

THOMAS, DAVID RICHARD (1833 - 1916), cleric and historian

Name: David Richard Thomas
Date of birth: 1833
Date of death: 1916
Parent: Mary Thomas
Parent: Owen Thomas
Gender: Male
Occupation: cleric and historian
Area of activity: History and Culture; Religion
Author: Robert Thomas Jenkins

Born in 1833 (christened 14 September 1833), the second son and third child of Owen Thomas, 'gentleman farmer,' of Bodynfol, Llanfechain, and Mary his wife. He was educated at Ruthin school under [E. L. Barnwell](#), and went to Jesus College, Oxford, in 1852, although the family was reduced in circumstances owing to his father's sudden death, and he was forced to teach in the vacations in order to maintain himself; he graduated in 1856 and, in 1859, applied for a Fellowship, but was not elected. In 1857 he was ordained curate of Rhuddlan; afterwards he became curate of Selatyn (1859-64), vicar of Cefn Meiriadog (1864-77), vicar of Meifod (1877-92), and rector of Llandrinio (1892-1916); he was appointed canon of St Asaph in 1881 and archdeacon of Montgomery in 1886. He was a hard-working parish priest, a conscientious archdeacon, a zealous defender of his Church, and the author of four religious books. But, for all that, he is best known to the general public as a historian and antiquary. He was a tower of strength to the Cambrian Archaeological Association : chairman of its committee, and twice (1875-80, 1884-8) editor of *Archæologia Cambrensis*, to which he contributed more than twenty-five articles. Similarly, he was chairman of the committee of the Powysland Club, and for many years editor of *Mont. Coll.*, to which he contributed regularly. In addition to these antiquarian labours (he was by this time a F.S.A.), one should not omit a reference to his edition of *Y Cwta Cyfarwydd*, 1883, the work of [Peter Roberts](#), his own *History of the Parish of Llandrinio*, 1895, and, a book which commanded a far wider popular appeal, *The Life and Work of Bishop Richard Davies and William Salesbury*, 1902. But his *magnum opus* is his *History of the Diocese of St. Asaph*, which was published in its original form in 1870-4, but which was enlarged into three volumes, 1906-13. Up to the present, St Asaph is the only one of the Welsh dioceses which has had its history investigated in such detail; and the debt which later research workers owe to the archdeacon for this splendid work is incalculable. A short handbook on the history of the diocese was published by him in 1888. He died 11 October 1916.

Author

Emeritus Professor Robert Thomas Jenkins, (1881 - 1969)

Sources

Foster, *Alumni Oxonienses*

memorial notices in *Archæologia Cambrensis*, 1916, 369-72

[Obituary: The Ven. Archdeacon Thomas, M.A., F.S.A.](#), *Collections historical & archaeological relating to Montgomeryshire and its borders*, xxxviii, 269-77

The National Library of Wales Journal, summer 1946, 214-6

Williams, *Llyfryddiaeth Sir Ddinbych* (1935-7, 1951), 163-4 (a list of his publications)

Further Reading


Wikipedia Article: [David Thomas](#)

Additional Links

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