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Papers of Dylan Thomas and Veronica Sibthorp,

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Gwybodaeth grynodeb | Summary information

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Hanes gweinyddol / Braslun bywgraffyddol | Administrative history | Biographical sketch

Nodyn | Note

Dylan Thomas (1914-1953), was a renowned poet; he was also an accomplished author of short stories and radio plays, a scriptwriter and broadcaster. – Dylan Marlais Thomas was born on 27 October 1914 at 5 Cwmdonkin Drive, Swansea, the son, of David John (Jack) Thomas, schoolmaster, and Florence (Florrie) Hannah Williams. Although both parents were Welsh-speakers, their families originating from rural Carmarthenshire, English was the language of the home in which Dylan and his elder sister, Nancy Marles, were raised. He was educated at Mrs Hole's Dame School and at Swansea Grammar School, where his father was Senior English Master; and during his schooldays he formed lifelong friendships with, among others, Daniel Jones, Charles Fisher and Mervyn Levy. In 1931 he left school to work as a reporter on the South Wales Daily Post, where he remained until late 1932. – He began writing poetry from an early age, his work first printed in the school magazine. Between 1930 and 1934, he copied his poems into notebooks, eventually compiling four volumes containing over 200 poems, some of which would later appear in print. In May 1933 the poem 'And death shall have no dominion', was published in the New English Weekly, followed in the same year by, 'That sanity be kept' in the Sunday Referee, after which he began corresponding with Pamela Hansford Johnson. He moved to London in 1934, where

he lived with Alfred Janes and Mervyn Levy. Selections of his work, entitled *18 Poems* (1934), and *Twenty-five Poems* (1936), established his reputation as a poet among literary circles. A collection of poetry and prose, *The Map of Love*, appeared in August 1939, and the part-autobiographical short stories, *Portrait of the Artist as a Young Dog*, followed in 1940. Another volume of poetry, *Deaths and Entrances* (1946), was published at the end of the war. In addition, two collections of poetry, including some prose, *The World I Breathe* (1939) and *New Poems* (1943), were published in America. – Dylan Thomas's first radio broadcast, 'Life and the Modern Poet', was recorded in April 1937. He joined the Strand Film Company as a scriptwriter in 1941 and was increasingly in demand, with his distinctive voice, as a broadcaster, gradually reading more of his own work including the nostalgic programmes 'Reminiscences of Childhood' (1943), 'Quite Early One Morning' (1944), and 'Memories of Christmas' (1945). With the inception of the BBC Third Programme in 1946, he was increasingly called upon – In 1936 Dylan Thomas met Caitlin Macnamara (1913-1994), whom he married in Penzance on 11 July 1937. They had three children: Llewelyn (1939-2000), Aeronwy (1943-2009) and Colm (1949-2012). With little income, the newly married couple stayed with family in Hampshire and Swansea, and rented various properties, including 'Eros' and 'Sea View' in Laugharne. Dylan Thomas spent much of the war in London, whilst the rest of the family lived at Llangain, Carmarthenshire, and New Quay, Cardiganshire. He returned to Wales in 1944 where he wrote some of his most popular works including 'Poem in October' and 'Fern Hill'. A four-month visit to Italy with his family in 1947, recommended by Edith Sitwell, produced 'In Country Sleep'. After the war the Thomas family resided for a time in Oxford, before finally settling, in 1949, at the Boat House in Laugharne, acquired by his patron Margaret Taylor. The return to Laugharne inspired him to write five further poems during the following five years – including 'Do not go gentle into that good night' –all of which were included in his *Collected Poems 1934-1952* (1952), awarded the Foyle's poetry prize. – Thomas embarked on his first tour of America, arranged by John Malcolm Brinnin, in February 1950. On the second US tour in 1952 he was accompanied by Caitlin. In May 1953, during his third reading tour, *Under Milk Wood* was first performed in New York. He returned to the US in October of the same year, by which time the demands of the reading and performing tours in the US were evidently taking their toll on his health. He collapsed at the Chelsea Hotel on 5 November, and died in St Vincent's Hospital, New York, on 9 November 1953. His body was returned to Wales by ship, accompanied by his widow Caitlin, and buried at Laugharne on 25 November. The Dylan Thomas Trust was established soon after to administer the income from his estate. A memorial plaque was dedicated to him in Poets' Corner, Westminster Abbey, in 1982.

Nodiadau | Notes

Nodiadau teitl | Title notes

Ffynhonnell | Immediate source of acquisition

Miss Freeth, Penzance per John Hilkes, Penzance; Penzance, Cornwall; Purchase; May 1981

Cyfyngiadau ar fynediad | Restrictions on access

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Nodiadau eraill | Other notes

- **Statws cyhoeddiad | Publication status:** Published
- **Dynodwr sefydliad | Institution identifier:** Llyfrgell Genedlaethol Cymru = The National Library of Wales

Pwyntiau mynediad | Access points

- Sibthorp, Veronica. (pwnc) | (subject)