

# ROUND THE CHURCHES

Drawing: Éilis O'Neill

## 3: Carlow Methodist Church



John Wesley visited Carlow six times: in 1765, 1767, 1769, 1771, 1781 and 1789. Over those years Wesley was delighting in the improved enthusiasm of the Carlow Methodists; meanwhile they were seeking a solution to a problem which had been caused by the improvement.

The old Huguenot church in which they worshipped was no longer large enough for them, nor was it sufficiently dignified. Eventually a site was found in Meeting House

Lane and a chapel was duly built before the end of 1787.

In the late 1800s, the Methodist society in Carlow obtained a site for a new chapel, as the lease on their existing one could not be renewed on satisfactory terms. The new site had been used as a quarry, and therefore needed to be filled, and this was achieved at remarkably little cost. Some buildings were being demolished in the town, and the site was only half as far from these as the place

where the rubbish was to be dumped. It was arranged to pay the carters one penny for each load they dumped at the site, which they gladly accepted as their journey was halved. For an expenditure of £5 the site was filled.

The cost of the chapel was estimated at £2,600 and James Martin Hill, who had been appointed to the Carlow circuit by the Conference of 1892, set about raising funds. In the early months of 1897, building operations commenced. The suite of buildings comprised a chapel and adjoining lecture hall, and in the basement, a tea room or Sunday School room, a store and a heating chamber. The external work was of 'fine grey granite, finely axed and tooled'. The work continued for just over a year, and the opening services were held on Friday, 15th April 1898.

Carlow Methodists have continued to worship in this church for almost 100 years, and on April 15th, will celebrate with a Centenary Celebration service.

Sunday worshippers currently average about 30, Sunday School numbers anything from 2 to 12 and MWA has an attendance of 7 to 10. The basement is used by Carlow Historical Society for storing records. We look forward with optimism to the new Millennium and to many more years of worship in our church.

**Avril Hogan**