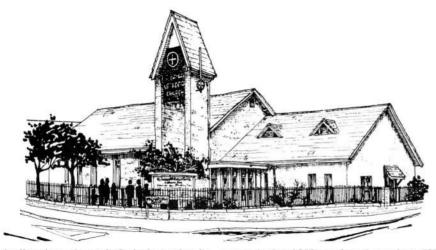
ROUND THE CHURCHES

Drawing: Peter Murray

15: Sydenham Methodist Church



Methodist witness began in Sydenham when in 1872 Mr and Mrs John Watson of the Knock congregation opened their home in Victoria Road for a Sunday School. By 1883 the work had expanded to include adults and was sufficiently well established to warrant a permanent building. On 29 December of that year the foundation stones were laid and the Mission Hall was opened on 21 March 1884. It

accommodated 300 people and cost about £500.

In 1914 the Sydenham Society transferred from Knock to the Ballymacarrett Circuit and that arrangement continued until Sydenham was deemed sufficiently mature to have independent status and was constituted a circuit in 1960.

The original hall and an assortment of temporary wooden and Nissen huts served the growing congregation until 1958. The present church was opened on 14 June and the original Mission Hall which had been long looked upon as a church was named The Watson Hall. Shortly after this a new hall, The Ferguson Hall, was built to replace the temporary huts and this was opened in June 1965.

Apart from renovations, no further building took place until 1993. In September 1992 a building programme was initiated. An extension to provide a crèche, a kitchen, upper room and office at the vestibule end of the church was opened in May 1993. By then The Watson Hall was almost 110 years old and it was decided to demolish it and replace it with a modern purpose-built youth hall and at the same time to link it to The Ferguson Hall. This new suite of premises was opened in May 1997 at a cost of £340 000.

When The Watson Hall was demolished newspapers of the day stored in sealed bottles which had been buried in the foundations were unearthed and these are now displayed in the entrance hall of the new suite together with a time capsule placed there on opening day in 1997.