

DANIEL ANGELL JONES (1861-1936)

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This is one in a series of articles about prominent British and Irish field-bryologists of the past. The author would be very pleased to learn of any information which supplements its content.

A Social and Biographical History of British and Irish Field-bryologists is also available on-line at <http://britishbryologicalsociety.org.uk/>

Family background and biography

Daniel Angell Jones was the first child of Daniel Jones (1825/6-1896), and Jane (*née* Jones, born 1833/4). Daniel Jones Sr. was the son of Job Jones, a farmer. Jane was the daughter of John Jones, a miller.

Daniel Jones Sr. was born at Llanbedr, near Ruthin, Denbighshire, and was a master house-painter at Liverpool, when DAJ was born on July 14th, 1861. The family had moved to Portmadog, Caernarvonshire by 1863, where a second child, Emily, was born, and by 1867/8 had moved again to Harlech, Merionethshire, where Catherine (born 1867/8), Jane (1869/70), William (1871/2) and John (1873/4) entered the world. Thus, DAJ was the eldest of six children.

By 1871, the family had settled in Harlech, Merionethshire, at Shop Newydd, from where the father Daniel combined his career of house-painter with selling general provisions. By 1881 the family were living at Gwyndy Shop, Harlech, and Mr Jones's double career had resolved into retailing at the expense of house-painting, for he described himself as a grocer and general provisioner. Mr and Mrs Jones were still living there when Daniel the father died in 1896.

By 1881, though, "D.A." (as he was known) had left home and was an assistant teacher at Widnes, Lancashire. After qualifying as a schoolteacher he taught at Machynlleth from 1886 until 1892. Then he moved back to Harlech, which remained his home until he retired in 1924. At Harlech, by 1901 he was living with his youngest brother John (who had followed his father into the grocery business) at Rock House, The Terrace (one of a terrace of houses by the steep winding road from the station to the castle, and now 5, Bronwen Terrace). John was still running the shop in the 1920s.

In 1900, D.A. married Louisa Edwards (born 1872/3) at Wrexham. Louisa was a daughter of Thomas Edwards (born 1846/7), a coal-miner at Broughton, Denbighshire, who was in turn the son of Adam Edwards (born 1815/6 at Bersham), a coal-miner.

Although Harlech remained his home, D.A. Jones was an agricultural lecturer at the University of Wales, Bangor, during the First World War, and he was awarded an M.Sc. in 1918.

Daniel and Louisa Jones continued to live at Rock House until 1924, when D.A. retired to Cheltenham. While living at Cheltenham he must have had many opportunities to botanise with his friend and bryological peer Henry Herbert Knight.

In 1931, Jones moved to Bristol, and was living at 11, Tyndall Avenue at the time of his death from carcinoma of the gall-bladder on October 6th, 1936.

Bryological career

Like many botanists, Jones first took interest in flowering plants and ferns, and by 1898 had written *A Handbook of the Botany of Merioneth*, an unpublished manuscript which is now preserved in the National Museum and Gallery of Wales, Cardiff. He also published lists of bryophytes for Denbighshire and Anglesey.

Around that time, a teaching colleague and friend, Samuel J. Owen of Croesor stimulated D.A.'s interest in bryophytes, and the two men made numerous botanical excursions to the local countryside. D.A. began collecting bryophytes in Merioneth and Snowdonia in about 1900, and joined the Moss Exchange Club in 1901 or 1902. By 1906 he was sufficiently keen and well thought of to be distributing the packets of mosses and liverworts which were annually exchanged between MEC members. In 1907 he became Secretary of "Section II", the newly formed beginners' section of the Club. By 1923, more members were in the beginners' section than in the senior Section I, and Jones took a pivotal role in reorganising the two sections of the Moss Exchange Club as a unified British Bryological Society. Indeed, he led the meeting at Dolgellau, when members met to discuss and enact the change.

D.A. became Secretary of the newly formed BBS in 1923, a position he held until becoming President in 1935-6. He also acted as Excursion Secretary at several BBS meetings. 49 members and friends met for a week at Harlech in 1931 and explored the surrounding country; this would be a good attendance at a BBS meeting in the early 21st century.

Unusually for his era, Jones became as proficient at identifying liverworts as he was at identifying mosses, and he added three rare liverworts to the British list: *Riccia crozalsii* in 1908, *Scapania nimbosea* in 1909 and *Gymnocolea acutiloba* in 1911. He made few important bryological discoveries after 1920, and began to take increasing interest in lichens, which he became accomplished at finding and identifying.

5,000 of his bryophytes went to the National Museum and Gallery of Wales at Cardiff in 1920. Further plants are at the Natural History Museum in London, Bristol City Museum and Art Gallery, Merseyside Museum, Warwick.

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