

JONES, GLANVILLE REES JEFFREYS (1923-1996), historical geographer

Name: Glanville Rees Jeffreys Jones
Date of birth: 1923
Date of death: 1996
Spouse: Pamela Jones (née Winship)
Spouse: Margaret Rosina Ann Jones (née Stevens)
Child: Sarah Catryn Jones
Child: David Emrys Jeffreys Jones
Parent: Sarah Jones (née Jeffreys)
Parent: Benjamin Jones
Gender: Male
Occupation: historical geographer
Area of activity: Education; History and Culture; Nature and Agriculture
Author: J. Beverley Smith

Glanville Jones was born in Felindre, parish of Llangyfelach, Glamorgan, 12 December 1923, the son of Benjamin and Sarah Jones (née Jeffreys). The family moved first to Pontlliw and then to Neath, and he received his secondary education at Neath Grammar School. His scholastic progress was interrupted by war service, 1943-46, during which, commissioned in the Royal Welsh Fusiliers, he saw active service in France and Germany. Upon his release he took his degree at the University College of Wales, Aberystwyth, graduating in Geography in 1947, first class honours in 1948.

After postgraduate research he was appointed to a lectureship at the University of Leeds in 1949. An accomplished and dedicated teacher, he established himself as a scholar of distinction and was appointed Professor of Historical Geography in 1974. He retired in 1989, his extensive published work a widely recognized influence on the study of the historical geography of medieval Britain. Active in several spheres related to his academic work, his offices included that of President of the Anthropology and Archaeology Section of the British Association for the Advancement of Science. In retirement he continued to pursue the studies despite increasing ill-health which he withstood with fortitude.

Throughout his years at Leeds Glanville Jones assiduously developed the investigations that he had first begun at Aberystwyth, influenced by the department's strong tradition in historical geography and the inspiring presence of the medieval historian [T. Jones Pierce](#), who directed his research dissertation, 'The military geography of Gwynedd in the 13th century', MA 1949. In this he examined the defensive measures adopted by the thirteenth-century princes of Gwynedd, not only their castle-building but the entire economic organisation that lay behind their commissariat arrangements. The essay inaugurated a sustained programme of study of the economic and social organisation of the lands ruled by the princes. Traditional historical interpretation, reflecting the influence of [Frederic Seebohm](#), had tended to portray a society consisting largely of freemen who pursued a mainly pastoral economy in a dispersed habitat. Jones, making extensive use of law texts and post-conquest documentary sources, envisaged an economic and social order in which settlement patterns and open-field systems were to a greater extent those of an unfree population occupying extensive lands with nucleated settlements. These demesne manors, the maerdrefi with their associated tir cyrif, formed the economic basis of the princes' political power. But Jones also examined the settlements of free kindreds revealed in the fiscal surveys in a distinctive gwely organization, and he showed the effect upon the rural landscape of continuing partible succession to hereditary lands.

His study of border areas such as Englefield and Archenfield, informed by the evidence of Domesday Book, enabled him to examine areas subject to Anglo-Saxon and Norman settlement. This led in turn to a broader study of settlement in Britain, his exploration of early estate structures and their economic and tenurial arrangements being increasingly focused upon the concept of the 'multiple estate' that he identified over a wide area of northern England. This proved to be a stimulating and widely debated influence in the quest for understanding of medieval land exploitation. His synthesis enabled him to present a comparative study of Gwynedd and Elmet which, with his informed interest in early Welsh verse of northern associations, gave him particular pleasure.

Constantly appreciative of the contribution of others, Jones won great respect and established strong friendships with scholars in a wide range of disciplines, among them students of historical and legal sources and language scholars whose work he was able to appreciate on account of his own facility in the Welsh language. He was himself a person of great warmth, conspicuous for his unflinching loyalty. He was able to share his interest in the land and its people with his wife Pam, whose love he deeply cherished, and he had a close bond with his daughter and his son whose professional achievements

was a source of a great pride. A representative selection of his very numerous papers have been brought together in volume form, and *The Welsh King and his Court*, ed. T. M. Charles-Edwards et al. (2000), to which he had himself contributed, was published in his memory.

Glanville Jones married, first Margaret Rosina Ann Stevens in 1949 (marriage dissolved 1958); second, Pamela Winship, 1959, with whom he had two children, Sarah Catryn and David Emrys Jeffreys. He died at Leeds on 23 July 1996, and the funeral service at St Margaret's Church was followed by cremation at Rawden.

Selected essays published in P. S. Barnwell and Brian Roberts, eds., *Britons, Saxons and Scandinavians: The Historical Geography of Glanville R. J. Jones* (2011), with a full bibliography of the author's writings, including: *Geography as Human Ecology*, ed. G. R. J. Jones with S. R. Eyre (1960); *Leeds and its Region*, ed. with M. W. Beresford (1967); 'Post-Roman Wales', in H. P. R. Finberg, ed., *The Agrarian History of England and Wales* I, i, (1973).

Author

J. Beverley Smith

Sources

The Independent, 6 August 1996

Obituary on the Society of the Antiquaries of London website

P. S. Barnwell and Brian Roberts, eds., *Britons, Saxons and Scandinavians: The Historical Geography of Glanville R. J. Jones* (2011)

Personal knowledge

Further reading

Independent: [Obituary: Professor Glanville Jones](#)

Additional Links

VIAF: [161697654](#)

Wikidata: [Q20804706](#)

Published date: 2012-06-27

Article Copyright: <http://rightsstatements.org/page/InC/1.0/> 

The Dictionary of Welsh Biography is provided by The National Library of Wales and the University of Wales Centre for Advanced Welsh and Celtic Studies. It is free to use and does not receive grant support. A donation would help us maintain and improve the site so that we can continue to acknowledge Welsh men and women who have made notable contributions to life in Wales and beyond.

Find out more on our [sponsorship page](#).

