

= Elizabeth Randles =

Elizabeth Randles (1 August 1800 ? 6 May 1829) , also known as " Little Cambrian Prodigy " , was a Welsh harpist and pianist . A child prodigy , she started playing the piano at the age of sixteen months , and performed in public for the first time before she was two years old . Elizabeth was taught by her blind father , who was organist at the Holywell parish church . She performed for local aristocracy , leading to a performance for King George III and his royal family when she was three and a half . Caroline , Princess of Wales , hoped to adopt her but her father did not allow it . She did , however , spend a few days at the Princess of Wales ' summer home , often playing with Princess Charlotte of Wales . Elizabeth went on to tour the country as a child , performing with John Parry . In 1808 , she returned home and learned the harp . She went on to take lessons from Friedrich Kalkbrenner , before moving to Liverpool and becoming a teacher .

= = Biography = =

Elizabeth Randles , also known as Bessy , was born on 1 August 1800 in Wrexham , north Wales . Her father , Edward Randles , the organist at the Holywell parish church of St. James , lost his sight at the age of three as a result of small pox . Perhaps due to his lack of sight , his parents placed him to be trained under the blind harpist John Parry , whom he excelled under . Elizabeth was the youngest of Randles ' several children including her brother Edward , who would become a subsequent organist at the parish church .

At the age of sixteen months , Elizabeth enjoyed pressing keys on the piano and attempting to " pick out a melody " . One day , while Randles was ill , he noticed someone attempting to play Blue Bells of Scotland on the nearby piano . Assuming it was one of his older children , he requested they stopped and was surprised to find it was Elizabeth who was playing . Due to her age , she needed to hit each key with the side of the hand . He discovered that she could play the basic melody for both the Blue Bells of Scotland and Charley over the water . Her father decided to start teaching her some other simple tunes and the musical notes . Before she could talk , she had the ability to recognise notes and press the piano keys which related to them . Randles went on to teach Elizabeth the melody to the Welsh folk song , Ar hyd y nos . Elizabeth also attempted to play the chords so her father ended up teaching her the full piece .

During the summer of 1802 , Wrexham was visited by a troupe of travelling comedians . One of the leaders , who had heard Elizabeth play , requested that she performed with them . Before the age of two , she joined the troupe at Wrexham theatre to play Ar hyd y nos and The Downfall of Paris . There , she played her pieces with an apple and slice of cake on either side of the piano , receiving both when she finished for playing well . Over the next nine months , Elizabeth played at the houses of Sir Watkin Williams @-@ Wynn , Lady Dungannon and Lady Cunliffe . Williams @-@ Wynn proposed that Elizabeth play in a Wrexham concert during the spring of 1803 , under the direction of the Welsh harpist John Parry . The concert was postponed a number of times due to the illness of Elizabeth 's mother , who insisted they carry on without her . On the night of the concert , Elizabeth 's mother died , after hearing that it was a success .

By the time Elizabeth was three and a half , she was invited to play for King George III , Queen Charlotte and other members of the Royal Family . The recital was a success and the king presented Elizabeth with 100 guineas (worth approximately £ 96 @,@ 000 in 2014) . She created such a sensation that Caroline , Princess of Wales , wished to adopt her though her father would not allow it . The publicity of the royal concert led to a subsequent breakfast concert for the public , with tickets costing 1 guinea each (approximately £ 960 in 2014) . The concert was held at Cumberland Gardens , with approximately 500 people " of first rank " attending . All profits of the breakfast , as well as donations by the attendees , were given to Elizabeth in the form of various trusts .

Elizabeth spent a few days under the care of the Princess of Wales , at her summer home , the Pagoda in Blackheath . There she spent time playing with a young Princess Charlotte of Wales , To ensure that she had sufficient funds for her education , Elizabeth , her father and Parry toured the rest of the United Kingdom between 1805 until 1808 . In June 1808 , she returned to London to

perform at the Hanover Square Rooms , sponsored by the Prince of Wales and the Marchioness of Downshire . Parry remained in London , whilst Elizabeth and her father returned home . There she learned to play the harp and by the age of fourteen she was proficient in both instruments , as well as the organ . She returned to London in 1818 , to take harp lessons from François @-@ Joseph Dizi and piano lessons from Friedrich Kalkbrenner .

Elizabeth moved to Liverpool , teaching harp , piano and singing regularly at a school in Ellesmere , and returning each weekend to attend to her father , until his death in 1823 . Elizabeth 's health was described as " delicate " and she died of " decline " on 6 May 1829 in Liverpool . Her musical skill at such a young age left her known as the " Little Cambrian Prodigy " .