

## WILLIAMS, JOHN (1792 - 1858), cleric, scholar, and schoolmaster

**Name:** John Williams  
**Date of birth:** 1792  
**Date of death:** 1858  
**Spouse:** Mary Williams (née Evans)  
**Parent:** Jane Williams (née Rogers)  
**Parent:** John Williams  
**Gender:** Male  
**Occupation:** cleric, scholar, and schoolmaster  
**Area of activity:** Education; Religion; Scholarship and Languages  
**Author:** Thomas Iorwerth Ellis

Born at Ystrad Meurig, 11 April 1792, son of [John Williams](#) (1745/6 - 1818) and Jane his wife. He attended his father's school there, and then went to teach at Chiswick. After a further period at school at Ludlow he matriculated at Oxford from Balliol College, 20 November 1810. He took his B.A. in 1814, after obtaining the highest honours in classics; he taught at Winchester for four years, and subsequently at Hyde Abbey school, near that city. During this period he took holy orders, and in 1820, after the death of [Eliezer Williams](#), he was offered the living of Lampeter by [bishop Burgess](#). He accepted it, and continued the excellent work done by his predecessor. He was not chosen first principal of S. David's College, but his school so prospered that some boys were sent to him from Scotland, including a son of Sir Walter Scott. In 1823, his brother David, who had succeeded their father as headmaster of Ystrad Meurig, died; but John Williams did not succeed to his place. However, in 1824, he was appointed first rector of Edinburgh Academy, and began his work there on 1 October. Here he met with great success; and although he accepted in August 1827 the chair of Latin in London University (resigning it nine months later) he was re-elected to his rectorship and remained there till 1847. When Llandoverly College was founded, John Williams (who had been archdeacon of Cardigan since October 1833, being re-instituted in August 1835 owing to a technical error) was invited to become the first warden. He started on his work on S. David's Day, 1848, and remained there till he retired owing to illhealth at Easter, 1853. By that time the school's reputation was established. After retiring, John Williams lived at Brighton, Oxford and Bushey; he died at the last-named place on 27 December 1858, and was buried there on 4 January 1859. He married Mary, only daughter of Thomas Evans of Llanilar, and they had six daughters. John Williams was considered to be one of the best classical scholars whom Wales has produced; he was also, according to all accounts, an excellent teacher. There is a portrait of him in his old school at Edinburgh, and also a bust (unless recently removed) in the University College of Wales at Aberystwyth. He published a number of books on classical subjects (see the list in *D.N.B.*), and in 1851 produced an edition of [Theophilus Evans](#), *Drych y Prif Oesoedd*.

### Author

Thomas Iorwerth Ellis, (1899 - 1970)

### Sources

*Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*

D. G. Osborne-Jones, *Edward Richard of Ystradmeurig with the story of his school and its associations under its successive masters 1734-1934* (Carmarthen 1934)

*Geirlyfr Bywgraffiadol o Enwogion Cymru* (1870)

Foster, *Alumni Oxonienses*

Benjamin Williams (Gwynionydd), *Enwogion Ceredigion* (1869)

### Further Reading

[\*The late Archdeacon Williams, member of Council of the Cambrian Institute\* \(Tenby 1859\)](#)

Wikipedia Article: [John Williams](#)

### Works

John Williams, [\*Gomer; or A brief analysis of the language and knowledge of the ancient Cymry\*](#) (London 1854)

### Additional Links

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