RODERICK, JOHN (JOHN or SION RHYDDERCH) (1673 - 1735), grammarian, printer and publisher of almanacks and books, poet, and eisteddfodwr

Name: John Roderick
Date of birth: 1673
Date of death: 1735
Parent: Elen Roderick
Parent: David Roderick
Gender: Male
Occupation: grammarian, printer and publisher of almanacks and books, poet, and eisteddfodwr
Area of activity: Eisteddfod; History and Culture; Poetry; Printing and Publishing; Scholarship and Languages; Science and Mathematics
Authors: William Llewelyn Davies, Enid Pierce Roberts, Llewelyn Gwyn Chambers

The belief that he was a native of the southern part of Cardiganshire was challenged some years ago (*Journal of the Welsh Bibliographical Society*, iii, 275-90) and it is now believed that he was born in the parish of Cemaes, Montgomeryshire; he was possibly the John, son of David Roderick and Elen his wife, who was christened in Cemaes church on 23 April 1673. However, on p. 7b of B.L. Add. MS. 14874 (which he had owned) is written ' Llyfr Cywyddau Siôn Rhydderch, 1709; b. April 11, 1675 '.

He printed and published in Shrewsbury his *Grammadeg Cymraeg*, 1728; a second edition was published at Carmarthen in 1824. With the collaboration of John Williams, Witley, Salop, he produced and published an *English and Welch Dictionary* , of which three editions appeared. He had before this begun to prepare, print, and publish his series of Welsh almanacks, which, beginning with the one for 1715, continued to be published until 1735 (for 1736) - nearly all from Shrewsbury.

The other well-known almanack-maker, Thomas Jones of London and Shrewsbury (1648? - 1713), had included, in his anthology called *Carolau a Dyriau Duwiol*, 1696, three carols written by Roderick; other examples of his work appeared in his own almanacks but many remain in manuscript. He was closely associated with the local eisteddfodau of his period, from that held at Machynlleth in 1701 onwards; his almanacks provided him with an opportunity to draw attention to those gatherings and to print some of the poems occasioned by them. His almanack for 1726 contains ' Englynion o Fawl i'r Celfyddydgar Gadairfardd John Rhydderch. '

He published a paper on arithmetic c. 1716. This may have been the first discussion of arithmetic in Welsh but there is no copy extant. It is mentioned in John William Thomas (1805 - 1840), *Elfennau Rhifyddiaeth* (Caerfyrddin, 1832), 6, and John Roberts (1731 - 1806), *Rhyfyddeg neu Arithmetic* (Dublin, 1768), iii.

Some of the various printed books for which his press was responsible (from 1715 to c. 1728) are noted in Ifano Jones, *Hist. of Printing in Wales and Monmouthshire*, where also is found an account of how Lewis Morris thought of getting John Roderick to look after the press which he proposed to establish at Llannerch-y-medd, Anglesey (Morris's prospectus with its reference to Rhydderch as 'a native of Mountgomeryshire ' and as an old man in reduced circumstances, is dated March 1732). By the end of 1733, however, Rhydderch was in Carmarthen arranging for Nicholas Thomas to print the 1734 almanack. In 1735 he was back in Cae Talhaearn, Cemaes; he was buried at Cemaes on 27 November of that year.

Some writers have confused him with John Rogers, another Shrewsbury printer.

Authors

Sir William Llewelyn Davies, (1887 - 1952)

Dr Enid Pierce Roberts

Dr Llewelyn Gwyn Chambers

Sources

Oxford Dictionary of National Biography

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

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