
ROUND THE CHURCHES

Drawing: B Syms



Dun Laoghaire Methodist Church owes its origin to the illness of Gideon Ouseley, probably the greatest of the Methodist evangelists. He spent a ministry of nearly fifty years touring the country preaching in the streets and wherever else he could gather a crowd. In 1820 he caught a cold, neglected it, and it developed into something more serious. His doctor ordered him to the seaside, where it was thought that rest and the sea air would help his cure. The sea air certainly did but Ouseley could not rest from preaching.

The resort he chose was the little seaport town of Dunleary. There he preached in the open air four times a week. In a short

while he gathered a class of fourteen people, and when he left the area to resume his mission work he entrusted the care of this little group to the preachers of the Dublin circuit. Under their care the work prospered.

A year later, when visited by George IV, the name of the seaport was changed to Kingstown. In 1836 the Rev. Robert Newton, an English Methodist minister celebrated for having opened 'innumerable chapels', came to Ireland to open two here. On the day of his arrival, March 8th, he opened one on Northumberland Avenue in Kingstown. Charles Mayne, who had retired the

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previous year, came to live in Kingstown, and for the remaining two years of his life took an active interest in the society.

Cole reports that Robert Wallace was attacked while preaching here in 1855. Comparing that with Crookshank's account of the incident, it appears that Wallace was protesting about the burning of Bibles in one of the streets.

The little church that was opened in 1836, in a little more than forty years was becoming too small for the society. It and the manse next door were demolished and in 1904 a new church was built to a design by George F. Beckett. The tower over the porch was never built. A hall was built at the back on the site. A new manse was acquired at Crosthwaite Park.

In the 1950s fashion was moving to Dun Laoghaire (old name; new spelling) and the church had to be enlarged. It was discovered that Beckett had foreseen this and some arches needed for the extensions were already in place. At the same time the hall was demolished and a new one put in its place. More recently the hall has been used by charitable groups in the community.

In 2014 the interior of the building was redesigned to meet the needs of contemporary worship and fellowship.

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