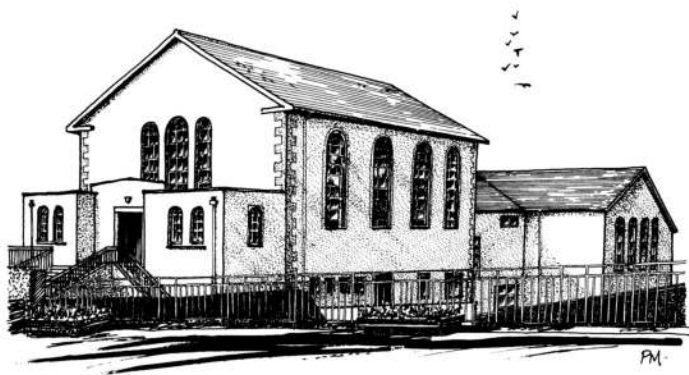


ROUND THE CHURCHES

Drawing: Peter Murray

42: Ballyclare Methodist Church

Text: Paul Kingston



Methodism in Ballyclare dates from 1801, when Joseph Morrison preached at Ballyboley, a few miles outside the town. Mrs Gawn opened her home to him and a prayer meeting was held. The Holy Spirit so moved that many were converted and a class was formed. Shortly afterwards another class commenced at Ballycorr.

The present Church was erected in 1828 during the ministry of Rev Alexander Mackey. The building was described as 'unnecessarily large'. Mr William McConnell held a mortgage of £800 on the property but agreed to cancel it if his name was engraved on a plate on the pew reserved for the preacher's family.

During 1859 Ballyclare witnessed great revival and blessing as large numbers of people, including many cotton mill workers, were converted.

The pipe organ was installed in 1920 as a memorial to those who had served and fallen in the Great War.

An extensive renovation scheme during the ministry of the Rev George Watson in the 1950s involved re-roofing the church, adding an entrance porch and toilets, and converting the basement, which had previously been the manse, to ancillary accommodation.

In 1960 a church hall was erected under the direction of Mr William G Montgomery, then circuit steward.

In 2001 the premises were greatly enhanced by further

extension and renovation. This enlarged the hall, provided additional meeting rooms; a new kitchen and foyer on the ground floor and a vestry and choir room adjoining the church at first floor level. Provision was also made for disabled access to both levels. The completion of the building work has enabled two new initiatives aimed at reaching the community and enriching fellowship. A mother and toddler group has been formed. A daytime friendship group has been established for all with time to spare and share. The new facilities have also helped and encouraged our Youth Organisations.

We pray that the work and witness of Methodism in Ballyclare will go from strength to strength.