

St Mark

It's very hard to know very much about who Mark was, but he is best known by the



gospel which bears his name. The four gospels in the Bible (Matthew, Mark, Luke and John) are the accounts of the life of Jesus. Traditions and stories grew up in the early church to give the gospel writers characters and lifestories, but we don't know how accurate they are.

The Acts of the Apostles (the biblical book which tells the story of the early church) tells of a man called John Mark, a cousin of Barnabus, who travelled with him preaching and building churches. He fell out with St Paul at one point, so that Paul stopped trusting him, but they were reunited later when Mark and Paul were working with St Peter in Rome. Mark is thought to have been brought up in Jerusalem, and was therefore one of the 70 apostles who collected around Jesus, and his mother's house became a meeting place for the early church there. After Paul and Peter's deaths in Rome, tradition holds that Mark went to North Africa and it is thought he became the first bishop of Alexandria – an important sea port, trading centre and centre of learning.

However, 'Mark' was a very common family name in the middle east at the time, so who knows ... what we remember is the early church's desire to share the gospel, to take risks and travel, to argue and explore the faith, and to encourage those who came to faith.

Mark is often depicted as a lion. The reasons for this are lost in the midst of time, but are thought to refer to Revelation 4 (which echoes the book of Ezekiel), or it is thought that it reflects the urgent nature of Marks gospel.

Today ... creation of Sacred Space

Today St Marks is a thriving congregation who meet twice a week to worship, to explore faith and life and to share communion. We have a vibrant junior church and youth group, we often use different service structures for special occasions, and celebrate all the major church seasons, as well as providing quiet space for reflection and prayer.



We meet as broken people, around the communion table, to remember the death and resurrection of Jesus, to hear ourselves loved and sent out to be his Body in the world, to forgive and love in our broken world.

Our building space is used by a wide variety of local organisations - from fitness classes to lectures, from children's french lessons to music rehearsals. We organise various open days, fairs, coffee mornings and other community events.

We have recently renovated the boundary wall to the churchyard, and have a vision of creating sacred space which can be open to everyone at all times.

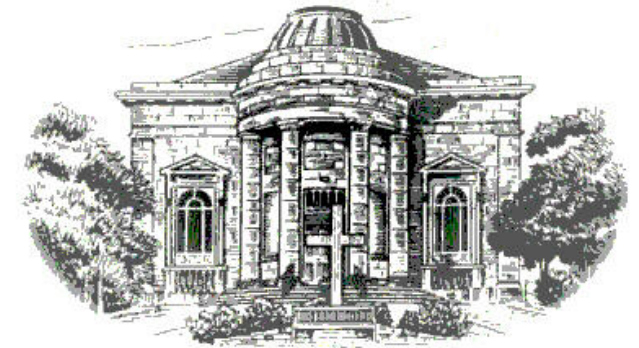
Service times:

Sunday 10.30am (modern liturgy) and Junior Church
Thursday 10am (traditional liturgy)

If you are interested in baptism, marriages or funerals please contact the rector.

Recent repairs generously supported by the Heritage Lottery Fund, Historic Scotland, Allchurches Trust Ltd, Artemis Investment Management, City of Edinburgh Council, Diocese of Edinburgh and Scottish Churches Architectural Heritage Trust.

St Mark's Episcopal Church Portobello



The building: a brief guide

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The history of the building .. One of change and continuity, a congregation that stretches back nearly 200 years

1828

St Marks was one of the first Episcopal churches to be built in the Edinburgh Diocese after the persecution of the Scottish Episcopal Church that followed the Jacobite risings in the 18th century.

The church is set within a tree lined burial ground, enclosed by a boundary wall. The Vestry was granted the right to open a burial ground in 1828.

The building has a category B listing and is of a villa like Neo Classical design. It is fronted with an imposing semi-circular Doric arched porch with flat topped dome which conceals a cupola lantern lighting the inner vestibule and stair to the gallery.

The building was erected by Colonel & Mrs Robert Haliburton and Mr & Mrs James Rutherford at their own expense and constructed with remarkable speed by builder Robert Gray. The ground had been feued from the Marquis of Abercorn in 1825, and the building was opened on 19 May 1826 and consecrated on 21 August 1828 by Bishop Sandford.

The church was rectangular at that time, with galleries on three sides.

1882

Work was carried out by the congregation in 1882, including the instalment of the two stained glass windows in the main body of the church (nave). On the West side of the church the window depicts the story of the Good Samaritan, a parable told by Jesus to emphasise how wide our love of neighbour should be (Luke 10:25-37).

The East side of the nave is the story of David and Jonathan, celebrating the close friendship of David, the future king of Israel, and Jonathan, the son of the then current king, Saul (1 Samuel 18:1-4).

The windows are by Ballentine & Sons, well respected glass workers and have their characteristic Renaissance borders. There are similar windows in Inveresk Parish Church, just outside Musselburgh.

1892

At this point, the two side galleries were removed, leaving only the current back gallery. The ceiling was reinforced and the chancel (the area where the main altar now stands) was added. This necessitated some interesting architectural skills as it was built over the graves in the graveyard. The steel beams can still be seen from the outside of this chancel area.

1919

A Lady Chapel was added on the west side of the nave in memory of the 48 members of the congregation who fell in the Great War. It comprised an altar with a white marble slab on two black pillars. Over it was a tabernacle for the Reserved Sacrament (bread and wine consecrated for Communion). The chapel was surrounded by an oak screen with eleven arches containing semi-circular panels carved by members of the congregation, one of which can be seen on the Crypt Chapel door (downstairs). (The war memorial still in place on the west of the church now has the names of the 65 members of the congregation who gave their lives in the two world wars).

The stained glass over the altar was gifted to the church. It shows Jesus on the cross, with his mother Mary and his disciple, St John.

1967

A serious fire in 1967 started in the boiler house (to the west of the entrance to the church) and burned its way through the floor at the rear of the church, the heat reportedly melting candles on the altar.

At this point, the Lady Chapel was removed, and a general reorganisation of the interior undertaken to reflect changes in liturgical practice, including moving the altar away from the back wall into the centre of the chancel area, levelling the floor and bringing the altar rails forward to their current position. The pulpit was replaced by the two lecterns.

Downstairs, a small stone-lined chapel and vestry were built by Alex and Ian Miller, members of the congregation.

1990

The area underneath the gallery was converted to include a meeting room, kitchen and accessible toilet, and a second meeting room was formed in the basement.

2005

Major repairs were undertaken to the external fabric of the building, including the restoration of the dome to its original glory.

Other landmarks:

The original organ was built in 1828 by David Hamilton of Edinburgh. It was relocated to the chancel in 1899. The water-powered mechanism was replaced by an electric motor in 1972. Unfortunately by 2009, it was requiring too much renovation and the decision was taken to replace it with the current Wyvern digital organ. The facade remains on the west side of the chancel.

The candle in front of the Reserved Sacrament (behind the main altar) was gifted in memory of F/Sgt Hamish Ian Sandison who was killed together with 9 other members of his crew in an air accident in 1946. His war grave is along the eastern wall of the churchyard.