



FACTsheet 24

A World War I memoir discovered

In 2019, when searching through the National Library of Wales archives, we discovered a memoir of World War I that had been written by Thomas Salisbury Jones, from Penmaenmawr. We set to work on finding out more about him, as well as embarking on the massive task of typing out the 156 pages and 25000 words of the hand-written memoir in Welsh, and then translating it into English.

Thomas lived a cultured life. He was born in Ruthin in 1882 and by the age of 16 he was working for the Post Office and participating in local Eisteddfodau, winning competitions for art and writing. Between 1907-1910, Thomas studied at the Crewe School of Art. He was 25 by this time and it is likely that he continued working for the Post Office and studied part-time.

Thomas married Jane Prichard in 1913. Over the next few years his name appears in various newspapers for submitting cartoons and illustrations. By 1916 he was summoned to join the forces in World War I. He was able to stay home long enough to see the birth of his daughter in the Spring of 1917.



A World War I memoir discovered

Thomas was active in the Welsh chapel movement. His reservations about the war are evident in his writing. He didn't like the thought of using a gun or killing another human being. However, at the age of 31 he left Britain to join the forces in France. There, he was appointed to the Highland Division as a Sapper and Engineer, responsible for communications around the front line.

When Thomas returned from the war in 1919, he re-joined the Post Office as a Postmaster and was transferred to Merthyr Tydfil. He became very active in the chapel and community-based arts and literature circles there. Two of his artworks hang at Cyfarthfa Castle – one depicts a young girl, and the other is a portrait of Joseph Parry, the composer of 'Myfanwy'.



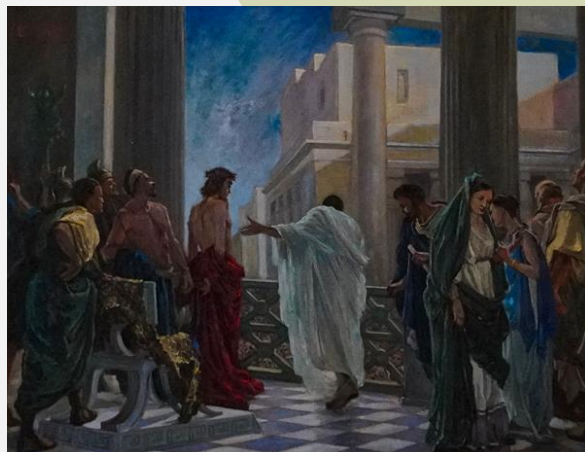
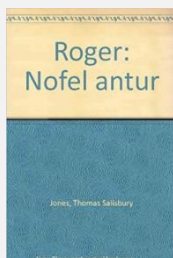
In 1944, Thomas and Jane moved to Morlais in Gogarth Avenue, Dwygfyldi. It was at this time he started exhibiting his artwork with the Royal Cambrian Academy in Conwy, and his pieces were included in their annual exhibitions of 1944 and 1945.

A World War I memoir discovered

Thomas joined Jerusalem Chapel in Penmaenmawr (now Eglwys y Berth). Two of his paintings hang in the chapel – a large copy of Ecce Homo by Ciseri (the original is in Florence), and a scene from the Crucifixion. It is believed that the face of the woman in the scene is that of Thomas's wife, Jane.



He also wrote Welsh language books during his retirement and in 1965 his children's novel 'Roger' was published.



Thomas died in 1967, leaving his wife Jane and daughter Gwerfyl. His collection of illustrated manuscripts, his World War One memoir and other works were accepted into the National Library of Wales in 1969.

Fifty years later, we came across them. Penmaenmawr Museum has summarised key events from Thomas's memoir in a series of four presentation videos in English, and four in Welsh.

We hope that after discovering this important history after all these years, we can do it justice by highlighting the legacy that Thomas left us through his work. A full copy of the transcripts of Thomas's memoir are available in Penmaenmawr Museum's archive.

