

## JONES, JOHN WILLIAM (1883 - 1954), author, collector of letters and papers, publisher, antiquary and folk poet

**Name:** John William Jones  
**Date of birth:** 1883  
**Date of death:** 1954  
**Spouse:** Maggie Jones (née Jones)  
**Parent:** Ellen Jones (née Roberts)  
**Parent:** David Jones  
**Gender:** Male  
**Occupation:** author, collector of letters and papers, publisher, antiquary and folk poet  
**Area of activity:** History and Culture; Literature and Writing; Poetry; Printing and Publishing  
**Author:** Meredydd Evans

Born 5 March 1883 at 4 Caerffridd, Tanygrisiau, Merionethshire, son of David Jones, 'Glan Barlwyd', and his wife Ellen (née Roberts), Llwynogon, Llanedwen, Anglesey. He was educated at Glan-y-pwll school until he was twelve years old, and then he spent a further two years at the Higher Grade School in Blaenau Ffestiniog. In 1897 he went to work at the Oakley quarry where he laboured diligently for 53 years until his retirement after injuring his hip. He married Maggie Jones, Minffordd, Oakley Square, Tanygrisiau, 11 June 1913, and they had one son. In 1936 J.W. Jones was elected an elder in Bethel chapel (CM), Tanygrisiau, and he was also a devoted and interesting Sunday school teacher for many years. He provided ready support for young boys and girls in his district who were fond of reading.

He was generally known as 'Joni Bardd' in his neighbourhood and he fulfilled the function of folk poet conscientiously. He had a burning interest in Welsh and English poetry, and particularly in collecting and publishing the work of some of the poets of his own and neighbouring areas. He edited some of the works of Ap Alun Mabon, *Gwrid y Machlud* (Blaenau Ffestiniog, 1941); *Ioan Brothen*, *Llinell neu Ddwyr* (Blaenau Ffestiniog, 1942); *Gwilym Deudraeth*, *Yr Awen Barod* (Llandysul, 1943); Rolant Wyn, *Dŵr y Ffynnon* (Blaenau Ffestiniog, 1949) and *R.R. Morris*, *Caneuon R.R. Morris* (1951). One of his close friends was *Ellis Humphrey Evans* ('Hedd Wyn') and he assisted J.R. Jones with the publication of *Cerddi'r Bugail*. He assisted with collecting the contents of *O Drum i Draeth* by *Eliseus Williams* ('Eifion Wyn'), and with the preparation of biographies of *Owen Griffith Owen* ('Alafon') and *John John Roberts* ('Iolo Caernarfon'). He also assisted *T. Gwynn Jones* in collecting material for his book *Welsh Folklore and Folk-custom* (1930). He took particular delight in his friendship with *T. Gwynn Jones* and received several manuscripts from him, including the ode *Gwlad y Bryniau* after the bard himself had written it ('wedi i'r bardd ei hun ei hysgrifennu').

He lectured a great deal to literary societies on the poets of his locality and he collected many of the works of the poets and authors of Gwynedd, e.g. *Alafon*, *Elfyn*, *Isallt*, *W. Pâr Huws*, *Gwilym Prysor*, *Carneddog* (Richard Griffith), *Glaslyn* (Richard Jones Owen), *Barlwydon*, *Gwilym Morgan*, *Awena Rhun*, *Glyn Myfyr*, *Llifon* (William Griffith Owen), and others. He also ensured that the poets, authors and musicians of the locality were commemorated in a worthy manner. He arranged the erection of a gravestone for *Robert Owen Hughes* ('Elfyn'), and a memorial stone (a stone from Cwm Pennant) to '*Eifion Wyn*.' With another friend and *T. Gwynn Jones*, he insisted on having a slate tombstone on the grave of *Robert Roberts*, 'Y Sgorlor Mawr', 1834-1885 in Llangernyw churchyard. He was responsible for the memorial near the home of *Thomas Lloyd* (1841 - 1909; 'Crych Elen') in Dolwyddelan - the money for this project came from a lady in America. He saw to it that a memorial stone was erected to *Edward Stephen* ('Tanymarian') at Rhyd Sarn, Maentwrog, and he arranged a meeting to commemorate *Morgan Llwyd* and to unveil a memorial to him at Cynfal Fawr. He later collected and edited a substantial memorial volume, *Morgan Llwyd o Wynedd: Coffa Morgan Llwyd* (1952). He also collected money for the *Sir O. M. Edwards* memorial fund. He was a regular contributor to the newspapers and journals of his time: *Y Glorian*; *Y Rhedegydd* (a great deal, for many years); *Y Genedl* (he contributed a weekly column for some years - 'Nodion Meirion'); *Yr Herald Cymraeg* (many essays on poets and authors); *Y Brython*; *Y Ffynon*; *Y Dydd*; *Y Cymro* (in which the popular column 'Y Fainc Sgldion' appeared); *Cymru*; *Y Genhinen*; *Cymru'r Plant*; *Trysorfa'r Plant*; *Y Drysorfa Fawr*; *Yr Eurgrawn*; *Yr Haul*; *Y Goleuad*; *Seren Cymru*. Shortly before his death he saw the publication of *Y Fainc Sgldion: casgliad o rai o straeon y chwarel a'r capel ...* (1953). Over many years he sent various materials which were valuable (particularly to the social historian) to the National Library of Wales, including numerous scrap-books; hundreds of letters (some personal ones and some by notable Welsh people); manuscripts of the works of several poets and authors; various documents such as the accounts of local institutions, craftsmen and industries; minutes and reports of ecclesiastical and secular bodies; poems and election addresses - local and county; local folktales; programmes of *eisteddfodau*, concerts and literary societies; pictures of Ffestiniog people; memorial poems and cards. He sent similar materials to the library of the University College of North Wales in Bangor. He died 6 January 1954, at his home, and was buried with his wife (who had pre-deceased him twelve years previously) at Bethesda cemetery, Blaenau Ffestiniog. He was a notable example of a cultured common man, ready to help others, and motivated in all his activity by his concern for matters of culture.

### Author

Dr Meredydd Evans

### Sources

NLW Archives: [Papurau J. W. Jones](#)

information from his son John Penri Jones and daughter-in-law

Trysorfa y Plant, 1941  
personal acquaintance

## Images

John Roberts, David Jones, 'Glan Barlwyd', Tanygrisiau, a David Grimaldi Davies

## Additional Links

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