



Oliver Goldsmith

Oliver Goldsmith seems to have had as many birthplaces as Homer, according to John Montague, who plumps for Ardnagowan, near Elphin, County Roscommon. The Registry of Trinity College Dublin gives his birthplace as 'County Westmeath', while Dr. Johnson's memorial to him in Poet's Corner, Westminster Abbey says he came from Longford. However, N. W. English writes that his birth is recorded as 'Pallas' in the flyleaf of the family bible and written by one of his parents. He received a B.A. from Trinity College Dublin in 1749. After some early difficulties, caused by his father's death and his tendency to gamble and generally lead a high life, he went to Edinburgh to study medicine. From there he travelled on the Continent and may have qualified as a doctor in Louvain.

In London his reputation as a writer became established when he contributed a number of articles to magazines which included *The Critical Review*, *The British Magazine*, *The Bee* and *The Busybody*. In 1760 he was commissioned to write for a newspaper owned by John Newbury. These contributions, called *Chinese Letters* were later printed in two volumes as *The citizen of the world*. This was the beginning of an enormous output of varied and highly accomplished work from Goldsmith, who established himself in the circle of Dr. Johnson. *The traveller* was published in 1765, followed by his great masterpiece *The vicar of Wakefield* in 1766. Other works included *The Roman history*, *The history of England* in four volumes, some biographies and *The goodnatured man* which was produced at Covent Garden. High on the list of his famous works are his poem *The deserted village* and the play *She stoops to conquer* which is still produced. Goldsmith died in 1774 at the age of 46. He was buried in England and a monument was erected in Westminster Abbey with an epitaph by Dr. Johnson.



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