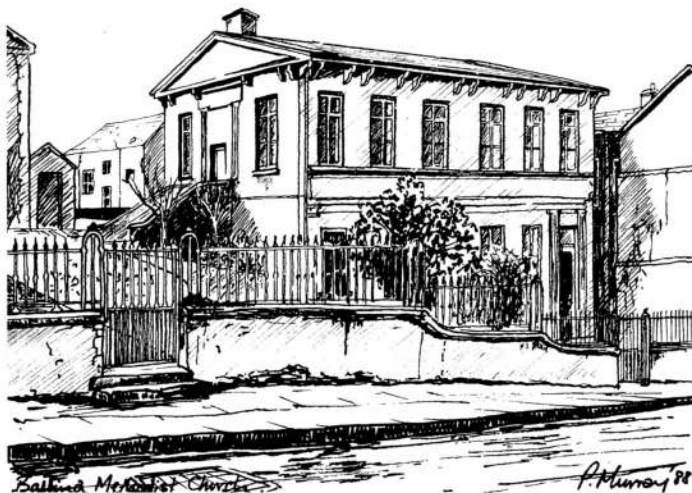


ROUND THE CHURCHES

Drawing: Peter Murray

28: Ballina Methodist Church

Text: Mary Trimble



'I was glad when they said unto me, let us go into the house of the Lord', Psalm 122 v1, and so began a new chapter in the long history of Methodism in the Ballina area when on 15 October 1983 the local congregation moved into a new church and vacated the old 'Wesley Chapel' which had been built in 1839. Methodism has roots in Mayo

which go back centuries. Our founder, John Wesley, visited Ireland in the 1700s and journeyed to many centres of population, Castlebar (Mayo's county town), being one of them. He established a church there, but it is thought that he did not take in Ballina in his itinerary.

In 1839 the Wesleyan Centenary Chapel and Manse

were erected, followed by a school house built in 1857. The school house was erected at a mere cost of £520 and according to records (not verified) had 90 pupils on the rolls.

The present Methodist Church, compact and beautifully appointed, has been created in the old Methodist schoolhouse. The old communion rails and two memorials from the walls of the old Wesley Chapel are incorporated in the new church. With a membership of approximately 20 souls, the Ballina church belongs to the Sligo/Drumshanbo Circuit and is ministered to by the Rev Robin Waugh.

Ballina is a thriving, West of Ireland town and can boast Presbyterian, Church of Ireland and two Roman Catholic congregations, along with the Methodist Connexion... a rare occurrence in the West of Ireland in the year 2000. Inter-church relations are good and support is given and received during times

of celebration in the Church year, Harvest Thanksgiving, Christmas, etc. A Flower Festival is held annually in the church and the local community can enjoy the peace, beauty and tranquillity of our church at this time. During the winter months, fellowship meetings are held in members' homes; these are supported and enjoyed by all denominations.

The membership of the present church is made up of two families, McCormicks and Trimbles. Both families have been deeply involved with the church in Ballina for many years, the earliest McCormick, the Rev Charles McCormick, coming to minister in the Ballina area in 1808 and the Trimble family's membership dating back to 1849.

These families, along with other members and loyal adherents, witness faithfully each Sunday in prayer and song to God's glory in the only remaining 'Methodist Outpost' on the Western seaboard en route to Galway.