

ROUND THE CHURCHES

Drawing: Peter Murray

51: Lisbellaw Methodist Church

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One of the earliest references we find to the Wesleyan movement in Lisbellaw is the visit of John Wesley to the village in 1771, where he had no intention of preaching but he found a large and attentive crowd gathered so he felt compelled to speak.

Wesley preached there again

16 years later and was asked to dedicate a young boy by the name of John Nelson who became an effective Wesleyan itinerant preacher many years later.

After the union of Wesleyans and Primitive Wesleyans the united Church went forward with renewed vigour and was tangibly

demonstrated in 1883 with the building of the existing church in Lisbellaw. The site was donated by Mr J G V Porter, Belleisle, the local landlord.

It is interesting to note the principal subscribers to the new church: their descendants – Wilsons, Veitches, Grahams, Orrs and Montgomerys – are still active members. The manse, which is situated beside the church, was built in 1896.

The old church hall, which was renovated from the stables in 1953, was officially opened by the late Mrs Brownlee (widow of the Rev Hugh T Nixon, a previous minister). A new kitchen was added to the hall in 1980.

A vestry was added to the church in 1981 and was officially opened by Mr Harold Montgomery, Innishmore, who was senior circuit steward for over 40 years.

After many years of planning it was decided to demolish the existing hall as it had become unsuitable for the needs of the circuit. A new and larger hall was opened on the same site on Saturday 23 May 2001 by the President, the Rev Ken Todd. This new facility has been put to good use by the CEs, Sunday School, Young Women's Group, Methodist Women's Association, Share and Prayer Group, Circuit Choir, table tennis, badminton, Youth Club, cookery classes, Youth Fellowship, all meeting in it. The catering committee of the hall also entertains visiting groups.

With the influx of new families to the village, it is hoped that the membership of the church will also benefit in the expansion of its fellowship in years to come through the outreach of the church.