

THOMAS, JOHN (1736 - 1769), cleric and antiquary

Name: John Thomas
Date of birth: 1736
Date of death: 1769
Parent: Jane Rowland (née Jones)
Parent: Thomas Rowland
Gender: Male
Occupation: cleric and antiquary
Area of activity: History and Culture; Religion
Author: Helen Myfanwy Ramage

Born 22 October 1736 at Tyddyn Ysguboriau, Ynyscynhaearn, Caernarfonshire, son of Thomas Rowland; [Richard Thomas](#) (1753 - 1780) was his brother, and [Ellis Owen](#) of Cefnymeusydd was his sister's son. He was schooled at Llanystumdwy, Llanegryn, Botwnnog, and Friars (Bangor). He matriculated 20 March 1755 from Jesus College, Oxford, where [John Lloyd](#) 'of Caerwys' (1733 - 1793) was a friend of his; and he was ordained at Oxford in 1760. He was 'under-keeper of the Museum' there, but could not live on his stipend - not (says [William Morris](#) of Anglesey) because it was inadequate but because he was a hard drinker; so he took a curacy at Holyhead at the end of 1760. At the end of 1761 he became usher at Friars school, a post to which the curacy of Llandygài was attached. In 1766, his former incumbent at Holyhead, Richard Langford, was appointed master of Beaumaris grammar school, but exercised his functions by deputy - John Thomas; it is thus not technically accurate to describe Thomas as 'Master,' as is generally done. To his new post were attached curacies at Llansadwrn and Llandegfan. He died suddenly on Easter Monday (27 March) 1769, at Castellior house, and was buried at Llandegfan 'aged 33,' says his memorial there, but more strictly, in his thirty-third year. By the unanimous testimony of all three [Morrises](#), of [Hugh Hughes](#) (Bardd Coch, who wrote an elegy upon him), and of [Ieuan Fardd](#), he was a remarkably good Welsh scholar, and a masterly genealogist.

He was a copyist of old Welsh manuscripts; these passed to his brother [Richard](#), after whose death they were dispersed; [Ellis Owen](#) says that [Hugh Maurice](#) used many of them in preparing *The Myvyrian Archaiology of Wales*^[a]. None of John Thomas's work was published during his life, but [Sir J. E. Lloyd](#) has shown (on the testimony of [John Lloyd](#) of Caerwys and of [Gwallter Mechain](#)) that he was the author of the anonymous *History of the Island of Anglesey* of 1775, and [William Williams](#) of Llandygài, included in his own *Observations on the Snowdon Mountains* (1802) a 'Genealogical Account of the Families of Penrhyn and Cochwillan' by John Thomas.

Author

Helen Myfanwy Ramage, (1992)

Sources

J. E. Griffith, *Pedigrees of Anglesey and Carnarvonshire Families* (1914), 359

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Y Gwyllydydd, 1831, 186

Y Brython, 1864, 54

John Williams, *David Hughes, M. A., and his free grammar school at Beaumaris an historical essay* (Bangor 1864) (1933 ed.), 26

The Letters of Lewis, Richard, William, and John Morris, of Anglesey, (Morrisiaid Môn) 1728-1765 (1907-9)

Hugh Owen (ed.), *Additional Letters of the Morrises of Anglesey (1735-86)* (London 1947-9)

Y Traethodydd, 1906, 309-11

Journal of the Welsh Bibliographical Society, 1920, 129-35; 1944, 110-11

Further Reading

Wikipedia Article: [John Thomas](#)

Additional Links

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