

JONES, JOSEPH (1799 - 1871), Catholic priest

Name: Joseph Jones
Date of birth: 1799
Date of death: 1871
Parent: Rachel Jones
Parent: Thomas Jones
Gender: Male
Occupation: Catholic priest
Area of activity: Religion
Author: Eric Edwards

The name of Joseph Jones is associated with Ysgeifiog, Flintshire. There, presumably, in 1799, he was born and there also, or not far away, he spent part of his adult life. Like some others from the mining districts of Flintshire, he too in his youth moved to work in the lead mines at Minera where, at the time, there were better work opportunities for miners. At Minera he joined Pen-y-bryn church, one of the earliest of Welsh Wesleyan churches, where he became a leader. It could be that during his stay at Minera he began to preach for it is recorded that ' he began to preach when very young '. At the District Meeting held at Amlwch on 31 May 1824, he was received as an itinerant preacher in accordance with the custom and rules of the Wesleyan Church although he was not stationed that year. It was in the following year (1825) that he was sent to the Caernarfon circuit but before the end of the connexional year he had withdrawn from the itinerant ministry. He returned to Ysgeifiog, renewing his membership in the Holywell circuit. He kept school 'here and there', proof that he was a man of learning. As an accredited bard he took the bardic name of 'Caradog' and addressed an eisteddfod at Caernarfon with a sequence of *englynion*.

At a Quarterly Meeting in the Holywell circuit a complaint was brought against him for 'inclining towards Papacy and although he firmly denied the accusation, the complaint was not without some credence for soon afterwards he joined first the Anglican Church before transferring his membership to the Catholic Church. Thereafter he was under the supervision of a Jesuit priest at Holywell, followed by a term at a college in France, before being appointed as missionary for his 'fellow countrymen in Wales ', being the first Welsh missionary so to be appointed from among the Catholic priests. In 1847 he was at Abergele ministering to the Irish labourers constructing the railway from Chester to Bangor. There followed a term of ministry at Wrexham and Mold (living at Wrexham) and, in 1851, at Brecon where he was involved with the building of a new church. Later he ministered at Bangor, and was ' almost worshipped by the Irishmen ' who were working on the railway extension to Holyhead. There followed a term at Dukinfield, Cheshire, (1860-1863), a year at Holyhead, then at Pant Asaph, and at Seacombe, before his last posting to Welshpool in 1870. He died at Welshpool, 2 December 1871 and was buried at Pant Asaph. An obituary was printed in *The Tablet*, 23 December 1871. In his will (under the name of James Jones) there is reference to brothers William and Robert and sisters Mary and Sarah. He left money to the Catholic orphanage at Flint (? Holywell) and to the Catholic Clergy Fund, diocese of Shrewsbury.

Author

Reverend Eric Edwards

Sources

Hugh Jones, *Hanes Wesleyaeth Gymreig* (1911-3), 1, 478, 2, 487

Y Traethodydd, 1846, 361-3

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Complete Battersby's Catholic Directory, Almanack and Registry (1846), 1846

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