

Francis Horace Jones (1874-1937)

Vicar 1928-1931

A Cambridge rugby 'blue,' briefly a Leicester Tigers player alongside his more famous sporting brother Arthur Owen Jones, a navy man, a leading freemason and a lover of amateur dramatics. Francis Horace Jones led a busy, varied and active life until ill health forced his early retirement in 1931.

Francis Horace Jones was born on 22nd February 1874 in Shelton, Nottinghamshire, the youngest of 8 children. His father, John Cartwright Jones, was Rector of St Mary & All Saints Church. Francis attended the independent Bedford School and went on to Emmanuel College, Cambridge, graduating in 1900. He trained as a priest at Ely Theological College and was ordained in Newcastle Cathedral, by the Bishop of Newcastle, in December 1901. He served as Curate of Blyth, Northumberland, between 1900-1904, before joining the Royal Navy as a Chaplain. Francis served on several ships, including Sir John Jellicoe's flagship, The Iron Duke, before taking up the post of Chaplain of the Royal Hospital School in Greenwich in 1918.

In December 1928 it was announced that Francis Horace Jones had accepted an invitation to become vicar of Ashby de la Zouch. On 29th of that same month he married Edith Harriet Sears, the nursing sister in charge of the Greenwich Royal Hospital School infirmary for several years. They were married in her home church in Manea, near March in Cambridgeshire and spent their honeymoon in Christchurch, Bournemouth, before Francis took up his post in Ashby in March 1929.¹



Edith Harriet Sears & Francis Horace Jones

His bride had worked at Addenbrookes Hospital in Cambridge before becoming a sister in the Territorial Force Nursing Service from 1914-1920 and receiving the British Army Medal.

Announcing his appointment in 1928, the press made much of his brother, Arthur Owen Jones, a Nottinghamshire and England cricketer and a distinguished Leicester Tigers player, who died of tuberculosis in 1914.

Francis Jones was to spend just three years in Ashby, retiring due to ill health in 1931.

He was a prominent freemason, a past master of the navy lodge and a recipient of provincial honours in Northants, Beds and Hunts. He was Chaplain of the St Ivo lodge, in St Ives, Cambridgeshire at the time of his death.

He and Edith retired to Hemingford Grey in Huntingdonshire, quite close to his wife's family in Manea, where Francis assisted in several churches, practised as a freemason and enjoyed amateur dramatics and cricket, despite ill health. He died in January 1937, aged 62. On his death, the Blyth News described him as '*a magnificent athlete*' and '*the life and soul of the Blyth Cricket Club as a player during his all too brief sojourn*'.² In retirement, Jones also became president of the Huntingdon

¹ Leicester Daily Mercury. 29 December 1928. (FindMyPast)

² Blyth News. 4 February 1937 (FindMyPast)

Rugby Club. The Peterborough Standard, in his obituary, described him as '*a keen sportsman, a faithful priest and a zealous freemason.*'³

Several Ashby representatives, including Col G German, Major H M S Edwards and Mr F C Stevenson, travelled to Hemingford Abbots for his funeral. He was survived by his widow, Edith.

Julie Starkey
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³ Peterborough Standard. 29 January 1937. (FindMyPast)