

JONES, DAVID LEWIS (1945-2010), Librarian of the House of Lords

Name: David Lewis Jones
Date of birth: 1945
Date of death: 2010
Parent: Joyce Jones
Parent: Gwilym Jones
Gender: Male
Occupation: Librarian of the House of Lords
Area of activity: History and Culture; Literature and Writing; Politics, Government and Political Movements
Author: John Graham Jones

David Jones was born at Riversdale, Aberaeron on 4 January 1945, the son of Gwilym and Joyce Jones, and he had two sisters Alice and Elinor. He received his education at Aberaeron Grammar School and Jesus College Oxford, where he graduated in history. He was one of the earliest and most distinguished students to pass through the College of Librarianship Wales at Llanbadarn Fawr in its early days. His background ensured that Welsh history and Welsh issues remained important to him throughout his life. He returned to his native Aberaeron regularly throughout his life.

Following a short stint as an assistant librarian on the staff of the Institute of Historical Research at London, 1970-72, he worked at the library of the University College of Wales, Aberystwyth, 1972-77, where he became the college's law librarian. Encouraged by Lord Elwyn-Jones, Lord Chancellor in the Labour Governments of the 1970s, Jones migrated to London, serving as Deputy Librarian of the House of Lords, 1977-91, and then as its Librarian from 1991 until his retirement in 2006. At the House of Lords, he was the first qualified librarian to be appointed to this role, dedicated to the sorely overdue task of re-cataloguing the holdings of the Library and facilitating access to online services. To achieve these goals, Jones worked in much harmony with Viscount Eccles, the chairman of the library sub-committee there. An integrated acquisitions, cataloguing and serials control was achieved at the House of Lords Library, largely in keeping with the library system at the Library of the House of Commons. Jones also instituted a major programme for the conservation and cataloguing of the historic collections in the custody of the House of Lords Library. The holdings of the Library increased substantially under his wise supervision, and he was able to augment the number of staff from just ten to about thirty, with the recruitment of more research clerks, librarians and secretarial staff, most of these of impressively high calibre - a necessary response to the increasingly sophisticated demands of the library's readership for speedy and accurate information and guidance. Throughout his term of office, David Jones made the best possible use of the resources of time and money available to him. Separate library provision for the Law Lords on the West Front of the Palace of Westminster was also instituted in 1999. When David Jones retired in 2006, the Library underwent its own change by becoming part of a wider Department of Information Services, headed by the new Librarian, Elizabeth Hallam Smith, and also consisting of the Parliamentary Archives and the House of Lords Information Office.

David Jones also pursued his personal academic researches vigorously throughout his life, and his published work was extensive. Primarily a bibliographer by inclination, his many publications included *Paraguay: A Bibliography* (1979), *Debates and Proceedings of the British Parliaments: A Guide to Printed Sources* (1986), *Peers, Politics and Power: The House of Lords 1603-1911* (joint editor with Clyve Jones, 1986), *A Parliamentary History of the Glorious Revolution* (1988), published on the tri-centenary of the event, and *Eirene: A Tribute* (2001), a warm personal tribute to the [Baroness \(Eirene\) White](#) of Rhymney, with whom for years he had enjoyed a close friendship. He also published the highly acclaimed *Nelson and Parliament* as a bi-centenary tribute in 2005. During his last years he was working assiduously on a detailed bibliography of the history of parliament which it is hoped will now be published posthumously.

He also published a number of scholarly articles on various aspects of Welsh history, lists of higher degree theses on the history of Wales for the *Welsh History Review*, and entries for the *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* and the *Dictionary of Welsh Biography* (now 'Welsh Biography on-line'). Each of these entries, invariably lengthy and complete, was marked by meticulous care, precision and pride in its compilation.

Jones was also a prominent member of the London Welsh community, and he was a member of a large number of committees, mostly relating to Wales. He was ever ready to travel back to Wales to attend various meetings and he contributed extensively and constructively to their proceedings. As secretary of the Honourable Society of Cymmrodorion between 1994 and 1997, he invited an array of high calibre, eloquent speakers to address the Society and increased turnout at meetings. For many years from 1998 he was also the secretary of the Lloyd George Statue Appeal Trust set up to achieve a memorial statue to [David Lloyd George](#) in Parliament Square, a commitment which proved an irksome, long-term undertaking, eventually achieved only in 2007 - to Jones's great delight and relief. The trust was then brought to an end in 2008.

David Jones's many honours included Gorsedd y Beirdd (Derwydd er Anrhydedd) at the Llandeilo National Eisteddfod in 1996, a fitting tribute to his extensive work for Welsh culture; Freeman of the City of London in 1993; Liveryman Stationers' and Newspapermakers' Company, 1994; FSA, FRHistS, and FRSA in 2006. He was also appointed CBE in 2005 in anticipation of his imminent retirement. Although fundamentally a shy, retiring individual, David Jones had forged close and lasting friendships both at Westminster and throughout Wales. He was always accessible to peers, operating an 'open door' policy at his office, and his determination to serve them became proverbial and greatly appreciated in the Upper House.

He died suddenly at his home Heathfield Court, Chiswick, London, following surgery, on 15 October 2010 at the age of only 65. The public funeral service was held at Henfynyw Church, Ffos y Ffin, Aberaeron on Saturday, October 23.

Author

Dr John Graham Jones

Sources

The Times, 5 November 2010

Western Mail, 20 October 2010

personal knowledge

Additional Links

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