

W. H. S. Jones (1876-1963)

William Henry Samuel Jones is perhaps best known to current members of the College as the author of two key histories of the College, the first published in 1936 and the second in 1951. However, Jones also occupied a key role in the management of the College from his joining in 1908 to his retirement from active duties in 1945.

Graduating from Selwyn College in 1898, with firsts in both parts of the Classical Tripos, Jones came to St. Catharine's in 1908 with F. M. Rushmore. They had both worked at the Perse School in Cambridge together, Rushmore in charge of the Modern side of the School, Jones as a teacher of Classics. In the tribute to Jones written in the College Society Magazine in 1963, the author notes that "at the age of thirty-two [when he was appointed to a Fellowship] Jones had so far shewn little distinction save as a classic. But the College made great demands on him, and he revealed his astonishing capacity."



This characteristic sketch of W. H. S. ("Malaria") Jones giving a lecture in St Catharine's in 1927/8 was drawn by Sir Robert Somerville, who was attending the lecture, and who gave the original to the College.

Reference: PHOT/7/Jones/4

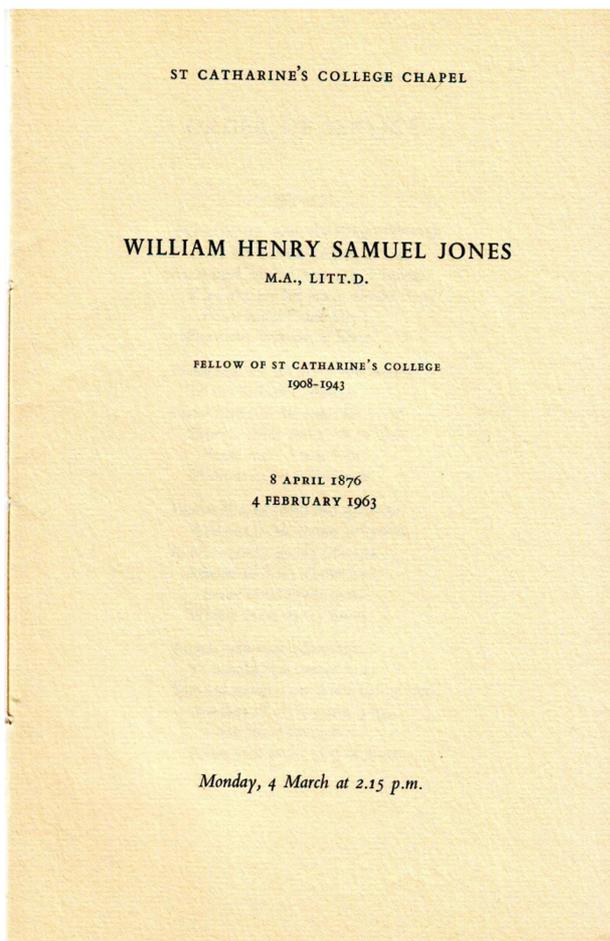
He held the College offices successively of Dean, Steward and Bursar, and President. It was in 1919 that Jones was appointed Bursar, a task he took over from the Master C. H. W. Johns who had appointed himself Bursar in 1917 after the report of professional auditors. Jones took his job very seriously and worked hard to up-date College systems. Although frequently ill, he always endeavoured to keep up with College business and when the thought arose that a College history was needed, it was to Jones that the College naturally turned.

On the academic side, Jones is most well known for his theory relating to malaria and the fall of the classical civilisations, for which he earned the nickname 'Malaria Jones'. He proposed that the spread of malaria was responsible for the decline of the Greek and Roman empires.

W. H. S. Jones, his wife and their dog. This photograph is believed to have been taken at their home in Millington Road, Cambridge.

Reference: PHOT/7/Jones/1





First page of the service sheet for the funeral of W. H. S. Jones.

Reference: OB/2/Jones

Jones died in 1963, after a lifetime of ill health. He always looked emaciated, but his hard work never seemed to exacerbate his ill health. Jones was a man of many contradictions, his ill health, yet strong work ethic just one.

His 1963 tribute ends as follows: "The shy charm and wit, the broad humour, the scholarship and the lavish bestowal of time, the pleasure in sharing the jest, the ill-health and the great persistence: they were all there, and they went to make a memorable St Catharine's man."

This seems a fitting way to end a short celebration of the life of W. H. S. Jones



W. H. S. Jones in later life.

Reference: PHOT/7/Jones/2

References:

'Malaria: a neglected factor in the history of Greece and Rome' by W.H.S. Jones ; with an introduction by R. Ross and a concluding chapter by G.G. Ellett, 1907.

'Malaria and Greek history' by W.H.S. Jones, 1909.

The Archivist is always pleased to answer questions about former members of the College. Enquiries should be directed to archivist@caths.cam.ac.uk, or call 01223 338343. The Archivist only works for the College on Thursdays and Fridays so there is sometimes a delay in being able to answer queries.