

JONES, ROBERT WILLIAM ('Erfyl Fychan'; 1899 - 1968) historian, litterateur and eisteddfodwr

Name: Robert William Jones
Pseudonym: Erfyl Fychan
Date of birth: 1899
Date of death: 1968
Spouse: Gwendolen Jones (née Jones)
Child: Geraint Vaughan-Jones
Parent: Jane Jones (née Thomas)
Parent: Robert William Jones
Gender: Male
Occupation: historian, litterateur and eisteddfodwr
Area of activity: Education; Eisteddfod; History and Culture; Literature and Writing
Author: Geraint Vaughan-Jones

Born New Year's Day, 1899, in Penygroes, Caernarfonshire, the younger son of Robert William Jones, Brynllwyni, quarryman and small-holder, and Jane his wife, the daughter of Robert Thomas, Drws-y-coed, Nantlle. Educated at Pen-y-groes county school, he entered the teachers' training dept at U.C.W. after World War I and taught for 2 years in Birmingham. He was appointed head-teacher at Trisant, Cardiganshire, in 1922 and became headmaster of Llanerfyl endowed school in 1924. A Board of Education research scholarship (1928) enabled him to study Welsh social life in the 18c. under **T. Gwynn Jones** and the award of an Owen Templeman Scholarship allowed him to study under **J. Glyn Davies** at Liverpool University. He gained his M.A. in 1939 for a dissertation on 'The wayside entertainer in Wales in the nineteenth century' and he was appointed the same year headmaster of Berriew Road school, Welshpool. In 1944 he was elected a Fellow of the Royal Historical Society. He married in 1929 Gwendolen Jones of Aberystwyth and they had two sons. He served in the army in both world wars and was promoted to the rank of major.

He was deeply interested in the art of penillion singing and won the first prize at Swansea national eisteddfod for the *penillion* solo in 1926. He became a member of the Gorsedd the same year. In the field of Welsh culture he owed much to the influence of **T. Gwynn Jones**, the **Francis brothers** of Nantlle, and **T. D. James** ('Iago Erfyl'), the talented and scholarly rector of Llanerfyl in the 1920s. At Bala in 1934 he founded the Cymdeithas Cerdd Dant and he was the society's secretary until 1949 when he was chosen to be Recorder of the Gorsedd. He succeeded **Geoffrey Crawshay** ('Sieffre o Gyfarthfa') as Herald Bard and was also Recorder and Chief Bard of the Powys Gorsedd for many years. Apart from his contribution to the *eisteddfod* and Cymdeithas Cerdd Dant, he held evening classes on Welsh history and literature for over thirty years and laboured untiringly to safeguard and advance the Welsh life of his adopted county.

He published *Bywyd Cymdeithasol Cymru yn y Ddeunawfed Ganrif* (1931) and a volume of poetry, *Rhigwm i'r Hogiau* (1949), as well as essays, articles and radio scripts etc. He died in Mynytho on 7 January 1968, and was buried at Pen-y-groes.

Author

Canon Geraint Vaughan-Jones

Sources

Personal knowledge

family papers

Who's who in Wales (1933, 1937)

The Biographical Index of W. W. Price, Aberdŷŵr

Allwedd y Tannau Cylchgrawn Cymdeithas Cerdd Dant Cymru, 1968, 18-19

correspondence in N.L.W.

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