




SAUNDERSON, ROBERT (1780-1863), printer and publisher

Name: Robert Saunderson
Date of birth: 1780
Date of death: 1863
Spouse: Rebecca Saunderson (née Thomas)
Child: Robert Saunderson
Child: Charles Saunderson
Gender: Male
Occupation: printer and publisher
Area of activity: Printing and Publishing
Author: Robert Thomas Jenkins

He served his apprenticeship at Liverpool but afterwards went to the printing-office at Chester which printed Welsh books for [Thomas Jones](#) (1756 - 1820) and [Thomas Charles](#) - see under [John Humphreys](#) (1734? - 1829). In 1803 [Charles](#) and [Jones](#) decided to begin printing at Bala, and Saunderson was engaged to work there. [Thomas Jones](#), in 1804, withdrew from active participation and [Charles](#) carried on the business on his own account (but in his wife's maiden name, as he was in orders), with Saunderson as manager - apparently he received half the profits, besides his own wage as printer. When [Charles](#) and his wife died (1814), Saunderson became owner of the business, and remained so till his death, 13 December 1863, at the age of 83.


He had become one of [Charles](#)'s closest friends, and in 1806 had married Rebecca Thomas, daughter of [Charles](#)'s favourite sister Elizabeth. He was at [Charles](#)'s bedside in his last illness and at his death; at the request of [bishop Short](#) of St. Asaph, he wrote reminiscences of [Charles](#), which were afterwards printed in *Y Goleuad*, [22 June 1878](#) .

Saunderson knew hardly any Welsh when he came to Bala, and was never quite at home in the language; he was therefore not at ease in the Calvinistic Methodist Society at Bala, and on [Charles](#)'s advice attached himself to the Established Church there, becoming indeed a zealous Churchman.

His printing is regarded as very good, and he had Hebrew and Greek founts. He printed nearly all [Charles](#)'s work of the period 1803-14, and in later years (1822-37) printed the excellent Anglican magazine *Y Gwyllydydd* , and other Anglican periodicals. There is a portrait of him on p. 219 of the second volume of *Y Tadau Methodistaidd* .

Of his sons, the eldest was

CHARLES SAUNDERSON (1810? - 1832), ('Siarl Wyn o Benllyn') poet

He died of cholera at New Orleans, 24 October 1832 (*Seren Gomer*, 1833, [94](#) ) in his twenty-third year. His literary remains, *Gweddillion o Waith Barddonol Charles Saunderson*, were published by his father in 1845 (extracts in *Beirdd y*

Bala, ed. [O. M. Edwards](#)); there is an elegy upon him by [Tegidon](#) (John Phillips, 1810 - 1877) who had been one of his father's apprentices.

Another son was

ROBERT SAUNDERSON (1814 - 1865), printer and publisher

Born 9 August 1814, he carried on the father's business, in partnership with his two sisters, till his death, 19 August 1865. In 1866 the printing and publishing establishment was sold to Edward Jones, another former apprentice of the elder Saunderson.

Author

Emeritus Professor Robert Thomas Jenkins, (1881 - 1969)

Sources

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

D. E. Jenkins, *Life of Thomas Charles* (Denbigh 1908) (consult index)

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