

JONES, JOHN OWEN (Ap Ffarmwr; 1861 - 1899), journalist

Name: John Owen Jones
Pseudonym: ap Ffarmwr
Date of birth: 1861
Date of death: 1899
Parent: Emma Jones
Parent: Owen Jones
Gender: Male
Occupation: journalist
Area of activity: Literature and Writing; Printing and Publishing
Author: Frank Price Jones

Son of Owen and Emma Jones; born at Ty'n y Morfa, Trefdraeth, Anglesey, 1 January 1861. Following his father's death and his mother's second marriage, the family removed to Cae'r Llechau, Dwyran (about 1865). Educated at the Board school, Dwyran, he was apprenticed at 14 as a draper to Lewis Lewis, Caernarvon. During this period he read widely in the works of authors like Darwin, Huxley, Ruskin, and Carlyle, and attended a school kept by a Mr. Kirk in the town. From there, he went to University College of Wales, Aberystwyth for three years, following this with a year at Owens College, Manchester. For a period after this, he was London correspondent of *Y Genedl Gymreig* and the *North Wales Observer and Express*.

He returned from London to set up a school at Dwyran, and continued to write for the newspapers. Some of his contributions on many subjects may be seen in the *North Wales Observer and Express*, *Y Werin*, *Y Genedl*, and *Y Cymro* during 1883-95, and in *Y Geninen* 1891, 1892, and 1897.

In 1891 he was appointed sub-editor of the newspapers published by the Welsh National Press at Caernarvon. He removed to Merthyr Tydfil in 1895 to become editor of the *Merthyr Times*, and in 1897 went to Nottingham as leader writer of the *Nottingham Daily Express* (see under [David Edwards](#)). During this time, he wrote a biography of Gladstone (*Cofiant Gladstone*, Caernarvon, 1898). He died at Nottingham 2 March 1899 and was buried in the Methodist burial-ground, Dwyran, 7 March. A memorial was placed on his grave in 1902, partly by subscriptions from Anglesey farm labourers.

As his pen-name suggests, he took a great interest in agricultural matters, and he is remembered particularly for his efforts to ameliorate the working conditions of Anglesey farm labourers. As a journalist he naturally wrote on many subjects, including a very effective series of articles on the state of the Established Church in rural Wales. But on his return from London to Dwyran, he took up the cause of the farm workers, and published a series of articles on this subject in the *North Wales Observer and Express*. A Welsh version of these was published in *Y Werin*, a halfpenny paper which developed as the main organ of the movement to secure improvements in agricultural working hours. Meetings were held throughout Anglesey, culminating in a conference at Llangefni on Easter Monday 1890, when a reduction of two hours a day was secured from the farmers. A similar conference was held at Llangefni, 2 May 1891, and an unsuccessful attempt made to form an agricultural labourers union. In spite of this failure, the farm workers determined to express their appreciation of Ap Ffarmwr's efforts on their behalf, and at a further public meeting at Llangefni, 11 May 1893, he was presented with a gold watch by them. At this meeting, too, a resolution was passed to form a union, calling on Ap Ffarmwr to take the lead in this effort. No union was formed, however, owing to the opposition of the farmers, the unwillingness of the workers to pay subscriptions and, possibly, because Ap Ffarmwr moved to Merthyr before completing the work. A good example of his style may be seen in an article in *Y Cymro*, 31 July 1890, which states his views on the part which workers should play in politics. (See further under [Edwards, David](#) and [Griffith, R. A.](#))

Author

Frank Price Jones, (1920 - 1975)

Sources

R. Hughes, *Enwogion Môn, 1850-1912* (Dolgellau 1913)

Hanes a Chyfansoddiadau Arobryn Eisteddfod [Môn] Llanerchymedd, 1911 (Llangefni 1912), 98-132, essay by O. Llew Owain
Y Genedl Gymreig, 16 May 1893, 7 March 1899

on the movement to form the Union, see D. Lleufer Thomas, *The Royal Commission on Labour* Vol. II, 125-43 (C 6894-xiv, 1893)


Further Reading

Wikipedia Article: [John Owen Jones](#)

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