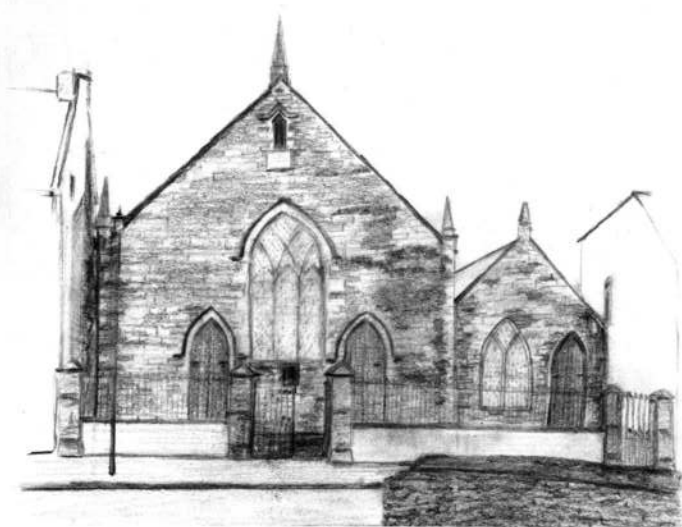


ROUND THE CHURCHES

Drawing: Elizabeth Giles

95: Clonakilty Methodist Church

Text: John Purdy



The Rev Thomas Walsh, one of John Wesley's preachers, was invited to Clonakilty, where he went with friends from Bandon

on 11 July 1752. He was refused permission to preach in the town hall by the magistrate, Rev William Ellis (Rector), so

he preached to a large crowd on the nearest strand. On returning to the town the Rev Mr Walsh and his companions were put in jail, where like St Paul they sang hymns and Mr Walsh preached through the bars to a huge sympathetic crowd who provided provisions and bedding.

Quite soon a society was formed in Clonakilty with regular house meetings.

John Bennett (mill manager, Rosscarbery) used to walk every Sunday to Clonakilty preaching morning and evening for 27 years. In 1805 he moved to Clonakilty and was instrumental in building the first church in 1812 in Kent Street (known as Meeting-house Lane).

In 1860 the present building was erected on the same site, with schoolroom to the side and vestry (and playground) behind.

In 1885 a school and schoolhouse were built on the Western Road; it was run by the society until 1945. It is now a regional museum.

The school beside the church (with kitchen added in 1970) is used for Sunday School, Bible Study, Boys' Brigade, ICA, MWI and other suitable events, and daily for a Montessori School.

What is interesting is the amount of respect given to the Methodist Society by the community. May it remain a lasting witness to God's kingdom on earth.