



Man who saved countless lives

HONOUR FOR INVENTOR OF GLOBALLY-USED BREATHALYSER

By HYWEL TREWYN

THE man who invented the breathalyser, saving countless lives worldwide, has had a plaque erected in his honour.

The plaque, in memory of Dr Thomas Parry Jones OBE, was unveiled by his widow, Raj Parry Jones at the official opening of the Llangefni police station yesterday, also attended by North Wales Police Chief Constable Mark Polin and Police and Crime Commissioner Winston Roddick QC.

Dr Jones, from Menai Bridge, died last January, after a short illness aged 77.

Born on a farm at Carreglefn, Amlwch, he developed the electronic breathalyser in 1974 and established Lion Laboratories to manufacture and market the products worldwide.

His widow Raj said her husband had always been proud of his "baby" and he often cited the lives saved as a result of its use by police forces in over 100 countries. In all more than 500,000 of them were sold.

Dr Jones was a lecturer at Cardiff University when he was approached by Bill Dewsey, an engineer, convinced of a commercial potential for a reusable breathalyser.

Just months later, the Home Office placed its first order and the Lion Company has supplied them ever since.

But despite his pride in his invention, Dr Jones knew they weren't universally popular. In 2005 he said: "People sometimes

pull my leg about coming up with such an anti-social invention, but I like to think of the people it's helped rather than the drink-drivers it has foiled. People try all sorts of things, but I can tell you from our research there is no way to beat it. If your breath test is positive then it's a fair cop."

In 1980 Dr Jones received the Queen's Award For Business, an OBE followed in 1986 and was inducted into the Gorsedd in 1997.

He sold his business and "retired" to Anglesey to pursue his love of flying, becoming a leading member of Mona Flying Club. He then began another company to develop sensors measuring pollutants in the environment.

A fellow of Bangor University, he established the Dr Tom Parry Jones Endowment Fund to encourage young people to pursue careers in science and technology and entrepreneurship.

His widow, Raj, thanked the

police for the recognising her late husband's work.

She said: "It is an enlightened and visionary act by North Wales Police, which will serve to inspire the people of Anglesey and Wales. His work radically transformed road safety and saved countless lives word-wide. He was internationally acclaimed as a brilliant scientist and entrepreneur yet had his roots firmly in Wales."

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Main, Mrs Raj Jones, the wife of breathalyser inventor Dr Thomas Parry Jones (left), unveils a commemorative plaque of her husband at the official opening of the new police HQ in Llangefni

Pic: RICHARD BIRCH