

ROUND THE CHURCHES

Drawing: Charles Bain

81: High Street Methodist Church, Lurgan

Text: E E Malcolmson



On his first visit to Lurgan, on 28 July 1756, the Rev John Wesley preached to the largest congregation since he left Cork, and asked, 'Why should we despair of doing good in Lurgan also?'

Isaac Bullick was one of the first to be converted under the Methodist preaching, and about 1770 a group of people began meeting in his home at the Rookery, High Street. These meetings continued until 1778

when, on the morning of 19 June John Wesley opened a small dwelling house in Nettleton's Court, Queen Street, as the first Methodist Chapel in Lurgan.

By 1802 this had become too small for the congregation, and they moved to a new chapel in High Street, parallel to the street and to the rear of where the present church now stands. Thanks to the generosity of a member, John Johnston, in 1826 tenements in front were demolished and the present church built. Extensive renovations were carried out in 1888, and again in 1925. Over the years since then there have been many improvements, culminating in the building of our church halls in the 1990s.

So much for our buildings!

Our church has been the scene of soul-stirring revivals, notably in 1825 during the ministry of the Rev John Armstrong, and also in 1859. High Street Methodist Church was – and is – built of 'living stones', men and women who have been born anew, and whose names are in the Lamb's Book of Life.

Today God has given a challenge for the future. A site adjacent to the church came on the market and has been purchased by the Home Mission Department. Partly because of the generous bequest of a 20th century Bullick, it may be possible for High Street to acquire and develop it. Please pray with us that God may make clear his will for its use, and give us courage to go forward again, confident in his leading.