

JESUS COLLEGE OXFORD

JC:P216 PAPERS CONCERNING JOHN WILLIAMS (MATR. 1756; F. 1762-70) AND FAMILY

John Williams was born at Llansadwrn, Anglesey, the son of Owen Williams, plebeian, and matriculated from Jesus College on 10 April 1756 aged 16. According to a transcript in RE.AD/2 p. 29, he was baptised there on 3 Sep 1739. Even if his father was described as a plebeian, the family was well-connected: John's older brother Thomas (1737-1802) became an attorney, a powerful figure in the copper trade, and from 1790 MP for Great Marlow. John himself was admitted to a Scholarship at Jesus on 15 December 1757, and then to a Fellowship on 25 August 1762. He resigned this post before 24 April 1770.

Joseph Foster in *Alumni Oxonienses*, referring to obituaries in *The Gentleman's Magazine* from 1817 and 1818 (*Gentleman's Magazine*, Vol. 87 part i p. 378 and Vol. 88 part ii p. 377), links him with a John Williams, former Fellow of Jesus College, who became rector of Braunston, Northamptonshire, a College living and later died there. However, this must be another John Williams, who was a Fellow of Jesus College from 1767-90.

Instead, other evidence for this John Williams shows that he returned to his native Wales. The copy of the baptism register of John's son James (RE.AD/2 p. 121) says that James was baptised at Llansadwrn, and that John himself was resident at Treffos, a property within that parish. Furthermore, the entry on James Williams in the *Dictionary of Welsh Biography* claims that his father John lived from 1740-1826, and was rector of Llanddeusant, Llangaffo and Llanfair-yng-Nghornwy, all of which parishes he resigned in 1821 to make way for his son. The Clergy of the Church of England Database says that this John Williams was instituted to these parishes in 1768, which explains the resignation of his Fellowship in 1770.

The papers in this collection include material on two of John's sons. The elder, John Williams the younger, was educated at Eton and came up to Jesus College on 2 June 1802 aged 17, but left without taking a degree. He became a lawyer, and according to *Alumni Oxonienses* became Chairman of the Anglesey Quarter Sessions in 1819. He died in 1876. John's second son James Williams was baptised on 21 February 1790 (RE.AD/2 p. 121), and matriculated from Jesus College on 20 March 1807 aged 17. He was admitted to a Scholarship on 4 July 1808, and to a Fellowship on 19 November 1813. He was reported as having resigning his post on 15 February 1822. Like his father, James took holy orders, and in 1851 became Chancellor and Honorary Canon of Bangor Cathedral. He died in 1872.

These items were given to Jesus College in 1980 by Col. G. E. H. Thelwall, who was presumably a descendant of John Williams. The contents of **JC:P216/C2/1** suggest that Thelwall offered the College a large collection of papers from which Ellis Evans, the then Professor of Celtic, advised the College just to keep the papers found here. The College also retained two books offered by Thelwall, Thomas Fairfax, *the King's Cabinet opened* (London, 1645), and Dafydd Thomas, *Arddwriaeth ymarferol* (Caernavon, 1816), which are now stored respectively in the Fellows' Library and the Celtic Library.

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JC:P216/C1 –PAPERS OF JOHN WILLIAMS AND FAMILY

- JC:P216/C1/1** **22 Nov 1762**
 Letter from Thomas and Elizabeth Chadborn (address, Piffs Elm [sic]) to John Williams, whom they address as “cousin”. The Chadborns are holding an unspecified vicarage house in possession for Williams, and wish to know whether he would like to have it when he is of age. Is this in relation to the parishes of Llanddeusant, Llangaffo and Llanfair-yng-Nghornwy, where he would eventually become rector?
- JC:P216/C1/2** **4 Nov 1763**
 Warrant by the Princess Dowager Augusta (widow of Frederick Prince of Wales and mother of George III), appointing John Williams to be one of her chaplains in ordinary.
- JC:P216/C1/3** **11 Nov 1763**
 Letter from William Irby, 1st Baron Boston (address, Grosvenor Street) to John Williams. Boston sends Williams the warrant appointing him a Chaplain to the Princess Dowager, a post which Boston evidently arranged for him. He now sets out the duties and perquisites of the position, and encourages Williams to stay with him when he is visiting London to perform his duties.
- JC:P216/C1/4** **13 Feb 1764**
 Letter from Jane Williams (address illegible) to her son John Williams. She and John’s father reproach their son that neither they nor his brother Thomas have received any letters from him lately.
- JC:P216/C1/5** **12 May 1797**
 Account given by John Williams the younger of the weekly round of exercises carried out by him at Eton in the fourth form.
- JC:P216/C1/6** **30 Oct 1813**
 Letter from James Williams (address, Jesus College) to his father John Williams (address, Treffos, Anglesey), reporting that he has been elected a Fellow of Jesus College.

JC:P216/C2 – CORRESPONDENCE ON THE ABOVE COLLECTION

- JC:P216/C2/1** **Aug-Oct 1980**
 Letter from Ellis Evans (Celtic Professor and F. 1978-96) to David Rees, and two copies of letters from Rees to Col. C. E. H. Thelwall, about the donation of the above materials to Jesus College. Evans’s letter makes clear that Thelwall offered the College a considerable quantity of papers, of which he recommended that the College retain the six items listed above, and the two publications, and that the remaining material be offered to the National Library of Wales.