

ROUND THE CHURCHES

Drawing: Unknown Artist

103: Mountpottinger Methodist Church

Text: Robert Spence



2009 will be an interesting year for Mountpottinger – this society will be 200 years old – the first church in East Belfast.

Donegall Square was the mother church for Methodism in Belfast and had an outreach

in Cotton Court – off Waring Street.

In 1816 the society split over the issue of communion. Our society, now Mountpottinger (Wesleyan) and Beaver Hall (Primitive Wesleyan), rejoined

at the union of both groups in 1878. Our first church was built in 1826 on the site now occupied by the East Belfast Mission.

It is recorded in the *Belfast Newsletter*, 30 May 1826, that on Sunday 28 May 1826, a new Wesleyan Chapel was opened. Divine worship was conducted by the Rev Alexander Mackey, who delivered an eloquent sermon on the occasion.

The minister of Ballymacarrett Wesleyan Chapel, the Rev John Ker, in November 1880 stated, 'There is one thing here, which in my opinion is a drawback. We have two chapels just beside each other neither of which is large enough to accommodate the people anxious to come.'

The leaders of the Wesleyan Chapel heeded his words and Mountpottinger was opened in 1887. The congregation marched en masse to the new church in May 1887.

Unfortunately the two congregations did not unite and the Belvoir Hall (former Primitive Wesleyans) moved into the vacated 1826 chapel which afterwards became Newtownards Road Methodist Church. The march was repeated at the centenary of Mountpottinger in June 1987.

Recently the toilet facilities have been upgraded and the sandstone stonework repaired, leading to the award for the best maintained church in the category 1800 to 1900 in the 2006 competition.