

JONES, THOMAS HUGHES (1895 - 1966), poet, writer and teacher

Name: Thomas Hughes Jones
Date of birth: 1895
Date of death: 1966
Spouse: Enid Jones (née Bumford)
Parent: Ann Jones (née Hughes)
Parent: Rhys Jones
Gender: Male
Occupation: poet, writer and teacher
Area of activity: Education; Literature and Writing; Poetry
Author: Evan David Jones

Born 23 January 1895 in Tan-yr-allt, his mother's home in the Blaenafon area of Blaenpennal parish, Cardiganshire. He was one of the two children and the only son of Rhys Jones, farmer, and his wife, Ann Hughes. He was raised at Cefnhendre Farm, in the same parish, but, on the death of his mother when he was only six years old, his father moved to Blaenaeron Farm. Next to Blaenaeron was Dolebolion, farmed by John Rowlands, a cultured man - a local poet and a master of cynganedd. Rowlands was the reputed father of **Thomas Huws Davies**. The young Thomas Hughes Jones learned much in Rowlands's entertaining company. On Sundays, Jones went to his maternal grandparents and attended the services and Sunday school at Blaenafon Calvinistic Methodist chapel where he blossomed as a child with a ready answer during the public examination held at the close of the Sunday school and which required a sound knowledge of the *Bible*. He also excelled above his contemporaries at Tan-y-garreg elementary school, Blaenpennal, where his schoolteacher until 1903 was John Finnemore, followed by David Davies who persuaded Jones's father that the boy should go to Tregaron county school. He entered the county school in September 1909, together with **William Ambrose Bebb**, **Evan Jenkins**, **D. Lloyd Jenkins** and **Griffith John Williams**. All of these boys came under the influence of outstanding teachers, especially Samuel Morris Powell, to whom generations of pupils owed a great debt. At this time, Thomas Hughes Jones made a name for himself by winning chairs at local eisteddfodau for his poetry. He was given the nickname 'Tom (or, Twm), the poet' in Tregaron and the surrounding district. He did not neglect his school work; a wide reader and possessing of a remarkable memory, he obtained the Higher Certificate (Central Welsh Board) in English, Latin, Welsh and history. He entered the University College, Aberystwyth in 1913 and took a leading role in student activities. He was awarded the Cynddelw Scholarship in 1915 and graduated in 1916 with second-class honours in Welsh. He was an effective speaker in English and Welsh; he contributed verses to *Y Wawr*, the college's Welsh periodical which he edited in 1915-16. In the same year, he served as vice-president of the Celtic Society; at the time, a member of the university staff was always the president. The following year, he was elected president of the Literary and Debating Society, but he was called up for military service in November 1915. He served in France with the Welsh Guards. At the end of the war, he returned to Aberystwyth where he resumed his social activities and took up again the research work begun in 1916. He was the secretary of the Literary and Debating Society in 1919-20; president of the Students' Council, 1920-21; and editor of *The Dragon*, the college's periodical, 1921-22. This busy social life earned Jones considerable popularity among the students, but he did not neglect his studies and he was awarded an M.A. degree in 1922 for his thesis entitled 'Social life in Wales in the eighteenth century as illustrated in its popular literature of the period'.

He was appointed in 1922 to a post with the National Savings Movement in Cardiganshire - a rather prosaic occupation for one with such a lively personality. Within eighteen months, he left to become the secretary of the Liberal Party in Montgomeryshire where **David Davies** of Llandinam was the M.P. When **Davies** resigned in 1929, Thomas Hughes Jones became an administrator with the Council for the Protection of Rural Wales which was based at Aberystwyth. His duties involved travelling the length and breadth of Wales to promote, mainly through lectures, the preservation of the natural beauty of Wales. The new post gave him an opportunity to spend Sundays at home. When he worked in Montgomeryshire, he lectured to the small societies in the county and held a successful Sunday school class, as well as a reading class, at Bethel Calvinistic Methodist chapel in Newtown. He was made an elder there in 1936. He married in 1934 Enid Bumford from Llanfair Caereinion, a college friend. He left his post with the Commission for the Protection of Rural Wales in 1932 for a part-time post, teaching Welsh, at Newtown grammar school. He also held external classes in Newtown. At the outbreak of World War II, a panel of teachers, with Jones as chairman and David Rowlands as Secretary, was established to consider improvements in the teaching of local history in schools. In 1941, the panel devised a syllabus for local history which was adopted by the Education Committee and distributed to every school in Montgomeryshire. The chairman's task was to arrange a programme to celebrate St. David's Day; this was held in every school and one of the county's worthies was the subject of each annual celebration. Jones was called upon to address meetings of teachers and the interest shown by school inspectors ensured that other counties became aware of the Montgomeryshire programme for local history. In 1946 an emergency training college for teachers was set up at Wrexham, which in time became known as the Cartrefle Education College; Jones was responsible for the course on Welsh-medium education. He was appointed deputy-principal of the College in 1956. Jones was in his element at Cartrefle College and the students later remembered him with great affection. He retired in 1962 and died 11 May 1966.

He turned to prose writing during his military service and he is now known more for his short stories (especially the long short-story) than for poetry. For many years, he contributed stories and essays to Welsh periodicals, and in English to *Welsh Outlook*; he achieved a reputation in this field when he won the prose medal at the 1940 Mountain Ash national eisteddfod for his long short-story, 'Sgweier Hafila'. He was a frequent adjudicator for literature and drama at the national eisteddfod; together with **B.T. Hopkins**, another Blaenpennal man, he was on the panel of adjudicators for the crown at Cardiff in 1960. He reviewed books for *Y Faner*, *Lleufer*, and *Yr Athro*.

He published *Sgweier Hafila a storïau eraill* (1941); *Amser i ryfel* (1944); *Mewn diwrnod a storïau eraill* (1948); Gildas Tibbott edited *Atgofion a storïau eraill ynghyd â detholiad o ysgrifau, sgyrsiau a cherddi* (1971).

Author

Evan David Jones, (1903 - 1987)

Sources

Information from his widow

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Further Reading

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