

## JONES, ROBERT (1891 - 1962), aerodynamicist

**Name:** Robert Jones  
**Date of birth:** 1891  
**Date of death:** 1962  
**Spouse:** Madeline Jones (née Broad)  
**Parent:** Sarah Mary Jones  
**Parent:** John Jones  
**Gender:** Male  
**Occupation:** aerodynamicist  
**Area of activity:** Science and Mathematics; Space and Aviation  
**Author:** Dennis John Wright

Born 7 November 1891 at Tŷ Newydd, Cricieth, Caernarfonshire the fourth child of John Jones and his wife Sarah Mary. He was educated at the local Board School and afterwards at Porthmadog County School. In October 1908 he entered the University College of North Wales with a small scholarship. His main course of study was in mathematics which he read under Professor G.H. Bryan, F.R.S., one of the founders of the science of aerodynamics. He also studied Welsh philology under Sir J. Morris-Jones. An outstanding student, he won several prizes including the R.A. Jones prize in mathematics (1910). In 1911 he graduated with a 2nd-class honours degree in Pure Mathematics, following this with a 1st-class honours degree in Applied Mathematics in 1912. The award of a substantial scholarship (Isaac Roberts) enabled him to study for an M.A. which he gained in 1913, this being the first higher degree awarded by the University of Wales for a thesis in aerodynamics. The substance of his work was later published in the *Proc. Roy. Soc.* in a joint paper with Bryan (1915). From 1913 to 1916 he held an 1851 Exhibition Science Research Scholarship, studying firstly at the University of Göttingen (1913-14) and then at the National Physical Laboratory, Teddington. He subsequently joined the staff of the Aerodynamics Division of the N.P.L. remaining there until his retirement in 1953. On 17 December 1918 he married Madeline Broad; they had one daughter and lived at Ashford, Surrey. Throughout his life he was an active member of the Congregational Church, remaining close to Wales and her language. He died 17 March 1962 at Stanwell.

Robert Jones' early work at the National Physical Laboratory was on the mathematical theory of aeroplane stability. Later he did much theoretical and wind tunnel work on airships and became one of the leading experts in the world on the stability of these craft. In 1923 he was awarded the R.38 Memorial Prize of the Royal Aeronautical Society for a classic paper on airship stability and in 1924 the University of Wales awarded him the degree of D.Sc., this being the first ever awarded for research in aerodynamics. Following the loss of the airship R. 101 Dr. Jones took a leading part in the wind tunnel work for the Commission of Enquiry receiving personal thanks from the chairman, Sir John Simon, for his work. Allied to his work on airships he carried out investigations for the Admiralty on the stability of torpedoes. He also undertook some of the earliest research on the stability of parachutes. In 1931 the N.P.L. commissioned its Compressed Air Tunnel which enabled wind tunnel investigations to take place at high pressures (25 atmospheres). Dr. Jones took over supervision of the work of the tunnel and was associated with it until his retirement. Under his leadership work of fundamental importance was carried out, the special facilities of the tunnel enabling direct comparison to be made between results for small models and the full scale. In addition to papers in scientific journals, Dr. Jones was the author of some 60 substantial Reports and Memoranda issued by the Aeronautical Research Council.

### Author

Dennis John Wright

### Sources

*Aeronautical Research Council Reports and Memoranda*, No. 2570

information from Miss Margaret G. Jones and Emrys Jones

University College of North Wales, Bangor, Manuscript Collection

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