

Ferguson and Urie

Colonial Victoria's Historic Stained Glass Craftsmen 1853-1899

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25-09-1866: St John's Anglican Church, Launceston, Tasmania.

St John's Anglican Church in Launceston contains a three-light Ferguson & Urie stained glass window representing the 'Ascension'.

This window was originally erected in the chancel of St John's in 1866 and later moved to the nave in the 1930's, but in its current configuration it is missing the upper portions of the window above the three main lights which are known as the tracery windows.

The figures or emblems that may have been in the missing pieces have been a mystery until recently. A report of the window in September 1866 described the main body of the windows in detail and "...At the top is the figure of a dove..." [1] As luck would have it I found a copy of Ferguson & Urie's original design for this window in the State Library of Victoria's collections. In the original design, the tracery above the three main lights contains three quatrefoil shaped windows with the descending dove in the one at the apex and the symbols Alpha and Omega in the ones below. There are only minor differences in the figurative designs in comparison to the entire window that was actually made and these can be seen in the slideshow of photographs.

Interestingly, the bottom of the original design for the window has the date 1864 which, at minimum, is about nineteen months prior to when it was finally erected in St John's!

[The Launceston Examiner, Tasmania, Tuesday 25th September 1866, page 2. \(http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article36638384\)](http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article36638384)

"RELIGIOUS INTELLIGENCE - CHURCH OF ENGLAND"

"The chancel in connection with St. John's Church, Launceston, has been finished, and a portion of the service has been conducted in it. The Bishop, it is anticipated, will visit the north in a week or two, when the building will be consecrated. Two handsome stained-glass windows have been erected in the chancel. One is the gift of the late John Cameron, Esq., and represents the Ascension. A half figure of our Saviour is exhibited at the bottom of a centre light, and above that is the Ascension with the words beneath "I go to prepare a place for you." On either side are the eleven Apostles, looking with wonder and adoration to their ascending Lord. At the top is the figure of a dove. The work does infinite credit to Messrs. Ferguson and Urie, of Melbourne, by whom it was designed and executed. The antique glass - which is a late discovery of the glass used by glass painters in the middle ages - has a very rich although subdued tone, and being heavy in substance gives great additional strength to the window. This contrasts favourably with the smaller window, the resurrection, the gift of the Rev. Dr. Browne, chaplain, in memory of the Venerable Archdeacon Hutchins, the first Archdeacon appointed to the diocese. This window is of common glass, by Headsland [sic: 'Hedgeland'], of London".