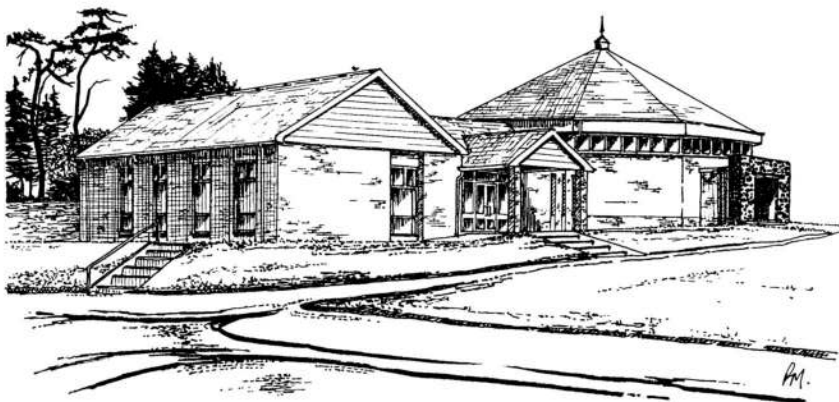


ROUND THE CHURCHES

Drawing: Peter Murray

19: Cullybackey Methodist Church



The present Cullybackey Methodist Church on Shellinghill Road celebrates its 30th anniversary this year. The premises, comprising a church, hall, classrooms, ancillary accommodation and a large car park, were built on a plot of almost 4 acres, purchased in 1963 for £1,800. A new manse was erected on the same site in 1974.

Those who worship on Shellinghill Road claim a heritage that is of both Presbyterian and Methodist tradition. The first meeting house, which stood on a plot of ground known as 'meetin-hoose brae' in the townland of Tullygrawley, was built in 1819 by the Presbyterian congregation which had been formed in 1810 by

Scottish families who had settled in the area.

In 1839 the congregation moved to a new building beside the River Maine in the village of Cullybackey. In 1858 this Secession Church joined the United

Presbyterian Church; in 1890 a further union took place with the Free Church of Scotland and the church became known as the United Free Church of Scotland.

In 1922 when the then Minister, the Revd Jonathan Townsley, MA resigned the pastorate, the authorities in Scotland requested that the congregation join the local

Presbyterian Church. The members of the congregation, however, wishing to maintain their autonomy, approached the Methodist Church in Ireland and, at the Annual Conference in June 1923, the congregation of Presbyterian descent became Methodist. Worship continued in this building until September 1969 when the congregation moved to new premises on Shellinghill Road.

In recent times the church has been re-roofed and some modifications carried out to improve disabled access; in the past year the Church organ has been enlarged and enhanced. It is testimony to the generosity of the members of the congregation that all of these projects have been completed debt free.

Elizabeth Wiseman