

JONES, PERCY MANSELL (1889 - 1968), Professor of French

Name: Percy Mansell Jones
Date of birth: 1889
Date of death: 1968
Parent: Arnaud Johnson Jones
Gender: Male
Occupation: Professor of French
Area of activity: Education; Scholarship and Languages
Author: Garnet Rees

Born 11 April 1889 at Carmarthen, son of Arnaud Johnson Jones and his wife. Educated at Queen Elizabeth's Grammar School, Carmarthen, he went to U.C.W., Aberystwyth in 1908 gaining a first-class honours degree in French and later a master's degree. He then proceeded to Balliol College, Oxford, where he obtained his B.Litt. A stimulating and influential teacher, he successively occupied posts as lecturer in French in Aberystwyth, University College of South Wales, Cardiff and Cambridge. He was appointed Professor of French in the University College of North Wales, Bangor in 1937 and in 1951 went to the University of Manchester as its first Professor of Modern French Literature. The University of Wales conferred on him an hon. D.Litt. degree in 1960, soon after his retirement. Mansell Jones was drawn to the study of modern French poetry; he was able, with his natural sensitivity and understanding, to illuminate his subjects in books like *Emile Verhaeren* (1926 and 1957) and *Baudelaire* (1952). His important new edition of *The Oxford Book of French Verse* (1957) displayed a sure taste in the choice of poems especially from Baudelaire onwards. Collections of essays on more general topics - *Tradition and Barbarism* (1930), *French Introspectives* (1937) and *The Background of Modern French Poetry* (1951) - reveal his interests in French thought and contemporary issues. In the 1950s he took a full part in the debates which were then raging on the role of the universities in the post-war world and especially the place of the humanities in a technological age. Mansell Jones, who suffered indifferent health throughout his life, was a bachelor with a host of friends. Known universally with affectionate admiration as 'P.M.' he was a welcome lecturer at universities where his humour, his humility, his affirmation of literary values and his pleasure in scholarship were fine examples to others. He died on 24 January 1968.

Author

Dr Garnet Rees, (1912 - 1990)

Sources

P. Mansell Jones, *How they educated Jones* (Cardiff 1974)

Pennar Davies(ed.), 'Saunders Lewis: Sketches for a Portrait' in *Saunders Lewis* (Denbigh 1950)

L. J. Austin, Garnet Rees and Eugène Vivaver (eds.), *Studies in Modern French Literature presented to P. Mansell Jones by pupils, colleagues and friends* (Manchester 1961)

Further Reading

Wikipedia Article: [Percy Mansell Jones](#)

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