

WILLIAMS, JOHN (1627 - 1673), early Nonconformist preacher, and physician

Name: John Williams
Date of birth: 1627
Date of death: 1673
Spouse: Dorothy Williams (née Whalley)
Child: Mary Williams
Parent: Mary Jones
Parent: William Jones
Gender: Male
Occupation: Nonconformist preacher, and physician
Area of activity: Medicine; Religion
Author: Robert Thomas Jenkins

Born at Tyn-y-coed (= 'Castellmarch Uchaf') in Llŷn, of a county family, his parents being William and Mary Jones. He entered Jesus College, Oxford, 7 March 1647, 'aged 20,' in order to study medicine. Several of the gentry round about his home had espoused the Puritan cause as he himself had done, and it is said that after he had started preaching he was for a time chaplain to [colonel John Jones](#) of Maesygarneidd (1597? - 1660). But our knowledge of his career between 1647 and 1662 is very sketchy; we cannot rely on the traditions collected about him by [Robert Jones](#) of Rhos-lan, any more than we can on later, more circumstantial, stories, e.g. there is no proof that he was the 'John Williams' who was given the living of Llanbeblig in 1651 and who held it until 1660; nor is there anything in Mostyn MS. 237 (N.L.W.) to connect him with the 'John Williams,' whose name appears among those of the militant Nonconformists of Llŷn whose houses were searched for arms in 1661. But he was certainly in London in 1662, and was said to be chaplain to a Puritan nobleman in Kent. In 1663, while he was still in England, the Caernarvonshire justices issued a warrant for his arrest and that of [Richard Edwards](#) of Nanhoron on the strength of an alleged treasonable letter sent by him to [Edwards](#). When news of this reached him, Williams surrendered to the authorities in London and succeeded in getting an acquittal; both men were released after spending ten weeks in gaol. Williams returned to his native county to practise medicine. He had married Dorothy Whalley of Cheshire; their only child, Mary, was born at Bryn Gro, Clynnog, in 1666, but she was christened at Llangian, and it is quite certain that he generally lived at Tyn-y-coed - the house which, on 5 September 1672, was registered as a meeting-house under the Indulgence of that year. At the end of August 1672 [Henry Maurice](#) visited Llŷn and called at Tyn-y-coed to look up his 'kinsman' to use his own expression - although the connection between them has not yet been traced. [Maurice](#) rebuked John Williams for his long inactivity, in that he had not preached for a great time, and although he saw 'grace abounding' in Williams he was not satisfied with his excuses. He paid him a second visit (14 September) and again reproached him with 'neglecting the work of the Lord in that land' - but, on that occasion, John Williams summoned up sufficient courage to tell him some pretty plain truths. John Williams died 28 March 1673, 'in the 47th year of his age,' and was buried at Llangian; there is a photograph of the Latin inscription and coat of arms on his tombstone in *Y Cofiadur*, 1928 - he is called *minister gratia Dei* and *patriae sanitas*, in allusion to his double calling.

Author

Emeritus Professor Robert Thomas Jenkins, (1881 - 1969)

Sources

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Robert Jones (Rhoslan), *Drych yr Amseroedd (Trefriw 1820)*, 9-12

Thomas Rees, *History of Protestant Nonconformity in Wales from its rise in 1633 to the present time* (London 1883), 129-31, 215, 217

Hanes Eglwysi Annibynnol Cymru, iii, 155, 162-5

Thomas Richards's volumes on early Nonconformity in Wales (indexes)

Thomas Richards, '[Henry Maurice: Piwritan ac Annibynnwr](#),' *Y Cofiadur*, 1928, pp.15-67

W. Gilbert Williams in *Y Cofiadur*, 1928

Further Reading

Wikipedia Article: [John Williams](#)

Additional Links

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