

JONES, THOMAS WILLIAM, ('TOM'), Baron Maelor of Rhos (1898-1984), Labour politician

Name: Thomas William Jones
Date of birth: 1898
Date of death: 1984
Gender: Male
Occupation: Labour politician
Area of activity: Politics, Government and Political Movements
Author: John Graham Jones

He was born at Ponciau on 10 February 1898, the son of James Jones and Elizabeth Bowyer. He was a brother to [James Idwal Jones](#) MP (1900-1982). He received his early education at Ponciau Boys' School and began work as a coalminer at the Bersham colliery at fourteen years of age, earning just twelve shillings a week. He thus followed in the footsteps of his father. It was this background which made him such an ardent Socialist and the champion of the miners throughout his life. As a result of much persuasion from his former headmaster, he became a pupil-teacher in August 1914, later joining the Non-Combatant Corps as a conscientious objector in 1917. As a result of his refusal to obey an order, he was court-martialled in December of the same year and was then imprisoned until May 1919. He undertook six months hard labour. Jones then became a student at Bangor Normal College, 1920-22, where he qualified as a certified teacher, was a schoolmaster from 1922 until 1940, and was a welfare officer with the Ministry of Labour, 1940-46. In 1946 he was appointed a welfare, education and public relations officer with the North Wales Power and Electric Co., a body which became MANWEB in 1951, and he thus became responsible for the welfare of all the workers transferred from the cities to the factories of north Wales. This work brought him into regular contact with the problems of the working classes and helped to formulate his views as a Labour politician. He became a JP for Denbighshire in 1937 at the age of 39 (the youngest ever working-class JP in the old county of Denbighshire) and served as chairman of the Ruabon bench of magistrates for twenty years.

Jones had joined the ILP in 1919 and served as the chairman of both the Wrexham Trades Council and the North Wales Labour Federation. He was short-listed as a prospective parliamentary candidate for Anglesey in 1931, but withdrew in favour of [Megan Lloyd George](#), the Independent Liberal candidate and sitting MP for the county. He unsuccessfully contested Merioneth in the Labour interest in the general election of 1935 against Henry Haydn Jones, the sitting Liberal MP, and captured the division in 1951, serving as MP until his retirement in 1966. He always believed that one of his foremost achievements as an MP was to persuade the government of the day to bring Bala lake into public ownership. He was also instrumental in persuading the Central Electricity Board to establish a nuclear power station at Trawsfynydd and in getting the pump storage scheme set up at Blaenau Ffestiniog. These were two areas of high unemployment. He had served as chairman of the Welsh group of Labour MPs and of the North Wales Labour Federation.

He then entered the House of Lords as Baron Maelor of Rhos (life peerage), remaining active in the upper house until his health deteriorated in 1981, and continuing to support causes that would benefit the Welsh people. One of his major campaigns was to fight to retain 'the Welsh Sunday' when he tabled an amendment to exclude Wales from the provisions of the Sunday Entertainments Bill sponsored in the upper house by Lord Willis. During the Investiture ceremony of the Prince of Wales at Caernarfon castle in July 1969, Lord Maelor carried one of the cushions bearing the royal crown and ring which were duly handed over to the Queen during the ceremony. In 1981 he was hailed as the singing Baron after making history by becoming the first ever person to sing in the House of Lords while narrating a story which involved a song. He was considered a strong personality in both the House of Commons and the House of Lords. He was a fervent Socialist and campaigner for miners' causes. He published a volume of reminiscences, *Fel Hyn y bu*, in 1970. He married on 1 January 1928 Flossy, the daughter of Jonathan Thomas of Birkenhead, who predeceased him. A son and a daughter survived him. The family lived at Ger-y-Llyn, Ponciau, Wrexham, and at Bro Hedd, Clarke Street, Ponciau, Wrexham. He died in a fire at his Wrexham home on 18 November 1984 when he was found to be dead on arrival at the War Memorial Hospital at Wrexham. His remains were cremated at Pentrebychan Crematorium.

T. W. Jones was considered as essentially a miners' MP who focused his parliamentary activities on Welsh industrial issues and was always a fervent campaigner for the miners' cause. Throughout his life he was viewed as a colourful and often controversial figure. Outside Westminster he was much in demand as a powerful orator in both Welsh and English, and was also prominent in the affairs of both the National Eisteddfod and the International Eisteddfod. He was admitted to the Gorsedd of Bards in 1962 and a little later was chosen president of the Llangollen International Musical Eisteddfod. He wrote poetry and published several monographs, including a study of parliament *Y Senedd* (1969) and a life of the American President Thomas Jefferson (1980). He was a prominent figure in the cultural, social and political life of Wales for very many years. He was also a local lay preacher and a humorist who liked to boast that he had served in two of Britain's toughest jails - Wormwood Scrubs and Dartmoor.

Author

Dr John Graham Jones

Sources

Who was who?

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Further Reading

NLW Archives: [Mr T. W. Jones. Meirioneth Parliamentary Election, 1951](#)
Wikipedia Article: [Thomas Jones, Baron Maelor](#)

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