

## JONES, GWILYM RICHARD ('Gwilym Aman '; 1874 - 1953), musician, conductor of choirs and singing festivals, hymnist

**Name:** Gwilym Richard Jones

**Pseudonym:** Gwilym Aman

**Date of birth:** 1874

**Date of death:** 1953

**Spouse:** Blodwen Jones (née Jones)

**Parent:** Elizabeth Jones (née Mathew)

**Parent:** Richard Jones

**Gender:** Male

**Occupation:** musician, conductor of choirs and singing festivals, hymnist

**Area of activity:** Music; Religion

**Author:** Evan David Jones

Born in Siop y Bont, Brynaman, Carmarthenshire, on 12 April 1874, the son of Richard Jones and his wife Elizabeth Mathew. The father, a successful baritone, came from Tŷcroes and settled, after his marriage, in Brynaman; his son grew up in the midst of the lively culture of that area during the heyday of **Walcyn Wyn** (Watkin Hezekiah Williams and **Gwydderig** (Richard Williams, 1842 - 1917)). Gwilym R. Jones was given music lessons by **Joseph Parry**, then choirmaster at Ebenezer Independent chapel, Swansea. In Brynaman, there was a famous choir, conducted by John Jones (Pen-crug) and with **David Vaughan Thomas** as the accompanist; this rich musical tradition was an inspiration to a young musician like Gwilym R. Jones who was born to be a conductor of choirs. The first post he held was choirmaster at Weast Independent Church, Manchester, where he was conductor, for fifteen years, of a mixed Welsh choir and of a male voice choir in the city. In 1910, he was invited to become the organist and choir-master of the Christian Temple, Ammanford and he held this post, with outstanding success, for nearly 40 years. He was regarded as the ablest choral conductor who had been raised in the Amman valley. For 30 years, he was conductor of the Ammanford and District Choral Society which won the most important music prize at the Corwen national eisteddfod of 1919 and the Barry national eisteddfod of 1920. As a result of this success, the national eisteddfod came to Ammanford in 1922. At this *eisteddfod*, the choir achieved an outstanding success, under his baton and to the accompaniment of the London Symphony Orchestra, with a memorable performance, for the first time in Wales, of Bach's C Minor Mass. Another remarkable success occurred when the choir won the most important prize at three *eisteddfodau* on the same day in 1924 - Burry Port, Carmarthen and Clunderwen. Gwilym R. Jones was awarded a silver crown by the Clunderwen eisteddfod for his work as the conductor of the choir; this crown is now in the National Museum of Wales. The most successful piece performed by the choir was 'Ye nations offer to the Lord', from Mendelssohn's *Hymn of Praise*, which won them £1500 in prizes, at a time when prize money was small. Gwilym R. Jones was a born conductor of singing festivals and his musical accompaniment at the Christian Temple created a perfect atmosphere for worship and frequently encouraged the congregation to sing certain hymns to well-known tunes in an uplifting way. He trained very many soloists and musicians in the Ammanford area as well as acting as music teacher in the county school. A number of his pupils were prize-winners at the national eisteddfod. He trained Trevor Anthony, Tom Williams of Dafen and others. He was a gentleman through and through and his annual performances from the works of the great composers left a great influence in the Amman Valley. He was a member of Gorsedd y Beirdd and a skilled writer of englynion; some of his hymns are in modern hymnals. He married, on 16 April 1925, Blodwen, the daughter of Evan Jones and Jane (née Edwards) of Gellimanwydd, at the Christian Temple. He died 3 February 1953 and was buried in Gellimanwydd cemetery on the following Saturday.

### Author

**Evan David Jones**, (1903 - 1987)

### Sources

Information from his widow

*Amman Valley Chronicle*, February 1953

### Additional Links

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