

LLOYD-JONES, JOHN (1885 - 1956), scholar and poet

Name: John Lloyd-jones
Date of birth: 1885
Date of death: 1956
Spouse: Freda Lloyd-Jones (née Williams)
Parent: Dorothy Lloyd-Jones
Parent: John Lloyd-Jones
Gender: Male
Occupation: scholar and poet
Area of activity: Eisteddfod; Poetry; Scholarship and Languages
Author: Thomas Parry

Born 14 October 1885, son of John and Dorothy Lloyd-Jones, Cartrefle, Dolwyddelan,, Caernarfonshire. He was educated at Llanrwst grammar school and the University College of North Wales, Bangor. He graduated B.A. in 1906 and M.A. in 1909. He took the B.Litt. degree of Oxford University at Jesus College, and then studied under Rudolf Thurneysen at the University of Freiburg. He was appointed first head of the Welsh department at University College, Dublin, and held the post until his retirement in 1955. He acted as external examiner in Welsh to the University of Wales from 1916 till 1955.

As a scholar Lloyd-Jones first appeared as contributor of etymological and lexicographical notes in the *Bulletin* of the Board of Celtic Studies of the University of Wales and the *Zeitschrift für celtische Philologie*. In 1921 he won the prize at the national eisteddfod at Caernarfon for an essay on Caernarfonshire place-names, which he amplified and published in 1928 under the title *Enwau lleoedd sir Gaernarfon*. At the time this work was the only study of its kind in Wales done according to modern scholarly principles, and although there have been significant advances in place names studies since then, the book is still useful. In 1924 Lloyd-Jones was asked by the Board of Celtic Studies to become responsible for the compilation of a glossary to the works of the Poets of the Princes which the Board proposed to publish. The first fascicule appeared in 1931 in 96 large pages of closely packed print under the title *Geirfa barddoniaeth gynnar Gymraeg*. It was evident that the author had included many hundreds of words from the period before the Poets of the Princes, and also from the works of later poets and even from prose writers. With each fascicule the list of sources read increased. The seventh fascicule, the last to be seen through the press by the author, came out in 1952. The eighth and final part, which went as far as the word *heilic*, appeared in 1963. The glossary is a fine example of Welsh scholarship at its very best. In addition to the immense labour involved in collecting and arranging the material, it displays the author's extraordinary ability to deduce the meanings of words hitherto unknown. The detailed nature of the information given is remarkable; for example, twenty three men called Dafydd are recorded, and whenever possible each one is identified. The glossary is of inestimable value for the interpretation of the literature of the medieval period, and it is a great pity that the author's scheme of work did not allow him to complete the task. His Sir John Rhŷs Memorial Lecture delivered to the British Academy in 1948, 'The Court Poets of the Welsh Princes', was the result of the detailed knowledge of the poetry which he had gained by collecting material for the glossary.

Lloyd-Jones was highly regarded as a poet in the strict metres. He won the national eisteddfod chair at Ammanford in 1922 for his poem 'Y Gaeaf', a lyrical composition very skilfully constructed. Poems by him appeared in *Y Llenor* in 1930, 1942, 1949 and 1950, each one thoroughly traditional in spirit and in metre and of a high poetic standard. There is a collection of his poetry in his own hand in the library of the University College, Bangor. In 1925 the Gregynog Press published *Caneuon Ceiriog: detholiad*, edited by Lloyd-Jones with an introduction in the form of a critical essay on the poet's work. He was awarded the degree of D.Litt. honoris causa, by the University of Wales in 1948.

Lloyd-Jones was of a kind and gentle disposition. Although he had lived in Ireland for many years, he had lost none of those characteristics which his Welsh Nonconformist background had given him. He was one of the chief supporters of the Welsh Presbyterian chapel in Dublin till its closure.

He married Freda Williams of Bangor in 1922. He died 1 February 1956 and he was buried in Bryn-y-bedd, Dolwyddelan.

Author

Sir Thomas Parry, (1904 - 1985)

Sources

Geirfa Barddoniaeth Gynnar Gymraeg (1931), preface, pt. viii (1963)

[*Baner ac Amserau Cymru*, 15 February 1956

Ŵotudes Celtiques, 7 (1956), 482-3

Y Traethodydd, 111 (1956)]

Further Reading

Wikipedia Article: [John Lloyd-Jones](#)

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