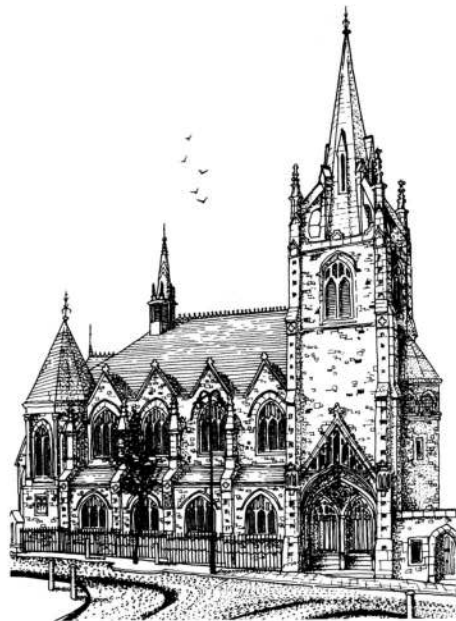


# ROUND THE CHURCHES

## 57: Carlisle Road Methodist Church

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Text: Hamilton Blain



Carlisle Road Methodist Church in Londonderry has been described as one of the most beautiful churches in Irish Methodism. Situated in the heart of the city it is listed as a building of particular historical interest because of its splendid architecture.

It is part of the Londonderry Mission circuit. On the Waterside of the city there is the newly erected Clooney Hall and Mission centre.

Carlisle Road Methodist Church and extensive suite of halls were opened on 8 May 1903 (100 years ago). The sum of £6,375 had still to be found when the buildings were opened and for more than a decade this debt was a burden which may have hindered the spiritual growth of the church in those early years.

Previous centres of worship on the west bank of the Foyle were in Magazine Street, Linenhall Street, East Wall. Epworth Hall in the Rosemount area was opened in 1895 and was destroyed by fire in the early 1990s.

Carlisle Road Church has experienced both high and low points in its history. The canteen that operated during the Second World War years catered for the needs of large numbers of Service personnel based in the city. This has been described as 'the zenith of the church's missionary activities'. The civil unrest in the area during the so-called 'Troubles' resulted in many members moving from the city and cancellation of most weeknight activities. With reduced

membership the society also struggled to meet its financial obligations. Thankfully those dark days appear to have passed and a brighter day has dawned.

There are now just over 100 members. The leaders are actively seeking to implement a Mission Statement. There is a close and growing fellowship between members, strengthened by a time of fellowship over a cup of tea following Sunday morning worship. There is a very successful youth club with a membership of over 50 young people. There is a monthly Sunday evening praise service that reaches out to other denominations. The buildings are well maintained by a small group of committed and skilled volunteers. The society is free of debt and contributes generously to connexional and other funds. At present the church buildings are also being used for Sunday worship by First Derry Presbyterian congregation while their own church is being repaired.

As we approach a new century of witness and service, the members of Carlisle Road Methodist Church praise God for all that is past and trust Him for all that's to come.