). He went to live at Eglwys-bach, Denbighshire; it has been said that it was in his house there that the Wesleyan Methodists began to preach in that part of Wales.

He wandered from place to place, following his craft, working at Bangor, S. Asaph, and Llanfyllin, but returned eventually to Eglwys-bach. He spent his later years at Llanrwst; it was from there that he sent in 1844 two *englynion* to greet Walter Davies (Gwallter Mechain) (see NLW MS 1746D) and it was there that he died in 1864. He was buried in Saint Grwst's churchyard; the inscription on his gravestone, making him 94 years of age at the time, is probably a mistake for 84.

He showed a fondness for poetry throughout his life, particularly for penillion sung to the accompaniment of the harp. He won the prize offered at the eisteddfod held in 1828 at Denbigh for the best collection of Welsh penillion not hitherto published; his collection numbered 815. In 1845 there was published, at Llanrwst, his *Lloches Mwyneidd-dra yn cynnwys Carolau, Cerddi, ac Englynion, yn nghyd a dau gant o Hen Bennillion Cymreig*. In the first part of the book are poems by Absalom Roberts and some by John Roberts, Bryncynlas. He shared with Wil Ysgeifiog the prize given at a Holywell Sr. David's Day eisteddfod, 1834, for six *englynion* relating to the reintroduction of Holywell fairs. In an eisteddfod held at Rhuddlan in 1850 he again submitted a collection of *penillion*, but on this occasion he had to take second place, the prize being awarded to John Jones (Idris Fychan). He contributed often to *Y Gwyliedydd*, *Y Gwladgarwr* (e.g. 1837 and 1841), and *Yr Eurgrawn Wesleyaidd*; he also wrote commendatory englynion to several books printed at Llanrwst (e.g. *Gwaith Eos Gwynedd*).

Author

Robert Roberts, (1879 - 1955)

Sources

R. Griffith, *Llyfr Cerdd Dannau* (Caernarfon 1913)

T. H. Parry-Williams, ed., *Hen Benillion* (Aberystwyth 1940), in addition to the sources referred to above

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