


WILLIAMS, TALIESIN (Taliesin ab Iolo; 1787 - 1847), poet and author

Name: Taliesin Williams
Date of birth: 1787
Date of death: 1847
Child: Edward Williams
Parent: Edward Williams
Gender: Male
Occupation: poet and author
Area of activity: Education; Literature and Writing; Poetry
Author: Griffith John Williams

Son of [Edward Williams](#) (Iolo Morganwg). He was born, according to tradition in the Vale of Glamorgan, in Cardiff prison on 9 July 1787, and was christened at Flimston on 16 September. He was educated at a school at Cowbridge and then worked with his father as stonemason and carver on gravestones. He kept a school at Gileston and, c. 1813, was appointed assistant in a school kept by the [Rev. David Davis](#) at Neath. In 1816 he opened a school at Merthyr Tydfil, where he remained until his death on 16 February 1847. We know little of his literary activity during his youth and it is a somewhat strange fact that he took little interest in the history and literature of Wales until he came into touch with the promoters of the provincial societies, which was about the year 1820. After that he was a prominent figure in the Welsh life of Merthyr Tydfil, in the eisteddfodau held there, and in those arranged by the regional societies and by the Abergavenny Cymreigyddion. He assisted his father to publish [Cyfrinach Beirdd Ynys Prydain](#), which appeared in 1829. It was he who received his father's manuscripts and he spent years arranging them and binding them into volumes. He studied them carefully, and made a selection from their contents, this selection being published by the Welsh MSS. Society in 1848 under the title of *Iolo Manuscripts*. In 1838 he won a prize at the Abergavenny eisteddfod for an essay on 'Hynafiaeth ac Awdurdodaeth Coelbren y Beirdd.' This was published in 1840. He succeeded in persuading the majority of his contemporaries that this 'druidical' theory was not a recent forgery. He published two English songs - *Cardiff Castle*, 1827, and *The Doom of Colyn Dolphyn*, 1837, with notes on the history of Glamorgan. He also wrote Welsh poems and won the chair in the Cardiff eisteddfod of 1834 for an *awdl* on 'Y Derwyddon' ('the Druids'). He left, in manuscripts, some essays, one of which was published in 1886, *Traethawd ar Gywreindedd, Hynafiaeth, a Hen Bendefigion Glynn Nedd*. His work as a poet is not of high quality, and as he accepted as truth everything which he saw in his father's manuscripts, his historical notes are comparatively worthless. His father succeeded in keeping from him his great secret. His contemporaries spoke of him as being a likeable, pleasant, and friendly man; he was remarkably successful as a schoolmaster.

[Edward Williams](#) (1826 - 1886) was his son.

Author

Emeritus Professor Griffith John Williams, (1892 - 1963)

Sources

Robert Williams, [Enwogion Cymru. A Biographical Dictionary of Eminent Welshmen \(1852\)](#)

Y Wawr sef cylchgrawn misol y Bedyddwyr Cymreig yn America, 1853, 114-5

Geirlyfr Bywgraffiadol o Enwogion Cymru (1870)

Y Gwyddoniadur Cymreig (1889-96)

Further Reading

Wikipedia Article: [Taliesin Williams](#)

Additional Links

NLW Archives: [Taliesin Williams \(Ab Iolo\) papers](#)

NLW Archives: [NLW MSS 21271-21279: Taliesin ab Iolo \(Taliesin Williams\) letters](#)

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