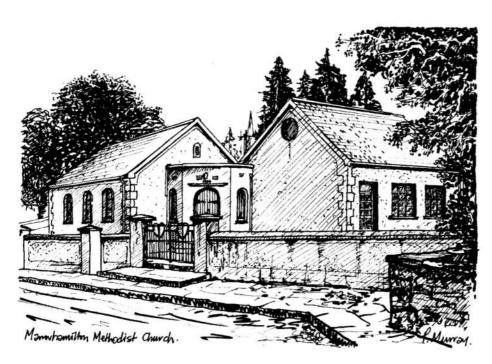
ROUND THE CHURCHES

Drawing: Peter Murray

2: Manorhamilton



Manorhamilton gets its name from Sir Frederick Hamilton, who was granted lands in the area by Charles I in the 1620's. He built a castle there circa 1636, which was burned in 1652 and remains a ruin today. The Irish name for Manorhamilton is Cluainin, "O'Rourke's Little Field", an indication that

the O'Rourkes of Breffni held control there before English rule came. John Wesley visited Manorhamilton on seven occasions between 1769 and 1789. Of his first visit he writes in his Journal that Manorhamilton was "so called from a poor wretch who settled here in the last century and was famous for nothing else but hanging up all the Irish who fell into his hands" – a reference to Sir Frederick. Conference first gave permission for a chapel in Manorhamilton in 1792. Oral tradition says this was in Reilly's Row, off Castle Street, but no trace remains today. A second chapel was built circa 1804 in Tea Pot Lane or St Patrick's Terrace, off the Main Street. This building, still extant, is divided with the Masonic Hall in one part and a furniture store in the other.

The Primitive Wesleyans erected a church in Manorhamilton in 1821. On reunification with the Wesleyans in 1878, this became the Methodist Church until 1964. Sold to Mr George Thompson, a local Methodist whose family are still members today, it was opened as a heritage and tourist centre in 1993 by President Mary Robinson, who referred to the fact that the late Senator Gordon Wilson had been baptised there.

The present church and hall, featured in the sketch by Rev Peter Murray were built in 1964. Today Manorhamilton has a congregation of about 20 members and is one of six churches on the Sligo and Drumshanbo circuit. There is a Sunday School, and a new Girls' Brigade Company was started last autumn with 18 girls. The hall is also used every day by a pre-school community play group.

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