

ROBERTS, GRIFFITH JOHN (1912 - 1969), priest and poet

Name: Griffith John Roberts
Date of birth: 1912
Date of death: 1969
Spouse: Margaret Roberts (née Morris)
Parent: Catherine Roberts
Parent: Edward Roberts
Gender: Male
Occupation: priest and poet
Area of activity: Eisteddfod; Poetry; Religion
Author: Mary Gwendoline Ellis

Born 2 March 1912, at Arwenfa, Afonwen, Caernarfonshire, son of Edward and Catherine Roberts. He was educated at the elementary school, Chwilog, the grammar school, Pwllheli and University College of North Wales, Bangor, where he graduated B.A. (2nd-class honours) in Hebrew 1934, M.A. 1936. In 1935-36 he was assistant lecturer in Semitic Studies, University College of N. Wales, Bangor. He began his studies as a ministerial candidate with the C.M. Church, but whilst at college he was confirmed into the Church in Wales. He was at Lichfield Theological College 1936-37 and was ordained deacon 1937 and served as curate of Rhyl, St. Asaph diocese. He was ordained priest in 1938. In 1941 he was appointed curate-in-charge of Llanefydd, and 1945-48 he was rector of Nantglyn. From 1948 to 1951 he was rector of Mellteyrn, Botwnnog and Bryncroes, diocese of Bangor, and became vicar of Blaenau Ffestiniog 1951-56. He obtained the living of Conwy with Gyffin in 1956.

According to one adjudicator, he was worthy of the crown at the national *eisteddfod*, Rhosllannerchrugog, 1945, for his *prydeust* 'Coed Celyddon'. He won the crown at the national eisteddfod, Colwyn Bay, 1947, for his *prydeust* 'Glyn y Groes' whilst his 'Awdl Goffa i R. Williams Parry' was highly commended in the *awdl* competition at the national eisteddfod, Llanelli, 1962. Later, he was the adjudicator in the *prydeust* competition on more than one occasion. He was a member of the Gorsedd of Bards. His anthology of poems 'Y Siaced Fraith' was staged at the national eisteddfod at Llangefni, 1957. In 1963 he was the chairman of the Literature Committee of the national eisteddfod at Llandudno, and he wrote a feature programme 'Y Llinyn Arian', portraying the Vale of Conwy, which was staged at that *eisteddfod*. He wrote a pageant, 'Deiniol Sant' 1959, which was performed at Bangor cathedral. His play, 'Goleuni y Byd' was staged at the parish church, Conwy, and was later performed at Bangor cathedral. In June 1967 he drew up a service to commemorate the 400th anniversary of the translation of the New Testament into Welsh, at Gyffin, the birthplace of [Bishop Richard Davies](#). When the Bishop of Bangor ([John Charles Jones](#)) decided to lead a diocesan pilgrimage to Bardsey in 1952 he asked G.J. Roberts to arrange the route and to write the script giving the historical background. He was one of the small band who sailed over to the island a few days later. 'Enlli'r Pererinion' was the title of his radio *prydeust*. His voice was familiar throughout Wales when he began to broadcast regularly in the Sunday evening programme, *Wedi'r Oedfa*. He wrote a number of feature programmes for the B.B.C., e.g. *Edmwnd Prys*, *Bishop William Morgan*, *Ieuan Glan Geirionydd*, etc.

He was a lyric poet composing in the Christian tradition. His publications include: *Wrth y tân*, 1944; *Coed Celyddon*, 1945; *Gwasanaethau'r Plant* (trans.), 1953, *Hanes y Beibl*, 1954; *Cerddi* 1954; *Yr Esgob William Morgan*, 1955; *Llyfr y Siaced Fraith*, 1957; *Seintiau Cymru* (with E.P. Roberts), 1957; *Ymddiddanion Llafar*, 1961; *Sgyrsiau wedi'r Oedfa*, 1966; *Awdl Goffa i R. Williams-Parry*, 1967; *Ysgrifau*, 1968; *Cofnodion*, 1970.

He married in 1942 Margaret Morris, daughter of Owen Morris and Elisabeth Williams, Morfa Nefyn, and they had two daus. He died 13 February 1969, and was buried at Abergwyngregin on the banks of the Menai Straits, as he had wished.

Author

Mary Gwendoline Ellis

Sources

Llawlyfr esgobaeth Bangor / Bangor Diocesan handbook (1968), 1968,

Y Llan, 21, 28 February 1959

Baner ac Amserau Cymru, 20 February 1969

Yr Haul, Spring 1969

North Wales Weekly News, 20 February 1969

information from his widow,
personal acquaintance

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