

# ROUND THE CHURCHES

Drawing: Peter Murray



Methodism in Antrim is said to have begun with the first visit of John Wesley to the town on 9 June 1785, but it was not until early in the next century that Methodism took root in the town. In 1805 about 30 people met in a

schoolroom to form the society, and in 1806 the first church was built in what was then Kiln Entry.

The church built in 1806 became too small for the numbers attending, and in 1867 a new church was built at the front of

## 63: Antrim Methodist Church

Text: Robert Knox

the old. On the opposite side of Church Street stood the Primitive Wesleyan Methodist Church, and after the union of the Wesleyans and Primitive Wesleyans in 1878 the Wesleyan Church was used by the united congregation. The Primitive Wesleyan building was first used as a school, and then as a church hall.

The 1867 church served the Methodist people well until Antrim began to develop in the early 1970s. After prayerful consideration it was decided to build a modern suite of buildings at a new site in Greystone Road. This decision was not without a great deal of heart-searching by those who had worshipped in the old church for most of their lives, but once the decision was made the project was taken up with

great enthusiasm, with the result that the present suite of buildings was opened in 1977.

We were able to bring with us to the new site parts of the old churches. The date stone from the 1806 church is on display in the present building, and the pulpit from the 1867 church was remodelled and installed in the new church. With the facilities available in the new premises there is now a wide range of activities for all ages, and most importantly the Gospel continues to be proclaimed with zeal.

The plaque under the 1806 date stone carries the following words of Charles Wesley:

*Our strength thy grace,  
Our rule thy word,  
Our end the glory of the Lord.*