

## ROBERTS, HOWELL ('Hywel Tudur ' ; 1840 - 1922), poet, preacher and inventor

**Name:** Howell Roberts  
**Pseudonym:** Hywel Tudur  
**Date of birth:** 1840  
**Date of death:** 1922  
**Gender:** Male  
**Occupation:** poet, preacher and inventor  
**Area of activity:** Business and Industry; Engineering, Construction, Naval Architecture and Surveying; Poetry; Religion  
**Author:** Gwilym Arthur Jones

Born 21 August 1840 at Bron-yr-haul, (Blaenau) Llangernyw, Denbighshire, the third of eight children. The family moved often as their father's occupation was building and selling houses. He began to take an interest in land surveying and became skilled in the craft. When he was aged thirteen he made an attempt at preaching. He attended a school at Abergele for a short time and it is said that he was for a while at the Mechanics Institute, Liverpool. Around 1853 a Literary Society was established at the Pandy, and it was there that he learnt **Caledfryn's** grammar. In 1861 he won a certificate in Welsh at the Caernarfon Training College, but was unable to be admitted to the Normal College due to a lack of places. He regarded himself as 'Bardd Mawr y Pandy, B.B.D.' ('The Great Poet of Pandy'). He decided to settle in Clynnog where **Eben Fardd** (Ebenezer Thomas), 'aged patriarch', kept a school and post office. He was invited to design a new school for the village which could be adapted as houses, should that be necessary. He is referred to as running a school in Llanllyfni but his interests turned increasingly towards inventions, and especially to the principle of 'perpetual motion'. He designed and built an airship (according to his daughter, in some of the buildings of the present St. Beuno's Hotel). A number of local craftsmen assisted him and he was visited by some important persons. His designs were frustrated by lack of money. His design (no. 110,201) for 'A propeller or driving wheel to put in motion vehicles, boats and flying machines ' was accepted by the Patent Office on 14 October 1916. He designed and built Bryn Eisteddfod (his home in Clynnog). A leisurely and unruffled man, he used to stay up until the small hours and was proverbial for missing trains! He assisted many in drafting their wills. He was one of the prime movers behind the Clynnog and Trefor Motor Company in 1912. He is said to have designed a gadget which would enable a railway guard to open and shut doors; he also designed a candlestick which had a pincers attached to it to hold the candle. He foresaw an invention that would enable people to see pictures of distant lands. He was an acceptable preacher, and wrote to denominational (CM) journals and newspapers. He adjudicated mainly in local eisteddfodau such as Cylchwy! Lenyddol a Cherddorol Capel Uchaf - a chapel which he had designed.

He married the daughter of Hafod-y-wern, Clynnog, where he farmed and was pastor at Seion, Gyrn Coch and Capel Uchaf (CM) churches. They had five children. After his wife's death he married the sister of the **Rev. R. Dewi Williams**, a son and daughter were born to them. He died suddenly on 3 June 1922 and was buried in the cemetery of Clynnog church, though it had been his wish to be interred in the place where he had spent his youth. He was the editor of *Gweithiau Barddonol Eben Fardd* (with Wm. Jones, junior 1873?); and author of *Llyfr Genesis ar Gân*; *Tlysau Beuno* (1902).

### Author

**Gwilym Arthur Jones**, (1925 - 1998)

### Sources

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Patent Office, London

[ Catrin Parri Huws, ed., *Hywel Tudur 1840-1922, bardd, pregethwr, dyfeisydd* (Caernarfon 1993) (1993) ]

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