



THE CHURCHES CONSERVATION TRUST



St James church was built and designed by Cuthbert Bisbrowne in 1774-5, the only existing structure from an ambitious scheme to build grand houses around a grid of spacious streets on land owned by the Earl of Sefton. Bisbrowne intended to build a high-class area known as Harrington fit for 'gentleman not obliged by business to reside in the centre and bustle of town. The development failed, probably due to its isolation from the centre of town.

The church is made of local red brick and has a tall, square west tower and nave. The chancel, organ chamber and vestry were added in 1900 by the architect H Havelock Sutton. The organ was removed in 1976 and installed in St Peter, Wallingford, Oxfordshire in order to protect the instrument when the future of St James was

uncertain. The tower contained a single bell and a clock, at present removed for conservation

Inside, there are galleries around 3 sides of the church, supported by cast iron columns, believed to be among the oldest use of cast iron for this purpose in England and the earliest in Liverpool. St James is the oldest remaining Anglican Church in the city.

St James became redundant in 1974, and was vested into the care of the Churches Conservation Trust in 1976. It may have become redundant because of plans to construct Junction 1 of the M62 motorway on the site. The church remains in our care today. We envisage an exciting community use for St James, and the full restoration of the church.

The Churches Conservation Trust

The Churches Conservation Trust is committed to finding successful community use for our large estate of redundant churches. For many years, St James has stood empty and unloved, at risk of vandalism in a neighbourhood lacking peaceful, communal space. CCT is determined that the church should be brought back into the heart of the community to safeguard this unique heritage for future generations. To do this, CCT will engage in a period of consultation, to fulfil the needs of the community to provide an oasis of peace and togetherness in a fast-moving urban world. Our aim is to address the fundamental challenges to the future of multi-cultural and multi-faith world. We are seeking partners that can work with us to deliver these goals. We want to position St James back in the heart of the community, to provide a venue for existing groups and offer new and exciting education and social opportunities.

The future

St James will be restored and sympathetically converted to provide community facilities and a base for a new programme of arts, culture, heritage and faith projects, courses, activities and events. The church will be fully accessible, with new toilets and a lift. There will be a small tea bar and relaxing seating area and library where people can enjoy a cup of tea and read newspaper or a book. The galleries will provide exhibition space for community arts projects and the pews will provide seating for audiences of drama, dance and music events. There will be a quiet contemplation area where people can sit in peace and escape from a busy, urban world. Small meeting areas will be created for the use of community groups and education projects. There will be a full exhibition programme supported by workshops and short courses to explore the heritage of St James and the history of Toxteth.

Through the creation of activities, projects, events and training, individuals and communities can participate in heritage, multi-faith, culture, education, training, work, learning, arts and community activities. People from different faiths and cultures can come together in a peaceful and supportive environment. St James will also bring together community

volunteers, community groups, local people, artists, educationalists, creative organisations, education institutions and people from across the region and from all corners of the globe.

Heritage, faith and culture will play a major role in the sustaining the hive of this creative activity in St James. The St James programme will become a central point for the design, development and delivery of heritage, faith, cultural and creative activities, and provide a platform for the exploration of heritage, faith, culture, identity and history. St James programmes will bring together people of all generations, nationalities, faiths and cultures. We aim to bring employment, job training, enjoyment and renewed hope to hundreds of men, women and children.

To ensure we achieve our goals we need to understand what the community needs. Please help us make St James a useful and loved place. Please fill in our questionnaire and consult our plans. You can add a note to the plans with comments and suggestions for facilities or activities you would like to see at St James. We will do our best to make sure St James fulfils the needs of the community.

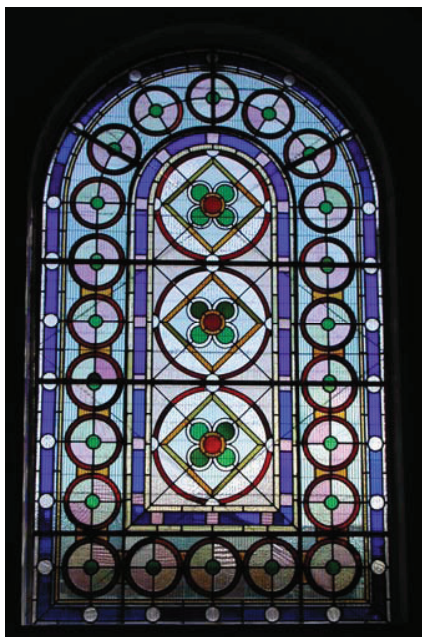
Thank you for your time.



Heritage



Some of the windows contain coloured glass. The large east window in the chancel was installed in 1881, designed by Henry Holiday. It depicts Jesus talking with children under the banner 'suffer little children to come unto me' carried by two cherubs. The 'A' and 'Q' represent the phrase 'I am the beginning and the end' –the first and last letters of the Greek alphabet. The glass itself is painted and was probably made by James Powell & sons.



Although the nave windows are in plain glass, it is believed they were coloured. When the nave windows on the second floor were unblocked, a damaged original window was discovered. This was repaired and reinstated. It appears from old photographs that all the nave windows were coloured in the same design.

St James contains 19 interesting monuments to people connected with the church. They can tell us much about society and life in Liverpool in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, some of which is difficult to comprehend today. Like many people at this time, some of the monuments were to people involved in the trade in sugar and slaves.

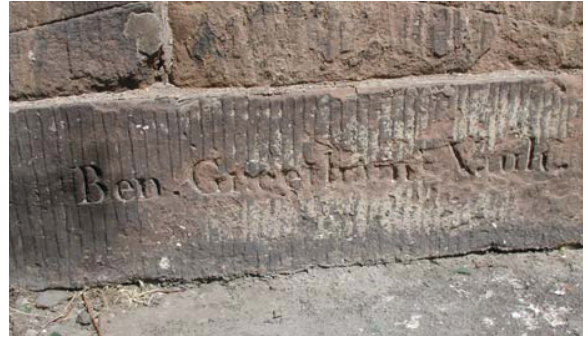


Ashton Byrom crops up several times in the records of St James. At least 3 of his children were baptised at St James: Henry was baptised in 1795; daughters Harriot in 1797 and Valentine in 1799. Their entries in the registers tell us a little about their father. He was married to Elizabeth, described as a sugar refiner and a sugar baker and the family lived in Toxteth Park.



Another interesting figure connected with trade is Moses Benson. He is remembered by his son, Ralph, on his monument "in testimony of the gratitude and esteem in which he holds the remembrance of a truly liberal and affectionate father. Contemplate a good mans life and look for his reward." His father is also featured on another monument- that of Captain George Pemberton, commander of the ship Wilding of Liverpool. Capt Pemberton was killed when defending the ship from the French when bound for Jamaica. Moses Benson pays for this monument and adds the words: 'This monument was erected by the order of Moses Benson in testimony to the high respect he entertained for Captain Pemberton during many years of faithful service.' That service was probably trading in slaves and sugar.

with little contact with the ground. People wanted their remains to be as complete as possible, untouched by worms and uncorrupted by decay. Some resorted to encasing their dead in lead, totally sealed from the air. Many such coffins were laid to rest inside churches as wooden coffins decayed and caused unpleasant smells and as a consequence were banned by the church.

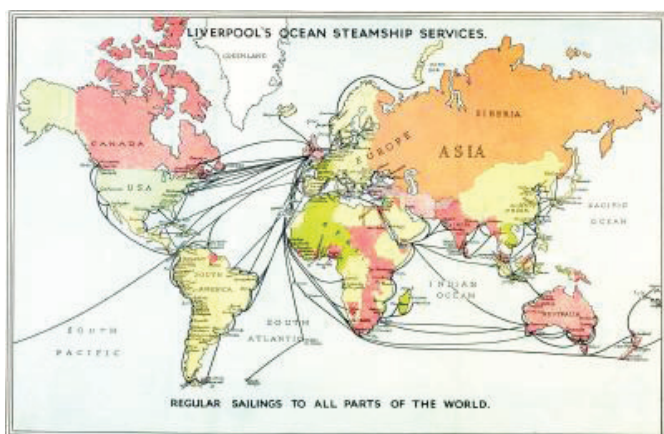


An intriguing stone at the base of the west tower reveals a story of a Toxteth family. Ben Greetham's vault is a reminder of days when people were buried within the church building. Churchyards were unpleasant and overcrowded places. Vivid descriptions describe the stench and half-buried human remains in Britain's churchyards. These conditions made people fear for their health in the present and next life. As such, those who could afford to purchased a vault or a small brick-lined grave within the church building. The coffin was rested on a shelf

Ben Greetham appears many times in the records of St James. He was a ship chandler and merchant. He married his first wife Bridgot, and they had at least one daughter, Eliza who died aged just 15 months in 1795. Later that year, Bridgot also died, aged just 21. Some time later, Ben married Margaret Tyldsley in the Isle of Man. They had at least 6 children. The family lived close by in St James Street and Parliament Street. It is believed that Ben's vault remains unused, though why is hard to explain. It may be that the church was intended to have a crypt beneath but it was never completed as there is little room below the floors, which are close to bedrock. It is unlikely that the church prevented burial inside the church as many Georgian churches were built with crypts specifically to generate income from burial fees. It was more than 50 years before legislation was introduced to outlaw intramural burial, and much longer for this to be implemented.

The registers of St James feature the names and origins of people from all over the world. How they came to Toxteth is not always clear. However, the case of James Thomas leaves us in little doubt- he was baptised on the 9th March 1792 'with the consent and approbation of his master, Thomas Aspinall'. James was described as a 'negro' –sadly his place of birth is not given.

The registers of St James demonstrate how people came from all over the world- New York, North Carolina, South Carolina, Norfolk, Philadelphia, Baltimore Charlestown, Long Island, Wilmington, Virginia (USA), Anamabo, Gold Coast, New Calabar, Old Calabar (West Africa), Saint Vincent's, Tortola (British Virgin Islands), Barbados, Kingston (Jamaica), Santa Cruz, Guadeloupe, Antigua, Savannah, Montserrat, Cape Coast, Martinique, St Kitts, Grenada, Jamaica, Bombay, Belfast (Northern Ireland), Oldenburg (Germany).



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Many Black people gave their origins as America-some would have no doubt been the sons of Black American Loyalists that fought alongside the British in the American War of Independence, in the hope of securing their freedom. Charles William was baptised in April 1792 and came from Charlestown, South Carolina and Peter Salisbury came from Baltimore, Maryland in 1783.

Many Black people in the records came from Gold Coast, now Ghana. Jonny Africa and Peter John were two such men, both baptised in 1786. Ten years later, Samuel Baron, the son of King Onramby was baptised at St James. His father was also known as Jackson. African Kings were often given English nicknames by traders in slaves and goods and slaves were often also given nicknames or the names of their masters. African kings sometimes sent their sons overseas to receive a European education. They were often entrusted to British traders or ship's captains, who sometimes sold the child into slavery. The circumstances of Samuel Baron's life in Liverpool are not known.

George Butler a native of Anamaboe in Africa was baptised 3rd April 1785. He took a European name when he became a Christian-as many people did at the time. He returned to Anamabo and his descendants are still in both Liverpool and Africa today.

Other people came from the Caribbean – from Guadeloupe, like John Luther and Antigua like George the son of Mercyrus Stevens (all baptised in 1795). Several people came from Tortola, in the British Virgin Islands such as Thomas Neptune (Bap. 1786) and Rachel Heringan (Bap. 1791); one of the few women in the register hailing from far flung places. Elizabeth Smith was African and lived in Bold Street and Ann Frances Ray was described as a 'Mulatto'- a person of mixed heritage. Elizabeth Cliffe came from Bombay and was baptised when she was 15 years old in 1806.

Jonathan Hodson was a merchant. He married Ann Moys in Manchester. His 5th child, daughter Ann Hope came into the world on one of his expeditions on 16th may 1802. What is unusual is the inclusion in the registers of the co-ordinates of her place of birth- approximately 500 miles north of French Guyana, presumably en route to the Caribbean.

The burial registers offer a tantalising glimpse of origins and trade: Joachim Bartelt came from Bremen in Germany and a man known simply as Despalet came from Bordeaux. Both were merchants, a clear indication of Liverpool's significance in international trade. Robert Knox was an 'American Captain' and Captain Michel Kalff of the elusive ship 'Juclics' from the unknown place, 'Lasitizea', were both buried in 1800. Peter Leschly was the clerk of the Danish Consul and was born in Norway and died aged 45 in 1797. Their presence in Liverpool indicates the importance of the city on the international scene.

Several entries detail tragic deaths that may have been indirectly caused by superstition: Captain Benjamin Frizzell, Henry McAllister, John Walker, and Fletcher Priestman all died by accident by drowning. Sailors often regarded learning to swim as tempting fate that their ship would sink.

Many sad stories lie behind the entries in the burial registers: Ann Foster died at the bottom of Duke Street-no address was given and the vicar was awaiting further details of her life at the time of her burial.

In 1807, Thomas and Elizabeth Nelson decided to baptise their 8th child Horatio. When Nelson was killed at Trafalgar in 1805 the nation lost one of its great heroes. Statues were built and many people named their children after him. It is no surprise to find one in St James with such strong links with the sea.

There are many entries for people connected with the sea and the ports of Liverpool. The exotically named John Elsworthy Fortunatus Wright was a lieutenant in the army and the master of St George's dock. He died in 1798 aged 49 years. Bernard McCabe was a tide waiter in the customs-there are many master mariners, shipwrights, chandlers, the odd port surveyor, master of docks, customs officers, and pilots. The sea and trade overseas were major sources of employment for the people of St James.

In 1802 Mary Owen gave birth to her son Edward. Mary had married Owen Owen in Penmynydd, Anglesey and they had moved to Liverpool. They lived in Feather Street and Owen worked as a labourer. There is nothing unusual in this entry, except that Edward was Mary's 28th child. Mary is far from alone in bearing an extraordinary number of children. In 1812 Sophia Mason gave birth to her daughter, Ann, her 25th child. Another entry reminds us of the burden of bearing more children than can be cared for. Later that same year, Mary Harrington was baptised. She is recorded in the registers as a foundling, abandoned by her family.

On Christmas Day 1892 Rebecca was born. She was the 4th child of Thomas and Joyce Hallows. We can wonder what life was like for her, 'residing at the cottage "Dungeon" under St James Walk.'

Many people who worked at St James also figure in the registers- the architect of the church, Cuthbert Bisbrowne chose to be buried

here in 1787. Sadly, no monument to him survives.



This monument commemorates John Smith, a vicar of St James. The inscription is in Latin, emphasising his identity as a distinguished and well-educated man. The inscription roughly reads as:

Here in Christ sleeps
Reverend John Smith
Who For 40 years
Taught religious instruction
died 7 may 1841
Aged 66 years

John married Elizabeth Lea at St Oswald's, Chester. He is described as a clerk of the church and has a Bachelor of Arts degree. They lived in Berry Street and had several children-John (1805), Elizabeth (1806), Mary (1807, now living in Mill Street). In 1798 the Rev. William Wise, minister of St James was also buried at the church.

In 1784 Samuel and Martha Littlemore had their daughter Kitty baptised. Samuel was the sexton of St James- he looked after the churchyard and dug graves. Historically, sextons had a poor reputation, renowned for being drunk and careless. They were said to be driven to drink due to the horrible conditions in the churchyards caused by cramming so many bodies that new graves cut through partially decomposed remains.

Edward Grayson



The most famous monument in St James is to Edward Grayson. His inscription reads:

*Sacred to the Memory of
Edward Grayson
of Liverpool shipwright
an honest man an affectionate relative
and a sincere friend
whose zeal in the defence of insulted innocence
caused him to fall a sacrifice to the laws
of false honour
whereby the injured are unhappily compelled
to expose themselves to destruction
at the call
of the aggressor.
He died March 4th 1804 in the
46th year of his age*

Edward Grayson made ships, several of which were used in the sugar trade. He built the ship 'the Watt' for the firm of Watt & Walker in 1797. It was a 22 gun ship-rigged vessel weighing 564 tons. It was used bring back sugar from Jamaica where Richard Watt had an estate. She was sold to Morrall & Boland (merchants) and the Scott shipbuilding family of Greenock in 1809 and continued carrying sugar until 1812.



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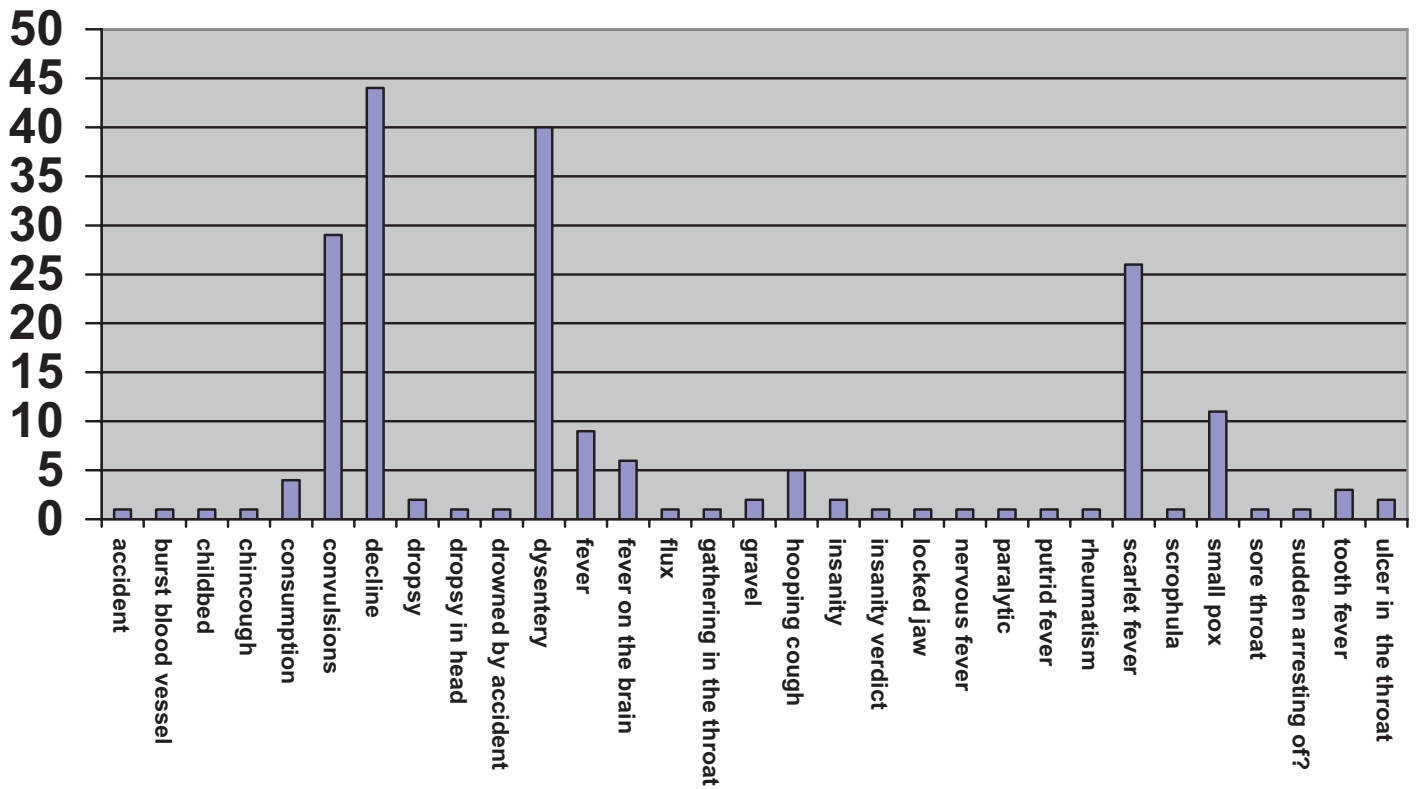
'The Watt' painted in oil in by Jackson in the collection of Liverpool Maritime Museum.

In 1804 Grayson had a disagreement which would cost him his life. He was travelling in his carriage with Major Brooks, on their way to dinner. Grayson felt that Mr Sparling had behaved like 'a villain' in breaking off his marriage with a relative. Major Brooks repeated this conversation and Mr Sparling was very angry and demanded an apology. When none was forthcoming, the matter was to be settled by pistols at dawn on Sunday the 24th February at Dingle Glen.

Each man selected a second, a man to take their place should they not turn up. Grayson rather fortuitously took Dr McCartney (who brought the surgeon, Mr Park with him) and Sparling took Captain Colquitt of the frigate Princess. The four men disappeared from sight into the glen. Shots were heard and Mr Sparling and Capt Finchett returned informing Grayson's servant that his master was gravely injured. The Doctor and surgeon hurried to help and found Grayson, his breeches covered in blood. They took him home, where he died the following Sunday. Mr Sparling and Capt Colquitt were found responsible for Grayson's death. They were sent to Lancaster Assizes for trial where they were found not guilty of murder.

Edward Grayson is believed to be the last man in Britain to die as a result of engaging in a duel.

Causes of Death, 1801.



The burial registers for St James contain some information on causes of death, as reported to the minister at the time of burial. These entries can tell us much about the lives of people who lived around the church and can be very useful in finding out about epidemics, living and working conditions and life expectancy. In 1801 202 people had causes of death entered into the register. The most common entry (44) was death by ‘decline’ this was a euphemism for consumption, or tuberculosis, a disease of the lungs associated with overcrowding.

TB is caused by bacteria and is transmitted through coughs, sneezes, eating utensils and infected milk, cheese and butter. There was a great stigma attached to TB and various alternative entries were made up to lessen the embarrassment felt by those left behind. The houses around St James provided the perfect breeding ground for TB- families would often live 10 people to a room, sometimes even living in cellars. Conditions were cramped, damp, cold and unsanitary. Infection could pass quickly between families, it was wrongly thought to be hereditary and this could explain why it was such a stigma.

It is possible to plot an outbreak of a disease using the burial registers and an old map. The registers often give an address as well as a cause of death. By plotting the deaths on a map, the spread of the disease can be tracked and the point of outbreak can be found. This is particularly useful when tracking down water-borne diseases such as Dysentery and Cholera.

Between August and November 1801, there was an outbreak of dysentery. It began on the 18 August in Ranelagh Street, when Jane, the 9 month old daughter of Henry and Margaret Wilson died. The disease killed 5 people over the rest of August, 45 in September, 23 in October and 2 in November. The disease is particularly prevalent in people with connections to the docks-mariners (5 deaths), Merchants (5), Sawyers (2) and shipwrights (2) all died in the outbreak. Also, the addresses given are concentrated in the area close to Queen’s dock and Prince’s dock. This all suggests that the cause of the outbreak was by the docks. The disease disappeared as quickly as it appeared-probably as the source of infection was identified and removed.

The records can tell us much about life in the past in Toxteth.