

Dobroho dnya vsim.

Prynhawn da, pawb. Philip Colley dw'i. Fy hen ewythr oedd Gareth Jones. Fy merch Alex a fi hapus iawn i fod yma gyda chi heddiw. Digon o gymraeg! Rwan, rhaid i mi siarad iath dramor...

Good afternoon everybody.

My name is Philip Colley. As you have just heard, Gareth Jones was my great uncle. I am very happy to be here with my daughter Alex and very honoured to be here with you today.

Thank you to you Madam Mayor for inviting and allowing me to say a few words. I'm really delighted to see Gareth being remembered and celebrated here in Barry and to see this wonderful plaque adorning the walls of this lovely chapel at Merthyr Dyvvan.

Here we are in 2022 but Gareth died back in 1935. One may ask why has it taken so long for him to be honoured in this way? Well the answer, I believe, is that after his untimely death, despite his amazing life and everything he'd done, Gareth fell into obscurity and was largely forgotten about. It took decades of hard work for his memory to be restored to its rightful place in history.

When he returned in 1933 with his reports of the famines then raging across all parts of the Soviet Union but particularly the manmade one in Ukraine now known as the Holodomor, his stories were denigrated by supporters of the Soviet Union. And on top of that the British government and his former boss Lloyd George, though they knew full well his reports were true, instead of backing him up, held their tongues. Relations with Stalin's murderous regime were held to be more important, so, the reality is they sided with Stalin and hung Gareth out to dry. And for the rest of his life something of a dark cloud hung over him. It must have been such a shock to him that the wages of telling the truth were to be blackballed by the British Establishment. That's why, I believe, he went off on his fateful world tour in an attempt to rehabilitate himself as a journalist. But he took a risk too many. And as we all know he was tragically killed.

After his memorial service was concluded, that was that. Even the memorial scholarship fund that was set up to preserve his memory was itself largely forgotten. For the following decades Gareth was only spoken within our family. I was brought up on fascinating stories of his adventures told by his two sisters, Eirian Lewis, my grandmother, and Gwyneth Vaughan Jones, my great aunt. They were formidable personalities themselves and both lived to over a hundred years old, with my

grandma managing to span 3 centuries. Her sister, Gwyneth, used to tell us of the time she saw Queen Victoria, a little old lady dressed in black. For many years she was headmistress at the girls school here in Barry. Her father, Gareth's father, Major Edgar Jones was the revered head of Barry Grammar School. His mother Annie Gwen Jones, who had begun teaching Gareth Russian on her knee, was also a clever and adventurous woman. Gareth was indeed the product of a remarkable family and I would hear endless stories from Eirian and Gwyneth about those heady times, how Eryl the family house, here in Barry, was at the time in many ways a centre of Welsh political life, where Auntie Winnie regularly served her celebrated Welsh teas to the great and good and the affairs of the world were discussed and debated, with Gareth coming and going from his adventures with ever more colourful stories.

I visited the house back in the early 90s. It still had such an atmosphere even then, the old grandfather clock still ticking in the hall there as it must have ticked so very loudly when Gareth's father, after a fortnight of false dawns, stood at the door, opened and read the telegram on that August morning that was to tell him of his son's death, so beginning the long night of grief. But the thing that struck me most, up on the top floor, was Gareth's bedroom which, with Russian posters under the bed and books absolutely everywhere, stood frozen in time. It was exactly as Gareth had left it when he set off on his world tour back in 1934. I wonder if Gareth's mother had ever entered it again. For Gwyneth and Eirian and for Gareth's parents, the death of their 'mab annwyl' their brilliant, beloved Gareth was completely earth-shattering and a blow from which they never really recovered. How proud they would all be, were they here today, to see this plaque here in his hometown, his name finally recognised and rehabilitated.

Gareth's ashes are interred along with his parents and his sisters in the family grave a short walk from this chapel. The inscription reads... Ieithydd, teithiwr, carwr heddwch. Linguist, traveller and seeker of peace. He was all those things, It's notable that the thing for which he is so famous now, Gareth's profession journalist, is not mentioned. It's as if at the time, Incredible as it sounds now, there was a certain shame attached to what he had done.

Now it's not inconceivable, very likely in fact, that Gareth would still only be being talked about within the confines the family were it not for the tireless efforts of my mother Dr Margaret Siriol Colley. She idolised her Uncle Gareth and as a child must also have been devastated by his loss. I think she was acutely aware all those years following that something was terribly amiss. That something quite special had been lost, something she was determined to find. And so she spent her retirement searching for the truth. She wasn't a trained historian but she left no stone unturned.

Assisted by my dear late brother Nigel Colley she wrote two books, one of them his official biography *More than a Grain of Truth*. Nigel supplemented those books with his remarkable website garethjones.org .

Together they brought Gareth out of the darkness and gave him back to the world. They placed him on the frontpage of history where he truly belongs. And that's really why I am here today, to pay them tribute. It is they who should be standing here today, not me. But sadly that is not possible. It is an honour for me to represent them.

Lastly, getting back to the plaque. As we sit here today, as this plaque goes, up in occupied Ukraine monuments to the Holodomor are coming down are being physically removed by the Russian forces. I have seen Russian news clips that unashamedly show this. They're trying to erase or at least rewrite history. But of course Gareth was writing down history the very second it was happening, as an eyewitness. His testimony of the Holodomr is indisputable. Because of what he did, what happened back then can never successfully be denied. And that's why, as a symbol of that, this plaque is so welcome and important. And I would like to thank on behalf of our family everyone behind it. I'd like to thank Mick Antoniv and Jane Hutt for everything you have done. And, though he is unable to be with us here today, I'd particularly like to thank Professor Lubomyr Luciuk from Canada who has devoted so much of his boundless energy towards making sure Gareth is remembered, including by the instigation of this plaque. I'd also like to thank Barry Town Council for their support and for their funding of the transportation of the plaque and lastly thank you again to you Madam Mayor for inviting me and allowing me to speak today.