

JONES, THOMAS LLEWELYN (1915-2009), poet and prolific writer

Name: Thomas Llewelyn Jones
Date of birth: 1915
Date of death: 2009
Spouse: Margaret Enidwen Jones (née Jones)
Child: Iolo Ceredig Jones
Child: Emyr Llewelyn Jones
Parent: Hannah Mary Jones
Parent: James Jones
Gender: Male
Occupation: poet and prolific writer
Area of activity: Literature and Writing; Poetry
Author: Idris Reynolds

T. Llew Jones, who published about 100 books for children and adults, was born at 1 Bwlch Melyn, Pentre-cwrt, Carmarthenshire, 11 October 1915, the eldest son of James and Hannah Mary Jones and brother to Edwin Sieffre and Megan Eluned. His father was a weaver at the Derw Mill in Pentre-cwrt. T. Llew married Margaret Enidwen Jones, descended from the **Cilie** family and they had two children, Emyr Llewelyn and Iolo Ceredig who inherited many of the father's gifts and contributed significantly to national life in their various activities, Emyr as a writer, teacher and lecturer, and Iolo as an international chess player.

T. Llew Jones was educated at Capel Mair and Saron primary schools and Llandysul secondary school. He left school aged 16 and for a while he was a pupil-teacher at his old school in Capel Mair. He had hoped to continue his formal education at Carmarthen Teacher Training College but he was forced to forget these plans when he father died suddenly in 1936. He felt it was his duty to become a wage earner and during this period he undertook a variety of jobs to assist his widowed mother and her young family to make ends meet. World War II broke out and he received his call-up papers on his wedding day. He soon left his wife and his mother to go to Italy and North Africa where he served until the end of hostilities. These were unhappy years for him, and he suffered ill health and deep longing for his family and friends back in Wales.

On his return he took advantage of the scheme to train members of the armed forces to become teachers. He followed the course at the Heath College, Cardiff and was appointed to a post in Cardiganshire. He taught in various schools, from Cardigan to Borth before being appointed to Talgarreg. Under the guidance of T. Ll. Stephens he grew in the post and his sense of Welshness was strengthened. After 18 months his mentor felt that his assistant was ready to take on his own school. He was appointed headmaster of Tre-groes school in 1950 and seven years later he moved to Coed-y-bryn where he spent the rest of his career as headmaster until his retirement in 1975 when he moved to Pontgarreg. From T. Ll. Stephens he learned that the children's well-being was to be the priority at all times and there was never a place in his school for anyone who could not respect the standards that he expected.

By this time he was gaining success as a poet, winning a number of chairs at local and provincial eisteddfodau. At the 1950 National Eisteddfod in Caerffili he won the englyn prize for his stanza 'Ceiliog y Gwynt' ('The weather cock') and he was successful in the literary competitions of several national eisteddfodau before winning the chair at Ebbw Vale in 1958 for his ode 'Caerllion-ar-Wysg' ('Caerleon'). The following year at Caernarfon he won again on the subject 'Y Dringwr' ('The Climber') emulating **Dewi Emrys's** feat in winning the chair in two successive years. He published two volumes of poetry for adults, *Sŵn y Malu* in 1967 and *Canu'n iach!* in 1987. His was a sweet muse and as a poet and critic he laid stress on lyrical, clear and attractive writing.

In the years after World War II there was a grave shortage of books in Welsh for school children. With the active encouragement of Alun R. Edwards, the then Ceredigion county librarian, a number of conferences were held at Cilgwyn House in Newcastle Emlyn to take steps to meet the need. Literary competitions were organised and the winning works were published. T. Llew Jones began to enjoy writing adventure tales for children and he soon establishes himself as the premier children's author in Welsh. He won the Tir na n-Og prize in 1976 for *Tân ar y Comin* and in 1990 for *Lleuad y Olau*. In 1991 he was awarded the Mary Vaughan Jones medal for his outstanding contribution to children's literature. He was a prolific writer and towards the end of his career he was released from his school duties to allow him time to write more books to meet the demand. He visited schools throughout Wales to read his work and the children idolised him. Two of his books were made into TV films and one of them, *Tân ar y Comin*, was translated into a number of languages. A cd of his reading of *Lleuad yn Olau* was published.

He composed children's verse, publishing two collections, *Penillion y Plant* (1965) and *Cerddi Newydd i Blant* (1973). The two were later combined in a single volume under the original title, *Penillion y Plant* (1990). Many of the poems became classics and favourite recitations pieces. A number of his best poems, like 'Cwm Alltcafán', appeal, at different levels, both to children and to adults. His greatest contribution was probably in this field and his stature as a children's poet is assured. The T. Llew Jones Day has been celebrated annually by Welsh school children around the date of his birthday, 11 October, since 2009. Pupils at Chwilog school had the original idea and the day is organised by the Welsh Books Council. T. Llew Jones published his reminiscences, *'Slawer Dydd'*, in 1979 and his diaries are in the National Library of Wales.

T. Llew Jones had wide interests. He wrote extensively on folklore and mythology in English and in Welsh in articles in, e.g. *Llafar Gwlad* and *Carmarthenshire Life*. He was a popular lecturer and a familiar voice and face in the media. In addition he was a skilful chess player who has an important place in the history of the game in Wales as one of the founders of the Welsh Chess Association.

T. Llew Jones died at Pontgarreg on 9 January 2009 and his ashes were buried in Capel y Wig cemetery, Pontgarreg.

Author

Sources

Gwynn ap Gwilym and Richard H. Lewis (eds), *Cyfrol Deyrnged y Prifardd T. Llew Jones* (1982)

Siân Teifi, *Cyfaredd y Cyfarwydd* (1982)

Jon Meirion Jones (ed), *Bro a bywyd T. Llew Jones* (2010)

Idris Reynolds, *Tua'r Gorllewinâ€¦ Cofiant T. Llew Jones* (2011)

Y Cymro, 16 January 2009

The Independent, 4 February 2009

Further Reading

Wikipedia Article: [T. Llew Jones](#)

Additional Links

NLW Archives: [Llawysgrifau ac archifau T. Llew Jones](#)

VIAF: [77666425](#)

Wikidata: [Q2717838](#)

Published date: 2013-02-19

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

PDF Print Cite

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](#).



APA Citation



Reynolds, I., (2013). JONES, THOMAS LLEWELYN (1915-2009), poet and prolific writer. *Dictionary of Welsh Biography*. Retrieved 15 Nov 2024, from <https://biography.wales/article/s8-JONE-LLE-1915>

Copy to Clipboard

Privacy & Cookies
Copyright
The Project
Help
Contact

LGC
NLW

LLYFRGEL
THE NATION



Moder gan
Llywodraeth Cymru
Sponsored by
Welsh Government