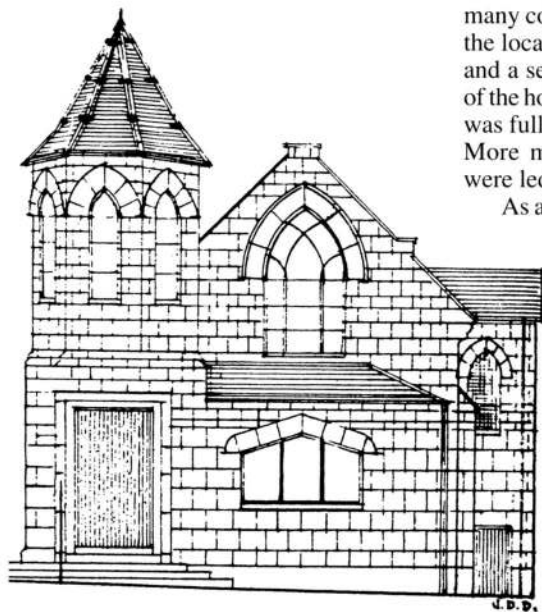


Drawing and Text: John D Deane



many converts. While she was in Newcastle, the local people asked her to hold a meeting and a service was held in the drawing room of the house where she was staying. The room was full of people waiting to hear her speak. More meetings were held and very many were led to Christ.

As a result of Miss Lutton's work and her inspiration, a new Methodist Church was opened on 22 June 1827. It was the first place of worship in the town. For many years the church was freely lent to ministers of the Church of Ireland, afterwards to ministers of the Presbyterian Church. The first Presbyterian Minister of Newcastle was ordained in the Methodist Church. The building, which could only seat one hundred people, over the years got into a state of decay and became inadequate, particularly in the summer months when many crowded into the church.

By the late 1920s it became clear that it was necessary to build a new church. Largely due to the enthusiasm and energy of the Rev James Kirkwood, a retired minister who had pastoral charge in Newcastle, a new church was opened on 16 November 1928 on the site

of the old church. It was erected at a cost of about £4,000 to seat 300 people. The church is of Gothic design with nave, transepts and apse and the addition of a tower at the front entrance. It was built with granite from Castlewellan stone.

It has several stained glass windows. One in the apse takes the form of a memorial to the Rev Wm A Bracken, others over the years were placed in memory of other benefactors, but after Mr Kirkwood's death the congregation placed one in his memory which shows the Apostle Paul in a rich scarlet cloak beside the sea at the conclusion of his travels, and the inscription reads as follows: To the Glory of God and in Loving Memory of Rev James Kirkwood and of his wife Frances Kirkwood through whose efforts this present Church was erected in the year 1928.

But a church is much more than a building, however fine, and during the intervening years since 1928 the work of God has been carried on by a long succession of dedicated ministers and a never large but ever faithful band of members and adherents, serving the church in their own often quiet and unspectacular individual ways. Most notable is the service rendered over the years to the vast numbers of holidaymakers who formerly crowded into Newcastle during the summer months.

In 1826 a Miss Anne Lutton (who had been born in 1791, the year John Wesley died) visited Newcastle for a holiday. In 1816 she had been led to the full consecration of her life to the service of God. The charismatic quality of her Christian life gave her very great influence and her unofficial ministry particularly among women and produced