

THOMAS, JOHN EVAN (1810-1873), sculptor

Name: John Evan Thomas
Date of birth: 1810
Date of death: 1873
Parent: Jane Thomas (née Evans)
Parent: John Thomas
Gender: Male
Occupation: sculptor
Area of activity: Art and Architecture
Author: Robert Thomas Jenkins

Born at Brecon 15 January 1810, the eldest son of John Thomas, Castle Street, and Jane (Evans) his wife. He studied in London under Chantrey and afterwards on the Continent, began to work independently in 1834, and was a frequent exhibitor at the Royal Academy between 1835 and 1857. He had a very successful career, and many of his works are to be seen in Wales and elsewhere - in his home town, for instance, we have his statue of the duke of Wellington, while the Priory church (now the cathedral) contains more statuary by him. He was a thoroughgoing Welshman, and took a great interest in everything pertaining to Wales. He took a leading part (with the support of [lord Llanover](#)) in the movement to prevent the mis-use of the endowments of Christ College, Brecon. In 1857 he bought Penisha'r-Pentre, a little mansion at Llansbyddid; in 1868 he was sheriff of Brecknock. He died 9 October 1873, in London, and was buried there.

For thirty years he was assisted in his work by his brother WILLIAM MEREDITH THOMAS who was born 13 July 1819 and died 7 September 1877. The latter, when he had completed his elder brother's unfinished works, continued to work on his own. He specialised in allegories and medallions executed in marble.

Another brother was JAMES LEWIS THOMAS, born 6 November 1825, and died 4 October 1904. He was an architect by profession and became chief surveyor to the War Office - he was the designer of the military hospital at Netley. He retired in 1890. In London he was a prominent member of the Society of Ancient Britons, of which he was sub-treasurer, and took an interest in its school at Ashford.

Author

Emeritus Professor Robert Thomas Jenkins, (1881 - 1969)

Sources

Poole, *The Illustrated History and Biography of Brecknockshire* (1886) 322-4 (the fullest account)

Theophilus Jones, Edwin Davies, Joseph Russell Bailey, *History of the County of Brecknock* (1909-1930), iv, 162-3
there is a short note on J. E. Thomas in the *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*

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