

## JONES (FAMILY), Cilie, Cardiganshire. A family of smiths, poets, musicians and preachers

They farmed Cilie, a farm of over 300 acres above the sea between Llangrannog and New Quay, Cardiganshire. Jeremiah Jones, the father (9 April 1855 - 19 February 1902) was a smith from a family of smiths in northern Pembrokeshire, a family which had, according to tradition, a close relationship to the poets of Cwmdru, near Newcastle Emlyn (see **Siencyn Thomas**, and **John Jenkin**). Jeremiah and his wife, Mary George (1853 - 1930) from the George family of Pembrokeshire, came to Blaencelyn in the parish of Llangrannog in 1876 to run the smithy. Their first eight children were born at the smithy; the family moved in 1889 to Cilie farm where the rest of the twelve children were born.

Examples of Jeremiah Jones's poetry can be found in *Awen Ysgafn y Cilie* (1976). All his sons learned the blacksmith's craft, although the main occupation of the smithy at Cilie was dealing with horses and farm machinery. A number of the boys and girls, especially Tom, the third, and Ann, the sixth child, made an outstanding contribution to the singing in the area around Capel y Wig. Except for Tom, the other boys - Frederick, David ('Isfoel'); John ('Tydu'); Evan George ('Sioronwy'); Simon Bartholomeus; and Alun Jeremiah - were poets skilled in the strict and in the free metres and much of their work has survived. Several anecdotes relating to the family can be found in *All gerddi Isfoel a hunangofiant byr* (1965), and in *Awen ysgafn y Cilie*.

### FREDERICK CADWALADR (Fred, 1877 - 1948), Independent minister, writer and nationalist

He was the eldest child, born 3 May 1877 in the smithy house, Blaencelyn. After he left Pontgarreg school, he worked in the smithy and on the farm while he attended, intermittently, the tutorial school at New Quay between 1897 and 1899. That year, he went to Bala-Bangor College and to the University College, Bangor to prepare for the ministry. He obtained a B.A. degree in 1903 and a B.D. in 1910 after he had entered the ministry. He served as a minister in Moreia, Rhymney, 1906-17; Bethania, Treorchy, 1917-27; and Bethel, Talybont, Cardiganshire, 1927-48. He was prominent in establishing Cymrodorion societies at Rhymney and at Treorchy; he was interested in social matters and always placed an emphasis, from the platform or in the press, on the value of the Welsh language and the need to defend it. He was a county councillor in Cardiganshire from 1927 until his death in 1948.

He was a member of a group in south Wales which sought to establish a political party to work for self-government. Fred Jones was one of the six who gathered in Pwllheli in 1925 to found Plaid Cymru. For a long period, he was a popular lecturer on topics like 'Michael D. Jones', 'Homespun', 'Learn both', and 'Daniel Owen'. He was also an university external lecturer in the Rhondda and in Cardiganshire. He was noted at university as a writer of englynion and cywyddau as well as a lively and amusing companion; he was an original, powerful and bold preacher. He won the chair at the Gwent eisteddfod in 1913 for an ode on 'Llywelyn ein llyw olaf'; he served as an adjudicator at the national eisteddfod.

He published a pamphlet on the Old Testament, *Llên a Dysgeidiaeth Cyfnod: I: Hanes Israel* (1929); he prepared entries for the *Geiriadur Beiblaidd* (1926); he left a manuscript which was published in 1977 under the title *Hunangofiant gwas fferm*; he published a short drama, 'Y ngwr i' in *Y Llenor* (October 1926); his englynion and light verse were published in *Awen ysgafn y Cilie*, 1976.

He married (1) in 1906, Maud, the daughter of Rev. and Mrs. E.H. Davies, Llannon, Carmarthenshire; (2) Eunice, the daughter of Rev. and Mrs. D. Rhagfyr Jones, Treorchy, Glamorganshire He died 2 December 1948.

### DAVID (Isfoel, 1881 - 1968), poet, composer of ballads and compère of eisteddfodau

He was the fourth child, born in the smithy house, Blaencelyn, on 16 June 1881. When his father died in 1902, most of the farm work fell on him and on his mother. He was a gifted smith and engineer. As a young man 'Dai Cilie' or 'Isfoel' became well known in his community as a poet, a composer of ballads, and a witty compère of eisteddfodau. He won prizes regularly at eisteddfodau for the englyn, cywydd and lyric. His englynion and verses written for special occasions became part of folk memory. Despite the frivolity and humour that characterised his verses, he wrote cywyddau, lyrics and, especially, memorial englynion with the hand of a master. He was made an honorary druid of Gorsedd y Beirdd and he named his retirement home, for himself and his wife Catrin (from Nanternis), 'Derwydd' [Druid]. They had one son and they both spent their lives in the Pontgarreg district, near Llangrannog. Isfoel was a frequent adjudicator at the national eisteddfod and, with his brother Alun, he directed the drama company, 'Cilie-Crannog'. In his later years, he published *Cerddi Isfoel*, 1958; *All gerddi Isfoel a hunangofiant byr*, 1965; and *Hen yd y wlad*, 1966. A selection of his work was published in *Awen ysgafn y Cilie*, 1976. He died 1 February 1968.

### SIMON BARTHOLOMEUS (1894 - 1964), Independent minister and poet

He was the youngest but one of the children, and was born at Cilie on 5 July 1894. He was a seaman in his youth but he returned to Cilie after falling into the hold of his ship in Buenos Aires harbour and breaking both legs, an accident which led to his spending 9 months in a local hospital. He entered the ministry after a course of study at the tutorial college in New Quay, University College, Bangor and Bala-Bangor College. He received a B.A. after interrupting his studies to serve with the Y.M.C.A. during World War I. He served as a minister at churches in Great Mersey St., Liverpool, 1922-27; Creigfryn, Carno, 1927-32 and Peniel near Carmarthen, 1932-62. He married, in 1923, Annie, the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. David Jones, the schoolmaster at Glynarthen. On his retirement, they went to live in Glynarthen, Cardiganshire, where he died on 27 July 1964. A popular preacher, he also conducted singing festivals when a young minister. At Peniel, he trained a dramatic company which achieved considerable success; he was an adjudicator of acting on several occasions.

From his college days until his death, he wrote poetry regularly. He won the crown at the Wrexham national eisteddfod in 1933 for a poem, 'Rownd yr Horn', and the chair at Fishguard national eisteddfod in 1936 for an ode 'Tyddewi', as well as lesser prizes at the National eisteddfod. He was an adjudicator at several national eisteddfodau and he was a chief bard in the Gorsedd of Bards under the name 'SB'. He published an outstanding, prize-winning ode, 'Yr unben', in 1935. After his death, his poetry and some of his prose writings were published in *Cerddi ac ysgrifau S.B. Jones* (1965).

## Author

Reverend Gerallt Jones, (1907 - 1984)

## Sources

Personal knowledge

Jon Meirion Jones, *Teulu'r Cilie* (1999)

## Further reading

NLW Archives: NLW ex 1836: Beirdd Cwm-du

## Images

NLW: Parch. Fred Jones

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