

ROBERTS, JOHN (1576 - 1610), Benedictine monk and martyr

Name: John Roberts
Date of birth: 1576
Date of death: 1610
Parent: Robert ab Ellis
Gender: Male
Occupation: Benedictine monk and martyr
Area of activity: Religion
Author: Emyr Gwynne Jones

Born at Trawsfynydd in 1576. It is now believed, on the authority of [Peniarth MS 287](#), that his father was Robert, one of the sons of Ellis ap William ap Gruffydd of Rhiwgoch, and that he was, therefore, a cousin of Robert Lloyd of Rhiwgoch, Member of Parliament for Merionethshire, 1586-7. He was brought up and educated as a Protestant and was admitted to S. John's College, Oxford, 26 February 1595/6, where he came into close contact with [John \(Leander\) Jones](#). After leaving Oxford in 1598 he spent a few months studying law at Furnival's Inn and then went on a tour of the Continent. While he was in Paris he became a Roman Catholic and was admitted to S. Alban's Jesuit College, Valladolid, 18 October 1598. After being there a year he decided to join the Benedictine Order, adopted the name of Fra. Juan de Mervinia, and went to Salamanca for a further course of study. In 1602 he was ordained priest, and the following April came to England as a missionary. On four different occasions he was arrested by the authorities, once in November 1605 on suspicion of being involved in the Gunpowder Plot, but on each occasion he was, after a short period of imprisonment, sentenced to exile. Roberts was arrested in London for the fifth time in 1610, found guilty of high treason, and executed 10 December. He was one of the founders of S. Gregory's College, Douai, 1606-7, which was intended to train priests for the English mission, and he was the first prior of the college. He was one of the pioneers of the revival of the Order of S. Benedict in Britain.

Author

Emyr Gwynne Jones, (1911 - 1972)

Sources

Oxford Dictionary of National Biography (and the authorities quoted therein)

T. P. Ellis, *The Welsh Benedictines of the terror* (Newtown 1936), 43-54, 76-104, and *The Catholic Martyrs of Wales, 1535-1680*, 79-91

Further Reading

Wikipedia Article: [John Roberts](#)

Additional Links

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