



Methodist activity in Roscrea was first heard of in 1748, when Charles Wesley travelled through the town intending to return at a later date. However some people recognised him and insisted that he should preach, which he did.

John Wesley visited the town in June 1752. When he preached several clergymen and others were present. Later in the year when Thomas Walsh, one of Wesley preachers on his way to Roscrea was met about a mile outside the town by an angry crowd. On that occasion he was not allowed to preach but at a later date returned to encourage the few whose lives had been changed and established the first Methodist Society in Roscrea. Its centenary was

celebrated in 1953.

In 1790 one Joseph Leech joined the society and began to meet in a class led by a Mr Rowland - Leech became very influential, and the society began to grow. Each time the preacher visited the members had to supply hay for his horse. Adam Averill's visit in 1793 greatly encouraged the little society and in 1794 the first Chapel was built. It accommodated about 400 people. This was

not necessarily a large building for in rural areas Methodist people were used to standing during service and consequently less space was required.

Sometime later it was discovered that the title deed of this chapel was not in order and because of this the Roscrea Methodists were left without their meeting-place. In 1801 our people were obliged to build a new chapel which they did on a site at the Mall; this had a seating capacity of 225. Around 1815 there was some controversy over the administration of the sacraments consequently there was 'a break' within the society when those of the Primitive Wesleyan thinking obtained a site in Church Street, where they built their Chapel, the ruins of which are part of historical Roscrea. The two societies laboured

in the town for some years. During that time Gideon Ouseley, the most famous of Irish Methodist evangelists, visited Roscrea. In 1840 a new building was erected. In 1878 the two sections of Irish Methodism reunited to form what was then officially termed 'The Methodist Church in Ireland'. Later the Wesleyan Chapel at the Mall was in so poor a state of repair that its replacement was recommended. However demolition did not begin until February 1902. The foundation stone of a new chapel on the same site was laid in the following May. Mr WPH Lloyd-Vaughan placed his quarry at Golden Grove at the disposal of the building committee free of charge, and it was his wife who laid the foundation stone on May 26 1902. The building was opened for worship on 1 May 1903.

The total cost was £2,050 towards which subscriptions had been received of £1,225 together with a grant of £90. The remaining debit of £735 was cleared in a comparatively short time. The building comprised the Chapel and a hall. In 1939 a Church Parlour and toilet was added to the rear of the hall and in 1970 this was altered to provide a small kitchen. In recent years our hall, as well as being used by our own people, has been made available to the wider community. We look forward to celebrating the centenary of our present church in the year 2002.

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