

David Jones of Wallington – obituary, Barry Dock News, 18th July 1890

Death of a Glamorganshire Antiquary

‘On Friday last there died at Wallington, Surrey, a gentleman who, of all other scholars, was best acquainted with the past history of the county of Glamorgan. The face and figure of Mr. David Jones was known in many parts of Glamorganshire and its adjoining counties, for there were few spots, however remote or out-of-the-way, that he had not visited in his antiquarian rambles. He was of a mild and retiring disposition, loth to push himself forward, and strongly adverse to publicity of any kind. Though not a fluent Welshman, he could sustain a conversation in Welsh and could read the language with some facility. He was a frequent contributor to the local press, though his bright and graphic letters were almost always anonymous. He personally visited every church in Glamorganshire, some of them many times over. Only last year he went over all those in the upper portion of the county, making sketches wherever he went and noting every early inscription in the different churchyards. Visitors to Cowbridge in the summer of 1888, during the meeting of the Cambrian Archaeological Association, will remember the fine collection of drawings and sketches Mr Jones then exhibited. He was subsequently pressed by Mr. R.W. Banks, the “doyen” of Welsh archaeologists, to furnish the association with other communications, and in reply he wrote for the same learned publication an excellent paper on a seventeenth century inscription at Michaelston-super-Ely, in which he cleared up several obscurities in the history of the Bassetts in Glamorganshire. Indeed, it is only since the meeting of archaeologists at Cowbridge that Mr Jones may be said to have come forward as a writer of antiquarian papers. Not long before his death he finished a paper upon Sir Rhys ap Thomas and his unfortunate grandson, Sir Rhys ap Griffith, which, when published, will be found to rank with the best historic works ever written upon Welsh ground. In a letter written a few days before his death he says, “There are two other Glamorganshire papers on the stock. In another week, had health granted me, both would have been finished.” But it was not to be. Weak by excessive adherence to research, Mr. Jones succumbed to an attack of cold, which deepened into inflammation of the lungs. He was born near Cowbridge, where he had a small property. His kindness and generosity were equal to his modesty. He was ever ready to help poor scholars, especially those of his own country, and by the poor and lonely and those that are out of the way he will be greatly missed, while his death has removed one who promised to reach a higher point in historic literature than any other.’

Typed by B. Alden, 2020