

JONES, WILLIAM JOHN PHILPIN (1913 - 1992), political cartoonist

Name: William John Philpin Jones

Date of birth: 1913

Date of death: 1992

Spouse: Rose Jones (née Spence)

Spouse: Margaret June Jones (née Price)

Spouse: Sylvia Jones (née Hull)

Child: Rose Jones

Child: Harriet Jones

Child: Louise Jones

Parent: Mary Jones (née Johns)

Parent: John Jones

Gender: Male

Occupation: political cartoonist

Area of activity: Art and Architecture; Politics, Government and Political Movements

Chris Williams (1963–2024)

William John Philpin Jones, generally known as John, was born on 17 August 1913 at Roseleigh in Llandrindod Wells, Radnorshire, the youngest of three children of John Jones (1875-1959), a bookmaker, and his wife Mary (née Johns, 1881-1948). Educated at Llandrindod County School, he had some early cartoons published in the Radnor Express in 1928. In 1932 he began studying at the Birmingham School of Art, and subsequently won a scholarship to the Royal College of Art, but did not complete the course. He returned to Wales in 1933 to work as a political cartoonist for the Western Mail in Cardiff, signing his work 'Jones'. By 1937 he had moved to London and joined Godbolds advertising agency. He married fellow Godbolds employee Rose Spence (1919-2005) in 1938 and they had one daughter, Judith.

At the outbreak of the Second World War Jones was made redundant, and he and his family returned to Llandrindod Wells to live with his parents. In 1940 he volunteered for the Coldstream Guards, but the lack of a private income meant he was subsequently commissioned into the Welsh Regiment. From 1943 onwards he served in North Africa, Sicily and Italy, seeing action as an Assistant Military Landing Officer at both Salerno and Anzio. His talent as a cartoonist led to his transfer to the British Army Newspaper Unit under the editorship of Hugh Cudlipp, and Jones contributed both satirical and political cartoons (as 'JON' and as 'Philpin') to the service publications *Eighth Army News*, *Union Jack*, *Crusader* and *Soldier*. Often visiting troops on the front line, his most famous cartoon creation was the 'Two Types': a pair of weathered, moustachioed, unconventional, yet jaunty Eighth Army officers who had fought across North Africa and were now slogging their way up through Italy. Immensely popular with the troops, the adventures of JON's 'Two Types' were reprinted in the *Daily Express* and came to be regarded as comparably iconic as Bruce Bairnsfather's 'Old Bill' from the First World War. Jones's contribution to the morale of British and Allied servicemen was singled out for praise by senior officers including Lieutenant-General Sir Bernard Freyberg VC and Field Marshal Harold Alexander. Freyberg reportedly said that the 'Two Types' were worth a division of troops. For fellow Newspaper Unit contributor Cyril James they reflected 'the true spirit of Army humour that helps us to get over the bad times and emphasizes the brotherhood of all who bear arms' ('Introduction' to *The Two Types*, 1944). Two collections of 'Two Types' cartoons (of which there were approximately 300 in total) were published during the war, and for his wartime cartooning Jones was made MBE.

After demobilisation in 1946 Jones followed Hugh Cudlipp to the Mirror group of newspapers, drawing sporting cartoons for the Sunday Pictorial, before joining Kemsley newspapers in 1952. Jones worked on the Daily Graphic, Sunday Graphic, Empire News and Sunday Times until 1955, drawing twelve cartoons a week, thereafter moving to the News Chronicle where he drew daily political and sporting pocket cartoons. In 1960 the *News Chronicle* was absorbed by the *Daily Mail*, and for the next twenty-one years Jones drew over 15,000 cartoons for the Mail. A founder member of the British Cartoonists' Association, he was recognised by the Cartoonists' Club of Great Britain as Topical and Sports Cartoonist of the Year in 1966, and Pocket Cartoonist of the Year in 1981. Although he ceased to work for the *Daily Mail* in 1981, Jones continued to draw for the *Mail on Sunday* until 1988.

Living in London until his retirement, Jones maintained strong connections with Wales. In 1969 he created the charitable 'JON award' aimed at encouraging 'talented and deserving youngsters in the creative arts' in the Rhymney valley, an annual award ceremony taking place at Caerphilly Castle. When he ended his connection with Fleet Street Jones moved to Raglan, and from 1987 until 1990 drew cartoons for the South Wales Argus and Abergavenny Chronicle, some of which echoed the whimsical depictions of valleys life found in the work for the South Wales Echo of his contemporary Grenfell Jones ('Gren').

His first marriage having ended during the Second World War, Jones married Margaret June Price in 1949, with whom he had two daughters, Harriet a Louise, before divorcing in 1969, and then in 1978 he married Sylvia Hull (1927-2009). He died on 28 June 1992 in St Joseph's nursing home, Newport, and is buried in St Cadoc's churchyard, Raglan.

The lasting popularity of the 'Two Types' have tended to overshadow Jones's career as a political cartoonist. Although he claimed to have held left-wing views as a young man Jones, as might be expected from someone working for the *Daily Mail* in the 1960s and 1970s, became a formidable critic of Labour Prime Minister Harold Wilson and a champion of Margaret Thatcher's brand of Conservatism. Towards the end of his life Jones, reflecting on his career, wrote that cartooning was 'hard, but worthwhile work. You have to give it your whole attention: it is your life' (Jon's Complete Two Types, 36).

Sources

British Cartoon Archive, University of Kent: William John Philpin Jones papers

JON [pseud. John Jones], *JON's Two Types in Italy* (Italy 1945)

JON [pseud. John Jones], *THE 'TWO TYPES'* (Italy 1944)

JON [pseud. John Jones], *Wilson in Wonderland* (London 1968)

JON [pseud. John Jones], *Cartoons from the Daily Mail* (Twickenham 1978)

JON [pseud. John Jones], *Maggie* (Twickenham 1979)

JON [pseud. John Jones], *Jon's Complete Two Types* (London 1991)

Western Mail

Obituaries in *South Wales Argus*, *Daily Mail* (29 June 1992), *The Daily Telegraph* (2 July 1992), *The Guardian* (4 July 1992)

Archives

British Cartoon Archive, University of Kent: William John Philpin Jones papers

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