

AH, YOU MUST BE A JONES

With another multi-million pound box office sure thing on the way, the Indiana Jones franchise is unwittingly continuing another tradition – yet another high profile appearance of Wales' commonest name: Jones. Rachel Howells goes in hunt of the shadowy past of the Joneses, and finds out what Jones has done for Wales

There were 391,909 people with the name Jones living in the UK in 1998 according to the last census. Of the Welsh population, 13.5 per cent are called Jones – that's almost one in six people. It's the second most common name in Britain (first in the ranks is Smith), the most common in Wales, and ranks fifth in America.

For every million people in America, 8,334 of them are called Jones – that's about 2.5 million people, roughly the same number of people as live in the whole of Wales today.

Famous Joneses abound: actor Catherine Zeta Jones, singer Tom Jones, classical singer Aled Jones, T4's Steve Jones, rugby's Stephen Jones, footballer and actor Vinnie Jones, singer Kelly Jones, comedian Ruth Jones. Even Wales' most famous baritone is a Jones. Bryn Terfel Jones dropped his surname when he realised another baritone,

"I'm extremely proud to be a Jones, it reflects my pride in my family's roots in Ceredigion and Carmarthenshire in west Wales"

GETHIN JONES, Blue Peter presenter

Delme Bryn-Jones, had already monopolised it. Llandudno and Blaenau Ffestiniog both claim to have more Joneses living in their towns than anywhere else in the UK.

Everywhere we look in Wales, the name Jones is there. In all walks of life, in every corner of the nation, it's not so much keeping up with the Joneses, as not being to able to escape them.

So where did this ubiquitous name come from? Why is a name that starts with J, a letter not in the Welsh alphabet, so archetypally Welsh? What does this name mean for a modern, progressive Wales in the third millennium? And is there a chance, even just a small one, that Indiana Jones might be Welsh?

Taking the lead from Indy himself, let's get historical first.

"The name Jones comes from two sources," says John Weston, self-proclaimed antiquarian and webmaster of the site data-wales.co.uk. "Firstly, there's the Roman name Johannes, which gave rise to the Welsh name Ieuan. One document of 1533 names Thomas ap Ieuan ap David ap ▶

Blethyn, alias Thomas Jones. But also, in the mediaeval period, John became a popular first name, mainly because of Wales's strong Christian influence, and in time this became used as a surname, sometimes unchanged, sometimes in the style Jones."

John became Jones via the Welsh

"I suppose I do like it when I meet another Jones, like we're part of a clan - even though our name is so common"

RUTH JONES, actor and writer

'patronymic' system, which saw children named after their fathers - so Robert, the son of John (or Jon), would become Robert ap John. In the late medieval period, rather than a string of patronyms (Robert ap John ap Lewis ap Thomas, for example), fixed surnames became the norm, and so Robert ap John became Robert Jones. It's Wales's late adoption of surnames that has made Jones so archetypally Welsh.

Chip Jones, an American Jones with Welsh roots, has become something of an expert on the name. He set up a web site, JonesGenealogy.com, in 1999 to reach out to other Joneses interested in researching their family histories.

"I've always had an interest and curiosity about my Jones last name," he grins. "I really became more interested after my Dad had hired a historian to write a publication about the beginnings of our family lumber business. This historian was able to locate an oral history done by my great-great-uncle in the early 1900s, which provided a huge amount of information related to my family. I've been hooked on Jones family

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history ever since."

With almost two decades of Jones research behind him, Chip takes up the name's story: "In Wales, it's rather ironic that Jones is the most common name considering the fact that the letter J is not found in the Welsh language.

"I believe that the reason for the commonality of the Jones name in Wales is mostly due to the influence of the English on the Welsh in the late 1400s to 1500s. For example, the Acts Of Union of 1536 and 1542 prohibited the use of the Welsh language in

all official documents and it's likely that many Welsh families adopted the name of Jones because it came the closest to the spelling and use of John [or Sion] as a given name, as well as the usage of bynames like 'ap John' or 'ab John'."

It might come as a surprise to many Joneses to know that they are not, in fact, all from the same extended family, but it hasn't stopped many from feeling an affinity with other Joneses - and a unique sense of Welshness, too.

Nia Jones is a 31-year-old media and PR

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Famous five

It can sometimes feel to us lesser mortals as though people called Jones are taking over the world. Here are five talented Joneses that have helped to put Wales on the map



1. Catherine Zeta Jones
Swansea's favourite A-lister, and a Jones to boot. From her humble stint as Mariette in *The Darling Buds Of May*, this is one Jones who's made it all the way to the top. She now earns \$3.2 million for every year she remains Mrs Douglas, and won herself a \$10 million paycheque for her role in the last *Zorro* film. Tidy.



2. Tom Jones
Pontypridd-born Tom was not always a Jones - in fact he was christened Thomas Jones Woodward. Was the singer's famous moniker an attempt to associate himself with Fielding's novel, or simply derived from his mother, whose maiden name was Jones? Opinion is divided. Regardless, Tom is Wales's most famous crooner, with 27 studio albums to his name. The 67-year-old now lives in LA and enjoys a £127 million fortune. Lovely.



3. Bryn Terfel (Jones)
Bryn Terfel Jones was born in Pantglas, north Wales. He dropped the Jones from his name to avoid confusion between himself and another Welsh baritone, Delme Bryn-Jones. Renowned for his performances of *Figaro*, he now lives in Bontnewydd with his childhood sweetheart Leslie and their three children. Bless.



officer for Wales Millennium Centre, Cardiff. She took part in the 2006 'Jones Jones' record attempt, which saw 1,224 people from all over the world muster in Cardiff to break the Guinness world record for the most people with the same surname gathered in one place.

"I love being a Jones – it makes me feel like I'm a part of a big Welsh family," she says. "We smashed the Guinness world record, beating the previous record held by 583 Norbergs in Sweden. It's hard to keep up with us Joneses."

It certainly is. Famous Welsh Joneses work – and excel – in every sphere.

"I wouldn't be who I am and so fiercely Welsh if I weren't a Jones, I think. Also, there are so many of us around, chances are I won't have to change my name when I get married..."

LIZ JONES, careers advisor

Catherine Zeta Jones has garnered an enviable reputation in Hollywood; Tom Jones has racked up a four-decade career; Ruth Jones is putting Welsh telly on the map and winning gongs from all sides; Vinnie Jones leapt the divide from sport to make himself a name in film acting. There were

"When I meet people from overseas and I say I'm a Jones they always say that I could only be Welsh"

NIA JONES, marketing and PR officer, WMC

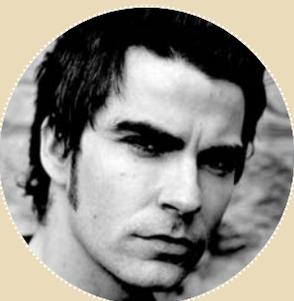
no fewer than seven Joneses in Wales' Grand Slam winning rugby squad earlier this year – even the captain was a Jones. In history, the journalist Gareth Jones advised Lloyd George and uncovered scandals in Russia and the Far East that eventually led to his alleged murder, and the Welsh mathematician William Jones was a respected contemporary of Newton. They're everywhere, from politics to academia, from big business to sport.

"There's no doubt at all that Welsh talent is putting Wales on the map, and because there are so many Joneses from Wales, it's not hard to see that the name Jones is putting us on the map too," says Jason Jones, The Big Issue Cymru's resident art critic.

"You just have to look at people like CZJ or Tom Jones to know that – most Americans would no doubt be in complete of ignorance of Wales if it weren't for people like them."

So, as Indiana Jones IV hits the silver screen later this week, there's surely just one question we all want answered. Is there any possibility the iconic adventuring archaeologist could have been Welsh?

"I would think that he is as likely to be Welsh, as not," says Chip Jones with a barely disguised wink. "Based on his rugged good looks, charm and sense of adventure I would think that he is a Welsh man." ■



4. Kelly Jones

The Stereophonics' lead singer was born in Cwmaman near Aberdare. The rather earnest Kelly started the band with friends Stuart Cable and (fellow Jones) Richard Jones back in the day. They've had a rocky road to stardom, with uproar following a falling out with Cable, and the controversial song Mr Writer, which targeted journalists. He's also a published author – you could even call him Mr Writer if you like. How ironic.



5. Ruth Jones

She's so a la mode it's scary. The co-writer of everybody's favourite TV show, Gavin & Stacey, Ruth is so 'now' this sentence will be out of date by the time you reach the full stop. She's played Myfanwy in Little Britain, Ness in G&S, and her films include Very Annie Mary and East Is East. She says she loved being called Ruth Jones growing up, because of the character in Rising Damp of the same name. Ooh miss Jones.

Shadowy past

Indiana Jones, above, was apparently named when Spielberg rejected the name Indiana Smith

Indiana Jones superstar Harrison Ford returns to his glorious past in the fourth in the Indiana Jones series, *Indiana Jones And The Kingdom Of The Crystal Skull* at the end of the week. Bruno Lester met the reserved actor, and found his questions answered with all the enthusiasm of someone arranging his own funeral

What makes Indiana Jones popular?

He's a fallible character. He makes mistakes and gets hurt. He has a few more aches and pains now. That's what people like: he's a real character, not a character with superpowers. [George] Lucas got the idea for the fourth movie back in 1993, when I made a cameo on *The Young Indiana Jones Chronicles*.

And you didn't like the idea?

That's true. Neither did Spielberg. But Lucas is a stubborn sucker. He kept pushing the idea into script form, and finally one script struck me as being smart and logical; the character was allowed to age. It never occurred to me that we would string this Indiana thing out this long, though.

You are 65; isn't that a bit old for an action hero role?

Age is no problem for me but it seems that it is a problem for other people. As long as I'm believable to the audience I will continue to play action roles.

How was turning 65?

I didn't just wake up one morning 65 years old so it was not a real blow to me. I've been able to accommodate. Now Calista [Flockhart – his partner] and I go to the movies, and I can order one adult and one senior citizen. I save \$6.

How would you describe your acting method?

I'm not a method actor at all. It's all fake with me. I'm very technical about things. I know what faces I want to make and how I want to express an idea, and then I go about doing it in full possession of my faculties.

What is the definition of a good actor?

Somebody who shows up on time and doesn't knock over the furniture! I never had an ambition to be a star, or thought of myself as star material. In 1966 I was told by an executive that I had no star quality.

Is there anything good about fame?

Well, I can use my celebrity to get a table at a restaurant or an appointment with the doctor. I'm serious: these are the practical uses of celebrity.

You are well known for enjoying flying, but you've had two near-accidents. Are you tempting fate?

I don't like to discuss flying or the possible dangers with people who are not fully conversant, because it inevitably gets blown out of proportion. Fairly early on, I crashed one helicopter.

You could talk to Tom Cruise, John Travolta and Kurt Russell about flying.

Yes, a lot of actors fly. There must be a reason. It's gotta be sexual, doesn't it? (chortles)

You said it.

Yes, I did, and I'll wear it for a long time to come.

Are you a romantic?

Love is critical. I believe that people can be made whole out of love. That makes me a romantic, doesn't it? ■