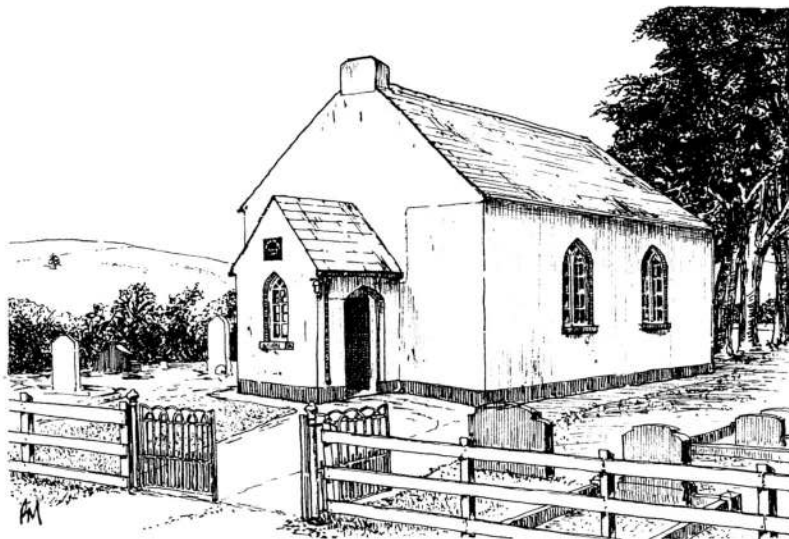


ROUND THE CHURCHES

Drawing: Peter Murray

14: Tirwinney Methodist Church



On 31 January 1999 The President of the Church, the Revd David Kerr, visited the Circuit of Pettigo, Irvinestown and Tirwinney Churches. Recalling his time on the circuit as a junior minister (1959-61), he spoke of these three congregations together with others no longer in existence – Rushandoo, Tulnagin, Tullychurry and others. Tirwinney church (or Terwhinney or Tierwhinney – the spelling varies depending upon which

document is consulted) was erected in 1870, as a foundation stone above the entrance porch testifies, and is situated between the villages of Lack and Ederney in NW Fermanagh. A small graveyard surrounds the church building and the family graves there bear witness to the families associated with the church over the years – Johnson, Moffitt, Simpson, Johnston, Chittick, Armstrong, Knox, Marshall, etc.

The Johnston family would have been drawn from the neighbouring townlands of Lack, Keeran, Glassmullagh and Maelbaun, whilst the congregation for the church would have been resident around the Lack/Ederney/Keeran triangle.

Some 60 years ago tea meetings and cottage meetings might have been held monthly and a congregation of 40-50 people might have filled the church with a Sunday school of 20 children under the guidance of Mrs Barton and other teachers. James Simpson was a local preacher on the circuit and his son, Freddie, and family are still members of the church.

The Revd William Johnston, a member of the Johnston family from Lack, originated from Tirwinney church, as did Ruth Moffitt (now Mrs Ruth Sowden) a member of the Youth Evangelism Team some years ago. The oldest member of the present congregation is Mrs Elizabeth Acheson, aged 94, and due to a decline in the number of large families, a shift in rural population to towns and cities, a movement of families to other circuits, and other factors, the congregation for Sunday worship now averages 6-10 people in this single-room church building set in an isolated rural landscape.

EMcD