

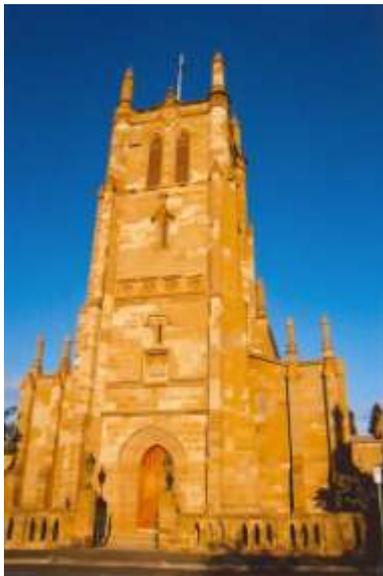
Tour of HOLY TRINITY CHURCH, Hobart (1841)



Holy Trinity Church is located at 50 Warwick Street, Hobart (Tasmania, Australia) and was heritage-listed on the Australian Register of the National Estate in 1978 (place identification number 11197). It is also listed on the Australian Heritage Places Inventory (identifier 2592) and the Tasmanian Heritage Register. The church is regarded as a building of national heritage significance, with a bell tower regarded as being of international heritage significance.

OUTSIDE TOUR OF CHURCH

Convict Built Church Designed by James Blackburn



Holy Trinity Church was designed as a place of Christian worship for the Church of England by convict architect James Blackburn, an Englishman who was transported to Van Diemen's Land (Tasmania) in 1833 for forgery. The church is in the Gothic Revival style with cathedral-like proportions along a north-south axis and is regarded as perhaps his greatest work. It is convict-built on a fine hilltop ("Potter's Hill") with excellent townscape values. The foundation stone was laid in 1841 by Tasmanian Lieut-Governor Sir John Franklin (of North West Passage fame). Construction was completed in 1848, with consecration taking place in 1849 - but not before the ownership title for the building and land had been transferred to the Trustees.

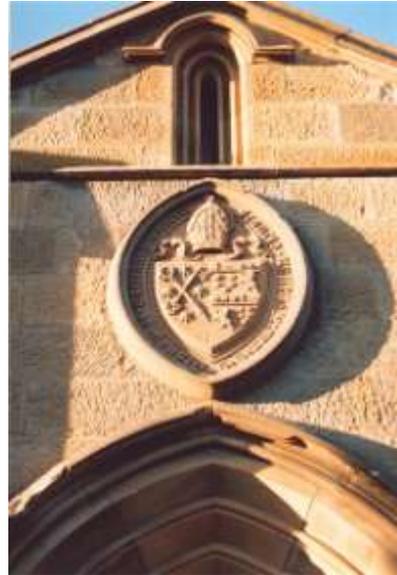
The first rector, Rev Phillip Palmer, was a Christian evangelist seeking to bring the citizens of old Hobart Town and surrounding areas to the gospels.

Early Water Colour Painting



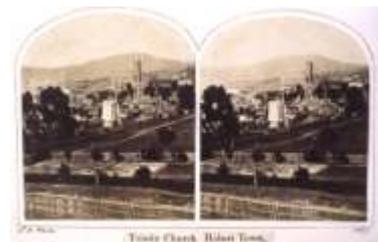
An unsigned water colour painting from the early 1850s bears words to the effect “Respectfully Inscribed to His Excellency, Sir William Denison, Knight, Lieutenant Governor of Van Diemen’s Land”. Given the exactness of line work, it is possibly the work of a very skilled draftsman (rather than architect James Blackburn) which was later hand coloured by a “naïve” artist. Vegetation, European inhabitants and a soldier have been added for context. The spires of presumably Scots Church are shown in the background together with the barely visible masts of a boat on the River Derwent. Denison was Lieut Governor during the latter stages of construction and the painting was probably given to him by parishioners grateful for his support to ensure the building was completed.

A Church - but not a Cathedral!



The Diocesan arms are shown above the entry door on the western side. Holy Trinity never became the cathedral it was designed to be, however, despite the hopes of Archdeacon Hutchins who was the main champion for building the church but died before it was completed in 1848. Hobart was created a city in 1842 and St David’s Church became a cathedral soon after. With its central location in the city, the foundation stone of the present St David’s Cathedral was laid in 1868. The nave was consecrated in 1874 and construction of the bell tower was completed in 1936.

Early Photos of Holy Trinity Church



Holy Trinity Church is an iconic building in Hobart and like St George’s Church in Sandy Bay, has dominated the landscape since the 1840s. Holy Trinity is the first heritage building to be seen by tourists and residents when entering Hobart along the main Highway from the north.

Current Condition of Holy Trinity Church

Built on solid rock, the church is structurally sound, stable and safe to use. No serious cracks are evident in the foundations. The interior is in excellent condition including the floors, walls, roof, glass windows, lighting, heating and furnishings. Weighing more than two and a half tonnes, the bells are rung regularly and the bell ringers report there is no movement of the building, further proof of the building's structural integrity.

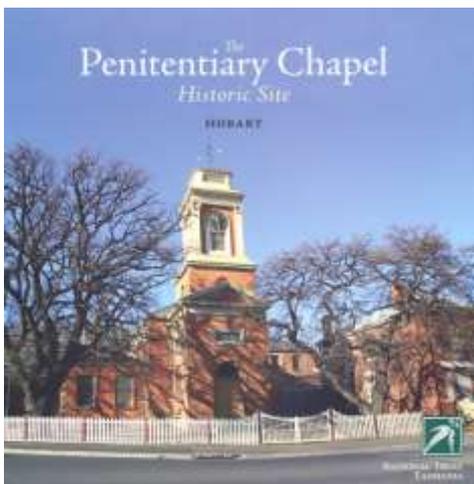
The church is used every Sunday for regular services (8am and 10am) and for weddings, baptisms, funerals and seasonal and special events. Choirs and other community groups also practise there during the week.



Much of the sandstone exterior of Holy Trinity Church however, is in poor condition and worsening with time. Weathering is especially evident in the corners where more than 160 years of wind force have caused damage by erosion. Weathering of trimmings and many sandstone blocks to a depth of 5-10mm has also occurred on those surfaces which do not dry out quickly after becoming wet eg north, west and south aspects in winter. The type of clay (spectite) in much of the sandstone makes it prone to expansion and contraction in cycles of wet and dry, resulting in cracking and flaking (exfoliation). Prolonged moisture retention within the sandstone also allows penetration of salt into the shallow sub-surface, thereby causing the surface to crust and degrade. The original source of the salt is probably sea spray carried by the wind from the River Derwent a few kms away.

These three types of types of weathering have caused widespread damage to the exterior but it is superficial and can be repaired. The costs have not been estimated in detail as yet but are expected to be in the range AU\$2-4 million and could be spread over a 20 year period, so that the annual cost would not be unreasonable. Go to the top bar on a webpage and click on the **Restoration Plan** button to learn about how restoration can be achieved feasibly, using contributions from Commonwealth, state and local government and some assets of Holy Trinity parish.

How the Parish of Holy Trinity Began in 1833



Holy Trinity parish was established in 1833 and the first Trinity Church was designed by John Lee Archer, another highly regarded colonial architect, who worked with James Blackburn. It is now known as the Penitentiary Chapel Historic Site (photo kindly provided by National Trust – Tasmania) and features an outstanding clock tower. The chapel was used until the mid 1840s as a place of worship by parishioners.

The first services at “new” Holy Trinity were undertaken in 1848, after it had been completed but controversially some months before it was

INSIDE TOUR OF CHURCH

A Spiritual Sanctuary



The ambience within Holy Trinity Church is serene, a spiritual sanctuary for generations of Hobartians of Christian faith. Whether giving thanks, celebrating, anxious or grieving, they have been comforted, instructed, uplifted and inspired by the word of God and fellowship of parishioners.

The high roof, generous floor plan, excellent acoustics and ample natural lighting due to numerous stained glass windows, create an open and welcoming space. The church was originally designed for a capacity of around 500 people although on very special occasions, such as celebrating the end of World War 2, it is claimed the congregation amounted to 800!

Main Windows (southern end)



The Interior, Early Photos.



The original windows above the altar were of traditional design. Following the end of World War 1, in which 101 parishioners gave their lives, new windows were installed as a commemoration in 1922. They were designed in contemporary style by Lucien Dechaineux, principal of the Hobart Technical College, and made by Ashwin & Co, Sydney. In the lower section of the left-side window, Diggers (Australian soldiers) are shown in sand-bagged trenches, with artillery shells exploding in the near distance. The wounded receiving care from the medical corps are shown in the lower section of the central window. The lower section of the right-side window shows a family receiving sad news about a loved one who has made the ultimate sacrifice during the war. A traditional scene of Christ's Crucifixion, which is the ultimate sacrifice for humanity according to Christian belief, is shown in the central section of the centre window. The Ascension of Christ to heaven is shown in the upper sections of the centre window. Above this is seen the Dove of Peace radiating golden rays of hope, which poignantly represents the "Peace of God which passes all understanding...."

Capt Emile Dechaineux, son of Lucien Dechaineux, was a naval hero in World War 2 who also gave his life during battle.

Altar and Reredos



A beautiful reredos is located below the main window and behind the altar. It comprises a tiled mosaic of the Christ Child with Mary (mother) and Joseph (father) in the centre panel and adoring angels in panels to the side. Framing the reredos from above are angels moulded in synthetic stone.

Organ, Furnishings and Commemorations



Music

The original organ was the first large organ of its type to be installed in Australia. It has been subsequently rebuilt and modified in various ways. Its musical quality is quite reasonable but limited - because although a 3rd keyboard has been added to the console, extraordinarily, it has never been connected to the pipes. The current organist is the son a former rector, Rev Ken Skegg.

The Orpheus Choir (now Hobart Orpheus Choir) was established in 1877 at Holy Trinity Church and is possibly Australia's oldest choir. It was formed to help raise money to purchase new bell ropes. More recently they have made a substantial donation to assist with the development of this website.

Furnishings

There is a very wide range of furnishings within the church. Much of it is dedicated to clergy and parishioners who gave outstanding service. For example, Richard John Wallace served the church in various capacities for 60 years and is commemorated in the prayer desk shown above.

Plaques and furniture are to be found extensively throughout the building. We have basic information about the hundreds of people named on them, but know little of their contributions. This is an area of our social and spiritual history we would like to learn much more about and if you think you may be

able to provide an interesting story, go to the top bar on a webpage and click on the **People & Events/Your Story** button.

Blackwood Chapel



A small chapel is located within the church and was named after Rev D B Blackwood (later Bishop Blackwood), the 6th rector. It was dedicated on Remembrance Day 1946.

The altar in the chapel is dedicated to sub-Lieutenant Donald McCabe, who lost his life on HMAS *Sydney* on 19 November 1941 off the Western Australian coast, and to Lieutenant Angus McCabe who died of wounds on 6 December 1943 in New Guinea during World War 2. They were two of four sons of the 7th rector Rev Canon F J McCabe.

The cushions were kindly donated by parishioners from St Peters (Bay West), Sandy Bay and feature colourful ecclesiastical designs.

TOUR OF BELL TOWER

The bell tower is regarded by many as the Gothic masterpiece of architect James Blackburn and houses the oldest bells made for an Australian church. Cast as a set of eight in bronze at the Whitechapel Bellfoundry in London, they were first rung on Regatta Day (December 1), 1847 and have been rung regularly ever since. Compared to the visual significance of Holy Trinity Church, many Hobartians tell us they value the sound of the bells ringing just as greatly.



The bell ringers at Holy Trinity are an intergenerational group of skilled and dedicated people. They continue to attract new members keen to learn “the ropes”. Since the 1860s visitors have come from all over the world to ring at the Holy Trinity bell tower as it is regarded as a destination of international significance. Special peals are commemorated on boards such as for the 2nd and 3rd peals of *Grandsire Triples* rung in Australia, which were performed at Holy Trinity in December 1890.

