

SIR HORACE JONES 1819-1887

Architect and Surveyor to the Corporation of London

Read by Stanley Keith Knowles
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On Friday, 30 July 1886 the train pulled out from Victoria Station. Horace Jones settled comfortably in his seat and reflected that this was to be the journey of his lifetime and tomorrow would be the summit of all his ambitions and achievements. Accompanied by his wife, he was travelling to Southampton, thence by ferry to Cowes to be in good time for his attendance at Osborne House the following day.

He had purchased *The Times* for three pence and read through the main political events of the day. The Government under Mr William Gladstone had just resigned over the Irish Question and the election results were printed:-

Conservatives	316)	394
Union Liberals	78)	Unionists
Gladstone Liberals	191)	276
Parnellites	85)	Home Rulers

That very day, Gladstone had attended at Osborne to hand over the Seals of Office and, on the following Tuesday, the Marquess of Salisbury, as Leader of the Unionists, was invited by Her Majesty to form a Government.

For that election, the two City candidates, Sir R Fowler and the Rt Hon J G Fowler, both Conservative, were elected unopposed - the registered electorate was 29,152.

Other items caught his eye - The Court of Common Council had turned down a proposal to erect statues of the Four Warrior Kings of England on the approaches to Blackfriars Bridge at a cost of £7,500 each.

There were continued cases of famine and starvation, such as a Parish Beadle, who on his retirement from the cares of the offices to the Weavers' Almshouses, succumbed to starvation in spite of an income of half a crown a week and three loaves.

The Canadian Fishery Disputes continued with the USA and the revolt of the

Crofters on Tiree was covered in many letters, including one from the Duke of Argyll who stated that they must be crushed by force.

So, on Saturday, 31 July 1886, Mr & Mrs Horace Jones travelled by coach from Cowes up to Osborne House for the Investiture. The weather was warm (73° in London) but unsettled and the sea was calm. They met the other six men to be honoured that day who included four medical men, one naval man and the Mayor of Weymouth. Horace was last to be touched by the Royal Sword and rose as Sir Horace Jones.

The Queen was accompanied by the Duke of Connaught, The Princess Beatrice and the Lord Chamberlain, the Earl of Latham.

After the Investiture, the recipients were entertained by the future King, Edward VII, aboard the Royal Yacht "Osborne" lying in Cowes Roads.

One can imagine the emotion and atmosphere of the occasion and the Investiture was reported in *The Times* on Monday, 2 August for all to read.

Whilst this investiture was being carried out, the Lord Mayor of London attended at the City of London Boys' School for the Annual Prize Day and there was an advertisement for partners in a Florida real estate project - large profits expected!

From his portrait painted during his Presidency of the RIBA some two years before his investiture, it is apparent that Jones was a well built, handsome man, bearded, as was the custom of the day, with the overall impression of a strong personality. He was very hard working, outspoken on occasions, even brusque and had the unusual power to grasp readily the gist of any matter put before him.

He was born (second son) on 20 May 1819 at 15 Sise Lane where his father, David Jones, had practised as a solicitor for nearly forty years. His elder brother, Alfred, continued his father's practice until his own death in 1876. *The Times* of that day had very little items of news - the only pertinent point being that it cost seven pence. Sise Lane was a corruption of St Osyth Lane from the Church of St Benet Sherehog or Syth, destroyed in the Great Fire. No 15, at the north end of the street, was swept away in the construction of Queen Victoria Street.

If his father had been in practice for 40 years, he must have been in his 60's when Horace was born which could have accounted for his son's ability. His

mother was Sarah Lydia Shepherd. Horace himself did not marry until he was 56 years old. On 15 April 1875 he wed Ann Elizabeth Patch, daughter of John Patch, a barrister. There was one child, a daughter, Annie Horatia (perhaps the second name reflected his disappointment at not having a son).

He was articled to John Wallen (1785-1865) at 16 Aldermanbury from 1836 (17 years old). He was a fellow student with Matthew Digby-Wyatt and studied under William Tite. He qualified as an ARIBA on 14 February 1842 (23 years old) and was nominated by William Tite. He was then living at 75 Sise Lane. He had been a student of the Architectural Society which became the Royal Institute of British Architects. He was mainly employed as a quantity surveyor, which must have provided a good grounding in construction costs for his future career. He also assisted in the design of several warehouses in Milton Street, Gresham Street and Wood Street (until the early 1950's, the area to the west of Cheapside and north of St Paul's was mainly occupied by cloth warehouses and workshops).

He travelled and studied in France, Italy, Greece and other parts of Europe with George Vulliamy (later architect to the Metropolitan Board of Works), T (later Professor) Hayer-Lewis, Ewan Christian and G R Burnell. Some of his sketches and drawings were published as illustrations to Wyatt Papworth's *Dictionary of Architecture* of 1855. The Guildhall Print Room has an extensive collection of his sketches of the detail classic designs he drew during these travels which were obviously a considerable influence in his later concepts for Tower Bridge, etc. The sketches came from Milan, Messina, Venice, etc.

A year later he set up in partnership with Arthur Ebdon Johnson (1821-1895) for three years. Johnson was a talented student and was awarded the Soane Medallion for the greatest number of approved drawings and also studied under Sir Gilbert Scott. However, Johnson decided to emigrate to Australia in 1846 and subsequently became the Melbourne City Architect during which time he designed the General Post Office and the Law Courts. He set up his own practice from 1851-1895. They must have remained in contact as Horace Jones signed his Fellowship application in 1883.

Horace Jones continued to practice on his own account from 1843-1864 at 14/16 Furnival's Inn. His obituary in the *RIBA Journal* stated that "His is the record of a busy life and a successful one; yet whatever eminence Sir Horace Jones attained, was due neither to any special advantages of birth or connections, nor to what is called good luck but was won by hard work and personal ability".

He was very active in the RIBA and, after serving on Committees and being a Member of Council for many years, he was elected Vice-President and ultimately President in 1882 and 1883, which he rightly regarded as the crown of his professional career. He was not knighted in recognition of that office but for "his distinguished services to the City of London as Architect to the Corporation". As the Senior Vice-President, he should have become President in 1881 but there was a movement against him on the grounds that "most of his buildings were second rate architecture, the most successful being Leadenhall Market". George Edmund Street, Architect of the Law Courts, was persuaded to stand, successfully, against him and it was only on his death that Horace Jones succeeded him. Obviously, Horace Jones was extremely upset at the time and protested strongly. His subsequent knighthood must have been sufficient reward for this temporary setback.

His first major commission was the result of a competition in 1847 for a new Town Hall in Cardiff. His design, which won him £50, was commended for its convenience, the heating arrangements and space left for future expansion. As ever in architectural competitions, his appointment and costings were criticised (despite the surname, he may have misunderstood the Welsh feeling against the appointment of a London architect). In his letter in *The Builder* in 1847, he rebutted the criticism that his cost estimate of £11,690 was far in excess of the competition figure of £8,000, by stating:-

"The means at the disposal of the Committee are £8,000 and I do not conceive that there is anything here which renders it imperative on an architect to limit his estimate to that precise sum if, in his opinion, the accommodation indispensably required could not be provided for the money. The 'question' is - has any building containing a Town Hall, two Courts of Justice (of size adequate to the population of Glamorganshire), together with Police Court, rooms for Magistrates, Grand Jury, Clerk of the Peace, Court Keeper, etc. etc., ever been executed for £8,000 or anything like it, even where building materials are as cheap as Cardiff".

The Town Hall was opened in 1854 at a grand ball. Its design was not approved by everyone but it was obviously held in affection since a poem was published to mark its demolition in 1914:-

"A True reflex of life thou art,
Its changes typify
Man's metaphoric counterpart,

The Sport of Destiny.
Ne'er on thee may we look again,
Upon thy beauty gaze;
Vanished like snowflakes on the plains,
When Phoebus 'gins to blaze!
Razed to the ground by man's rude hand,
For Civic needs o'erthrown,
A Greater Cardiff's stern demand,
The boundaries o'ergrown".

However, one definite benefit from the Cardiff Town Hall must have been his introduction to the Crawshay family, ironmasters from Merthyr Tydfil. He was commissioned to design a new house at Caversham Park near Reading when the previous building was burnt down in 1850.

It is interesting to note that he used a cast-iron frame for this structure, possibly after discussion with his client, but also because it was very popular due to its fire resistant qualities and he became an expert on the subject, using this material many times in his designs.

No expense was spared and it must have been a dream commission for Horace Jones. He carried out several other small buildings in Caversham, including two schools and his only church, for the Crawshay family.

In 1853 Jones became a Fellow of the RIBA and continued his interest in surveying to the extent that he was appointed as surveyor to the Tufnell Park Estate, the Duke of Buckingham's Estate, the Bethnal Green Estate and the Barnard Estate, all of which must have been very useful sources of employment between his major commissions.

His next success was to win the competition as architect for the Surrey Music Hall in Walworth in 1853. The design was for a building "for the performance of vocal and instrumental music, capable of accommodating 10,000 people". It was a great success with superb acoustics, whereby any person, even in the remotest part of the building, could hear perfectly and professional musicians considered it to be one of the best music rooms in London.

The design could well have been influenced by the Crystal Palace at the Great Exhibition in 1851 and was certainly a forerunner for Alexandra Palace. As can be seen from the plans, it was a galleried building with a cast-iron frame and extensive glazing which, when lit at night, provided a very dramatic impact.

Once again, criticism was not far away and one critic wrote "The Architect's favourite style seems to be degenerate Italian with a large infusion of French taste and, considering that four months have sufficed for what has been done, Horace Jones deserves some praise". These reservations and criticisms were to dog his reputation throughout his professional life. Ironically, the Music Hall was burnt down in 1861.

Other major commissions came his way. In 1859 his design for the British and Irish Magnetic Telegraph Company in Threadneedle Street was described as a "noble edifice and, with the prospect of fast international communications via telegram, was novel and exciting, the ramifications of the telegraph are being so developed that it appears that, in a very short space of time, these new offices may be in immediate rapport with Hindustan, China and even Australia".

Another fine commission must have derived from his City connections as banks and insurance companies became keen to emphasise their status and integrity by building large monumental structures for impression and expressions. The Sovereign Life Assurance office in St James's Street was completed in 1857 to his design. The elevation was very ornate with its carved stone decoration and strong treatment. Regrettably, it was demolished earlier this century. It is interesting to note the life cycle of these nineteenth century buildings compared to the present day - about fifty years seems to render it obsolete in occupation and design. Today, many such buildings would be subject to preservation orders with all the inherent problems of internal circulation, services, etc.

As a contrast to his rather flamboyant designs for office buildings, his commission for the Metropolitan (now Royal Free) Hospital in Grays Inn Road, subscribed by the Freemasons is rather austere and conjures up the impression of nineteenth century institutions. The building still stands in Grays Inn Road. Horace Jones was a very active Freemason and was appointed Grand Superintendent of Works.

Just to show his versatility, Jones also designed a poultry house for the Earl of Norbury at the latter's model farm at Valence Park, Kent. His commercial approach was also recognised by his work for the growing number of department and drapery stores in London. These included Lewis & Allenby, silk mercers of Regent Street, Benjamin Hyams & Co, Liverpool tailors with premises in Oxford Street and Marshall & Snelgrove who, until comparatively recently (early 1960's) occupied a large store in Oxford Street.

And so we come to his appointment as Architect and Surveyor to the City.

Although he was busy in his architectural practice, he must have been keen either to secure permanent employment or status or combinations of both. In 1859 he had been unsuccessful in seeking the office of Surveyor to the Clothworkers' Company and in 1864 he failed to be appointed as Surveyor of Bridges for the County of Middlesex. However, perhaps it was third time lucky and certainly the City appointment proved to be his "crowning glory".

Election as Architect and Surveyor

Friday, 26 February 1864

Extract from proceedings of the Court of Common Council for that day

This day the Court proceeded to the election of an Architect and Surveyor and Clerk of the City's Works in the room of James Bunstone Bunning Esq, deceased.

Motion - that the candidates be allowed to take their seats on the Bench with the Aldermen in the order in which their names appear on the Summons.

Amendment - That so much of the Standing Orders of this Court as to prevent Mr Richard Tress (who ceased on St Thomas's Day last to be a Member of the Common Council,) becoming a Candidate for the office of Architect and Surveyor be suspended.

Negatived.

Original motion - Resolved in the Affirmative and Ordered accordingly.

The humble Petitions of:-

Richard Bell	-	Citizen and Spectacle Maker
Frederick Chancellor	-	Citizen and Coach and Coach Harness Maker
Henry Dawson	-	Citizen and Girdler
William Henry Heath	-	Citizen and Cordwainer
Horace Jones	-	Citizen and Fishmonger
Frederick Wallen	-	Citizen and Spectacle Maker

praying to be elected to the said Office were severally presented and read.

Resolved

That the number of Candidates be reduced to four by a poll of the Members present; that the number be again reduced to two by a poll of the Members then present and that the election be by a poll, if demanded, the same to continue open one hour unless otherwise agreed to by the Candidates and with the

consent of the Court.

The Lord Mayor appointed Mr Samuel Green and Mr Robert James Chaplin, Scrutineers. The Poll being taken, and cast up, the Lord Mayor declared the four candidates to be:-

Horace Jones
Richard Bell
Henry Dawson
Frederick Wallen

The Poll being again taken, and cast up, the Lord Mayor declared the two candidates to be:-

Horace Jones
Richard Bell

A Poll being demanded and cast up, there appeared:-

For Horace Jones 95
For Richard Bell 82

[177] (1995 maximum total - 156 members)

Whereupon the Lord Mayor declared Horace Jones Esq., Citizen and Fishmonger, to be elected ...

It should be noted that all the candidates were Liverymen and Frederick Wallen was probably related to John Wallen to whom he was articulated. Richard Bell was a well known architect and the voting was remarkably close.

Earlier that month (9th February) the Court had agreed that the title should be Architect and Surveyor, the change being the removal of the word City and also, after lengthy discussion, the salary should be £1,500 per annum. As a comparison, the current labour rates and material costs were also quoted in the Court minutes. A skilled craftsman, such as a carpenter, bricklayer or stonemason, received six shillings per day - about £90 per annum.

His predecessor, James Bunstone Bunning, had been City Architect and Surveyor for the last twenty years. In May that year (1864) a proposal to provide a bust to be placed in Guildhall for £200 was referred back and in December it was agreed to erect a Memorial Tablet in the City of London School for fifty guineas.

Horace Jones received the Freedom of the City by servitude in February 1843

at about the time he set up in practice. He was apprenticed to Frederick Mattam, Citizen and Fishmonger (by trade a brewer) on 26 February 1835 when he was 17 and subsequently became a Liveryman of the Fishmongers' Company.

RIBA Journal of Proceedings for 16 June 1887 - "When engaged at the Guildhall, he found an amount of work waiting to be done such as the Corporation had at no previous time contemplated and probably can never again undertake. The City markets were then a disgrace to London. Those who remember the Old Newgate Market and shambles and think what handsome buildings had been erected in Paris and other foreign cities for market purposes, will allow that the City had not begun a move too soon. The seven markets were undertaken in a worthy spirit ... and apart from the design Horace Jones had to negotiate the purchase of the ground, settlement of claims and to design wharves, jetties, heavy engineering constructions not usually considered within the scope of an architect's profession".

Under his supervision and design, the City carried out the following works:-

- 1864 Central Meat Market - Smithfield
- City Lunatic Asylum - completed
- Guildhall - Roof of Great Hall
- Guildhall - Restoration of Masonry, etc.
- 1867 Police Station - Bishopsgate
- 1870 Police Station - Seething Lane
- 1871 Foreign Cattle Market - Deptford
- 1872 Guildhall Library and Museum
- 1875 Poultry and Provision Market - Smithfield
- Police Station - Snow Hill
- 1877 Fish Market - Billingsgate
- 1879 Police Station - Bridewell
- 1882 General Market - Leadenhall
- 1883 Fruit and Vegetable Market - Smithfield
- 1884 Guildhall - New Council Chamber
- 1885 Guildhall School of Music
- 1886 Police Station - Cloak Lane
- Tower Bridge

As one would expect, this list comprises civic buildings and his work falls into three main categories:-

Markets

Police Stations
Guildhall complex

with the main exception being, of course, Tower Bridge.

In 1861 City obtained an Act for a new market at a cost of £200,000 (£27m being the cost of refurbishing the East Market today) to be raised by a toll of one pence per square foot per week per shop. The Market Improvement Committee (Henry Lowman JP Chairman) adopted the Horace Jones' scheme for a building 631 feet east to west, 246 feet north to south, with a rail station to be constructed jointly by the Corporation and the Metropolitan and Great Western Railway. (These works could only be carried out for 2-3 hours per night).

The market was opened in 1868. "The moving of a market is always an operation of great risk and uncertainty" he said in his paper - how true by our own current experiences.

Apart from the overall design, Jones introduced an innovation in the roof structure with provision of two thicknesses of glass which stops the heating ray penetrating the second glass and thus inducing a current of air. The overall design was generally Italian and more allied to the Renaissance Architecture of France than the more severe Palladian School.

(Minutes of the Smithfield Club in 1873 - Smithfield Show - Dense fog some cattle died others slaughtered most moved. Sheep and pigs did not suffer so much as their heads were comparatively covered in the straw which acted as a filter).

The structure of the market consists of iron girders on wrought-iron stanchions. Above ground the building is conceived as a series of arcaded recesses leading to shops. The outer skin is of red brick and Portland stone, four towers placed at each corner. Broad glass louvres in the mansard roof admit air for ventilation, whilst the overlapping of the plate-glass is designed to shut out the direct rays of the sun, Jones' original idea. On Smithfield Market Aubrey Wilson aptly comments: "Its main feature is, however, the covered roadway which divides it into two equal parts. The roadway unites the design and supplies just that feature of interest needed to mark the centre of the building, breaking the monotony of the long north and south fronts. The roadway is 50 ft wide between the double piers which carry a richly moulded elliptical arch and pediment of cast iron. The sides of the roadway are shut off from the market by an elaborate screen of open ironwork and at its intersections ... with

the central avenue the market is closed by gates of ornamental ironwork". Perceptively, Wilson remarks on Smithfield's "air of both a railway station and a pier", though Pevsner finds it "weakly Italianate". Surely Jones' skills in combining practicality with delight and originality are undeniable after over 100 years?

Jones was to add further to his work at Smithfield in 1875 with a somewhat similar Poultry Market. This was burnt down in 1958 and replaced by the present structure. Completing the range was the Central Fruit & Vegetable Market of 1881 (later a fish market) fronting Farringdon Road. The supporting columns here are constructed of rolled iron sections (again this was Jones' own idea of providing longer and stronger support). A smaller fourth market was built opposite this in the 1880's).

Deptford Foreign Cattle Market

Jones' second market project was the conversion of the old Government Dockyard in Deptford dating from Nelson's time, to a Foreign Cattle Market for the City Corporation. (The dockyard now belongs to a well-known newspaper group which carried out drastic alterations to the buildings). Jones himself dwells at some length on the history of the dockyard in a speech to the RIBA on 7 January 1878. He mentions the building of three jetties and the filling of slips where ships had been built. Jones was also responsible for building several sheds for lairage accommodation, for adding slaughter-houses and tripe houses and for building roads here in the early 1880's. The interiors of these buildings with their great spans of iron and timber bear comparison with the best examples of 19th Century industrial architecture.

In 1875 he was responsible for the erection of new lairage accommodation and slaughter-houses at Islington Cattle Market, originally designed by Bunning. These have now all been demolished.

Billingsgate Market was completed in 1877 and proved to be very much admired and successful. The site was very restricted and to obtain a solid foundation a deep vaulted basement was constructed. This was to form the largest deep freeze in the City and when the Corporation closed the market in the early 1980's, it was thought the whole structure would collapse into the river and many strange items would emerge from the ice. There were, however, no mishaps and the original structure proved to be solid and well designed.

By now Horace Jones was very adept at market design but his Leadenhall

Market in 1882 is considered to be one of his most attractive designs and is still very popular today with its variety of uses.

Whilst his market work continued, he was also very much involved on the Guildhall complex. These included work to the Guildhall itself, a new library and museum with the climax being the New Council Chamber - regrettably destroyed.

From the illustrations, it can be seen that this was a very fine building very much in the high Victorian style with particular attention to the practical problems of heating, ventilation and acoustics.

The Guildhall School of Music was his last single work and proved to be very popular, being near to the Boys' School and many features were retained when both sites were sold by the Corporation in 1987 to a large American Bank for its new London headquarters.

And, finally, to probably Horace Jones' most famous structure, Tower Bridge, which celebrated its own Centenary in 1994. A new vehicle bridge was urgently required but it had to allow access for shipping into the Pool of London. A special City Bridge or Subway Committee was convened in 1876 and Horace Jones' scheme for a bascule bridge was recommended out of ten designs to the Court of Common Council. However, nothing materialised until 1884 when the Government appointed a Committee which selected the scheme whereby Sir John Wolfe Barry was the engineer and Horace Jones the architect. The whole concept of the engineering and architectural design captured the public's attention and today it is still one of the nation's international landmarks. It was sad that he did not live to see it completed.

Conclusion

Sir Horace Jones died of heart disease at the age of 68 on 31 March 1887 at 30 Devonshire Place. He died a rich man leaving over £20,000, three houses and various other properties. At its first meeting after his death, the Court of Common Council unanimously adopted a Resolution "to place on record its high appreciation of his ability as an architect and of the faithfulness and integrity with which he always discharged the duties of his office".

APPENDIX*

A Convivial Clerk of the Works - "Latest Edition of Horace"

The preparation for receptions of this character at the Guildhall was really capital fun. They were all conducted on practically the same lines. The Corporation Committee would determine the general points to be observed and, as far as possible to whom invitations should be sent, a subject always treated on broad lines, so as to ensure the gathering being representative. Then six or eight of us would stay - it did not matter how late in the evening, often, however, till the small hours - in dealing with the details, dispatching invitations and recording the replies as they came in, substituting others according to our judgment for those who declined, guided by supplementary lists approved by the Committee. We dined together bounteously at the Corporation's expense at seven o'clock and then over coffee, cigars, or pipes, would leisurely, and often hilariously, go through the evening. There was much merriment tossed about, however close and serious the work might be, and, if at times a note of severity came up at any slip in exactitude, it came all in good part.

There was at this time at Guildhall a clerk of the works by name Henry Weekes, of a convivial nature, and addicted to intemperance. After many warnings he was summoned before the General Purposes Committee for censure, and possibly dismissal from his post. Just when he was about to be called in, it occurred to a genially-minded member of the Committee that it would only be fair to the man to hear what his chief had to say about it and learn from him if any excusing word could be said concerning him. His chief was Sir Horace Jones, the city architect, and in obedience to the Committee's request he came swaggering in, a large and very corpulent man, displaying a spacious white waistcoat and a massive gold chain, and swinging his hat in his right hand from side to side. He gathered what he was wanted for. He liked Weekes; Weekes was a useful man to him; always at his elbow, anticipating his momentary requirements and he was loth to lose him, despite the man's frequent displays of weakness. When called upon for his views, he deferentially, but deeply, deplored the man's unfortunate failing, but he ventured to observe (and this with bounteous smiles, and not a little light jocularly) that no member of the Corporation could blind his eyes to the fact that everyone connected with it ought to be a two-bottled man. A unanimous burst of laughter greeted this astute remark. The threatening intentions were converted into commiserations, if not into sympathy. Poor, terrified Weekes was not even called in and reprimanded and he served the Corporation faithfully for many years afterwards, with possibly only an occasional slip, of which no one took any notice, and he died in office.

Among the excellent works Sir Horace Jones carried through for the Corporation, was the present fine Council Chamber at the Guildhall. He was a man who married very late in life and he was immensely proud of the son that was born to him. When this son was about five years old, he took him with him in the procession on Lord Mayor's Day, thinking it would amuse the child. The Press, with its usual sagacity, seized upon the incident and recorded in their columns the following item in the procession:- "The City Architect in his State carriage drawn by four horses, with the latest addition of Horace".

* quoted from A.G. Temple **Guildhall Memories** (1918), pp. 72-73

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RIBA Library
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