

# ROUND THE CHURCHES

Drawing: Bee Syms

## 107: Inver Methodist Church

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Inver Methodist Church was built in 1881 near Mountcharles in County Donegal. Its erection resulted from a revival that took place in the area in 1875. Due to the number of people converted, it became essential to build a church to accommodate the numbers coming for worship. Murray Corscadden was building a new home for family relatives and altered the design of the house so that the Methodists could use it as a temporary place of worship capable of accommodating 150 people, while the new church at Inver was being built.

The superintendent minister resided in Donegal town and a circuit evangelist was

employed to care for the Inver society. Over the years a number of those evangelists entered the ministry but Edwin M Colvin is the only native member of Inver church to enter the Methodist ministry.

In the second decade of the 20th century, two Faith Mission pilgrims held a mission in Inver at which a number of local people were converted. A prayer meeting was started at that time which has continued on a weekly basis ever since.

There was a Methodist school at Inver, Gortward National School. It dated back to at least 1835 as one of the Mission Schools and records show that there were 86 pupils on the roll. It also served as a place of worship for the Methodist community before the church at Inver was built.

A new school was built in 1887 and one of the teachers, Mary Rebecca Morrow, married the Rev George James. In 1915 the school was amalgamated with Inver Church of Ireland School. The children of the school still take part in the annual Tea Meeting in Inver church.

There is an annual open-air service held on Doorin Rock nearby on the last Sunday of June. In 2007 there were over 70 gathered for worship on the Rock. No

one can remember when the Rock Service first started, but one local Church of Ireland resident, who died a few years ago, had attended Doorin Rock every year for 75 years. So it may well have started in 1875 with the Revival that led to the building of Inver church.

In 1983 Inver church underwent major renovation. The original church was demolished except for one wall and rebuilt with the addition of kitchen and toilet facilities. A painting of the original church, by the Rev A Desmond Gilliland in 1984, hangs in the porch of the present building. A photograph of the original church was discovered only last year, fixed to the back of the painting which Mr Gilliland had used for his picture.

It was only after the re-opening of the church in 1984 that it was realised that the centenary of the building had been overlooked. Consequently in 2006 it was decided to hold a special celebration for the 125th anniversary. The preacher was the Rev Ivan McElhinney, President of the Methodist Church in Ireland, who is also a native of the circuit. A history of Inver church and a special hymn were written for the occasion.