

JONES, EDWARD (Bardd y Brenin; 1752 - 1824), harpist, arranger and publisher of harp music, collector and publisher of old penillion, national melodies, and translations into English; historian of Welsh literature and of Welsh musical instruments; collector of manuscripts and antiquary

Name: Edward Jones

Pseudonym: Bardd Y Brenin

Date of birth: 1752

Date of death: 1824

Parent: Jane Jones

Parent: John Jones

Gender: Male

Occupation: harpist, arranger and publisher of harp music, collector and publisher of old penillion, national melodies, and translations into English; historian of Welsh literature and of Welsh musical instruments; collector of manuscripts and antiquary

Area of activity: History and Culture; Literature and Writing; Music; Performing Arts; Printing and Publishing; Scholarship and Languages

Author: Tecwyn Ellis

Born at Henblas, Llandderfel, Meirionnydd, and christened 29 March 1752, he was the fourth child of John and Jane Jones, in a family of nine children. The father is said to have been an able musician, skilled in playing several instruments, a harpist, and harp-maker. He taught some of his children to play various instruments. Edward was prepared for the musical profession, and took an early interest in poetry and native customs.

He proceeded to London about 1775 under the patronage of members of the Welsh nobility. Almost immediately he came into contact with Charles Burney, and became teacher of the harp to several persons of rank. After his appointment as harpist to the prince of Wales, he made constant use of this title from about 1790 until 1820. On the prince's succession to the throne, he became known as Bardd y Brenin ('the king's bard'). He lived at S. James's Palace from 1805 until 1820 in the Office of Robes, and held a situation there. He used to visit the residences of certain members of the English gentry, and came to Wales during the summer. A medal was awarded by him to the best singer with the harp at the Corwen eisteddfod of 1789 and for the best collection of *penillion* at Bala in the same year. He was present at the two *gorseddau* on Primrose Hill, London, in 1792. He was also adjudicator of the harp-playing competitions at the Carmarthen eisteddfod, 1819, and the Wrexham eisteddfod, 1820.

He published about twenty books containing songs with accompaniments arranged for the harpsichord, piano, or harp, arrangements of works by classical and lesser composers, national airs with variations, and compositions of his own. *The Lyric Airs* (1804) contains a laborious essay on ancient Greek music. His important books, however, are the three volumes, *The Musical and Poetical Relicks of the Welsh Bards* [↗](#), first volume 1784, second edition with considerable additions [1794](#) [↗](#); second volume, *The Bardic Museum* [↗](#), 1802; third volume, *Hen Ganiadau Cymru*, 1820. The third edition (1808) of his work is considered 'a representative summary of the best English poetry derived from genuine Welsh sources' during the period of the Celtic Revival. His *Popular Cheshire Melodies* (1798) was an early attempt to record and publish English airs. He was considered a very good performer, and *Musical Remains* (1796) testifies to his ability. The first to publish a miscellaneous collection of old *penillion*, he also collected and published over 200 Welsh airs, and possessed a collection of manuscripts and rare books.

He was a lonely, reserved man, and died in straitened circumstances on 18 April 1824; he was buried in S. Marylebone cemetery.

Author

Tecwyn Ellis

Sources

J. Parry, Biographical Sketch

Musical and Poetical Relicks of the Welsh Bards. Vol. 3 Hen Ganiadau Cymru. Cambro-British Melodies ... harmonized with new basses; to which are added Variations for the Harp, or the Piano-Forte, Violin, or Flute ... This third volume is a confirmation of the former two volumes of the Musical and Poetical Relicks of the Welsh Bards, etc (London 1820), 1825

NLW MSS 37-40, 60-61, 108-109, 111-112, 125, 127, 148, 262, 164-174, 225, 322-323, 340, 354, etc.

J. Lloyd Williams, *Y tri thelynor arloeswyr cerddorol Cymru yn y ddeunawfed ganrif* (1945)

Y Cymmrodor, 1951

Further Reading

Edward Jones, *Musical and poetical relics of the Welsh bards* (London 1784)

Edward Jones, *Musical and poetical relics of the Welsh bards* (London 1794)

Edward Jones, *Musical relics of the Welsh bards* (London 1800)

Edward Jones, *Musical relics of the Welsh bards* (Dublin c.1800)

Edward Jones, *The bardic museum, of primitive British literature* (London 1802)

Edward Jones, *Musical and poetical relics of the Welsh bards* (London 1825)

Edward Jones, *Hên ganiadau Cymru* (London 1825)

Edward Jones, John Parry, *The Welsh harper* (London 1838)

Meirion Hughes, 'Jones, Edward (Bardd y Brenin; 1752-1824)', *Cydymaith i Gerddoriaeth Cymru* (Talybont 2018), pp.278-79

Wikipedia Article: [Edward Jones](#)

Additional Links

NLW Archives: [NLW MS 37B: Hanes cerddoriaeth, barddoniaeth a thrioedd Cymreig. &c.](#)

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Wikidata: [Q3048577](#)

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