

= St John 's Church , Manchester =

St John 's Church , Manchester , also known as St John 's , Deansgate , was an Anglican parish church in Manchester , England , established in 1769 and demolished in 1931 . Its site is now that of St John 's Gardens , situated between Lower Byrom Street , Byrom Street and Quay Street .

St John 's Church was built in 1769 by Edward Byrom , a co @-@ founder of the first bank in Manchester . Its parish encompassed a large and important section of the city of Manchester . The first rector , John Clowes , held the office for 62 years until his death in 1831 . Clowes preached the first Sunday school sermon in the Manchester area , introduced Swedenborgianism there and was prominent in championing Whit Walks . Clowes was succeeded by William Huntington , who had held the post of curate since 1826 and continued as rector until his death in 1874 . Huntington established the Sunday school , for which he laid the foundation stone in 1827 . In 1906 , around 250 children attended the Sunday school and the church had numerous affiliated groups , such as a Penny Bank and a Choral Society . By the early 1900s , the graveyard was overshadowed on its northern side by a warehouse built on the Quay Street site of the Byrom family residence , and with a declining congregation and some redundancy of provision given the nearby St Matthew 's Church , the Manchester diocese decided to merge the parish of St John 's with St Matthew 's in 1927 . As a result , the church was demolished in 1931 .

The church has been described as the first significant building in Manchester to be constructed in the Gothic Revival style of architecture . Construction of the tower , which contained a peal of eight bells manufactured by Lester and Pack , was completed in May 1770 . The first restoration took place in 1821 , including a re @-@ roofing paid for by a daughter of Byrom . Between 1874 and 1878 work was done at a cost of £ 1600 and in 1898 the lighting was converted from gas to electric . The church bells , which were described as " among the best peal of bells in Manchester " , were rehung in 1832 and again around 1883 . The roof collapsed in 1924 and was rebuilt by 1926 . Among people who were commemorated in the church windows were John Owens , and Sir Thomas Bazley .

Today the graveyard of the church is commemorated by a stone cross and a plaque states that more than 22 @,@ 000 bodies lie buried in the vicinity . Among those buried in the churchyard are John Owens , the founder of Owens College , and William Marsden , who founded the concept of a half @-@ day holiday on Saturdays .

= = Origins = =

The rapid population growth of Manchester during the mid @-@ 18th century saw a rising demand for more churches . St John 's Church was built in 1769 by Edward Byrom (13 June 1724 ? 24 April 1773) , a co @-@ founder of the first bank in Manchester and the oldest surviving son of John Byrom , whose affluent family was well known in the area . According to William Shaw , a local historian and fellow of Owens College , the church was " intended for the ' genteel ' residents who were migrating to the south side of the town " .

Byrom obtained permission from Edmund Keene , the Bishop of Chester , and was supported by many prominent local people . Its parish , which was not formalised until at least 1839 , encompassed an area described by the Manchester Courier in 1900 as

Between Quay @-@ street and Brazennose @-@ street on the north , and the Central Station and Bridgewater @-@ street on the south . Its eastern boundary is the Town Hall (which is within the parish) , Cooper @-@ street , and Lower Mosley @-@ street ; and its western limit the River Irwell , forming the boundary of Manchester and Salford . [Thus it covered] a large and important section of the city of Manchester .

J. M. W. Turner sketched the tower of St John 's and two nearby church spires in 1831 . The sketch is in the Tate 's collection .

= = Structure = =

Although contemporary sources such as the Manchester Mercury name Byrom as the sponsor of the building , they do not identify his architect . The church was described by the English author and historian Clare Hartwell as being the first significant building in Manchester to be constructed in the Gothic Revival style of architecture . It had galleries supported by slender cast @-@ iron columns . The foundation stone was laid by Edward Byrom on 28 April 1768 and Keene performed the consecration on 7 July 1769 , when the sermon was given by John Byrom 's friend , John Clayton . Construction of the tower , which contained a peal of eight bells manufactured by Lester and Pack , was completed in May 1770 .

The first restoration took place in 1821 , including a re @-@ roofing paid for by a daughter of Byrom . Between 1874 and 1878 work was done at a cost of £ 1600 and in 1898 the lighting was converted from gas to electric , substantial internal modifications were carried out and repairs made to the clock tower which cost around £ 2200 . The church bells , which were described by a local journalist for the Manchester Courier and Lancashire General Advertiser as " among the best peal of bells in Manchester " , were rehung in 1832 and again around 1883 . The tower had clock dials on all four sides . A minute hand was added to the clock in 1833 and its mechanism was replaced around 1906 . The graveyard was paved with tombstones .

In 1906 , the church was looking to raise funds to acquire and convert the nearby St John 's Hospital of Manchester and Salford for the Ear for use as a rectory .

The roof collapsed in 1924 and was rebuilt by 1926 . Among people who were commemorated in the church windows were John Owens , and Sir Thomas Bazley . Another window was of some antiquity , originating from a convent in Rouen , France , and presented to the church by a grateful French refugee priest . This Entry to Jerusalem window were moved in 1929 to the Church of St Mary the Virgin , Eccles and windows depicting St John , St Peter and St Matthew , dating from 1760 by William Peckitt , were at some time moved to St Ann 's Church in the city .

= = Functions = =

The church held the right to conduct the marriages of people throughout Manchester , not only from within its parish , until 1874 . Despite this , there were no such services for the first 35 years of its existence , perhaps because of the continued popularity of the Collegiate Church as a venue for weddings but probably because the latter insisted on collecting its own fees for marriages held in other local churches , which effectively doubled the cost of being married at St John 's rather than at the Collegiate Church . Later , after the rights of the Collegiate Church were curtailed , some weeks saw more than 100 marriage services at St John 's in the years just before 1874 . Burials ceased completely in 1900 but there had been very few for some years previously because the available space had been exhausted and most graves were full .

In 1827 , the church erected a building dedicated as a Sunday school . This was also used as a day school from 1838 . In 1906 , around 250 children attended the Sunday school and the church had numerous affiliated groups , such as a Penny Bank and a Choral Society . The day school accommodation was at that time condemned by the Board of Education as unfit for purpose and it was operating under a stay issued by the board . In the same year , Hannah Mitchell , a suffragette , was arrested at the day school for protesting during an election campaign speech by Winston Churchill . The building was closed in 1908 and a new school building opened on Gartside Street in 1910 at a cost of £ 4000 . This new facility was used only as Sunday school because , said the local clergy , the Board of Education put too many administrative obstacles and demands in their way , such as stipulating such a small attendance roll as to render any day school uneconomic and insisting on a dedicated playground despite there being a large open space next door that was traditionally used for that purpose . According to the foundation stone of the new school building , the church had operated the first Sunday school in Manchester , although Shaw attributes that distinction to a Mr Fildes , a Methodist whose establishment began operating from a Travis Street cellar in 1782 . Shaw says that several other schools preceded that of St John 's .

Around 1781 , the church had been the base for one of Manchester 's eight fire engines .

= = Clergy = =

A condition imposed by Byrom was that he had the right to present the living . The first rector , John Clowes , held the office for 62 years until his death in 1831 . He was commemorated by two stone tablets in the church , one by either Richard Westmacott or his son , erected after his death and one , the only example of the work of John Flaxman in Manchester , to celebrate his 50th anniversary as rector . Clowes preached the first Sunday school sermon in the Manchester area , introduced Swedenborgianism there and was prominent in championing Whit Walks .

Clowes was succeeded by William Huntington , who had held the post of curate since 1826 and continued as rector until his death in 1874 . Huntington established the Sunday school . Huntington 's successor as rector was John Henn , who held office for 14 years before moving to Heaton Chapel . The next rector , G. R. Youngman , was in office from 1888 until his death in 1890 . His position was taken by E. F. Leach . The last rector was Herbert Edmonds .

William Cowherd , a Swedenborgian proponent of teetotalism and vegetarianism , was a curate in the late 1700s , before leaving to establish the Bible Christian Church in Salford .

= = Demise = =

By the early 1900s , the graveyard was overshadowed on its northern side by a warehouse built on the Quay Street site of the Byrom family residence . The area had been residential ? Richard Cobden was among those who lived nearby and attended the church ? but changed in character during the 19th century , as many homes once occupied by affluent families became lodging houses and the locale became increasingly a place of business . Those who did live there , or were patients in the nearby hospitals , were poor and unable to contribute significantly to the funds of the church and its schools . Fundraising bazaars were held in the 1890s and 1900s at the Free Trade Hall , in a nearby area that was more salubrious .

Falling attendances due to the commercial nature of the district , and also a sense that there was some redundancy of provision given the nearby St Matthew 's Church , caused the Manchester diocese to review the status of St John 's and its parish in the 1920s . Following an internal review and a public consultation , in 1927 it was formally proposed that the two parishes should be merged as St Matthew 's parish . The diocese preferred to retain St Matthew 's and demolish St John 's , at least in part because the former was a more recent construction . This was a reversal of a proposal made in 1919 , when the predominantly transient Roman Catholic population of the St Matthew 's parish was given as a reason to merge it into St John 's .

The Ecclesiastical Commissioners proposed to hand over the church site to Manchester Corporation in 1929 , with the hope that the city would convert it into an open space similar to Parsonage Gardens . The Manchester Guardian had reported a similar proposal to convert the " bleak expanse " of the graveyard into a " open , cultivated space " in 1914 .

The church was demolished in 1931 . It is commemorated by a stone cross and a plaque states that more than 22 @, @ 000 bodies lie buried in the vicinity . Among those buried in the churchyard are John Owens , founder of Owens College , the forerunner of Manchester University and William Marsden , who pioneered the concept of a half @-@ day holiday on Saturdays .