

## WILLIAMS, ROBERT (1782 - 1818), composer of the hymn-tune 'Llanfair'

**Name:** Robert Williams  
**Date of birth:** 1782  
**Date of death:** 1818  
**Parent:** Mary Williams (née Davies)  
**Parent:** Owen Williams  
**Gender:** Male  
**Occupation:** composer of the hymn-tune 'Llanfair'  
**Area of activity:** Music; Religion  
**Authors:** Robert Thomas Jenkins, Huw Williams

which appears in all Welsh congregational tune-books and in *Songs of Praise* and other English hymn-books; Dr. R. Vaughan Williams has composed variations upon it.

Robert Williams was born at Mynydd Ithel farm, Llanfechell, Anglesey, son of Owen Williams and Mary (née Davies). He was baptised at Llanfechell on 27 October 1782. He was blind from birth and earned his living by basket-making, but was also a musician of great repute.

The tune which we now call 'Llanfair' was at first called 'Bethel'; it is so called in Robert Williams's manuscript book, and is there dated 14 July 1817. It was first printed (again named 'Bethel') as harmonized by [John Roberts](#) (1807 - 1876) of Henllan, in the *Peroriaeth Hyfryd* (1837) of [John Parry](#) (1775 - 1846)

His burial is recorded in Llanfechell parish register under the name Robert Owen, 15 July 1818, though he is said to have been buried in Llanrhwydrys churchyard.

### Authors

Emeritus Professor Robert Thomas Jenkins, (1881 - 1969)

Huw Williams, (1922 - 2002)

### Sources

P. Dearmer and A. Jacob, *Songs of Praise Discussed a handbook to the best-known hymns and to others recently introduced* (London 1933)

Ifor L. Evans, *Mawl yr Oesoedd. Casgliad o donau ac emynau* (Cardiff 1951)

Huw Williams, *Cofio Robert Williams, Mynydd Ithel* (1990)

### Additional Links

VIAF: [303660029](#)

Wikidata: [Q20734368](#)

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