

# ROUND THE CHURCHES

Drawing: Unknown Artist

## 101: Dundrum Methodist Church



The earliest known Methodist service in Dundrum was held in 1821 by a passing Methodist itinerant preacher.

Around 1873 the Rev William Lovett preached here, but, for some time previous to that, services were held in Clara, about three miles west of Dundrum, in the houses of the Ashe, Hill, Truesdale and Burke families.

Mr and Mrs William Quinn of Dundrum and a Mr Agar of Murlough were influential in establishing the nucleus of the Dundrum

Methodist society.

The erection of the church in Dundrum was commenced in 1882 by the Rev Thomas Foster and finished during the ministry of the Rev James Kirkwood, through whose influence also the manse was built.

It is understood that members of the society gave considerable help in the building work.

The 1 June 1883 issue of the *Irish Evangelist* records that the new chapel at Dundrum, costing £400, had been opened during the year, having a debt of £175.

The *Irish Christian Advocate* of 7 September 1883 reported a fortnight of special services during which 'our new church was well filled, and a blessed influence was felt... We have had a very precious work of God here, especially among our young people'.

The Conference of 1884 formed the Dundrum and Castlewella circuit with the Rev James Kirkwood as the

first superintendent, and churches at Castlewella (1867), Newcastle (1826) and Annalong (1842).

In 1967 the Dundrum and Newcastle societies combined with the Downpatrick society to form the present circuit.

In 1983 the Methodist Youth Department signed an agreement with the circuit whereby the MYD rented the church, manse and grounds for a nominal amount, the Dundrum society having the full use of the church, and occasional use of the manse.

The MYD built a chalet to provide extra accommodation, and replaced the pews with carpeting and soft chairs.

In 2001 the MYD withdrew from the agreement, and a similar one was made with Project Evangelism. The new partnership has proved fruitful for both parties in the work of God.

The local society is small, but offers a warm welcome to visitors.