

A.G.K. Leonard

Josiah George Poole (1818-1897): Architect and Surveyor serving Southampton

In his *Picture of Southampton*, first issued in 1849, the artist Philip Brannon included his engraving of the new stone walls and iron railings around St. Mary's churchyard. The 'mother church' of Southampton therein depicted was an 1833 enlargement of an older building, all demolished in favour of G.E. Street's replacement of 1878-84, itself reconstructed between 1948 and 1962 after bomb damage in 1940.

Brannon's caption to this print and his text credited J.G. Poole as the architect responsible for the "the great improvement effecting by the enclosure of the church-yard, which, when the design is completed, will offer an example that it would be well for many of the parishes of the metropolis and other large towns to follow". This 'improvement' was the outcome of a public subscription launched in 1846 by a committee comprising Southampton clergy, churchwardens and prominent citizens. Brannon's engraving had, in fact, been done to show what was proposed, as an illustration to the leaflet issued by the committee in January 1847. This stated that "after having offered a premium for a design for the proposed Improvement, the Committee have selected from the drawings sent in the plan best calculated to effect their object - - - and hope to be placed in a position to contract for the requisite works in the course of the ensuing Spring".

Their appeal cogently outlined the circumstances requiring "Improvement":-

"The disgraceful appearance of this Chuchyard has long been a subject of remark and regret amongst all classes of the inhabitants of Southampton, and the unprotected state of the



Josiah George Poole (from a photograph of 1867, courtesy of John Cooper-Poole).

walls and footpaths has rendered the burial place of the dead the resort of the idle and the profligate for evil purposes of every description [...] The opening of the Cemetery on the Common having now precluded further burials from taking place, within the churchyard, except in those cases where parties are the owners of vaults, it has been deemed a suitable opportunity to place a spot so memorable in the annals of the Town in a state of befitting

reparation and improvement. The object of the Committee is to raise a sufficient sum to substantially enclose the whole of the Churchyard with a stone and iron ornamented fencing, fence the footpaths on each side, and so improve the general aspect of the burial ground as to render it a peaceful, undisturbed cemetery for the remains of the dead, as well as an ornament to the Town and a pleasing object of veneration and respect to the living and to future generations".

The Rector of St. Mary's at this time was the Earl of Guilford (sic), an absentee pluralist. He made a donation towards the cost of the project but left the "Curate of the Parish", Rev. C.J. Parsons, to chair the committee and organise the work. In May 1850 he was able to say that about three quarters had been completed but the funds subscribed were exhausted: he hoped that the Local Board of Health (i.e. the Borough Council) would "take up and complete a work in which the public good is deeply involved".

The Local Board of Health eventually did so, although it was not until December 1853 that its busy surveyor was able to invite tenders accordingly.

He was the same Josiah George Poole whose scheme had been accepted in 1846. This was the first of his various contributions to the enhancement of the townscape of Southampton in Victorian times.

It would have helped promote his local professional standing, which was also helped by the commission to alter and enlarge the Catholic church of St. Joseph in Bugle Street in 1850-51, developing the first phase of 1843-44 designed by the celebrated ecclesiastical architect A.W.N. Pugin. It seems that only the chancel was built as he intended: Poole's work probably included the nave but the architectural history of the church is now obscure, due to further alterations and enlargement carried out in 1888 to the plans of another architect, Leonard Stokes. (See N. Pevsner & D. Lloyd: *The Buildings of England* -

Hampshire & the Isle of Wight, Penguin, 1967, pp 519-20).

This seems to have been Poole's only involvement in church design. He was already primarily occupied with his duties as surveyor to a sequence of public bodies in Southampton from 1848 onwards, also the Southampton and South Hants Building Society from its establishment in 1852.

Early Years

Who was this busy young architect, then at the beginning of his career that would see him serving Southampton through nearly half a century?

Josiah George Poole was born on 7 December 1818, the son of William and Mary Poole, then living in Bugle Street. He was baptised at St. Michael's church on 31 January 1819, when his father was recorded as being a coachman. Josiah George was the second son of his second marriage, to Mary Coles of Hound in November 1816. Of Mr and Mrs William Poole nothing is known beyond the dates of their deaths and burials in Southampton in 1840 and 1854 respectively, aged 74 and 78, but they obviously ensured that their son Josiah received sufficient education and training to support his progress towards a professional career.

On 7 October 1838 J.G. Poole ("of age, bachelor, articled clerk, Portswood: father - retired coachman") married Eliza Byles (described as a minor, the daughter of George Byles, a tailor) at South Stoneham. They had five children, born between 1840 and 1850 - a son, christened William Clinch Poole, in 1841, and four daughters, two of whom died in infancy.

The baptismal entries in the parish registers of St. Mary's and All Saints churches recorded their father's address and occupation as:-

1840 Union Terrace, architect
1841 Regent's Place, builder's foreman

1843 South Front, Kingsland, writing clerk
1846 25 Union Terrace, Canal, Walk architect
1850 Bernard Street, architect & surveyor

While his description of himself as "architect" in 1840 may have been more a matter of aspiration than professional status, he could by then have completed his term as a pupil with some professional man; over the next few years he evidently took a range of employments to widen his practical experience, until he confidently published his advertisement as "architect and surveyor" in the Southampton Directory for 1849. Here, at "charges strictly moderate", he offered a wide range of services:-

Plans, Specifications, and Estimates for every description of Buildings, Alterations. Shop Fronts, &c.

Measurer and Valuer of Builders' Works, upon the most satisfactory and correct principle.

Land carefully Planned and Allotted for Building purposes.

Estates, Landed, and other Properties Surveyed, Mapped, and Computed.

Properties valued, Plans taken and drawn on Deeds for Solicitors, in the most careful manner.

As a useful sideline, he also announced himself as "Agent for the Metropolitan Counties, and General Life Assurance Annuity, Loans and Investment Society" .

Improvement Commissioners

By 1849, J.G. Poole had already secured his first appointment as Surveyor to one of the Southampton local authorities – the Improvement Commissioners established under an Act of 1844 to carry forward with wider powers the functions of the Pavement Commissioners set up in 1770. The new Board, separate from but closely associated with the Borough Council, was authorised to borrow £20,000 to undertake a programme of sewerage

and drainage schemes and road improvements. These were initially the responsibility of the ubiquitous John Doswell Doswell, who held multiple appointments as Surveyor to the Improvement Commissioners, the Pier and Harbour Board and the Borough Council.

MR. J. G. POOLE,
ARCHITECT AND SURVEYOR,
25, UNION TERRACE, CANAL WALK,
SOUTHAMPTON.

Plans, Specifications, and Estimates made for every description of Buildings, Alterations, Shop Fronts, &c.

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Agent for the Metropolitan Counties, and General Life Assurance Annuity, Loan, and Investment Society.

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Josiah Poole's advertisement in the 1849 'Directory of Southampton'.

Following his resignation from the service of the Commissioners, J.G. Poole was appointed to succeed him as their Surveyor from September 1848.

Their minute books have not survived but associated papers preserved in the City Archives show him involved with carrying out sections of

the sewerage works, e.g. in February 1849, followed by others, including Kingsland Place and Spa Road in August that year.

Poole had also to attend to numerous specific cases of arranging drainage from various properties and connections with new sewers, along with day-to-day matters such as settling lines of street frontages and shop fronts; dealing with encroachments, cellar flaps and coal vaults in front of houses and doors opening outwards; maintaining public lamps and adding new ones where needed; as well as dealing with licences for owners and drivers of Hackney carriages and trying to keep abreast of houses etc being erected without due notice.

The Surveyor to the Commissioners had also to concern himself with improvements and maintenance of pavements and streets e.g. laying gravel in Commercial Road and crushed whinstone in the High Street. He was responsible for the seasonal watering and regular scavenging of town streets - three times a week for the High Street, once or twice a week for others. To deal with 13½ miles of public streets, he had a staff comprising "two able-bodied men at 15s. per week each man and four others from the poor house, who are paid by the Guardians from the poor rates, occasionally". A contractor supplied horse, cart and driver - for 6s. a day, "with the right to such portions of the sweepings he may think proper to take".

Ominously, "they never sweep or cleanse any of the 167 undedicated streets, passages and courts".

Local Board of Health

The urgency of improving the sanitary condition of the town was dramatically highlighted by the cholera epidemic, which claimed 240 lives in June - September 1849. Public demand for effective further measures to tackle potentially lethal "nuisances" centred on the establishment of a Local Board of Health, carried forward in January 1850 by the comprehensive public inquiry conducted at the Bargate guildhall over

a period of two weeks by William Ranger, the sanitary engineer appointed as inspector for Southampton by the central government General Board of Health. J.G. Poole was among those giving evidence to him, detailing the work of the Improvement Commissioners in respect of street lighting and cleaning, the progress of sewerage works etc. He listed 62 streets where sewers had been laid down since 1845 and another 135 still without sewers. (In March 1851 Poole was duly paid £22.8s.9d. fees and expenses for his attendance at the inquiry).

Ranger's inquiry, ably conducted and swiftly presented in a detailed *Report to the General Board of Health* (HMSO 1850), quickly overcame ill-founded opposition in the name of local self-government and led to the Borough Council agreeing to itself becoming the Local Board of Health. A bill authorising it to exercise these powers passed through Parliament in August 1850.

Mr Ranger's recommendations were thorough-going and comprehensive. As Local Board of Health, the Borough Council faced the task of dealing with the many streets as yet without sewers, together with about a hundred congested courts, alleys and yards, where conditions were truly revolting. Even where sewers had been constructed in the 1840s, it was on a piecemeal basis, with many properties not connected and lacking piped water supplies. At the outfalls of some of the new sewers, untreated discharges created offensive and unhealthy conditions on the mudlands off the Western Shore and near the Floating Bridge.

Mr Ranger was engaged as consulting engineer to the Local Board of Health, which held its first meeting at the Audit House on 23 September 1850, under the chairmanship of the Mayor, Richard Andrews. In October, it voted unanimously to appoint J.G. Poole as its Surveyor, at a salary of £150 a year (paid quarterly in arrears). Dr Francis Cooper was appointed Medical Officer of Health at the same salary, on a part-time basis. The Surveyor was initially required "not to engage in any private

practice within his district" but in July 1851, when the Board agreed to fund an office in Lansdowne House, it was decided that he might engage in private practice - although he would have had less time available because the Board then added to his duties those of the Inspector of Nuisances.

Poole was doubtless kept busy dealing with more of the matters that had been his concern since the autumn of 1848. There was fear of another outbreak of cholera in 1853: the *Hampshire Advertiser* of 8 October reported the Bargate having been whitewashed - seemingly as some sort of precaution against disease. The following month the Board advertised that it had provided "a pumping apparatus for emptying cesspools, privy vaults and dead wells etc.", which could be borrowed on application to its Surveyor. In another advertisement, Poole sought to secure "an assistant who has a knowledge of surveying and is of sober habits. One who is acquainted with the town preferred."

There was plenty of work to be done, including the updating of a large-scale 10 ft to the inch map of the town - authorised in October 1851 at a cost of £100 - to record all the development of concern to the Local Board of Health.

In December 1853 Poole was seeking tenders for cleaning and scavenging all the streets of the borough; altering and widening Love Lane (St. Mary Street); and a major project to pave all the unpaved streets and courts - for which the lowest tender was £16,000.

Poole's responsibility for sewerage and drainage schemes was increased after August 1854, when William Ranger resigned as consulting engineer, consequent upon his appointment as full-time Superintendent Engineer to the General Board of Health.

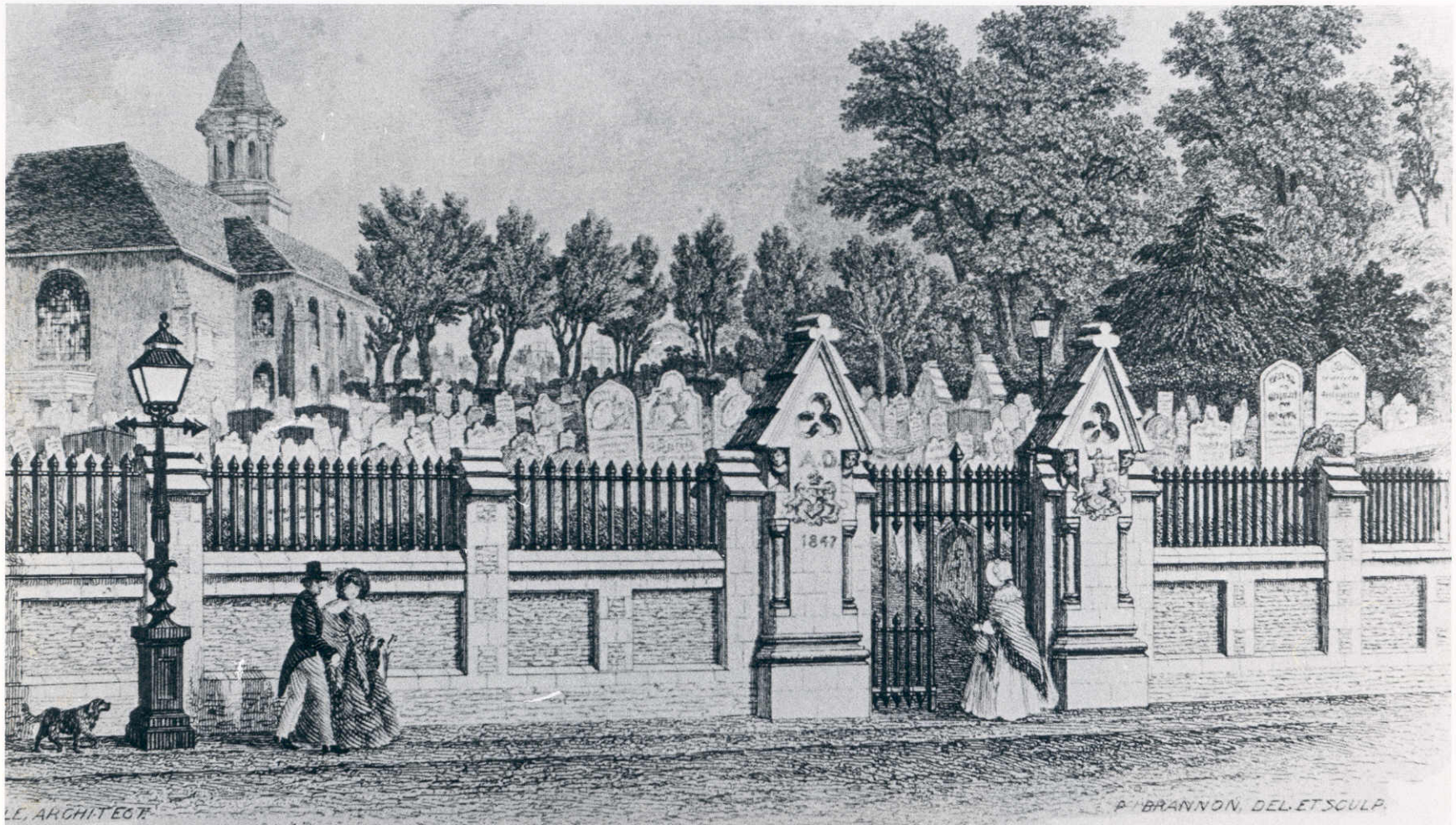
An incomplete collection of Poole's reports to the Local Board in the 1850s, preserved in the City Archives, shows him continually dealing with a host of routine matters - obstructions, encroachments, nuisances of various kinds,

sewer and drainage connections etc, as well as attempting to exercise some control over new buildings and apply the Board's byelaws, including regulations affecting slaughter houses and common lodging houses. In November 1856 he presented to the Board a long list of cases of non-compliance with statutory notices to construct water closets, lay drains and connect to sewers: its compilation must have required much time and effort on the part of the Surveyor, who seems to have had only one paid assistant during these years.

His services were usefully complemented by those of William Clinch Poole, Josiah's only son by his first marriage, who became 15 in August 1856 and joined his father's office as a pupil. He progressed through this apprenticeship to be elected A.R.I.B.A. in 1863. The practice was then briefly styled "Poole & Son" but W.C. Poole soon left the partnership with his father to pursue an independent career in and around London. He was involved in laying out numerous new housing estates for land and building societies and other developers, principally in Wandsworth, Tooting, Balham, Fulham and Wimbledon. He designed various houses and blocks of flats for them and other clients, along with other commissions such as the chapels at Battersea cemetery and additions to the Union workhouse at Wandsworth. He died in 1911, at his home in Wandsworth.

Family

Josiah Poole's addresses generally combined family home and private offices. In December 1851 he took a five year lease from Colson Bernard (at £25 a year rent) of Old Palace House, 9 St. Michael's Square - the central section of the building that since 1912 is conserved by the Council as Tudor House Museum. The Census of March 1851 had recorded him at his previous address, 6 Bernard Street, with his wife and three children and one live-in servant. There was no addition to the family of this first marriage: Mrs Eliza Poole died young in December 1853.



St. Mary's Churchyard, Southampton.

Philip Brannon's engraving of St. Mary's churchyard showing J.G. Poole's 1847 design for its brick and stone wall.

Josiah took a second wife, at Romsey Abbey, on 8 June 1854, when he married Louise Mary Powell, daughter of Thomas Lampard Powell, an upholsterer of that town. The new bride was 21, her husband 35. Their marriage was blessed with 16 children, born between 1855 and 1877, four of who died in childhood.

Before 1858 their father removed the family home from St. Michael's Square to 6 Albion Place, then in 1862 to 4 Gloucester Square. From 1867 he had established his office and home at 21 Portland Street, advertising his services as valuer as well as architect and surveyor - also in 1869 as estate agent. His eldest surviving daughter, Miss Marion Poole (born 1843) had served her indentures from the age of 16 with Alexander Campbell Rowland, "a professor and performer of music" (Lynda Chantler: *As it was*, pp 42-43); from 1867 she advertised herself as "teacher of the pianoforte and harmony" at the same address. The 1871 Census recorded Mr and Mrs Poole living there with ten of their children. By 1880 the family had returned to Old Palace House, St. Michael's Square, where the census enumerator in 1881 noted twelve children (seven daughters and five sons) aged between 4 and 20 years living with their parents. Ten years later J.G. Poole and his wife, their ages given as 70 and 56, were again recorded at this address, with five daughters and three sons, now aged between 14 and 29, still at home with them. Later in 1891 the Pooles removed to 118 Gordon Avenue.

Borough Council

To return to the 1850s, at its meeting on 10 November 1856, the Borough Council resolved "that the Surveyor to the Local Board be appointed Surveyor to the Corporation, except to such portions of the duty as related to the Cemetery, which shall be superintended by Mr. J.W. Beavis at a salary of £10 p.a." J.G. Poole was to receive £50 p.a. for this additional appointment, which was made by a vote of 16-8, electing him in preference to the other candidate, George Doswell, son of the celebrated John Doswell Doswell.

One of Poole's early tasks was to survey and recommend prices for the sale to Summers & Day and Money Wigram of sections of the mudlands abutting their freehold premises at Northam. He proposed £125 and £159 respectively but the shipbuilders must have had friends in the Council, which in August 1857 reduced Poole's figures to £50 each. Other duties in the late 1850s included arranging a new entrance from Market Lane to the Audit House in the High Street; repairs to the town wall along Western Shore; and designing and obtaining tenders for graduated and portable seating in the Bargate guildhall.

As Borough Surveyor, J.G. Poole was shortly to be responsible for painstaking works of repair and renovation to the Bargate, giving its south front its present historically authentic appearance, but in 1859-60 he was involved in a lesser project at the old Grammar School in Bugle Street - which around 1830 he may have attended as a pupil, living nearby. An aspect of this scheme, which passed unnoticed for more than a century, has now been recognised as of historic importance in the development of glued laminated timber technology.

"Glulam" Pioneer

Pioneering glued laminated timber arch structures in Germany, France and Britain were the subject of detailed research by Dr. L.G. Booth, Emeritus Reader in Timber Engineering, Department of Civil Engineering, Imperial College, London. His accounts included two detailed articles published in the *Journal of the Institute of Wood Science*, Vol.13, nos. 3 & 4, 1994. The second, written in collaboration with Diana Heywood, was entitled "Josiah George Poole and the New School Room, King Edward VI School, Bugle Street, Southampton - an early example of glued laminated timber arches in buildings of Great Britain".

Now the Marriage Room of the Southampton Register Office, the schoolroom erected in 1866 to Poole's design is therein acclaimed as "a building whose roof is still supported by the

earliest known glued laminated timber arches in Britain".

The "free grammar school" established in 1554 had occupied premises in Bugle Street since 1696. In early Victorian times it languished to the extent that in 1853 it had only a handful of pupils. On the death of its master, Rev. Thomas Shapcott, Vicar of St. Michael's, in August 1854, no replacement was appointed and the school remained closed for six years.

Responsibility for the school was contentiously divided between a body of charity trustees and the Corporation, which leased the premises to them. In August 1859 the latter acknowledged "the necessity of causing the school premises to be put into a proper state of repair" and in September Mr Poole was directed to prepare plans and specifications for the invitation of tenders for the work. He evidently proceeded speedily, enabling the Council to accept in October the £659 tender of a well-known local builder, Mr S. Stevens. This was for repairs and the removal of some unwanted outbuildings.

The charity trustees of the school were reported in January 1860 to be "anxious that a new School Room should be erected upon the Free Grammar School premises and that the present School Room should be converted into Class and Dining Rooms and that the Trustees were willing to lay out all the available funds in their possession towards such a desirable improvement". As its Lease Committee later unanimously resolved, "the Corporation are not called upon to carry out any further works at the Free Grammar School premises", so the erection of any additions to them had to be financed by the trustees, whose resources were obviously limited.

Poole had therefore to design a new schoolroom as cheaply as possible. Again, he lost no time producing an acceptable scheme: on 28 January he reported that "the Trustees of the Grammar School Charity authorised me to employ Mr. Stevens to erect an extra school room [...] the Trustees are to pay him a sum of £250 for

builders work and £70 for heating apparatus, together £320, in addition to the sum of £659, the amount of his contract with the Corporation".

While work proceeded accordingly, the Council granted a new lease of the premises to the school trustees at a nominal rent and agreed to pay £150 p.a. for a new headmaster to be appointed, enabling the school to re-open in August 1860.

The new schoolroom, added to the east of the old building, extending through to French Street, measured 37 by 30 ft. Its pitched roof was supported by three timber arches, each composed of 8 or 10 laminations about an inch thick and four inches wide. No contemporary specification or contract documentation has survived to give details of this form of construction and the timber arches have since been covered by numerous coats of white paint, concealing their highly original nature from all except the most knowledgeable experts.

Further alterations were carried out by the school trustees in 1872, notably to the schoolroom, as described in a report published in the *Southampton Times* of 26 April 1873:-

"The room built in 1860, and which has been described as a mere well with a light on top, has been greatly improved through the introduction of windows to the walls and the supply of fireplaces, for ventilating purposes. The lantern has been removed and a handsome perpendicular window placed in the eastern wall, which extends to French-street".

A plaque, later repositioned, was erected to record, in Latin, "Rebuilt and Enlarged 1860, Again 1872 AD". This work cannot have involved the arches supporting the roof, which remain as Poole designed them in 1860. The school removed to new buildings off Havelock Road in 1896 and the Bugle Street premises have since continued in use for other Corporation purposes. Later adaptations have

not affected the arches supporting the roof of the 1860 schoolroom.



The glued laminated timber arches in the schoolroom designed by J.G. Poole in 1860, now the Marriage Room of Southampton Register Office (photograph courtesy of Dr L.G. Booth and Diana Heywood).

It must remain a mystery how Poole came to adopt their distinctive form of construction in 1860 - whether he had heard of this being pioneered in France, Germany or elsewhere, or himself invented it independently, in the context of providing a simple structure as economically as possible.

In any case Poole does not seem to have used this unique form of roof arch in any other building for which he was responsible before or after 1860. It passed unnoticed at the time and remained unrecognised until "discovered" by expert eyes more than a century later.

The Bargate

As Borough Surveyor, J.G. Poole was closely involved in 1863-64 with work on the Bargate, beginning with repairs to the weathered stone and going on to carry through the sensitive renovation of the South side.

On 16 September 1863 the Borough Council received the report of its Lease Committee "that

finding one of the arches on the South side had been successfully restored by Mr Poole and being of the opinion that it was most desirable a trial should be made as to whether the South side could not be wholly restored, they had directed Mr Poole to remove a small portion of the stucco in front of the Bargate for the purpose of ascertaining the state of the South side for the guidance of the committee."

Poole had already been authorised by the committee to prepare specifications for the restoration work and to invite tenders from selected local builders. The Mayor, George Brinton, commended him for having consulted widely and "given great attention to the matter" and Poole himself spoke to justify his design as being in appropriate Early English style but the Council then voted 17-8 to adopt the proposal of Councillor J.R. Stebbing that "photographs (be taken) of the present partially restored South face of the building and also of the North side, to be sent to Archaeological and Antiquarian Societies and members thereof be invited to give their opinions as to the correct mode of restoration before proceedings be taken."

The background to this discussion was that alterations made around 1705 to the medieval structure had included obliterating the pointed heads of the four windows, taking out the stone mullions and inserting sash frames (for better lighting of the upper chamber used as the town's guildhall) and covering the old stonework with a coat of roughcast rendering. Later in the 18th century, the Bargate was further altered by construction of a pair of archways to provide passages for pedestrians beside the central carriageway.

At the Mayor's request, the Town Clerk asked Sir Henry James, Director General of the Ordnance Survey, "to cause photographs to be taken" of the Bargate; and Rev. Edmund Kell, prominent Unitarian minister and antiquarian, attended the next meeting of the Lease Committee to facilitate consultations, particularly with Edward Roberts, President of the Archaeological Association and secretary of

the Society of Antiquaries. The committee authorised the Borough Surveyor to arrange removal of the cement plaster coating the South frontage to reveal original features and the stonework requiring repair and re-pointing along with the restoration work.

Mr Roberts wrote several letters offering helpful comments and a sketch of the design he preferred for the window. Poole was happy to accept it and to prepare plans accordingly, with specifications for the building contractor appointed, again S. Stevens.

In April 1864 the Borough Council directed the Town Clerk to prepare the contract for the works, the total cost of which seems to have been £140. The builder evidently made good progress, enabling Poole to recommend in his committee report of 4 July that Mr Stevens be paid £100 on account.

Poole then submitted two designs for ornamental stained glass to be fitted to the four windows; his second was selected, to be provided at a cost of £60 by the London firm of Heaton, Butler & Baynes of Covent Garden. Councillor Edward Lanham thereupon offered to present them to the town. The Borough Council meeting of 24 August 1864 voted its thanks to him for his generosity and to "E. Roberts esq. for his advice and assistance in the matter of the restoration of the South side of the Bargate."

In December 1864 the Council was informed that the windows had been duly installed and insured for £25. At its next meeting on 1 February 1865 members unanimously carried the motion proposed by Cllr Stebbing "that this Council very cordially acknowledges the generous presentation of the decorated windows now adorning the Town Hall which have been prepared at the expense of Mr Edward Lanham" and "that this vote and acknowledgement be written on vellum and presented to that gentleman in token of his goodwill and liberality."

The windows suffered blast damage during World War II; replacements were provided free of charge by W. Dibben & Sons and fitted in May 1947.

A distinctive feature of the Roberts-Poole restoration of 1864 was the framing of windows and arches incorporating corbels carved with representations of the heads of kings and queens - 14 monarchs in all, selectively chosen, running in historical order from King John, flanking the top left window, to Queen Victoria, depicted beside the smaller arch to the left of the entrance stairway.

Council records do not contain any reference to them and they are not mentioned in the surviving reports of the Borough Surveyor. It would appear likely that they were not the work of any named sculptor but were probably carved by a local craftsman, working for the builder S. Stevens on this part of the specification for his contract. Unfortunately, the soft stone used for these carved heads was soon weather-eroded; photographs from the early 1900s show them already featureless and unrecognisable. Their intended subjects can now only be known from Poole's outline "Diagram for Carvings", happily preserved in the City Archives.

Ransom's Fountain

In 1865 J.G. Poole designed what is now a "Grade II listed building of special historical and architectural interest" This is a drinking fountain and horse trough at the southern end of Asylum Green, in the centre of The Avenue; long disused, it was carefully moved some twenty yards north of its original position to preserve it during road improvements in 1966.

Inscriptions proclaim it "the gift of Mr Councillor John Ransom to his native town", inaugurated on November 2nd 1865. Ransom (1799-1886) was a Victorian "self-made man" who "raised himself from small beginnings to a position of considerable opulence" as builder and owner of numerous small wooden sailing vessels, mostly engaged in coastal trading. He

was a colourful character, who from 1851 lived at Hawthorn Cottage on the edge of the Common, whence he was a familiar sight being driven in his carriage or pony and trap down to his shipyard in Northam.

In April 1865 the Local Board of Health (i.e. the Borough Council) was informed that "he was desirous of presenting the town with a drinking fountain, providing the Local Board would supply it with water." To "meet the needs for a water supply for way-worn beasts" and their thirsty masters, Ransom selected one of several designs prepared for him by J.G. Poole, whether as obliging Borough Surveyor or in his private capacity is unclear.

Its "artistic execution" by the London sculptor Sansom and local builder Samuel Stevens was praised by Southampton newspapers, one writer acclaiming "the perfection of this chief ornament, of great practical usefulness, to the principal entrance to the town."

Placed on three steps, on a mosaic tiled surround, the stonework of the fountain incorporated basins and water points on all four sides - with the injunction "drink but waste not" - and inscribed columned panels embellished with relief carvings of the four seasons, all topped by a dome and decorative cross.

So much admired in Southampton, Poole's elegant structure was also featured in the *Illustrated London News* of 9 December 1865, which published an impressive engraving and an enthusiastic description of it, as "a highly creditable specimen of artistic skill." This is quoted in full, along with a more detailed account of the shipbuilder who thus created his own long-lasting memorial, in a chapter in the book *Southampton Memorials of Care for Man and Beast*, published in 2005 by the admirably active Bitterne Local History Society.

Shirley Sewerage

The importance of clean water supplies and efficient urban sanitation was again underlined

by further "visitations" of cholera to Southampton in the autumn of 1865 and again in the following summer, claiming over 140 lives. The same meeting of the Borough Council on 30 October 1865 that approved the location of the Ransom fountain in The Avenue had also the melancholy task of resolving that "the Corporation sincerely deplores the sad calamity which has deprived them of the efficient services of their Officer of Health Dr Cooper, who lost his life while in the discharge of important public duties."

For whatever reason, perhaps not unrelated to the pressures of his situation and responsibilities at this time, Josiah Poole soon afterwards decided to relinquish his Corporation appointments at the end of the year.

In his *Reminiscences of Public Life in Southampton 1866-1900* Sir James Lemon recorded that advertisements for a successor brought 62 applicants, from whom he was selected on 10 January 1866 by a vote of 22-11. Then 32, he was well qualified, having worked for the Metropolitan Board of Works as an assistant to Sir Joseph Bazalgette. Lemon was surprised to find that his predecessor at Southampton had been operating with only one assistant, W.B. Morgan. The incoming Borough Surveyor quickly surveyed the state of the town sewers, organising action to clean out those that had become partially stopped up and going on to produce a report on what more needed to be done to improve and extend the sewerage system, separating gravitational drainage from higher levels and lower level sewers which needed to be pumped. Lemon was able to take a newcomer's overall view of the system, whereas Poole had perforce been working piecemeal on various lesser projects.

After 12 busy years serving the Corporation, Lemon left to start his own practice, while continuing as Consulting Engineer to the Council - of which he himself became a member in 1883-1900, serving a chairman of its Works Committee and twice Mayor in 1891-93. He was knighted in 1909, in recognition of his

life's work enhancing the profession of Civil Engineering.

Meanwhile, having left the service of the Corporation, J.G. Poole soon found another appointment, when the Shirley Local Board of Health meeting on 31 January 1866 unanimously engaged him as the engineer to design and carry through its first drainage and sewerage scheme.

The Board agreed to pay him 2.5% for making sections, plans, specifications, estimates, superintending the works and certifying contractors' accounts. Poole lost no time in starting to earn his fees, bringing to the Board's next meeting on 7 March a plan showing his proposed route for the main sewer, along the Romsey Road from Anglesea Road down to an outfall pipe below Four Posts; he later added connections for the Shirley Park area and most of Hill Lane.

The Board approved his report and detailed plan on 18 April but objections were registered by the Borough Council (represented by James Lemon) against any outfall across the mudlands below Four Posts. The Shirley Board asked the Government to send an engineer to hold a local enquiry to resolve the impasse. Robert Morgan came to Shirley to conduct it on 26 June. He decided that Poole's proposed route was appropriate but that to obviate the nuisance that Southampton feared, a tank should be constructed at Four Posts, from which sewage would be discharged at ebb tide every 12 hours. Poole was then authorised to invite tenders: the whole project was expected to cost about £7,500 - which the Board had to borrow commercially from a Life Assurance Society.

After various delays, contracts were signed on 1 May 1867 and work proceeded. In January 1868 the Board members remarked upon "the almost complete absence of Mr Poole from the works during their construction" and urged him "to give his personal superintendence to ensure speedy completion." He presumably had full confidence in the man he had selected from 60

applicants to serve as his clerk of works at £1.13s. a week; Thomas Egerton continued to oversee operations until their completion in November 1868.

The subsequent history of sewerage arrangements for Shirley, superseding Poole's original scheme, is outlined in a chapter in the booklet *Shirley Nuisances and Services* published by Southampton City Council in 2003 (£2.50 from the Central and Shirley Libraries).

The immediate benefit to Shirley of Poole's 1868 project was limited by the Board deciding that it "cannot consent to any privies being connected to the main sewer until a supply of water be obtained," Most larger properties had their own wells and pumps to service water closets but the majority of smaller ones had to wait another ten years, until the newly established South Hants Water Works Company began laying its mains in 1878 to bring piped water supplies to the area.

Later Works

Around 1869 J.G. Poole, with his offices at 21 Portland Street, advertised himself as valuer and estate agent as well as architect and surveyor. Besides continuing as Surveyor to the Southampton & South Hants Building Society, he offered a range of services to other developers and builders:

Designs, Specifications and Estimates prepared for every description of Building and Alterations.

Plans of and for the laying out of Estates for Building and other purposes; for Drainage, Roads, and for Leases, Transfers &c."

Valuations of Builders' and general Contractors' Work, and for Repairs, Dilapidations, Probate, Mortgage &c."

In 1871 J.G. Poole secured appointment as Surveyor to the Southampton Harbour Board - a part-time position that he was to hold in an

increasingly nominal capacity for the rest of his life.

From 1871 he was assisted in his practice by two of his sons from his second marriage - first as professional pupils, then as partners.

The first, born on 29 May 1856 and baptised at St. Michael's church on 1 February 1857, was George Thomas Poole. In June 1871, having reached the age of 15, he was apprenticed to his father "to be taught the arts and sciences of an architect, engineer etc." After thus becoming qualified, he continued helping his father on harbour and jetty works in Southampton before widening his experience in 1879-81 as assistant to Christopher Creeke, Surveyor to the Improvement Commissioners for Bournemouth, carrying out Sir Joseph Bazalgette's sewerage scheme. He returned to partner his father for another two years before moving to London to start his own practice in Chancery Lane.

In 1885 G.T. Poole successfully applied for the post of Superintendent of Public Works for the Government of Western Australia, got married at Bournemouth and left England to pursue a distinguished career "down under." As architect and engineer, ARIBA, AMICE, he was responsible for many public buildings now greatly esteemed and preserved for their historic value. Leaving the Western Australia government service in 1897, G.T. Poole continued prominent in private practice and professional activities, until his death in 1934.

His younger brother, born on 17 December 1863, the seventh of the 16 children of Josiah's prolific second marriage, was Edward Cooper Poole. From 1879 he likewise became his father's professional pupil, then his partner, taking over his work for the Harbour Board, first as assistant surveyor, then as Acting Surveyor from 1887, when his father had effectively retired and was declining in health.

J.G. Poole was a long-time member of the Royal Gloucester Lodge of Freemasons. One of his later projects involved a Masonic Hall in

Southampton. In 1878 a group of Masons formed a company to acquire a site at Albion place/Forest View on which to erect a new hall. They included two other surveyors - Joseph Lemon and Edwin Howell. The latter prepared plans, on which tenders were obtained from local builders who were themselves Freemasons. The lowest was from S. Stevens & Son at £3,917. It seems that this design was regarded as too expensive, so it had to be reduced in scale, leading to the withdrawal of Mr. Howell. J.G. Poole then agreed to replace him; he produced revised plans and specifications, for which a figure of £2,270 was negotiated with the builder.

The cornerstone of this hall was duly laid on 24 March 1879. Its completion in December was celebrated with Masonic ceremony and music ("Bro. Poole was one of the soloists"), followed by a "sumptuous banquet" at the Victoria Rooms.

Final Years

Joseph Poole seems to have possessed a good tenor singing voice, which he enjoyed using at the family Christmas gatherings at Old Palace House in the 1880s. A granddaughter's recollections half a century later helped the *Echo* columnist 'Townsmen' (E.A. Mitchell) to present a colourful description of these festive occasions. His 1937 article, reprinted in the 1938 volume of his collected *Occasional Notes* (page 56-57) is often quoted and seasonally recycled.

A booklet published by the City of Southampton Society in 1987, *The Saving of Tudor House*, includes more about the involvement of the Pooles with the Old Palace House/Tudor House and relates how the whole property was purchased in 1886 by the splendidly named William Francis Gummer Spranger, a practical philanthropist who had it sensitively restored around 1900 and offered it cheaply to the Corporation - which declined to accept it in 1905 but agreed to buy it in 1911, to become the

town's first public museum, opened in July 1912.

Among the eight sons and daughters, aged 14 to 29, recorded by the 1891 census as still living with their parents in St. Michael's Square was Edward Cooper Poole, then 27. He married shortly afterwards and took a house in Hill Lane, maintaining a separate office in Portland Street. By 1892 his parents and younger siblings had removed to 118 Gordon Avenue, Portswood, where J.G. Poole spent the rest of his days, in declining health. He died on 25 May 1897, at the age of 79.

The obituary published in the *Southampton Times* of 29 May is worth quoting because, besides outlining aspects of his professional career as then remembered, it gave an indication of how he was personally regarded and esteemed by his contemporaries. The *Southern Daily Echo* of 26 May reported his death in a notice worded very similarly.

Southampton Times, 29 May 1897

DEATH OF MR. J.G. POOLE

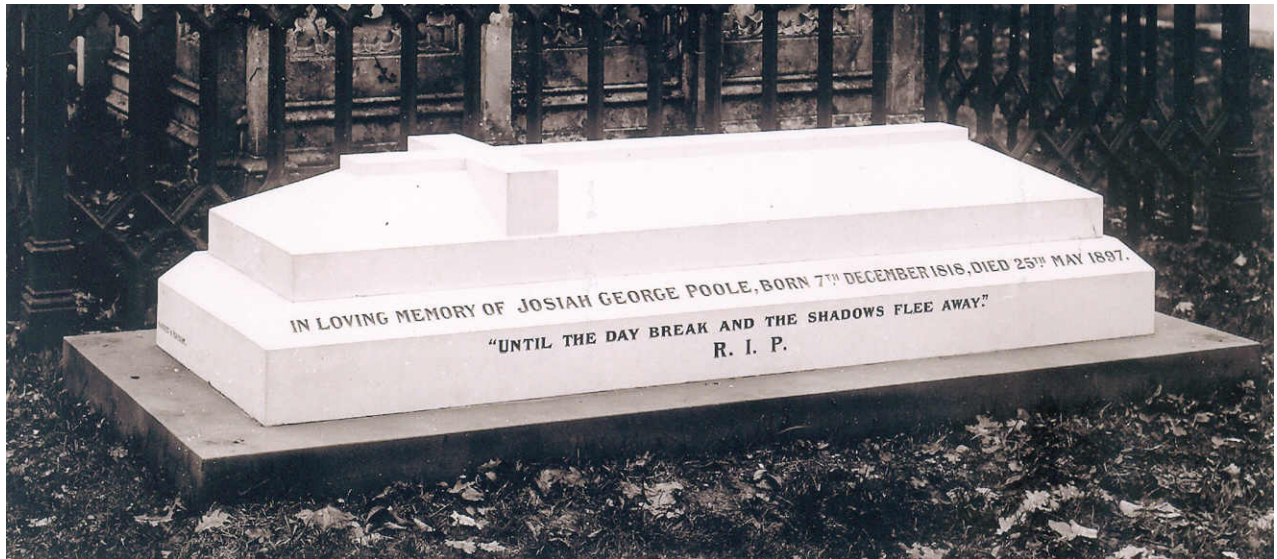
It is with much regret we have to record the death of Mr. Josiah George Poole, surveyor to the Southampton Harbour Board, which sad event, occurred at his residence, Gordon-avenue, on Tuesday, after an illness which had laid him aside from active work for some few years. He was highly esteemed by all who knew him, for though of an unassuming and retiring disposition, his aimability [sic] of character endeared him to everybody with whom he came in contact, while his unflagging zeal and honesty and integrity of purpose were manifest throughout the whole of his long career. In political matters Mr. Poole associated himself with the Liberal Party, and ever remained true to the cause, though his business avocations did not permit of his taking that part in public life which no doubt would have obtained under other conditions. Mr. Poole was a native of Southampton, and was for several years surveyor to the Southampton Corporation, an

office which he resigned in 1866, and in 1871 he was appointed surveyor to the Harbour Board, which post he held until his death. He prepared the first scheme for the sewerage of Shirley, which was carried out under his supervision. He was also surveyor to the Southampton and South Hants Building Society, having held that appointment since the formation of the society in 1852. He was a member of the Royal Gloucester Lodge of Freemasons. Mr. Poole was in his 79th year. The funeral takes place at noon to-day at the Southampton Cemetery.

By his will, made on 15 May 1868, J.G. Poole left all his "real and personal estate and effects to my dear wife Louisa Mary Poole absolutely." On 5 July 1897 she was granted administration of them - valued precisely at £717.17s.11d. gross and £683. 16s. 5d. nett (worth about 100 times as much in today's money,).

His widow lived on another twenty years, dying at Newhaven on 2 January 1918, at the age of 83. She was buried alongside her husband in his grave at the Old Cemetery off Hill Lane. An unmarried daughter, Mary Eveline Poole (born 1876) was also interred there in 1920.

Edward Cooper Poole FRIBA, AMICE served the Southampton Harbour Board as its architect, surveyor and engineer for the remainder of his life. On his father's death in 1897, the Board unanimously appointed him as its Surveyor - not unmindful that "he has carried out the duties for some years." His appointment was initially on a part-time basis, at a salary of £100 p.a. with 2.5% commission on all new works, "allowed private practice but must be at the service of the Board when required" and attend daily at its office. This appointment was made full time in 1916. Its holder continued to serve the Board until his death, on 15 August 1935, a few weeks before he would finally have retired, being already over 71.



This memorial to J.G. Poole looks pristine because it was photographed by A.G. Butler of Northam for the stonemasons Garret & Haysom soon after its placing in 1897 over his grave in the Old Cemetery, near the entrance from Hill Lane. It is now maintained by volunteers of Friends of Southampton Old Cemetery, supported by John Cooper-Poole (who provided this photograph).

Among other projects, he designed the Board's new offices, opened by Admiral Lord Jellicoe on 8 September 1925, and the eye-catching entrance to the Royal pier, reconstructed in 1926-27 to replace the earlier one for which he had been responsible in 1890-92.

Father and son, Josiah George Poole (1818-1897) and Edward Cooper Poole (1863-1935) spent all their professional lives in their native Southampton - between them more than a hundred years - quietly contributing in various ways to the development of town and port.

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Ryden; Dr. I.H. Van Bremen; Friends of Southampton Old Cemetery; and, of course, to the ever-helpful staff of the City Archives Service and the Local Studies Collection at the Central Library, Southampton.

Particular use has been made of the Minutes and associated records and papers of the Southampton Improvement Commissioners Local Board of Health; Southampton Borough Council; Shirley Local Board of Health (all fully catalogued in the Archives Office listings) and volumes of the weekly *Southampton Times*. In addition to books cited in the text, the authoritative work by Professor A. Temple Patterson: *A History of Southampton 1700-1914* (3 vols.) provides an invaluable account of the period reviewed in this article.