

WILLIAMS, JOHN ('J.W. Llundain ' ; 1872 - 1944) slate merchant

Name: John Williams
Pseudonym: J.w. Llundain
Date of birth: 1872
Date of death: 1944
Spouse: Margaret Jane Williams (née Lloyd)
Parent: Catherine Williams (née Jones)
Parent: John Williams
Gender: Male
Occupation: slate merchant
Area of activity: Business and Industry
Author: Evan David Jones

Born in Tŷ Capel Rhostryfan, Llanwnda, Caernarfonshire, 22 September 1872, the eldest of the seven children of John Williams, slate-quarryman, and Catherine his wife, daughter of Robert and Jane Jones, Llandwrog. One of his brothers was **William Gilbert Williams**. John was educated in Rhostryfan Board School and began working in Braich quarry in July 1885 where he remained for about five years when water flooded the quarry. After a few months in Moeltryfan quarry he decided to try and improve his circumstances in Liverpool. He worked in a mill-stone factory, a ship repairer's foundry, a cotton storehouse, Morris Jones's warehouse, Laird shipyard, a smithy and a timberyard. In 1898 he was clerk to a builder in Neston but very unsure of his prospects there. He went to London and was employed as a foreman in a slate and roofing business in January 1900. The business closed in 1904 but he secured a similar post with a company which was expanding. He married Margaret Jane, second daughter of Edward Lloyd, Pen-y-fron, Derwen, Denbighshire, in December 1900 and they had two daughters and two sons. In September 1923, with his eldest son as clerk, he realised his ambition of setting up a business of his own as a slate merchant. He obtained a convenient yard for his roofing materials in three L.M.S. railway bridge arches near Queen's Park station. The venture proved successful with plenty of work between the two world wars when streets of new houses were being built.

During his early years in Liverpool he took an interest in the life associated with the chapels and the Welsh cultural societies, but temporarily lost touch. In London he became acquainted with several good Welsh writers and poets and his interest in the strict cynganedd metres was kindled. He taught himself to play the piano and organ and took part in every aspect of the work in Willesden Green chapel, where he became a precentor and Sunday schoolteacher. He was firmly in favour of having Welsh spoken in Welsh society meetings in London. At his suggestion *Y Ddolen*, a newspaper for the London Welsh, was published in 1925, he himself being responsible for standards of language and grammar, with **David Rowland Hughes** as co-editor; its publication continued until January 1941. John Williams gave lectures and held classes on cynganedd; he wrote a weekly column 'Ymhlith Cymry Llundain ' as well as articles on cynganedd for *Y Brython*, 1934-38. His autobiography, *Hynt Gwerinwr*, includes some of his *englynion* and hymns.

He lived for a period in 4 Wrentham Ave., Willesden and Okehampton Road before returning to Wales c. 1940 and residing in Gwynfa, Llandwrog, Caernarfonshire, where he died 30 May 1944.

Author

Evan David Jones, (1903 - 1987)

Sources

John Williams, *Hynt Gwerinwr* (London 1943)
The Biographical Index of W. W. Price, Aberdŷr

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