

ROBERTS, ELIS (died 1789), cooper, ballad-writer, and composer of interludes

Name: Elis Roberts

Date of death: 1789

Spouse: Ellen Roberts

Spouse: Grace Roberts

Spouse: Elizabeth Roberts

Gender: Male

Occupation: cooper, ballad-writer, and composer of interludes

Area of activity: Business and Industry; Literature and Writing; Music; Performing Arts; Poetry

Author: Gruffydd Glyn Evans

A man of Llanddoged parish near Llanrwst. The place and year of his birth are alike uncertain but it is probable that he came to Llanddoged from Merioneth, [in fact one of his poems implies that he was born at Bala]. In the Llanddoged parish registers there is a definite reference to 'Ellis Roberts Cooper and Elizabeth his Wife' under the date 1753. We cannot, however, be sure that the entries relating to christenings, between 1742 and 1748, of the children of 'Ellis Robert and Ellen his wife' refer to the same persons. The name of his wife from 1765 on is given as Grace. Under the date 1 December 1789 we get the entry 'Ellis Roberts was buried.' In a poem begging for the gift of a small spinning-wheel, 1767 (Cwrtmawr MS. 46) Elis refers to his family, his poverty, and, half penitently, to his own dissipation. Of his work there remain some ballads (see [J. H. Davies](#), *Bibliog. of Welsh Ballads*), and interludes, and a series of nine 'letters' (e.g. one the title of which may be translated: 'A Serious Meditation on Death, to wit the Fifth Contemplative Letter directed to the Betterment of life in this our Worldly Pilgrimage ... by Elis Roberts of Llanddoged, Poet and Cooper') - see under [Edward Roberts](#), (late 18th century). There are at least nine of his interludes still extant: (a) in manuscript form - 'Argulus,' composed c. 1756; 'Jeils,' c. 1757; 'Oliiffernes a Jiwadath,' 1766; 'Tair Rhan Oes Dyn,' before 1771; and his last interlude, 1789; (b) in print - *Gras a Natur*, 1769; *Y Ddau Gyfamod*, 1777; *Pedwar Chwarter y Flwyddyn*, written 1787; and *Cristion a Drygddyn*, 1788. As a composer of interludes he was as well-known and prolific as [Twm o'r Nant](#). His early plays are amusing and are full of traditional ribaldry but the impact of religion caused him to overload his later interludes with tedious moral dissertations. Yet in spite of his love of using the stage as a pulpit, he was opposed to Methodism. His works betray lack of poetic invention, and a dual personality. The derogatory remarks made about him by [Goronwy Owen](#) (in his letters) are well known; see also *Morris Letters*, i, 330.

Author

Gruffydd Glyn Evans

Sources

Llanddoged parish registers

personal research

Additional Links

VIAF: [62972124](#)

Wikidata: [Q18913097](#)

Published date: 1959

Article Copyright: <http://rightsstatements.org/page/InC/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](#).

