

# ROUND THE CHURCHES

Drawing: Peter Murray



The present Knock Church was opened for worship on 13 June 1883. It was a replacement

for one built in 1870, also sited on the Knock Road. This building, enlarged and updated several times, is still in use for youth and adult activities and is known as the Methodist Centre. At the end of the 19th century prosperous merchants moved into the leafy Knock suburb. Many were Methodists who were determined to build a large and more worthy Methodist place of worship to accommodate the growing congregation.

The church is built of Scrabo red sandstone. A shamrock, symbol of the Trinity, is incised into the stonework of the façade. It occupies a prominent site on the

## 48: Knock Methodist Church

Text: Florence Alexander

Knock ring road. The manse built in 1874 is on the same site. Knock was the first church in the British Isles to introduce a system of free-will offering.

There have been three major alterations. In 1908 a gallery was opened above the front porch. The second alteration, in 1925 as part of a War Memorial project, added two transepts, better accommodation for the new organ and the choir side porch and hall. The third scheme was carried out in 1968 with the property now having a larger choir room, church office, youth pastor's room, vestry and kitchen with adjoining crèche.

The church contains an array of beautiful stained glass. Among this is a 1939/45 War

Memorial window, two windows from Carlisle Memorial Church and the specially significant Barbara Heck and Philip Embury windows from Donegall Square Church.

Music has always made an important contribution to worship in Knock. The present organ is a three-manual Smethurst organ, insured for £305,000. The thirty-strong robed choir is trained by the talented organist, Stephen Preston, and has won many trophies.

Youth activities have a vital place in the Knock fellowship. Recently a youth pastor was appointed to expand the work already being carried out.