

JONES, Sir WILLIAM (1566-1640), judge,

Name: William Jones
Date of birth: 1566
Date of death: 1640
Spouse: Margaret ferch Griffith ap John Griffith
Child: Elinor Price (née Jones)
Child: Elizabeth Littleton (née Jones)
Child: Robert Jones
Child: Griffith Jones
Child: Charles Jones
Child: William Jones
Parent: Margaret Wynn
Parent: William ap Griffith ap John
Gender: Male
Occupation: judge
Area of activity: Law
Author: Arthur Herbert Dodd

was the eldest son of William ap Griffith ap John (died 1587) and of his first wife, Margaret, daughter of [Humphrey Wynn ap Maredudd](#) of Cesail Gyfarch (died 1583), first cousin to the grandfather of [Sir John Wynn](#) of Gwydir. His great-grandfather, John ap Robert ap Llywelyn ab Ithel, alias John Roberts, of Castellmarch (Llangian), was among the first batch of Caernarvonshire local officials appointed under the Act of Union (1542) and became sheriff of the county in 1548. His grandfather, Griffith ap John, entered the service of John Dudley, earl of Warwick (later duke of Northumberland), co-regent for Edward VI, and was made constable of Caernarvon castle (1549). John was the ancestor from whom the surname Jones was adopted by some of the brothers of William ap Griffith, and consistently from the time of his son William. Anthony Wood's statement (corrected by [Humphrey Humphreys](#) in the Bliss edition of *Athenae Oxon.*) that William Jones was educated at Beaumaris grammar school is manifestly wrong: as a rising barrister he helped and advised [David Hughes](#) (died 1609) in its foundation and acted as feoffee of the school and the almshouses. He entered S. Edmund Hall, Oxford (1580?), proceeded without graduating to Furnivall's (1585) and Lincoln's (1587) Inns, was called to the Bar, 1595, and appointed Lent reader in 1616. From 1603 he was legal adviser to his kinsman [Sir John Wynn](#), assisting him in his numerous lawsuits (many against his own wife's nephew, [John Griffith II, Cefnamwlch](#), see the article on that family), and his parliamentary candidatures, and corresponding with him over Welsh literature and antiquities. He represented Beaumaris inconspicuously in the parliament of 1597 and Caernarvonshire in that of 1601; he began to become active on committees in that of 1604-11, and in the Addled Parliament (1614) - where he reverted to Beaumaris - he took a prominent part in opposing the royal prerogatives of proclamations (under the Act of Union) and of impositions. In 1617 he was knighted, made a serjeant at law, and sent to Ireland as lord chief justice of King's Bench. Returning in 1620, he declined nomination as Member of Parliament for Caernarvonshire (where he was now regarded as 'prime man'), supporting the unsuccessful candidature of [Sir John Wynn](#) against [John Griffith](#). In 1621 he was nominated by [bishop John Williams](#) (1582 - 1650) as a judge of Common Pleas (accepting office reluctantly, since he declared it involved him in a loss of £300 a year), and in 1623 he was transferred to the King's Bench. It was on his advice that [Williams bought Penrhyn](#) (to his regret) in 1622. This, and the conduct of [Wynn's](#) son, [Sir Richard](#), may have contributed to the breach with both the lord keeper and the [Gwydir](#) connection, which culminated in Sir William's successful opposition to [Sir Richard's](#) patent of the Greenwax (1624). This coolness did not prevent him from losing favour with Buckingham in company with his patron, and this dashed his hopes of further promotion. In 1625 he retired to Castellmarch, and in the next three years rebuilt the house, much as it now stands. His career as judge is fully described in *D.N.B.* He died at Holborn 9 December 1640, and was buried in Lincoln's Inn chapel.

He married Margaret, daughter of [Griffith ap John Griffith of Cefnamwlch](#), by whom he had five sons (one dying in infancy) and six daughters, and on her death (1609) contracted a second (childless) marriage with an English widow.

His eldest son, WILLIAM JONES, barrister, was elected 'recruiter' Member of Parliament for Beaumaris, 1647, but was 'secluded' by Pride's Purge the following year; he held, jointly with his brother Charles, the reversion to the office of prothonotary and clerk to the crown in Denbighshire and Montgomeryshire, which they surrendered in 1636; and from 1655-60 he was recorder of Shrewsbury.

GRIFFITH JONES,

the second son, was put on the commission of array for Caernarvonshire by Charles I (12 August 1642), but soon became involved in a quarrel with [John Griffith II, Cefnamwlch](#), over a royal order to transport ordnance from the coast of LI n for

defence of the border, which Jones maintained would leave the coast dangerously exposed; after that he appears to have taken little active part in public affairs till in June, 1647 - after the county had fallen to Parliament - he was appointed by the Rump to the county assessment committee. On 6 March 1649 the royalist captain, Bartlet, swooped down from Wexford, plundered Castellmarch, and kidnapped Griffith Jones, probably as hostage for the life of [Sir John Owen](#), who had just been condemned to death. He continued to serve on county committees (even under the Barebones régime) until the Protectorate collapsed; but he was ill-disposed towards the dominant Puritanism. By March 1660, he had become a supporter of the Restoration, serving as county magistrate in the round-up of suspects and on the county militia; notwithstanding which he was himself among the political suspects from whom he was lodged in Caernarvon gaol for a short time after the Restoration. In 1663, however, he was named as sheriff. His daughter, Margaret, married Sir William Williams of Vaynol.

ROBERT JONES,

the third son, represented Caernarvon in Parliament in 1625 and 1626 and Flintshire in 1628-9; he was sheriff of his county in 1644, and royalist governor of Caernarvon in March 1645.

CHARLES JONES,

fourth son, barrister of Lincoln's Inn, was recorder of Beaumaris from 1625 and represented the borough in the parliaments of 1624, 1625, 1626, and 1628-9; in the Short Parliament (1640) he was elected for Monmouth as well. He helped Selden to draft charges against Buckingham in the parliament of 1626, and in that of 1628 he was associated with Edward Littleton, Member of Parliament for Caernarvon and justice of the Anglesey circuit (who had married his sister Elizabeth) in preparation for the Petition of Right; and after the dissolution he undertook the defence of one of the members on trial for seditious conduct in the House. He was sheriff for his county in 1638, and in the Short Parliament chairman of the committee for privileges, but he died soon afterwards. He was co-founder with [William Price of Rhiwlas](#) (see [Price of Rhiwlas](#)) of the almshouses at Llangybi. With his generation the family died out in the male line.

Author

Emeritus Professor Arthur Herbert Dodd, (1891 - 1975)

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