



Welcome to the Church of St James and St Basil's

The building of the church began during the winter of 1927/28 with the generosity of Sir James Knott, a wealthy ship merchant. The church was built in memory of two of Sir James' sons Basil and James who were killed in the First World War.

The church was designed by Edward Eric Lofting, Assistant Surveyor to the fabric of Westminster Abbey, who had been a pupil and assistant of Temple Lushington Moore (one of the leading church architects of late Victorian and Edwardian England). It is thought of as amongst the great churches of the Arts and Crafts movement and is recognised as a masterpiece.

The church took over three years to build, partly because the foundations were laid so thoroughly that it took one year for any sign of building appeared over the barricades but it was finally ready for consecration by June 1931. The church is grade II listed and said to be built with stone from Dobson's 1830 Newcastle prison, in Carlisle Square, demolished at that time. It is faced however with stone quarried from nearby Kenton.





The Memorial Chapel

The memorial Chapel in the south east corner of St James and St Basil's Church was dedicated on 6th June in 1952 on the 21st anniversary of the church's consecration. The east window (1a) is one of the five (from a total of thirteen) stained glass windows designed by Edward Woore, a well known stained glass artist who worked in the Arts and Crafts tradition. This window shows parables of Christ; at the top are two trees, one fruitful and the other unfruitful. In the panels below you can see the the Parables of the Saver, the Lost Corn, the Lost Sheep, the Good Samaritan, the Prodigal Son and the Parable of the Talents. In the centre of the window, Christ sends forth his disciples.

The south window (1b) is the memorial to James and Basil Knott who were killed at Ypres and the Somme respectively in the First World War. The window also shows the family home, Close House and Eton where they went to school.



The Organ

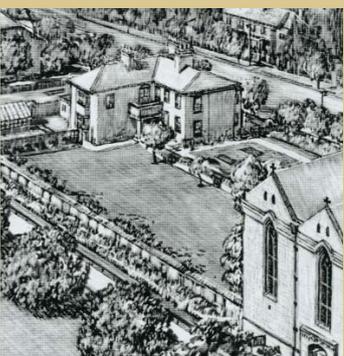
Just outside the memorial chapel is the organ console (2). The organ was built by J.W. Walker & Sons of London and is considered to be one of the finest in Newcastle. If you look up at the north wall and above the memorial chapel you can see the beautifully carved screens which hide the main part of the organ. The screens look Moorish in style, are almost certainly executed by George Jack and carved by Lawrence Turner, a well known craftsman in his day.

The Consecration Mark

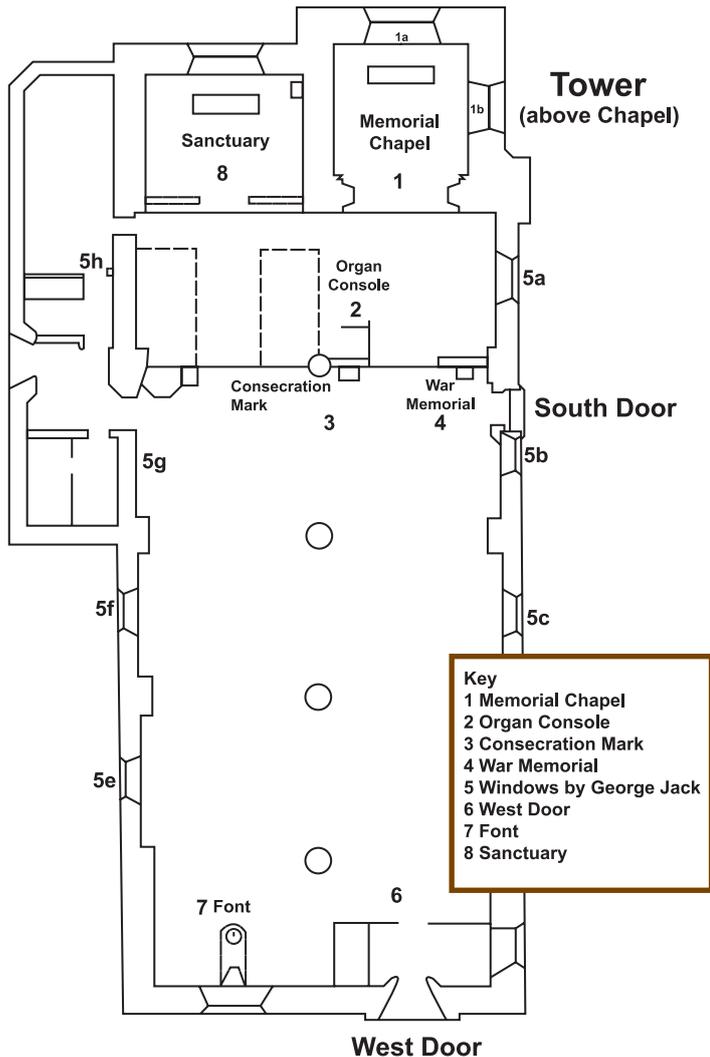
The Church was consecrated on the 6th June 1931 by the Bishop of Newcastle. The consecration mark can be seen in the west face of the pillar near the lectern (3).

The War Memorial

Near the south door is the 1939-45 war memorial, (4) a glass case which contains a vellum scroll inscribed with 68 names. Also in a separate case near the organ you can see a Book of Remembrance containing the names of those whose lives were associated with the church.



GROUND PLAN OF THE BUILDING



The Font and Children's Window

The font (7) can be found just to the side of the west door. It is made from Heptonwood stone quarried in Yorkshire. The Stonemason was a Mr J.G. Cook and the foundation stone is said to be Roman in origin. The water from the font runs fifteen feet before it drains into the earth of the church gardens where there is an old well.

Above the font you can see the children's window with images of Christ and the children. Below this is Moses in the bulrushes and Samuel going to Eli the Priest. Below this you can see children playing. The window is in memory of Dame Margaret Annie Knott, the wife of Sir James Knott, the church benefactor. She was a strong supporter of children's charities, particularly the Northern Counties Orphanage, the Fleming Memorial Children's Hospital and the W.J. Sanderson's Home. The coat of arms is of the Knott family, but the colours are incorrect.

Nave Windows

If you look at the south wall itself you can see the four tall windows (5a-d) illustrate verses from Psalm 104 and these then continue in the two tall and two clerestory windows (above the organ loft) on the north wall (5e-h). Each window contains a verse and illustration from the Psalm, praising the greatness of God in creation.

Adam and Eve Window

The window just above the west door (6) shows the creation of man and the story of Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden. You can see Eve tempting Adam with the forbidden fruit and with her children. It is also one of the few church windows portraying the devil.





The Sanctuary

The last work of stained glass is the large east window above the altar in the sanctuary (8).

At the top of the window you can see the four evangelists; St Matthew, St Mark, St Luke and St John. Beneath them are scenes of the life and ministry of Jesus as recorded by them. You can see the Annunciation, the flight into Egypt, Jesus in the temple as a boy, Jesus cleansing the temple, the Crucifixion and the Risen Christ appearing to the two disciples on the road to Emmaus.

The altar table is carved from oak and inlaid with pear-wood. Around the walls of the sanctuary you can see the two emblems of the church carved into the wood. The Cockle Shell is the emblem of St James the Great. His shrine in Spain was a popular centre for medieval pilgrimage when the Pilgrims wore a badge in the shape of a shell in their hats. The Dove is the emblem of St Basil the Great, Bishop of Caesarea (370-379), who wrote a treatise on the Holy Spirit.

The Bells

The church has a unique chime of 17 bells; a peal of 8 bells, rung in full circle in the traditional English manner by rope and wheel and 9 bells which are hung 'dead' and do not swing but are rung by drawing the clapper across to strike against the inner side of the bell. The 17 bells can be played like a carillon from a keyboard in the ringing room.

All the bells were cast in 1930 by Mears and Stainbank at the Whitechapel Bellfoundry, London and have the founders name and date inscribed. The tenor bell also has the additional inscription of: 'We ring in memory of James and Basil Knott. God knows'



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