

1788-1875



ST JAMES THE GREAT
SCOTTISH EPISCOPAL CHURCH



RECONCILIATION AND UNION

The death of Bonnie Prince Charlie in 1788 paved the way for the Scottish Episcopal Church to abandon finally its support for the exiled Stuarts and begin to pray for the Hanoverian monarchy. Some of the penal laws were repealed in 1792 and the Qualified churches began to reunite with the Scottish Episcopal Church.

In 1803 the Stonehaven Qualified chapel reunited with the Scottish Episcopal Church. The two Stonehaven congregations worshipped separately until the death of Robert Memess in 1815 when they united in the former Qualified chapel in the High Street.

In 1804, the Scottish Bishops met at the Synod of Laurencekirk and adopted the 39 Articles of the Church of England. Eventually,

the final repeal of the Penal Laws permitted the Qualified congregations to join the Scottish dioceses, and accept the jurisdiction of Scottish bishops.

The death of Henry Benedict Stuart, the brother of the Young Pretender, in 1807 ended the Jacobite dynasty and so removed the impediment of Jacobites to accepting the Hanoverian succession.

It is clear that, by 1815, the relationship between the congregations in Stonehaven was close. So, when Robert Memess retired, the Scotch Chapel minister, George Garden arranged for both congregations to use the High Street premises. This allowed the sale of the Scotch chapel in 1817, the proceeds being used to improve the High Street chapel.

GROWTH, EDUCATION AND CONTROVERSY

Stonehaven expanded in waves during the middle of the 19th century. The New Town (the part to the North of the Carron river outside St James) was started in the 1820s, but periods of economic hardship (caused by poor harvests, overseas wars, and variable fishing catches) meant that the completion dragged on until the 1870s.

The central years of the 19th century saw controversy within the Scottish Episcopal Church. The Oxford Movement reached Scotland in the 1840s, where it found a measure of ready acceptance, owing to the high sacramental doctrine of the Scottish Liturgy, which has its origins in a version of the Orthodox liturgy dating before the Reformation. At the same time, there were an increasing

number of Oxbridge-educated bishops, mostly with low church tendencies, who were deeply suspicious of any deviation from the 1662 Book of Common Prayer.

In 1860, Bishop Alexander Penrose Forbes was taken to task for supporting 'high church' views in a legal case brought by Revd Henderson, the incumbent of Arbroath. His former charge of St James' sent in a letter of support for their Bishop. After

much debate at Synod, and many column-inches in the newspapers of the day, the Bishop was censured and admonished.

Despite all this effort, Bishop Forbes' time was marked by a significant increase in congregations, the opening a number of new churches, and new Episcopal Schools, including the one in Stonehaven High Street.

More information can be found by visiting our website www.stjames-stonehaven.org.uk