

## WILLIAMS, JOHN (Ioan Mai; 1823 - 1887), poet

**Name:** John Williams  
**Pseudonym:** Ioan Mai  
**Date of birth:** 1823  
**Date of death:** 1887  
**Spouse:** Margaret Williams (née Hughes)  
**Parent:** Mary Williams  
**Parent:** Benjamin Williams  
**Gender:** Male  
**Occupation:** poet  
**Area of activity:** Literature and Writing; Poetry; Religion  
**Author:** David Jenkins

Born 13 May 1823 at Caernarvon, son of Benjamin and Mary Williams. Educated at the National school, he was then apprenticed to Messrs. W. Potter, booksellers at Caernarvon and Pwllheli. About 1847 Williams opened his own business in Bridge Street, Caernarvon, and though but young and inexperienced, his success was immediate. He was a great reader and developed wide literary interests which made him a friend of men of the calibre of Joseph Loth of the University of Rennes, and E. B. Cowell of Cambridge. He is reputed to have given the latter considerable help with his translations into English of the poems of [Dafydd ap Gwilym](#). Ioan Mai wrote many poems in the free metres, some of them for competition at various eisteddfodau, but although his unfinished essay on 'The characteristics of Welsh poetry' is sufficient proof of his knowledge of the intricacies of *cynganedd*, he composed but very few poems in the stricter metres. He translated into English some of the poems of [Dafydd ap Gwilym](#), the hymns of [Ann Griffiths](#) and a few of [Ceiriog](#)'s lyrics. For about forty-seven years he was a lay-preacher with the Wesleyans. He married Margaret, only daughter of Hugh Hughes, Tynwydd, Trefriw, by whom he had six children. He died 14 October 1887, and was buried in Llanbeblig churchyard. A selection of his sermons was included in the published volume of his works edited by John Lloyd Pierce.

### Author

Dr David Jenkins, (1912 - 2002)

### Sources

*Gweithiau Ioan Mai sef Detholion o bregethau a barddoniaeth ... This volume also contains a selection of poems and an essay on "The Characteristics of Welsh Poetry", by the same author. Wedi eu trefnu a'u golygu gan John Lloyd Pierce, yn nghyda byr-gofiant o'r awdwr* (Porthmadog 1891)

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