



FACTsheet 19

Penmaenmawr proverbs

"The bald will not be believed until his brains are seen."

"Ni choelir y moel oni welir ei ymenydd."

That may not be a saying you've had occasion to use today, but in the late 19th century it was one of the hundreds of Welsh proverbs that were recorded by Thomas Rowland Roberts in his book 'Proverbs of Wales'.

The book was published in 1885 when Thomas was living at 2 Morllon Terrace in Penmaenmawr with his wife and son.

Proverbs were a hot topic during that period. People would pay to hear talks about old Welsh and local proverbs, and communities held Eisteddfodau-style competitions where entrants were judged on their essays and presentations about proverbs they had collected.

Thomas probably wrote 'Proverbs of Wales' in his spare time because records suggest that he was working as a builder's agent when he lived in Penmaenmawr in the 1880s. By the late 1890s, Thomas had moved to Caernarfon where he was working as a court interpreter and official shorthand writer.

PENMAENMAWR.

LECTURE. — A very interesting lecture was delivered at the Gladstone Hall, Penmaenmawr, on Monday evening, by the Rev George Lamb, Liverpool, the subject being "Popular Proverbs." The proceeds were devoted for defraying the debt on the English Presbyterian Church.

Glan Menai awarded the first prize for the best collection of Welsh proverbs in use in the neighbourhood to Mr J. D. Williams, Llanfairfechan, and the second to Mr S. M. Jones, Penmaenmawr. The prize for the trio, "Dw bydd drugarog," was awarded to the only party who competed, though their performance was considered by Dr

That Mr T. R. Roberts, of Penmaenmawr, is the compiler of a book which will be issued shortly. That its title is "The Proverbs of Wales."



Penmaenmawr proverbs

present stage.—T. R. Roberts, proceeding, said that the transcript on the official file was a correct transcript of his shorthand notes, which were correct as to all the questions and answers.—Mr Dew then read a portion of the transcript of the private examination, from which, *inter alia*, it appeared that the accused had held a meeting of his creditors on January 30th in Liverpool. He had been to Mr Hignett to try to get a second mortgage on Paradise-crescent. The composition was paid out of the money received from Mr Darbishire.—T. R. Roberts, proceeding, gave similar evidence as to the correctness of his notes and transcript of the accused's public examination.—Mr Dew then read lengthy extracts from the transcript, from which it appeared, among other things, that the accused said that he understood that Mr Hignett had promised to find the £400.—T. R. Roberts, cross-examined, said that the answers were given in Welsh, and were mentally translated by the witness, and were put down by the witness in English. The witness was not sworn as to interpreting.

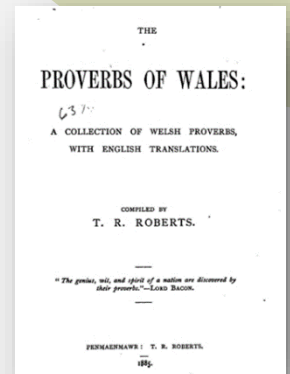
In 1899, we see from newspaper reports that his skills were put to the test in a case brought to court by quarry-owner Charles Darbishire, who was seeking payment from a Penmaenmawr tradesman after the man failed to repay a £150 loan that Charles had given him.

In the same year, Thomas wrote a biographical work of Edmwnd Prys. By 1901, he had become the editor of *Y Genedl Gymreig* and by 1908 he had published what would probably become his best-known work, 'Eminent Welshmen'.

He later established an accountancy practice in Colwyn Bay, where he was General Secretary of the National Eisteddfod in 1910, and at Bangor in 1915.

Thomas remained in Colwyn Bay until his death in 1940, aged 83.

'Proverbs of Wales' is available free to read online. It contains some amusing sayings which you will probably never use but you never know when the occasion may arise! They include:



"A damsel loves not a youth from her own hamlet."

"He who gathers a dunghill will have one faithful friend."

"One must have a clean mouth to slander."

"Night is the mother of plots."

"A titmouse in hand is better than a duck in air."

"Better see thy mother in her coffin than to see fine weather in January."

"Ni châr morwyn mab o'i thréf."

"A gasglo domen a gaiff yn câr cywir."

"Rhaid yw genau glân i oganu."

"Nos yw mam y cyssulwau."

"Gwell penloyn mewn llaw nac hwyad yn yr awyr."

"Gwell gweled dodi'th fam ar elor, na gweled hinon tēg yn lonor."

