

From the Archivist 6

The Story of the Episcopal Church

The New Town of Edinburgh

The New Town, begun in the 1760's, attracted many of the wealthier citizens of Edinburgh. A group of Episcopalians came together to found St George's Church in York Place. The building opened for worship in 1790 but the congregation did not agree to join the Scottish Episcopal Church until 1810. Much the same happened with St John's which was set up in Rose Street during the year 1792. They became members of the Scottish Episcopal Church in 1804. Not until 1818 were they able to open their present home at the West End of Prince's Street.

The New Town continued to grow and the Episcopal Chapel (Contemporaries designated Episcopal Churches as Chapels.) of St James was opened in Broughton Place. They remained here from 1821 to 1883 when they moved to Golden Acre.

The Episcopal Church in Edinburgh attracted many of the wealthier members of society. The Lord Provost would, at times of special need, request all the churches in the city to hold collections at the door. Here is a list of the highest givers for a collection held in February 1851.

St John's Episcopal Chapel	£150	1sh	0d
St Paul's Episcopal Chapel	£145	4sh	8d
St Andrew's Church	£84		
St Stephen's Church	£59	5sh	8d
St George's Church	£59	1sh	
St Thomas's Episcopal Chapel	£52		

It has to be noted that all these churches are based in the most affluent part of the city. Much of the Old Town had by this time degenerated into a slum. The once large tenement flats had been sub-divided leading to overcrowding. Lack of toilets and a proper water supply led to high mortality rates especially among the young. Poorer members of the Episcopal congregations lived here. Mary Pyper, a blind poet, eked out a living making shirts and eating very little.