

ROUND THE CHURCHES

Drawing: Ruth Fitzpatrick

60: Killarney Methodist Church

Text: Ed Ritchie



John Wesley did not visit Kerry. Methodism was brought to the county in 1790 by Charles

Graham, a native Irish speaker. The Rev Adam Averell preached near Kenmare in 1797. Eleven

years later, at the close of a service at Killarney Courthouse, six people testified to their conversion at that memorable open-air meeting. A church (then called a preaching house) was built in High Street in 1810.

The present building, opened in 1911, was designed by George Beckett, a Dublin architect. It was built on a prominent site – the Ha Ha – with finances from the Twentieth Century Fund. It is a fine stone-faced building and is a preserved structure.

Forty years ago the congregation had dwindled away due to emigration, so the church was transferred to the Cork circuit. Successive Cork ministers and local preachers kept the church open in the summer months for the many

visitors to the area.

In 1998, in a venture of faith, services were once again held all the year round. Next year a church house was bought and two lay pastors appointed. To adapt to contemporary worship the pews were replaced by chairs, and the building was refurbished.

Now at two Sunday morning services visitors join the enthusiastic, growing congregation of local people, asylum-seekers, refugees and other newcomers.

An extension is due to be built this year for Sunday School and small group meetings. In the autumn the lay pastors are due to retire, and we pray for suitable replacements to continue the work God is doing here at this time.