

## HUGHES, HYWEL STANFORD (1886 - 1970), cattle breeder, benefactor and Welsh nationalist

**Name:** Hywel Stanford Hughes

**Date of birth:** 1886

**Date of death:** 1970

**Spouse:** Olwen Margaret Hughes (née Williams)

**Parent:** Elizabeth Hughes (née ?Jones)

**Parent:** Owen Hughes

**Gender:** Male

**Occupation:** cattle breeder, benefactor and Welsh nationalist

**Area of activity:** Nature and Agriculture; Patriots; Philanthropy; Politics, Government and Political Movements

**Author:** Gwilym Arthur Jones

Born 24 April 1886, at Mold, Flintshire, youngest child and only son of Owen Hughes, minister (Meth.), and his wife, Elizabeth. His sisters were leading members of the suffragette movement, particularly Vyrnwy, who achieved prominence as a journalist and Daily Mail columnist under the pseudonym Anne Temple. Both she and her sisters, Morfudd and Blodwen, became friends of Mrs. Pankhurst. One of their cousins was Sarah Pugh Jones, a well-known local historian and librarian at Llangollen. Hywel was educated at Grove Park grammar school, Wrexham, and Kingswood, Bath, a Methodist foundation. After leaving school he became a pupil with a veterinary surgeon at Llangollen, but in 1907 he sailed for Bogota, Colombia, to join two uncles, Ifor and R.J. Jones, both of whom were engaged in the import trade. Hywel Hughes soon displayed a high level business acumen and in time acquired 27,000 acres in the Honda region which he developed for cattle rearing. He expanded into coffee exporting and established offices in New York and elsewhere but as a result of the 1929-33 world economic recession his empire crashed. Lesser men would have abandoned any hope of recovery but he applied himself with singular determination, proven leadership and outstanding organising ability so that his interest had soon expanded into agricultural machinery, oil and cattle breeding. Although he had now turned from coffee exporting, many of his former employees held key positions in Colombia. He improved and developed cattle breeding and a second ranch, Poponte, was added to his expanding property.

In 1924 he married Olwen Margaret Williams in Mile End chapel, London, with [Thomas Charles Williams](#) officiating. Born in London, she was the daughter of Owen Williams, Gwalchmai, Anglesey, one-time High Sheriff of that county and a prosperous London draper. She was a niece of [Sir Vincent Evans](#). Their four children continued to farm in Colombia. Hywel Hughes never sought Colombian citizenship preferring always to emphasise his Welsh nationality. He was an enthusiastic member of Plaid Cymru and a generous benefactor. He actively supported Urdd Gobaith Cymru and allowed the movement to hold its first camp in 1929 at his home, Plas Tŷ'n dŵr, Llangollen. In 1931 he was elected a vice-president of the Company, Cwmni Urdd Gobaith Cymru. He was a member of the Honourable Society of Cymmrodorion, and at the Ebbw Vale national eisteddfod he was the leader of the Welsh from abroad, Y Cymry ar Wasgar. He was vice-president of the American cymanfa ganu at Cardiff in 1969. His benefactions and loyalty to Wales were recognised by the Gorsedd of Bards and he was admitted to the Druidic Order as 'Don Hywel'. His personality, facility in Spanish and undoubted reputation brought him into contact with many of the presidents and leading senators of Colombia. In 1955 he bought Drws-y-coed, Menai Bridge, and the mansion became a popular cultural and social centre for Welsh people from all parts of Wales and abroad. He greatly admired the life and work of [Sir O.M. Edwards](#). He retained his Christian faith and never abandoned his non-conformist principles. His aspirations may be summarised: to improve the standard of cattle breeding generally and to seek independence for Wales. He died on 19 March 1970 at Bogota and was buried there.

### Author

Gwilym Arthur Jones, (1925 - 1998)

### Sources

Information from Mrs. Olwen Hughes and Mr. Rolant Hywel Hughes;

R. E. Griffith, *Urdd Gobaith Cymru (Aberystwyth 1971-73)*, 1 (1971).

### Additional Links

NLW Archives: [Llythyr oddi wrth Hywel Hughes, yn Bogota](#) , Papurau Kate Roberts, Ffeil 1270

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