


## ROWLANDS, HENRY (1655 - 1723), antiquary

**Name:** Henry Rowlands  
**Date of birth:** 1655  
**Date of death:** 1723  
**Parent:** Magdaline Rowlands (née Wynne)  
**Parent:** William Rowlands  
**Gender:** Male  
**Occupation:** antiquary  
**Area of activity:** History and Culture; Literature and Writing  
**Author:** Evan Gilbert Wright

Born at Plas Gwyn, Llanedwen, Anglesey, son of William Rowlands and Magdaline, daughter of Edward Wynne of Penhesgyn Isa, Llansadwrn. There is no record of his having been to any school or college and the inference is that he was educated at home. He was ordained deacon 2 July 1682 and priest a fortnight later. In 1682 he was given the living of Llanfair-pwll and Llantysilio, and in 1696, that of Llanidan together with Llanedwen, Llanddaniel-fab, and Llanfair-yn-y-cwmwd. His first book was *Idea Agriculturae* which was written in 1704, but remained in manuscript until 1764. This describes the state of agriculture in Anglesey and tells us the methods adopted to improve the soil. He wrote his next work, *Antiquitates Parochiales*, in Latin in 1710. A partial translation of this was published in the *Cambro-Briton* (vol. 2) and this was all that was available until it all appeared in *Archæologia Cambrensis* [1846-9.] The author's intention was to make a survey of all the ancient remains in the county but only part of the work was finished. Rowlands, in one of his letters (N.L.W. Plas Gwyn MS. 105), refers to a second edition of his book on fossils, but nothing is known about this work. His most important work was *Mona Antiqua Restaurata* , which was published in Dublin in 1723, a second impression being issued in 1766 under the editorship of [Dr. Henry Owen](#) (1716 - 1795). In this work the principal relics of the past are listed and an effort is made to prove that Anglesey was the chief seat of the druids. He was not successful in his attempt to trace the derivation of Welsh words. He corresponded with [Edward Lhuyd](#), [Browne Willis](#), and other leading antiquaries, and his influence on his contemporaries was marked. It is true that many of his theories were incorrect but it must be remembered that he was a pioneer. We are indebted to him for preserving the history of a number of places of antiquarian importance which would have been unknown to us but for his writings. He died 21 November 1723.

### Author

Reverend Canon Evan Gilbert Wright, (1903)

### Sources

*Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, and the authorities named therein

T. R. Roberts, *Eminent Welshmen: a short biographical dictionary of Welshmen... from the earliest times to the present* (1908)

Richard Parry (Gwalchmai), *Enwogion Môn: henafol a diweddar, mewn cofnodau hanesol* (1877), 153-4

W. Garel Jones, M.A. thesis, 1936 (unpublished), in N.L.W., 'The Life and Works of Henry Rowlands'

### Further Reading

Wikipedia Article: [Henry Rowlands](#)

### Additional Links

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