

St. James Church, King St, Sydney

On 16th March 2009 members travelled to Sydney by train to be treated to a special tour of St. James Church by St. James archivist Rosemary Annabel. Beth Brooker and Peter Christian arranged this for us and we are most grateful to them.



Professor Rosemary Annabel

St. James was constructed between 1819 and 1824. It is the oldest surviving church building in the City of Sydney and has been in continuous use from its consecration on 11th February 1824 to the present day. It celebrates its 185th anniversary of continuous service in 2009.



St. James was designed by convict architect Francis Greenway, and build entirely with convict labour. The heavy wooden gallery above the back of the church is where the convicts were taken for the church services. Solders were also assigned to this area. The present pews now stand where the original enclosed stalls used to be. These stalls were completely private and paid for by the free settlers. They could be furnished any way the tenants wished, with blankets, cushions etc.

A colourful Children's Chapel exists in the Crypt and the roof and walls were decorated by artists of the early 20th century. The artwork has been faithfully restored and is very beautiful.

St. James is an integral part of the most extensive group of Macquarie period buildings in Australia, including the Mint and Barracks buildings in Macquarie St , and the Supreme Court building at the corner of King and Elizabeth Streets. After this most interesting and informative tour we lunched at the Law Courts' 15th floor café and then some of us made a quick visit to the Barracks. We left, resolved to return to the Barracks for a full day – it is a fascinating museum.