

ROUND THE CHURCHES

Drawing: Peter Murray



Wesleyan Methodists had made an attempt to establish a society in Bangor in the 1820s but when they failed the Methodist New Connexion succeeded in 1832. Three years later the New

to the Wesleyans for £ 4000. Secondly, a new Wesleyan church, the Wesley Centenary in Hamilton Road, had also been opened in 1891. The Queen's Parade society found it difficult to

Connexion bought the small sanctuary in Sandy Row - now Queen's Parade - which had been erected by the Wesleyans.

This church served local needs for almost 50 years until in 1891 it was replaced by the present building. Almost immediately, however, the Queen's Parade society encountered difficulties on two fronts. First, the New Connexion was in decline and in 1905 it ceased to exist in Ireland and all its property - including Queen's Parade - was sold

5: Queen's Parade, Methodist Church, Bangor

maintain its membership under these conditions and the society declined to such an extent that the church was eventually closed in 1912.

Plans were made to sell the church building but before the sale occurred Samuel (later Sir Samuel) Kelly, a coal merchant, intervened. He recognised that Bangor was growing and had much potential for further growth and believed that the church in Queen's Parade should be retained. Mainly through his vision and his financial generosity, the church was reopened in 1918 and once again became a circuit in 1922.

Since then Queen's Parade has justified his confidence. It has played an important role in Methodist Church growth in Bangor, taking a lead in the establishment of the work in Carnalea and contributing to the development of Primacy.

Last year the Fountain Centre, a complex containing a new hall, a counselling room and the new Fountain Cafe, was officially opened on Wesley Day, 24th May.

Arthur Parker