

John Oldham

John Oldham was a poet, son of a non-conformist minister, who was born at Shipton Moyne in 1653. He was firstly educated at home then at Tetbury School for two years. He had obviously shown some remarkable scholastic achievement and ability as he was identified by a Bristol Alderman as a suitable example to study alongside his own son.

Rapid progress was made by John and in June 1670 he entered St Edmund's Hall, Oxford, where he was hailed as a young genius. By studying poetry, amongst other subjects, he found it took more and more of his time and thoughts. In 1674 he graduated with a BA degree and took up teaching in Croydon. Then he became a private tutor but was in 1683 struck by small-pox in his 30th year. It seems an awful waste of a talented young man.

Oldham appeared to be a gifted satirist in the Dryden style and the following is written of him "Oldham, far superior in his satires to Marvell, ranks, perhaps, next to Dryden".