

Five into One – Tay Square Church



Tay Square traces its origins to the secessions of the eighteenth century. From 1743, School Wynd Secession Church flourished, but in 1832, a group of members, dissatisfied over the nomination of a new minister, disjoined to form Tay Square. United Secession Church, entering their new church in 1834.

Rev. Robert Wardrop, 1807-1840. Silhouette (1837)

Mr Wardrop was called in 1832 to be minister of School Wynd Church, but in consequence of a dispute in that congregation the call was not sustained. Those who supported him left the church, and were formed into a separate congregation — Tay Square — and they at once called Mr Wardrop, but his delicate health prevented his acceptance of the call. He died when only 33 years of age.

Still in the church archives, this silhouette of Rev. Robert Wardrop was lent by its owner, Andrew Roxburgh, to be exhibited in the “Old Dundee” exhibition of 1892-93 – held in the Albert Institute (now McManus Galleries).

The first minister, the Rev. J R McGavin, was elected in 1875 as Moderator of the United Presbyterian Synod. The second, the Rev. Dr Charles Jerdan, became Principal Clerk of the United Free Church General Assembly. Under these two ministers, Tay Square became one of the foremost congregations in the United Presbyterian Church. Mission activities centred on the West Port, Artillery Lane and Hawkhill, the last leading to the founding in 1876 of Hawkhill United Presbyterian Church, which united with Tay Square in 1903.



Such community interests were extended onto a national scale by the Rev. John Mansie, who as Convener of the Assembly Committee on Social Problems, was largely responsible for the establishment in 1931 of the Belmont Castle Eventide Home. After the union of Tay Square and St. Paul's in 1952, the Tay Square building was reopened as St. Paul's Halls by Mrs Jarvis, wife of the Very Rev. Ernest D Jarvis and daughter of the Rev. John Reid, a former Tay Square minister.

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