

JONES, EDMUND DAVID (1869 - 1941), schoolmaster and author

Name: Edmund David Jones
Date of birth: 1869
Date of death: 1941
Spouse: Claudia Jones (née Morgan)
Gender: Male
Occupation: schoolmaster and author
Area of activity: Education; Literature and Writing
Author: Griffith Milwyn Griffiths

Born in Trawsfynydd, Merionethshire, 9 September 1869. His father died when the child was very young and he was brought up by a mother of great ability and his grandfather David Jones, a prominent figure with the Scottish Baptists. He acknowledged his debt to the headmaster of the village school and to his teachers at Blaenau Ffestiniog secondary school. In 1885 he went to Bala grammar school and in 1886 to the University College at Bangor where, in 1890, he graduated with honours in French in the University of London. In 1891 he obtained a teaching post in the Birkenhead Institute, but at the end of the year he returned to Bangor as a student-assistant in French. In order to prepare for the London M.A. degree he went to Oxford to attend lectures and to study in libraries without entering a college. Specializing in French and English he took the degree in 1894. Throughout his life he continued his studies, attending holiday classes of the Alliance Française in France. When the Barmouth intermediate school was established in 1894, he was appointed headmaster and held the post until his retirement in 1931. He started with only seven pupils in a dwelling house at Barmouth, but by 1900 he had succeeded, through a valiant local effort, to secure a new school near the sea and to make it a power in Arduwy. He was a pioneer schoolmaster; languages were his chief subjects and he placed great stress on phonetics, using the gramophone as an instrument to teach correct pronunciation. He was ahead of his time in the attention which he gave to Welsh and Welsh literature in his school, a standpoint he illustrated in the essay on 'The place of Welsh in the education of the future in Wales' which brought him the prize at the national eisteddfod held at Blaenau Ffestiniog in 1898. In the same vein he published in 1900 *Gemau Ceiriog i Blant*, a selection which remained very popular in Welsh schools for over a quarter of a century, reaching its 9th edition by 1927. Another subject very close to his heart was the role of fine art in education. He took care to secure reproductions of the work of the masters for the walls of his school. After retiring from teaching he undertook to compile what he called 'a survey of the development of art from the earliest times to the period of the Renaissance' which resulted in the publication of his illustrated volume, *Camre Celfyddyd*, in 1938. Other aspects of his interests are represented in the English volumes which he edited for grammar schools, e.g. a selection of poems by James Russell Lowell which he considered to be instrumental to lead children to appreciate beauty (*Select Poems* 1906); *Of King's Treasures*, 1907, from *Sesame and Lilies* by John Ruskin, whose influence upon him as a Christian Socialist was marked; *Poems of Wales*, 1914, and two volumes in the 'World's Classics' - *English Critical Essays (nineteenth century)*, 1916 and 1922, and *English Critical Essays (sixteenth, seventeenth, and eighteenth centuries)*. He was a Sunday school teacher for many years in Barmouth, and, after his retirement, at Penel chapel in Bangor, and he contributed a number of articles on difficult passages in the New Testament to *The Expositor*. He married Claudia, youngest daughter of T.J. Morgan, Calvinistic Methodist minister at Pen-y-garn, near Aberystwyth. He died following an accident, on 13 February 1941, and was buried at the new cemetery on the Llandygái road.

Author

Griffith Milwyn Griffiths

Sources

Seren Gomer, 1942

The Liverpool Daily Post, 20 February 1941

Y Cymro, 22 February 1941

Additional Links

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