

ROUND THE CHURCHES

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53: Drumady Methodist Church

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Drumady Methodist Church is the smallest church on the Upper Erne Circuit. It has an interesting history. The first Methodist Society in the area was formed in a nearby farmhouse. John Smith was a very effective evangelist in these parts and one of his first converts was George Nicholl of Knappagh. When the good news of salvation through faith in Jesus Christ was preached in his home, John and James

Clarke of Cortrasna and John Armstrong of Lisrace responded, and a Society was formed. Later it moved to the neighbouring townland of Drumady, probably to the barn of a Mr James Johnston. Through the preaching and witness of John McBurney, the Rev John Wesley, Gideon Ousley and countless others, thousands were brought to the Saviour in the Clones area.

The area saw blessing but it

also saw disaster. The population was decimated in the awful famine period. One of the famine relief works in the winter of 1846/47 was to cut a new road to Fivemiletown. In 1858 the Primitive Wesleyan Methodists, who had their heartlands in the area, decided to build a preaching house on the intersection between the new and the old road.

Drumady was built on the then large Clones Circuit. Sadly the parent church is now closed. Drumady is about three miles from Clones, and the border lies in between. This resulted in an exodus of Protestants in the early part of the last century from the southern portion of the circuit for economic, political and religious reasons. The recent troubles have encouraged the continued movement of population away from areas close to the border on the northern side.

However Drumady remains as an outpost of Methodism. Surnames of members include the names Clarke, Coulter, Hall, Hutchinson, Mayne, Moffett,

Rountree, Rutledge and Wilson. The ethos of the Primitive Wesleyans was to maintain links with other churches. This openness continues. In the Sunday School of eleven scholars only four are Methodist. Highlights of the church year include a tea meeting, harvest services, a carol service, a parade service and a service conducted by the Faith Mission. It is not unusual to have to put chairs in the aisle, or sit people in the porch or kitchen at these special occasions. The small, regular congregation keep the building in pristine condition, the latest renovations having been completed in 1997. There is also an intimacy and openness in worship. From May to September they meet at 9.30am. The earliest service in Irish Methodism? The service is at 4.00pm during the remainder of the year. Other neighbours are welcomed regularly, maintaining Wesley's belief that Methodists should be 'the friends of all, and the enemies of none'.