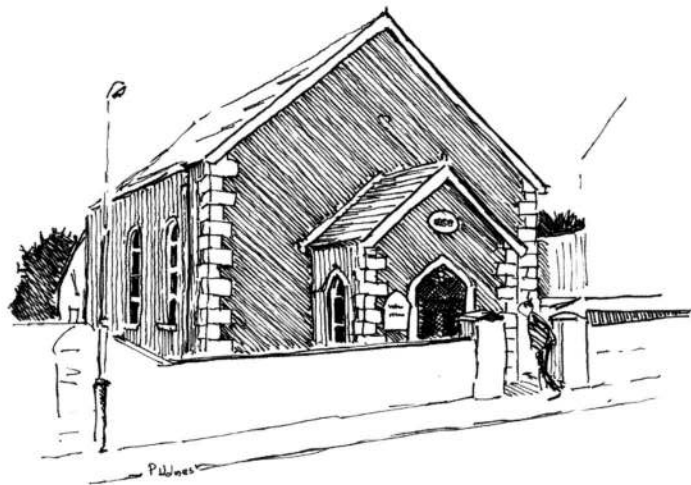


ROUND THE CHURCHES

Drawing: Paul Holmes



Methodism in this area of the Glens of Antrim began in the nearby village of Glenarm in 1771. Glenarm had been a considerable town from medieval times but was at a low ebb spiritually. The area was strongly Presbyterian but in the 1780s, according to Presbyterian sources, hardly any were going to church.

When John Smith came to preach in the village he was told that it was a very wicked place but that there was one God-fearing man, a William Hunter.

Smith preached twice a day for the next nine days from this home and made an impact. John Wesley visited some months later.

Carnlough, two miles from

102: Carnlough Methodist Church

Text: Andrew Kingston

Glenarm, was still a tiny village of eleven cabins at this time. John Sayers, a young man from Redbreas near Carnlough, was converted in 1780.

His alcoholic father disapproved, and knowing that it was the day of the meeting, hid his son's breeches so that he couldn't attend. John managed to escape and must have borrowed someone else's trousers. His father pursued him but the sermon had commenced by the time he got there. Realising his evil ways, he too was converted. The Sayers were stalwarts of Carnlough Methodism for generations.

We find a reference to a small Methodist Preaching House and a nearby Methodist School House in the village in 1820. With the building of the Coast Road (1832-42) and the decision of the Marchioness of Londonderry to develop

her interests in the village, Carnlough began to expand.

A new Methodist Church was opened on Herbert Street on 12 September 1858. An organ was installed in 1884. An extension comprising a kitchen, toilets and cloakroom were added to celebrate the centenary and a new pulpit was dedicated as part of the 125th Anniversary celebrations.

The small Carnlough congregation has been worshipping with the local Church of Ireland congregation since 2005. This has facilitated a Sunday School, something that was not possible for either congregation for some time. They are looking forward to their sesquicentennial.

Mission opportunities are becoming apparent and we pray that the congregation will continue to play a useful role in the building of God's Kingdom.