

## MEET AN ILLUSTRATOR

For the last twenty-six years I have lived in the village of Capel Bangor, five miles east of Aberystwyth. I work in a studio which was built for me above the garage, and which looks out over the back garden and a hill-field beyond.

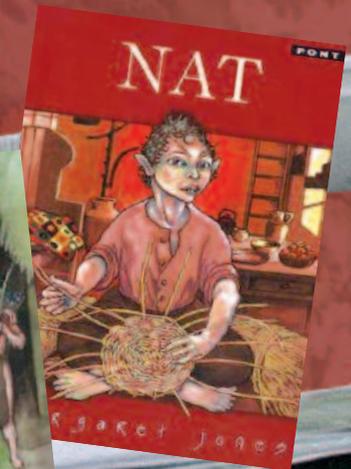
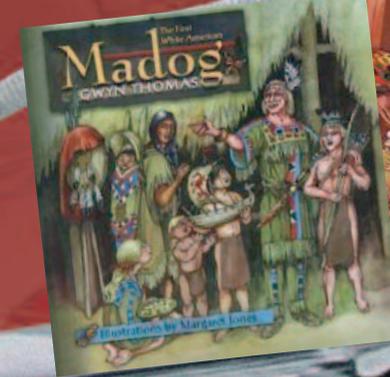
I have always loved both legends and painting so I am very lucky to be making pictures of traditional tales, for books. The old stories have the best characters – real heroes and beautiful heroines, who have magical adventures. I like to paint people in flowing garments, textures

like satin or fur, and armour which catches the light. I like scenes lit up by torchlight or candlelight. I get a kick out of capturing just the right expression on a face – excited, arrogant, tragic, or incoherent with rage. I especially enjoyed the challenge presented by magic moments in the stories of the Mabinogion – the impossible happening, like a woman being made out of flowers, or turned into an owl.

I have written my own story, too, and illustrated it. It is the tale of Nat, a changeling who is rejected by

the Fairy folk, and goes to live with Gwenny, in a mid-Wales village; it is set at the end of the nineteenth century, when many people firmly believed in the Little People, the 'Tylwyth Teg'. Such beliefs coloured their humdrum lives, and gave rise to a treasure-house of stories. Wales is particularly rich in such tales; even today, in the Welsh hills and fields and woodland, you can still feel the magic.

Margaret Jones



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# Margaret Jones



**Name** Margaret Jones

**Date of Birth** 28 December, 1918

**Where were you born and brought up?** I was born in Bromley, Kent and brought up mainly in Handsworth Wood, Birmingham.

**Where did you go to school?** I went to the Methodist Boarding School for Girls, 'Trinity Hall' in Southport, Lancashire.

**What did you particularly like and dislike about school?** I loved school, because I did well in most subjects, particularly art. I didn't like playing hockey on an icy winter afternoon.

**What did you want to be, as a child?** An illustrator.

**What was your favourite book as a child?** *Irish Fairy Tales*, by the poet James Stephens, illustrated by Arthur Rackham, published in 1920.

**Do you have any hobbies?** I am a crossword addict, and I like making up rhymes.

**What makes you happy?** Having my family gathered round me – I have fourteen grandchildren!

**When did you start to illustrate books?** For my own pleasure, in childhood. For commercial publication, in 1984, with *Y Mabinogi* by Gwyn Thomas.

**How do you choose which books to illustrate?** I receive a commission from a publisher, almost always for a book very much to my liking.

**From where do you get your ideas?** From the text, out of my head, from the world around me, and from artists who have gone before me.

**Which of your books is your favourite?** I think, *Culhwch ac Olwen*. It has drama, action, humour and wonderful characters.

**Is there something you would like to change about yourself?** Plenty! Would that I were younger, better-looking, cleverer, and more knowledgeable. And I wish my eyes were as sharp as they used to be.

**What makes you laugh?** Many things, especially the sayings of my grandchildren, and waggish remarks from my sons!

**Winner of the Tir na n-Og Award in 1989, 1993, 2000 and 2003. Some recently published books illustrated by Margaret Jones:**

**Nat**

Written and illustrated by Margaret Jones (Pont Books)

**The Story of Dafydd ap Gwilym\***  
Gwyn Thomas (Y Lolfa)

**Saint David: Patron Saint of Wales\***  
Rhiannon Ifans (Y Lolfa)

**Tales from the Celtic Countries\***  
Rhiannon Ifans (Y Lolfa)

**Madog\***  
Gwyn Thomas (Y Lolfa)

**The Tale of Twm Siôn Cati**  
Margaret Isaac (Apecs Press)

**Owain Glyndŵr: Prince of Wales\***  
Rhiannon Ifans (Y Lolfa)

**From the Four Corners of Europe – Tales and Folk Legends\***  
Wolfgang Greller (CAA)

\*also available in Welsh

