

In his booklet, published in 1999, the Reverend A. A. Roy - who retired in 2007 as the last and, having spent 52 years in Wick, the longest serving of the church's eleven Ministers - provides an interesting history of what is currently known as Wick Bridge Street Church of Scotland, its first Minister having been the Reverend Charles Thomson.

The Disruption of 1843 led to the formation of the Free Church of Scotland whose Ministers were elected by their congregations (rather than chosen for them by patrons such as local landowners) and financed through the voluntary contributions of the church members and adherents.

In Wick the Reverend Thompson, whose portrait hangs in Bridge Street Church, left the Established Church (formerly known as Wick Old Parish) taking the majority of his congregation with him. They worshipped in the open air at the Glebe Park until their new building, known as Wick Free Church, was built on the site now occupied by Poundstretcher, at the bottom of Kirk Lane, and Whitechapel Road.

In 1862 plans for the building in Bridge Street were drawn up and it took three years to build the impressive neo-Gothic style building which had seating for over a thousand and cost well over £1,000. Records show that the money was raised by the congregation, many giving substantial donations

to pay for the new Wick Free Church. The church was later renamed Wick United Free Church following the union between the Free Church of Scotland and the United Presbyterian Church of Scotland in 1900. It finally became known as Wick Bridge Street Church of Scotland in 1929 after the unification of the Established Church and the United Free Church.

Bridge Street congregation always displayed generosity and, over the years, many gave of their time and money. A great debt of gratitude was owed in particular to the Elders, Deacons and Board Members, the choirs and organists who enhanced the weekly services, those who ran the church organisations such as the Sunday Schools in both Bridge Street and the Barrogill Hall and the Youth Groups, Fellowships and Guilds, and also to those who arranged flowers, distributed envelopes, baked, cleaned and effected repairs to the building.

Due to the success of the Church, and the large attendances, its ministry expanded into Pulteneytown where the congregation built the Barrogill Hall which opened in 1887 and was reported by the Northern Ensign as follows:-

Barrogill Hall opening

Northern Ensign Sept 28th 1887

United Evangelistic services begin on Monday first in the New Mission Hall, Pulteneytown. The merchants of Wick and Pulteneytown have agreed unanimously to shut their shops promptly at eight o' clock (until further notice) beginning on Monday night first.

Northern Ensign October 5th 1887

The Pulteneytown Mission Hall has now been finished and the first meeting for religious purposes was held in it on Sabbath evening last. The hall is well adapted for the purpose for which it is intended, namely a centre for evangelical work in upper Pulteneytown

The architect was Mr Barron CE who gave his services gratuitously. This generous action on his part has been recognised by the Deacons Court of Wick Free Church, which, at a meeting on the 19th ult. unanimously and cordially agreed to record their gratitude to Mr Barron "for the valuable services he has rendered in designing the hall providing specifications for the work for the several contractors and also superintending the same while in progress" and the clerk was instructed to send an excerpt of this minute to Mr Barron.

The hall will comfortably seat 500 persons and those who have tested the acoustic properties of the building say they are excellent. The first of a series of evangelistic meetings in which nearly all the ministers of the town are to take part was held in the Mission Hall on the evening of Sabbath last. The hour announced for the meeting was half past six but by six o' clock the hall was crowded in every part and hundreds were unsuccessful in obtaining standing room. Amongst those on the platform were, the Rev Messrs Renny, Clark, Hewlett, Brown and Robertson, Rev Mr Renny presided and after the introduction services he delivered an address in the course of which he referred to the uses to which it is intended the hall shall be put. Addresses were also delivered by Rev Mr Clark and Mr Charles Houston, Draper. Meetings are to be held in the hall each evening this week commencing at eight o' clock.

In 1903 the Zion Hall in Victoria Place was acquired and was used until 1918 when it was sold to the Salvation Army. Previously, in 1862 the first Free Church building which was then only 22 years old, was purchased by the Gaelic Committee, for worship by the large numbers who arrived annually from the west of Scotland for the herring fishing season.

During its history - in addition to Sunday Schools, Bible Class, Women's Guild, the Church Choir and Sunday School choirs, Young Mothers' Group, Young Men's Christian Association, Ladies Work Party, the Christian Endeavour and the Youth Fellowship - Wick Bridge St Church was home to a Literary Society, the Girls Guildry, a Girl Guide Company, Wick Youth Club and one organization which drew crowds too large even for a church of this size. This was the "Brotherhood" whose monthly open meetings were sometimes so well attended that people sat in the aisles and even on the pulpit steps. The banner of The Brotherhood, designed by the wife of the Reverend Alfred Coutts who ministered between 1909 and 1912, has recently been gifted to Wick Heritage Centre.