

St. James Church, Thane.

Bombay City in the 1870's was transformed by the British from a fishing hamlet into India's biggest Centre of import-export Sea borne trade, making it a real gate way to India. In Thane there were British Soldiers and officers in Charge of a Prison inside a Fort. They had an additional duty to safeguard the Mercantile Ships from Sea-Pirates. It was for this Small group of British Christian Soldiers and their families that the need of a Protestant Church arose. The initiative was finally taken up in 1825 by the wife of the then Governor of Bombay, Mount Stuart Elphinstone with the help of Captain Tate, an architect in the Army.

During the same period a church was ready to be consecrated in the camp area in Pune. It was decided to invite the only Bishop in Calcutta Rt. Rev Reginald Heber for the dedication of both the Churches. He consecrated the church at Pune named St. Mary's Church on 3rd July 1825. He then travelled to Thane through the treacherous & dense forests of Sahyadri Mountain, in heavy rains.

The formal consecration and naming of St. James Church, in memory of James a disciple of our Jesus Christ took place on 25th July 1825.

St. James Church boasts of construction rich in Gothic architecture with length of 90 feet, width 60 feet and height from the top of the steeple at 70 feet. At the main entrance of the Church stand 6 pillars, 15 feet high surrounding a porch made of Greek Stone measuring 350 sq. & 24 ft high. Upon entering the main gate we pass through an arch 15" x 9" on the right is the office. The main centre of the church is 55 ft. Long, 33 ft wide with a height of 24 ft and a wooden ceiling. To the East is the Baptismal font made of White Marble near the second entrance facing the cemetery?

After independence most of the British Soldiers left for England and Australia thus dwindling the Church membership to a handful of 4-6 families.

But after 1962, Thane was industrialized & the membership rose again. The construction of the parsonage in the church compound was taken up by the Mulund cement Company. On the west of the Church is the cemetery for the Church members, where the oldest tomb stone is of John Vhon who died in 1780.

The Church has tall pillars and imposing entrance lends a British ambience & is an epitome of History of Bombay in the 18th Century. The Trust Association has incurred an expenditure of Rs. 3, 22,000/- in the renovation of this church.