

EDWARDS, THOMAS (Caerfallwch; 1779? - 1858), lexicographer

Name: Thomas Edwards
Pseudonym: Caerfallwch
Date of birth: 1779?
Date of death: 1858
Spouse: Edwards (née Webster)
Spouse: Edwards (née Wynne)
Spouse: Margaret Edwards (née Jones)
Parent: Margaret Edwards
Parent: Richard Edwards
Gender: Male
Occupation: lexicographer
Area of activity: Scholarship and Languages
Author: Henry Lewis

Born, probably at Felinganol, Caerfallwch, Northop, Flintshire, in 1779, and christened at Northop 5 March 1780, son of Richard and Margaret Edwards. After a short period at Northop grammar school he was apprenticed at the age of 14 to a Mold saddler, at whose house he was given the opportunity of reading English books and newspapers. When his apprenticeship was over he and a companion walked to London to look for work. They were unsuccessful and had to beg their way home. In 1800 or 1801 he married Margaret Jones of Trelyniau, Halkin, and with her dower set up a saddler's business at Northop. The business failed. In 1802 he was appointed secretary to a colliery in the district. In 1803, his first wife having died, he married a Miss Wynne of Northop. In 1806 he was transferred by the colliery company to its London office and in 1815 he was given an appointment by N. M. Rothschild with whose firm he remained for the rest of his life. In 1816 he married his third wife, a Miss Webster of Mynachlog, Northop. He crossed over to the Continent on many occasions on behalf of his firm and, in 1830, spent more than two months in Germany inquiring into certain irregularities which had appeared in the accounts of some of the princes. For this service he was awarded £1,000 by the firm. He died in London, 4 July 1858, and was buried in Highgate cemetery.

All his life he was interested in the Welsh language and in music. He contributed many articles to such periodicals as *Y Gwyllyddydd*, *Seren Gomer*, and *Cymro Llundain* under the pseudonyms T. ap Edwart ap Eurgain, Zabulonun, and Caerfallwch. *Y Gwyllyddydd*, 1829-30, published one of his lectures on minerals, etc., 'delivered in the presence of the Society of Cymreigyddion in London on Thursday night, the 1st July, 1830.' He wrote poetry after the manner of **Pughe** (see two lyrics in *Ceinion Awen y Cymry*, 121-4). Airs composed by him are to be found, for example, in *Seren Gomer*, v, 224, and vi, 64. But his principal efforts were directed to enriching the Welsh language by the devising of new words to express new technical developments, more especially in science. In 1845 he published his *Analysis of Welsh Orthography* in which the language is dissected in **Pughe's** way, consonantal mutations and vowel changes are described, and the use and meaning of prefixes and suffixes are explained. This was republished in his *magnum opus*, *Geirlyfr Saesoneg a Chymraeg, An English and Welsh Dictionary* (Holywell, printed and published by **P. M. Evans**, 1850). In this dictionary will be found a host of words invented by himself to correspond to new English words appearing in the various spheres of knowledge. Now, a century after his death, committees are engaged in trying to do the same thing. Incidentally, it would appear that Caerfallwch himself invented the Welsh word for committee - *pwyllogor* (from *pwyll*, deliberation, and *cor*, assembly, company).

Caerfallwch was one of the members of Jewin Welsh Methodist church, London, excommunicated by the Calvinistic Methodist authorities for supporting the emancipation of Roman Catholics.

Author

Emeritus Professor Henry Lewis, (1899 - 1968)

Sources

Josiah Thomas Jones, *Geiriadur Bywgraffyddol o Enwogion Cymru (Aberdŵr 1867-70)*, i, 229-30

Y Gwyddoniadur Cymreig (1889-96) (2nd ed.), iv, 631 D-E

Geirlyfr Bywgraffiadol o Enwogion Cymru (1870)

'bishops' transcripts at N.L.W.

NLW Archives: [NLW MS 1577C: Miscellany](#)

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