

METHODIST ALLEGIANCE IN
SOUTH NOTTINGHAMSHIRE PARISHES
1770-1875

Anne C. Woodcock, BA. LLB. MA.

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Abstract

This study considers the nature of Methodist allegiance in four south Nottinghamshire parishes from the arrival of the denomination in the late eighteenth or early nineteenth century until about 1875. In this area, Methodism became strongly established against an inadequate Anglican church but nevertheless most individuals did not exhibit an exclusive commitment. Using records from the Newark, subsequently Bingham, Wesleyan Methodist circuit, relating to the Societies in three medium-sized villages and one small market town, and looking particularly at Methodist membership and decisions regarding choice of baptismal rite, the research shows the existence of both exogenous growth and continuing fluidity of allegiance from the early period until well beyond the mid-century point of the religious census. It demonstrates a previously unidentified, significant turnover in Methodist membership throughout the period, which occurred irrespective of apparent growth, stability or decline. This lends support to the growing body of evidence about both varying and dual denominational allegiance, in particular between the Wesleyan chapel and the parish church. The research further confirms this phenomenon in relation to baptismal decisions, where some committed Methodist families continued to use the Anglican rite and many varied their choice for different children. In investigating these facets of religious life, the study also establishes the existence of emerging religious competition during the nineteenth century, evidenced additionally in competitive church building, service patterns and the provision of education. Only by the last quarter of the century were denominational boundaries clearly hardening, particularly in the town of Bingham, but this thesis demonstrates that until then allegiance was neither exclusive nor consistent.

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List of Abbreviations

B.M.C. – Bingham Methodist Church

C.E.R.C. – Church of England Record Centre

C.B.M.C. – Cropwell Bishop Methodist Church

H.T.C.T. – Holy Trinity Church, Tithby

L.A.O. – Lincolnshire Archives Office

L.P.L. – Lambeth Palace Library

N.A.O. – Nottinghamshire Archives Office

O.S. – Ordnance Survey

T.N.A. – The National Archives

V.C.H. – Victoria County History

Tithby – alternatively spelt Tythby. Tithby is used throughout, apart from in quotations which are unaltered.

Bailey 1784 - W. Bailey, *British Directory or Merchant's and Tradesman's Useful Companion for the Year 1784* Vol.II (1784)

Crockford 1860 - Crockford's, *The Clerical Directory: a biographical and statistical book of reference for facts relating to the clergy and the church* (1860)

Crockford 1885 - Crockford's, *Crockford's Clerical Directory for 1885: Being a Statistical Book of Reference for Facts Relating to the Clergy and the Church* (London, 1885)

Kelly 1855 - Kelly & Co., *Post Office Directory of Derbyshire and Nottinghamshire with maps engraved expressly for the work* (1855)

Kelly 1876 - *Post Office Directory of Nottinghamshire* (1876)

Kelly 1912 - *Kelly Directory of Nottinghamshire* (1912)

Kelly 1922 - *Kelly's Directory of the Counties of Derby, Nottingham, Leicester and Rutland* (1922)

Morris 1869 - Morris & Co., *Commercial Directory and Gazetteer of Nottinghamshire with Grantham, Chesterfield and Gainsborough* (1869)

Morris 1877 - Morris & Co., *Commercial Directory and Gazetteer of Nottingham and District* (1877)

- Pigot 1819 - Pigot & Co.'s *Directory of Nottinghamshire* (1819)
- Pigot 1822 - Pigot & Co.'s *Directory of Nottinghamshire* (1822)
- Pigot 1831 - Pigot & Co.'s *Directory of Nottinghamshire* (1831)
- Pigot 1835 - Pigot & Co.'s *Directory of Nottinghamshire* (1835)
- White 1832 - W. White, *History, Gazetteer and Directory of Nottinghamshire and the town and county of Nottingham* (1832)
- White 1844 - W. White, *History, Gazetteer and Directory of Nottinghamshire and the town and county of Nottingham* (1844)
- White 1853 - F. White, *History, Gazetteer and Directory of Nottinghamshire and the town and county of Nottingham* (1853)
- White 1864 - F. White, *Nottinghamshire: History, Gazetteer and Directory of the county, and of the town and county of Nottingham* (1864)
- White 1885 - W.White, *History, Gazetteer and Directory of Nottinghamshire* (1885)
- White 1894 - W.White, *History, Gazetteer and Directory of Nottinghamshire* (1894)
- Wright 1871 - C.N. Wright, *Wright's Directory of Nottingham & Twelve Miles Round & Red Book* (1871)
- Wright 1874 - C.N. Wright, *Wright's Directory of Nottingham & Twelve Miles Round* (1874)
- Wright 1879 - C.N. Wright, *Wright's Commercial & General Directory Gazetteer & Blue Book of Nottinghamshire* (1879)

Introduction

A Grantham Wesleyan Methodist plan of 1832 included a verse ending with the couplet:

'And truth should be thy object of research,
Where'er thou goest, to chapel, or to church.'¹

This thesis considers the nature of Methodist allegiance in a selection of south Nottinghamshire parishes from the establishment of the denomination until about 1875. It demonstrates that those seeking truth in religious matters might vary their allegiance regarding both Methodist membership and choice of baptismal rite, while for much of this time any categorisation of people into a particular religious group can be misleading. For many, allegiance to the Methodist Society and the parish church was both dual and variable. Villagers and townspeople lent sufficient support for the establishment and consolidation of Methodism but nevertheless constantly moved in and out of the commitment of membership, as revealed by a continuous turnover throughout the period. On occasions, religious competition prompted a clearer denominational choice; nevertheless, even committed Methodists exhibited dual allegiance regarding baptismal decisions.

Arising from my earlier research on Methodism in the parish of Tithby-cum-Cropwell Butler,² which had identified the emergence of religious competition and its potential link with baptismal choice, this study broadens the geographical area and extends the scope. An overview of

¹ Quoted in B.J. Biggs, 'Saints of the Soil: Early Methodism in Agricultural Areas', *Proceedings of the Wesley Historical Society*, 48 (October 1992), 190.

² A.C. Woodcock, 'Union in Saving Souls: the Impact of Methodism on Cropwell Butler, Nottinghamshire, 1770 – 1870' (University of Nottingham M.A., 2005).

south Nottinghamshire, as comprised by the Bingham and Rushcliffe Hundreds, provides the context and the basis for the original selection of ten parishes for in-depth investigation.³

Initial work on four parishes to test methods and the available material revealed an unanticipated and significant fresh dimension to the research related to turnover in Methodist membership. This could not be investigated in the remaining six parishes because of lack of surviving records, so it was decided to narrow the area to the parishes of Flintham, Cropwell Bishop, Tithby-cum-Cropwell Butler and Bingham, comprising four villages and one small market town.⁴ Although this somewhat limits the scope of questions about denominational reciprocities and reasons for the establishment of Methodism in different communities, these parishes still exhibit a range of characteristics.

Four broad areas are investigated: factors leading to the establishment of Methodism in a locality; the nature of the consolidation of Methodist (particularly Wesleyan) Societies; development of competition amongst the religious groups and the balance for individuals of dual allegiance against exclusive commitment.

Notwithstanding the argument for arranging the discussion of the research and its findings according to these four areas, it was decided to adopt a broadly chronological approach. Thematic presentation would have necessitated a significant amount of repetition or cross-referencing about events and individuals when much of the material was already complex and when it was often important to appreciate various aspects of the situation

³ See below Chapter 2 for detailed discussion of the methodology.

⁴ See below Chapter 2, 91-93.

at a particular time point. Consequently, although considering the initial arrival of Methodism in Chapter 3 fits directly into the chronological sequence and forms the first substantive chapter, the discussions relating to the remaining three areas are arranged as appropriate within the subsequent chronological progression. Chapter 4 focuses on Wesleyan Methodist consolidation up to approximately mid-century, while Chapter 5 considers developments for the parish church and other Methodist groups for the same period in the context of the emerging competitive religious environment. The particular aspect of competition in education, extending to 1875, is discussed separately in Chapter 6. Chapter 7 deals with interpreting the results of the 1851 religious census for the four parishes and Chapter 8 with the continuing competition thereafter. The final presentation in Chapter 9 incorporates the strands from the earlier periods relating to dual allegiance of individuals with analysis and discussion of allegiance in the third quarter. The introduction to each chapter identifies the specific issues investigated.

The establishment of Methodism in each community is approached by assessing the extent to which size, type of landholding, state of the parish church and local support and/or opposition were relevant. Overall, Methodism emerged where there was diversity in landholding and the parish church was experiencing problems of one type or another. Some leading individuals usually offered support and no significant opposition arose.

The nature of the consolidation of Methodist Societies is considered by analysis of the pattern of growth and chapel building, the type of growth experienced and whether core families can be identified. In the places studied, chapel building to some extent followed the recognised pattern,

but analysis of membership totals led to an unanticipated and highly significant conclusion regarding the existence of a concealed turnover throughout, irrespective of overall growth or decline. Furthermore, exogenous growth almost certainly extended beyond the mid-nineteenth century. As anticipated, a small group of core families were of critical importance in maintaining the Societies in all the parishes.

Although the 1851 religious census acted as a defining point, the extent to which religious competition emerged in the 1840s and as the nineteenth century progressed is explored by consideration of a range of aspects: the establishment of new religious groups, expansion of buildings, patterns of services and other activities, changes in baptismal practices and the provision of religious and secular education. The overall evidence pointed to a competitive situation from most of the aspects studied, although the precise nature and level varied amongst the parishes.

Allegiance and commitment are investigated from three angles: options for attendance at worship alongside recorded attendances, baptismal practices of individuals who revealed other Methodist commitment and the links of leading figures with more than one religious group. More broadly, the question is also explored of whether denominational boundaries hardened more quickly in the town than in the villages. Just as with the membership records, the analysis of baptismal practices revealed a complex situation indicating an unexpected level of fluidity and suggesting a variation in practice by Methodist families throughout most of the period. Although the evidence was more limited for questions about dual attendance and individual cross-denominational links, it indicated that both of these were present.

A Yorkshire incumbent in 1865 reported 'several Wesleyans ...are all good Church goers, and regular communicants, class leaders included',⁵ while even in 1881 a Leicestershire parson commented 'in country villages they go to church and chapel also'.⁶ This thesis demonstrates that, during most of the nineteenth century, fluidity in religious allegiance also existed in south Nottinghamshire, alongside emerging competition amongst the denominations.

⁵ J. Wolffe, 'The 1851 Census and Religious Change in Nineteenth-century Yorkshire', *Northern History*, XLV: 1, (2008), 84.

⁶ D.M. Thompson, 'The Churches and Society in Nineteenth-Century England: a Rural Perspective', in G.J. Cuming & D. Baker (eds.), *Studies in Church History*, 8: *Popular belief and practice* (1972), 274-75.

Chapter One

Literature Review

Introduction

The literature on the religious history of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries and related topics has been reviewed to provide an outline of the emergence and development of Methodism and its relationship with the Anglican church and to identify arguments put forward about particularly significant aspects. Consideration is given to some key areas of discussion which have emerged as the study of religious history has moved from a purely descriptive and narrowly denominationally focused approach to one more analytical, broadly based and often inter-disciplinary.

When the original review was undertaken, it was anticipated that the scope of the research would include a sufficient number of parishes for a range of comparisons about reasons for the establishment of Methodism in some places rather than others. Based on this focus, a section was devoted to the literature on religious geography and religious adherence in different types of communities. However, as the investigation proceeded, it was decided to reduce the number of parishes under consideration because of the emergence of other significant issues relating to the consolidation of Methodist Societies, for which the records in some places proved inadequate.¹ Consequently, the comparison of the emergence of Methodism in different places was ultimately a less widespread aspect of the study than had been foreseen.

¹ See below Chapter 2, 91-92.

Religion in England prior to Methodism

Throughout the eighteenth century, the Church of England was the dominant church with nominal allegiance of 90 per cent of the population.² However, despite its strong position in society, its condition was often far from satisfactory and subject to considerable regional variation.³ In 1704, Queen Anne's Bounty was instituted with the purpose of augmenting the maintenance of poor clergy and, by 1736, about 1,100 benefices with incomes below £50 per annum had received benefactions.⁴ Nevertheless half were still classified as poor and 20 per cent were worth less than £10, without including unbeneficed curates.⁵ Although clerical incomes generally increased during the century, resulting in only one third being below the poverty line (then estimated at £150 per annum) by the early nineteenth century, pluralism and non-residence increased from 16 per cent of beneficed clergy in 1705 to 36 per cent by 1775.⁶ It is not entirely clear how far clerical poverty necessitated pluralism but the lack of resident incumbents undermined the monopoly claims of the church and its influence in many localities weakened the parochial system.⁷ The most frequently stated reason for non-residence was the absence of a 'convenient' house for an incumbent, since many benefices had no parsonage houses or ones in poor repair or considered inadequate.⁸ In 1764, Nottinghamshire visitation returns revealed 103 parishes with houses, 33 without and 55 unclear responses.⁹ As incumbents were responsible for building and maintenance, the capital outlay was beyond

² H.D. Rack, *Reasonable Enthusiast: John Wesley and the Rise of Methodism* (2002), 10.

³ J. Walsh & S. Taylor, 'Introduction: the Church and Anglicanism in the 'Long' Eighteenth Century', in J. Walsh, C. Haydon & S. Taylor (eds.), *The Church of England c.1689-c.1833: From Toleration to Tractarianism* (1993), 6-12.

⁴ G.F.A. Best, *Temporal Pillars: Queen Anne's Bounty, the Ecclesiastical Commissioners and the Church of England* (1964), 85, 93.

⁵ Walsh & Taylor, 'Church and Anglicanism', 6.

⁶ *Ibid*, 7-8.

⁷ *Ibid*, 8.

⁸ W.M. Jacob, *The Clerical Profession in the Long Eighteenth Century* (2007), 102-03

⁹ H. Fisher (ed.), *Church Life in Georgian Nottinghamshire: Archbishop Drummond's Parish Visitation Returns 1764*, Thoroton Society Record Series Vol.46, (2012), xvii.

the means of most where the income was small.¹⁰ However, there was significant rebuilding from the late eighteenth century because of an improvement in clerical incomes.¹¹

On the other hand, a non-resident incumbent was not necessarily incompatible with a high standard of pastoral care, since he might live nearby, use a curate or share duties with neighbouring clergy.¹² There were few churches in Nottinghamshire in 1764 without a clergyman either resident or living close to the parish¹³ and contemporaries did not necessarily view such practices critically, providing profits were not excessive and satisfactory arrangements were made for deputies to undertake the requisite responsibilities.¹⁴ However, where there was neither resident incumbent nor curate, the soil might be fertile for the establishment of nonconformity.¹⁵ Gray found in Hunsonby in the 1820s that the vicars seemed to be absentees when the Methodists were first establishing their Society, despite the curate providing a level of continuity and activity.¹⁶

The general pattern of worship was for country churches to have three or four communions per year at the great festivals but the numbers attending, as recorded in visitation returns, were generally much lower than potential communicants and did not necessarily indicate levels of commitment.¹⁷ Although the requirement was for morning and evening (or afternoon) services, in some villages where parishioners had a distance to

¹⁰ Jacob, *Clerical Profession*, 102-03.

¹¹ *Ibid*, 153.

¹² Walsh & Taylor, 'Church and Anglicanism', 8, 10; Jacob, *Clerical Profession*, 100.

¹³ Fisher, *Drummond's Visitation*, xviii.

¹⁴ Jacob, *Clerical Profession*, 98.

¹⁵ *Ibid*, 108.

¹⁶ L. Gray, '“And Who is My Neighbour?”: the Methodists of Hunsonby and Winskill in their Local Context, 1821-1871', *Transactions of the Cumberland and Westmorland Antiquarian and Archaeological Society*, 13 (2013), 171.

¹⁷ Rack, *Reasonable Enthusiast*, 19-21; Walsh & Taylor, 'Church and Anglicanism', 23; Jacob, *Clerical Profession*, 184; Fisher, *Drummond's Visitation*, xxvi.

travel, there was only a second service during the summer.¹⁸ The usual reason for just one service was pluralism; it was difficult to fit two services into both morning and afternoon, especially in winter, if there were four or five miles between the churches.¹⁹

It has been suggested that there were approximately 1,845 dissenting congregations in the second decade of the eighteenth century, with Dissenters comprising about 6.2 per cent of the total population.²⁰ However, these congregations were by no means evenly distributed, being more urbanized than the general population and usually with larger congregations in the towns.²¹ Consequently, many villages had no dissenting church and those that existed drew their membership from a wide geographical area. For example, 30 of the 42 parishes in the Derbyshire High Peak Deanery had no dissenting meeting house in 1751.²² Rural dissent could experience pressures to conform not found in towns and was subject to an ever present likelihood of collapse through the loss of members, ministers or the building.²³ The 1689 Toleration Act had given Dissenters freedom and security to build permanent places of worship; however, responses varied and many dissenting congregations still met in temporary premises at the beginning of the eighteenth century.²⁴ In addition, by 1730 there was a growing uneasiness regarding the state of the churches, principles and religion,²⁵ such that in 1731 Isaac Watts wrote that religion had fallen 'under a general and remarkable decay' and

¹⁸ Jacob *Clerical Profession*, 177.

¹⁹ *Ibid*, 178.

²⁰ M.R. Watts, *The Dissenters: Vol. I From the Reformation to the French Revolution* (1978), 268-69.

²¹ *Ibid*, 285.

²² J.V. Beckett, M. Tranter & W. Bateman (eds.), *Visitation Returns from the Archdeaconry of Derby 1718-1824*, Derbyshire Record Society Vol.29, (2003), xxxv.

²³ Watts, *Dissenters I*, 288.

²⁴ *Ibid*; R.W. Ambler, *Churches, Chapel, and the Parish Communities of Lincolnshire 1660-1900* (2000), 89.

²⁵ Watts, *Dissenters I*, 382.

Dissenters were losing their reputation for 'superior virtue and merit'.²⁶

The visitation returns of the 1730s and 1740s confirmed a decline, with the Nottinghamshire return in 1743 referring to disused Presbyterian meeting houses in Calverton, Woodborough and Widmerpool.²⁷

The Evangelical Revival

Ultimately, the revival of religion and dissent itself came from the established church, not from any of the dissenting denominations.²⁸ It was part of an international phenomenon, attempting to return to an earlier religious fervour emphasising personal conversion and the reformation doctrine of justification by faith.²⁹ By the 1730s, a revival in America, an outburst of Moravian missionary enthusiasm and a movement in Wales were brought into contact through a group of Oxford graduates and students who, from 1729, met together for study, prayer and good works and were branded as 'Methodists'.³⁰ Charles Wesley had founded the 'Holy Club', with John Wesley becoming its spiritual guide and, during three days in May 1738, they both experienced evangelical conversions with John recording that he found his 'heart strangely warmed'.³¹ Nevertheless, the revival in England developed out of a series of local revivals, eventually consolidating into several distinct bodies and influencing existing churches.³² The Anglican wing, with its roots in the old reformed tradition of the established church, progressed from the earliest days quite separately from Methodism and was often highly critical of it.³³

²⁶ I. Watts, *An Humble Attempt towards the Revival of Practical Religion among Christians, and Particularly the Protestant Dissenters* (1731) 1, 292.

²⁷ S.L. Ollard & P.C. Walker (eds.), *Archbishop Herring's Visitation Returns 1743, Vol.IV*, Yorkshire Archaeological Society Record Series Vol.77 (1930), 163, 174, 176.

²⁸ Watts, *Dissenters I*, 393.

²⁹ *Ibid*, 394.

³⁰ *Ibid*, 396-97.

³¹ W.R. Ward & R.P. Heitzenrater (eds.), *The Works of John Wesley: Vol.18 Journal and Diaries I (1735-38)* (1988), 250.

³² Rack, *Reasonable Enthusiast*, 164.

³³ Walsh & Taylor, 'Church and Anglicanism', 43-44.

The revival stressed revealed, biblical, supernatural religion and challenged the contemporary stress on morality by emphasising justification by grace through faith as the only foundation for good works.³⁴ It was to be experienced as a new birth, which for many was a distinct moment of conversion of an emotional kind.³⁵ Another characteristic, varying somewhat from one group to another, was a stress on active lay piety and the importance of small groups meeting together for prayer and mutual guidance and edification.³⁶ In addition, most groups showed a concern for philanthropy and developed voluntary institutions to express this concern in action.³⁷

Following their conversion experiences, the Wesleys travelled extensively and were soon assisted by a band of dedicated travelling preachers comprised largely of laymen with a few Anglican clergy. As members of the established church, they had an immediate advantage in terms of perceived loyalty and could also engage in outdoor preaching which was not permitted for Dissenters.³⁸ However, as far as the brothers were concerned, the revival remained a movement within the church and it has been argued that this is a testimony of a growing awareness regarding its inadequacies.³⁹ John Wesley believed Methodists should attend services and receive communion at the parish church, maintaining they were not Dissenters, while he tried to insist that meetings of Methodist Societies did not clash with Anglican services.⁴⁰ This approach strained the loyalty of his

³⁴ Rack, *Reasonable Enthusiast*, 167.

³⁵ *Ibid.*

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 168.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 169.

³⁸ Watts, *Dissenters I*, 436-37.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 440; A. Smith, *The Established Church and Popular Religion 1750-1850* (1971), 5, 28; J. Gregory, 'In the Church I will Live and Die': John Wesley, the Church of England, and Methodism', in W. Gibson & R. Ingram (eds.), *Religious Identities in Britain 1660-1832* (2005), 147-78.

⁴⁰ Watts, *Dissenters I*, 442; J. Gregory, 'The Long Eighteenth Century', in R.L. Maddox & J.E. Vickers (eds.), *The Cambridge Companion to John Wesley* (2010), 36.

followers, particularly in the light of Anglican pulpits often being closed to his itinerant preachers and opposition to them in many places being led by local clergymen.⁴¹ Indeed, in the second half of the eighteenth century hostility to Anglican clergy was usually manifested by parishioners transferring their allegiance to a Methodist Society or dissenting meeting house.⁴² On the other hand, some clergy did not consider Methodists as Dissenters, particularly when they came to church as regular parishioners.⁴³ Nevertheless, despite the protestations of the Wesleys, Methodists were gradually forced into a separatist position and had to start erecting their own meeting houses.⁴⁴ These were exposed to prosecution unless they registered under the Toleration Act and from the late 1750s this became increasingly common.⁴⁵

Wesley and his travelling preachers not only preached, but also organised followers into Societies, further divided into classes. He maintained autocratic control, regulating the membership and leadership as well as nominating and stationing the itinerant preachers.⁴⁶ The classes, of up to twelve, comprised all members of the Society, meeting weekly for fellowship, prayers, consolation and advice. It was important as the key unit for Methodist fellowship and as the normal basis of membership.⁴⁷ The class leader had pastoral and spiritual oversight of the members and the class meeting was intended to be an occasion for exchanging religious experiences under his or her guidance.⁴⁸ As the nineteenth century progressed, it came under increasing criticism because of the nature of the

⁴¹ Watts, *Dissenters I*, 404, 442.

⁴² Jacob, *Clerical Profession*, 298.

⁴³ E. Royle, 'Writing the Local History of Methodism' in P. Forsaith & M. Wellings (eds.), *Methodism and History: Essays in Honour of John Vickers* (2010), 27.

⁴⁴ Watts, *Dissenters I*, 445.

⁴⁵ *Ibid*, 446.

⁴⁶ *Ibid*, 443.

⁴⁷ *Ibid*, 445; H.D. Rack, 'The Decline of the Class-Meeting and the Problem of Church-Membership in Nineteenth-Century Wesleyanism', *Proceedings of the Wesley Historical Society*, 39 (1973), 12.

⁴⁸ Watts, *Dissenters I*, 445; Rack, 'Decline of Class-Meeting', 12.

meetings and the problem of relating its membership to that of the chapel.⁴⁹ However, it remained in existence, exemplifying most acutely the fact that there were many levels of commitment to Methodism and that membership figures might not reveal the true picture.⁵⁰

In addition to the registration question, problems arose surrounding the administration of communion and ordination of Methodist preachers.⁵¹ The possibility of secession from the established church had been discussed as early as 1750⁵² but Conference, which had emerged as Methodism's ruling body, repeatedly declined to separate while Wesley was alive.⁵³ However, after his death in 1791, the issue could no longer be contained. Centred primarily around communion, it also involved arguments about the timing of services and more broadly about local members asserting independence against trustees of chapels who often wished to maintain an Anglican connection.⁵⁴ Conference decisions of 1792 and 1793 failed to resolve the question but the 'Plan of Pacification' was accepted unanimously in 1795. This allowed the sacrament to be administered with the consent of trustees, stewards and leaders of a chapel and, in reality, meant practical dissent for most Methodist communities.⁵⁵ However, an organisational split did not by any means imply a separation on an individual basis and for much of the nineteenth century there were Wesleyan⁵⁶ Methodists who attended both the parish church and the chapel.⁵⁷

Evangelical clergy remaining within the mainstream of Anglicanism became increasingly uneasy with the Methodist approach. From the 1750s, local

⁴⁹ Rack, 'Decline of Class-Meeting', 12-13.

⁵⁰ *Ibid*, 15-17.

⁵¹ Watts, *Dissenters I*, 446-49.

⁵² Smith, *Established Church*, 34.

⁵³ Watts, *Dissenters I*, 447.

⁵⁴ W.R. Ward, *Religion and Society in England 1790-1850* (1972), 29-30.

⁵⁵ *Ibid*, 33.

⁵⁶ See below, 14-15.

⁵⁷ M.R. Watts, *The Dissenters: Vol. II The Expansion of Evangelical Nonconformity 1791-1859* (1995), 175.

groups of 'Gospel clergy' emerged, at first scattered but later banding together to form provincial associations and growing rapidly after the 1780s.⁵⁸ By the 1790s a reform movement had spread to England from Ireland, with internal church reform being partly a practical response to local conditions.⁵⁹ However, by the early nineteenth century this was following a fairly standard pattern across Anglican dioceses: establishment of parochial schools and societies, more frequent services and communion, greater emphasis on clerical residence and a desire to ensure where pluralism existed that parishes were served personally or by a resident curate with a proper stipend.⁶⁰ In 1809 the evangelical politician Spencer Perceval secured an annual grant, renewed until 1821, of £100,000 to increase endowments of poor livings and the 1817 Non-Residence Act attempted to require clergy to live in their parishes, limited the number of acres a clergyman might farm and forbade engagement in trade.

Methodist Growth and Anglican Reform

During the first half of the nineteenth century, there was continuous tension between the increasingly centralised, authoritarian and conservative government of Wesleyans and the activities of lay preachers and local chapels where lay participation and free debate were fostered.⁶¹ From 1820 onwards Conference was dominated by Jabez Bunting, about whom it was commented that whoever was President 'Bunting was the prime minister who never went out of office'⁶² and those with more liberal views, either organisationally or politically, became discontented.⁶³ The

⁵⁸ Walsh & Taylor, 'Church and Anglicanism', 44, 50.

⁵⁹ N. Yates, 'Internal Church Reform, 1780-1850: Establishment under Fire', in J. Van Eijnatten & P. Yates (eds.), *The Churches: the Dynamics of Religious Reform in Northern Europe 1780-1920* (2010), 31.

⁶⁰ *Ibid* 34-35.

⁶¹ Watts, *Dissenters II*, 358.

⁶² B. Gregory, *Side Lights on the Conflicts of Methodism: During the Second Quarter of the Nineteenth Century 1827-1852* (1899), 176.

⁶³ Watts, *Dissenters II*, 411-12.

outcome was a series of secessions from what became Wesleyan Methodism or the Old Connexion, the first occurring in 1797 and the last in 1849. Although the specific events surrounding each split varied, they tended to involve either lay evangelical activity attempting to operate outside Wesleyan rules, or issues to do with the central government of the church.⁶⁴ Disputes centred on the nature and conduct of revivals and on matters relating to discipline and polity.⁶⁵ Of the seceding groups, Primitive Methodists were the only ones to establish themselves in south Nottinghamshire.

As the basis for the itinerant ministry, Wesley had organised the different places where Societies were formed into circuits. Preachers were stationed in a circuit, initially for two years, while circuits also managed a local preaching system, with individuals moving from 'exhorters' to 'on trial' to ultimately approval as a local preacher. They lived permanently in the area and the distinction between itinerant and local preachers remained crucial until 1836 when Conference adopted ordination of ministers.⁶⁶ On the other hand, as Wesleyan Methodism expanded from about 57,000 in 1791 to about 354,000 in 1850, it became increasingly dependent upon lay people to serve as local preachers, as well as to raise money and run the chapel organisation.⁶⁷ The quarterly circuit meeting included class leaders and circuit stewards, consequently allowing lay Methodists some local organisational power.⁶⁸ Circuits had to maintain various records to submit to Conference, which detailed *inter alia* the current membership figures.⁶⁹ Districts developed as a method of linking a number of circuits, forming an

⁶⁴ *Ibid*, 33-35; F. Knight, 'Internal Church Reform, 1850-1920: an Age of Innovation in Ecclesiastical Reform', in J. Van Eijnatten & P. Yates (eds.), *The Churches: the Dynamics of Religious Reform in Northern Europe 1780-1920*, (2010), 83.

⁶⁵ Knight, 'Church Reform', 83.

⁶⁶ Watts, *Dissenters II*, 146.

⁶⁷ *Ibid*, 31-32.

⁶⁸ *Ibid*, 197.

⁶⁹ N.A.O. NC/MR/5/23;/30; /8/28-30.

intermediate governing body for the Connexion, the term adopted to describe the entire organisation. Groups seceding from the Wesleyans, such as the Primitive Methodists, tended to adopt the same organisational system.

The pattern for the establishment of Wesleyan Methodism in a local area was one of initial growth followed by steady consolidation, although Gilbert noted this as a time where growth was primarily exogenous, rather than endogenous, with the emphasis on adult conversion.⁷⁰ By 1825, Obelkevich found that in south Lindsey Wesleyan Methodism had a long history behind it and was solidly established,⁷¹ while Biggs investigating north Nottinghamshire and Dorset suggested that it was well established in most towns and large villages, where second and third generations of local Societies were developing a church identity.⁷² In Lincolnshire, Ambler observed cycles of revival brought extraordinary growth, which needed to be consolidated into Society membership and these patterns produced a relatively steady increase in membership through the eighteenth century.⁷³ However, analysing national church membership figures, Currie, et al., concluded that high growth meant high turnover because of recruitment from outside existing members' families, where new members were then less likely to retain membership;⁷⁴ in the Penrith circuit, Burgess identified an annual turnover (i.e. loss) of membership of over 15 per cent from 1835-1870, largely on account of single people seeking work.⁷⁵ At the

⁷⁰ A.D. Gilbert, *Religion and Society in Industrial England: Church, Chapel and Social Change, 1740-1914* (1976) 68, 152.

⁷¹ J. Obelkevich, *Religion and Rural Society: South Lindsey, 1825-1875* (1976), 184.

⁷² B.J. Biggs, 'Saints of the Soil : Early Methodism in Agricultural Areas', *Proceedings of the Wesley Historical Society*, 48 (October 1992), 179

⁷³ Ambler, *Churches*, 146.

⁷⁴ R. Currie, A.D. Gilbert & L. Horsley, *Churches and Churchgoers: Patterns of Church Growth in the British Isles since 1700* (1977), 82.

⁷⁵ J. Burgess, *A History of Cumbrian Methodism*, (1980), 63.

Society level, Gray also found evidence of a potentially high turnover in the late 1860s.⁷⁶

Based upon Wesley's concept of the Methodist class and its rules, those involved as members of a Society were demonstrating a serious level of commitment,⁷⁷ although the numbers of the congregation meeting for Sunday worship would have been greater. Hempton suggests that the conventional multiplier used by historians to relate members to congregations is between three and five.⁷⁸ Within this band, Watts estimated for 1851 the ratio of one to three as the likely proportion of members to general congregation in dissenting congregations,⁷⁹ although Gray found a multiplier of about 2.5 could be calculated for a village Methodist chapel holding only one service where the problem of double counting was therefore avoided.⁸⁰ On the other hand, she also found that its attendance was low compared with other local Societies.⁸¹

The normal progress of Methodism was from rooms in houses to larger temporary shelters and then to a chapel building.⁸² As well as a growth in numbers, Ambler and Biggs also found a critical aspect of its firm establishment was acquiring a building, which led the Society into the more ordered environment of chapel-based religion and symbolised the establishment of a separate identity more than any other activity;⁸³ Gilbert suggested that a permanent place of worship often reflected the changing

⁷⁶ L. Gray, "Efficient Members": the Early Years of Methodism in Hunsonby and Winskill, 1821-1871', *Transactions of the Cumberland and Westmorland Antiquarian and Archaeological Society*, 12 (2012), 239.

⁷⁷ Watts, *Dissenters I*, 444; J. Wesley and C. Wesley, *Rules of the Society of the People Called Methodists* (c.1738).

⁷⁸ D. Hempton, *Methodism: Empire of the Spirit* (2005), 1-2.

⁷⁹ Rack, 'Decline of Class-Meeting', 15-17; M.R. Watts (ed.), *Religion in Victorian Nottinghamshire: the Religious Census of 1851* (1988), xiii.

⁸⁰ Gray, 'Efficient Members', 239.

⁸¹ *Ibid*, 239.

⁸² L.F. Church, *The Early Methodist People* (1948).

⁸³ Ambler, *Churches*, 143, 146; B.J. Biggs, 'Methodism in a Rural Society: North Nottinghamshire 1740-1851' (University of Nottingham Ph.D. 1975), 279.

aspirations of the congregation, with the chapel becoming a symbol of status, a focus for group identity and a centre of social as well as religious activity.⁸⁴

Gilbert also argued that by the mid-century Wesleyan Methodism had evolved from its initial phase of rapid expansion to one of organisational consolidation: a professional ministry with formal training and ordination, the anticipation of endogenous rather than exogenous growth and a growing dependence on the wealthier element of the Wesleyan laity.⁸⁵

Features of the Penzance revival in 1849 exemplified this trend where conversion was treated as a natural step for junior members of prospering Wesleyan households, somewhat like confirmation for Anglicans.⁸⁶

Recruitment was no longer expected to be from the community outside the church but from those already associated with Methodism; growth was therefore becoming endogenous.⁸⁷

Watts, Ambler and Obelkevich all identified the feature of Societies often being run over long periods by a small group of families, sometimes termed 'hereditary Wesleyans'.⁸⁸ However, Watts found that as energies of church members were taken up with building chapels and raising money for salaries, their enthusiasm for evangelism declined.⁸⁹ This rise of respectability was accompanied by neglecting other methods of attracting working-class people, so that by the mid-century, love feasts were annual rather than half yearly or quarterly.⁹⁰ Nevertheless, Bebbington suggested that the attitude of the pre-eminent Wesleyan figure, Jabez Bunting, has

⁸⁴ Gilbert, *Religion and Society*, 160.

⁸⁵ *Ibid*, 149-53.

⁸⁶ D. Bebbington, *Victorian Religious Revivals: Culture and Piety in Local and Global Contexts* (2012), 99.

⁸⁷ *Ibid*.

⁸⁸ Watts, *Dissenters II*, 163-64; Ambler, *Churches*, 139,147,151; Obelkevich, *Religion*, 184, 200-01.

⁸⁹ Watts, *Dissenters II*, 609-10.

⁹⁰ *Ibid*, 611.

sometimes been misinterpreted as involving hostility to revival for the sake of orderly control, while in reality he believed in encouraging awakenings so long as they did not disrupt regular circuit life;⁹¹ he told the 1837 Conference, 'we may excel in getting revivals but we have yet to learn how to manage them'.⁹² On the other hand, for rural Methodism celebratory events such as Sunday school anniversaries were a village occasion and in south Lindsey these provided entertainment and took on the character of popular social festivals.⁹³

In addition, there was an emergence of social issues and Wesleyans eagerly promoted the wider ideal of self-improvement.⁹⁴ One matter of concern was temperance, since during the 1820s the tolerance of nonconformist chapels to moderate drinking started to be questioned.⁹⁵ However, the Wesleyans were initially the temperance movement's most strenuous opponents amongst nonconformists, on the basis that it threatened discipline and order.⁹⁶ The 1841 Conference banned the letting of chapels for teetotalist meetings and insisted fermented wine was used for communion,⁹⁷ while during the 1850s beer was still the normal drink at Wesleyan quarterly meetings.⁹⁸ Nevertheless, Watts has argued that the ban was resented and widely ignored⁹⁹ and there is also evidence of local Societies condemning the Conference resolutions and on occasions losing members over the issue.¹⁰⁰ It has also been suggested there was a fear of the temperance cause emerging as an alternative to religion, particularly

⁹¹ Bebbington, *Revivals*, 95.

⁹² Gregory, *Side Lights*, 246.

⁹³ Obelkevich, *Religion*, 213.

⁹⁴ *Ibid*, 209.

⁹⁵ Watts, *Dissenters II*, 213.

⁹⁶ *Ibid*, 220.

⁹⁷ *Ibid*.

⁹⁸ D.W. Bebbington, 'Methodism and Culture', in W.J. Abraham & J.E. Kirby (eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of Methodist Studies*. Oxford Handbooks in Religion and Theology (2009), 714.

⁹⁹ Watts, *Dissenters II*, 220-21.

¹⁰⁰ J.A. Hargreaves, 'Arresting the Progress of this Degrading and Brutalising Vice: Temperance, Methodism and Chartism in Halifax and its Hinterland 1832-48', *Transactions of the Halifax Antiquarian Society*, 20 (2012), 131.

as the opening of temperance halls offered a secular public place and activities often occurred on Sunday morning.¹⁰¹

Primitive Methodism was the largest and most influential of the various branches of Methodism, apart from the founding Wesleyans. It originated in Staffordshire at the beginning of the nineteenth century under the leadership of Hugh Bourne and William Clowes, springing from a revivalist movement based on a desire to return to the original zeal of Wesley and his first preachers, allegedly lost by the increasingly respectable and dignified Wesleyans.¹⁰² The Primitives were fundamentally mission orientated, with less emphasis on organisation and chapel building, although their structure of Societies, circuits etc. was identical.¹⁰³

Nottingham was first visited in 1815 but from 1816-18 the missionary efforts of the movement were specifically focused on Nottinghamshire, resulting in the formation of Societies in 30 of its villages,¹⁰⁴ with particular activity from 1817-18 in the valley of the Trent from Nottingham to Newark and also in the Vale of Belvoir, extending as far as Grantham.¹⁰⁵ Although some expansion was at the expense of the Wesleyans, Primitives tended to appeal to sections of society and areas previously untouched by other nonconformists, such as the agricultural labourers of Lincolnshire and north Nottinghamshire, where farm workers became leaders within the Societies.¹⁰⁶

¹⁰¹ F. Knight, 'Recreation or Renunciation?: Episcopal Interventions in the Drink Question in the 1890s', in S.J. Brown, F. Knight & J. Morgan-Guy (eds.), *Religion, Identity and Conflict in Britain: from the Restoration to the Twentieth Century: essays in honour of Keith Robbins* (2013), 159.

¹⁰² Watts, *Dissenters II*, 140-41; Bebbington, *Revivals*, 11.

¹⁰³ See approach of H.B. Kendall, *The Origin and History of the Primitive Methodist Church*, 2 Vols. (1906).

¹⁰⁴ J. Petty, *The History of the Primitive Methodist Connexion from its Origin to the Conference of 1860* (1864), 65; R.C. Swift, *Lively People: Methodism in Nottingham 1740-1979* (1979), 56.

¹⁰⁵ Kendall, *Origin and History*, 225-26.

¹⁰⁶ Watts, *Dissenters II*, 141, 144; Biggs, 'Methodism', 424; Ambler, *Churches*, 153-58; Obelkevich, *Religion*, 94-96.

Although their doctrines were generally orthodox, the Primitives were nicknamed 'Ranters' from their early extravagant and emotional approach.¹⁰⁷ Open-air witness in camp meetings was one of the characteristics of the early movement and by 1845 a circuit in County Durham was still giving 'every attention' to keeping up the gatherings, seen as a recruiting agency denied to the Wesleyans.¹⁰⁸ Love feasts, a substitute for communion avoiding the requirement for a clergyman, were particularly popular,¹⁰⁹ being maintained much longer by Primitive Methodist groups than by Wesleyans.¹¹⁰ The view that they were far more mission and far less chapel oriented than the Wesleyans¹¹¹ was confirmed by Ambler's conclusions about Lincolnshire that they made many converts but paid little attention to forming classes and introducing rule and order, thus having to carry out missionary work again after losing an initial presence.¹¹² Obelkevich also found in south Lindsey that until the 1850s the Primitives stood out because of their single-minded commitment to both evangelism and revivalism and that the phenomenon of 'enthusiasm' was consistently repeated in their Sunday services.¹¹³ Morris similarly highlighted this characteristic in Nottinghamshire, including the feature of open-air witness.¹¹⁴ In 1854 the report on the religious census provided one contemporary view:

The community whose operations penetrate most deeply through the lower sections of the people is the body called the Primitive

¹⁰⁷ G.M.Morris, 'Primitive Methodism in Nottinghamshire 1815-1932', *Transactions of the Thoroton Society*, 72 (1968), 86.

¹⁰⁸ Bebbington, *Revivals*, 117.

¹⁰⁹ Watts, *Dissenters II*, 188-89.

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*

¹¹¹ Kendall, *Origin and History*; Ambler, *Churches*, 157.

¹¹² Ambler, *Churches*, 156.

¹¹³ Obelkevich, *Religion*, 224-25.

¹¹⁴ Morris, 'Primitive Methodism', 86-87.

Methodistsperhaps their rough unformed energy is best adapted to the class to which it is addressed...¹¹⁵

Although the evangelistic methods of the Primitives did mature and moderate over the years, this did not occur until much later in the century.¹¹⁶ Contrasting with the Wesleyans, the Primitive Methodist Conference was recommending temperance as early as 1832 and was the first of the larger branches of Methodism to advocate consistent teetotalism.¹¹⁷

The evangelical revival in England had originated within the established church and evangelicals tried to work within its structures as far as possible.¹¹⁸ The 'Gospel clergy' and the laity involved in the voluntary societies remained part of the Anglican church and the impetus for church reform continued within the context of parliamentary and other social reforms.¹¹⁹ Full civil rights were granted to Protestant Dissenters in 1828 and Roman Catholics in 1829, the Civil Marriage Act of 1836 removed the Anglican monopoly and further measures tackled the issues of parochial organisation, multiple livings and tithes. The 1838 Pluralities Act aimed to control pluralism, with no incumbent being permitted to hold more than two benefices. The maximum aggregate value was £1,000 a year, the total population was not to exceed 3,000 and the maximum distance allowed between parishes was ten miles; in addition, there were regulations concerning the employment of curates. This legislation made a major impact on non-residence, with the number of non-resident

¹¹⁵ *Census of Great Britain, 1851. Religious Worship. England & Wales. Report and tables.* PP 1852-3 [1690], LXXXIX, clviii.

¹¹⁶ Morris, 'Primitive Methodism', 87-88.

¹¹⁷ Obelkevich, *Religion*, 246; Bebbington, *Revivals*, 120.

¹¹⁸ Yates, 'Church Reform', 37.

¹¹⁹ Smith, *Established Church*, 57-59.

clergymen falling from 6,000 to 2,000 between 1813 and 1858.¹²⁰ Overall by 1840 the external pressure for church reform was waning and the church had itself internalised processes of reform.¹²¹

In spite of the significant improvement in clerical incomes resulting from Queen Anne's Bounty, government assistance after 1812, and agricultural improvement, the median income in 1830 of £275 a year for an English parish clergyman was still considered deficient.¹²² Furthermore, a tenth of clergy still received less than £100 a year and, with the demise of pluralism, may have been much worse off than their predecessors.¹²³ In Nottinghamshire, the average income for the parishes around Southwell in 1831 was just £149 and of the 30 parishes in the patronage of the chapter and prebendaries in 1836, only seven contained a house held to be fit for the residence of a clergyman.¹²⁴

Throughout the eighteenth century, the fortunes of high churchmanship had ebbed and flowed but had always commanded the allegiance of sizeable sections of clergy and by 1800 a group of high churchmen were deeply concerned for the defence of the church against liberals and evangelicals.¹²⁵ There was much resentment at government legislation which appeared to threaten its status, even when some of the measures had been supported by reforming bishops in the past.¹²⁶ This then helped

¹²⁰ G. Parsons, 'Reform, Revival and Realignment: the Experience of Victorian Anglicanism' in G. Parsons (ed.), *Religion in Victorian Britain, 1: Traditions* (1988), 24; Watts, *Dissenters II*, 603; Best, *Temporal*, 306.

¹²¹ Knight, 'Church Reform', 69.

¹²² Jacob, *Clerical Profession*, 142-43.

¹²³ *Ibid*, 143.

¹²⁴ M. Austin, 'A Time of Unhappy Commotion': *the Church of England and the People in Central Nottinghamshire 1820-1870* (2010), 19, 131-32.

¹²⁵ Walsh & Taylor, 'Church and Anglicanism', 33-35.

¹²⁶ Yates, 'Church Reform', 34.

to trigger the Oxford or Tractarian movement, which can be regarded as heir of a long and rich high church tradition within Anglicanism.¹²⁷

It emerged around a group of Oxford based clerical academics, signalled by John Keble's Assize sermon in 1833, and was concerned to reaffirm the autonomous nature of the church as distinct from the political state.¹²⁸

From 1833-41 a series of *Tracts for the Times* were published, with authors including Keble, John Henry Newman and Edward Bouverie Pusey. These were intended to revive Anglican doctrines, institutions and liturgy, which the writers felt had become submerged and emphasised points of agreement with the Roman Catholic church.¹²⁹ Although the narrowly defined movement failed to survive the eventual secession of Newman and others to Catholicism, it also provoked a reaction from a deep-rooted English fear of Rome.¹³⁰ However, Knight has argued that in the period up to 1860 there was an extremely limited impact of Tractarianism outside Oxford and that clergy accused of sympathies with the movement were in fact old-fashioned high churchmen of varying types, with any admitting such sympathies tending to provoke distrust and hostility.¹³¹ Despite there being some evidence of Tractarian activity, it was only one strand in a variety of high church attitudes and often lay people, such as churchwardens and architects were in the vanguard of promoting it.¹³²

¹²⁷ P. Nockles, 'The Oxford Movement and the Legacy of Anglican Evangelicalism', in J. Van Eijnatten & P. Yates (eds.), *The Churches: the Dynamics of Religious Reform in Northern Europe 1780-1920*, (2010), 56-57.

¹²⁸ Smith, *Established Church*, 61-62; Nockles, 'Oxford Movement', 53.

¹²⁹ J.S. Curl, *Victorian Churches* (1995), 27-28.

¹³⁰ O. Chadwick, *The Victorian Church I* (1966), 230.

¹³¹ F. Knight, 'The Influence of the Oxford Movement in the Parishes c.1833-1860: A Re-assessment', in P. Vaiss, (ed.), *Newman: From Oxford to the People* (1996), 130, 135.

¹³² *Ibid*, 136-39.

Establishment of Methodism: Religious Geography

The issues surrounding the establishment of Methodism have been the subject of considerable analysis. There are many approaches; Currie, et al., provided a broad overview of national growth patterns for all the denominations;¹³³ Gilbert looked at the national situation but considered some regional and local specifics, again across all denominations,¹³⁴ while Currie had earlier investigated the varied growth amongst the different branches of Methodism and in different localities.¹³⁵ At the other end of the spectrum, there are numerous detailed histories of chapels charting their establishment, development and survival, usually in a very localised context.¹³⁶ Recently, Tiller has shown the detail of individual congregations can be placed in a wider context to understand the character of the Methodist presence¹³⁷ and to explore what Hempton described as the 'symbiotic relationship with its host environments'.¹³⁸

An alternative approach has been to investigate the distribution of denominations at a particular point, most frequently the 1851 religious census, rather than over time.¹³⁹ In recent years many have been based fully or in part upon this data,¹⁴⁰ with increasing use of computer analysis and a focus on a more rigorously quantitative approach, employing the use of recognised statistical techniques.¹⁴¹ Here the area analysed has varied

¹³³ Currie, Gilbert & Horsley, *Churches and Churchgoers*.

¹³⁴ Gilbert, *Religion and Society*.

¹³⁵ R. Currie, 'A Micro-Theory of Methodist Growth', *Proceedings of the Wesley Historical Society*, 36 (October 1967), 65-73.

¹³⁶ R.C. Swift, *Methodism in Cropwell Bishop* (1952); R. Okrafo-Smart, *A Short History of Methodism in Cotgrave and the Centenary of the Present Church*, (2001).

¹³⁷ K. Tiller, 'The Place of Methodism: a Study of Three Counties in 1851', in P. Forsaith & M. Wellings (eds.), *Methodism and History: Essays in Honour of John Vickers* (2010), 86-7.

¹³⁸ Hempton, *Methodism*, 7.

¹³⁹ See below, 36-43.

¹⁴⁰ J.D. Gay, *The Geography of Religion in England* (1971); A.M. Everitt, *The Pattern of Rural Dissent: the Nineteenth Century* (1972); B.I. Coleman, *The Church of England in the Mid-Nineteenth Century: a social geography* (1980); Watts, *Religion*.

¹⁴¹ K.D.M. Snell, *Church and Chapel in the North Midlands: Religious Observance in the Nineteenth Century* (1991); P.S. Ell, & T.R. Slater, 'The Religious Census of 1851: a Computer-mapped Survey of the Church of England', *Journal of Historical Geography*, 20,1 (1994), 44-61; K.D.M. Snell, & P.S. Ell, *Rival Jerusalem: the Geography of Victorian religion*

widely from the whole of England and Wales down to individual parishes. Earlier writers tended to focus on the bigger unit, with Pickering utilising the national figures before mapping them by county¹⁴² and Gay also analysing this area.¹⁴³ Inglis looked comparatively at various groups of towns,¹⁴⁴ while more recently the registration district has emerged as possibly a more suitable unit. It was used by Watts in his sometimes overlooked commentary accompanying the publication of the Nottinghamshire census returns, as well as in his work on dissent¹⁴⁵ and by Snell, in both his study of religion in the north Midlands and his and Ell's major investigation based upon computer analysis of the entire published census returns.¹⁴⁶ This latter work also used the census and other data to undertake analysis in 15 selected counties at parish level. Some decades earlier, contrary to the broader area approach of the time, Everitt had considered rural dissent primarily on a parish basis.¹⁴⁷

These variations in the areas selected for analysis pose difficulties in interpreting the literature. Generalisations covering broad areas conceal important differences and, even at the level of registration districts, there is not necessarily a coherent pattern.¹⁴⁸ In the 1970s, Gilbert identified the 'crucial local variations of religious adherence',¹⁴⁹ while Everitt revealed the complexity at parish level.¹⁵⁰ More recently, the studies of Vickers,¹⁵¹ Watts,¹⁵² Royle¹⁵³ and Gray¹⁵⁴ have shown the significance of local

(2000); A. Crockett, 'Rural-Urban Churchgoing in Victorian England', *Rural History*, 16:1 (2005), 53-82.

¹⁴² W.S.F. Pickering, 'The 1851 Religious Census : a Useless Experiment?', *British Journal of Sociology*, 18:4 (1967), 382-407.

¹⁴³ Gay, *Geography*.

¹⁴⁴ K.S. Inglis, 'Patterns of Religious Worship in 1851', *Journal of Ecclesiastical History*, 11 (1960), 74-86.

¹⁴⁵ Watts, *Religion*; Watts, *Dissenters II*.

¹⁴⁶ Snell, *Church and Chapel*; Snell & Ell, *Rival Jerusalems*.

¹⁴⁷ Everitt, *Rural Dissent*.

¹⁴⁸ Snell, *Church and Chapel*, 28-38.

¹⁴⁹ Gilbert, *Religion and Society*, 116.

¹⁵⁰ Everitt, *Rural Dissent*.

¹⁵¹ J.A. Vickers, 'Good Red Herring : Methodism's Relations with Dissent', *Proceedings of the Wesley Historical Society*, 47 (October 1989), 92.

¹⁵² Watts, *Religion*, xiv-xx.

variation. Over the years there have been a number of suggestions that further work of micro-analysis was needed¹⁵⁵ and comparatively recently Wolffe indicated that the way ahead lies in micro-studies exploring the complex and diverse religious dynamics of particular parishes and settlements together with the development of an informed awareness of the county-wide and regional pattern.¹⁵⁶

The most important area of debate has centred around the extent of a meaningful relationship between the strength and weakness of the major denominations relative to each other in any particular place. Tillyard's analysis of the distribution of the free churches in England in 1935 initiated this,¹⁵⁷ when he claimed to demonstrate 'how complementary to the other denominations the work of the Methodists has been'.¹⁵⁸ His proposition that English counties in which Methodism became strong were noticeably distinct and separate from the regions of old dissent became known as 'the Tillyard thesis'.¹⁵⁹ It was then taken up by later historians, who looked not only at places having a strong nonconformist presence but also investigated whether this seemed to correlate with strength or weakness in the established church.

Investigating 13 counties constituting the major industrial areas of eighteenth-century England, Currie concluded that

¹⁵³ E. Royle, 'The Church of England and Methodism in Yorkshire, c.1750-1850: from Monopoly to Free Market', *Northern History*, 33 (1997), 137-61.

¹⁵⁴ Gray, 'Efficient Members', 231-48; Gray, 'Neighbour', 171-90.

¹⁵⁵ Currie, 'Micro-Theory' 73; A.M. Everitt, 'Nonconformity in Country Parishes', in J. Thirsk (ed.), 'Land, Church and People: Essays Presented to H.P.R. Finberg', *Agricultural History Review*, 18 Supplement (1970), 182-83; Vickers, 'Red Herring' 92-93; Snell, *Church and Chapel*, 53.

¹⁵⁶ J. Wolffe, 'The 1851 Census and Religious Change in Nineteenth-century Yorkshire', *Northern History*, XLV: 1, (2008), 75.

¹⁵⁷ F. Tillyard, 'The Distribution of the Free Churches in England', *Sociological Review*, 27 (1935), 1-18.

¹⁵⁸ *Ibid*, 11.

¹⁵⁹ Gilbert, *Religion and Society*, 115-21.

whilst the older dissent generally grew strong where the Church of England was strong, deriving (at least historically) much of its membership directly from the Church of England, Methodism grew strong where the Church of England was weak, and recruited from those sections of the population that Anglicanism failed to reach.¹⁶⁰ Shortly afterwards, Gay reached the same conclusion at county level.¹⁶¹ On the other hand, Everitt's study of the pattern of rural dissent in four counties at parish level, published a year later and also based upon census data, maintained that old dissent as well as Methodism in rural areas most frequently fitted into the gaps left by Anglicanism.¹⁶² Again the same general conclusion was reached by Gilbert, arguing that nonconformity was generally successful 'only where the Church was either too weak or too negligent to defend its traditional monopoly of English religious practice'.¹⁶³ He found that nearly one in ten parishes nationally had no pastoral supervision at all and were therefore exposed to nonconformist encroachment.¹⁶⁴ Similarly, a local study by Biggs in north Nottinghamshire suggested new Methodist Societies were usually established where a group of local people felt normal church life was inadequate.¹⁶⁵ Currie had also concluded that not only issues such as non-residence but also the specific location of the parish church could be relevant to its establishment.¹⁶⁶ More recently this latter point has been supported by evidence relating to Linton, Yorkshire, where the incumbent judged a mile was too far for people to be willing to walk to the parish church.¹⁶⁷ Also, by 1836, Addingham parish in Cumbria had three Methodist chapels, 'conveniently sited in three of the four townships, as an

¹⁶⁰ Currie, 'Micro-Theory', 68.

¹⁶¹ Gay, *Geography*, 145.

¹⁶² Everitt, *Rural Dissent*, 11.

¹⁶³ Gilbert, *Religion and Society*, 94.

¹⁶⁴ *Ibid*, 97.

¹⁶⁵ Biggs, 'Methodism', 209.

¹⁶⁶ Currie, 'Micro-Theory', 69.

¹⁶⁷ Wolffe, 'Census', 80.

alternative to the church sited near none of them' and later in the century the vicar lamented the opportunities afforded by dissenting chapels and the distance to church.¹⁶⁸

Until 1980 the generally accepted view was that nonconformity, in one version or another, grew where the established church was inadequate in some way. However, this was challenged in a study of census data, when Coleman concluded that in the counties there was 'no firm inverse relationship between Anglican practice and levels of Nonconformity'.¹⁶⁹ Like Everitt he stressed that any patterns within larger units had to be qualified by allowing for internal diversity, not only within counties but also within registration districts.¹⁷⁰ A decade later, Snell came to the same conclusion regarding protestant nonconformity as a whole at county level.¹⁷¹ In addition, he analysed the north Midland region using census registration districts and found no suggestion that 'Protestant nonconformity was positively or negatively associated with the Church of England'.¹⁷² A confirmation of the difficulty of drawing any conclusions about denominational reciprocity on a county basis was provided by Watts who could find 'no obvious connection between the success of Methodism and Old Dissent and inadequate provision by the Church of England' when relating attendances in 1851 to provision of parish churches.¹⁷³ Indeed, his more detailed analysis of the Nottinghamshire census revealed that Methodism flourished in medium-sized villages of between 400 and 1,000 inhabitants where the established church was also holding its own.¹⁷⁴ Royle has also suggested that in Huddersfield and York Methodism grew

¹⁶⁸ Gray, 'Efficient Members', 235; Gray, 'Neighbour', 172.

¹⁶⁹ Coleman, *Church of England*, 9.

¹⁷⁰ *Ibid*, 15.

¹⁷¹ Snell, *Church and Chapel*, 7-8.

¹⁷² *Ibid*, 8.

¹⁷³ Watts, *Dissenters II*, 44-46.

¹⁷⁴ *Ibid*, 46; Watts, *Religion*, xix.

not only in reaction to a lifeless and negligent church but rather within a reviving and even spiritually vital Church of England.¹⁷⁵

Attempting to settle at least some aspects of the debate, Snell and Ell, having fully computerised the returns of the religious census, confirmed the traditional thesis stating that 'at the level of broad generalisation about England, there is no doubt that these conclusions are valid, and that Tillyard and Currie were correct in the arguments they made' and that this 'should at last have resolved the Tillyard and related debates at this registration district level of analysis.'¹⁷⁶ Nevertheless, there still remain caveats about using the 'snapshot' of the religious census as the basis for conclusions about religious geography and denominational reciprocity. Despite the view that 1851 was a focal point,¹⁷⁷ census attendances may not reveal accurately the strength of denominations relative to each other or to the total population in any particular place in terms of growth and decline over time.¹⁷⁸ Additionally, the snapshot may not be representative, as Wolffe concluded in relation to Yorkshire.¹⁷⁹ Consequently, the census should not be taken as delineating defined bodies of regular worshippers with consistent denominational allegiances.¹⁸⁰

Establishment of Methodism: Nature of Communities

Since the 1960s there has been considerable debate about the model of open/closed villages.¹⁸¹ However, historians have continued to utilise the

¹⁷⁵ E. Royle, *Need Local History be Parochial History?* Occasional Paper No.4 (Cambridge, 2001), 22-23.

¹⁷⁶ Snell & Ell, *Rival Jerusalems*, 192, 196.

¹⁷⁷ *Ibid*, 196; Crockett, 'Churchgoing', 54.

¹⁷⁸ Wolffe, 'Census', 78-9; Royle, 'Church and Methodism', 142.

¹⁷⁹ J. Wolffe, 'Elite and Popular Religion in the Religious Census of 30 March 1851', *Studies in Church History*, 42 (2006), 361-66.

¹⁸⁰ *Ibid*, 366.

¹⁸¹ See entries in Bibliography under D.R. Mills, B.A. Holderness, S. Banks, M. Reed & R.A.E. Wells, B.M. Short and D. Spencer.

classifications as a tool in specific investigations¹⁸² and, as early as 1976, Obelkevich suggested that linking patterns of landownership with many aspects of economic, social, political and religious life was an indispensable tool in the analysis of nineteenth-century rural society.¹⁸³ This has not necessarily involved accepting a causal or predictive model, since the open/closed classification can 'serve as a basic description of property ownership without regard for historiographical precedent or the prior definitions of others'.¹⁸⁴ Nevertheless, the debate has provided starting points and frameworks for investigating the characteristics of villages and parishes on a comparative basis and highlighted the need to consider also sources of power within a community and interrelationship between different neighbouring communities.

The potential link between landownership in a village and the religious affiliation of its inhabitants was introduced in Mills' early publication where he identified the proliferation of nonconformist sects in freehold villages.¹⁸⁵ A few years later, Gay suggested that in general chapels could more easily be established in the open type of village, with no dominant landlord, but not in those of the closed integrated type, where squire and parson wielded a patriarchal influence.¹⁸⁶ In Everitt's more detailed study, he also identified 'freeholders' parishes' as one of the types of rural parish where new dissent had taken root, noting that there was a common element of an unusual degree of freedom.¹⁸⁷ Conversely, he found nonconformity was the exception when land was in the hands of a few local magnates.¹⁸⁸ Also

¹⁸² Obelkevich, *Religion*, 20-22; M. Tranter, 'Landlords, Labourers, Local preachers: Rural Non-conformity in Derbyshire, 1772-1851', *Derbyshire Archaeological Journal*, 101 (1981), 119-21; Snell & Ell, *Rival Jerusalems*, 366-93.

¹⁸³ Obelkevich, *Religion*, 10.

¹⁸⁴ Snell & Ell, *Rival Jerusalems*, 367.

¹⁸⁵ D.R. Mills, 'English Villages in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries: A Sociological Approach', *Amateur Historian*, 6 (1965), 277.

¹⁸⁶ Gay, *Geography*, 111.

¹⁸⁷ Everitt, *Rural Dissent*, 20-22, 44.

¹⁸⁸ *Ibid*, 21.

in 1972, Thompson, investigating religious diversity of the countryside based upon Leicestershire, found that only six from over 100 freehold villages had no nonconformity in 1851, with three of these experiencing nonconformist evangelistic activity soon afterwards.¹⁸⁹

Hey's 1973 study of south Yorkshire noted a lack of free tenure in limestone villages where old dissent was weak and, although the Methodists attracted people in almost every type of community, 'a few estate villages held out against the new dissent'.¹⁹⁰ The broad link between landownership and religious adherence was further confirmed by Obelkevich in 1976 who found in mid-nineteenth-century south Lindsey that closed parishes favoured the Church of England, while open parishes were more accessible to Methodism, although he warned that the contrast should not be over simplified.¹⁹¹ Gilbert had also concluded in his national study that Thompson's findings for Leicestershire were true generally and that open villages demonstrated significantly lower rates of Anglican religious practice than 'squire's' villages.¹⁹² Four years later, Mills cited the research to date as confirming the prediction of his model that nonconformity would be common in open villages, while a characteristic of closed villages would be strong Anglican control.¹⁹³ Again, rural Derbyshire was shown to exhibit the same overall links with nonconformity finding least support in parishes owned by one landlord, irrespective of region, and highest support in three groups of freehold parishes,¹⁹⁴ while in Cumbria,

¹⁸⁹ D.M. Thompson, 'The Churches and Society in Nineteenth-Century England: a Rural Perspective', in G.J. Cuming & D. Baker (eds.), *Studies in Church History, 8: Popular belief and practice* (1972), 270.

¹⁹⁰ D.G. Hey, 'The Pattern of Nonconformity in South Yorkshire, 1660-1851', *Northern History*, 8 (1973), 94, 117.

¹⁹¹ Obelkevich, *Religion*, 13.

¹⁹² Gilbert, *Religion & Society*, 104, 110.

¹⁹³ D.R. Mills, *Lord and Peasant in Nineteenth Century Britain* (1980), 117, 125.

¹⁹⁴ Tranter, 'Landlords', 130.

two villages where Methodism later became the dominant religious and social culture had a significant number of owner-occupiers.¹⁹⁵

Watts' analysis of the Nottinghamshire religious census revealed the Anglican church was supported by 40 per cent of the population in villages where all the land, apart from the glebe, was in the hands of a single proprietor, with two of the most powerful landlords in the county being largely successful in keeping nonconformity out of their villages.¹⁹⁶

Nonconformists were supported by over 30 per cent where land was subdivided amongst several proprietors or numerous freeholders¹⁹⁷ and, in particular, Methodism demonstrated a popular appeal in the freehold villages south of the Trent.¹⁹⁸ By contrast, in the Southwell district where much of the land was in the hands of the church, only about 17 per cent attended Methodist chapels, compared with 34 per cent Anglican attendance.¹⁹⁹

My earlier research had demonstrated that in Cropwell Butler, a number of leading villagers either became Methodists or had family connections with members in the early period of the establishment of the Society, thus suggesting the importance of a solid level of support in the community.²⁰⁰

Similarly, Gray concluded that in the village of Hunsonby in Cumbria a single forceful individual was key to its becoming strongly established.²⁰¹

Nevertheless, any connection between single proprietors and opposition to nonconformity was not always straightforward. Ambler found elements of opposition depended on the way affairs were ordered and could centre

¹⁹⁵ Gray, 'Neighbour', 180.

¹⁹⁶ Watts, *Dissenters II*, 117; Watts, *Religion*, xviii.

¹⁹⁷ Watts, *Religion*, xviii.

¹⁹⁸ *Ibid*, xix.

¹⁹⁹ Austin, *Unhappy Commotion*, 109.

²⁰⁰ A.C.Woodcock, 'Union in Saving Souls: the Impact of Methodism on Cropwell Butler, Nottinghamshire, 1770 – 1870' (University of Nottingham M.A., 2005), 45-46.

²⁰¹ Gray, 'Efficient Members', 235.

round the squire, an influential farmer or the clergyman, although an absentee clergyman meant lay people were more influential.²⁰² Obelkevich also identified a resident squire as a reinforcing feature for the Anglican church²⁰³ and conversely that major landowners were more likely to be absentees than resident in villages where nonconformity flourished.²⁰⁴ On the other hand, Watts noted that not all large landowners kept their estates as Anglican preserves and on occasions the existence of two principal owners with conflicting interests facilitated the growth of nonconformity.²⁰⁵

Despite the concerns raised about Mills' model of open and closed villages regarding its causal and predictive aspects, the findings of subsequent research generally supported a link between landownership and religious affiliation, albeit with various qualifications. This was further confirmed by Snell and Ell.²⁰⁶ They concluded that whatever way the issue was tested, the established church was most successful in parishes of highly concentrated ownership and the association of dissent with complex landownership was entirely convincing.²⁰⁷

Everitt identified a further group open to new dissent where the significant feature was a number of dispersed hamlets or subsidiary townships, rather than a single nucleated settlement.²⁰⁸ In addition, these were often large in terms of acreage in comparison with the surrounding East Midlands area; for example, Bottesford (Lincolnshire) covered 5,000 acres and Rothley (Leicestershire), 5,500.²⁰⁹ On the other hand, Hey found in south

²⁰² Ambler, *Churches*, 141.

²⁰³ Obelkevich, *Religion*, 21.

²⁰⁴ *Ibid*, 12; Gay, *Geography*, 111; Gilbert, *Religion and Society*, 104, 110.

²⁰⁵ Watts, *Religion*, xviii.

²⁰⁶ Snell & Ell, *Rival Jerusalems*, 364-94.

²⁰⁷ *Ibid*, 373, 375.

²⁰⁸ Everitt, *Rural Dissent*, 40.

²⁰⁹ *Ibid*, 41.

Yorkshire that Methodism was not only successful in the marshlands but also flourished in the farming villages.²¹⁰ Obelkevich suggested that in south Lindsey, size, settlement pattern and the structure of land ownership all combined to exert a very powerful indirect influence on religious life.²¹¹ Small parishes were favourable to the established church²¹² and Methodism generally found in dispersed settlements, frequently within large parishes.²¹³ Similarly, Royle found in Yorkshire small and scattered settlements were one of the established church's main problems.²¹⁴ Overall, small size parishes with nucleated settlements, a small population, concentrated ownership of land and perhaps a resident squire provided reinforcing features for the Church of England.²¹⁵

Watts suggested that in Nottinghamshire the relationship between religion and landownership was to some extent a reflection of the relationship between landownership and the size of the community.²¹⁶ He found that Anglican support in 1851 varied inversely with size, declining from 44 per cent in villages with fewer than 200 inhabitants to 17.1 per cent in places with 1,000 to 5,000.²¹⁷ Villages with a sole proprietor were likely to be small and have insufficient people to support a dissenting congregation.²¹⁸ Conversely, Methodism attracted 11.2 per cent in villages of under 200 and 22.8 per cent in those of 1,000 to 5,000.²¹⁹ However, its greatest attendance was in medium-sized villages of 400 to 1,000 where it recorded over 26.6 per cent, which Watts linked with the subdivision of land.²²⁰ Snell and Ell found a marked pattern of closed parishes generally being

²¹⁰ Hey, 'Nonconformity', 116-17.

²¹¹ Obelkevich, *Religion*, 8.

²¹² *Ibid*, 8-9.

²¹³ *Ibid*, 9.

²¹⁴ Royle, 'Church and Methodism', 143-44.

²¹⁵ Obelkevich, *Religion*, 21.

²¹⁶ Watts, *Religion*, xix.

²¹⁷ *Ibid*, xix-xxx.

²¹⁸ *Ibid*, xix.

²¹⁹ *Ibid*, xxx.

²²⁰ *Ibid*, xix-xxx.

smaller in population and acreage than open ones and consequently tested whether the strength of the Anglican church might be due to variation in size, rather than landownership.²²¹ However, they found that although acreage had a larger role to play than population, neither variable matched the statistical effect induced by landownership.²²²

Crockett's analysis of the rural-urban split in the census results involved investigating Anglican and dissenting attendances in relation to both population density and size of parishes.²²³ He found that the Church of England was unable to secure as many worshippers in districts of below about 50 people per square kilometre, while dissent was able to attract almost the same percentage in isolated districts as elsewhere in rural England.²²⁴ These findings confirm the association of large parishes with dissent and small, densely populated parishes with the Church of England.

Overall, the debates about religious geography and religious adherence in different types of community confirmed the need for further research at the local level to supplement broader studies by exploring the precise situation in a small area.

The Religious Census

Renewed governmental interest and intervention in church affairs combined with Victorian enthusiasm for collecting statistics and conducting surveys, gave rise to the 1851 religious census.²²⁵ Its purpose was to discover 'how far the means of Religious Instructionhave kept pace with the population, and to what extent those means are adequate to meet the

²²¹ Snell & Ell, *Rival Jerusalems*, 371, 373, 379.

²²² *Ibid*, 374.

²²³ Crockett, 'Churchgoing', 66-68.

²²⁴ *Ibid*, 66.

²²⁵ J.A. Vickers, *The 1851 Religious Census* (1995), 1.

spiritual wants of the increased population of 1851'.²²⁶ Taking place on the nearest Sunday to the decennial population census, it counted numbers attending places of worship as well as seeking information about the nature of the building, seating accommodation and endowment (for Anglican churches). Returns were requested from every place of worship, to be completed by Anglican clergy and the ministers of dissenting chapels. Although the system was voluntary, the enumerators who collected the information were instructed to check the forms and try to get answers for missing responses.²²⁷ Overall there was a high level of fully completed returns in England and Wales, with only 390 out of 34,467 lacking both sittings and attendance data.²²⁸

Results were published in 1854 having been tabulated and summarised by Horace Mann, a solicitor at the Registrar General's office. However, the measurement of attendances did not identify those attending more than one service, either at the same or a different place of worship. Mann approached this by devising a formula which added the total attending morning services, to half at afternoon services and a third at evening services.²²⁹ This figure for denominational attendance was then set against the population. The formula had no evidential basis and was criticised at the time, while he admitted himself that it worked disadvantageously for nonconformist groups whose main service was frequently in the evening.²³⁰

Mann claimed that from a population of 17.9 million, only 40.5 per cent attended a place of worship on census Sunday and, of that figure, only just

²²⁶ *Circular to Clergy of the Established Church*. P.P. 1851 [1339] XLIII, 41.

²²⁷ Ell & Slater, 'Census', 45.

²²⁸ *Ibid*, 46.

²²⁹ *Census, Religious Worship*, clii.

²³⁰ H. Mann, 'On the Statistical Position of Religious Bodies in England and Wales', *Journal of the Statistical Society of London*, Vol. 18 No.2 (1855), 147.

over half attended the parish church.²³¹ In Nottinghamshire, based on Watts' method of adjusting the raw data to allow for multiple attendances,²³² the overall picture was slightly better (44 per cent) but relatively worse for the Anglicans (18.6 per cent); however in the registration district of Bingham, comprising the south Nottinghamshire Hundreds of Bingham and Rushcliffe, the attendance figures were ten per cent higher than anywhere else in the county at 63.9 per cent, with 33.7 per cent for all nonconformist denominations taken together and 30.2 per cent for the Anglicans.²³³

In assessing the responses of the religious groups, it is important to bear in mind the limitations of the available information. The report made clear that details were only published in registration districts, because a pledge had been given at the outset that only general results would be made public, in order to avoid invidious comparisons between parishes.²³⁴ Following publication, it was reported in Parliament that 21,000 copies of the Report had been sold;²³⁵ however, most of the papers and journals focused on summarising it, with some comments about the fairness of the numbers depending on the stance of the publication.²³⁶ Unsurprisingly, Mann's conclusions on the inadequacy of church accommodation, particularly in urban areas, were noted but the writer in the *British Quarterly Review* was not alone²³⁷ in stating:

so long as this deficiency exists, there is room for zeal in the direction of building churches and chapels. But...it is found to be so much easier to provide accommodation for worshippers, than to

²³¹ Watts, *Religion*, vii.

²³² *Ibid*, xi-xiii.

²³³ *Ibid*, xxix.

²³⁴ *Census, Religious Worship*, clxxi.

²³⁵ Parliamentary Debates House of Lords July 11 1854, 3rd Series Vol. 135 Col.32.

²³⁶ *The Morning Chronicle* 5 January 1854; *Nottingham Review* 20 January 1854; *Christian Remembrancer* April 1854, 378.

²³⁷ *Eclectic Review*, April 1854, 482-83; *Nonconformist*, 4 January 1854, 7.

give that interest to the worship which shall dispose the people to use the accommodation.²³⁸

The proposed solutions for attracting worshippers frequently centred on improving the number, training and status of ministers of religion.²³⁹ However, the *Wesleyan Methodist Magazine* confined itself to printing extracts from the Report, without comment or suggestions about any possible response from the Connexion or Societies.²⁴⁰ On the other hand, George Wilkins, the archdeacon of Nottingham, devoted the whole of his archidiaconal charge in 1854 to a lengthy criticism of the census.²⁴¹ It appeared, therefore, that those working in the parishes and local Societies had no specific information about their own census results and no obvious national or denominational lead regarding a necessary response, despite some local reaction. This casts some doubts on Vickers' view that all denominations consequently redoubled their efforts to convert those outside.²⁴²

The interpretation of the raw data was not only a problem for Mann but has been an issue for subsequent historians who have developed different formulae to identify the level of support for the various religious groups.²⁴³ In 1960, Inglis devised an index of attendances, comprising the total attendances from all three services as a percentage of the population.²⁴⁴ These figures were used to compare denominations and areas. He acknowledged the main disadvantage was that the number of attendances at Anglican or Roman Catholic services were likely to represent a greater number of individual worshippers than the same number of nonconformists

²³⁸ *British Quarterly Review* April 1854, 443.

²³⁹ *Ibid*, 463; *Eclectic Review*, April 1854, 486-87; *Nonconformist*, 4 January 1854, 7.

²⁴⁰ *Wesleyan Methodist Magazine*, February 1854, 129-34.

²⁴¹ Austin, 'Unhappy Commotion', 106-07.

²⁴² Vickers, *Census*, 3.

²⁴³ *Census, Religious Worship*, clii; Mann, 'Statistical Position', 145-47.

²⁴⁴ Inglis, 'Religious Worship', 79.

and that 'this factor must be allowed for whenever it is relevant'.²⁴⁵ Despite these limitations, the basic approach has been widely adopted. Starke, et al., investigating religious pluralism, created a measure based on total attendance in each unit, contending that these reflected the extent of religious energy or mobilization achieved.²⁴⁶ Snell and Ell's computer-based analysis used the index as its most common measure, stating that after 'extensive examination of the inter-relationships between variables, for each denomination, we could find little evidence that the index of attendances is an unreliable or distorting measure'.²⁴⁷ More recently Crockett argued that multiple attendance was not as common as has often been assumed and geographical variations were so great that any small unidentified variations would be insignificant.²⁴⁸ However, Royle, also using the index, rightly pointed out that the absolute figures were meaningless and were useful to the local historian only when used comparatively.²⁴⁹

An alternative method, totally avoiding denominational double counting, was suggested by Pickering.²⁵⁰ This identified the minimum number of individuals attending by selecting the figures for the best attended service for each denominational group.²⁵¹ Although it excluded counting individuals only present at one of the less well attended services, it prevented what Pickering referred to as 'wild guesses' about the number attending twice.²⁵² He argued that since a good proportion of churchgoers attended twice, the error of excluding the remainder was not very great.²⁵³

²⁴⁵ *Ibid.*

²⁴⁶ R. Stark, R. Finke & L.R. Iannaccone, 'Pluralism and Piety: England and Wales, 1851', *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion*, 34:4 (1995), 437.

²⁴⁷ Snell & Ell, *Rival Jerusalems*, 432.

²⁴⁸ Crockett, 'Churchgoing', 58.

²⁴⁹ Royle, *Local History*, 17.

²⁵⁰ Pickering, 'Census', 393.

²⁵¹ *Ibid.*

²⁵² *Ibid.*

²⁵³ *Ibid.*

In his analysis of the Nottinghamshire census, Watts utilised a formula which he claimed avoided the over and under counting of the other two methods.²⁵⁴ For each denomination he used the figure for the best attended service added to one third of the totals for the remaining service or services. The adoption of one third was based on a religious census in London in 1902-3 over a small sample of places of worship, where 62.8 per cent at the least well attended service did not attend any other service.²⁵⁵ Watts argued that the proportion of those attending twice was likely to be higher in 1851 than 50 years later and therefore suggested one third as appropriate.²⁵⁶ However, there was no evidential basis for making this specific reduction.

Methods used to analyse the returns for other East Midlands' counties have also varied. Pre-dating Watts, Ambler developed a formula for Lincolnshire taking the best attended services at one time at a particular place expressed as a percentage of the total population.²⁵⁷ This avoided double counting but produced an underestimate and, although it provided a measure of the main trends of attendance and the level of religious adherence, it did not facilitate any comparison between denominations.²⁵⁸ In his later study, he utilised Watts' general formula but this was only specifically discussed in relation to the Anglican returns.²⁵⁹ Tranter used Inglis' index for Derbyshire, after suggesting that there was a striking comparability between the figures produced by the index and Watts' formula regarding the Derbyshire parishes in the Nottinghamshire

²⁵⁴ Watts, *Religion*, xi-xii.

²⁵⁵ R. Mudie-Smith, *Religious Life of London* (1904), 449-50.

²⁵⁶ Watts, *Religion*, xii.

²⁵⁷ R.A. Ambler (ed.), *Lincolnshire Returns of the Census of Religious Worship 1851*, Lincoln Record Society Vol.72 (1979), lxxi.

²⁵⁸ *Ibid*, lxxi-lxxii.

²⁵⁹ Ambler, *Churches*, 176.

registration district.²⁶⁰ She concluded, therefore, that for Derbyshire the sum of all attendees did not exaggerate attendance to any appreciable degree.²⁶¹ However, the table illustrating the comparability contains a significant number of caveats and it is difficult to reconcile the figures given with calculations based on the raw data.²⁶² More recently, Ward also used the index for Northamptonshire, maintaining it was useful for purposes of comparison and was all there was when looking at the census nationwide.²⁶³ However, he cited one example where the index gave an attendance of 99 per cent, which he then suggested indicated a formula was required. Within Nottinghamshire, Austin employed Watts' formula in his study of the rural deanery of Southwell, thereby allowing comparisons with Watts' earlier analysis of the whole county.²⁶⁴

Discussion has centred on two separate but inter-related questions; to what extent was the factor of multiple attendance significant in interpreting the results and what proportion, if any, should be utilised for attendances where more than one service was held. At the time, Mann clearly identified it as relevant. Pickering assumed that it was widespread in 1851, Inglis felt it was a factor to be allowed for but Snell and Ell maintained that although multiple attendances inflated the values of the index, this was not significant because of other consistent relationships. Crockett argued the proportion of multiple attendance was small enough to be discounted, while Watts presumed that it was significant but that it was difficult to achieve the correct proportion for second and third services. Furthermore, the figures contained in his benchmark of the Mudie-Smith report, have themselves been criticised as misleading and it has been suggested that a

²⁶⁰ M. Tranter, D.A. Barton & P.S. Ell (eds.), *The Derbyshire Returns to the 1851 Religious Census*, Derbyshire Record Society Vol.23, (1995), xxviii-xxix.

²⁶¹ *Ibid*, xxix.

²⁶² *Ibid*, lxviii.

²⁶³ G.S. Ward (ed.), *The 1851 Religious Census of Northamptonshire*, Northamptonshire Record Society (2007), 14.

²⁶⁴ Austin, '*Unhappy Commotion*', 109.

more meaningful figure would be 15 per cent attending twice in 1904.²⁶⁵ It is apparent, therefore, that there is no clear resolution to this debate.

A separate point also raised in the literature is the high incidence of 'round' numbers in the raw data, leading to suspicions of overestimation.²⁶⁶

Addressing this, Crockett and Crockett developed a structural equation model to estimate for the mean degree of inflation that resulted from rounding and found that almost half the returned congregation sizes were rounded.²⁶⁷ In terms of effects, Anglicans inflated their rounded congregations by about 12 to 13 per cent, so the total recorded figures were about 7.3 per cent greater than the likely number actually attending.²⁶⁸ In contrast the figures for the dissenting denominations (as a whole) were about 5 to 6 per cent inflation for rounded congregations, giving the recorded figures at about 3.9 per cent greater than the likely number of attendees.²⁶⁹

Denominational Rivalry

It has been suggested that the mid-nineteenth century can be regarded as the high point in religious observance.²⁷⁰ In 1850, total Methodist membership per head of population was at its highest and never again kept pace with population increases.²⁷¹ The religious census had revealed the diversity and variety of nonconformity, with its strength in rural areas coming as a pleasant surprise to some nonconformists themselves.²⁷² On the other hand, the 1840s was the start of a phase of decelerating growth

²⁶⁵ Crockett, 'Churchgoing', 58.

²⁶⁶ Obelkevich, *Religion*, 153; Watts, *Religion*, ix-x.

²⁶⁷ A. Crockett & R. Crockett, 'Consequences of Data Heaping in the British Religious Census of 1851', *Historical Methods*, 39:1 (2006), 24, 35.

²⁶⁸ *Ibid*, 35.

²⁶⁹ *Ibid*.

²⁷⁰ Snell & Ell, *Rival Jerusalems*, 196; Crockett, 'Churchgoing', 54.

²⁷¹ Watts, *Dissenters II*, 657; R. Currie, *Methodism Divided: A Study in the Sociology of Ecumenicalism* (1968), 90.

²⁷² G. Parsons, 'From Dissenters to Free Churchmen: the Transitions of Victorian Nonconformity', in G. Parsons (ed.), *Religion in Victorian Britain, 1: Traditions* (1988), 68-69.

leading to eventual decline, particularly amongst the Wesleyans.²⁷³ The initial setback was largely caused by the major controversies and resulting secessions in the 1840s and early 1850s following the *fly sheet* controversy, where the denomination's national membership figures rose and fell a number of times throughout the decade before plummeting by 28.5 per cent from 1850-55.²⁷⁴ However, all Methodist denominations enjoyed a rising membership in the ten years after 1857 benefiting from the revival led by the Free Methodists, with the Wesleyans increasing by 25 per cent and the Primitives by 36 per cent.²⁷⁵ Nevertheless, stabilisation moved into decline from the 1880s for all the main branches of Methodism.²⁷⁶

Slightly later than the Wesleyans, Primitive Methodism experienced the same trend towards organisational consolidation, with reductions to only one camp meeting per year in village Societies.²⁷⁷ Another aspect was further chapel building, with changes in chapel architecture and the rise of nonconformist Gothic, although barns and meeting houses lasted much longer in the countryside and small towns.²⁷⁸ However, by 1868 even Primitive Methodist permanent chapels outnumbered rented rooms.²⁷⁹ In addition, the development of the view that 'church should be church' architecturally went alongside changes in nonconformist worship.²⁸⁰ A comprehensive assessment of the state of dissenting worship in 1812 had advocated a balance between traditional extempore prayer and more formal liturgical services.²⁸¹ This trend developed steadily during the Victorian period, with greater use being made of printed services and hymn

²⁷³ Currie, *Methodism*, 89-92.

²⁷⁴ Watts, *Dissenters II*, 621-24; Currie, Gilbert & Horsley, *Churches and Churchgoers*, 141.

²⁷⁵ Watts, *Dissenters II*, 660-62.

²⁷⁶ Currie, *Methodism*, 92.

²⁷⁷ Watts, *Dissenters II*, 611.

²⁷⁸ Parsons, 'Dissenters', 100.

²⁷⁹ Watts, *Dissenters II*, 604.

²⁸⁰ Parsons, 'Dissenters', 101, 99.

²⁸¹ *Ibid*, 99; Best, *Temporal*, 309-12.

books, more frequent celebration of communion and a change in the pattern of services to morning and evening.²⁸²

By the mid-nineteenth century Anglican diocesan administration was becoming much more efficient.²⁸³ There was also widespread concern to revitalize public worship, which in 1830 was still comparatively dull, plain and unceremonial.²⁸⁴ As the century progressed aspects of the ethos of the Oxford movement could be found in the emerging high church party and more generally in the approach adopted by many Anglican clergy.²⁸⁵ This involved transforming services from plain and utilitarian to picturesque rites with a corresponding revival of rubrical usage, sacred music, art and architecture.²⁸⁶ A single Sunday service was often replaced by two and a substantial sermon provided.²⁸⁷ Alongside other changes, there was a revival of the ideal of the ordained pastoral ministry and developments in the church's corporate institutional life.²⁸⁸ By 1850, the role of the incumbent in relation to English rural society was changing and it was expected that clergy should give value for money through service to the community.²⁸⁹ This involved a spectrum of activities from paternalistic assistance to the encouragement of self-help with coal, boot or clothing clubs.²⁹⁰ However, clergymen in the mid-century still saw the parish church at the heart of the community and themselves as important spiritual leaders expecting secular support.²⁹¹ The widely held view that

²⁸² Parsons, 'Dissenters', 99-100.

²⁸³ Yates, 'Church Reform', 35.

²⁸⁴ Parsons, 'Reform', 47.

²⁸⁵ Chadwick, *Victorian Church*, 230; Curl, *Victorian Churches*, 28.

²⁸⁶ Curl, *Victorian Churches*, 48.

²⁸⁷ A. Digby, 'Social Institutions', in E.J.T. Collins (ed.), *The Agrarian History of England and Wales*, Vol.7: 1850-1914, Pt.2 (2000), 1479.

²⁸⁸ Parsons, 'Reform', 27-28; Knight, 'Church Reform', 69.

²⁸⁹ Digby, 'Institutions', 1468-69; Best, *Temporal*, 398-401.

²⁹⁰ Digby, 'Institutions', 1469.

²⁹¹ E. Royle, 'The Parish Community through the Vicarage Window: Nineteenth-century Clergy Visitation Returns', *Family and Community History*. 12:1 (2009), 8

the established church embraced everyone was indeed found to be a reality in many smaller rural parishes in the York diocese in 1865.²⁹²

A further development was the embracing of the temperance cause by Anglican clergy, although most preferred to sanction occasional use rather than endorse total abstinence.²⁹³ The nucleus of the Church of England Temperance Society, under evangelical leadership, dated from 1862 and it became the expectation that a well run parish should have a branch.²⁹⁴ Nevertheless, in the second half of the century there were large numbers of teetotallers of all denominational perspectives and a confusing network of temperance organisations operating at local, regional and national level.²⁹⁵

The continuation of the era of Anglican privilege and nonconformist disabilities, even after the legislative reforms of the 1830s, meant continued conflict between church and chapel.²⁹⁶ In addition, the growth of Anglo-Catholic sentiment had a profound effect, particularly on Wesleyan Methodists, so that by the early 1840s even the leadership was beginning to question the traditional relationship between the Connexion and the established church.²⁹⁷ The results of the 1851 census then refuted any possible claims that the Anglican church was the church of the majority.²⁹⁸ This strengthened arguments about the injustice of the remaining nonconformist civil disabilities, resulting in the eventual abolition of compulsory church rates in 1868.²⁹⁹

²⁹² *Ibid*, 9.

²⁹³ F. Knight, 'The Pastoral Ministry in the Anglican Church in England and Wales c.1840-1950' *Dutch Review of Church History: The Pastor Bonus*, 83 (2004), 416.

²⁹⁴ *Ibid*, 417.

²⁹⁵ Knight, 'Recreation', 161.

²⁹⁶ G. Parsons, 'Liberation and Church Defence: Victorian Church and Victorian Chapel', in G. Parsons (ed.), *Religion in Victorian Britain, II: Controversies* (1988), 150.

²⁹⁷ Watts, *Dissenters II*, 541-44.

²⁹⁸ Parsons, 'Dissenters', 70.

²⁹⁹ Parsons, 'Liberation', 151-53; Gilbert, *Religion and Society*, 164.

Denominational rivalry also became a great spur to church and chapel building. If a denomination was slow to build, it risked being overtaken by its rivals although this did not necessarily produce an adequate number of pews where most needed.³⁰⁰ Mann's report on the census discussed the requisite level of accommodation and concluded that seats for 58 per cent of the population were required within reach of everyone in a registration district, making allowances for children, the sick and those engaged on essential duties.³⁰¹ The recorded seating capacity showed potential overcapacity by the end of the century even without extra competitive church building in the face of depopulation in rural areas.³⁰² Mann's analysis for the Bingham registration district was 14,558 sittings for a population of 16,241, thus providing for 89.6 per cent.³⁰³ Clearly this indicated a significant overall surplus, although obviously not necessarily in each individual parish. However, it did accord with Watts' view that by the 1850s there were more chapels and available seating than needed,³⁰⁴ and Snell's argument that by 1851 Anglicans, Wesleyans and Primitive Methodists had all staked out and built a rural constituency in the north Midlands to a greater extent than demand warranted.³⁰⁵ Although competitive building raised overall attendance rates, in the longer term it had the effect of making chapels emptier, because those attending Sunday worship were more thinly distributed, even if there were more overall.³⁰⁶ In addition the financial burden incurred by the establishment and maintenance of a building tended to lead to serious debt problems for many rural chapels by 1900.³⁰⁷

³⁰⁰ Watts, *Dissenters II*, 604.

³⁰¹ *Census, Religious Worship*, cxx-cxxi, cxxiii.

³⁰² R. Gill, *The 'Empty' Church Revisited* (2nd edn., 2003), 33.

³⁰³ *Census, Religious Worship*, cclxxxix.

³⁰⁴ Watts, *Dissenters II*, 604.

³⁰⁵ Snell, *Church and Chapel*, 22-26.

³⁰⁶ Gill, *'Empty' Church*, 135.

³⁰⁷ *Ibid*; Knight, 'Church Reform', 73.

My earlier research had suggested that religious competition became a feature of village life during the 1840s with both Anglicans and Primitive Methodists challenging the Wesleyans.³⁰⁸ This corresponded with south Lindsey where peaceful co-existence was rejected by increasingly militant Anglicans who hoped to repulse the Methodist challenge.³⁰⁹ In north Nottinghamshire the existence of dissent was also a matter of concern since as late as the 1830s the deficiencies of the Church of England could still induce keen churchmen to transfer allegiance to the Wesleyans.³¹⁰ For Cropwell Butler in south Nottinghamshire, I have argued that religious competition was a significant factor in the decision of Methodist Society members to change from Anglican to Methodist baptism for their children.³¹¹

One of the most contentious areas between Anglicans and nonconformists related to education. The eighteenth-century Sunday school movement spread rapidly so that by the 1840s it included half the children in England between five and 15.³¹² By the mid-nineteenth century, Sunday schools had often become the nurseries for nonconformist membership, although in south Lindsey those of the Wesleyans were greatly outnumbered by church schools until later; they then increased because of the increasingly confrontational attitude of the Anglicans, with competition for scholars becoming apparent.³¹³ However, elsewhere competition developed earlier, illustrated by a comment in the Yorkshire census on the failure of attempts to establish a specifically Anglican Sunday school after a hiatus during

³⁰⁸ A.C. Woodcock, 'The Emergence of Religious Competition in Cropwell Butler, Nottinghamshire, in the Early Nineteenth Century', *Transactions of the Thoroton Society*, 110 (2006), 103-18.

³⁰⁹ Obelkevich, *Religion*, 214.

³¹⁰ Biggs, 'Methodism', 275.

³¹¹ Woodcock, 'Emergence'.

³¹² Watts, *Dissenters II*, 58-59.

³¹³ Obelkevich, *Religion*, 193.

rebuilding of the parish church.³¹⁴ Although the extent of success in providing the rudiments of a secular education is unclear,³¹⁵ until the 1870 Education Act one of their great attractions was free education without interfering with the main working week.³¹⁶ They also had a significant role in stimulating 'special services', which often became an important part of community life.³¹⁷

Day schools were the subject of conflict through much of the century between the opposing British and Foreign School Society, providing education in religion without the characteristics of a particular church and the National Society, promoting schools teaching the Anglican liturgy and catechism.³¹⁸ Until 1870 mutual antagonism frustrated all attempts to establish a national system of education. From 1833 the Treasury paid grants to assist building schools in proportion to the amount the Societies raised, resulting in the National Society receiving far more because its resources were greater and also in provision tending to be concentrated in rural areas;³¹⁹ by mid-century, the majority of village schools were National Society ones.³²⁰ However, where there were also nondenominational schools, it was a source of tension and often bitter competition.³²¹ Lack of a school or schoolroom was a hindrance to parish work and most Anglican incumbents aimed to secure a good parish school with a trained and conscientious master and mistress, where the master often helped to run evening and Sunday schools.³²²

³¹⁴ Wolffe, 'Census', 84.

³¹⁵ Watts, *Dissenters II*, 58-59.

³¹⁶ D. Bebbington, *Victorian Nonconformity*, Headstart History Papers, (1992), 37; Obelkevich, *Religion*, 167.

³¹⁷ Obelkevich, *Religion*, 228-29.

³¹⁸ Watts, *Dissenters II*, 536-37; Chadwick, *Victorian Church*, 338.

³¹⁹ Watts, *Dissenters II*, 538.

³²⁰ Digby, 'Institutions', 1476; Obelkevich, *Religion*, 167.

³²¹ Digby, 'Institutions', 1492.

³²² Royle, 'Parish Community', 14-15.

Fear amongst nonconformists of the government using the inadequacies of the educational system as a pretext for strengthening the position of the established church led to attempts to improve the voluntary system; Wesleyans were the main group to utilise state aid after the education grant was increased in 1847 on condition of inspections and examination of teachers. However, the next 20 years revealed glaring educational inadequacies. Most nonconformist communities, already financially overstretched, found difficulty in supporting denominational schools, which still failed to cater for the expanding population.³²³ Even the Wesleyans took 25 years to build 670 schools, often not in the areas of most need.³²⁴

By the 1870s, most nonconformists had abandoned any commitment to a voluntary principle and so welcomed the 1870 Education Act.³²⁵ This aimed to fill gaps in elementary educational provision by allowing both voluntary schools to continue and the creation of a school board with powers to build and run schools and draw on the rates for funding, where there was a proven deficiency of accommodation or where demanded by a majority of the ratepayers.³²⁶ Such nondenominational schools excluded any specifically Anglican teaching.³²⁷ However, tremendous efforts were made by religious groups after the Act to forestall the creation of a local school board by building or expanding voluntary schools.³²⁸ Conflict also continued as church and chapel vied for control of such boards, where clergy could gain great influence on future educational provision by being active members.³²⁹ Since this was difficult for Wesleyan ministers because

³²³ Watts, *Dissenters II*, 553; Bebbington, *Nonconformity*, 38.

³²⁴ Watts, *Dissenters II*, 553.

³²⁵ Parsons, 'Liberation', 157.

³²⁶ G. Sutherland, 'Education', in F.M.L. Thompson, (ed.), *The Cambridge Social History of Britain 1750-195 Vol.3 Social Agencies and Institutions* (1990), 142.

³²⁷ Parsons, 'Liberation', 157; J.T. Smith "'The Enemy Within?': the Clergyman and the English School Boards, 1870-1902', *History of Education: Journal of the History of Education Society*, 38:1 (2009), 135.

³²⁸ Digby, 'Institutions', 1492.

³²⁹ Parsons, 'Liberation', 158; Smith, 'Enemy', 136; Digby, 'Institutions', 1492.

of the itinerant system, representation was often assumed by laymen.³³⁰ Nevertheless attitudes to their children attending board schools varied and where their own schools already existed, Conference gave continuing encouragement not to transfer to boards.³³¹ By 1875, Wesleyan concerns about an Anglican school board monopoly in the villages were not entirely unfounded.³³²

Dual Allegiance

Since the dual allegiance of individuals was originally identified as a key issue, the literature was reviewed to ascertain the extent to which writers have identified this phenomenon and current thinking regarding its significance.

Despite a comment that 'perhaps the most worked-over issue in eighteenth-century religious history is the question of John Wesley's relationship with the Church of England',³³³ there has been comparatively little discussion of the nature of the religious allegiance of individuals. Almost 40 years ago, Biggs commented about north Nottinghamshire that many villagers enjoyed dual membership of two denominations and many babies of Methodist parents were baptised by the parson, with some families alternating between church and chapel.³³⁴ Ambler also suggested that an element in religious observance emerging from the census was the habit of many worshippers of attending both church and chapel³³⁵ and Thompson similarly cited a number of examples suggesting a fluidity in

³³⁰ Smith, 'Enemy', 138-39.

³³¹ *Ibid*, 141.

³³² *Ibid*, 143-44.

³³³ Gregory, 'In the Church', 147.

³³⁴ Biggs, 'Methodism', 230, 233.

³³⁵ R.W. Ambler, 'The 1851 Census of Religious Worship', *The Local Historian*, 11 (1975), 380.

attendance, particularly in the countryside.³³⁶ Obelkevich found in south Lindsey in the mid-century that many Wesleyan Methodists worshipped regularly in the parish church, often attending church and chapel on the same day, although at local level the response in the period of Anglican resurgence from 1850 depended on individual clergy.³³⁷ In addition, families of labourers had a weaker institutional commitment than farmers and tradesmen and were more likely to mix their choice of baptismal rites between the parish church and the Primitives.³³⁸ Watts noted nine comments from the Nottinghamshire census indicating that Methodists had connections with the local parish church.³³⁹ He also concluded, in his study of dissent, that for much of the nineteenth century Wesleyans in some places attended both church and chapel, citing Burton Joyce, Nottinghamshire, where local preachers altered the time of services to avoid clashing with the Anglicans.³⁴⁰

More recent research has revealed similar evidence. Wolffe and Royle both found widespread reporting in rural Yorkshire, from the census and subsequent visitation returns, of individuals attending both the Anglican church and a Methodist chapel (either Primitive or more usually Wesleyan) on the same day.³⁴¹ In the countryside around York, 21 out of 30 villages with both a church and a chapel had no conflict in service times³⁴² and in the Alne and Husthwaite parishes arrangements were made to avoid any clash.³⁴³ Gray concluded that in the early days of the Penrith circuit members of many Societies had to attend the parish church if they wished

³³⁶ D.M. Thompson, 'The 1851 Religious Census : Problems and Possibilities', *Victorian Studies*, 11:1 (1967-8), 95-96.

³³⁷ Obelkevich, *Religion*, 214-16.

³³⁸ *Ibid*, 240-41.

³³⁹ Watts, *Religion*, 13,31,33,36,140,202,221,302.

³⁴⁰ Watts, *Dissenters II*, 175.

³⁴¹ Wolffe, 'Popular Religion', 365; Royle, 'Church and Methodism', 149; Royle, 'Parish Community', 10,17; E. Royle, 'When Did Methodists Stop Attending their Parish Churches?: Some Suggestions from Mid-Nineteenth Century Yorkshire', *Proceedings of the Wesley Historical Society*, 56:6 (2008), 281-89.

³⁴² Royle, 'Methodists', 281.

³⁴³ Wolffe, 'Census', 82-83.

to receive communion, because none of their services were conducted by a minister.³⁴⁴ Royle reached a similar conclusion and also that the Methodist chapel could act as a supplement to the parish church when it was more centrally located.³⁴⁵ Furthermore, a decision to use the Methodist baptismal rite only became practicable when ministers visited villages frequently, particularly if a baby was unlikely to live long.³⁴⁶ However, there was also evidence in Cumbria of Methodist families varying their practices without necessarily an obvious practical explanation, while many committed Methodists continued to choose Anglican baptism.³⁴⁷

Despite evidence of continuing dual allegiance in the mid-1860s, Anglican clergy in Yorkshire expressed varying views on Methodism ranging from hostility to a good relationship.³⁴⁸ The 1865 visitation return contained comments both that a change of service times might prevent many young people from 'lapsing into Wesleyanism',³⁴⁹ and that Wesleyans were all good churchgoers.³⁵⁰ However, by the later decades of the century, church and chapel began to find themselves in competition and references to co-operation are fewer than those expressing rivalry and hostility.³⁵¹

In the mid-1990s the issue of religious identity was first addressed more comprehensively. Two publications by Knight, focusing on the definition of Anglican identity during the first 70 years of the nineteenth century, of necessity considered dual allegiance, while a third published slightly later specifically addressed this phenomenon between Anglicans and

³⁴⁴ Gray, 'Efficient Members', 240.

³⁴⁵ Royle, 'Methodists', 282.

³⁴⁶ Gray, 'Neighbour', 174.

³⁴⁷ *Ibid*, 174-75.

³⁴⁸ Royle, 'Methodists', 284.

³⁴⁹ Royle, 'Church and Methodism', 150.

³⁵⁰ Wolffe, 'Census', 84.

³⁵¹ Royle, 'Methodists', 290-96.

Methodists.³⁵² She criticised the assumption by historians that people who attended chapel to any extent were Dissenters, maintaining that contemporary sources reveal numerous examples of individuals and even communities who moved easily between church and chapel and that double allegiance indicated an underlying seriousness about religious matters where those concerned about their souls would take advantage of the variety of religious opportunities available.³⁵³ Royle reached the same conclusion in his later study of Methodist dual allegiance in Yorkshire and also noted that the identification of first allegiance varied from report to report in the visitation returns.³⁵⁴ In Knight's view, a significant proportion of such people, may have regarded themselves as primarily Anglican and only occasional 'hearers' at the chapel. She also pointed out that in many rural areas the church and chapel existed almost in parallel and that the evidence of the census confirmed the practice of Anglicans and Methodists worshipping together in each other's churches, although the level of toleration was not evident in urban areas where denominational boundaries had hardened by 1851.³⁵⁵ As well as dual allegiance in respect of worship, Knight found evidence that Methodists, particularly Wesleyans, continued to look to the parish church for baptism and other rites of passage, even after the Civil Registration Act of 1837.³⁵⁶ Anglican baptism conveyed a spiritual meaning even to Methodists, as well as the positive aspect of being linked to the 'established' church.³⁵⁷ However, in the latter part of the century, double allegiance came under pressure from both sides; Methodist chapels increasingly met all the needs of their members, while

³⁵² F. Knight, *The Nineteenth-Century Church and English Society* (1995), 24-36; F. Knight, 'From Diversity to Sectarianism : the Definition of Anglican Identity in Nineteenth-Century England', *Studies in Church History*, 32 (1996), 377-86; F. Knight, 'Conversion in Nineteenth-Century Britain, and the Phenomenon of Double Allegiance in Anglicanism and Methodism', in U. Gorman (ed.), *Towards a New Understanding of Conversion* (1999), 116-24.

³⁵³ Knight, 'Diversity', 377-78; Knight, 'Conversion', 117, 122.

³⁵⁴ Royle, 'Methodists', 286.

³⁵⁵ Knight, *Nineteenth-Century Church*, 26; Knight, 'Diversity', 380-81; Knight, 'Conversion', 119-20.

³⁵⁶ Knight, 'Diversity', 378.

³⁵⁷ Knight, 'Conversion', 122.

Anglican parishes began to acquire permanent, resident incumbents who narrowed the definition of Anglican identity, so church and chapel were no longer easily compatible.³⁵⁸ Royle subsequently came to the same conclusion, also citing the impact of new Anglican styles of worship under the influence of ritualism and the increasingly divisive issue of education in the countryside.³⁵⁹ In addition, members of most denominations were less inclined to spend as much time at church as earlier in the century, leading to their developing loyalty to a single place of worship.³⁶⁰

Two other publications have also developed the discussion. Lloyd argued that Church Methodism was more representative of Connexional opinion throughout the eighteenth century than is commonly supposed, which affected the identity of the evolving church.³⁶¹ He also found that many Methodists had a deep-seated aversion to schism and a genuine spiritual attachment to the established church.³⁶² Although some Church Methodists left the Connexion after the Plan of Pacification, many continuing to regard themselves as having a shared denominational identity for well into the next century.³⁶³ Gregory also looked at the broader problem of the relationship between Methodism and Anglicanism in Georgian England by re-examining Wesley's own relationship with the church.³⁶⁴ He argued that nineteenth-century developments led to the assumption that Methodism's attraction in the eighteenth century was its dissent from the church, whereas it may have been its Anglican credentials allowing it to develop, since most Methodists still wanted to see themselves

³⁵⁸ Knight, 'Diversity', 383-84; Knight, 'Conversion', 123-24; F. Knight, A. Burns, & J. Morris, 'When One Revival Led to Another', in H. Chadwick (ed.), *Not Angels, but Anglicans: A History of Christianity in the British Isles* (Norwich, 2000), 199; see also Obelkevich, *Religion*, 179; Gray, 'Neighbour', 186.

³⁵⁹ Royle, 'Methodists', 291-95.

³⁶⁰ Knight, 'Conversion', 123.

³⁶¹ G. Lloyd, "'Croakers and Busybodies": The Extent and Influence of Church Methodism in the Late 18th and Early 19th Centuries', *Methodist History*, 42:1 (2003), 21.

³⁶² *Ibid*, 21-22.

³⁶³ *Ibid*, 31.

³⁶⁴ Gregory. 'In the Church', 149.

as members of the church and benefit from its ministrations.³⁶⁵ Like other writers he found local research indicated the relationship on the ground between Methodists and Anglicans was fairly fluid and more consensual than the emphasis on conflict might suggest, with examples of co-operation and integration as well as clashes.³⁶⁶ Gray similarly found this in Hunsonby, Cumbria, in relation to the position of churchwarden, suggesting a co-operative rather than competitive relationship.³⁶⁷

This is clearly an emerging area of research, posing some important questions. Gregory encouraged historians to think outside the church/chapel divide, referring to the varying picture revealed by local research.³⁶⁸ The comments identified by a number of writers in the religious census and visitation returns have demonstrated the need for careful investigation of different localities and that attendance figures, or even membership numbers, cannot necessarily be taken as indicating distinct and exclusive allegiance.

Research Questions

This review of the literature has suggested a range of issues and questions relating to Methodist allegiance. Regarding the establishment of Methodism, four key questions were identified. The first two, relating primarily to the nature of the communities, were whether successful dissent was associated with complex landownership³⁶⁹ and whether Methodism was more likely to flourish in places with larger populations, in particular medium-sized villages of between 400 and 1,000 inhabitants.³⁷⁰

³⁶⁵ *Ibid*, 177.

³⁶⁶ *Ibid*, 177-78.

³⁶⁷ Gray, 'Neighbour', 175-76.

³⁶⁸ Gregory, 'In the Church', 177-78.

³⁶⁹ Snell & Ell, *Rival Jerusalems*, 373, 375.

³⁷⁰ Watts, *Dissenters II*, 46; Watts, *Religion*, xix; Obelkevich, *Religion*, 9; Thompson, 'Churches and Society', 269.

In addition, did Methodism succeed where the parish church was non-existent, weak or negligent in fulfilling its parochial functions adequately³⁷¹ or flourish when the parish church was also holding its own?³⁷² Finally, was support from leading figures in the community required³⁷³ and did opposition from leading landowners or clergy hinder its establishment?³⁷⁴

The nature of Wesleyan consolidation, the type of growth experienced, the existence of membership turnover and the identity of key members all emerged as significant questions. Did the Wesleyan Societies follow a pattern of initial growth leading to consolidation demonstrated by chapel building³⁷⁵ and subsequently was organisational consolidation apparent by the mid-nineteenth century? It had been suggested that the latter might be demonstrated by a focus on property, money raising and social issues and a lessening or omission of more overtly evangelistic activities.³⁷⁶ The argument put forward on growth was that it was primarily exogenous, emphasising adult conversion, in the first half of the nineteenth century,³⁷⁷ but by mid-century this had reversed with endogenous growth coming from families of Wesleyan members and adherents.³⁷⁸ Linked to this did high growth mean high turnover because of recruitment from outside, where new members were less likely to retain membership?³⁷⁹ In addition, although not widely discussed in the literature, was there a consistently high turnover in Wesleyan Methodist membership throughout the period?³⁸⁰ The issue of the identity of key members was primarily whether Wesleyan

³⁷¹ Gilbert, *Religion and Society*, 94; Biggs, 'Methodism', 209; Currie, 'Micro-Theory', 69; Gray, 'Efficient Members', 235.

³⁷² Watts, *Dissenters II*, 46.

³⁷³ Woodcock, 'Union', 45-46.

³⁷⁴ Ambler, *Churches*, 141; Obelkevich, *Religion*, 21; Watts, *Dissenters II*, 117; Watts, *Religion*, xviii.

³⁷⁵ Ambler, *Churches*, 143, 146; Biggs, 'Methodism', 279; Church, *Early Methodist*, 52.

³⁷⁶ Watts, *Dissenters II*, 609-11.

³⁷⁷ Gilbert, *Religion and Society*, 68, 152.

³⁷⁸ *Ibid*, 149-53; Currie, *Methodism*, 92.

³⁷⁹ Currie, Gilbert & Horsley, *Churches and Churchgoers*, 82.

³⁸⁰ *Ibid*; Burgess, *Methodism*, 63; Gray, 'Efficient Members', 239.

Societies were often run over long periods by a small group of families.³⁸¹

Finally, was the third quarter of the century a time of stability prior to eventual decline for Wesleyan membership?³⁸²

The main question about the Primitive Methodists was the extent to which their approach differed from that of the Wesleyans in exhibiting more evangelistic characteristics, particularly by the mid-nineteenth century.³⁸³

It was suggested this meant they appealed to a different section of society and also focused on gaining converts rather than on building chapels and establishing an organisation.³⁸⁴ This raised further questions of whether by the third quarter organisational consolidation was becoming apparent with fewer camp meetings and love feasts³⁸⁵ and whether, like the Wesleyans, this became a time of stability before eventual decline.³⁸⁶

Various aspects of religious competition emerged: the expansion of buildings, the pattern of services, decisions about baptismal practices and the provision of education. The initial question was whether denominational rivalry spurred church and chapel building,³⁸⁷ subsequently raising overall attendance rates, while making individual chapels emptier.³⁸⁸ Did this lead to overcapacity affecting chapels in rural areas, particularly where there was also depopulation,³⁸⁹ with chapels consequently struggling with debt in the third quarter of the nineteenth century?³⁹⁰ A further aspect of potential competition was whether clashes

³⁸¹ Watts, *Dissenters II*, 163-64; Ambler, *Churches*, 139,147,151; Obelkevich, *Religion*, 184, 200-01.

³⁸² Currie, *Methodism*, 89-92.

³⁸³ Watts, *Dissenters II*, 188-89.

³⁸⁴ Kendall, *Origin and History*; Ambler, *Churches*, 156-57.

³⁸⁵ Watts, *Dissenters II*, 611; Parsons, 'Dissenters', 85.

³⁸⁶ Currie, *Methodism*, 89-92.

³⁸⁷ Watts, *Dissenters II*, 604.

³⁸⁸ Gill, 'Empty' Church, 135.

³⁸⁹ *Ibid*, 33.

³⁹⁰ *Ibid*, 30,36,135.

of service times increased as the century progressed.³⁹¹ Although baptismal choice was primarily considered in the literature in relation to dual allegiance, the question had been raised that changes of practice by Methodist members, might be in response to increasing denominational competition.³⁹² The key issue regarding education was the extent of denominational competition,³⁹³ since all the religious groups ran Sunday schools at some point, while there were potentially competing day schools in Bingham. However, even in the four villages, the question arose of the reaction to the 1870 Education Act regarding existing church schools.

The extensive literature on the 1851 religious census prompted the question of whether detailed local results agreed with broader studies, particularly in south Nottinghamshire and specifically regarding the relative strengths of Methodism and the established church.³⁹⁴ The dual attendance of individuals was also a question where the census might provide either some explicit answers or data from which inferences could be drawn.³⁹⁵ In addition, was there evidence that denominations renewed their efforts to attract people after the results were published.³⁹⁶

The literature had indicated specific aspects regarding dual allegiance: for how long did worshippers in the nineteenth century attend both church and chapel,³⁹⁷ were there local examples of individual co-operation and integration³⁹⁸ and did denominational boundaries harden more quickly in

³⁹¹ Knight, 'Diversity', 383-84; Royle, 'Church and Methodism', 150.

³⁹² Woodcock, 'Union', 64-67; Woodcock, 'Emergence', 27.

³⁹³ Gilbert, *Religion and Society*, 200-01; Watts, *Dissenters II*, 536-37; Chadwick, *Victorian Church*, 338; Parsons, 'Liberation', 158.

³⁹⁴ Watts, *Religion*, xxviii-xxix.

³⁹⁵ Ambler, 'Census', 380; Thompson, 'Census', 95-96; Watts, *Religion*, 13,31,33,36,140,202,221,302; Royle, 'Church and Methodism', 149.

³⁹⁶ Vickers, *Census*, 3.

³⁹⁷ Ambler, 'Census', 380; Thompson, 'Census', 95-96; Obelkevich, *Religion*, 214-16; Watts, *Religion*, 13,31,33,36,140,202,221,302; Knight, 'Diversity', 377-78; Royle, 'Church and Methodism', 149-50; Lloyd, 'Croakers', 31.

³⁹⁸ Gregory, 'In the Church', 177-88.

towns than in villages as the nineteenth century progressed?³⁹⁹

Concerning rites of passage, it was suggested that even committed Methodist families varied their baptismal practices throughout much of the period;⁴⁰⁰ on the other hand was there an increase in exclusive commitment to Methodist baptism in the third quarter of the nineteenth century?⁴⁰¹

Having reviewed the literature and some specific questions arising from it in relation to this study, the next chapter introduces the parishes in south Nottinghamshire and describes the selection process adopted.

³⁹⁹ Knight, 'Diversity', 380-81, 383-84.

⁴⁰⁰ Gray, 'Neighbour' 174-75.

⁴⁰¹ *Ibid*, 174; Knight, 'Diversity', 383-84.

Chapter Two

South Nottinghamshire Parishes and Methodology

Introduction

This chapter explains the method for selecting the field of research, outlines key features of the broad geographical area and provides a brief portrait of the parishes ultimately investigated. Originating from my previous research into Methodism in the south Nottinghamshire villages of Cropwell Butler and Tithby in the late eighteenth and nineteenth century,¹ it was decided to investigate Methodism and its impact upon the parish church and community in a number of rural parishes. The broad time parameters initially chosen were 1750, as a suitable point when Methodism was spreading to many parts of the country, and 1914 when the advent of the first world war changed many aspects of life irrevocably.

The initial step was to identify the precise location of the study, preferably utilising a recognised grouping. Although the churches' organisational divisions (circuits or Anglican ecclesiastical jurisdictions) were considered, it was decided this might limit the variety of the potential parishes and, as far as circuits were concerned, pose a problem of places being reallocated at various times. Consequently, the more stable and clearly identifiable secular grouping of the Hundreds was chosen; south Nottinghamshire was covered by the Bingham and Rushcliffe Hundreds, comprising 50 parishes and 59 villages or small towns.² In assessing whether the study should include the whole of south Nottinghamshire, the approach adopted drew

¹ A.C.Woodcock, 'Union in Saving Souls: the Impact of Methodism on Cropwell Butler, Nottinghamshire, 1770 – 1870' (University of Nottingham M.A., 2005).

² White, 1853.

upon my earlier experience indicating that in-depth studies necessitated devoting considerable time to collecting and analysing detailed data. Therefore some selection was deemed necessary.

Characteristics of the broad area in respect of size, population, landownership and the prevalence of dissent are discussed, using data from the 1851 religious census, directories and the 1873 Return for Owners of Land. Subsequently, the procedure is considered for developing and applying three selection criteria: a long-standing Methodist presence, the absence of old dissent and the adequacy of surviving records. The resulting selection comprised 15 places in ten parishes. Finally, the argument is presented in support of the ultimate narrowing of the study to five places within four parishes, followed by a brief portrait of their key features.

Key Data Sources

The focal time point was initially taken as 1851 because of the data available from the religious census.³ This provided information on Methodist and other dissenting places of worship and, on occasions, the date of erection of the chapels. However, there were certain limitations to be addressed. The first was the issue of whether every place of worship had submitted a return. As a further check, the 1829 Returns for Sectarian Places of Worship were consulted.⁴ For the vast majority of places, the census confirmed the Return entries. However, there were three places, Ratcliffe-on-Soar, Thoroton and Newton, where the places of worship in the Return were not recorded in 1851,⁵ although their existence was noted in

³ T.N.A. HO 129/443.

⁴ N.A.O. C/QDR/2/4; /10.

⁵ *Ibid*; T.N.A. HO 129/443.

later directories.⁶ This indicated that a small number of places within the two Hundreds may not have sent returns but it was not regarded as significant in view of the overall value of the data in identifying dissenting places of worship. On the other hand, earlier research had revealed gaps in the returns made for Anglican places of worship, such as the omission of the chapel of ease in Cropwell Butler,⁷ so it was clear that the possibility of such deficiencies needed to be borne in mind.

The census identified places where one or more branches of Methodism had taken root by the mid-nineteenth century. However, a method was needed to identify the approximate date when Methodism had started and to show if it was still in existence in 1914 or had disappeared earlier. Taking the start date as that given for the erection of the building was not entirely satisfactory. For instance, both Tithby and Kneeton were recorded as not being separate buildings, nor used exclusively as places of worship; however, at Tithby it was noted that the building had been opened as a place of worship in 1820, while at Kneeton the date of erection was given as before 1800, which presumably referred to the actual building.⁸ A more serious difficulty, relevant to virtually all the entries, was that the date of erection of a chapel building, or of the use of a particular building for worship, could not be assumed to be the date when a Methodist Society first became established. One striking example was Cropwell Bishop, where the Wesleyan chapel was erected in 1842⁹ although the Society obtained its licence to hold services forty years earlier.¹⁰ Nevertheless, it was decided to take the dates given in the census, despite their limitations, as the starting points for Methodism, with the caveat that it might be

⁶ White, 1853; White, 1894; Kelly 1922.

⁷ Woodcock, 'Union', 61.

⁸ T.N.A. HO 129/443.

⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰ R.C. Swift, *Methodism in Cropwell Bishop* (1952), 3.

necessary later to look behind particular ones. Places not included in the census, but with evidence of Methodism from directories of a later date, were given an approximate date based on the directory entries.

To ascertain the continued existence of the chapels during the second half of the nineteenth century and beyond, various directories of the period were consulted. These documents, drawn up by different commercial organisations, provided information on each individual place within the area covered, including population figures (taken from the most recent census), acreage, a potted history and details about current facilities, such as places of worship, schools, postal arrangements and shops. The series by White was used as the primary source until it ceased in 1894 while Kelly's was used for the final period.¹¹

Just as with the census, limitations were encountered in the information obtained. In general, entries did not include Methodist meetings held in buildings not identifiable as chapels. Tithby again provides an example; the Independent Primitive Methodists were never mentioned despite meeting from 1818 to at least 1851.¹² Altogether there were 13 places of worship in the census, not mentioned in any earlier or later directories. However, three were in places with another branch of Methodism and two were in the same village, leaving nine places where it was impossible to be certain if/when Methodism had disappeared. In order to compare size, the figures for the population given in the 1853 edition of *White's Directory* (taken from the 1851 general census) were used, together with the approximate acreage.¹³

¹¹ White 1832; White 1853; White 1864; White 1885; White 1894; Kelly 1876, Kelly 1912; Kelly 1922.

¹² T.N.A. HO 129/443.

¹³ White 1853.

In view of the widespread discussion in the literature about landownership and religious adherence,¹⁴ the 1873 Return for Owners of Land was consulted.¹⁵ This survey, based primarily on valuation lists for rating in each parish,¹⁶ listed all the landowners within each county giving their address, extent of their land in acres and gross estimated rental. However, because the holdings specified were county-wide, it could not be assumed that all were in the parish in which the landholder lived; an extreme example is Thomas Dickenson Hall, who owned 2,537 acres, whereas the total acreage of Whatton where he lived was only 1,720 acres, with twelve other owners also living there.¹⁷ Some villages had no resident landholders at all, such as Barton-in-Fabis where the entire parish was part of the Clifton estate; in these cases *White's Directories* for 1864 and 1885 were used to identify the absentee landholders.¹⁸

Despite these limitations, it was considered that the smaller the landholding, the greater the likelihood of its all being within one parish and that identifying the number of landowners with up to 999 acres resident in a particular place, and calculating the percentage of land they owned out of the total acreage, would provide some indication of the extent of multiple landownership. Although it was accepted that this categorisation was arbitrary, numbers of landowners with over 1,000 acres (resident or absentee) were also identified.

¹⁴ See above Chapter 1, 30-36.

¹⁵ *Return for each County in England and Wales of Name and Address of every Owner of Acre and upwards, and less than One Acre: Extent of Commons and Waste Lands* P.P. 1874 [1097] LXXII Pts 1 & 2.

¹⁶ *Return*, Pt.1, 5.

¹⁷ *Return*, Pt.2, 12; White, 1853.

¹⁸ White 1864; White 1885.

Parishes of the Bingham and Rushcliffe Hundreds

The geographical position of these Hundreds in the historic county is shown in Map 2.1 below. The parishes demonstrated a variety of population size, acreage, landownership and dissenting congregations; Table 2.1¹⁹ provides detailed information, which is then viewed comparatively in a series of maps based on the relevant section of Map 2.1.

Population and Acreage

The population of the parishes in 1851 varied from over 2,000 in Ruddington to 38 in Thorpe-in-Glebis. Map 2.2²⁰ shows that the six largest parishes were spread over the area, although none were in the south-easterly section which was becoming the more specifically rural Vale of Belvoir. The two places with a population of over 2,000 were the market town of Bingham towards the north-east and the framework knitting village of Ruddington located towards the south-west. There were also four other larger villages of over 1,000 (Radcliffe-on-Trent, Sutton Bonington, East Bridgford and East Leake). Of these, Sutton Bonington and East Leake, also in the south-west, were predominantly framework knitting villages, while Radcliffe-on-Trent and East Bridgford, both near Bingham, were primarily agricultural.

The category of medium-sized villages contained 17 examples. Again these were found over the whole area, with a number in parishes also containing other, smaller places. There were 14 villages of between 200 and 400, which were scattered everywhere apart from a section around Shelford, Radcliffe-on-Trent and just south-west of Bingham, while the 22

¹⁹ See below, 68-70.

²⁰ See below, 71.

very small places included seven within bigger parishes. As with all the categories, these were found throughout south Nottinghamshire.

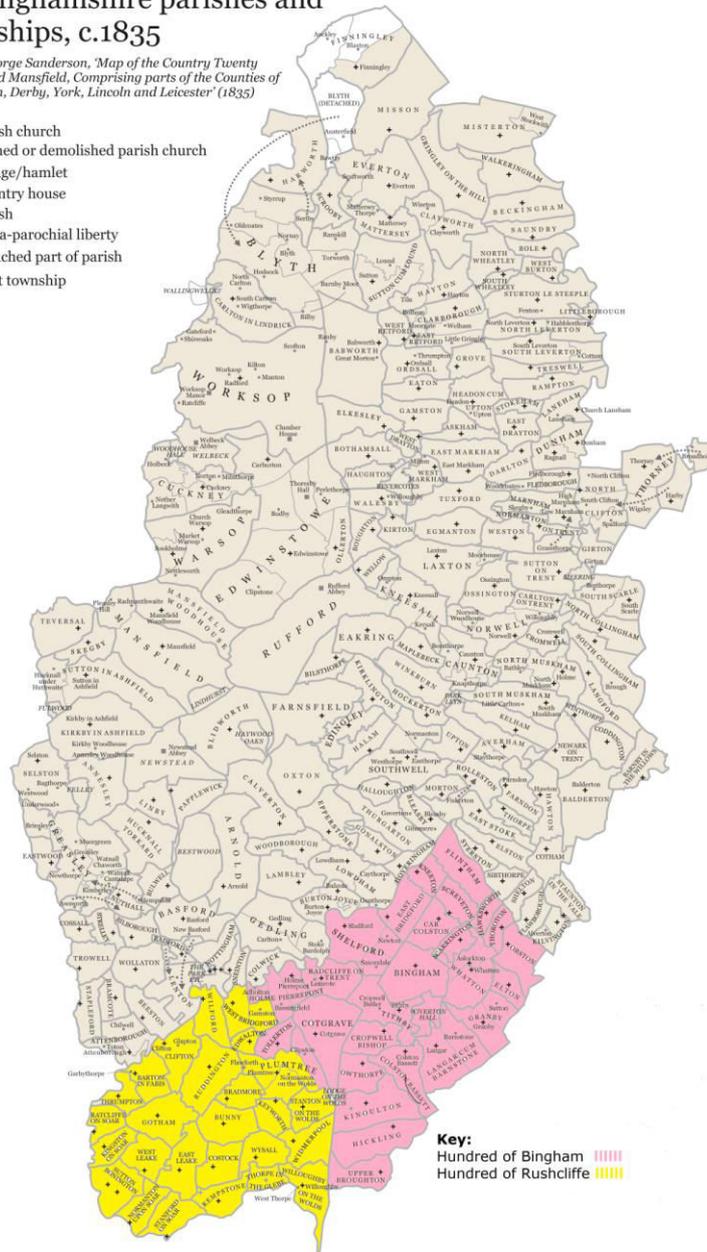
Map 2.1

Bingham and Rushcliffe Hundreds within Nottinghamshire²¹

Nottinghamshire parishes and townships, c.1835

Source: George Sanderson, 'Map of the Country Twenty Miles Round Mansfield, Comprising parts of the Counties of Nottingham, Derby, York, Lincoln and Leicester' (1835)

- + Parish church
- + Ruined or demolished parish church
- Village/hamlet
- Country house
- EATON Parish
- WELDEK Extra-parochial liberty
- Detached part of parish
- Joint township



Key:
 Hundred of Bingham ■■■■
 Hundred of Rushcliffe ■■■■

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²¹ <http://www.nottsheritagegateway.org.uk/places/villages/nottsparishes1835.pdf>, accessed 8.6.2014

Table 2.1 Bingham and Rushcliffe Hundreds Sorted by Population

Place	Pop.	Acreage	Density	Landowners <1000 acres	% land owned	Landowners >1000 acres	Wesleyan	Other Methodist	Non- Methodist
Ruddington	2182	2900	0.75	20	40%	1R / 1A	WM	PM	B
Bingham	2054	2930	0.7	31	17%	1A	WM	IPM	TC
Radcliffe-on-Trent	1273	1873	0.68	18	48%	1A	WM	IPM	
Sutton Bonington	1220	2070	0.59	4	17%	1A?	WM	PM	B
East Bridgford	1155	1910	0.6	40	65%	0	WM	PM	
East Leake	1149	2434	0.47	2	3%	2A	WM		B
Cotgrave	817	3520	0.23	12	31%	1A	WM	IPM	
Gotham	792	2740	0.29	9	22%	1A	WM	PM	
Bunny & Bradmore	737	3560	0.21	3	6%	1R	WM		
Cropwell Butler	695	1800	0.39	14	92%	0	WM	PM	
Keyworth	667	1530	0.44	18	69%	0		PM	C / B
Cropwell Bishop	640	1551	0.41	19	45%	?A	WM		
Flintham	637	2110	0.3	8	13%	1R	WM	PM	
Willoughby-on-the-Wolds	625	2080	0.3	3	8%	2A	WM	PM	
Hickling	613	2663	0.23	28	74%	0	WM		
Wilford	570	1700	0.34	5	29%	1A			
Shelford	516	2152	0.24	6	2%	1A	WM	IPM	
Granby	515	2236	0.23	11	22%	2A	WM		
Costock	470	1320	0.36	2	87%	0	WM		
Orston	461	1850	0.25	19	73%	0	WM		
Kinoulton	405	3071	0.13	2	4%	1A	WM		
Whatton	404	1720	0.23	12	20%	1R	WM		
Clifton-cum-Glapton	401	1980	0.2	1	0%	1A			
Broughton Sulney	394	1800	0.22	14	58%	1A			B
Normanton-on-Soar	390	1543	0.25	47	72%	0	WM		B
Rempstone	389	1660	0.23	2	9%	1A	WM		
Aslackton Township	360	1250	0.29	17	46%	1A		PM	

Barton-in-Fabis	344	1520	0.23	0	0%	1A			
Colston Bassett	337	2400	0.14	7	9%	1R		PM/IPM	RC
Car Colston	319	1640	0.19	18	29%	0	WM	IPM	
Langar-cum-Barnstone	315	3820	0.08	5	18%	2A			
Screveton	307	1100	0.28	4	12%	2A	WM	PM	
Plumtree	306	1812	0.17	1	26%	1A			
Wysall	270	1360	0.2	5	22%	1A	WM		B
West Bridgford	258	1190	0.22	2	20%	1A			
Scarrington	230	910	0.25	10	100%	0	WM		
Normanton-on-the-Wolds	210	790	0.27	1	3%	1R	WM		
Kingston-on-Soar	194	1300	0.15	0	0%	1R	WM		
West Leake	190	1390	0.14	1	34%	1A	WM		B
Ratcliffe-on-Soar	183	1200	0.15	0	0%	1A			
Thoroton	177	730	0.24	2	68%	0			
Stanton-on-the-Wolds	177	1300	0.14	3	11%	1A			
Holme Pierrepont	174	2135	0.08	0	0%	1A	WM at Bassingfield		
Hawksworth	171	800	0.21	4	32%	1A			
Kneeton	169	990	0.17	7	41%	1A	WM	TW	
Tollerton	157	1240	0.13	3	96%	0			
Sutton	152	858	0.18	1	1%	1A		PM	
Widmerpool	147	2190	0.07	3	24%	1R			B
Owthorpe	143	1450	0.1	1	1%	1A			
Stanford-on-Soar	140	1520	0.09	1	6%	1R			
Thrumpton	133	1080	0.12	1	82%	0	WM		
Saxondale	130	640	0.2	5	4%	1A		PM	
Tithby	116	567	0.2	1	4%	1A		IPM	
Edwalton	115	800	0.14	1	8%	1A		PM	
Newton	109	800	0.14	4	4%	1A		?PM	
Gamston Township	92	530	0.17	0	0%	1A	No returns		
Clipston	81	864	0.09	0	0%	1A			
Elton-on-the-Hill	79	965	0.08	0	0%	1R			
Thorpe-in-Glebis	38	930	0.04	0	0%	1A	No returns		

Key: R – Resident; A – Absentee; WM – Wesleyan Methodist; PM – Primitive Methodist; IPM – Independent Primitive Methodist; B – Baptist; TC – Temperance Christians; C – Congregationalist; RC – Roman Catholic

Multi-settlement Parishes

Granby/Sutton

Orston/Scarrington/Thoroton

Plumtree/Normanton-on-the-Wolds/Clipston

Shelford/Saxondale/Newton

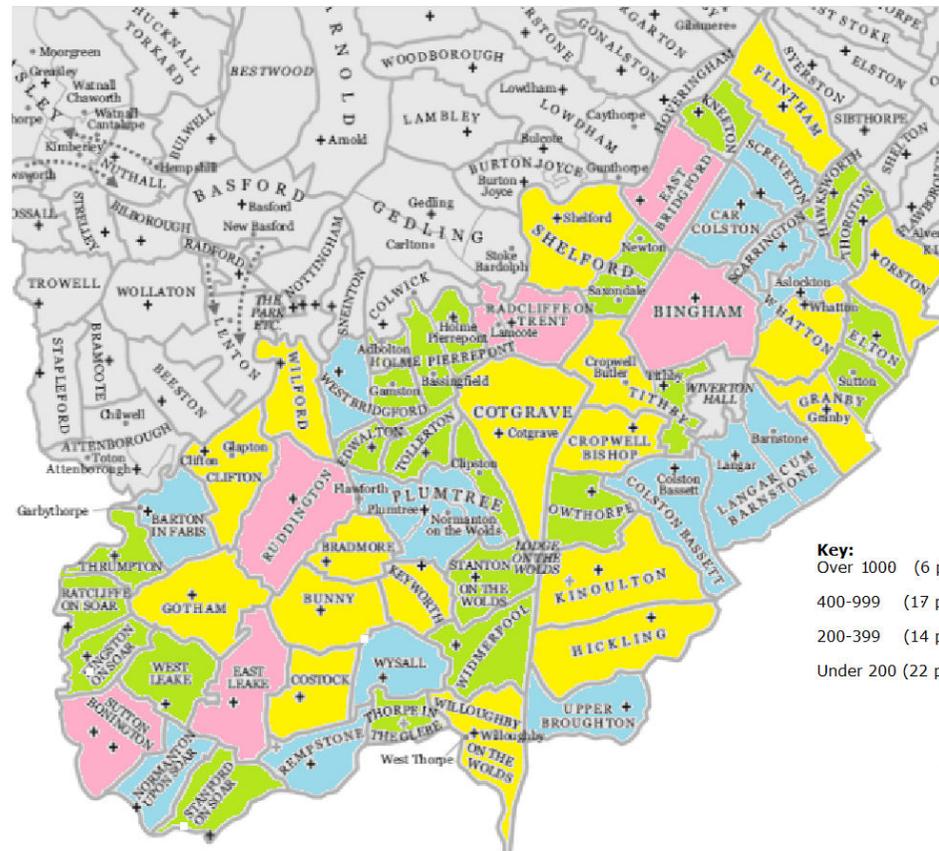
Tithby/Cropwell Butler

West Bridgford/Gamston Township

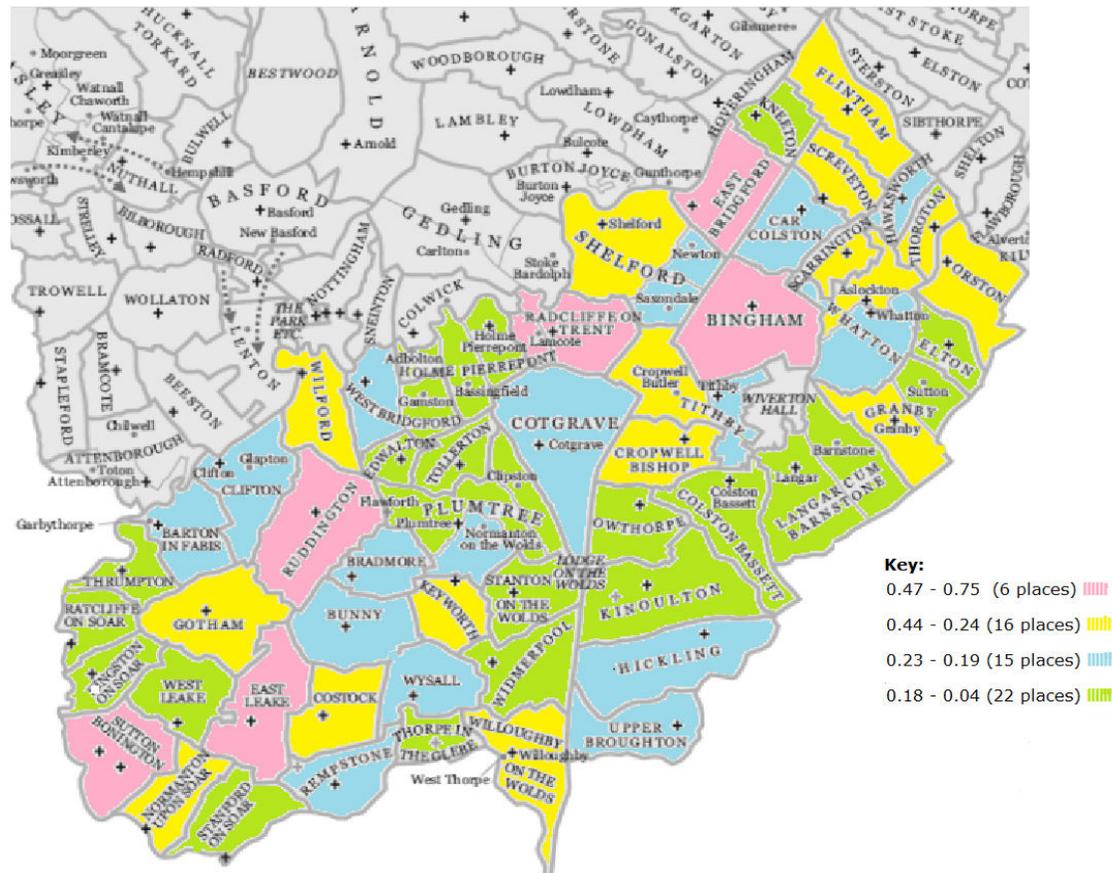
Whatton/Aslackton Township

The acreage of the various places also differed widely. The largest was Langar-cum-Barnstone, covering 3,820 acres and the smallest Gamston township including only 530. However, calculating the density of the population provides a more useful comparator, as shown in Map 2.3.²² The majority of places (41) fell into the same relative categories when measured by population density, as by absolute population, including all the six largest. However, the widest variation was found in the small villages of between 200 and 400 where Langar, with its population of 315 had a density of only 0.08, whereas Screveton with a population of 307 had a density of 0.28. The spread of places was generally mixed, although the section from Bingham towards the north-east was somewhat more densely populated and some of the south-eastern parishes looking towards the Vale, more sparse. There was no particular concentration in the parishes near Nottingham itself, indicating that in the mid-nineteenth century these two Hundreds were primarily rural, with a small market town and large villages as their centres.

²² See below, 72.



Map 2.2 Bingham and Rushcliffe Hundreds: Population in 1851



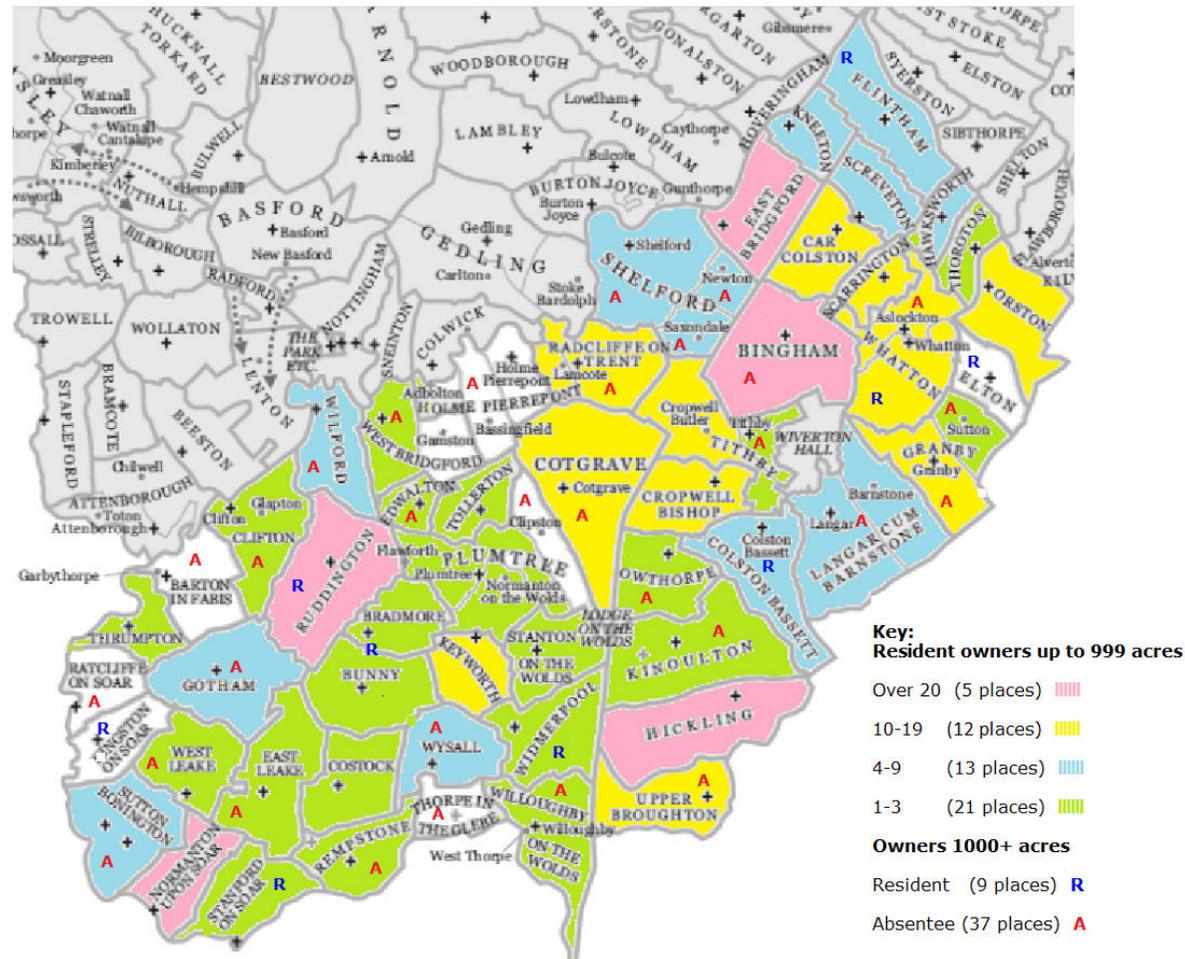
Map 2.3 Bingham and Rushcliffe Hundreds: Population Density in 1851

Landownership

A summary of the information about landownership detailed in Table 2.1²³ is reproduced in Map 2.4 below. Although the Table shows both the number of owners and their percentage of holdings, the summary has been limited to numbers only. In general, using this measure alone provides a fair representation of multiple ownership for numbers above ten owners. However, a smaller number may either hold a small percentage between them because there is also a large landowner or a few individuals may hold a large percentage of the land in the parish, probably without there being any owner of over 1,000 acres. In East Leake two individuals held three per cent of the land and there were also two large absentee landowners, whereas in Tollerton three individuals held 96.2 per cent between them. It is clear that in both instances landownership was concentrated, so it was decided that it was appropriate to take the number of owners as a reasonable representation of the position.

Map 2.4 shows the area was split and multiple landownership tended to be more prevalent in the north-easterly section, with twelve of the 17 places having ten or more owners. Conversely, this area had just four places with resident large landowners, only one of which (Elton) had no small landowners at all, which indicated a relatively widespread occurrence of villages being more open. Although the south-westerly part had three places with more than twenty smaller landowners (Normanton-on-Soar, Ruddington and Hickling), two of which had no large landowners, nevertheless there was a predominance of places with limited diversification of ownership. Out of 29 villages in the whole area with under four small owners, 24 were located in this section.

²³ See above, 68-70.



Map 2.4 Bingham and Rushcliffe Hundreds: Landownership in 1873

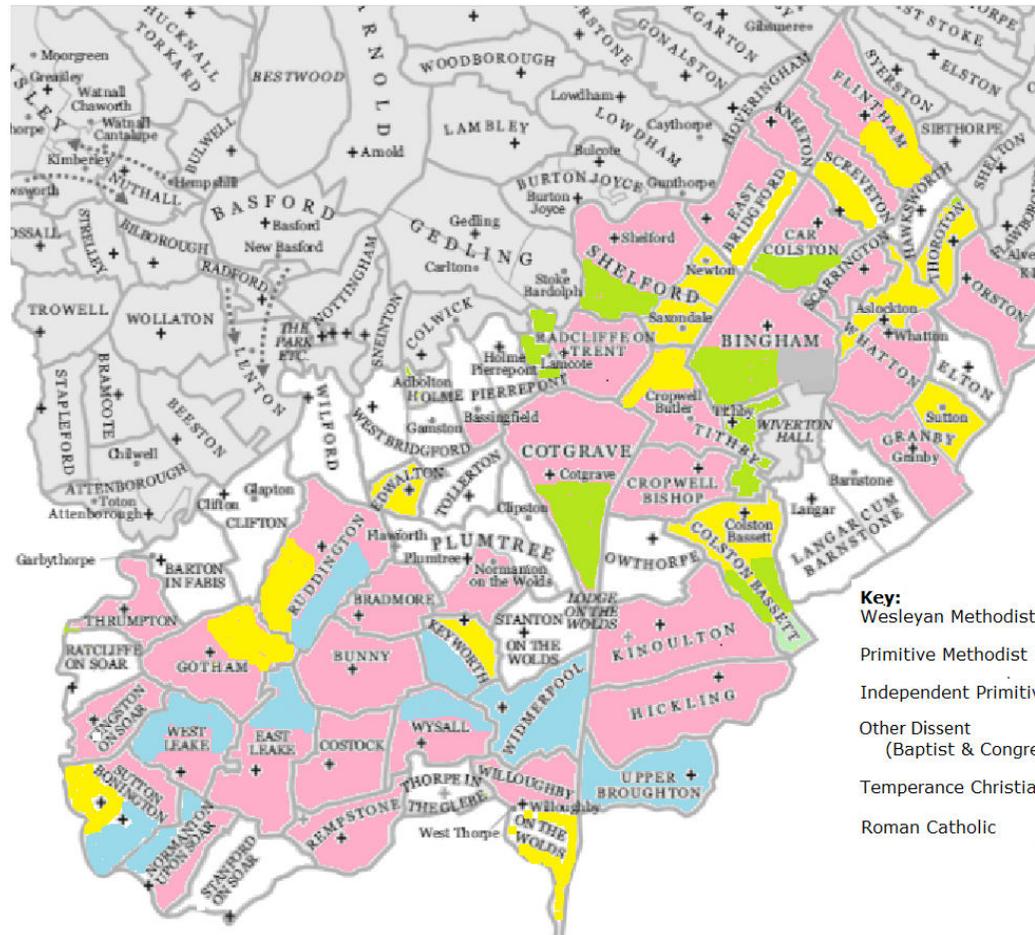
Multiple landownership was more likely to occur where there were no large landowners. Nine of the 13 places without these had ten or more owners; however, the remaining four were places where one, two or three individuals owned the majority of the land but it did not amount to 1,000 acres. Of the 21 places with limited ownership, 17 had large landowners, either resident or absent.

Prevalence of Dissent

The focal point regarding the existence of dissent was taken as the religious census and the spread is shown in Map 2.5 below. Although the census was the only evidence of Methodism in a few places, these were included in order to show the full extent of Methodist evangelistic activities. Additionally, Thoroton was included despite Methodism not arriving until 1859, because it was within the overall period.

Wesleyan Methodism was widespread throughout by 1851; similarly, Primitive Methodism was found in all areas, although less extensively, and was slightly more concentrated to the north-east. The Independent Primitives were a breakaway group centred on Bingham and Radcliffe-on-Trent, while other dissent (General Baptist and one Congregationalist) was exclusively in the south-west. Out of the 59 places, 17 had no dissenting places of worship, although Plumtree and Clipston formed part of a parish with the Wesleyans in Normanton-on-the-Wolds. There was a strip of parishes to the north-west where no dissent existed, while on the other hand everywhere in the north-east had a Methodist denomination, apart from Hawksworth, Elton and Langar.

Map 2.5 Bingham and Rushcliffe Hundreds: Dissent in 1851



Only Widmerpool and Broughton Sulney (alternatively called Upper Broughton) were without Methodists in addition to other dissenting denominations. In both places, together with Keyworth, Normanton-on-Soar and Wysall, these had been established before Methodism arrived, while in Sutton Bonington and East Leake they emerged at approximately the same time. The dates of both are unknown in West Leake where there were no separate places of worship; only in Ruddington did the Wesleyans become established before 1800 and the General Baptists not until 1825. It can be concluded therefore that the existence of other dissenting groups did not in general prevent the spread of Methodism. Three places were able to support three nonconformist denominations (Bingham, Ruddington and Sutton Bonington), all of which had large populations and high population density. Overall it is clear that Methodism was strong in the whole of south Nottinghamshire, being present in 41 of the 59 places, and having more than one branch in 15 of these.

Overview

The key features of the south Nottinghamshire parishes are summarised in Table 2.2 below. Taking the number of small landowners as the guide feature and setting against it population density and dissent, a strong correlation is revealed between a higher number of small landowners and the existence of one or more dissenting denominations. Everywhere with more than five landowners had at least one dissenting group and of the 17 places with multiple landownership of ten or more, all but one had longstanding Methodist Societies. Conversely dissent occurred in only two places where there were no small landowners.

Table 2.2 Comparative Features: Bingham and Rushcliffe Hundreds

Place	Small Landowners	Pop. Density	Non-Anglican Denominations
Normanton-on-Soar	47	0.25	WM/GB
East Bridgford	40	0.6	WM/PM
Bingham	31	0.7	WM/IPM/Temperance Christians
Hickling	28	0.23	WM
Ruddington	20	0.75	WM/PM/GB
Cropwell Bishop	19	0.41	WM
Orston	19	0.25	WM
Radcliffe-on-Trent	18	0.68	WM/IPM
Keyworth	18	0.44	PM/GB/Congregationalist
Car Colston	18	0.19	WM/IPM
Aslockton Township	17	0.29	PM
Cropwell Butler	14	0.39	WM PM
Broughton Sulney	14	0.22	GB
Cotgrave	12	0.23	WM/IPM
Whatton	12	0.23	WM
Granby	11	0.23	WM
Scarrington	10	0.25	WM
Gotham	9	0.29	WM/PM
Flintham	8	0.3	WM/PM
Kneeton	7	0.17	WM/Temperance Wesleyans
Colston Bassett	7	0.14	PM/IPM/Roman Catholic
Shelford	6	0.24	WM/IPM
Wilford	5	0.34	
Wysall	5	0.2	WM/GB
Saxondale	5	0.2	PM
Langar-cum-Barnstone	5	0.08	
Sutton Bonington	4	0.59	WM/PM/GB
Screveton	4	0.28	WM/PM
Hawksworth	4	0.21	

Newton	4	0.14	PM
Willoughby-on-the-Wolds	3	0.3	WM/PM
Bunny & Bradmore	3	0.21	WM
Stanton-on-the-Wolds	3	0.14	
Tollerton	3	0.13	
Widmerpool	3	0.07	GB
East Leake	2	0.47	WM/GB
Costock	2	0.36	WM
Thoroton	2	0.24	
Rempstone	2	0.23	WM
West Bridgford	2	0.22	
Kinoulton	2	0.13	WM
Normanton-on-the-Wolds	1	0.27	WM
Tithby	1	0.2	IPM
Clifton-cum-Glapton	1	0.2	
Sutton	1	0.18	PM
Plumtree	1	0.17	
West Leake	1	0.14	WM/GB
Edwalton	1	0.14	PM
Thrumpton	1	0.12	WM
Owthorpe	1	0.1	
Stanford-on-Soar	1	0.09	
Barton-in-Fabis		0.23	
Gamston		0.17	
Kingston-on-Soar		0.15	WM
Ratcliffe-on-Soar		0.15	
Clipston		0.09	
Holme Pierrpont		0.08	WM
Elton		0.08	
Thorpe-in-Glebis		0.04	

Key: WM – Wesleyan Methodist; PM – Primitive Methodist;

IPM – Independent Primitive Methodist; GB – General Baptist

Yet although the incidence of dissent lessened with the decrease in number of owners, in the majority of places with under six small landowners and Methodist Societies, these proved to be reasonably longstanding. Most places with more than one dissenting group had a larger number of landowners, although Sutton Bonington (three denominations) only had four.

Population density correlation was more varied but broadly indicated that multiple ownership related to a higher density and single large landowners to a lower density. These relationships were as anticipated from the literature²⁴ and confirmed that the Bingham and Rushcliffe Hundreds were an appropriate study area.

Method of Selection

Before devising a procedure for selection, it was decided to identify Methodist circuits and the existence, or otherwise, of Methodist and parish records. Records in this context were defined as a collection of relevant documents of a quantity and quality likely to facilitate answering the questions forming the basis of the investigation; the Nottinghamshire and Leicestershire archive offices were therefore consulted for both circuit and individual chapel records. Although by no means comprehensive, identifying relevant circuit records showed the allocation of the majority of Wesleyan and Primitive chapels and also provided dates confirming the continued existence of three Societies not mentioned in the directories. There were no separate circuit records for the Independent Primitive Methodists, although some of its Societies appeared in the Primitive

²⁴ See above, Chapter 1, 34-36.

Methodist records before the separation. The relevant types of record, including parish records, are detailed in Table 2.3 below.

As expected, there were no records of any type relating to the whole period. Consequently, it was necessary to judge the potential value on the basis of both type and time span and it was decided those covering at least 30 years continuously would be regarded as long. The records were assessed primarily on the information available in the catalogues and indices of the archive collections. The record collection for each place was then placed in one of four categories, as indicated in Table 2.4.²⁵ For the parish records, the time span was less significant because where a type of record existed at all, it usually covered a period exceeding 30 years. Since these also covered a much broader spectrum, with the extent of their precise relevance being uncertain, a slightly different categorization was used.

As the research progressed, a further source of information about both Anglicans and Methodists became available through the digitisation of the *Nottinghamshire Guardian* from 1849-1900.²⁶ This facilitated online searches for newspaper reports about the activities of the denominations and provided further rich information for all the places forming part of the detailed investigation.

²⁵ See below, 84.

²⁶

<http://www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk/search/results?newspapertitle=nottinghamshire%20guardian&sortorder=dayearly>, accessed 7.10.2012-12.2.2013

Table 2.3**Types of Circuit, Chapel and Parish Records**

Originating Body	Type of Record	Data within Record
Circuit	Quarterly schedules and reports	Membership statistics; sometimes names of members; names of class leaders; financial problems
	Quarterly meeting records	Starting & closing of Societies; names of some office holders; financial & property issues; evangelistic activities; problems arising
	Minutes of local preachers' meetings	Identity of some local preachers; changes in service patterns; names additions and deletions to plan; issues re conduct
	Education schedules	Existence of day &/or Sunday schools; numbers of scholars & teachers; names of leaders
	Accounts	Membership numbers; names of class leaders & circuit stewards; amounts collected from Societies; changes of ministers; provisions re circuit debt (not all data in every document)
	Property schedules	For each chapel – number of trustees; identity of treasurers; sources of income, level of debt
	Records of baptisms	Names of parents & children; dates of birth & baptism; sometimes occupation of father
	Quarterly plans	Chapels within circuit; times & frequency of services & other events; identity of ministers & local preachers
Chapel	Deeds re building	Identity of trustees, vendors of land & price paid; location &

		measurements of land; nature of trusts
	Chapel accounts	Identity of trustees; sources of income & types of expenditure; membership numbers; names of class leaders; office holders (not all data in every document)
	Registers of members	Names & periods of membership
	Sunday school registers	Names of scholars, periods of attendance; reasons for leaving; names of teachers; special events & speakers
	Registers & minutes for Sunday school teachers	Names & attendances of teachers;
	Records of baptisms	As for circuit
	Miscellaneous records	
Parish	Parish registers	Baptism, marriage, burial information; names, dates & occupations
	Overseers' records	Identity of overseers & those allowing accounts;
	Churchwardens' accounts	Identity of c/w & those allowing a/c; types of expenditure; church rates
	Constables' accounts	Identity of constables; sometimes occupations
	Vestry minutes	Church rates; maintenance/improvement etc. for parish church; those approving minutes
	Miscellaneous records	

Table 2.4
Categories for Record Collections

Originating Body	Category	Number and length of records
Circuit & Chapel	Extensive	2 long
		1 long and 2 or more short
	Some	1 long and 1 short
		3 or more short
	Few	1 long or 2 short
	None	0
Parish	Extensive	4 or more
	Some	3
	Few	1 or 2
	None	0

Key: Long – covering at least 30 years continuously; accounts excluded
Short – covering under 30 years continuously or over 30 years with gaps
Adjustments made for occasional short parish records

Selection Criteria

The two issues of size and type of landownership, identified from the literature as particularly relevant to religion and rural communities, were considered in developing appropriate selection criteria. Rather than adopt a particular size range and specify type(s) of landownership, it was hoped that parishes exhibiting a variety of these characteristics would fall within the other parameters. In this way, a range of conditions where Methodism had taken root could be explored and tested. However, since the investigation was to be over an extensive time period, it was decided only to include places with evidence of a Methodist presence, of one or more of the various branches, for more than 50 years because this indicated a well established presence. Since Wesleyans, Primitives and Independent

Primitives were found throughout the initial area, it was also decided that the final study should include parishes with both single and multiple branches of Methodism.

Dissent was primarily based in the towns rather than the countryside at the time of the advent of Methodism.²⁷ In towns there was less pressure to conform and dissenting congregations in villages, usually reliant upon members drawn from a wide geographical area and often with temporary buildings, were more likely to collapse.²⁸ By 1851 only nine of the 50 parishes in the two Hundreds had places of worship belonging to dissenting denominations other than Methodism (General Baptist and one Congregationalist).²⁹ In view of these limitations within the overall area, it was decided that those denominations should not form part of the investigation. Consequently, a further selection criterion identified was the exclusion of parishes with dissenting denominations apart from Methodism (Normanton-on-Soar, Ruddington, Keyworth, Broughton Sulney, Wysall, Sutton Bonington, Widmerpool, East and West Leake).

Since a key aspect of Methodist organisation was the circuit,³⁰ it was decided to select places from at least two different circuits to avoid the risk of reaching conclusions that leant too much upon material in only one set of circuit records. This led on to the consideration of the geographical proximity of the places chosen because of questions raised regarding cultural or other connectivity, which may have influenced the development and spread of Methodism. It was decided that a further criterion must be some of the places being physically adjacent, although investigating within

²⁷ See above Chapter 1, 9.

²⁸ M.R. Watts, *The Dissenters: Vol. I From the Reformation to the French Revolution* (1978), 288.

²⁹ M.R. Watts (ed.), *Religion in Victorian Nottinghamshire: the Religious Census of 1851*, (1988), 1-11, 160-66, 276-308

³⁰ See above Chapter 1, 15-16.

different circuits meant that this might not be possible on a continuous basis. In addition, a criterion relating to the quality of the source material for such in-depth studies was essential. It was also necessary to consider whether any selection related to parishes as a whole or individual places; nine of the parishes were multi-settlement and the earlier research had already revealed that in the parish of Tithby-cum-Cropwell Butler the two settlements were very different regarding both general characteristics and the establishment of Methodism. Consequently, it was decided to include all the settlements within each parish, provided at least one met the criteria.

Application of the Selection Criteria

As already indicated, there were nine parishes with other dissenting denominations and a further 16 parishes failed to show a well established Methodist presence. The exclusion of both these groups left 35 places within 25 parishes.

The next criterion related to the quality of the available records. The assessment was initially based upon the Methodist records (both circuit and chapel) because their existence was more variable, compared with parish records. It was acknowledged that research into a sample of parishes in south Nottinghamshire selected merely because of the quality of the surviving source material ran the risk of not being representative of anything, other than the fact that valuable documents had been preserved in some places and not others. In addition, it would clearly be possible to investigate and reach some conclusions about Methodism even with sparse records. However, it was considered appropriate to select on the basis of available records and then review the result.

Places with records for both circuit and chapel designated as either 'extensive' or 'some' were selected³¹ and the result revealed ten parishes, comprising 15 different places. These are shown in Table 2.5 below.

Including all the settlements within a parish meant three had limited circuit and no chapel records (Tithby, Saxondale and Newton) and two had no evidence of any Methodist presence (Plumtree and Clipston). However, it was decided that looking at parishes as a whole remained appropriate, with advantages in investigating why the fortunes of Methodism varied within it. In considering the quality of parish records, seven had been assessed as either 'extensive' or 'some' and for the Tithby-cum-Cropwell Butler parish my earlier research had identified a small but very informative set of letters of one of the incumbents,³² which significantly supplemented the sparse parish records. It was decided the other two parishes (Kinoulton and Plumtree, Normanton-on-the-Wolds and Clipston) should also remain within the selection, while other criteria were considered.

Selection of Places

The places were reviewed for variety, regarding size, landownership, branches of Methodism and circuits. The population ranged from 2,054 (Bingham) to 81 (Clipston) and the population density from 0.7 (Bingham) to 0.09 (Clipston), with a broad spread of both the total and density between. This was considered sufficiently varied. The percentage of land owned by smaller landowners varied from 92 (Cropwell Butler) to 0 (Clipston), although Cropwell Butler was unusual in that no other places had over 50 per cent of small landownership.

³¹ See above, 84.

³² N.A.O. DD TB 3/2/30, /36, /39-40.

Table 2.5 Selection of Parishes within Bingham and Rushcliffe Hundreds

Place	Pop.	Acreage	Density	Landowners <1000 acres	% land owned	Landowners >1000 acres	Wesleyan	Other Methodist	Circuit Records	Chapel Records	Parish Records
Bingham	2054	2930	0.7	31	17	1A	WM	IPM / TC	Extensive	Some	Some
Radcliffe-on-Trent	1273	1873	0.68	18	48	1A	WM	IPM	Some	Some	Extensive
Cotgrave	817	3520	0.23	12	31	1A	WM	IPM	Some	Some	Some
Gotham	792	2740	0.29	9	22	1A	WM	PM	Some	Some	Some
Cropwell Butler	695	1800	0.39	14	92	0	WM	PM	Extensive	Extensive	Few
Cropwell Bishop	640	1551	0.41	19	45	?A	WM		Extensive	Some	Extensive
Flintham	639	2110	0.3	8	13	1R	WM	PM	Extensive	Some	Some
Shelford	516	2152	0.24	6	2	1A	WM	IPM	Some	Some	Some
Kinoulton	405	3071	0.13	2	4.4	1A	WM		Some	Some	Few
Plumtree	306	1812	0.17	1	26	1A			None	None	Few
Normanton-on-the-Wolds	210	790	0.27	1	3	1R	WM		Some	Some	Few
Saxondale	130	640	0.2	5	4	1A		PM	Few	None	Some
Tithby	116	567	0.2	1	4	1A		IPM	Few	None	Few
Newton	109	800	0.14	4	4	1A		?PM	Some	None	Some
Clipston	81	864	0.09	0	0	1A			No Methodists		Few

Key: R – Resident; A – Absentee; WM – Wesleyan Methodist; PM – Primitive Methodist; IPM – Independent Primitive Methodist; TC – Temperance Christians

Multi-settlement Parishes:

Shelford/Saxondale/Newton
 Plumtree/Normanton-on-the-Wolds/Clipston
 Tithby/Cropwell Butler

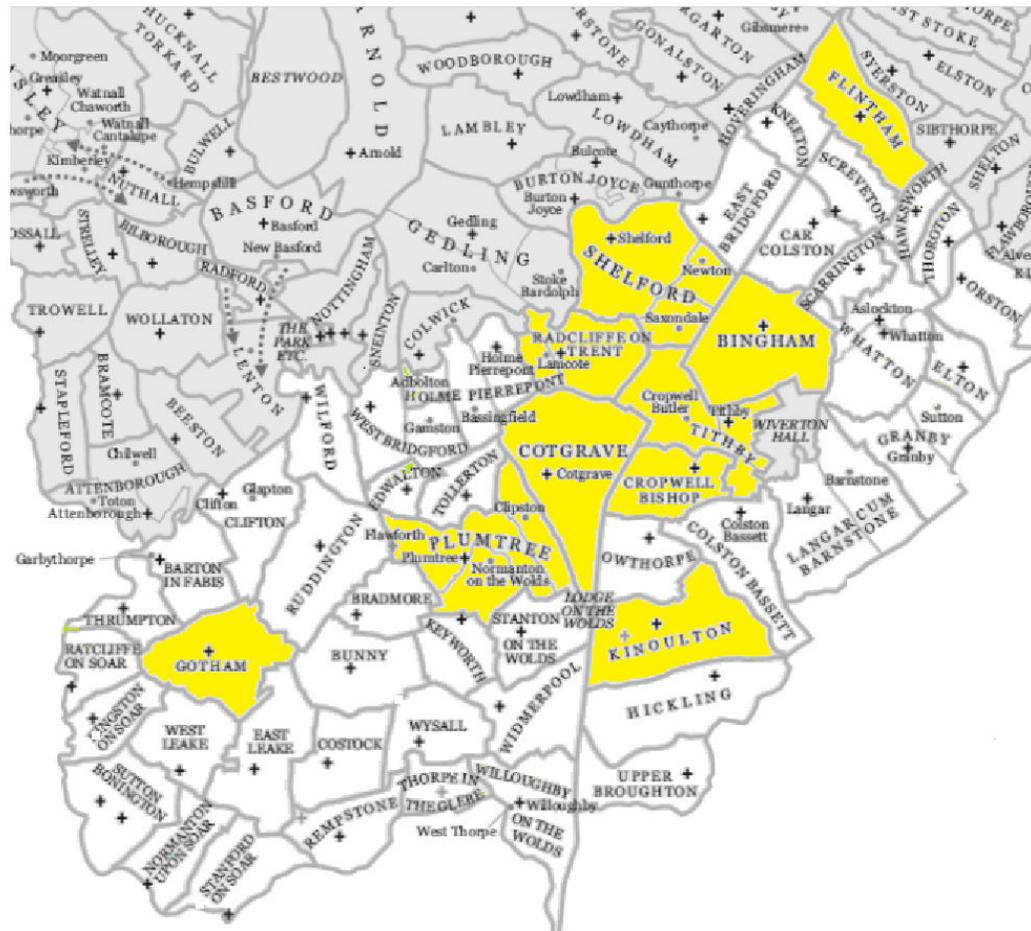
yellow highlight – Parishes selected for ultimate in-depth study

The majority of places also had absentee owners with large landholdings and two places had resident large landowners. It was decided therefore that there was sufficient scope for looking at the effects of different patterns of landownership. Within the 15 places, there were ten Wesleyan Societies, five Primitive and five Independent Primitive. The incidence of these was such as to provide opportunities to investigate the relationships of denominations in various permutations.

In addition, there was a further dissenting place of worship in Bingham, the Temperance Christians. As far as the Wesleyans were concerned, four different sets of circuits were involved, while the Primitive Methodists, as far as this could be ascertained, were all in the same group. Consequently, for the Wesleyans, the research would not be limited to one set of circuit records.

Since it appeared that the ten parishes selected for in-depth study exhibited sufficiently varied characteristics under all the criteria previously identified, the issue of geographical proximity was then reviewed (Map 2.6 below). Eight were physically adjacent and grouped together. The remaining two (Flintham and Gotham) were separate, with one at the north-east point of the area and the other towards the south-west. It was considered that this provided ample scope for exploring connections between neighbouring places, as well as for comparisons with two places in separate parts of south Nottinghamshire. These parishes were therefore selected for the research.

Map 2.6 Parishes Selected for In-Depth Study



Revision of Selection

As the investigation progressed, it became clear that the time parameters originally set were not sustainable. The earliest date with evidence about Methodism in the area was 1770, which was identified as the appropriate start date. In addition, the quantity of available relevant source material was such that continuing the investigation and analysis to 1914 would result in the study becoming too long and possibly losing focus. It was therefore decided that an appropriate end date would be about 1875, when the effects of the 1870 Education Act were becoming apparent, since education was one of the significant aspects of denominational competition.

It was decided to look initially at the four parishes in the Newark (later Bingham) Wesleyan circuit: Flintham, Cropwell Bishop, Tithby-cum-Cropwell Butler and Bingham. The wealth of surviving circuit records allowed the possibility of developing a framework and some benchmarks before moving on to analyse the remaining six parishes. However, it rapidly became obvious that the rich data regarding membership records was capable of much more extensive analysis than had originally been envisaged. In addition, this analysis was producing some unanticipated and potentially important results about short-term membership losses and the existence of a significant level of turnover throughout the period.

At this point, it was necessary to choose whether to continue to investigate all the parishes or to narrow the selection further. There were no similar records for the other circuits, so it was not possible to compare these developing aspects of the study over the whole area. It was decided to focus on the issue of membership and turnover at this micro-level, rather than to retain the original wider scope over a broader region in south

Nottinghamshire. In addition, the baptismal choice of Methodist families was proving to be a further significant aspect in this fluidity of allegiance. Although relevant records were available for some of the other parishes, the extent of analysis required meant that the study would become too long if these were included and additionally it would not be possible to balance baptismal decisions against membership turnover for such places. The narrowing of the selection to four villages and the small market town because of the limited availability of crucial material involved some loss of variety as established in the original criteria. However, it did still include places of varying size and geographical location, different patterns of land ownership and with three branches of Methodism and one independent group as shown in Table 2.5³³ and Map 2.7 below. The one significant disadvantage was that there were no longer any small settlements similar to Tithby remaining in the study, thus preventing comparisons regarding Methodist success or failure in such places.

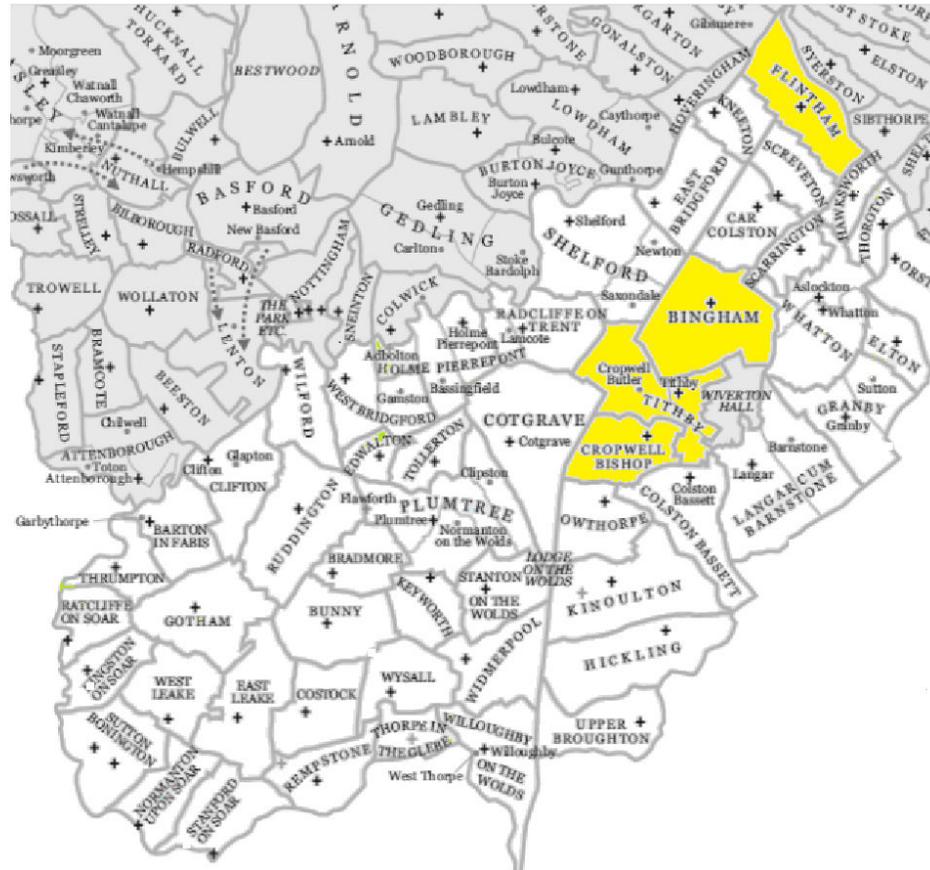
The literature had suggested micro-level studies were needed to supplement those covering larger areas³⁴ and Gray has recently contributed an in-depth investigation regarding religious allegiance in a single parish in Cumbria.³⁵ In view of this and the potential significance of some of the results, it was therefore considered that there was adequate scope for the findings of the study to be of value overall.

³³ See above, 88.

³⁴ R. Currie, 'A Micro-Theory of Methodist Growth', *Proceedings of the Wesley Historical Society*, 36:3 (1967), 73; J.A. Vickers, 'Good Red Herring : Methodism's Relations with Dissent', *Proceedings of the Wesley Historical Society*, 47 (October 1989), 93; A.M. Everitt, 'Nonconformity in Country Parishes', in J. Thirsk (ed.), 'Land, Church and People: Essays Presented to H.P.R. Finberg', *Agricultural History Review*, 18 Supplement, (1970), 182-83; K.D.M. Snell, *Church and Chapel in the North Midlands: Religious Observance in the Nineteenth Century* (1991), 53; J. Wolffe, 'The 1851 Census and Religious Change in Nineteenth-Century Yorkshire', *Northern History*, XLV: 1, (2008), 75; J. Gregory, "'In the Church I will Live and Die": John Wesley, the Church of England, and Methodism', in W. Gibson & R. Ingram (eds.), *Religious Identities in Britain 1660-1832* (2005), 177-78.

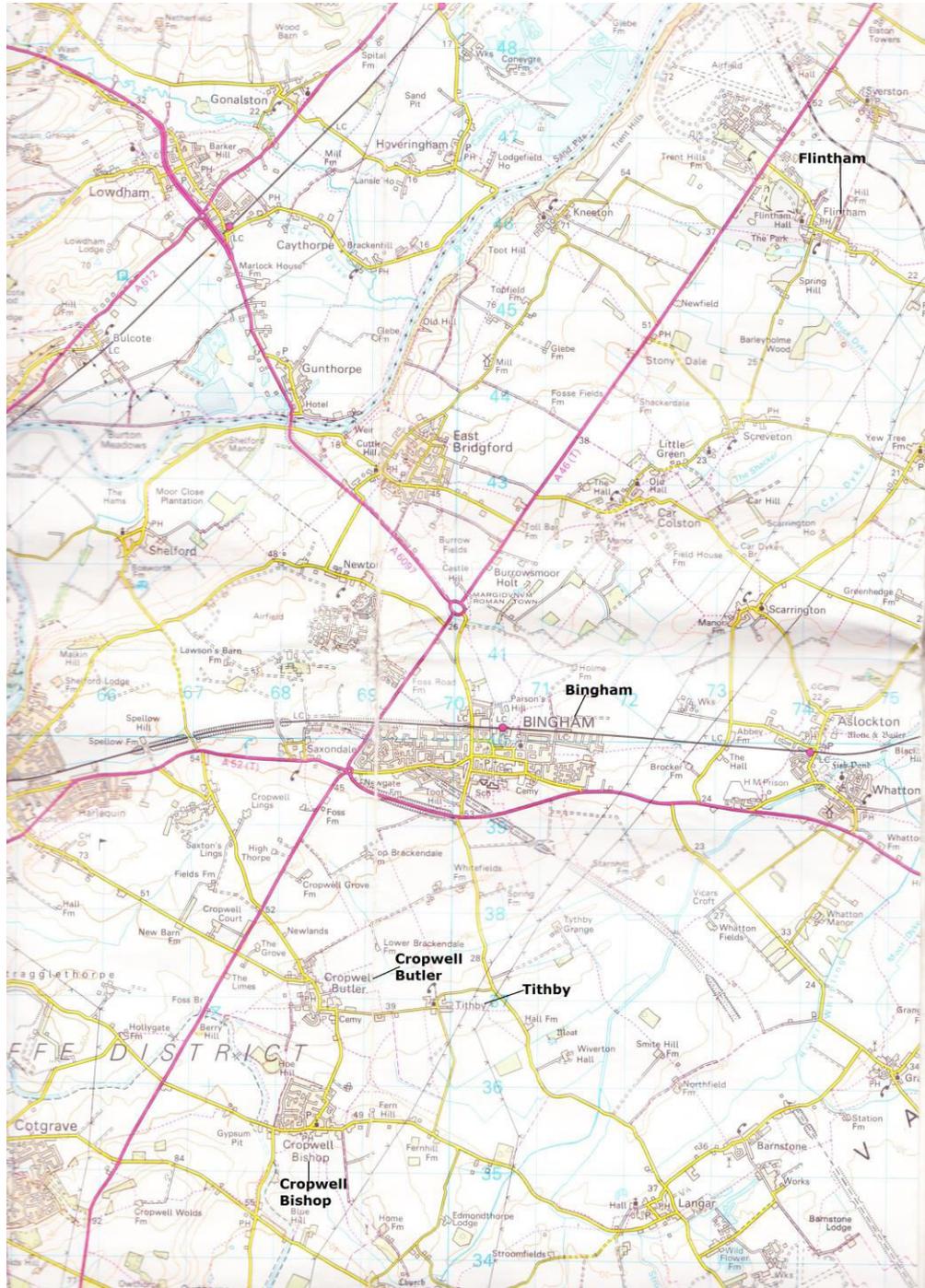
³⁵ L. Gray, 'Efficient Members': the Early Years of Methodism in Hunsonby and Winskill, 1821-1871, *Transactions of the Cumberland and Westmorland Antiquarian and Archaeological Society*, 12 (2012), 231-48; L. Gray, 'And Who is My Neighbour?': the Methodists of Hunsonby and Winskill in their Local Context, 1821-1871, *Transactions of the Cumberland and Westmorland Antiquarian and Archaeological Society*, 13 (2013), 171-90.

Map 2.7 Revised Selection of Parishes



Portraits of the Four Parishes

Map 2.8 Location of the Four Villages and Bingham³⁶



³⁶ O.S. 1996, Nottingham and Loughborough, part of sheet 129.

Flintham

Comprising over 2,000 acres, Flintham parish forms a rectangle bisected by the Fosse way, the major route from Leicester to Lincoln partly turnpiked in 1773.³⁷ It is six miles south-west of Newark, five miles north-east of Bingham and about 14 miles east of Nottingham. The north-western boundary is the river Trent including the Hazelford ferry and the south-eastern is just above the Car dyke. The village of Flintham is almost in the centre of the parish about a mile below the Fosse. It is the only main settlement, although there are a number of outlying farms. Just outside the main village, Flintham Hall, the seat of the Thoroton and Hildyard family, is situated in what was, in the nineteenth century, a well wooded park of 250 acres.³⁸ The parish is rich, loamy land with a subsoil of sand and clay and in 1876 the crops were chiefly cereals and roots.³⁹

The population of 459 in 1801 rose rapidly from 1811 to 1821 and then again in the 1840s, reaching a peak of 639 in 1851.⁴⁰ From then there was a steady decline, attributed to the migration of agricultural labourers into manufacturing districts.⁴¹ Although by 1861 there was a seven per cent fall in the number of households primarily connected with agriculture, it was described as an agricultural village, since this was still the main occupation of over 50 per cent of families.⁴² Most of the remainder were craftsmen and tradesmen supplying the needs of the village community or working in some capacity for Flintham Hall.⁴³

³⁷ A. Henstock, 'A Parish Divided: Bingham and the Rev. John Walter, 1764-1810', *Transactions of the the Thoroton Society*, 85 (1981), 90.

³⁸ <http://www.nottshistory.org.uk/Jacks1881/flintham.htm>, accessed 25.4.2014

³⁹ White 1832, 493; Kelly 1876, 692.

⁴⁰ V.C.H. *Nottinghamshire* II (1910), 311.

⁴¹ *Ibid*; White 1864, 447.

⁴² T.N.A. RG9/2483.

⁴³ *Ibid*.

In the late eighteenth century, the major landowner in Flintham was the Thorotons (later Hildyards) who purchased and rebuilt Flintham Hall, subsequently occupying it as the main family residence.⁴⁴ Although there was a shift later to more diverse ownership, as resident squires the family remained highly influential.⁴⁵ The parish church of St. Augustine is situated next to the Hall and the majority was rebuilt by Colonel Hildyard in the late 1820s.⁴⁶ Nevertheless, it was a poor living and Flintham was fortunate to have a resident rather than absentee incumbent. Wesleyan Methodism emerged in 1802 and the Society rapidly acquired a chapel building through support of leading figures elsewhere in the circuit; Primitive Methodism was not established until 1842 but its members also bought land and built a chapel within three years.⁴⁷

Cropwell Bishop

The parish of Cropwell Bishop is located on the edge of the Vale of Belvoir about one mile south of Cropwell Butler, four miles south-west of Bingham and nine miles south-east of Nottingham. The Fosse way forms the boundary to the west while the northern boundary with Cropwell Butler extends around a small round hill (Hoe Hill). In the mid-nineteenth century, it comprised approximately 1,551 acres.⁴⁸ The soil is strong clay and there used to be deposits of gypsum and limestone on the south side of the parish.⁴⁹ The Grantham canal completed in 1797⁵⁰ passes through from north to south just to the west of the village of Cropwell Bishop, the only settlement. This lies to the centre of the northern half of the parish.

⁴⁴ N.A.O. C/QDE/Flintham/1794;
www.nottingham.ac.uk/manuscriptsandspecialcollections/collectionsindepth/family/thorotonhildyard/biographies/biographies.aspx, accessed 14.1.2011.

⁴⁵ See below Chapter 3, 114.

⁴⁶ White 1832, 493-94.

⁴⁷ See below Chapter 3, 117 ; Chapter 5, 212.

⁴⁸ White 1853, 446.

⁴⁹ White 1832, 492; White 1864, 463.

⁵⁰ <http://www.granthamcanal.org/history/>, accessed 24.4.2014.

Map 2.9 Flintham, showing Church, Chapels and Schools⁵¹



⁵¹ O.S. 1900, Nottinghamshire, part of sheet XL/NW.

In 1790, there were about 60 dwellings⁵² and in 1801 the population was 307.⁵³ By 1831 it had risen to 473 with a high point of 640 mid-century, although it then remained relatively static until the 1880s.⁵⁴ Agriculture was the chief employment of 54 per cent of households in 1851 but the nature of the soil and other deposits led to the growth of limeworks and brickfields, encouraged by the transport facilities of the canal.⁵⁵ A wharf was built close to the Town End Bridge and a basin constructed to enable barges to turn round⁵⁶ but during the 1850s the limeworks declined and there was a shift back to agriculturally based employment.⁵⁷ In addition, the village was sufficiently close to Nottingham to enable women to be employed as outworkers in the lace industry.⁵⁸

Almost all Cropwell Bishop belonged to the two prebendaries of Oxtun in Southwell Collegiate Church, who let the land on renewable leases.⁵⁹ However, there were also a number of freeholders⁶⁰ and under the enclosure award in 1804 over 60 per cent was allocated to 27 other individuals, each parcel being less than ten per cent of the total.⁶¹ The value of the prebends was small and until 1840 the poor living was held by non-resident pluralists as regards both the vicar and his curate.⁶² From this point, the new resident vicar George Gould worked determinedly to augment its value and improve the facilities.⁶³ Located in the centre of the village is the thirteenth-century parish church of St. Giles and from about 1802 Wesleyan Methodism also became established. Meetings were held

⁵² R. Thoroton, *The Antiquities of Nottinghamshire* ed. and enlarged by J. Throsby Vol.I (1790), 189-90.

⁵³ V.C.H. *Nottinghamshire* II, 312.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵⁵ T.N.A. HO 107/2139.

⁵⁶ A. Harper & E. Harper, *Chronicles of Cropwell Bishop* (1988), 55; Kelly 1876, 682.

⁵⁷ T.N.A. RG9/2485.

⁵⁸ T.N.A. HO 107/2139.

⁵⁹ White 1832, 491; Thoroton, *Antiquities*, 189.

⁶⁰ Thoroton, *Antiquities*, 190.

⁶¹ Harper & Harper, *Chronicles*, 29.

⁶² J.T. Godfrey, *Notes on the Churches of Nottinghamshire: Hundred of Bingham* (1907), 127.

⁶³ See below Chapter 5, 218-19.

in a private house and then a barn before chapel buildings were acquired, the first in 1824 and the second in 1842.⁶⁴ However, Primitive Methodism never succeeded in gaining a foothold in Cropwell Bishop.

Cropwell Butler and Tithby

The parish of Tithby-cum-Cropwell Butler is located nine miles east of Nottingham and one mile north of Cropwell Bishop, similarly on the edge of the Vale of Belvoir. Extending over about 2,367 acres in 1851,⁶⁵ it is an irregular rectangular shape lying from north-west to south-east with the Fosse way bisecting it just over a mile parallel to the north-western boundary. The centre of the parish is three miles south-west of Bingham, although the northern boundary is close to the main road into the town. There is a small section of the Grantham canal, including the Fosse bridge, running across the corner of the parish near Cropwell Bishop.

There are two main settlements as well as a number of outlying farms: the larger village of Cropwell Butler, roughly in the centre of the parish and one mile from the Fosse and the smaller village of Tithby, one mile east. In addition, about a mile further east is Wiverton Hall which was an extra parochial liberty with a demesne of 1,000 acres of grazing and arable land belonging to the Chaworth and later the Musters families.⁶⁶ The soil is principally clay and the chief crops were wheat, barley, beans and roots in the nineteenth century.⁶⁷

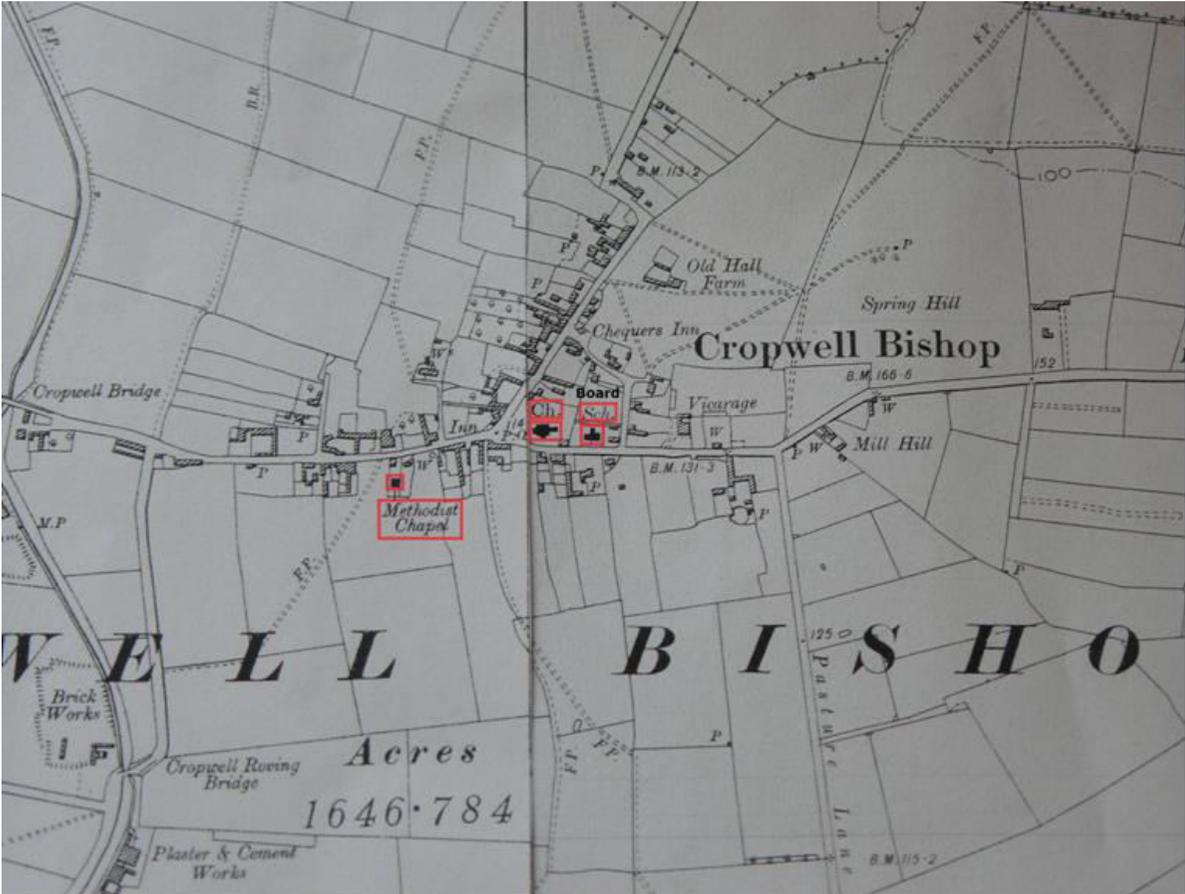
⁶⁴ See below, Chapter 4, 164-65.

⁶⁵ White 1853, 457.

⁶⁶ Kelly 1855, 130.

⁶⁷ Kelly 1876, 682.

Map 2.10 Cropwell Bishop, showing Church, Wesleyan Chapel and Board School⁶⁸



⁶⁸ O.S. 1901, Nottinghamshire, part of sheets XLIII SW & SE.

The thirteenth-century parish church of Holy Trinity is located in Tithby, which in 1790 consisted of 18 dwellings with some farm-hovels nearby.⁶⁹ In 1801 the population was 155, while in Cropwell Butler it was 362.⁷⁰ The population of the larger village rose steadily to a peak of 695 in 1851 and in 1864 it was described as a 'considerable village';⁷¹ after this numbers declined slowly through the second half century. However, the high point for Tithby was 1811, after which the population declined continuously to just 81 by 1881.⁷² Both villages were heavily dependent on agriculture and its linked activities as the main source of employment. During the mid-nineteenth century, the number of households with this as the primary occupation was over 64 per cent in Cropwell Butler and between 70 and 90 per cent in Tithby.⁷³ However, there was also some employment connected with the canal. There were locks near the Fosse bridge with an adjacent wharf and two cottages for the lock-keeper and foreman of the canal maintenance men, while the Hoe Hill brickyard was quite close.⁷⁴ Just as in Cropwell Bishop, the proximity to Nottingham meant many women, particularly the wives and daughters of agricultural labourers, were outworkers in the lace industry.⁷⁵

Tithby was owned entirely by the Chaworth family who were also significant landowners in Cropwell Butler, although there was a diversity of landownership and tradition of freeholders in the larger village.⁷⁶ The family were also patrons of the very poor living with unsatisfactory accommodation, often held in plurality by absentee clergy.⁷⁷ The location of the parish church in Tithby meant there was no place of worship in

⁶⁹ Thoroton, *Antiquities*, 200.

⁷⁰ V.C.H. *Nottinghamshire* II, 312.

⁷¹ White 1864, 474.

⁷² V.C.H. *Nottinghamshire* II, 312.

⁷³ T.N.A. HO 107/0854; /2139; RG9/2485.

⁷⁴ A. Harper, *Earlier Times Around Cropwell Butler* (1987), 65-66.

⁷⁵ T.N.A. HO 107/2139.

⁷⁶ See below Chapter 3, 130 and 132.

⁷⁷ See below Chapter 3, 132.

Cropwell Butler until the advent of the Methodists; however, in the mid-nineteenth century concern about this situation by the incumbent resulted in the opening of a chapel of ease.⁷⁸ Methodism (later Wesleyan) became established in Cropwell Butler in the 1770s, acquiring a building sometime in the early nineteenth century, while the Primitives arrived in the 1840s and rapidly built a chapel. In Tithby, a small Primitive Methodist Society, which joined the Independent Primitive group in the 1830s, existed from 1818 to at least 1851.⁷⁹

Bingham

The parish of Bingham is located just on the northern edge of the Vale of Belvoir, about ten miles east of Nottingham and eleven south-west of Newark. In the mid-nineteenth century it extended over 2,930 acres with the historic market town of Bingham roughly in the centre.⁸⁰ Its western boundary is the Fosse way, about a mile from the town, and the southern one is with the Cropwell Butler and Tithby. The main Nottingham to Grantham road runs through the parish from west to east. It was turnpiked in 1759 and in this period went directly through the town with the Chesterfield Arms (earlier the Royal Oak) serving as a coaching inn for both this route and the Fosse.⁸¹ By 1850, the Nottingham to Grantham railway had been opened with a station at Bingham.⁸²

⁷⁸ See below Chapter 5, 225-26.

⁷⁹ See below Chapter 3, 128-29 and Chapter 5, 232.

⁸⁰ White 1853, 422.

⁸¹ Henstock, 'Parish Divided', 90.

⁸² http://www.binghamheritage.org.uk/history_of_bingham/victorian/bingham_railway.php, accessed 30.4.2014.

Map 2.11 Cropwell Butler, showing Chapel of Ease, Methodist Chapels and School⁸³



⁸³ O.S. 1901, Nottinghamshire, part of sheets XLIII SW & SE.

Map 2.12 Tithby, showing Church⁸⁴



⁸⁴ O.S 1901, Nottinghamshire, part of sheet XLIII SE.

The parish was enclosed in the seventeenth century⁸⁵ and was part of the arable region of the Vale, although some was devoted to pasture for stock rearing.⁸⁶ The town served the local agricultural community with a weekly market and fairs four times a year and was also a minor administrative centre as head of the Hundred and deanery.⁸⁷ Petty sessions were held fortnightly at the Chesterfield Arms.⁸⁸ Its accepted status in 1790 was a 'market town but not of considerable magnitude; we may suppose it was once of more consequence'.⁸⁹ Compared with other market towns in Nottinghamshire, it remained comparatively undeveloped even in the early nineteenth century, overshadowed by Nottingham and Newark;⁹⁰ with a population of 1,082 and a population density of 0.37 in 1801,⁹¹ it fell into the lowest category under Clark's classification of small towns (up to 1,650 population).⁹² Nevertheless, from 1801 to 1851 the population increased by 90 per cent to a peak of 2,054⁹³ and in 1822 it was described as 'well paved and remarkably neat and clean'.⁹⁴ The chief occupations were typical market town craftsmen and tradesmen, although the structure gradually became more complex, so that by 1841 88 occupations were recorded.⁹⁵ Although it was on the edge of the Nottinghamshire hosiery district, there was also a substantial community of domestic stocking-knitters and by 1844 the town possessed 58 frames and 22 workshops.⁹⁶

⁸⁵ Thoroton, *Antiquities*, 277.

⁸⁶ Henstock, 'Parish Divided', 90.

⁸⁷ Pigot 1819, 539; Pigot 1822, 323.

⁸⁸ White 1832, 481.

⁸⁹ Thoroton, *Antiquities*, 277.

⁹⁰ C.A. Smith, *The Renaissance of the Nottinghamshire Market Town 1680-1840* (2007), 49.

⁹¹ V.C.H. *Nottinghamshire* II, 311; White 1853, 420.

⁹² P. Clark, 'Small Towns 1700-1840' in P. Clark, (ed.), *The Cambridge Urban History of Britain Vol.2 1540-1840* (2000), 734-40.

⁹³ V.C.H. *Nottinghamshire* II, 311.

⁹⁴ Pigot 1922, 323.

⁹⁵ Bailey 1784, 394; Pigot 1819, 539; Pigot 1822, 324; Smith, *Renaissance*, 67; T.N.A. HO 107/0853.

⁹⁶ *Royal Commission to inquire into Condition of Framework Knitters. Appendix to Report, Part II., Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire.* P.P. 1845 [641] XV, 10-11.

The majority of Bingham was owned by the absentee Earl of Chesterfield but there were also freeholders and families of prosperous farmers.⁹⁷ The Earl was patron of the wealthy living, which was further enhanced by the outstanding rectory built by the rector, John Walter, in the late eighteenth century and situated between the market place and the parish church of All Saints.⁹⁸ The appearance of the church interior was significantly changed in the 1840s under Robert Miles, the new incumbent influenced by the Oxford movement.⁹⁹ Methodism arrived in the town in the 1773, with meetings first in a preaching room and subsequently in one or possibly two different chapel buildings before land was purchased for a larger chapel in 1818. By then there was also a Primitive Society which, unusually, acquired a chapel building almost immediately.¹⁰⁰

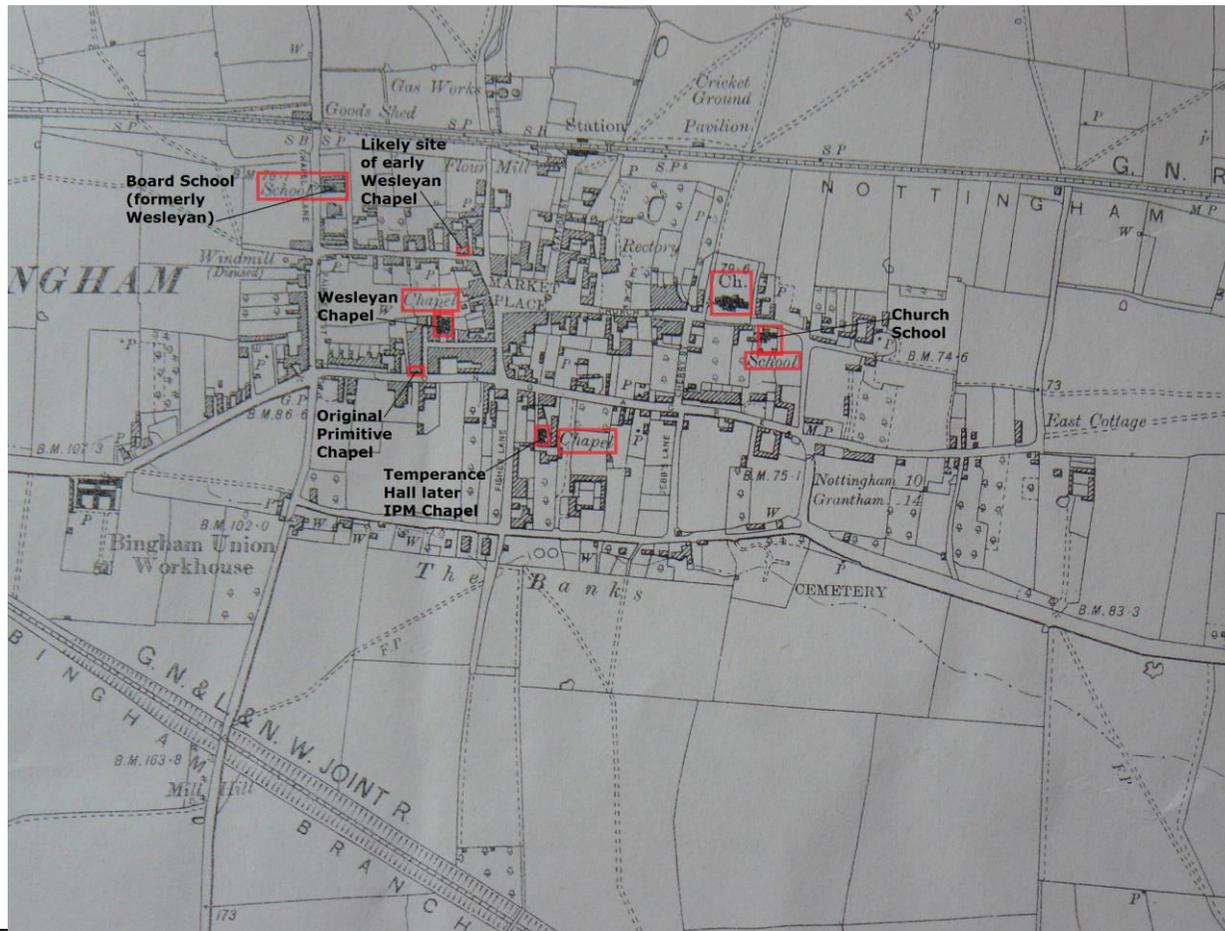
⁹⁷ See below Chapter 3, 138-39; also Henstock, 'Parish Divided', 90.

⁹⁸ Thoroton, *Antiquities*, 278.

⁹⁹ See below Chapter 5, 233-34.

¹⁰⁰ See below Chapter 3, 138.

Map 2.13 Bingham, showing Church, Chapels and Schools¹⁰¹



¹⁰¹ O.S. 1901, Nottinghamshire, part of sheet XLIII NE.

Conclusion

Although this was originally envisaged as a study embracing aspects of the whole area of south Nottinghamshire encompassing the Bingham and Rushcliffe Hundreds, with a more detailed focus on a selection (comprising one fifth) of the parishes, a change of direction occurred during the course of the investigation.¹⁰² Four parishes chosen because of the significantly high quality of their records were originally analysed as models. However, more was revealed by the analysis than had been anticipated, while there were some unexpected and potentially significant results. Since these results could not be tested in the other six parishes in the absence of similar records and they suggested the need for further detailed micro-analysis, the decision was taken to limit the study.

Inevitably this narrowing of the scope resulted in some reduction in variety. In addition, the exploration of denominational reciprocities in only four parishes was of more limited value. However, this was replaced by the emergence of the new focus regarding the nature of Methodist allegiance, as revealed by turnover in membership and decisions about choice of baptismal rite. This smaller number of parishes also facilitated the micro-level of analysis which had been suggested in the literature.

¹⁰² See above, 91-93.

Chapter Three

The Arrival of Methodism

Introduction

The review of the literature had confirmed the need for further work of micro-analysis to contribute to the understanding of local variations in religious geography. This chapter explores why Methodism took root and then became established in the four villages and small town. The same steps have been followed for each place sequentially; first, identifying the evidence regarding its origins and initial development; secondly, considering the nature of the different communities; thirdly, looking at the state of the parish and its church; fourthly, assessing as far as possible the likely level of support or opposition from individuals or groups. The particular questions from the literature relating to the arrival of Methodism are detailed below, as are methods adopted for analysis.

In answering the initial question of when and how Methodism became established, its origins were investigated using a variety of sources including visitation returns, circuit schedules, chapel deeds, newspaper reports and journals of leading Methodists. Since it began in two parishes before any of the later splits and in the other two before the split with the Primitives, the initial information related to the Wesleyans. The approach adopted for assessing the early development of the Societies was twofold; investigating trends in membership numbers and any progress in the acquisition of a chapel building.

The establishment, or attempted establishment, of Primitive Methodist Societies was included only when this occurred in the early nineteenth century, thus forming part of the initial impact of Methodism; of particular relevance was the missionary campaign in the Trent valley and Vale of Belvoir in 1817, following the Nottingham campaign of 1815. Those Primitive Societies arriving later in the century are considered in Chapter 5.

The overall question of why Methodism entered and then took root in these four parishes was approached by considering various arguments raised in the literature. The first related to the type of communities and in particular the key issue of whether successful dissent, in this case Methodism, was associated with complex landownership.¹ As well as actual ownership, the existence of absentee or resident landowners was also relevant regarding the exercise of power in different types of parish.² Although there was no ideal source or method for analysing landownership, land tax returns were available for the period when Methodism became established and it was considered that returns prior to about 1799, when redemption started to be utilised and amounts no longer listed, would provide an indication of major owners and occupiers.

In view of the difficulty encountered in reading some of the returns, it was decided to select one year from each of a series of five year bands, rather than attempt to use corresponding years for each individual place. Four returns were studied for each village from 1782-1799;³ the total tax payable and the proportion of this assessed against each proprietor or

¹ J. Obelkevich, *Religion and Rural Society: South Lindsey 1825-1875* (1976), 8; D.R. Mills, *Lord and Peasant in Nineteenth Century Britain* (1980), 117; K.D.M. Snell, & P.S. Ell, *Rival Jerusalems: the Geography of Victorian Religion* (2000), 371, 373, 375, 379; M.R. Watts, *The Dissenters: Vol.II The Expansion of Evangelical Nonconformity* (1995), 120.

² Snell & Ell, *Rival Jerusalems*, 374-5, 377, 383; J.D. Gay, *The Geography of Religion in England* (1971), 111; Obelkevich, *Religion*, 12; A.D. Gilbert, *Religion and Society in Industrial England: Church, Chapel and Social Change, 1740-1914* (1976), 104, 110.

³ N.A.O. C/QDE/Bingham/1780-1832; the references for Cropwell Bishop, Cropwell Butler, Flintham and Tithby are the same, substituting the appropriate name.

occupier were calculated, provided the latter was ten per cent or greater. The sums for the remaining proprietors (under ten per cent) were totalled and their overall percentage worked out. Using this method, it was possible to identify significant landholders during the last two decades of the eighteenth century which was when, or just before, Methodism became established in these parishes. A further question relating to the nature of the communities and arising primarily from Watts' later analysis of the whole of Nottinghamshire, was whether Methodism was more likely to flourish in places with larger populations, in particular medium-sized villages of between 400 and 1,000 inhabitants.⁴

It was widely suggested that Methodism succeeded where the parish church was non-existent, weak or negligent in fulfilling its parochial functions adequately.⁵ The first key issue appeared to be the value of the living, since the likely effect of a poor income was pluralism and non-residence.⁶ However, the details of the situation were also important, because non-resident incumbents might still care for their parish satisfactorily. The second point was whether the church building was suffering from neglect. Sources of information were not only the visitation returns and parish records but also contemporary and later church histories.

⁴ Watts, *Dissenters II*, 46; M.R. Watts, (ed.), *Religion in Victorian Nottinghamshire: the Religious Census of 1851* (1988), xix; Obelkevich, *Religion*, 9; D.M. Thompson, 'The Churches and Society in Nineteenth-Century England: a Rural Perspective', in G.J. Cuming & D. Baker (eds.), *Studies in Church History, 8: Popular belief and practice* (1972), 269.

⁵ Gilbert, *Religion and Society*, 94; B.J. Biggs, 'Methodism in a Rural Society: North Nottinghamshire 1740-1851 (University of Nottingham Ph.D., 1975), 209; R. Currie, 'A Micro-Theory of Methodist Growth', *Proceedings of the Wesley Historical Society*, 36:3 (1967), 69; L. Gray, 'Efficient Members': the Early Years of Methodism in Hunsonby and Winskill, 1821-1871, *Transactions of the Cumberland and Westmorland Antiquarian and Archaeological Society*, 12 (2012), 235.

⁶ J. Walsh & S. Taylor, 'Introduction: the Church and Anglicanism in the 'Long' Eighteenth Century', in J. Walsh, C. Haydon & S. Taylor (eds.), *The Church of England c.1689-c.1833: From Toleration to Tractarianism* (1993), 6-12.

The final question regarding the arrival of Methodism was the extent to which there was support from leading figures in the community⁷ and whether opposition from leading landowners or clergy hindered its establishment.⁸ The latter had clearly occurred in the local area, since it was reported in 1844 that Wesleyans in the Bingham circuit had erected a wooden chapel on wheels for a group of small villages or hamlets 'where no site can be obtained, the land being the property of noblemen or other landed proprietors'.⁹ As there was not necessarily any specific primary evidence concerning opposition or support in these parishes, a procedure was devised to identify leading resident villagers or townspeople in each community to compare with lists of early Methodist Society members. Using land tax returns and additional sources as available, key individuals were identified as proprietors occupying their own land, occupiers also recorded as performing some administrative function within the parish and others performing an administrative function on three or more occasions. The rationale was that these groups would have had a stake in the nature of the village community; those more likely to have been absentee landholders and with small tenant holdings were excluded. Any connection between leading individuals and Methodists, either directly or via family links, provided a comparable gauge of support in each community.

Flintham

Archbishop Drummond's 1764 visitation return recorded that, from the 80 families in Flintham, there were neither Dissenters nor meeting houses and

⁷ A.C. Woodcock, 'Union in Saving Souls: the Impact of Methodism on Cropwell Butler, Nottinghamshire, 1770 – 1870' (University of Nottingham M.A., 2005), 45-46.

⁸ R.W. Ambler, *Churches, Chapels and the Parish Communities of Lincolnshire 1660-1900* (2000), 141; Obelkevich, *Religion*, 21; Watts, *Dissenters II*, 117; Watts, *Religion*, xviii.

⁹ *Nottingham Review* 5 July 1844.

none unbaptised or unconfirmed.¹⁰ In 1802, the Newark circuit records first mentioned the Methodist Society at Flintham.¹¹ Newark had separated in 1793 from the Nottingham circuit¹² and initially comprised 15 Societies extending from Newark itself to Grantham.¹³ By the time Flintham was included, there were 22 other Societies indicating that the previous ten years had been a period of Methodist expansion in the area.¹⁴

The initial membership at Flintham was 14, and although the numbers did not exceed 20 until 1808, the new Society rapidly secured its position by acquiring land and erecting a chapel.¹⁵ Land was purchased for ten shillings in 1805 from John William Whyman, a tanner of Flintham, by 13 trustees who were 'desirous at their own expense of building and erecting at Flintham a place of religious worship for the use of the society of the people called Methodists'.¹⁶ None of the trustees were from Flintham, suggesting that leading Methodists in the wider area were keen to support and encourage the new Society.¹⁷ A plan of 1813 showed weekly Sunday services at 2pm and 6pm which indicates sufficient support for these to be viable.¹⁸

In 1790, Throsby identified the major landowners in Flintham as Thomas Thoroton and Tippet (Richard Tibbets) of London and the land tax returns of 1794 support this.¹⁹ Table 3.1²⁰ shows Thoroton's percentage share of

¹⁰ H. Fisher (ed.), *Church Life in Georgian Nottinghamshire: Archbishop Drummond's Parish Visitation Returns 1764*, Thoroton Society Record Series Vol.46, (2012), 62-63.

¹¹ N.A.O. NC/MR/5/30/1.

¹² R.C. Swift, *Lively People: Methodism in Nottingham 1740-1979* (1979), 26.

¹³ N.A.O. NC/MR/5/30/1.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁵ *Ibid.*; N.A.O. NC/MR/8/293. The document providing details of the purchase of the land comprises notes made in the late twentieth century about Wesleyan Methodism in Flintham. The author had clearly studied the original deeds, which are no longer available.

¹⁶ N.A.O. NC/MR/8/293.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁸ N.A.O. NC/MR/5/33/1.

¹⁹ R. Thoroton, *The Antiquities of Nottinghamshire* ed. and enlarged by J. Throsby Vol.I (1790), 257; N.A.O. C/QDE/Flintham/1794.

²⁰ See above for method used, 110-11 and below for Table, 115.

the tax was 31.5 per cent and Tibbets' 21.8 per cent, while out of 27 proprietors, 24 paid less than ten per cent of the assessment.²¹ The third smaller, but still significant, landholder was Trinity College, Cambridge, with a levy of 13.8 per cent.²² By 1799, the situation had changed to some extent. Thomas Thoroton had purchased Flintham House in 1789 and been succeeded by his son, Colonel Thomas Thoroton, who from 1798-1800, demolished the old house, built a new Georgian mansion and landscaped the park.²³ He also moved to Flintham House (now Hall) as the main family residence, thereby ceasing to be an absentee landowner.²⁴ As far as his tax valuation was concerned, this shows a reduction to 21.5 per cent in the 1799 return in accordance with a shift towards more diverse ownership, confirmed by a continuing increase in proprietors who were also occupiers.²⁵

These changes indicate that while Flintham was moving towards slightly more diverse ownership, it was also significantly falling under the influence of a dominant locally based proprietor, as opposed to all the major proprietors being absentees. This became important when the proprietor in question changed from one without strong views about religious groups to one strongly opposed to at least one branch of Methodism.

In 1790, Throsby remarked that the parish church of Flintham dedicated to St. Augustine was 'decently pewed' and that the value of the living was

²¹ N.A.O. C/QDE/Flintham/1794.

²² *Ibid.*

²³ www.nottingham.ac.uk/manuscriptsandspecialcollections/collectionsindepth/family/thoroton/hildyard/biographies/biographies.aspx, accessed 14.1.2011.

²⁴ *Ibid.*

²⁵ N.A.O. C/QDE/Flintham/1794.

Table 3.1

Flintham Land Tax Division prior to Redemption

Date	L1 %	O1 %	L2 %	O2 %	L3 %	Total % tax major landowners	Total % tax those paying under 10%	Proprietors (total)	Proprietors also Occupiers	Proprietors also Occupiers over 10%
1782	31.7	19	25.5		13.3	70.5	29.5	26	9	0
1788	31.9	19	22.7		13.4	68	32	24	8	0
1794	31.5	18.9	21.8		13.8	67.1	32.9	27	13	0
1799	21.5		26.9	14.7	15.1	63.5	36.5	26	18	1

Key:

L1 (Landowner 1) L.D. Fytche (1782; 1788)/Thomas Thoroton (1794; 1799)

L2 (Landowner 2) Rev. Burselm (1782; 1788)/Richard Tibbits (1794; 1799)

L3 (Landowner 3) Trinity College, Cambridge

O1 (Occupier 1) Charles Neale

O2 (Occupier 2) William Curtis

Source: N.A.O. C/QDE/Flintham/1782-1799

£32.²⁶ This put it well below the clerical poverty line, confirmed by its having received several augmentations from Queen Anne's Bounty.²⁷

During the first quarter of the nineteenth century, the fabric of the church apparently decayed, such that Colonel Hildyard 'rebuilt the whole of the church except the chancel, in 1827-8, at the cost of £1,100' at the same time as he was rebuilding the adjoining Flintham Hall.²⁸ From 1785 to 1804 the vicar was John Davies, who was succeeded by Thomas Bowman.²⁹ In addition, Davies became perpetual curate of neighbouring Kneeton in 1786, although he also had the services of an assistant curate.³⁰ It was also likely that Flintham shared alternating services with Kneeton, assuming there had been no change from the situation detailed 20 years earlier.³¹ At that earlier point the vicar resided in the parish and there is no evidence that Davies or Bowman behaved differently. It therefore appears that the poor living did not lead to absentee clergy.

Two of the leading landowners in Flintham when Methodism first arrived were absentees but the attitude of Thomas Thoroton, who had moved into Flintham Hall about 1800, was potentially significant. Inevitably, in the role of local squire, the Thoroton/Hildyard family was closely involved with the parish church but there is no evidence that Thomas Thoroton, who died in 1813, adopted any particular stance regarding the advent of Methodism in 1802 and the erection of the chapel in 1805. On the other hand his son

²⁶ Thoroton, *Antiquities*, 257.

²⁷ White 1832, 494.

²⁸ *Ibid*, 493-94.

²⁹ J.T. Godfrey, *Notes on the Churches of Nottinghamshire: Hundred of Bingham* (1907), 180.

³⁰ *Ibid*, 281; Thoroton, *Antiquities*, 303;

<http://www.theclergydatabase.org.uk/jsp/persons/CreatePersonFrames.jsp?PersonID=123978>
accessed 10.3.2011;

<http://www.theclergydatabase.org.uk/jsp/persons/CreatePersonFrames.jsp?PersonID=54604>,
accessed 10.3.2011.

³¹ Thoroton, *Antiquities*, 303; Fisher, *Drummond's Visitation*, 63.

Thomas, who took the surname of Hildyard in 1815,³² was a fierce opponent of the evangelistic activities of the Primitive Methodists in the area. In 1817 he led a group of local gentry in an unsuccessful attempt to disperse a camp meeting at nearby Car Colston, threatening at one point to read the Riot Act.³³ There is no evidence of any attempt to establish a Primitive Methodist Society in Flintham at this point, although the group was engaged in extensive local missionary activity³⁴ and it seems reasonable to suggest that Hildyard's attitude was a significant factor in this.

The leading resident villagers are shown in Table 3.2 below.³⁵ When the 15 families identified are set against the details of the Wesleyan Society members for the same period, it reveals that two individuals, Paul Fryer and William Curtis, were members at some point and that there were probable family links with the Methodists for John Cliff and John Green.³⁶ This indicates a level of support for the newly established Society amongst at least a proportion of the group of leading villagers.

Cropwell Bishop

In both 1743 and 1764, the visitation returns stated that there were no Dissenters or meeting houses in Cropwell Bishop.³⁷ By the 1790s the Methodist Society in neighbouring Cropwell Butler was well established and the Newark circuit record for 1800 listed John Mabbott as a member.³⁸ He

³² www.nottingham.ac.uk/manuscriptsandspecialcollections/collectionsindepth/family/thoroton/hildyard/biographies/biographies.aspx, accessed 14.1.2011.

³³ H.B. Kendall, *The Origin and History of the Primitive Methodist Church*, 2 Vols. (1906), 25.

³⁴ *Ibid.*

³⁵ See above for method used, 112.

³⁶ N.A.O. NC/MR/5/30/1.

³⁷ S.L. Ollard & P.C. Walker (eds.), *Archbishop Herring's Visitation Returns 1743, Vol.IV*, Yorkshire Archaeological Society Record Series Vol.77 (1930), 40; Fisher, *Drummond's Visitation*, 38-39.

³⁸ N.A.O. NC/MR/5/30/1.

Table 3.2

Flintham's Leading Resident Villagers 1794-1814

First Name	Surname	1794	1796	1799	1801	1803	1804	1808	1809	1811	1812	1814
John	Armstrong					C			O			O
John	Bettinson	P/O	C	P/O			P/O	P/O?	P/O			P/O
Joseph	Bettinson	A		A			A					
John	Cliff	O	A	O;C			P/O;A	O	P/O			P/O
William	Curtis	O	A	O			O		O			
Mrs	Dawson								P/O			P/O
Thomas	Fernicough							P/O?	C			
Francis	Fryer	O					P/O	P/O?	P/O			P/O;C
Mrs	Fryer	P/O		P/O								
Paul	Fryer	P		P/O			P/O;C	P/O?	P/O			
John	Green	P/O		P/O			P/O	P/O?	P/O	C		P/O
Richard	Hall	P/O;C						P/O?				
Thomas	Horner			P			P	P/O?	P		R	P
John	Jebb	O		O;A	C		O	O	O			
Richard	Marston	P/O		O			O		O			O
Charles	Neale	O;C;A	C	O			O	O				O
Simon	Smith	P/O		P/O			P/O	P/O?	P/O			
Francis	Taylor	O		O			O		O			O;R

Key: (Land Tax Returns dates in bold) P Proprietor in Land Tax Returns (except 1808 taken from map of parish); O Occupier in Land Tax Returns (except 1808 taken from map of parish); P/O Proprietor occupying own land; C Churchwarden; A Examining and allowing Churchwardens' accounts; R Overseer

Sources: N.A.O. C/QDE/Flintham/1794-1814; FT/2L; PR 19566; 19568

was amongst those who transferred to the Cropwell Bishop Society when it was first listed separately in 1805 and in that and the previous year was a class leader.³⁹

However, services had clearly begun in the village by 1802 when the 'dwelling house now in the occupation of Robert Hopewell, farmer, situate in the Parish of Cropwell Bishop' was registered as a place of worship for 'Protestant Dissenters'.⁴⁰ In addition, there is a later record referring to a visit in 1802 by John Hickling, as being that of the first Methodist preacher to visit Cropwell Bishop.⁴¹

John Mabbott's name was not recorded beyond 1805 but Robert Hopewell became a member in 1803 and was then continuously listed until the 1830s, including being a class leader from 1807-10.⁴² The membership lists showed the Hopewells as a family committed to the emerging Society throughout the whole early period⁴³ and in 1817 'a certain Barn occupied by George Hopewell situate in Cropwell Bishop...was Registered...as a place of Public Worship of Almighty God for Protestant Dissenters...'.⁴⁴

Although there is no record of the membership numbers in 1817, the 15 members in 1815 were less than the 17 in 1805⁴⁵ and a surviving plan for 1813-14 showed only one weekly Sunday service at 10am at Cropwell.⁴⁶ It is not possible to be certain whether this referred to Cropwell Bishop or Cropwell Butler or even varying between the two villages. However, it indicates insufficient support for two services at either place, although the

³⁹ *Ibid.*

⁴⁰ B.M.C. Deeds for Methodist Chapel, Cropwell Bishop, Notts. These contain a copy. It has not proved possible to trace the original certificate.

⁴¹ DD/1702/3/51/14. Extract from letter to Mr. Blatherwick by Mr. G. Hopewell of Granby, 24 January 1938.

⁴² N.A.O. NC/MR/5/30/1-2.

⁴³ *Ibid.*

⁴⁴ N.A.O. NC/MR/8/295.

⁴⁵ N.A.O. NC/MR/5/30/2.

⁴⁶ N.A.O. NC/MR/5/33/1.

inclusion of a sacrament and love feast also suggests a committed membership. In addition, the numbers attending services would have been higher than the recorded membership, so it likely that Robert Hopewell's house had become too small. By 1820 there were 24 members⁴⁷ which would support the suggestion that larger premises assisted expansion. The first chapel was built in 1824⁴⁸ and according to one source was on George Hopewell's land near his house.⁴⁹

Although Primitive Methodism never took root in Cropwell Bishop, the village was included in the 1817 missionary activity.⁵⁰ On one occasion the parish clergyman ordered the constable to put Thomas Jackson in the stocks while he was preaching at Cropwell Bishop but he was detained in custody overnight because the stocks were broken.⁵¹ According to William Clowes' *Journal*, he also visited Great Croppel (an earlier name for Cropwell Bishop) in 1817 'and, according to report, good was done'.⁵² Since this was when the Wesleyans were acquiring a bigger meeting place, there may have been less scope for the Primitives to become established.

In 1801 almost all Cropwell Bishop belonged to the two prebendaries of Oxtun in Southwell Collegiate Church, who let the land on renewable leases.⁵³ However, in 1677 Thoroton also recorded 'three or four not very considerable freeholders',⁵⁴ while the Poll Book of 1722 noted eleven resident freeholders⁵⁵ and by 1790 Throsby mentioned 'several reputable

⁴⁷ N.A.O. NC/MR/5/30/2.

⁴⁸ White 1832, 492. No deeds have survived for these premises.

⁴⁹ A. Harper & E. Harper, *Chronicles of Cropwell Bishop* (1988), 13.

⁵⁰ Kendall, *Origin and History*, 225-26.

⁵¹ *Ibid*, 239.

⁵² W. Clowes, *The Journals of William Clowes a Primitive Methodist Preacher* (1844), 122

⁵³ White 1832, 491; Thoroton, *Antiquities*, 189.

⁵⁴ Thoroton, *Antiquities*, 189.

⁵⁵ J.D. Chambers, *Nottinghamshire in the Eighteenth Century: a Study of Life and Labour under the Squirearchy* (1966), 169.

freeholders' in the village of about 60 dwellings.⁵⁶ This is confirmed by evidence from the suit rolls for 1780-98, listing between eight and twelve freeholders.⁵⁷ Nevertheless the major lessees of the prebendaries were clearly significant landholders in the community; Table 3.3 below shows two or three major figures but, more significantly, even their share of the total land tax assessment never exceeded 60 per cent.⁵⁸ Madam Le Mercier was an absentee but William German was a substantial farmer in Cropwell Bishop and when he died in 1791, his estate was passed to a relative by marriage, William Marshall; Joshua Mann also became connected with the family by a later marriage and although he had been a resident of nearby Hickling, became part of the village community.⁵⁹ The identity of John Smith, the other major landowner, is uncertain but he was possibly part of the Smith family who were bakers and millers in the village at that time.⁶⁰ Under the enclosure award of 1804, 27.8 per cent of the allocation was to Madam Le Mercier and 11.1 per cent to William Marshall the elder son of the individual referred to above and still a minor.⁶¹ The remaining 61.1 per cent was allocated to 27 other individuals, with each parcel being less than ten per cent of the total.⁶²

Cropwell Bishop was clearly a village with complex landownership both before and after enclosure. The actual owners of the majority of the land were absentees, as was one of the major lessees, while the existence of freeholders was noted in a variety of sources. While not an open village under the traditional open-closed model, its features were still clearly such as to facilitate the establishment of Methodism.

⁵⁶ Thoroton, *Antiquities*, 190.

⁵⁷ N.A.O. DD 535/111/2; 119/2.

⁵⁸ See above for method used, 110-11.

⁵⁹ Harper & Harper, *Chronicles*, 37-39.

⁶⁰ *Ibid*, 49.

⁶¹ *Ibid*, 29.

⁶² *Ibid*.

Table 3.3

Cropwell Bishop Land Tax Division prior to Redemption

Date	L1 %	L2 %	Total % tax major landowners	Total % tax those paying under 10%	Proprietors (total)	Proprietors also Occupiers	Proprietors also Occupiers over 10%
1785	35.8		35.8	64.2	18	No data	No data
1790	41		41	59	19	No Data	No data
1795	45.7	12.4	58.1	41.9	22	9	2
1800	40.7	12.4	53.1	46.9	21	10	2

Key:

L1 (Landowner 1) William German (1785; 1790)/Madam Le Mercier and William Marshall* (1795)

Madam Le Mercier and Joshua Mann* (1800)

L2 (Landowner 2) William Marshall and John Smith* (1795; 1800)

*The data records one assessment amount for two entries. Therefore the proportion for each individual cannot be specified.

Source: N.A.O. QDE/Cropwell Bishop /1785-1800

A number of sources indicate that the Cropwell Bishop parish was a poor living held in plurality as regards both the vicar and his curate. Thoroton in 1677 stated that the 'provision for the Vicar was so small' and by 1790 Throsby valued the living at £40 per annum.⁶³ In 1743, the vicar remarked that he resided at his other living three miles away, 'the Vicarage House here being small and inconvenient' and that the 'Smallness of the Income does not enable me to keep a resident Curate, profits not exceeding £45'.⁶⁴ By 1764 the absentee vicar was employing a curate for £1 per year plus surplice fees but even the curate resided in the neighbouring village of Colston Bassett, although there was a weekly Sunday service in Cropwell Bishop.⁶⁵ When Methodism arrived, the parish was served by a non-resident vicar who lived over 20 miles away, with a non-resident curate who was also the vicar of Great Dalby in Leicestershire and held three other curacies.⁶⁶

There is no evidence regarding the state of the thirteenth-century parish church of St. Giles at the turn of the century, apart from an indication that there had been some repairs to the roof in 1785.⁶⁷ However, in 1824, Stretton wrote:

The whole church is otherwise of the very worst description and has nothing to recommend it but cleanliness...There is a loft or gallery at west end for an organ, never used, and seats for the singers not made use of...the floor, like [that of] the church, is of broken stones, and very ill paved.⁶⁸

⁶³ Thoroton, *Antiquities*, 189-90.

⁶⁴ Ollard & Walker, *Herring's Visitation*, 40.

⁶⁵ Fisher, *Drummond's Visitation*, 39.

⁶⁶ Godfrey, *Notes*, 127.

⁶⁷ *Ibid*, 132.

⁶⁸ Quoted in Godfrey, *Notes*, 130.

The building was clearly in need of some attention, which could well have been the case 20 years earlier. Combining this with continuous absentee clergy inevitably provided a potential opening for Methodism.

When Methodism can first be identified in Cropwell Bishop, there were four major landowners. Of these, Madam Le Mercier was an absentee and William Marshall a minor.⁶⁹ Joshua Mann's wife was part of the Mabbott family,⁷⁰ from which came four original Methodist Society members, including John Mabbott,⁷¹ although there is no indication Mann had any connection with the Society. However, it is reasonable to suggest he was not a source of opposition. There is no evidence regarding the attitude of John Smith, the other major landowner.

The landowners and other leading villagers in Cropwell Bishop are shown in Table 3.4 below.⁷² When the group of 21 families (counting John and Richard Smith separately because of the frequency of the surname) are set against the Methodist Society membership records, it reveals that Robert Hopewell, whose key role has already been discussed, was one of the leading villagers and also that there were probable family links for Robert Kirkman, William Mabbott and the younger William Marshall.⁷³ It seems clear, therefore, that there was positive support amongst the village community. The opposition to the Primitive Methodist preacher in 1817 was reported as coming from the parish clergyman and did not refer to involvement of the local landowners, although there may have been tacit agreement. However, by that point the Wesleyans were firmly established.

⁶⁹ Harper & Harper, *Chronicles*, 53; 38-9.

⁷⁰ *Ibid*, 38-9.

⁷¹ N.A.O. NC/MR/5/30/1.

⁷² See above for method used, 112.

⁷³ N.A.O. NC/MR/5/30/1.

Table 3.4

Cropwell Bishop's Leading Resident Villagers 1795-1818

First Name	Surname	1795	1796	1800	1802	1806	1810	1812	1816	1818
John	Abbott	O							V	
Samuel	Alcock			J;O		O		J;O		O
William	Brett	P/O		P/O		P/O		P/O		P/O
John	Briggs		L	J;O		O		O		
William	Briggs						J	J	J;C	O;L;R
George	Brownhill	P/O		J;P/O	P	P/O		J;P/O	J;V	P/O
John	Hall	F;O	F	J;O						
William	Hall			P	P	P/O	J	J;P/O		
Robert	Hopewell	P		P	P	P/O	J	P/O	J	P/O
Benjamin	Howard			O		P/O		P/O	J;V	P/O
Robert	Kirkman	P/O		P/O		P/O		O	V	
Richard	Lowe			J;O		O	J	O		
William	Mabbott			P	P	P	J	J;P		P/O
Joshua	Mann			J;P/O	P	P/O		P/O		P/O
Joshua	Mann jnr.				P			P/O		P/O
William	Marshall				P			P		P/O
Alice	Parker	P/O		P/O	P	P/O				
Ann	Parker	P/O		P/O	P					P/O

Thomas	Parker					P	J	P/O		P/O
William	Parker					P/O	J	P/O		O
John	Pilkington	F;P/O	F	J;P/O	P				V	O
Mary	Pilkington							P/O		P/O
William	Porter			J			J	J;O	J	
William	Shaw	F	F	P/O	P	P/O		P/O		P/O
Robert	Shelton	O		J;O		O				
John	Smith	F;P/O	F	J;P/O	P	P/O	J	P/O	J;V	P/O
Richard	Smith	F;P/O	F	P/O	P	P/O	J	P/O		P/O
Robert	White						J	J	J	P/O
Samuel	White	P		J;P	O	P/O		P/O		

Key: (Land Tax Return dates in bold)

P Proprietor in Land Tax Returns; O Occupier in Land Tax Returns; P/O Proprietor occupying own land; F Freeholder;
J Member of Manor Court Jury; C Churchwarden; R Overseer; V Member of Vestry Meeting; L Constable

Sources: N.A.O./QDE/Cropwell Bishop /1795-1818; DD 535/119/2; DDSP 8/10/21-44; PR 3886; 4635

Cropwell Butler and Tithby

In his 1764 visitation return, the curate for Tithby-cum-Cropwell Butler, Thomas Hebblethwaite, stated there were 65 families of which three were Dissenters 'of what sort I know not', although there were no licensed or other meeting houses.⁷⁴ Nine years later, Thomas Innocent applied to register his house as a dissenting meeting house.⁷⁵ Since John Wesley had preached at nearby Bingham in 1770,⁷⁶ this may have contributed to the formation of the original village Society. Although no records have survived relating to this early group, in 1794 Cropwell Butler was listed amongst the 15 Societies in the original Newark circuit.⁷⁷ It was one of the smaller, with twelve members forming one class under the leadership of John Newton.⁷⁸ No mention was made of Thomas Innocent or Ann Spencer, the other individual referred to in the registration application.⁷⁹ The class grew rapidly, split into two in 1798 and for a short period a third class was formed before members of the neighbouring village of Cropwell Bishop separated to form their own Society.⁸⁰ The fluctuations in membership numbers in the early years of the nineteenth century were partly accounted for by the fact that the figures sometimes included Methodists from Cropwell Bishop.⁸¹

It is difficult to be certain when Cropwell Butler Methodists first acquired a separate building. Myles, quoted in Harwood,⁸² listed the chapel as being built in 1789 and certainly in existence by 1813 but his information cannot

⁷⁴ Fisher, *Drummond's Visitation*, 175.

⁷⁵ A. Harper, *Earlier Times Around Cropwell Butler* (1987), 57. The application referred to by Harper has not been traced.

⁷⁶ Swift, *Lively People*, 11.

⁷⁷ N.A.O. NC/MR/5/30/1.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*

⁷⁹ Harper, *Earlier Times*, 57.

⁸⁰ N.A.O. NC/MR/5/30/1; R.C. Swift, *Methodism in Cropwell Bishop* (1952), 3.

⁸¹ N.A.O. NC/MR/5/30/1-2.

⁸² G.H. Harwood, *History of Wesleyan Methodism in Nottingham and its Vicinity* (1872), 130.

be relied upon.⁸³ The 1851 religious census return indicated that it was built before 1800, so that was clearly the view of the members at that time.⁸⁴ In addition, an entry for 1817 in William Clowes' *Journal* stated:

At Little Croppel, I preached in the Methodist [Wesleyan] Chapel, at the request of the people and satisfaction was given; indeed, in those parts the spirit of bigotry appeared to be annihilated; union in saving souls was the order of the day; the Methodist class leader led our class as well as his own.⁸⁵

Little Croppel was the earlier name for Cropwell Butler. Clowes' entry strongly suggests the use of a particular building, rather than meeting in someone's house. Yet even this reference must be regarded with some caution, since his *Journal*, published in 1844, was written many years after the events related.⁸⁶ However, in 1825, trustees purchased land 'upon which a Chapel was [that is already] built with moneys collected by the Wesley Methodist Society in and around Cropwell Butler', which they had previously leased 'for a long term'.⁸⁷ The vendor was Miss Ann Parr, one of the earliest members in 1794,⁸⁸ so it seems reasonable to date the building no later than the early nineteenth century. A further purchase from Ann Parr of surrounding land was made in 1831, suggesting the seizing of an opportunity and a perceived need to expand chapel property.⁸⁹

There were no other branches of Methodism in the village before 1839, apart from the suggestion of a Primitive Methodist class from the comments of William Clowes quoted above. Yet the much smaller village of Tithby, where the parish church was located, was one of the successes

⁸³ Biggs, 'Methodism', 282; L.F. Church, *The Early Methodist People* (1948), 85.

⁸⁴ T.N.A. HO 129/443.

⁸⁵ Clowes, *Journals*, 122.

⁸⁶ W. Parkes, 'The Original Methodists, Primitive Methodist Reformers', *Proceedings of the Wesley Historical Society*, 35 (Sep. 1965), 60.

⁸⁷ B.M.C. Deeds for Methodist Chapel, Cropwell Butler, Notts., Bargain & Sale 7 October 1825.

⁸⁸ *Ibid*; N.A.O. NC/MR/5/30/1.

⁸⁹ B.M.C. Deeds, Cropwell Butler, Release of a Piece of Ground 26 July 1831.

for the Primitive Methodists in their missionary campaigns and was added to preaching places between 1817 and 1818.⁹⁰ Nevertheless, a description of a visit there in 1817 by the preacher John Harrison indicates this was not without difficulty:

...I had a large congregation, but they looked just like what they were, viz., stiff-necked professors, who had the form of religion, but were without the power;...I could not move these formal professors – and to all appearance God did not – so I left them.⁹¹

In view of this reception and the fact that many preaching places in the Nottingham Primitive Methodist circuit started, collapsed and restarted again with amazing rapidity, as shown by entries in the circuit local preachers' minutes and quarterly board,⁹² it is surprising that the Primitive Methodist presence was maintained consistently in Tithby from 1818. It is mentioned in the early 1830s and on a surviving plan for 1831⁹³ but, by 1838 at the latest, had dropped out of the circuit records.⁹⁴ However, a group of Societies in and around Bingham in the early 1830s separated to form an Independent Primitive Methodist circuit⁹⁵ and the Tithby Society became part of this group.⁹⁶ The 1851 religious census return stated that the meeting place had been approved as a place of worship since 1820 but was not a separate building, nor used exclusively for worship,⁹⁷ and no evidence has survived regarding the other usage of the building.

Although they form a single parish, Cropwell Butler and Tithby were always distinct secular communities. In relation to the Manor of Cropwell, Thoroton in 1677 noted the sale of farms to 'divers freeholders' and listed

⁹⁰ Kendall, *Origin and History*, 225.

⁹¹ *Ibid*, 231.

⁹² N.A.O. NC/MR/15/19.

⁹³ *Ibid*.

⁹⁴ *Ibid*.

⁹⁵ See below Chapter 5, 232-33

⁹⁶ N.A.O. NC/MR/15/19; Swift, *Lively People*, 74.

⁹⁷ T.N.A. HO 129/443.

five by name, in addition to the substantial holdings of Lord Chaworth.⁹⁸ Tithby, on the other hand, was described as a small lordship owned by Mr Chaworth,⁹⁹ comprising 583 acres and apparently enclosed before 1700.¹⁰⁰ The land tax returns confirm Tithby as a closed village, consistently listing successive members of the Chaworth family as the sole proprietor, with a few unnamed occupiers or tenants.¹⁰¹

On the other hand, Cropwell Butler's freeholders had risen by the 1722 election to eight resident and three non-resident¹⁰² and this trend of further division of ownership continued during the eighteenth century, with the 1790 suit rolls listing 27 freeholders.¹⁰³ In 1781, the remaining 873 acres were enclosed, making a total award, including land previously enclosed, of just over 2,789 acres.¹⁰⁴ The petition was unopposed and George Chaworth became significantly the biggest landowner with 631 acres.¹⁰⁵ Table 3.5 below¹⁰⁶ shows his family and the Pierreponts as the two major landowners. Both were absentees but each had an occupier with a substantial holding and it was these individuals, Joseph and later William Marriott and John Parr, who were significant figures in the village community. However, the Table also indicates that the number of both separate proprietors and proprietors occupying their land increased in the last quarter of the eighteenth century. In addition, a substantial part of the Chaworth estate in Cropwell Butler was put up for auction in 41 lots in

⁹⁸ Thoroton, *Antiquities*, 194.

⁹⁹ *Ibid*, 200.

¹⁰⁰ Chambers, *Nottinghamshire*, 166-8.

¹⁰¹ N.A.O. C/QDE/Tithby/1780-1819.

¹⁰² Chambers, *Nottinghamshire*, 169.

¹⁰³ N.A.O. DD/535/119/2.

¹⁰⁴ W.E. Tate, *Parliamentary Land Enclosures in the County of Nottingham during the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries (1743-1868)* Thoroton Society Record Series Vol.5 (Nottingham, 1935), 70.

¹⁰⁵ Harper, *Earlier Times*, 19; N.A.O. EA 45/2.

¹⁰⁶ See above for method used, 110-11.

Table 3.5

Cropwell Butler Land Tax Division prior to Redemption

Date	L1 %	O1 %	L2 %	O2 %	Total % tax major landowners	Total % tax those paying under 10%	Proprietors (total)	Proprietors also Occupiers	Proprietors also Occupiers over 10%
1780	46.1	24.5	25.2	25.2	71.3	28.7	20	11	0
1788	40.2	24.1	19.6	19.6	59.8	40.2	32	21	0
1794	40.4	24.2	23.2	23.2	63.6	36.4	26	18	0
1799	40.4	24.2	23.2	23.2	63.6	36.4	28	20	0

Key:

L1 (Landowner 1) William Chaworth (1780)/George Chaworth (1788)/Miss Chaworth (1794; 1799)

L2 (Landowner 2) Duke of Kingston (1780)/Duchess of Kingston (1788)/Charles Pierrepont, later Lord Newark (1794; 1799)

O1 (Occupier 1) Joseph Marriott (1780; 1788; 1794)/William Marriott (1799)

O2 (Occupier 2) John Parr

Source: N.A.O. QDE/Cropwell Butler /1780-1799

1812.¹⁰⁷ Since this was not a good time for selling land because of the attractiveness of short-term investment in government bonds due to the war, the Chaworths must have been experiencing some financial difficulty. It seems clear from these various sources that Cropwell Butler was a village with fragmented landownership, a tradition of freeholders and where problems were leading the major (absentee) landlord to undertake a reduction of his holdings in the village.

The parish of Tithby-cum-Cropwell Butler was unique in this study in that the parish church was located in Tithby, the smaller village, and there was no place of worship in Cropwell Butler before the arrival of the Methodists. The church building was small and, according to a visitor in 1812, in a bad condition.¹⁰⁸ In addition, he noted that 'a singers loft was built in 1742, but to the disgrace of the present vicar he will not suffer any singing'.¹⁰⁹ The benefice was a perpetual curacy in the gift of the Chaworth family and, owing to the small stipend of £15 per year, increased to £35 per year after the Cropwell Butler enclosure, it was on various occasions held in plurality by neighbouring clergy.¹¹⁰ Even when, as in the case of Thomas Hebblethwaite, he held no other cure because of his infirmities and could only offer a service once a fortnight, he lived about a mile from the parish because 'the house has not been fit for a Minister to live in the memory of man'.¹¹¹ The accommodation had not improved by 1812 when it was noted '... of the very worst description, consisting only of two rooms about 5 feet 8 inches high, and very small'.¹¹² This situation clearly provided an opening for Methodism to take root, particularly in Cropwell Butler, a growing village without its own place of worship.

¹⁰⁷ N.A.O. DD.TB 2/2/11/2; 11/3.

¹⁰⁸ Godfrey, *Notes*, 438.

¹⁰⁹ Quoted in Godfrey, *Notes*, 438.

¹¹⁰ Godfrey, *Notes*, 438.

¹¹¹ Fisher, *Drummond's Visitation*, 175.

¹¹² Quoted in Godfrey, *Notes*, 438.

When Methodism first appeared in Cropwell Butler in the 1770s, the two chief resident tenants of the absentee landholders were Joseph Marriott and John Parr. Although there is no indication that either ever joined the Society, they had family links with members mentioned on the earliest membership list, so it seems unlikely that they opposed the original house meetings. Leading villagers in Cropwell Butler, shown in Table 3.6 below, comprised 28 families (again not linking the surname Smith) from 1775-1815.¹¹³ The Methodist records show that Henry Barratt, Thomas Crampton, John Innocent, John Marriott, John Willoughby and Thomas Wragby all became members of the Society at some point¹¹⁴ and of these Thomas Crampton and Thomas Wragby were related to leading Methodists of the nineteenth century.¹¹⁵ There was a family link for John Parr to Ann Parr, who provided and then later sold the land for the chapel building,¹¹⁶ while John Newton, one of the Society's class leaders from 1794 until his death,¹¹⁷ was also clearly within the influential section of village society.¹¹⁸ There was, therefore, a very solid level of support for the Methodist Society amongst the leading families in the village. Alongside this, nothing has emerged indicating opposition to its formation or development. The comparatively early building of the chapel, financed by money collected in and around the village, would have helped to enhance the status of the Society and its members in the community.¹¹⁹ In 1808, John Newton's obituary referred to him as '....many years a local preacher of the gospel in the Methodist connexion....a man of exemplary piety and both in his public and private capacity...illustrated and set forth and adorned the walk of a

¹¹³ See above for method used, 112

¹¹⁴ N.A.O. NC/MR/5/30/1-2.

¹¹⁵ N.A.O. NC/MR/8/28-30.

¹¹⁶ B.M.C. Deeds, Cropwell Butler, Bargain; N.A.O. NC/MR/R/30/1.

¹¹⁷ N.A.O. NC/MR/5/30/1.

¹¹⁸ N.A.O. DD/535/90-127; PR 4546.

¹¹⁹ Ambler, *Churches*, 143.

Table 3.6**Cropwell Butler's Leading Resident Villagers 1775-1815**

First Name	Surname	1775	1780	1788	1794	1805	1815
John	Annabell	J	J;O				
Samuel	Baguley			P/O	P/O	P/O	P/O
Joseph	Baldock	J	O	O;A	C;R;O		
Henry	Barratt				O	O	P/O
John	Barratt	J;F	P/O;J;F	F;P/O	P/O	P/O	P/O
Thomas	Bell	J	J;O				
William	Brett				P/O	P/O	P/O
George	Broomhill		P/O	P	P/O	P/O	P/O
George	Clifton	F	P/O;F	F;P/O	P/O	P/O	P/O
John	Clifton		O	O	O	O	P/O
Richard	Crampton	F	P/O				
Thomas	Crampton	J;F	P/O;F	F;P/O	P/O	P/O	P/O; A
William	Flower	F	P/O;F	J;F;P/O	P/O	P/O	P/O
Joseph	Gimson	F		P/O			
Joseph	Hutchinson			P/O	P/O		
John	Innocent		O	J;O	O	O	O;A

Thomas	Leeson			P	P	P	P/O
George	Lord			O	P/O		
John	Marriott	J;F	J;F;O	J;F;P/O	P/O	P/O	
Joseph	Marriott		O	P/O	P/O	O	P/O
William	Marriott		P		A	P/O	
Thomas	Moult	J;F	P/O;J;F				
John	Parr	J	J;O	J;F;P/O	P/O	P/O	P/O
John	Pilkington	J	P/O	P/O	P/O	P	P/O
Thomas	Porter		P;C	F;P/O	P/O	P/O	P/O
Ann	Raynor				P/O	P/O	
William	Saxton		C;O	J;F;P/O;C;R	P/O	P/O	P/O
William	Shaw					C;R	R
Richard	Smith			P	P/O		
William	Smith	F	F;P/O				
John	Waite	J	P/O				
John	Willoughby	F	J;F;P/O	J;F;P/O	P/O	P/O	P/O
Thomas	Wragby			J;F;P/O	P/O	P/O	P/O

Key: (Land Tax Return dates in bold) P Proprietor in Land Tax Returns; O Occupier in Land Tax Returns; P/O Proprietor occupying own land; F Freeholder; J Member of Manor Court Jury; C Churchwarden; A Examining and allowing Churchwardens' accounts; R Overseer

Sources: N.A.O./QDE/Cropwell Butler /1780-1815; DD/535/90-127; PR 4546; 6969

true Christian'.¹²⁰ While allowing for the language of obituaries, it is indicative to some extent of the level of regard in which he was held.

No evidence has survived regarding the identity of those who supported the Primitive Society at Tithby at the time of its formation but clearly premises were provided for its meetings. It can also be concluded that since the Chaworth family were sole proprietors of the entire small village, there was no significant opposition from them.

Bingham

Wesley recounted in his *Journal* for 30 July 1770,

I preached at Bingham, ten miles from Nottingham. I really admired the exquisite stupidity of the people. They gaped and stared while I was speaking of death and judgement, as if they had never heard of such things before. And they were not helped by two surly, ill-mannered clergymen, who seemed to be just as wise as themselves.¹²¹

According to his obituary, William Huckerby introduced Methodism into Bingham in 1773 'by building a place'¹²² (generally interpreted as a preaching place) and it has also been suggested that he induced Wesley to turn aside and visit the town on the earlier occasion.¹²³ The preaching house has been identified as a 'room up 'Huckerby's Yard' off Market Street seating 50 persons' but the source of this information is not clear.¹²⁴ The

¹²⁰ *Nottingham Journal* 10 December 1808.

¹²¹ W.R. Ward & R.P. Heitzenrater (eds.), *The Works of John Wesley: Vol. 22 Journal and Diaries V (1765-75)* (1993), 242.

¹²² B.A. 'Recent Deaths', *Wesleyan-Methodist Magazine* Vol.15 (Dec.1836), 966.

¹²³ Ward & Heitzenrater, *Works* 22, 242. Editor's note.

¹²⁴ *Ibid.*

obituary also indicated that he received visits from other leading Methodist figures, although the timing is uncertain.¹²⁵

Huckerby was listed as a mercer and draper in Bailey's *Directory of* 1784,¹²⁶ so he was clearly a significant figure in the commercial community and well placed to lead the new Society. Its establishment is confirmed by the survival of a class ticket from 1776.¹²⁷

Bingham was one of the original Societies when the Newark circuit was formed in 1793.¹²⁸ There were 26 members and William Huckerby was the class leader,¹²⁹ a role he continued to occupy until his death in 1836.¹³⁰ It is possible that the first chapel building was erected as early as 1780;¹³¹ however, early in 1796 the *Nottingham Journal* described the opening on Christmas Day 1795 of 'a new and elegant chapel, belonging to the sect who denominate themselves Methodists'.¹³² A collection of £30 was made towards the expenses of erecting the building, indicating a new construction.¹³³ By 1795 membership had dropped slightly to 22 but by 1798 there were 40 members,¹³⁴ suggesting that the new place of worship had assisted growth. An 1813-14 plan showed weekly afternoon and evening Sunday services, with three sacraments and four love feasts during the six month period.¹³⁵ Membership dipped in 1814 to 45, compared with higher levels from 1805-10, but by 1815 it was back to 63 and in 1818 land was purchased and a completely new chapel building

¹²⁵ B.A. 'Recent Deaths', 966.

¹²⁶ Bailey 1784, 394.

¹²⁷ Quoted in N.A.O. DD 1702/3/19/12 as from Methodist Conference Handbook 1924. It has not been possible to trace a copy of the Handbook.

¹²⁸ Swift, *Lively People*, 26.

¹²⁹ N.A.O. NC/MR/5/30/1-2.

¹³⁰ B.A. 'Recent Deaths', 966.

¹³¹ Quoted in N.A.O. DD 1702/3/19/12 as from Methodist Conference Handbook 1924. It has not been possible to trace a copy of the Handbook.

¹³² *Nottingham Journal* 2 January 1796.

¹³³ *Ibid.* No documents have survived relating to these premises.

¹³⁴ N.A.O. NC/MR/5/30/1.

¹³⁵ N.A.O. NC/MR/5/33/1.

erected.¹³⁶ By the second decade of the nineteenth century, Bingham had clearly become a major Society in the southern part of the Newark circuit.

There is a reference to Methodism being brought to Bingham in 1812 by two Primitive Methodists from Nottingham, whose services were in Chapel Yard, although the source is uncertain.¹³⁷ However, the missionary campaign in 1817-18 led to the establishment of a Society at Bingham. It was shown as a new Society in early 1818¹³⁸ and by the following September the *Nottingham Review* reported that 'a sect called Ranters, opened their new chapel at Bingham. ...Rev. Lorenzo Dow from America preached to a very large congregation, so numerous indeed, that the chapel, which is pretty capacious, was not sufficient to hold half the people assembled'.¹³⁹ The Primitive chapel was the first to be erected and opened in Nottinghamshire¹⁴⁰ and in this period Bingham was probably visited by the leader William Clowes, who preached in the market place to 2,000 people.¹⁴¹

Although comparatively small, Bingham was a historic market town and classified as such by contemporaries.¹⁴² It was also quite distinct from the villages with a more complex occupational structure, some central urban functions and significantly larger resident population.¹⁴³ Enclosed by agreement in or before 1684,¹⁴⁴ the vast majority of the town was owned by the Earl of Chesterfield.¹⁴⁵ However, he was a distant absentee landowner and there were also freeholders; 16 resident and three non-

¹³⁶ N.A.O. NC/MR/5/30/1-2; See below Chapter 4, 183.

¹³⁷ N.A.O. DD/1702/3/19/13. Copy of letter from Mr C.B. Doncaster, 24th June 1938.

¹³⁸ Kendall, *Origin and History*, 225.

¹³⁹ *Nottingham Review* 18 September 1818.

¹⁴⁰ Kendall, *Origin and History*, 266.

¹⁴¹ Clowes, *Journals*, 122.

¹⁴² C.A. Smith, *The Renaissance of the Nottinghamshire Market Town 1680-1840* (2007), 9.

¹⁴³ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁴ Tate, *Enclosures*, 189.

¹⁴⁵ N.A.O./QDE/Bingham/1780-1814; Thoroton, *Antiquities*, 277.

resident shown in the 1722 Poll Book¹⁴⁶ and 16 mentioned by name in 1790, of whom at least some resided in their premises.¹⁴⁷ The analysis in Table 3.7 below¹⁴⁸ shows that the only other major landholder was the church and there were no tenants with holdings of over ten per cent. However, it was a wealthy living giving the rector some standing and influence and, as a small town, the nature of the community was also related to its commercial activities. A post office was established in 1790¹⁴⁹ and although there were only seven tradesmen mentioned in 1784,¹⁵⁰ by the time of the next surviving directory including Bingham in 1819, the list had expanded to 40, confirming both the growth of the town and its shifting focus.¹⁵¹

¹⁴⁶ Chambers, *Nottinghamshire*, 168.

¹⁴⁷ Thoroton, *Antiquities*, 277.

¹⁴⁸ See above for method used, 110-11.

¹⁴⁹ *Ibid*, 278.

¹⁵⁰ Bailey 1784, 394.

¹⁵¹ Pigot 1819, 539.

Table 3.7

Bingham Land Tax Division prior to Redemption

Date	L1 %	L2 %	Total % tax major landowners	Total % tax those paying under 10%	Proprietors (total)	Proprietors also Occupiers	Proprietors also Occupiers over 10%
1780	75.4	10.6	86	14	24	9	1
1786	72.4	10.5	82.9	17.1	24	6	1
1791	75.9	10.6	86.5	13.5	24	7	1
1797	72.2	10.6	82.8	17.2	23	7	1

Key:

L1 (Landowner 1) Earl of Chesterfield

L2 (Landowner 2) Rev. John Walter

Source: N.A.O. QDE/Bingham /1780-1797

Among the 120 families in Bingham, there were no dissenters and all were baptised and confirmed in 1764, according to the visitation return.¹⁵²

However, at this point the rector, Henry Stanhope, had 'been incapable for many years by reason of Phrensy'.¹⁵³ According to a medical dictionary, this was

an inflammation of the membranes of the brain, and is attended with a furious delirium, shining eyes which are set as it were in the head, a burning fever, continual watching, and a violent pulsation of the arteries about the head and temples; it is generally a dangerous symptom of a fever.¹⁵⁴

Services had been performed by a succession of curates, who were often priests at other churches,¹⁵⁵ such as Richard Kirkby who completed the return and was the rector of Gedling. He lived with Stanhope in the parsonage house, stating he preached twice on Sunday during the summer season and performed services in no other church.¹⁵⁶

Stanhope died later in 1764 and was followed by John Walter until 1810, whose main interests were hunting and high living and who frequently engaged in disputes with his parishioners about tithes and other matters.¹⁵⁷ He built a new rectory and tithe barn in 1770,¹⁵⁸ such that in 1790 Throsby commented that it could be 'classed with the first rate reverend's dwellings in the County'.¹⁵⁹ The living in the gift of the Earl of Chesterfield was a wealthy one worth £700 per annum.¹⁶⁰ Nevertheless,

¹⁵² Fisher, *Drummond's Visitation*, 16.

¹⁵³ *Ibid.*

¹⁵⁴ P. Davey & B. Law, *The Lady's Assistant: Family Physician* (1755).

¹⁵⁵ Trustees of Friends of Bingham Parish Church, *Bingham Parish Church: a history & guide* (1994), 9; <http://southwellchurches.nottingham.ac.uk/bingham/hhistory.php#stanhope>, accessed 25.7.2014.

¹⁵⁶ Fisher, *Drummond's Visitation*, 16.

¹⁵⁷ Trustees, *Bingham Parish Church*, 9; A. Henstock, 'A Parish Divided: Bingham and the Rev. John Walter, 1764-1810, *Transactions of the Thoroton Society*', 85 (1981), 90-101.

¹⁵⁸ Trustees, *Bingham Parish Church*, 9.

¹⁵⁹ Thoroton, *Antiquities*, 278.

¹⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 281.

during Walter's incumbency aspects of church life were vigorous; a choir or 'society of singers' was established by 1778, there were several fiddle players and a group of bell ringers¹⁶¹ and a small number of changes were made to the church building.¹⁶² Overall, the situation towards the end of the eighteenth century was that, following a long period of comparative neglect, the rector and the church were still not satisfactorily fulfilling their role in the community and consequently an opening was left for the more vigorous and spiritually focused Methodists.

As Methodism became established from 1770, there is no evidence of opposition amongst the townspeople. Indeed, difficult economic conditions in the 1790s, which led to a riot in the market place in 1795 over the price of provisions,¹⁶³ might have encouraged support for a religious group outside the establishment. Identifying leading figures in the town during this period required a slightly revised approach to that adopted for the villages.¹⁶⁴ As well as land tax returns and available parish records (only the churchwardens' accounts in this instance), a surviving directory from 1784 and a list of a cricket team from 1800 were used.¹⁶⁵ In the case of the seven directory entries, all were included regardless of other criteria, because their listing in such an early directory, of itself indicated some standing in the community. The results are shown in Table 3.8.¹⁶⁶

Comparing the 31 families with the Methodist lists for the same period, reveals that William Huckerby, whose key role has already been mentioned, Richard Jebb and John Strong were all Methodist members. In

¹⁶¹ Trustees, *Bingham Parish Church*, 9.

¹⁶² Thoroton, *Antiquities*, 278.

¹⁶³ A.E. Wortley, *A History of Bingham* (1954), 38.

¹⁶⁴ See above for original method used, 112

¹⁶⁵ N.A.O./QDE/Bingham/1780-1814; N.A.O. PR 7113; Bailey 1784, 394; Wortley, *Bingham*, 46 (Cricket team list lent by Mrs E. Sharp).

¹⁶⁶ See below, 144.

addition there were probable family links to Methodists for Joseph Askew, George Baxter, Joshua Doncaster, the Horsepools, John Pilgrim, Richard Skinner, and the Whites. Overall this suggests a considerable body of support for Methodism in the town. However, the situation was less favourable by the time of the advent of the Primitives in 1817-18. Kendall recounts that a large Society was formed but under adverse conditions and the church party, through the influence of the clergyman, did its utmost to prevent them from having an interest in the place.¹⁶⁷ By this point, Walter had been succeeded as rector by Robert Lowe,¹⁶⁸ who was apparently taking a more pro-active approach to the Methodist challenge than his predecessors.

¹⁶⁷ Kendall, *Origin and History*, 240.

¹⁶⁸ Godfrey, *Notes*, 19.

Table 3.8

Bingham's Leading Resident Townspeople 1770-1814

First Name	Surname	1770	1780	1784	1786	1797	1800	1803	1814
Joseph	Askew		O;C		O	A			
George	Baxter				O;A	O;C		O;C	C
Thomas	Brown	A	O		O				
John	Chettle	A	P/O; A		P/O	P/O		P/O	
William	Chettle					P;A		P;A	P/O
Henry	Crooke						K		P/O
Jasper	Doncaster		O	T	O				
Thomas	Eden	A	O						
John	Foster				C	P		P	
Mary	Foster		P/O		P/O				
John	Fowkes		O		P/O				
Robert	Grant		P/O		P/O				
John	Harrison		O		O	A		A	
Thomas	Hart					A		A	P/O
James	Horsepool		P/O		P/O;A	P/O	K	P	P/O
John	Horsepool						K	A	A
William	Horsepool						K		P/O
William	Huckerby			T					
Mrs	Hutchinson		P/O		P/O				
William	Hutchinson		O		O;A	P/O		P/O;A	
Richard	Jebb					A		A	P/O
Ebenezer	Lomax		O	T	O				
Rev. Robert	Lowe								P/O
John	Marriott		O		O;A				
Joseph	Oliver							O	P/O

Thomas	Pacey		O		O	P/O;A		P/O;A	
William	Pacey						K		P/O
Daniel	Parley			T		A			
William	Petty	C	C		C	O;C		C	
John	Pilgrim jnr.						K	P;A	P/O
Thomas	Scoffings			T					
George	Shelton	A	P/O		P/O	P		P/O	
Richard	Skinner	A	O; A		O				
John	Strong	C	P/O	T	P/O	P		P/O	
John	Timm jnr.		O		P/O	P/O			
Thomas	Walker					O	K	O	P/O
Rev. John	Walter		P/O		P/O	P/O		P/O	
George	White	A	P/O	T	P/O	P/O;A		P/O	
Samuel	White	A	O		O	A			
James	Wickham	A	O		O				

Key (Land Tax Return dates in bold)

- P Proprietor in Land Tax Returns
- O Occupier in Land Tax Returns
- P/O Proprietor occupying own land
- C Churchwarden
- A Examining and allowing Churchwardens' accounts
- T Tradesman
- K Bingham Cricket Team 1800

Sources: N.A.O./QDE/Bingham/1780-1814; PR 7113; Bailey 1784; Wortley, *Bingham*, 46

Comparisons

Bingham and Cropwell Butler were early Societies almost certainly starting in the 1770s, while Cropwell Bishop and Flintham were established at the beginning of the nineteenth century. Although surviving documentation about registration of a meeting house varied, three of the Wesleyan Societies followed this route in becoming established. No evidence has emerged about where the Society first met in Flintham. There was an early visit by Wesley to Bingham and possibly by another of his preachers to Cropwell Bishop but no recorded visits for the other places. Flintham was unusual because the land was bought and a chapel built only three years after Methodism arrived, facilitated by Wesleyans from outside the village. Tracing the exact dates for the move to the first chapel building was less certain elsewhere but, very broadly, it appeared to be about 20 years later than the commencement of Society meetings. There was no clear relationship between membership numbers and development in terms of permanent buildings, although the evidence was significantly incomplete for the two earlier Methodist Societies.¹⁶⁹

The missionary campaign of the Primitive Methodists in the area in 1817-18 impacted on all the parishes. Everywhere except Flintham was visited, with Primitive Societies being established in Bingham and Tithby. The response in the Cropwells was mixed and no Societies were formed alongside the existing Wesleyans.

All the villages, except Tithby, exhibited diverse and often complex patterns of landownership. Most of the major landowners were absentees, as were some substantial tenants, but the advent of a resident local squire at Flintham and of an active incumbent of the wealthy living at Bingham

¹⁶⁹ See below Chapter 4, 173-75 and 183-85.

affected the Primitives' efforts to become established. The three main villages all had a population in 1801 of between 300 and 460, while Bingham was just over 1,000. In marked contrast to the other places, Tithby was a small, closed village, with a population of less than 200 and a sole proprietor.

As regards the parishes and their churches, the situation in all the villages was similar but quite distinct from Bingham. The three village parishes were all very poor livings where inevitably pluralism occurred. In Cropwell Bishop and Tithby-cum-Cropwell Butler the incumbents were absentees, although in Flintham he was resident. There is evidence of various critical comments about the state of the church buildings, particularly at Tithby. In contrast, Bingham was a wealthy living where the rector built himself a particularly magnificent rectory well before this became a more regular occurrence following Anglican clergy benefitting from land enclosure.¹⁷⁰ However, his energies were primarily devoted to pursuits outside the church and to disputing with his parishioners, although the church building received some attention and was certainly in a better state than in the village parishes.

In general, no evidence was found indicating opposition to the Wesleyans, but at a slightly later point there was clearly a degree of opposition to the efforts of the Primitives to establish themselves in the area. It has not been possible to tabulate comparative results regarding support for Wesleyan Methodism from leading individuals and families, because of varying time periods and available records. However, in all the parishes

¹⁷⁰ F. Knight, 'Did Anticlericalism Exist in the English Countryside in the Early Nineteenth Century?', in N. Aston & M. Cragoe (eds.), *Anticlericalism in Britain, c.1500-1914* (2000), 159-160.

there was identifiable support for the Methodist Society amongst leading individuals and families.

Conclusions

In analysing the origins of Methodism in the four parishes, they all exhibited some characteristics anticipated from the literature indicating that a Methodist Society might be expected to take root.¹⁷¹ The much debated view, confirmed by Snell and Ell,¹⁷² of the association of dissent with complex and diverse landownership was demonstrated in the Cropwells but less clearly in Flintham where there was a dominant resident squire or Bingham where the major landowners were absentees. Since Tithby appeared to conform to the model of a small, closed village,¹⁷³ the establishment of a Primitive Society was contrary to the expectation that Methodism would not succeed in such places.

Although the literature had suggested that absentee landowners did on occasions actively oppose the establishment of Methodist Societies,¹⁷⁴ their absence in the majority of the places studied appears simply to have removed one source of potential opposition. This exemplified the argument that the issue of absent or resident landowners and the level of power and influence they exercised was at least as significant as the percentage of land owned.¹⁷⁵ Similarly, the likelihood that Flintham was not visited by the Primitives because of the attitude of the resident Colonel Hildyard and the difficulties posed to this group in Bingham by the rector, further demonstrated the significance of the presence of powerful local figures, as

¹⁷¹ See above Chapter 1, 25-36.

¹⁷² Snell & Ell, *Rival Jerusalems*, 371,373,375,379.

¹⁷³ See above Chapter 1, 30.

¹⁷⁴ Watts, *Dissenters II*, 117; Watts, *Religion*, xviii.

¹⁷⁵ Obelkevich, *Religion*, 12; Gilbert, *Religion and Society*, 104, 110; Snell & Ell, *Rival Jerusalems*, 383.

did the inability of other villages in the area to obtain a site for a chapel.¹⁷⁶ In accordance with my earlier findings about Cropwell Butler,¹⁷⁷ the other parishes also revealed a level of support for Methodism from leading individuals and, apart from Tithby, all were at least medium-sized.¹⁷⁸

Studies in many different places had identified the situation regarding the parish church as important in relation to the success of Methodism.¹⁷⁹ The existence of inadequacies, albeit of a varying nature, agreed with findings elsewhere and indeed appeared to be a key common factor amongst the parishes. Despite the wealth of the living distinguishing Bingham, the quality of church life when the Wesleyans arrived was not necessarily any better than in the villages.

It had been argued that for Methodists to become fully established in the community it was necessary for Societies to develop stability by acquiring land and a building.¹⁸⁰ This occurred everywhere except Tithby, although Flintham Wesleyans and Bingham Primitives departed from the traditional pattern of using temporary accommodation over some years by rapidly acquiring their chapel buildings .

Overall, the places investigated demonstrated the majority of features anticipated from the literature for the successful establishment of Methodism: the existence of freeholders, diverse landownership, absentee landlords exercising little power or influence, medium or large size of population, an inadequate parish church, little opposition and support from

¹⁷⁶ See above, 112.

¹⁷⁷ Woodcock, 'Union', 45-46.

¹⁷⁸ Watts, *Dissenters II*, 46; Watts, *Religion*, xix; Obelkevich, *Religion*, 9; Thompson, 'Churches and Society', 269.

¹⁷⁹ Gilbert, *Religion and Society*, 94; Biggs, 'Methodism', 209; Currie, 'Micro-Theory', 69; Gray, 'Efficient Members', 235.

¹⁸⁰ Church, *Early Methodist*; Ambler, *Churches*, 143, 146; Biggs, 'Methodism', 279.

a number of leading individuals or families. The exception was Tithby where the lack of opposition from the sole proprietor was clearly crucial.

Although not forming part of the detailed study, there were several other neighbouring parishes to the north and west of Bingham and the Cropwells, (Scarrington, East Bridgford, Shelford, Radcliffe and Cotgrave), where Methodism became established in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.¹⁸¹ It can be assumed that all these places supported and encouraged each other, despite sometimes being in different circuits. Flintham seems to have been more isolated at this time, apart from a short-lived Society at Hawksworth, with Societies in its surrounding area, such as Screveton and Syerston, being formed at a later date.¹⁸² The continued consolidation of the Societies and chapels during the first half of the nineteenth century is considered in the next two chapters.

¹⁸¹ T.N.A. HO 129/443; N.A.O. NC/MR/30/1.

¹⁸² *Ibid.*

Chapter Four

Wesleyan Methodist Consolidation

Introduction

Having considered the factors leading to the arrival of Methodism, this chapter explores further the extent to which Societies consolidated and expanded in their respective communities, focusing solely on the four Wesleyan chapels. At some point between 1818 and 1851 the Tithby and Bingham Primitive Methodists became part of the Independent Primitive Methodist group centred on Bingham. Their further consolidation and development is considered in Chapter 5 in conjunction with discussing the breakaway group from the Wesleyans in Bingham and the establishment of new Primitive Societies in Flintham and Cropwell Butler.

Consolidation is approached firstly in terms of any further acquisition or development of chapel buildings and secondly in respect of changes in membership, looking at trends over the whole period from the establishment of the Society to the pivotal point of the religious census in 1851. Finally, consideration is given to any changing priorities in terms of the type of activities undertaken. The key questions are indicated below, together with details of the methods of analysis adopted.

The question of whether the Societies followed a pattern of initial growth leading to consolidation demonstrated by chapel building has already been

considered briefly.¹ Further expansion via either new buildings or the development of existing ones is explored, leading to the issue of whether this appeared to be related to membership trends. The best source was surviving deeds, which revealed trustees as well as the nature of the development but directories and newspaper reports also provided valuable information. Membership trends are set against building developments to assess any relationship between them.

Two key issues related to growth and turnover: firstly, whether Wesleyan Methodist growth was primarily exogenous in the first half of the nineteenth century, with an emphasis on adult conversion² and if this changed to endogenous growth by mid-century;³ secondly whether high growth led to high turnover because of exogenous recruitment.⁴ This related to a further question, which emerged as more significant during the research, of whether there was a consistently high turnover in membership throughout, irrespective of growth trends.⁵ The other aspect of membership was whether Wesleyan Societies were often run over long periods by a small group of families.⁶ Since the questions on turnover and core families spanned the whole period, they are also addressed in Chapter 8.

¹ R.W. Ambler, *Churches, Chapels and the Parish Communities of Lincolnshire 1660-1900* (2000), 143, 146; B.J. Biggs, 'Methodism in a Rural Society: North Nottinghamshire 1740-1851' (University of Nottingham Ph.D., 1975), 279; L.F. Church, *The Early Methodist People* (1948), 52; See above Chapter 3, 146 and 149.

² A.D. Gilbert, *Religion and Society in Industrial England: Church, Chapel and Social Change, 1740-1914* (1976), 68, 152.

³ *Ibid*, 149-153; R. Currie, *Methodism Divided: A Study in the Sociology of Ecumenicalism* (1968), 92.

⁴ R. Currie, A.D. Gilbert & L. Horsley, *Churches and Churchgoers: Patterns of Church Growth in the British Isles since 1700* (1977), 82.

⁵ *Ibid*; J. Burgess, *A History of Cumbrian Methodism* (1980), 63; L. Gray, 'Efficient Members': the Early Years of Methodism in Hunsonby and Winskill, 1821-1871, *Transactions of the Cumberland and Westmorland Antiquarian and Archaeological Society*, 12 (2012), 239.

⁶ M.R. Watts, *The Dissenters: Vol. II The Expansion of Evangelical Nonconformity 1791-1859* (1995), 163-64; Ambler, *Churches*, 139,147,151; J. Obelkevich, *Religion and Rural Society: South Lindsey, 1825-1875* (1976), 184, 200-01.

The rich surviving data contained in the Newark Wesleyan circuit records, including names of all members up to 1830,⁷ provided the primary information source. In addition to overall changes, individual membership spans were calculated from the earliest recorded date to 1832, although only class leaders were named in the 1832 records, so the final possible date for most members was 1830. Obviously the membership span of those listed in 1830 or 1832 may have extended later, as may be the case for others listed prior to earlier gaps in the records and not appearing subsequently.

Specific individuals and families were mapped from within the overall statistics and, although more limited, the records for the remainder of the half century also enabled some analysis of trends and identification of leading individuals. In order to explore the existence of long-term family groups, families (listing two or more individuals) were identified, using surnames and date connections as indicators. The span for a family was taken from the earliest to the latest recorded date, irrespective of the number of individuals.

The identification of family groups up to 1830 also facilitated some analysis regarding whether growth was exogenous or endogenous. Since it was not possible to ascertain the exact relationships of individuals within a group identified by surname, nor to know whether any of those in families were converted at about the same time, certain assumptions were made: in families of three or more, one person became a member from adult conversion (exogenous), while the remainder joined through the family connection (endogenous); families of two were always assumed to be part of exogenous growth.

⁷ N.A.O. NC/MR/5/30/1-2.

The literature on organisational consolidation had suggested this would be apparent from a focus on property, money raising and social issues and a lessening or omission of more overtly evangelistic activities by the mid-century point.⁸ Circuit and individual chapel records were sources indicating activities and matters of concern, together with newspaper reports of particular events. However, there was less extensive evidence for this than that relating to membership.

Flintham

The evidence about the development of Flintham chapel in the first half of the nineteenth century is limited; however, it was enlarged, probably in the 1830s. The Newark circuit stewards' quarterly accounts in 1834 stated 'Mr Boler, Mr Butler, Mr Brown be a committee to superintend and make arrangements for enlarging Flintham Chapel in conjunction with the Trustees Mr A. Ward, R. Watson and Mr Whyman'.⁹ There is some confirmation of an extension from notes made in the late twentieth century, suggesting clear signs of raising the walls to add a gallery and additionally noting that the pulpit was originally much higher than in the 1970s, apparently having been lowered as use of the gallery declined.¹⁰ Unfortunately, White's *Directory* for 1844 simply confirmed 'the Methodist chapel was built 30 years ago' without mentioning any extensions or alterations.¹¹ Nevertheless, this may be the result of the focus on the extensive rebuilding of the parish church, rather than indicating that no alterations had occurred.

⁸ Watts, *Dissenters* II, 609-11.

⁹ N.A.O. NC/MR/5/8.

¹⁰ N.A.O. NC/MR/8/293.

¹¹ White 1844, 385.

The membership of the Flintham Society for 1802-1851, with gaps for years without any data, is shown in Figure 4.1 below. Despite noticeable fluctuations, it demonstrates an upward trend both absolutely and, until 1831, as a percentage of the population (3.1 per cent in 1801 rising to 10.8 per cent in 1831). By 1851, this had dropped to 8.3 per cent and the second half of the 1840s onwards revealed a reversal in growth, as occurred nationally. Looking at the pattern against the building enlargement in 1834, it is not clear why this decision was taken, although it would have been justified by the peak reached ten years later. However, the recent Anglican rebuilding from 1827-8, might have acted as a spur.¹²

Up to 1832, approximately 160 individuals were listed as members of the Society, with dates of membership ranging from entries for a single year (60) to a span of 30 years (1).¹³ Figure 4.2¹⁴ summarises this information.

The short-term nature of many members' adherence to the Society is striking, leading to the potential conclusion that it must have attracted many more new members than would be apparent from comparing membership numbers recorded yearly. Table 4.1¹⁵ shows an analysis of the period from 1806-10, where the records were mostly full and continuous, with some significant variations in the totals.

¹² See below Chapter 5, 211.

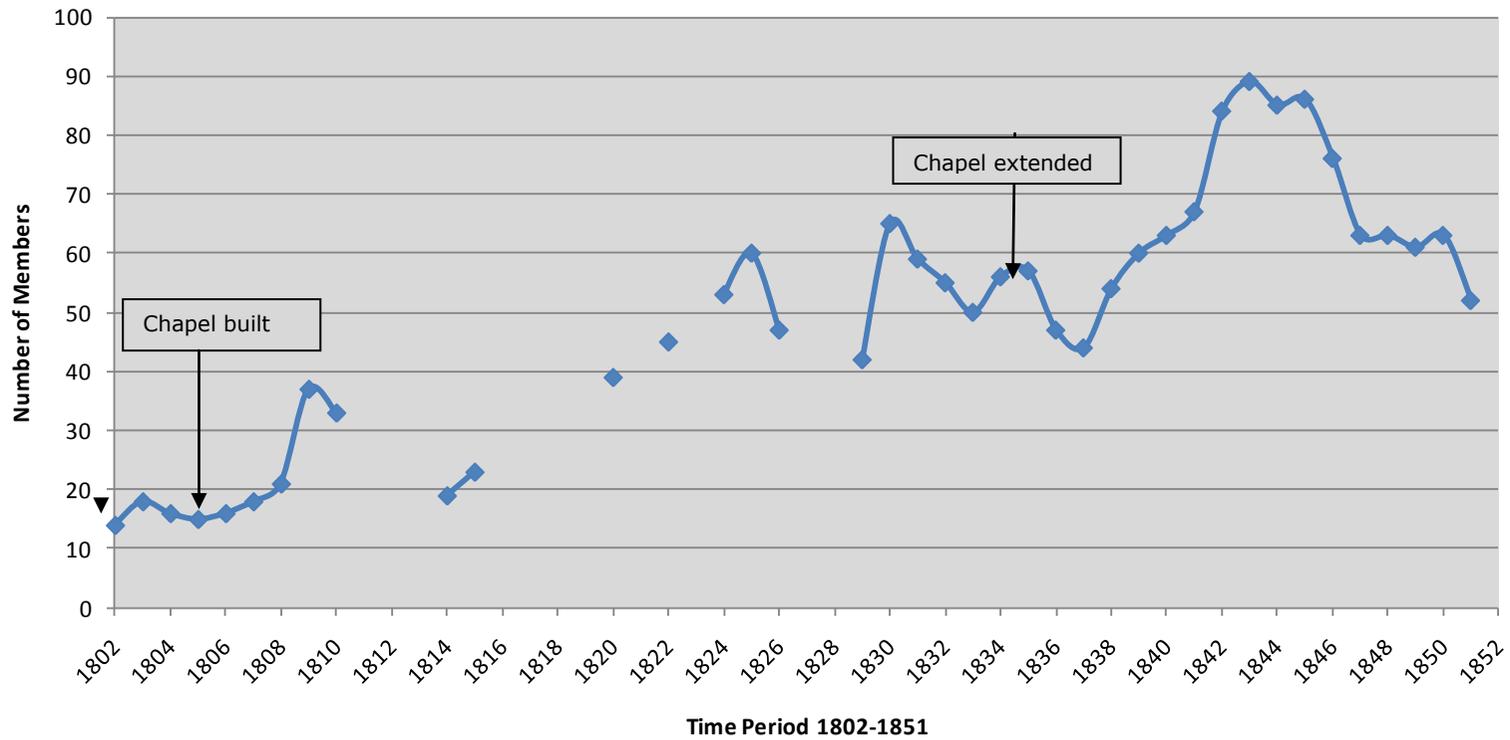
¹³ See above for method, 153.

¹⁴ See below, 157.

¹⁵ See below, 158.

Figure 4.1

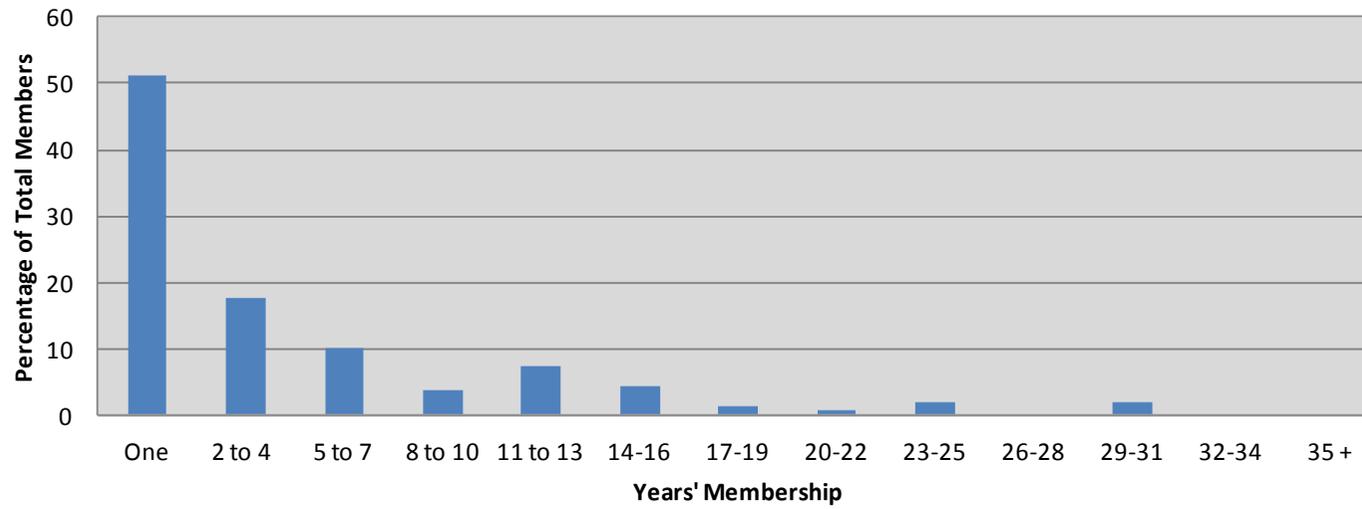
Flintham Wesleyan Membership 1802-1851



Sources: N.A.O. NC/MR/5/30/1-2; /5/23/1-2; /8/28

Figure 4.2

Flintham Wesleyan Society Membership Span 1802-1832



Sources: N.A.O. NC/MR/5/30/1-2

Table 4.1

Flintham Wesleyan Society Membership Changes 1806-10

Year	Recorded Membership	Change from Previous Year	New Members
1806	16	+ 1	4
1807	18	+ 2	No data
1808	21	+ 3	9
1809	37	+ 16	19
1810	33	- 4	1

Source: N.A.O. NC/MR/5/30/1

Although the range of the membership numbers was 21, with a net gain of 17, there were actually 33 new members added. This supports the conclusion that significantly higher numbers were both joining and leaving than revealed by the growth rate. Based on the data in Figure 4.2,¹⁶ it seemed inevitable that there was a rapid loss of new members, which was tested by identifying the membership spans of the 19 individuals joining the Society in 1809, as shown in Table 4.2 below. Although no specific information was found indicating reasons for the large increase in this particular year, it suggests the presence of a local revival. However, out of these individuals, eleven were members for less than six years (it was impossible to be more precise because of missing data) and four for only one year, thus providing some evidence of a noticeable turnover within a short period. When the names were compared with existing members to identify possible family connections, it did not appear that new previously unconnected members were any more likely to leave quickly, rather slightly the contrary. However, this was still early in the Society's development when family traditions had not necessarily become established.

¹⁶ See above, 157.

Table 4.2

**Flintham Wesleyan Society:
Membership Span of New Members 1809**

1 year	2 – 5 years	7 years	16 years	22 years
Ann Hand	Elizabeth Cliff	Mary Cliff	Ann Green	Deborah Pagett
Mary Wood	Jane Curtis	Mary Copley	Henry Green	
Richard Wood	William Curtis	Nathanial Morton	Mary Wood	
William Wood	John Dent	Sarah Morton		
	Henry Fisher			
	Dorcas Houghton			
	Mary Pepper			

Key: Individuals highlighted previously unconnected with Society

Source: N.A.O. NC/MR/5/30/1-2

Of the 160 members joining the Flintham Society from its first record up to 1830, about 71.2 per cent came from outside the existing membership, with 28.8 per cent having family connections,¹⁷ which accords with the view that growth in the first half of the nineteenth century was primarily exogenous.

After 1832, the records no longer listed names of members routinely, so only class leaders can be tracked individually. However, the quarterly returns gave some breakdown of the stages of membership (on trial and received fully) and reasons for leaving.¹⁸ The figures frequently failed to add up correctly, possibly because they were compiled from the separate returns from each class leader and because of inconsistency about whether those on trial were counted and therefore detailed analysis was not

¹⁷ N.A.O. NC/MR/5/30/1-2; See above for method used, 153.

¹⁸ N.A.O. NC/MR/5/23/1-2; /8/28.

possible. However, they did provide insight into points where there was noticeable geographical movement and/or backsliding, as shown for 1837-1851 in Table 4.3. In addition, comparing the numbers leaving and the membership total suggested that during this period there was still a high turnover; the overall difference between the first and last date is plus eight, whereas 119 people left during that time, meaning that 127 must have joined. This was a loss of 93.7 per cent of the total of new members.

Table 4.3
Reasons for leaving Flintham Wesleyan Society 1837-1851

Year	Backsliding	Removal	Death	Total	Membership
1837	2	1		3	44
1838	3	2	1	6	54
1839	4	1		5	60
1840	3	3		6	63
1841	1	2		3	67
1842	1	2		3	84
1843	7	3		10	89
1844	4	4		8	85
1845	11	3		14	86
1846	10	6		16	76
1847	4	7	2	13	63
1848	7	4	1	12	63
1849	4	1	2	7	61
1850	4			4	63
1851	9			9	52
Totals	74	39	6	119	

Sources: N.A.O. NC/MR/5/23/1-2; /8/28

At the other end of the spectrum, analysis of the overall membership spans revealed that a small number of individuals formed the solid core of Methodist support from its early years and as it became an established part

of the community. Table 4.2¹⁹ showed that in 1809 one of the new members became committed to the Society on a very long-term basis, while another three were involved for a significant period. The membership span of families from the beginning until 1830 is shown in Table 4.4.²⁰

Table 4.4
Membership Span of Families in Flintham Wesleyan Society
1802-1832

Name	Span	Dates
Cliff	29	1802-30
White	29	1802-30
Brown	28	1803-30
Pepper	28	1803-30
Wood	25	1808-32
Huskinson	23	1802-24
Green	22	1809-30
Pagett	22	1809-30
Squires	21	1802-22
Wright	20	1805-24
Hand	15	1808-22
Jobson	13	1820-32
Johnson	13	1820-32
Briggs	11	1820-30
Fisher	11	1820-30
Forster	11	1814-24
Jow	11	1820-30
Marson/den	11	1820-30
Parnham	9	1822-30
Squire	9	1822-30
Palmer	8	1803-10
Morton	7	1809-15
Breedon	5	1820-24
Jackson	5	1820-24
Branston	3	1822-4
Fryer	3	1808-10
Curtis	2	1809-10
Oller	1	1824

Sources: N.A.O. NC/MR/5/30/1-2

¹⁹ See above, 159.

²⁰ See above for method used, 153.

The maximum potential span was 31 years, so during this period the Cliff, White, Brown, Pepper and Wood families constituted a core group. Out of these, the Cliff family members were entirely female, which may have reduced their significance within the Society. However, Daniel Brown was an early member and then a class leader for a substantial period²¹ and John Brown was referred to as a local preacher in 1838 and 1840.²² From the Wood family, Joseph was a long-standing member and class leader and John Wood was a local preacher in 1848, although he attracted some censure from the local preachers' meeting. A note was sent to him 'reminding him that it is a violation of the discipline of Wesleyan Methodism to put men into our Pulpits who are not accredited Local Preachers on the Plan, unless by the consent of his Superintendent' (1848) and then three years later 'requesting him to be more guarded in future in his business transactions as several things having been brought before the meeting calculated to injure his moral character and usefulness amongst us' (1851).²³ However, these criticisms indicate a level of standing in the Society and the local community. A John Wood was also a class leader in the second half of the century, although it is uncertain whether it was the same person, but it shows the continued influence of the family.²⁴

During the latter part of the half century, other families emerged. John Parnham was listed from 1822 and had four children baptised from 1832-40, which was prior to Methodists routinely opting for Methodist rather than Anglican baptism.²⁵ By 1851, he was the chapel steward completing

²¹ N.A.O. NC/MR/5/30/1-2.

²² N.A.O. NC/MR/5/19.

²³ N.A.O. NC/MR/8/13.

²⁴ N.A.O. NC/MR/8/29.

²⁵ N.A.O. NC/MR/5/30/2; /5/34/1-2.

and signing the census return.²⁶ He was first a joiner, then master carpenter, druggist and shopkeeper and kept the village shop, although the family disappeared from the records by 1861.²⁷ The Perkins family were farmers, first listed as members in 1830 and remaining until at least the 1860s.²⁸ One of John Parnham's sons married Maria Perkins in 1852, showing that Methodism was further strengthened by inter-marriage between key families.²⁹ Dinah Dixon (née Squires), listed with other family members in 1830, was noted in 1844 and 1853 as a dress and straw hat maker and became a Methodist class leader in 1851.³⁰ She and George Dixon, who later became a local preacher, were another core family for many years.³¹ These families, if not leading villagers, were clearly of some substance and significance in the village, evidenced by entries in White's *Directory*, and were therefore likely to provide essential financial support.

Insufficient surviving plans have prevented any meaningful analysis of methods of attracting people to the Wesleyan Society and of whether events such as love feasts were declining. The minutes of the local preachers' meetings focused on effective organisation and the moral conduct of preachers,³² although the quarterly schedule did include at least one set of comments about conversions and backsliding.³³ However, a resolution from a circuit General Trustee meeting in 1847 indicated concern about the level of debt and proposed a method of helping chapels liquidate this, provided they also raised money.³⁴ Therefore at the mid-century point, financial issues were becoming more pressing but there is no

²⁶ T.N.A. HO 129/443.

²⁷ White 1832, 494; White 1844, 386; White 1853, 431; S. Clayton, 'The Village Shop 1832-1982', (University of Nottingham Advanced Certificate in Local History, 1994), 32.

²⁸ N.A.O. NC/MR/5/30/2; /8/29; White 1832, 494; White 1844, 386; White 1853, 431.

²⁹ N.A.O. PR 23130.

³⁰ N.A.O. NC/MR/5/30/2; /8/28; White 1844, 386; White 1853, 431.

³¹ N.A.O. NC/MR/8/28-29; /8/68/1.

³² N.A.O. NC/MR/5/19; /8/13.

³³ N.A.O. NC/MR/8/28.

³⁴ N.A.O. NC/MR/8/39.

evidence of a significant change of focus. As far as the chapel specifically was concerned, a Sunday school came into existence around 1818, since its forty-fourth anniversary celebrations were reported in 1862, although there is no direct evidence about it or other chapel activities prior to the later 1850s.³⁵ The debt at Flintham was estimated at £30 in 1847, with an annual surplus of only £2 5s 0d, so the Society's financial position was not totally secure, possibly influencing the emphasis of its work.³⁶

Cropwell Bishop

The meeting places for the Cropwell Bishop Society had developed along traditional lines, progressing from a private house (1802), to a barn (1817), to a chapel building (1824). There is little information about the first building. However, in the 1840s, the Society bought land and erected a new chapel; a subscription list from December 1841 'towards the erection of a New Chapel' detailed over 100 names and amounts subscribed from Cropwell Bishop residents with additional contributions from people in the surrounding area.³⁷ This level of support suggests the Wesleyans had already established a solid identity in the village, since it far exceeds their 43 recorded members and included some individuals connected with the parish church.³⁸ The land, containing two occupied tenements, was purchased for £150 in July 1842 with the chapel site measuring 132 square yards.³⁹ By September 1842 opening services were reported, so the building had been erected rapidly.⁴⁰ A later report indicated it was calculated to seat about 400 people and also that the old chapel building

³⁵ *Nottinghamshire Guardian* 25 April 1862.

³⁶ N.A.O. NC/MR/8/39.

³⁷ N.A.O. NC/MR/8/106.

³⁸ N.A.O. NC/MR/5/23/2; PR 3886.

³⁹ B.M.C. Deeds for Methodist Chapel, Cropwell Bishop, Notts. Conveyance of Messuages and hereditaments 2 July 1842; N.A.O. NC/MR/8/106.

⁴⁰ B.M.C. Deeds, Cropwell Bishop, Conveyance; *Nottingham Review* 8 September 1842.

was retained as a Sunday school.⁴¹ Six of the 15 trustees were from Cropwell Bishop, including class leaders Robert Hopewell and John Squires, a subsequent class leader William Crampton, and George Shelton who completed the 1851 religious census return as Society steward.⁴² Their occupations were identified as two farmers, a smith, a tailor, a bricklayer and a labourer⁴³ and all were also listed as substantial contributors.⁴⁴ The majority of remaining trustees were class leaders in the Bingham Society⁴⁵ indicating that support from outside the village community also remained important for the expansion of Methodism. In 1844 the increased status of the new building was clearly evident: 'A Methodist chapel was built here in 1824; since which, a neat one was erected in 1842...'.⁴⁶ It was a significant step in embedding the Wesleyan Society more deeply in the community, as well as providing bigger and better facilities for conducting religious and other activities.

The fluctuations in membership from the Society's first separately recorded figures in 1805 until 1851, with gaps for missing data, are shown in Figure 4.3 below. The general trend was upwards until the mid-1840s, although numbers only rose relative to the population in the 1830s (6.1 per cent in 1831 to 8.8 per cent in 1841). The decisions to build the chapels in 1824 and 1842, are explicable in terms of these membership figures and possibly the building of the second chapel and the improved premises themselves partially accounted for the steep rise in membership shortly afterwards. According to one source, the national movement to reform Wesleyan Methodism led to the formation of a group of reformers in Cropwell Bishop, holding services for a short time in a private dwelling

⁴¹ *Nottingham Review* 19 July 1844.

⁴² B.M.C. Deeds, Cropwell Bishop, Conveyance; N.A.O. NC/MR/5/23/2; T.N.A. HO 129/443.

⁴³ B.M.C. Deeds, Cropwell Bishop, Conveyance.

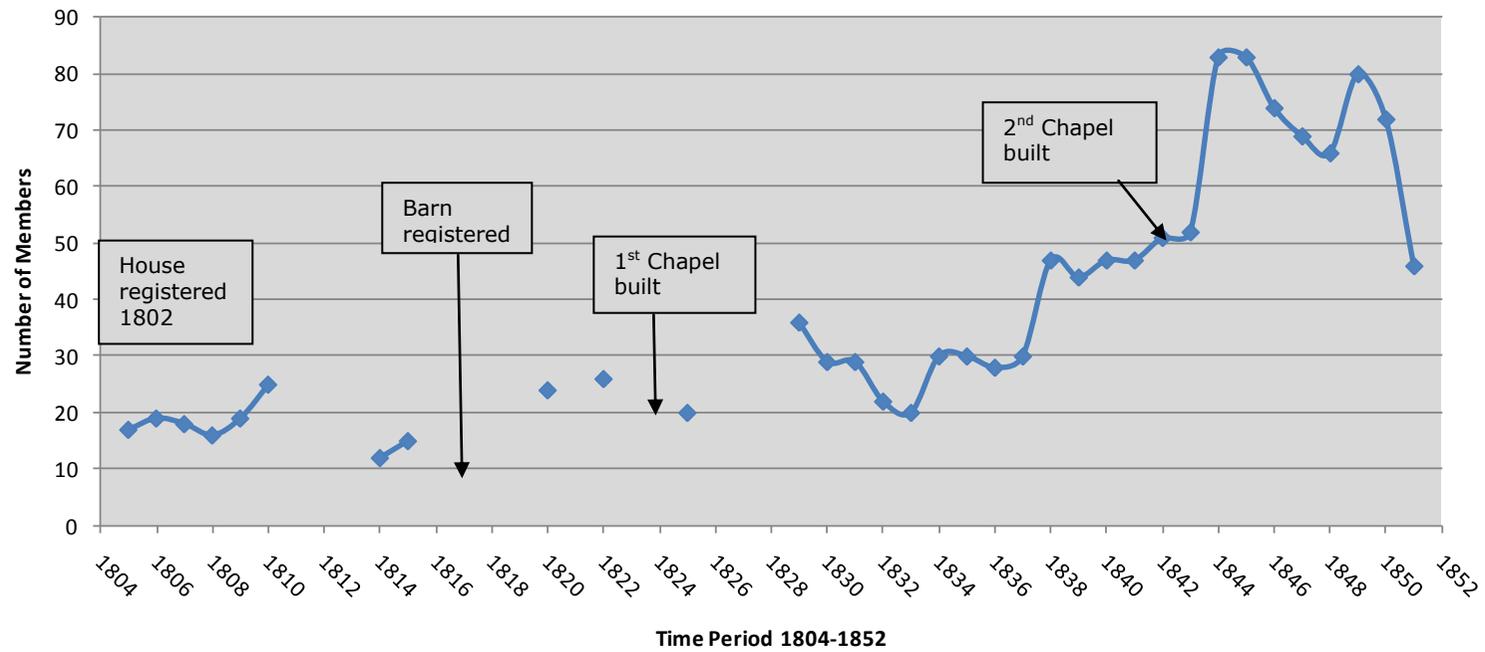
⁴⁴ N.A.O. NC/MR/8/106.

⁴⁵ B.M.C. Deeds, Cropwell Bishop, Conveyance; N.A.O. NC/MR/5/23/1.

⁴⁶ White 1844, 400.

Figure 4.3

Cropwell Bishop Wesleyan Membership 1805-1851



Sources: N.A.O. NC/MR/5/30/1-2; /5/23/1-2; /8/28

house, which may be one factor accounting for the sharp fall in membership from 1849-51.⁴⁷

Approximately 71 individuals were listed as members up to 1832, with dates ranging from entries for a single year (29) to a span of 28 years (2).⁴⁸ It should be noted that some Cropwell Bishop members were recorded earlier under Cropwell Butler, with the earliest date of 1800, giving a maximum span of 33 years. Figure 4.4 below summarises this information.

The loss of members in their first year was noticeably less in Cropwell Bishop than in Flintham but nevertheless still exceeded 40 per cent, while the loss for the two-to-four-year span was higher. Table 4.5 shows detailed analysis from 1806-10.

Table 4.5
Cropwell Bishop Wesleyan Society Membership Changes 1806-10

Year	Recorded Membership	Change from Previous Year	New Members
1806	19	+ 2	7
1807	18	- 1	No data
1808	16	- 2	5
1809	19	+ 3	5
1810	15	- 4	0

Source: N.A.O. NC/MR/5/30/1

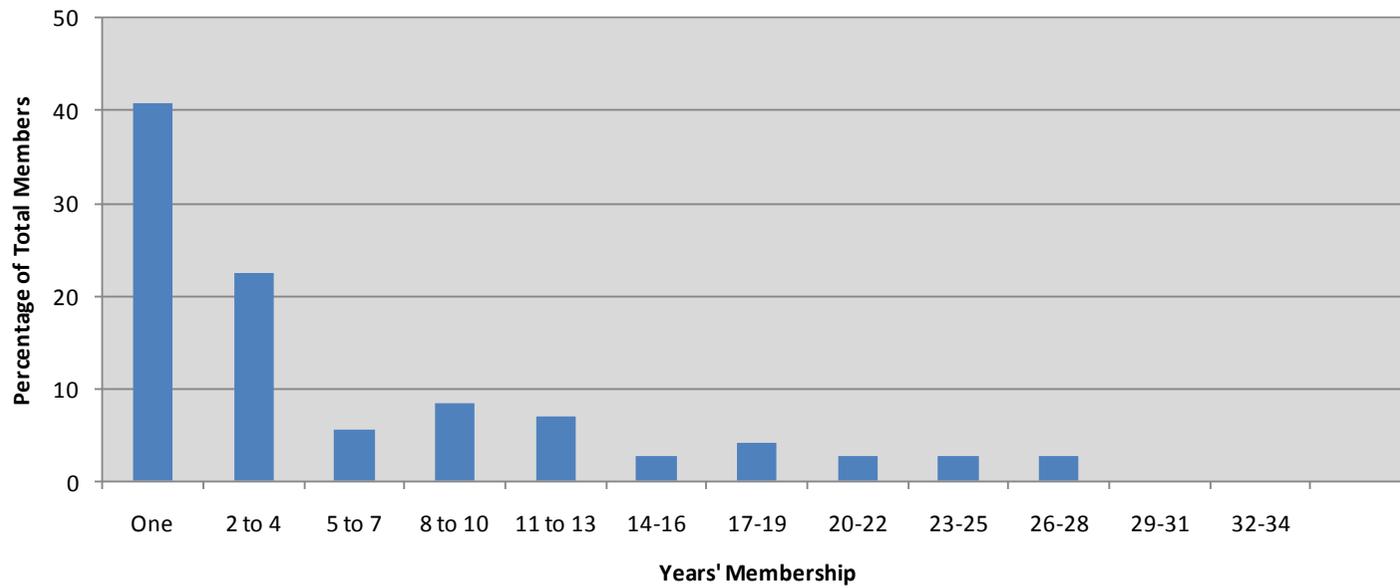
This reveals that although there were 17 new members, there was a net loss of four over the period. Even more strikingly than for Flintham, it was

⁴⁷ R.C. Swift, *Methodism in Cropwell Bishop*, (1952), 15; A. Harper & E. Harper, *Chronicles of Cropwell Bishop* (1988), 14.

⁴⁸ See above for method used, 153.

Figure 4.4

Cropwell Bishop Wesleyan Society Membership Span 1800-32



Sources: N.A.O. NC/MR/5/30/1-2

clear that changes in membership totals concealed much bigger fluctuations. The extent to which these losses related to new members was therefore tested for 1806, the year with the largest number of additions (Table 4.6).

Table 4.6
Cropwell Bishop Wesleyan Society:
Membership Span of New Members 1806

1 Year	4 Years	25 Years
Ann Atkin	Joseph Brooks	Ann Hopewell
George Bonser	Mary Buxton	George Hopewell
	John Cooper	

Key: Individuals highlighted previously unconnected with Society

Sources: N.A.O. NC/MR/5/30/1-2

Although the numbers are small, it still suggests a significant dropout rate in the early years of membership and, in this instance, those already having family connections stayed longest. As in Flintham, there were almost equal numbers in the two categories.

When the balance between exogenous and endogenous growth was calculated for Cropwell Bishop,⁴⁹ 81.5 per cent of members came from outside, while only 18.5 per cent had connections with existing families during the period up to 1830.⁵⁰ This particularly low figure for growth via family connections was partly accounted for by the fact that in a small Society at least one of the core members (Thomas Kemp) apparently had no extended family in the village.⁵¹

⁴⁹ N.A.O. NC/MR/5/30/1-2; See above for method used, 153.

⁵⁰ N.A.O. NC/MR/5/30/1-2.

⁵¹ D. Smith & E. Smith, *St. Giles Church, Cropwell Bishop: a Survey of the Churchyard* (1998); T.N.A. HO 107/0853.

The quarterly returns for the latter part of the half century were also investigated to ascertain reasons for leaving.

Table 4.7

Reasons for leaving Cropwell Bishop Wesleyan Society 1837-1851

Year	Backsliding	Removal	Death	Total	Membership
1837		3		3	30
1838	9	1	1	11	47
1839	2		1	3	44
1840	9	2		11	47
1841	6			6	47
1842	1		1	2	51
1843	3	4	1	8	52
1844	8		1	9	83
1845	6	1		7	83
1846	17	3	1	21	74
1847	8	3	3	14	69
1848	8	4		12	66
1849	19	2		21	80
1850	15	6		21	72
1851	15	3	1	19	46
Totals	126	32	10	168	

Sources: N.A.O. NC/MR/5/23/1-2; /8/28

Table 4.7 shows that significant numbers left the Society in the second half of the 1840s, primarily because of backsliding which would have included those forming the breakaway reforming group. However, the figures also indicate an enormous fluidity in the membership. Over the whole period, there was an increase of 16, indicating that although 168 people left, 184 joined. This was a loss of 91.3 per cent of the number of new members, although there was also a sharp rise and fall in the visible membership during the 14 years. Even more strikingly, from 1846-50 during which 89

members left, the membership only fell by 2 suggesting that 87 new members had joined, with a loss of 102.3 per cent of new members.

The analysis of membership spans in Cropwell Bishop had shown a small number of individuals forming a core of long-term support. Even the small numbers of the 1806 analysis identified two new members who remained for the next 25 years. Table 4.8 shows the specific membership spans of families.⁵²

Table 4.8
Membership Span of Families in Cropwell Bishop Wesleyan Society
1803-1832

Name	Span	Dates
Hopewell	28	1803-30
Kemp	28	1805-32
Marshall	22	1809-30
Cooper	20	1803-22
Beet	16	1815-30
Burrows	11	1820-30
Mabbott	11	1800-10
Thraves	11	1820-30
Hallum/am	8	1803-10
Kirkman (1)	8	1803-8
Shipman	4	1803-6
Alcock	3	1808-10
Kirkman (2)	3	1820-22
Burton	1	1815

Sources: N.A.O. NC/MR/5/30/1-2

The Hopewells and the Kemps were the two key families during the whole of this period, with the Marshalls and Coopers for somewhat shorter times.

⁵² See above for method used, 153.

As discussed earlier,⁵³ Robert Hopewell's house and then George Hopewell's barn were the earliest registered meeting houses, with the land for the first chapel also probably belonging to George, who was of some standing in the village as an overseer and constable in 1831-2.⁵⁴ Robert Hopewell was a class leader from 1806-10, as was his son Robert from 1838-59.⁵⁵ The family were blacksmiths and by 1851 the younger Robert Hopewell was a master blacksmith employing one man and an apprentice.⁵⁶ He was a trustee and major subscriber for the new chapel in 1842 and also the first president of the Wesleyan Methodist Friendly Society instituted in 1842.⁵⁷ In addition, he acquired wider Methodist links by marrying Elizabeth Squires, a member of the Flintham Society, in 1829⁵⁸ and four of their children were on the Sunday school register for 1851.⁵⁹ Thomas Kemp became a member in 1805 and was a class leader from 1814 to 1838, while his wife Ellen was listed from 1814 and also as a leader between 1829 and 1837.⁶⁰ As a labourer, Thomas did not hold the same position in the community as the Hopewells but this did not prevent his being a significant core member of the Society.⁶¹ There is no evidence of the Marshalls or the Coopers playing any other roles.

From 1830 the Squires emerged as a new core family. John Squires was first listed in 1830 and became a class leader from 1837 until the 1880s.⁶² He embarked on the process of becoming a local preacher in the 1840s and was one of the first stewards of the Friendly Society.⁶³ Also one of the

⁵³ See above Chapter 3, 119-20.

⁵⁴ N.A.O. PR 3886.

⁵⁵ N.A.O. NC/MR/5/30/1; /5/23/2; /8/28.

⁵⁶ Harper & Harper, *Chronicles*, 33; T.N.A. HO 107/0853; HO 107/2139; White 1832, 492; White 1844, 400; White 1853, 447.

⁵⁷ N.A.O. NC/MR/8/338/1-6.

⁵⁸ N.A.O. PR 3868.

⁵⁹ Harper & Harper, *Chronicles*, 15.

⁶⁰ N.A.O. NC/MR/5/30/1-2; /23/1-2.

⁶¹ Harper & Harper, *Chronicles*, 33; T.N.A. HO 107/0853.

⁶² N.A.O. NC/MR/5/30/2; /5/23/1-2; /8/28-30.

⁶³ N.A.O. NC/MR/8/13; /8/338/1-6.

original trustees and subscribers for the new chapel, he had a position in the community as a bricklayer, being described in 1851 as a master bricklayer employing two journeymen and one labourer.⁶⁴ George Squires was also a bricklayer and rapidly became accredited as a local preacher in 1845, although the local preachers' meeting recorded that he 'neglected Kneeton on Sep. 5th. A note to be sent to him....especially since this is not his first offence'.⁶⁵ He and his wife Sarah chose Methodist baptism for their children during the 1840s and sent five children to the Sunday school in 1851, thereby indicating further strong commitment.⁶⁶ Another new core family was the Sheltons; George Shelton was a trustee and subscriber for the new chapel, opted for three Methodist baptisms of his children in the 1840s and had three children attending the Sunday school in 1851.⁶⁷ He also held the key position of chapel steward, signing the census return and was described in the general census as a small farmer with 33 acres.⁶⁸ However, he was part of a much wider family within the village, the majority of whom had connections with the Wesleyan chapel, as indicated by 16 Shelton children on the 1851 Sunday school register, coming from five different households.⁶⁹ It seems evident that key families who became committed to the Society were able to provide sufficient status and financial support to maintain a solid base in the village.

The focus of circuit activities has already been discussed.⁷⁰ As regards the Society, Cropwell Bishop had opened a Sunday school at some point prior to 1842 and with sufficient success that by 1851 110 scholars were

⁶⁴ White 1844, 401; White 1853, 447; T.N.A. HO 107/2139.

⁶⁵ T.N.A. HO 107/0853; /2139; White 1853, 447; N.A.O. NC/MR/8/13.

⁶⁶ N.A.O. NC/MR/8/243; Harper & Harper, *Chronicles*, 15.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*

⁶⁸ T.N.A. HO 129/443; HO 107/2139.

⁶⁹ Harper & Harper, *Chronicles*, 15; T.N.A. HO 107/2139.

⁷⁰ See above, 163-64.

registered.⁷¹ In addition, in 1842 the Wesleyan Methodist Friendly Society was instituted to give assistance to members in times of sickness, bereavement or death.⁷² Members had to be of 'good moral character and make it a point of duty to attend some public act of worship'.⁷³ Although membership was not limited to the chapel, it was run by prominent members. Four years later another social issue emerged when the local preachers' meeting minuted that 'a conversation took place as to what part Bro. Crampton [a Society member and local preacher] took in a Tetotal Meeting held in the Wesleyan Chapel, Cropwell Bishop'.⁷⁴ Clearly there was some support for the temperance movement in the Society, despite Wesleyan opposition nationally. Overall, this suggests a growing emphasis on care for the social needs and moral welfare of members or adherents, rather than on specifically seeking to convert those outside. On the other hand, a report of the chapel anniversary in 1844 stressed the attributes of the preacher in relation to conversions and focused on the numbers drawn to attend.⁷⁵ In respect of its financial position, Cropwell Bishop Society had a debt of £360 in 1847, which was unlikely to be paid off from the annual surplus of £4 10s 3d;⁷⁶ consequently, raising money must have featured amongst its concerns.

Cropwell Butler

Although the exact date of the erection of the Cropwell Butler Wesleyan chapel is uncertain, at some point in the late eighteenth or early nineteenth century the Society had moved from meeting in private houses to erecting

⁷¹ *Nottingham Review* 19 July 1844; Harper & Harper, *Chronicles*, 15.

⁷² N.A.O. NC/MR/8/338/1-6.

⁷³ *Ibid.*

⁷⁴ N.A.O. NC/MR/8/13.

⁷⁵ *Nottingham Review* 19 July 1844.

⁷⁶ N.A.O. NC/MR/8/39.

its own building on leased land.⁷⁷ No evidence has survived regarding the identity of the subscribers for the eventual purchase in 1825 but it can be assumed that the two trustees from Cropwell Butler, Thomas Crampton (a tailor) and Randall Kemp (a shoemaker), were amongst them.⁷⁸ In 1831, the Society purchased a much larger area of land surrounding the chapel building with trusts allowing the erection of a Sunday school, vestry and one or more dwelling houses as appendages and in aid of the chapel.⁷⁹ The precise level of expansion of the physical premises is uncertain. Although White's 1832 *Directory* stated that the Methodist chapel was 'built about five years ago,' this must have referred to an extension rather than a new chapel, as confirmed by the subsequent two entries noting an 'enlargement'.⁸⁰ There is no evidence of dwelling houses ever being built but changes were probably made to accommodate the Sunday school, since this was holding regular yearly anniversary services by 1837.⁸¹

Figure 4.5 below plots the membership totals, with gaps for missing data, from the earliest record until 1851. No records have survived for the first twenty years of the Society's existence but it was probably quite small, since there were only twelve members in 1794. Over the period, considerable fluctuations were apparent, although early losses were partly due to members from Cropwell Bishop setting up their own Society. However, against the population, the Wesleyans never again achieved the high point of 8 per cent in 1801. During the following half century, the only decade to see a proportional rise was from 1821 (4.5 per cent) to 1831 (6.5 per cent). By 1851 it had fallen back to 4.5 per cent, with the numbers exhibiting a sharp drop towards the end of the 1840s, possibly

⁷⁷ See above Chapter 3, 127-28.

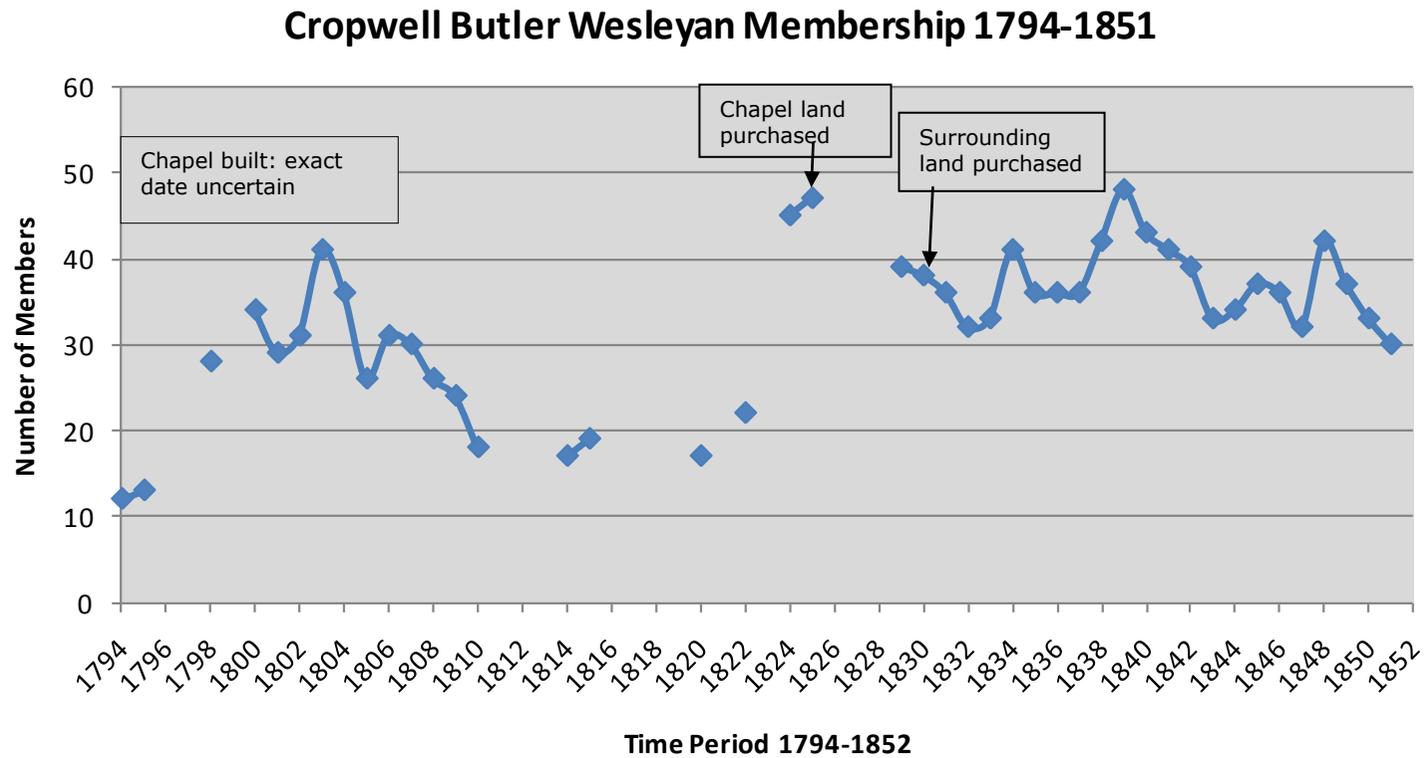
⁷⁸ B.M.C. Deeds for Methodist Chapel, Cropwell Butler, Notts., Bargain & Sale 7 October 1825.

⁷⁹ B.M.C. Deeds, Cropwell Butler, Release of a Piece of Ground 26 July 1831.

⁸⁰ White 1832, 512; White 1844, 411; White 1853, 458.

⁸¹ J.M. Barratt, Cropwell Bishop, Notts. Private Collection of Scrap Books. Set of Sunday School Anniversary Invitations, 1837-69.

Figure 4.5



Sources: N.A.O. NC/MR/30/5/1-2; /5/23/1-2; /8/28

from a combination of the national denominational problems and the local factor of the establishment of the Primitive Methodists.⁸² The decision to purchase the leased land on which the chapel building stood was taken at a time of rising membership but it is somewhat surprising that a considerable amount of further land was purchased when numbers were decreasing.

Up to 1832, approximately 128 individuals were listed as members, with dates ranging from entries for a single year (64) to a span of 37 years (2).⁸³ Figure 4.6 below summarises this information.

Cropwell Butler experienced short-term adherence of members very similar to that found at Flintham, although there were slightly less in the two-to-four-year category. When the 1806-10 period was analysed in detail (Table 4.9), it showed 13 additions with a net loss of three, which again confirmed that recorded membership figures concealed a much greater turnover.

Table 4.9
Cropwell Butler Wesleyan Society Membership Changes
1806-10

Year	Recorded Membership	Change from Previous Year	New Members
1806	31	+ 5	5
1807	30	- 1	No data
1808	26	- 4	2
1809	24	- 2	3
1810	28	+ 4	3

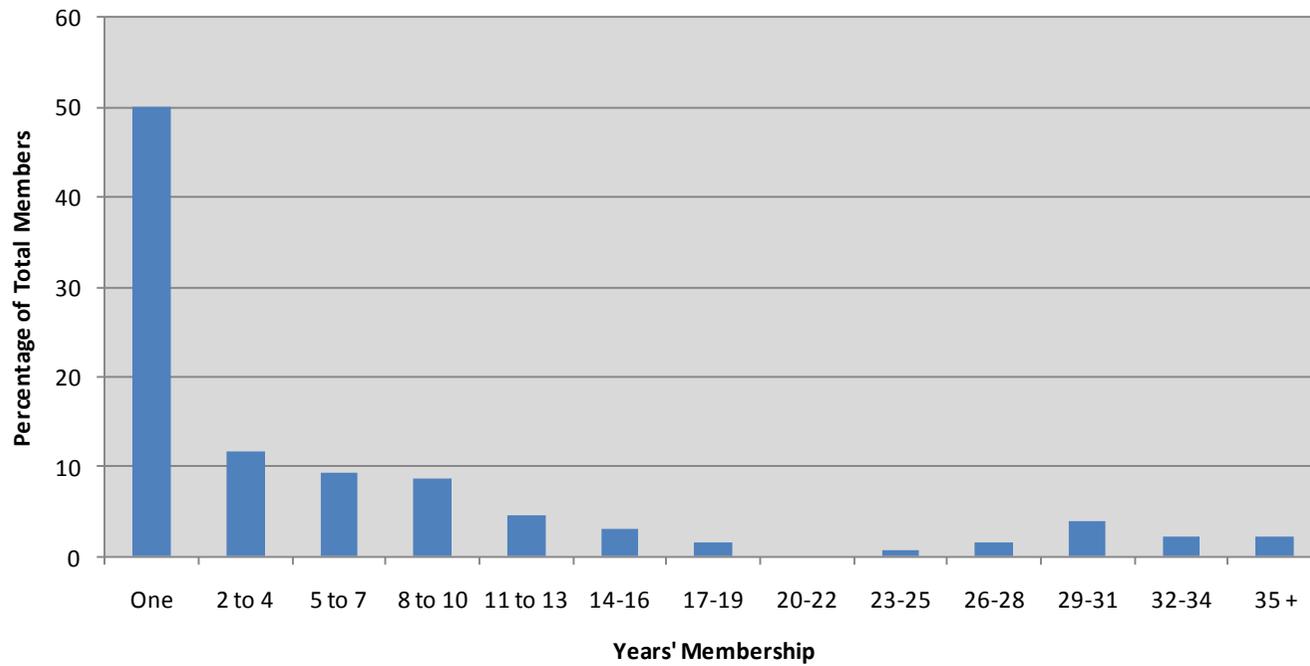
Source: N.A.O. NC/MR/5/30/1

⁸² See below Chapter 5, 226-27.

⁸³ See above for method used, 153.

Figure 4.6

Cropwell Butler Wesleyan Society Membership Span 1794-1832



Sources: N.A.O. NC/MR/5/30/1-2

The final investigation of the early records was not undertaken, because of insufficient numbers in any of the five years under consideration for a valid analysis of the extent to which losses related to new members.

Nevertheless, analysing type of growth, Cropwell Butler was shown to have 67.6 per cent exogenous and 32.4 per cent endogenous during the early period.⁸⁴ Although the balance was still two thirds to one third, nevertheless the Society appeared to be moving to a greater dependence on recruitment from existing families, possibly because it had been established well before the nineteenth century.

As with the other villages, the quarterly returns were used to identify reasons for leaving from 1837-1851. Table 4.10 below shows the results. Although the numbers leaving from year to year did not show such a wide variation as in Flintham or Cropwell Bishop, the percentage loss was even higher, amounting to 107.1 per cent of the total number of new members (84). A substantial part of this related to people moving to other places, rather than to backsliding, which again contrasts with Cropwell Bishop. However, irrespective of the reason, it is still clear that there was a vast turnover in membership concealed behind small changes in the totals.

⁸⁴ N.A.O. NC/MR/5/30/1-2; See above for method used, 153.

Table 4.10
Reasons for Leaving Cropwell Butler Wesleyan Society 1837-1851

Year	Backsliding	Removal	Death	Total	Membership
1837			1	1	36
1838	5	1		6	42
1839	10	5		15	48
1840	3	4		7	43
1841	3		1	4	41
1842	1		1	2	39
1843	4	1		5	33
1844	2	1		3	34
1845	2			2	37
1846		3		3	36
1847	2	8		10	32
1848	2	10		12	42
1849	2	2	1	5	37
1850	5	2		7	33
1851	8			8	30
Totals	49	37	4	90	

Sources: N.A.O. NC/MR/5/23/1-2; /8/28

The membership spans of families in the earlier period were investigated and are shown in Table 4.11 below.⁸⁵

⁸⁵ See above for method used, 153.

Table 4.11
Membership Span of Families in Cropwell Butler Wesleyan Society
1794-1832

Name	Span	Dates
Bowden	37	1794-1830
Crampton	37	1794-1830
Kemp	35	1798-1832
Hopewell	33	1798-1830
Innocent	33	1798-1830
Marriott	31	1794-1824
Willoughby	31	1800-1830
Wragby	22	1809-30
White	18	1803-20
Newton (1)	17	1794-1810
Parker	16	1795-1810
Walker	15	1801-15
Barratt	11	1794-1804
Miller	11	1820-30
Sponge (1)	11	1820-30
Sponge (2)	9	1798-1806
Taylor	8	1794-1801
Carver	7	1824-30
Gibson	7	1824-30
Newton (2)	7	1824-30
Cooper	3	1822-4
Whillis	3	1822-4
Burgen	1	1803
Dent	1	1824
Levers	1	1806
Marshall	1	1808

Sources: N.A.O. NC/MR/5/30/1-2

There were potentially five core families: Bowden, Crampton, Kemp, Hopewell and Innocent. Of these, the two key ones were the Cramptons and the Kemps. The Cramptons had been in the village for generations. John Crampton was on the first membership list in 1794 and a class leader from 1809 to 1822.⁸⁶ He was then succeeded as a leader in 1824 by his son Thomas, who fulfilled this role until 1840 and was also a Sunday school

⁸⁶ N.A.O. NC/MR/5/30/1-2.

teacher and one of the two Cropwell Butler trustees when the land was purchased for the chapel in the 1820s.⁸⁷ Described as a tailor and shopkeeper, he continued as a member into the second half of the century.⁸⁸ Randall Kemp was the other trustee, joining the Society in 1798 and becoming a leader in 1808 until his death in 1841.⁸⁹ His family were shoemakers and he and George Kemp (probably his brother), who was unusual in opting for a Methodist baptism as early as 1833, were both listed in the directories.⁹⁰ It is clear these two core families were of sufficient substance and standing in the community to provide vital support for the Wesleyans. There is no evidence regarding the other three families playing any particular role in the Society's life.

In the 1840s, the most significant new family to emerge was the Coopers. Matthew Cooper was a class leader from 1840-48 and from 1845 onwards six of his children received Methodist baptism.⁹¹ He was a leader in the Sunday school where four of his children were registered in 1851.⁹² William Cooper was a class leader for over 40 years, starting in 1848 and became a trustee from 1851.⁹³ He too led in the Sunday school and sent his children there.⁹⁴ Both were agricultural labourers,⁹⁵ indicating a change in the socio-economic group leading one aspect of the Society's life and in line with Biggs' finding in north Nottinghamshire that labourers were one of the largest groups amongst the class leaders, especially in the villages.⁹⁶ However, the steward was John Newton, son of a tenant farmer of 170

⁸⁷ N.A.O. PR 6988; NC/MR/5/30/1-2; /5/23/1-2; /8/408 B.M.C. Deeds, Cropwell Butler, Bargain; Release.

⁸⁸ White 1832, 512; White 1844, 412; White 1853, 459; N.A.O. NC/MR/8/29.

⁸⁹ B.M.C. Deeds, Cropwell Butler, Bargain; Release; N.A.O. NC/MR/5/30/1-2; /5/23/1-2.

⁹⁰ White 1832, 512; White 1844, 412; White 1853, 458; N.A.O. NC/MR/5/34/1.

⁹¹ N.A.O. NC/MR/5/23/2; /8/28; /8/242.

⁹² N.A.O. NC/MR/8/408.

⁹³ N.A.O. NC/MR/8/28-30; B.M.C. Deeds, Cropwell Butler, Memorandum of the choice and appointment of New Trustees 5 July 1851.

⁹⁴ N.A.O. NC/MR/8/408.

⁹⁵ T.N.A. HO 107/0854; /2139.

⁹⁶ Biggs, 'Methodism', 427.

acres, the seventh largest farm in the village in 1851.⁹⁷ He was mentioned as a subscriber to various funds and a purchaser of the minutes of the Methodist Conference, so was clearly a committed Methodist of some substance.⁹⁸ In 1848 he married Mary Crampton, which further strengthened the base of the Society by establishing a link between two major families;⁹⁹ their children were baptised at the chapel, although never appeared on the Sunday school roll, which may have reflected a level of class bias.¹⁰⁰ It is likely that there were family connections with George Newton, who was also a farmer, a member from at least 1830 and a class leader from 1845 until his death in 1848.¹⁰¹

The other major core family to emerge in this later period was the Barratts. Individuals from this extensive village family appeared on the earliest membership lists and by the 1840s George and Sarah Barratt were key members, opting for Methodist baptism from 1847, sending their children to the Sunday school and with George becoming a trustee in 1851.¹⁰² In addition, three children of William Barratt, George's brother, were also on the Sunday school register.¹⁰³

The focus of circuit activities has already been discussed,¹⁰⁴ although the Cropwell Butler Society appeared to lack involvement in circuit affairs, with few individuals becoming local preachers. Following John Newton, who died in 1808, there were only two local preachers in the later part of the half century, both of whom moved in and out of the village.¹⁰⁵ In addition, there is no record of anyone from the Society ever holding a circuit office.

⁹⁷ T.N.A. HO 129/443; 107/2139; White 1844, 412; White 1853, 458.

⁹⁸ N.A.O. NC/MR/8/28-9.

⁹⁹ H.T.C.T. Register of marriages 1837→.

¹⁰⁰ N.A.O. NC/MR/8/242; /8/408.

¹⁰¹ T.N.A. HO 107/0854; N.A.O. NC/MR/5/30/2; /8/28.

¹⁰² N.A.O. NC/MR/5/30/1; /8/242; /8/408; B.M.C. Deeds, Cropwell Butler, Memorandum 1851.

¹⁰³ NC/MR/8/408.

¹⁰⁴ See above, 163-64.

¹⁰⁵ N.A.O. NC/MR/5/19; /8/13.

The surviving evidence indicates a significant level of chapel activity related to the Sunday school, with its anniversaries having clearly become village occasions.¹⁰⁶ However, it is not certain how far there was a developing emphasis on social needs at the expense of evangelistic activities.

Bingham

The Bingham Society had progressed from using a preaching place (1773) to possibly having a chapel building in 1780 and certainly having a building by 1795.¹⁰⁷ However, in February 1818 the Society purchased 568 square yards in Union Street for £198 5s 0d 'for the Purpose of erecting thereon a Chapel for *The Wesleyan Society of Methodists*';¹⁰⁸ by July the *Nottingham Review* reported the opening services of a new chapel.¹⁰⁹ In 1822 it was described as a 'large dissenting meeting house' and in 1844 as a 'neat chapel... which will seat about 500'.¹¹⁰ Of the 14 trustees, three were from the Bingham Society; William Huckerby, John Doncaster and William Hemstock were longstanding members and the first two were also class leaders.¹¹¹ As respectively a draper, a grocer and a miller, they were all tradesmen within the town.¹¹² By 1837 it was reported that 'on Sunday lasta collection made towards defraying expenses incurred by erection of a singing gallery, amounted to £10'.¹¹³ However, in 1849, the surviving trustees bought a piece of adjoining land for £80,¹¹⁴ which was sold on for the same price to a new set of trustees in 1856 'to be an appendage to the

¹⁰⁶ See below Chapter 6, 261-63.

¹⁰⁷ See above Chapter 3, 136-37.

¹⁰⁸ B.M.C. Deeds for Methodist Chapel, Bingham, Notts. Bargain and Sale of a Tenement and a Parcel of Land in Bingham Coun^t Nott^m 24 February 1818.

¹⁰⁹ *Nottingham Review* 24 July 1818.

¹¹⁰ Pigot 1822, 324; White 1844, 378.

¹¹¹ B.M.C. Deeds, Bingham, Bargain; N.A.O. NC/MR/5/30/1.

¹¹² B.M.C. Deeds, Bingham, Bargain; Pigot 1819, 539; Pigot 1822, 324.

¹¹³ *Nottingham Review* 14 April 1837.

¹¹⁴ B.M.C. Deeds, Bingham, Conveyance of a piece of ground Messuage and hereditaments at Bingham in the County of Nottingham 19 May 1849.

Methodist Chapel'.¹¹⁵ No evidence has survived regarding the particular use of this extra land but it suggests a continued consolidation of the Wesleyans' position regarding their physical presence in the town.

The variations in membership are shown in Figure 4.7 below. Although there was an overall upward trend until the 1840s, there were only two decades with a rise relative to the growth in population. The first between 1801 and 1811 (3.7 to 5 per cent), a period of reasonably steady growth, and the other between 1831 and 1841 (4.4 to 6.2 per cent), where a dramatic but temporary rise in membership occurred from 1839-42. No specific local evidence has emerged to explain the sharp rise from 1838-9 but it is likely that it indicates a period of revival. Although the drop in 1843 may have related to a loss of faith in those newly converted,¹¹⁶ it also occurred when the Bingham circuit split from Newark.¹¹⁷ Consequently, there may have been some discrepancies in transferring records or reassessment of the actual membership as a new circuit was set up. This latter option is supported by the actual membership loss for 1843 being recorded as only eight with lower overall totals subsequently.¹¹⁸ In the later part of the 1840s, numbers levelled off rather than exhibiting a distinct downward trend. The decisions to build a chapel in 1795 and then a subsequent one in 1818 are understandable since these were points when numbers were increasing but the purchase of adjoining land in 1849 might have been simply because it became available. The fact that it was not specifically vested in the trustees as Methodists until 1856 and that the purchase price was paid again supports this suggestion.

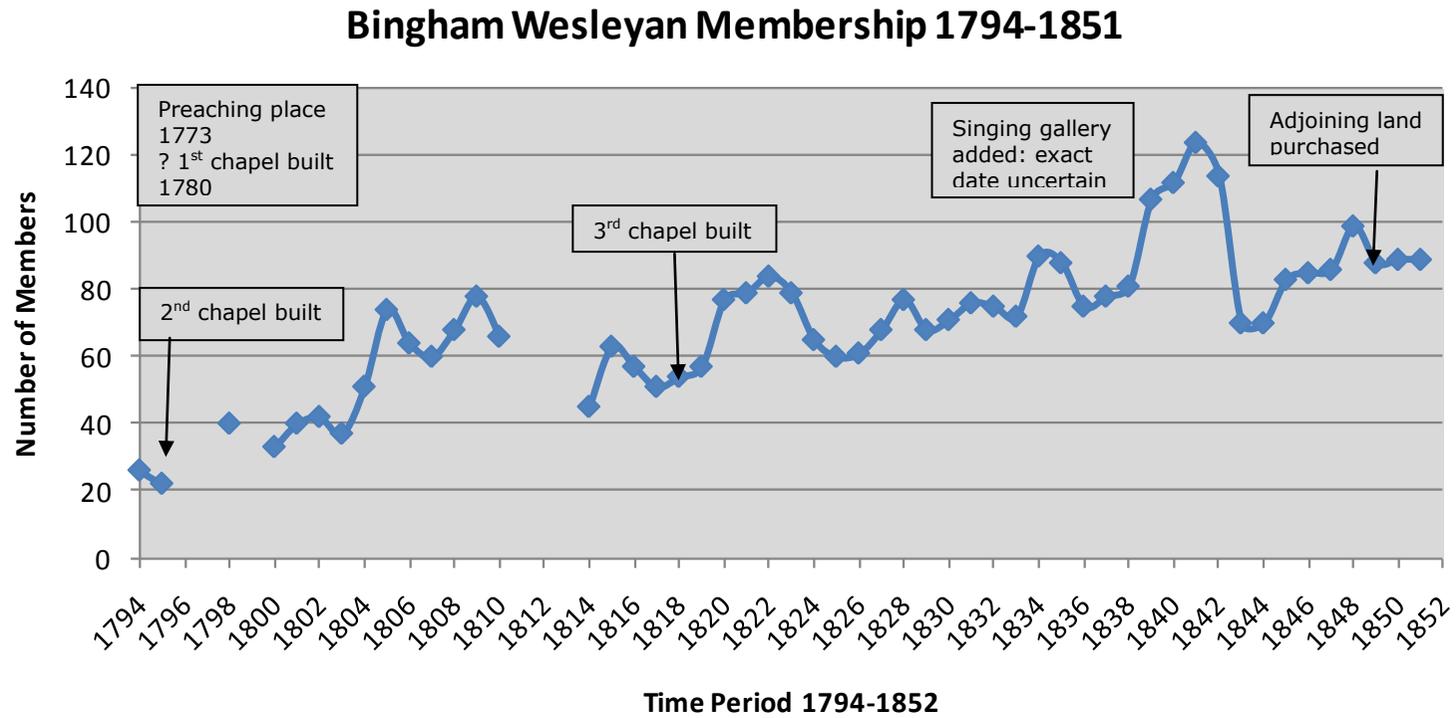
¹¹⁵ B.M.C. Deeds, Bingham, Conveyance of a piece of land and messuage situate at Bingham Nottinghamshire 2 May 1856.

¹¹⁶ Currie, Gilbert & Horsley, *Churches and Churchgoers*, 82

¹¹⁷ N.A.O. NC/MR/5/23/2; /8/28.

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*

Figure 4.7



Sources: N.A.O. NC/MR/5/30/1-2; /5/23/1-2; /8/28; /8/73

Up to 1832, approximately 321 individuals were listed as members, with dates ranging from entries for a single year (155) to a span of 39 years (2).¹¹⁹ Figure 4.8 below summarises this information.

There was a sharp fall off in the adherence of members after both the first year (48.3 per cent) and in the first four years (67.6 per cent). These percentage losses were very similar to those of Flintham, thus indicating that there was no significant difference between town and village regarding membership commitment. An early five-year period with continuous records was analysed in detail to ascertain whether changes in totals concealed a much bigger turnover. Table 4.12 shows the results.

Table 4.12
Bingham Wesleyan Society Membership Changes 1805-09

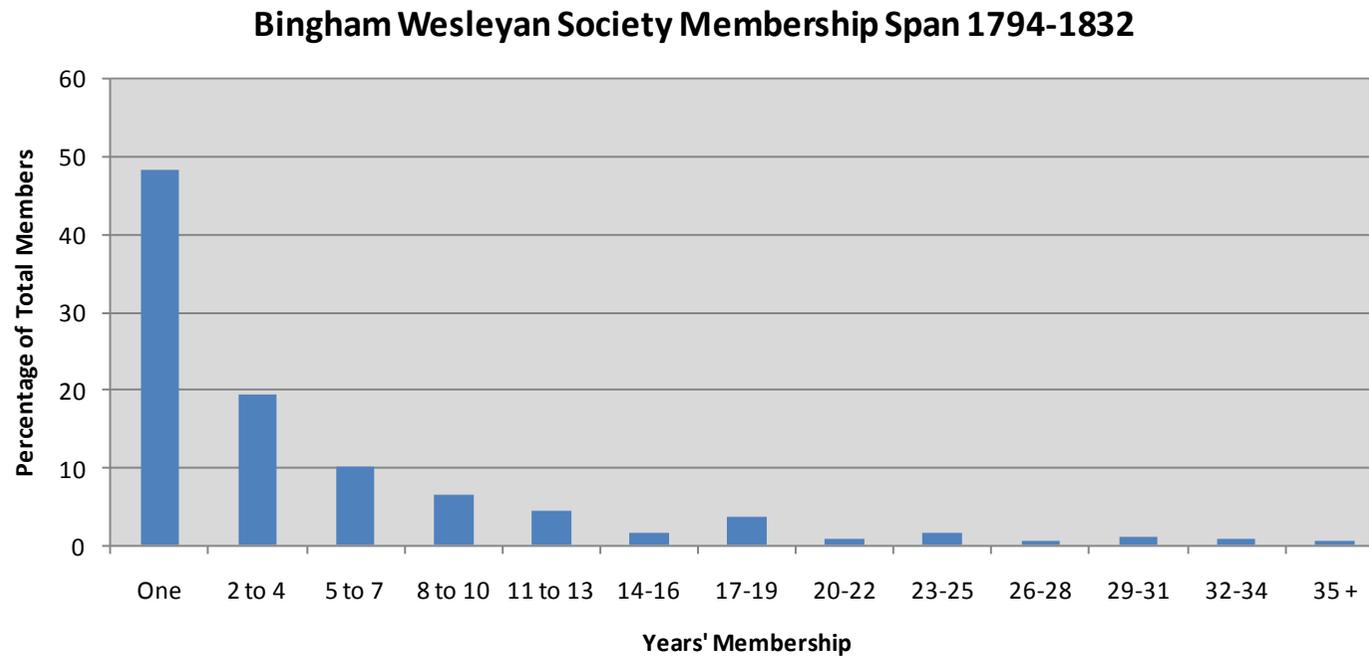
Year	Recorded Membership	Change from Previous Year	New Members
1805	74	+ 23	30
1806	64	- 10	6
1807	60	- 4	No data
1808	68	+ 8	14
1809	78	+ 10	24

Source: N.A.O. NC/MR/5/30/1

Although the range of the membership numbers was 18, with a net gain of four by the end of the period, there had been a total of 73 new members added, with additions even in years of net loss. This clearly supported the same conclusion as in the villages that significantly higher numbers were both joining and leaving than the growth rate revealed.

¹¹⁹ See above for method used, 153.

Figure 4.8



Sources: N.A.O. NC/MR/5/30/1-2

To test whether there was a rapid loss of new members, the membership spans of the 30 individuals joining in 1805 were identified (Table 4.13 below). 19 were members for less than five years and twelve for only one year, thus confirming a high dropout rate in the early years. It was also clear that a previous family connection with the Society increased the chances of a new member moving into longer commitment.

Despite the presence of a number of key families, growth in the first part of the half century was still primarily exogenous. Analysing the membership up to 1830,¹²⁰ there were 76.7 per cent members from outside, as opposed to 23.3 per cent connected with existing families.

Table 4.14¹²¹ shows reasons for leaving the Bingham Society from 1837 to 1851. 217 individuals left, although the membership total only changed by eleven; however, there was a variation of 44 within that time. In view of the tentative conclusion reached above regarding the recorded drop in 1843, it is difficult to be certain about the exact extent of turnover but it was still significant.¹²² Although backsliding was the biggest reason for leaving, it exceeded the figure for removal by only five per cent, which suggests a greater mobility of members than in some of the villages.

¹²⁰ N.A.O. NC/MR/5/34/1-2; See above for method used, 153.

¹²¹ See below, 191.

¹²² See above, 185.

Table 4.13
Bingham Wesleyan Society:
Membership Span of New Members 1805

Number of years

1	2	3	4	5	6-10	11-15	16 +
Elizabeth Clifton	Mary Jones		Sarah Crofts	Rebecca Senn	George Baxter	Richard Jebb	Robert Brewster
John Fewks	John Jones		Sarah Jebb		Richard Culley	William Spencer	Mary Culley
Charles Graves	George Upton		Mary Stubbs		Robert Huskinson	William Vickerstaff	Mary Hough
John Harrison			Elizabeth Upton				Samuel Pilgrim
Maria Morris							
Elizabeth Parr							
Richard Parr							
Charles Reed							
Sarah Thraves							
Alice Voce							
Sister Wright							
William Wright							

Key: Individuals highlighted previously unconnected with Society

Source: N.A.O. NC/MR/5/30/1

Table 4.14
Reasons for Leaving Bingham Wesleyan Society 1837-1851

Year	Backsliding	Removal	Death	Total	Membership
1837	2	3	2	7	78
1838	3	10	2	15	81
1839	8	11	2	21	107
1840	8	10	4	22	112
1841	12	8	1	21	124
1842	6	6	3	15	114
1843	4	3	1	8	70
1844	6	4		10	70
1845	5	5		10	83
1846	6	7	2	15	85
1847	4	11	2	17	86
1848	13	7	1	21	99
1849	14	4		18	88
1850	5		1	6	89
1851	7	4		11	89
Totals	103	93	21	217	

Sources: N.A.O. NC/MR/5/23/1-2; /8/28

Investigating the membership span of the early families revealed five core families (Culley, Huckerby, Doncaster, Robinson and Skinner) with spans of 37 and 39 years (Table 4.15 below).¹²³ However, there were also another four families with substantial periods of committed membership.

¹²³ See above for method used, 153.

Table 4.15
Membership Span of Families in Bingham Wesleyan Society
1794-1832

Name	Span	Dates
Culley	39	1794-1832
Huckerby	39	1794-1832
Doncaster	37	1794-1830
Robinson	37	1794-1830
Skinner	37	1794-1830
Greaves	30	1801-30
Strong	29	1804-32
Hemstock	27	1804-30
Pilgrim	26	1805-30
Green	25	1800-24
Rowe	23	1800-22
Clifton (1)	21	1810-30
Jones	21	1804-24
Brewster	19	1804-22
Thr(e)aves	19	1802-20
Jebb	18	1805-22
Bates	17	1794-1810
Dikes/Dykes	17	1814-30
Widdowson	17	1814-30
Wheatley	16	1815-30
Wright	16	1794-1809
Vickerstaff	12	1804-15
Wilford	12	1804-15
Asher	11	1820-30
Baxter	11	1805-15
Crampton	11	1794-1804
Doubleday	11	1820-30
Essex	11	1820-30
Stubbs	11	1805-15
Richards (1)	10	1801-10
Dickman	9	1814-22
Felton	9	1822-30
Watson (1)	9	1814-22
Clifton (2)	8	1798-1805
Richards (2)	8	1822-30
Huskinson (1)	7	1804-10
Fisher	6	1795-1801
Harrison	5	1820-24
King	5	1820-24
Randall	4	1801-4
Upton	4	1805-8

Watson (2)	4	1795-8
Baker (1)	3	1822-4
Berry	3	1830-2
Kilham	3	1808-10
Marriott	3	1820-22
Rotherea	3	1808-10
Swann	3	1820-22
Whittle	3	1806-8
Woodward	3	1820-22
Baker (2)	1	1795
Balmer	1	1820
Beercroft	1	1808
Castledine	1	1815
Farehotin	1	1820
Huskinson (2)	1	1822
Mabbott	1	1806
Marshall	1	1800
Parr	1	1805
Ruxby	1	1815
Slater	1	1820
Whyman	1	1798

Sources: N.A.O. NC/MR/5/30/1-2

Some of these families appear to have been core to the activities of the Society and sometimes the circuit as well, while others were solely recorded in respect of long-term membership. The contribution of William Huckerby to the arrival of Methodism in Bingham has been discussed.¹²⁴ He remained a class leader until his death in 1836, was a trustee for the various chapel buildings and several of his family were also members, although apparently not playing any other roles.¹²⁵ He clearly had some status in the town as a draper and by 1832, aged 85, was of sufficient standing to be listed in *White's Directory* simply with name and address.¹²⁶ Of the other longest recorded families, George Skinner, whose child's Methodist baptism in 1796 is notable as the earliest in the records, was a

¹²⁴ See above Chapter 3, 136-37.

¹²⁵ N.A.O. NC/MR/5/34/1; /5/30/1-2; /5/23/1-2; B.A. 'Recent Deaths', *Wesleyan-Methodist Magazine* Vol.15 (Dec.1836), 966; B.M.C. Deeds, Bingham, Bargain.

¹²⁶ White 1832, 482.

class leader from 1794-1812, Thomas Culley was one from 1823-40, while there is no further evidence about the Robinson family apart from an early marriage link with the Culleys in 1789, which was likely to have strengthened the Society in its earliest period.¹²⁷ Amongst the remaining four families with more than 25 years' membership, at various times John Greaves and William Strong were class leaders and chapel and circuit stewards respectively and William Hemstock was a trustee in 1818 and 1849.¹²⁸

However, the family which stood out as being core to the Bingham Society over a very extensive period was the Doncasters. John Doncaster was first recorded as a member in 1798 and rapidly became a class leader until his death in 1820.¹²⁹ He married Elizabeth Huckerby in 1799, which was clearly a significant inter-marriage of two key families. A surviving plan of the period (1813-14) lists a Doncaster as a local preacher, which almost certainly refers to him and he was a trustee for the new chapel in 1818 and steward in 1819.¹³⁰ His obituary indicated his status:

Died on Friday last at Bingham, aged 52, gloriously triumphing in a firm belief of the truths of the Gospel – that Gospel which he had for many years eloquently and earnestly held up as a beacon to others by his preaching in the Wesleyan Connexion of Methodists – Mr John Doncaster, grocer etc. in that town.¹³¹

Shortly after his death, another John Doncaster from a different branch of the family became a member. First listed in 1822, he married Jane Strong (from another core family) in 1829 and by 1832 had become a circuit

¹²⁷ N.A.O. PR 7105; NC/MR/5/30/1-2; /5/23/1-2.

¹²⁸ N.A.O. NC/MR/5/30/1-2; /8/73; /5/23/1; /5/8; B.M.C. Deeds, Bingham, Bargain; Conveyance, 1849.

¹²⁹ N.A.O. NC/MR/5/30/1-2; *Nottingham Review* 10 November 1820.

¹³⁰ N.A.O. NC/MR/5/33/1; /8/73; B.M.C. Deeds, Bingham, Bargain.

¹³¹ *Nottingham Review* 10 November 1820.

steward;¹³² from 1835 he was a class leader and a local preacher from 1838.¹³³ His occupation developed from bricklayer to brickmaker and by 1853 he was identified as a builder and brickmaker of Providence House, Long Acre.¹³⁴ He had earlier lived in Market Place, also the residence of many other Methodist shopkeepers and tradesmen.¹³⁵ However, in 1843, he and others left the Wesleyan Society, almost certainly in connection with the temperance issue.¹³⁶ From the late 1830s Charles and Jane Doncaster emerged as new representatives of the family. They both became class leaders in 1839, Jane until 1843 and Charles until 1868, and seven of their children received Methodist baptism between 1840 and 1851.¹³⁷ Charles was also a steward from 1838-41, a local preacher from 1840 and became a trustee in 1856.¹³⁸ He described himself as a grocer but this was broadened later to shopkeeper, stationer and ironmonger.¹³⁹

In addition to the continuing support of the Doncasters, towards the end of the half century new families emerged. Again from the tradesmen and shopkeepers of Market Place, were the Newtons, who were boot and shoe makers.¹⁴⁰ The most notable was Isaac Newton, a class leader from 1835-1871, a steward in the late 1830s and a trustee from 1856.¹⁴¹ In the same location the Hardstaffs were chandlers and ironmongers and then general shopkeepers.¹⁴² James Hardstaff was both a circuit and chapel steward in the 1840s and signatory of the religious census return.¹⁴³ Both families used Methodist baptism for their children in the 1820s, 1830s and

¹³² N.A.O. PR 7106; NC/MR/5/30/1-2; /5/8.

¹³³ N.A.O. NC/MR/8/73; /5/19.

¹³⁴ Pigot 1831, 164; Pigot 1835, 269; White 1853, 424.

¹³⁵ Pigot 1835, 269.

¹³⁶ See below Chapter 5, 236-37.

¹³⁷ N.A.O. NC/MR/8/73; /5/34/2; /8/242.

¹³⁸ N.A.O. NC/MR/5/23/2; /5/19; /8/247; B.M.C. Deeds, Bingham, Conveyance, 1856.

¹³⁹ B.M.C. Deeds, Bingham, Conveyance, 1856; White, 1853, 425.

¹⁴⁰ White 1832, 483; White 1844, 379; White 1853, 424.

¹⁴¹ N.A.O. NC/MR/8/73; /5/23/2; B.M.C. Deeds, Bingham, Conveyance, 1856.

¹⁴² White 1832, 484; White 1844, 380; White 1853, 425.

¹⁴³ N.A.O. NC/MR/8/6; T.N.A. HO 129/443.

1840s.¹⁴⁴ Finally, the first of the Chettle family appeared in the records in 1847, when William Walker Chettle was authorised as an exhorter.¹⁴⁵ He was listed in 1848-9 and later in the 1850s became a class leader and trustee.¹⁴⁶ Other members of the family also became heavily involved with the Society in the succeeding half century.¹⁴⁷ Overall it is clear that a number of key families demonstrated a continuing commitment, sometimes involving different branches of the family and over succeeding generations. As part of the established community of tradesmen and craftsmen often living in close proximity, they provided both a status in the community and a basis of financial support.

The focus of circuit activities has already been considered¹⁴⁸ but since Bingham was the second largest place in the Newark circuit and later the largest in the Bingham circuit, there was more involvement in circuit affairs than in the villages.¹⁴⁹ There is little evidence about the focus of the Society's activities before the 1840s, although a Sunday school was in existence by 1851 and the Wesleyan day school opened in 1846.¹⁵⁰ This venture, probably partly spurred on by Anglican plans to build a new parish school,¹⁵¹ must inevitably have been a focus of chapel activity.

Nevertheless, there was clearly a financial cost and the circuit schedule for 1847 showed the Bingham chapel debt as £525.¹⁵² It also suggests an emphasis away from activities to draw in adults by conversion to ones directed at a broad spectrum of children and therefore only indirectly aimed at involving their families.

¹⁴⁴ N.A.O. NC/MR/5/34/1-2.

¹⁴⁵ N.A.O. NC/MR/8/13.

¹⁴⁶ N.A.O. NC/MR/8/247; /8/28; B.M.C. Deeds, Bingham, Conveyance, 1856.

¹⁴⁷ NC/MR/8/28-30.

¹⁴⁸ See above, 163-64.

¹⁴⁹ See above, 193-95.

¹⁵⁰ T.N.A. HO 129/443; A. Esdaile, *An Historical Account of Bingham and Surrounding Villages* (1851), 23; *Nottingham Review* 23 January 1846; see Chapter 6 below, 265 and 270.

¹⁵¹ Esdaile, *Bingham*, 20-21.

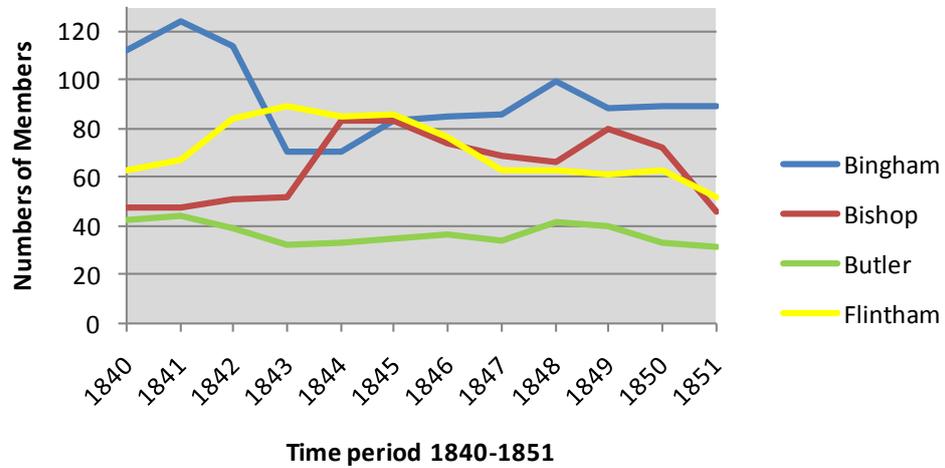
¹⁵² N.A.O. NC/MR/8/39.

Comparisons

Three of the Wesleyan Societies had already acquired a chapel building by the early nineteenth century and Cropwell Bishop moved from a barn to a chapel in 1824. As anticipated, they all continued to expand and develop their facilities and physical presence in the community. In Bingham and Cropwell Bishop this comprised erecting a completely new chapel building on different land, while in Cropwell Butler the chapel building was made more secure by the outright purchase of the land and in Flintham the building was extended. In general these decisions did not relate closely to membership trends and in some instances the purchase of additional land appeared to be primarily because it became available, although it still suggests that certain members were thinking about future expansion.

The trends of overall membership for the four Societies from their formation until the 1840s was generally upwards, although some fluctuated more widely than others, with signs of local revivals on occasions. A comparison of the variations during the last decade of the half century is shown in Figure 4.9 below.

Figure 4.9
Comparison of Membership of Wesleyan Societies
1840-1851



Sources: N.A.O. NC/MR/5/23/2; /8/28

Although there were signs of a decline everywhere, it was not clear cut and, apart from Bingham, all the Societies were in a very similar position at the end of the decade as at the beginning. Cropwell Butler was the most stable avoiding large variations but was also the smallest Society. In all cases the chapels experienced similar fortunes to the national situation regarding total membership, with decelerating growth and some indication of decline.

All the Societies apparently experienced a much greater level of exogenous than endogenous growth up to 1830, although these figures have to be viewed with caution in the light of the difficulties of identifying family relationships and of ascertaining how far adult conversions were simultaneous for a number of family members. Table 4.16 below shows comparative percentages.

Table 4.16

Type of Growth in Wesleyan Societies up to 1830

Place	Exogenous Growth %	Endogenous Growth %
Flintham	71.2	28.8
C.Bishop	81.5	18.5
C.Butler	67.6	32.4
Bingham	76.7	23.3

Sources: N.A.O. NC/MR/5/30/1-2

While the figures are sufficiently high in all the four places to support the suggestion that growth was primarily exogenous, nevertheless the evidence points to a continually evolving situation. Some new families with no previous connections became very long-term members, while other second generation individuals apparently did not continue as Methodists. It may be that the slightly less clear cut position in Cropwell Butler, which was the longest standing Society in the villages, indicated a move towards a greater reliance on new members coming from existing families.

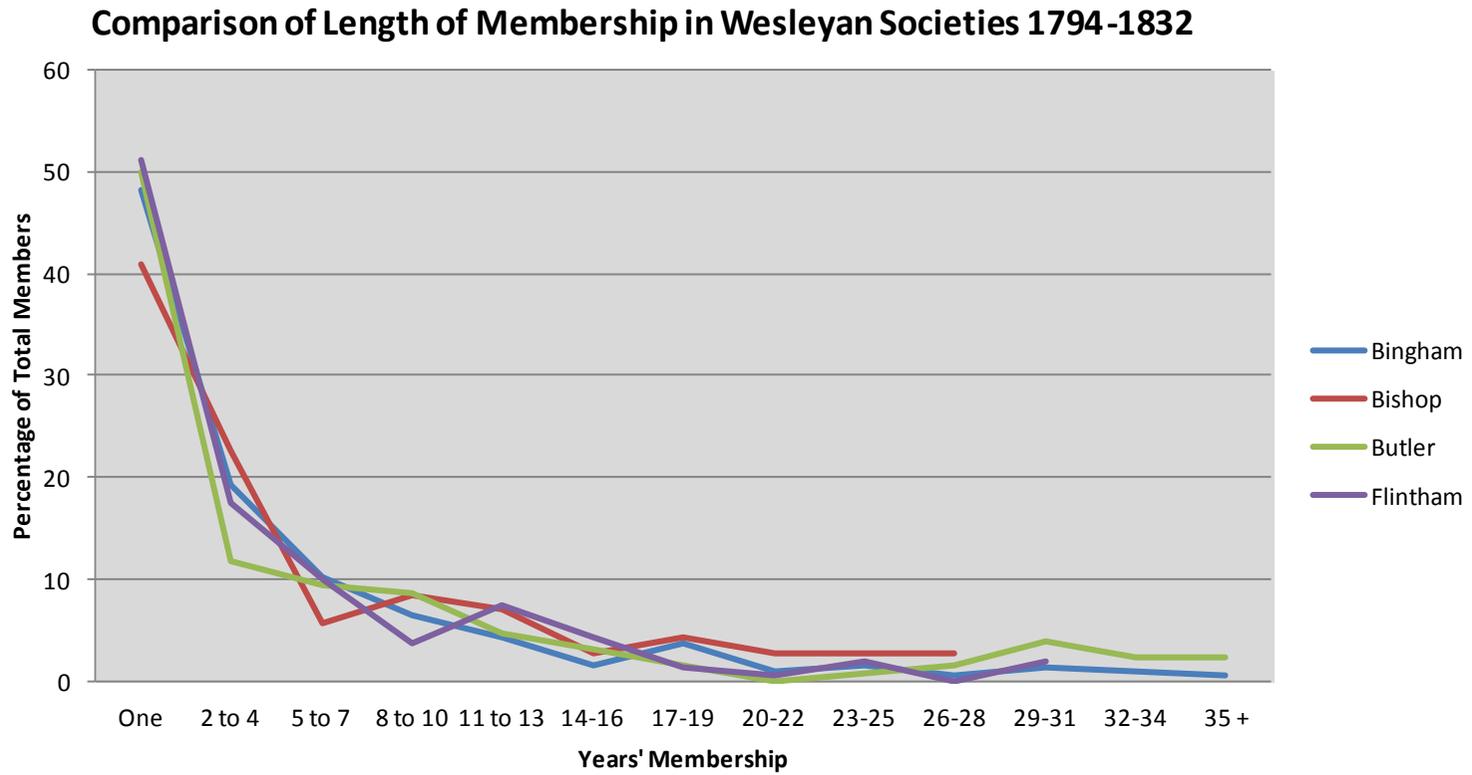
However, within these overall growth trends, what clearly emerged in relation to both the small town of Bingham and the three medium-sized villages was that changes in total membership numbers concealed a much bigger turnover of people joining and leaving. Figure 4.10¹⁵³ compares the membership spans of individuals up to 1832.

The similarity of the short-term membership loss for all the chapels is identified, as well as the existence of a small number of people demonstrating long-term commitment. In addition, analysis of a five-year

¹⁵³ See below, 201

period early in the nineteenth century confirmed that in all four Societies many more new members joined, as identified by individual names in the records, than was apparent from changes in the overall total. There were some variations as the losses were most acute in the Cropwells and least so in Flintham but it was still significant everywhere. In Bingham and Cropwell Bishop, more of those without any apparent family connection left earlier, although not in Flintham.

Figure 4.10



Sources: N.A.O. NC/MR/5/30/1-2

The data available for the latter part of the half century also revealed that by the 1840s a significant turnover of membership was continuing for all the Societies, even allowing for uncertainties in the records. The biggest reason identified was backsliding but its proportion out of the total varied noticeably, as shown in Table 4.17.

Table 4.17
Turnover in Membership in Wesleyan Societies 1837-1851

Place	% Back-sliding	% Moving	% Death	Total Leaving	Diff.*	Total Joining
Flintham	62.2	32.8	5.0	119	+ 8	127
C.Bishop	75.0	19.0	5.6	168	+16	184
C.Butler	54.4	41.1	4.4	90	- 6	84
Bingham	47.5	42.9	9.7	217	+11	228

*difference in total membership between start and end of period

Sources: N.A.O. NC/MR/5/23/1-2; /8/28

In this period, Bingham suffered less from backsliding than any of the villages and conversely identified more people as moving. The loss through backsliding was particularly high in Cropwell Bishop which may have been due to the temporary breakaway of a group of Wesleyan Reformers.¹⁵⁴

Although individuals and families moving away, identifiable from 1841 in the population censuses, could not be linked with those ceasing to be Wesleyan Society members up to 1832, the extent of population turnover was investigated for one village. This showed that in Cropwell Bishop 50 per cent of individuals over 14 on the 1841 census were no longer listed in 1851. The largest group disappearing from the village (6.4 per cent males

¹⁵⁴ See above, 165-67.

and 10.8 per cent females of the total population over 14), comprised single people of 25 and under who were apprentices or without specific occupation. However, an unidentified but small number of the females in this group would have married and remained. Of the occupational groups, unskilled workers were most likely to leave. It was assumed the main reason for individuals and couples leaving was related to finding work and this high mobility between the censuses was clearly a possible factor contributing to the high turnover in membership. Nevertheless, general population movement was only relevant to the numbers leaving because of 'removals' and, for all the Societies, backsliding was still the major reason for loss of members in this period.

The membership spans clearly revealed that core families existed in all the chapels. Members of some families were actively involved as class leaders, stewards or trustees, while others simply gave the commitment of membership, undoubtedly involving financial support. In the second quarter additional key families emerged, while some of the earlier ones disappeared. On occasions, the next generation took over, as with the Hopewells in Cropwell Bishop, the Cramptons in Cropwell Butler and the Doncasters in Bingham and there was also some inter-marriage between Methodist families both within a Society (Doncaster and Huckerby in Bingham) and from neighbouring places (Hopewell from Cropwell Bishop and Squires from Flintham). From the start, there were a noticeable number of tradesmen among key members forming a basis of financial support and in Bingham many of them were neighbours, located in the Market Place for much of the period. In all the villages a level of support from farmers had emerged by mid-century but there were still labourers amongst the class leaders.

In terms of the focus of chapel activities, the Societies had all established Sunday schools at some point before 1851, while Bingham also opened a day school. Indications of social concerns were apparent at Cropwell Bishop with the institution of a Friendly Society and some involvement in the temperance movement. Temperance was also an issue at Bingham where the national Wesleyan stance led to a breakaway group.¹⁵⁵ All the Societies, apart from Cropwell Butler, were struggling with debt by mid-century.

Conclusions

Although the identity of the Societies became solidly established in the first quarter of the nineteenth century, with separate chapel buildings and the purchase of land, it has already been shown¹⁵⁶ this did not clearly follow the pattern identified in the literature.¹⁵⁷ Similarly, expansion of the premises over the next 25 years did not relate closely to overall growth.

Trends in membership totals were broadly in line with the national situation, particularly the signs of decline in the later 1840s¹⁵⁸ and the argument that growth was initially exogenous¹⁵⁹ was clearly demonstrated everywhere. The related point of subsequent endogenous growth¹⁶⁰ was not confirmed because later evidence was insufficiently detailed, there were some contrary examples and high turnover continued. Currie, et al., had suggested from the national perspective that high growth meant high turnover owing to exogenous recruitment;¹⁶¹ however, the experience of these four Societies raises questions about this relationship. The apparent

¹⁵⁵ See below Chapter 5, 236-37.

¹⁵⁶ See above, Chapter 3, 146 and 149.

¹⁵⁷ Ambler, *Churches*, 143, 146; Biggs, 'Methodism', 279; Church, *Early Methodist*, 52.

¹⁵⁸ Currie, *Methodism*, 89-92.

¹⁵⁹ Gilbert, *Religion and Society*, 68, 152.

¹⁶⁰ *Ibid*, 149-53; Currie, *Methodism*, 92.

¹⁶¹ Currie, Gilbert & Horsley, *Churches and Churchgoers*, 82.

consolidation revealed in growth trends concealed an unexpectedly high turnover throughout, including during times of overall stability or decline. Figure 4.10¹⁶² demonstrates that when individuals could be identified (up to 1830) between 40 and 50 per cent left after one year, while from 1837-51 there was a loss of over 90 percent of the total of new members in every Society. Obviously, these were not necessarily all the same individuals but nevertheless it was surprising, particularly in view of the level of commitment required for membership, although it may not have meant ceasing to attend worship or severing other connections. This phenomenon of a continuous high turnover, irrespective of growth has not generally been identified in local studies, particularly for the early part of the century. Those leaving the Societies because of removal were undoubtedly part of the general turnover of people seeking work but there is no obvious conclusion about the reason for the level of backsliding, other than temporarily in Cropwell Bishop, or why it was somewhat less in Bingham in the 1840s.

The view in the literature that Wesleyan Societies were often run over long periods by a small group of families¹⁶³ was confirmed in this study; there was evidence everywhere that a committed core of families, sometimes linked by inter-marriage, remained the key support, with particular individuals often occupying a variety of leadership roles.

There is mixed evidence regarding whether the focus of activities had shifted by 1851, as has been suggested.¹⁶⁴ The references to conversions in circuit records and the gain of many new members, albeit for possibly only a short time, indicates the fundamental spiritual purpose of the

¹⁶² See above, 201.

¹⁶³ Watts, *Dissenters II*, 163-4; Ambler, *Churches*, 139,147,151; Obelkevich, *Religion*, 184, 200-01.

¹⁶⁴ Watts, *Dissenters II*, 609-11.

Societies had not been lost. However, the small number of surviving plans hinders any firm conclusion about the extent of specifically evangelistic activities. In addition the growing concern with social issues and contributions to community life in terms of Sunday school and chapel occasions, as well as the financial problems for most Societies, suggest some refocusing.

All the Wesleyan Societies clearly consolidated in this period in terms of buildings, total membership, the emergence of core families and key individuals and exhibiting signs of moving towards greater social and community involvement. Within this broad picture, there was a concealed but significantly large turnover of membership, evidenced from the earliest full records through to the mid-century point. In addition, where individuals could be identified, the short-term nature of nearly half the membership was also revealed. Overall, this finding on turnover was unanticipated and not generally discussed in the literature.

Chapter Five

Religious Competition

Introduction

Although the previous chapter looked specifically at the consolidation and expansion of the Wesleyan Methodist chapels, this cannot be viewed in isolation. It is therefore necessary to explore developments regarding both the parish church and other branches of Methodism and their relationships with the Wesleyans during the first half of the nineteenth century.

Primitive Methodist Societies were established in addition to the existing Wesleyans in Flintham and Cropwell Butler, in Bingham there was a breakaway group from the Wesleyans and both there and in Tithby the Primitive Societies joined the Independent Primitive Methodist group.

Changes regarding the parish church are identified first, followed by discussion of the establishment and development of the non-Wesleyan Methodist Societies. The relationship amongst all the denominational groups and the extent of emerging competition (excluding education)¹ is then considered. Key questions from the literature and methods utilised for particular analyses are detailed below.

There was little sign of Anglican reform in the four parishes when Methodism became established.² However, some impact of legislative reforms in the 1830s regarding pluralism and non-residence³ was expected

¹ See below Chapter 6.

² See above Chapter 3.

³G. Parsons, 'Reform, Revival and Realignment: the Experience of Victorian Anglicanism', in G. Parsons (ed.), *Religion in Victorian Britain, 1: Traditions* (1988), 24; M.R. Watts, *The Dissenters: Vol. II The Expansion of Evangelical Nonconformity 1791-1859* (1995), 603;

at the local level, although not necessarily in all instances; Best pointed out that poor clergy still needed a couple of adjacent livings for tolerable subsistence.⁴ There was also the question of whether influences of either the evangelical revival or the Oxford movement were apparent in terms of changes to architecture, interior decoration and types of services, particularly since Knight had argued that Tractarianism had little impact outside Oxford before 1860 and that traditional high church attitudes were often behind any changes.⁵

Everywhere except Cropwell Bishop experienced changes as regards Methodism. The main questions regarding the Primitive Methodists were how far their approach differed from that of the Wesleyans in terms of evangelistic characteristics and whether their focus was on gaining converts rather than on building chapels and establishing an organisation.⁶ There were few surviving records for any Primitive Societies preventing detailed analysis of their development. However, some information was obtained from surviving circuit records, directories and newspaper reports. Similar sources were used to investigate the split in the Wesleyan Society in Bingham in the 1840s over the temperance issue.

My earlier work on Cropwell Butler had strongly suggested that religious competition became a feature of village life during the 1840s with both the Anglicans and Primitive Methodists challenging the Wesleyans.⁷

Competition was therefore investigated from a variety of angles. The initial

G.F.A. Best, *Temporal Pillars: Queen Anne's Bounty, the Ecclesiastical Commissioners and the Church of England* (1964), 305-06.

⁴ Best, *Temporal*, 406-07.

⁵ F. Knight, 'The Influence of the Oxford Movement in the Parishes c.1833-1860: A Re-assessment', in P. Vaiss (ed.), *Newman: From Oxford to the People* (1996), 130, 135-39.

⁶ Watts, *Dissenters II*, 188-89; H.B. Kendall, *The Origin and History of the Primitive Methodist Church* 2 Vols. (1906); R.W. Ambler, *Churches, Chapels and the Parish Communities of Lincolnshire 1660-1900* (2000), 156-57.

⁷ A.C. Woodcock, 'The Emergence of Religious Competition in Cropwell Butler, Nottinghamshire, in the Early Nineteenth Century', *Transactions of the Thoroton Society*, 110 (2006), 103-118.

question of whether denominational rivalry spurred church and chapel building⁸ was considered in relation to the timing of decisions to build, improve facilities or extend activities, whilst the linked issue of potential overcapacity and its effects, particularly in rural areas,⁹ was approached by examining the extent of accommodation relative to the requirements of the population. It was decided to compare this with the level of attendance in the Bingham registration district in 1851 (64 per cent according to Watts' analysis)¹⁰ because this would give a more accurate reflection of the requirement in this area than using Mann's 58 per cent.¹¹

A further key question was the existence of clashing service times amongst the various religious groups.¹² The final aspect was whether any changes in baptismal practices by Methodist members were in response to increasing denominational competition.¹³ The questions about religious competition are further considered in Chapter 8 in relation to the third quarter of the century, while the overall issue of dual allegiance is discussed in Chapter 9.

The religious census, in conjunction with surviving plans of both Wesleyans and Primitives, provided material to consider issues of capacity and service patterns. In addition, the extensive Wesleyan circuit records, combined with parish registers, facilitated considerable analysis on baptisms. In order to assess the whole mid-century period, families were identified from

⁸ Watts, *Dissenters II*, 604.

⁹ R. Gill, *The 'Empty' Church Revisited* (2nd edn., 2003), 33; 135.

¹⁰ M.R. Watts (ed.), *Religion in Victorian Nottinghamshire: the Religious Census of 1851* (1988), xxix.

¹¹ *Census of Great Britain, 1851. Religious Worship. England & Wales. Report and tables.* PP 1852-3 [1690], LXXXIX.1, cxix.

¹² F. Knight, 'From Diversity to Sectarianism: the Definition of Anglican Identity in Nineteenth-Century England', *Studies in Church History*, 32 (1996), 383-84; E. Royle, 'The Church of England and Methodism in Yorkshire, c.1750-1850: from Monopoly to Free Market', *Northern History*, 33 (1997), 150.

¹³ A.C. Woodcock, 'Union in Saving Souls: the Impact of Methodism on Cropwell Butler, Nottinghamshire, 1770 - 1870' (University of Nottingham M.A. 2005), 64-67; Woodcock, 'Emergence', 27.

Wesleyan baptismal records up to 1855 and the practices adopted for all their children examined. Additionally, membership lists and other records revealed Wesleyan families who, upon investigation, used only Anglican baptism.

Comparing the analysis of any changes in baptismal practices amongst the four Wesleyan Societies was difficult because of the small numbers involved and the question of how to relate these to the size of the Societies. It was considered that the membership total of individuals was not an appropriate measure for comparing families. However, totalling the number of families using Wesleyan baptism gave a figure from which a percentage could be calculated regarding both the frequency of change of practice and the extent of exclusive Methodist commitment. Methodist families continuing to use only the Anglican rite required a different measure. A total of families with any identifiable Methodist links, apart from baptism, was calculated and the families using only Anglican baptism were then given as a percentage.

Flintham

During the early nineteenth century, the parish church at Flintham had sunk into a poor state of repair. A resolution of the vestry meeting in 1826 revealed that:

the Church of Flintham particularly the Body thereof is in a very ruinous decayed dilapidated and dangerous state and that it is absolutely necessary to take down and rebuild the whole of the Body thereof and that the Tower of the said Church is also in a

State of dilapidation and must undergo a thorough repair and the upper part thereof must be taken down and rebuilt.¹⁴

This was followed by a second resolution specifying the action to be taken, including an authorisation to collect church rates to raise the money.¹⁵

Two years later it was resolved to collect a 10d in the pound church rate and charge pew rents both of which would have provided a contribution towards the repairs;¹⁶ however, the bulk came from Colonel Hildyard of Flintham Hall, who financed substantial rebuilding in 1827-8, involving removing the transepts and replacing the nave, at a cost of £1,100,¹⁷ although the carriage of the material was 'performed gratuitously' by the parishioners themselves.¹⁸

Shortly after the work was completed, Charles John Myers became the new vicar on the death of Thomas Bowman.¹⁹ Although there is no record of Bowman holding other livings, Myers became rector of Ruskington in Lincolnshire in 1832,²⁰ valued at £230,²¹ which would have significantly boosted his income. Indicative of this is his ability to advance approximately a quarter (£161-2s-7d) of the cost of repairing and extending Flintham vicarage in 1833.²²

There was apparently no attempt to establish Primitive Methodism in Flintham during the missionary activity of 1817-18.²³ However, Colonel Hildyard, who had been its strong opponent locally, died in 1830 with the

¹⁴ N.A.O. PR 19566.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁷ White 1832, 493-94; J.C. Cox, *County Churches* (1912), 94.

¹⁸ T. Bailey, *Annals of Nottinghamshire: History of the County of Nottingham, including the Borough* Vol. IV (1855), 358.

¹⁹ www.theclergydatabase.org.uk/jsp/DisplayAppointment.jsp?CDBAppRedID=184563, accessed 1.9.2011.

²⁰ www.theclergydatabase.org.uk/jsp/DisplayAppointment.jsp?CDBAppRedID=17672, accessed 1.9.2011.

²¹ www.theclergydatabase.org.uk/jsp/DisplayDsAppoint.jsp?CDBDsAppntID=20767, accessed 1.9.2011.

²² N.A.O. DD TN5/11.

²³ See above Chapter 3, 117.

result that the estate was administered by relatives until his eldest son came of age in 1842.²⁴ By this point the Nottingham Primitive Methodist circuit had identified the village as a place for expansion; in December 1842 it was reported that Flintham had recently been visited by the home missionary, who had been 'successful in collecting a flourishing society'.²⁵ The Society was listed in early 1843 with weekly services including one sacrament, one love feast and a camp meeting, although a report noted 'this is a Barn in which we Preach'.²⁶ Clearly the new Society followed the pattern of many villages regarding its initial place of worship. Nevertheless, a year and a half later the circuit was keen to consolidate, resolving 'that we try to get a piece of land at Flintham on which to build a Chapel and that we lose no time....'.²⁷ By the end of 1844, land had been conveyed for £17-11s-0d to ten trustees, of whom seven were from Flintham with the trust 'that a Chapel and buildings shall be erected thereon by the members of the Primitive Methodist Connexion resident at Flintham aforesaid and the neighbourhood thereof'.²⁸ The majority of the trustees were labourers or other manual workers, with just two joiners and one tailor.²⁹ In the following July, the 'commodious' chapel held its opening services and celebrated the following day with a tea party in the barn previously used for worship.³⁰ The original cost of the chapel was £160, with an outstanding debt on completion of £108, a significant sum for a village Society.³¹

²⁴ www.nottingham.ac.uk/manuscriptsandspecialcollections/collectionsindepth/family/thorotonhildyard/biographies/biographyofthomasblackbornethorotonhildyard%281821-1888%29.aspx, accessed 2.9.2011.

²⁵ *Nottingham Review* 23 December 1842.

²⁶ N.A.O. NC/MR/15/17.

²⁷ N.A.O. NC/MR/15/19.

²⁸ N.A.O. NC/MR/5/356.

²⁹ *Ibid.*

³⁰ *Nottingham Review* 25 July 1845.

³¹ N.A.O. NC/MR/5/315.

Despite this rapid consolidation, secure establishment of the new Society was not entirely smooth. No direct records have survived regarding numbers, although a schedule from 1867 stated there were 40 members when the chapel was built.³² However, a circuit report in 1846 listed six individuals ceasing membership in the preceding year for various reasons, including William Richardson, an original trustee, whose reason was noted as 'non attendance'.³³ In addition, the Society was without a Sunday school in 1848.³⁴ This is noteworthy because Primitive Methodists as a group were keen on establishing Sunday schools and their reports included sections investigating the state of these and the efforts to introduce them.³⁵ There are no further surviving circuit records mentioning the Society until 1860 by which time it was part of the Newark branch,³⁶ which became an independent circuit in 1862.³⁷

The first evidence of potential religious competition is the timing of the extension of the Wesleyan chapel in 1834.³⁸ The extensive rebuilding of the parish church from 1827-8 had taken place because of a combination of an urgent need for repairs and the provision of the money by Colonel Hildyard. However, the Wesleyan extension six years later did not relate to expanding membership, so may have been a response to the significant improvement to the Anglican building. Unfortunately, the records do not provide any information regarding the impetus behind this decision. Further competition emerged with the establishment of the Primitive Methodist Society from 1843-5 and the rapid erection of a chapel.³⁹ Support for the new Society would have been derived from existing

³² *Ibid.*

³³ N.A.O. NC/MR/15/18.

³⁴ *Ibid.*

³⁵ *Ibid.*

³⁶ N.A.O. NC/MR/5/314.

³⁷ Kendall, *Origin and History*, 270.

³⁸ N.A.O. NC/MR/5/8.

³⁹ See above, 212.

Primitives moving into the village, people changing denominational allegiance or new converts. The only surviving evidence is the list of trustees; all were either listed in the census in 1841 or shown in 1851 as having been born in the village, with one also being a Wesleyan member in 1830. This suggests some change of allegiance from the Wesleyans and possibly new converts, rather than an influx of Primitives from elsewhere. Consequently, although it has been shown that figures for total membership have to be regarded with caution, the overall decline in Wesleyan membership from 1844 until the mid-1850s may have been partly related to the arrival of the Primitives.⁴⁰ The inclusion of love feasts and open-air meetings, in addition to regular services, offered something new and exciting in terms of worship, particularly as these no longer formed part of the Wesleyans' regular programme.⁴¹

Regarding competition for attendance at Sunday services, there is no surviving information about those held at the parish church. The vicar in 1851 refused to provide such details on his religious census return, the anticipated source for Anglican service times.⁴² However, based upon the pattern adopted in neighbouring parishes, the likelihood is a morning and one other service, probably in the afternoon.⁴³ The service pattern is summarised in Table 5.1 below.⁴⁴ This suggests a level of competition, particularly regarding the evening services and the introduction of an additional fortnightly morning service by the Wesleyans, coinciding approximately with the arrival of the Primitives. Nevertheless it was still quite possible for individuals to practise dual allegiance and attend more than one denomination on the same Sunday.

⁴⁰ N.A.O. NC/MR/8/28.

⁴¹ N.A.O. NC/MR/8/247.

⁴² T.N.A. HO 129/443.

⁴³ *Ibid.*

⁴⁴ *Ibid*; N.A.O. NC/MR/8/247; /15/17.

Table 5.1

Service Pattern in Flintham 1841-1851

Denomination	Morning	Afternoon	Evening
Anglican	?	?	
Wesleyan Methodist	10.30 (2/month) (by 1848)	2.00	6.00
Primitive Methodist	10.30		6.00

Sources: T.N.A. HO 129/443; N.A.O. NC/MR/8/247; /15/17; C.B.M.C. Newark circuit plan 1841

Using the capacity figures from the religious census, the provision of accommodation from the church and two chapels is demonstrated in Table 5.2. This also shows how the increase in seating had outstripped the growth in population over the previous half century; it was clear, therefore, that the establishment of the Primitive Methodists gave rise to overprovision, only corrected if the population continued to increase.

Table 5.2

Accommodation in Places of Worship in Flintham 1801-1851

Date	Total Pop.	64% Pop.	Total Seating	Church/Chapels	Seats per head (64% pop.)
1801	459	293	310	Anglican	1.1
1811	455	291	508	Anglican/WM	1.7
1821	546	349	508	Anglican/WM	1.5
1831	545	349	508	Anglican/WM	1.5
1841	611	391	508	Anglican/WM	1.3
1851	639	408	622	Anglican/WM/PM	1.5

Key: WM – Wesleyan Methodist; PM – Primitive Methodist

Sources: T.N.A. HO 129/443; V.C.H. *Nottinghamshire* II (1910), 311; Watts, *Religion*, xxix

As a potential aspect of competition, the baptismal decisions of Flintham Wesleyans were also explored.⁴⁵ Four families with at least a five-year Methodist membership span did not change their practices during the period up to 1830.⁴⁶ Of these, John Johnson was a class leader from 1820-54 and Joseph Barnes became a leader in the second half of the century, although in the latter case his children were all baptised before he became a Methodist member.⁴⁷ Table 5.3 below shows the ten families who at some point used both Anglican and Methodist baptism.

Although eight families moved from Anglican to Methodist, two made the opposite change; in addition, three families changed their baptismal practice twice and the Parnhams three times. Since John Parnham was an office holder and a leading figure in the Society, this was unexpected, although he did primarily opt for the Methodists from 1832. To some extent a trend towards adopting Methodist baptism developed during the 1840s and early 1850s but this did not always reveal permanent commitments. However, it is possible that the Anglican rebuilding and the establishment of the Primitive Methodists was relevant to the decisions in 1832 and 1846 respectively in terms of an increased perception of a competitive situation.

Of the eight families only ever recorded as using Methodist baptism, four had only one child baptised in Flintham. Of these, the Rose family moved to Newark where they had an additional child by 1861.⁴⁸ However, the other three families could not be traced further. The remaining exclusively Methodist families (Dixon, Drury, Harvey and Perkins) stayed in Flintham, although there were two earlier children of the Harvey family possibly born

⁴⁵ See above for method used, 210.

⁴⁶ N.A.O. PR 8474-5; /5/30/2; /5/34/1-2.

⁴⁷ N.A.O. PR 8474-5; /5/30/2; /8/28.

⁴⁸ T.N.A. RG9/2478.

Table 5.3
Changes in Baptismal Practices of Flintham Wesleyan Methodists
1832-1863

Father	Methodist Links	Prior Ang.	First Meth.						No. of Changes
John Parnham	S; T M 1822->	3	1832	1835	1837	1838	1841	1844	3
Richard Green	M 1830->	1	1832	1834	1837	1840			1
Charles Marson		1	1846	1849	1853	1857	1859		1
William Perkins	M 1830->	7	1846						1
William Harston	M 1863 (widow)	3	1849	1850	1853				1
Samuel Pearson		2	1849	1852	1855				2
John Smith			1849	1852	1855	1858	1863		2
Richard Hand		2	1851						1
Joseph (H)ea(r)son		6	1852	1854	1856	1857			2
Thomas Summerfield			1854	1856					1

Key: S – Steward; T-Trustee; M – Member; grey – Anglican; yellow – Methodist; no highlight – baptism not traced

Sources: T.N.A. HO 129/443; N.A.O. PR 8475-6; NC/MR/5/34/1-2; /8/242; /8/29

outside the village and two later children of the Perkins family born in the village where baptismal records were not traced.⁴⁹ Consequently, it is only possible to be confident about exclusive commitment from the outset for two families.

Cropwell Bishop

The main features of the Anglican presence in Cropwell Bishop when the Methodist Society became established were that the church was serviceable but in need of some maintenance and that the poor living had resulted in a succession of absentee vicars and curates.⁵⁰ This continued under Robert Wood who became vicar in 1815 but also vicar of Sneinton in 1816 and High Master of the Nottingham Free Grammar School in 1819.⁵¹ In 1836 the gross benefice income had increased to £150 but the curate was still only paid about £30 a year.⁵² Wood's successor, George Gould, was appointed in 1840 and became the first vicar to reside in the village for over 100 years.⁵³ He graphically summarised the state of the parish in a letter of December 1840 to the Ecclesiastical Commissioners seeking financial help:

...There not having been before, in the memory of man, a resident Incumbent, yr. Lordships may also readily conceive that everything is left in a very unsatisfactory state, there being no schoolroom, the Church sadly out of repair; and even no house that is at all fit for the Vicar to reside in.....⁵⁴

⁴⁹ N.A.O. NC/MR/8/242; PR 8475-6; T.N.A. RG9/2483; RG10/3550.

⁵⁰ See above Chapter 3, 123.

⁵¹ J.T. Godfrey, *Notes on the Churches of Nottinghamshire: Hundred of Bingham* (1907), 128.

⁵² M. Austin, 'A Time of Unhappy Commotion': *the Church of England and the People in Central Nottinghamshire 1820-1870* (2010), 140.

⁵³ Godfrey, *Notes*, 129; A. Harper & E. Harper, *Chronicles of Cropwell Bishop* (1988), 8; N.A.O. DD 232/1 Memories of William Baldock (c.1886), 42.

⁵⁴ C.E.R.C. ECE/7/1/1891/1.

His arrival clearly stimulated activity since it was reported that the church building had been 'repaired and renovated' in 1842.⁵⁵ However, Gould wrote again in 1843 regarding his inadequate residence and the total lack of a schoolroom;⁵⁶ his own offer of a contribution towards building the latter had met with no encouragement 'either from the Prebendary, the Lessees or the Parish'.⁵⁷ By 1850 Robert Miles, the rector of Bingham and the rural dean, added support in requesting the Commission to set apart a piece of ground for a school and their reply suggested a specific application might be regarded favourably.⁵⁸ A month later the Vestry meeting agreed 'a plot of Ground enclosed by the Church wallshould be applied for the purpose of building a Room for the Sunday Scholars belonging to the parish of Cropwell Bishop'.⁵⁹ It was erected soon afterwards, with £27 contributed by local landowners and £23 by neighbouring clergy⁶⁰ towards a total cost of £90.⁶¹

Cropwell Bishop was part of the Primitive Methodist missionary activity in 1817 and one source suggests that at some point a small group attracted to the Primitives began to conduct their own form of service.⁶² However, there is no clear evidence of a Society being established. In the late 1830s and 1840s, the Nottingham circuit was endeavouring expand in the area and in 1839 recorded that 'Big Cropwell come on [the plan] in the forenoon of Sunday once a fortnight'; unfortunately this was short lived since three months later it was noted 'that Cropwell Bishop be taken off the plan'.⁶³ In

⁵⁵ White 1844, 400; Bailey, *Annals*, 425.

⁵⁶ C.E.R.C. ECE/7/1/1891/1.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*

⁵⁸ C.E.R.C. ECE/7/1/5280.

⁵⁹ N.A.O. PR 3886, 4 July 1850.

⁶⁰ C.E.R.C. ECE/7/1/5282.

⁶¹ White 1853, 447.

⁶² Harper & Harper, *Chronicles*, 14.

⁶³ N.A.O. NC/MR/15/19.

1851, the religious census confirmed that the only places of worship in the village were the parish church and the Wesleyan chapel.⁶⁴

The Anglican presence in Cropwell Bishop had increased significantly in 1840 with the advent of the first resident vicar for a century, so it is arguable that there was a competitive element in 1842 when both a new Methodist chapel was erected and the parish church was repaired and renovated. This was the view of the vicar, who commented in his plea to the Ecclesiastical Commission for financial assistance that 'all the younger part of the population are thrown into the hands of the Dissenters from the Established Church'.⁶⁵

The failure of the Primitives to establish a Society was slightly earlier and was likely to have been related primarily to the strength of the Wesleyans at that time when their overall membership trend was generally upwards.⁶⁶ Table 5.4 shows the service pattern of the two denominations mid-century, indicating some level of competition for congregations in the afternoon and occasionally evening, although only on alternate weeks. Nevertheless, attendance at the services of both denominations was always feasible.

Table 5.4

Service Pattern in Cropwell Bishop 1841-1851

Denomination	Morning	Afternoon	Evening
Anglican	am*	pm*	Summer (occasionally)*
Wesleyan Methodist		2.00	6.00

Key: *alternating

Sources: T.N.A. HO 129/443; N.A.O. NC/MR/8/247; C.B.M.C. Plan

⁶⁴ T.N.A. HO 129/443.

⁶⁵ C.E.R.C. ECE/7/1/1891/1.

⁶⁶ See above, Chapter 4, 165-66.

Without a third place of worship, there were 1.2 seats per person in 1851, so the problems associated with overcapacity were unlikely unless the population declined.⁶⁷ Table 5.5 shows accommodation had broadly kept pace with requirements.

Table 5.5

Accommodation in Places of Worship in Cropwell Bishop 1801-1851

Date	Pop.	64% Pop.	Total Seating	Church/Chapel	Seats per head 64% pop.
1801	307	196	210	Anglican	1.1
1811	364	233	210	Anglican	0.8
1821	392	250	210	Anglican	0.8
1831	473	303	310 ?	Anglican/WM*	1.0
1841	533	341	310 ?	Anglican/WM*	0.9
1851	640	410	491	Anglican/WM	1.2

Key: WM – Wesleyan Methodist; *estimate of 100 for first Wesleyan chapel

Sources: T.N.A. HO 129/443; V.C.H. *Nottinghamshire* II, 312; Watts, *Religion*, xxix

When changes in Wesleyan baptismal practice were explored,⁶⁸ there were only two instances of families with more than a five-year membership span who did not change their practices.⁶⁹ 18 families were identified who at some point used both Anglican and Methodist baptism, as shown in Table 5.6 below.

⁶⁷ T.N.A. HO 129/443; V.C.H. *Nottinghamshire* II, 312; Watts, *Religion*, xxix.

⁶⁸ See above for method used, 210.

⁶⁹ N.A.O. PR 3866-7; 14618; NC/MR/5/30/2; /5/34/1-2.

Table 5.6
Changes in Baptismal Practices of Cropwell Bishop Wesleyan Methodists 1841-1866

Father	Methodist Links	Prior Ang.	First Meth.											No. of Changes
George Squires	LP; SS		1841	1843	1846	1849	1851	1853	1857	1859	1861	1864	1866	1
Edmund Cumberland	SS	2	1843	1846	1849	1851								2
John Gretton	SS	6	1843	1845										1
George Shelton	T; LP; S; SS; M 1863	3	1843	1846	1849	1851								1
William Shelton	SS		1843	1844	1846	1847	1850	1852	1854	1856	1858			1
John Squires	T; LP; S; CL; SS; M1830 & 1863	6	1843	1845	1848									3
Thomas Wilford		1	1843	1845	1849									1
Robert Hopewell	T; CL; SS	7	1844	1847										1
Thomas Gregg	CL 1860s-> SS; M 1863	1	1845	1847	1850	1855								2
William Kirchin		2	1845	1847	1849									2

There was clearly considerable fluidity regarding baptismal choices. The majority of changes were from Anglican to Methodist but four families moved in the opposite direction; eight changed twice, while John Squires, who was a highly committed Wesleyan in terms of his positions in the Society, changed three times. William Crampton, another leading Wesleyan in the late forties and early fifties, moved back to Anglican baptism after using the Methodists on one occasion. In addition, four families were sending their children to the Methodist Sunday school in 1851, despite having switched their baptismal practice to the Anglicans. Moreover, out of the 18 families, from those still in the village in 1851 with children of an appropriate age, only one did not appear in the Methodist Sunday school register.

Although there was a trend during the 1840s to opt for Methodist baptism, it did not indicate exclusive commitment. A competitive element may have been present in the early 1840s, as demonstrated by the building activities of both church and chapel, and the individual decisions probably reflected this. On the other hand, from 1840-1855 there were only three examples of families opting exclusively for Methodist baptism, two of which included earlier children whose baptismal record could not be traced.⁷⁰

Cropwell Butler and Tithby

Little appeared to change regarding the state of the parish church at Tithby⁷¹ during the incumbency of John Davenport from 1798 to 1824.⁷² However, it 'was thoroughly repaired and new pewed in 1824, at the cost

⁷⁰ N.A.O. PR 3867; NC/MR/5/34/2; /8/242-3.

⁷¹ See above Chapter 3, 132.

⁷² N.A.O. PR 6988.

of £900',⁷³ possibly due to the arrival of the new perpetual curate, Edward Palling.⁷⁴ The 'new pews' referred to the replacement of the original oak seats with numbered high box pews, which were a comfortable feature for those who paid a pew rent but which took up a lot of space and inevitably disadvantaged the poor.⁷⁵

In 1845 Bailey recorded a 'small but neat church erected at Cropwell Butler (Tithby parish) at a cost of £400 by Mr George Parr';⁷⁶ more usually described as a chapel of ease, it was included in subsequent directories.⁷⁷ The incumbent from 1834 to 1879 was Joshua Brooke, who graduated from Oxford in 1832 and came immediately to the area to become vicar of nearby Colston Bassett and first the curate and then perpetual curate of Tithby-cum-Cropwell Butler, receiving the dispensation to hold the benefices in plurality in 1843.⁷⁸ George Parr owned one of the two biggest farms in the village, with 500 acres and 15 labourers in 1851.⁷⁹ He was churchwarden continuously from 1848-68⁸⁰ and the building was originally a schoolroom, licensed for services in 1844 and the following year extended into what Brooke termed 'a real ecclesiastical edifice capable of containing 300 persons', with an additional separate schoolroom built behind it and connected by folding doors.⁸¹ Brooke's correspondence also reveals his efforts, with the support of his parishioners, to persuade the Ecclesiastical Commissioners to assist in the endowment of a separate church or chapel of ease in Cropwell Butler.⁸² The key matters of concern were the fact that most people lived in the much larger village, its distance

⁷³ White 1832, 512.

⁷⁴ N.A.O. PR 6989.

⁷⁵ J.S. Curl, *Victorian Churches* (1995), 26.

⁷⁶ Bailey, *Annals*, 443.

⁷⁷ White 1853, 458; White 1864, 475.

⁷⁸ Crockford, 1860, 77; N.A.O. DD/TB/3/2/30; L.P.L. FI/CC/265-6.

⁷⁹ T.N.A. HO 107/2139.

⁸⁰ N.A.O. PR 110/1-2.

⁸¹ N.A.O. DD/TB/3/2/36.

⁸² N.A.O. DD/TB/3/2/30; /32.

from Tithby and the inadequate size of the church building.⁸³ In addition, he was also worried about the lack of free accommodation.⁸⁴ Clearly, by the middle of the century the parish church was attempting to re-establish a more prominent position in the religious life of the villages.

Apart from the suggestion of a Primitive Methodist class from the comments of William Clowes,⁸⁵ there is no further evidence of Primitive Methodist activity until 1839. The Nottingham circuit preachers' meeting resolved 'that Little Cropwell [come on the plan] every Sunday afternoon'⁸⁶ and the following year an opening for building a chapel at Cropwell Butler was reported.⁸⁷ By 1843 the Society was holding two regular Sunday services and a weekday meeting.⁸⁸ In addition, the minutes mentioned a love feast, the sacrament and even a camp meeting to be held at Cropwell.⁸⁹ Arrangements for the building proceeded during 1844⁹⁰ and the chapel held its opening services in 1845, with a tea party next day, where 'more than three score persons sat down to a cheering beverage'.⁹¹ There was also a temperance lecture in the chapel a few days later,⁹² suggesting that a temperance movement probably existed in the village and may have been one factor assisting the establishment of the Primitives. No evidence has survived regarding the number of Society members, either initially or subsequently and although there was no Sunday school in 1843,⁹³ this situation had changed a decade later.⁹⁴ The Primitives had clearly become a viable Society, with sufficient resources to

⁸³ *Ibid.*

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*

⁸⁵ See above Chapter 3, 128.

⁸⁶ N.A.O. NC/MR/15/19.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*

⁸⁸ N.A.O. NC/MR/15/17.

⁸⁹ N.A.O. NC/MR/15/19.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*

⁹¹ *Nottingham Review* 29 August 1845.

⁹² *Ibid.*

⁹³ N.A.O. NC/MR/15/19.

⁹⁴ See below Chapter 6, 263.

build a chapel and subsequently start a Sunday school, in a village where the Wesleyans had been established for more than 60 years.

In terms of potential religious competition, the 1840s was a time of significant challenge to the Wesleyans. The Primitives arrived in 1839 and six years later opened a new chapel, while the Anglicans had first licensed a schoolroom in 1844 and then opened the specifically adapted chapel of ease the following year. Despite the hidden variations within the figures, the overall decline of Wesleyan membership may have been related to this establishment of other denominations.⁹⁵ It is clear that Joshua Brooke regarded the situation in Cropwell Butler competitively, since he wrote to the Bishop of Lincoln in 1845 that 'there are two dissenting Chapels in Cropwell to which I firmly believe many resort more from the convenience of having a place of Worship near them than from any disaffection to the Church'.⁹⁶ With regard to the Primitives, the more informal types of worship might have attracted Wesleyan adherents, if not actual members. In addition, the Wesleyans in Cropwell Butler possibly lacked drive and enthusiasm for conversion, as evidenced by the lack of indigenous local preachers.⁹⁷

As Table 5.7 below shows, the service pattern amongst the five places of worship in two villages was complicated. The evidence regarding Anglican services is limited; the census return detailed one afternoon service but gave an average for the morning also, which suggests alternating services.⁹⁸ Although there was no return for the chapel of ease, Joshua Brooke discussed an evening service and also alternating with the parish

⁹⁵ N.A.O. NC/MR/5/23/1-2; /8/28.

⁹⁶ N.A.O. DD/TB 3/2/36.

⁹⁷ See above Chapter 4, 183.

⁹⁸ T.N.A. HO 129/443.

church but not details of any arrangement.⁹⁹ However, there was undoubtedly a level of competition in evening services from 1840, when the Primitive Society became established, then intensified with the licensing of the chapel of ease in 1844.

Table 5.7

Service Pattern in Cropwell Butler and Tithby 1841-1851

Denomination	Place	Morning	Afternoon	Evening
Anglican (parish church)	Tithby	am (alternate)	pm (alternate)	
Anglican (chapel of ease)	C.Butler	?	?	evening (alternate)
Wesleyan Methodist	C.Butler	10.30		6.00
Primitive Methodist	C.Butler		2.00	6.00
Independent Primitive Methodist	Tithby			6.00 *

Key: * fortnightly

Sources: T.N.A. HO 129/443; N.A.O. DD/TB/3/2/36; NC/MR/8/247; /15/17; /15/19; C.B.M.C. Plan

Capacity for worshippers was a matter of concern as evidenced by Brooke's comment that 'many of the inhabitants [are] entirely precluded from attending divine service from there being no room for them'.¹⁰⁰ Table 5.8 below shows that capacity at the parish church was inadequate for the two villages from the outset. The advent of the Wesleyans improved the overall situation but a rising population meant a developing shortage until the new Primitive chapel and the chapel of ease provided considerably more seats in Cropwell Butler. However, the figures need to be regarded with caution, because the chapel of ease capacity figure was probably

⁹⁹ N.A.O. DD/TB/3/2/36.

¹⁰⁰ N.A.O. DD/TB/3/2/30.

overstated and it seems unlikely there would have been services simultaneously at the two Anglican places of worship. Although the two new places of worship were clearly needed in the middle of the century, overprovision was likely if the population declined.

Table 5.8
Accommodation in Places of Worship in Cropwell Butler and Tithby
1801-1851

Date	Pop.	64% Pop.	Total Seating	Church/Chapels	Seats per head 64% pop.
1801	517	331	140	(T)Anglican	0.4
1811	549	351	350	(T)Anglican/(CB)WM	1.0
1821	635	406	380	(T)Anglican/PM/(CB)WM	0.9
1831	695	445	380	(T)Anglican/PM/(CB)WM	0.9
1841	804	515	380	(T)Anglican/IPM/(CB)WM	0.7
1851 ¹	811	519	483	(T)Anglican/IPM/(CB)WM/PM	0.9
			643 ²	(T)IPM/(CB)WM/PM/Anglican	1.2

Key: T – Tithby; CB – Cropwell Butler; WM – Wesleyan Methodist; PM – Primitive Methodist; IPM – Independent Primitive Methodist

¹Alternatives of Anglican services at the two locations

²Includes 300 for the chapel of ease, taken from Joshua Brooke’s correspondence, (possibly an overestimate).

Sources: T.N.A. HO 129/443; V.C.H. *Nottinghamshire* II, 312; N.A.O. DD/TB/3/2/36; White 1853, 458; Watts, *Religion*, xxix

My previous research on Cropwell Butler had identified changes in baptismal practices in the mid-1840s, suggesting this may have been a response by the Wesleyans to competition from the other denominations.¹⁰¹ In order to facilitate comparison, this earlier analysis

¹⁰¹ Woodcock, ‘Emergence’.

was extended.¹⁰² There was only one instance of a family with more than a five-year membership span who did not change their baptismal practice, excluding those whose children were baptised at a much earlier period.¹⁰³ Table 5.9 below shows the nine families who at some point used both Anglican and Methodist baptism.

Whilst eight out of the nine families moved from Anglican to Methodist baptism, in three instances this was a one-off decision not repeated. However, for the other five families, as far as the later children can be traced, the Methodist practice was maintained. In addition, the five fathers concerned were all occupying various roles within the Wesleyan Society as well as sending children of an appropriate age to the Sunday school. It is therefore suggested that these baptismal decisions, all taken in the mid-1840s by key individuals, were related to the competitive situation in Cropwell Butler arising from the opening of two other chapels in 1845. On the other hand, the decision of Edmund Loach to have a child baptised by the Primitive Society in 1848 also suggests that commitment was never absolute and that there may have been a level of dual allegiance between the two Methodist Societies, as well as between Wesleyans and Anglicans.

Five of the eight families recorded as only using Methodist baptism, had only one child baptised.¹⁰⁴ The Marriotts had a later child whose baptismal record was not found and there was no further trace of the other four families in censuses or registers.¹⁰⁵ Of the other three families, the Marstons moved to Bingham and the Alroyd/Holroyd family remained in the village but there was still an untraced record between the two Methodist

¹⁰² See above for method used, 210.

¹⁰³ N.A.O. PR 6988-89; NC/MR/5/30/2; /5/34/1-2.

¹⁰⁴ N.A.O. NC/MR/8/242.

¹⁰⁵ T.N.A. RG10/3546-7.

Table 5.9

Changes in Baptismal Practices of Cropwell Butler Wesleyan Methodists 1833-1857

Father	Methodist Links	Prior Ang.	First Meth.						No. of Changes
Thomas Carver	SS; M 1830(wife)	2	1833	1835 (2)	1837	1839	1840	1848	3
George Kemp		5	1833	1835	1837	1841			2
Matthew Cooper	CL; SS; SSS	6	1845	1847	1850	1852	1855	1857	1
Edmund Loach	CL; T(N); SS	4	1845	1848	1852				3
William Cooper	S; T; CL; SS; SSS; M 1863	7	1846	1850	1852				1
Stephen Wragby	T (N); SS	5	1846 (2)	1852					1
George Barratt	T; SS; M 1863	3	1847	1859					1
John Crampton			1847	1850					1
Joseph Carver	SS	5	1849	1851	1856				2

Key: S – Steward; T – Trustee; T (N) – nominated as Trustee; CL – Class leader; M – Member; SS – children in Sunday School 1851; SSS – Sunday School Superintendent;

grey – Anglican; yellow – Wesleyan Methodist; green – Primitive Methodist; no highlight – not traced

Sources: T.N.A. HO 129/443; N.A.O. PR 6989; NC/MR/5/30/2; /5/34/1-2; /5/23/1-2; /8/28-30; /8/242; /8/247; /8/408; H.T.C.T. Register of baptisms 1850→; B.M.C. Deeds for Methodist Chapel, Cropwell Butler, Notts. Memorandum of the choice and appointment of New Trustees 5 July 1851

baptisms;¹⁰⁶ however, the Newtons were consistent in their Wesleyan commitment, even to the extent of returning to Cropwell Bishop chapel for the baptism of their fifth child, after the family had moved to nearby Colston Bassett where there was no Wesleyan Society.¹⁰⁷

The Primitive Methodist Society in Tithby had joined the Independent Primitive group by 1851.¹⁰⁸ It was mentioned on the 1831 Nottingham Primitive plan and also in the minutes for 1832 but no longer included by 1838.¹⁰⁹ It can be assumed, therefore, that it made the change in denominational allegiance at some point between 1832 and 1838. There are no other records about the Society which remained small and without a separate place of worship.

Bingham

The church and parish of Bingham had suffered a noticeable level of neglect in the eighteenth century, despite its being the richest benefice in Nottinghamshire.¹¹⁰ In 1810, Robert Lowe became the rector and

¹⁰⁶ T.N.A. RG10/3548.

¹⁰⁷ N.A.O. NC/MR/8/243; T.N.A. RG10/3548.

¹⁰⁸ T.N.A. HO 129/443; see below, 234-35.

¹⁰⁹ N.A.O. NC/MR/15/19.

¹¹⁰ See above Chapter 3, 141-42; Austin, *Unhappy Commotion*, 32.

remained until his death in 1845.¹¹¹ He led a gentleman's life and was involved nationally with the Poor Law and the establishment of workhouses, after having described the labourers of Bingham as 'idle, mischievous and profuse'.¹¹² Nevertheless, concerned with education for the poor, he started a subscription for building a parish school.¹¹³ In addition, by 1832 the church had benefited from 'a complete reparation at the cost of £150'.¹¹⁴

Lowe was succeeded in 1845 by Robert Miles, a wealthy and forthright evangelical, who had attended Oxford university.¹¹⁵ He immediately enlisted George Gilbert Scott, one of the foremost 'Gothic' architects of the day, to restore the church and make other improvements, carried out mainly from 1845-6 and completed by 1849.¹¹⁶ The changes involved removing almost all the previous alterations, so the overall appearance was transformed to a well-ordered state of finely carved woodwork and colourful stained glass.¹¹⁷ Much of this was at the expense of the rector, including new pews and a marble-tiled floor in the chancel.¹¹⁸ By 1853, it was described as '... a thorough restoration, in a spirit congenial to the beautiful design of its original founders'.¹¹⁹ Robert Miles also continued and completed in 1846 the project of building the new parish school and appointed Alfred Mowbray, a strong adherent of the Oxford Movement, as

¹¹¹ Godfrey, *Notes*, 18.

¹¹² V. Henstock (ed.), *Victorian Bingham: A Cameo of Life in a Small Nottinghamshire Town 1837-1901* (1986), 45.

¹¹³ A. Esdaile, *History of Bingham* (1851), 20.

¹¹⁴ White 1832, 481.

¹¹⁵ Henstock, *Bingham*, 45;

<http://southwellchurches.nottingham.ac.uk/bingham/hhistory.php#middleages>, accessed 14.2.2012.

¹¹⁶ Trustees of Friends of Bingham Parish Church, *Bingham Parish Church: a history and guide* (c.1994), 10, 25.

¹¹⁷ *Ibid*, 12; <http://southwellchurches.nottingham.ac.uk/bingham/hhistory.php#middleages>, accessed 14.2.2012.

¹¹⁸ Esdaile, *Bingham*, 11-13.

¹¹⁹ White 1853, 420.

the first headmaster.¹²⁰ Mowbray, together with the curate Nathaniel Keymer, had a significant influence and Miles became an increasing enthusiast for Anglo-Catholicism.¹²¹

Although the Primitive Methodists had become established in Bingham comparatively early, the development of the Society from the opening of the chapel in 1818 to the religious census of 1851 is somewhat difficult to trace. By 1851 it had become one of a group of village Societies in the Bingham area which had rebelled against the Connexional system and rule of itinerant preachers.¹²² They had severed connection with the Nottingham circuit and adopted the name of Independent Primitive Methodist.¹²³ Their distinctive approach is described in a note added to the census return from neighbouring Radcliffe-on-Trent:

The meaning of Independent is this. They are a separate Denomination from the Primitive Methodists. Independent of any paid ministers. Those officiating in this place are men who like St. Paul can say (these hands administer to my own necessities.) Working with their own hands the six days and reason with the people and exhort [on] the Sabbath'.¹²⁴

Secondary sources suggest the Bingham Primitive Methodist Society left the Nottingham circuit and became part of the Independent Primitive Methodist group in either 1828¹²⁵ or 1829.¹²⁶ However, an 1831 plan

¹²⁰ Esdaile, *Bingham*, 20;
<http://southwellchurches.nottingham.ac.uk/bingham/hhistory.php#middleages>, accessed 14.2.2012.

¹²¹ <http://southwellchurches.nottingham.ac.uk/bingham/hhistory.php#middleages>, accessed 14.2.2012.

¹²² R.C. Swift, *Lively People: Methodism in Nottingham 1740-1979* (1979), 74.

¹²³ *Ibid*, 74.

¹²⁴ T.N.A. HO 129/443.

¹²⁵ Swift, *Lively People*, 74.

¹²⁶ W. Parkes, 'The Original Methodists, Primitive Methodist Reformers', *Proceedings of the Wesley Historical Society*, 35:3 (1965), 60.

showed the Society was still part of the Nottingham circuit.¹²⁷ In 1832 circuit records noted that five named individuals, of whom four were from Bingham, 'be considered no longer as members of our Connexion for base immorality and attempting to make a division...'.¹²⁸ This exclusion of particular individuals from the main denomination might reasonably relate to members of the Bingham Society setting up a separate independent group. A further entry at the end of 1833 confirmed an irreconcilable split, noting that 'an affectionate Letter be sent to Barkestone advising them not to allow the Bingham Preachers to Preach in our Pulpits'.¹²⁹ Since the Independent Primitive Society emerged at about this time, it can be assumed that the 'Bingham Preachers' belonged to the independent group and were formerly lay preachers within the Nottingham Primitive circuit. It can therefore be concluded that the separation occurred around 1832, rather than at the earlier dates previously suggested.

Later evidence confirmed the Primitive Methodists no longer had a Society in Bingham. The next surviving plan of 1838-9 did not mention the town but there were entries in the minutes from 1839-40 regarding a mission in Bingham, with the statement in June 1841 that 'Bingham come on the plan again'.¹³⁰ An 1843 plan for the Bridgford branch (covering East Bridgford, Shelford, Screveton, Flintham, Cropwell Butler, Newton and Saxondale) included times of services for a Mission without indicating the place,¹³¹ but this was likely to have been Bingham in view of the location of the other Societies. However, there is no further evidence regarding the re-

¹²⁷ N.A.O. NC/MR/15/19.

¹²⁸ *Ibid.*

¹²⁹ *Ibid.*

¹³⁰ *Ibid.*

¹³¹ N.A.O. NC/MR/15/17.

establishment of the main Primitive denomination in the town and it did not appear in the 1851 census.¹³²

Alongside this, the Independent Primitive Society continued, although it also experienced problems with secessions to the 'second advent teachers' in 1844 and consequent invitations to teetotallers to join the Society.¹³³ Nevertheless, it recorded two well attended services on census Sunday and also maintained a Sunday school.¹³⁴

The other key Methodist development in Bingham was the emergence of the Temperance Christians, formed partly because of a split in the Wesleyan Society. Until 1842, William Strong, John Doncaster and George Berry were all Wesleyan class leaders, with the latter two also local preachers, after which they no longer appear in any of the lists.¹³⁵ In December 1842, a meeting of the Benevolent Society under the management of the Primitive Methodists was reported, where William Strong was in the chair, with Mr Doncaster and Mr Berry also present.¹³⁶ It appears therefore that all three individuals had links with the Primitives, who were also generally at the forefront of the temperance movement. By January 1844, a new Temperance Hall was opened, erected 'under the direction of the leading teetotallers of Bingham' and 'intended also as a place of religious worship'.¹³⁷ It was built on land lying behind John Doncaster's house and it is probable that he both gave the land and, as a builder, was involved in its construction.¹³⁸ He completed the religious census return in 1851, identifying himself as a trustee and local or lay

¹³² T.N.A. HO 129/443.

¹³³ *Nottingham Review* 27 September 1844.

¹³⁴ T.N.A. HO 129/443; Esdaile, *Bingham*, 23; see below Chapter 6, 268.

¹³⁵ N.A.O. NC/MR/5/23/2; C.B.M.C. Plan.

¹³⁶ *Nottingham Review* 16 December 1842.

¹³⁷ *Nottingham Review* 30 January 1844.

¹³⁸ Henstock, *Bingham*, 52.

Preacher. In addition he noted 'The Temperance Hall is supplied every Sabbath day by Local Preachers or lay men and occupied occasionally by Temperance, Peace and other moral and Religious Meeting'.¹³⁹ The group responsible for the Hall were the Bingham and Vale of Belvoir Total Abstinence Society, whose services for the anniversary of the Hall in 1848 were reported as providing a highly festive occasion.¹⁴⁰ The report revealed the three former Wesleyans as significant figures in the group, although it was a cross-denominational event.¹⁴¹ On the other hand, the Temperance Hall maintained its own Sunday school,¹⁴² so it is not entirely clear how far those running the Hall were a separate religious group or still retained links with other denominations.

The efforts of the Nottingham Primitive Methodist circuit to re-establish a presence in Bingham in the late 1830s and early 1840s indicated a further competitive religious element, at least as far as the Independent Primitives were concerned. Prior to that, the denominational situation had not altered for 20 years but the 1840s then became a time of increasing change and potential competition. The changes in Wesleyan membership numbers from 1838 to 1843 have been discussed and do not necessarily indicate the effects of competition.¹⁴³ However, the breakaway in 1842 by the individuals setting up the Temperance Christians was in direct competition and the group rapidly became established by acquiring a new building and engaging in a variety of well-publicised activities. In addition, the plans for a new Anglican parish school signalled a further challenge regarding educational provision to which the setting up of a Wesleyan day school may

¹³⁹ T.N.A. HO 129/443.

¹⁴⁰ *Nottingham Review* 23 June 1848.

¹⁴¹ *Ibid.*

¹⁴² *Ibid.*

¹⁴³ See above Chapter 4, 185.

well have been a response, with both opening in 1846.¹⁴⁴ Perhaps most significantly, the major changes to the parish church building during the second half of the 1840s would clearly have raised the profile of the church in the community thus increasing competition with other denominations.

Table 5.10 shows the service pattern amongst the four religious groups. The precise times for the Methodist denominations have been taken from earlier plans.

Table 5.10
Service Pattern in Bingham 1841-1851

Denomination	Morning	Afternoon	Evening
Anglican	am	pm	evening
Wesleyan Methodist	10.30 (1848)	2.00 (1841)	6.00
Independent Primitive Methodist		2.00	6.00
Temperance Christians		pm	evening

Sources: T.N.A. HO 129/443; N.A.O. NC/MR/8/247; /15/19; C.B.M.C. Plan

The level of competition for congregations increased during Sunday with every group offering an evening service. Competition would have been particularly acute amongst the three nonconformists, since they offered one rather than two additional service times. The Wesleyans may have decided to change from afternoon to morning when the Temperance Christians were established in 1843 because of the increased level of competition. However, just as in the villages, it was possible for an individual to practise dual allegiance and attend services of more than one group. Indeed, any combination of attending three out of the four was feasible.

¹⁴⁴ See below Chapter 6, 274.

Table 5.11 shows the seating capacity during the first half century. From the 1830s onwards the provision remained within point one per cent of that required, with the construction of the Temperance Hall balancing the increase in population. Nevertheless, although an additional place of worship was needed in the 1840s, this would become increasingly unnecessary if the population declined.

Table 5.11
Accommodation in Places of Worship in Bingham 1801-1851

Date	Pop.	64% Pop.	Total Seating	Church/Chapels	Seats per head 64% pop.
1801	1082	693	700?	Anglican/WM*	1.0
1811	1326	849	700?	Anglican/WM*	0.8
1821	1574	1007	1254	Anglican/WM/PM	1.3
1831	1738	1112	1254	Anglican/WM/PM	1.1
1841	1998	1279	1254	Anglican/WM/IPM	0.9
1851	2054	1315	1500	Anglican/WM/IPM/TC	1.1

Key: *estimate of 100 for first Wesleyan chapel; WM – Wesleyan Methodist; PM – Primitive Methodist; IPM – Independent Primitive Methodist; TC – Temperance Christians

Sources: T.N.A. HO 129/443; V.C.H. *Nottinghamshire* II, 312; Watts, *Religion*, xxix

In investigating baptismal practices of the Bingham Wesleyans,¹⁴⁵ there were only three families (the early Doncasters, Greaves' and Hemstocks) with more than a five-year membership span who continued to use

¹⁴⁵ See above for method used, 210.

Anglican baptism throughout, excluding those whose children were baptised prior to 1796.¹⁴⁶ However, all these families were significantly committed to the Wesleyan Society.

Table 5.12 below shows 24 families using both Methodist and Anglican baptism. There was a notable level of fluidity, with over one third changing their practice more than once; the majority making one change were from Anglican to Methodist, although four moved in the opposite direction. Four families tried Methodist baptism on one occasion and then reverted, while the Parnhams and the Allens changed three times. However, during the 1830s, those highly committed to the Society regarding the positions they occupied made decisions to use Methodist baptism and, with one exception, maintained this thereafter. There is no identifiable reason why Charles Doncaster, despite his total involvement with the Wesleyans, used Anglican baptism for his youngest child in 1852. In contrast to the other places studied, three families opted for rebaptism of their children, using the different rite from that originally chosen. This suggests that in some cases a denominational allegiance was being defined, rather than a looser dual allegiance operating.

Analysis of families using only Methodist baptism reveals a complicated pattern. This is summarised in Table 5.13.¹⁴⁷ For eight of the eighteen, there was an exclusive commitment from the outset, although one family moved away and their records have not been traced further. However, the remaining ten are uncertain because of the number of children whose

¹⁴⁶ N.A.O. PR 7100-01.

¹⁴⁷ See below, 243.

Table 5.12

Changes in Baptismal Practices of Bingham Wesleyan Methodists 1831-1865

Father	Methodist Links	Prior Ang.	First Meth.								No. of Changes
William Strong	CS;CL; M 1809-32->	4	1831								1
John Doncaster	CS;LP;CL;	1	1833								1
Joseph Jackson	LP?; M 1830 1863 (wife)	1	1834	1836	1838						1
Isaac Newton	S;T;TD;CL; M 1863	7	1835	1843							1
Samuel Richards	M 1863(wife)	6	1838	1841							1
Charles Doncaster	S;CS;T;TD; LP;CL;M 1863	2	1840	1842	1844	1846	1848	1849	1851	1852	2
John Leighton		5	1840	1841	1843	1844					1
Edmund Richmond		3	1840	1846	1847	1852	1855				2
John Beet			1845 ¹	1847 ¹	1849 ¹	1851 ²	1853				1
Thomas Ruxby		4	1845	1847	1850						1
William Wilson		3	1845	1849							1
Joseph Brewster		4 (1) ¹	1847(2) ²	1852	1854	1857	1860				2
Edward Castledine		1	1847	1849	1851						1

Robert/Richard Green			1847 (2)	1849	1851	1854					1
Thomas Parnham	M1863 (wife)	5	1848	1849	1852	1854	1855	1857			3
William Allen		1	1850	1852	1856(2)						3
William Braithwaite		2	1850								1
Thomas Routh/Rowarth		6	1850	1852	1854	1856	1858	1859	1861		2
Robert Stubbs			1850	1852	1855	1858	1860	1863			1
Thomas Wright		2	1850 ¹	1852 (2) ²	1854	1857(2)	1860				2
John Jackson		5	1852	1854	1857						2
John Stubbs		4	1852	1856							2
William Clarke			1854	1856	1858	1861	1865				1
John Gillman		3	1854								1

Key: S – Steward; CS – Circuit Steward; T – Trustee; TD – Day School Trustee; LP – Local preacher; CL – Class leader; M – Member

grey – Anglican; yellow – Methodist; no highlight – not traced

¹child(ren) rebaptised; ²date of rebaptism

Sources: N.A.O. PR 7100-02; NC/MR/5/8; /5/19; /5/23/2; /5/30/1-2; /5/34/1-2; /8/6; /8/13; /8/28-29; /8/31; /8/73; /8/242; /8/247; B.M.C. Deeds for Methodist Chapel, Bingham, Notts. Conveyance of a piece of land and messuage situate at Bingham Nottinghamshire 2 May 1856

Table 5.13

Bingham Wesleyan Methodists using only Methodist Baptism 1796-1853

Father	Untraced earlier	First Meth.	Later Meth.	Untraced later (Bingham)	Untraced later (outside parish)
George Skinner		1796	1		
George White		1824	1		
James Hardtstaff	3	1833	1		
John Mabbott	2	1834	4	4	
William Smith (1)	1	1834	4	1	
John Scothern		1845	4	4	
William Blatherwick		1846	0	1	2
Thomas North*		1846	1		
Richard Skinner		1847	0		
George Langley		1848	6	2	
John Saunders		1848	3	1	
William Chettle		1849	6	1	2
John Wakefield	2	1849	0	1	1
William Smith (2)		1850	0	2	1
John Wilson		1850	0		1
Robert Brewster		1851	2		
William Saunders		1851	1		
Samuel White	1	1853	5		

Key: Untraced – baptismal records not traced; **Yellow** – families with Methodist baptisms of all recorded children;

*no later trace of family

Sources: T.N.A. HO 107/0853; HO 107/2139; RG9/2484; RG10/3546-3547; N.A.O. PR 7100-02; NC/MR/5/34/1-2; /8/2

baptismal records in Bingham could not be traced, even though the family lived there. Since other families clearly varied their practice, it cannot be assumed that the untraced records would have been Methodist. On the other hand, the Methodist system had the potential for missing entries. The circuit register was apparently compiled from data supplied by the different chapels sometime after the ceremonies, as shown by dates not being in strict chronological order; for example:

117	23.06.1842
118	14.12.1841
119	14.12.1841
120	17.04.1842
121	08.05.1842
122	05.06.1842
123	12.06.1842 ¹⁴⁸

Consequently, details of some chapel baptisms may never have reached the circuit register. To some extent this is confirmed by the existence of a separate register maintained by Cropwell Bishop.¹⁴⁹

Comparisons

As anticipated, there were developments regarding all the parish churches. The buildings underwent some level of repair, improvement or extension and a new chapel of ease was opened in Cropwell Butler to better serve the needs of the larger village. Apart from Flintham, the major changes all occurred in the 1840s. The impetus in each parish varied; in Flintham the fabric was in urgent need of repair and the dominant local landowner was prepared to pay; in Cropwell Bishop the advent of a new resident vicar was the likely stimulus; in Tithby the arrival of a new incumbent in the 1820s

¹⁴⁸ N.A.O. NC/MR/5/34/2.

¹⁴⁹ N.A.O. NC/MR/8/243.

resulted in some basic refurbishment, while 20 years later the lack of an Anglican place of worship in Cropwell Butler, combined with Methodist competition and the provision of premises by a major local farmer, led to the new chapel of ease; in Bingham a new rector, who rapidly became influenced by the Oxford movement, instigated and largely financed major changes to the church interior.

For three parishes, there were significant changes for the Methodists. Up to the 1840s, the Wesleyans had enjoyed a period of unchallenged consolidation. However, by 1851 they were faced with a flourishing new nonconformist group everywhere except Cropwell Bishop. The new Primitive Methodist Societies in both Flintham and Cropwell Butler rapidly consolidated and built chapels thus securing a more permanent position in the villages. In addition, they offered types of worship such as love feasts and camp meetings, which were both designed to appeal to those outside and were potentially more exciting to existing members. For the Bingham Wesleyans, the challenge was focused on the temperance issue with the emergence of the separate group of Temperance Christians by 1843. As in the villages, this new group was able to consolidate almost immediately by building premises and running a Sunday school.

It was particularly evident in Bingham that the emergence of new groups led to changes in allegiance since leading Wesleyans left the Society to become key figures for the Temperance Christians but some movement from the Wesleyans to the Primitive Societies in Flintham and Cropwell Butler was also likely. The extent to which the additional accommodation was actually required to serve the religious needs of the population varied but in general the situation in Cropwell Bishop and Bingham was similar, apart from a slight variation in the timing, and accommodation was broadly

appropriate by the half century point. Cropwell Butler and Tithby had been significantly underprovided initially but the new buildings balanced the population increase to reach a suitable level by 1851. However, Flintham had never been underprovided and the building of Methodist chapels led to a situation where there was far more seating than needed.

There were clashing service times everywhere, particularly in the evenings in Cropwell Butler and Bingham, and indications that competition in both Bingham and Flintham may have led the Wesleyans to introduce changes. However, it was also possible for individuals to practise dual allegiance and attend the services of different denominations at different times.

Comparison of the baptismal practices in the Wesleyan Societies¹⁵⁰ revealed that in all four places a number of early members with more than five years' membership recorded before 1830 continued to use Anglican baptism, although some still exhibited a high level of commitment to the Wesleyans. The largest number of families (four) was in Flintham, although it was not the biggest Society, while only one family did not change in Cropwell Butler. The opposite choice of exclusive commitment to Methodist baptism revealed some clear differences. This is summarised in Table 5.14 below.

¹⁵⁰ See above for method used, 210.

Table 5.14

**Wesleyan Families using Methodist Baptisms Exclusively:
First Baptism up to 1855**

Methodist Baptisms only	Flintham	C.Bishop	C.Butler	Bingham
Definite	2	1	1	8
Possible (includes children where baptism untraced)	7	3	8	18
Total	9	4	9	26
Percentage of all families using Methodist baptism	44.4	14.3	47.1	42.9

Sources: T.N.A. HO 107/0853-4; HO 107/2139; RG9/2483-5; RG10/3546-8; 3550; RG11/3380-2; RG12/2717-18; N.A.O. PR 8474-6; 3866-7; 14618; 6988-9; 7100-02; NC/MR/5/34/1-2; /8/242-3; H.T.C.T., Baptisms

Although there were difficulties everywhere regarding tracing baptismal records for subsequent children, it is clear that in Cropwell Butler there was a greater likelihood of families maintaining the initial decision for Methodist baptism; nevertheless, there was not a great difference between there and Flintham or Bingham. However, those opting for the Wesleyans were significantly less likely to continue with this choice in Cropwell Bishop.

In comparing those changing baptismal practices, a number of points emerge. The first is that although changes were primarily from Anglican to Methodist, the reverse also occurred; in addition while some families later reverted to their original practice, there were a few instances of yet a third change. The percentages indicating the comparative level of fluidity reveal the opposite balance from exclusive commitment to Methodism, as shown in Table 5.15 below.

Table 5.15
Wesleyan Families varying Baptismal Practice up to 1855

At least one variation	Flintham	C.Bishop	C.Butler	Bingham
Number of families	10	18	9	24
Percentage of all families	55.6	85.7	52.9	57.1

Sources: T.N.A. HO 107/0853-4; HO 107/2139; RG9/2483-5; RG10/3546-8; 3550; RG11/3380-2; RG12/2717-18; N.A.O. PR 8474-6; 3866-7; 14618; 6988-9; 7100-02; NC/MR/5/34/1-2; /8/242-3; H.T.C.T, Baptisms

Conclusions

The 1840s were a key decade nationally for the established church¹⁵¹ and in the area studied proved to be a significant decade for all the religious groups. In Cropwell Bishop, the legislative reforms had a noticeable effect, with the arrival of the first resident vicar for 100 years in 1840. However, Best's observation that pluralism was still present and inevitable in poor livings¹⁵² was confirmed in both Flintham and Tithby-cum-Cropwell Butler. Contrary to Knight's view about the early spread of the Oxford movement out to the parishes,¹⁵³ the church in Bingham was strongly affected by the arrival of a rector who employed a leading architect and schoolmaster both greatly influenced by the movement.

The evidence points in two directions about the question raised in the literature of whether the Primitives were mission rather than chapel oriented.¹⁵⁴ Of the earlier Societies, that at Tithby never acquired a building, while the Bingham chapel was opened very shortly after the Society's formation and was the first in Nottinghamshire. The two new Societies established in the 1840s both built a chapel comparatively

¹⁵¹ See above Chapter 1, 24 and 45.

¹⁵² Best, *Temporal*, 406-07.

¹⁵³ Knight, 'Oxford Movement', 130, 135-39.

¹⁵⁴ Kendall, *Origin and History*; Ambler, *Churches*, 156-57.

quickly; at Flintham two years after the Society's first meetings and at Cropwell Butler, six years later. Overall, it appears there was generally a strong focus on establishing a presence with a building but also on the continuation of evangelistic events, such as camp meetings.

During the 1840s, accommodation provided in places of worship increased because of building by both existing and new religious groups. This increase was not related to a shortage of seats, other than in Cropwell Butler, so it can be concluded that denominational rivalry was to some extent a spur as had been suggested in the literature.¹⁵⁵ Nevertheless even in Cropwell Butler the incumbent explicitly viewed the situation as one of competition. At the mid-century point there was already overcapacity in Flintham and, even where better balanced, any population decline was likely to immediately put a strain on maintaining organisations and buildings with potentially less members and adherents. The onset of such effects, highlighted by Gill,¹⁵⁶ for the period after 1851 are discussed in Chapter 8.

According to the literature,¹⁵⁷ the existence of clashing service times was an indicator of developing competition and this phenomenon was widespread in all the parishes. In Cropwell Butler and Tithby, there is evidence that it was deliberate, as may have been the situation elsewhere. On the other hand, the pattern was such that dual allegiance in terms of attendance was feasible everywhere and undoubtedly occurred.¹⁵⁸

The suggestion from my earlier research about Cropwell Butler that changes in baptismal practices by Methodist members were in response to

¹⁵⁵ Watts, *Dissenters II*, 604.

¹⁵⁶ Gill, 'Empty' Church, 33, 135.

¹⁵⁷ Knight, 'Diversity', 383-4; Royle, 'Church and Methodism', 150.

¹⁵⁸ See further discussion below, Chapter 9, 400-01.

increasing denominational competition¹⁵⁹ was confirmed to some extent. Cropwell Bishop exhibited a similar pattern to Cropwell Butler in the 1840s with six families, including two core ones, changing to Methodist baptism following the renovation of the parish church and the opening of the new Methodist chapel. In Cropwell Butler, the same change in practice for five core families followed the opening of the Anglican chapel of ease and the new Primitive Methodist chapel. The dates of changes in baptismal practice in Flintham suggest a possible response to increase in competition from the building of the Primitive chapel, although the link is less certain and there was no particular Anglican challenge at that point. In Bingham, major alterations to the parish church and the emergence of the Temperance Christians were followed by six changes in baptismal practice from Anglican to Methodist in 1845 and 1847. However, none were core families and the Society was much larger compared with the Cropwells. In addition, during the 1830s five core families in the Society all changed to the Methodist rite and in general maintained this consistently thereafter but it was not a time of particular denominational competition.

Overall it can be concluded that the 1840s was as significant a decade in this local area as it was for both Anglicans and Wesleyans nationally. Major positive developments for the parish churches and the establishment of additional nonconformist groups challenging the Wesleyans, resulted in religious competition as an emerging feature in all the communities, as evidenced by new building, competing services and, to some extent, baptismal decisions. The existence of competition amongst the denominations regarding educational provision is discussed in the next chapter.

¹⁵⁹ Woodcock, 'Union', 64-67; Woodcock, 'Emergence', 27.

Chapter Six

Religious Competition in Education

Introduction

It has been established that there was a level of religious competition in the villages and Bingham by the mid-nineteenth century; its extent with regard to education is now considered. Previous chapters have referred to the establishment of Sunday schools as an aspect of consolidation but this chapter looks at the overall development of religious and secular education up to 1875, when the 1870 Education Act had begun to take effect in the communities. It was decided to explore this aspect over the whole period, rather than before and after the religious census, because it was an extensive topic with no clear dividing point.

Although all the religious groups ran Sunday schools at some point, the first issue was the time at which these, particularly Wesleyan ones, became established. According to the literature, their existence in the early part of the century was by no means universal, as found by Obelkevich in south Lindsey and even within the Bingham registration district in 1851.¹ The key subsequent question was whether there was evidence of religious education being regarded as an area of competition amongst the denominations.² Until the 1870 Act, Sunday schools provided a level of free elementary education as well as religious instruction, with the

¹ J. Obelkevich, *Religion and Rural Society: South Lindsey 1825-1875* (1976), 193; *Census of Great Britain, 1851. Education. England & Wales. Report and tables.* P.P. 1852-3 [1692] XC, 164.

² A.D. Gilbert, *Religion and Society in Industrial England: Church, Chapel and Social Change, 1740-1914* (1976), 200-01; M.R. Watts, *The Dissenters: Vol. II The Expansion of Evangelical Nonconformity 1791-1859* (1995), 536-37; O. Chadwick, *The Victorian Church Part 1 : 1829-59* (1966), 338; G. Parsons, 'Liberation and Church Defence: Victorian Church and Victorian Chapel', in G. Parsons (ed.), *Religion in Victorian Britain, II: Controversies* (1988), 158.

advantage of avoiding the working week.³ Numbers of scholars for chapels and churches were one measure of their effectiveness relative to the population and to each other. In addition, the existence and recognition of additional 'events' offered involving the community, such as Sunday school anniversaries, was a further point of comparison and an indication of competition. The varied source material was inevitably more extensive for some groups than others, but in general newspaper reports were particularly valuable.

The literature had indicated that secular education was a major area of competition between Anglicans and nonconformists.⁴ The conflict between the two opposing Societies promoting religious education during most of the nineteenth century resulted in the majority of rural schools being under the Anglican National Society, although the Wesleyans were the main nonconformist group accepting state aid with its conditions.⁵ An initial question was therefore whether the two day schools in Bingham reflected the national competitive approach and also whether the National schools in the villages were supported by the community, including Methodist families and adherents, or were more narrowly denominational. Subsequently, the issue was how far there was local evidence of efforts made generally by religious groups after the Education Act to avoid the creation of a local school board and to vie for control when one was created.⁶ Again, there was evidence from a variety of sources, including diocesan records about the church schools and government records about the establishment of school boards.

³ D. Bebbington, *Victorian Nonconformity*, Headstart History Papers, (1992), 37; Obelkevich, *Religion*, 167.

⁴ Gilbert, *Religion*, 200-01; Watts, *Dissenters II*, 536-37; Chadwick, *Victorian Church*, 338; Parsons, 'Liberation', 158.

⁵ See above Chapter 1, 50-51.

⁶ Parsons, 'Liberation', 158; J.T. Smith 'The Enemy Within?': the Clergyman and the English School Boards, 1870-1902', *History of Education: Journal of the History of Education Society*, 38:1 (2009), 136; A. Digby, 'Social Institutions', in E.J.T. Collins (ed.), *The Agrarian History of England and Wales*, Vol.7: 1850-1914, Pt.2, (2000), 1492.

Flintham

Unfortunately, the evidence regarding the provision of religious education in Flintham was limited. The churchwardens' accounts refer to children attending confirmation in 1844 (28), 1853 (21) and 1862 (12), so it can be assumed that a level of religious instruction had preceded this.⁷ A surviving scrap of paper dated 5 October 1846 gave the following information:

Boys Sunday School	33
New Scholars	14
Day Scholars	16

On the back it also stated that '5 Day Scholars attend the Sunday school'.⁸ This confirmed the existence in the 1840s of both an Anglican Sunday school of at least 33 boys and a day school connected to the parish church. No further information was given in the religious census return because the vicar declined to answer the questions about endowment and attendance, although he did refer to 'movable forms in the chancel occupied by the Sunday School boys'.⁹ In 1865, a surviving diocesan church school return recorded 75 in the Sunday school, presumably both boys and girls,¹⁰ which was 55.1 per cent of the number of children in the village from four to 13 in 1861¹¹ and exceeded the Wesleyans' 60 scholars in 1869.¹² In 1868, a Sunday school treat at Flintham Hall was held where 'the children were regaled with a bountiful dinner of roast beef and plum pudding', further suggesting a flourishing Anglican Sunday school in the late 1860s.¹³

⁷ N.A.O. PR 19566.

⁸ N.A.O. PR 8486.

⁹ T.N.A. HO 129/443.

¹⁰ L.A.O. DIOC/DBE/8/4/41.

¹¹ T.N.A. RG9/2483.

¹² N.A.O. NC/MR/8/44.

¹³ *Nottinghamshire Guardian* 23 October 1868.

The forty-fourth Wesleyan Sunday school anniversary was held in 1862, indicating that the school began around 1818.¹⁴ The census referred to an average attendance of 30 scholars, although none attended on census Sunday.¹⁵ Regular anniversary events were held in the 1850s and 1860s at which the children gave recitations with a tea on the Monday, often followed by a public meeting.¹⁶ Circuit records from 1869 detailed numbers of scholars, teachers and their average attendance, showing 60 scholars and ten teachers and meetings in the morning and afternoon.¹⁷ Between 1871 and 1872, there was a sharp drop in numbers and thereafter a general decline, probably related to effects of the Education Act.¹⁸

The Primitive Methodist Society never succeeded in establishing a Sunday school. There was an attempt in 1868, when it was listed as having just commenced with ten teachers, six boys and four girls, but it was no longer running the following year and the problem of competition because 'the Wesleyans have strong churches and schools' was identified in later circuit records.¹⁹

A parish school had been built in 1779 with money from a bequest.²⁰ It was referred to as a charity school, with the Rev. C.J. Myers as proprietor/trustee²¹ and was presumably the place of education of the 'day scholars' mentioned above. In 1865 there were 29 scholars²² and by 1869 it had become a National School.²³ Problems were clearly envisaged in

¹⁴ *Ibid*, 25 April 1862.

¹⁵ T.N.A. HO 129/443.

¹⁶ *Nottinghamshire Guardian* 16 April 1857; 25 April 1862; 22 April 1864; 27 April 1866.

¹⁷ N.A.O. NC/MR/8/44

¹⁸ *Ibid*.

¹⁹ N.A.O. NC/MR/5/315.

²⁰ White 1832, 494.

²¹ N.A.O. DD 345/4/1-212.

²² L.A.O. DIOC/DBE/8/4/41.

²³ Morris 1869, 256.

respect of meeting the requirements of the 1870 Act since steps were taken in 1870 towards applying for a grant from the National Society to enlarge the schoolroom.²⁴ Apparently this did not proceed further but in the same year an application was made to the Education Department for assistance which eventually resulted in a grant of just over £100.²⁵ The main landowner, T.B.T. Hildyard, and the vicar, J.W. Hayward, were both active in the project, raising money with subscriptions from local landowners and negotiating with the Endowed Schools Commission in respect of releasing money from the original bequest, while Hildyard also provided freehold land for the site.²⁶ The total cost, including the value of the land, was about £1,000 and the new building was completed by the end of 1873.²⁷ Local efforts had avoided any 'deficiency of accommodation' which could have to a non-denominational school board being created, although the trust deed stated that the provisions of the Education Act, which constitute a public elementary school, should apply.²⁸ It is noteworthy that the subscribers included at least two leading Wesleyans, John Whyman and Thomas Ragsdale, indicating broad-based village support for avoiding a school board.²⁹

Overall it appears that the Anglican and Wesleyan Sunday schools were of roughly similar size mid-century, although there was also day school provision under the control of the church. By the latter part of the 1860s, the Anglican Sunday school had probably overtaken the Wesleyan in numbers. Increases in both the Sunday schools were against a declining population but this did not necessarily mean a steady increase in the

²⁴ C.E.R.C. NS/7/1/4992.

²⁵ T.N.A. ED/103/121/27.

²⁶ T.N.A. ED/49/5971.

²⁷ *Ibid*; White 1885, 132.

²⁸ N.A.O. SBX 248/2/7.

²⁹ T.N.A. ED/103/121/27; see below Chapter 9, 362-64.

intervening years.³⁰ However, the Wesleyan Sunday school contributed to village life in terms of events, such as anniversaries and there were also Anglican village occasions. In 1865, the overlap between the Anglican Sunday school and the day school was very high, in that only three children at the day school were not registered at the Sunday school.³¹ This suggests the Sunday schools met at different times and some children attended both because the Church school was the only one in the village and some Wesleyan children would have been pupils there. In general it appears that secular education was not regarded competitively but as an important facility for the village, albeit still connected closely to the church.

Cropwell Bishop

There is no specific evidence regarding the Anglican Sunday school until the mid-nineteenth century, although it was in existence earlier; the vicar was eventually successful in obtaining a schoolroom in 1850³² and the census return recorded 65 Sunday scholars for the afternoon, stating this was also the average attendance.³³ A report in 1853 stated the vicar 'gave his annual treat to the day and Sunday scholars and others in the place. Ninety-eight children and about 200 parishioners assembled on the occasion'.³⁴ Although this suggests a general village event, it also indicates that a significant number of children were involved. However, in 1854 Gould wrote to the Ecclesiastical Commissioners requesting assistance as 'the funds for carrying on the business of the School are found to be inadequate for its support'.³⁵ He described it as a day and Sunday school

³⁰ V.C.H. *Nottinghamshire* II (1910), 311.

³¹ L.A.O. DIOC/DBE/8/4/41.

³² See above Chapter 5, 219.

³³ T.N.A. HO 129/443.

³⁴ *Nottinghamshire Guardian* 4 August 1853.

³⁵ C.E.R.C. ECE/7/1/5282.

'lately established' and 'capable of containing from 70 to 80 Scholars'.³⁶ Apparently the mistress employed at £30 per annum superintended both schools.³⁷ However, the diocesan reports recorded numbers ranging from 44 in 1860 to 19 in 1863, showing a clear decline compared with ten years earlier.³⁸

The Wesleyans had also opened a Sunday school sometime prior to their new building in 1842 and with sufficient success that by 1851 there were 110 scholars registered.³⁹ However, the actual attendance on census Sunday was only 66 and no average was given.⁴⁰ Since both the Wesleyan and Anglican schools met on the afternoon of census Sunday, no overlap would have been possible;⁴¹ consequently on this important occasion 131 children attended, divided equally between the denominations, out of a possible 169 children in the village between the ages of four and 13.⁴² Therefore some of the children on the Methodist register must have attended the Anglican Sunday school, at least on census Sunday, suggesting a level of dual allegiance amongst the parents. There is no further precise evidence regarding numbers until 1869, when circuit records showed an increase in the average attendance compared with the mid-century to 100 and 90 in the morning and afternoon respectively, although the number of scholars registered was similar at 103.⁴³ However, by 1874 the attendance had dropped to 70 and 80, with 92 registered.⁴⁴ When the new Wesleyan chapel was built in 1842, the Sunday school

³⁶ *Ibid.*

³⁷ *Ibid.*

³⁸ L.A.O. DIOC/DBE/9/17/72; /74; /76; /78.

³⁹ *Nottingham Review* 19 July 1844; A. Harper & E. Harper, *Chronicles of Cropwell Bishop* (1988), 15.

⁴⁰ T.N.A. HO 129/443.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*

⁴² T.N.A. HO 107/2139.

⁴³ N.A.O. NC/MR/8/44.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

initially continued to meet in the old chapel building⁴⁵ but at some point later probably moved to the new chapel. As in many villages, it is clear that it played a social as well as an educational role in the community. The *Nottingham Review* reported the 1864 anniversary services and accompanying festivities, which involved 115 children, and these were not the only regular events.⁴⁶

According to one source, there were one or two local dame schools in Cropwell Bishop and by 1850 a night school was also being held in the church itself.⁴⁷ The new building erected in that year served as both a day and Sunday school and as a National School was closely linked to the church, with oversight by the vicar who also kept a key.⁴⁸ In 1854 he successfully obtained £5 per annum towards the running costs from the Ecclesiastical Commissioners but it is clear that finance was an ongoing problem.⁴⁹ Its other income consisted of voluntary subscriptions, £20 from payments by the children and amounts from occasional sermons.⁵⁰ Expenditure was primarily the mistress's salary of £30 which Gould noted was 'the lowest sum at which an efficient Teacher is to be procured' but there were also requirements for books, other necessary expenses and payments off the debt outstanding from the building costs.⁵¹

However, by the early 1860s the diocesan inspector was despairing about the state of the school.⁵² In April 1862 he reported

I really don't know what to do with this School, there is none in the district I have visited so often – but there is no local

⁴⁵ *Nottingham Review* 19 July 1844.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 22 July 1864; Harper & Harper, *Chronicles*, 15.

⁴⁷ Harper & Harper, *Chronicles*, 15; C.E.R.C. ECE/7/1/5280.

⁴⁸ Harper & Harper, *Chronicles*, 17.

⁴⁹ C.E.R.C. ECE/7/1/5282.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*

⁵¹ *Ibid.*

⁵² L.A.O. DIOC/DBE/9/17/77.

superintendence, no funds to procure a good mistress, so without one or the other of these requirements, it would be a marvel if the school thrived.⁵³

There were 47 children on the books in 1865⁵⁴ but the government inspector's report under the Education Act reported a deficiency in accommodation for all the 103 children within the district and that a suitable site had already been selected with a view to the erection of a school.⁵⁵ By 1873 nothing had been done and correspondence suggested the proposers were hoping that the deficiency of accommodation in Cropwell Bishop might be supplemented by neighbouring schools.⁵⁶ However, it was also noted that Cropwell Butler had no room to spare and Colston Bassett was not convenient for the children, so Cropwell Bishop should 'be called on to supply the whole of its deficiency'.⁵⁷ The various procedures under the Act were followed culminating in a statement in 1875 that 'no steps have been taken to provide the necessary School Accommodation for the parish of Cropwell Bishop'.⁵⁸ An order for a school board was therefore issued.⁵⁹

The Board was informed by the Education Department in 1876 that the present school was inefficient in every way and a new school was recommended.⁶⁰ It rapidly found a suitable site, invited tenders and obtained a loan of £1,300 from the Public Works Loan Commissioners;⁶¹ the school accommodating about 116 children and the master's house were erected from 1877-8 and opened in September 1878.⁶² The government

⁵³ *Ibid.*

⁵⁴ L.A.O. DIOC/DBE/8/4/41.

⁵⁵ T.N.A. ED/2/354.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*

⁶⁰ N.A.O. SB 16/1/1.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*; T.N.A. ED/21/14036.

⁶² N.A.O. SB 16/1/1; White 1885, 114.

inspector visited in October and gave a generally favourable report.⁶³ By the end of June 1879, the quarterly statistics showed 101 registered pupils and an average attendance of 72.1, which was very different from the state of the earlier Church school.⁶⁴

Although the vicar clearly regarded education as a competitive issue⁶⁵ and his efforts met with some success during the 1850s, by the early 1860s Anglican Sunday school numbers were declining and at the end of the decade the Wesleyans had increased against relatively static population numbers.⁶⁶ This suggests moves in favour of the Methodists, which may also have been related to the inadequacy of the Church school. Perhaps surprisingly, there was no particular involvement of the Wesleyans in the formation of a school board, although one leading Wesleyan, George Shelton, was elected to the Board in 1878.⁶⁷

Cropwell Butler and Tithby

There is little evidence about the Sunday school attached to the parish church but in 1844 Joshua Brooke referred to the difficulties of accommodating the scholars in Tithby church where they were 'obliged to be seated within the communion rails and in the aisles'.⁶⁸ The number was given as 110, although the manuscript is not clearly legible.⁶⁹ The attendance in 1851 was considerably less at 40 scholars for the one service, despite an average being given as 50 for both morning and afternoon.⁷⁰ Although not entirely clear, it appears from both newspaper

⁶³ T.N.A. ED/21/14036; N.A.O. SB 16/1/1.

⁶⁴ N.A.O. SBX 45/4.

⁶⁵ See above Chapter 5, 220.

⁶⁶ V.C.H. *Nottinghamshire* II, 312.

⁶⁷ N.A.O. SB 16/1/1.

⁶⁸ N.A.O. DD/TB/3/2/30.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*

⁷⁰ T.N.A. HO 129/443.

reports of the 1850s and diocesan records for the first half of the 1860s that the opening of the chapel of ease allowed the development of Anglican Sunday schools at Cropwell Butler as well as Tithby.⁷¹ Where combined totals can be ascertained (1860-61 and 1865), the number of scholars varied between 70 and 84, showing an increase on the mid-century figures.⁷² Consequently, the census total must have only related to the Tithby school, with combined totals of around 70 to 100 until the mid-1860s.⁷³

The first surviving register of the Wesleyan Sunday school in 1851 recorded 79 children, which was 46.7 per cent of the children in Cropwell Butler and Tithby between four and 13.⁷⁴ However, its earlier establishment is confirmed by a set of Sunday school anniversary invitations from 1837-46 showing special visiting preachers invited primarily from Nottingham or Newark, but including one from the Wesleyan Theological Institution in London.⁷⁵ There were usually six classes of children from 1851 to the early 1870s, each with a separate teacher.⁷⁶ A note of those teachers at a meeting in 1858 listed 14 names⁷⁷ and the circuit education schedule from 1869-74 recorded eleven or twelve teachers up to 1872, so more teachers were generally available than the number of classes.⁷⁸ Scholars who left the school after a substantial period of attendance were usually presented with a bible, sometimes at the

⁷¹ L.A.O. DIOC/DBE/9/17/254-65; /8/4/41; *Nottinghamshire Guardian* 9 December 1852; 29 December 1853; 9 November 1854.

⁷² L.A.O. DIOC/DBE/9/17/254; /256; /259; /261; /263; /265; /8/4/41.

⁷³ T.N.A. HO 129/443; *Nottinghamshire Guardian* 18 August 1853; 1 October 1857; L.A.O. DIOC/DBE/8/4/41.

⁷⁴ N.A.O. NC/MR/8/408; T.N.A. HO 107/2139.

⁷⁵ J.M. Barratt, Cropwell Bishop, Notts. Private Collection of Scrap Books. Set of Sunday School Anniversary Invitations, 1837-69.

⁷⁶ N.A.O. NC/MR/8/408.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*

⁷⁸ N.A.O. NC/MR/8/44.

anniversaries⁷⁹ but also at other times, as evidenced by the inscription in a surviving family bible:

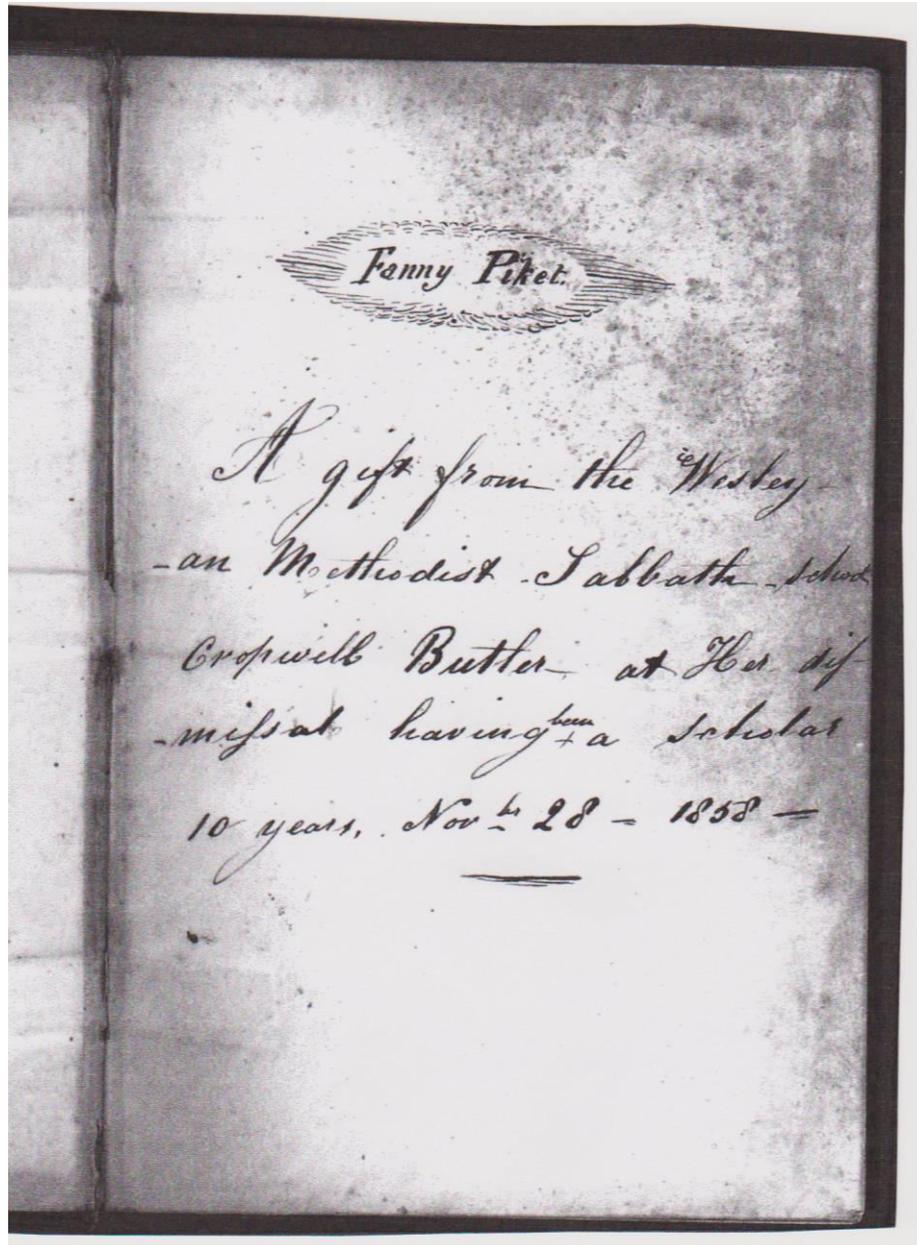


Illustration 6.1

Inscription on First Page of Family Bible

Bible given for Anniversary display 2011, Cropwell Butler Methodist Chapel.

Donor unknown.

⁷⁹ Barratt, Scrap Books. Anniversary Invitations, 1837-69.

Sunday school occasions clearly continued into the second half of the century; the National schoolmaster, Charles Goodwin, noted a Sunday school treat in the village in 1866 leading to 17 children being absent in the afternoon⁸⁰ and in 1869 there were anniversary services on a Sunday, followed by a public tea and meetings on Monday.⁸¹ Despite this level of activity, the number of scholars registered had dropped to 55 in 1860 and 48 in 1865, while by 1869 it was half that of 1851, with average attendances also falling by almost as much.⁸² The Anglican Sunday school had overtaken the Wesleyans in numbers by the 1860s and the establishment of the Primitive Methodist Sunday school may also account for some reduction.

The Primitive Methodists' Sunday school commenced at some point between 1848, when the Nottingham South circuit return stated there was no Sunday school, and 1852, when the *Nottinghamshire Guardian* reported 'the teachers of the Wesleyan and Primitive Methodist Sunday Schools at Cropwell Butler, gave their scholars the usual treat of plum-cake and tea upon Christmas Day in their respective chapels'.⁸³ This indicates that the Sunday school was by then well established and by 1860 there was a particular event with sermons on its behalf and including contributions by the children.⁸⁴

Private schools existed in the village by the 1830s⁸⁵ and by the 1840s a village school had been established in premises owned by George Parr, which were extended to provide the chapel of ease. It was a National Society school and a local history of the time mentions it as being 'for the

⁸⁰ N.A.O. SL 48/1/1.

⁸¹ Barratt, Scrap Books. Anniversary Invitation, 18 July 1869.

⁸² N.A.O.NC/MR/8/44.

⁸³ T.N.A. HO 129/443; N.A.O. NC/MR/15/18; *Nottinghamshire Guardian* 30 December 1852.

⁸⁴ *Nottinghamshire Guardian* 12 July 1860.

⁸⁵ N.A.O. DD 232/1.

education of the poor'.⁸⁶ Enlarged in 1859 at the expense of Mr Parr and then further in 1866 to accommodate about 120 pupils,⁸⁷ by the time of the procedures under the Education Act, it was designated as an efficient school accommodating 107 children, meaning there was no deficiency in the district.⁸⁸

45 children were registered in 1860, although there were efforts to increase this massively the following year; however, the significant change came in 1863 with the appointment of a new master, Charles Goodwin, who rapidly became very popular.⁸⁹ Two different sources give the numbers in 1865 as 108 and 100 and the diocesan inspector stated that he 'seems a person likely to succeed in getting a large no. of children under his care'.⁹⁰ Indeed, some cross-denominational usage is suggested by the attendance of the youngest son of a leading Wesleyan, George Barratt.⁹¹ However, after 1865 it is difficult to be certain about the numbers on the school roll at any particular time.⁹² Charles Goodwin was clearly a conscientious teacher and respected in the village,⁹³ and the success of the school might well have contributed to the decline of the Wesleyan Sunday school in the third quarter of the century. On the other hand, records showed some children going to the Sunday school did not attend the day school, indicating that the Wesleyans were making a real contribution to the educational provision.⁹⁴

In addition to the secular education available in the larger village of Cropwell Butler, a small school existed for a time in Tithby. The record of

⁸⁶ A. Esdaile, *History of Bingham*, (1851), 47.

⁸⁷ White 1885, 115.

⁸⁸ T.N.A. ED/21/14037.

⁸⁹ L.A.O. DIOC/DBE/9/17/261-63; /266-67.

⁹⁰ L.A.O. DIOC/DBE/8/4/41; /9/17/267; N.A.O. SL 48/1/1.

⁹¹ N.A.O. SA 48/1/1.

⁹² *Ibid*; SL 48/1/1.

⁹³ Plaque in Tithby Church.

⁹⁴ N.A.O. NC/MR/8/408; SA 48/1/1.

inspections from 1860-1863 showed its numbers varying between 25 and twelve, although the reduction in numbers by 1863 was attributed to popularity of the new master at Cropwell Butler.⁹⁵ It was essentially a dame school but nevertheless under the auspices of the church and highly commended by the inspector.⁹⁶ The schoolroom was originally in a cottage but in 1861 a new room was 'built by Mr Musters amply sufficient for the requirements of the place'.⁹⁷ The inspector concluded at the end of 1863 that it would remain a useful school for the smaller children who could not walk from Tithby to Cropwell Butler and there were still eleven children registered in 1865.⁹⁸ By 1871 the school had closed, since the first report under the Education Act stated there were no efficient schools in the district but there was no deficiency because the children could be accommodated in neighbouring Cropwell Butler and children already attended school there.⁹⁹

Overall it is difficult to assess the level of competition between the Sunday schools. On census Sunday, the Anglican and Wesleyan schools met at different times, so children may have attended both. Nevertheless, even if this was not the case, there were still at least 71 children between four and 13 who did not attend either school, which was considerably more non-attenders than the proportion in neighbouring Cropwell Bishop.¹⁰⁰ Subsequently, the Anglicans may have increased at the expense of the Wesleyans, possibly because they opened a Sunday school in Cropwell Butler, as well as at the church in Tithby and as the century progressed there was further competition from the Primitives. For those who lived in the smaller village, all the educational options were under Anglican control

⁹⁵ L.A.O. DIOC/DBE/9/17/254-60.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*

⁹⁸ L.A.O. DIOC/DBE/9/17/260; /8/4/41.

⁹⁹ T.N.A. ED/2/360.

¹⁰⁰ T.N.A. HO 107/2139.

and there is no indication that the Independent Primitive Society challenged this in any way.

Bingham

The earliest evidence regarding an Anglican Sunday school dates from 1832:

a few years ago, the Earl of Chesterfield gave nearly one acre of land in the southern suburb of the town called *Longacre*, for the erection and endowment of a *Day and Sunday School*, which has been built by subscription.¹⁰¹

Esdaile's 1851 history also described the subscription, organised by the rector Robert Lowe, stating that the 'common parish school was kept in what is now used as the vestry in the Church'.¹⁰² Presumably the Sunday school was held in the same place. A new National school near the church was built in 1846, with the existing building being used for the infants but it is not clear where the Sunday school was then located.¹⁰³ However, in 1851 it was flourishing; the religious census recorded 150 scholars in the morning and 109 in the afternoon and Esdaile referred to a large Sunday school at the church.¹⁰⁴ The morning figures can be compared with the Wesleyans and the Temperance Hall, who noted 52 and 54 scholars respectively, and against the overall total of 566 children in Bingham between four and 13.¹⁰⁵ In the early 1860s there were over 170 children registered, although attendances were recorded as varying between 150 and 135.¹⁰⁶ This suggests that the Anglican Sunday school was maintaining, rather than increasing, its numbers of active scholars but this

¹⁰¹ White 1832, 481.

¹⁰² Esdaile, *Bingham*, 20.

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁴ T.N.A. HO 129/443; Esdaile, *Bingham*, 23.

¹⁰⁵ T.N.A. HO 129/443; HO 107/2139.

¹⁰⁶ L.A.O. DIOC/DBE/8/4/41; /9/17/6; /12; /14; /16.

must be set against a small population decline in the 1850s.¹⁰⁷

Subsequently the Sunday school continued to be active, since the Board schoolmaster noted the effect of 'Church Sunday School treats' on attendance.¹⁰⁸

By the 1840s the Wesleyan Sunday school was well established. Reports described anniversary celebrations in 1844 and in 1849 'on Christmas Day children belonging to the Wesleyan and Primitive Methodist Sunday Schools, were regaled with tea, and children belonging to the Temperance Hall were also treated to plum cake'.¹⁰⁹ A further report the following year indicated the Christmas treat was a regular annual affair.¹¹⁰ Since the 52 scholars at the Wesleyan morning service on census Sunday was the lowest figure amongst the three religious groups providing figures,¹¹¹ the Sunday school may have been experiencing some difficulties at this time. Abraham Kaye, the Wesleyan day schoolmaster, described in his diary a chapel leaders' meeting where

some important remarks were made about our Sabbath school. It is considered to be in a serious state. Mr Smith, Joiner, gives great dissatisfaction in the financial point of view - and we have resolved to try to reorganize the School on Wesleyan principles.¹¹²

However, it remained in existence, benefiting from a fund-raising event at the Temperance Hall in 1860¹¹³ and enjoying annual treats, which usually resulted in half-day holidays from the day school.¹¹⁴ By 1869 there were 140 scholars and 18 teachers with average attendances of 102 and 108,

¹⁰⁷ V.C.H. *Nottinghamshire* II, 311.

¹⁰⁸ N.A.O. SL 14/2/1.

¹⁰⁹ *Nottingham Review* 3 May 1844; 28 December 1849.

¹¹⁰ *Ibid*, 27 December 1850.

¹¹¹ HO 107/2139.

¹¹² M.K. Kendrick (ed.), *Diary of Abraham Kaye* (1995). Transcription loaned by Mrs V. Henstock, 26 March 1852.

¹¹³ V. Henstock (ed.), *Victorian Bingham: A Cameo of Life in a Small Nottinghamshire Town 1837-1901* (1986), 49.

¹¹⁴ N.A.O. SL/14/3/1; *Nottingham Guardian* 16 July 1868.

morning and afternoon respectively.¹¹⁵ Although this was a particularly high point, the numbers of scholars registered generally exceeded 115.¹¹⁶ The Wesleyan and then the Board school continued to allow half-day holidays for Sunday school treats, although after the change in 1872 it was noted in the school log that '16 of the Scholars did not belong to the Sunday School and were not treated to tea as before time, since the School has been made a School Board School'.¹¹⁷ Tea was provided the next day by the schoolmaster and the issue did not appear to recur.¹¹⁸

Although the Primitive Methodists had become Independent Primitives about 1832, the denomination was frequently referred to simply as Primitive Methodists, as is apparent in quotations cited. The earliest reference to a Sunday school was the report of the joint Christmas treat in 1849.¹¹⁹ It is difficult to say how securely it was then established because the denomination did not record any scholars in their census return.¹²⁰ On the other hand, in the same year Esdaile confirmed a Sunday school at the Primitive chapel.¹²¹ A 'Teachers' Tea Meeting' was reported at the end of 1853¹²² and in 1854 a social tea party was held on Christmas Day for teachers and scholars (together with the Temperance Christians).¹²³ There were also further newspaper items relating to a similar event and to a Sunday school anniversary during the next nine years.¹²⁴

Despite the Temperance Christians not being a denominational organisation, they nevertheless operated a Sunday school. A report about

¹¹⁵ N.A.O. NC/MR/8/44.

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁷ N.A.O. SL/14/3/1; SL/14/2/1.

¹¹⁸ N.A.O. SL/14/2/1.

¹¹⁹ See above, 267.

¹²⁰ T.N.A. HO 129/443.

¹²¹ Esdaile, *Bingham*, 23.

¹²² *Nottinghamshire Guardian* 29 December 1853.

¹²³ *Ibid.*, 28 December 1854.

¹²⁴ *Ibid.*, 2 January 1863; 24 May 1855.

anniversary services at the Hall in 1848 referred to tea being given to 80 children belonging to their Sunday school,¹²⁵ who were also part of the joint Christmas treat in 1849.¹²⁶ In 1850, sermons were preached at the Hall in aid of the Sabbath school and by 1851 Esdaile recorded the Trustees 'have a Sunday School prospering'.¹²⁷ The census return gave attendances of 54 scholars in the morning and 55 in the afternoon, with an average given as 60.¹²⁸ Considering the Temperance Hall had only been in existence since 1843, it rapidly established a significant Sunday school. However, after the report of the joint Christmas party in 1854, mentioned in connection with the Primitives, there is no further evidence about it in the second half of the century.¹²⁹

Overall, the mid-century position was that the Anglican Sunday school was significantly the largest and that the three nonconformist organisations engaged in a level of co-operation. Over the next half century, the Wesleyan Sunday school increased in size and appeared to flourish, as did that attached to the Independent Primitives, although there is no evidence regarding the size of the latter. However, the Anglican Sunday school also maintained its size and attendance rate and probably its dominant position. There was a noticeable contribution to the life of the town from the regular events held by the three denominational Sunday schools, while general Temperance festivals were held, although not exclusively for children. The numbers of children absent from school on various occasions for these celebrations indicated that they probably attended as many as possible without particular regard to strict denominational allegiance.

¹²⁵ *Nottingham Review* 23 June 1848.

¹²⁶ See above, 267.

¹²⁷ *Nottingham Review* 13 December 1850; Esdaile, *Bingham*, 23.

¹²⁸ T.N.A. HO 129/443.

¹²⁹ *Nottinghamshire Guardian* 28 December 1854.

The provision of secular education in Bingham in the nineteenth century was complicated. Esdaile's history referred to the common parish school within the church premises and elsewhere he stated it was the only parish school '50 years back'.¹³⁰ The acquisition of a new building prior to 1832 has already been described,¹³¹ while later it became a National School and in 1845 a new school was built 'near the east end of the church, at the sole expense of the Rev. R. Miles', who had just become the rector.¹³² Esdaile noted it was a 'handsome school' and 'has every convenience' and White's reported the schoolrooms 'receive about 200 children, and besides being an unspeakable boon to the poorer inhabitants of Bingham, are...a great ornament to that part of the town'.¹³³ The school building in Longacre was converted into an infants' school and during the 1860s was also used for a separate girls' school.¹³⁴ The diocesan inspector's reports on both the schools were highly commendatory; 'one of the best conducted Schools in the whole Deanery of Bingham' for the boys' school,¹³⁵ and 'A most excellent School' for the girls.¹³⁶ Numbers of children registered varied between 233 and 263 from 1860-65.¹³⁷

However, the National school encountered serious problems early in the 1870s. Correspondence between the curate, Nathaniel Keymer, and the Education Department revealed the parish was polled in May 1871 regarding setting up a school board but this was rejected.¹³⁸ Apparently a number of leading ratepayers wished to avoid paying a rate for educational purposes and many voters thought that the schools would carry on with

¹³⁰ Esdaile, *Bingham*, 20, 12.

¹³¹ See above, 266.

¹³² White 1853, 421.

¹³³ Esdaile, *Bingham*, 11; White 1853, 421.

¹³⁴ White 1853, 421; T. Bailey, *Annals of Nottinghamshire: History of the County of Nottingham, including the Borough* Vol. IV (1855), 443; White 1864, 437; L.A.O. DIOC/DBE/9/17/11.

¹³⁵ L.A.O. DIOC/DBE/9/17/13.

¹³⁶ *Ibid.*

¹³⁷ L.A.O. DIOC/DBE/9/17/6-16; /19-20; /23-24; 8/4/41.`

¹³⁸ T.N.A. ED/2/353.

the expenses being met by the rector.¹³⁹ Since a serious debt had accumulated, the schoolmaster was dismissed and the National schools closed immediately after the unsuccessful poll, with the Managers stating they 'do not intend to be responsible for the expenses of the Schools'.¹⁴⁰ There were now potentially about 120 children who could not be accommodated, as confirmed by the subsequent inspection report.¹⁴¹ Following protracted correspondence between the school authorities and the Education Department, it was noted that 'Church people and Dissenters alike are apparently anxious for a School Board'; eventually the statutory provision, allowing an order for a board to be issued outside periods when the parish could be polled, was invoked and the order sent on 25 November 1871.¹⁴² Elections were held and the Board first met in January 1872.¹⁴³

Unfortunately from the Anglican point of view, despite the church's efforts in getting a board established, their supporters failed to achieve a majority (two places out of five); consequently the offer by the rector to transfer the Church infants' school was refused, while that of the Wesleyan school was accepted.¹⁴⁴ Ironically, there was no necessity to increase the provision of school places because shortly after the transfer of the Wesleyan Day school, the National school reopened under the management of the rector and a committee of churchmen with accommodation for 150 children.¹⁴⁵ It had again become one mixed and infant school; shortly after it was removed from the 'Upper School Room' (presumably in Longacre) in the

¹³⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

¹⁴¹ *Ibid.*

¹⁴² *Ibid.*

¹⁴³ A.E. Wortley, *A History of Bingham* (1954), 39; N.A.O. SB/8/1/1.

¹⁴⁴ N.A.O. SB/8/1/1.

¹⁴⁵ N.A.O. SL/14/3/1; /14/1/1; T.N.A. ED/2/353.

centre of town to the school near the church and divided into two rooms for the main school and infants.¹⁴⁶

Until 1875 the Church school experienced difficulties regarding its master but with the arrival of John Ledsome a more settled period ensued.¹⁴⁷ Although the inspector's reports always included critical points, it was noted in 1878 that the school was 'remarkably well taught'.¹⁴⁸ In terms of its position as a Church school, there were regular visits to services integrated into the school day and holidays for specific festivals, such as Ascension Day and Harvest.¹⁴⁹ However, in June 1878 that there was 'very limited attendance – many of the scholars went to the Wesleyan Sunday School Treat'.¹⁵⁰

The Wesleyan Day school, opened in 1846, was based upon the Glasgow tuition system with Mr Kirk from Glasgow as the first headmaster.¹⁵¹ By 1848 the children were undergoing an examination before an audience following the 'mode of Bible training instituted by the Normal Society of Glasgow', as well as being closely questioned on other non-religious subjects.¹⁵² The original school premises were in Union Street attached to the chapel¹⁵³ but by 1859 the Wesleyans were engaged in a project for a new school building and master's house elsewhere in the town.¹⁵⁴ As well as attracting contributions from beyond Society members and from outside Bingham itself, the promoters successfully obtained a grant of £372 from the Education Department on the basis of demonstrating a need for

¹⁴⁶ N.A.O. SL 14/1/1.

¹⁴⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁵⁰ *Ibid.*

¹⁵¹ *Nottingham Review* 16 January 1846; 23 January 1846.

¹⁵² *Ibid.*, 23 June 1848.

¹⁵³ White 1853, 421, 424.

¹⁵⁴ N.A.O. XBS 9/1-4 S.

expanding the school's capacity.¹⁵⁵ A major event was organised for the official stone laying in July 1859 and by December opening services were being held.¹⁵⁶ With a capacity for 120 scholars, it was described as a 'neat building of brick, with a good house for the master adjoining'.¹⁵⁷ In 1864 the school was flourishing with 93 children registered and a good report following the annual inspection, although the school log contained regular references to problems surrounding attendance.¹⁵⁸ From 1866-9, the school struggled under an incompetent master, with critical reports and reduced government grants, although attendances were not affected.¹⁵⁹ The next master only stayed a year because of the inadequate salary but in 1871 Thomas Jones took over and remained master of the school until 1889.¹⁶⁰ For his first year, the circuit schedule recorded the total number of scholars as 96, with an average attendance of 68.¹⁶¹

The master noted in 1871 that some children were removed because the Wesleyans had voted against a school board.¹⁶² Since later in the year both Anglicans and Dissenters appeared anxious for a board, some Wesleyans may have been swayed by financial rather than religious interests.¹⁶³ Nevertheless, once the decision had been taken, the Wesleyans clearly decided to aim for integration with the new school and a controlling position on the Board, rather than endeavouring to compete against it. Two leading Wesleyans, William Clifton and Samuel Chettle, were successful in the election in 1871 and, together with John Watts, formed a majority group in favour of compulsory and unsectarian

¹⁵⁵ T.N.A ED/103/77/19.

¹⁵⁶ *Nottingham Review* 15 July 1859; 23 December 1859.

¹⁵⁷ White 1864, 437.

¹⁵⁸ N.A.O. SL/14/3/1.

¹⁵⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁶⁰ *Ibid.*; SL/14/2/1.

¹⁶¹ N.A.O. NC/MR/8/44.

¹⁶² N.A.O. SL/14/3/1.

¹⁶³ T.N.A. ED/2/353.

teaching.¹⁶⁴ Clifton and Watts became the first chairman and vice-chairman respectively, with the rector, Robert Miles, being outvoted on both occasions.¹⁶⁵ The offer of the trustees and managers to transfer the Wesleyan school to the Board was accepted early in 1872 and by May the master noted that the 'School is now under the School Board'.¹⁶⁶ Although William Clifton died at the end of 1872, Samuel Chettle became the next chairman and remained so for the next 20 years, thus maintaining Wesleyan influence.¹⁶⁷

The opening of new premises for the Church school in 1845 and the commencement of the Wesleyan school in 1846 suggest the existence of a competitive element regarding secular education. Entries in the surviving log books from 1863 also indicate competition for pupils; in September 1865 it was noted 'several infants have left the School because they availed themselves of the Church infant school during the harvest holidays and dare not return'.¹⁶⁸ In 1871 the Anglicans wished to transfer their schools to the school Board primarily for financial reasons, although they would clearly have expected to exercise a strong influence. However the new Board school (ex-Wesleyan) was no longer denominational in terms of its religious teaching, with the master being instructed to alter the timetable for religious instruction and have 'Bible Reading without note or comment'.¹⁶⁹ Nevertheless, it still had strong Wesleyan connections through the Board members and its regular holidays for Wesleyan Sunday school events. The competition with the Church school continued, as indicated by the noting of children changing allegiance and an entry after the government examination in 1878 that 'we had passed 91 per cent and

¹⁶⁴ Wortley, *Bingham*, 39.

¹⁶⁵ N.A.O. SB/8/1/1.

¹⁶⁶ N.A.O. SL/14/3/1; SB/8/1/1.

¹⁶⁷ N.A.O. SB/8/1/1.

¹⁶⁸ N.A.O. SL/14/3/1.

¹⁶⁹ *Ibid.*

the Church School 92 per cent'.¹⁷⁰ This element of competition was similarly apparent from notes made in the Church school log book about children moving to or from the Board school.¹⁷¹

Comparisons

There was no single pattern in terms of the development of educational provision and the relationships between the religious groups. Sunday schools were established by every group except the Primitive Methodists at Flintham, contrasting with the Bingham registration district as a whole where there were almost twice as many Anglican as Methodist Sunday schools in 1851.¹⁷²

In both Flintham and Cropwell Butler, from a similar position at the time of the religious census, the Anglicans appeared to increase numbers, while the Wesleyans declined, but in Cropwell Bishop the position was reversed. The Anglican Sunday school in Bingham was significantly the largest in 1851 but all except the Temperance Christians¹⁷³ continued to flourish during the third quarter. There was clearly a degree of co-operation between the nonconformists in Bingham regarding activities for the scholars and everywhere some children probably attended more than one Sunday school and attempted to participate in as many anniversaries and other celebratory events as possible. Such occasions were a significant contribution to the life of both town and villages and it is inevitable that the religious groups would regard them as one indicator of relative success.

In all the places studied, including Tithby, there was a church school. For the villages, it was the only educational provision apart from a few dame

¹⁷⁰ *Ibid.*

¹⁷¹ N.A.O. SL 14/1/1.

¹⁷² *Education Census*, 164.

¹⁷³ See below Chapter 8, 346.

schools and an all an important part of the village communities, although the level of support varied. In Flintham, the school had been established in the eighteenth century and was sufficiently firmly embedded that Wesleyans as well as Anglicans were involved in ensuring a school board was avoided. The Cropwell Butler school begun in the 1840s was flourishing by the time of the Act and judged as efficient, while the children from the small Tithby school had already started to attend the larger institution. However, in Cropwell Bishop the vicar had struggled to maintain the parish school; it was heavily criticized in the 1860s because of lack of 'superintendence' and inadequate funding and was also unable to accommodate all the children. The resistance in the parish to a school board, claiming that children should be sent outside the village, indicates that the church had not succeeded in making the school an integral part of village life, as had occurred elsewhere. When the Board was finally established in 1875 and a new school opened in 1878, it did not appear to be a denominational issue.

Bingham was the only place with competing day schools. The parish school dated from the eighteenth century, having acquired new premises in the 1840s with the advent of Robert Miles as rector. The Wesleyan school begun in the 1840s and moving to new premises in 1859 was built with widespread community support. There was clearly a level of competition over attracting pupils and obtaining good reports from the inspectors. After the 1870 Act, the Anglicans were particularly keen for a school board to take over and thereby solve a financial problem but, as in Cropwell Bishop, ratepayers were against it. However, when the Board was imposed, the electoral competition for places was won by the Wesleyans and their supporters resulting in their school transferring to become the

non-denominational Board school. Nevertheless, it still maintained close Wesleyan connections and competition between the schools continued.

Conclusions

The establishment of Wesleyan Sunday schools in all the parishes in the early part of the century contrasted with findings elsewhere, such as in south Lindsey and also with the situation in the Bingham census registration district in 1851.¹⁷⁴ The existence of Sunday schools competing with the Anglicans by the mid-century was therefore a distinctive feature, although the extent varied; in Flintham the Primitive Methodists could not establish one in the face of Anglican and Wesleyan competition, while in Bingham there was a level of co-operation amongst the nonconformists. There was wide community participation in anniversaries and other Sunday school events indicating that, in accordance with the literature, children were not necessarily exclusive in their attendance.

The existence of church schools in all the villages by mid-century was as anticipated¹⁷⁵ and the argument that lack of school and schoolroom hindered parish work was clearly confirmed by the efforts of the vicar in Cropwell Bishop to improve and sustain his educational facilities.¹⁷⁶

Although there was no direct denominational competition, the church schools were undoubtedly seen as a way of establishing and maintaining a connection with the parish church, which was evidenced in Flintham, Cropwell Butler and Tithby where there was general community support; indeed the activities of the vicar and squire in Flintham, supported by the

¹⁷⁴ Obelkevich, *Religion*, 193; *Education Census*, 164.

¹⁷⁵ Digby, 'Institutions', 1476; Obelkevich, *Religion*, 167.

¹⁷⁶ E. Royle, 'The Parish Community through the Vicarage Window: Nineteenth-Century Clergy Visitation Returns', *Family and Community History*. 12:1 (2009), 14-15.

Wesleyans, illustrated the efforts made by many religious groups after the Act to forestall the creation of a school board.¹⁷⁷

The only competition regarding secular education was in Bingham, with the Wesleyan school established in the 1840s competing thereafter with the Church school. This reflected the national approach of the Wesleyans at this time¹⁷⁸ but, in this particular parish, by the time of the 1870 Act the capacity provided by both schools was needed. The view in the literature that conflict between church and chapel continued over control of local school boards¹⁷⁹ was confirmed in Bingham where the rector was outnumbered by the Wesleyans and non-denominational members and consequently failed to become chairman or get the Church school transferred to the Board. This attempted transfer leads to the conclusion that in this instance financial issues were considered more pressing than the nature of religious instruction. The Wesleyans' stance was also unexpected in that Conference discouraged transferring schools to boards and censured certain places where this occurred.¹⁸⁰ There is no evidence of any criticism levelled at Bingham, where the school retained many Wesleyan links despite its new status. In addition, rivalry between the two schools continued.

The overall conclusion is that education was an element of denominational competition by the 1840s, with nonconformist Sunday schools in all the parishes and competing day schools in the town. However, examples of co-operation and support for the educational facilities in the communities

¹⁷⁷ Digby, *'Institutions'*, 1492.

¹⁷⁸ Watts, *Dissenters II*, 545, 550.

¹⁷⁹ Parsons, *'Liberation'*, 158; Smith *'Enemy'* 136; Digby, *'Institutions'*, 1492.

¹⁸⁰ Smith, *'Enemy'*, 141.

suggest that competition was less bitter than has been found in some other areas.¹⁸¹

¹⁸¹ Digby, 'Institutions', 1492.

Chapter Seven

The Religious Census

Introduction

Having considered the development of all the religious groups over the first half of the nineteenth century, this chapter investigates the religious census of 1851 in order to assess their relative positions at the mid-point. Since the method adopted for the analysis of the raw data is crucial to the discussion, this is considered before the sequential analysis of the results for each parish. Relative denominational attendances as a percentage of the population and in comparison with the registration district were calculated, as well as the total percentage of those attending a place of worship. In addition, the number and pattern of services were analysed to assess the feasibility and likelihood of dual attendance.

The extensive literature on religious geography in 1851¹ raised the initial question of how far the results for the parishes were in accord with the those of broader studies, particularly in south Nottinghamshire. It was anticipated that in this area the Methodists would record higher attendances than the Anglicans.² In respect of the Bingham registration district as a whole, the percentage attendance figures were 30.2 per cent for the Anglicans compared to 30.5 per cent for all the Methodists together (Wesleyans 19.2 per cent, Primitives 7.3 per cent and Independent Primitives 4.0 per cent).³ It was expected that the percentage for the total number of worshippers would be relatively high, in view of that fact that

¹ See above, Chapter 1, 25-30.

² M.R. Watts (ed.), *Religion in Victorian Nottinghamshire: the Religious Census of 1851* (1988), xxix-xx.

³ *Ibid*, xxvii, xxix.

the 63.9 per cent recorded for Bingham was ten per cent higher than for any other district in the Nottinghamshire registration county.⁴

The difficulty of interpreting membership figures has already been explored⁵ but nevertheless the figures available for the Wesleyans provided a point of comparison with the recorded attendance. The ratio of one to three, estimated by Watts for Nottinghamshire as the likely proportion of members to general congregation in dissenting congregations, was used as a broad guide.⁶

The extent to which individuals attended the services of more than one denomination was also a question where the census results provided relevant data.⁷ It was decided to approach this by analysis of the service pattern, combined with some interpretation of the attendance figures. The number of services held by each religious group was also considered as demonstrating both the demand for religious provision and the level of resources available to supply this. Since dual allegiance was a wider issue, questions relating to it are also discussed in Chapter 9.

Analysis of Census Data

In view of the variety of approaches to analysis of the raw data,⁸ it was decided to apply each of the main formulae suggested in the literature to one of the parishes in the study, so the extent of the difference between the results could be assessed. None of the four parishes was an ideal

⁴ *Ibid*, xxix.

⁵ See above Chapter 4.

⁶ Watts, *Religion*, xiii; see also discussion on choice of multiplier, Chapter 1, 217.

⁷ R.W. Ambler, 'The 1851 Census of Religious Worship', *The Local Historian*, 11 (1975), 380; D.M. Thompson, 'The 1851 Religious Census : Problems and Possibilities', *Victorian Studies*, 11:1 (1967-8), 95-96; Watts, *Religion*, 13,31,33,36,140,202,221,302; E. Royle, 'The Church of England and Methodism in Yorkshire, c.1750-1850: from Monopoly to Free Market', *Northern History*, 33 (1997), 149; J. Wolffe, 'Elite and Popular Religion in the Religious Census of 30 March 1851', *Studies in Church History*, 42 (2006), 78-79.

⁸ See above Chapter 1, 39-43.

exemplar but Bingham was selected because it had more than two religious groups without the logistical complexities of Cropwell Butler and Tithby. Flintham could not be used because of the lack of data for the parish church. Unfortunately, it was not possible to utilise Crockett and Crockett's finding about the effects of rounding⁹ in terms of adjusting attendance figures because there was no method of establishing whether an individual church or chapel with a 'round' attendance figure had estimated or counted individually.

The results of comparing the formulae used by Mann, Inglis, Pickering and Watts¹⁰ are shown in Tables 7.1 to 7.5 below:

Table 7.1

Mann: Comparison of Bingham Attendances 1851

Denomination	Morning service (actual figure)	Afternoon service (half figure)	Evening Service (third of figure)	Total	% total pop.
Anglican	340	105	79	524	25.5
Wesleyan Methodist	184	None	69	253	12.3
Independent Primitive Methodist	None	75	60	135	6.6
Temperance Christians	None	72	46	118	5.7
Combined					50.1

Sunday scholars meeting within service times included.

⁹ A. Crockett & R. Crockett, 'Consequences of Data Heaping in the British Religious Census of 1851', *Historical Methods*, 39:1 (2006), 24, 35.

¹⁰ See above for details of the different formulae, Chapter 1, 37 and 39-41.

Table 7.2**Inglis: Comparison of Bingham Attendances 1851**

Denomination	All services (number)	All Sunday Scholars*	Total	% total pop.
Anglican	526 (3)	259	785	38.2
Wesleyan Methodist	339 (2)	52	391	19.0
Independent Primitive Methodist	330 (2)	No data	330	16.1
Temperance Christians	226 (2)	60	286	13.9
Combined				87.2

*Sunday scholars disregarded if met outside service times

Table 7.3**Pickering: Comparison of Bingham Attendances 1851**

Denomination	Highest service (time)	Sunday Scholars (highest service)	Total	% total pop.
Anglican	236 (evening)	None	236	11.5
Wesleyan Methodist	207 (evening)	None	207	10.1
Independent Primitive Methodist	180 (evening)	None	180	8.8
Temperance Christians	137 (evening)	None	137	6.7
Combined				37.1

Table 7.4**Watts: Comparison of Bingham Attendances 1851**

Denomination	Highest service	¹/₃ other services	Highest Sunday Scholars	Total	% total pop.
Anglican	236 evening	97 am & pm	150 am	483	23.5
Wesleyan Methodist	207 evening	44 am	52 am	303	14.8
Independent Primitive Methodist	180 evening	50 pm	No data	230	11.1
Temperance Christians	137 evening	30 pm	55 pm	222	10.8
Combined					60.2

Table 7.5

**Formulae for Comparing Bingham Attendances 1851 as
Percentage of Total Population**

Denomination	Services	Mann	Inglis	Pickering	Watts
Anglican	3	25.5	38.2	11.5	23.5
Wesleyan Methodist	2	12.3	19.0	10.1	14.8
Independent Primitive Methodist	2	6.6	16.1	8.8	11.1
Temperance Christians	2	5.7	13.9	6.7	10.8
Combined		50.1	87.2	37.1	60.2

Before drawing any conclusions, it was decided to look at the percentages shown in Table 7.5 against figures obtained using a method employed in a completely different context. The 'three point estimation technique' is a technique used in industry where there is uncertainty and estimates have

to be made about time, cost or some other variable.¹¹ The technique was utilised for the raw data regarding the Bingham services to give the results shown in Table 7.6.

Table 7.6

Bingham Attendances 1851 using Three Point Estimation Technique

Denomination	Likely minimum	Likely maximum	Beta Distribution (Beta mean)	Closest formula
Anglican	21	22.2	22	Watts (23.5)
Wesleyan Methodist	12	13	12.1	Mann (12.3)
Independent Primitive Methodist	11	13	11.2	Watts (11.1)
Temperance Christians	8.8	10.2	8.1	Pickering (6.7)

It can be seen that Watts' formula came closest to the Beta Distribution for two out of the four denominations, while Mann's and Pickering's respectively were nearest for each of the remaining two.

Consideration of these results led to a number of conclusions. Mann's formula was inappropriate because it disadvantaged not only groups with the most popular service in the evening, but also groups who did not hold a morning service. In the case of Bingham, that applied to the Primitives and Temperance Christians. Since the best attended service for all groups was the evening, it made less relative difference than would be the case elsewhere but still meant the apparent support for all denominations was reduced.

¹¹ <http://www.super-business.net/Quantitative-Methods/1055.html>, accessed 4.6.2013.

It was clear that a better basis was using the best attended service. Pickering's approach had the effect of leaving all the groups holding more than one service without any credit for this. This affected all four groups in Bingham whose total support appeared less, although it was less disadvantageous to their relative position. However, other parishes in the study included groups holding only one service which would be relatively advantaged.

Inglis' index of attendance had the attraction of being widely used in many studies of the census and identified as a sound measure. However, in investigating individual parishes in detail, it had the disadvantage of showing relatively greater support for groups having more services. In Bingham, this was the Anglicans but it applied to different groups in the three villages, thus making comparisons between the parishes more difficult. Clearly, holding a greater number of services was an indication of a higher level of support, but not to the extent that multiple attendances were entirely irrelevant. Additionally, this was the only method which failed to give the closest result to the Beta Distribution for any denomination.

Overall, it was decided that the most appropriate measure to use in this study was that developed by Watts in a Nottinghamshire context. Although the addition of one third for the less well attended services is an arbitrary figure, it is in keeping with the general view at the time that a significant number of people attended at least two services. While the proportion cannot be verified, the approach does give a reasonable balance in crediting support for those religious groups holding one service as against those holding two or three. A further confirmation of its suitability is that it came closest to the Beta Distribution for two out of the four denominations.

Finally, it has the advantage of facilitating comparisons with Watts' study of the census over the whole of Nottinghamshire.

Flintham

Of the four parishes, the data from Flintham is the most difficult to analyse because of the refusal of the vicar, Charles Myers, to provide information about attendances. He remarked:

I decline to answer questions 5 and 7 [endowment and attendances], because I consider them impertinent, at any rate, in the original sense of the word; and because I know not to what use the required information might be put by an unscrupulous Ministry.¹²

The attendances for the two Methodist groups are shown in Table 7.7 below with a suggested figure for the percentage of the village population who might have attended the Anglican service or services. This has been calculated by taking the combined percentage totals of worshippers attending in the other three parishes studied (60 per cent in Cropwell Bishop, 53 per cent in Cropwell Butler and Tithby and 60.2 per cent in Bingham)¹³ and the total of 63.9 per cent for the district. On this basis it was felt that the mean of these totals (59.3 per cent) would be a reasonable estimate for the total of worshippers in Flintham, so an estimate for Anglican attendance could then be calculated.

There was considerably more support for Methodism in Flintham than for the parish church and both the Wesleyans and the Primitives had higher percentage attendances than in the Bingham district as a whole.

¹² T.N.A. HO 129/443.

¹³ See below, 292, 296 and 301.

Table 7.7**Comparison of Flintham Attendances 1851**

Denomination	Highest service	¹/₃ other services	Highest Sunday Scholars	Total	% total pop.	Reg. Dist. %
Anglican	No data*	No data*	No data*		(15.5)	30.2
Wesleyan Methodist	140 evening	37 Pm	Data combined	177	27.7	19.2
Primitive Methodist	90 evening	13 Am	None	103	16.1	7.3
Combined					(59.3)	

Key: * question about attendances not answered; () estimates

Sources: T.N.A. HO 129/443; V.C.H. *Nottinghamshire* II (1910), 311

The fact that the estimated Anglican attendance was only just over half the district could suggest it was inaccurate; however, it was not significantly different from the recorded attendance in Cropwell Butler and Tithby (17.3 per cent),¹⁴ which supports some reliance upon it. Unsurprisingly, the established Wesleyans revealed stronger support than the more recently arrived Primitives.

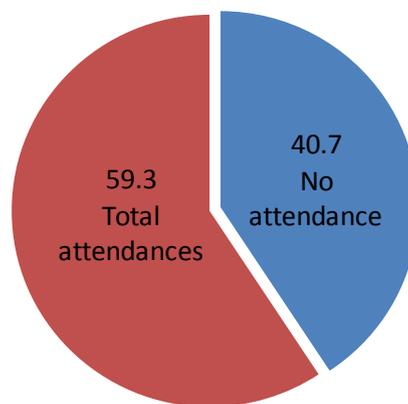
Wesleyan membership in 1851 was 53, so the one-to-three ratio indicated a likely attendance of about 159. Their overall attendance was 18 higher, although this figure included an unspecified number of Sunday scholars. However, the return noted the average congregation as 130 and scholars as 30. Therefore, allowing that the attendance might have been slightly increased because of the census, the likely percentage figure of members and adherents was still at least a quarter of the population. If the ratio is

¹⁴ See below, 296.

applied to the Primitive attendances, it suggests a membership of about 34, which is consistent with a recorded membership of about 40 in 1845.¹⁵

Figure 7.1 demonstrates the general level of religious enthusiasm in the village, although this is only an estimate because of the lack of data from the Anglicans.

Figure 7.1
Flintham Total Attendances as Percentage of Population



Sources: T.N.A. HO 129/443; V.C.H. *Nottinghamshire* II, 311

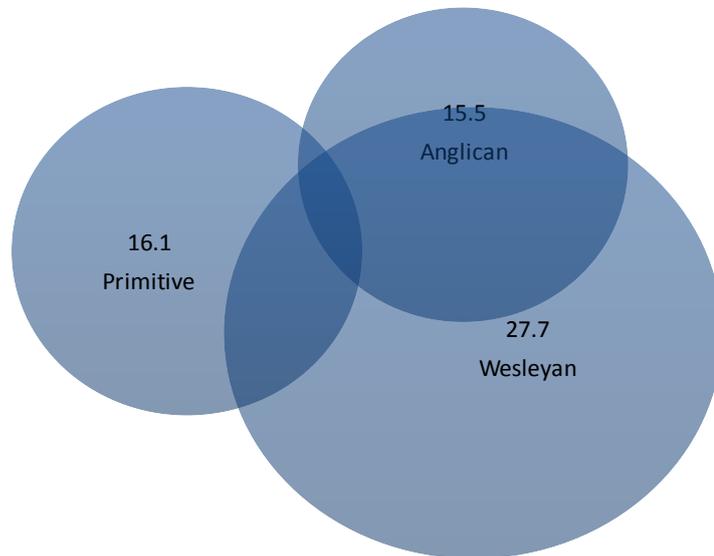
However, when considering the denominational breakdown, dual or even triple allegiance is relevant. The percentages from Table 7.7¹⁶ are repeated in Figure 7.2 below to demonstrate the existence of a non-quantifiable overlap amongst the three religious groups. Nevertheless, the totals are still indicative of a level of adherence to each denomination.

¹⁵ N.A.O. NC/MR/5/315.

¹⁶ See above, 288.

Figure 7.2

Flintham Denominational Attendances as Percentage of Population



Sources: T.N.A. HO 129/443; V.C.H. *Nottinghamshire* II, 311

Although the Anglicans probably attracted a markedly low level of support, below even that of the Primitive Methodists, without the requisite information in the vicar's return it is impossible to be certain which Anglican services clashed with either Methodist denomination and therefore what specific options were available. In the other two villages studied, there was only one service at the parish church; it is therefore probable that this was also the case at Flintham. The most usual Anglican service time was morning (competing with the Primitives in Flintham) or afternoon (competing with the Wesleyans). However, the main service for both the Methodist groups was in the evening in line with the majority of nonconformist denominations.¹⁷ A possible service pattern, with some assumptions for the Anglicans, is shown in Table 7.8 below.

¹⁷ H. Mann, 'On the Statistical Position of Religious Bodies in England and Wales', *Journal of the Statistical Society of London*, xviii (1855), 147.

Table 7.8

Service Pattern in Flintham 1851

Morning	Afternoon	Evening
? Anglican	? Anglican	
Primitive Methodist		Primitive Methodist
	Wesleyan Methodist	Wesleyan Methodist

Source: T.N.A. HO 129/443

The number of services held on Sunday clearly affected the overall level of support. The Methodist groups had the advantage of the lay preacher system which enabled them to provide two services more easily than could the Anglican incumbent. However, assuming there was only one Anglican service, this may also relate to demand in that individuals attended church in the morning (or possibly afternoon) and chapel in the evening. 230 people attended one or other branch of Methodism on census Sunday evening, when it is very unlikely there was an Anglican service, and this constituted 60.9 per cent of the total population, excluding those under 14.¹⁸

Overall, as far as can be concluded from the census data supplied, the Methodist groups both separately and collectively were in a stronger position regarding both provision and support than the parish church. They also demonstrated a significantly higher level of support than that of the Bingham registration district as a whole.

¹⁸ T.N.A. HO 129/443; V.C.H. *Nottinghamshire* II, 311.

Cropwell Bishop

Cropwell Bishop was the only place in the detailed study where there were just two religious groups, Anglicans and Wesleyan Methodists. Their attendances are shown in Table 7.9.

Table 7.9

Comparison of Cropwell Bishop Attendances 1851

Denomination	Highest service	¹/₃ other services	Highest Sunday Scholars	Total	% total pop.	Reg. Dist. %
Anglican	82 pm	None	65 pm	147	23.0	30.2
Wesleyan Methodist	144 evening	27 pm	66 pm	237	37.0	19.2
Combined					60.0	

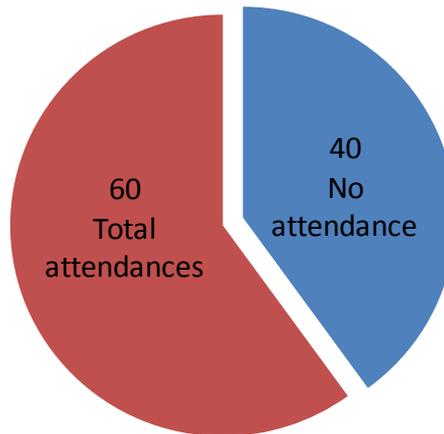
Sources: T.N.A. HO 129/443; V.C.H. *Nottinghamshire* II, 312

The percentages for the two denominations reveal significantly greater support for the Wesleyans than for the Anglicans, with these figures also being higher and lower respectively than for the registration district. Wesleyan membership in 1851 was 51, giving a likely attendance of 153, using the one-to-three ratio.¹⁹ The actual attendance was 171 (excluding the Sunday scholars), so there were clearly more adherents in the village than might have been anticipated, possibly because of the lack of any other nonconformist alternative. However, the proportion of Wesleyans attending in Cropwell Bishop (37 per cent) was less than the proportion of Wesleyans and Primitives together in Flintham (43.8 per cent) supporting the view that an additional place of worship increased the overall total but lessened support for each chapel, although this was not the case in the

¹⁹ N.A.O. NC/MR/8/28.

other parishes.²⁰ Figure 7.3 shows the general level of commitment as indicated by participation in any religious service.

Figure 7.3
Cropwell Bishop Total Attendances as Percentage of Population



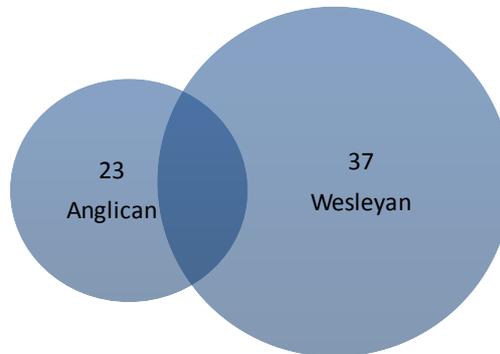
Sources: T.N.A. HO 129/443; V.C.H. *Nottinghamshire* II, 312

The apparent level of denominational support was affected by dual allegiance of any individuals, although with only two religious groups, the situation was less complicated in Cropwell Bishop than elsewhere. The percentages from Table 7.9²¹ are reproduced in Figure 7.4 below, indicating the existence of overlap between the groups.

²⁰ See below, 296 and 301.

²¹ See above, 292.

Figure 7.4
Cropwell Bishop Denominational Attendances as Percentage of
Population



Sources: T.N.A. HO 129/443; V.C.H. *Nottinghamshire* II, 312

Table 7.10
Service Pattern in Cropwell Bishop 1851

Morning	Afternoon	Evening
	Anglican	
	Wesleyan Methodist	Wesleyan Methodist

Source: T.N.A. HO 129/443

Table 7.10 shows that on census Sunday there was a direct choice in the afternoon between the Anglicans and Wesleyans, while only the Wesleyans offered an evening service. This meant that the 82 people attending the chapel in the afternoon did not attend the parish church at all.²² However, the vicar noted that 'the service is alternately morning and afternoon – some times in the summer in the evening'.²³ Consequently, if the census had been on a week with a morning service, the Anglican percentage would almost certainly have been higher.

²² T.N.A. HO 129/443.

²³ *Ibid.*

The number of services also affected recorded support with the Wesleyans offering two services, compared with one at the parish church, thus meeting any demand for the option of attending both church and chapel. Nevertheless their best attended service alone attracted 62 more people than the only Anglican service.

The census clearly indicated that the Wesleyan Methodists were in a strong position in Cropwell Bishop compared with the parish church, in terms of Sunday services offered and the support they attracted. They also recorded over 17 per cent higher attendance than in the registration district as a whole but this was to some extent related to the lack of other nonconformist groups in the village.

Cropwell Butler and Tithby

The situation in the parish of Tithby-cum-Cropwell Butler was the most complicated; not only were there two villages but the parish church was located in Tithby, the considerably smaller one. This had led in 1845 to the opening of a chapel of ease in Cropwell Butler.²⁴ Although there is no definite evidence about how this was operated, it may have offered alternating services with Tithby, as suggested by the incumbent,²⁵ and the lack of census return supports this possibility. The census attendances were recorded for services at the parish church and the Independent Primitive Methodist meeting place in Tithby and for the Wesleyan and Primitive Methodist chapels in Cropwell Butler. The details are shown in Table 7.11 below.

²⁴ See above Chapter 5, 225.

²⁵ N.A.O. DD/TB/3/2/36.

Table 7.11**Comparison of Cropwell Butler and Tithby Attendances 1851**

Denomination	Highest service	¹/₃ other services	Highest Sunday Scholars	Total	% total pop.	Reg. Dist. %
Anglican	100 pm/T	None	40 pm/T	140	17.3	30.2
Wesleyan Methodist	90 ev./CB	25 am/CB	58 am/CB	173	21.3	19.2
Primitive Methodist	70 pm/CB	22 ev./CB	No data	92	11.3	7.3
Independent Primitive Methodist	25 ev./T	None	None	25	3.1	4.0
Combined					53.0	

Key: ev. evening; CB Cropwell Butler; T Tithby

Sources: T.N.A. HO 129/443; V.C.H. *Nottinghamshire* II, 312

The total attendance for all the Methodist groups (35.7 per cent) was just over twice that of the Anglicans; however, of the individual denominations, only the Wesleyans had higher attendances and the single best attended service in the two villages was in the afternoon at the parish church.

Nevertheless, the Anglican attendance was considerably lower than that of the registration district. Both the Cropwell Butler Methodist denominations had higher attendances than in the district but the difference for the Wesleyans was only small (+2.1 per cent) and the longer established Wesleyans showed more support than the Primitives. Unsurprisingly, attendance at the Independent Primitive meeting place in Tithby, (not a

separate place of worship),²⁶ was low but still only 0.9 per cent less than that of the district.

Given a Wesleyan membership of 30, the anticipated attendance would have been 90 applying the one-to-three ratio.²⁷ It can be seen that the actual attendance (excluding the Sunday scholars) was 115; considering there were three major denominational options available, the number of adherents suggests levels of dual, or even triple, allegiance. However, contrary to expectations, the increased number of choices did not result in an increase in overall attendance. Figure 7.5 below shows that only 53 per cent of the population of the two villages attended on census Sunday, which was markedly less than the percentage in the other places studied and ten per cent less than the attendance for the registration district.²⁸ One possible reason may have been the distance of the church from the larger village,²⁹ which would mirror the situation in Linton, Yorkshire, where the incumbent judged a mile was too far for people to be willing to walk to the parish church.³⁰

There were undoubtedly individuals who attended two or more places of worship within the two villages. The complexity of this religious adherence is indicated in Figure 7.6,³¹ which shows the existence but does not quantify the overlap between the groups. It has been assumed that any dual allegiance of the Independent Primitives at Tithby would be with the parish church, rather than the other Methodist groups, because of both

²⁶ T.N.A. HO 129/443.

²⁷ N.A.O. NC/MR/8/28.

²⁸ T.N.A. HO 129/443; Watts, *Religion*, xxix.

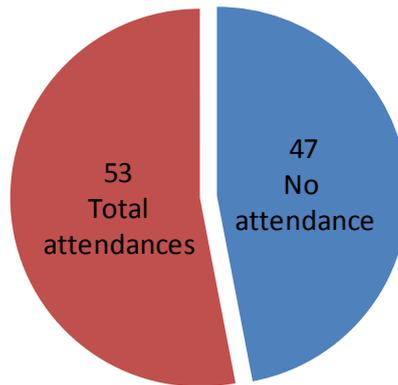
²⁹ See above Chapter 5, 225-26.

³⁰ J. Wolffe, 'The 1851 Census and Religious Change in Nineteenth-century Yorkshire', *Northern History*, XLV: 1, (2008), 80.

³¹ See below, 298.

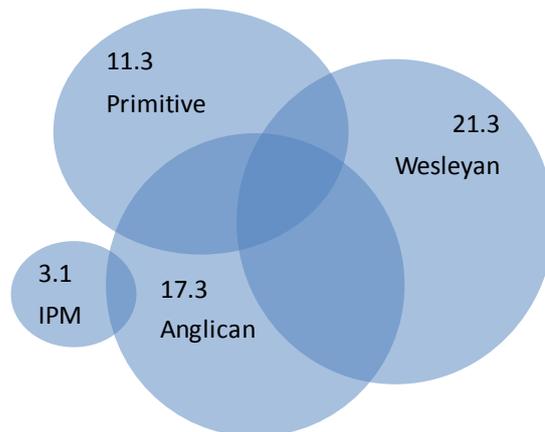
location and their very different approach from either the long established Wesleyans or the Primitives from whom the denomination had separated.³²

Figure 7.5
Cropwell Butler and Tithby Total Attendances as Percentage of Population



Sources: T.N.A. HO 129/443; V.C.H. *Nottinghamshire* II, 312

Figure 7.6
Cropwell Butler and Tithby Denominational Attendances as Percentage of Population



Key: IPM Independent Primitive Methodist

Sources: T.N.A. HO 129/443; V.C.H. *Nottinghamshire* II, 312

³² See above Chapter 5, 234.

As far as any conflict of services was concerned, it is relevant to consider both location and timing. The situation on census Sunday is set out in Table 7.12.

Table 7.12
Service Pattern in Cropwell Butler and Tithby 1851

	Morning	Afternoon	Evening
Cropwell Butler	Wesleyan Methodist		Wesleyan Methodist
		Primitive Methodist	Primitive Methodist
Tithby		Anglican	Independent Primitive Methodist

Source: T.N.A. HO 129/443

Looking at each village separately, the only direct competition was between the two Methodist chapels in Cropwell Butler on Sunday evening. However, taking both villages together there was competition on Sunday afternoon and evening. If individuals wished to attend worship three times, then most combinations were possible; however, the 70 people who attended the Primitive service on Sunday afternoon did not attend the parish church at all.³³ On the other hand the return gave an average number for the morning at the parish church, which suggests alternating services and the lack of a return from the chapel of ease in Cropwell Butler means that the situation revealed on census Sunday must be approached with some caution in terms of revealing a regular pattern.³⁴ Had there been a service at the chapel of ease on census Sunday, the effect might have been to increase both the Anglican proportion of worshippers and the overall total of attendances.

³³ T.N.A. HO 129/443.

³⁴ See above Chapter 5, 228

Despite the one Anglican service being the best attended out of the six held in the villages, the two main Methodist groups each attracted more worshippers overall; they were able to provide two services and thus meet the potential demand for those wanting to take part in the worship of both Anglican and nonconformist groups. In addition, it meant that there were always two possible times for committed Methodists to attend chapel.

As was anticipated, it can be concluded that Methodism was in a strong position in Cropwell Butler as regards both attendance and provision of services. However, there was clearly an Anglican challenge since there was solid support for the parish church even when there was only one service held at Tithby.

Bingham

Bingham was the only place investigated with more than two religious groups in the same place, all supplying complete returns, which therefore facilitated comparisons. The attendances for the three main denominations, together with the Temperance Christians, a group peculiar to Bingham within this study, are shown in Table 7.13 below.

Table 7.13
Comparison of Bingham Attendances 1851

Denomination	Highest service	¹/₃ other services	Highest Sunday Scholars	Total	% total pop.	Reg. Dist. %
Anglican	236 evening	97 am & pm	150 am	483	23.5	30.2
Wesleyan Methodist	207 evening	44 am	52 am	303	14.8	19.2
Independent Primitive Methodist	180 evening	50 pm	no data	230	11.1	4.0
Temperance Christians	137 evening	30 pm	55 pm	222	10.8	n/a
Combined					60.2	

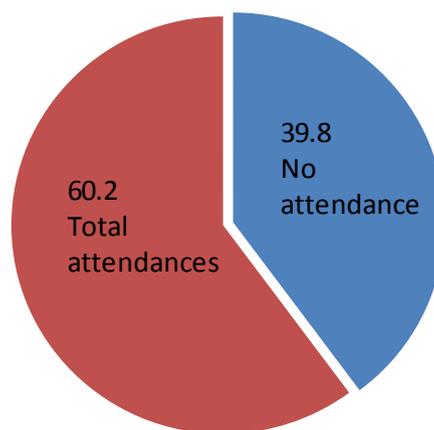
Sources: T.N.A. HO 129/443; V.C.H. *Nottinghamshire* II, 311

The Anglicans attracted the highest level of support for a single group, although still below that for the district. However, taking the Temperance Christians as a further nonconformist group, the total (36.7 per cent) was considerably higher than the established church. Interestingly, the split between Anglicans and nonconformists was very similar to that in Cropwell Bishop (23 per cent to 37 per cent), where the Wesleyans were the only alternative.³⁵ The possibility of three options of Methodist or similar services meant there was less support for each, with the Wesleyans having a low percentage, 4.4 per cent below that of the district. Although the Independent Primitives were particularly successful, attracting seven per cent higher support than the district figure, this must be seen in the context of there being no Primitive Methodist group in the town.

³⁵ See above, 292.

Wesleyan membership was 89, giving a likely attendance of 267 using the one to three ratio.³⁶ However, if the Sunday scholars are excluded, the total attendance was only 251. This suggests possibly a lower level of dual allegiance, despite the nine service options available, supporting the view that denominational boundaries were hardening earlier in the town. However, the overall attendance for the town of 60.2 per cent, shown in Figure 7.7, was the highest for any of the places studied, although still slightly less than the district; moreover, the evening attendance, when all the four religious groups were holding competing services, attracted 59 per cent of the entire population aged over 14. Comparing this with Cropwell Bishop, where the figure was only 37.8 per cent at the one evening service, it can be seen that competition produced more religious observance than one denomination alone.

Figure 7.7
Bingham Total Attendances as Percentage of Population



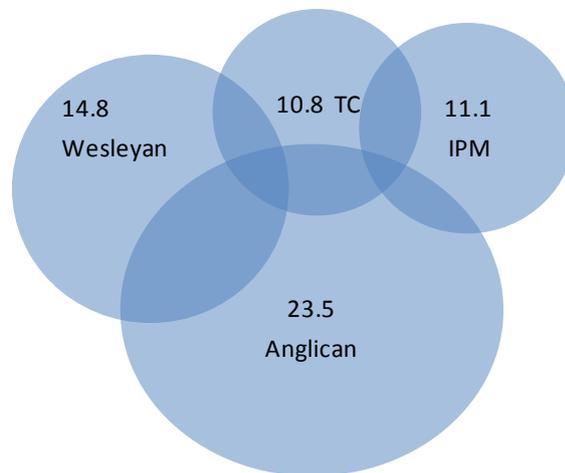
Sources: T.N.A. HO 129/443; V.C.H. *Nottinghamshire* II, 311

³⁶ N.A.O. NC/MR/8/28.

Based only on the evidence from the Wesleyan membership figures and attendances, dual allegiance appears to have been somewhat less prevalent than in the villages. Nevertheless it did occur and this is demonstrated, although not quantified, in Figure 7.8

Figure 7.8

Bingham Denominational Attendances as Percentage of Population



Key: IPM Independent Primitive Methodist; TC Temperance Christian

Sources: T.N.A. HO 129/443; V.C.H. *Nottinghamshire* II, 311

Table 7.14 below shows the service pattern in Bingham. The level of competition built up during the day, with two options in the morning, three in the afternoon and four in the evening. Perhaps surprisingly, the highest attendance for all the four religious groups was in the evening when no overlap was possible. Although no individual could attend services for all four groups within three time slots, all combinations were possible;

consequently, one cannot draw conclusions about non-attendance for any particular denomination.

Table 7.14
Service Pattern in Bingham 1851

Morning	Afternoon	Evening
Anglican	Anglican	Anglican
Wesleyan Methodist		Wesleyan Methodist
	Independent Primitive Methodist	Independent Primitive Methodist
	Temperance Christians	Temperance Christians

Source: T.N.A. HO 129/443

Just as elsewhere, holding a larger number of services was advantageous, although in Bingham it was the Anglicans who benefited by holding three services, compared with two for each of the nonconformist groups.

However, this only produced a similar total share to that in Cropwell Bishop, where there was only one Anglican service.³⁷ This supports the view that Anglicans were more likely than nonconformists to attend only one service on Sunday.³⁸ The ability of the rector of Bingham to provide three services was undoubtedly related to the wealthy living; not only was he not responsible for other churches but he was also able to employ a curate.³⁹

Overall the situation in Bingham was of competition amongst the denominations producing a significant level of religious observance. As a

³⁷ See above, 301.

³⁸ K.S. Inglis, 'Patterns of Religious Worship in 1851', *Journal of Ecclesiastical History*, 11 (1960), 78.

³⁹ See above Chapter 5, 231-32.

single group the Anglicans attracted the highest support but this was over ten per cent below the total for nonconformists; nevertheless, each of these smaller groups was inevitably in a less secure position because of the existence of other denominations with quite similar characteristics.

Comparisons

Despite each parish having unique characteristics making overall comparisons more difficult, some important points of comparison emerged. Table 7.15 shows attendances as a percentage of the population.

Table 7.15
Comparison of Attendances as Percentage of Population

Denomination	Flintham	C.Bishop	C.Butler & Tithby	Bingham	Reg. Dist.
Anglican	(15.5)	23.0	17.3	23.5	30.2
Wesleyan Methodist	27.7	37.0	21.3	14.8	19.2
Primitive Methodist	16.1		11.3		7.3
Independent Primitive Methodist			3.1	11.1	4.0
Temperance Christians				10.8	n/a

() estimate; see above, 287-88

Sources: T.N.A. HO 129/443; V.C.H. *Nottinghamshire* II, 311-12

All the Anglican attendances were significantly less than those of the registration district while, with one exception, all the Wesleyans and Primitives were higher. The Cropwell Bishop and Bingham Anglicans recorded stronger support than those in Flintham or Cropwell Butler and

Tithby, although the Flintham figure is an estimate and must be regarded cautiously. One likely explanation for the comparatively low Cropwell Butler and Tithby attendance is the problems associated with the location of the parish church.⁴⁰ Support for the Wesleyans in Cropwell Bishop was particularly high but the denomination benefited from the absence of any nonconformist competition, while conversely the Bingham Wesleyans were adversely affected by being one of three significant nonconformist groups. Although attendance at both the Primitive chapels was well above the registration district average, the Flintham group showed particularly strong support compared with Cropwell Butler. This is notable since both had arrived at a similar time in the early 1840s, facing an established Wesleyan Society.⁴¹ The Independent Primitives at Tithby and Bingham experienced very different attendance levels, with the former close to the district average, while the latter, without Primitive Methodist competition, exceeded the average for the main denomination being only 0.2 per cent behind Cropwell Butler.

Table 7.16

Comparison of Anglican and Combined Methodist Attendances as Percentage of Population

Denomination	Flintham	C.Bishop	C.Butler & Tithby	Bingham	Reg. Dist.
Anglican	(15.5)	23.0	17.3	23.5	30.2
Combined Methodists & Temperance Christians	43.8	37.0	35.7	36.7	30.5
Total	(59.3)	60	53	60.2	63.9*

() estimates; see above, 287-88; * total includes other denominations

Sources: T.N.A. HO 129/443; V.C.H. *Nottinghamshire* II, 311-12

⁴⁰ See above, 297.

⁴¹ See above Chapter 5, 212 and 226-27.

Table 7.16 above focuses on the share of attendances split between Anglicans and nonconformists. Although the total attendance, indicating the general level of religious enthusiasm, was below that of the registration district in all the four parishes, this is in the context of the Bingham district being ten per cent higher than elsewhere in Nottinghamshire.⁴² The lower figures were entirely due to the Anglican attendances because the combined Methodist denominations and Temperance Christians exceeded the district attendance by five per cent or more in every place. Apart from Flintham, which was geographically separate from the other parishes, the Methodists as a whole enjoyed a very similar level of support throughout the area; indeed the proportionate share between Anglicans and nonconformists in Cropwell Bishop (with one Methodist group) and Bingham (with two Methodist and one similar group) was almost identical.

Comparing the difference between the anticipated number of attendances based on membership⁴³ and actual attendance was taken as one indicator of the level of dual allegiance. This could only be investigated for the Wesleyans but nevertheless provided a more general guide. Table 7.17 below shows all three village parishes recorded higher attendance than expected, with the difference being particularly large in Cropwell Butler and Tithby, possibly attributable to the Anglican church location.

The main point of competition between the Anglicans and nonconformists was in the morning or afternoon, with only Bingham having an evening service at the parish church. On the other hand competition between the Methodist denominations was confined to the evening service, apart from

⁴² See above, 280-81.

⁴³ See above, 281.

the Independent Primitives and the Temperance Christians in Bingham in the afternoon.

Table 7.17

Comparison between Wesleyan Methodist Likely and Actual Attendance

Place	Membership March 1851	Likely Attendance (Memb. X3)	*Actual Attendance (Census)	% Difference
Flintham	53	159	177	+ 11.3
C.Bishop	51	153	171	+ 11.8
C.Butler	30	90	115	+ 27.8
Bingham	89	267	251	- 6.0

*excludes Sunday scholars everywhere except Flintham, where scholars not listed separately

Sources: T.N.A. HO 129/443; N.A.O. NC/MR/8/28

However, all nonconformist denominations apart from the Cropwell Butler Primitives still recorded their highest attendance in the evening. These competitive patterns are shown in Table 7.18. From this it is also clear that in the Cropwells and probably in Flintham, there was a group of Methodists who did not attend the parish church at all, despite a level of dual allegiance in the villages. Owing to the larger number of services held in Bingham, it is not possible to make comparable deductions.

Table 7.18

Comparison of Points of Competing Services

Place	Morning	Afternoon	Evening
Flintham	A*/PM	A*/WM	WM/PM
C.Bishop		A/WM	
C.Butler & Tithby		A/PM	WM/PM/IPM
Bingham	A/WM	A/IPM/TC	A/WM/IPM/TC

Key: A Anglican; WM Wesleyan Methodist; PM Primitive Methodist; IPM Independent Primitive Methodist; TC Temperance Christians
* suggested alternatives (no data provided); see above, 290-91

Source: T.N.A. HO 129/443

Since the number of services held by a religious group was relevant to its level of support, these are compared in Table 7.19. Apart from the very small group of Independent Primitive Methodists at Tithby, all the nonconformist groups offered two services. However, for the Anglicans, there was a marked difference between the wealthy living at Bingham where the rector and curate could offer three services and the much poorer villages with only one per Sunday.

Table 7.19
Comparison of Number of Services

Denomination	Flintham	C.Bishop	C.Butler and Tithby	Bingham
Anglican	(1)	1	1	3
Wesleyan Methodist	2	2	2	2
Primitive Methodist	2		2	
Independent Primitive Methodist			1	2
Temperance Christians				2

() estimate; see above, 290-91

Source: T.N.A. HO 129/443

Conclusions

The most striking point is the significantly stronger support revealed from attendance data for the nonconformists compared to the Anglicans. Since the Temperance Christians were a split from the Wesleyans and closely allied to the Primitives, they can to some extent be regarded as a type of Methodist group, meaning that Methodism demonstrated greater support than the parish church in every place with the smallest margin of difference just over 13 per cent. These differences were much higher than the 0.5

per cent for the district as a whole and, although the overall attendance figures were less than the extremely high district figure of 63.9 per cent, they were still well in excess of the national 40.5 per cent. Consequently, at the census, this small area was revealed to be strongly Methodist and the established church comparatively weak, within a generally high level of religious observance. This reflects the conclusions of much of the literature on denominational reciprocity, confirmed by Snell and Ell's study of the entire census, that Methodism was strong where the Church of England was weak.⁴⁴

Methodism was particularly strong in all the villages; in Flintham and Cropwell Bishop all branches of Methodism showed greater support than the Anglicans while in Cropwell Butler and Tithby, although an Anglican challenge was more apparent, the Wesleyans individually and all Methodists collectively recorded higher attendances than the parish church. While this supports Watts' conclusion from the Nottinghamshire returns that Methodism flourished in medium-sized villages, it differs from his related conclusion that in such places the established church was also holding its own.⁴⁵ The situation in Bingham was more acutely competitive with the nonconformist groups together, but not individually, showing greater support than the Anglicans.

In addition, the census measurement everywhere except at Flintham failed to demonstrate that a larger number of places of worship increased overall support but lessened support for each individual place, as had been

⁴⁴ R. Currie, 'A Micro-Theory of Methodist Growth', *Proceedings of the Wesley Historical Society*, 36:3 (1967), 68; K.D.M. Snell & P.S. Ell, *Rival Jerusalems: the Geography of Victorian Religion* (2000), 192, 196.

⁴⁵ M.R. Watts, *The Dissenters: Vol. II The Expansion of Evangelical Nonconformity 1791-1859* (1995), 46; Watts, *Religion*, xix.

suggested by Gill.⁴⁶ The Methodist presence was split amongst the groups in Cropwell Butler and Bingham but it was no bigger overall than in Cropwell Bishop with only the Wesleyans.

The comparison between likely and actual attendance for the Wesleyans suggests that a significant level of dual allegiance was still present in the villages.⁴⁷ However, the situation in Bingham was different with a lower attendance for the Wesleyans than anticipated. Although only a small town, it can lend support to the view that denominational boundaries hardened earlier in towns than in the countryside.⁴⁸ The conclusion from the various service patterns is that while facilitating dual allegiance, they also revealed a level of continuing competition, especially amongst the Methodist groups and in Bingham.

⁴⁶ R. Gill, *The 'Empty' Church Revisited* (2nd edn., 2003), 135.

⁴⁷ See further discussion below, Chapter 9.

⁴⁸ F. Knight, 'From Diversity to Sectarianism : the Definition of Anglican Identity in Nineteenth-Century England', *Studies in Church History*, 32 (1996), 380-81, 383-84.

Chapter Eight

Competition after the Census

Introduction

This chapter investigates how far competition continued after the census and during the third quarter of the century. The first key question was whether there was any evidence to support the suggestion that denominations renewed their efforts to attract people after the results of the census were published in 1854.¹ Changes to church and chapel buildings, membership trends and financial issues are analysed separately for each denomination followed by overall consideration of aspects of competition and any effects of rivalry amongst the religious groups.

An initial question was whether rivalry continued to spur church and chapel building.² Useful sources regarding the fabric and decoration were directories and newspaper reports, in addition to any specific records for parishes or chapels. In view of the rich data available, at least for the Wesleyans, fluctuations were charted and, with other indicators, revealed the membership position relative to the population. After a half century of expansion, the population in most villages in the Bingham Hundred started to decline in either the 1850s or 1860s³ raising the question of whether this affected Wesleyan chapel membership. The same analysis was also applied to the Primitives in Flintham, because unusually circuit records were available. This local situation was then compared with the national

¹ J.A. Vickers, *The 1851 Religious Census* (1995), 3.

² M.R. Watts, *The Dissenters: Vol. II The Expansion of Evangelical Nonconformity 1791-1859* (1995), 604.

³ V.C.H. *Nottinghamshire* II (1910), 311-12; <http://www.genuki.org.uk/big/eng/>, accessed 22.8.2014.

picture where the mid-century had been identified as the high point in religious observance.⁴ A further key question was whether there was still a significant turnover of Wesleyan membership, as had been found earlier.⁵ The problem of debt was primarily raised in the literature in relation to rural chapels in this period,⁶ but evidence of financial issues affecting Anglican churches was also considered.

In terms of overt competition, a significant question was whether the timing of services began to clash more frequently.⁷ There was also the issue of overprovision of chapel accommodation⁸ and whether this affected the rural chapels, particularly where there was also depopulation.⁹ In addition, the extent of activities in the community, apart from regular Sunday worship and Methodist classes, revealed whether there was duplication and a generally competitive approach, with newspaper reports being a particularly valuable source.¹⁰ The final aspect of religious competition, that of changes in baptismal practices,¹¹ is discussed separately in Chapter 9.

Flintham

Although the census apparently revealed the parish church was in a weaker state than the Methodists in Flintham, there was no obvious response to this situation in the subsequent decade. Charles Myers remained vicar

⁴ K.D.M. Snell, & P.S. Ell, *Rival Jerusalems : the Geography of Victorian Religion* (2000), 196; A. Crockett, 'Rural-Urban Churchgoing in Victorian England', *Rural History*, 16:1 (2005), 54.

⁵ See above Chapter 4, 205.

⁶ R. Gill, *The 'Empty' Church Revisited*, (2nd ed., 2003), 30,36,135.

⁷ F. Knight, 'From Diversity to Sectarianism : the Definition of Anglican Identity in Nineteenth-Century England', *Studies in Church History*, 32 (1996), 383-84; E. Royle, 'The Church of England and Methodism in Yorkshire, c.1750-1850: from Monopoly to Free Market', *Northern History*, 33 (1997), 150.

⁸ See above Chapter 5, 249.

⁹ Gill, *'Empty' Church*, 33.

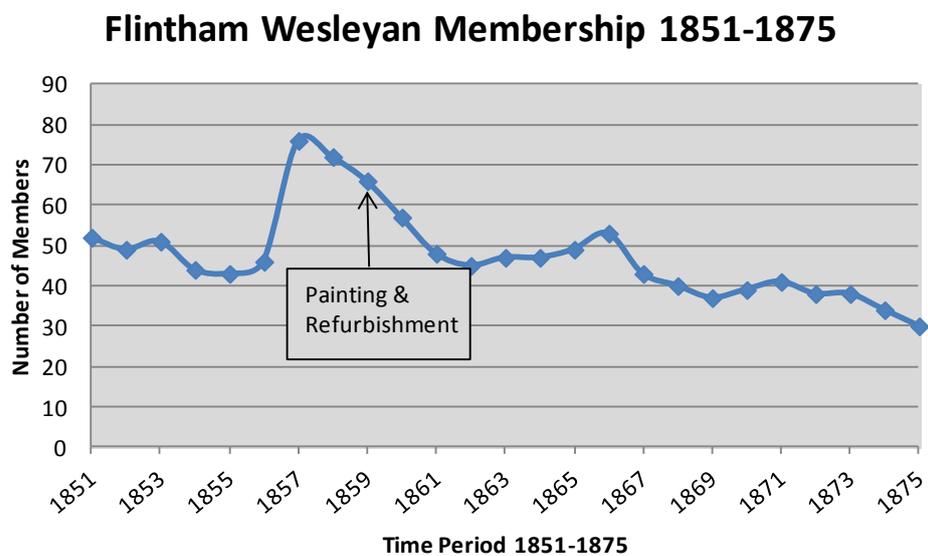
¹⁰ See above Chapter 2, 81.

¹¹ See above Chapter 5, 246-48.

until his death in 1870 when he was succeeded by John Wheeler Hayward¹² and during this period no changes to the church building were recorded. The links between the vicar and the squire remained strong as shown by Myers' explanation to the Bishop of Lincoln in 1859 that his failure to give collections from communion services to the poor was because, when parishioners were unemployed, the squire gave them money or created work for them.¹³

Despite the Wesleyans' dominant position at the time of the census, this did not result in an increased committed membership. Figure 8.1 shows the variations over the next quarter of a century.

Figure 8.1



Sources: N.A.O. NC/MR/8/28-29; /8/254

Membership fell until 1855, as was occurring nationally, but there was one very sharp increase of 30 new members from 1856-57, possibly related to

¹² N.A.O. PR 19566.

¹³ M. Austin, *'A Time of Unhappy Commotion': the Church of England and the People in Central Nottinghamshire 1820-1870* (2010), 114.

the Free Methodist revival which led to a general rise in Methodist membership. However, the increase did not continue over the next ten years in line with the overall denominational trend and numbers had dropped back again five years later. Nevertheless, this increase was probably the impetus for the painting and refurbishment of 1859, which was sufficiently extensive to generate the printing of 100 circulars and the holding of re-opening events on three separate occasions where it was noted that 'congregations were good and the collections liberal'.¹⁴

During the third quarter, in common with other villages,¹⁵ Flintham was experiencing a significant fall in population. Table 8.1 shows the Society was in fact maintaining and indeed improving its position relatively until 1871, which was better than the national position of stabilisation; yet by the 1880s Wesleyan membership had moved into relative decline.

Table 8.1
Flintham Wesleyan Membership and Population 1851-1881

Date	Population	W. Membership*	% Population
1851	639	53	8.3
1861	524	53	10.1
1871	452	42	9.3
1881	381	28	7.3

*Figure for quarter ending 31st March to coincide with population census.

Sources: V.C.H. *Nottinghamshire* II, 311; N.A.O. NC/MR/8/28-30

Nevertheless, just as in the first half of the century, the changes in total membership concealed a much higher turnover,¹⁶ as shown in Table 8.2 below.

¹⁴ N.A.O. NC/MR/8/254; *Nottinghamshire Guardian* 8 September 1859.

¹⁵ See above, 312.

¹⁶ See above Chapter 4, 202.

Table 8.2**Reasons for leaving Flintham Wesleyan Society 1851-1875**

Year	Backsliding	Removal	Death	Total	Membership
1851	9			9	52
1852	2	1		3	49
1853	1		3	4	51
1854			2	2	44
1855	2	4	1	7	43
1856	1	1	1	3	46
1857	3	3		6	76
1858		7		7	72
1859	4	3	3	10	66
1860	7		1	8	57
1861	1	5		6	48
1862	7		1	8	45
1863	3	1	1	5	47
1864		1	3	4	47
1865	1	2	1	4	49
1866	3	1	1	5	53
1867	2	3		5	43
1868			2	2	40
1869		5		5	37
1870	1	4		5	39
1871	2			2	41
1872			1	1	38
1873	1	2	1	4	38
1874	1			1	34
1875	1	4	2	7	30
Totals	52	47	24	123	

Sources: N.A.O. NC/MR/8/28-30

From 1851 to 1875, membership fell by 22, although 123 individuals were recorded as leaving the Society. Consequently, 101 must also have joined,

suggesting rather than a stable but slowly decreasing group, it was one experiencing a constant movement in and out. Analysing the reasons for leaving, 42.3 per cent were backsliders, 38.2 per cent removals and 19.5 per cent deaths, indicating that one of the main causes of loss was still the failure to retain those initially attracted. However, the number attending services, based on the census evidence,¹⁷ would have been considerably larger than the Society's membership and individuals recorded as backsliders were possibly still part of the worshipping congregation on Sundays. Their backsliding may have related only to attendance at the fortnightly class meetings and payment of the appropriate subscription.¹⁸

A further indication that the Wesleyans continued to maintain a reasonably strong position was the reduction of the chapel debt towards the end of this period. Nothing was added to it following the painting and refurbishment of 1859, costing £10 19s 0d;¹⁹ the £30 owed in 1847 was still outstanding in 1870 but reduced to £22 in 1871 and cleared totally by 1873.²⁰

Surviving circuit records from 1859 for the Newark Primitive Methodist circuit enable charting of membership for the Flintham Primitives, as shown in Figure 8.2 below. The initial point of 24 members in 1859 was a decline from the estimated membership of 34 in 1851²¹ and from the 40 members when the chapel was built in 1845.²² There was also an overall decline between 1859 and 1867, which was the period during which national membership was rising significantly. Numbers through the remainder of

¹⁷ See above Chapter 7, 288.

¹⁸ N.A.O. NC/MR/68/1-7; /8/208; B.M.C. Deeds for Methodist Chapel, Bingham, Notts., Plan 1869.

¹⁹ N.A.O. NC/MR/8/254.

²⁰ N.A.O. NC/MR/8/38-39.

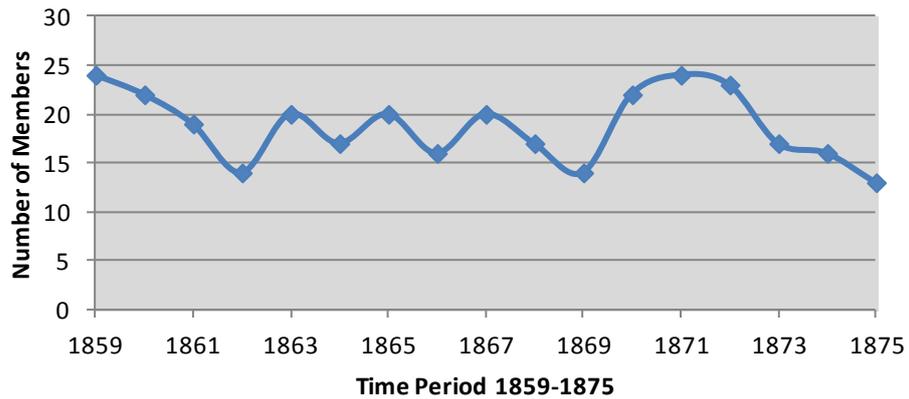
²¹ See above Chapter 7, 288-89.

²² N.A.O. NC/MR/5/315.

the quarter century fluctuated but increases were never maintained and by 1875 the membership was just over half that of 1851 and only a third of the original number.

Figure 8.2

**Flintham Primitive Membership
1859-1875**



Source: N.A.O. NC/MR/5/316

However, just as for the Wesleyans, it is necessary to view membership against the declining population. Table 8.3 shows that although support relative to the population had decreased by 1861, ten years later it had improved beyond the mid-century position.

Table 8.3

Flintham Primitive Membership and Population 1851-1881

Date	Population	P. Membership*	% Population
1851	639	(34)	(5.3)
1861	524	20	3.8
1871	452	25	5.5
1881	381	18	4.7

*Figure for quarter ending 31st March to coincide with population census.

() estimate; see above, 289

Sources: V.C.H. *Nottinghamshire* II, 311; N.A.O. NC/MR/5/316

The available data was insufficient to analyse overall turnover but there were some indications that membership numbers concealed movement in and out of the Society. For example, the membership dropped by three from 1863 to 1864 although during that period there were at least two new members, suggesting that five individuals had left.²³

Despite maintaining a strong position relative to the population in respect of members, the Primitive Society was burdened with debt. At some point before 1867, £2 17s 2d for improvements had been added to the £108 outstanding after the chapel was built.²⁴ Special services and a tea meeting were held in 1852 where 'the collections realised £3 2s 9d towards defraying the debt on the chapel'.²⁵ The amount owed had been reduced to £90 by 1867 and eventually to £80 in 1875.²⁶ However, with an annual balance which never exceeded £5 between 1866 and 1875, there was little prospect of clearing the debt and the reduction in membership meant a smaller pool of possible financial contributors.²⁷

Competition from the parish church had increased by 1874 when Sunday services were being held morning and afternoon.²⁸ Each was therefore in competition with one of the Methodist denominations but nevertheless did not preclude attendance at their evening services. There is no evidence of when this changed pattern was introduced or how far it was in reality prompted by a competitive approach. Wesleyan services remained unchanged throughout but at some point before 1879, the Primitives changed their morning service to the afternoon, putting them in direct

²³ N.A.O. NC/MR/5/316.

²⁴ N.A.O. NC/MR/5/315.

²⁵ *Nottinghamshire Guardian* 20 May 1852.

²⁶ N.A.O. NC/MR/5/315.

²⁷ *Ibid.*

²⁸ Wright 1874, 327.

competition with the Wesleyans, although avoiding any clash with the Anglican morning service.²⁹ It is not clear whether this was related to attracting worshippers or other factors.

In the light of the overprovision of accommodation in Flintham, it was not expected that membership for both Methodist Societies would increase relative to the population.³⁰ On the other hand, for the Wesleyans it could not be ascertained whether actual attendance declined relatively, despite membership improving. There were reports of 'overflowing' and 'large' congregations at Sunday school anniversaries in the 1860s;³¹ however, the regular services would have been considerably less well attended. For the Primitives, there is some evidence that actual attendances, as opposed to membership, were maintained. Their schedules recorded average attendance at the principal Sunday service as 90 until 1875, when it was given as 80.³² However, since 90 was also given in the census return, it was possibly a general rounded estimate, rather than related to very specific counting.³³ In 1867 the average number of hearers at the weekday meeting was recorded as 50, which would have been 15 per cent of the adult population of 1861, indicating a level of solid support.

As far as Anglican activities were concerned, the Sunday school was flourishing in the 1860s and clearly supported by the squire at Flintham Hall.³⁴ Both Sunday school anniversary celebrations and missionary meetings were also major public events for the Wesleyans.³⁵ Collections

²⁹ Wright 1879, 397.

³⁰ See above Chapter 5, 215.

³¹ *Nottinghamshire Guardian* 22 April 1864; 27 April 1866.

³² N.A.O. NC/MR/315.

³³ T.N.A. HO 129/443.

³⁴ See above Chapter 6, 253.

³⁵ See above Chapter 6, 254; *Nottinghamshire Guardian* 30 May 1850; 18 August 1853; 19 November 1869; N.A.O. NC/MR/68/6.

for Sunday school and missions were substantial, generally exceeding £5.³⁶ Music also formed part of chapel life; in 1851 'the choir of the Wesleyan Methodist chapel held their singing party, at the house of Mr Parnham, the leader of the choir. The proceedings passed off with singing and great delight to all present'.³⁷ Despite struggling financially, the Primitives also contributed to village life with anniversary and other events; special services with tea meetings the following day were regular occurrences in the 1850s and early 1860s³⁸ and annual missionary meetings were also held.³⁹ However, significantly, the Society tried and failed to establish a Sunday school.⁴⁰ In terms of its competitive position, the comment in the circuit report in 1894 could have been applied to Flintham twenty years earlier: 'we have strong Wesleyan interest to compete with, besides the Church of England'.⁴¹

Cropwell Bishop

Although detailed parish census returns were unavailable,⁴² the vicar George Gould was well aware of the weak position of the parish church, including competition from the Wesleyans, and had worked assiduously during the 1840s to remedy the situation.⁴³ He remained in Cropwell Bishop throughout the third quarter of the century and continued with initiatives to maintain and improve the fabric of the church. In 1854 the chancel was restored at the expense of the Ecclesiastical Commission and William Marshall,⁴⁴ the major landowner in the parish.⁴⁵ However, these

³⁶ *Nottinghamshire Guardian* 30 May 1850; 18 August 1853; 19 November 1869.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 13 February 1851.

³⁸ N.A.O. NC/MR/5/314-15; *Nottinghamshire Review* 20 May 1852; 7 July 1853.

³⁹ *Nottinghamshire Guardian* 23 October 1851.

⁴⁰ See above, Chapter 6, 254.

⁴¹ N.A.O. NC/MR/315.

⁴² See above Chapter 1, 38.

⁴³ See above Chapter 5, 219.

⁴⁴ C.E.R.C. ECE/11/1/1891; J.T. Godfrey, *Notes on the Churches of Nottinghamshire: Hundred of Bingham* (1907), 132; White 1864, 463; *The Morning Post* 12 December 1853.

⁴⁵ C.E.R.C. ECE/7/1/5282.

improvements involved costs as well as benefits to the community, with rates of 2½d in the pound in 1858 and 5d in 1862 granted for 'necessary repairs to the Parish Church'.⁴⁶ There was also attention to the interior with a new communion cloth and refurbishment of the pulpit cushions in 1867⁴⁷ and necessary exterior maintenance with major repairs to the roof in 1873.⁴⁸ Gould was constantly in correspondence with the Ecclesiastical Commissioners endeavouring to obtain financial assistance towards running the school and Sunday school, improving the vicarage and extending its land and augmenting the value of the living.⁴⁹ Eventually this was increased by £129 per annum in 1863.⁵⁰

Cropwell Bishop Wesleyans had demonstrated a strong level of support in 1851 with 37 per cent of the total population attending the chapel, constituting well over half attending any place of worship. However, Figure 8.3 below shows membership numbers initially declining in the 1850s. This reflected the national situation up to 1855 but in Cropwell Bishop there was a more speedy improvement. The revival of Methodism in the decade after 1857 was also reflected until 1863, which probably contributed to the decision to purchase a harmonium in 1859 and alter the pews in 1860.⁵¹ The harmonium, costing £27 10s 0d, was a particularly large item of expenditure in the chapel budget⁵² and may have reflected the general development towards somewhat more formal services for nonconformists.⁵³

⁴⁶ N.A.O. PR 3886.

⁴⁷ N.A.O. PR 3881.

⁴⁸ Kelly 1876, 682; J.C. Cox, *County Churches* (1912), 75.

⁴⁹ C.E.R.C. ECE/7/1/5282.

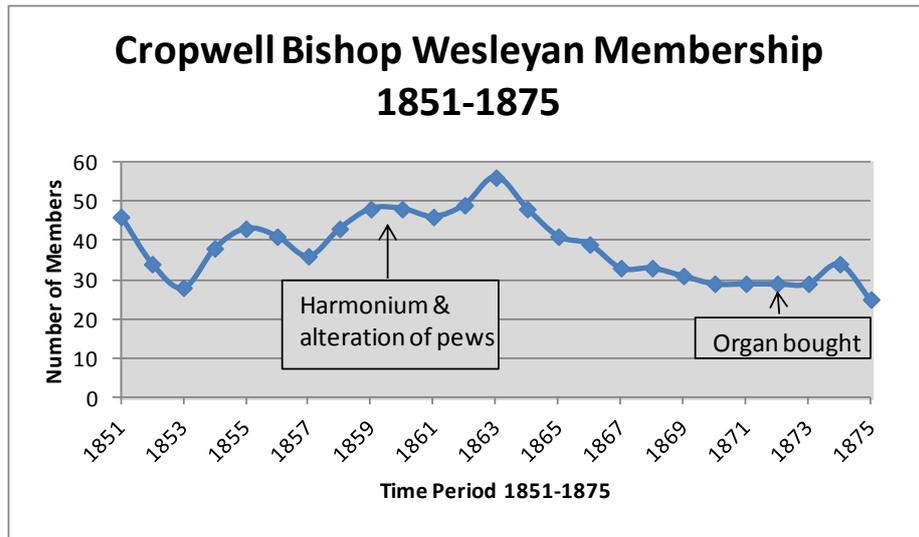
⁵⁰ *Ibid*; N.A.O. DD 232/1.

⁵¹ N.A.O. NC/MR/8/110.

⁵² *Ibid*.

⁵³ See above Chapter 1, 44-45.

Figure 8.3



Sources: N.A.O. NC/MR/8/28-29; /8/110

With one or two minor fluctuations, numbers gradually reduced from 1863 until 1875 and the decision to buy an organ was taken when total membership was static. Possibly based on this, the trustees decided that trust funds must not be used for buying or playing the organ to avoid adding to the debt.⁵⁴

Despite the trend of declining membership, a surprising shift occurred in 1876 when numbers suddenly increased from 25 to 60.⁵⁵ The minutes of the Bingham circuit quarterly meeting for June 1876 stated 'an increase in the quarter in membership of Societies in the Circuit of 46 with 35 on trial'.⁵⁶ Although the Cropwell Bishop increase did not correspond precisely to the same quarter, their Society's improvement may have been part of a wider upsurge of support. However, no reasons have been identified,

⁵⁴ N.A.O. NC/MR/8/110.

⁵⁵ N.A.O. NC/MR/8/29.

⁵⁶ N.A.O. NC/MR/8/1.

either organisational or connected with missionary activities, for this particular growth and no similar phenomenon occurred in Flintham.⁵⁷

Unlike the other places in the study, the population in Cropwell Bishop remained comparatively static from 1851-81, with just a small dip in the 1860s. Against this, Wesleyan numbers fell significantly during the first two decades but exceeded the 1851 percentage by the end of the third decade, as shown in Table 8.4. This change was clearly related to the rapid rise in membership from 1876; nevertheless, for the whole of the period directly under consideration the position of the Wesleyans in respect of committed members was deteriorating.

Table 8.4

Cropwell Bishop Wesleyan Membership and Population 1851-1881

Date	Population	W. Membership*	% Population
1851	640	51	8.0
1861	638	47	7.4
1871	616	26	4.2
1881	636	56	8.8

* Figure for quarter ending 31st March to coincide with population census.

Sources: V.C.H. *Nottinghamshire* II, 312; N.A.O. NC/MR/8/28-30

Investigation of the membership losses during this period, shown in Table 8.5 below, revealed that these totals again concealed a high turnover. The decrease of 21 involved 110 people leaving the Society, indicating that 89 must also have joined. Of those leaving, 57.3 per cent were backsliders, 34.5 per cent moved out of the area, while deaths only accounted for 8.2 per cent.

⁵⁷ See above, 312.

Table 8.5

Reasons for leaving Cropwell Bishop Wesleyan Society 1851-1875

Year	Backsliding	Removal	Death	Total	Membership
1851	15	3	1	19	46
1852	1	9	2	12	34
1853					28
1854					38
1855	5			5	43
1856	3	4		7	41
1857	5			5	43
1858		1		1	43
1859	5	1		6	48
1860	2	2	1	5	48
1861	1			1	46
1862	1	2		3	49
1863	1	2		3	56
1864	5	3	1	9	48
1865	2	1		3	41
1866		1		1	39
1867	2	1	2	5	33
1868	1	2	1	4	33
1869	1	4	1	6	31
1870	4	1		5	29
1871		1		1	29
1872					29
1873					29
1874	2			2	34
1875	7			7	25
Totals	63	38	9	110	

Sources: N.A.O. NC/MR/8/28-29

Even more than in Flintham, there was a failure to retain members; this may have related specifically to the level of commitment required or may have indicated a general loss of interest in chapel activities. Whatever the

reason, a fluctuating membership must have made the Society's financial position more difficult. In 1853 there were 'annual services towards liquidating the debt upon the Wesleyan meeting-house, Cropwell Bishop', with collections and a public tea party.⁵⁸ However, by 1860 only £20 had been paid off the £360 debt incurred in 1842 and by 1866 the current account was running a deficit.⁵⁹ The situation had improved a little by 1875 with £30 paid off and the account again in surplus but it was not until the 1890s that there were real efforts to bring about considerable debt reduction.⁶⁰

From about the time of the increase in the value of the Anglican living in 1863, the church began to hold two services on Sunday.⁶¹ In 1871 service times were 11am and 2pm,⁶² so the afternoon had become a weekly, rather than fortnightly, point of competition with the Wesleyans.⁶³ However, three years later the time changed from afternoon to evening, thus shifting the balance during a Sunday, although there were no obvious factors to account for this.⁶⁴

Although the vicar's efforts concerning Anglican educational provision initially met with success and his annual treats for children and parishioners were popular,⁶⁵ the day school became increasingly unsuccessful and Sunday school numbers declined compared with the Wesleyans.⁶⁶ The chapel community, however, undertook a wide range of activities. Anniversaries were always big occasions and Charles

⁵⁸ *Nottinghamshire Guardian* 7 July 1853.

⁵⁹ See above Chapter 4, 174; N.A.O. NC/MR/8/38.

⁶⁰ N.A.O. NC/MR/8/38-39; /8/110.

⁶¹ C.E.R.C. ECE/7/1/5282; N.A.O. DD 232/1.

⁶² Wright 1871, 266.

⁶³ See above Chapter 7, 294.

⁶⁴ Wright 1874, 321.

⁶⁵ See above Chapter 6, 256; *Nottinghamshire Guardian* 4 August 1853.

⁶⁶ See above Chapter 6, 260.

Richardson, a famous Methodist preacher known as the 'Lincolnshire Thresher' preached sermons at chapel anniversaries in 1857 and 1859.⁶⁷ This was clearly a time of trying to attract people, possibly as new converts, because the plan for 1860-61 also listed a love feast, which was by then an unusual occurrence in Wesleyan Methodism.⁶⁸ In both 1860 and 1862 a public meeting was held in aid of foreign missions,⁶⁹ while anniversaries, in particular those of the Sunday school, were social and fund-raising as well as religious.⁷⁰ On occasions social events were held without any accompanying preaching; in 1875 a tea meeting and concert raised £6 17s 5½d for chapel funds.⁷¹

In addition to activities directly connected with the chapel, Wesleyans played a key role in other village organisations. Many continued to be stewards of the Friendly Society to the extent that it was known as the 'Chapel Club'.⁷² Also, according to one source, a branch of the Band of Hope flourished in Cropwell Bishop in the 1860s, largely backed by Methodists.⁷³ In 1870, a group of villagers, mostly chapel members, formed a Co-operative Society based around the shop kept by another member, Frank Wright;⁷⁴ all but one of the shareholders can be identified later as Methodist worshippers.⁷⁵ The Wesleyans, therefore, maintained a much stronger presence in the village than the Anglicans in terms of community and chapel-centred activities.

⁶⁷ R.C. Swift, *Methodism in Cropwell Bishop*, (1952), 13.

⁶⁸ N.A.O. NC/MR/8/68/1.

⁶⁹ *Ibid* /68/6.

⁷⁰ *Nottinghamshire Guardian* 23 May 1861.

⁷¹ N.A.O. NC/MR/8/110.

⁷² See above Chapter 4, 174; A. Harper & E. Harper, *Chronicles of Cropwell Bishop* (1988),14.

⁷³ *Ibid*, 15.

⁷⁴ Swift, *Methodism*, 14; T.N.A. RG10/3548.

⁷⁵ Swift, *Methodism*, 14; N.A.O. NC/MR/8/321.

Cropwell Butler and Tithby

Since Joshua Brooke was already concerned about competition from the Methodist groups in Cropwell Butler,⁷⁶ he may have discovered the approximate numbers attending the places of worship in the two villages on census Sunday. However, there is no evidence of any immediate response. His suggestions about a new church in Cropwell Butler came to nothing because George Parr's building continued to be used, both as a church and a schoolroom.⁷⁷ In 1863, correspondence between him and John Chaworth Musters, the patron of the living, revealed the situation regarding the Anglican presence in both villages. The 'wealthy Cropwellites' wanted to build a church and endow it for themselves but were not prepared to finance this to the level required and therefore proposed renting George Parr's chapel of ease and subscribing a sum to obtain a resident curate;⁷⁸ Brooke, supported by Chaworth Musters, proposed enlarging Tithby church by adding a north aisle, with all the seats to be free for the poor of both villages because currently almost all the pews had been bought up by their richer neighbours.⁷⁹ Brooke also felt, somewhat contrary to his view expressed 20 years earlier about the problem of travelling to Tithby, that many inhabitants would be sorry to give up going to Tithby church.⁸⁰ The latter plan for enlarging the church was carried out later that year, also involving new windows and replacing box pews.⁸¹ The first plan was partly accomplished by 1868, by which time there was a curate living in Cropwell Butler.⁸² Whether the chapel of ease was ever formally rented cannot be established but in 1877 it was listed as

⁷⁶ See above Chapter 5, 227.

⁷⁷ *Nottinghamshire Guardian* 30 December 1852; 29 September 1859.

⁷⁸ N.A.O. DD/TB/3/2/39-40.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*

⁸⁰ N.A.O. DD/TB/3/2/39.

⁸¹ Godfrey, *Notes*, 439-40.

⁸² *Nottinghamshire Guardian* 27 March 1868; 10 July 1868.

being 'the property of Mr. John Parr, in which Church of England services are held'.⁸³

Although the Wesleyans recorded the highest attendances in the census, they did not demonstrate an overwhelmingly strong relative position. There was no obvious response in terms of the activities of the Society and membership declined in the first half of the 1850s in line with the national position. In the decade from 1857, it initially reflected Wesleyan growth but this was short-lived; a decline from 1860-67 settled down to stable total membership numbers until 1875, as shown in Figure 8.4 below. However, it is likely that alterations to the chapel undertaken in 1859 were in part a response to membership growth at that point resulting in some confidence about the future, although also necessary because the chapel had apparently 'sunk into a state of delapidation'.⁸⁴ The cost of £178 3s 10d was considerable and over 44 per cent must have been raised locally since the eventual outstanding debt was £100, indicating the existence of a level of wealth amongst some members and/or villagers.⁸⁵

Just as in Cropwell Bishop, there was a sudden growth in membership shortly after 1875. However, the increase was much smaller (from 21 to 35) and slightly later;⁸⁶ it is therefore difficult to know whether or not it was related to the upsurge in support around the circuit.⁸⁷

⁸³ Morris 1877, 431.

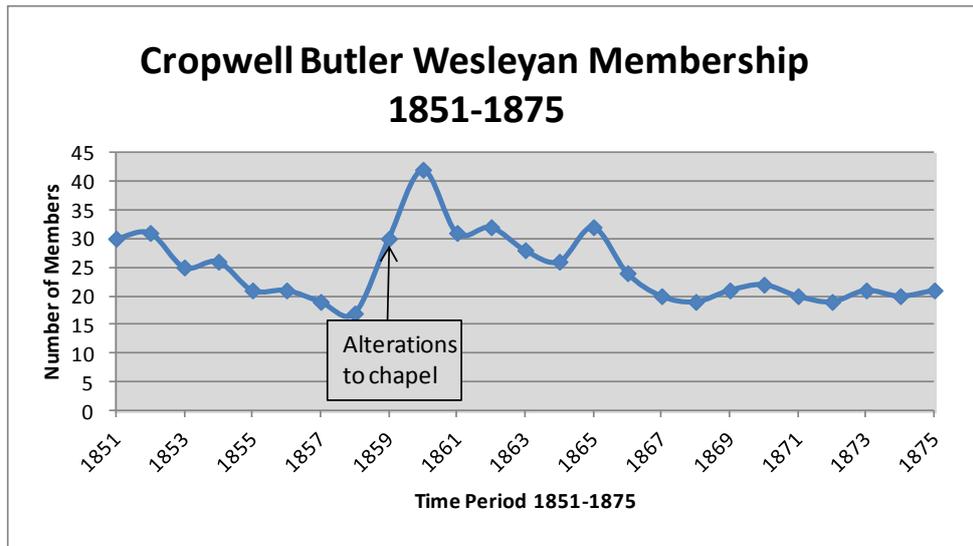
⁸⁴ N.A.O. NC/MR/8/38.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*

⁸⁶ N.A.O. NC/MR/8/29.

⁸⁷ See above, 320-21.

Figure 8.4



Sources: N.A.O. NC/MR/8/28-29; *Nottinghamshire Guardian* 29 September 1859

Unlike the variations in Wesleyan membership, the population in the two villages declined continuously throughout this period, resulting in the Wesleyans improving their percentage of members at least by the early 1860s, as shown in Table 8.6 below. Although this had fallen significantly by 1871, the rise in the next decade was again related primarily to the further reduction in the population; at the end of the decades from 1851-81, the Society therefore had maintained its position relative to the number of inhabitants.

Table 8.6

Cropwell Butler Wesleyan Membership and Population 1851-1881

Date	Population¹	W. Membership²	% Population
1851	811	31	3.8
1861	718	32	4.5
1871	692	20	2.9
1881	621	24	3.9

¹Figure includes Cropwell Butler and Tithby

²Figure for quarter ending 31st March to coincide with population census.

Sources: V.C.H. *Nottinghamshire* II, 312; N.A.O. NC/MR/8/28-30

Table 8.7 below shows the fall in membership numbers of nine between 1851 and 1875 concealed a fluid situation, as occurred both earlier and elsewhere. Altogether 65 individuals left the Society, indicating that 56 must have joined. Considerably the largest proportion was accounted for by backsliding (60 per cent) with 26.2 per cent removals and 13.8 per cent deaths. Clearly, the Wesleyans were struggling to retain committed members, although those backsliding may have remained adherents.

Initially during this period, the Society was unusual in having been free from debt since at least 1847.⁸⁸ However in 1860, the circuit property schedule recorded: 'Cropwell Butler is free from debt but.....has undergone considerable repairs the amount of which is not yet known'.⁸⁹ This was clearly a reference to the alterations and repairs in 1859. Thereafter the chapel had an outstanding debt of £100, not reduced until almost the end of the century.⁹⁰ The Society had apparently acted independently and not followed appropriate procedures for undertaking the repairs, since it was

⁸⁸ N.A.O. NC/MR/8/39.

⁸⁹ N.A.O. NC/MR/8/38.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*

Table 8.7
Reasons for leaving Cropwell Butler Wesleyan Society 1851-1875

Year	Backsliding	Removal	Death	Total	Membership
1851	8			8	30
1852			1	1	31
1853					25
1854					26
1855			1	1	21
1856	2	1	1	4	21
1857		2		2	19
1858	3			3	17
1859	1			1	30
1860	3	7	1	11	42
1861	5	1	2	8	31
1862	2	1		3	32
1863	1	1		2	28
1864	3	3		6	26
1865					32
1866	1	1		2	24
1867	2		2	4	20
1868	1			1	19
1869					21
1870			1	1	22
1871	2			2	20
1872	1			1	19
1873	1			1	21
1874	1			1	20
1875	2			2	21
Total	39	17	9	65	

Sources: N.A.O. NC/MR/8/28-29

noted that 'the accounts of Cropwell Butler Chapel are in such confusion that a Meeting of the New Trust must be held as early as possible to

examine the whole. Till then, no fair statements can be had'.⁹¹ It can be argued that the problems alluded to are a further example of the limited involvement of the Cropwell Butler Wesleyans with the wider circuit.⁹²

The evidence about the Primitive Methodist Society in the third quarter of the century is limited. There is no information about numbers of members but their best attendance in 1851 was 70, with an average given as 60.⁹³ They recorded 65 for the evening service, indicating a level of solid support.⁹⁴ An 1862 plan listed a chapel anniversary, a love feast and a camp meeting.⁹⁵ Although the love feast was mainly for regular worshippers, the camp meeting, in which five preachers were involved, was an evangelistic event aimed at Cropwell Butler and the surrounding area.⁹⁶ In addition, during the 1860s there were 24 baptisms.⁹⁷ Overall, the available evidence about the Primitive Society indicates that after rapidly becoming established in the second half of the 1840s, it consolidated during the 1850s and then probably expanded during the 1860s. This would be in line with the national position and is also likely to have reflected both the competitive situation in Cropwell Butler and also the division of the village into quite marked social groups.⁹⁸

At the census, the small group of Independent Primitive Methodists at Tithby had an evening congregation of 25, with the average given as 20.⁹⁹ On the assumption that those attending would have come from Tithby itself and not Cropwell Butler, this constituted 27.5 per cent of the village

⁹¹ *Ibid.*

⁹² See above Chapter 4, 183.

⁹³ T.N.A. HO 129/443.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*

⁹⁵ N.A.O. NC/MR/15/188/1.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*

⁹⁷ N.A.O. NC/MR/15/32.

⁹⁸ See below Chapter 9, 379-81.

⁹⁹ T.N.A. HO 129/443.

population over 14, which was a significant level of support.¹⁰⁰ The leader was William Hardy, an agricultural labourer.¹⁰¹ No further evidence has survived about this group and it was not included in the Bingham circuit in a 1905 history of Independent Methodism, indicating that it had disappeared by the end of the century.¹⁰²

Joshua Brooke had suggested a curate in Cropwell Butler would facilitate two Anglican services every Sunday¹⁰³ and an 1869 report noted a morning service at Tithby and an afternoon one at Cropwell Butler.¹⁰⁴ Directory entries of 1871 and 1879 gave alternating service times, showing that Cropwell Butler's chapel of ease and Tithby church provided one service in each of the villages every Sunday, thus making the situation considerably more competitive for both Methodist groups.¹⁰⁵

Accommodation in the places of worship was adequate at the mid-point in the century and therefore a decline in population inevitably meant overprovision. Nevertheless, Wesleyan membership did not fall, although numbers were not necessarily proportionate to attendances; the chapel re-opening in 1859 after the alterations attracted only 70 to the public tea between the two services, compared with 90 at the best service on census Sunday.¹⁰⁶ In addition there was a hint of falling attendances in 1864 at chapel anniversary services when 'the afternoon attendance was not so

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid*; HO 107/2139.

¹⁰¹ T.N.A. HO 129/443; 107/2139.

¹⁰² A. Mounfield, *A Short History of Independent Methodism: a Souvenir of the Hundredth Anniversary Meeting of the Independent Methodist Church* (1905), 201-02.

¹⁰³ N.A.O. DD/TB/3/2/39.

¹⁰⁴ *Nottinghamshire Guardian* 10 December 1869.

¹⁰⁵ Wright 1871, 267; Wright 1879, 386, 544.

¹⁰⁶ *Nottinghamshire Guardian* 29 September 1859.

good as upon former occasions, but in the evening the chapel was well filled'.¹⁰⁷

A lot of Anglican activity centred round the Sunday schools with annual sermons to raise funds and extensive Christmas and summer treats.¹⁰⁸ In addition to events involving children, the church held an annual festival of church singers in Cropwell Butler, at least in the 1850s, where 'most of the inhabitants of the village were present, and a very delightful evening was spent'.¹⁰⁹ It also demonstrated wider concerns with annual sermons and collections for missionary societies and for local hospitals.¹¹⁰ Overall the parish church was active in the community, as well as increasing opportunities for worship.

The Wesleyans had faced a particularly competitive situation from the mid-1840s with the establishment of the Primitive Methodists and the opening of the chapel of ease.¹¹¹ Sunday school numbers exhibited an overall declining trend, as presumably some children transferred to one of the Anglican or the Primitive Sunday schools. However, there was still much activity: fund raising through annual sermons, anniversary celebrations, Christmas and summer treats, meetings about foreign missions and collections for the hospital.¹¹²

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid*, 3 June 1864.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid*, 24 November 1853; 29 September 1859; 30 December 1852; 3 July 1856.

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid*, 27 January 1853.

¹¹⁰ *Ibid*, 1 December 1853; 3 October 1854; 24 July 1856; 5 November 1857; 14 October 1858; 10 December 1869; 12 February 1875.

¹¹¹ See above Chapter 5, 225-27.

¹¹² *Nottinghamshire Guardian* 26 June 1851; 24 July 1856; 18 August 1853; 31 December 1857; N.A.O. NC/MR/8/68/1; /6; /8/208; J.M. Barratt, Cropwell Bishop, Notts. Private collection of Scrap Books. Set of Sunday School Anniversary Invitations, 1837-69.

Although only one report has been identified,¹¹³ it is likely that the Primitive Methodists also ran annual anniversary events at this time; consequently, all the denominations in Cropwell Butler faced a challenging situation throughout this period.

Bingham

There is no specific evidence regarding the attitude of the rector to competition with other religious groups but the census took place just after a period of intense activity regarding changes to the church building and the construction of a new parish school.¹¹⁴ Despite not knowing the details, he would have been aware of the general level of support for the nonconformists and clearly continued to try and raise the profile of the parish church and promote various activities throughout the period.

The next addition to the church fabric occurred when Sybil Miles, daughter of the rector, was appointed organist.¹¹⁵ A subscription was opened in 1859 and an extension built in 1863 expressly to accommodate the organ, which was moved from the north transept.¹¹⁶ A few years later Robert Miles set up a committee to raise money for a church clock, placed in the tower in 1871 to the accompaniment of a festival resulting in many children being absent from the Wesleyan day school.¹¹⁷ More substantial improvements were made in 1873 when the nave roof was restored, three clerestory windows were added and the porch and adjacent chapel

¹¹³ See above Chapter 6, 263.

¹¹⁴ See above Chapter 5, 233-34.

¹¹⁵ <http://southwellchurches.nottingham.ac.uk/bingham/horgan.php>, accessed 12.2.2013.

¹¹⁶ *Ibid*; *Nottingham Journal* 29 April 1859.

¹¹⁷ <http://southwellchurches.nottingham.ac.uk/bingham/hclock.php>, accessed 12.2.2013; N.A.O. SL/14/3/1.

rebuilt.¹¹⁸ The re-opening after completion was marked by various displays and celebrations, including a large public lunch attended by 270 people at the cost of 2s 6d per ticket.¹¹⁹

However, finance for regular expenses became an increasing problem. The rector must have decided that church rates had an uncertain future because, in 1854,

collections were made in Bingham church, during the morning and evening services, towards defraying the expenses of lighting and warming the church, which amounted to the sum of £5 4s 6d.

Hitherto these expenses have been paid out of the church rate.¹²⁰

Compulsory church rates were abolished in 1868 and by 1869 a weekly offertory was started, raising £89 1s 0¾d, although only £28 10s 10d was taken for church expenses, with the rest going to hospitals, missions and the organ debt.¹²¹ The following year the rector asked heads of families to make a regular contribution of 1d morning and evening; he calculated this would give him £75 a year if all 200 families paid.¹²²

Although the Wesleyans had to contend with a significant level of competition, there is no evidence of any particular response to the census in either 1851 or in 1854, when the district results were published. Much effort during the first half of the 1850s was devoted to dealing with the

¹¹⁸ Godfrey, *Notes*, 27; Trustees of Friends of Bingham Parish Church, *Bingham Parish Church: a history and guide* (c.1994), 15, 25;

<http://southwellchurches.nottingham.ac.uk/bingham/hhistory.php#middleages>, accessed 12.2.2013.

¹¹⁹ *Nottinghamshire Guardian* 26 September 1873;

www.binghamheritage.org.uk/history_of_bingham/victorian/parish_magazine.php, accessed 12.2.2013.

¹²⁰ *Nottinghamshire Guardian* 20 January 1854.

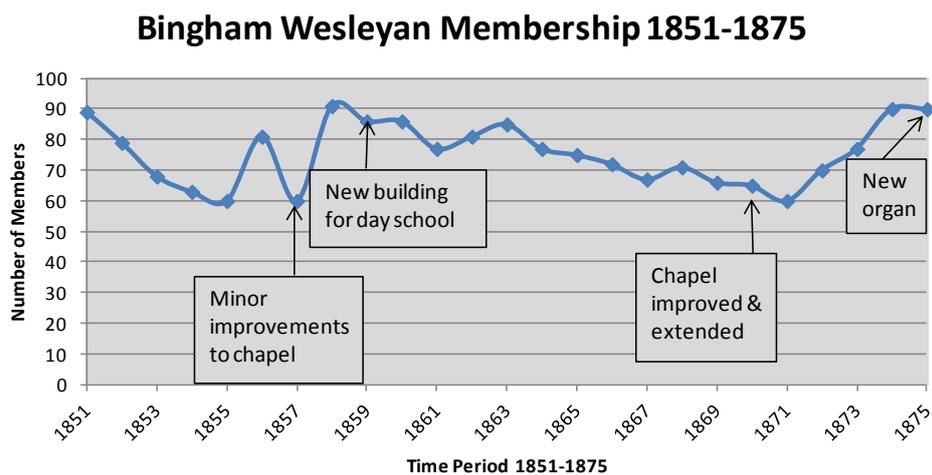
¹²¹ www.binghamheritage.org.uk/history_of_bingham/victorian/parish_magazine.php, accessed 14.2.2013.

¹²² *Ibid.*

Society's debt.¹²³ According to Abraham Kaye, the schoolmaster and local preacher, there were problems with the congregation in 1852; his diary related '...preaching tonight...in our chapel.Tonight many while I was speaking were sleeping and most seemed inattentive'.¹²⁴ In addition, he had written a few days earlier: 'of one thing I am certain viz that the society in Bingham is in a declining state'.¹²⁵

Figure 8.5 shows that membership fell by a third, slightly more than the national average, up to 1855 and although the Society had regained this by 1858, there was an overall trend downwards for the next 13 years.

Figure 8.5



Sources: N.A.O. SL/14/3/1; NC/MR/8/28-29; /8/38; *Nottingham Review* 17 April 1857; 15 July 1859; 23 December 1859; *Nottingham Journal* 17 July 1869; 15 January 1870; 18 May 1870; 1 April 1875

The 'thorough cleaning and other improvements' in 1857 was possibly an attempt to retain new members and it was also likely that the Society felt in a stronger position when deciding to erect a new school building two

¹²³ See below, 342-43.

¹²⁴ M.K. Kendrick (ed.), *Diary of Abraham Kaye* (1995). Transcription loaned by Mrs V. Henstock, 28 January 1852.

¹²⁵ *Ibid*, 21 January 1852.

years later.¹²⁶ However, the decision to undertake exterior and interior improvements in 1869-70, with an 'outlay extending over £600',¹²⁷ is somewhat surprising after some years of a declining trend in membership. The interior was re-seated with boarded floor and gas fittings, a heating apparatus on a new principle added and also a recess for the orchestra.¹²⁸ Nevertheless the Wesleyans were clearly successful in attracting support for their project with donations and subscriptions towards the restoration fund amounting to £400.¹²⁹ The improvements were followed by a steady increase in members, probably related to a more attractive and modern chapel building, further enhanced by a new organ in 1875.

The population of Bingham was generally in decline throughout the period, although there was a very small increase in the 1870s. This differed from market towns of a similar size, such as Castle Donnington and Market Harborough, where there was little change in population by 1881, although the size of the latter decreased significantly by the end of the century.¹³⁰ In the 20 years from 1851, the Wesleyan percentage of members also fell continuously, as shown in Table 8.8 below; however, by the end of the 1870s there had been a significant increase of two per cent compared with 30 years earlier, so the Wesleyans were in a significantly better state with a newly improved and refurbished building and membership increasing both absolutely and relatively.

¹²⁶ *Nottingham Review* 17 April 1857.

¹²⁷ *Nottingham Journal* 15 January 1870.

¹²⁸ *Ibid.*

¹²⁹ *Ibid.*

¹³⁰ S.A. Royle 'The Development of Small Towns in Britain', in P. Clark (ed.), *The Cambridge Urban History of Britain Vol.3 1840-1950* (2000), 154-55; <http://www.genuki.org.uk/big/eng/>, accessed 22.8.2014.

Table 8.8

Bingham Wesleyan Membership and Population 1851-1881

Date	Population	W. Membership*	% Population
1851	2054	89	4.3
1861	1918	77	4.0
1871	1629	64	3.9
1881	1673	106	6.3

*Figure for quarter ending 31st March to coincide with population census.

Sources: V.C.H. *Nottinghamshire* II, 311; N.A.O. NC/MR/8/28-30

It was anticipated there would be larger numbers of members moving in and out of membership than was apparent from analysing yearly totals. Table 8.9 below shows that although the totals in 1851 and 1875 were virtually the same, there were continuous fluctuations during the intervening years but still within a range of 30. However, the actual membership changes were significantly greater.

270 individuals left the Society, indicating that 271 must have joined in order to give an eventual increase of one. Of these 7.8 per cent died, 41.5 per cent were backsliders, while 50.7 per cent moved. The biggest challenge clearly related to members leaving the town, although the number of individuals ceasing to remain fully committed was still significant. On the other hand, adherents would have constituted a much wider group, some of whom may have drifted in and out of full membership.

Table 8.9
Reasons for leaving Bingham Wesleyan Society 1851-1875

Year	Backsliding	Removal	Death	Total	Membership
1851	7	4		11	89
1852	3	7		10	79
1853	2	8	2	12	68
1854	4			4	63
1855	1	1	1	3	60
1856	6	8	3	17	81
1857	8	10	2	20	60
1858	4	4		8	91
1859	7			7	86
1860	3	5		8	86
1861	10	10	2	22	77
1862	4	3		7	81
1863	6	9	2	17	85
1864	5	5	2	12	77
1865	1	2	2	5	75
1866		8	1	9	72
1867	6	6		12	67
1868		8		8	71
1869	4		1	5	66
1870	2	6	1	9	65
1871	2	10		12	60
1872	1	3	1	5	70
1873	1	6		7	77
1874	9	4	1	14	90
1875	16	10		26	90
Total	112	137	21	270	

Sources: N.A.O. NC/MR/8/28-29

In the first half of the 1850s the Wesleyans were facing considerable competition, experiencing falling numbers and observed as being in a

'declining state'.¹³¹ One particular problem was the burden of debt. In 1847, the Society's debt was £525 and in the 1850s there were 'annual sermons on behalf of the trust funds', which were an integral part of chapel anniversary celebrations.¹³² By 1854, it was reported that:

We understand the Wesleyans of this place are about to remove whole of debt upon their chapel, which amounts to rather more than £500, and already donations and subscriptions to the amount of more than £200 have been promised.¹³³

This improvement left the way open for the further commitment of erecting a completely new building for the day school in 1859. However, the intention was to avoid this project leaving the Society with a fresh level of ongoing debt. The application to the Education Department stated that total expenditure would be just over £860 and promoters were expected to raise £430, (£250 from contributions and the rest from collections and various sales).¹³⁴ The grant recommended by the Department was £372, so the vast majority of the anticipated cost should have been covered.¹³⁵ Nevertheless in 1860 an outstanding debt of £360 was recorded, indicating that possibly the cost was greater than expected or that contributions did not all materialise.¹³⁶ However, in 1863 a leading member, John Peat, 'with the exception of a legacy to his niece, ...bequeathed the whole of his property to objects connected with the Wesleyan Methodist Society'.¹³⁷ Consequently the debt was reduced to £220 by 1864 and then to £210 by the end of the decade when the extensions and improvements were

¹³¹ See above, 335.

¹³² N.A.O. NC/MR/8/39; *Nottinghamshire Guardian* 24 April 1851; 14 October 1852.

¹³³ *Nottingham Review* 24 November 1854.

¹³⁴ T.N.A. ED/103/77/19.

¹³⁵ *Ibid.*

¹³⁶ N.A.O. NC/MR/8/38.

¹³⁷ *Nottingham Review* 28 August 1863.

undertaken.¹³⁸ Although significant sums were raised towards the £700 cost, inevitably the debt again increased, with £400 owing in 1872 of which £100 had been paid off by 1875.¹³⁹ However, the reseating in the interior had a positive financial result because the income from the seat rents more than doubled.¹⁴⁰ It is clear the financial situation was an issue for the Society throughout this period and it was only able to embark upon major building projects because of support from wealthy members and the ability to raise money in the town and local area extending beyond its membership and adherents.¹⁴¹

Although the stark contrast was between Anglicans and nonconformists, nevertheless most Wesleyans would have identified a clear difference between themselves and the Independent Primitives. This group had broken away from the main Primitive Methodist denomination and clearly designated itself as Independent Primitive,¹⁴² but both newspaper reports and directories usually referred to them as Primitive Methodists, thus raising the possibility that they had at some point rejoined the main denomination. However, a surviving 1862 plan for the Nottingham First Primitive Methodist circuit, including Cropwell [Butler], Shelford, Newton and Saxondale, did not list Bingham.¹⁴³ Moreover, of the 74 baptisms in the Primitive circuit record between 1851 and 1875, including 34 from Cropwell Butler, only two gave their place of residence as Bingham, suggesting that the group in Bingham generally referred to as the Primitives did not belong to the main denomination.¹⁴⁴ A physical confirmation can also be found in the plaque above the front of the building

¹³⁸ N.A.O. NC/MR/8/38.

¹³⁹ *Ibid*; *Nottingham Journal* 15 January 1870.

¹⁴⁰ N.A.O. NC/MR/8/38.

¹⁴¹ T.N.A. ED/103/77/19.

¹⁴² See above Chapter 5, 234-35; T.N.A. HO 129/443.

¹⁴³ N.A.O. NC/MR/15/188/1.

¹⁴⁴ N.A.O. NC/MR/15/32.

which was originally the Temperance Hall [now a private house], shown in Illustrations 8.1 and 8.2 below. This was bought and refitted by the Independent Primitives in 1882. In addition, a later history of Independent Methodism referred both to its origins in Bingham in 1817 and to the later purchase of the Temperance Hall,¹⁴⁵ confirming the Society remained as Independent Primitives during the second half of the century.¹⁴⁶

The denomination was one of four competing religious groups in 1851 and very similar in size to the Temperance Christians. There is no further specific evidence of subsequent numbers but it sometimes needed to borrow the Temperance Hall, indicating it was attracting large numbers on occasions like Sunday school anniversaries.¹⁴⁷ The capacity of the original Independent Primitive chapel was recorded as 198, while the Temperance Hall could seat 246 with 50 standing and was apparently filled to overflowing in 1854.¹⁴⁸ In 1857, there may have been some improvements to the small chapel building because there were reopening services.¹⁴⁹ Nevertheless, by 1882 the Temperance Hall had been rebuilt as an Independent Primitive Methodist chapel.¹⁵⁰ This purchase of bigger premises suggested the Society was maintaining and possibly increasing its numbers, thus indicating solid support, as did the continuation of an attractive Sunday school in the face of Anglican and Wesleyan competition.¹⁵¹

¹⁴⁵ Mounfield, *Short History*, 201.

¹⁴⁶ R.C. Swift, *Lively People: Methodism in Nottingham 1740-1979* (1982), 154.

¹⁴⁷ *Nottinghamshire Guardian* 25 May 1854; 24 May 1855.

¹⁴⁸ T.N.A. HO 129/443; *Nottinghamshire Guardian* 25 May 1854.

¹⁴⁹ *Nottingham Review* 7 August 1857.

¹⁵⁰ http://www.binghamheritage.org.uk/built_heritage/development_of_bingham/built_long_ac_re.php, accessed 6.3.2013; White 1885, 81; see Illustration 8.2 below.

¹⁵¹ *Nottingham Express* 28 October 1903; N.A.O. SL/14/3/1.

Illustration 8.1

Former Independent Primitive Methodist Chapel, Bingham



Illustration 8.2

**Plaque on Former Independent Primitive Methodist Chapel,
Bingham**



Although it was never entirely clear how far the Temperance Christians operated as a separate religious group,¹⁵² they designated themselves as something distinct and their services on census Sunday were competing with the other denominations.¹⁵³ In addition, they had 'a Sunday school prospering' according to a contemporary local historian.¹⁵⁴ However, when John Doncaster noted the Temperance Hall was supplied by local preachers or lay men, he must have been referring to preachers who were originally or currently part of the other two nonconformist denominations.¹⁵⁵ The Bingham and Vale of Belvoir Total Abstinence Society was responsible for the Hall¹⁵⁶ but would not have had its own local preachers. Nevertheless, the Temperance Christians continued to operate independently in the early part of this period, holding anniversary sermons for trust funds of the Hall in the early 1850s.¹⁵⁷ After 1854, there is no further evidence about them as a separate religious group and by 1861 it appeared 'there remains but little of the temperance cause at Bingham, so prosperous there once a day. Only some half dozen members remain of that formidable body....'.¹⁵⁸ This report was prompted by the purchase of ale by one of the founders of the Bingham Temperance Society, who was a trustee of the Hall.¹⁵⁹ However, there was still a temperance evening entertainment at the Hall in 1862 and a public tea meeting in 1863,¹⁶⁰ while temperance activities continued into the later part of the century, as the Board school log recorded absences of pupils for temperance demonstrations and festivals in the 1870s and early 1880s.¹⁶¹

¹⁵² See above Chapter 5, 236-37.

¹⁵³ T.N.A. HO 129/443.

¹⁵⁴ A. Esdaile, *History of Bingham* (1851), 23.

¹⁵⁵ T.N.A. HO 129/443.

¹⁵⁶ See above Chapter 5, 237.

¹⁵⁷ *Nottinghamshire Guardian* 7 August 1851; 16 November 1854.

¹⁵⁸ *Nottingham Telegraph* 7 September 1861.

¹⁵⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁶⁰ *Nottinghamshire Guardian* 25 April 1862; 2 January 1863.

¹⁶¹ N.A.O. SL/14/3/1.

The dwindling of support in the town for the temperance movement was presumably the reason for the premises moving into the hands of another organisation in 1864. According to extracts taken from circuit minute books by a later historian, the United Methodist Free Churches recorded that 'the Temperance Hall at Bingham be takenfor one year at a rent of £14 per annum with the offer of sale for £350 at the expiration...the Hall be opened on the 14th August'.¹⁶² It continued to be used as a place of worship, since an 1868 report referred to 'the congregation at the Temperance Hall';¹⁶³ it can be assumed this was by the United Methodists, who recorded a membership of nine in 1870.¹⁶⁴ However, by 1882 their membership had fallen to two at which point the decision was made to sell the building to the Independent Primitives.¹⁶⁵

As might have been anticipated in the light of the number of nonconformist groups already in Bingham and its very specific focus, the Temperance Christians did not continue as an identifiable group for a lengthy period. However, the fact that the United Methodists were never able to establish themselves effectively and only remained in the town for 18 years revealed their inability to challenge the longstanding Wesleyans and Independent Primitives and that there was only room for two Methodist denominations in Bingham, particularly since the population declined by 18.6 per cent in the 30 years after 1851.¹⁶⁶

The service pattern in Bingham remained relatively unchanged during the third quarter of the century, apart from the disappearance of the Temperance Christians and the advent of the United Methodists; however,

¹⁶² N.A.O. DD 1702/3/19/17. (Papers of R.C. Swift).

¹⁶³ *Nottinghamshire Guardian* 28 August 1868.

¹⁶⁴ N.A.O. DD 1702/3/19/17.

¹⁶⁵ *Ibid.*.

¹⁶⁶ V.C.H. *Nottinghamshire* II, 311.

no evidence has survived about their services. The Anglicans held three services on Sunday throughout the period,¹⁶⁷ while the Wesleyans and Primitives continued with two.¹⁶⁸

In mid-century the provision of accommodation in the four places of worship was adequate for the population, so the subsequent decline in inhabitants meant overprovision. Consequently, the fall in support for the Wesleyans could be anticipated, as a smaller population divided itself up amongst the same number and size of religious buildings.¹⁶⁹ However, it cannot be ascertained whether increased support after 1870 was at the expense of other denominations or attracting previous non-attenders. The low percentages must be viewed cautiously and attendances were not necessarily proportionate to membership numbers. In Bingham, the census numbers were less than the three-to-one ratio of attendance to membership and notwithstanding large attendances at public meetings in connection with the Sunday and day schools and at public lectures, there is no evidence regarding numbers at services.¹⁷⁰ Around the middle of the century there was a notable level of co-operation between the Independent Primitives and Temperance Christians, with the loan of the Hall for particular Independent Primitive events.¹⁷¹ Although this did not relate to Sunday worship, it does suggest the Independent Primitives at least were under rather than overprovided as regards accommodation.

Despite any financial difficulties, the parish church both instigated and supported a wide range of activities in addition to its regular acts of

¹⁶⁷ Wright 1874, 307.

¹⁶⁸ N.A.O. NC/MR/8/208; Wright 1871, 254.

¹⁶⁹ See above, 335.

¹⁷⁰ *Nottinghamshire Guardian* 10 July 1851; 29 December 1853; 21 August 1856; *Nottingham Review* 1 April 1864.

¹⁷¹ See above, 341.

worship. Numbers in the large Sunday school were maintained,¹⁷² with annual treats for scholars and teachers, while extensive events often termed 'feasts' or 'festivals' and including fireworks were organised for the children from the day school.¹⁷³ There was some attention to mission with special sermons in aid of the Church Missionary Society and in 1869 the formation of a local branch of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel and also to wider concerns with very regular collections for local hospitals.¹⁷⁴ However, many initiatives were aimed at benefiting the local community, while simultaneously raising the profile of the church; in 1869, the rector started a monthly parish magazine including a notice about a parish tea costing 6d.¹⁷⁵ He also arranged 'lime-light lantern' lectures in 1872, opened a reading room in the Infants' school room in 1873 and encouraged the use of a 'Penny Bank' in the church school room.¹⁷⁶ On occasions specifically church activities were designed to have a much wider impact. A lengthy newspaper report in 1874 about the annual harvest festival not only gave extensive details about the decoration of the church, the services and the tea but stated that 'the harvest thanksgiving will be continued for several days, as the trains to and from Nottingham are generally convenient for the purpose of attending'.¹⁷⁷

The Wesleyans also engaged in many activities outside Sunday services and classes, which clearly assisted in re-establishing their position after 1851. The growing support for the Sunday school¹⁷⁸ was encouraged by annual anniversaries and treats, sometimes combined with those for the

¹⁷² See above Chapter 6, 266-67.

¹⁷³ *Nottinghamshire Guardian* 15 January 1852; 4 August 1853; www.binghamheritage.org.uk/history_of_bingham/victorian/parish_magazine.php, accessed 14.2.2013.

¹⁷⁴ N.A.O. PR 24641.

¹⁷⁵ http://www.binghamheritage.org.uk/history_of_bingham/victorian/, accessed 17.2.2013.

¹⁷⁶ www.binghamheritage.org.uk/history_of_bingham/victorian/parish_magazine.php, accessed 17.2.2013.

¹⁷⁷ *Nottinghamshire Guardian* 11 September 1874.

¹⁷⁸ See above Chapter 6, 267-68.

day school until the latter became a board school.¹⁷⁹ The stone-laying for the new school building in 1859 was turned into a lavish occasion for the town with a procession and a band, finishing in a field lent by a local publican where over 1,200 people enjoyed refreshments in a marquee.¹⁸⁰ Events connected solely with the day school could involve many elements: public examination, displays, singing, a tea and evening public entertainment.¹⁸¹ The intention was to encourage more scholars and attract financial support, as well as raise funds on the day. The Wesleyans also arranged public lectures on topical matters, such as American slavery, which included collections for the schools.¹⁸² In terms of attracting people, love feasts were held on a number of occasions,¹⁸³ which were an infrequent occurrence amongst Wesleyans by this time and would have had a positive impact for the local Society. In addition there were missionary meetings, sermons in aid of tract funds and collections for Hospital Sunday.¹⁸⁴ The status of the Bingham Wesleyans in the community was indicated by their collecting £400 in donations and subscriptions towards the restoration in 1870 and holding re-opening services on at least three separate days, despite the parish church being simultaneously engaged in a wide range of activities.

There is also limited evidence about activities by the Independent Primitives. Although newspaper reports concerning the Sunday school are less frequent after the 1850s, it is clear from the Board school log books that their anniversaries were regular and well-attended events, usually

¹⁷⁹ *Nottinghamshire Guardian* 10 July 1851; 25 April 1861; N.A.O. SL/14/3/1.

¹⁸⁰ *Nottingham Review* 15 July 1859.

¹⁸¹ *Ibid*, 1 April 1864.

¹⁸² *Nottinghamshire Guardian* 21 August 1856; 9 November 1866; N.A.O. NC/MR/8/388.

¹⁸³ Kendrick, *Diary of Abraham Kaye*, 18 January 1852; N.A.O. NC/MR/8/68/2; /8/68/6-7.

¹⁸⁴ *Nottinghamshire Guardian* 12 April 1855; 1 April 1870; 12 February 1875.

leading to children being absent or to holidays being granted.¹⁸⁵ Other activities included collections taken for Hospital Sunday.¹⁸⁶

Comparisons

The publication of the report on the religious census in 1854 provided no details beyond the registration district and engendered surprisingly little comment from the denominations nationally.¹⁸⁷ In the four parishes studied there was no obvious response from any of the religious groups, although concerns had earlier been expressed by the incumbents in Cropwell Bishop and Tithby-cum-Cropwell Butler about competition from the Methodists.

Most of the religious groups made some repairs, improvements or extensions to their church or chapel buildings. The substantial improvements to the Bingham parish church in 1873 occurred three years after the extensions and improvements to the Wesleyan chapel, while it is noteworthy that the Wesleyans in 1859 undertook some kind of refurbishment, repairs or alterations in all the village chapels and in Bingham opened a new building for the day school.

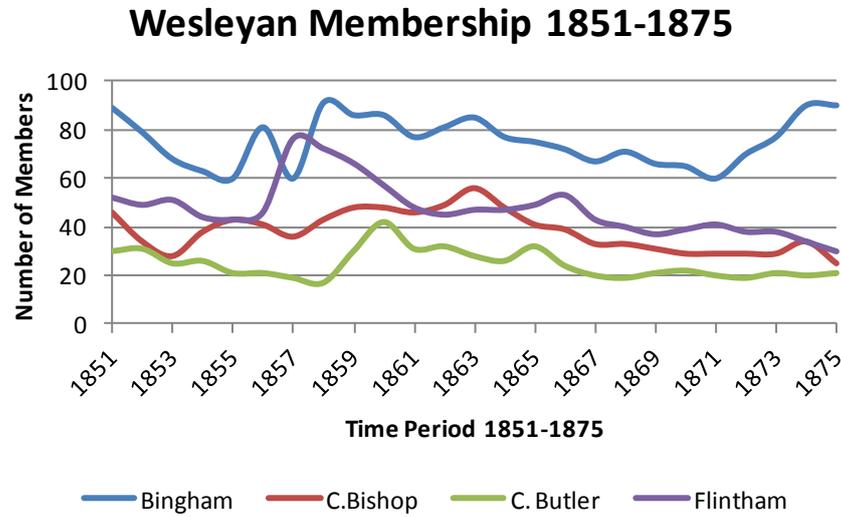
Data about membership is available for the four Wesleyan Societies and the Primitives at Flintham. A comparison of the changes for the Wesleyans is shown in Figure 8.6 below.

¹⁸⁵ N.A.O. SL/14/3/1.

¹⁸⁶ *Nottinghamshire Guardian* 3 January 1861; 6 February 1874; 12 February 1875.

¹⁸⁷ See above Chapter 1, 38-39.

Figure 8.6



Sources: N.A.O. NC/MR/8/28-29

Membership in the villages generally declined despite a number of fluctuations but in Bingham numbers recovered after 1871 to reach the same level as mid-century. Since there was something of a revival in the Wesleyan circuit immediately after 1875 affecting Cropwell Bishop and possibly Cropwell Butler,¹⁸⁸ the trends revealed in Figure 8.6 were not necessarily part of an ongoing situation. This is partly demonstrated when the membership is set against the population from 1851-1881 as shown in Table 8.10 below.

With one exception none of the Societies experienced falls in membership as great as the population decline and in some instances achieved an increased proportion.

¹⁸⁸ See above, 320 and 326.

Table 8.10

**Membership and Population Changes in Wesleyan and
One Primitive Society 1851-1881**

Date	Flintham	Flintham PM	C.Bishop	C.Butler	Bingham
1851 ¹	8.3	5.3 ²	8.0	3.8	4.3
1861 ³	+1.8 (-8.0)	-1.5 (-18.0)	-0.6 (-0.3)	+0.7 (-11.5)	-0.3 (-6.6)
1871 ³	-0.8 (-11.3)	+1.7 (-11.3)	-3.2 (-3.4)	-1.6 (-3.6)	-0.1 (-15.1)
1881 ³	-2.0 (-15.7)	-0.8 (-15.7)	+4.6 (+3.2)	+1.0 (-10.3)	+2.4(+2.7)

Key:

¹ membership as percentage of population

² estimate

³ percentage change over previous decade; brackets give percentage change for population

Sources: V.C.H. *Nottinghamshire* II, 311-12;

N.A.O. NC/MR/8/28-30; /5/316

The exception was Cropwell Bishop where the population was virtually static over 30 years; here the membership changes mirrored the population, apart from in the final decade where the revival boosted the proportionate increase. As in the first half of the century, the turnover in membership was striking, with changes in totals concealing a high level of fluidity. Table 8.11 below shows the details.

In every case members were continually joining and leaving and, although in Bingham it was significantly related to the number of people moving, it was clearly also related everywhere to individuals either committing themselves fully to membership or backsliding.

Table 8.11

Turnover in Membership in Wesleyan Societies 1851-1875

Place	Back-sliding %	Removal %	Death %	Total Leaving	Difference *	Total Joining
Flintham	42.3	38.2	19.5	123	-22	101
C.Bishop	57.3	34.5	8.2	110	-21	89
C.Butler	60	26.2	13.8	65	- 9	56
Bingham	41.5	50.7	7.8	270	+ 1	271

*difference in total membership between start and end of period

Sources: N.A.O. NC/MR/8/28-29

The extent to which any groups could extend their buildings, opportunities for worship or other activities was partly dependent on finance. In Flintham the Wesleyans reduced their debt over the period and had cleared it by 1873, while the Primitives struggled throughout owing a sum beyond their means to repay. Both Anglicans and Wesleyans in Cropwell Bishop had financial problems because of, respectively, the poor living and the chapel building debt. There were financial issues for Anglicans in Cropwell Butler and Tithby regarding the use of the chapel of ease and extension of the parish church and difficulties for the Wesleyans in paying for essential chapel improvements. In Bingham, despite a very wealthy living, there was an increasing problem in meeting regular expenses and for the Wesleyans debt was an issue throughout. Clearly financial problems were widespread.

One important aspect of religious competition was the pattern of Sunday services and the extent of conflicting times. In 1851, it was possible for individuals to practise dual or even triple allegiance everywhere; nevertheless, those groups offering only one service limited this option.

During the third quarter, Anglicans in the three villages all moved to providing a second service on Sunday and in the cases of Cropwell Bishop and Cropwell Butler and Tithby, this change was in the context of a competitive situation with the Methodists, which continued to be of concern to the incumbents.

It had been anticipated that a declining population would either exacerbate (for Flintham) or lead to (for the other parishes) overprovision of accommodation in the places of worship. However, this proved not to be the case regarding membership numbers. On the other hand, there is little evidence about the level of attendance after the census and numbers worshipping in individual chapels may have declined as overprovision became more of an issue everywhere except Cropwell Bishop. Large congregations for significant events were referred to at Flintham and Cropwell Bishop but there were some indications of falling attendances at Cropwell Butler where accommodation in the parish church at Tithby had expanded. The Primitives at Flintham noted a fall in attendance at the end of the period but not based upon detailed counting.

Competition was apparent from celebratory events designed to make an impact in the community and directed at adults as well as children. In addition to these, many other activities clearly contained a competitive element in aiming to attract individuals outside regular members or adherents. While it is probable that many would have occurred in a one-denomination parish, nevertheless in each place the groups were doing similar things. Unlike services, the times would not have clashed directly but an element of competition was undoubtedly present. The Cropwell Bishop Wesleyans were distinctive in their involvement in community

groups, particularly the Friendly Society, compared with the nonconformists elsewhere but they may have experienced less pressure with only the Anglicans in the village, thus enabling them to devote time and energy to broader social activity.

Conclusions

Although there was no direct local evidence to support Vickers' view that denominations renewed efforts to attract people after the census results in 1854,¹⁸⁹ it cannot be concluded that it had no effect. Leaders of all the religious groups would have been aware of their own attendance count and the incumbents of the two Cropwells had been particularly concerned about competition from the Methodist chapels.

The argument in the literature that denominational rivalry continued to spur church and chapel building¹⁹⁰ is less clearly demonstrated during this period than earlier. Apart from possibly in Bingham in the early 1870s, no particular competitive pattern is discernible. However, it is likely that three factors combined to produce the phenomenon of widespread Wesleyan building projects in 1859: nationally the Wesleyans were recovering from the earlier decline and benefiting from the general Methodist revival after 1857;¹⁹¹ locally there must have been some mutual encouragement within the Bingham circuit for engaging in improvements; individually all the chapels were in the midst of, or had just experienced, growth in their recorded membership numbers.

¹⁸⁹ Vickers, *Census*, 3.

¹⁹⁰ Watts, *Dissenters II*, 604.

¹⁹¹ R. Currie, A.D. Gilbert & L. Horsley, *Churches and Churchgoers: Patterns of Church Growth in the British Isles since 1700* (1977), 141; Watts, *Dissenters II*, 660-62.

In general the national picture was of the mid-century as the high point in religious observance¹⁹² with, for Wesleyan Methodism, the third quarter showing a significant fall in membership followed by a rise in the late 1850s and 1860s before stabilisation eventually moved to decline in the final two decades.¹⁹³ To some extent this was reflected locally, although only Flintham entirely conformed to the national pattern; Bingham had improved its total membership by the end of the period and both the Cropwells did so shortly afterwards. There was an even clearer divergence from the national position regarding membership proportionately to the population,¹⁹⁴ since all but one Society improved its position relatively.

The continuation of a high turnover into a period usually regarded as one of stabilisation for all branches of Methodism, with any growth being endogenous,¹⁹⁵ was not anticipated. However, it was clearly in accord with the conclusions reached in this study for the first half of the century.¹⁹⁶ As well as being contrary to the contention that there was endogenous growth and stability in the third quarter, the findings also disagreed with the suggestion of a link between high growth and high turnover,¹⁹⁷ since turnover still occurred whether there was growth, stability or decline overall.

Although this period was one of generally declining population, it cannot be concluded that moving from the parishes was the key reason for the high turnover. Just as earlier, the major reason for loss of members was

¹⁹² Snell & Ell, *Rival Jerusalems*, 196; A. Crockett, 'Rural-Urban Churchgoing in Victorian England', *Rural History*, 16:1 (2005), 54.

¹⁹³ Currie, Gilbert & Horsley, *Churches and Churchgoers*, 141; Watts, *Dissenters II*, 660-62; R. Currie, *Methodism Divided: A Study in the Sociology of Ecumenicalism* (1968), 92.

¹⁹⁴ Currie, *Methodism*, 90.

¹⁹⁵ *Ibid*, 89-92.

¹⁹⁶ See above Chapter 4, 204-06.

¹⁹⁷ Currie, Gilbert & Horsley, *Churches and Churchgoers*, 82.

backsliding,¹⁹⁸ apart from in the Bingham Society, where it was still significant but less so than removals. Furthermore, the Societies were generally increasing membership against the declining population, suggesting that members moving away was not an acute problem.

Closely linked to membership and support, was the conclusion that the increasing overprovision of accommodation for religious worship had no significant effect on membership but may have affected attendances in some places. This was to some extent contrary to Gill's view that additional buildings would make individual chapels emptier¹⁹⁹ because one might have expected such an effect to be noticeable in respect of numbers of members. However, as suggested in the literature,²⁰⁰ there clearly was a financial burden for all the chapels incurred by maintaining and improving buildings.

Considering overt competition, the timing of services began to clash increasingly in this period. This was anticipated from the literature²⁰¹ and undoubtedly part of the general revitalisation of Anglican worship. However, in Cropwell Bishop and Cropwell Butler and Tithby, it occurred in the context of an acknowledged competitive situation with the Methodists.

By the end of the third quarter, the competitive situation identified at the census had become an integral part of village and town life. Improved facilities and increased provision of religious services were significant, as

¹⁹⁸ See above Chapter 4, 202.

¹⁹⁹ Gill, *'Empty' Church*, 135.

²⁰⁰ *Ibid*, 30, 36; F. Knight, 'Internal Church Reform, 1850-1920: an Age of Innovation in Ecclesiastical Reform', in J. Van Eijnatten & P. Yates (eds.), *The Churches: the Dynamics of Religious Reform in Northern Europe 1780-1920*, (2010), 73.

²⁰¹ Knight, 'Diversity', 383-84; Royle, 'Church and Methodism', 150; A. Digby, 'Social Institutions', in E.J.T. Collins (ed.), *The Agrarian History of England and Wales*, Vol.7: 1850-1914, Pt.2, (2000), 1479.

well as an involvement in the life of the community via both celebratory events and the meeting of social and educational needs. As far as Methodist membership was concerned, the response was constantly changing support, which was nevertheless stronger than might have been anticipated from the national situation. The very small group of Independent Primitive Methodists in Tithby disappeared, as did the single-issue group of Temperance Christians in Bingham, indicating that it was necessary to have a minimum size and denominational underpinning for a group to remain viable.

The extent to which dual allegiance of individuals occurred throughout the nineteenth century, particularly in respect of baptismal practices, and how this related to competition amongst the religious groups is discussed in the following chapter.

Chapter Nine

Divided Loyalties

Introduction

The issue of dual allegiance has been under consideration throughout and in particular the question of worshippers in the nineteenth century attending both church and chapel¹ was investigated earlier by looking at service patterns and attendances recorded for the religious census.²

However, in this chapter the focus is on individuals and families demonstrating examples of either dual or exclusive allegiance. The strands are ultimately brought together in assessing when denominational boundaries started to harden and whether this occurred more quickly in the town than in the villages.³

The existence of local examples of individual co-operation and integration⁴ was investigated first by identifying, as far as possible, the leading figures for the denominations. Sources for Anglicans were primarily churchwardens and those approving the accounts and for Wesleyan

¹ R.W. Ambler, 'The 1851 Census of Religious Worship', *The Local Historian*, 11 (1975), 380; D.M. Thompson, 'The 1851 Religious Census: Problems and Possibilities', *Victorian Studies*, 11:1 (1967-8), 95-96; J. Obelkevich, *Religion and Rural Society: South Lindsey, 1825-1875* (1976), 214-16; M.R. Watts (ed.), *Religion in Victorian Nottinghamshire: the Religious Census of 1851* (1988), 13,31,33,36,140,202,221,302; F. Knight, 'From Diversity to Sectarianism: the Definition of Anglican Identity in Nineteenth-Century England', *Studies in Church History*, 32 (1996), 377-78; E. Royle, 'The Church of England and Methodism in Yorkshire, c.1750-1850: from Monopoly to Free Market', *Northern History*, 33 (1997), 149-50; G. Lloyd, "'Croakers and Busybodies": The Extent and Influence of Church Methodism in the Late 18th and Early 19th Centuries', *Methodist History*, 42:1 (2003), 31.

² See above Chapters 5, 7 & 8.

³ Knight, 'Diversity', 380-81, 383-84.

⁴ J. Gregory, "'In the Church I will Live and Die": John Wesley, the Church of England, and Methodism', in W. Gibson & R. Ingram (eds.), *Religious Identities in Britain 1660-1832* (2005), 177-78.

Methodists, circuit stewards, local preachers, subscribers to circuit debt, trustees, chapel stewards, treasurers, class leaders and Sunday school teachers. Since records were insufficient to identify a range of positions for the other religious groups, any individuals identified were included. Individuals who appeared within more than one group were recognized as demonstrating a level of dual allegiance.

Looking further at families, the question of choice of baptismal rite was considered. It had been suggested that even committed Methodist families varied their baptismal practices throughout much of the period⁵ but nevertheless there was an increase in opting for Methodist baptism in the third quarter of the nineteenth century.⁶ Changes in baptismal practices up to 1855 had already been analysed regarding religious competition;⁷ later baptisms were investigated to discover the extent of both changing practices and exclusive commitment. Wesleyan circuit records and parish registers again facilitated considerable analysis and there were also Primitive circuit records covering Cropwell Butler. To encompass the entire third quarter, Methodist baptisms were investigated from 1850 to 1875, although this meant duplicating a small number of children. The practices adopted for all the children of these families were examined. In addition, any key Wesleyan Methodist families⁸ and others on the only surviving membership list,⁹ who used Anglican baptism for all their children, were identified. The same method was used for comparing changes in baptismal practices amongst the Societies as that adopted earlier.¹⁰

⁵ L. Gray, 'And Who is My Neighbour?': the Methodists of Hunsonby and Winskill in their Local Context, 1821-1871, *Transactions of the Cumberland and Westmorland Antiquarian and Archaeological Society*, 13 (2013), 174-75.

⁶ Knight, 'Diversity', 383-84; Gray, 'Neighbour', 174.

⁷ See above Chapter 5, 246-48.

⁸ See above, 360-61.

⁹ NC/MR/8/29.

¹⁰ See above, Chapter 5, 210.

After consideration of dual allegiance separately for each parish during the third quarter, key points from the earlier period regarding attendance options, actual attendances, baptismal choices and any cross-denominational overlap of individuals are summarised before overall comparisons are undertaken.

Flintham

In Flintham there were important villagers who belonged to both the church and the Wesleyan chapel.¹¹ The Perkins family had emerged as a leading Wesleyan family in the 1840s¹² but from 1848-62 James Perkins was a churchwarden, while in 1860 was also paying a pew rent to the Wesleyans.¹³ Another farmer, John Perkins, was a Wesleyan steward in 1861 and 1866 and appeared on both the pew rent list and list of members for 1863;¹⁴ although not as obviously involved in the church as James, he was still involved in approving the parish accounts from 1863-4.¹⁵ Even more notable was the dual allegiance of John Whyman, a churchwarden from 1862 to 1874 and also on the lists of Wesleyan members and those renting a pew.¹⁶ In addition his commitment was clearly active, since he lent a field for the 'evening's amusement' of the Wesleyan Sunday school children at their 1862 anniversary.¹⁷ This involvement of some leading Wesleyans in the parish church confirmed the existence and continuation of an overlap between these two groups.

¹¹ See above for method of identifying leading individuals, 360-61.

¹² See above Chapter 4, 163.

¹³ N.A.O. PR 19566; NC/MR/8/254.

¹⁴ N.A.O. NC/MR/8/29; /8/254.

¹⁵ N.A.O. PR 19566.

¹⁶ *Ibid*; NC/MR/8/254; /8/29.

¹⁷ *Nottinghamshire Guardian* 25 April 1862.

Table 9.1 below details key Wesleyan families and individuals. Not all were part of the Society for the whole period; John Johnson, John Parnham and Joseph Wood had left the village by 1861,¹⁸ while others like John Whyman and Joseph Lee came to the fore in the 1870s. Other families such as the Dixons and Woods continued their leading position from earlier. Overall, a comparatively small group from within Society membership constituted the cornerstone of the Wesleyan presence. Their occupations included a cross-section, ranging across farmers, tradesmen and labourers, suggesting that attenders and adherents were also drawn from a wide village base and the links with the parish church confirmed the denomination was an integral part of village society. Indeed, a further indication of its secure position and cross-denominational aspect was in 1869 when the squire, T. Hildyard, chaired the Society's missionary meeting and 'for some time past has been giving a series of Scriptural addresses at the above place' (i.e. the chapel).¹⁹

In considering the baptismal practices amongst Wesleyan members and adherents after 1850,²⁰ of the 27 families using Methodist baptism, the 15 who changed their practice at least once are shown in Table 9.2.²¹ These divided almost equally between Methodist and Anglican by the time of the final baptism. A third changed more than once, although this only occurred where the first baptism was before 1860. The majority had no identifiable other links with the Wesleyans, although Joseph Lee, a class leader at the end of the period, only used Methodist baptism once before reverting to the parish church.

¹⁸ T.N.A. RG9/2483.

¹⁹ *Nottinghamshire Guardian* 19 November 1869.

²⁰ For method used see above, 361 and Chapter 5, 210.

²¹ See below, 365-66.

Table 9.1
Flintham Leading Wesleyan Methodists 1850-1875

Name	Occupation	Memb. 1863	Positions	Meth. Bap. in period	Pew rent 1860	Subs.* 1850s
Joseph Barnes	Ag. Lab.	Yes	CL 1854-75			
John Bradshaw	Ag. Lab.		LP 1866-78			
John Branston	Coachman		LP 1870-> (from PMs)		Yes	
Thomas Cliff	Miller				Yes	Yes
Dinah Dixon	Bonnet maker	Yes	CL 1851-54; 1860-78	Yes		
George Dixon	Cottager	Yes	LP c.1855-1872	Yes		
William Fletcher	Shopkpr; baker	Yes	Tr		Yes	Yes
John Harvey	Ag. Lab.	Yes	CL 1845-74; S 1860; ?T 1860-70; Tr; SSS 1862		Yes	
William Harvey			S 1862; 1866			
John Johnson	Ag. Lab.		CL 1830-54			
Joseph Lee	Gas works mgr.	Yes	CL 1874-1898->	Yes		
John Parnham	Shopkpr.; carpenter		S 1851; Tr; choir leader 1851			
John Perkins	Farmer	Yes	S 1861-2; 1866		Yes	Yes
Thomas Ragsdale	Shopkpr; cottager	Yes	LP 1860-1873; T1872		Yes	Yes
John Whyman	Farmer	Yes	T 1874-1897		Yes	Yes
John Wood	Shoemaker	Yes	CL 1860-79; Tr.; S 1874	Yes	Yes	
Joseph Wood	Shoemaker		CL 1820-60; S 1857		Yes	Yes

Key: CL – Class leader; LP – Local preacher; S – Steward; T – Treasurer; Tr – Trustee; SSS – Sunday School Superintendent

*Subscribed to circuit debt during second half of 1850s

Sources: T.N.A. HO 129/443; RG9/2483; N.A.O. NC/MR/8/6; /13; /28; /29; /38; /39; /68/1-7; /208; /242-3; /254; White 1844, 386; 1853, 430-31; 1864, 448; 1885, 132; *Nottinghamshire Guardian* 13 February 1851; 25 April 1862; B.M.C. Deeds for Bingham Methodist chapel, Notts., Plan 1869

Table 9.2

Changes in Baptismal Practices of Flintham Wesleyan Methodists 1850-1882

Father	Methodist Links	Pre 1850										No. of Changes
William Harston	M 1863 (widow)	3; 1	1850	1853								1
Joseph (H)Ea(r)son		5	1850	1852	1854	1856						2
Joseph Wood			1850	1852	1855	1858	1860	1863	1866	1869	1871	2
Richard Hand		2	1851	1857								2
John Smith		1; 1	1852	1855	1858	1863						3
Charles Marson		1; 2	1853	1857	1859							1
Thomas Summerfield			1854	1856								1
Joseph Lee	M 1863; CL 1874-98->		1857	1859	1864	1867	1871	1875				2
John Abbott			1858	1860	1863							1
Samuel Marr			1861	1861*								1
Edmund Mason	M 1863		1863	1865								1
Edward Harvey			1864	1866	1867	1870	1875					1

William Holmes			1865	1867								1
George Harvey			1868	1869	1872	1874	1875	1878	1879	1882		1
Robert Sponge			1871	1873								1

Key: CL – Class leader; M – Member; grey – Anglican baptism; yellow – Methodist baptism; no highlight – baptism not traced;
 * rebaptism;

Sources: N.A.O. PR 8475-6; NC/MR/8/242-3; /8/29-30; T.N.A. RG9/2483; RG10/3550; RG11/3380

Table 9.3 below shows families demonstrating exclusive baptismal choices for either denomination. Of the twelve Methodist families, an exclusive commitment was certain in only four instances. Three of the remainder had children born in Flintham during the period, whose baptism was untraced, and three had children born outside the parish, either before or after living in the village and, for Robert Wilkinson, six out of seven of these later children received Anglican baptism after moving to nearby Cropwell Butler. The final two families could not be traced apart from the Methodist baptismal record. However, the two individuals also holding Methodist offices, George Dixon and John Wood, were both exclusive in their choices. Only two identified Methodists continued to use Anglican baptism throughout the period; one was briefly an exhorter in the 1850s and the other a member in 1863. Referring to Table 9.1,²² just four of the sixteen key families used Methodist baptism during this period; the remainder either only had children baptised prior to 1850 or did not have children at any relevant time.²³

Overall the evidence of links between Wesleyans and the Anglicans was further demonstrated by the dual allegiance apparent in baptismal choices. It was shown in the decisions of both members and adherents, although it is difficult to draw conclusions about the leading Wesleyan families because most of them were not having children baptised at this time.

²² See above, 364.

²³ N.A.O. PR 8475-6; NC/MR/242; RG9/2483; RG10/3550; RG11/3380.

Table 9.3
Exclusive Baptismal Practices of Flintham Wesleyan Methodists 1850-1874

Father	Methodist Links	Pre 1850						
George Drury	M 1863	1	1850					
William Ragsdale	M 1863	1	1850	1852	1854	1856	1857	1860
Thomas Talbot	E 1857-9	1	1851	1860				
George Dixon	M 1863; LP c.1855-72		1853	1855				
Thomas Rose ¹			1854					
William Perkins ¹			1855	1858	1860	1863	1866	1868
Samuel Stanley ²			1855					
Robert Wilkinson ¹			1857					
John Wood	M 1863; CL 1860-79; Tr; S 1874		1861	1864	1866	1868	1872	
George Davis/Dennis ²			1862	1864				
Robert Marston ¹			1863x4	1866	1869			
Thomas Thornley			1863	1864	1867			

William Blow ¹			1866	1868	1870	1874		
Freeman Thacker ¹			1870					

Key: CL – Class leader; E – Exhorter; LP – Local preacher; M – Member; S – Steward; Tr – Trustee;

grey – Anglican baptism; yellow – Methodist baptism; no highlight – baptism not traced;

¹ earlier or later children born outside parish; ² family not traced apart from baptisms;

individuals highlighted yellow – exclusive Methodist commitment certain

Sources: N.A.O. PR 8475-6; NC/MR/8/13; /8/28-30; /8/68/1-7; /8/208; /8/242-3; T.N.A. RG9/2483; RG10/3550; RG11/3380;
B.M.C. Deeds, Bingham, Plan 1869

Although there is insufficient information from which to identify the core of committed membership within the Primitive Methodist Society, the majority of original trustees were probably key members. John Richardson was steward in 1851 and Edward Padgett, despite living in Screveton, was treasurer in 1866.²⁴ Since other members of the Richardson family were also trustees, they appear to have been one early core family but they were no longer listed by the 1861 census.²⁵ No records have survived of Primitive Methodist baptisms in the Newark circuit of which the Society was part.

Cropwell Bishop

The extent of any overlap in commitment to both church and chapel in Cropwell Bishop is uncertain.²⁶ All who served as churchwardens and approved the accounts were significant members of village society as farmers or major tradesmen²⁷ and individuals such as John Smith, Vincent Parker, William Baldock and John Newton could be identified as leading Anglicans from their frequent involvement but they had no connection with the Methodists.²⁸ No Wesleyans were churchwardens, although two class leaders in the 1850s, Robert Hopewell and George Shelton (also a steward), approved the accounts,²⁹ as did John Squires, the leading Wesleyan throughout the period, and Frank Wright, a local preacher of the 1860s.³⁰ However, there is no evidence of any further involvement in the affairs of the parish church.

²⁴ N.A.O. NC/MR/5/356; /5/315; T.N.A. HO 129/443.

²⁵ N.A.O. NC/MR/5/356; T.N.A. RG9/2483.

²⁶ See above for method of identifying leading individuals, 360-61.

²⁷ N.A.O. PR 3881; White 1853, 447; White 1864, 464; Morris, 1869, 251; Kelly 1876, 682.

²⁸ N.A.O. PR 3881.

²⁹ *Ibid*; NC/MR/8/28.

³⁰ N.A.O. PR 3881; NC/MR/8/13; /8/28-9; /8/38; /8/68/1-7; /8/208; B.M.C. Deeds, Bingham, Plan 1869.

Table 9.4

Cropwell Bishop Leading Wesleyan Methodists 1850-1875

Name	Occupation	Memb. 1863	Positions	Meth. Baptisms in period	Steward FS	Subs.* 1850s	SH Co-op
Robert Clark	Ag. Lab.	Yes			Yes		
William Crampton	Tailor		CL 1843-51; Tr 1842; E 1845; LP 1846-9				
Thomas Gregg	Ag. Lab.	Yes	CL 1864-74;1877-90	Yes			
Robert Hopewell	Blacksmith		CL 1838-45; 1851-60; Tr 1842				
John Keyworth		Yes	CL 1845-50				
William Knight	Shoemaker		CL 1860-64; E 1854; LP 1855-63	Yes			
Isaac Marriott	Brickmaker		CL 1877-86; LP 1866->				
William M(a)(o)ule	Bricklayer	Yes			Yes		
George Shelton	Farmer	Yes	CL 1851-6; T 1864-78; S 1851; Tr 1842-81	Yes	Yes		
John Shelton	Ag. Lab.	Yes	S 1862-6	Yes			
Thomas Shelton	Ag. Lab.	Yes			Yes		
George Squires	Bricklayer		E 1844; LP 1845-55	Yes	Yes		?
John Squires	Bricklayer/ builder	Yes	CL 1837-83; T 1860-3;1882; S 1857;1862-6; Tr 1842;1881; E 1845; LP 1846->		Yes	Yes	
John Swin(s)co	Ag. Lab.	Yes		Yes			Yes
William Thraves	Tailor	Yes	Tr 1881				
Frank Wright	Grocer	Yes	Tr 1881; LP 1861->	Yes			

Key: CL – Class leader; FS – Friendly Society; LP – Local preacher;
S – Steward; SH – Shareholder; T – Treasurer; Tr – Trustee

*Subscribed to circuit debt during second half of 1850s

Sources: T.N.A. HO 129/443; HO 107/2139; RG10/3548;
N.A.O. NC/MR/5/23/1-2; /8/6; /8/13; /8/28-30; /8/38; /8/68/1-7;
/8/208; /8/247; /8/334/1-2; B.M.C. Deeds, Bingham, Plan 1869; Deeds
for Methodist Chapel, Cropwell Bishop, Notts., Conveyance of Messuages
and hereditaments 2 July 1842; Conveyance of Wesleyan Methodist Chapel
and hereditaments on an appointment of new trustees 30 June 1881;
White 1853, 447; Morris 1869, 251-52; R.C. Swift, *Methodism in Cropwell
Bishop*, (1952), 14

Table 9.4 above shows members of the Shelton and Squires family played key roles in the Wesleyan Society, with John Squires occupying virtually every possible position at some point from 1837 to 1883. Both had already emerged as core families. However, the Hopewells, involved from the formation of the Society, disappeared from the records after 1863. Other individuals were significant members of the group at different times; William Crampton and John Keyworth in the 1850s, William Knight in the early 1860s and Thomas Gregg, Isaac Marriott and Frank Wright from the mid-1860s onwards. The majority were tradesmen but George Shelton was a farmer of 33 acres,³¹ while Thomas Gregg was an agricultural labourer, indicating the Wesleyans drew support from a cross-section of the community. Although there was little involvement with the parish church by those leading the Society, nevertheless numbers reported for special events, both Methodist and Anglican, suggest a significant level of dual allegiance.³²

Investigation of baptismal choices made by Wesleyans revealed that eleven families changed their practice on one or more occasions (Table 9.5

³¹ T.N.A. HO 107/2139.

³² *Nottinghamshire Guardian* 4 August 1853; 23 May 1861; 22 July 1864.

below).³³ The majority changed only once, four from Anglican to Methodist and four the other way round. The remaining three were more variable, with George Marriott altering his practice three times over 30 years, involving ten children and two different wives. Although there were no further changes after 1864, suggesting that a clearer denominational split may have been emerging, the final baptismal choices were almost equally divided between the two denominations.

Unlike Flintham, the majority (eight out of eleven) of the families had other Methodist links in addition to baptismal choice and, in five instances, the father held a recognised Wesleyan position at some point. Of this latter group, only William Knight changed to Anglican baptism simultaneously with being a local preacher and then class leader, although he did subsequently revert to Methodist practice. The remaining four held Wesleyan offices either before or after the Anglican baptisms.

Table 9.6³⁴ shows the five families with evidence of only Methodist baptisms, together with those having Methodist links but opting exclusively for Anglican baptisms. Of the Methodist group, only one had an untraced baptism and children born outside the parish, so the remaining four can reliably be identified as demonstrating exclusive commitment; Frank Wright was a significant figure in the Society as a longstanding local preacher but none of the other three occupied particular positions. However, it is noticeable that in four cases the first baptism was in the 1860s or 1870s, rather than earlier.

³³ For method used see above, 361 and Chapter 5, 210.

³⁴ See below, 376-77.

Table 9.5

Changes in Baptismal Practices of Cropwell Bishop Wesleyan Methodists 1850-1881

Father	Methodist Links	Pre 1850											No. of Changes
Thomas Gregg	CL 1864-74; 1877-90; M 1863	1; 2	1850	1855									2
William Shelton		4	1850	1852	1854	1856	1858						1
George Marriott	M 1863		1851	1853	1855	1859	1864	1870 ¹	1872	1877	1879	1881	3
George Shelton	CL 1851-6; T 1864-78; S 1851; Tr 1842-81; M 1863; SFS	3; 3	1851										1
George Squires (1)	E 1844; SFS LP 1845-55;	4	1851	1853	1857	1859	1861	1864	1866				1
Thomas Wilford	M 1863	1; 3	1852	1854	1871 ¹	1873							1
William Knight	CL 1860-64; E 1854; LP 1855-63		1855	1856	1858	1860	1862						2

John Stimpson	E 1854; M 1863	1; 2	1855										1
William Musson			1857	1858	1860								1
Henry Smith			1857 ²	1859	1861	1863	1865	1867	1868	1872	1877		1
Frederick Marriott	M 1863; SFS		1859	1861	1864	1867							1

Key: CL – Class leader; E – Exhorter; LP – Local preacher; M – Member; S – Steward; SFS – Steward of Friendly Society; T – Treasurer; Tr – Trustee; grey – Anglican baptism; yellow – Methodist baptism; no highlight – baptism not traced; ¹remarried; ²baptised in Cropwell Butler

Sources: N.A.O. PR 3867; 14618; NC/MR/8/13; /8/28-30; /8/38; /8/68/1-7; /8/208; /8/242-3; /8/247; /8/334/1-2;
T.N.A. HO 129/443; RG9/2485; RG10/3548; RG11/3382; RG12/2718; B.M.C. Deeds, Cropwell Bishop, Conveyance 2 July 1842;
Conveyance 30 June 1881

Table 9.6

Exclusive Baptismal Practices of Cropwell Bishop Wesleyan Methodists 1850-1888

Father	Methodist Links	Pre 1850									
John Keyworth	CL 1845-50		1850	1854							
Robert Clark	M 1863; SFS	2	1851	1853	1855						
William Clewrow/Cluro	M 1863	1	1851	1853	1855	1857	1860	1863	1865	1870	1873
William Cumberland	M 1863	3	1851	1854							
John Swinscoe	M 1863; SH	2 ¹	1851 ¹	1854							
Isaac Marriott	LP 1866-81 ->; CL 1877-86		1855	1856							
William Brooks	M 1863		1860	1870							
Jarvis Simpson	M 1863; SFS		1860	1863	1865	1867	1870	1872	1874	1877	
Frank Wright	M 1863; LP 1861-81->; Tr. 1881		1860	1861	1863	1865	1867	1869	1872	1873	1875
John Shelton	M 1863; S 1862-6		1862	1864	1866	1869					

William Maule	M 1863; SFS		1866	1868	1871						
George Squires (2)			1872	1873	1875	1877	1881	1884	1888		
Thomas Clarke			1873	1875	1877	1880	1883	1885			

Key: CL – Class leader; E – Exhorter; LP – Local preacher; M – Member; S – Steward; SFS – Steward of Friendly Society; SH – Shareholder of Co-op; Tr – Trustee; grey – Anglican baptism; yellow – Methodist baptism; no highlight – baptism not traced; ¹ baptised East Bridgford; individuals highlighted yellow – exclusive Methodist commitment certain

Sources: N.A.O. PR 3867; 14618; NC/MR/8/13; /8/28-30; /8/38; /8/68/1-7; /8/208; /8/242-3; /8/334/1-2; B.M.C. Deeds, Bingham, Plan 1869; Deeds, Cropwell Bishop, Conveyance 30 June 1881; Swift, *Methodism*, 14; T.N.A. HO 107/2139; RG9/2485; RG10/3548; RG11/3382; RG12/2718

Eight families with Methodist links chose Anglican practice exclusively. Although two included one untraced baptism, nevertheless this number was surprising. John Keyworth had been a class leader prior to the decisions and Isaac Marriott held Methodist offices ten years later, while four families did not utilise Anglican baptism simultaneously with membership. Conversely, William Cluro and Jarvis Simpson chose the parish church in 1863, while Methodist members. Table 9.4³⁵ also shows that although almost half key Wesleyans opted for Methodist baptism, a further four (Keyworth, Marriott, Clark and Maule) were amongst the exclusive Anglicans. However, the latest date at which a family with Methodist links made an initial Anglican choice was 1866, again suggesting signs of a clearer separation developing.

Cropwell Butler and Tithby

The leading Anglican³⁶ in the parish was undoubtedly the farmer George Parr who had provided accommodation for the chapel of ease and school in Cropwell Butler and was sole churchwarden continuously from 1835 to his death in 1868.³⁷ Another member of his family, John Parr, was also active in church and parish affairs and succeeded to the ownership of the chapel and school property.³⁸ John Allan (Allin), also a farmer, was involved with the church community, providing tea at his house for the incumbent Joshua Brooke and the Sunday school teachers during a Sunday school treat.³⁹ Other prominent figures were Joseph and John Marriott who later became churchwardens but there is no evidence of connections between any of

³⁵ See above, 371.

³⁶ See above for method of identifying leading individuals, 360-61.

³⁷ See above Chapter 5, 225; N.A.O. PR 16371.

³⁸ *Ibid*; Morris 1877, 431.

³⁹ *Nottinghamshire Guardian*, 17 August 1854; White 1853, 458.

these families and the Wesleyans.⁴⁰ The only individual with a Wesleyan link was Richard Wright, recorded as agreeing to the rate of five pence in the pound in 1864.⁴¹ He was a Wesleyan Sunday school teacher in 1858, although not a member in 1863, so his commitment may have been short-lived.⁴² It appears therefore that Anglicans and Wesleyans constituted different groups in village society.

Table 9.7 below details the major figures in the Wesleyan Society, demonstrating both continuity and change in the small group operating in Cropwell Butler.⁴³ Thomas Crampton had been a member from the early period and continued as a trustee throughout his life, while the Coopers and John Newton, who had come to prominence mid-century, remained significant figures. Matthew Cooper emigrated to Canada about 1860;⁴⁴ however, William Cooper was not only a class leader and trustee until his death in 1892 but also left a legacy of £9 to the Methodist General Mission Fund.⁴⁵ The Newtons moved to Colston Bassett and their youngest child was baptised in the Cropwell Bishop chapel in 1860 but John Newton still retained a significant role as treasurer until 1878.⁴⁶ In the 1860s the Walker family from Tithby began to undertake important roles while others, such as Edmund Loach, Stephen Wragby and Richard Wright, disappeared from the records.

The leading Wesleyans were tradesmen and agricultural labourers, with just the one farmer leaving by 1860, so members and adherents were

⁴⁰ N.A.O. PR 16371.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*

⁴² N.A.O. NC/MR/8/408; 8/29.

⁴³ See above for method of identifying leading individuals, 360-61.

⁴⁴ 1861 Census of Canada <http://trees.ancestry.co.uk/tree/67574408/source/-254515572?pid=46170706857&cid=321544039475&pg=32772%2c32854&pgpl=pid%2cpid%2c>, accessed 2 April 2014.

⁴⁵ *Wesleyan-Methodist Magazine*, Vol.121 (July 1898), 96.

⁴⁶ See above Chapter 5, 232; T.N.A. RG10/3548; N.A.O. NC/MR/8/243.

Table 9.7
Cropwell Butler Leading Wesleyan Methodists 1850-1875

Name	Occupation	Memb. 1863	Positions	Meth. Bap. in period	Children in S. School
George Barratt	Ag. Lab.	Yes	Tr. 1851	Yes	Yes
Harriet Bateman	Lace worker	Yes	CL 1848-65;1880-87		
William Carlile	Ag. Lab.	Yes	SST 1858		
Matthew Cooper	Ag. Lab.		SSS 1858; CL 1840-5	Yes	Yes
William Cooper	Ag. Lab.; Shepherd	Yes	Tr 1851-92; CL 1845-92; SSS 1858; S 1857; 1862	Yes	Yes
Thomas Crampton	Tailor	Yes	Tr; 1825-83; CL 1824-40; SST 1858		Yes
Edmund Gibson			CL 1852-3		
Edmund Loach	Carpenter		CL 1851-2; nominated for Tr 1851	Yes	Yes
John Newton	Farmer	Yes	S 1851;1854;1857;1862; Tr 1854; T 1860-78	Yes	
George Oliver	Groom	Yes	M 1863; Tr 1901		
Francis Walker	Blacksmith	Yes	LP 1861-7; S 1874; CL 1865-79; Tr 1881		
William Walker	Blacksmith	Yes	Tr 1862-79		
Stephen Wragby	Tailor		Nominated for Tr 1851	Yes	Yes
Richard Wright	Carpenter		SST 1858		

Key: CL – Class leader; LP – Local preacher; S – Steward;
SSS – Sunday School Superintendent; SST – Sunday School Teacher;
T – Treasurer; Tr – Trustee

Sources: T.N.A. HO 129/443; HO 107/2139; RG9/2485;
N.A.O. NC/MR/8/13; /8/28-30; /8/38; /8/68/2; /8/408;
B.M.C. Deeds for Methodist Chapel, Cropwell Butler, Notts., Bargain & Sale
7 Oct. 1825; Release of a Piece of Ground 26 July 1831; Memorandum
5 July 1851; Certificate for Procuring Registry 1 May 1854; Discharge and
Appointment of Trustees 11 March 1881

probably drawn primarily from the first two groups; indeed there appears to have been a distinct separation of village society as illustrated in the memoirs of a villager, William Baldock, probably written in the late 1880s. In describing the main places of interest in the village and his recollection of their history, he mentioned the chapel of ease (closed and bricked up), the school and the public houses (both those current and no longer in use), but did not refer to either of the Methodist chapels, which were in use and had been for all his adult life.⁴⁷ While this was one individual's view, it suggests there was a section of the village community who were barely aware of the existence of the Methodists, which accords with there being virtually no overlap between those running the parish church and the Wesleyan Society.

Investigation of baptismal practices suggested that denominational boundaries were fluid.⁴⁸ Table 9.8 below details Wesleyans who changed their practice on one or more occasions (just over a third twice or more) and this phenomenon continued throughout. An almost equal number moved once in each direction, while the eventual outcome at the final baptism was eight Anglican to six Methodist. However, later choices were predominantly Anglican with 1864 being the latest date for a Methodist

⁴⁷ N.A.O. DD 232/1.

⁴⁸ For method used see above, 361 and Chapter 5, 210.

Table 9.8
Changes in Baptismal Practices of Cropwell Butler Wesleyan Methodists 1850-1879

Father	Methodist Links	Pre 1850								No. of Changes
Matthew Cooper	CL 1840-8; SS; SSS 1858	6; 2	1850	1852	1855	1857				1
William Cooper	CL 1848-90; Tr 1851; S 1857; SS SSS 1858; M 1863	7; 1	1850	1852						1
John Roberts	SS; M 1863		1850	1852	1856	1860	1861	1864		1
Joseph Carver	SS	4; 1	1851	1856						2
Edmund Loach	CL 1851-2; nominated for Tr 1851; SS	4; 1; 1	1852							3
Stephen Wragby	SS; nominated for Tr 1851	4; 2	1852							1

Robert Guy			1858	1864*							1
George Barratt	Tr 1851; M 1863; SS	2; 1	1859								1
Thomas Beet			1859	1860	1862	1865	1866	1868	1870		2
Thomas Wragby	SS		1859	1861	1863	1865					1
George Bradwell	SS		1861x 2	1863	1865	1868	1870				1
Thomas Raynor	SS		1863	1865x2	1867	1869	1871	1874	1877	1879	3
Vincent Willoughby			1861	1863	1865	1867	1869	1871	1874	1878	2
John Gregg	SS		1869	1872	1874						1

Key: CL – Class leader; M – Member; S – Steward; SS – children in Sunday school; SSS – Sunday school superintendent; Tr – Trustee; grey – Anglican baptism; yellow – Wesleyan Methodist baptism; green – Primitive Methodist baptism; no highlight – baptism not traced; *baptised Bingham

Sources: N.A.O. PR 6989; NC/MR/8/29-30; /8/242-3; /8/408; T.N.A. HO 107/2139; RG9/2485; RG10/3548; RG11/3382; H.T.C.T., Register of baptisms 1850→; B.M.C. Deeds, Cropwell Butler, Memorandum 5 July 1851

baptism, without a subsequent reversion to the parish church. Apart from Edmund Loach, Methodist office holders or members moved once from an initial Anglican choice (mainly prior to 1850) to Methodist, indicating the emerging level of commitment related to the particularly competitive situation in Cropwell Butler mid-century.⁴⁹ On the other hand, the wider group of adherents beyond the committed core utilised the Wesleyan Sunday school at various points and the option of baptism on a flexible basis and were thus likely to be practising dual allegiance regarding attendance at worship.

Table 9.9 below shows families using only chapel or church for baptisms. Of the 13 Methodist families, exclusive commitment is certain in only four instances. Five of the remaining families had children where the baptism was not traced and/or children born outside the parish, while four could not be traced beyond the baptismal record. Of the four exclusive Methodists, John Newton was the only leading figure but another was a Sunday school teacher in 1858 and a third a member in 1863. Table 9.7⁵⁰ also shows that six of the 14 leading Wesleyans opted for Methodist baptism during this period. However, there were also three families with Methodist links exclusively using Anglican baptism, including at a time when they were all Methodist members; George Oliver and William Walker were also trustees, although not until a much later date for the former.

⁴⁹ See above Chapter 5, 230.

⁵⁰ See above, 380.

Table 9.9
Exclusive Baptismal Practices of Cropwell Butler Wesleyan Methodists 1850-1876

Father	Methodist Links	Pre 1850						
John Newton (1)	S 1851-62; Tr 1854; T 1860-78 M 1863	1	1850	1853	1857	1860 ¹		
John Alroyd/Holroyd ²	SS		1851	1855	1859			
Henry Marston ²			1853	1855				
Thomas Carlile ²			1853					
Thomas Whittle			1854					
John Newton (2) ³			1855					
John Spicts ³			1855					
Thomas Miller	SS; M 1863		1858	1861				
Henry Martin ³			1859					
Samuel Pike	M 1863		1860	1863				
George Oliver	SS; M 1863; Tr 1901		1861	1862	1868	1869	1871	1876

William Walker ²	Tr 1862-79; M 1863		1861	1863				
Samson Stubbs ²			1865	1867				
George Pykett/Piket	SST 1858;		1868					
William Bradley ²	SS		1872	1875				
Alexander Shaw ³			1875					

Key: M – Member; S – Steward; SS – children in Sunday school; SST – Sunday school teacher; T – Treasurer; Tr – Trustee; grey – Anglican baptism; yellow – Methodist baptism; no highlight – baptism not traced; ¹ baptised in Cropwell Bishop; ²earlier or later children born outside parish; ³family not traced apart from baptisms; individuals highlighted yellow – exclusive Methodist commitment certain

Sources: N.A.O. PR 6989; NC/MR/8/29-30; /8/38; /8/242-3; /8/408; T.N.A. HO 129/443; RG9/2485; RG10/3548; RG11/3382; H.T.C.T., Baptisms; B.M.C. Deeds, Cropwell Butler, Certificate for Procuring Registry 1 May 1854; Memorandum 16 April 1862; Discharge and Appointment of Trustees 11 March 1881; Memorandum 22 July 1901

Only two leading figures from the Primitive Society were identified; John Garratt was the steward in 1851 and Robert Willimott a local preacher in 1862 and probably a class leader.⁵¹ Both were labourers, as were the majority of those adopting Primitive baptism, although there were also a few craftsmen.⁵² Particularly in the light of the splits in village society,⁵³ it is likely that those who were members or adherents were predominantly from these sections of the village.

One Wesleyan family had one child baptised by the Primitives in 1848 but this was an isolated event.⁵⁴ However, from 1860 to 1876, 16 families, comprising 29 children, chose Primitive baptism.⁵⁵ Tables 9.10 and 9.11 below give details of those changing their baptismal practices and those opting exclusively for the Primitives.⁵⁶ Of the seven families varying, only one changed more than once, choosing the Anglicans on the final occasion. Four of the remainder moved from Anglican to Primitive and two in the opposite direction. This level of fluidity was unexpected in that the Primitives were generally more markedly different from the Anglicans than were the Wesleyans. In addition, the majority of this group sent children at some point to the Wesleyan Sunday school, although they never used Wesleyan baptism.

Nine families using only Primitive baptisms were identified, with three demonstrating exclusive commitment. Just as for the Wesleyans, there were uncertainties because of untraced baptisms, untraced families and children born outside the parish. Contrary to those varying their practice,

⁵¹ T.N.A. HO 129/443; N.A.O. NC/MR/15/188/1.

⁵² T.N.A. RG9/2485; N.A.O. NC/MR/15/32.

⁵³ See above, 379 and 381.

⁵⁴ N.A.O. NC/MR/15/32.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*

⁵⁶ For method used see above, 361 and Chapter 5, 210.

Table 9.10
Changes in Baptismal Practices of Cropwell Butler Primitive Methodists 1850-1880

Father	Methodist Links									No. of Changes
John Woodward	SS	1852	1854	1857	1860	1866	1869			1
Thomas Coy	SS	1856	1857	1860	1862	1865	1867			2
Richard Knight	SS	1857	1860	1862	1864	1867	1870	1871	1873	1
William Walker	SS	1860	1863	1866	1868	1878x2				1
John Wisher	SS	1863	1866	1869	1873	1876	1880			1
Thomas Godfrey		1867	1869							1
Alfred Walker		1868	1870							1

Table 9.11
Exclusive Baptismal Practices of Cropwell Butler Primitive Methodists 1850-1877

Father	Methodist Links								
Edward Cumberland	SS	1862	1869						
William Wisher ¹		1863	1864	1867	1868	1870	1872	1874	1877
Joseph Barratt ²		1864							
William Parker ¹		1865	1867						
Thomas Widdowson		1865	1867	1869	1870				
William Chester		1866							
Mark Thorlby ²		1866							
Robert Willimott	CL?; LP	1869							
John Breedon		1872							

Key: CL – Class leader; LP – Local preacher; SS – children in Wesleyan Sunday school; grey – Anglican baptism; yellow – Methodist baptism; no highlight – baptism not traced; ¹earlier or later children born outside parish; ²family not traced apart from baptisms; individuals highlighted yellow – exclusive Methodist commitment certain

Sources: N.A.O. PR 6989; NC/MR/8/408; /15/32; /15/188/1; T.N.A. RG9/2485; RG10/3548; RG11/3382; H.T.C.T., Baptisms

there was only one family with a link to the Wesleyan Sunday school, which may indicate a greater exclusivity. Overall, it is probable there was a level of dual allegiance being practised with the Anglicans, in view of the evidence regarding baptisms and possibly with the Wesleyans also, although the evidence is weaker.

Bingham

In Bingham a number of individuals demonstrated cross-denominational links.⁵⁷ John Horsepoole, a churchwarden in the mid-1850s, was listed as a contributor for the new Wesleyan school building in 1859,⁵⁸ and the farmer Robert Brewster was a Wesleyan member and trustee for both chapel and day school,⁵⁹ while also being a member of the committee obtaining subscriptions for the new parish church clock and that operating the Anglican Coal Club in 1869.⁶⁰ Another member of the latter committee was James Hardstaff, a leading Wesleyan from the 1840s occupying a variety of Society roles.⁶¹ William Clifton, a similarly highly committed Wesleyan, was also a member.⁶² However, there was no overlap regarding offices in the church such as churchwarden.

The leading core families in the Bingham Wesleyan Society, emerging before 1850, were the Doncasters, Newtons, Hardstaffs, Chettles and

⁵⁷ See above for method for identifying leading individuals, 360-61.

⁵⁸ N.A.O. PR 7113; T.N.A. ED/103/77/19.

⁵⁹ N.A.O. NC/MR/8/29; /8/31.

⁶⁰ <http://southwellchurches.nottingham.ac.uk/bingham/hclock.php>, accessed 17 February 2013;

http://www.binghamheritage.org.uk/history_of_bingham/victorian/parish_magazine.php, accessed 17 February 2013.

⁶¹ www.binghamheritage.org.uk/history_of_bingham/victorian/parish_magazine.php, accessed 17 February 2013; see below, 392.

⁶² See below, 392; <http://southwellchurches.nottingham.ac.uk/bingham/hclock.php>, accessed 17 February 2013.

Cliftons.⁶³ Table 9.12 below shows all these families continued to be prominent up to 1875. Apart from the Chettles, they were all part of the community of tradesmen, where often a son would join the father in the business and also continue involvement with the Wesleyan Society, although usually less extensively. The key individuals in the 1850s and 1860s were William Clifton, Charles Doncaster and James Hardstaff and, to a slightly lesser extent, Isaac Newton; all held a wide range of positions at different times and provided financial support to the circuit, the day school and presumably the Society, although the only evidence about the latter is of a loan from James Hardstaff.⁶⁴ The Wesleyans also benefited from the status and financial support of members like Robert Brewster, part of an important farming family in the area, Charles Rowland, a surgeon and John Peat, a retired tradesman, who described himself in 1856 as 'gentleman' and left the Society a substantial legacy in 1863.⁶⁵ The involvement of other individuals prominent in the early part of the period later ceased; the master of the day school, Abraham Kaye, moved to Hatcliffe, Lincolnshire, in 1858 and William Chettle, surprisingly, became a 'clerk in holy orders'.⁶⁶ He had been ordained as a deacon in 1864, after attending St. Aidan's College, Birkenhead, and as a priest in 1866.⁶⁷ Nevertheless there was continuity from Samuel Chettle who, despite living at Aslockton,⁶⁸ was an important figure in chapel and community life up to the 1890s and from James Hardstaff who continued to play an active role as treasurer up to 1878. By the 1870s, other tradesmen such as the grocer, George Brown,

⁶³ See above Chapter 4, 194-96.

⁶⁴ N.A.O. NC/MR/8/74.

⁶⁵ B.M.C. Deeds, Bingham, Conveyance of Bingham Methodist Chapel to Fresh Trustees 1 May 1856; see above Chapter 8, 342.

⁶⁶ M.K. Kendrick (ed.), *Diary of Abraham Kaye*, (1995). Transcription loaned by Mrs V. Henstock; B.M.C. Deeds, Bingham, Conveyance of Bingham Methodist Chapel to Fresh Trustees 24 April 1878.

⁶⁷ Crockford, 1885, 224

⁶⁸ Kendrick, *Diary of Abraham Kaye*, 2 February 1852.

Table 9.12
Bingham Leading Wesleyan Methodists 1850-1875

Name	Occupation	Memb. 1863	Positions	Meth. Bap. in period	Subs.¹	Cont.²	Subs.³
John Attenborough	Barber	Yes	CL 1871-88; Tr 1878	Yes			
Robert Brewster	Farmer	Yes	Tr 1856; TD 1859;1872	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
George Brown	Grocer		CL 1874-79;1881-1912; S 1874, 78; CS 1875-78; Tr 1878; LP 1874-> ; SB 1875->	Yes			Yes
Samuel Chettle	Farmer	Yes	CL 1857-94; CS 1862;1874; LP 1859; TD 1872; SB 1872-> ; Tr 1878		Yes		Yes
William Chettle	Merchant	Yes	Tr 1856; TD 1859; CS 1857-8; CL 1855-63; LP 1848-63; CD 1860	Yes	Yes	Yes	
Henry Clark	Tailor	Yes	LP 1861-69->				
William Clifton	Builder	Yes	CL 1839;1843-72; TD 1859;1872; S 1842-3;1869; CS 1861-2; T 1867-72; Tr 1856; LP ?1832-72; CD 1860; SB 1872	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Sister Clifton		?	CL 1865-68;1873-4	?			
Charles Doncaster	Grocer & draper	Yes	CL 1839-42;1843-68; S 1838-41;1857-8; Tr 1856; TD 1859; LP 1839-68; CD 1860	Yes	Yes	Yes	
Sister Doncaster		?	CL 1864-77	?			
James Hardstaff	Grocer & chandler	Yes	S 1840-1;1851;1857-8;1861-2;1866;1869;1874; CS 1843-6;1869; T 1860-66;1873-78; Tr 1856;1878; CD 1860;1872		Yes	Yes	Yes
William Hardstaff	Grocer		S 1869; CD 1860	Yes		Yes	
Abraham Kaye	Schoolmaster		CL 1848-56; LP 1848-58	Yes			
Cornelius Moffatt	Painter	Yes	LP 1860-70	Yes			

Thomas Morris	Ironmonger		LP 1874-6	Yes		Yes	
Isaac Newton	Shoemaker	Yes	CL 1835-71; Tr 1856; S 1838-40; TD 1859; CS 1847; CD 1860			Yes	
Isaac Newton jnr.	Shoemaker	Yes	Tr 1856; TD 1872	Yes			Yes
John Peat	Retired Baker	Yes	Tr 1856; CD 1860			Yes	
Charles Rowland	Surgeon	Yes					Yes
William Smith			CL 1843-53	Yes			

Key: CD – Committee/Manager Day School; CL – Class leader; CS – Circuit Steward; LP – Local preacher; S – Steward;

SB – School Board; T – Treasurer; TD – Trustee Day School; Tr – Trustee

¹ Subscribed to circuit debt during second half of 1850s

²Contributors to new day school building, 1859

³Subscribers voting to transfer day school to School Board, 1872

Sources: T.N.A. ED/103/77/19; HO 129/443; HO 107/2139; N.A.O. NC/MR/5/23/1-2; /8/1; /8/6; /8/13; /8/28-31; /8/38;

/8/68/1-7; /8/73; /8/208; SB/8/1/1; SL/14/3/1; B.M.C. Deeds, Bingham, Plan 1869; Conveyance of a piece of land and message

2 May 1856; White 1864, 441-42; Morris 1869, 235; Morris 1877, 310-11; Wright 1871, 256

and the barber, John Attenborough, were moving into significant positions, indicating that the social base of the Wesleyans remained unchanged.

Although there was little overlap between active Anglicans and Wesleyans,⁶⁹ the day school attracted support beyond that of committed Society members. Of 47 individual contributors from Bingham to the new school, 30 had no identifiable connection with either denomination.⁷⁰ Therefore, even before it became a board school in 1872, it was clearly regarded as an important facility within the town by leading inhabitants. It is also likely that some of those supporting the school were chapel adherents and attended services, although not members.

Analysis of baptismal practices⁷¹ reveals that those who changed allegiance constituted a comparatively small group (22 out of 79). These families are detailed in Table 9.13 below; just over half changed once, with equal proportions in each direction. Those moving twice all initially opted for the Anglicans, varied at some point to Methodist and then returned to the Anglicans. The two families who changed three times both ended as Methodists. Only four out of this group had any other Methodist links, two contributing to the new day school building and one being a class leader for a single year; the other, Charles Doncaster, was a leading figure in the Society and his surprising decision to opt for Anglican baptism for his youngest child has already been noted.⁷² Although the number of families changing allegiance was only just over a quarter of the total, the phenomenon continued throughout the period, indicating there was always some fluidity even when denominational divisions were generally more

⁶⁹ See above, 390.

⁷⁰ T.N.A. ED/103/77/19.

⁷¹ For methods used, see above, 361 and Chapter 5, 210.

⁷² See above Chapter 5, 240.

Table 9.13
Changes in Baptismal Practices of Bingham Wesleyan Methodists 1850-1883

Father	Methodist Links	Pre 1850										No. of Changes
William Allen		1	1850	1852	1856x2							3
William Braithwaite		1	1850x 2									1
William Huskinson	DS 1859	1	1850	1853	1856	1863x2						2
Thomas Routh/Rowarth		6	1850	1852	1854	1856	1858	1859	1861			2
Thomas Ruxby		3; 2	1850									1
Robert Stubbs			1850	1852	1855	1858	1860	1863				1
Thomas Wright	DS 1859	2	1850	1852x2	1854	1857x2	1860					2
Charles Doncaster	9 links, 1838-68 ¹	2; 6	1851	1852								2
John Gillman		2	1851	1854								1
Robert Robinson			1851	1854	1856	1859	1861	1865				1
John Walker			1851	1854	1855	1859	1860	1864	1866	1868	1870	1
John Jackson		3	1852	1854x2	1857	1860						2
Thomas Parnham		5; 2	1852	1854	1855	1857						3
John Stubbs		3	1852	1856								2

William Clarke			1854	1856	1858	1861	1865					1
Thomas Rockley			1857	1859	1864	1866	1870	1872				2
William Draper			1861	1863	1864	1868	1870	1872	1877			2
William Taylor			1864	1866	1872							1
Rueben Hart			1870	1871	1873	1876	1878	1881	1883			1
William Mowberry			1871	1872	1875							1
Edmund Jones	CL 1872		1873	1875	1877							1
Frederic Hobley			1874	1877	1878	1881						1

Key: CD - Committee/Manager Day School; CL - Class leader; DS - Day school contributor; LP - Local preacher; M - Member; S - Steward;
 SC - subscriber to circuit debt during second half 1850s; TD - Trustee Day School; Tr - Trustee; grey - Anglican baptism; yellow - Methodist baptism;
 no highlight - baptism not traced

¹Charles Doncaster: S 1838-41;1857-8; CL 1839-68; LP 1840-68; SC; Tr 1856; TD&DS 1859; CD 1860; M 1863

Sources: N.A.O. PR 7102; NC/MR/5/23/1-2; /8/6; /8/13; /8/28-29; /8/31; /8/68/1-7; /8/73; /8/208; /8/242-3; /8/247; T.N.A. ED/103/77/19;
 HO 107/2139; RG9/2483-4; RG10/3546-7; RG11/3380; RG12/2717; B.M.C. Deeds, Bingham, Conveyance 2 May 1856

clear cut. Nevertheless, there were no multiple changes during the last ten years.

Table 9.14 below details families demonstrating exclusive commitment to either denomination. From the 57 Methodists, this is only certain in 15 cases. Although ten of the remainder were families who apparently remained in the parish but with untraced baptisms, the majority were families moving away or ones which cannot be traced. In view of the comparatively small number changing their practice, it is probable that many who moved continued as Methodists elsewhere but this cannot be demonstrated. Of the exclusive Wesleyans, Robert Brewster and William Clifton had numerous links with the Society and its activities throughout, while George Brown was a leading figure in the 1870s and to the end of the century. Four others were members in 1863 and three additionally held offices, while three more were contributors to the new day school building in 1859. Nevertheless five families had no other recorded connection with the Wesleyans apart from baptismal choice, suggesting exclusive commitment was found amongst members and adherents and not limited to the core group. This is further supported by only two families with Methodist links exclusively using Anglican baptisms; one was a member in 1863, between the dates of baptisms, while the other had baptisms predating his position as a class leader in 1869 and neither was identified as a leading Wesleyan.

Although there was a noticeable level of co-operation on civic matters, even if connected specifically to the parish church or the Wesleyan chapel, the baptismal analysis clearly revealed a hardening of denominational boundaries in terms of religious commitment.

Table 9.14
Exclusive Baptismal Practices of Bingham Wesleyan Methodists 1850-94

Father	Methodist Links	Pre 1850										
John Attenborough	M 1863; CL 1871-88; Tr 1878		1850	1852	1854	1855	1858	1859	1862	1864	1866	1872
William Chettle ¹	9 links, 1848- c.66 ³	1	1850	1852	1855	1857	1858	1860	1862			
George Langley	DS 1859	1	1850	1852	1854	1855	1857	1860	1862	1865		
Joseph Richards			1850	1853	1858	1861x2						
John Saunders		1	1850	1851	1854	1855						
William Smith ²	CL 1843-53		1850									
John Wilson ¹			1850									
Robert Brewster	6 links, 1856- 72 ⁴		1851	1854	1856							
Abraham Kaye ¹	CL 1848-56; LP 1848-58	1	1851	1853								
William Saunders			1851	1854								
John Scothern		3	1851	1852	1855	1857	1859	1861				

John Taylor	M 1863		1853	1855	1858	1869x4						
Samuel White ¹	DS 1859		1853	1855	1857	1859	1861	1864				
John Green ²	Tr 1856		1855									
John Strong			1856									
William Baker ²			1857									
Alfred Footitt			1857	1860	1864							
William Hardstaff	DS 1859; CD 1860; S 1869		1857	1859	1862	1866						
William Sponge ²			1858									
John Mason ¹			1859	1861	1863	1867x2						
George Eato	DS 1859		1860	1869								
Joseph Garfield ¹			1860	1861	1864	1866	1868	1871	1874	1877		
Joseph Oliver			1860x2									
John Gash			1861									
Henry Jackson	DS 1859		1861	1866	1871							
Cornelius Moffatt	LP 1860-70; M 1863		1862	1864	1865	1868						
Robert Skinner	M 1863		1862	1864	1866	1868						
Jonathan Nix ¹	M 1863		1863	1869								
William Brown ¹			1864									

Martin Jones ¹			1864									
Joseph Taylor ¹	M 1863; LP 1864		1864	1865								
John Watson	CL 1869		1864	1865	1866	1867						
James Cardell ²			1865									
William Clifton	13 links, 1832-72 ⁵		1865	1868								
Samuel Rose ²			1865									
Thomas Johnson ²			1866									
Thomas Williams			1866	1869	1873	1875						
Thomas Bronsby ²			1867									
Bedford Hitchcock	M 1863		1867	1870	1874	1878						
John Matson ¹			1867x2	1869								
Isaac Newton	Tr 1856; DS 1859; M 1863; SD&TD 1872		1868	1871	1875							
Thomas Castledine ¹			1870									
Frederick Clarke ¹			1870	1872								
Robert Pape ¹			1870	1872								
George Brown	6 links, 1872-		1871	1874	1877	1879	1881	1884				

	1912 ⁶											
John Julian			1871									
William Wall	DS 1859		1871									
Henry Wilson ²			1871									
Thomas Broadbent ²	CL 1871-4		1872	1873								
George Green ²			1872	1874								
Thomas Hallam ²			1872									
George Pickering ¹			1872	1874								
Robert Seymour ²			1872									
Matthew Carnell			1873	1877								
Robert Misson ²			1873									
Thomas Morris	CD 1872; LP 1874-6		1873	1874								
Joseph Scothern ²			1873									
Ralph Firbank ¹			1875									
Frederic Shepperson			1875	1876	1879	1880	1883	1884	1886	1890	1893	1894

Key: CD - Committee/Manager Day School; CL – Class leader; CS – Circuit steward; DS – day school contributor; LP – Local preacher; M – Member; S – Steward; SB – School Board; SC – subscriber to circuit debt during second half 1850s; SD – Subscriber voting to transfer day school to School Board; T – Treasurer; TD – Trustee Day School; Tr – Trustee; grey – Anglican baptism; yellow – Methodist baptism; no highlight – baptism not traced;

¹earlier or later children born outside parish;

²family not traced apart from baptisms;

individuals highlighted yellow – exclusive Methodist commitment certain

³ William Chettle: LP 1848-c.66; CL 1855-63; SC; Tr 1856; CS 1857-8;

TD&DS 1859; CD 1860; M 1863

⁴Robert Brewster: SC; Tr 1856; DS 1859; TD 1859;1872; M 1863; SD 1872

⁵William Clifton: LP 1832-72; CL 1839;1843-72; S 1842-3;1869; SC; Tr 1856;

DS 1859; TD 1859;1872; CD 1860; CS 1861-2; M 1863; T 1867-72; SB 1872;

SD 1872

⁶George Brown: SD 1872; S 1874;1878; CL 1874-9;1881-1912; LP 1874->;

CS 1875-8; Tr 1878

Sources: N.A.O. PR 7102; NC/MR/5/23/1-2; /8/1; /8/6; /8/13; /8/28-31; /8/38; /8/68/1-7; /8/73; /8/208; /8/242-3; /8/247; SB/8/1/1; SL/14/3/1; T.N.A. ED/103/77/19; HO 107/2139; RG9/2483-4; RG10/3546-7; RG11/3380; RG12/2717; B.M.C. Deeds, Bingham, Plan 1869; Conveyance 2 May 1856

The only information about Independent Primitive individuals is the religious census return recorded by William Wall, the steward.⁷³ This could have been either father or son, living together in Needham Street, which was then also the location of the chapel building. William Wall senior aged 76 in 1851 was a small farmer and his son, aged 44, was a labourer.⁷⁴

The only identifiable members of the Temperance Christians were the three individuals who left the Wesleyans in 1842-3 over the temperance issue;⁷⁵ of these, George Berry was listed in directories up to 1865, John Doncaster

⁷³ T.N.A. HO 129/443.

⁷⁴ T.N.A. HO 107/2139.

⁷⁵ See above Chapter 5, 236-37.

in the census of 1871 and William Strong died in 1870.⁷⁶ Consequently, it is possible that they and other remaining members joined the United Methodists in 1864. As they were originally Wesleyans, they were probably more at home with the United Methodists than with the Independent Primitives and it would also have facilitated a continuing connection with the Temperance Hall building, built in 1843 probably by John Doncaster.⁷⁷

Comparisons

The existence and extent of dual allegiance throughout the entire period has been explored in a number of different ways. For each, a summary of key points from the earlier period is followed by comparisons for the third quarter of the century.

The first approach was to investigate whether attendance at Sunday services of more than one denomination was possible. By the 1840s, it was feasible to attend every denomination using each of the morning, afternoon and evening options in the three villages while in Bingham any three of four religious groups could be selected. The situation had not changed at the religious census; nevertheless, the parish churches in the villages offered only one service compared to two provided by the Methodist denominations. During the third quarter, the Anglicans in all the villages started to provide a second service on Sunday, opening up greater choice.

⁷⁶http://www.binghamheritage.org.uk/built_heritage/development_of_bingham/built_market_street.php, accessed 6 March 2013;
http://www.binghamheritage.org.uk/churchyard/search_the_churchyard/search_results.php?surname=STRONG&Submit=Search+by+Surname, accessed 6 March 2013; T.N.A. RG10/3546.

⁷⁷ See above Chapter 5, 236.

The second route in assessing dual allegiance was to explore where individuals actually attended. Unfortunately, there was no direct evidence in the form of comments about attendance either in the census returns or elsewhere, although there were general comments from the incumbents of two of the villages about the problems of parishioners deserting the parish church in favour of Dissenters. Consequently comparisons have been based on interpreting the census data.

Likely attendances for the Wesleyans⁷⁸ were exceeded in the villages, while it was lower than expected in Bingham. However, worshippers there were offered an additional nonconformist choice. In Cropwell Bishop, there was one very specific pointer towards dual allegiance because the two Sunday schools met at the same time on the census afternoon and the numbers indicated that some children on the Methodist register must have attended the Anglican Sunday school. In the Cropwells and probably in Flintham, there was a group of Methodists who did not attend the parish church at all on census Sunday, although it cannot be assumed this would have occurred, if/when Anglican services were at alternating times. Owing to the larger number of services held in Bingham, it was not possible to make comparable deductions. In addition, the numbers reported for both Anglican and Methodist special events in all the parishes, at least until the mid-1860s, exceeded that anticipated from census and membership data, thus suggesting a level of flexibility.

One of the main focuses of the investigation was the analysis of baptisms as an indicator of either dual allegiance or exclusive commitment. It was decided that dual allegiance occurred when those identified as Methodists by membership and/or positions they occupied either continued to use

⁷⁸ See above Chapter 7, 308.

Anglican baptism or varied their practice on different occasions.

Conversely, exclusive commitment was demonstrated when families chose only the Methodist rite.

Prior to 1837, a small number of early members continued to use Anglican baptism, although still exhibiting a high level of commitment to the Wesleyans. This occurred most frequently in Flintham and least in Cropwell Butler. Nevertheless, in the 1830s five core families in the Bingham Society all changed to Methodist baptisms and in general maintained this consistently thereafter. Up to 1855, everywhere except in Cropwell Bishop, between 53 per cent and 57 per cent of families with Wesleyan connections demonstrated a level of dual allegiance by varying their practice. However, in Cropwell Bishop the fluidity was considerably higher at 86 per cent and the extent of exclusive commitment proportionately lower.

Overall it appeared that a first move towards denominational identification occurred earlier in the town than the villages, supported by the fact that Bingham was the only place recording re-baptism. However, by the 1840s, there was evidence of moves towards greater commitment by the Wesleyans in the villages. On the other hand, by the mid-century the extent of variation in practice was still similar in Bingham to Flintham and Cropwell Butler. This indicated that the facet of early denominational identification by Wesleyans in Bingham was not clearly maintained.

The comparative baptismal choices for the third quarter are shown in Tables 9.15 and 9.16 below.⁷⁹

⁷⁹ See above, 361 and Chapter 5, 210 for discussion of methods of comparison.

Table 9.15
Comparison of Families using Wesleyan Methodist Baptism
1850-1875

Place	Number of families	Multiple changes %	Single change %	Exclusive % (certain)
Flintham	27	18.5	37	44.4 (14.8)
C.Bishop	16	18.6	50	31.3 (25)
C. Butler	27	18.5	33.3	48.2 (14.8)
Bingham	79	12.7	15.2	72.2 (19)

Sources: N.A.O. PR 8475-6; 3867; 14618; 6989; 7102; NC/MR/8/242-3; T.N.A. HO 107/2139; RG9/2483-5; RG10/3546-8; 3550; RG11/3380; 3382; RG12/2717-18; H.T.C.T., Baptisms

Table 9.16
Comparison of Wesleyan Methodist Families using only Anglican
Baptism 1850-1875

Place	Number of families*	Anglican exclusive baptism families	Anglican exclusive %
Flintham	10	2	20
C.Bishop	27	8	29.6
C. Butler	22	3	13.6
Bingham	30	2	6.7

Key: * Families using either rite of baptism with additional Methodist links
Sources: N.A.O. PR 8475-6; 3867; 14618; 6989; 7102; NC/MR/8/242-3; T.N.A. HO 107/2139; RG9/2483-5; RG10/3546-8; 3550; RG11/3380; 3382; RG12/2717-18; H.T.C.T., Baptisms

In Flintham, dual allegiance was apparent, although slightly more marked earlier; over half the families changed at least once, while the percentage remaining Anglican was out of a comparatively small number with

Methodist links. On the other hand, the main office holders with children at this time were exclusively Methodist.

Cropwell Bishop again revealed the most fluid state of affairs. Over two thirds changed their choice, with the same number moving from Anglican to Methodist as vice versa. In addition adherence to both Methodists and Anglicans was not seen as incompatible, since almost 30 per cent of families with Methodist links continued exclusively with Anglican baptism, even if not always simultaneously. However, the final ten years of the period indicated an increasing level of exclusivity, with the last change in 1864 and the last Anglican choice by a Methodist in 1866.

In Cropwell Butler, there was a level of exclusive commitment amongst the Wesleyans approaching half, with a smaller percentage using exclusively Anglican baptism compared with the other villages. Conversely, there were families making multiple changes throughout the period and a level of involvement with the Sunday school, suggesting a flexible denominational approach. In addition, there were also villagers using both Primitive Methodist and Anglican baptisms, together with the Wesleyan Sunday school on occasions.

The comparisons shown in Tables 9.15 and 9.16 above revealed a denominational division in Bingham. There were significantly more families with exclusive commitment than in any of the villages and a very small number of families with Methodist links who opted for the Anglicans. Although the few families changing allegiance did so throughout, there were none making multiple changes in the last ten years.

Overall, in the third quarter the baptismal decisions revealed a broadly similar position in Flintham and Cropwell Butler regarding the extent of families both varying their choices and remaining exclusively Wesleyan, although more still favoured the Anglican rite in Flintham. Cropwell Bishop stood out amongst the villages because a significantly larger number of families changed practice, less were exclusively Wesleyan and more continued to use Anglican baptism. Bingham was becoming differentiated with a much smaller number of changes, higher level of exclusivity and very few Wesleyans opting only for the Anglican practice.

The final strand in exploring dual allegiance was assessing the extent of any overlap between leading individuals or groups in the different denominations. In Flintham this was significant between the Anglicans and Wesleyans, with important villagers belonging to both groups and even the squire giving scriptural addresses at the Wesleyan chapel. The Society continued to be run by key families but still comprised a cross-section of the community; unfortunately there is insufficient information to assess how far there was any overlap with the Primitive Methodists. The situation in Cropwell Bishop was of limited civic parish involvement by some leading Wesleyans but no evidence of other connections. The Wesleyan Society was again run by key families drawn from a cross-section of the village including farmers and agricultural labourers, as well as the tradesmen who formed the majority. Cropwell Butler village society was apparently divided into distinct groups, with no evidence of any connections between the leading Anglicans and the Wesleyan Society. The majority of core families and individuals were drawn from both tradesmen and agricultural labourers, while the limited evidence indicates that Primitive Methodists were mainly labourers, suggesting possibly a further distinct group. In

Bingham, there was limited overlap between leading Anglicans and Wesleyans but only relating to civic matters, including the Wesleyan day school. Although this was specifically denominational, it clearly attracted much broader support but in general the two denominations comprised different groups. There is little evidence about any overlap amongst the other nonconformist groups but the Temperance Christians were drawn from those supporting the cause across all denominations, so many probably practised dual allegiance. However, there was co-operation amongst the nonconformist Sunday schools and regarding use of buildings in the middle century decades. Overall, Flintham was the only place with specific evidence of the dual allegiance of individuals.

Conclusions

According to the literature there was widespread dual allegiance in terms of attendance at services until the mid-1860s and even later in some rural areas.⁸⁰ Despite the lack of explicit evidence for the parishes studied, dual attendance was feasible throughout and was probably encouraged by the limited number of Anglican services in the villages. Comparison of likely with actual attendances for the Wesleyans on census Sunday suggested a significant level of this, which is in accordance with findings elsewhere.⁸¹ Nevertheless there were also groups in the Cropwells who opted not to attend the parish church on that date and it is more difficult to draw firm conclusions about Bingham from the census figures.

Obelkevich and Royle, in Lincolnshire and Yorkshire respectively, both found the continuation of dual allegiance during the second half of the

⁸⁰ See above, 360, fn¹ for extensive literature references.

⁸¹ See above Chapter 1, 51-53.

century tended to vary, often depending upon the particular approach of the Anglican incumbent.⁸² The incumbents of both the Cropwells found the Methodists a threat but there was no direct evidence to draw conclusions about the level of continued cross-denominational attendance in the villages. The increase in Anglican service provision meant that church attendees wishing to worship twice on a Sunday no longer needed to go to the chapel on the second occasion, although special services attracted numbers suggesting attendance ranged across the religious groups.

Although not as widely discussed as dual attendance, it has been argued that dual allegiance was exhibited by families varying their choice of rite or by Methodist families continuing to opt for Anglican baptism.⁸³ Initially, it had been considered in this research that moves from Anglican to Methodist baptism could be a denominational response to increasing religious competition⁸⁴ but, although this view had some evidential support, it became clear that baptismal choices were sometimes more complicated and could also indicate a fluid situation suggesting both dual and varying allegiance. Overall, the conclusion suggested in the literature was strongly confirmed in the parishes studied. Variation in practices was demonstrated everywhere by Wesleyan families in the first half of the century and continued in the villages for much of the later period. There is no obvious reason for the particularly high level of fluidity in Cropwell Bishop, although it may have been related to the presence of only two denominations.

⁸² Obelkevich, *Religion*, 214-16; E. Royle, 'When Did Methodists Stop Attending their Parish Churches?: Some Suggestions from Mid-Nineteenth Century Yorkshire', *Proceedings of the Wesley Historical Society*, 56:6 (2008), 284, 290-96.

⁸³ B.J. Biggs, 'Methodism in a Rural Society: North Nottinghamshire 1740-1851' (University of Nottingham Ph.D., 1975), 230, 233; Gray, 'Neighbour', 174-75; Knight, 'Diversity', 378; F. Knight, 'Conversion in Nineteenth-Century Britain, and the Phenomenon of Double Allegiance in Anglicanism and Methodism', in U. Gorman (ed.), *Towards a New Understanding of Conversion* (1999), 122.

⁸⁴ See above, 249-50.

It was also demonstrated that some families with Methodist links in the villages continued to use Anglican baptism exclusively into the third quarter of the century, although lessening during the 1860s. This is broadly in accordance with Gray's findings in Cumbria and supports Knight's argument that double allegiance came under increasing pressure as the century progressed.⁸⁵ Nevertheless, the extent of continued Anglican choice by committed Methodists was greater than anticipated. Looking at the opposite side of baptismal decisions, Gray showed there was an increase in the overall proportion of Methodist baptisms in Hunsonby and Winskill by the 1860s.⁸⁶ This research also identified a parallel trend towards baptisms being exclusively Methodist, where families chose the Methodist rite for all their children. It was most pronounced in Bingham and least in the very fluid Cropwell Bishop, with the other two villages in between.

The lack of specific evidence of dual allegiance of individuals, apart from in Flintham, was surprising in the light of the baptismal and other evidence and differed from findings in the literature, although some examples there related primarily to the earlier period of the late eighteenth century.⁸⁷

Considering all aspects, dual allegiance, at least between the Anglicans and the Wesleyans, was most apparent in Flintham and least in Bingham. It clearly occurred in both the Cropwells and in Cropwell Bishop there was an exceptionally low level of commitment to either denomination regarding baptismal choices. Its existence in these three villages was in accordance with findings elsewhere and it is suggested that these conclusions about

⁸⁵ Gray, 'Neighbour', 174-75; Knight, 'Diversity', 378, 383-84.

⁸⁶ *Ibid* 174.

⁸⁷ *Ibid*, 175-76; Gregory, 'In the Church', 177-78.

Methodist allegiance revealed by baptismal choice offer strong support to other studies.

Although there was an indication in the 1830s of the Wesleyans in Bingham ceasing to choose Anglican baptism, this was not clearly maintained. However, at the census point the Wesleyan attendance was lower than was expected and in subsequent years baptismal decisions indicated a growing denominational identification and decreasing fluidity to a significantly greater extent than elsewhere. Consequently, it is concluded that, in accordance with the literature in respect of urban areas,⁸⁸ denominational boundaries were hardening earlier even in a small town than in the surrounding villages. The fact that the divide between the Anglicans and nonconformists in Bingham had become generally apparent as the century progressed was shown by some personal memories referring to the end of this period where the writer stated 'the town was largely divided into two factions, Church people and Chapel people, Conservatives and Liberals. Almost everybody belonged to one denomination or another'.⁸⁹

⁸⁸ Knight, 'Diversity', 380-81, 383-84.

⁸⁹ E. Sharp, *Memories of Bingham* (1960). Typescript in Bingham Library.

Conclusion

Introduction

This thesis explores and challenges certain aspects of the broadly accepted view that Methodist Societies became established, grew, acquired a building and consolidated until the mid-nineteenth century and then stabilised before eventually moving into slow decline. Based upon a selection of parishes in south Nottinghamshire from 1770 to 1875, it argues that from the outset Methodist allegiance was fluid in terms of a significant level of very short-term membership with a continuous turnover throughout, both of which were concealed within overall membership trends. This fluidity existed in the context of emerging local competition with the Anglican church and other denominations where, even amongst those demonstrating commitment to Methodism, there was a dual allegiance regarding baptismal decisions which continued beyond the mid-century.

The specific selection of parishes¹ was ultimately determined by the limited availability of material providing data on Methodist membership. Although a broader study was originally envisaged, the identification of the phenomenon of fluid allegiance revealed by membership and baptismal decisions was a highly significant finding; this could not be explored for chapels over the whole area since the relevant records had not survived. Consequently, the focus was directed to the four parishes in the Newark/Bingham circuit where the schedules and registers facilitated the

¹ See above Chapter 2, 87-93 for detailed discussion on selection.

required in-depth analysis. Historians have urged further work at a micro-level² and a recent study of one parish in Cumbria has shown the value of focusing on a small sample in depth.³

Establishment of Methodism

The research investigated the initial establishment of Methodism by looking at landownership, size, state of the parish church and support or opposition in the communities. Although the number of parishes studied limited general conclusions, nevertheless the factors leading to Methodism taking root in each parish was an important contextual point to test against the literature. Snell and Ell's conclusion, in agreement with many other studies, that dissent was associated with complex landownership and the established church with highly concentrated ownership,⁴ was less clearly demonstrated than had been anticipated, even allowing for the small sample. Diverse landownership provided an opening for Methodism, as in the two Cropwells but it also became established where a resident dominant landowner raised no opposition, as in Flintham for the Wesleyans, or where the major landowners were absentees, as in Bingham. The unexpected arrival and continuation of the Primitive Methodist Society in the single proprietor village of Tithby had been noted

² R. Currie, 'A Micro-Theory of Methodist Growth', *Proceedings of the Wesley Historical Society*, 36:3 (1967), 73; J.A. Vickers, 'Good Red Herring : Methodism's Relations with Dissent', *Proceedings of the Wesley Historical Society*, 47 (October 1989), 93; A.M. Everitt, 'Nonconformity in Country Parishes', in J. Thirsk (ed.), 'Land, Church and People: Essays Presented to H.P.R. Finberg', *Agricultural History Review*, 18 Supplement, (1970), 182-83; K.D.M. Snell, *Church and Chapel in the North Midlands: Religious Observance in the Nineteenth Century* (1991), 53; J. Wolffe, 'The 1851 Census and Religious Change in Nineteenth-century Yorkshire', *Northern History*, XLV: 1, (2008), 75; J. Gregory, '"In the Church I will live and die": John Wesley, the Church of England, and Methodism', in W. Gibson & R. Ingram, (eds.), *Religious Identities in Britain 1660-1832* (2005), 177-78.

³ L. Gray, '"Efficient Members": the Early Years of Methodism in Hunsonby and Winskill, 1821-1871', *Transactions of the Cumberland and Westmorland Antiquarian and Archaeological Society*, 12 (2012), 231-48; L. Gray, '"And Who is My Neighbour?": the Methodists of Hunsonby and Winskill in their Local Context, 1821-1871', *Transactions of the Cumberland and Westmorland Antiquarian and Archaeological Society*, 13 (2013), 171-90.

⁴ K.D.M. Snell & P.S. Ell, *Rival Jerusalems: the Geography of Victorian Religion* (2000), 373, 375.

at the outset of the research and no further evidence emerged to explain this, other than confirmation that the landowner raised no objection, contrary to action taken by others in nearby villages.

The general tenor of the literature on size and religious affiliation indicated an association between large parishes and dissent and small parishes and the established church.⁵ From the census in Nottinghamshire, Watts had found the strongest Anglican support in parishes with a small population and greater support for dissent where the population exceeded 1,000 but also that Methodism primarily flourished in medium-sized villages of between 400 and 1,000 inhabitants.⁶ Although there were insufficient parishes in this study to draw any general conclusions, the establishment of Primitive Methodism at Tithby, with a population of under 200, was against expectations. However, all the other places were at least medium-sized, so the success of Methodism was as anticipated.⁷

In the much debated question of denominational reciprocities, Snell and Ell's major investigation confirmed the findings of many others that by 1851, at census registration district level, nonconformity succeeded where the parish church was non-existent, weak or negligent in fulfilling its parochial functions adequately.⁸ Focusing on the local level of the parish and the earlier point of initial establishment, this research reached the

⁵ J. Obelkevich, *Religion and Rural Society: South Lindsey, 1825-1875* (1976), 9, 21; D.R. Mills, *Lord and Peasant in Nineteenth Century Britain* (1980), 117; M.R. Watts (ed.), *Religion in Victorian Nottinghamshire: the Religious Census of 1851* (1988), xix; A. Crockett, 'Rural-Urban Churchgoing in Victorian England', *Rural History*, 16:1 (2005), 66-68.

⁶ M.R. Watts, *The Dissenters: Vol. II The Expansion of Evangelical Nonconformity 1791-1859* (1995), 46; Watts, *Religion*, xix.

⁷ Watts, *Dissenters II*, 46; Watts, *Religion*, xix; Obelkevich, *Religion*, 9; D.M. Thompson, 'The Churches and Society in Nineteenth-Century England: a Rural Perspective', in G.J. Cuming & D. Baker (eds.), *Studies in Church History, 8: Popular belief and practice* (1972), 269.

⁸ A.D. Gilbert, *Religion and Society in Industrial England: Church, Chapel and Social Change, 1740-1914* (1976), 94; B.J. Biggs, 'Methodism in a Rural Society: North Nottinghamshire 1740-1851 (University of Nottingham Ph.D., 1975), 209; Currie, 'Micro-Theory', 69; Gray, 'Efficient Members', 235; Snell & Ell, *Rival Jerusalems*, 192, 196.

same conclusion. Indeed the situation regarding the parish church was identified as a key significant factor everywhere. In Cropwell Bishop and Tithby-cum-Cropwell Butler, the established church was in a poor state because of pluralism, absentee clergy and the condition of the buildings, while in Flintham it was only slightly better with a resident incumbent of a very poor living. Cropwell Butler also suffered from the problem of the location of the church building, as had been identified in villages elsewhere.⁹ Despite the contrasting wealthy living at Bingham, the rector's attitude and lifestyle meant the quality of church life was similarly impoverished. This conclusion about the parish church is contrary to Royle's findings in two Yorkshire towns¹⁰ that Methodism grew within a reviving Church of England and Watts' suggestion that in medium-sized villages in Nottinghamshire it flourished when the parish church was also holding its own, although he was analysing the position in 1851.¹¹

The existence of opposition to the establishment of Methodist Societies by leading landowners and clergy has been well documented.¹² However, there was no evidence of opposition to the Wesleyans in these parishes, probably because most of the major landowners and some substantial tenants were absentees, thus impacting upon the extent of their power, influence and interest. Although absentee landowners were potentially a source of opposition, its absence is broadly in accord with the findings of Obelkevich and the view of Snell and Ell about the nature of dependency and exercise of power.¹³ On the other hand, slightly later, the Primitives' efforts to become established in 1817-18 were prevented by the resident

⁹ Currie, 'Micro-Theory', 69; Wolffe, 'Census', 80; Gray, 'Efficient Members', 235; Gray, 'Neighbour', 172.

¹⁰ E. Royle, *Need Local History be Parochial History?* Occasional Paper No.4 (2001), 22-23.

¹¹ Watts, *Dissenters II*, 46; Watts, *Religion*, xix.

¹² R.W. Ambler, *Churches, Chapels and the Parish Communities of Lincolnshire 1660-1900* (2000), 141; Obelkevich, *Religion*, 21; Watts, *Dissenters II*, 117; Watts, *Religion*, xviii.

¹³ Obelkevich, *Religion*, 21; Snell & Ell, *Rival Jerusalem*, 383.

local squire at Flintham and hindered by the active incumbent of the wealthy living at Bingham.

The importance of support from key individuals for Methodism to take root had been noted in the literature and from my earlier research.¹⁴ This study also concluded that in all the communities a number of leading individuals and families were significant in the initial formation and development of the Wesleyan Societies.

Consolidation of Methodist Societies

The widely held view that Wesleyan Societies followed a pattern of initial growth leading to consolidation demonstrated by chapel building¹⁵ was not clearly confirmed. In Bingham, Cropwell Bishop and Cropwell Butler, various premises were registered as meeting houses before a move to a permanent building, generally about 20 years later, but investigation of the detailed schedules showed no clear relationship with membership growth. Overall numbers had increased in Cropwell Bishop but were falling in Bingham when the chapel was erected, while it is impossible to conclude for Cropwell Butler because of uncertainty about the date. Flintham followed a completely different path; the chapel was built quickly, about three years after the first Society meeting, when there had been no recorded increase in total membership. Later consolidation in terms of further chapel building or extension was undertaken in all four Societies but again these decisions did not relate closely to times of overall growth.

¹⁴ Gray, 'Efficient Members', 235; A.C.Woodcock, 'Union in Saving Souls: the Impact of Methodism on Cropwell Butler, Nottinghamshire, 1770 – 1870' (University of Nottingham M.A., 2005), 45-46.

¹⁵ Ambler, *Churches*, 143, 146; Biggs, 'Methodism', 279; L.F. Church, *The Early Methodist People* (1948), 52.

Contrasting with the Wesleyans, historians have tended to view the Primitives as mission-rather than chapel-oriented focusing on converts, not buildings or organisation.¹⁶ However, the research found there was no dichotomy between the two approaches; both occurred except in Tithby, where no separate place of worship was ever acquired. Here the Society was very small and, as already noted, in a location where it would not have been expected to flourish. All the other Societies moved to permanent buildings comparatively quickly after their formation with the longest wait being six years in Cropwell Butler.

The overall argument in the literature was that Wesleyan growth was initially exogenous, followed by consolidation but by the mid-nineteenth century had become endogenous.¹⁷ This could be investigated in some detail because of the high quality of the records in the places selected¹⁸ and initial exogenous growth was strongly confirmed everywhere up to 1830. From then, individuals were no longer routinely identified, although there were examples of both new families emerging and second generation individuals not continuing as Methodists. Consequently, in view of this and the evidence about turnover discussed below, it is argued that a much greater level of exogenous growth existed at, and beyond, the mid-century point than previously suggested.

The possibility of a significant turnover of membership, concealed within yearly totals, was not widely discussed in the literature, although Currie, et al., suggested nationally that high growth meant high turnover because of

¹⁶ H.B. Kendall, *The Origin and History of the Primitive Methodist Church* 2 Vols. (1906); Ambler, *Churches*, 156-57.

¹⁷ Gilbert, *Religion and Society*, 68, 149-53; R. Currie, *Methodism Divided: A Study in the Sociology of Ecumenicalism* (1968), 92; D. Bebbington, *Victorian Religious Revivals: Culture and Piety in Local and Global Contexts* (2012), 99.

¹⁸ See above, 413-14 and Chapter 2, 91-92.

exogenous recruitment and two local studies found evidence indicating its presence.¹⁹ This thesis has strongly demonstrated consistently high turnover for all the Wesleyan Societies throughout the whole period; indeed one crucial aspect of the Wesleyan circuit records for these four parishes was the listing of individual members up to 1830, revealing that between 40 and 50 per cent left after one year. Such findings impact upon the view of Currie, et al., about high growth and turnover because they reveal significant turnover irrespective of overall growth, stability or decline. In addition, they challenge the assertion that Wesleyan membership moved into a period of decelerating growth followed by stabilisation and then decline from the mid-century.²⁰ Despite yearly totals presenting this pattern, the detailed records demonstrated that in reality membership was highly fluid with individuals continually joining and leaving. Moreover the national position of total membership in slow decline in the third quarter²¹ was not evidenced in any of the places when viewed as a proportion of the population and even in absolute terms was only a clear trend in Flintham. This continuation of a high turnover into a period usually regarded as one of stabilisation with endogenous growth was not anticipated. Nevertheless, it only represents part of the total picture, since membership was not synonymous with attendance at worship or other participation in chapel life.

Although there was evidence of a high population turnover between censuses, removals was never the major reason for losses in membership, other than in Bingham in the third quarter. This casts some doubt on the argument that population turnover was the significant factor in the fluidity

¹⁹ R. Currie, A.D. Gilbert & L. Horsley, *Churches and Churchgoers: Patterns of Church Growth in the British Isles since 1700* (1977), 82; J. Burgess, *A History of Cumbrian Methodism* (1980), 63; Gray, 'Efficient Members', 239.

²⁰ Currie, *Methodism*, 89-92.

²¹ *Ibid.*

of membership. The occasional references in the literature to turnover in Methodist Societies suggest removal because of work as the most likely explanation;²² however, in the places studied, even by the third quarter when removal was generally becoming a more significant recorded factor in membership losses, backsliding was still the major reason other than in Bingham.

The generally accepted view was that organisational consolidation, shown by a lessening of evangelism and a focus on social and other issues, was apparent in Wesleyan Societies by the mid-nineteenth century and in Primitive Societies slightly later.²³ In this research, the evidence about a shift in the focus of activities was inconclusive. Continued evangelistic activity of Wesleyans was suggested by circuit references to conversions and many new members joining the Societies but there were insufficient surviving plans to assess the continuation of events such as love feasts and camp meetings. However, by the 1840s social concerns about temperance were evident everywhere except Flintham and all Societies except Cropwell Butler had financial problems. There was also an emphasis on contributions to community life via Sunday school events in Cropwell Butler, the new day school in Bingham and setting up a Friendly Society in Cropwell Bishop.

New Primitive Societies in Flintham and Cropwell Butler in the 1840s established their presence by rapid chapel building but also continued events such as camp meetings, thus demonstrating more evangelistic characteristics than the longstanding Wesleyans. However, it was

²² Gray, 'Efficient Members', 239; Burgess, *Methodism*, 63.

²³ Watts, *Dissenters II*, 609-11, 188-89; G. Parsons, 'From Dissenters to Free Churchmen: the Transitions of Victorian Nonconformity', in G. Parsons (ed.), *Religion in Victorian Britain, 1: Traditions* (1988), 85.

impossible to draw any general conclusions about the development of organisational consolidation in the third quarter, since the only surviving evidence related to Cropwell Butler. However, this indicated some evangelistic activities, both camp meetings and love feasts. The difficulties encountered in reaching conclusions on organisational consolidation because of lack of surviving material confirmed the importance of investigating places with extensive records relating to the key issue of turnover.²⁴

As anticipated,²⁵ the existence of a core group of families was found everywhere and most continued to run the Wesleyan Societies over many years. It was also clear that certain individuals, usually from a key family, tended to fill a variety of positions, sometimes throughout their entire adult life. Nevertheless even their Methodist allegiance was not always exclusive.²⁶

Competition amongst the Religious Groups

Arising from my earlier research on Cropwell Butler and Tithby²⁷ was the question of whether religious competition developed similarly in the other parishes during the nineteenth century. A significant point of measurement was the 1851 religious census, where Watts' analysis of Nottinghamshire returns had showed a higher proportion of Methodists in the Bingham district than elsewhere in the county.²⁸ This study clearly

²⁴ See above, 413-14.

²⁵ Watts, *Dissenters II*, 163-64; Ambler, *Churches*, 139,147,151; Obelkevich, *Religion*, 184, 200-01.

²⁶ See below, 427.

²⁷ Woodcock, 'Union'; A.C. Woodcock, 'The Emergence of Religious Competition in Cropwell Butler, Nottinghamshire, in the Early Nineteenth Century', *Transactions of the Thorton Society*, 110 (2006), 103-18.

²⁸ Watts, *Religion*, xix, xxviii-xxix.

confirmed the strength of Methodism relative to the established church in all four parishes; it was higher in every instance, with the smallest difference being over 13 per cent, compared to only 0.5 per cent in the registration district as a whole. It also provided local illustrations of the argument, demonstrated by Snell and Ell at registration district level, that Methodism was strong where Anglicanism was weak.²⁹ The census revealed the most competitive situation in Bingham where the parish church showed greater support than any individual nonconformist group. However, the greater strength of Methodism in the villages, measured against the Anglicans, was not in accordance with Watts' view that Methodists not only flourished in medium-sized villages in Nottinghamshire but that in such places the established church was also holding its own.³⁰

No evidence was found about any local responses to the census results, in any case unavailable beyond the detail of the registration district.

Consequently, Vickers' view that denominations renewed their efforts to attract people after the census³¹ could not be confirmed. However, leaders of the religious groups would clearly have been aware of the local situation and their own attendance count.

The accepted view that denominational rivalry spurred church and chapel building,³² was confirmed to a greater or lesser extent. The clearest evidence was found in the letters of the incumbent of Tithby-cum-Cropwell Butler regarding the opening of the chapel of ease but the relative dates of new and extended buildings for both Anglicans and Methodists suggest a deliberate level of competition in Cropwell Bishop in 1842, of likely

²⁹Currie, 'Micro-Theory', 68; Snell & Ell, *Rival Jerusalems*, 192, 196.

³⁰ Watts, *Dissenters II*, 46; Watts, *Religion*, xix.

³¹ J.A. Vickers, *The 1851 Religious Census* (1995), 3.

³² Watts, *Dissenters II*, 604.

competition in Flintham in the late 1820s and early 1830s and Bingham at the start of the 1870s. In addition, the newly established religious groups of the 1840s (Primitives in Flintham and Cropwell Butler and Temperance Christians in Bingham) all rapidly acquired a building, indicating that denominational rivalry was to some extent a spur.

Gill's argument that competitive building led to a higher overall attendance but emptier chapels³³ was not demonstrated in 1851 in Cropwell Butler and Bingham, where the nonconformist attendance scattered amongst a number of chapels was broadly the same as in Cropwell Bishop with only one alternative to the Anglicans; individual chapels were clearly emptier but overall attendance had not increased. Nevertheless, in Flintham the two chapels recorded a higher nonconformist attendance than in any of the other places thus suggesting that here the competitive building may have raised the total numbers of worshippers.

By the mid-century point, there was already overcapacity in Flintham and the situation elsewhere was such that any population decline would produce a similar result. However, contrary to expectations, Gill's further contention that overcapacity affected chapels in rural areas³⁴ was not supported by the evidence for the majority of places, at least in respect of chapel membership, which declined less, or even increased, against a declining population. The exception was Cropwell Bishop where the population remained static. However, it is not possible to reach an overall conclusion because there was a small amount of evidence that attendances may have been falling, which was more significant regarding capacity. Additionally, it was suggested that chapels struggled with debt in the third

³³ R. Gill, *The 'Empty' Church Revisited* (2nd edn., 2003), 135.

³⁴ *Ibid*, 33.

quarter of the century because of the difficulty of maintaining buildings with less support.³⁵ All the chapels in the study had financial problems, although this was more directly related to paying for building improvements and, in Bingham, for the new day school building, than simply for maintenance. However, it can be concluded that overcapacity was relevant because of possibly diminishing attendances and because any absolute decline in membership, even when disproportionate, reduced income.

The suggestion in the literature was that the timing of services clashed increasingly as the century progressed, particularly with denominational boundaries hardening and Anglicans concerned to confirm their distinct identity and provision for the parish.³⁶ This was supported by evidence from all the villages of an additional service at the parish church during the third quarter and for the Cropwells the situation was one of acknowledged competition with the Methodists.

Baptismal choice was primarily considered in the literature in relation to the dual allegiance of individuals³⁷ but my earlier research on Cropwell Butler had argued that changes of practice from Anglican to Methodist, particularly by Methodist core families, might be in response to increasing denominational competition.³⁸ Extensive analysis of the baptismal records broadly confirmed this for Cropwell Bishop and to a lesser extent for Flintham, although the situation in Bingham was less clear, where

³⁵ *Ibid*, 30,36,135.

³⁶ F. Knight, 'From Diversity to Sectarianism : the Definition of Anglican Identity in Nineteenth-Century England', *Studies in Church History*, 32 (1996), 383-84; E. Royle, 'The Church of England and Methodism in Yorkshire, c.1750-1850: from Monopoly to Free Market', *Northern History*, 33 (1997), 150.

³⁷ See below, 427-28.

³⁸ Woodcock, 'Union', 64-67; Woodcock, 'Emergence', 27.

competition with the Anglicans was less obviously acute at the relevant times and changes did not always involve core families.

The view that religious and secular education were regarded as an area of competition amongst the denominations,³⁹ was confirmed within this study. The existence of nonconformist Sunday schools in all the parishes by the mid-nineteenth century was in itself an indicator of competition, since this was not widespread, even in the relatively local area.⁴⁰ The competitive element was stronger in Flintham in that the Primitives never managed to establish a Sunday school in the face of Anglican and Wesleyan competition and less pronounced in Bingham where four Sunday schools flourished at one point, with a level of co-operation between some of them. The contention that nonconformist Sunday school anniversary celebrations were a significant part of community life⁴¹ was confirmed everywhere.

As anticipated, church day schools existed in all the places⁴² and in Flintham and Cropwell Butler there was a level of denominational co-operation regarding secular education where the church schools were embedded in the community and supported by the Methodists. The contention that religious groups made strenuous efforts to avoid a school board⁴³ was well illustrated in Flintham where Wesleyans also participated in the successful efforts to build a new school after the Education Act. On the other hand, the Church school in Cropwell Bishop struggled to find any community support, apparently because of cost rather than its religious

³⁹ Gilbert, *Religion and Society*, 200-01; Watts, *Dissenters II*, 536-37; O. Chadwick, *The Victorian Church Part 1 :1829-59* (1966), 338; G. Parsons, 'Liberation and Church Defence: Victorian Church and Victorian Chapel', in G. Parsons (ed.), *Religion in Victorian Britain, II: Controversies* (1988), 158.

⁴⁰ See above, Chapter 6, 275.

⁴¹ Obelkevich, *Religion*, 212-13, 228-29.

⁴² A. Digby, 'Social Institutions', in E.J.T. Collins (ed.), *The Agrarian History of England and Wales*, Vol.7: 1850-1914, Pt.2, (2000), 1476; Obelkevich, *Religion*, 167.

⁴³ Digby, 'Social Institutions', 1492.

affiliation. Bingham was the only place with directly competing day schools, where the marked competition continued even after the Wesleyan school transferred to the Board. In addition, denominational conflict for control, as suggested in the literature,⁴⁴ was apparent from its inception, while contrary to the situation in some other places,⁴⁵ the Wesleyan transfer passed without comment from the national organisation.

The argument put forward in my earlier research on Cropwell Butler that religious competition was an emerging feature by the mid-nineteenth century⁴⁶ was generally confirmed. There was widespread competitive building and competing services, partly because of the establishment of new nonconformist groups, and in the villages evidence of baptismal decisions in response to this situation. In Bingham a level of competition was identifiable somewhat earlier, developing during the second half of the century to a more defined denominational boundary between Anglicans and nonconformists, alongside ongoing competition regarding education and celebratory occasions. In the villages, a competitive environment continued after 1851 in relation to Sunday schools, increased provision of services and community activities.

Dual Allegiance

The widespread evidence in the literature of dual attendance at church and chapel until well into the third quarter of the nineteenth century⁴⁷ has generally been confirmed in this research. Since there was no direct

⁴⁴ *Ibid*; Parsons, 'Liberation', 158; J.T. Smith 'The Enemy Within?': the Clergyman and the English School Boards, 1870-1902', *History of Education: Journal of the History of Education Society*, 38:1 (2009), 136.

⁴⁵ Smith, 'Enemy', 141.

⁴⁶ Woodcock, 'Emergence'.

⁴⁷ See Chapter 1, 51-53.

evidence from the census, even in the wider area of south Nottinghamshire, the conclusion is based primarily on the feasibility of dual or even triple attendance in all the parishes and the comparison of likely with actual attendances for the Wesleyans on census Sunday.⁴⁸ However, the evidence in Bingham was less convincing and even in the villages there were some who did not attend the parish church. Nevertheless, reported numbers at special services throughout most of the period suggested attendances from outside the particular religious group.

The existence of a significant level of variation in baptismal choice by Wesleyans has been identified. This was demonstrated everywhere in the first half of the century and continued in the villages for much of the later period, being particularly strong in Cropwell Bishop throughout, leading to the conclusion that many families of committed Methodists were practising either dual or variable allegiance. Although not widely discussed, this phenomenon had been identified elsewhere.⁴⁹ The conclusion was further supported by evidence of families with Methodist links continuing to use Anglican baptism exclusively, although this was lessening during the 1860s even in the villages. Again this supports findings in Cumbria,⁵⁰ while its decrease in the third quarter confirms Knight's view of double allegiance coming under increasing pressure.⁵¹ The converse was the increase over the period in families exclusively choosing the Methodist rite, which was demonstrated to varying degrees, most strongly in Bingham and least in Cropwell Bishop. This particular measure was not discussed in the literature but it confirms the trend observed by Gray, who also utilised in-

⁴⁸ See above, Chapter 1, 52.

⁴⁹ Biggs, 'Methodism', 230, 233; Gray, 'Neighbour', 174-75; Knight, 'Diversity', 378; F.Knight, 'Conversion in Nineteenth-Century Britain, and the Phenomenon of Double Allegiance in Anglicanism and Methodism', in U. Gorman (ed.), *Towards a New Understanding of Conversion* (1999), 122.

⁵⁰ Gray, 'Neighbour', 174-75.

⁵¹ Knight, 'Diversity', 378, 383-84.

depth baptismal analysis yielding valuable details, of an increase in the overall proportion of Methodist baptisms in the 1860s⁵² and again suggests pressure on this facet of dual allegiance. In the light of the baptismal and other evidence discussed, it was surprising that dual allegiance of individuals was only clearly demonstrated in Flintham; this differed from findings elsewhere, albeit partly from an earlier period.⁵³

At various points this research has revealed differences between the situation in Bingham and the nearby villages. As early as the 1830s there were signs of denominational identification in the town regarding Wesleyan baptisms and, although this was not clearly maintained, dual allegiance was less noticeably demonstrated at the census compared with the other parishes. Subsequently, baptismal choices were significantly less variable and showed greater exclusive commitment. Although only relating to a small town, this evidence supports Knight's contention that denominational boundaries were hardening earlier in towns than in villages;⁵⁴ nevertheless, even in the villages, it was becoming more apparent by 1875.

Conclusions

This thesis has shown the main factor encouraging the initial establishment of Methodism was the inadequacy of the parish church while positive support and lack of opposition, facilitated by a variety of landownership patterns, were also significant. In general this has been in accordance with the vast literature on denominational reciprocities and the growth of dissent.

⁵² Gray, 'Neighbour', 174-75.

⁵³ *Ibid*, 175-76 Gregory, 'In the Church', 177-78.

⁵⁴ Knight 'Diversity', 380-81, 383-84.

It has been strongly demonstrated that exogenous growth amongst Wesleyan Societies was prevalent up to 1830, confirming the suggestion of its presence in the first half of the nineteenth century. However, contrary to the accepted view, it has also shown for the study area that a level of exogenous growth probably continued thereafter and that overall membership proportionate to the population was maintained during the third quarter of the century.

Of particular significance, the research has identified the existence of a high turnover in membership throughout the period, including significant short term losses in the early years and possibly for longer. The turnover was present irrespective of whether the total membership showed growth, stability or decline. This phenomenon has received little attention in the literature and it is suggested that it reveals a previously unsuspected fluidity in Methodist allegiance. Nevertheless, as the literature had anticipated, the existence of core families retaining membership over long periods was also demonstrated.

Features pointing to developing religious competition were found in all the parishes, although the specifics and some of the timing varied.

Consequently, the emergence of religious competition in the 1840s, as found previously in Cropwell Butler, was confirmed but over a somewhat more extensive period. Contrary to the literature, the research demonstrated that overcapacity after 1850 caused by competitive chapel building did not lead to proportionately declining membership, nor directly to financial problems.

A further aspect of fluidity in Methodist allegiance identified in this thesis has been the variation in baptismal choices by Wesleyan Methodists throughout most of the period and probably to a lesser extent by the Primitives. Not only did committed Methodist families use different rites on different occasions but some continued to use Anglican baptism well beyond the mid-century point. This conclusion and the supporting evidence contribute to the growing discussion of this facet of dual allegiance.

Finally, the research clearly demonstrated, albeit on the scale of one small town and three medium-sized villages, that denominational boundaries started to harden at an earlier point in the town, in line with urban areas.

Overall, this thesis has endeavoured to fulfil the appeal by many historians⁵⁵ for work at the micro-level, supplementing broader studies and exploring the precise situation in a local area. Although many of the conclusions are as expected and in accordance with the literature, its particular contribution is the identification of the high level of fluidity in Methodist allegiance in respect of both membership and baptismal decisions, as demonstrated with some consistency in four parishes up to and even beyond the middle of the nineteenth century.

⁵⁵ See above, 414, fn².

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