

## GOING BACK IN TIME

2007

### 150 YEARS SAINT ANDREW'S

St Andrew's Scots Church in Valletta this year celebrates its 150th anniversary. The church, which stands at the junction of South Street and Old Bakery Street, opened in 1857 and was originally erected for a Presbyterian congregation.

The church was built under the direction of Rev. Dr George Wisely, who was minister of the church from 1854 to 1896 and who continued to live in Malta until 1914.

Wisely was very active in Maltese life in many ways - as well as building St Andrew's, he set up several schools for poor children and helped to build what became the Boffa Hospital. He became very influential in later life and it was said that even the British Governors trod softly around Wisely because he was so well connected in London.

The Methodist congregation from the former Methodist church in Floriana joined the Presbyterian congregation in 1974 to form a united congregation and today St Andrew's is a Partnership church of the Church of Scotland and the Methodist Church.

The church was built to Dr Wisely's own plan. He had in mind the typical Aberdeenshire village parish church of his time. Wisely instructed the Maltese architect Giuseppe Bonavia to design a neo-Gothic church, the first time that this style was attempted in Malta. The building as it stands today is as Bonavia designed it and as it was originally built, apart from the roof which has had to be replaced twice over the years.

The minister, Rev. David Morris, said: "A lot of the church records are missing because of bombing during the Second World War when parts of the church and church hall were badly damaged. However, we think that the interior furnishings of the church were probably made in Britain. The pews are in a traditional pattern of the mid-19th century as is the internal layout of the church with its two aisles, gallery and central pulpit."

The building was dedicated and taken into use on St Andrew's Day (November 30) in 1857, and so its 150th anniversary is celebrated this year. The celebration begins this week with a three-day exhibition of the church and its history from Tuesday to Thursday from 11 a.m. to 7 p.m.

The exhibition will display information about the history of the church, its stained glass windows, its plaques and memorials, and about some of the people who have made St Andrew's part of Malta's history for the last 150 years.

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