

JONES, JOHN OWEN, OWEN BRYNGWYN (1884-1972), singer

Name: John Owen Jones
Pseudonym: Owen Bryngwyn
Date of birth: 1884
Date of death: 1972
Spouse: Dorothy Mary Jones (née Elliott)
Parent: Esther Margaret Jones (née Roberts)
Parent: Owen Jones
Gender: Male
Occupation: singer
Area of activity: Music; Performing Arts
Author: Huw Williams

Born 7 February 1884 at Llangwm, Denbighshire, son of Owen Jones, a carpenter on the Garthmeilo estate, Llangwm, and Esther Margaret (née Roberts), only daughter of **Ellis Roberts** ('Elis Wyn o Wyrfaï'). The family moved to Llanegryn, Meirionnydd, in 1890 when the father was appointed agent to the Peniarth estate, a post he held for 32 years.

His was a musical family. His father (died 1922) was the conductor of the Llanegryn choir and his mother was an excellent pianist. He was educated at Llanegryn primary school and at Tywyn grammar school. He won a scholarship in 1903 to study at the University College of North Wales, Bangor, and graduated BSc in 1907. At Bangor he was greatly influenced by **John Lloyd Williams** and he became a member of the Welsh Folksong Society in its early days. From 1907 to 1911 he taught science at Daventry grammar school, and from 1911 at Newport (Essex) grammar school where he was acting headmaster from 1914 to 1918. He left teaching in 1919 and went to London to prepare for a new career as a singer. He entered the Royal College of Music to study under Walter Ford and in 1922 embarked on his career as professional singer under the name 'Owen Bryngwyn' (Bryngwyn was the name of his home in Llanegryn). He married, 24 March 1923 in Manchester, Dorothy Mary Elliott of Maidenhead, a trades union official, and they made their home in Hampstead, London, until 1962 when they moved to Ashtead, Surrey. In 1939 he resumed his teaching career and he was science teacher at Epsom College until 1954.

As a singer he was in great demand as a soloist in oratorio and in celebrity concerts and broadcasts, and he travelled widely in Britain and the Celtic countries. He had an easy, smooth baritone voice which led him to specialise in interpreting Welsh folksongs, many of which he recorded for Decca. Documents relating to his career as a singer have been safeguarded in the National Library of Wales.

He died in Ashtead 24 March 1972. He was cremated in Leatherhead and the ashes were buried in the family grave in Llanegryn parish church graveyard.

Author

Huw Williams, (1922 - 2002)

Sources

Y Bangoriad cylchgrawn Cymdeithas cyn-fyfyrywyr Coleg y Gogledd, Bangor, Bangor, March 1973

Information from his widow, Mrs Dorothy Mary Jones

Information from his niece, Mrs Eirlys Lewis Evans

Meredydd Evans, Owen Bryngwyn, '*Welsh Music, the journal of the Guild for the Promotion of Welsh Music*' 6 (6), 54-60, 1980-81

Darllen Pellach

Meredydd Evans a Wyn Thomas, 'Jones, John Owen (Owen Bryngwyn) (1884-1972)', *Cydymaith i Gerddoriaeth Cymru* (Talybont 2018), tt.284-85

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