

Characteristics of Religious Diversity in  
Mid-Nineteenth Century Warwickshire:  
A Study of the 1851 Religious Census



F.Keith Geary  
St Catherine's College  
Department of Continuing Education  
University of Oxford

Thesis submitted for degree of  
*Doctor of Philosophy*  
Michaelmas 2016

F. Keith Geary, St Catherine's College

Characteristics of Religious Diversity in Mid-Nineteenth Century Warwickshire: A Study of the 1851 Religious Census

Thesis submitted for degree of *Doctor of Philosophy*, Michaelmas 2016

#### Abstract

The Census of Religious Worship of 1851 was a unique attempt to collect information about the nation's religious practice in the middle of a century of great social, economic and political upheaval. By 1851, a period of intense urbanisation had resulted in the country's urban population exceeding that in rural areas. Warwickshire can be considered as a microcosm of England as a whole, with its mixture of rural and urban landscapes and agricultural and industrial employment. This study attempts to investigate how far the Religious Census helps to illustrate the nature and extent of religious diversity.

From the survey of the extensive literature emerge a number of significant questions about the reliability of the Census. This study is rooted in the geographical, socio-economic and religious contexts of Warwickshire in the middle of the nineteenth century, drawing original raw material from transcriptions of the Warwickshire returns of the Religious Census. The spatial distribution of these differences is analysed through a comparison of distribution maps.

It is possible to observe the results of the attempts of the Church of England as it struggled to maintain its position as the Established Church, as well as responding to criticisms. There is evidence that the Church of England in Birmingham was faring much better than in other urban-industrial centres, while in rural Warwickshire, clerical abuses such as pluralism and nepotism were being addressed. We can also see the rapidly developing diversity of religious provision in the proliferation of Nonconformist sects and denominations during the first half of the nineteenth century. The results of the Census reveal the variety of provision of accommodation for worship, including Sunday Schools, variations in attendance and worship provided and also demonstrate clearly the variety of religious experience in rural and urban areas in the county which the different denominations offered.

## Contents

List of Figures, Tables and Maps	ii
Acknowledgements	iii
Introduction	1
Chapter 1 The Historiography of the 1851 Census of Religious Worship	5
Chapter 2 The Warwickshire Contexts of the Religious Census	88
Chapter 3 The Results of the Census in Warwickshire	117
Chapter 4 Geographical Distribution of Denominations in Warwickshire	208
Chapter 5 Social & Economic Characteristics of Warwickshire Clergy and Lay Nonconformists	273
Conclusion	348
Appendix A - Census of Religious Worship 1851: The returns for Warwickshire	355
Appendix B - Maps 1 - 11	384
Bibliography	396

## Tables, Figures and Maps

Table 3.1 - Proportion of Free and Appropriated Sittings in Warwickshire	142
Table 3.2 - Pre-1800 Nonconformist and Roman Catholic Places of Worship	159
Table 3.3 - Post-1800 Construction of Places of Worship by Denomination and Decade	160
Table 3.4 - Provision of Worship in Warwickshire	170
Table 3.5 - Index of Attendance for Warwickshire Registration Districts	177
Table 3.6 - Distribution of Different Denominations in Warwickshire	182
Table 3.7 - Variations in Anglican Strength in Warwickshire Registration Districts	183
Table 3.8 - Distribution of the Nonconformist Denominations in Warwickshire Registration Districts	185
Table 3.9 - Number of Sunday Scholars in Different Denominations	202
Table 5.1 - Birthplaces of Warwickshire Clergy	282
Table 5.2 - Cambridge Colleges Attended by Warwickshire Clergy 1851	289
Table 5.3 - Oxford Colleges Attended by Warwickshire Clergy 1851	290
Table 5.4 - Oxbridge Colleges and Warwickshire Parishes	308
Table 5.5 - Patron/Incumbents in Warwickshire Parishes	309
Table 5.6 - Patronage by Family Members in Warwickshire Parishes	310
Table 5.7 - Nonconformists and Social Class in Warwickshire	344
Figure 5.1 - Warwickshire Clergy 1851 (Excluding Birmingham & Aston) Age Distribution	277
Figure 5.2 - Birmingham & Aston Clergy 1851 Age Distribution	281
Figure 5.3 - Warwickshire Clergy 1851 Household Size	284
Figure 5.4 - Nonconformist Clergy in Warwickshire 1851 Religious Census	317
Figure 5.5 - Warwickshire Nonconformist Clergy 1851 Household Size	319
Map 1 - Warwickshire Registration Districts and Sub-regions	385
Map 2 - Warwickshire Parishes and Registration Districts	386
Map 3 - Warwickshire 'Open' and 'Close' Parishes	387
Map 4 - Distribution of Anglican Churches	388
Map 5 - Distribution of Wesleyan Methodist Chapels and Meeting Places	389
Map 6 - Distribution of Primitive Methodist Chapels and Meeting Places	390
Map 7 - Distribution of other Methodist Chapels and Meeting Places	391
Map 8 - Distribution of Independent Chapels and Meeting Places	392
Map 9 - Distribution of Baptist Chapels and Meeting Places	393
Map 10 - Distribution of other Nonconformist Denominations' Chapels and Meeting Places	394
Map 11 - Distribution of Roman Catholic Chapels	395

## **Acknowledgements**

I have had considerable assistance and encouragement from many people and my grateful thanks are due to all of them. Staff at the County Record Offices in Warwick and Worcester, The National Archives at Kew, Dr Williams's Library and the Quaker Library in London, the John Rylands University Library in Manchester, the Oxford Centre for Methodism and Church History, Birmingham City Library, Shakespeare Birthplace Trust and especially at the various branches of the Bodleian Libraries in Oxford have patiently and efficiently produced documents and books for me. Thanks also must go to Bob Bearman, General Editor of the Dugdale Society, who exercised patience in the extreme and provided considerable support throughout the production of the edition of the transcriptions and to Andy Isham whose cartographic expertise has produced an excellent set of maps which give the study a 'sense of place'. Finally, Mark Smith, who was responsible for initiating my interest in this topic, has continued to provide support and advice throughout, and ensured that I 'kept my eye on the ball'.

F.K.Geary

December 2016

# Introduction

The main purpose of the Census of Religious Worship conducted in 1851 was to collect information about the accommodation provided and attendances at services on a particular day. It was expanded to include questions about the age of buildings used, to indicate changes since the beginning of the century, and also, in the case of Anglican churches, to identify the sources of funding. A further, controversial question was included on the nature of Anglican endowment, but, after much acrimonious debate, responses to this were made optional. This leads to the significant question: how far does the Religious Census help to determine the nature and extent of religious diversity within a community such as Warwickshire in the middle of the nineteenth century?

Chapter 1 examines the very extensive historiography of the Religious Census, looking first at the much-neglected contemporary debate, which centred on the related issues of voluntarism and disestablishment. Subsequent attempts at analysis have been concerned with the question of the degree of religiosity in the second half of the nineteenth century. Much discussion can be found in the commentaries written to accompany the county transcriptions which have been published since the 1970s. The historiography leads to consideration of a number of important questions, the answers to which provide pieces for the jigsaw which is religious diversity in mid-nineteenth century Warwickshire.

Chapter 2 sets the study into a variety of contexts. The geography of mid-nineteenth century Warwickshire can be seen as a microcosm of England as a whole. Although lacking extremes of altitude and climate, it does contain a variety of relief, drainage, soil and consequently agricultural landscape. But unlike much of southern and

central England, it was directly affected by the Industrial Revolution, with mining and industrial development, and the rapid growth of the Birmingham conurbation. Diversity in the socio-economic backgrounds of rural parishes is considered via the debate about 'open' and 'close' parishes,<sup>1</sup> a distinction which seems to have an important influence on the ability of Nonconformity to offer variety in place of the Anglican monopoly. The religious background is presented through a description of the diverse denominations, their relationship to local geography and history and their setting in a national context.

Chapter 3 presents the results of the Religious Census, first setting them in the context of government data collection in the first half of the nineteenth century. This summarises the answers to Mann's questions about accommodation, age of buildings, worship provided<sup>2</sup>, attendances, endowments and income (for Anglican churches) and Sunday Schools.<sup>3</sup> Consideration is also given to the wider issues which arose from the Census, including its reliability<sup>4</sup>, denominational continuity<sup>5</sup> and the significance of free and appropriated sittings.<sup>6</sup>

Chapter 4 attempts to analyse the geographical distribution of denominations, especially Nonconformists, as shown in the Census. The main question concerns denominational diversity and deals with the amount of reciprocity of the

---

<sup>1</sup> Q4 in historiography

<sup>2</sup> Q8 in historiography

<sup>3</sup> Q6 in historiography

<sup>4</sup> Q1 in historiography

<sup>5</sup> Q2 in historiography

<sup>6</sup> Q5 in historiography

Nonconformist denominations<sup>7</sup> and the degree to which they had penetrated the Anglican monopoly in rural Warwickshire, which is associated with the patterns of landownership considered in Chapter 2.<sup>8</sup> Further consideration is given to the question of denominational durability<sup>9</sup>, placing the Religious Census in its historical context, and comparing its findings with earlier attempts at data collection, both nationally and locally.

The final chapter considers two socio-economic questions arising from the Religious Census. In the first part I try to construct a profile of Warwickshire clergy using additional contemporary sources, via nominal record linkage.<sup>10</sup> The second part also uses other sources to identify the Nonconformist signatories in consideration of the social and economic differences between the different Nonconformist denominations, both lay and clerical.<sup>11</sup>

---

<sup>7</sup> Q3 in historiography

<sup>8</sup> Q4 in historiography

<sup>9</sup> Q2 in historiography

<sup>10</sup> Q8 in historiography

<sup>11</sup> Q7 in historiography

## Chapter 1

### The Historiography of the 1851 Census of Religious

### Worship

The literature surrounding the 1851 Religious Census is vast and still growing. In 1978, Clive Field compiled an exhaustive list of secondary literature which comprised 128 separate works.<sup>12</sup> Less than twenty years later, he returned to the task and produced an article with 131 footnotes, referring to no fewer than 182 works, both published and unpublished.<sup>13</sup> In this later work he also recorded primary materials, but declared that his coverage of secondary literature had been more selective, culling more than 80 of the previous contributions. He conceded that the growth in the amount of local research in twenty years had made it impossible for any individual to record it all.

### **Contemporary Debate**

According to Pickering, who was one of the few commentators to pay much attention to contemporary writers, the census was not the most burning religious issue of 1851, and in the period leading up to it the contributors to newspapers and journals were much more agitated over the Second Spring and the Ecclesiastical Titles Bill.<sup>14</sup> However, the anxieties and opinions of Anglican luminaries such as the Bishop of Oxford about the Census were reported both at the time of the data collection and when the report was issued. Moreover, the contemporary debate is worth investigating in itself as an indication of a number of the preoccupations of mid-nineteenth century religious culture.

---

<sup>12</sup> C.D. Field, 'The 1851 Religious Census: A Select Bibliography of Materials Relating to England and Wales' *Proceedings of the Wesley Historical Society*, Vol. XLI (1977- 78)

<sup>13</sup> C.D. Field, 'The 1851 Religious Census of Great Britain: a Bibliographical Guide for Local and Regional Historians' *Local Historian*, 27 (1998) pp. 194 – 215

<sup>14</sup> W.S.F. Pickering, 'The 1851 Religious Census - A Useless Experiment?' *British Journal of Sociology*, xviii (1967) p. 405

At the very beginning of the Parliamentary Report on the Religious Census, the Registrar-General, George Graham, in a note to the Home Secretary, Lord Palmerston, re-iterated the fact that he had been instructed “to endeavour to procure information as to the existing accommodation for Public Religious Worship,” while in the first sentence proper of the Report, Horace Mann declared that this summary of the returns showed “the amount of accommodation for worship provided by the various religious bodies in the country and the extent to which the means thus shown are available to be used.” This set the scene and the context for the contemporary debate but was extended to include a number of other matters. From the returns themselves, questions were raised about what constituted sufficient accommodation for worship and whether the returns of attendance were accurate. The wider implications for contemporaries were the reasons for non-attendance, for which many claims were made, even though the returns themselves provided little evidence, in the occasional remarks made by the person completing the form. Interestingly it is rare to find comments which challenged the assumption that religiosity could be measured by attendance at worship on a single Sunday (especially a wet one in the middle of Lent), though the Vicar of Easington was forthright on this in his remarks<sup>15</sup> and Abraham Hume (see below) was one of the few contemporary writers to give serious consideration to this question. The overall figures for accommodation and attendance shown by the returns for the different denominations were used to argue against the continued legitimacy of the

---

<sup>15</sup> “If this be intended to ascertain the number of persons who attend Divine Worship it will be most fallacious; not above a third of the morning congregation is the same as that in the afternoon; and again the congregation of one Sunday differs materially from that of another; so that it cannot be inferred because the half or the third of any population was at Divine Worship on any given Sunday that therefore the rest are Heathen.” HO129.404.1.5.9

establishment of the Church of England, while the spatial variations were widely used in attempts to link mid-nineteenth century irreligion with urbanisation and industrialisation.

The earliest piece of writing about the Religious Census was by Horace Mann, the barrister responsible for its administration, whose official report was published as a Parliamentary Paper in 1853<sup>16</sup>, followed a month later by an abridged version. His text included historical background<sup>17</sup> and explanatory commentary (edited for the abridged report) and 250 pages of detailed tables of the number of churches, sittings and attendances for every registration district (omitted from the abridged report). For the next six months, the report received considerable coverage in the press, both secular and religious.<sup>18</sup>

Mann's main conclusion concerned non-attendance at church (which, as already noted, appeared to many to be the principal criterion of religiosity). In his report he coined three phrases which have been reproduced by many subsequent writers. He noted that a large proportion of the population were "habitual neglecters of the

---

<sup>16</sup> H. Mann, *Census of Great Britain, 1851: Religious Worship, England and Wales - Report and Tables* (London, 1853)

<sup>17</sup> The report gave much space to the history of churches and sects which appeared in the census, including publishing in full the 39 Articles, which Pickering suggested was upholding the anti-Puseyite tradition. (W.S.F. Pickering, 'The 1851 Religious Census - A Useless Experiment?' p. 387)

<sup>18</sup> C.D. Field, 'The 1851 Religious Census of Great Britain: a Bibliographical Guide', p. 210 note 7; C.D. Field, 'Methodism in the 1851 Religious Census' in T. Macquiban (ed.), *Methodism in its cultural milieu: proceedings of the Centenary Conference of the Wesley Historical Society in conjunction with the World Methodist Historical Society, held 26-30 July 1993 in Cambridge, England' Westminster Wesley Series No.2* (Summer 1994) Appendix 2, pp. 185-186 described reactions to the 1851 Religious Census in Methodist Periodicals.

public ordinances of religion”<sup>19</sup>; that these non-attenders came chiefly from the “labouring myriads”<sup>20</sup>, who were not so much antagonistic to religion as indifferent to it and could thus be described as “unconscious secularists”.<sup>21</sup> Mann’s remarks reflected a concern over the perceived irreligiousness of the working classes which had been growing steadily probably since the 1790s.

He ventured to suggest that there were five main reasons for non-attendance. These were social distinctions, the indifference of the church to the social conditions of the poor, misconceptions of the motives of ministers, poverty and crowded dwellings and “an inadequate supply of the Christian agency”. This last was not simply too few churches or too few seats, since “teeming populations now surround half-empty churches which would probably remain half-empty even if all the sittings were free”.<sup>22</sup> This section of the report, however, was not based on the statistics, and these reasons were general and not related to the detailed differences shown by the census.

The issues of non-attendance and insufficient accommodation were seized on by Dissenters and in particular the disestablishmentarians of the Liberation Society.<sup>23</sup> The society’s pamphlet *Voluntaryism in England and Wales*<sup>24</sup>, issued in October 1854, reworked the data, especially looking at the increased number of

---

<sup>19</sup> H. Mann, *Census of Great Britain, 1851: Religious Worship, England and Wales* p. clviii

<sup>20</sup> H. Mann, *Census of Great Britain, 1851: Religious Worship, England and Wales* p. clviii

<sup>21</sup> H. Mann, *Census of Great Britain, 1851: Religious Worship, England and Wales* p. clviii

<sup>22</sup> H. Mann, *Census of Great Britain, 1851: Religious Worship, England and Wales* pp. clx - clxi

<sup>23</sup> in full ‘Society for the Liberation of Religion from State-patronage and Control’

<sup>24</sup> *Voluntaryism in England and Wales or, The Census of 1851* (London, 1854)

Nonconformist chapels and sittings since 1800 and concluded that they demonstrated the superiority of the voluntary principle over that of the State church. The society's view was that "the Church of England, as a State church, has totally failed – not failed as a Christian organisation formed for religious ministrations, but as a State appliance intended to maintain for the whole community, means of religious instruction and edification, and to provide them in timely abundance, as new exigencies render them necessary".<sup>25</sup>

While for some Dissenters the Religious Census represented a golden opportunity to press the cause of disestablishment, the local authors of *Independency in Warwickshire*<sup>26</sup>, published in the following year, allowed it to pass them by. They make no mention of it in their voluminous 416 pages but do provide a mountain of statistics concerning churches, accommodation and attendances, for other Dissenting groups too, which can usefully be compared with the Census returns.

One response of the Church of England to the Census results had been to denigrate the accuracy of the statistics. Initially the Bishop of Oxford averred that, for a variety of social and educational reasons, and either inadvertently or in some cases deliberately, the Anglican returns had been consistently underestimated, while those of the Dissenters had been exaggerated.<sup>27</sup> Samuel Wilberforce appears to have had a number of pre-conceptions about the kind of people who were

---

<sup>25</sup> *Voluntaryism in England and Wales* p. 52

<sup>26</sup> J. Sibree and M. Caston, *Independency in Warwickshire: a brief history of the Independent or Congregational churches in that county; containing biographical notices of their pastors; with an illustrative map and vignette engravings* (Coventry, 1855)

<sup>27</sup> Debate in the House of Lords, 11 July 1854 (cited in C.D. Field, 'The 1851 Religious Census of Great Britain: a Bibliographical Guide', p. 196)

Nonconformists. He implied that the fact that many of their officers and ministers were largely drawn from the working classes meant that they were untrustworthy, leading them to lie about their attendances, to round up to excessively high figures and to resort to pew-packing, while their lack of education caused them to be unable to calculate accurately when summing the numbers of General Congregation and Sunday Scholars. Perhaps because they held a different view of Nonconformists, the Registrar-General<sup>28</sup> and Lord Palmerston, the Home Secretary<sup>29</sup>, rebutted the Bishop's claims, while Mann defended the statistics himself in a paper read to the Statistical Society of London in December 1854 and published the following June.<sup>30</sup>

Although this was ostensibly an overview of the census results, almost two-fifths of the paper consists of answers to the criticisms that the results had been biased and inaccurate. He accepted that there had been errors and omissions, but maintained that the overall results were "substantially correct", a view subsequently accepted by most of the people who have reviewed them. The general issue which was most contended was the method of dealing with "twicers", as Gladstone termed them.<sup>31</sup> Here, Mann willingly conceded that his formula derived from taking the morning congregation and adding half of that in the afternoon and one third of that in the evening "is but the conjecture of an individual; and any other person is at liberty to

---

<sup>28</sup> C.D. Field, 'The 1851 Religious Census of Great Britain: a Bibliographical Guide, p. 210 note 11

<sup>29</sup> C.D. Field, 'The 1851 Religious Census of Great Britain: a Bibliographical Guide p. 210 note 12

<sup>30</sup> H. Mann, 'On the Statistical Position of Religious Bodies in England and Wales' *Journal of the Statistical Society of London*, Vol. 18, No. 2 (Jun. 1855), pp. 141 - 159

<sup>31</sup> R. Mudie Smith (ed.), *The Religious Life of London* (London, 1904) p. 6

make a computation for himself".<sup>32</sup> Nonetheless many scholars have fastened on to Mann's findings without question, for example, Edward Norman who stated that "3,773,474 people attended the worship of the Church of England on the sample day chosen and that 3,487,558 attended Catholic and Protestant Dissenting Churches".<sup>33</sup> Moreover, the degree of precision of such numbers implies an accuracy which is, to say the least, spurious.

Even in the 1850s, further concern was evident about the point that at local level, the error and omissions in the Census were significant and could either lead to erroneous conclusions or prevent any meaningful conclusions from being drawn. The Bishop of Oxford indignantly reported that according to the Census returns for his diocese, there were almost 20,000 fewer attendants than his own figures (drawn from diocesan sources) showed. However when it was pointed out that the Census figure which he quoted did not exist, and that it actually showed 30,000 more than his, he seems smoothly to have retracted his statement and assented to the general accuracy of the tables.<sup>34</sup>

To counterbalance the Liberation Society's pamphlet, Abraham Hume, Anglican (though not English) priest, sociologist and statistician, published his *Remarks on the*

---

<sup>32</sup> H. Mann, 'On the Statistical Position of Religious Bodies in England and Wales' p. 147

<sup>33</sup> E.R. Norman, *Church and Society in England 1770 - 1970: a historical study* (Oxford, 1976) p. 125

<sup>34</sup> H. Mann, 'On the Statistical Position of Religious Bodies in England and Wales' p. 145, which includes details of the four methods which Mann proposed as possibilities and considered below.

*Census of Religious Worship* in 1860.<sup>35</sup> From his thorough analysis of the data he argued that a comparison of numbers of places of worship would over-estimate the number of Dissenters, since it included many preaching stations (up to 40% according to Baines).<sup>36</sup> Hume, returning to the debate about voluntarism, claimed that any arguments about rates of increase based on the dates of erection are valueless, for a variety of reasons, though he conceded that Mann was aware of this. However, the access which we now have to the individual records, not an option for Hume, of course, can sometimes produce information which does allow further conclusions to be drawn. For example, the Countess of Huntingdon's Connexion in Birmingham is the chapel referred to in the Parliamentary Report as being erected before 1800. The return stated "the first chapel [erected] in 1743, the second in lieu of it in 1842". But the return also pointed out that they had "No place of worship at present, our chapel having been taken down by the railway company in Jan<sup>y</sup> of 1850. Now occupying the Odd Fellows Hall on Sundays."<sup>37</sup>

Hume analysed Mann's calculations of attendances, looking at the four methods which Mann suggested could be used. In fact the first and third of these (morning + ½ afternoon + ⅓ evening and "for attenders take ⅔ of attendances") produced results which were almost identical (within 3,000), while the second (the mean of the maximum and minimum possible) gave about half a million more. The fourth

---

<sup>35</sup> A. Hume, *Remarks on the Census of Religious Worship for England and Wales* (London, 1860) As seen below, this was also a contribution to the debate about whether the Religious Census should be repeated in 1861.

<sup>36</sup> Evidence before a Select Committee of the House of Commons on Church Rates, 1851, p. 435 (cited in A. Hume, *Remarks on the Census of Religious Worship for England and Wales* p. 7)

<sup>37</sup> H0129.394.5.1.8

method which added a third to the best attendance gave a somewhat higher figure again, but as Hume pointed out, this overvalued churches which had only one Sunday service (almost 10,000 of them). At any rate it seems clear that the question of the overall number of people in attendance remained a key issue in the decade after the Census.

Hume accepted the Census Report's claim that 58 sittings were required for every 100 people, but argued that the remaining 42% were not necessarily 'home-heathen'. "An allowance must be made for those who are bona fide worshippers, but who were absent on Census Sunday, as a similar number would be absent on any other Sunday. The question simply is – what allowance?"<sup>38</sup> Mann actually addressed this in his JSS paper, but it must be stressed (as Mann did) that the values he gave were illustrative.<sup>39</sup>

Hume made two other significant contributions to the contemporary debate on the Religious Census. Firstly he dealt with spatial variations, culminating in a map showing the distribution of religious and irreligious in the counties and large towns. He found that there was a high positive correlation between the percentages of Churchmen and Dissenters, concluding that "much more depends on the moral and religious tone of any particular place than upon the success of one denomination over another." He also highlighted irreligion in towns, believing that the poor did not attend church because they could not afford decent clothes and pew rents. Hume's

---

<sup>38</sup> A. Hume, *Remarks on the Census of Religious Worship for England and Wales* p. 17

<sup>39</sup> In fact, many of the remarks draw attention to the fact that there were more absentees on Census Sunday than there would be on any other Sunday. This is considered in some detail in Chapter 3.

pioneering cartography paved the way (more than a century later) for the work of Pickering in the 1960s<sup>40</sup>, Gay in the 1970s<sup>41</sup> and the computer mapping of Ell and others in the 1990s.<sup>42</sup> These cartographical developments encouraged a more detailed analysis of diversity from a geographical perspective and validated the idea that essential conclusions about mid-nineteenth century religion could be drawn from the analysis of maps and statistics. Secondly, he made a series of suggestions for improvements to the 1861 Census, including compulsion, accurate counting, returns open to inspection and records of abandoned churches. In the event, there was no 1861 Religious Census, nor in any subsequent years, due to the failure of the Established Church and the Nonconformists to agree as to the form it should take. Hume continued to concern himself with the statistical analysis of the state of religion in Liverpool. In 1881 and 1882 he organised censuses of Anglican churches in the Liverpool diocese, which were published in the Liverpool Daily Courier in March 1882. However, in spite of Pickering's attempt to publicise this "Forgotten Pioneer of Religious Sociology"<sup>43</sup>, Hume's work remains largely unknown or ignored. The value of examining the contemporary debate about the Religious Census can be seen in the fact that many writers in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries appear to have 're-invented the wheel' in order to arrive at similar conclusions to Hume, seemingly without having seen his work. Of note here can be included Wickham's 1957 account

---

<sup>40</sup> W.S.F. Pickering, 'The 1851 Religious Census - A Useless Experiment?' pp. 396 - 405

<sup>41</sup> J.D. Gay, *The Geography of Religion in England* (London, 1971)

<sup>42</sup> P.S. Ell, 'The Geography of Religious Worship in England and Wales - 1851 Census', *GIMMS Newsletter* No. 12 (October 1991); P.S. Ell and T.R. Slater, 'The Religious Census of 1851: a computer-mapped survey of the Church of England' *Journal of Historical Geography*, 20, 1 (1994) pp. 44-61

<sup>43</sup> W.S.F. Pickering, 'Abraham Hume (1814-1884), A Forgotten Pioneer in Religious Sociology', *Archive de Sociologie des Religions* Vol. 33 (1972)

of the failure of churches in Sheffield and work by Inglis and Gilbert and more recently that of C.G. Brown and R. Gill.<sup>44</sup>

During the second half of the nineteenth century there were numerous other attempts to organise religious censuses at local level. These later urban and regional surveys were often promoted by newspaper proprietors with Nonconformist sympathies. McLeod used a number of such from Liverpool (conducted in 1881, 1882, 1891, 1902 and 1912) to analyse church attendance as a proportion of population, using the 1851 Religious Census figures as a starting point. From the 1902 and 1912 results he also attempted to identify variations according to social class and geographical location.<sup>45</sup>

In 1882 Andrew Mearns, Secretary of the London Congregational Union, tabulated the statistics derived from the local press surveys carried out between October 1881 and February 1882.<sup>46</sup> The results covered 76 towns (and two rural areas) ranging geographically from Egremont to Hastings and Newcastle-on-Tyne to Trowbridge, and in terms of size, from the major cities of Liverpool, Sheffield and Bristol, to much smaller towns such as Blisworth, Conway and Needham Market. To obtain an estimated number of worshippers, he followed Mann's suggestion (morning + ½ afternoon + ½ evening), an excellent example of the status acquired by Mann's

---

<sup>44</sup> E.R. Wickham, *Church and People in an Industrial City* (London, 1957); K.S. Inglis, *Churches and the working classes in Victorian England* (London, 1963); A.D. Gilbert, *Religion and Society in Industrial England* (London, 1976); C.G. Brown, *The death of Christian Britain: understanding secularisation 1800-2000* (London, 2001); R. Gill, *The Empty Church Revisited* (Aldershot, 2003)

<sup>45</sup> H. McLeod, 'White Collar Values and the Role of Religion' in G. Crossick (ed.), *The Lower Middle Classes in Britain 1870-1914* (London, 1977)

<sup>46</sup> A. Mearns, *The Statistics of Attendance at Public Worship* (London, 1882)

‘conjecture’ over the succeeding 30 years, and his index is of the percentage estimated number of worshippers to population.<sup>47</sup>

In the preface, Mearns warned that the figures had been obtained by different methods and do not give the same particulars in each case. This is of particular significance when he compares, for the major settlements, the 1851 figures (which in all cases included the young people belonging to the Sunday schools who had been brought to church) with the 1881 returns, which in the main, did not. Thus although the figures for total attendance in general rose (Bath, Liverpool and Warrington being exceptions) their percentages of attendance to population fell (Coventry and Bradford excepted).

The most significant of these later censuses (at least according to its author) was that carried out in London for the *Daily News* between November 1902 and November 1903 by Mudie-Smith.<sup>48</sup> He claimed that his was the “first scientific attempt in the history of this country to discover the number of those who attend places of worship in the Metropolis”. He dismissed the 1851 Religious Census as of “little value, owing to the fact that the Churches themselves furnished the returns”. He also dismissed the 1886 Census by Robertson Nicoll, in the *British Weekly*, though he was prepared to use it for comparative purposes. He avoided the defects of Mann’s methods, by counting all worshippers as they entered. He also took account of morning services other than the 11 a.m. service (especially Roman Catholic

---

<sup>47</sup> cf. K.S. Inglis, ‘Patterns of Religious Worship in 1851’, in *Journal of Ecclesiastical History*, xi (1960) pp. 74 – 86

<sup>48</sup> R. Mudie Smith (ed.), *The Religious Life of London* p. 1

masses). He differentiated worshippers by sex and age, and attempted to identify twicers. They were listed for 71 churches and varied from 10% at Chelsea Old Parish Church to 75% at the Salvation Army in Penge. Although there was no indication of whether any worshipped at more than one church or denomination, he was able to quantify the twicers for London as a whole at 38%. This makes Mann's suggestion of attenders equal to  $\frac{2}{3}$  of attendances appear a reasonably accurate estimate, though the norms for attendance may have changed over half a century, due perhaps to the impact of Sunday School socialisation on a new generation of adults.

Much of the contemporary debate arose from the main issue behind the undertaking of the Religious Census, namely what constituted sufficient accommodation in churches. From the associated attendance figures, attempts were made to link working class irreligion to urbanisation, industrialisation and poverty. Concern was expressed from the start over the accuracy of the figures and especially the method of dealing with double-counting. These ideas were taken up again 100 years later, but other questions were also beginning to be asked, about matters such as landowning, nature of sittings, reciprocity and denominational durability and continuity.

## Twentieth century

During the first half of the twentieth century, the Religious Census seems to have been ignored by both general and religious historians. One of the few to acknowledge its existence, albeit briefly, was Young, who wrote about it in 1936.<sup>49</sup> He raised the question of reliability, pointing out the limitations of the statistics of absolute attendance, but he seemed to accept Mann's view that 58% of the population worshipped somewhere. Turning to reciprocity, he highlighted the Church of England's strength in the south and south-west (excluding Cornwall) and identified Nonconformist strength in the old Puritan strongholds of Bedford, Huntingdon, the West Riding and Northumberland. He also drew a distinction between, on the one hand, the rural areas and old towns where all "except the free thinking cobbler would at least have called himself something or other" and where one could find "few families which were not sometimes represented at the Sunday service" and on the other hand, the new agglomerations where "great multitudes were as indifferent ... as the inhabitants of Borrioboola-Gha".<sup>50</sup>

Also in the 1930s, Tillyard had analysed the regional distribution of Nonconformist churches.<sup>51</sup> He developed the ideas of reciprocity and complementarity, concluding that the older dissenting groups were strong where the Church of England was strong, whereas Methodism complemented the other, older Nonconformist denominations and tended to be strongest where the others were weak. This came

---

<sup>49</sup> G.M. Young, *Victorian England: Portrait of an Age 2<sup>nd</sup> ed* (London, 1960) pp. 63 - 64

<sup>50</sup> G.M. Young, *Victorian England* p. 64

<sup>51</sup> F. Tillyard, 'The Distribution of the Free Churches in England', *The Sociological Review* (1935) pp. 1-18

to be known as the Tillyard thesis and was widely publicised by Currie<sup>52</sup> and Gilbert.<sup>53</sup> Tillyard identified the strongholds of Old Dissent in the South-East Midlands/East Anglia and South-West England, excluding Cornwall, which had become a stronghold of Methodism, which had also taken hold of Lincolnshire and much of Yorkshire. He also maintained that Old Dissent was better adapted to urban rather than rural conditions, and in particular to middle class urban congregations rather than working class industrial ones, while the Methodists found it easier to maintain chapels in villages which were served by itinerant ministers from the towns. The Methodists were also more successful than Old Dissent in establishing a base in many of the new industrial areas. Much of this will be seen to be evident in Warwickshire in Chapter 4, which analyses the geographical distribution of the various denominations. Although Tillyard does not appear to have used the Religious Census at all, arriving at his conclusions by studying the distribution of Nonconformist ministers, his findings have been subsequently confirmed by numerous studies of reciprocity demonstrated by the returns of the Religious Census.

The major turning point in the historiography of the Religious Census appears to have occurred in 1951, when the original returns became available under the 100-

---

<sup>52</sup> R. Currie, A.D. Gilbert. & L.S. Horsley, *Churches and churchgoers: patterns of church growth in the British Isles since 1700* (Oxford, 1977)

<sup>53</sup> A.D. Gilbert, *Religion and Society in Industrial England*

year Census rules.<sup>54</sup> The writings of the modern period can be divided into six groups:

1. Overall studies.
2. Denominational studies.
3. Regional studies.
4. a. Urban and b. Rural studies
5. County transcriptions.
6. Micro studies.

1. Overall studies.

The first historian to make use of the original returns was Inglis, as part of his research on religion and the working classes. His 1960 article was based on almost a decade's work and is rightly regarded as the starting point of the modern historiography of the Religious Census.<sup>55</sup> (Wickham published his work on Sheffield three years earlier, using local returns<sup>56</sup>, but his conclusions have been criticised because Sheffield was atypical.<sup>57</sup>) Inglis based his conclusions on the Index of Attendance, derived from the total attendances at all places of worship in an area, expressed as a percentage of that area's population. He used this to compare

---

<sup>54</sup> Field points out that it is now exceptional for a scholarly work dealing with nineteenth religion (either specifically or as part of a wider history) not to make reference to it, and that "it has even become common for commemorative histories of Methodist chapels and circuits to make use of the census results". (C.D. Field, 'Methodism in the 1851 Religious Census')

<sup>55</sup> K.S. Inglis, 'Patterns of Religious Worship in 1851'

<sup>56</sup> E.R. Wickham, *Church and People in an Industrial City*

<sup>57</sup> R. Gill, *The Empty Church Revisited* p. 24

attendances in rural areas and small towns with those in large towns and more specifically between the different types of urban settlements – “to discover just where the churches were in least touch with the population”.<sup>58</sup> He concluded that Mann was correct in identifying the major absentees from Sunday worship as the working classes, especially in London and “in many towns where the industrial revolution was wrought”.<sup>59</sup> He continued his analysis by investigating, in the major towns, the relative strengths of the Established Church, the Protestant Nonconformists and the Roman Catholics and the variations in strength between the various Nonconformist groups.

In 1963, a brief overview of the Religious Census was provided by Rogan, who published some of the principal statistics of the Report along with comments from its author.<sup>60</sup> He also summarised Mann’s findings in the context of the Church’s domestic mission, using the data to point out that the strengths and weaknesses of the Church of England in the 1950s and 1960s can be traced back at least a century.

Four years later, the sociologist Pickering provocatively questioned whether the Religious Census had been a useless experiment.<sup>61</sup> He raised concerns about reliability, considering in some detail the background to the census and the problems arising from the data collection and interpretation. In attempting to deduce the number of individuals who attended church without using the unrefined formulae of

---

<sup>58</sup> R. Gill, *The Empty Church Revisited* p. 80

<sup>59</sup> R. Gill, *The Empty Church Revisited* p. 82

<sup>60</sup> J. Rogan, ‘The Religious Census of 1851’, *Theology*, Vol. LXVI (1963) pp. 11 - 15

<sup>61</sup> W.S.F. Pickering, ‘The 1851 Religious Census - A Useless Experiment?’ pp. 382-407

Mann and others, he calculated what he called the “maximum-minimum” by using the figures which represented the best attended service on the day. He accepted that this would exclude those whose only attendance was at a less well-attended service, but argued (though without evidence) that those who were double counted would eliminate the error. He concluded that, in spite of errors and omissions, the census painted a valuable picture of the spatial variations in relative levels of church attendance. This regional analysis took Pickering in the footsteps of his hero, Abraham Hume, and Pickering’s five maps illustrated variations in churchgoing at county level and offered comparisons between areas for the Church of England, Nonconformists and Roman Catholics. In his analysis of urban churchgoing he stopped short of proposing an ‘iron law’ in which churchgoing is seen to be inversely proportional to the population of an urban area”, but did concur with Inglis that there was a broad inverse correlation. He concluded that the results of the census could have been more accurate, but questioned whether the overall picture would have been significantly different.

At the same time as Pickering was questioning the usefulness of the Religious Census, David Thompson was examining it for problems and possibilities.<sup>62</sup> His article claimed to move the debate on from Inglis’s concern about religious practice in large towns. Thompson analysed 1,200 returns from nineteen registration districts, mainly in Leicestershire and Nottinghamshire, which he frequently used as local examples to illustrate general points. He surveyed the contemporary responses to the Census, plus Mann’s Report on his findings and his subsequent defences of his methodology.

---

<sup>62</sup> D.M. Thompson, ‘The 1851 Religious Census: Problems and Possibilities’ *Victorian Studies*, Vol. 11, No. 1 (Sep., 1967), pp. 87-97

He took Mann to task for insisting on the limited objectives of the census, yet drawing conclusions based only loosely on the statistics. Thompson also argued that the generalised, national picture was less useful than those drawn at regional or local level, subject to the limitations of the results.

He assessed the reliability of the figures for the number of places of worship and their accommodation, raising such issues as the anomalous returns for workhouses and prisons (some were included and some were not) along with deserted/disused churches, the failure to identify precisely some of the Nonconformist denominations and the reliability of the distinction between free and appropriated sittings. He highlighted the problems caused by the lack of differentiation in many returns between the general congregation and Sunday scholars, the latter being included in some places but not others and queried the use of a mixture of average and actual attendance figures and identified arithmetical errors in some of the tables (one of which may have led Inglis to calculate an unusually high Index of Attendance for Leicester).

His final criticisms were reserved for Mann's method of deriving attendants from attendances. He pointed to the unfairness to Nonconformists, illustrating this with local examples which also served to show differences between rural, semi-rural and urban districts. In addition to questioning the actual attendance returns, he looked at the reliability of a one-off count, particularly through some of the remarks on the returns which were offered as explanations of discrepant values. Nevertheless, he concluded that "the main value of the Census is its picture of religious practice. Though it is not possible to make any reliable comparisons over time, which is a

disadvantage, there is no other collection of statistical material which is as complete for comparing varying practice from place to place and from denomination to denomination. This is even more important than what the material reveals about non-attendance.”<sup>63</sup>

Ten years later, Thompson published what was considered at the time to be the broadest and best single contribution to the literature of the Religious Census.<sup>64</sup> Some of this was a more detailed working of familiar topics – the contemporary reaction to the report and the reliability of the data presented for accommodation and attendance. He elaborated on the use of actual and average figures and ventured to suggest that instead of using actual figures and supplementing them with averages where necessary (as Mann did), a more sensible method would be to reverse the process, using average figures as a base and interpolating actual figures as required. Thompson argues that one flaw in Mann’s method was that he gave no indication in the Tables of the proportion of average to actual figures. He justified his method by claiming that “no particular interest attaches to the number of people present on 30 March 1851 - it is valuable only in so far as it reflects a normal state of affairs”.<sup>65</sup> Moreover, some churches even admitted that they had put their average in the ‘actual’ column because the latter was so low.<sup>66</sup> It is tempting to support Thompson on this, especially as so many Warwickshire remarks comment on how

---

<sup>63</sup> D.M. Thompson, ‘The 1851 Religious Census: Problems and Possibilities’ p. 97

<sup>64</sup> D.M. Thompson, ‘The Religious Census of 1851’, in R. Lawton (ed.), *The Census and Social Structure* (London, 1979), pp. 241-86

<sup>65</sup> D.M. Thompson, ‘The Religious Census of 1851’ p. 250

<sup>66</sup> Examples in Warwickshire are the returns for Caldecote (H0129.398.1.1.1) and Weddington (H0129.398.1.2.2)

much lower the attendance on Census Sunday was than their usual number, but there is evidence to show that some respondents had an imperfect understanding of the term 'average', while others wrote that they had counted the actual attendances but had estimated (or guessed) the average. He trod familiar ground over the problem of attendants and attendances and the unfairness to Nonconformists, venturing to question why those who attended the Church of England in the morning and a Dissenting Chapel in the evening should be counted as Anglicans rather than Dissenters.

In his interpretation he pointed out that there had been initial concern about what the census showed about non-attendance. This fact had been discussed in the 1840s by such contrasting writers as Friedrich Engels and Edward Miall<sup>67</sup>, but the Census attempted to provide evidence of its scale (though Thompson indicated the misleading nature of Mann's precise figure of 5,288,294 absentees). He summarised the regional variations in strength between the Established Church, Nonconformists and Roman Catholics looking particularly at the types of area where Dissent was stronger than the Church of England, and made a case for further studies which look at the regional differences of the various Methodist denominations. He also elaborated on his use of original returns to make comparisons between settlements in the same area, being one of the first to suggest that the relative strength of different denominations in rural areas may be related to the nature of landholding in

---

<sup>67</sup> F. Engels, *The Condition of the Working Class in England* (1844); E. Miall, *The British Churches in Relation to the British People*, (1849)(cited in D.M. Thompson, 'The Religious Census of 1851', p 267, note 58)

the village.<sup>68</sup> Analysis of variations in denominational strength in Warwickshire is undertaken in Chapter 4, which concludes that many of Thompson's findings in Leicestershire, including the link between Nonconformity and 'open' parishes, the presence of rural Roman Catholics near the houses of old Catholic families, and Methodist links with mining and industrial villages, are echoed in Warwickshire.

The question of distribution pattern was taken up by Gay in the early 1970s.<sup>69</sup> He discussed the Religious Census in general at great length, and also made extensive use of the results when he analysed each major denomination. He tried to put it into a longer-term context, using it as one of many statistical sources to illustrate the changes in the geographical distribution of the major denominations in England over 200 years. His major contribution was the cartographical representation of his findings at county level.<sup>70</sup>

In 1991, ahead of the completion of his doctoral thesis, Ell published a short article explaining his use of computer technology to analyse the Census data.<sup>71</sup> He looked at the 624 Registration Districts, analysing the spatial patterns of worship for more than 20 denominations and creating up to ten variables for each denomination. The enormity of this task becomes apparent when one realises that this entailed 220 maps, each with 624 polygons (as well as more detailed maps at a larger scale). In this article Ell limited himself to just two illustrations of the marked variations in

---

<sup>68</sup> Kitson Clark had made a similar point in his Ford Lectures in 1960. See G. Kitson Clark, *The Making of Victorian England* (Oxford, 1962, 1965 edition) pp. 158-159

<sup>69</sup> J.D. Gay, *The Geography of Religion in England*

<sup>70</sup> J.D. Gay, *The Geography of Religion in England* pp. 264 – 335

<sup>71</sup> P.S. Ell, 'The Geography of Religious Worship in England and Wales - 1851 Census'

spatial patterns of worship which occurred over quite small areas. His map of the Index of Attendance for the Church of England showed the strength south of the line from the Wash to the Bristol Channel, and concomitant weakness to the north and west. But what this map demonstrated more clearly than the county maps of Gay and others was the unevenness of that strength, there being parts of the 'southern heartland' where, by this criterion, the Church was faring less well than in the 'non-Anglican north'. His other map, of the percentage share of sittings of the Wesleyan Methodists also showed an expected pattern of strength in the East Midlands, northern England and Cornwall, but also in some districts of the Anglican-dominated south, even where the Anglican Index of Attendance was high. Bringing the focus down to the scale of Registration Districts gives greater resolution to the picture of religious diversity which is illustrated by many of the editors of county transcriptions, including the present author, both here and in the commentary to the Warwickshire returns.<sup>72</sup>

## 2. Denominational Studies

Significant contributions to the historiography of the Religious Census have been made by the authors of denominational studies. These have included work by Coleman and Ell and Slater on the Church of England<sup>73</sup>, Field on Methodism, both nationally<sup>74</sup> and within Shropshire<sup>75</sup>, Watts on Nonconformists generally<sup>76</sup>, Butler on

---

<sup>72</sup> K. Geary (ed.), *The 1851 Census of Religious Worship: Church, Chapel, and Meeting Place in Mid Nineteenth-Century Warwickshire* (Stratford, 2014)

<sup>73</sup> B.I. Coleman, *The Church of England in the Mid-Nineteenth Century: a Social Geography* (London, 1980); P.S. Ell and T. Slater 'The Religious Census of 1851: a computer-mapped survey of the Church of England'

<sup>74</sup> C.D. Field, 'Methodism in the 1851 Religious Census'

the Society of Friends<sup>77</sup> and Benson and Doxey on the Church of the Latter Day Saints.<sup>78</sup> Almost all of these investigations raised the question of the reliability of the Religious Census; for some that was the main purpose of the study. Writers on the Church of England attempted to assess the extent to which the Church of England had responded to criticisms of the Hanoverian Church and early nineteenth century legislation, Watts and Coleman addressed the question of continuity, while Coleman also looked at the influence of landowning patterns on the strength of the Church of England.

Coleman's study of the Church of England in the mid-nineteenth century used the results of the Religious Census to explore the reasons for the regional and social variations in levels of Anglican practice, while Ell and Slater demonstrated the developments which had taken place in data analysis by looking at a variety of performance measures for the Church of England at a much smaller scale than had previously been attempted.<sup>79</sup> Because variations occurred over quite small areas, they believed that analysis at county level was inadequate "even for the omnipresent Church of England". They used computer-generated maps at Registration District level to enable a more detailed atlas of mid-nineteenth century

---

<sup>75</sup> C.D. Field, 'Methodism in Shropshire in 1851: an overview from the Religious Census', *Shropshire History and Archaeology*, Vol. LXXX (2005) pp. 176-189

<sup>76</sup> M.R. Watts, *The Dissenters Vol. 2. The Expansion of Evangelical Nonconformity* (Oxford, 1995)

<sup>77</sup> D.M. Butler, 'Places of Worship in the National Census of 1851', *Journal of the Friends' Historical Society* Vol. 55, (1983-89) pp. 25-34

<sup>78</sup> E.C. Benson and C. Doxey, 'The Ecclesiastical Census of 1851 and the Church of Jesus Christ and the Latter-day Saints in *Local Historian* (May 2004)

<sup>79</sup> P.S. Ell and T. Slater, 'The Religious Census of 1851: a computer-mapped survey of the Church of England'

religious practice to be produced. Coleman put the mid-nineteenth century Church into an historical context, tracing the Church of England back to the Reformation, Old Dissent Nonconformists back to the Restoration of 1660 and the Methodists to the middle of the eighteenth century. He linked the regional variations in religious performance to the regionalisation not only of industrial change but also of urbanisation.<sup>80</sup> Ell and Slater identified two major themes in the literature explaining spatial patterns. The first was in terms of denominational reciprocities, while the second involved reference to a whole range of socio-economic factors.<sup>81</sup> Those who had looked at reciprocities faced problems which were derived initially from the fact that the data at county level lacked precision. Ell and Slater contended that their data at Registration District level allowed a more clearly defined pattern to emerge.

In rural areas Coleman identified a number of factors which allowed Anglicanism to remain strong. These included the presence of small, single-village parishes with easily accessible churches, easily supervised by the parson, parishes owned by one person or a few large proprietors and communities which were predominantly agricultural. However, even in these ideal areas, there were adverse factors such as non-residence and disputes over tithe and enclosure which contributed to the creation of a diversity of rural communities. In urban areas he recognised that different types of town tended to produce a corresponding type of religious condition. Much of this depended on the nature and growth of industrialisation as well as migration and social structure. He also considered the variations which

---

<sup>80</sup> B.I. Coleman, *The Church of England in the Mid-Nineteenth Century*: pp. 3-5

<sup>81</sup> P.S. Ell and T. Slater 'The Religious Census of 1851: a computer-mapped survey of the Church of England' p. 48

existed within towns and the relationship between towns and their rural surroundings.<sup>82</sup> Ell and Slater's analysis at Registration District level identified, and attempted to quantify, intra-county variations in Church of England strength which had not previously been possible. It also pointed the way forward in looking at other denominations, and offering the ability to investigate more closely the social and economic factors affecting the religious geography of mid-nineteenth century England and Wales, which came to fruition in the collaboration between Ell and Snell in the book *Rival Jerusalems*.<sup>83</sup> For both rural and urban areas, this study considers the Warwickshire context in Chapter 2, and using this evidence, analyses the results of the Religious Census in Chapter 4.

Field's analysis of the Census from a Methodist perspective is concerned less with an assessment of denominational strength and more with using other denominational data to look again at the reliability of the census as a historical document.<sup>84</sup> The enumeration returns he used were limited to those counties which had already been transcribed and published<sup>85</sup>, plus London from his own study, which explains the absence of such Methodist strongholds as Cornwall, Lancashire and Yorkshire. He conceded that his list was arbitrarily rather than scientifically selected and thus that his findings should be regarded as "indicative but not necessarily fully

---

<sup>82</sup> B.I. Coleman, *The Church of England in the Mid-Nineteenth Century*: pp. 16-19, 26-34

<sup>83</sup> K.D.M. Snell and P.S Ell, *Rival Jerusalems: the Geography of Victorian Religion*, (Cambridge, 2000)

<sup>84</sup> C.D. Field, 'Methodism in the 1851 Religious Census'

<sup>85</sup> Bedfordshire, Buckinghamshire, Devon, Hampshire, Lincolnshire, Monmouthshire, Montgomeryshire, Nottinghamshire, Oxfordshire and Sussex.

representative”.<sup>86</sup> The local evidence which he used for comparison came primarily from Circuit plans, which exist for 101 Methodist circuits.<sup>87</sup> This comprised another arbitrary limit on the analysis. He analysed the number of places of worship, the accommodation provided, attendances on Census Sunday and on average, and the reasons for the differences between them. He concluded that up to five per cent of Methodist places of worship were omitted, principally, but not exclusively, small societies meeting in private houses and mainly from some of the newer branches (especially Wesleyan Association and Wesleyan Reform Union congregations). He found that the returns were, in the main, complete and promptly returned despite the fact that almost three-quarters were returned by laymen rather than ministers. However, up to half were rounded rather than being precisely enumerated, rather more than in Warwickshire.

Field pointed out that average Methodist attendances were about eleven per cent higher than those recorded on the day (citing the usual comments from the ‘Remarks’ section of the forms – weather, sickness and seasonal employment, as well as the presence of a lay preacher rather than a minister and the holding of a prayer meeting rather than a full service with sermon). At the same time, about a quarter of Methodist congregations were above average – often due to a special service, though this may have caused reduced numbers (or no service at all) at neighbouring chapels. He concurred with many of his predecessors that there is no reliable method for converting Methodist attendances for Census Sunday to a figure

---

<sup>86</sup> C.D. Field, ‘Methodism in the 1851 Religious Census, p. 170

<sup>87</sup> C.D. Field, ‘Methodism in the 1851 Religious Census, p. 188

for an overall worshipping community, but he concluded that the Census “probably still remains a broadly accurate quantitative tool for examining the state of English and Welsh Methodism at mid-century, provided that the unit of geographical analysis is kept sufficiently large”.<sup>88</sup> As is shown later, Field’s optimism was shattered when, some ten years later, he turned his attention to the Shropshire returns.

Butler’s survey of places of worship from a Quaker viewpoint is unusual in that it is based on duplicates of the P.R.O. schedules which were collected by the Monthly Meetings and kept by the Friends in their own Library.<sup>89</sup> The collection of a second set of records may partly be explained by the fact that an earlier attempt at obtaining information on places of worship in 1810 had been limited by the fact that some Quaker meetinghouses were not reported. Butler compared the individual returns with the summary pages and with records of meetings for 1851 and 1852. He found numerous discrepancies, the most serious being thirteen meetings omitted from the Census entirely. However he failed to recognise the possibility of double counting in some places. The significant effect of this in Warwickshire, especially the double counting of the large Birmingham meeting is discussed in Chapter 4, where some of the conclusions of the leading historian of Victorian Quakerism are called into question. By making comparisons with membership figures for 1861, he concluded that the attendance of Friends at Meeting on Census Sunday was of the order of 75%, a remarkable figure in comparison with other denominations and

---

<sup>88</sup> C.D. Field, ‘Methodism in the 1851 Religious Census, p. 181

<sup>89</sup> D.M. Butler, ‘Places of Worship in the National Census of 1851’, pp. 25-34

considering the reports throughout the country of bad weather and widespread illness.<sup>90</sup>

In the second volume of his magnum opus on Nonconformity<sup>91</sup>, Watts sought to examine the durability over time of the geography of the major denominations to identify historical continuity. To do this, he compared Evans's list of Dissenting congregations from 1715 – 1718 and that of Thompson in 1772 – 1773 with data from the Religious Census to show the great expansion of Nonconformity from the reign of George I to that of Queen Victoria, at a rate which far outstripped the growth of population.<sup>92</sup> Moreover, by number of places of worship, Nonconformists significantly outnumbered Anglicans by 1851. Watts pointed out that more than half of the Nonconformists congregations were Methodists, and that, although Mann was quite happy to lump together all the Dissenting groups, the leaders of the Wesleyan Methodists were less so. However, the 40% or so Methodists who were not Wesleyans had no fewer objections to being classified as Dissenters.

He repeated many of the problems with the Religious Census identified by previous writers, but made a significant contribution to the debate over the translation of attendance figures into the number of worshippers. To counteract the bias against Dissenters which Mann admitted his formula produced, Watts used the totals for the best attended services for each denomination from each Registration District and

---

<sup>90</sup> Three 'in-house' censuses of attendance taken by the Friends in 1904, 1909 and 1914 showed attendance rates of about 30%.

<sup>91</sup> M.R. Watts, *The Dissenters Vol. 2*.

<sup>92</sup> While the population of England and Wales had grown from about 7 million in 1773 to 17.9 million in 1851, an increase of 155%, the number of Nonconformist congregations had risen by 975%. M.R. Watts, *The Dissenters Vol. 2*, p. 24

added one-third of the total attendances at other services, a slightly more conservative estimate than that proposed for London by Mudie-Smith. He claimed this formula was justified by what is known about the frequency of church attendance in the nineteenth century and that it produced results which tallied with church membership data. In Appendix 1 he elaborated on the deficiencies of earlier attempts to quantify attenders on Census Sunday and further justified his formula with reference to contemporary remarks taken from the Census returns. In Chapter 3 of the present study, I attempt to assess the number of people at worship on Census Sunday from the returns of attendances using Watts's formula, though some of the remarks in the returns pointed to an absence of double counting.

Watts highlighted the problems caused by returns which were "defective as to attendance", making estimates for those churches and chapels which provided accommodation figures but not attendances, but not for those which provided neither. He also showed that some of the more serious defects in the published tables arose from carelessness on the part of the clerks who transferred the figures from the returns rather than "from the incompetency or dishonesty of the ministers who made the returns and of the enumerators who checked them".<sup>93</sup>

A year after he edited the transcriptions of the Returns for Shropshire, Field published an article reflecting on Methodism in the county<sup>94</sup> "shortly before it reached its high point".<sup>95</sup> He extracted the data concerning Methodism from his

---

<sup>93</sup> M.R. Watts, *The Dissenters Vol. 2*, p. 673

<sup>94</sup> C.D. Field, 'Methodism in Shropshire in 1851' pp. 176-189

<sup>95</sup> C.D. Field, 'Methodism in Shropshire in 1851' p. 176

larger work and combined it with material which did not find its way into the book. He dealt at length with methodological and interpretative issues, in particular the extent to which returns have survived, or not. This is hardly surprising, as he found almost 200 Methodist places of worship (about 43%) were missed by the enumerators. He also revisited, with a Methodist emphasis, other issues such as the accuracy of surviving returns, including the way in which congregations were enumerated, whether attendance on 30 March was typical (due to its being Mothering Sunday, the weather and local outbreaks of sickness), the question of twicers and data concerning Sunday Schools.<sup>96</sup> As the review of county transcriptions later in this chapter shows, this crucial question of the diligence of the enumerators and consequently the reliability of the Religious Census returns can best be studied in the context of county-based studies, which are of an appropriate size to detect differences. Each county's degree of accuracy can be seen as a point on a continuum, with Warwickshire appearing towards the more reliable end.

In his overview, Field analysed in great detail the results for the different branches of Methodism, finding significant variations within the county. All branches of Arminian Methodism which had separated from the Original Connexion in the fifty or so years since Wesley's death were represented, with the exception of the Bible Christians. However, with only 24 chapels between them (and perhaps about 20 missed) the Methodist New Connexion, Wesleyan Methodist Association, Wesleyan Reform Association and the Independent Methodists were not significant forces. The Primitive Methodists, on the other hand, most certainly were. In terms of recorded

---

<sup>96</sup> C.D. Field, 'Methodism in Shropshire in 1851' pp. 178-180

places of worship and attendances, they comfortably exceeded the Wesleyan Methodists, especially in the north of the county, close to their Staffordshire origins. These figures placed them as the second largest denomination in the county after the Church of England and as the largest group of Nonconformists, while the omission of so many of their preaching stations and cottage meetings meant that the success of the Primitive Methodists was certainly understated.<sup>97</sup>

Consideration of the Census results from a denominational viewpoint was extended in 2004 by the work of Benson and Doxey on the records concerning the Mormons.<sup>98</sup> They highlighted the problems facing the enumerators in trying to find meetings of Nonconformists (especially the newer varieties) which were not so well known or had no recognisable meeting places. With regard to the Mormons, branches (congregations) and conferences (groups of branches) sometimes grew up overnight and they asked "How could an enumerator hope to find branches that perhaps a week before did not even exist?"<sup>99</sup>

They pointed out that the Church of Jesus Christ and the Latter Day Saints provided a good case study of the thoroughness of the Religious Census, since the Church was extremely thorough in its branch record keeping. Contemporary sources reported that the number of branches recorded by the Church (575) was nearly three times

---

<sup>97</sup> C.D. Field, 'Methodism in Shropshire in 1851' p. 181

<sup>98</sup> E.C. Benson and C. Doxey, 'The Ecclesiastical Census of 1851 and the Church of Jesus Christ and the Latter-day Saints'

<sup>99</sup> E.C. Benson and C. Doxey, 'The Ecclesiastical Census of 1851 and the Church of Jesus Christ and the Latter-day Saints' p. 66

higher than the 222 listed in the Census<sup>100</sup>, though they were only able to find 210 returns which they could identify with confidence. They discovered that only 37% of branches with membership records were definitely found in the Census – a figure comparable with the returns for other denominations (such as the Baptists in Suffolk). The explanation for missed branches is fairly simple and mirrors other new denominations – lack of permanent meeting places, frequent changes of meeting place or use of places which served other purposes during the week. Of the six Mormon places of worship recorded in Warwickshire, three (Birmingham, Coventry and Fillongley) were listed as chapels<sup>101</sup>, while of the three meeting places, both Welford on Avon and Pailton were exclusively for worship<sup>102</sup>, and only Avon Dasset was described as “part of a house”.<sup>103</sup>

### 3. Regional Studies

At regional level, there have been major contributions from Goodridge, Coleman and Snell.<sup>104</sup> Goodridge’s early attempt involved a consideration of reciprocity by taking the data at registration district level for the West Country counties of Gloucestershire, Wiltshire and Somerset and calculating indices of attendance for all denominations and for four separate groups - Church of England,

---

<sup>100</sup> E.C. Benson and C. Doxey, ‘The Ecclesiastical Census of 1851 and the Church of Jesus Christ and the Latter-day Saints’ p. 67

<sup>101</sup> HO129.394.5.1.5; HO129.400.1.1.12; HO129.396.2.10.13

<sup>102</sup> HO129.404.4.5.7; HO129.408.1.2.3

<sup>103</sup> HO129.163.3.4.24

<sup>104</sup> R.M. Goodridge, ‘The Religious Condition of the West Country in 1851’, *Social Compass*, Vol.XIV (1967) pp. 285 – 296; B.I. Coleman, ‘Southern England in the Census of Religious Worship, 1851’ *Southern History*, 5 (1983) pp. 154 - 188; K.D.M. Snell, *Church and Chapel in the North Midlands: Religious Observance in the Nineteenth Century* (Leicester, 1991)

Independent/Congregationalists, Baptists and Methodist. He indicated these by simple shading onto base maps of the area, which allowed him to make comparisons between the denominations and geographically.

After his work on the Church of England, Coleman reduced his geographical field of study to ten counties (or two Registration Divisions) of southern England (which may or may not constitute a distinctive region), but broadened his scope to cover the patterns of worship of all denominations. His primary contention that (Cornwall apart) the chief characteristic of the region was Anglican predominance was tempered by the fact that this predominance was unevenly distributed and this necessitated dividing the area into at least five sub-regions. Even then, there were internal variations, some of which, he suggested, may have been linked to the region's long coastline and the contrasts between inland and coastal districts in several counties. Although he deliberately eschewed attempts at explanation, his conclusions raised the usual issues about the local circumstances which may have tended to undermine the dominance of the Established Church. He alluded to Anglican weakness in the upland areas, but made no further suggestions as to why. He identified industrial areas such as the Weald, the Wiltshire textile towns and especially the mining districts of Devon and Cornwall, where Anglicanism suffered either relatively or absolutely at the hands of Nonconformity. He also pointed to the effects of urbanisation, arguing that, even excluding London, the region contained a number of urban areas where the churches were experiencing similar problems to those in the industrial north and midlands.

He relied entirely on the printed figures in the Census Report to produce his Indices of Attendance and Percentage Share, but made no attempt to use any actual returns, either at county level or below. He did, however, consider that his discussion at regional level “should provide an appropriate framework” for smaller scale studies.<sup>105</sup> Throughout this study, consideration is given to the diversity of both urban and rural contexts in Warwickshire. The variety of towns includes a conurbation, a mediaeval city in the case of Coventry, a county town and a nineteenth-century resort as well as a number of market towns, while the rural areas encompass not only Felden and Arden, but also mining and industrial villages.

In his analysis of the North Midlands, Snell’s main aims were to analyse denominational proximity or regional reciprocity and to apply statistical analysis to the material derived from the 1851 Religious Census. As a subsidiary element he also attempted to analyse the occupational basis of denominations, especially Nonconformists. He applied statistical analysis to the Tillyard thesis of regional complementarity between Old and New Dissent and found that the statistical correlation expected if Tillyard’s thesis is to stand scrutiny was lacking. He identified a number of problems, most notably the use of countywide data which hid local geographical differences and the broad denominational generalisations among Nonconformists which masked denominational differences.<sup>106</sup> He attempted to find contrasts and similarities with Southern England by applying correlation techniques

---

<sup>105</sup> B.I. Coleman, ‘Southern England in the Census of Religious Worship, 1851’ p. 154. By this time, Coleman had already written articles for *Devon Historian* on Devon and Exeter and subsequently produced a chapter on nineteenth century Nonconformity for the book by N. Orme, *Unity and variety: a history of the church in Devon and Cornwall* (Exeter, 1991) pp. 129 -55

<sup>106</sup> K.D.M. Snell, *Church and Chapel in the North Midlands* pp. 3 - 8

to Coleman's figures and concluded that "insofar as generalisations can be made from Registration District data about which denominational strengths and weaknesses coincided, they commonly have to be made by grouping the Registration Districts of a number of counties together to form general census-type regions. One should stress, however, that in the south, as in the North Midlands such generalisations will often be contrary to individual county patterns within the overall region".<sup>107</sup>

#### 4. Urban and Rural studies.

Significant accounts have been given of the church in urban and rural areas – the former being covered by Yates, Coleman and Smith<sup>108</sup>, the latter by Everitt and Obelkevich.<sup>109</sup>

##### a. Urban Studies

In his assessment of urban church attendance in the second half of the nineteenth century, Yates used the Religious Census as his starting point and traced the development through later local censuses for a number of towns. He cited Leeds as an example of the speciousness of the argument that there was insufficient space in churches for the growing urban population. His table of changes in attendance at

---

<sup>107</sup> K.D.M. Snell, *Church and Chapel in the North Midlands* p. 50. Chapter 5 of this study attempts to analyse variations in occupations among Nonconformist denominations in Warwickshire, while reciprocity is a key issue in Chapter 4.

<sup>108</sup> N. Yates, 'Urban Church Attendance and the Use of Statistical Evidence, 1850 – 1900', *Studies in Church History*, xvi, (1979) pp. 389-400; B.I. Coleman, 'Religion in the Victorian City' *History Today*, 30:8 August 1980 pp. 25 - 31; M.A. Smith, *Religion and Industrial Society* (Oxford, 1994)

<sup>109</sup> A. Everitt, *The Pattern of Rural Dissent: the Nineteenth Century*, (Leicester, 1972); J. Obelkevich, *Religion and Rural Society: South Lindsey, 1825-1875* (Oxford, 1976)

selected Portsmouth churches shows that for each of four denominations, both overall increase and decrease were recorded, for a variety of reasons. This, he claimed, served as “a further warning to those who are too eager to see general patterns in urban churchgoing”.<sup>110</sup> As this study will show in Chapter 3, the availability of sittings in the Birmingham conurbations supports Yates’s view that if the working classes were absenting themselves from Sunday worship it was not simply due to lack of physical space.

Coleman’s assessment of urban religion in Victorian England began with two contemporary views – that of Engels arguing that the cities were witnessing a breakdown of religious belief and practice, and that of Vaughan, who maintained that, whatever the short-term problems, Christianity, and in particular Protestant Nonconformity would eventually triumph. The early analysis of the Census results for the largest towns showed that the level of urban churchgoing was only two-thirds of that in the rest of society. While this supported the view of many Anglicans that the cities were less amenable to religious belief and practice, it hardly amounted to the total breakdown of urban religion anticipated by Engels and feared by pessimists both at the time and subsequently.<sup>111</sup>

Coleman also highlighted the inadvisability of regarding towns (or large towns) as a homogeneous group, pointing out the marked variations between the towns in their returns in the Census<sup>112</sup> and consideration has already been given above to different

---

<sup>110</sup> N. Yates, ‘Urban Church Attendance and the Use of Statistical Evidence, 1850 – 1900’ p. 395

<sup>111</sup> B.I. Coleman, ‘Religion in the Victorian City’ p. 26

<sup>112</sup> B.I. Coleman, ‘Religion in the Victorian City’ pp. 26-27

types of town in mid-nineteenth century Warwickshire. In general there was an inverse correlation between the size of town and levels of worship, though this was more likely where rapid growth had occurred in the first half of the nineteenth century (outstripping the ability of the churches to provide places of worship). In the case of the largest cities, Coleman regarded occupational and class structure as determinants of religious performance and linked this to the spatial pattern of distribution of class groupings and denominational buildings within towns, especially London, while immigration from outside England was also a significant factor (especially in Liverpool).<sup>113</sup> According to Coleman the evaluation of the position of Protestant Nonconformity is complicated by its heterogeneity<sup>114</sup> – old Dissent contained four significant denominations, while the Methodists had already fragmented and were in the process of coping with further schism at the time of the Religious Census. Coleman concluded that the Victorian cities “presented two very different pictures”. He claimed that Vaughan’s boom in Protestant Christianity could be seen in the high levels of religious observance among the prosperous and respectable, while at the same time, Engels’s supporters could claim that there was a growing working class indifference to regular worship.<sup>115</sup>

---

<sup>113</sup> B.I. Coleman, ‘Religion in the Victorian City’ p. 30

<sup>114</sup> B.I. Coleman, ‘Religion in the Victorian City’ p. 30. This has been echoed by other writers including R.G. Cowherd, *The Politics of English Dissent* (London, 1959) p. 15; I. Sellers, *Nineteenth-Century Nonconformity* (London, 1977) pp. 1, 14; D.W. Bebbington, *Victorian Nonconformity* (Bangor, 1992) pp. 1-30; D.A. Johnson, *The Changing Shape of English Nonconformity 1825 – 1925* (Oxford, 1999).

<sup>115</sup> B.I. Coleman, ‘Religion in the Victorian City’ p. 31

In Oldham & Saddleworth, Smith examined the reliability of the returns and found that in Oldham “the Census failed to pick up an Independent Methodist room at Greenacres with at least 300 seats, and many of the small chapels, preaching rooms and cottages favoured by the Methodists may also have slipped through the census net”<sup>116</sup>. This led him to conclude that ‘when at least one in four Independent Methodist and three in seven Primitive Methodist buildings remained undetected, the 1851 Census must be regarded as a very defective instrument for assessing Methodist accommodation in Oldham’.<sup>117</sup> Regarding the overall value of the Religious Census, Smith was inclined to a pessimistic view, claiming that “an estimate of church attendance on a rainy Sunday in 1851 does not go far to illuminate the changing relationship between religion and industrial communities”.<sup>118</sup>

#### b. Rural Studies

The mid 1970s saw the publication of two very important works on rural religion. Everitt began by warning that “many peculiarities in the pattern of Dissent (were) ... certainly due to purely personal or fortuitous causes”.<sup>119</sup> His four case studies reveal very different pictures – Kent was predominantly Anglican, in Northamptonshire, Old Dissent and Lincolnshire, New Dissent were widely found, while Leicestershire presented a balance between the two.

---

<sup>116</sup> M.A. Smith, *Religion and Industrial Society* p. 206

<sup>117</sup> M.A. Smith, *Religion and Industrial Society* p. 206

<sup>118</sup> M.A. Smith, *Religion and Industrial Society* p. 268-9

<sup>119</sup> A. Everitt, *The Pattern of Rural Dissent*: p. 12

His major contribution, however, was the assessment of the types of rural parish and rural economy where new Dissent had taken root. He found a marked variation in parishes differentiated according to types of landholding, drawing attention to the greater spread of Nonconformity in 'freeholder parishes' (subdivided or much subdivided) compared to that in 'estate parishes' (with one or few owners). In this latter group he found more Nonconformity where landlords were absent and living at a distance. He considered the growth of Dissent in boundary (or frontier) settlements, decayed market towns, industrial villages and large parishes comprising numerous dispersed hamlets. This study considers the economic and social background of Warwickshire in Chapter 2, while Chapter 4 includes a consideration of the relationship between the distribution of Nonconformity and the various types of settlement found in the county.

Everitt concluded that mid-nineteenth century rural Dissent was closely associated with social and economic freedom and in settlements which tended to be of very early or very late origin. He found a marked tendency for old Dissent to be associated with forest and wood-pasture areas (large parishes and scattered settlements) with new Dissent more commonly found in the smaller and more arable parishes of the limestone and Lias belts. This point that differences within counties were as important as differences between them is a valuable one, but greater inter-county differences would surely have been noted if his choice of counties had been less restricted.

At about the same time, Obelkevich was producing his seminal work on rural religion, based on one part of a single county.<sup>120</sup> Unlike many previous writers who merely used the summary tables in the Parliamentary Report, all the figures which Obelkevich used were based on the original returns. For the Church of England<sup>121</sup> he analysed attendance at morning and afternoon services (only 2 churches out of 225 in South Lindsey held an evening service) and showed afternoon services better attended than morning, the former being preferred by farmers and the latter by their labourers. He related attendance to size of population and type of parish and found that a higher proportion attended churches in smaller parishes. As for parish type, his results were as ‘theory’ predicts – the more ‘open’ the parish, the lower the level of attendance. However ‘close’ parishes generally were smaller than ‘open’ and thus he questioned how much of the variation was due to population size and how much to type. Comparing similar sized parishes, he concluded tentatively that attendance was affected more by size than type, though there was a high correlation between the two variables. Chapter 2 of this study attempts to sub-divide Warwickshire parishes into ‘open’ and ‘close’ and according to size, providing comparisons with Obelkevich’s findings in South Lindsey, while Chapter 4 relates these to the distribution of Nonconformity in mid-nineteenth century Warwickshire.

Obelkevich also picked his way deftly through the minefields posed by the counting (or not) of Sunday scholars and of twicers to conclude that ‘if 30 March 1851 was anything like a typical Sunday, church attendance was customary for a large minority

---

<sup>120</sup> J. Obelkevich, *Religion and Rural Society*

<sup>121</sup> J. Obelkevich, *Religion and Rural Society* pp. 152 – 157

of the village population but not a majority. He attempted to analyse motives for church attendance, accepting as a “commonplace that most who attended church also attended chapel”.<sup>122</sup> For Obelkevich, many attended church out of deference (to clergy) and chapel out of desire for salvation. He claimed that local evidence backed Hume’s view of morning service as the ‘service of respectability’ (squires and farmers seeking respectability), the afternoon as the ‘service of convenience’ (labourers showing respect for the parson) and the evening service as the ‘service of devotion’ (“for the few who were poor and pious but not Methodists”).<sup>123</sup> However, if only 2 out of 225 parishes Churches in South Lindsey held an evening service, there would seem to be very few who were “poor and pious but not Methodists”. In Warwickshire, where there was a much greater choice of Nonconformist denomination, there were examples of both competition and cooperation, with many of the services being held in the morning, directly in competition with those at the parish church. Elsewhere in Warwickshire, though, cooperation occurred, with service time being altered to allow villagers to attend both church and chapel.<sup>124</sup>

Turning his attention to Wesleyan Methodism<sup>125</sup> Obelkevich analysed in general terms its relative strengths compared with the Church of England in favour of the former (though it is occasionally necessary to add in other Nonconformist congregations). In attempting to show that, paradoxically, Wesleyan Methodism was

---

<sup>122</sup> J. Obelkevich, *Religion and Rural Society* pp. 156-157

<sup>123</sup> J. Obelkevich, *Religion and Rural Society* p. 157. For the Warwickshire returns this is dealt with in the second part of Chapter 5 of this study.

<sup>124</sup> Such as Upper Quinton Methodist Chapel (HO129.406.1.1.2) where the steward wrote “When there is a service at Church in the afternoon, the service is morning and evening at Chapel.”

<sup>125</sup> J. Obelkevich, *Religion and Rural Society* pp. 195 – 197

more catholic than the Establishment, he pointed out that over half of the society stewards making returns to the Religious Census were farmers, of whom nearly two thirds had holdings of more than 100 acres – men of substance were not out of place in this office. He utilised circuit plans and seat rent books where they exist and linked class leaders and local preachers to occupations via the census, but was hampered by the absence of class books for the area in identifying rank and file members. He also considered the disparity between membership and attendance – those who were committed and those who were merely adherents.

## 5. County Transcriptions

Major contributions to the local study of the Religious Census have been made by those who have transcribed the local returns for a county, and then offered a commentary based on their findings. These transcriptions allowed their authors (and subsequent students) to compare their county with national patterns, but also to consider local variations within the county (and within smaller areas). The commentaries which accompanied these transcriptions varied considerably in length and scope. Some were rather brief descriptions of the results with limited analysis. Others were weightier and set the results in the context of their county's economic and social history as well as the national setting. Some writers were content with merely transcribing the returns, while others made use of a variety of contemporaneous sources to add detail to the picture being presented and also to assist with the verification and analysis. Most of the writers assessed the reliability of the returns, and used local examples to illustrate points which were raised

nationally, such as reasons for the low turnout and opposition to the Census, especially among Anglican clergy.

Although the original returns had been made available in 1951, more than twenty years elapsed before the transcriptions for English counties began to be published. Rogers produced transcriptions for the city of Nottingham as early as 1972<sup>126</sup>, but the accolade of 'first countywide publication' must go to Bushby's Bedfordshire in 1975.<sup>127</sup> This has been followed by: Wales, Lincolnshire, Oxfordshire, Nottinghamshire, Sussex, Devon, Buckinghamshire, Hampshire, Derbyshire, Hertfordshire, Surrey, Suffolk, Norfolk, Kent, Worcestershire, Yorkshire, Rutland, Shropshire, Northamptonshire, Berkshire, Northumberland and Durham, Warwickshire, Cambridgeshire and Huntingdonshire, and Bristol and

---

<sup>126</sup> A. Rogers, 'The 1851 religious census returns for the city of Nottingham' *Transactions of the Thoroton Society of Nottinghamshire* Vol. 76 (1973 for 1972) pp. 74-87

<sup>127</sup> D.W. Bushby, (ed.), *The Ecclesiastical Census, March 1851, Bedfordshire*, (Amphill, 1975)

Gloucestershire. There is also an undated survey of West Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly.<sup>128</sup>

#### a. Reliability and Accuracy

The most pressing question raised by almost every author was that of the reliability and accuracy of the source material. In Wales, Jones found that the accuracy of the returns was compromised by administrative errors, especially in the preparations for collecting the data, and that consequently some churches and chapels were missed. There were misunderstandings over definitions, such as what constituted a separate place of worship, and between free and appropriated sittings. Denominational

---

<sup>128</sup> I.G. Jones and D. Williams (eds.), *The Religious Census of 1851: A Calendar of the Returns relating to Wales, Volume I, South Wales* (Cardiff, 1976); I.G. Jones (ed.), *The Religious Census of 1851: A Calendar of the Returns relating to Wales, Volume II, North Wales* (Cardiff, 1981); R.W. Ambler (ed.), *Lincolnshire returns of the census of religious worship, 1851* (Lincoln Record Society, Fakenham, 1979); K. Tiller (ed.), *Church and Chapel in Oxfordshire, 1851: The Return of the Census of Religious Worship* (Oxford, 1987); M.R. Watts (ed.), *Religion in Victorian Nottinghamshire: The Religious Census of 1851*, (Nottingham, 1988); J.A. Vickers (ed.), *The Religious Census of Sussex, 1851* (Lewes, 1989); M.J.L. Wickes (ed.), *Devon in the Religious Census of 1851* (Bideford, c1990); E. Legg (ed.), *Buckinghamshire Returns of the Census of Religious Worship* (Aylesbury, 1991); J.A. Vickers (ed.), *The Religious Census of Hampshire, 1851* (Winchester, 1993); M. Tranter, D.A. Barton and P.S. Ell (eds.), *The Derbyshire Returns to the 1851 Religious Census* Derbyshire Record Society, 23, (Chesterfield, 1995); J. Burg (ed.), *Religion in Hertfordshire, 1847 to 1851* Hertfordshire Record Society, 11, (s.l., 1995); C. Webb, and D. Robinson, (eds.), *The 1851 Religious Census: Surrey*, Surrey Record Society, 35, (Guildford, 1997); T.C.B. Timmins (ed.), *Suffolk Returns from the Census of Religious Worship of 1851*, Suffolk Records Society, 39, (Woodbridge, 1997); J. Ede and N. Virgoe (eds.), *Religious Worship in Norfolk*, Norfolk Record Society, 62, (Norwich, 1998); M. Roake (ed.), *Religious Worship in Kent: the Census of 1851*, Kent Archaeological Society, Kent Records, 27, (Maidstone, 1999); J. Aitken (ed.), *Census of Religious Worship, 1851, The Returns for Worcestershire* (Worcester, 2000); J. Wolffe (ed.), *Yorkshire Returns of the 1851 Census of Religious Worship Vol.1*, (York, 2000); J. Wolffe (ed.), *Yorkshire Returns of the 1851 Census of Religious Worship* Yorkshire Volumes 2&3, (York, 2005); P. Tomalin, 'The Returns of the Rutland Districts to the 1851 Census of Religious Worship in Rutland', *Journal of the Rutland Local History & Record Society* No 22, (2002) pp. 51-67; P. Tomalin, 'The returns to the 1851 Census by the Rutland parishes in the Stamford Registration District', *Journal of the Rutland Local History & Record Society* No 24, (2004) pp. 169-174; C.D. Field (ed.), *Church and Chapel in Early Victorian Shropshire: Returns from the 1851 Census of Religious Worship*, (Keele, 2004); C.G. Ward (ed.) *The 1851 Religious Census of Northamptonshire*, (Northampton, 2007); K. Tiller (ed.), *Berkshire Religious Census 1851* Berkshire Record Society (Reading, 2010); A.F. Munden (ed.), *Religious Census of 1851: Northumberland and Durham* (Woodbridge, 2012); K. Geary (ed.) *The 1851 Census of Religious Worship: Church, Chapel, and Meeting Place in Mid Nineteenth-Century Warwickshire*; D.M. Thompson, (ed.) *Religious life in mid-19th century Cambridgeshire and Huntingdonshire: the returns for the 1851 census of religious worship* (Cambridge, 2014); A.F. Munden (ed.), *Religious census of Bristol and Gloucestershire, 1851* (Cheltenham, 2015) J.C.C. Probert (ed.), *West Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly* (n.d.)

definitions also caused problems, especially with regard to the Baptists, but this was much less of a problem in Wales than in England since the General Baptists were extremely few. There was also evidence of confusion over place names. There were places of the same name in different counties and places with similar names, which London clerks may have found almost unintelligible and difficult to differentiate. Nevertheless Jones claimed that “It is reasonable to conclude, therefore, that the system devised by Mann, though far from perfect, achieved a fair degree of accuracy so far as the actual counting and recording of places of worship were concerned, their denominational allegiances and the sitting accommodation they provided”.<sup>129</sup> This was in marked contrast to Field’s subsequent findings in one of the Marcher counties. As far as the attendance figures were concerned, there were contemporary accusations of inaccuracy due to exaggeration as well as conspiracy among Dissenters to inflate artificially the numbers of attendants by encouraging people to attend additional services in chapels other than their own. However, he found very little evidence in the returns to support such claims.<sup>130</sup> He did find, in the Remarks, that there was concern to explain the discrepancies between the actual and average attendances, including Mothering Sunday, the weather, the popularity or otherwise of particular preachers and sickness. The local economy also featured here – cattle farming, fishing and the shift system in the copper works of Swansea and Llanelli.<sup>131</sup>

---

<sup>129</sup> I.G. Jones and D. Williams (eds.), *The Religious Census of 1851: A Calendar of the Returns relating to Wales, Volume I*, p. xxii

<sup>130</sup> I.G. Jones and D. Williams (eds.), *The Religious Census of 1851: A Calendar of the Returns relating to Wales, Volume I*, p. xxv

<sup>131</sup> I.G. Jones and D. Williams (eds.), *The Religious Census of 1851: A Calendar of the Returns relating to Wales, Volume I*, p. xxvi

In Oxfordshire, Tiller found eight chapels in an 1852 directory which were not apparently in the returns. She argued that some would have been missed due to a lack of permanent buildings (especially among the Primitive Methodists) but did not attempt to locate any. She also considered the question of ‘conforming schismatics’ (who would have been among the twicers). Both here and in Berkshire she argued that the incompleteness of Anglican returns appeared to owe a great deal to the opposition, locally and nationally, of the diocesan bishop, Samuel Wilberforce. In his volumes on Hampshire and Sussex, Vickers reviewed the accuracy and interpretation of the results of the Census using local examples as illustrations of errors of addition, methods of determining congregational size, rounding of numbers, duplicate and missing returns. In Derbyshire, Tranter and her colleagues, in attempting to analyse the extent to which the population of Derbyshire took advantage of the opportunities to attend public worship, assessed the likelihood of double counting due to multiple attendances and claimed that the returns “provide considerable evidence that in parts of Derbyshire, particularly rural areas where there was frequently only one Anglican service, or where settlements were distant from the parish church, attendance more than once on a Sunday was not the norm.”<sup>132</sup> In Warwickshire the vicar of the polynuclear parish of Bidford on Avon made a similar point about attendance at his services.<sup>133</sup> Moreover, not all Nonconformist chapels had more than one service, so they argued that, where it existed, dual attendance was frequently inter-denominational. This led Tranter to claim that “it may not

---

<sup>132</sup> M. Tranter, D.A. Barton and P.S. Ell (eds.), *The Derbyshire Returns to the 1851 Religious Census*. pp. xxix-xxx

<sup>133</sup> HO129.405.4.2.5

therefore be grossly inaccurate, in order to attempt a *tentative* estimate of the percentages of Derbyshire folk who attended regular worship, to equate *attendances with attenders*".<sup>134</sup>

The use of contemporaneous material was pioneered by Jones, who included additional material from other contemporary sources, such as the details regarding the income and patronage of benefices<sup>135</sup>, the numbers of services performed in each church and chapel in Wales<sup>136</sup>, the returns of the names and residences of Curates and the stipends of each<sup>137</sup>, and an entry of all grants made to Welsh parishes between 1818 and 1851 by the Incorporated Church Building Society<sup>138</sup>, while Tiller made frequent reference to *Jackson's Oxford Journal*, Visitation Returns and Deanery Papers. Burg, however, had the most exciting contemporaneous resource with which to compare her county transcription in William Upton's statistics of the religious condition of Hertfordshire collected on behalf of the Hertfordshire Union of Baptists and Independents in 1847-8. Although Upton's attendance figures were less precise than one would wish, he did provide a great deal of detail about the number and frequency of services (far more than is given in the Religious Census). From her comparison of the two surveys it would appear that the Census returns were slightly more complete than Upton's in terms of numbers of

---

<sup>134</sup> M. Tranter, D.A. Barton and P.S. Ell (eds.), *The Derbyshire Returns to the 1851 Religious Census*. p. xxx

<sup>135</sup> S. Lewis, *A Topographical History of Wales* (London, 1849)

<sup>136</sup> Parliamentary Return 1850, (P.P.1850, XLII (4))

<sup>137</sup> Parliamentary Return 1850, (P.P.1850, XLII (226))

<sup>138</sup> I.G. Jones and D. Williams (eds.) *The Religious Census of 1851: A Calendar of the Returns relating to Wales, Volume I*, p. viii

churches and chapels. However, at local level, more discrepancies occurred and Burg concluded that a detailed study of the two “would produce a catalogue of places of worship certainly longer than one taken from either source on its own”.<sup>139</sup>

In Surrey, Webb and Robinson qualified to some extent their optimism about the accuracy of the returns, with reference to the duplicate returns from eight Wesleyan Methodist chapels and one each from the Baptists and the Wesleyan Methodist Association. Slight errors were highlighted in the returns of sittings as the result of varied interpretations of free and appropriated, as well as over numbers of Sunday scholars. Sunday School attendances were analysed both geographically, contrasting metropolitan districts with rural areas, and denominationally. In terms of completeness they appeared to have found very few cases of churches and chapels which were not recorded at all, though they quote Mann’s report, showing 33 churches which failed to return the number of sittings and 29 which did not give attendance figures. However, Timmins highlighted serious omissions in Suffolk claiming that almost 30 places where Anglican services were performed were not recorded, while the problem for Nonconformists was even more serious. He identified 51 missing places belonging to various Dissenting denominations and estimated that a further 90 or more were in use but not traced. “Thus over a quarter of all Dissenting chapels and cottages were not even traced and 15% of all places of worship were missed.”<sup>140</sup> He regarded as over-optimistic Mann’s argument that the best guarantee for the reliability of the returns was that the enumerators were local

---

<sup>139</sup> J. Burg (ed.), *Religion in Hertfordshire* p. xxvii

<sup>140</sup> T.C.B. Timmins (ed.), *Suffolk Returns from the Census of Religious Worship of 1851*. p. xiii

men with intimate knowledge of their small enumeration districts.<sup>141</sup> Their lack of competence, along with that of some of the superintendent registrars was highlighted in numerous examples, though he did concede that in some rural area, where many small cottages were used for worship, it was almost impossible to obtain complete coverage. Timmins pointed out that Suffolk parishes were divided between the dioceses of Ely and Norwich and found that opposition to the Religious Census was greater in the former, whose Bishop had advised his clergy not to take part, than in the latter, whose relatively new bishop had, to that date, spent little time in the diocese. This may go some way towards explaining regional variations in accuracy within the county. However, opposition in Suffolk seemed to have been much less than that in Oxfordshire.<sup>142</sup>

Ede and Virgoe's assessment of the accuracy of the Religious Census in Norfolk dealt mainly with local omissions, which appeared to have been more significant for Nonconformists rather than Anglicans, and most significant for the smaller sects, such as the Independent Methodists/Free Gospelers, the Gospel Pilgrims and especially the Mormons. This omission of Dissenting chapels created problems for the analysis of attendance, especially in Norwich, which in the middle of the nineteenth century still had significant manufacturing industry. In terms of attendance, Norfolk Anglicans differed from their contemporaries in Oxfordshire and Devon, for example, in that they had more afternoon services (and consequently attendances) than morning. In assessing the problems of double counting, they cited

---

<sup>141</sup> H. Mann, *Census of Great Britain, 1851: Religious Worship, England and Wales* pp. cxlii-cxliii

<sup>142</sup> T.C.B. Timmins (ed.), *Suffolk Returns from the Census of Religious Worship of 1851* p. xv

a contemporary account of a servant who attended the parish church in the morning and the Primitive Methodist chapel in the evening, while in one parish, men attended the parish church while their wives and daughters worshipped with the Ranters.<sup>143</sup> In Kent, Roake concluded that officials were reasonably efficient in the face of some opposition from Anglican clergy, although those in Canterbury and Dover appeared to have experienced the greatest difficulty. She quoted the Registrar for Dover, who wrote to Horace Mann in August 1851 complaining that the Primitive Methodists at Charlton-near-Dover were “nothing but an outdoor gathering of Mormons, which in truth ought to be put down by the police”, and refused to make further enquiries about missing returns “unless you can arm me with authority to endorse filling up returns”.<sup>144</sup>

In Worcestershire, Aitken discovered significant omissions of Anglican churches as well as Nonconformists, along with calculation errors and a handful of duplicate returns. However, even allowing for the blank returns from a dozen Anglican parishes, he perhaps surprisingly concluded that the figures for the county were substantially accurate<sup>145</sup>, whereas in Yorkshire, Wolffe’s assessment of the accuracy of the returns led him to concur with editors of other county transcriptions, and Smith’s work on the Yorkshire area of Saddleworth, that under-recording took place for a variety of reasons. This was exacerbated in the case of Halifax, where the entire registration district is unfortunately missing. He concluded that the rate of omissions

---

<sup>143</sup> J. Ede and N. Virgoe (eds.), *Religious Worship in Norfolk* p. 20

<sup>144</sup> M. Roake (ed.), *Religious Worship in Kent* p. xvii

<sup>145</sup> J. Aitken (ed.), *Census of Religious Worship, 1851, The Returns for Worcestershire* p. xvi

could be as high as those in East Anglia.<sup>146</sup> In common with other more recent county editors (notably Field) he used other sources to identify churches and chapels which had been omitted - relatively small (less than 2%) in the case of Anglican churches, but more significant in the case of Nonconformists, though this was by no means a universal phenomenon. As already noted, in Shropshire, Field found that the most significant issue was the under-recording of places of worship, especially those of Nonconformists. He found that almost half of the Wesleyan Methodists and more than 40% of the Primitive Methodist meetings were absent – in an appendix he produced a list of more than 200 missed meetings.<sup>147</sup> In the north-east, Munden identified a sizeable number of non-compliant clergy and Nonconformist ministers who would not give information thus undermining the reliability of the returns.<sup>148</sup>

---

<sup>146</sup> J. Wolffe (ed.), *Yorkshire Returns of the 1851 Census of Religious Worship Vol.1* p. iv

<sup>147</sup> C.D. Field (ed.), *Church and Chapel in Early Victorian Shropshire* pp. li - liii

<sup>148</sup> A. F. Munden (ed.), *Religious Census of 1851: Northumberland and Durham* p. xx. In the 1970s Milburn had found that in Sunderland, only three places were omitted (out of 74 which were known to have existed) and this encouraged him to think that coverage was good. (G.E. Milburn 'Religion in Sunderland in 1851' *Durham County Local History Society Bulletin* 18, April 1975) However, he did point out that other Registration Districts were up to 20 times larger and the resulting problems could have reduced the reliability. Shortly afterwards Patterson considered the returns for the neighbouring town of South Shields, with contrasting results. (G. Patterson, 'The Religious Census – A Test of its Accuracy in South Shields' *Durham County Local History Society Bulletin* 21, April 1978) He concluded that for the Church of England the number of places of worship was overstated, but attendance was understated; the Wesleyan Methodists' attendance figures were grossly understated; the Wesleyan Reformed congregations (newly formed) were completely omitted (though one congregation can be identified from its address); the United Presbyterians' attendance was understated by one third and the Latter Day Saints' evening attendance missed out, leaving total attendances are short by more than 1,600 (or about 11%).

## b. Continuity and Reciprocity

Two related issues which were developed from the returns were those of historical continuity, using the date of the building along with other evidence, and denominational reciprocity, based chiefly on the distribution of Nonconformist places of worship.

### i. Continuity

Ambler, among others, used comments by the incumbents on the history and architecture of their buildings, while comments made by Nonconformists often indicated the chapel's building history.<sup>149</sup> Watts argued that most of the General Baptist churches in Nottinghamshire were founded as a result of the Leicestershire revival of the mid-eighteenth-century and thus were the products of eighteenth-century Evangelicalism rather than Old Dissent.<sup>150</sup> Timmins found that in Suffolk the Independents had the longest history of any Dissenting denomination in the county and the second largest number of places of worship. They were among the wealthiest of all Suffolk Dissenters, especially in towns. Some Baptist congregations in Suffolk traced their history back to the early eighteenth century, but most chapels were built in the first half of the nineteenth century, predominantly in rural areas. Their chapels were much smaller than those of the Independents, even when they were subsidised by London Baptists.<sup>151</sup> In Berkshire, Tiller traced the roots of Old

---

<sup>149</sup> R.W. Ambler (ed.), *Lincolnshire returns of the census of religious worship, 1851* pp. xlii-xlvi

<sup>150</sup> M.R. Watts (ed.), *Religion in Victorian Nottinghamshire*: p. xvi

<sup>151</sup> T.C.B. Timmins (ed.), *Suffolk Returns from the Census of Religious Worship of 1851* pp. xxxix, xlvi-xlvii

Dissent via the Compton Census to its beginnings in the fourteenth century and suggested that not only did some parts of the county appear to be historically more open to Dissent, but that this pattern was reflected in the Religious Census returns, though doubts were raised as to whether or not this was due to direct continuity. The strength of Old Dissenting denominations was unevenly distributed, often reflecting seventeenth century 'hotspots', while the Methodists, both Wesleyan and Primitive, showed the greatest impact of Evangelicalism in both urban and rural areas, in the latter, reaching parts that the other Nonconformist denominations had failed to reach.<sup>152</sup> As Chapter 4 of this study will show, elements of this can also be seen in Warwickshire.

## ii. Reciprocity

Reciprocity can be seen in local variations of denominational distribution. In Nottinghamshire, Watts contrasted the distribution of Methodists with other Nonconformists, supporting Tillyard's view that the Methodists made a greater impact than Old Dissent in rural areas, but argued that at least part of the reason lay in the strength of rural Anglicanism, which had been well provided with Churches in the eighteenth century.<sup>153</sup> In adjoining Derbyshire, with one or two exceptions, Old Dissent was not particularly strong. It was New Dissent, in particular, Methodism,

---

<sup>152</sup> K. Tiller (ed.), *Berkshire Religious Census 1851*, pp. xlvi-xlvii

<sup>153</sup> M.R. Watts (ed.), *Religion in Victorian Nottinghamshire*: p. xvi

which was stronger, forming part of a large band which swept from Staffordshire to Northumberland.<sup>154</sup>

Timmins reported that Suffolk Independents were very strong in the south and south west of the county and weakest in the north west. They had fewer chapels than in Essex, but many more than Cambridgeshire and Norfolk. The Baptists were the largest Nonconformist denomination in Suffolk in terms of places of worship. All were Particular Baptists; no General Baptists were recorded either by the Religious Census or by the General Baptist Association. Wesleyan Methodists were concentrated mainly in the north and north east of the county, reflecting their historical development, with circuits there being 'planted' from Norfolk. The Primitive Methodists, on the other hand, seemed to be still expanding in Suffolk. They had large numbers of chapels and preaching places, but they were mainly small, so their total numbers were less than the Wesleyan Methodists. They too were predominantly found in the north of the county, with all of their circuits belonging to the Norwich District. They had less success in Suffolk than in Norfolk as they found it very difficult to compete with Baptists and Independents.<sup>155</sup>

Analysis of the Nonconformist returns for Norfolk showed that Old Dissent was relatively weak, while Methodism in all its forms (including two congregations of Bible Christians) was much better represented. Wesleyans were found throughout the county, with any gaps being filled by Primitive Methodists. More significantly,

---

<sup>154</sup> M. Tranter, D.A. Barton and P.S. Ell (eds.), *The Derbyshire Returns to the 1851 Religious Census*. pp. xliv - xlv

<sup>155</sup> T.C.B. Timmins (ed.), *Suffolk Returns from the Census of Religious Worship of 1851* pp. xlvi, lvii, lxii

Norfolk saw a rapid growth of Wesleyan Reformers. In the brief period between the formal split and the Religious Census, no fewer than 62 congregations, mainly in the north west of the county, sprung up, contrasting with just three in neighbouring Suffolk.<sup>156</sup>

The Kentish returns revealed that Old Dissent, along with Roman Catholics, was found primarily in the towns and in the Weald, while on the other hand the Methodists, especially the Wesleyans, were more widely spread.<sup>157</sup> Tomalin highlighted the contrast in Rutland between urban and rural areas, with the Church of England providing three-quarters of the seats in the latter, but barely two in five in the market towns of Oakham and Uppingham, where Dissent was commonly stronger. The attendance figures showed a similar pattern. Aitken found that all major Dissenting groups were represented in Worcestershire, most of them having areas of considerable strength. Tillyard's idea that old Dissent was to be found in areas of Anglican strength (with the opposite being true of Methodism) seemed to be confirmed here.<sup>158</sup> In Shropshire, as has already been noted, Field found that Wesleyan Methodism was comparatively weak and the Primitive Methodists strong, especially in the north of the county, reflecting the proximity of that area to its Staffordshire origins.<sup>159</sup>

---

<sup>156</sup> J. Ede and N. Virgoe (eds.), *Religious Worship in Norfolk* p. 28

<sup>157</sup> M. Roake (ed.), *Religious Worship in Kent* pp. xxxii-xxxiii, xxxix-xlvi

<sup>158</sup> J. Aitken (ed.), *Census of Religious Worship, 1851. The Returns for Worcestershire* p. xxviii

<sup>159</sup> C.D. Field, 'Methodism in Shropshire 1851' p. 176

In terms of places of worship, Old Dissent was much less strong than the Methodists in Northumberland and Durham. Of particular significance was that in Northumberland, almost 65% of Old Dissenting chapels were Presbyterian, reflecting their links with their Scottish brethren across the border. The other denominations were less well represented, though Quaker numbers were artificially depressed by the absence of a return for their Darlington stronghold. Methodist places of worship outnumbered those of Old Dissent by more than three to one. As Chapter 3 shows, this is significantly different from Warwickshire, where the numbers are very similar.

### c. Landownership

In several commentaries, their authors tried to link the patterns revealed in the returns to the social controls demonstrated by landownership types, shown by 'open' and 'close' parishes. The final section of Ambler's commentary on Lincolnshire, "Social Conditions and Religious Worship" contains an exhaustive analysis of the returns in the light of the concept of 'open' and 'close' villages. He used local examples to illustrate each of his village types and showed that a higher proportion of the more 'open' types of village had non-Anglican places of worship than the 'close' types<sup>160</sup>, though he did warn against too deterministic an interpretation of the development of Dissenting chapels. On the 'open'/'close' debate Watts found Nottinghamshire similar to Leicestershire, Lincolnshire, Northamptonshire and Kent (citing Thompson, Ambler and Everitt) in that

---

<sup>160</sup> R.W. Ambler (ed.), *Lincolnshire returns of the census of religious worship, 1851* pp. lxvii – lxix

Nonconformity spread more easily in 'open' parishes.<sup>161</sup> He added the rider that it was also easier in 'close' parishes where Whig landowners like the Earl of Scarborough were more tolerant than unsympathetic Tories such as the Duke of Newcastle. His analysis is based on a similar table to the others (derived from Holderness and Mills) but with five categories rather than four. He also analysed on the basis of settlement size but pointed out that 'close' villages tended to be smaller than 'open' ones.<sup>162</sup>

In Oxfordshire and Berkshire, Tiller examined the effect of 'place' on patterns of religious adherence and attendance, especially the relationship between 'open' and 'close' settlements, finding a good deal of evidence in *Lark Rise to Candleford* which is borne out by Census and other data for Juniper Hill and Cottisford.<sup>163</sup> Records for Nonconformist places of worship were used by Timmins to place the growth of Dissent in Suffolk in its historical context. He also considered the returns against a background of landownership, finding few chapels and meetinghouses in 'close' parishes.<sup>164</sup> In neighbouring Norfolk, Ede and Virgoe found that the smaller towns provided a choice of styles of worship, but even many of the rural parishes had Nonconformist chapels. This included more than 60% of 'close' parishes, leading to the view that the Norfolk landowner was "not always ready to exercise his influence

---

<sup>161</sup> For Warwickshire these links are reviewed in Chapter 4. Also in Chapter 4 are seen the influence in Warwickshire of local gentry such as Sir Roger Newdigate and Rev. Sir Egerton Leigh.

<sup>162</sup> cf J. Obelkevich, *Religion and Rural Society* pp. 154 – 155

<sup>163</sup> K. Tiller (ed.), *Church and Chapel in Oxfordshire, 1851:* pp. xxvi - xxxi

<sup>164</sup> T.C.B. Timmins (ed.), *Suffolk Returns from the Census of Religious Worship of 1851* pp. xxxv-xxxviii

over the religious practice of the villagers".<sup>165</sup> In rural Surrey, the main feature is the weakness of all kinds of Dissent, but Webb and Robinson find no obvious reasons. The number of 'open' parishes, the weakness of squirearchical influence and the high average size of parish existed in Surrey, yet failed to provide a stimulus to Dissent, either Old or New.<sup>166</sup> Chapter 2 of this study considers the significance of the 'open'/'close' division of parishes in Warwickshire, while Chapter 3 examines their contribution to the Anglican monopoly in rural districts.

#### d. Anglican response to criticism

Along with the authors of studies of the mid-nineteenth century Church of England, a number of the county transcribers used the Religious Census returns to shed light on the Anglican response to criticism of their performance in the first half of the century, as well as on theological developments within the Church of England. In Kent, for example, the Church of England was generally in good shape, providing resources where the population was increasing, with new District Churches supplementing restoration and reconstruction work. Some unwillingness of the clergy to cooperate was found, though the figure of 11.7% completed by non-clergy compared rather favourably with the 30% in Berkshire. Some of these were in areas where Nonconformity was relatively strong, while elsewhere there was evidence

---

<sup>165</sup> J. Ede and N. Virgoe (eds.), *Religious Worship in Norfolk* p. 25

<sup>166</sup> C. Webb and D. Robinson (eds.), *The 1851 Religious Census: Surrey* pp. lxxviii-lxxxii

that the reform of abuses such as plurality, absenteeism and tithe leasing still had some way to go in Kent.<sup>167</sup>

#### e. Benefice Income and Endowment

The question of clerical incomes was extremely contentious and the returns reveal the attitude of individual clergy in different parts of the country, both in their willingness to complete that question and their eagerness in the remarks section to express qualifications which they felt were necessary to supplement and explain the bald statistics. In spite of the controversy over the question on endowments, only one Welsh incumbent complained that it was impertinent, but nevertheless he answered the question accurately. Jones believed that the returns could generally be regarded as complete and accurate, though he pointed out that, apart from an occasional remark, they give little information about unbeneficed clergy.<sup>168</sup>

In Surrey it was found that the question on benefice income, unpopular as it may have been nationally, was answered by most of the incumbents, with a number of them taking the opportunity to make comments about the inadequacy of their income or the amount and nature of their outgoings. They discovered that some of the wealthiest were coy about their income, while in some cases the curates of non-resident incumbents found that they were unable to answer the question.<sup>169</sup> In Hertfordshire, Burg noted numerous comments about clergy income, finding

---

<sup>167</sup> M. Roake (ed.), *Religious Worship in Kent* p. xxix

<sup>168</sup> I.G. Jones and D. Williams (eds.), *The Religious Census of 1851: A Calendar of the Returns relating to Wales, Volume I*, pp. xxx-xxxii

<sup>169</sup> C. Webb and D. Robinson (eds.), *The 1851 Religious Census: Surrey* p. lxxxii

information on 80% of Anglican forms<sup>170</sup> while almost the same proportion of Worcestershire's respondents answered questions about income. Aitken pointed out that many Anglican clergy in the county were poor and some must have relied on a private income or augmentation funds such as Queen Anne's Bounty.<sup>171</sup>

In Norfolk, the number of Anglican returns giving information about endowments and income was large enough to permit some exploration of the topic. This revealed a few relatively well-endowed parishes, but a significant number too at the opposite end of the scale, while others indicated the extent of the deductions which they had to make from their income.<sup>172</sup> Similarly, in Kent, Roake suggested that in some country parishes, clerical incomes were relatively generous in relation to the number of inhabitants which may have caused some reticence among incumbents when faced with a government enquiry.<sup>173</sup> In Suffolk, slightly more than a quarter of incumbents exercised their right to give no information about endowments and income, but even when information was provided it was difficult to work out precisely what any parson was receiving. Nevertheless it would appear that most Suffolk clergy, especially the rectors and vicars, were clearly well paid, though there were perpetual curates in impoverished benefices who were struggling to make ends meet, even with assistance from Queen Anne's Bounty.<sup>174</sup>

---

<sup>170</sup> J. Burg (ed.), *Religion in Hertfordshire* p. xxi

<sup>171</sup> J. Aitken (ed.), *Census of Religious Worship, 1851. The Returns for Worcestershire* p. xxviii

<sup>172</sup> J. Ede and N. Virgoe (eds.), *Religious Worship in Norfolk* pp. 34-35

<sup>173</sup> M. Roake (ed.), *Religious Worship in Kent* p. xxix-xxx

<sup>174</sup> T.C.B. Timmins (ed.), *Suffolk Returns from the Census of Religious Worship of 1851* pp. xxviii-xxxi

In spite of the opposition to the question on benefice income, 57% of Church of England returns in Berkshire contained some information. The replies revealed a number of interesting variations between Anglican parishes and their clergy. The returns showed “very considerable inequalities between livings ... and the immensely varied and complex combination of sources on which they were based”.<sup>175</sup> Tiller regarded the detail which the clergy included in the returns as being indicative of their differing attitudes not only to the completion of the census form but also of the need for financial prudence. She also highlighted differences in endowment patterns between the ancient parishes, with their tithes and other property rights and the newer and district parish churches which relied on private benefactors and pew rents. The responses to the question on endowment income and the availability of supporting contemporary material makes it possible to construct a socio-economic profile for the Anglican clergy, such as the one which forms the first part of Chapter 5 of this study.

#### f. Seat Appropriation and Sunday Schools

Two of the issues which could have been explored from the Religious Census returns were seat appropriation and Sunday Schools, but because of concerns over the reliability of the responses, most commentators have left these unaddressed. While acknowledging the difficulties in assessing the availability of accommodation, especially with regard to seat appropriation, Timmins found that just over three-quarters of all Suffolk churches had more free than appropriated sittings. He

---

<sup>175</sup> K. Tiller (ed.), *Berkshire Religious Census 1851*, p. xxxii

considered that this reflected well on the clergy, who were making efforts to remove inequalities caused by appropriation, but showed too that there were significant variations in quality between free and appropriated sittings. There was also uneven geographical distribution of accommodation, “churches in the smallest villages had a generous provision of accommodation, sometimes even an appropriated sitting for every man woman and child. On the other hand at Ipswich there was church room for only one person in four and at Mildenhall for little more than one in seven.”<sup>176</sup> In Surrey, Webb and Robinson highlighted slight errors in the returns of sittings as the result of varied interpretations of free and appropriated<sup>177</sup>, while Jones and Ambler found that in Wales and Lincolnshire respectively, there were misunderstandings over the definitions of free and appropriated sittings.<sup>178</sup> In spite of the confusion over numbers of Sunday scholars, Webb and Robinson analysed Sunday School attendances both geographically, contrasting metropolitan districts with rural areas, and denominationally<sup>179</sup>, while in Berkshire, Tiller’s review of the returns included an examination of Sunday Schools, found in 65% of Anglican churches but only 33% of Nonconformist chapels.<sup>180</sup>

---

<sup>176</sup> T.C.B. Timmins (ed.), *Suffolk Returns from the Census of Religious Worship of 1851*. p. xviii

<sup>177</sup> C. Webb and D. Robinson (eds.), *The 1851 Religious Census: Surrey* p. lvii-lviii

<sup>178</sup> R.W. Ambler (ed.), *Lincolnshire returns of the census of religious worship, 1851* pp. xxxiii-xxxiv; I.G. Jones and D. Williams (eds.), *The Religious Census of 1851: A Calendar of the Returns relating to Wales, Volume I*, pp. xix-xx

<sup>179</sup> C. Webb and D. Robinson (eds.), *The 1851 Religious Census: Surrey* p. lix-lxii

<sup>180</sup> K. Tiller (ed.), *Berkshire Religious Census 1851*, p. xl

## g. Local Conditions

The 'Remarks' section of the returns provides interesting and colourful material, which, although not usually quantifiable, helps to bring the returns to life. Many were concerned to explain the discrepancies between the actual and average attendances, including Mothering Sunday, the weather, the popularity or otherwise of particular preachers and sickness. In Wales, the local economy also featured – cattle farming, fishing and the shift system in the copper works of Swansea and Llanelli.<sup>181</sup> In Buckinghamshire, among the explanations for low attendance, Legg compared comments with local meteorological reports, and obtained temperature and rainfall data from the Meteorological Archive Department.<sup>182</sup> (He reported that temperatures varied from 43.5°F to 52.7°F (6.4°C to 11.5°C) throughout the day, while during a period of twelve hours, only 0.0075 inches (less than 2 mm) of rain fell.) In contrast, in Warwickshire there were numerous comments about the inclement weather. “Much rain” from the incumbent at Little Compton<sup>183</sup>, “squally weather” according to the minister of Maney Independent Chapel<sup>184</sup>, and “stormy” from the Vicar of Wolvey<sup>185</sup> indicate that poor weather conditions prevailed across the county. The Surrey returns revealed a number of instances where attendances were above average, usually for special services. More common were reasons why

---

<sup>181</sup> I.G. Jones and D. Williams (eds.), *The Religious Census of 1851: A Calendar of the Returns relating to Wales, Volume I*, p. xxvi

<sup>182</sup> E. Legg (ed.), *Buckinghamshire Returns of the Census of Religious Worship* p. Ix, footnote 5

<sup>183</sup> H0129.162.2.3.3

<sup>184</sup> H0129.395.4.4.8

<sup>185</sup> H0129.399.2.3.4

the attendance on Census Sunday was below average, typically rain, influenza, ‘the season’ and the absence of notable residents with their “large establishments”, including the Archbishop of Canterbury at Addington.<sup>186</sup>

In Yorkshire, a wide range of factors which affected the congregations on a particular day, was noted by many respondents. Wolffe found a number of clergy making comments to the effect that their congregations consisted of different individuals. He compared the comments by one curate with the number of attenders for his Church derived from Mann’s most used formula. This gave 167.5 individuals, but the respondent remarked that “many who attend this place of worship attend frequently but not regularly. The entire number of persons attached ... may be set down at 250.”<sup>187</sup> Thus the number of attached may exceed the attenders by about 50%, and Wolffe commented that “were such a ratio to be applied across the country, it would significantly shift our assumptions about levels of participation in religious worship”.<sup>188</sup> He conceded that such generalisation from a single case is academically unsound, but he suggested that other returns from elsewhere in the country might be grouped together to provide a sample which may be statistically valid.<sup>189</sup>

---

<sup>186</sup> C. Webb and D. Robinson (eds.), *The 1851 Religious Census: Surrey* p. lxiv

<sup>187</sup> J. Wolffe (ed.), *Yorkshire Returns of the 1851 Census of Religious Worship Vol.1* p. v, fn 15

<sup>188</sup> J. Wolffe (ed.), *Yorkshire Returns of the 1851 Census of Religious Worship Vol.1* p. v, fn 15

<sup>189</sup> Comparison of the application of Mann’s formula with the priest’s remarks at Harvington Hall Catholic Chapel in Worcestershire (H0129.384.1.1.2) reveals a discrepancy of almost 32% under-recording, while at Bidford, where the vicar described the “congregations for the most part distinct” (H0129.405.4.2.5) the figures for the average attendances would reveal under-recording of about 40%, while for those on the day, that rises to almost 50%.

In Northamptonshire, too, there are references to bad weather, illness and farming practice as causes of poor attendance.<sup>190</sup> From the Remarks section Ward also found emigration to Australia as a cause of reduced numbers, references to the 'Flysheets Controversy' within the Methodist Church and the effects of the repeal of the Corn Laws and subsequent agricultural distress on clergy incomes<sup>191</sup>, while in Northumberland and Durham, Munden found factors which caused attendances to be small included Mothering Sunday, bad weather and illness. Local economic conditions also contributed – farmers and shepherds were lambing, fishermen were at sea, while ironworkers had to work on alternate Sundays.<sup>192</sup> This expanded earlier work by Milburn who also used the remarks to explain differences from normal in the returns – the weather, sickness, rural employment (in this case lambing in the Pennines and Cheviot uplands).<sup>193</sup> In the Warwickshire remarks there were also indications that some local conditions caused attendances to be reduced more regularly. The incumbent of St Peter's in Coventry, for example, commented that "The Congregation at the Church would be much larger but that the roads to it are so bad. There is not a single paved street in the entire district."<sup>194</sup>

---

<sup>190</sup> C.G. Ward, (ed.) *The 1851 Religious Census of Northamptonshire* p. 9

<sup>191</sup> C.G. Ward, (ed.), *The 1851 Religious Census of Northamptonshire* p. 10

<sup>192</sup> A.F. Munden (ed.), *Religious Census of 1851: Northumberland and Durham* p. xix

<sup>193</sup> G.E. Milburn, 'The Census of Worship of 1851' *Durham County Local History Society Bulletin* 17, July 1974

<sup>194</sup> HO129.400.2.1.1

## 6. Micro Studies

In addition, many accounts have been written at very small, local scales, both as independent studies or as contributions to more substantial local histories of the period. Among these are works by Ambler, Robson, and Elliott. The reliability of the returns again loomed large as a discussion topic, sometimes controversially, while the nature of parishes in rural areas and industrialisation in urban areas were considered as significant factors in the spread or otherwise of Nonconformity.

In 1974, Ambler wrote a general introduction to the Religious Census<sup>195</sup> in which he drew heavily on Mann's report, but illustrated his comments with references drawn in the main (but not exclusively) from Lincolnshire. At the time he wrote the article he was preparing his own transcription of the Lincolnshire returns, which eventually appeared in 1979.<sup>196</sup> His acceptance of the general reliability of the census data was based on checking the information with local sources, such as Methodist preaching plans, where they existed.<sup>197</sup> He found that the returns provided valuable insights at local level on the matter of the quantity and quality of accommodation available in places of worship.<sup>198</sup> He pointed out the value of the returns in illustrating such key social topics as the difficulties in establishing Dissenting chapels in estate villages (analysed for Warwickshire in Chapter 4), the status of the Anglican clergy in the local community (Chapter 5a presents a socio-economic profile of Warwickshire

---

<sup>195</sup> R.W. Ambler, 'The 1851 Census of Religious Worship', *Local Historian*, Vol. 11 (1974-75), pp. 375 - 381

<sup>196</sup> R.W. Ambler (ed.), *Lincolnshire returns of the census of religious worship, 1851*

<sup>197</sup> R.W. Ambler, 'The 1851 Census of Religious Worship' p. 376

<sup>198</sup> R.W. Ambler, 'The 1851 Census of Religious Worship' p. 377

clergy), and in the social composition of local Nonconformist communities (considered here for Warwickshire in Chapter 5b ii).

Elliott's article was written to coincide with the centenary of the building of Secular Hall in Leicester.<sup>199</sup> He took the Religious Census data as a starting point, where he found that the city showed marked contrasts with national trends. Its recorded attendances of 62% were not only significantly greater than comparable large towns but also larger than many rural counties where religious adherence had remained strong. A second factor which marked out Leicester as different from the country at large was the significant presence of the Baptists as easily the largest Nonconformist denomination, with attendances almost comparable with the Church of England. He attributed this, at least in part, to powerful early nineteenth century preachers such as John Deacon, William Carey (founder of the Baptist Missionary Society) and Robert Hall, and by the mid-nineteenth century they were also able to draw on the skill and resources of Thomas Cook, the travel agent. Much of the rest of the article dealt with the development of secularism in the second half of the nineteenth century, but he concluded that Mann's "unconscious secularists" – the working classes – among whom indifference to the churches was the norm in 1850, had shown an equal lack of enthusiasm for a secular alternative.

As seen above, studies at local level can often indicate errors in the statistics of the report and may sometimes expose flaws in the general pictures which have been painted. As early as 1979, Robson took Inglis to task over his assertion that, apart from Bristol, Wolverhampton was the only town with a population of more than

---

<sup>199</sup> M. Elliott, 'Belief and Unbelief in Victorian Leicester' *Transactions of the Leicestershire Archaeological and Historical Society* Vol. LVI (1981) pp. 88-96

100,000 to have above average church attendance (I.A = 53.1). He pointed out that since this was based on the Parliamentary Borough, it included many industrial villages (relying on nail-making and mining) as well as the manufacturing town, and that there were significant variations in the Index of Attendance between the component parts of the borough. Robson also pointed out that Inglis overplayed the impact of the Methodists among the urban working class, partly for the reasons already given and partly because he discovered four duplicate returns of Wesleyan chapels accounting for more than 3,000 worshippers.<sup>200</sup> Coleman found significant errors in the summary figures for Berkshire.<sup>201</sup> In Warwickshire the same Tables showed under-recording of Roman Catholics and over-recording of Quakers, especially in Birmingham.

### **Twenty first century**

The publication of *Rival Jerusalems* in 2000 was a landmark in the historiography of the Religious Census.<sup>202</sup> Since then the output of scholars has dwindled to a trickle. Snell and Ell's volume is a definitive historical geography of religion in mid-nineteenth century England and Wales derived from a massive database, based on data at Registration District level, which they constructed from the original returns of the Religious Census. The questions which they raised are of major importance and form the foundations on which this study is based. After reviewing the reliability of the returns, concluding that the Census data were "collected with commendable

---

<sup>200</sup> G. Robson, 'Between Town and Countryside: Contrasting Patterns of Churchgoing in the Early Victorian Black Country' *Studies in Church History*, xvi, (1979) pp. 400 – 414

<sup>201</sup> B.I. Coleman, 'Southern England in the Census of Religious Worship, 1851' p. 188 fn 7

<sup>202</sup> K.D.M. Snell and P.S Ell, *Rival Jerusalems*

rigour and care” and attesting to its reliability as a source<sup>203</sup>, they examined the regional geography of the various denominations, including the extent of denominational reciprocity based on the ‘Tillyard thesis’. However, it can be argued that their analysis using the distinction between ‘Old Dissent’ and largely Methodist ‘New Dissent’ can be misleading, given that several of the older Dissenting denominations were themselves revitalized and extended in the evangelical atmosphere of the first half of the nineteenth century. At parish level, for fifteen counties, they reviewed the historical continuity between the Compton Census of 1676 and the Religious Census, explored the links between the distribution of denominations and landholding patterns, analysed free and appropriated sittings and considered the growth of Sunday Schools, concluding that this was one area where the Church of England had responded effectively to social change. The selection of the fifteen counties for this analysis seems rather bizarre, including as it does, four from Wales but none from the southwest, except Dorset, and neither the West Riding of Yorkshire nor the industrial West Midlands were considered. The sole area from urban and industrial England given extensive treatment was Lancashire, so this study is a contribution towards redressing the imbalance.

Other than *Rival Jerusalems*, the only book to make a serious assessment of the Census returns to appear in this century was Robson’s work on religion and irreligion in Birmingham and the Black Country, published in 2002. But although this post-

---

<sup>203</sup> K.D.M. Snell and P.S Ell, *Rival Jerusalems* pp. 51-3

dated *Rival Jerusalems* by two years, it had been written five years previously<sup>204</sup>, so the work of Snell and Ell received only passing reference. This is an important work in the context of this study, including as it does the most predominantly urban part of Warwickshire. At the core of the book are two chapters on the Religious Census. In the first of these he started by analysing Mann's Report and accepting the results as reliable, with slight reservations. In assessing the reliability of the returns, he cited Field's findings that there were not only returns which had incomplete attendance records, but also missing places of worship (especially small preaching rooms and domestic premises) and clerical errors in handling those returns which were sent in, but he offered no evidence from his study area. He also analysed the returns for Birmingham and the Black Country in the light of Gill's thesis concerning denominational provision, "that denominational rivalry in rural areas and inter-denominational competition to establish new congregations in the towns led to over-provision of accommodation in both, leading, after 1851, to emptier churches..."<sup>205</sup> Robson found that, in Birmingham at least, if people stayed away from church it was not due to lack of seats, as almost half of the available accommodation was not filled.<sup>206</sup>

In his efforts to interpret the Census in an urban context, Robson looked at a number of factors relating to attendance levels, producing a large number of correlation coefficients (many of them up to seven decimal places). He found that size and

---

<sup>204</sup> G. Robson, *Dark Satanic Mills? Religion and Irreligion in Birmingham and the Black Country* (Carlisle, 2002). This incorporated much of Robson's earlier work, some from as far back as 1976.

<sup>205</sup> G. Robson, *Dark Satanic Mills?* p. 78

<sup>206</sup> G. Robson, *Dark Satanic Mills?* p. 83

population growth produced inconclusive results, but that there was a better correlation between accommodation and Index of Attendance. He did not find a link between specific occupations and denominations.<sup>207</sup> Robson based his findings on urban-rural links in the context of recent studies, especially that of Watts.<sup>208</sup> This seemed to confirm the view that the West Midlands were untypically religious for an urban-industrial area. The surroundings of the conurbation included not only predominantly agricultural villages, but also small industrial settlements in the Black Country, including those making nails and needles. In many of the latter he identified strong Anglican support. "This suggests that the good showing of the Church of England compared with Protestant Nonconformity in Birmingham and Wolverhampton was related to allegiances formed in the birthplaces of many of their immigrant population. The unknown factor then becomes the pattern of rural attendance at the parish church, on the regularity and motivation of which considerable differences of opinion persist."<sup>209</sup> In fact, as Maps 3 and 4 show, many of the Arden parishes to the east and south-east of the conurbation were 'close' parishes in which the Anglican church had a monopoly.

Robson also raised the issue of 'open' and 'close' parishes, citing Thompson and Obelkevich. However, he offered nothing from any of his 'hinterland' counties, save a comparison between the villages in Silas Marner and Adam Bede as illustrations of North Warwickshire village life, and his conclusion that "both villages could have

---

<sup>207</sup> G. Robson, *Dark Satanic Mills?* pp. 91 – 94

<sup>208</sup> M.R. Watts, *The Dissenters Vol. 2.*

<sup>209</sup> G. Robson, *Dark Satanic Mills?* p. 100

existed and probably did”<sup>210</sup> does not advance our understanding of rural attitudes to churchgoing by much. However, in Chapter 4 of this study, careful attention is given to the relationship between those parishes with an Anglican monopoly and the division into ‘open’ and ‘close’ parishes.

Work on the methodology of the Census enumeration was advanced significantly in 2006, by the work of the Crocketts on the rounding of numbers.<sup>211</sup> They argued that the high incidence of round numbers (congregations of 100 or 150, for example) is the result of overestimation of attendance. In the case of the Church of England, they found support for this theory in the work of Obelkevich<sup>212</sup> and Watts<sup>213</sup>, while similar characteristics were found in the 1865 New York State Census.<sup>214</sup> They developed a statistical model to attempt to find the amount of over-estimation resulting from rounding. Their model suggested that Anglican figures were most likely to be inflated by about 11%, whereas the corresponding figure for Nonconformists was about half of that. They suggested that there was psychological pressure to make the numbers appear better than they actually were, and that this pressure was greater in the Church of England, which was faring worse than most Dissenting denominations in the mid-nineteenth century. They also pointed to the fact that new Dissenting denominations put far greater emphasis into keeping

---

<sup>210</sup> G. Robson, *Dark Satanic Mills?* p. 102

<sup>211</sup> A. Crockett and R. Crockett, ‘Consequences of Data, in the British Religious Census of 1851’ *Historical Methods: A Journal of Quantitative and Interdisciplinary History* Vol. 39 (1) (2006) pp. 24-46

<sup>212</sup> J. Obelkevich, *Religion and Rural Society* p. 153

<sup>213</sup> M.R. Watts (ed.), *Religion in Victorian Nottinghamshire*: pp. ix-x

<sup>214</sup> R. Finke, A.M. Guest and R. Stark, ‘Mobilizing Local Religious Markets: Religious Pluralism in the Empire State, 1855 to 1865’ *American Sociological Review* vol. 61:2 (1996) p. 210

membership statistics. Since the Census returns could be checked against these, there was more incentive to estimate accurately. This is supported by evidence from the Warwickshire returns. For example, of the 190 values given for the attendance of the General Congregation at morning worship in Anglican churches, statistically there should have been 19 ending in 0, whereas in fact, 76 did. The number of congregations above and below 100 was identical, but while 31 of the smaller congregations appeared to have been rounded, 45 of the larger ones did. Moreover, of the very large congregations (more than 300) 20 out of 26 were seemingly given to the nearest hundred. (Some 43 of the Anglican returns in Warwickshire were made on Information Forms often by enumerators or Registrars, and on occasion, some time later. These are almost without exception rounded to the nearest ten or hundred.) Of the major Nonconformist denominations, the Baptists and Independents had respectively five and four times as many 'rounded' congregations as they should, but while the Baptists had the same discrepancy as the Anglicans for congregations of more than 100, for the Independents that proportion was reversed. The Crocketts' conclusion about New Dissent is also borne out by the Warwickshire Wesleyans, whose rounding was of the order of only two and a half times, with little difference between small and large congregations. Thus it would seem that for Warwickshire, as for other counties, the returns for the Nonconformist places of worship were more reliable than those for the Church of England.

In 2006, it was Wolffe's turn to address the question of mid-nineteenth century working-class irreligion.<sup>215</sup> Mann's comments had encouraged a view of working-

---

<sup>215</sup> J. Wolffe, 'Elite and Popular Religion in the Religious Census of 30 March 1851' *Studies in Church History* Vol.42 (2006) pp. 360 - 371

class estrangement from organised religion, but Wolffe argued that even if upper and middle-class attendance had been 100%, there would still have been a substantial shortfall, which could only have been made up from the working-classes. Furthermore, significant denominational exceptions, especially the Primitive Methodists and Roman Catholics had to be recognised. Wolffe pointed out that it could be argued from the 1851 Religious Census figures that the whole population attended church regularly but only once every two or three weeks. But this, implausible as it probably is, represented an opposing extreme to the view that the figures revealed a solid core of worshippers, attending every Sunday, but amounting to less than half of the overall population. He argued that it was necessary to look at evidence, in the Census and elsewhere, for irregular and occasional attendance. "Individual patterns of attendance at public worship are also highly relevant to the wider interface between elite and popular religion and to the assessment of working-class religiosity".<sup>216</sup> While much of his evidence was drawn from the Yorkshire returns, he also called on examples from other county transcriptions, as well as non-Census sources such as visitation returns and a partial parish survey (*Speculum gregis*) from 1854 for Selby, which provided detailed material for a fascinating case study.

He drew three main conclusions from his overview of the data. The first concerned the related facts that in general the attendance on 30 March was somewhat lower than average and that attendance could vary widely from one week to the next, especially in rural areas, where bad weather and seasonal farming occupations were

---

<sup>216</sup> J. Wolffe, 'Elite and Popular Religion' p. 361

not such trivial factors as they might be in towns. Secondly the 'Remarks' frequently stated that the congregations at different services comprised different individuals. As with his introduction to the returns, he cited numerous examples to quantify the under-recording that this represents. Thirdly he reiterated his argument that many churchgoers lacked "a sustained, exclusive denominational identification", finding much evidence that individuals would attend both Church and Chapel on the same day, and showing that, in some areas at least, service times seem to have been negotiated to facilitate such practice.

From these, Wolffe argued that it was necessary to see "a spectrum of commitment from regular Sunday attendance at more than one service, through occasional attendance, if favourable weather or personal inclination allowed, to an identification that was seldom, if ever, expressed in actual participation other than for rites of passage".<sup>217</sup> Thus "the overall implication is that the body of regular worshippers was probably smaller... than has been generally supposed, but that diffuse religious influence ... extended much more broadly"<sup>218</sup>. He used data from his Selby case study to back up these arguments, providing evidence to support his view that even in predominantly working-class areas, total non-association with organised religion was much rarer than had been previously suggested.

---

<sup>217</sup> J. Wolffe, 'Elite and Popular Religion' p. 366

<sup>218</sup> J. Wolffe, 'Elite and Popular Religion' p. 366

In 2008 Wolffe confirmed his reputation as the most prolific recent commentator on the Religious Census, when he addressed the question of religious change.<sup>219</sup> This time, apart from some national comparisons, he drew exclusively on the Yorkshire returns, which he claimed offered “a point of departure for work on the Census in the North as a whole”.<sup>220</sup> In attempting to assess a process taking place throughout the century he used a series of snapshots provided not only by the Census returns and their comments, but also other sources, such as visitation returns and the Selby parish survey. This technique extends the value of the Religious Census returns, but it is only possible where other sources with comparable detail exist.

The one dynamic element in the summary of the Census returns is the rate of church building, derived from the dates of erection of places of worship. He pointed out that in March 1851, probably the majority of people were worshipping in buildings which had been built within living memory. Wolffe argued that these transient or temporary meeting places “are likely to have induced an atmosphere of provisionality and fluidity”<sup>221</sup> and pointed out that church building continued well into the second half of the century. Other examples of change evident in Yorkshire in mid-century identified by Wolffe included the Evangelical Revival, the work of Hook in Leeds, and the schism in Wesleyan Methodism, all referred to in his earlier work.

The major part of this article, though, was taken up with an analysis of the local dynamics of religious change in three contrasting environments - urban/industrial

---

<sup>219</sup> J. Wolffe, 'The 1851 Census and Religious Change in Nineteenth-Century Yorkshire' *Northern History*, XLV: 1, March 2008, pp. 71 - 86

<sup>220</sup> J. Wolffe, 'The 1851 Census and Religious Change in Nineteenth-Century Yorkshire', p. 73

<sup>221</sup> J. Wolffe, 'The 1851 Census and Religious Change in Nineteenth-Century Yorkshire', p. 76

(Huddersfield), rural upland (Grassington) and rural lowland (Easingwold).<sup>222</sup> In Huddersfield he found a much greater number of churches with more varieties and more widespread locations than at the beginning of the century. He drew attention to the expansion of the Church of England in what might have seemed unfavourable territory, though this was not uniformly spread over either time or place.

Grassington provided clear evidence of the spread of Dissent - primarily in filling in the religious vacuum caused by the absence or weakness of the Established Church. This upland district, with its population living in dispersed and isolated settlements, physically remote from parish churches, provided ideal territory for the expansion of Dissent. Easingwold was different again. Here there was a larger proportion of older churches (only half of them Anglican). Anglicans and Wesleyans seemed to co-exist without too much of the acrimony found in Huddersfield and Grassington. This was particularly true with regard to the avoidance of clashing services as well as cooperation over Sunday Schools. By 1851 an overall trend towards diversification existed throughout Yorkshire, though whether it was confrontational or consensual varied between localities.

Wolffe concluded that the early part of the nineteenth century showed evidence of "rechristianisation rather than secularisation".<sup>223</sup> In 1851 there was a general optimism about the church's ability to counteract any tendency towards non-participation. However, he also found evidence both in the Census and in documents

---

<sup>222</sup> J. Wolffe, 'The 1851 Census and Religious Change in Nineteenth-Century Yorkshire', pp. 78-84

<sup>223</sup> J. Wolffe, 'The 1851 Census and Religious Change in Nineteenth-Century Yorkshire', p. 85

of the period, of pessimistic attitudes locally, with people seeing the glass as half-empty (and emptying) rather than half-full.

In conclusion, the historiography reviewed above raises significant questions which the present study seeks to address. These include:

1. How reliable was the Census of Religious Worship?

For Warwickshire this is considered from the outset, when reviewing the way in which the Census was compiled, and later in Chapter 3 when assessing its results. Comparisons are made with other contemporary material including White's *Directory, Independency in Warwickshire* and Methodist Circuit Plans.

2. How durable over time has the geography of the major denominations been? Can historical continuity be recognised?

These questions are considered in Chapter 2, as part of the religious background, in Chapter 3 when considering the age of buildings and in Chapter 4 as part of the assessment of denominational distribution. This follows the pattern set by Snell and Ell in *Rival Jerusalems* using the Compton Census, *Evans List*, *Return of Papists* as well as local materials from Warwick County Records and the *State of the Bishoprick of Worcester*.<sup>224</sup>

---

<sup>224</sup> A. Whiteman (ed.), *The Compton Census of 1676: a critical edition* (London, c1986) pp. 183-187, 449-453, 538-540; J. Evans, *John Evans List of Dissenting Congregations and Ministers, 1715-29* (London, 1729); E. Worrall, *Return of Papists 1767 vol. 2* (London, 1989); *Warwick County Records*, vol. 8, pp. xlix – cxxxviii (Warwick, 1935); M. Ransome (ed.), *The State of the Bishoprick of Worcester 1782-1808*. Worcestershire Historical Society (Worcester, 1968)

3. Did the major denominations reciprocate or undercut each other spatially?

This is one of the questions to be answered in Chapter 4, when reviewing the geographical distribution of the different denominations. The key to the explanation and analysis lies in a series of distribution maps (Maps 4 to 11) showing the places of worship of the different denominations. These are derived from the transcriptions of the Warwickshire returns published in 2014.<sup>225</sup>

4. How important were the social controls exercised particularly through landowning patterns?

Consideration is given to 'open' and 'close' parishes as part of the socio-economic background in Chapter 2, and again in Chapter 4 along with a map of 'open' and 'close' parishes, based on Wilson's *Gazetteer of England and Wales* and other local sources (Map 3).

5. What was the denominational significance of free and appropriated sittings?

The Religious Census returns make it possible to compare the appropriation of sittings across the different denominations. Discussion of the Warwickshire returns is found in the Accommodation section of Chapter 3, where examination is made of the question of exclusivity with regard to both the Anglican Church and the Nonconformist denominations, the relationship between exclusivity and landownership pattern and between appropriation and church or chapel size.

---

<sup>225</sup> K. Geary (ed.), *The 1851 Census of Religious Worship: Church, Chapel, and Meeting Place in Mid Nineteenth-Century Warwickshire*

6. What was the role of the Sunday School?

Sunday Schools are dealt with in Chapter 3, when considering the results of the Religious Census. The Warwickshire returns are examined in the context of the two major theories about the role of the Sunday School in mid-nineteenth century England and examples to support both can be found in Warwickshire which reflect the diversity of socio-economic conditions in Warwickshire parishes.

7. What were the social and economic differences between the different Nonconformist denominations?

This is considered in the second part of Chapter 5 when reviewing Nonconformist people in the Religious Census. Laymen are identified through the Population Census and *White's Directory*, while clergy and their households are studied via the Population Census.

8. How far had the Church of England responded to criticisms of the Hanoverian Church and early nineteenth century legislation?

The question of provision of worship is answered in Chapter 3, in particular concerning the age of buildings and the worship provided, while the issue of clerical abuses is addressed in the first half of Chapter 5 when assessing the socio-economic profile of Anglican Clergy. This uses information from the Religious Census as the starting point, and then identifies other clergy and endowment incomes via the *Clergy List*, with additional information about age, marital status, household size and

birthplace from the 1851 Population Census, and educational details from university records.

## Chapter 2

### The Warwickshire Contexts of the Religious Census

The purpose of this chapter is to consider the background against which the returns of the Religious Census can be interpreted. The first part considers the nature of the physical geography and the way in which this has influenced land use and land ownership in the rural parts of the county, as well as the development of manufacturing industry, especially in the conurbation, but also in Coventry and the eastern part of the county. Further consideration is given to landownership in the second section, where the question of 'open' and 'close' parishes and their distribution within Warwickshire is examined. This issue is particularly important when the question of denominational distribution is analysed in Chapter 4. Finally, the religious background is presented as the context within which the Warwickshire returns of the Religious Census must be studied.<sup>226</sup>

### **Geographical Background**

Warwickshire has been traditionally regarded as two distinct areas - Arden and Felden. As Map 1 shows, Arden lies to the north and west of the county town and was an area of mixed light soils, formerly wooded, where common fields had never been a significant feature of the organization of farming. To the south and east lies the Felden, itself an area of contrasts in soils and farming pursuits. It extends in an arc from Stratford in the south-west to Rugby in the north-east, along the valley of the Avon, which forms a band of rich loamy soil three to four miles wide on either

---

<sup>226</sup> J.M. Martin's work on eighteenth century Warwickshire villages provides a local background in which to view the socio-economic condition of the county as it had developed by the middle of the nineteenth century. J.M. Martin, 'The Small Landowner and Parliamentary Enclosure in Warwickshire' *The Economic History Review*, New Series, Vol. 32, No. 3. (Aug., 1979), pp. 328-343; J.M. Martin, 'The Parliamentary Enclosure Movement and Rural Society in Warwickshire', *Agricultural History Review* xv (1967), pp. 19-39; J.M. Martin, 'Village Traders and the Emergence of a Proletariat in South Warwickshire, 1750 - 1851' *Agricultural History Review* xxxii (1984) pp. 179-88

bank. To the south and east of the river valley the most significant feature is the extensive tract of Lower Lias Clay which stretches up to the limestone of the Cotswold Edge, also shown on Map 1.

The varied physical landscape made possible a variety of farming activities. Leland found the Felden "plentiful of corne", and the Arden "not so plentiful of corne, but of grasse and woode",<sup>227</sup> and although this was modified over the course of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, in terms of land use and land holding, the Felden could still be differentiated from Arden. Within the Felden itself, too, there were differences between the highly fertile Avon valley and the heavy clays of the southeast. The Arden parishes were large and comprised mainly scattered hamlets, while the Felden communities, consisted of smaller, nucleated villages. Moreover, both the soil and the villages were poorer in Arden than they were further south. These differences could also be recognized in patterns of landownership and in farming practice, not only as between north and south but also, within the Felden, between the Avon valley and the southeast, and between old-enclosed and 'open' parishes. Such differences occurred not only between the various localities but also between individual parishes within the same area. In the Felden, in particular, rural society exhibited considerable contrasts. The lands of many parishes had remained in the possession of small squires and yeomen farmers, but the Felden was also dotted with enclosed and depopulated parishes in the hands of great landowners. Often such parishes were contiguous to overcrowded 'open' parishes like 'Hungry' Harbury, where land ownership was widely dispersed and great poverty had long

---

<sup>227</sup> T. Smith (ed.), *Leland's Itinerary in England* (1910), v pp. 154-5, cited in J.M. Martin, 'Small Landowner' p. 329

been apparent. These villages formed convenient pools of agricultural labour for the 'close' parishes.<sup>228</sup>

In Arden, the rural communities were comparatively large and landownership was, in many cases, widely dispersed among a large number of smallish owners. Socially, it was made up of communities of small free-holders, husbandmen, and a body of landless labourers and squatters. In these forest and pastoral communities, rural industry such as the woollen and linen manufacture had long been a necessity in order to supplement a living from the land. But in the Felden parishes, as enclosure proceeded in the third quarter of the eighteenth century,<sup>229</sup> the status of the majority of the population changed from that of tenants to hire labourers. This led to the cottagers, with their rural trade skills supplemented by small land holdings and grazing rights on the common lands, suffering the greatest reduction of status and living standards. If their trade did not provide an adequate income, they were reduced to day labourers or were displaced by poverty thus becoming landless men.

As Map 1 also shows, the northern part of the county also contained two extremely significant sub-regions. In the west, on the Birmingham plateau, was the growing conurbation of Birmingham and Aston, whose population more than trebled between 1801 and 1851 and almost trebled again before the end of the century, on its way to becoming England's second largest city by population and the third in the

---

<sup>228</sup> J.M. Martin, 'The Parliamentary Enclosure Movement and Rural Society in Warwickshire' p. 23

<sup>229</sup> J.M. Martin, 'The Parliamentary Enclosure Movement and Rural Society in Warwickshire' p. 24

British Empire after London and Glasgow.<sup>230</sup> Already, by 1851, it could justifiably be described as the workshop of the world and the city of a thousand trades. In the east, on the East Warwickshire coalfield, the small settlements which had been strung out in a line to the west of Watling Street, from Rugby, via Nuneaton and Atherstone, to Tamworth were developing rapidly into mining and industrial villages.

### **Settlements in Warwickshire**

The geographical basis of this study comprises parishes in the modern county of Warwickshire, listed as such in the Victoria County History table of population from which the 1851 population census figures have been taken.<sup>231</sup> However, data for the Religious Census were collected by Registration District, which usually corresponded to Poor Law Union boundaries. Districts 394 to 407 were regarded as Warwickshire districts. Nine of these districts contain only Warwickshire parishes, though in the Stratford district are several former Gloucestershire parishes, such as Welford-on-Avon and Clifford Chambers, and Alderminster, originally in Worcestershire, but all since transferred to Warwickshire and thus included here. Other registration districts included, in varying numbers, parishes still in Leicestershire, Northamptonshire and Gloucestershire, which have been omitted. At the same time, Warwickshire parishes, some officially transferred to the county since the publication of the *Victoria County History*, have been retrieved from Registration Districts in Worcestershire, Oxfordshire, Leicestershire and Staffordshire. The inclusion of some of the Tamworth

---

<sup>230</sup> Coventry also more than doubled its population over the same periods, although it would never regain the important status it had held in mediaeval and early modern times when it was the nation's fourth largest town.

<sup>231</sup> See Map 2.

returns reflects the concern by some of the informants to stress that, although the parish church was in Staffordshire, and therefore part of the Lichfield diocese, hamlets such as Amington and Glascote were part of Warwickshire. Elsewhere, Oldberrow was originally in Worcestershire but was transferred to Warwickshire in 1896 and has therefore been included here. In terms of numbers of places of worship, the 'revised' Warwickshire is slightly slimmer (by about fifteen churches and chapels) than the Warwickshire in the Tables of the Parliamentary Report published in 1853.<sup>232</sup>

The division between urban and rural settlements has been relatively straightforward. At the extremes, of course, there is no question that the most populous settlements are urban and those with the smallest populations are rural. The county as delimited here had a population in 1851 of just under 500,000 of which the budding metropolitan region based on Birmingham (including Aston and Edgbaston) contained almost half. Coventry, too (about 37,000), was a substantial settlement, even if its national importance had diminished, while Leamington (16,000) was one of the most rapidly growing towns in the country. Warwick (11,000), as the county town, was still of great significance locally in spite of being outgrown by neighbouring Leamington. The remaining large settlements, in decreasing order of size down to Alcester (almost 2,500) may all be classed as urban, with perhaps two exceptions. Bedworth, in spite of its population of more than 5,000, was, according to White's *Directory*, 'a large, neat and well-built village' although the authors of *Independency in Warwickshire* claimed that it had advanced

---

<sup>232</sup> H. Mann, *Census of Great Britain, 1851: Religious Worship, England and Wales*, pp. ccxxvi, ccxlviii, cclxxiv, cclxxxviii.

from its former status as 'a large and important village and is now become a small town'.<sup>233</sup> Chilvers Coton (population in excess of 2,600) was also classed in White's *Directory* as a village.<sup>234</sup> The former had been an important coal-mining centre since the sixteenth century, by 1850 employing 800 persons, while the latter had (in the hamlet of Griff) an extensive colliery and lime and brick works providing employment for 240 people. Both were also homes to a great number of ribbon weavers. Three other large industrial villages, each with more than 2,000 inhabitants, were Studley (home to 800 needle makers), Polesworth (with three extensive coal mines) and Bulkington, another centre of ribbon weaving. Settlements with fewer than 2,000 inhabitants might normally be considered as villages, although Coleshill, Shipston-on-Stour, Southam, Henley-in-Arden and Kineton are sufficiently distinctive to be defined as small towns. Taking the county as a whole, and including the industrial villages as rural, the urban population comprised around 75% and, even removing the Birmingham/Aston/Edgbaston parishes, the remainder of Warwickshire, by 1851, was typical of the country as a whole where for the first time town dwellers outnumbered those living in rural areas.

---

<sup>233</sup> F. White & Co., *History, Gazetteer and Directory of Warwickshire*, (Sheffield, 1850) p. 569.

<sup>234</sup> F. White & Co., *History, Gazetteer and Directory of Warwickshire*, p. 812.

## Socio-Economic Background

### 'Close' and 'Open' Parishes<sup>235</sup>

Holderness pointed out that though the terminology probably dated from around 1830, the distinction between 'open' and 'close' parishes was not a new development of the mid-nineteenth century.<sup>236</sup> In a 'close' parish, all or most of the land was owned by a single landlord, who could exercise enormous control over the life of the parish. In particular he often controlled the supply of housing, which he would limit in order to keep the poor rate as low as possible. In such parishes, the shortage of cottage housing for labourers meant that there were not sufficient labourers residing in the parish to supply the needs of the farmers. Many labourers were thus forced to live some distance from their work, in 'open' parishes. In these parishes the land was owned by many small owners who were unable to limit the amount of housing and who may actually build cottages as speculative investments. Most of the labourers living in an 'open' parish would work there, but others would have to walk long distances to work in a 'close' parish. But landowners had social as well as economic motives. As the major owners of housing, they could control the quality as well as the quantity of population, "in other words, only the law-abiding,

---

<sup>235</sup> See Map 3. The most important contributions to the debate on 'open' and 'close' parishes have been by B.A. Holderness 'Open and Close Parishes in England in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries', *Agricultural History Review* xx (1972) pp. 126-139; D.R. Mills, *Lord and Peasant*, (London, 1980) and S. Banks, 'Nineteenth-Century Scandal or Twentieth-Century Model? A New Look at 'Open' and 'Close' Parishes' *The Economic History Review*, New Series, Vol. 41, No. 1. (Feb., 1988), pp. 51-73

<sup>236</sup> B.A. Holderness, 'Open and Close Parishes in England in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries' p. 127

deferential and morally sound of the neighbours were welcome".<sup>237</sup> It was claimed that some large landowners actually demolished cottages on their estates in order to maintain social control and minimise poor rate. The curate of Oldberrow wrote in the Remarks section of the Religious Census return "A large landowner in the parish pulled down 50 cottages I am told 40 years ago - & there are now only 5 farm houses in the parish with an average of 4 indoor servants."<sup>238</sup>

To create a taxonomy which encompasses the whole variety of parish types in Warwickshire is far from simple, but one useful model is that developed by Obelkevich in his study of South Lindsey.<sup>239</sup> He divided parishes into four types:

- A. "Squire's" – where one landlord owned more than half of the land;
- B. "Oligarchic" – where a few landlords owned most of the land but none had more than half;
- C. "Freeholders" – where land was owned by smallholders averaging less than 40 acres each;
- D. "Divided" – all the rest – where there were often several large landowners with small or medium holdings and a larger number of smallholders.

It is sometimes difficult to distinguish between C and D, though true 'freeholders' parishes were more likely to take on the characteristics of small towns. Villages classified A or B can generally be regarded as 'close' and those C and D as 'open'.

---

<sup>237</sup> D.R. Mills, *Lord and Peasant* p. 23

<sup>238</sup> HO129.405.1.1.1

<sup>239</sup> J. Obelkevich, *Religion and Rural Society* p. 12

This division had implications for religious worship. A landlord who could prevent cottages from being built, could certainly refuse permission for a Nonconformist chapel or meeting house. He could check up on the attendance at church of his tenants and their families, whether they were farmers or labourers, and evict anyone who displeased him. Thus in 'close' parishes, especially those with a resident squire who supported the Church of England, the Established Church had distinct advantages. In 'open' parishes, by contrast, the gentry and clergy found it more difficult to exercise control and thus these were more accessible to Nonconformity. They tended to be larger in both area and population, with more hamlets and dispersed settlement ('polynuclear'), and were more independent of the influence of squires and parsons. Yet if they were friendlier to Nonconformity, they also tended to be 'rough' parishes, with more drunkenness and disorder. From the Victorian viewpoint, the problem was essentially moral. Private squalor was often identified with moral delinquency, and beerhouses received a large proportion of the blame for rural despair and dissipation. Holderness notes that 'open' parishes were described as "penal settlements for people of bad character from all the country round," being forced to receive the "scum and offscour" of the countryside hindered from settling anywhere else. Most counties from Dorset to the East Riding could show one or two particularly notorious examples.<sup>240</sup>

The nature of a settlement and its 'open' or 'close' status (by the nature of property sub-division) has been determined initially from the *Imperial Gazetteer*<sup>241</sup> (1872

---

<sup>240</sup> B. A. Holderness, 'Open and Close Parishes in England in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries' p. 127

<sup>241</sup> J.M. Wilson, *The Imperial Gazetteer of England and Wales*, (London, 1872 and 1886)

edition where available, otherwise 1886) with added contemporary corroboration from *Joseph Ashby's Victorian Warwickshire*<sup>242</sup> and White's *Directory* of 1850.<sup>243</sup> All of the urban settlements except one can be considered ipso facto 'open'. As such, they all have numerous churches, the number and variety being directly proportionate to population size. The one exception was Birmingham's growing suburb of Edgbaston, which was not much divided, most of which still belonged to Lord Calthorpe and, despite housing almost 10,000 people in 1851, possessed only two places of worship, both of them Anglican.

Map 3 shows that of the 211 rural settlements in Warwickshire, there are seven which are impossible to classify as either 'open' or 'close'.<sup>244</sup> This leaves 204, of which 134 appear to be 'close' and 70 'open'. The 'close' parishes range in size from Chilvers Coton and Studley, mentioned above, to tiny extraparochial tracts such as Chapel Ascote with a handful of inhabitants. The mean population size of the 'close' parishes is almost 400 and their mean area is 2,072 acres (838 hectares). The 'open' parishes vary from Bedworth with more than 5,000 people to Stretton Baskerville with 62. Their mean population is more than double that of the 'close' parishes (at 841) while the mean area is almost half as much again at 3,007 acres (1,216 hectares). Compared to parishes in South Lindsey, those of Warwickshire are generally larger. According to Obelkevich the mean size of his Lincolnshire 'open' parishes was 2,000 acres (809 hectares) and of 'close' parishes, 1,600 acres (647

---

<sup>242</sup> A. Langley (ed.), *Joseph Ashby's Victorian Warwickshire* (Studley, 2007)

<sup>243</sup> F. White & Co., *History, Gazetteer and Directory of Warwickshire*

<sup>244</sup> These are Beaudesert, Bilton, Easington, Long Marston, Milverton, Quinton and Wolford

hectares). In 1851 he calculated that 'close' parishes were relatively underpopulated, since they occupied more than 59% of the land, but contained only 44% of the population.<sup>245</sup> In rural Warwickshire, the 'close' parishes occupied 57% of the land, but contained 47.5% of the population. One factor contributing to this disparity in population size and density between the 'close' parishes of Lindsey and Warwickshire is the fact that the latter included some very populous industrial villages.

One Warwickshire village, used as a local study by Mills, was Tysoe, a very large parish in the Felden, with a nucleated settlement pattern, but with three nuclei.<sup>246</sup> In two of them the Marquess of Northampton was Lord of the Manor (his seat Compton Wynyates was the next parish to the south), but it was not unusual for an absentee landlord to have a major interest in an 'open' parish, just as many estate villages held a few independent landowners. Mills described Tysoe as a stronghold of Nonconformity from the early part of the eighteenth century. Subsequently the Methodists were particularly strong, and by 1835 there were 135 pupils at the Methodist Sunday School compared with 86 at the parish church. These children probably went to the Wesleyan Chapel, which dates from before 1800, and re-erected in 1820, though by 1851 the Primitive Methodists also had a meeting place.<sup>247</sup> "We are left in no doubt that the gentry, large farmers and submissive dependents went to the parish church, the living of which was in the hands of the

---

<sup>245</sup> J. Obelkevich, *Religion and Rural Society*, p. 12

<sup>246</sup> D.R. Mills, *Lord and Peasant* pp. 49-54

<sup>247</sup> HO129.406.4.9.10; HO129.406.4.9.4

Marquis of Northampton. The independent ones were Nonconformists, Wesleyans in the case of the middling sort of folk, Primitives in the case of the labourers.”<sup>248</sup>

---

<sup>248</sup> D.R. Mills, *Lord and Peasant* p. 52

## Religious Background

### Church of England

Theologically the Church of England in the mid nineteenth century can be considered to consist of three main branches. The Evangelicals were mistrustful of any party countenancing Roman Catholicism and were sometimes prepared to cooperate with fellow evangelicals among Dissenters. At the opposite end of the theological spectrum were the Tractarians, who were the product of the Oxford Movement and were the descendants of the Old High Churchmen of the eighteenth century. They emphasised the authority of the visible Church (especially the sacraments and tradition) and resented state interference. In the middle were the broad churchmen or Latitudinarians, who were liberal in politics and theology and hoped for reconciliation with Nonconformists.

In the eighteenth century many Anglicans viewed their Church as a social institution and regarded it as a safe refuge from the excessive enthusiasm of Dissent. But it was much more than that. The nation's political and legal system relied on the Established Church. At the apex of political life, its bishops sat in the House of Lords, while at the grass roots of society, the basic structures of local government, education and poor relief were derived from the parish system. "Its non-recurrent rites – baptisms, confirmations, marriages and funerals – contributed to the maintenance of communal solidarity at times of individual and social crisis; the

annual rituals and festivals which it sponsored or legitimised helped bind a local society together in the natural cycles of rural existence.”<sup>249</sup>

By the end of the eighteenth century the speed and direction of social and political change was causing a growing number of problems, and this trend intensified from 1790 to 1830. Gilbert argued that “In the unsettled era of early industrialisation, traditional authority structures began to disintegrate, social cohesion began to break down, and for individuals and families the personal security which came from integration in a stable community often gave way to anomie in the new and relatively unstructured world of the industrial shanty town or the industrial city.”<sup>250</sup> Moreover, in much of England, the Industrial Revolution had been preceded by a revolution on the land, where the effect of enclosure and tithe commutation permeated the whole of society. In many rural areas this resulted in the rise of the clergy as members of the landowning class, a process which alienated rural labourers and small farmers alike, and which led to the appearance of a new phenomenon – the ‘squarson’.<sup>251</sup>

Thus, Gilbert suggested that labourers drifted from the parish church, often attending only when necessary to ensure their share in the charitable distribution of clothing, blankets or soup. The incumbent distributed various charities, some from his own pocket. This was sometimes used as a lever to ensure church attendance and to keep children from Dissenting Sunday schools. Some of them found their way

---

<sup>249</sup> A.D. Gilbert, *Religion and Society in Industrial England*. p. 75

<sup>250</sup> A.D. Gilbert, *Religion and Society in Industrial England*. p. 77

<sup>251</sup> The phenomenon of the Squarson is considered in some detail in Chapter 5.

into the Nonconformist chapels, but others were alienated and abandoned organised religion altogether.<sup>252</sup>

By the early 1830s pressures for reform had become irresistible. These focussed on two major areas – the structure of the organisation and the structure of the clerical profession. Under Queen Anne at the beginning of the eighteenth century some attempts had been made to subdivide parishes and build new churches, while the establishment of Queen Anne’s Bounty in 1704 made some attempt to augment benefice income in poorly endowed parishes. Attempts had also been made before 1836 to modify the parish system, including substantial grants for church building in 1818 and 1824. In 1828 the Government repealed the Test and Corporation Acts, followed a year later by the Catholic Emancipation Act. This legislation eased many of the restrictions which had been placed on non-Anglicans, although it was considered by many Anglicans that the Church had been betrayed by the Government. They were even more concerned by the setting up of the Ecclesiastical Commission (to reform the structure of the Church) in 1832, the Established Church Act (to equalise bishops’ stipends and propose new sees at Manchester and Ripon) in 1836, and the Ecclesiastical Duties and Revenues Act (which attacked sinecures and took some cathedral revenues to augment poor livings and fund new parishes) in 1840. Other grievances were also removed in 1836 with the Marriage Act and the Tithe Commutation Act (though the Church Rate was not abolished until 1868), and it was felt that by 1850 the Church of England was better equipped to counter the

---

<sup>252</sup> However, Gilbert’s views have been disputed by other historians including M.A. Smith in *Religion and Industrial Society*, especially Chapter 7.

challenges of population growth and Dissent than it had been in 1800.<sup>253</sup> The most significant organisational change emanating from the period following the establishment of the Ecclesiastical Commission was the legislation in 1843, which simplified parochial subdivision, allowing the creation of the 'Peel Parishes' and producing an increased demand for new churches and clergy.<sup>254</sup>

It has been argued that the Religious Census shows that by the middle of the nineteenth century the Church of England could no longer lay claim to being the 'national' Church. "Legitimate religious pluralism had emerged in no large part due to the decline of established social systems and a transition to an open and more pluralistic society."<sup>255</sup> Yet as the Established Church, the Church of England still operated as a national body. But as the returns of the Religious Census demonstrated, it was still very much a local institution. In rural areas it remained as a social constant, providing rituals which marked significant points in human life as well as meeting educational needs and dispensing charity. The reduction of pluralism and non-residence, along with some re-distribution of income made the rural Church a more efficient organization, and with more resident clergy its presence became an even more permanent feature than hitherto. In urban areas reforms helped the Church respond to change which was occurring on an unprecedented scale by

---

<sup>253</sup> E. Royle, *Modern Britain: A Social History 1750 – 1997* (London, 1997) pp. 308-309

<sup>254</sup> G. Best, *Temporal pillars: Queen Anne's bounty, the Ecclesiastical Commissioners, and the Church of England* (Cambridge, 1964) is still a key text on this topic, especially Chapter VI -The Crisis of Church Reform 1820-35, Chapter VII - The Foundation of the Ecclesiastical Commissioners and Chapter VIII - The Time of Troubles. S.J Brown, *The national churches of England, Ireland, and Scotland, 1801-46* (Oxford 2001) has analysed these issues in detail.

<sup>255</sup> R. Brown, *Church and State in Modern Britain* (London, 1991) pp. 468-471

creating new parishes, building new churches and providing more clergy, though for many people, especially among the working classes this was too little, too late.

### Nonconformists

Many writers on the subject (including Hurwich<sup>256</sup>) use the terms “Dissenters” and “Nonconformists” interchangeably. Writing in the early twentieth century, J Hay Colligan<sup>257</sup> argued that “Nonconformist” was the term generally used until the early eighteenth century, but “Dissenter” became more common in the eighteenth century and was adopted as the legal designation. Dissenters were a legally defined body, being Protestants who refused to comply with the terms of the Act of Uniformity of 1662. These terms included episcopal ordination and subscription to the Book of Common Prayer by ministers, while laymen were required to attend the parish church weekly and to receive Communion there once a year. Thus the terms “Nonconformist” and “Free Church” were rarely used in the first half of the nineteenth century, while “Dissent” included all the religious groups refusing to conform to the Established Church. Roman Catholics and Jews as well as Protestants suffered many legal and social disabilities because of their religion.<sup>258</sup> However, by the 1850s Dissenters were again calling themselves Nonconformists or Freechurchmen, alternative names which they took readily. “The new nomenclature removed at one sweep the sense of inferiority under which the Dissenters had

---

<sup>256</sup> J.J. Hurwich, ‘Dissent and Catholicism in English Society: A Study of Warwickshire, 1660-1720’ *The Journal of British Studies*, Vol. 16, No. 1, (Autumn, 1976), pp. 24-58

<sup>257</sup> J.H. Colligan, *Eighteenth-Century Nonconformity*, (London, 1915) p. 79

<sup>258</sup> Wesleyan Methodists, though Dissenters by circumstance rather than by choice, united with the Dissenters to obtain the freedom to propagate their faith. See R.G. Cowherd, *The Politics of English Dissent* p. 16

previously laboured & was a godsend to the Wesleyans who had longed for a less partisan term than Dissenter to define their special status in the religious world. A confident and heady scent of victory pervaded the Nonconformist ranks."<sup>259</sup>

The three major denominations of Old Dissent (Presbyterians, Independents, Baptists), had their origins in the seventeenth century, and as time passed it became clear that the theology of the three denominations had strong similarities. It was officially Calvinist, asserting salvation by faith and predestination as central tenets, along with the doctrine of the Trinity. The crucial difference between Baptists and others was the practice of adult baptism by immersion, while the significant difference between Presbyterians and Independents was one of church government the latter vesting authority in the individual congregation, while, in theory, the Presbyterian system was hierarchical. During the eighteenth century, however, there was a growing movement away from belief in Trinity, especially among Presbyterians and the original General Baptists, many of whom left to join forces with the nascent Unitarians. Quakers too had their origins in the seventeenth century but had always stood apart from the other denominations. As will be seen in Chapter 4, the snapshot provided by the Religious Census indicated that in Warwickshire, apart from the Quakers, who were in decline, Old Dissent was consolidating and expanding in its established (mainly urban) areas, while supporting new congregations (especially in rural areas) wherever possible.

New Dissent dated back only to the eighteenth century and consisted mainly of the various branches of Methodism which was the largest sector of Nonconformity.<sup>260</sup>

---

<sup>259</sup> I. Sellers, *Nineteenth-Century Nonconformity* p. 60

Although Methodism did not become a separate church until after the death of Wesley in 1791, within six years, the first of numerous secessions occurred. In the main these secessions sprang from two causes; the perception of oppressive actions on behalf of ministers or leading laymen in Wesleyan and Primitive Methodist Connexions and the apparent unfair financial demands imposed on poor members in Wesleyan or Primitive Methodist churches. In 1797 the Methodist New Connexion was formed by Alexander Kilham. He asserted the rights of lay people against the overweening power of the ministry. The early years of the nineteenth century saw the development of Independent Methodists, who eschewed a paid ministry, in and around Lancashire, the Primitive Methodists spreading outwards from the Potteries with their emphasis on revivalism and camp meetings, while the Bible Christians, with a similar outlook, were confined almost entirely to Devon and Cornwall and to migrants from these counties. Controversies in Leeds in the 1820s and 1830s led to the secession of the Protestant Methodists and Wesleyan Methodist Association, while the most famous cause célèbre, the Flysheet controversy, convulsed Wesleyanism between 1847 and 1851 and led to the establishment of the Wesleyan Reformers.<sup>261</sup> Yet the great majority of Methodists remained loyal to the original denomination, and the Original Connexion did eventually recover from even the most serious of schisms, though it took until the mid 1870s for Wesleyan membership numbers to reach pre-1850 levels. Moreover, barely six years after the

---

<sup>260</sup> F. Rinaldi makes a strong case for including the New Connexion of General Baptists within New Dissent. (*The Tribe of Dan* (Milton Keynes, 2008) pp. 69-71)

<sup>261</sup> There were also secessions from the Primitive Methodists – the Original Methodists (or “Selstonites”) in Derbyshire and Nottinghamshire in the late 1830s were the result of both a clash of personalities and a conflict over money. The somewhat later secession of Christian Methodists was occasioned by a disagreement over the way in which hymns were read out in services!

Flysheet secessions the formation of the United Methodist Free Church marked the beginnings of re-unification, which culminated in the formation of the Methodist Church in 1932.<sup>262</sup>

Not all who were called Methodists were followers of Wesley. The Calvinistic Methodists of the eighteenth century, for example, did not accept Wesley's theology. A small group of them survived in England in the Countess of Huntingdon's Connexion, closely associated with the Independents.<sup>263</sup> In addition, on the fringes of Nonconformity there was a range of small groups, orthodox, but sectarian, that almost defies listing. During the first half of the nineteenth century, creative movements within the Nonconformist Churches led to the foundation of many new organisations, and as we shall see, many were represented in Warwickshire, especially in Birmingham. The 1830s saw the emergence of the Brethren, a movement of laymen and disillusioned clerics who sought freedom from the ordained structures and ministry of the churches and a return to primitive Christianity. Other groups which originated in the same period included the Church of the Disciples and the Catholic Apostolic Church both founded by former Presbyterian ministers. The Moravians served 0.1% of the population in 1851, while even smaller were the Inghamites, Sandemanians, Scotch Baptists, Catholic Apostolic Church, Churches of Christ, Evangelical Union, Free Church of England, Peculiar

---

<sup>262</sup> This is treated extensively in R. Davies, A.R. George and G. Rupp (eds.), *History of the Methodist Church in Great Britain Vol. 2* (London, 1978) (Ch. V – The Mid Nineteenth Century Background by T.E. Jessop); R. Davies, A.R. George and G. Rupp (eds.), *History of the Methodist Church in Great Britain Vol. 3* (London, 1983) (Ch. 2. Wesleyan Methodism 1849 – 1902 by H.D. Rack); R. Davies, *Methodism 2<sup>nd</sup> ed.* (London, 1976) pp. 122-4 and M.R. Watts, *The Dissenters Vol. 2* pp. 614 - 625

<sup>263</sup> The Calvinistic Methodists flourished and became the largest denomination in Wales.

People and the Cokelers. This trend towards increasing numbers of non-Anglican forms of Christianity continued to develop and later in the century, there arose a number of Holiness denominations, of which by far the best known is the Salvation Army. Thus the snapshot captured by the Religious Census represents just one point on a rising curve of English religious diversity.

As Bebbington has asserted, “Victorian Nonconformity has commonly received a bad press”.<sup>264</sup> He cites Matthew Arnold’s criticism of Nonconformists as “addicted to a mixture of disputes, tea meetings, openings of chapels and sermons”<sup>265</sup>, and points out that much of nineteenth century literature treated Nonconformity with little sympathy. Yet English Nonconformity underwent a remarkable transformation during the nineteenth century. Initially it carried the general label ‘Dissent’ and as such “bore marks of exclusion from established Church of England and larger society through inherited disabilities and the accumulated scorn of most Anglicans”.<sup>266</sup> Over the course of the century, disabilities endured since the Restoration were gradually removed, allowing greater participation in political life and access to education. “Between the failure of Sidmouth’s attempt to regularise the status of Dissenting preachers and the passage of Carvell Williams’s Burial Act of 1900, most of the grievances were smoothed away until only their flavour remained.”<sup>267</sup> Nineteenth century legislation included Church Building Acts in 1818 and 1824 and the New

---

<sup>264</sup> D.W. Bebbington, *Victorian Nonconformity* p. 1

<sup>265</sup> M. Arnold, *Culture and Anarchy* ed. J. Dover Wilson (Cambridge, 1932) p. 58.

<sup>266</sup> D.A. Johnson, *The Changing Shape of English Nonconformity 1825 – 1925* p. 3

<sup>267</sup> J.C.G. Binfield, *So Down to Prayers. Studies in English Nonconformity 1780 – 1920* (London, 1977)

Parishes Act of 1843. The setting up of the Ecclesiastical Commission by Peel in 1835 led subsequently to legislation to revise diocesan boundaries (1836), to restrict pluralism (1838 and 1850) and to redistribute revenues to where they were needed most (1840), while 1836 also saw the passing of the Tithe Commutation Act. The Church of England was also affected by other legislation, such as the Toleration Act, 1813, the Repeal of the Test and Corporation Acts (1828), the Catholic Emancipation Act (1829) and the Dissenters' Marriages Act (1838), which ended the obligation of nonconformists to marry in an Anglican church, while religious issues had been very prominent during the agitation for the Reform Act of 1832. The Church Rate was finally abolished in 1868, and the older Universities opened their doors to Nonconformists in 1854, 1856 and 1871.<sup>268</sup>

#### Roman Catholicism – Seigneurial and Urban

The Catholic Church in England at the end of the nineteenth century was a very different institution from that which existed at the end of the eighteenth. Its chief differences were in terms of numbers, organisation, and class. In 1800 it was the religion of a small, though not inconsiderable minority, a minority which was, in general, led by wealthy peers and gentry, who were concerned to maintain a degree of independence from Rome. There was a massive growth in numbers during the nineteenth century, one which had begun during the second half of the eighteenth century. This was associated initially with the natural increase in population of the country which had begun to accelerate from about 1750 onwards, and continued apace for the next 150 years. To this should be added the influx of Irish immigrants,

---

<sup>268</sup> J. Obelkevich, 'Religion', in F.M.L. Thompson (ed.), *Cambridge Social History of Britain*, iii, (Cambridge, 1990) pp. 328-9, 343

especially during the 1840s, which transformed many English towns and had a major impact on the Catholic Church marking a major turning point. As seen in Chapter 4, this was particularly important in the development of Catholicism in Birmingham. The 'new Catholics' were far more willing to defer to the priest in matters of religion and this led to an extension of clerical power as the century progressed. Moreover the immigrant Irish played a major part in turning the English Catholic Church into the church of the working class, although the public perception in the mid century was also influenced by the nature of the converts from the Oxford Movement and at the end of the century by literary and artistic figures.

Employment opportunities had brought Irishmen to England in a steady stream since the late eighteenth century. Some came as seasonal harvesters, while others remained in the poorest and most squalid quarters of the English towns. Irish immigration started as a trickle in the 1790s, and became a stream in the 1820s. By the 1840s it had become a spate, as the potato harvest failed, a million people died of starvation and more than a million emigrated. Many of the poorest came to Britain, nearly doubling the number of Irish born people in England from 291,000 to 520,000 between 1841 and 1851, so that by 1850, with the children of the Irish (born) in England, the English Church had the task of evangelising a nominally Catholic population of well over half a million people. Righteous Protestants believed this threatened to flood England's green and pleasant land with alien dogma and Popish superstition.<sup>269</sup>

---

<sup>269</sup> E.J. Evans, *The Forging of the Modern State*, 2nd ed. (London, 1996) p. 319

Moreover, many of these immigrants had a different view of Catholicism from that traditionally practised in England. In parts of rural Ireland, especially in the west, perhaps as few as 40% of the population attended church on Sunday. Their faith was centred not on the scattered priesthood and weekly attendance at Mass at a distant chapel, but on family prayers and the local shrine or holy well. Thus the English Catholic Church had one overwhelming task on its hands: the provision of priests and churches for the immigrant Irish, and the re-education of some of them in the modern norms of English Catholicism.<sup>270</sup> The Religious Census provided a snapshot of part of this effort in action.

During the second quarter of the nineteenth century, the Catholic Church in England experienced an influx of prominent, able, intelligent and immensely enthusiastic converts, many of them from the landed aristocracy and gentry. By 1845 the Oxford Movement and its turmoils had produced a significant crop of converts from the Church of England to Rome, the most influential being John Henry Newman, by 1851 priest at the Oratory in Birmingham.<sup>271</sup> A significant number of converts were women, many of whom became nuns, not the least attraction of Catholicism being that it gave women's work a degree of autonomy in its religious orders, which initiated massive new works in the realm of education, nursing and charity.

---

<sup>270</sup> S. Gilley and W.J. Sheils (eds.), *A History of Religion in Britain; Practice and Belief from Pre-Roman Times to the Present* (Oxford, 1994) p. 351

<sup>271</sup> HO129.395.1.1.5

Parsons argues that the significance of these converts has frequently been both exaggerated and misunderstood.<sup>272</sup> The impression that it was the converts who initially brought new vitality and revival to an essentially staid English Catholicism was encouraged by the idea of a 'second spring' to characterise the revival of English Catholicism, the image used by Newman in his famous sermon. It is, however, too simple a view. The revival of Victorian Catholicism derived from a number of factors, the zeal of the converts being but one alongside ongoing influences from within the old English Catholic tradition. The number of converts may have been, in reality, small to the point of insignificance and the well known conversions were not typical of converts as a whole. Most Catholic converts were humble folk who converted on marrying a Catholic as poor as themselves. The enthusiasm of many of the converts for monasteries, convents, monastic dress, public processions and many of the more dramatic manifestations of a continental Catholic devotional style (with its flamboyance, ceremony, emphasis on the Virgin, the Immaculate Conception, the rosary and a whole range of Italian and Ultramontane devotional activities) was strikingly alien to English Catholic tradition let alone to English Protestantism.<sup>273</sup>

In 1840 the Pope reacted to the growing numbers of the faithful by doubling the numbers of Vicars apostolic to eight. Ten years later he restored the hierarchy proper, sanctioning thirteen new Catholic bishoprics - mostly in densely populated areas such as Birmingham, Liverpool and Salford - under the primacy of Nicholas Wiseman, whom he made Cardinal Archbishop of Westminster. Wiseman became

---

<sup>272</sup> G. Parsons, *Religion in Victorian Britain vol. 1, Traditions* (Manchester, 1988) pp. 150 – 151

<sup>273</sup> G. Parsons, *Religion in Victorian Britain vol. 1* p. 152

England's first cardinal since the reign of Mary I and he celebrated his elevation with an injudicious pastoral letter celebrating the fact that "Catholic England has been restored to its orbit in the ecclesiastical firmament from which its light had long vanished".<sup>274</sup>

At the local level, too, the Catholic Church was responding to the challenge and opportunities afforded by mass-emigration from Ireland in the late 1840s, much to the concern of many Protestants. The *Protestant Magazine* reported that in a single decade (1846 to 1856) there had been a 35% increase in the number of Catholic places of worship and the number of priests rose by an appalling 48%. Moreover the priests seemed to exert a greater influence in their communities than Protestant clerics did in theirs.<sup>275</sup>

The restoration of the hierarchy signified an important turning point in the internal development of Victorian Catholicism. During the seventeenth and eighteenth century the English Catholic community had tried to obtain from Rome the restoration of a local hierarchy of bishops. They had intended this to be a means of securing greater local and national control over their Church as opposed to direct rule from Rome. But when the hierarchy finally was restored, it proved to be not a "symbol of independence from Roman and papal control, but rather the seal on the process by which English Catholicism came to be dominated by the continental

---

<sup>274</sup> E.J. Evans, *The Forging of the Modern State* p. 319

<sup>275</sup> E.J. Evans, *The Forging of the Modern State* p. 314

tradition of Roman and Ultramontane devotion, loyalty to the papacy and centralised clerical control".<sup>276</sup>

Thus it can be seen that the expansion and achievements of Catholicism in Victorian Britain was based on a number of interacting and sometimes conflicting factors. As the Religious Census shows, in Warwickshire, the Old Catholic tradition had not died out and provided a foundation on which nineteenth century could build. Converts provided zeal and enthusiasm throughout the century (not merely from the Oxford Movement). Prior to the 1840s and the putative 'second spring', numbers had grown, quite apart from the Irish immigration, and a lively urban Catholic community had developed, again quite apart from the Irish contribution. Behind these changes was a further important development - the rise of clerical leadership and control of the community. None of the changes were revolutionary innovations nor did they constitute a radical break with the immediate past of English Catholicism. What they did do was to speed up, sharpen and seal a process of change already at work within English Catholicism.

The recurring theme of this chapter is that of diversity. The diverse landscape and economic geology of Warwickshire led to variations in population density, population distribution and a variety of settlement types. Within the towns, and especially in the conurbation there was a considerable range of employment from which a socio-economic structure developed which was very different from that in the agricultural villages, although there were also significant differences within the latter group. It is within the context of the development of a multi-faceted society

---

<sup>276</sup> G. Parsons, *Religion in Victorian Britain vol. 1* p. 153

that we should view the growth of religious pluralism and the impact of these trends is clearly displayed in the Warwickshire returns of the Religious Census considered in Chapter 3 and the geographical distribution of the denominations discussed in Chapter 4.

## Chapter 3

### The Results of the Census in Warwickshire

Introduction.

This chapter presents the results of the Religious Census and as such is concerned with the answers given to the questions posed by Horace Mann. But these responses, both individually and collectively, can be used to cast light on a number of other questions relating to the mechanics of the census itself and to wider issues concerning the ecclesiastical history of mid-nineteenth century Warwickshire. In the former category fall matters such as the reliability of the census, while the wider issues include denominational continuity (as seen through the age of buildings), the significance of free and appropriated sittings, the role of the Sunday School and the extent to which the Church of England had responded to the criticisms of the Hanoverian Church and to early nineteenth century legislation.

The Census of Religious Worship held on 30 March 1851 was unique in the nineteenth and twentieth century demographic history of England and Wales.<sup>277</sup> Inglis argues that its very uniqueness is reason enough for extracting all the evidence it can yield, and claims that it is 'a richer quarry than its comparative neglect by social and ecclesiastical historians may suggest'.<sup>278</sup> Yet it was very much a document of its time. It was believed that facts were necessary for understanding if government action was to be based on knowledge rather than ignorance. The Victorians were known for their pre-occupation with statistics and the middle years of the nineteenth century had already produced a vast amount of data concerning

---

<sup>277</sup> Not until the 2001 census was a question on religion asked again. See <http://www.statistics.gov.uk/census2001/pdfs/H1.pdf> (Q.10)

<sup>278</sup> K.S. Inglis, 'Patterns of Religious Worship in 1851' p. 74

the poor law, agriculture and industry via Select Committee and other investigative reports. Moreover, comparable religious censuses were held around this time for at least nine European states, and Ireland held one in 1834.<sup>279</sup>

This Census of Religious Worship (also known as The Ecclesiastical Census or Religious Census) is seen by many commentators as just another collection of information which occurred during the nineteenth century. Yet it also had great significance. For Nonconformists (including Roman Catholics), it was the first time that they had been given parity of esteem with the Established Church in a Government survey. Moreover, it is unique, since it has never been repeated (the religious question in the 2001 and 2011 censuses merely asked for individual religious affiliation).

It is important to remember that the first half of the nineteenth century saw significant religious change and development, including structural reform of the Church of England, the Oxford Movement, the growth and divisions within Methodism, the substantial expansion of Nonconformity generally, and the spread of agnosticism and secularism. Economic, industrial, urban and demographic changes imposed severe strains on churches requiring them to adapt and reform and there was particular concern that religious provision was failing to keep pace with the growth and changing distribution of population.

---

<sup>279</sup> K.D.M. Snell and P.S. Ell, *Rival Jerusalems* p. 28

## How The Census Was Compiled

On 30 March 1851, the sixth national decennial census of population was conducted. In order to utilise the same administrative machinery, censuses of educational provision and of religious worship were carried out at the same time. In the first instance, the enumerators were asked to provide a list of all the places of worship in their enumeration district and the completed returns were checked against these lists. In the week preceding the census, the 30,610 enumerators distributed forms within their district to clergy and others who were responsible for places of worship. These forms were to be collected on Monday 31 March, when they collected the population census returns. All forms were returned to local registrars who were responsible for attempting to obtain information from missing places of worship. Final checks were made at the Census Office and further requests for information were made from London over the subsequent sixteen months or so.<sup>280</sup> The final responsibility for the Religious Census was delegated by the Registrar-General to Horace Mann, one of the two senior officials at the Census Office. At the end of the process, Mann wrote a report which was published alongside tables of information aggregated by Registration Districts.

There were three versions of the data request form. A blue form with black printing was for the Church of England, a blue form with red printing was for Nonconformists (including Roman Catholics and Jews) while the Quakers had their own form (in black

---

<sup>280</sup> Further attempts were made (as late as August 1852) to obtain information, at least about sittings and average congregation size. These information forms were usually (but not always) completed by the Registrar, though occasionally the clergyman did relent and either completed the form himself or provided the information. These forms were then included in the collection of folios, though not always close to their correct position. Such a return for St Nicholas Parish Church, Nuneaton was actually signed by the Vicar, those for Wolverton and Coughton by a 'Minister' and at Beaudesert and Halford by a curate.

and white). In addition there were Information Forms to match the two main ones, which asked for seating and average attendances.

The Anglican form requested the following information:

1. Name and description of the Church or Chapel.
2. Where situated – parish, registration district, county and diocese.
3. When consecrated or licensed (with date if after 1800).
4. For Churches consecrated or licensed after 1800, how, by whom, at what cost and method of defraying cost.
5. How the living was endowed.
6. What space was available in both free and 'other' sittings.
7. The estimated number attending on Sunday 30 March 1851. The respondent could also enter the average number of attendants if it was felt that this gave a more accurate picture.
8. There was a small space in which remarks could be made.
9. Signature, official character and address.

On the Nonconformist form, much the same information was required about the name and location, space available (though there was also room to indicate free space or standing room) and attendances. There was also space to indicate religious denomination, but instead of date of consecration or licence, the question asked was "When erected?" Instead of the contentious questions about the cost of construction and the amount and nature of endowment, enquiry was made about whether the place of worship was a separate and entire building, and whether or not

it was used exclusively for worship. The Quaker form asked for space in feet as well as number of people who could be seated, both on the floor and in galleries. It seems likely that because they used moveable seating, an indication of area was considered to be more appropriate. Apart from the fact that there was no space for the average number of attendants, there were no other differences between the form for Quakers and other Nonconformists.

Each return can be given a full reference number. This is divided into five parts. HO129 is the class code under which all the 1851 Ecclesiastical Census returns are filed at the National Archives. The four parts which follow constitute a unique identifier, comprising Registration District, sub-district, parish and finally place of worship.<sup>281</sup> For example, St Peter's Parish Church, Butlers Marston, is HO129.406.4.13.15 (406 for Shipston-on-Stour Registration District, 4 for Halford sub-district, 13 for Butler's Marston Parish and 15 the running number within the Halford sub-district).

It was believed that the information obtained by the Religious Census would allow two questions to be addressed - how many people were outside the institutional church, and was the Anglican Church still the church of the majority and therefore effectively performing its role as the established church?

Nationally there was much opposition to the idea of a census of religious worship. Many in the Church of England believed that a question in the population census regarding a profession of belief would have given a more accurate picture. However this was rejected as being too inquisitorial and prone to bias as few would claim to

---

<sup>281</sup> Individual returns are referenced throughout the thesis using this system.

be atheists and many would put down Church of England though only nominally. The favoured alternative was to collect information about religious acts. It was felt that the outward conduct of people gave a better guide than mere statement of profession. These two methods, of course are not mutually exclusive.

When it was agreed, in the middle of March, that there was no legal obligation to complete the form, and that no financial penalty would be imposed for failure to do so, it was argued that in many cases, no returns would be made. Thus the information collected would be misleading and incomplete. Within Warwickshire direct opposition by Anglican clergy was limited. The Vicar of Claverdon declined giving the attendance (though he did complete the section on endowment).<sup>282</sup> The officiating minister of Offchurch also refused to give figures for the attendance (but someone else did)<sup>283</sup>, while the Vicar of Fillongley remarked “It is presumed that the above inquiries don’t apply to Fillongley Church.”<sup>284</sup> 39 returns for Anglican churches were completed by laymen, mainly registrars. The folio for All Saints, Allesley indicates that information has been provided by the Rector,<sup>285</sup> while at St John’s, Wasperton, the Registrar’s return is from “information partly received from the Churchwarden”.<sup>286</sup> The enumerator for Austrey writes that he has written to the Vicar and he refused to give the information required. However, as a native of Austrey, he begged to say that the information he provided would be close

---

<sup>282</sup> HO129.404.5.3.3

<sup>283</sup> HO129.403.5.7.8

<sup>284</sup> HO129.396.2.10.11

<sup>285</sup> HO129.396.2.7.7

<sup>286</sup> HO129.403.1.12.12

enough.<sup>287</sup>

Many left blank the section on endowment, the Rector of St George's Birmingham declaring "Answers to this, I understand, are not required".<sup>288</sup> The Vicar of Budbrooke stated rather bluntly "As no reasons are stated why this return is desired & as I am unable to discover a sufficient reason, I most respectfully decline to state the amount of my income from a living which became mine by purchase"<sup>289</sup>, while the Rector of Fenny Compton, who also declined to answer the Question, then proceeded (on an annexed sheet) to explain in great detail his reasons<sup>290</sup>, which are considered below.<sup>291</sup>

Outside the Anglican Church, the only complaint came from the Catholic Apostolic Church, two of whose respondents protested "against being classed under any sectarian name or among Dissenters from the Church of England, and make no claim to the exclusive use of these titles".<sup>292</sup> The most explosive response on an information form came from the Roman Catholic priest in Wootton Wawen who wrote "I have before filled up a similar paper when I took a great deal of trouble to ascertain the particulars. I don't chose [sic] to do so again, but put down the numbers from memory as my time is much too valuable to be thrown away in this

---

<sup>287</sup> HO129.376.1.8.10

<sup>288</sup> HO129.394.8.1.1

<sup>289</sup> HO129.403.1.8.6

<sup>290</sup> HO129.407.1.23.28

<sup>291</sup> See below pp. 164-165

<sup>292</sup> HO129.394.6.1.3; HO129.403.2.1.9

fashion.”<sup>293</sup> The priest’s indignation is understandable. The form he had already completed and returned was misfiled with the Birmingham folios.<sup>294</sup>

On several forms there is an indication that certain places are missing. For instance across the top of the return for Providence Independent Chapel, Hampton in Arden a clerk has written “No. 4 Berkswell Church missing; No. 5 Meriden Church missing”.<sup>295</sup>

It is not clear whether these missing returns were the result of administrative carelessness or ecclesiastical recalcitrance.

### **Reliability**

Although every effort was made by enumerators to obtain information for every place of worship, the data which we have are incomplete. In some cases the form was returned with incomplete, ambiguous or no information. In other cases, no form was returned, but a note has been made on another return indicating a missing church or chapel. Rather confusingly, sometimes the missing form appears later in the set of returns, having been misfiled. Elsewhere, we have no reference in the Census Returns, but have evidence from other sources for the existence of church buildings and communities.

The first assessment of the value of the Census must be from the standpoint of accuracy. Contemporary criticisms included the fact that churches did their own counting and that since no explicit instruction was given, some counted heads, some

---

<sup>293</sup> H0129.404.5.8.7

<sup>294</sup> H0129.394.3.1.7

<sup>295</sup> H0129.396.2.3.3

estimated, while nationally, some 7% refused on principle, as they were allowed, and even encouraged by Samuel Wilberforce, the Bishop of Oxford. Wilberforce had opposed the whole idea of the census and argued that inaccurate information was worse than none. It was alleged that Nonconformists deliberately exaggerated their attendances, and the Church of England unintentionally underestimated theirs, while accusation and counter-accusation raged over the extent to which “pew packing” had taken place. Comments were made about the effects on attendance of bad weather and the fact that the census was taken on mid-Lent (or Mothering) Sunday.

The most serious issue was with Sunday School scholars who were supposed to be recorded separately if present at normal services. This was not always done and those attending meetings exclusively for Sunday scholars were excluded anyway. Where possible, returning officers would make an estimate of the number of scholars at normal services and deduct this from total, but this was difficult to perform accurately.

The other issues were addressed by Mann, who could find no evidence of deliberate distortion and felt that although the method of obtaining attendance figures left much to be desired, checking techniques ensured that few gross errors would have escaped notice, and the general validity of the census remained intact. The *Times* (9<sup>th</sup> January 1854) agreed that ‘the result ... may be taken as substantially accurate and trustworthy’<sup>296</sup>, and so for that matter did the Bishop of Oxford.<sup>297</sup> Twentieth

---

<sup>296</sup> J.D. Gay, *The Geography of Religion in England* p. 49

<sup>297</sup> H. Mann, ‘On the Statistical Position of Religious Bodies in England and Wales’ p. 145

century investigations by Inglis and Pickering both agreed on the general reliability of the results. More recently, Snell and Ell expressed their confidence in the thoroughness of the measures taken for collection of data, confirming the view by correlating with studies made both at earlier and later dates.<sup>298</sup>

The matter of defective returns is more problematical. Mann made some attempt to compensate for missing figures using averages where provided, but this is not always possible, and while it may be successful at national or regional level, it cannot be applied accurately at local level.<sup>299</sup>

The information from the Warwickshire returns indicated that eight parish churches had been missed completely. There are also two parishes, Copston Magna and Sowe, not in the Census, for which evidence is found in both White's *Directory* of 1850 and the *Clergy List 1851*.<sup>300</sup> A number of parishes had no churches, most notably King's Newnham and Stretton Baskerville. There were also some extra-parochial tracts but these contained very few people, who probably worshipped in adjoining parishes.

Turning to the Nonconformist denominations, especially the newer ones, it is difficult to be certain about the completeness of their returns. In the towns (especially in Birmingham and Aston), many congregations met in buildings which had other uses, while some had been displaced by railway construction and were meeting in temporary premises. In rural areas they often met in a room in a

---

<sup>298</sup> K.D.M. Snell and P.S. Ell, *Rival Jerusalems* pp. 35, 49 -51

<sup>299</sup> J.D. Gay, *The Geography of Religion in England* p. 50

<sup>300</sup> In these cases, I have done no numerical analysis, but I have used information obtained elsewhere in my analysis of the Anglican clergy and their benefices.

freeholder's cottage or in a sympathetic farmer's barn. Some groups appeared overnight, prompting two commentators on Mormon records to ask "How could an enumerator hope to find branches that perhaps a week before did not exist?"<sup>301</sup>

For Old Dissent, cross-reference with a contemporary history of Independency in Warwickshire<sup>302</sup> indicated that very few Congregational chapels were missed<sup>303</sup>, while for the Baptists, much more recent work by Alan Betteridge<sup>304</sup> has revealed that none of their congregations is missing. There appear to be only two significant omissions in Warwickshire. One is the Roman Catholic chapel at Erdington where Catholics had worshipped from 1820, and from 1840 in the former Congregational chapel. White (1850) described the chapel as being due to be completed in 1849, and the priest at whose expense it had been built (Rev Daniel Haigh) is listed as such in the 1851 Population Census. The second is the Independent Methodist Chapel in Birmingham. John Dolan, Independent Methodist's archivist, pointed out to me a group in Birmingham which existed in 1847 (confirmed by the *Post Office Directory of Birmingham, Staffordshire and Worcestershire* 1850 but not White's *Directory of 1850* or *Slater's Directory of 1852*). He was inclined to believe that it went out of existence rather than being missed. However, the Census Returns provide evidence which suggests that they may have joined the Wesleyan Reformers. Of the other Methodist groupings there is little to suggest that more than the odd congregation

---

<sup>301</sup> E.C. Benson and C. Doxey, 'The Ecclesiastical Census of 1851 and the Church of Jesus Christ and the Latter-day Saints' p. 66

<sup>302</sup> J. Sibree and M. Caston, *Independency in Warwickshire*

<sup>303</sup> One such may be at Hockley - J. Sibree and M. Caston, *Independency in Warwickshire* p. 331

<sup>304</sup> A. Betteridge, *Deep Roots, Living Branches, A History of Baptists in the English Western Midlands*. (Kibworth Beauchamp, 2010)

was missed, meaning that the Warwickshire returns comprised, unusually, a fairly complete series. It would certainly appear that Warwickshire was better served by its enumerators than neighbouring Shropshire, where Field found more than 200 congregations which were missed, and suggested that his list is not likely to be complete. Therefore a study of the 1851 Religious Census in Warwickshire is likely to give a fuller picture of religious diversity than would be available for many other counties.

In a small number of cases, duplicate returns for a place of worship were made. Edward Miller, Vicar of Radway and Ratley, returned two copies for each church,<sup>305</sup> which were bound with individual folio numbers (though not HO129 identifiers). H.F.Radford, the Curate of St Esperit, Marton, also completed two forms identically. His forms were not only bound with individual folio numbers, but were given different identifiers too.<sup>306</sup> However it seems unlikely that these were double counted. Two forms were returned for Long Compton Wesleyan Methodist Chapel, with the same identifier<sup>307</sup>, one written on Census Sunday by a Trustee and Steward, the other, dated the day before, by the circuit minister, the only difference being in the estimates of the evening congregation. Since this is in one of the non-Warwickshire Registration Districts it has not proved possible to verify whether this was double counted, although it seems unlikely. However three Quaker

---

<sup>305</sup> HO129.163.2.12.9 and HO129.163.2.13.10

<sup>306</sup> HO129.401.3.10.17 is a duplicate of HO129.401.3.10.16 in spite of having a different number. It was written out again by the Curate. A clerk in the Census Office has crossed it through and written "see previous page".

<sup>307</sup> HO129.162.2.5.16

meetinghouses returned information on both types of non-Anglican form and in two cases attendances were certainly counted twice in Mann's tables. Since one of these was the large, by Quaker standards, meeting in Birmingham, such over-recording in the tables has led to quite significant overestimation of Quaker strength by historians who did not use the individual returns.<sup>308</sup>

### **Accommodation**

The Religious Census forms required information about the number of sittings provided by each place of worship, to be divided between "Free" or "Appropriated"/"Other" sittings. The total is an indication of the religious provision in the county and, combined with the number of services, could be used to answer the question of whether or not non-attendance at religious worship might be due to insufficient provision.

Mann's estimate of the number of people who were able to attend divine service at the same time, excluding young children, the sick and the aged, those engaged in household duties and essential workers such as those involved in transport amounted to 58% of the population, which in Warwickshire was 279,127 people. The Religious Census returns showed that there were 206,379 sittings<sup>309</sup> in the 574 places which returned figures to which should be added free space or standing room for 11,114. Taken together, this would imply a theoretical deficit of 61,634.

---

<sup>308</sup> This is explained in more detail in Chapter 4.

<sup>309</sup> This figure includes 132 for each of the Welsh Calvinistic Methodist Chapel in Birmingham (H0129.394.2.1.5) and Foxcote Roman Catholic Chapel (H0129.406.1.3.5), and 114 for Exhall (Alcester) Parish Church, (H0129.405.4.4.8) where the numbers of sittings given almost certainly represent pews and should be multiplied by 6.

The Remarks section of the returns occasionally sheds light on seating arrangements. Some excluded as sittings the benches on which the Sunday scholars sat<sup>310</sup> though others included them.<sup>311</sup> The minister at St Paul's, Stockingford included not only those used by the Sunday School but also the Choir "together with a few appropriated (by custom) to women that come to be churched".<sup>312</sup> Others declared that more people had been fitted in, on special occasions, than there was space for<sup>313</sup> while at Austrey General Baptist Chapel and Islington Wesleyan Methodist Chapel, Birmingham there was the possibility of creating more sittings by opening up vestries and schoolrooms.<sup>314</sup> Together these would add a further 1,400 to the total, but this is more than offset by the 1,900 sittings in three places which were not opened until after the Census and the 35 at Wolvey Calvinistic Baptists<sup>315</sup>, where services were held only on Wednesday, along with the 500 sittings at the Countess of Huntingdon's chapel in Leamington<sup>316</sup>, which was closed shortly before the Census, but reopened at the beginning of the following year.<sup>317</sup>

---

<sup>310</sup> These were the parish churches at Avon Dassett (HO129.163.3.4.4), Dunchurch (HO129.401.3.1.1), Grandborough (HO129.401.3.5.8), Ryton upon Dunsmore (HO129.401.3.12.21), Barcheston (HO129.406.3.8.14) and Butler's Marston (HO129.406.4.13.15).

<sup>311</sup> Such as Broad Street Presbyterian Church, Birmingham (HO129.394.1.1.4) and St Matthew's Duddeston cum Nechells (HO129.395.2.1.1).

<sup>312</sup> HO129.398.1.3.4

<sup>313</sup> These were Zion Independent and Abbey Street Wesleyan Methodist Chapels in Nuneaton (HO129.398.1.3.6, HO129.398.1.3.8), Ryton Wesleyan Methodist Chapel, Bulkington (HO129.398.1.7.20) and All Saints' Parish Church, Bedworth (HO129.399.1.1.1).

<sup>314</sup> HO129.376.1.8.11; HO129.394.2.1.4

<sup>315</sup> HO129.399.2.3.5

<sup>316</sup> HO129.403.2.1.5

<sup>317</sup> J. Sibree and M. Caston, *Independency in Warwickshire* pp. 308-309

Some allowance must be made for those places whose sittings are unknown. These include the fifteen defective returns which gave no such figures, those places which were recognised as having been missed, but which were not followed up, and finally those for which there is other evidence of their existence. The easiest way to deal with the defective returns would be to add 360 for each, that being the average number of sittings for the 574 usable returns, giving space for an extra 5,400 people.<sup>318</sup> However, this would be far too simplistic, ignoring as it does the nature of the places which did not provide returns. All five Anglican churches were in village parishes which were unlikely to contain 360 (or more) eligible churchgoers. The six Wesleyan Methodist congregations were also mainly rural; only one is named as a chapel, the remainder being houses, unlikely to accommodate substantial numbers. Radway Friends Meeting House had no services<sup>319</sup>, since it had probably closed. The county average for Quaker Meeting Houses is 239, but this is distorted by the figures for Birmingham (372) and Coventry (300).<sup>320</sup> It is probably more realistic to compare Radway with Easington, the smallest, with space for 100.<sup>321</sup> For the three remaining places it is difficult to find any way of obtaining an accurate estimate. The sole Brethren meeting was held in a schoolroom, the Christian Israelites in Birmingham met in a dwelling house, while the Roman Catholic chapel at Princethorpe was

---

<sup>318</sup> Mann adopted a somewhat more complex method for his estimation of missing sittings, using the average number of sittings for each denomination for the whole of England and Wales unless that was lower than the number of people attending at one service, when he reckoned the sittings as being a quarter more than the number of attendants. This would add another 3,958 people, which is a little more realistic, but not much.

<sup>319</sup> H0129.163.2.12.32

<sup>320</sup> H0129.394.7.1.3; H0129.394.8.1.11; H0129.400.1.1.13

<sup>321</sup> H0129.404.1.5.11

attached to the Convent there.<sup>322</sup> For all of these, Mann's estimated figures appear too large, so there seems to be no alternative but to use the attendance figures, while recognising that this would leave revised totals perhaps a little low. In fact, that is probably the most useful method for the other missing places too, especially as the parishes of Chadshunt and Upper Shuckburgh were extremely small (populations of thirty-two and fifty respectively). This would allow the addition of 1,051 sittings. For the larger parishes of Over Whitacre, Baginton and Gaydon, an alternative would be to use the average for rural churches in their Registration District. This would increase the additional sittings by a further 524.

There were eight churches which were recognised as being missing, but which were not followed up. These were the parish churches at Ward End (Little Bromwich), Great and Little Packington, Berkswell, Meriden and Weston on Avon, plus the chapels at Rugby School and Rugby railway station. White's *Directory* states that the parish church at Ward End had 306 seats, of which 178 were free and that in 1827, Meriden had an addition of 225 sittings of which 182 were free.<sup>323</sup> Unfortunately for the other parishes, no figures are given, so estimates here are based on the number of sittings in parishes of similar population size. These six Anglican parish churches would add 172 sittings, to which another 300 or so may represent the sittings in Rugby School chapel.<sup>324</sup>

It would appear that a further five parish churches were missed altogether – at

---

<sup>322</sup> H0129.394.5.1.4; H0129.394.6.1.4; H0129.401.3.11.20

<sup>323</sup> F. White & Co., *History, Gazetteer and Directory of Warwickshire*, pp. 73, 872.

<sup>324</sup> Any attempt to produce a figure for the chapel at Rugby railway station would be based on pure guesswork and is probably best avoided.

Harbury, Copston Magna, Sowe, Hillmorton and Aston Cantlow, as was the Licensed School Room which was used in addition to Nuneaton Parish Church.<sup>325</sup> In addition, White's *Directory* pointed out that there was no church in the parish of Compton Verney (population 48), the inhabitants attending the private chapel of Lord Willoughby de Broke.<sup>326</sup> Applying the same methods as to the other missing churches and chapels would add a further 2,000 sittings. Of the missing Nonconformist places of worship, information is much more difficult to obtain. Rather than using White's *Directory* to identify omissions in the Religious Census, the reverse is the case, with numerous chapels making returns, but being omitted by White. People's Baptist Chapel in Birmingham also rented a room in Slayney Street where they held a service each Sunday evening (for about 50 people) but no return was made for this<sup>327</sup>, while the Independent minister at Coleshill appears to have held an afternoon service at Gilson and a cottage service on the edge of the town.<sup>328</sup>

The other omissions were those chapels attached to prisons and workhouses.<sup>329</sup> For Warwickshire there were no returns for the former and only two for the latter. According to White's *Directory*, the chapel at the County Gaol in Warwick would hold 400 people.<sup>330</sup> Of the sixteen workhouses in the county, only those at Stratford and

---

<sup>325</sup> HO129.398.1.3.3

<sup>326</sup> F. White & Co., *History, Gazetteer and Directory of Warwickshire*, p. 723.

<sup>327</sup> HO129.394.8.1.7

<sup>328</sup> J. Sibree and M. Caston, *Independency in Warwickshire* p. 384

<sup>329</sup> It was not compulsory to return places of worship in workhouses and gaols. See I.G. Gwynedd-Jones & D. Williams, *The Religious Census of 1851, a calendar of the returns relating to Wales vol.1* p. xvi

<sup>330</sup> F. White & Co., *History, Gazetteer and Directory of Warwickshire*, p. 465

Alcester submitted returns.<sup>331</sup> For the Stratford workhouse, White gave no figures for the accommodation, but on Census night 94 people were enumerated (including the Governor, Matron, their son and a schoolmistress). The chapel had space for 150, with an average attendance of 55, though 62 attended the morning service and 59 attended the evening service. The Alcester workhouse, at Oversley, had accommodation for 200, with an average of 80, though on Census night, 112 were enumerated. The chapel had sittings for 100, and the morning congregation on 30 March numbered 74. Of the remaining fourteen workhouses, White gave accommodation figures for all but Shipston and average figures for all but Shipston and Southam.<sup>332</sup> In total, there was space for about 3,500 inmates. The two chapels for which we have data had seats for between a half and three-quarters of their potential population, which suggests that a figure of 2,200 sittings might be reasonable. Although these increases push the total space upwards towards the figure of 279,127 sittings which would be required if everyone who was able to attend worship were to turn up at the same time, we are still some way short to the tune of about 55,000 sittings. Moreover, the geographical distribution of these sittings presents another problem. In the three major urban areas (the Birmingham conurbation – including Aston and Edgbaston – Coventry and Leamington/Warwick) there was a total population of about 308,000, or about 64% of the county's total. Yet these areas provided not much more than 105,000, or about 47% of the total sittings. On the other hand, in the rest of the county, in the rural parishes and smaller towns, barely one-third of the population shared more than half the sittings.

---

<sup>331</sup> HO129.404.10.15; HO129.405.2.8.15

<sup>332</sup> For list, see F. White, & Co., *History, Gazetteer and Directory of Warwickshire*, p. x

58% of this population totalled just over 100,000, so with about 120,000 sittings, there was a substantial surplus. Consequently when Mann calculated the additional seats required for the Warwickshire Registration Districts (almost 73,000), he had to ignore the 20,000 excess sittings spread across large parts of the county. He identified a tiny deficit (178) in Nuneaton and a relatively small one (1,384) in the Warwick Registration District (which included the rapidly growing Leamington). 5,814 additional sittings were required in Coventry, while the rest were needed in Aston (18,966) and Birmingham (46,573). Edgbaston was subsumed into the King's Norton Registration District, but its 9,269 people had only 1,339 sittings, leaving a deficit in that parish of 4,035.

Much has been made of the failure of religious groups, especially the Church of England, to keep pace with the need for places of worship, especially in the rapidly growing urban areas, and it was suggested by Mann that the growing irreligiosity of the working classes was attributable in no small measure to the lack of accommodation in churches and chapels. This was in spite of the fact that a large number of new churches had been built in the first half of the nineteenth century. One contemporary account reckoned that nationally five hundred new parish churches had been built between 1800 and 1830, and over 2,000 more in the following twenty years.<sup>333</sup> In 1800, the Birmingham conurbation had possessed just ten parish churches, with slightly fewer than 10,000 sittings to cater for a population

---

<sup>333</sup> ΦΙΛΑΔΕΛΦΙΑ *Augmentation of Small Livings to the Minimum Value of £200 per annum by a Clerical Income Tax upon Existing Incumbents of Dignities and Large Benefices and a Ten Years' Appropriation of a Fifth of the Net Income of Their Successors. Recommended in a Letter to the Right Honourable the Premier (the Earl of Aberdeen) and the Right Honourable the Lord Chancellor (Lord Cranworth)* (London, 1854)

of 73,670. By 1851, this population had more than trebled to 244,401. To cope with this increased population, 19 additional churches had been built, providing more than 22,000 sittings. This improvement of provision was slight, though, as the ratio of population to sittings in parish churches only decreased from 7.5 to 7.0. The plight of densely populated parishes was highlighted in 1854 by the Reverend George Bull, Rector of St Thomas's Church, Birmingham who pointed to the fact that in his parish of 26,600 souls, "there is but one church, and, so far as appears at present, there is no procurable freehold on which to erect an additional church".<sup>334</sup> His church contained seats for 2,200 and on Census Sunday was almost full in the morning and three-quarters full in the evening. Including Sunday Scholars in the afternoon, attendances totalled 4,070. Three years later he was holding five services every Sunday, three in Church and two on Sunday evenings in schoolrooms licensed by the Bishop, with the hope of licensing an additional schoolroom, to accommodate another 800, "if a church cannot be had". To perform these extra services (and other duties in the parish) he appeared to have acquired two curates. He complained that Acts of Parliament allowed the compulsory purchase of land for railways "and other secular matters" but not for church building.<sup>335</sup>

If we relax the probably unreasonable stipulation that there should be sittings provided for everyone who was able to attend at the same time, the situation

---

<sup>334</sup> G.S. Bull, *Sheep Without Shepherds. (The difficulties of populous parishes and suggestions as to remedial measures.)* (London, 1854)

<sup>335</sup> This included places of worship. In Birmingham congregations affected included those of Salem Calvinist Chapel (H0129.394.1.1.9), St Jude's Parish Church (H0129.394.5.1.3), Lady Huntingdon's Connexion (H0129.394.5.1.8), and New Hall Street Independent Meeting Place (H0129.394.5.1.11).

improves somewhat. The 29 parish churches in the conurbation held 66 services between them on Census Sunday, with almost half of the clergy doing double duty and another eleven opening three times. This would have increased the capacity by more than 47,000 sittings. These sittings in parish churches were supplemented by those in 72 places of worship not of the Established Church (excluding the synagogue) providing space for a further 41,573. Since the chapels and meeting places held 164 services, the potential seating capacity was actually 99,785. This means that it would have been possible for more than 73% of the entire population of the conurbation to have been accommodated at least once on Census Sunday.<sup>336</sup> This points to the conclusion that if the working classes were absenting themselves from Sunday worship it was not simply due to lack of physical space.<sup>337</sup>

So far we have been concerned merely with the amount of physical space in which congregations could take part in worship. How that space was used was another matter and was related to the further information which the Religious Census requested, namely the division between free and appropriated sittings. The literature on this topic is extensive<sup>338</sup> and Mann himself argued strongly that this differentiation, as well as the location of the free seats acted as a serious deterrent to working class attendance at worship.<sup>339</sup> Under common law all parishioners were

---

<sup>336</sup> This figure assumes a distribution which matched the population density. The Nonconformists in George Bull's parish would have added only 5,658 to his capacity of 6,600, providing total space for only 46% of the population of the parish.

<sup>337</sup> Robson came to the same conclusion. G Robson, *Dark Satanic Mills* p. 78

<sup>338</sup> Snell refers to discussions printed as early as 1781, through to the end of the twentieth century. K.D.M. Snell and P.S. Ell, *Rival Jerusalems* p. 322 footnote 2

<sup>339</sup> H. Mann, *Census of Great Britain, 1851: Religious Worship, England and Wales* p. clix

entitled to a seat in their parish church, provided there was space, but they did not have the right to choose where they sat. Argument and debate over rights to Anglican pews had raged at least since the mid seventeenth century, and pews were often regarded as physical assets in the same way as other freehold property.

Legislation in the first half of the nineteenth century was enacted to increase the amount of free accommodation in churches. The Church Building Acts after 1818 gave initially £1 million, with a further £500,000 in 1824, towards the building of churches where there was to be a minimum of one-fifth free seats, while the Church Building Society (founded in 1818 and incorporated in 1828) gave grants conditional on a half of the seats being free. The 1843 New Parishes Act (6&7 Victoria cap 37), which created the 'Peel Parishes', did not allow pew rents initially, though they were allowed by the middle of the next decade. This legislation led to the proportion of Anglican free seats increasing from 1818 onwards. In Warwickshire the results were striking. In the 192 parish churches identifiable as being in existence by 1818, only 40% of the sittings were free. Of those built or licensed later (including St Jude's, opened in 1852)<sup>340</sup> the figures were more than reversed, with 62% being free. But although every parishioner had a right to a seat at no cost, pew rents were prevalent in the Victorian church as they had been for many centuries. The rents were used for a variety of purposes, including church repair (St Mary's Parish Church, Warwick)<sup>341</sup>, unspecified amounts paid to "clerk, beadle and choir" (St John the Evangelist's

---

<sup>340</sup> H0129.394.5.1.3

<sup>341</sup> H0129.403.4.1.1

Church, Walmley)<sup>342</sup>, while the incumbent of St Mary's Leamington had to deduct £130 from pew rents to meet the expenses of organist, lights and verger, with a further £100 to pay the curate.<sup>343</sup>

Snell stated that the minister was normally entitled to some of the proceeds but that this usually made up only a small part of his income,<sup>344</sup> though in a footnote he conceded that there were exceptions, like St Mary's, Gorleston, "where mid-nineteenth century pew rents from 800 non-free sittings came to £120".<sup>345</sup> In Warwickshire 29 returns of clerical income included the amounts received in pew rents and while six received less than £10 a year and another six between £10 and £30, there were eleven who received more than £120, six of which received between £200 and £480, including the said incumbent of St Mary's Leamington, who made his deductions from annual pew rents of £320. The minister of St Luke's Leamington, a proprietary chapel, had no exact knowledge of pew rents, since the chapel had only opened in October 1850, but did point out that since there was no endowment of any kind, his income depended solely on this source.<sup>346</sup>

Pew rents were not confined to the Established Church. The Nonconformists also needed them to help pay for chapel building (and repair) as well as contributing towards the payment of ministers and preachers. As with the parish churches the

---

<sup>342</sup> HO129.395.4.4.7

<sup>343</sup> HO129.403.2.1.2

<sup>344</sup> K.D.M. Snell and P.S. Ell, *Rival Jerusalems* p. 337

<sup>345</sup> K.D.M. Snell and P.S. Ell, *Rival Jerusalems* p. 337 footnote 2

<sup>346</sup> HO129.403.2.1.1

location and distribution of free and appropriated seating in some Nonconformist chapels was a reflection of socio-economic status, though some consideration was also given to service to the church. The Religious Census returns make it possible to compare the appropriation of sittings across the different denominations. There was some ambiguity over the use of the terms free and appropriated, both in the instructions for filling in the schedule (which were not identical on the Anglican and non-Anglican forms) and in the way in which the form was completed. Where an Anglican church returned all its sittings as free, Mann decided to allocate this figure to a category which he called 'the residue'. The 'residue' contained those sittings which Mann claimed were not adequately described and may be either free or appropriated "but most likely in greater proportion to the latter".<sup>347</sup> The reasoning behind this was that although no money was received in pew rents, many of these seats were actually appropriated either by custom or by church officers and were therefore unavailable to anyone else. Thus he concluded that nationally, across all denominations, there were 3,947,371 free sittings (or 41.7%), 4,443,093 were appropriated (49.9%) and 1,077,274 in 'the residue' (11.4%).

Snell's analysis of 15 counties<sup>348</sup> accepted the census at face value, while including alternatives for the Church of England based on Mann's reservations. Face value seems to be particularly appropriate for Warwickshire, as the 'genuine' residue (total sittings given but with no breakdown into free and appropriated) amounts to a mere

---

<sup>347</sup> H. Mann, *Census of Great Britain, 1851: Religious Worship, England and Wales* p. clxii

<sup>348</sup> These were the Welsh counties of Anglesey, Caernarvonshire, Cardiganshire and Monmouthshire, while England was represented by Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire, Derbyshire, Dorset, East Riding of Yorkshire, Lancashire, Leicestershire, Northumberland, Rutland, Suffolk and Sussex.

845 sittings, of which 600 were Anglican. Mann’s reservations, however, could be applied to 30 Anglican places of worship, containing 7,185 sittings. Taking 1818 as a watershed year, after which the proportion of free sittings rose significantly, we find that nineteen of these places of worship were erected or licensed after this date. In addition to the Stratford Union Workhouse, seven of them were schoolrooms, and six were churches built after the New Parishes Act of 1843.<sup>349</sup> If we accept these at face value and consign to the residue all of the sittings at the pre-1818 churches, we are looking at fewer than 3,500 or 1.67% of all sittings falling into this category.

Table 3.1 shows the proportion of free and appropriated sittings in Warwickshire for the major denominations. For comparative purposes I have added a column for average free sittings in Snell’s 15 counties.

Table 3.1 - Proportion of Free and Appropriated Sittings in Warwickshire

Denomination	Free (%)	Other (%)	Snell’s 15 Counties - Free (%)
Anglican	46.1	53.7	45.6
All Baptists	40.4	59.2	47.9
Independent	37	63	40.1
Primitive Methodist	59	37.7	56
Roman Catholic	74.7	25.3	45
Unitarian	50.3	49.7	30.7
Wesleyan Methodist	45.5	54.5	45.4
Others	56.8	43.2	
Total	46.2	53.7	

In Warwickshire, of the total sittings, 46.2% were free and 53.7% were appropriated, figures which were replicated in the parish churches across the county. While this percentage of free sittings was much smaller than in Primitive Methodist and Roman

---

<sup>349</sup> One of these was the aforementioned St Luke’s Episcopal Chapel, Leamington, where pew rents were the minister’s sole source of income, but where he indicated that all 400 sittings were free.

Catholic Chapels, they compare favourably with the Baptists, Independents and even the Wesleyan Methodists. This confirms Snell's conclusion that "any idea that the Church of England was, in these terms, the most exclusive of denominations therefore seems doubtful".<sup>350</sup> In terms of parish churches, if we ignore Mann's reservations, there were almost as many with more than 50% free sittings as there were with fewer and these were frequently the larger ones. In Warwickshire, as in Snell's fifteen counties, the Independents seemed to be the most exclusive, while in the case of the Unitarians and Baptists the positions seemed to be reversed, although the number of Unitarian sittings in the county is heavily influenced by the existence of two large domestic missions in Birmingham (Hurst Street and Lawrence Street)<sup>351</sup>, which provided almost half of the 1,924 free sittings. The relatively high proportion of free sittings in Primitive Methodist places of worship may well reflect the fact that many were cottage meeting places which would require minimum maintenance costs compared to the chapels, as well as many worshippers being drawn from labouring classes and thus unable to afford to pay for sittings. In the case of the Roman Catholics, the rural chapels were often part of the great country house of Catholic nobility and gentry and the costs of upkeep would be borne by the owner, while in the conurbation a large number of the attendants at mass were Irish immigrants who were among the very poorest in the community and equally, unable to pay.

What actually happened in the parishes can be discerned in a number of cases

---

<sup>350</sup> K.D.M. Snell and P.S. Ell, *Rival Jerusalems* p. 346

<sup>351</sup> H0129.394.3.1.5; H0129.394.4.1.7

where the incumbent has made reference in the Remarks section. Evidence for the customary appropriation of seating to individual parish properties comes from Avon Dassett Parish Church which had only 43 free sittings out of 197 (or 21.8%) but the Rector pointed out that “each cottage on the parish has a certain number of sittings in pews”, probably at no charge<sup>352</sup> while the Curate of Ryton on Dunsmore, with an even smaller proportion of free sittings (16.8%), wrote that “almost all the Cottagers (labourers) have appropriated sittings (‘others’)”.<sup>353</sup> In Tanworth in Arden the Curate of the Parish Church stated that “no one has any legal right to any particular sittings, tho’ most of the seats have been appropriated”.<sup>354</sup> Support for the argument that pew appropriation negatively influenced attendance came from the Rector of Rugby, where free sittings comprised less than one-third of the total. He declared “Much room wanted, the appropriated sittings excluding numbers who would otherwise attend”<sup>355</sup>, while the Rector of Shipston on Stour with only 60 free sittings out of 500, explained that “there would be a much fuller attendance if there were more free sittings. The Pews are considered private property.”<sup>356</sup> The increase in the number of free sittings, though, would, in many parishes, come at a cost. The incumbent of St John’s Aston, pointed out that his church “situate in the midst of a Manufacturing Population, has no accommodation for the poor besides what is

---

<sup>352</sup> H0129.163.3.4.4

<sup>353</sup> H0129.401.3.12.21

<sup>354</sup> H0129.402.3.2.2

<sup>355</sup> H0129.401.1.15.18

<sup>356</sup> H0129.406.3.9.15

given up by the Chaplain at a sacrifice of pew rents".<sup>357</sup> Elsewhere, clergy complained about the way in which space was wasted due to the way in which the church was pewed. At St Michael's Coventry, almost a third of sittings were "useless", being "so placed that persons in them could not hear the service".<sup>358</sup> In Southam and Long Itchington, there were complaints about the under-occupancy of the appropriated pews, where one or two people occupied space which would fit six or even twelve.<sup>359</sup> Further consideration will be given later in this section to the allegation of 'exclusivity' which such arrangements have aroused.

Relatively few comments about sittings were made by Nonconformists. The Secretary of Wesley Chapel in Birmingham explained that "The 260 sittings for the Sunday Scholars and occupied by them morning and afternoon are available as free sittings for adults in the evening ..."<sup>360</sup>, a policy that seems to have been adopted in other churches and chapels throughout the county. Henry Yeates, the itinerant preacher at Napton Primitive Methodist Chapel pointed out that "We frequently have more persons present in our place of worship than we can accommodate with sittings".<sup>361</sup> His colleague, George Warner, who completed the return for recently opened Southam Primitive Methodist Meeting Place, where there was no service on Census Sunday, hoped that "God would open the way for a more commodious

---

<sup>357</sup> H0129.395.1.1.1

<sup>358</sup> H0129.400.1.1.3

<sup>359</sup> H0129.407.1.11.12; H0129.407.1.12.15

<sup>360</sup> H0129.394.8.1.9

<sup>361</sup> H0129.407.1.14.19

house".<sup>362</sup> It may well have been true that the Nonconformist denominations could meet any accommodation shortage more easily than the Church of England, by using cottages and other existing buildings, although the Primitive Methodists were to embark on a chapel-building programme in Warwickshire in the 1850s.<sup>363</sup> For the Anglicans this was a greater problem in urban areas than rural, but as has been shown above<sup>364</sup>, by the 1850s they were beginning to overcome this shortage by using school rooms and other buildings.

Snell considered at length the context and consequences of seat appropriation<sup>365</sup>, in particular its relationship with landownership in parishes. The two questions he asked concern the sorts of parishes which were most inclined to appropriate their Anglican sittings and the location of relatively large proportions of free seats. He claimed that many historians make the implicit assumption "that highly appropriated Anglican churches were likely to be found in the most 'traditional', 'close', stable, agricultural parishes ... in which everybody knew their place, outside church as well as in it". He used the *Imperial Gazetteer* to classify settlements according to landownership and compared this with the availability of free sittings, concluding that in the most extreme 'close' parishes (those with property owned by only one

---

<sup>362</sup> HO129.407.1.11.13

<sup>363</sup> The Keith Guyler Collection of photographs at the Oxford Centre for Methodism and Church History identifies 7 chapels at Gooch Street (Bethesda), Birmingham (1852), Ebenezer, Leamington (1852), Morville Street, Aston (1854), Nechells, Aston (1856), Bishop's Itchington (1856), Grandborough (1856) and Sheldon (1859). In addition cottage meeting places were established in Burton Dassett (1855) and Priors Hardwick (1859), while George Warner's prayers seem to have been answered as in 1853, the Primitive Methodists in Southam moved into larger premises made up of two cottages.

<sup>364</sup> See above, pp.136 - 137

<sup>365</sup> K.D.M. Snell and P.S. Ell, *Rival Jerusalems* pp. 351-359

family) the mean percentage of appropriated Anglican sittings was 30%, whereas in the most extreme 'open' parishes (those which were 'much sub-divided') the mean was 41%. The returns for Warwickshire indicate a similar overturning of the expected. Only ten parishes can be classed with confidence in the most extreme 'close' category, but these had a mean of almost 50% of appropriated Anglican sittings, whilst in the 27 most extreme 'open' parishes the figure was almost 60%.

It is clear that these averages mask great variations. In two of these parishes, Compton Wynyates and Stretton on Dunsmore, all seats were appropriated<sup>366</sup>, but whereas the former was a 'close' parish in which all the property belonged to the Marquis of Northampton, the latter was one of those which was much sub-divided. At the other extreme, in Charlecote, the exclusive property of the Lucy family, almost three-quarters of the seats were free<sup>367</sup>, almost exactly comparable with the 'open' parish of Barston, and exceeded among the most 'open' only by the 95% at Tredington and 83% in the new church in the parish of Newbold on Stour.<sup>368</sup>

One of the most articulate and vehement critics of the mid-nineteenth century Anglican Church was the Warwickshire agricultural labourer Joseph Arch, born in Barford in 1826, who became a Primitive Methodist local preacher in 1849 and founder of the National Agricultural Labourers Union in 1872. He complained bitterly about the social stratification within the Church, which he saw as a child in

---

<sup>366</sup> HO129.406.4.8.8; HO129.401.3.11.19

<sup>367</sup> HO129.404.2.5.7

<sup>368</sup> HO129.402.2.3.4; HO129.406.4.1.1

the 1830s and early 1840s, especially at the Communion rail.<sup>369</sup> Yet Barford was another of the much sub-divided parishes, and in its large, recently rebuilt church (seating over 600) more than 60% of the seats were free.<sup>370</sup> Barely fifteen miles away in Farnborough, Thomas Hall had written about the church in the early nineteenth century: "In the chancel on the left hand side sat the ladies and gentlemen from the Hall; on the opposite side sat the servants and we schoolchildren occupied the steps leading to the communion table. We children always watched the arrival of the occupants of these pews with great interest and when the ladies and gentlemen had taken their seats, the butler and footman also took theirs."<sup>371</sup> But although this was a parish in which property was divided among a few, almost half the seats were free (excluding those for the Sunday school).<sup>372</sup>

It would appear then that appropriation is not in itself the indicator of exclusivity. Where there were many free seats, the resentment may have been at their location. Snell cited Thomas Wright, who in 1867, complained that "if a working man ... does go into a church, he is put into a free sitting, where he probably finds himself in company with a lot of sniggering children, while any well-dressed individual who enters the church ... is obsequiously shown into a pew. This ... touches the working man on a tender chord."<sup>373</sup> Snell suggested that these 'close' parishes had a clearly

---

<sup>369</sup> J. Arch, *Joseph Arch: the story of his life told by himself* (London, 1898) pp. 16-17, 19-21

<sup>370</sup> HO129.403.1.11.10

<sup>371</sup> cited in P. Horn, *The Victorian Country Child* (Kineton, 1974, Gloucester, 1985 edition) p. 141

<sup>372</sup> HO129.163.3.5.5

<sup>373</sup> T. Wright, *Some Habits and Customs of the Working Classes by a Journeyman Engineer* (New York, 1867, 1967 edition) in K.D.M. Snell and P.S. Ell, *Rival Jerusalems* p. 245

defined social structure anyway, had smaller populations and relatively little religious Dissent and the Warwickshire returns certainly provide some support for this. None of the ten most 'close' parishes had a population greater than 350, and of the three which had more than one place of worship, two, Baddesley Clinton and Coughton were owned by prominent Roman Catholic families, while the Methodist chapel at Combroke was the only building in the village which did not belong to Lord Willoughby de Broke. This would support Snell's argument that where wealth was concentrated in the hands of a few significant families, then only a small part of the church needed to be reserved for them, whereas in more socially heterogeneous parishes, appropriated seating was a manifestation of social position. It is tempting to suggest that what would happen on a Sunday morning in a Warwickshire parish church without rents or appropriation would depend on the degree of entrenchment of the social hierarchy. Where resident gentry and clergy were present, then families would probably have occupied the same prestigious pews as if they were appropriated. In more 'open' parishes, and in towns, it is more likely that a free for all would have developed, with pews being occupied on a 'first come first served' basis.

Snell also considered the association between appropriation and church or chapel size. He concluded that "this showed strongly significant results (except for Welsh Calvinistic Methodism) and it was clearly one of the most important influences on the extent of appropriation. In every case, the variables were positively correlated. Where place of worship size was large, there also tended to be high percentages of

seats appropriated".<sup>374</sup> Warwickshire examples of this include St Martin's parish church, Birmingham and St Nicholas parish church, Nuneaton.<sup>375</sup> However, analysis of the Warwickshire returns using Spearman's Rank Correlation suggests that these associations are somewhat more complex. For the six major denominations<sup>376</sup>, all correlation coefficients are positive, implying that appropriated seats formed a greater percentage in larger churches and chapels than in smaller ones, although in the case of Roman Catholic and Primitive Methodist chapels, the value is so small as to be unable to rule out a correlation by chance even at the 95% confidence level. The Independents and Wesleyan Methodists on the other hand, do have strongly significant correlations; the coefficients in each case exceed the 99.9% level. (The Baptists were not quite so strongly correlated, their coefficient being significant at the 99%, but not 99.9% level.)

This suggests that the larger chapels, being predominantly urban, may have been socially more heterogeneous, and that their recent construction may have incurred debts which pew rents could help to repay.<sup>377</sup> Carr's Lane Independent Chapel, Birmingham, for example, was opened in 1819, having cost about £11,000, with a further £3,000 being spent subsequently on school rooms and other buildings.<sup>378</sup> Unsurprisingly, of its 1,800 seats, only 200 were designated as free.<sup>379</sup> The smaller

---

<sup>374</sup> K.D.M. Snell and P.S. Ell, *Rival Jerusalems* p. 353

<sup>375</sup> H0129.394.3.1.3; H0129.398.1.3.3

<sup>376</sup> Spearman's Rank Correlation is less reliable with sample sizes of fewer than 10.

<sup>377</sup> K.D.M. Snell and P.S. Ell, *Rival Jerusalems* p. 340

<sup>378</sup> J. Sibree and M. Caston, *Independency in Warwickshire*, p. 180

<sup>379</sup> H0129.394.4.1.4

chapels and meetinghouses, many in rural areas, had congregations which were socially more homogeneous and had lower costs. As for the Anglican Churches, the sample is so large that almost any coefficient value would be strongly significant and any generalisations drawn from it would be misleading or at least would require further investigation. There were eighteen parish churches with 1,300 and more sittings, all located in towns, especially Birmingham, Coventry and Aston. The proportion of free sittings varied from 76.92% at St Jude's, Birmingham to 9.52% at St Martin's, also in Birmingham.<sup>380</sup> If these churches are divided according to age, the oldest nine, all built before 1800 have fewer than one third of all seats free, while in the other nine, built after 1810, more than 60% are free, indicating some measure of success for the programme of new church building in towns and cities in making more space available for the working classes.

The subject of seat appropriation is capable of various interpretations. As a means of raising revenue it was of much more significance for the nonconformist denominations than the Church of England. The former had to fund new building costs without Government aid, ministerial stipends without endowments (including tithes) and repairs and maintenance of chapels and fittings without Church rates. Payment of pew rents by Nonconformists can be viewed as evidence of commitment to the cause and based on 'merit' or ability to pay, rather than inherited status. In some parish churches, on the other hand, appropriation met with disapproval, being regarded as an indicator of exclusivity, reinforcing the social divisions in the community. Such segregation or exclusion of the poor has been regarded as

---

<sup>380</sup> H0129.394.5.1.3; H0129.394.3.1.3

extremely damaging to the faith of the working classes.<sup>381</sup> From the evidence in the Warwickshire returns it is difficult to draw firm conclusions about this, or about whether the complaints are about inaccessibility due to money payment or from customary occupancy. We have already seen the Vicar of St John's Deritend's comment that there was "no accommodation for the poor besides what is given up by the Chaplain at a sacrifice of pew rents" an attitude which would not seem to offer much of a welcome to those who were unable to pay (and in spite of Pew Rents providing him with a mere £16 per annum of an income listed in the Clergy List as £319). Yet on Census Sunday there were more than 200 empty sittings at the morning service and more than 400 in the evening.<sup>382</sup> However, not very far away, Lawrence Street Mission had been established by the Birmingham New Meeting, with 500 free seats for the "extremely poor of the neighbourhood"<sup>383</sup>, half of which were filled at the evening service. Elsewhere in the county, a chapel had been built in 1840 "Licensed for the use of the Poor of the Hamlet of Long Lawford" with 150 of its 200 sittings free, which was generally well filled<sup>384</sup>, while at Hatton, another well filled church, there were no pew rents, but more than half of the seats were arranged by the church warden and the rest were "free for the poor".<sup>385</sup> At Wolfhamcote, however, the vicar wrote that there was "ample room for all, sick &

---

<sup>381</sup> K.D.M. Snell and P.S. Ell, *Rival Jerusalems* p. 361

<sup>382</sup> HO129.395.1.1.1

<sup>383</sup> HO129.394.4.1.7

<sup>384</sup> HO129.401.1.10.9

<sup>385</sup> HO129.403.1.5.5

poor, if they would come”<sup>386</sup>, suggesting that absence from worship was not solely due to inability to pay, though in some cases it may have been a contributing factor.

Before leaving this topic, perhaps two further observations should be made. The first concerns the limitations of the Religious Census as a source, since there are very few examples of differentiation within the “Others” between seats for which pew rents were paid and those which were occupied by customary right. Nor do the Nonconformist returns give any indication as to why seats are not free, although customary occupation was not a significant issue in their chapels. The other is to acknowledge the existence of a range of other documents covering this topic, whose further exploration and analysis would undoubtedly shed greater light on the issues raised here.<sup>387</sup>

---

<sup>386</sup> HO129.401.3.4.6

<sup>387</sup> K.D.M. Snell and P.S. Ell, *Rival Jerusalems* pp. 361-3

## The Age of Places of Worship

The spread or development of religious groups can to some extent be charted through the returns in the Religious Census giving the age of places of worship. Commentators have often ignored these responses because of 'denominational diversity'.<sup>388</sup> In the case of Anglican churches and chapels, the question asked was "When consecrated or licensed?" followed by "Under what circumstances consecrated or licensed?". No precise date was required if the answer to the first part was before 1800, though some respondents gave very precise and detailed answers. For example, the vicar of Alderminster declared that his church was consecrated in "1193 by Henry de Soilli, Bp of Worcester, confirmed by Pope Celestine the third and Hubert Archbishop of Canterbury"<sup>389</sup>, while St Edith's, Polesworth was described as "ancient, supposed to have been built by the daughter of King Egbert. Endowed under the will of Sir Francis Nethersole to his mistress as returned to the Commissioner."<sup>390</sup> The vicar of Snitterfield wrote that "Dugdale states that there was a Church here at the time of the Conquest in 1066."<sup>391</sup> Others left that box empty, though their designation of the building as "an ancient parish church" was taken as indicating pre-1800 and included as such in the tables in the Parliamentary Report. In many instances, for these old churches, the second part was left blank; it seems to have had more relevance in the case of churches built

---

<sup>388</sup> K.D.M. Snell and P.S. Ell, *Rival Jerusalems* p. 360

<sup>389</sup> HO129.404.3.7.10

<sup>390</sup> HO129.397.1.6.10

<sup>391</sup> HO129.404.3.1.1. The vicar was obviously acquainted with the work of Warwickshire's most eminent antiquarian - Sir William Dugdale, *The antiquities of Warwickshire illustrated: from records, leiger-books, manuscripts, charters, evidences, tombes, and armes : beautified with maps, prospects, and portraictures*, (London, 1656)

after January 1<sup>st</sup> 1800. In these cases, the next questions were applicable – “How or by whom erected?” and “Cost: how defrayed?”. Replies here often indicated under which Act of Parliament the church was built and whether as a chapel of ease to an existing parish church or as the church of a new parish.

In rural parishes, the parish church had usually been there since time immemorial, albeit with some rebuilding necessary to repair the ravages of wind and rain. They often had sufficient seats to accommodate the entire population of the parish (had they all wished to attend) throughout the nineteenth century as numbers changed little during that period. Where there had been population increase, the new property built to house the additional families tended to be constructed at an increasing distance from the centre of the settlement. In such cases a chapel of ease might be built towards the edge of the village<sup>392</sup>, or in the case of polynuclear parishes, in an adjoining hamlet.<sup>393</sup> However, in the towns, the rapid population growth of the nineteenth century created severe accommodation problems for the parish churches. The density of population grew immensely as row after row of tightly packed terraced houses were built cheek by jowl with the industrial premises in which their inhabitants found work.

In the case of the Nonconformists we are immediately faced with a different problem – one of methodology. The question about their place of worship asked of both the Quakers and other Nonconformists was “When erected?”. In many cases it is quite dangerous to draw conclusions from the date given here. The chroniclers of

---

<sup>392</sup> As at the north end of Burton Dassett (H0129.407.1.24.31)

<sup>393</sup> As at Warton (H0129.397.1.6.9)

Old Dissent, from Sibree and Caston in the 1850s to Betteridge in the early twenty-first century, differentiate clearly between the groups of people who belong to Dissenting denominations and the buildings in which they met for worship. The people were described as 'congregation' or 'church', while the place in which they worshipped, if designated as a separate building was referred to as a 'meeting house' and later as a 'chapel'.<sup>394</sup> In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, Quakers, Unitarians, Independents and Baptists began to meet in groups outside the framework of the Established Church and licensed their premises for public worship. In very many cases these were rooms in private houses, but they were soon replaced by purpose-built meetinghouses and chapels. Many of these survived into the mid-nineteenth century and the date of erection given in the Religious Census reflects an unbroken tradition of worship stretching back 150 years or more. For example, all seven of the Quaker meetinghouses were dated pre-1800 (that at Easington being given as 1681). In other cases, the chapel in use in 1851 may not have been the original, and this is sometimes recorded in the Remarks section. Thus in Birmingham, both the Old and New Meeting Houses of the Unitarians were rebuilt in the early nineteenth century to replace those which were destroyed in the Church and King Riots of 1791.<sup>395</sup>

The demarcation line of 1800 does allow us to attempt to reconstruct the distribution pattern of churches and chapels at the end of the eighteenth century and to obtain some idea of the development of denominations in the first half of the

---

<sup>394</sup> J. Sibree and M. Caston, *Independency in Warwickshire* pp. 57-58; A. Betteridge, *Deep Roots, Living Branches* p. 196

<sup>395</sup> H0129.394.5.1.9; H0129.394.4.1.5

nineteenth. The Census returns clearly identify 237 places of worship which were built or consecrated before 1800, along with ten others which were built after 1800 in lieu of one on a pre-1800 site. There are, though, a further 26 parish churches for which no date or indication of age are given. References to the value in the King's Book, construction in "King Stephen's time" or to being "built by the Templars" can be found in White's *Directory* of 1850 and would allow us to add 24 to our pre-1800 list.<sup>396</sup> This gives a total of 271 places of worship, of which 218 (or slightly more than 80%) were Anglican. The 53 Nonconformist and Roman Catholic chapels are listed in Table 3.2. This shows that the oldest structures still in use in 1851 were the Baptist chapels in Backhills (Warwick) and Alcester both dating back to the middle of the seventeenth century.<sup>397</sup> The only other two which categorically date from the seventeenth century are the Quaker meeting house at Easington and the Unitarian Old Meeting in Birmingham though according to the Minister, the latter was "erected on the present site in 1689 and rebuilt after the riots in 1795".<sup>398</sup> Stell's inventory dates at least two more from before 1700 – the Quaker meetinghouses at Shipston-on-Stour and Warwick.<sup>399</sup> In addition to the five whose dates are given in the first quarter of the eighteenth century should be added the Quaker meetinghouses in Radway and Coventry and the Independent meetinghouses at Stratford on Avon and Atherstone.<sup>400</sup> Although there are difficulties if we use only

---

<sup>396</sup> e.g., F. White & Co., *History, Gazetteer and Directory of Warwickshire*, pp. 581, 722, 865.

<sup>397</sup> HO129.403.4.2.8; HO129.405.2.6.12

<sup>398</sup> HO129.404.1.5.11; HO129.394.5.1.9

<sup>399</sup> C. Stell, *An inventory of nonconformist chapels and meeting-houses in central England: Royal Commission on Historical Monuments* (England) (London, 1986) pp. 225-43

<sup>400</sup> HO129.163.2.12.32; HO129.400.1.1.13; HO129.404.4.10.18; HO129.397.1.16.28

the information given in the Religious Census, it is possible, by using other sources as well, to trace the growth and diversity of religious provision in the century and a half before 1851. Thus, far from being disregarded because of what it doesn't say, the Religious Census has a key role to play, in partnership with those other sources, in producing a linear study.<sup>401</sup>

---

<sup>401</sup> The question of religious continuity is dealt with in greater detail in Chapter 4.

Table 3.2 - Pre-1800 Nonconformist and Roman Catholic Places of Worship

Baptists (all)	Date	Independent	Date
Backhills, Warwick	1640	Vicar Lane, Coventry	1724
Alcester	1640	The Old Meeting, Bedworth	1726
Little Sutton (sic), Sutton Coldfield	1750	Little Kineton	1796
Bond Street Birmingham	1786	Carr's Lane Birmingham	1820 *
Lombard Street, Aston	1786	North Street Mancetter	pre-1800
Shipston on Stour	1788	Old Meeting House, Atherstone	pre-1800
Wolvey	1789	Hartshill	pre-1800
Lower Street Hillmorton	1790	Old Meeting, Nuneaton	pre-1800
Cow Lane, Coventry	1793	Foleshill	pre-1800
Longford, Foleshill	pre-1800	West Orchard, Coventry	pre-1800
Bedworth	pre-1800	Warwick	pre-1800
Studley	pre-1800	Rother Market, Stratford on Avon	pre-1800
		Stretton under Fosse	pre-1800
Quaker		Roman Catholic	
Eatington	1681	Brailes	1730
Radway	pre-1800	St Peter's, Birmingham	1786
Bull Street, Birmingham	pre-1800	St Mary's, Weston in Arden.	pre-1800
Vicar Lane, Coventry	pre-1800	Solihull	pre-1800
High Street, Warwick.	pre-1800	St Francis, Baddesley Clinton	pre-1800
Brailes	pre-1800	St Anne's Wappenbury	pre-1800
Shipston on Stour	pre-1800	Coughton	pre-1800
		St Osburgh's, Coventry	1845 *
Unitarian		Wesleyan Methodist	
Old Meeting House, Birmingham	1689	Cherry Street, Birmingham	pre-1800
Coventry	1700	Belmont Row, Duddeston cum Nechells	pre-1800
Kenilworth	1705	Hill, Sutton Coldfield	pre-1800
High Street Warwick	1780	Middle Tysoe	pre-1800
New Meeting House, Birmingham	1802 *		
		Alcester Presbyterian	1721
		Lady Huntingdon's Connexion, Birmingham	1743
		Oxford Street MNC, Birmingham	pre-1800
		South Street Primitive Methodist, Atherstone	pre-1800 **
* Erected on the site of a previous one.			
** Erected before 1800, but not used as a Primitive Methodist Chapel until about 1840.			

Table 3.3 shows the decade of construction of the 273 places of worship which can be identified as having been built after 1800.

Table 3.3 - Post-1800 Construction of Places of Worship by Denomination and Decade

Denomination	1801-10	1811-20	1821-30	1831-40	1841-50
Anglican	1	2	6	17	30*
Independent	2	8	11	14	11
Primitive Methodist	**		3	8	11
Roman Catholic		3	1	5	5
Wesleyan Methodist	7	11	17	26	17
Other Methodist		1	1	4	4
Baptist (all) ***	1	6	8	6	13
Other ****	2		2	2	7
* 1 Anglican Church is recorded on an Information Form with a consecration date of 1852.					
** 1 Primitive Methodist Meeting Place is dated 1800, which is probably the date of construction of the building.					
*** Warton Baptist Church is simply dated "post-1800".					
**** The Latter Day Saints worshipped in buildings dated 1800, 1820 and 1825.					

Of the 56 new Anglican Churches, only 12 pre-date the establishment of the Ecclesiastical Commission in 1835. One third of these new Anglican Churches were in the Birmingham conurbation. Some were licensed schoolrooms in working class districts while others were new parishes, created under various pieces of nineteenth century legislation, including Church Building Acts in 1818 and 1824 and the New Parishes Act of 1843. Thus in Birmingham, as a result of a Private Act 1803, (43 George iii c 117) Christ Church was built as an additional church in St Philip's parish in July 1813, St Thomas's was built in 1829 under the Million Act, by the Church Building Commissioners, while St Jude's was "A New Church under Sir R. Peel's Act ... Erected by grants from the Incorp. Soc., The Church Comms & the Coventry

Archdiaconal Soc aided by private subscription grants.”<sup>402</sup>

Another third were in towns with growing populations, often as sub-divided parishes. These included, in Coventry, St Peter’s Church, Harnall in the parish of Holy Trinity, under the 16<sup>th</sup> Section of the 59<sup>th</sup> Geo.3 cap 134, with cost defrayed “By voluntary contributions, aided by grants from Ecclesiastical Commissioners &c. By Parliamentary Grant £800, Incorporated Society £350, Coventry Archdeaconry Soc. £600,” and St Thomas’s Parish Church, Keresley & Coundon funded by grants “from Her Majesty’s Comm<sup>s</sup>, ... from the Coventry & the Incorporated Church Building Societies”, while in Nuneaton, Trinity Parish Church, Attleborough was opened in August 1842 and funded by grants from, among others, the “Church Commissioners £250, Diocesan Society £300, Incorporated Society £300.”<sup>403</sup>

Others were built as chapels of ease in parishes with more than one centre, such as Burmington for Welford and North End for Burton Dassett<sup>404</sup>, or where a parish covered a very large area, as with Chessets Wood (four miles from Knowle Church, and Bentley (five miles from Shustoke)<sup>405</sup>. Of the 20 Birmingham Anglican churches, only seven had been built by 1831, by which time the 1801 population had almost doubled. It would appear that the Established Church was very slow to react to population growth, or even that it only took action after the debates of the 1830s had raised a real threat of disestablishment. Certainly it could be argued in the case

---

<sup>402</sup> H0129.394.5.1.2; H0129.394.2.1.2; H0129.394.5.1.3

<sup>403</sup> H0129.400.2.1.1; H0129.399.1.3.9; H0129.398.1.3.5

<sup>404</sup> H0129.406.3.2.3; H0129.407.1.24.31

<sup>405</sup> H0129.402.2.1.6; H0129.397.1.2.4

of Birmingham, where the population more than doubled again between 1831 and 1861, that despite the best endeavours of clerics like George Bull, Grantham Yorke and John C Miller, it was either a case of too little too late, or that in 1851, it was just too early to tell.

In the case of the Nonconformists, two patterns emerged. The denominations of Old Dissent, especially the Independents and Baptists, appeared to have responded more promptly than the Church of England to early nineteenth-century population growth, with almost half of their new chapels being built before 1831. This was a reflection of the development of evangelicalism in these denominations in the period between 1780 and 1830, to which Lovegrove attributed the development of itinerancy<sup>406</sup> especially where the influence of the traditional hierarchy of squire and parson was absent or weak. It also illustrated the symbiotic relationship between evangelicalism and itinerancy through which each could grow. Betteridge suggested that evangelical Nonconformity provided a clear gospel through a more acceptable set of personal and social values and an organisation in which ordinary people could play a key role. In rural areas this expressed itself in chapel after chapel being established in villages with great success. At the same time, the Industrial Revolution was giving rise to growing urban populations whose wealth came from manufacturing and the professions, creating an urban middle class for whom an evangelical faith was often at the heart of their life.<sup>407</sup>

---

<sup>406</sup> D.W. Lovegrove, *Established Church, Sectarian People. Itinerancy and the Transformation of English Dissent, 1780-1830* (Cambridge, 1988) pp. 150, 163-4; D.W. Lovegrove (ed.), *The Rise of the Laity in Evangelical Protestantism* (London, 2002) pp. 119-120

<sup>407</sup> A. Betteridge, *Deep Roots, Living Branches* pp. 145-6

On the other hand, the Methodists, and especially the secessionist groups followed a similar pattern to the Anglicans, though for different reasons. The Original Connexion, which had already begun chapel building after the break with the Church of England in 1791, continued to build during the first four decades of the nineteenth century, as membership grew. But this growth began to slow as first the Warrenite secession of 1835 and then the Wesleyan Reformers split of 1849-51 removed membership.<sup>408</sup> The creation of the Wesleyan Methodist Association in 1835 does not appear to have resulted the building of many new chapels as it did in the adjoining Black Country, while the development of the Wesleyan Reform Association occurred too close in time to the Religious Census to have had the much impact. Although the Wesleyans created 14 chapels in the Birmingham conurbation, the bulk of their new building was done elsewhere in the county, much of it in rural areas. The Primitive Methodists, even more than the Wesleyans, seem to have concentrated their efforts elsewhere in their early years, the chapel at New John Street West, in Birmingham having opened as late as 1849. However, of the new chapels built in the 1850s, at least three were to be built in Birmingham, reflecting the movement's growing consolidation as purpose-built places of worship began to replace cottages and hired halls.<sup>409</sup>

The construction of new Roman Catholic chapels in nineteenth century Warwickshire was influenced by a number of factors. Prior to 1837, all of the chapels, with the

---

<sup>408</sup> Between 1851-5 the Wesleyans nationally lost almost 100,000 members due to disruption and secession and membership did not reach the 1850 figure of 358,277 not until 1876. See R. Davies, A.R. George and G. Rupp (eds.) *History of the Methodist Church in Great Britain Vol. 3* pp. 122-123

<sup>409</sup> I. Sellers, *Nineteenth-Century Nonconformity*, p. 10

exception of that in rapidly growing Leamington, were centred on rural areas which had historically had a strong Catholic presence. Some replaced rooms in the homes of prominent Catholic families (Wootton Wawen, for example<sup>410</sup>), while others were attached to religious orders (as at Princethorpe<sup>411</sup>). The more recent ones reflected the growth of urban Catholicism, not only in Birmingham but also in other towns such as Atherstone and Rugby<sup>412</sup>, mainly due to the immigration of the Irish to provide a labour force, not only in the factories of the conurbation, but also in railway construction in the north of the county.

### **Endowments and income**

In the Religious Census, the nature of endowment was the most controversial of all questions. The issue had been raised beforehand by many (including the bishop of Oxford) which had led to a greater leniency towards those who refused to complete this section. One complaint was that the question of income was asked only of Anglican clergy, but this was countered by the statement that Dissenting clergy were supported entirely by voluntary contributions. Eventually it was agreed that the endowment question could be left unanswered, and many clergy chose that option. This is a pity, as some of the notes and remarks which *were* made provide valuable social commentary, especially in rural parishes. Information about clerical incomes had been collected frequently by the Church authorities and by Parliament, most notably in 1835, as a result of a Government enquiry, and such coyness seems

---

<sup>410</sup> HO129.404.5.8.7 (HO129.394.3.1.7)

<sup>411</sup> HO129.401.3.11.20

<sup>412</sup> HO129.397.1.16.27; HO129.401.1.15.21

somewhat affected, since the Clergy List for 1851 gives the value of all the livings, as do entries in local directories. Thus there seems to be little justification for withholding such information from the Census enumerators, especially as the individual returns were bound by the same 100-year restrictions as those of the Population Census. However, for some clergy, the issue was one of principle, being concerned with the relationship between Church and State, and reflecting the influence of Tractarianism.<sup>413</sup>

The 279 Anglican returns for Warwickshire included 177 which gave some indication of endowment. Thirty-four others were simply Information Forms, usually completed by a Registrar, which had not required information under this head. In the remaining sixty-eight cases, this section was simply left blank. Of these, seven were licensed schoolrooms, usually in urban parishes, while a further eleven were additional churches or chapels of ease included with a 'mother' church, or were part of a combined benefice. A further five had no endowment, while eight refused to give the information requested. Two of these were curates of parishes with non-resident incumbents, while the living of Monks Kirby with Witherbybrook was under sequestration and the curate had no information.<sup>414</sup> Of those who refused to comply, the vicar of Fenny Compton deserves especial mention. Instead of taking refuge in the fact that replies to the question had been deemed voluntary, he wrote a lengthy explanation of why he was refusing to complete the section. He claimed that without consideration of the "drawbacks to which the income is subjected" his

---

<sup>413</sup> A similar reluctance was noted in the Scottish returns. See A.A. MacLaren, *Religion and Social Class. The Disruption Years in Aberdeen* (London, 1974) pp. 31-2

<sup>414</sup> H0129.408.1.1.1; H0129.399.2.4.7

answer would be inaccurate. Under this heading he included “Land Tax Tenths & Synodals, [and] Repairs of Chancel”. To which, in cases where the endowment consists in land with buildings upon it, as it does here, might fairly be added, “Repairs on farm buildings, on a like average. Besides these drawbacks, I may add that last year very nearly 10% of the gross income was returned to Tenants in consideration of the pressure on the agricultural interest.”<sup>415</sup> This is one of a number of occasions where the Warwickshire returns of the Religious Census draw attention to the fact that the effective value of clerical incomes is a much more complex issue than is revealed by discussions dealing simply with bald totals.

The Census form provided for a breakdown of the sources from which Anglican clergy drew their benefice income. These included land, tithes, glebe, other permanent endowments, pew rents, fees, dues and Easter Offerings, as well as other sources such as grants from Ecclesiastical Commissioners and Queen Anne’s Bounty. These last two sources were seemingly less important in supporting Anglican ministry in Warwickshire. Only six received some of their income from the Ecclesiastical Commissioners, all of which were additional churches in urban areas. A further fourteen returns indicated some financial support from Queen Anne’s Bounty. These were all located in rural areas, and most, though by no means all, had incomes of less than £150 per annum. Most of the returns specifically indicated income from tithes, glebe and land in varying amounts and combinations. Only 34 relied solely on pew rents, offerings and other sources. Only ten of these were in rural areas, and these included one district church and one additional church. The

---

<sup>415</sup> H0129.407.1.23.28

remainder were in urban areas, with half of them being found in the conurbation. The responses also varied in the degree of detail. Many respondents rounded their income to the nearest ten or even hundred pounds. Some, though, gave exact detail, such as the incumbent of Trinity Parish Church, Attleborough, whose reply was "Gross Income – No Parsonage. Land £69 4s 0½d, Glebe £20 15s 6d, Other Permanent Endowment £75, Pew Rents £10 6s 3d, Fees £3 18s 2d, Other (Ecclesiastical Commissioners) £15, Total £194 13s 11½d."<sup>416</sup>

Some of the churches relied on the generosity of local patrons, such as St Saviour's, Saltley, which received "£150 given by C.B.Adderley Esq. M.P."<sup>417</sup> while St Bartholomew's, Binley relied almost exclusively on the "£52 given by the Earl of Craven".<sup>418</sup> Others, especially newer churches, were dependent mainly on pew rents and fees such as St Luke's Leamington, whose minister wrote "There is no Endowment of any kind. The Minister's income depends solely on the Pew Rents." He added that the "Pew Rents (are) not exactly known, the chapel only having been open since last October."<sup>419</sup> Similarly the incumbent of St Paul's District Parish Church, Birmingham declared his benefice income to be "Pew Rents £240, Fees £185."<sup>420</sup> Others explained in some detail what they did with parts of their income, such as the aforementioned vicar of Walmley "Pew Rents Go to pay Clerk, Beadle

---

<sup>416</sup> H0129.398.1.3.5

<sup>417</sup> H0129.395.3.5.10

<sup>418</sup> H0129.399.2.8.15

<sup>419</sup> H0129.403.2.1.1

<sup>420</sup> H0129.394.6.1.1

...<sup>421</sup> and the incumbent of St Mary's, Leamington "Pew Rents £320, (expenses of Organist, Lights, Verger &c £130 to be deducted from Pew Rents. The Curate has also £100 p.a.), Fees belong to the Mother Church."<sup>422</sup> Some clergymen also identified difficulties with their endowment. The Vicar of Kenilworth commented "It is impossible to give an exact return of the Endowment, where Fees, Easter Offering &c are so varying."<sup>423</sup> The Vicar of Wolfhamcote complained that information was "Impossible to give under the present depressed state of agriculture – the actual amount of income arising from 35 acres of land. Question if any."<sup>424</sup>, while the Rector of Arley declared that "The amount of the tithe is likely to be materially reduced by free trade that I think it is useless entering it here."<sup>425</sup> All of these indicate the value of the Religious Census as a source, while at the same time illustrating the complexity of clerical incomes.

154 of the returns gave information which enabled income to be calculated. For those with no information, it was possible to determine from the *Clergy List* and *White's Directory* almost a hundred more endowments. Many of White's figures were identical with those of the Clergy List, suggesting a similar source, though White clearly seemed to have access to other sources, since he often gave additional information about private benefactions, Queen Anne's Bounty and Parliamentary Grants. Discrepancies do occur in some of the figures – though others are

---

<sup>421</sup> H0129.395.4.4.7

<sup>422</sup> H0129.403.2.1.2

<sup>423</sup> H0129.403.3.6.7

<sup>424</sup> H0129.401.3.4.6

<sup>425</sup> H0129.398.1.4.13

remarkably close. Possible explanations include differences between gross and net incomes<sup>426</sup>, and different dates for the data. In the case of Birmingham and Aston, there was a greater number of discrepancies between the Religious Census and White's *Directory*. The most likely explanation is that the latter quoted permanent endowments, but excluded pew rents and surplice fees. In parishes with large populations these were often much more significant sources of income. The endowment income for the parishes for which we have data totals more than £68,000, with a mean value of almost £280 per benefice. This of course, masks considerable variation. At one extreme was the vicarage of Aston, worth a staggering £2,075 a year<sup>427</sup>, along with a further six in excess of £1,000 per annum. These were the Birmingham parishes of St Philip's, St Martin's and St Luke's<sup>428</sup>, plus Solihull and Rugby<sup>429</sup>, with Hampton Lucy the solitary rural representative<sup>430</sup>. Further consideration is given to the question of endowments and income in Chapter 5, but at this point it is important to stress the diversity of sources of income, but more especially of income totals; there was a considerable difference between the "fat cats" at one extreme and the "church mice" at the other. It is clear that for many clergymen in mid-nineteenth century Warwickshire it was still necessary to have other means of income in addition to endowments, fees and pew rents.

---

<sup>426</sup> The Religious Census instructions simply required the respondent to give the aggregate annual amount of the endowment. Comments in the returns indicated that in at least seven cases this was interpreted as the gross income.

<sup>427</sup> H0129.398.1.3.5

<sup>428</sup> H0129.394.5.1.1; H0129.394.3.1.3; H0129.394.3.1.1

<sup>429</sup> H0129.402.1.3.6; H0129.401.1.15.17

<sup>430</sup> H0129.404.2.6.8

## Worship Provided

The Census returns provide information about the pattern of services to be found in Warwickshire's places of worship. These are summarised in Table 3.4.

Table 3.4 - Provision of Worship in Warwickshire

Number of services	Times *	Church of England		Old Dissent **		Wesleyan Methodist		Primitive Methodist		Other	
		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
3	mae	25	9	33	25	20	22	4	12	10	19
2	ma	158	57	5	4	3	3	0	0	15	28
2	me	18	6	45	35	21	23	6	18	15	28
2	ae	1	0	20	15	32	34	18	55	3	6
1	m	28	10	4	3	1	1	1	3	6	11
1	a	19	7	10	8	7	8	3	9	1	2
1	e	2	1	8	6	7	8	1	3	3	6
1	m/a alt	21	8	1	1	1	1	0	0	1	2
No data		7	3	4	3	1	1	0	0	0	0
* m = morning, a = afternoon, e = evening											
** Independents, Baptists, Presbyterians, Quakers, Unitarians											

A total of 92 churches and chapels (almost one in six) offered three services on a Sunday. More than a third of these were chapels of Old Dissent and well over a quarter were Methodists (including the Independent Methodists and the Welsh Calvinistic Methodists), but a large number were parish churches, especially in urban areas (ten in the Birmingham/Aston conurbation, five out of six in Coventry and four in Leamington/Warwick). This can be seen as an indication of the effect of the Anglican revival and also of the attempt by the clergy in these areas to cater for the rapidly growing urban population.

Ransome has pointed out that "Canons of 1604 laid down two services every

Sunday, services or prayers on saints' days during the week, celebration of communion three times a year and regular catechising, as the minimum parochial duty to be observed by parish clergy" concluding that this was not a very exacting standard. She found that at the beginning of the nineteenth century, of 267 churches and chapels in the diocese of Worcester (which included the Warwick and Kineton deaneries), 105 (39%) held two services every Sunday, while a further seven held two services in summer and one in winter.<sup>431</sup> By 1851, in Warwickshire, 72 per cent of Anglican churches offered at least two services (most commonly morning and afternoon). Of those 67 Anglican places where only one service was held, several were in schools or schoolrooms which had been licensed for extra services, such as Thurlaston School, Dunchurch, Forshaw School, Solihull<sup>432</sup>, two schools in Sutton Coldfield<sup>433</sup> and two schoolrooms in Birmingham set up by the incumbents of St Luke's and St Martin's<sup>434</sup>, and one by the vicar of Kenilworth.<sup>435</sup> 47 of the parishes contained fewer than 500 souls, while among the smallest were five pairs of parishes which shared an incumbent.<sup>436</sup> In fact, in some of the smallest parishes, the turnout at the single service was most impressive – the churches at Chadshunt, Billesley and

---

<sup>431</sup> M. Ransome (ed.), *The State of the Bishoprick of Worcester 1782-1808* p. 9

<sup>432</sup> HO129.401.3.2.3; HO129.402.1.3.8

<sup>433</sup> HO129.395.4.4.3; HO129.395.4.4.4

<sup>434</sup> HO129.394.3.1.1; HO129.394.3.1.3

<sup>435</sup> HO129.403.3.6.8

<sup>436</sup> Seckington (HO129.376.1.11.13) and Shuttington (HO129.376.1.12.14); Wyken (HO129.399.2.6.12) and Binley (HO129.399.2.8.15); Caldecote (HO129.398.1.1.1) and Weddington (HO129.398.1.2.2); Oldberrow (HO129.405.1.1.1) and Moreton Bagot (HO129.405.1.2.2); Kinwarton (HO129.405.2.5.9) and Weethley (HO129.405.3.4.11)

Weethley recording congregations larger than the entire village population<sup>437</sup>, while the congregation of 105 at Honiley being more than double the total inhabitants of the village, included many from neighbouring parishes.<sup>438</sup>

The Anglicans appeared to prefer to worship in daylight. The Nonconformists, on the other hand, seemed happy to venture out for worship after dark, with 246 (almost 80%) out of the 310 chapels and meeting places holding at least an evening service. Most prominent were the Primitive Methodists (88%) followed by the Wesleyans (86%) and the Old Dissenters (82%). There were significant differences though. Of the Old Dissenting chapels, many also held morning services, whereas the Methodists (especially the Primitives) held their additional services in the afternoon. There are several possible explanations for this phenomenon. In many cases, the Old Dissenters can be regarded as being in direct competition with the Established Church, and thus saw no difficulty, or even a virtue, in holding their services at the same time as those in the parish church. On the other hand, many Methodists (especially Wesleyan) continued the pre-secession practice of 'occasional conformity', which Wesley had encouraged and still worshipped in their parish church as well. Thus the Vicar of Polesworth could point out that "Many churchmen attend the meetinghouses in the evening."<sup>439</sup> Dean Inge has recorded that when he was a boy (he was born in 1860) in his grandfather's Yorkshire parish "there was a small Wesleyan chapel in the village, but half the Methodists came to church once

---

<sup>437</sup> H0129.407.1.1.1; H0129.404.4.9.12; H0129.405.3.4.11

<sup>438</sup> H0129.403.3.7.14

<sup>439</sup> H0129.397.1.6.10

on Sunday".<sup>440</sup> The steward of Upper Quinton Wesleyan Methodist Chapel also confirmed this when he wrote "When there is a service at Church in the afternoon, the service is morning and evening at Chapel."<sup>441</sup> A second explanation was suggested by the minister of Cherry Street Wesleyan Methodist Chapel, Birmingham who pointed out that "The afternoon service is for the benefit of servants who cannot attend the morning or evening service."<sup>442</sup> It seems likely that those in service were more likely to be free to attend afternoon services, while labourers in agricultural areas who had to work on a Sunday were more likely to be available to attend in the evening.

Moreover, although comments were frequently made about the unsuitability of mid-Lent Sunday in particular as the date for the Religious Census, it is worth considering whether the time of year in general had an influence on the worship provided, and it might not be unreasonable to suggest that perhaps more (and better attended) services might have taken place in June or July. Lowsonford Independent Chapel, Rowington switched to "an evening service in the summer months"<sup>443</sup>, while the officiating minister at Wibtoft Chapel (Anglican) pointed out that "In winter the service is in the morning but in summer in the evening. In the latter case the congregation is larger."<sup>444</sup> Similar increases in summer attendance were stated at St

---

<sup>440</sup> cited by T.E Jessop, 'The Mid Nineteenth Century Background' in R. Davies, A.R. George and G. Rupp (eds.) *History of the Methodist Church in Great Britain Vol. 2* pp. 180-1

<sup>441</sup> HO129.406.1.1.2

<sup>442</sup> HO129.394.5.1.6

<sup>443</sup> HO129.403.1.2.3

<sup>444</sup> HO129.408.1.8.9

Nicolas's Parish Church, Curdworth "In the summer [the congregation] is much larger than at other seasons of the year", St Osburgh's Roman Catholic Chapel, Hill Street, Coventry "In the summer months the church is quite crowded" and St Benedict's and St Mary's Roman Catholic Church, Wootton Wawen "During the summer months the number attending the morning services is more than double the number entered. This is owing to the great influx of harvest labourers and families."<sup>445</sup> The curate at Oldberrow Parish Church recorded two figures for afternoon attendance, that for summer being half as large again as that in winter.<sup>446</sup>

### **Attendance**

The attendance section of the form was divided into two parts. The first required an estimate of the number of persons attending Divine Worship on 30 March 1851, with space for 'General Congregation', 'Sunday Scholars' and 'Total', for morning, afternoon and evening services. The second part had similar spaces for the average number of attendants during the months preceding 30 March 1851. The instructions made it clear that the second part of the form was available in case the actual attendance on Census Sunday "should not truly represent the numbers *usually* in attendance, the person making the return is at liberty to add ... the estimated *average* number of attendants on Sunday during the 12 calendar months next preceding 30 March 1851 or during such portion of that period as the building has been open for public worship, stating in the heading over the numbers so inserted

---

<sup>445</sup> H0129.395.4.1.1; H0129.400.1.1.5; H0129.394.3.1.7

<sup>446</sup> H0129.405.1.1.1

the exact number of months for which the additional return is made".<sup>447</sup>

These seemingly uncomplicated instructions did not produce a straightforward set of results. 66 of the Warwickshire returns are 'defective as to attendance', in that no return was given for 30 March. Ten of these had no service, for which there were varied reasons. One met only on Wednesday, two had closed, or ceased meeting, four were still incomplete, while two met on alternate Sundays and for one, it was the one Sunday in the month when they joined another congregation. Many of the remainder were Information Forms completed some time after the Census. These required only the number of sittings and average attendances, though in some cases incumbents and chapel officials chose to give only attendance figures without comment. The Vicar of Claverdon declined to give the attendance<sup>448</sup>, while the Vicar of Fillongley "... presumed that the above inquiries do not apply to Fillongley Church"<sup>449</sup> but these were the only two respondents who actually refused to give the attendance information requested. There were 48 returns where the average has been used instead of the actual figures, which leaves just nine, all of which returned accommodation figures.<sup>450</sup> Watts made estimates for those churches and chapels for which accommodation figures, but not attendance figures, are provided in the published returns, calculating the estimates on the basis of the ratio between

---

<sup>447</sup> H. Mann, *Census of Great Britain, 1851: Religious Worship, England and Wales* pp. clxiii, clxv

<sup>448</sup> HO129.404.5.3.3

<sup>449</sup> HO129.396.2.10.11

<sup>450</sup> St Cuthbert's Parish Church, Shustoke (HO129.396.1.4.5), Fillongley Parish Church (HO129.396.2.10.11), Bedworth Primitive Methodist Church (HO129.396.1.4.5), St Paul's Parish Church, Foleshill (HO129.399.1.4.11), St John's Parish Church, Coventry (HO129.400.1.1.4), Birdingbury Parish Church (HO129.401.3.7.11), St Mary Magdalene Parish Church, Tanworth (HO129.402.3.2.2), The Chapel of the Guild of the Holy Cross, Stratford on Avon (HO129.404.3.2.3) and St Michael's Parish Church, Claverdon HO129.404.5.3.3 .

sittings and attendants for other places of worship of the same denomination in the same registration district, or, in the case of small denominations, the same county.<sup>451</sup> Using Watts's method it has been possible to obtain an estimation based on the ratio between sittings and attendance for other places of worship of the same denomination in the same Registration District.

The easiest way of interpreting these figures is by calculating an Index of Attendance (IA), the method used by Inglis for his investigation of urban religion via the Religious Census. He derived it from the total attendance at all places of worship expressed as a proportion of the population in the area<sup>452</sup>. According to Inglis the IA for all places in England and Wales was 61. Values were higher in the countryside (71.4) than in the towns (49.7), though this should not be exaggerated, as there were wide variations within both rural and urban areas. Leamington/Warwick (71.4) was one of a group of towns and urban areas (almost all non-manufacturing) which exceeded the average IA for the whole country, whereas the Birmingham/Aston conurbation (38.1) and even Coventry (43.7) were some way below the urban average. Thus Warwickshire provided a good example of the range of values which were often concealed behind a broad national average figure. Although in general the larger the town the lower the attendance, in many parts of the country, towns with the lowest IAs tended to be of a similar type, though whether through cause or effect is debateable. Snell and Ell found that the picture was far more complex than Inglis had suggested, concluding that "Extreme urbanisation in London and some of the largest

---

<sup>451</sup> M.R. Watts, *The Dissenters Vol. 2* p. 673

<sup>452</sup> K.S. Inglis, 'Patterns of Religious Worship in 1851' p. 74

English cities did therefore tend to reduce religious attendances – but one should be sceptical about whether this was true of urbanisation generally.”<sup>453</sup>

The variations in Index of Attendance within the Warwickshire Registration Districts can be seen in Table 3.5.

Table 3.5 - Index of Attendance for Warwickshire Registration Districts

RD	Location	Population	Attendance	Index of Attendance
397	Atherstone	8,406	9,169	109.1
162/3	Cotswold Edge	3,747	3,355	89.5
401	Rugby	18,895	16,909	89.5
398	Nuneaton	13,532	11,594	85.7
399	Foleshill	19,590	15,896	81.1
408/412	Lutterworth/Hinckley	2,261	1,621	71.7
404	Stratford on Avon	20,734	14,458	69.7
406	Shipston on Stour	12,026	8,377	69.7
403	Warwick	41,934	29,075	69.3
405	Alcester	9,414	6,515	69.2
407	Southam	10,504	6,835	65.1
376	Tamworth	4,075	2,120	52.0
402	Solihull	9,902	4,318	44.6
400	Coventry	36,919	16,145	43.7
394/395	Birmingham/Aston (Inc. Edgbaston)	245,845	93,625	38.1
396	Meriden	11,267	4,313	38.3 *

\* Meriden includes four missing parish churches. If the population of these parishes is deducted the IA rises to a slightly more respectable 52.2.

The IA for Warwickshire as a whole at 52.1 was somewhat below the national average, which can be explained in part at least by the fact that whereas in the country as a whole, in 1851, the urban population had finally reached 50%, the Birmingham conurbation and Coventry alone comprised more than 60% of the county’s total, and the addition of the other towns pushed the proportion of urban population in the county to around 75%. The variations between Registration

<sup>453</sup> K.D.M. Snell and P.S. Ell, *Rival Jerusalems* pp. 402-4

Districts are also important, indicating much greater attendance in the eastern part of the county, especially in the areas associated with the East Warwickshire coalfield. The influence of the Birmingham conurbation can be seen inasmuch as the areas with poorer attendance figures included those districts closer to Birmingham, such as Solihull and Meriden. This may well confirm Obelkevich's claim that if attendance was poor in many of the (northern) industrial towns, it was partly because they drew immigrants from the surrounding rural areas where church-going had been weak for generations.<sup>454</sup> In terms of the Index of Attendance, there seem to be three Warwickshires – the Conurbation, which mirrored its urban-industrial counterparts elsewhere in the country, the Felden, with its attendances on a par with much of rural England, and the Eastern Coalfield, where, religiosity, at least as measured by IA, was much greater than elsewhere in the county. This diverse pattern appears again in Chapter 4 when denominational distributions are considered.

The fact that the Religious Census was only a Census of Accommodation and Attendance at Worship explains much of the controversy which surrounds it. Attempts have been made to calculate the precise number of individuals who attended church on Census Sunday, but since the question was not asked in this form, it is hardly surprising that the results cannot be made to yield the answer. Figures were collected for morning, afternoon and evening services, but no enquiry was made about who attended more than once. The figures used for the Index of Attendance, using the total for all services (in Warwickshire 244,325), assumed that no one attended more than once. At the other extreme, the absolute minimum

---

<sup>454</sup> J. Obelkevich, 'Religion' p. 337-8

figure was the total of those attending the morning service, 113,729, since these cannot have been counted more than once. (In the case of Roman Catholic chapels, there may have been more than one mass on Sunday morning, but it can be reasonably assumed that no one attended more than once.) Somewhere in between these two numbers is a figure which more accurately reflects the actual size of the worshipping community on 30 March 1851. Watts claimed that this could be achieved “by taking the figures for the best-attended services as the basis, and adding a proportion of the worshippers at the less well-attended services. The major problem is, what proportion?”<sup>455</sup> This also failed to make allowance for cross-denominational attendance.<sup>456</sup>

Mann himself used a formula which counted everyone at morning service, half of those attending afternoon service and a third of those attending evening service. Mann’s formula was biased in favour of the Church of England who enjoyed their largest attendances in the morning, while Dissenters tended to have their largest congregations in the evening. The returns from individual churches can be used in an attempt to produce a more accurate figure. I have followed Watts’s method in assuming that one-third of the people who attended one of the less well-attended services on Census Sunday did not attend any other<sup>457</sup>. Watts admitted that this formula may exaggerate the strength of Nonconformity relative to the Church of England and the Roman Catholic Church, whose members were more likely to attend

---

<sup>455</sup> M.R. Watts, *The Dissenters Vol. 2* p. 671

<sup>456</sup> Referred to above in section Worship Provided.

<sup>457</sup> M.R. Watts, *Religion in Victorian Nottinghamshire* p. xiii. In this earlier work he added those present at the best-attended Sunday school session, but ignored other Sunday school attendances.

only once on a Sunday but argued that “while the extent of the exaggeration cannot be gauged, it is probably only marginal and will not be as great as using Inglis's index of attendance.”<sup>458</sup> Watts justified his method by referring to comments made by people who completed the forms in different parts of the country.

In fact, in some Warwickshire parishes, the remarks suggested that there was almost no double counting. According to the Vicar of Bidford “The parish comprises four hamlets or villages, three of which being more than a mile from the parish church, the attendance is very variable & the two congregations for the most part distinct,”<sup>459</sup> while the Vicar of Wormleighton remarked that “On 30 March scarcely any of the persons attending the morning service attended the afternoon service”<sup>460</sup> and the Vicar of Easington declared that “If this be intended to ascertain the number of persons who attend Divine Worship it will be most fallacious; not above a third of the morning congregation is the same as that in the afternoon.”<sup>461</sup> Other comments made by some of the Warwickshire respondents added further detail about the nature of the congregations, in terms of gender, for example, and social class. The Vicar of St Thomas’s Birmingham wrote “The morning congregations are  $\frac{2}{3}$  males. The evening a larger portion ( $\frac{1}{2}$ ) females.”<sup>462</sup> The Vicar of St Paul’s District Church, Friar Street, Warwick stated that “The congregations in Mg & Afternoon are

---

<sup>458</sup> M.R. Watts, *The Dissenters Vol. 2.* p. 672

<sup>459</sup> HO129.405.4.2.5

<sup>460</sup> HO129.407.1.22.27

<sup>461</sup> HO129.404.1.5.9

<sup>462</sup> HO129.394.2.1.2

composed of almost an entirely different class of persons”<sup>463</sup>, while the minister of Cherry Street Wesleyan Methodist Chapel, Birmingham pointed out that “The afternoon service is for the benefit of servants who cannot attend the morning or evening service.”<sup>464</sup> On the other hand, an indication that double counting might have taken place across the denominations came from the aforementioned Vicar of Polesworth, who wrote that “Many churchmen attend the meeting houses in the evening.”<sup>465</sup>

Applying Watts’s method indicates that 171,391 people attended at least one church service in Warwickshire on 30 March 1851. This represents 36.5% of the county’s population and compares unfavourably with the 44% of Nottinghamshire’s population.<sup>466</sup> However, evidence from the Remarks given above suggests that  $1+\frac{2}{3}$  might be a more appropriate figure to use than  $1+\frac{1}{3}$ , which would raise the total attending from 171,391 to 214,239, an increase of more than 40,000 and comprising 45.7% of the county’s total population. The denominational distribution can be seen in Table 3.6.

---

<sup>463</sup> HO129.403.4.1.2

<sup>464</sup> HO129.394.5.1.6

<sup>465</sup> HO129.397.1.6.10

<sup>466</sup> M.R. Watts, *Religion in Victorian Nottinghamshire* p. xiv. I have made comparisons with Nottinghamshire as it is almost contiguous with Warwickshire and is a similar type of county with its mixture of rural and urban, though Nottingham is probably not as influential as Birmingham.

Table 3.6 - Distribution of Different Denominations in Warwickshire

Total number of people attending worship	171,391	%	IA%
Anglican	95,183	55.5	57.1
Independent	17,953	10.5	10.3
Wesleyan Methodist	15,626	9.1	8.7
Baptist (all)	14,696	8.6	8.7
Roman Catholic	12,331	7.2	6.6
Primitive Methodist	4,434	2.6	2.5
Unitarian	2,748	1.6	1.3
Latter Day Saints	1,690	1.0	0.9
WMA/WRA	1,194	0.7	0.7
Methodist New Connexion	1,075	0.6	0.6
Presbyterian	776	0.5	0.4
Independent Methodist	538	0.3	0.3
Friends	403	0.2	0.2
Other	2,724	1.6	1.6

The figures generally support Watts's claim that his method shows a stronger performance by the major nonconformist groups (except the Baptists), but whichever method is used, the Church of England still had the majority of churchgoers in Warwickshire on Census Sunday.<sup>467</sup>

However, as Table 3.7 shows, within the county, there were significant variations in attendance at parish churches.

---

<sup>467</sup> Watts states that "... in the country as a whole the Church of England had a 3% lead over the Nonconformists, (but that) in Nottinghamshire, Dissenters and Methodists had a 5% lead over the Anglicans" M.R. Watts, *Religion in Victorian Nottinghamshire* p. xiv

Table 3.7 - Variations in Anglican Strength in Warwickshire Registration Districts

RD	Location	At Worship	Church of England	% Anglican
402	Solihull	3,186	2,852	89.5
396	Meriden	2,955	2,315	78.3
404	Stratford on Avon	10,481	7,856	75.0
403	Warwick	19,317	14,465	74.9
376	Tamworth	1,525	1,091	71.5
401	Rugby	11,652	8,258	70.9
406	Shipston on Stour	5,890	3,994	67.8
407	Southam	4,753	3,128	65.8
162/3	Cotswold Edge	2,474	1,410	57.0
397	Atherstone	6,139	3,291	53.6
405	Alcester	5,056	2,622	51.9
398	Nuneaton	7,370	3,777	51.2
400	Coventry	11,091	5,317	47.9
408/412	Lutterworth/Hinckley	1,146	529	46.2
394/395	Birmingham/Aston (Inc. Edgbaston)	68,049	30,353	44.6
399	Foleshill	10,287	3,925	38.2

A number of points are worthy of note. The Solihull and Meriden districts had relatively low total attendance figures, though Meriden is missing four parish churches, which would have increased its percentage significantly. The Warwick district included the rapidly growing resort of Leamington, whose population was probably swollen by more middle class in-migration than any other town in the county. A marked contrast can be drawn between the 'Felden' parishes of south Warwickshire, in many of which the Anglican Church had a monopoly, and the towns and villages of the East Warwickshire coalfield, where Nonconformity was especially strong. Birmingham also appears as a Nonconformist stronghold, but the figure there of 44.6% Anglicans indicates that there is some truth in Conrad Gill's remark that even "in a town long known as a centre of nonconformity, the members of the Established Church in actual attendance, ... nearly equal those of all other

denominations together".<sup>468</sup> Moreover this near-parity of the Church of England with the combined forces of Dissent in a rapidly expanding urban-industrial setting contrasts with an Anglican attendance of barely a third of the population which Smith found in Oldham.<sup>469</sup>

As Table 3.8 shows, there was considerable variation in the distribution of the different Nonconformist denominations.

---

<sup>468</sup> C. Gill, *History of Birmingham Vol. I. Manor and Borough to 1865* (Oxford, 1952) p. 374

<sup>469</sup> M.A. Smith, *Religion and Industrial Society* p. 251

Table 3.8 Distribution of the Nonconformist Denominations in Warwickshire Registration Districts

Location	At Worship	Nonconformist Total %	Baptist	Independent	Primitive Methodist	Roman Catholic	Wesleyan Methodist	Other
Cotswold Edge	2,474	43.0	0.0	5.9	18.5	0.0	18.2	0.4
Tamworth	1,525	28.5	8.3	8.7	0.0	0.0	11.4	0.0
Birmingham/Aston (Inc. Edgbaston)	68,049	55.4	9.9	9.4	1.1	11.5	9.5	13.9
Meriden	2,955	21.7	0.0	11.2	0.0	0.0	9.8	0.7
Atherstone	6,139	46.4	1.9	28.1	1.2	1.2	10.3	3.8
Nuneaton	7,370	48.8	7.9	19.0	4.1	5.8	8.5	3.5
Foleshill	10,287	61.8	23.2	15.5	13.3	0.0	9.0	0.8
Coventry	11,091	52.1	10.5	18.9	2.7	12.6	3.0	4.4
Rugby	11,652	29.1	8.3	2.2	2.9	5.9	9.4	0.4
Solihull	3,186	10.5	1.1	3.5	0.0	3.8	2.0	0.0
Warwick	19,317	25.1	3.6	11.4	0.6	3.4	5.1	1.0
Stratford on Avon	10,481	25.0	3.8	7.7	1.3	2.6	9.2	0.3
Alcester	5,056	48.1	16.8	3.6	0.0	12.0	11.4	4.4
Shipston on Stour	5,890	32.2	5.0	0.0	3.5	4.5	18.8	0.4
Southam	4,753	34.2	0.0	6.8	7.0	0.0	18.8	1.6
Lutterworth/Hinckley	1,146	53.8	27.1	19.3	5.0	0.0	0.0	2.4

The Baptists were particularly strong on the Leicestershire border, in Foleshill, Alcester and in the urban areas of Birmingham and Coventry, though they were conspicuously absent in Southam, Meriden and the Cotswold Edge districts, and relatively weak alongside others (for example, in Solihull and Atherstone). The other sizeable denomination of Old Dissent, the Independents, on the other hand, were extremely prominent in Atherstone, where they comprised more than a quarter of all worshippers, and in a contiguous group of Registration Districts in East Warwickshire. They too, though, had areas of no support - Shipston on Stour - or little support - Rugby, Solihull and Alcester. The chief representatives of New Dissent, the Wesleyan Methodists, appear to have had more success in spreading their message across the county; apart from the four parishes in the Lutterworth and Hinckley districts they were present in every Registration District. Their particular areas of strength were in the southeast in the Shipston on Stour, Southam and the Cotswold Edge districts, but, with the exceptions of Solihull and Coventry, were well represented throughout.<sup>470</sup>

The greatest enigma was the Primitive Methodists. Numerically they were strongest in Foleshill, where they outnumbered the Wesleyan Methodists, and they and the Baptists combined almost equalled the number of Anglicans. They were relatively strong in the Cotswold Edge parishes, alongside the Wesleyan Methodists, which may be a case of their travelling on the Wesleyans' coat tails or as a reflection of the influence of Primitive Methodism in Oxfordshire.<sup>471</sup> However, in other areas where

---

<sup>470</sup> The question of how far the major denominations reciprocated or undercut each other spatially is considered in Chapter 4.

<sup>471</sup> K. Tiller, 'The desert begins to blossom: Oxfordshire and Primitive Methodism' *Oxoniensia*, Vol. LXXI (2006) p. 103

the Wesleyan Methodists were strong, Primitive Methodists were relatively weak - Shipston on Stour and Atherstone - or non-existent - Alcester, Tamworth and Meriden. They also failed to make much of an impression in the Birmingham conurbation, where, by 1851, they comprised barely 1% of churchgoers. However, unlike some other counties, the Primitive Methodists in Warwickshire were not principally a rural "agricultural labourers" group. When Watts analysed male Dissenters from baptism records he found that among Warwickshire Primitive Methodists between 1830 and 1837, fewer than one in ten were from unskilled labourers (in Norfolk this group formed more than half, while in Lincolnshire they comprised almost 60%).<sup>472</sup> No fewer than 37.2% came from groups whose wages had become 'depressed' since the turn of the century<sup>473</sup>, including weavers, while 33.5% from higher skilled workers. This seems to confirm the view that, Joseph Arch notwithstanding, Primitive Methodism in Warwickshire found much of its support from the ribbon weavers and the slightly more affluent workers of the East Warwickshire coalfield.

The Roman Catholics had by far the most uneven distribution pattern. Numerically their greatest stronghold was in the Birmingham conurbation, where their total of nearly 8,000 worshippers was second only to the Church of England. This reflects the significant growth of the immigrant Irish community during the 1840s and the tireless efforts of Bernard Ullathorne, bishop from 1848. They had another urban stronghold in Coventry, while their strong showing in the Alcester Registration

---

<sup>472</sup> M.R. Watts, *The Dissenters Vol. 2* pp. 744-5, 747-8, 766

<sup>473</sup> M.R. Watts, *The Dissenters Vol. 2* p. 313

District was due, in the main, to the presence of the Throckmorton family at Coughton.<sup>474</sup> This was one of a number of examples of “seigneurial Catholicism” which have been discussed in Chapter 2.

One picture which emerges from the 1851 Religious Census is the kaleidoscope of denominations within urban Nonconformity.<sup>475</sup> In addition to the Baptists and Independents, Birmingham had significant numbers of other denominations of Old Dissent - Presbyterians, Quakers and especially Unitarians. In addition to the Wesleyans (and a small number of Primitives) there were representatives of the numerous fragmentations of Methodism - the Methodist New Connexion, Wesleyan Methodist Association, Wesleyan Reform Association and Welsh Calvinistic Methodists. Completing the denominational diversity there were chapels and meeting places for the Countess of Huntingdon’s Connexion, the Catholic Apostolic Church, Swedenborgians, Latter Day Saints, Brethren, Calvinists, Christian Israelites and a non-sectarian group at George Dawson’s Church of the Saviour as well as a community of about 200 Jews.

Many of the remarks on the Census returns attempted to explain the attendance. Occasionally they showed a greater than average turnout, usually for a special service or a funeral, but in the main they were explaining why the numbers were

---

<sup>474</sup> HO129.405.2.1.2

<sup>475</sup> H. McLeod, *Religion and the People of Western Europe 1789-1970* (Oxford, 1981) p. 91. McLeod claimed that Bolton is typical, where he found that although 85% of worshippers were Anglicans, Wesleyans, Independents or Roman Catholics, there were also three other varieties of Methodism, Baptists, Presbyterians, Unitarians, Quakers, Brethren, Swedenborgians, Mormons and two other unspecified denominations. He found the pattern in most other Lancashire towns to be similar, with the addition of ‘Greek Orthodox in Manchester, Sandemanians and four branches of Presbyterianism in Liverpool, Moravians in Ashton, Lady Huntingdon’s Connexion in Oldham, Inghamites in Burnley, Southcottians in Warrington, Scotch Baptists in Preston and also several Jewish congregations.’

below average. Some referred to local circumstances – “no settled minister for the last nine months” (Union Place General Baptist Chapel, Foleshill)<sup>476</sup> and “... the roads ... are so bad. There is not a single paved street in the entire district” (St Peter’s Church, Coventry<sup>477</sup>). Also in Coventry, the vicar of St Michael’s complained that “...the excessive cold and dampness of the Church during the winter season drive numbers away – and this particular day was on other accounts unfavourable.”<sup>478</sup> Several referred to illness, citing epidemics of influenza and other diseases, and “... members of several families of regular attendants lying dead” (St Mary’s Parish Church, Warwick).<sup>479</sup> Seven of the comments made reference to the bad weather (cold, squally, windy and much rain) which seems to have occurred nationwide over that weekend, and would have deterred many of those faced with a long walk each way and the prospect of sitting in wet clothes in an unheated church or chapel for upwards of an hour.

However, most of the comments (no fewer than 35) cited the fact that 30 March was Mid-Lent Sunday, known in the Midlands and elsewhere as Mothering Sunday.<sup>480</sup> Most of these came from urban clergy. In Birmingham both Anglicans and Nonconformists pointed out that it was a local holiday, including the Rev Thomas

---

<sup>476</sup> HO129.399.1.4.22

<sup>477</sup> HO129.400.2.1.1

<sup>478</sup> HO129.400.1.1.3

<sup>479</sup> HO129.403.4.1.1

<sup>480</sup> Gwynedd-Jones and Williams (*Religious Census, South Wales*, p. xxvi) pointed out that there were references to Mothering Sunday as ‘a day for family reunions’ in Monmouthshire, East Glamorgan and South Radnorshire, and Aitken (*Census of Religious Worship, 1851, The Returns for Worcestershire*, p. xxiii) found several in Worcestershire. But there was no reference in either Norfolk or Suffolk.

Bowring, Unitarian Minister of Hurst Street Chapel, Birmingham - "This being Mid-Lent Sunday – a general holiday in Birmingham, many in consequence absent."<sup>481</sup> In addition, many congregations in the smaller towns were affected. The Curate of Burton Green Licensed Schoolroom Kenilworth pointed out that his service was "Generally very full – smaller attendance always on Mid Lent Sunday, commonly called Mothering Sunday – this being the greatest day of visiting & feasting among the Poor (in the Midland Counties) in the year"<sup>482</sup> while the Curate of St Peter's, Coleshill wrote that "The attendance at Church and Schools small Mar 30 1851 – MidLent, called here "Mothering" Sunday is kept in the county as a Festal Visiting day of Relations etc."<sup>483</sup> An indication that all age groups were affected came from the Minister of St Peter & St Paul's Parish Church, Kingsbury who stated that "More people would have been in attendance but parents and children were absent, being Midlent or Mothering Sunday."<sup>484</sup> However, it was not simply an urban problem, otherwise the decline in attendances in the towns might have been offset by a corresponding increase in rural congregations. But the Vicar of Bulkington, whose parish consisted of five scattered hamlets, pointed out that it was "a bad day for the Census, it being Mid Lent or Mothering Sunday, when in rural districts, people move about and see their friends."<sup>485</sup> The vicar of Clifton upon Dunsmore described it as "The worst Sunday that could have been selected in the whole year, being mid-Lent,

---

<sup>481</sup> HO129.394.3.1.5

<sup>482</sup> HO129.403.3.6.8

<sup>483</sup> HO129.396.1.5.6

<sup>484</sup> HO129.376.2.8.5

<sup>485</sup> HO129.398.1.7.19

or what the Common People call Mothering Sunday”<sup>486</sup>, while the Curate of Willoughby commented “I beg to remark that the 30<sup>th</sup> March is the most unfortunate Sunday in the whole year for estimating the number of attendants at Church in agricultural districts as it happens to be this year “Midlent” or “Mothering” Sunday, when all young people out at service make a point of going home to see their parents & seldom go to Church on that day.”<sup>487</sup>

Several respondents attempted to quantify this reduction. The most extreme estimate was made by the incumbent of St Nicholas Church, Curdworth,<sup>488</sup> who estimated that the congregation was about a third less than usual. The minister of Christ Church, Birmingham declared “Evening congregation about 200 less than average of last 6 months owing to its being Mid-Lent Sunday, wh. always makes a difference.”<sup>489</sup> and this was echoed by the Rector of St Philip’s, Birmingham, who pointed out that “About 250 seat holders were absent today, it being Mid-Lent Sunday.”<sup>490</sup> In each case these reflected a reduction of between a quarter and one third, while the minister of Foleshill Independent Chapel<sup>491</sup> claimed that “The Old Practice of making special visits on Mid Lent Sunday prevails in the locality which reduces our congregation at least 20 per cent”. That this is likely to be typical can be seen in the difference between the actual and average attendances which is slightly

---

<sup>486</sup> HO129.401.2.1.1

<sup>487</sup> HO129.401.3.3.4

<sup>488</sup> HO129.395.4.1.1

<sup>489</sup> HO129.394.5.1.2

<sup>490</sup> HO129.394.5.1.1

<sup>491</sup> HO129.399.1.4.14

greater than 20%.<sup>492</sup> This would allow us to add more than 34,000 to the number of worshippers on 30 March to give a figure for a 'typical' Sunday of 206,673, or 42.9% of the county's population, more encouraging for the churches than the 36.5%, which using the Watts method, the returns indicate actually attended on Census Sunday.

The extent to which attendance at Sunday worship can be regarded as an indication of religiosity is in itself debatable. Legally it was a minimum requirement for members of the Church of England to take Communion three times a year, including Easter Day, and it would seem that many adherents probably did not regard weekly attendance as an essential commitment. The officiating minister at Exhall (Coventry) Parish Church pointed out that "A great number of nominal Church people hardly ever attend Church."<sup>493</sup> Such non-attendance did not necessarily reflect indifference. The Vicar of Easington concluded his comments by declaring that "... the congregation of one Sunday differs materially from that of another; so that it cannot be inferred because the half or the third of any population was not at Divine Worship on any given Sunday that therefore the rest are Heathen."<sup>494</sup>

Many middle class contemporaries took the pessimistic view that the religious census provided the evidence that the nineteenth century church was failing. But this is only true in context of the ultimate ambition of churches to draw in all of the

---

<sup>492</sup> Wolffe found one place of worship where the number of persons attached exceeded the attendance figures given by 49%, and ventures to suggest that "were such a ratio to be applied across the country it would significantly shift our assumptions about levels of participation in religious worship" (Wolffe, J. (ed.), *Yorkshire Returns of the 1851 Census of Religious Worship Vol.1*, p. v.)

<sup>493</sup> HO129.399.1.2.7

<sup>494</sup> HO129.404.1.5.9

people.<sup>495</sup> As Obelkevich has pointed out, the ecclesiastical 'golden age', with 100% church attendance, never existed; even in the second half of the eighteenth century, before the rise of industry and large towns, many people were infrequent attenders at church.<sup>496</sup>

## **Sunday Schools**

From their popularisation in the third quarter of the eighteenth century, Sunday Schools played a very important part in the religious and educational life of the country.<sup>497</sup> Although the Sunday School Movement dated its centenary and bicentenary from the work of Robert Raikes in Gloucester in 1780, there is much evidence from many parts of the country to show that people in churches were attempting to educate children on Sundays for as much as a century and a half before that. In fact, few people now would want to describe Raikes as the founder of Sunday Schools, but he was certainly their publicist in chief, and the idea of the Sunday School became a movement of national significance through his public relations.<sup>498</sup>

Initially schools were held in the homes of the teachers, in the absence of anywhere else to meet, but very quickly the need arose for alternative accommodation and an assortment of premises was used, "a disused pottery, until mining subsidence

---

<sup>495</sup> M.A. Smith, *Religion and Industrial Society* p. 250

<sup>496</sup> J. Obelkevich, 'Religion' p. 319

<sup>497</sup> Sunday Schools also played a significant role in the recreational, cultural and social lives of scholars and their families. See T.W. Laqueur, *Religion and Respectability: Sunday Schools and Working Class Culture, 1780-1850* (London, 1976) pp. 169-179

<sup>498</sup> P.B. Cliff, *The Rise and Development of the Sunday School Movement in England 1780-1980* (Redhill, 1986) pp. 39, 69

rendered it unfit, a stable loft, an old theatre, factories closed for the Sabbath etc. In some places church buildings were used, but the problems of church services created an embarrassment if schools ran late or the congregation arrived early. It was all right in the days when there were few children, but when the crowds came it was difficult. Not all congregations, even evangelically minded congregations, could endure the smell, mischief and nuisance of Sunday School children.”<sup>499</sup>

Laqueur pointed out that not all Sunday Scholars were children – some were as old as thirty. In fact there were numerous Sunday Schools which catered solely for adults, while in many others there was a significant proportion of scholars over the age of fifteen. It was reported in the 1830s in Birmingham that one scholar in six was over fifteen;<sup>500</sup> the median age in one large Sunday School in the town was thirteen, while in five local charity schools it was only ten.<sup>501</sup>

The number of scholars grew rapidly through the first half of the nineteenth century - and continued to do so for the rest of the century, even though primary education had become almost universal after Forster’s 1870 Education Act. Cliff stressed the link between the development of the Sunday school movement and the rapid growth of urban population, chiefly as a consequence of migration in search of work, and he made especial mention of “the new industrial works of Birmingham and Warwickshire”.<sup>502</sup> He cited the need for the various congregations to obtain suitable

---

<sup>499</sup> P.B. Cliff, *The Rise and Development of the Sunday School Movement in England 1780-1980* p. 54

<sup>500</sup> ‘Report on the State of Education in Birmingham’ by the Birmingham Statistical Society for the Improvement of Education in the *Journal of the Statistical Society of London* Vol. 3, No. 1 (April 1840) p. 45

<sup>501</sup> T.W. Laqueur, *Religion and Respectability* p. 90

<sup>502</sup> P.B. Cliff, *The Rise and Development of the Sunday School Movement in England 1780-1980* p. 15

premises even in the early years of the nineteenth century, one of which required “a shuttle system of attendance”.<sup>503</sup>

Scholars were not only given moral and religious instruction, but were also taught some secular subjects, reading and sometimes writing, though there was often opposition to the last from some quarters, including Anglicans and Wesleyan Methodists “because it is too worldly an employment for Sunday”.<sup>504</sup> Cliff cited a school started in Hey Chapel by the Revd J. Beckett. He had the children taught both reading and writing, but a little later, Beckett was followed by a man called Grundy who was against writing on a Sunday. He stopped the classes, and the irate children chanted after him: “Here comes the Reverend Mr Grundy Who won’t have writing on a Sunday”.<sup>505</sup> Cliff claims that the children left and joined the Independents who did have writing on a Sunday, but Smith has evidence that Grundy’s objections were based on a combination of Sabbatarian sentiment and fear that popular Sunday morning writing lessons were proving a drain on his morning congregations, and that far from opposing writing per se, he actually instituted classes for writing on weekdays.<sup>506</sup> It has been argued that writing was an upper class accomplishment and that those who taught it were doing so for purposes of indoctrination. However, many of the Evangelicals who condemned the teaching of writing on a Sunday argued most strongly that it should be taught during the week. Laqueur pointed out that in 1838 Birmingham had 56 Sunday Schools in total (with 16,757 scholars). All of

---

<sup>503</sup> P.B. Cliff, *The Rise and Development of the Sunday School Movement in England 1780-1980* p. 97

<sup>504</sup> F. Engels, *The Condition of the Working Class in England* (Oxford, 1993 edition) p.125

<sup>505</sup> P.B. Cliff, *The Rise and Development of the Sunday School Movement in England 1780-1980* p. 25

<sup>506</sup> M.A. Smith, *Religion and Industrial Society* pp. 95-6.

them taught reading, but only 25 taught writing (to 7,329 scholars) and as few as 7 (with 2,067 scholars) taught arithmetic.<sup>507</sup>

Arguments have raged among historians about the purpose and control of Sunday Schools. Marxists such as E.P.Thompson saw the rise of the working class as a conflict with controlling aristocratic and upper middle class interests, with religion as part of that repressive tyranny. Thompson argued that Sunday Schools were concerned with indoctrinating working class children with middle class moral and political values<sup>508</sup>, whilst Laqueur regarded them as “indigenous institutions of the working class community rather than an imposition on it from outside”.<sup>509</sup>

Cliff took both of them to task. Thompson was mostly concerned with Methodism and drew extensively on his own upbringing. But Cliff pointed out that not all schools were Methodist nor were they compulsory. The variety of denominational schools provided alternatives for those who felt they were being indoctrinated, and children were free to choose whether or not to attend.<sup>510</sup> While accepting Laqueur’s argument that some schools were started by poor or working men, Cliff’s argument was over “the loose way in which ‘working men’ translated into ‘working class’”.<sup>511</sup> He also questioned Laqueur’s view that the majority of teachers were former

---

<sup>507</sup> T.W. Laqueur, *Religion and Respectability* p. 103. Source ‘Report on the State of Education in Birmingham’ by the Birmingham Statistical Society for the Improvement of Education in the *Journal of the Statistical Society of London* Vol. 3, No. 1 (April 1840) pp. 38, 47

<sup>508</sup> E.P. Thompson, ‘Time, Work-discipline, and Industrial Capitalism’ *Past and Present* (1967) 38 p. 84; *The Making of the English Working Class* (London, 1980) p. 442

<sup>509</sup> T.W. Laqueur, *Religion and Respectability* p. 61

<sup>510</sup> P.B. Cliff, *The Rise and Development of the Sunday School Movement in England 1780-1980* pp. 101, 105-6

<sup>511</sup> P.B. Cliff, *The Rise and Development of the Sunday School Movement in England 1780-1980* p. 44

scholars, and since the scholars were from the working class, it followed that the teachers were too.<sup>512</sup> There seems to be little evidence for this statement, especially before 1850, and one of the authorities cited by Laqueur in support of his argument seems to have said the exact opposite.<sup>513</sup> Dick also analysed Laqueur's interpretation of Sunday Schools as developing from within the working class, promoting working class needs and sustaining a working class culture. He claimed that for the period 1780 to 1833 this appeared to be a myth, with insufficient evidence to support the arguments.<sup>514</sup>

In the Warwickshire returns, some 388 places of worship included separate figures for Sunday scholars attending church, with the number of such scholars totalling 35,627.<sup>515</sup> The largest by some distance was at St Thomas's Parish Church in Birmingham with 635<sup>516</sup>, though five others had more than 400 scholars and a further eleven had 300 or more. The actual total is almost certainly greater than this as it seems likely that in many returns, in spite of the instruction to give separate figures for the General Congregation and Sunday School, the two were combined.<sup>517</sup>

In fact, in eight returns, the remarks indicate the presence of a Sunday School, even

---

<sup>512</sup> T.W. Laqueur, *Religion and Respectability* pp. 91-3

<sup>513</sup> P.B. Cliff, *The Rise and Development of the Sunday School Movement in England 1780-1980* p. 151

<sup>514</sup> M. Dick, 'The Myth of the Working-class Sunday School' *History of Education: Journal of the History of Education Society*, Vol. 9:1, pp. 27-41(1980)

<sup>515</sup> I have followed the example of Watts and Snell, who used the maximum attendance figure at each Sunday School.

<sup>516</sup> HO129.394.2.1.2

<sup>517</sup> Some commentators have avoided using numbers of Sunday scholars citing inconsistencies in responses (as in K. Tiller, (ed.), *Berkshire Religious Census 1851*). However, Snell devoted a whole chapter (9) in *Rival Jerusalems*, which is almost identical with his article 'The Sunday-School Movement in England and Wales: Child Labour, Denominational Control and Working-Class Culture', *Past & Present*, No. 164 (Aug., 1999), pp. 122-168

though no separate figure is given. Some refer to schoolrooms, others to where the scholars sit and when or how they attend. Another eighteen gave a figure for Sunday School attendance in the section for average but not for 30 March. These are generally fairly small, but would add 436 to the total. Nine returns stated clearly that there was no Sunday School, though in two of them, Ansty and Wyken their Sunday Scholars attended Shilton and Binley respectively.<sup>518</sup> At the Unitarian New Meeting House in Birmingham, 40 Charity School children were included in the return for Sunday Scholars<sup>519</sup>, while three returns mentioned dame schools. Haseley had a dame school but no Sunday School; Moreton Morrell had a Sunday School and a daily dame school, while the Vicar of Bulkington referred to several dame and night schools in his parish and ended his remarks by pointing out that “A government grant for our schools is badly wanted”.<sup>520</sup>

Although a fuller picture of Sunday School development in Warwickshire could be obtained by examining the data available in Sunday School records, such an investigation is beyond the scope of this thesis. But even the most pessimistic interpretation of the numbers in the Religious Census returns would indicate that only about 30 parishes (fewer than one in ten) had no Sunday School of any kind. Many of these were small parishes and it is not inconceivable that the few children living there attended Sunday School in an adjacent parish. In addition, there were a further half dozen parishes where the only evidence in the returns is of a

---

<sup>518</sup> Wyken (HO129.399.2.6.12) and Binley (HO129.399.2.8.15); Ansty (HO129.399.2.1.1) and Shilton (HO129.399.2.2.2)

<sup>519</sup> HO129.394.4.1.5

<sup>520</sup> HO129.403.1.4.4; HO129.404.1.1.1; HO129.398.1.7.19

Nonconformist Sunday School. What does seem clear, though, is that the Religious Census shows the extensive penetration of Sunday Schools into most of rural Warwickshire in addition to the major urban centres, and since these returns were compiled only 70 years post-Raikes, they could be interpreted as evidence of a success story rather than of failure.

In many of the returns, the numbers attending in the morning and the afternoon are either identical or very similar. Many commentators, including Watts and Snell have made the assumption that these represented the same people. This assumption presupposes that differences between morning and afternoon attendance can be explained in terms of small numbers attending only once instead of twice. However it is also possible that these could represent different groups, perhaps boys at one time and girls at the other, since in very few communities would the number of boys and girls be exactly equal.<sup>521</sup> The minister at the Unitarian's Old Meeting House wrote that "Only a portion of our Sunday Scholars can be accommodated each Sunday in the Meeting Room."<sup>522</sup> while other remarks in Birmingham (Cannon Street Particular Baptist, and Bradford Street and Belmont Row Wesleyan Methodist)<sup>523</sup> indicated that accommodation was limited for scholars attending the service and was only available for a proportion of the scholars at any one service. This would also explain identical numbers at different services, the number being determined by

---

<sup>521</sup> R.W. Ambler (ed.), *Lincolnshire Returns of the Census of Religious Worship, 1851* (p. liii) quoted a Lincolnshire rector who failed to make return to the Education Census for his "female school" because he was not supplied with a form, while M.A. Smith claimed that there is evidence that Sunday scholars, in particular, attended only once on Sunday, with some churches segregating on the basis of gender and others by age. (M.A. Smith, *Religion and Industrial Society* p. 250)

<sup>522</sup> H0129.394.5.1.9

<sup>523</sup> H0129.394.5.1.7, H0129.395.1.1.3, H0129.395.2.1.6

the available seating. It would also result in quite serious under-enumeration, compounded by the fact that, in many places, the Sunday Scholars recorded in the Religious Census were those who actually attended service. In some, such as the Church of the Saviour in Birmingham, “Sunday Scholars do not attend service in a body”<sup>524</sup> and thus were not recorded.

Of Anglican churches in Warwickshire 77% had a Sunday School – somewhat higher than Snell and Ell’s 72% in their fifteen selected counties<sup>525</sup> and significantly greater than Berkshire’s 65%. This may well relate to a higher degree of urbanisation in Warwickshire than in both Berkshire and Snell and Ell’s more rurally dominated sample. In addition, almost 60% of Nonconformist chapels and meeting places had Sunday scholars. Most numerous of these were the Baptists (82%) and the Independents (with 81%), while there were Sunday scholars in no fewer than seven out of the eight Unitarian places of worship. At the other extreme were the Roman Catholics with only eight Sunday schools in their 22 chapels, who perhaps had other ways of catechising and thus had little need of them. The Quakers had traditionally placed little importance on First Day schools, and so it is not surprising to find none in the county. There was also a relatively poor showing by the Wesleyan Methodists (55%) and Primitive Methodists (42%). This may have been due in part to the number of cottage meetings, especially in rural areas, where there was no facility for a Sunday School.

The early Sunday Schools served the whole local community, often with only weak links to a particular denomination. However, by 1851, this belief in non-

---

<sup>524</sup> HO129.394.1.1.5

<sup>525</sup> K.D.M. Snell and P.S. Ell, *Rival Jerusalems* p. 300

denominationalism had virtually disappeared and the Religious Census reveals a very close link between church or chapel and its Sunday School. In the Warwickshire returns, the only example of inter-denominationalism appears to have been in Welford, where the Registration Officer who completed the form for the Parish Church wrote: "The above scholars are taught by the Wesleyan Methodists in their Chapel and was returned at the time the Census was taken as their School. The Rev<sup>d</sup> Chas Davenport preaches a sermon and has a Collection for them in his Church once a year, and pays the amount over to the Wesleyan Teachers. They in return agree to teach the Church Catechism, and take them every Sabbath morning to his Church."<sup>526</sup>

The geographical distribution of scholars within the county reveals the relative lack of success of the urban churches compared with those in rural areas. The Birmingham conurbation contained more than half of the county's population, but it had only 38% of its scholars. There were 74,085 people (or almost 32% of the population) aged between five and nineteen<sup>527</sup>, of which the Sunday Schools were reaching 13,895. But the Parliamentary Report claimed that about three-quarters of those on the books of Sunday Schools attended every Sunday<sup>528</sup>, so the Census returns which showed just under 14,000 as a minimum would represent around 18,500 names in the register, in other words, the Sunday Schools were reaching barely a quarter of the five to nineteen age group. What is perhaps surprising is that

---

<sup>526</sup> HO129.404.4.5.8

<sup>527</sup> H. Mann, *Census of Great Britain, 1851. Population tables. II. Ages, civil condition, occupations, and birth-place of the people: with the numbers and ages of the blind, the deaf-and-dumb, and the inmates of workhouses, prisons, lunatic asylums, and hospitals. Vol. I.* p. 194

<sup>528</sup> H. Mann, *Census of Great Britain, 1851: Religious Worship, England and Wales* p. clxv. The problems of under-enumeration have been considered above.

in Birmingham, almost half of the scholars attended Anglican Sunday Schools, with the Old Dissenting denominations of Independents, Baptists and Unitarians, and the Wesleyan Methodists taking most of the rest. Elsewhere in the county, comparable figures show that there were almost 80,000 individuals in the five to nineteen age groups, the 22,078 recorded in the Religious Census, giving 29,437 (or 36.8%) in the registers.

Table 3.9 - Number of Sunday Scholars in Different Denominations

Denomination	Number of Scholars	Percentage	15 Counties (after Snell <sup>529</sup> )
Anglican	19,761	55.5	43.6
Independent	4,822	13.5	11.2
Baptist	3,500	9.8	8.6
Wesleyan Methodist	3,302	9.3	13.5
Primitive Methodist	922	2.6	4.2
Roman Catholic	630	1.8	
Unitarian	1,462	4.1	
Other	1,228	3.4	

Table 3.9 shows the dominance of Anglican Sunday Schools, mainly organised by the clergy and their families, especially wives and daughters. Old Dissenting denominations (especially the Independents) were seemingly more successful in Warwickshire than nationally, while the two principal Methodist connexions were less so. Snell pointed out that the Primitive Methodists, the most proletarian denomination, were almost negligible as a provider of Sunday Schools, and that although a stronger argument can be made for the other major Nonconformist denominations, their efforts did not match those of the Anglican Church.<sup>530</sup>

<sup>529</sup> K.D.M. Snell and P.S. Ell, *Rival Jerusalems* p. 298

<sup>530</sup> K.D.M. Snell and P.S. Ell, *Rival Jerusalems* p. 298

Moreover, the influence of the middle classes in the denominations of Old Dissent (and to a lesser extent the Wesleyan Methodists) might raise questions about how much influence the working classes had on the organisation of Sunday Schools. The two theories about the role of Sunday Schools in mid-nineteenth century England are not mutually exclusive and examples to support both can be found in Warwickshire. These reflect the diversity of socio-economic conditions in Warwickshire parishes; in the rural, mainly 'close' parishes of the Felden, where the influence of the landowner and clergyman, sometimes embodied in the same person, the 'squarson', was pre-eminent, the Sunday School, organised by the parson's wife and daughters was another element of social control, where as Dickens tells us, children were taught to pray that God would bless the squire and his relations and help them to know their proper stations.<sup>531</sup> Elsewhere, in the polynuclear, more 'open' parishes, and in towns large and small, Dissenters organised Sunday Schools for their own socio-economic classes.

## **Conclusion**

It remains to consider how the returns of the Religious Census shed light on religious diversity in mid-nineteenth century Warwickshire. No fewer than 23 Christian denominations are represented in these returns, plus two congregations which were declared to be non-sectarian and one Jewish community. In addition to the Established and the Roman Catholic Churches all the major denominations of Old Dissent are found, along with many of the 'recent' representatives of New Dissent, including seven different brands of Methodism.

---

<sup>531</sup> C. Dickens, *The Chimes, Second Quarter* (London, 1844)

Diversity can be seen within as well as between the denominations. The places of worship provided by these denominations displayed considerable variation. Those of the Church of England ranged from small parish churches such as those at Caldecote and Weddington, with 115 and 85 sittings respectively, but still able to accommodate every man woman and child of their respective 1851 populations of 105 and 54, to the vast edifices in Birmingham with room for congregations of 2,000 or more. In spite of the size of their churches, some of these urban parishes provided additional accommodation in schoolrooms. A similar variation in building size can be seen with the major Nonconformist groups, each of which provided large chapels in urban areas. In the villages, small chapels served established congregations, while more recent arrivals used domestic buildings, while harbouring hopes that they would be able to build more spacious accommodation in the future.<sup>532</sup> Within the buildings the space available and its use provided further evidence of diversity. As the analysis in this chapter shows, interpretation of the results of the Religious Census relating to free and appropriated sittings is fraught with difficulty due to differences in understanding of what information was required, particularly between those seats appropriated by custom and those for which rent was paid. Part of this was due to ambiguities in the instructions for completing the forms, while additional information was given by some respondents, who were perhaps trying to be helpful.

Although the information provided about the age of places of worship is of limited value, this chapter shows that it is still worthy of investigation by historians, not least

---

<sup>532</sup> George Warner, a travelling preacher at Southam Primitive Methodist Meeting Place wrote "Our place of worship is a dwelling house – But used exclusively for public worship. May God open the way for a more commodious house." (H0129.407.1.11.13)

because it gives clear indications of a wide diversity in the surroundings in which congregations met. The additional information supplied by some clergy is particularly useful here; those in Cubbington, Whitchurch, Temple Grafton, Erdington, Willoughby and Hatton<sup>533</sup> all indicated the date of pre-1800 buildings as some time between the twelfth and fifteenth centuries. Such surroundings must have created the impression of permanence summed up by the phrase “from time immemorial”. At the other extreme were buildings which had been built, or re-built so recently that the paint would have been scarcely dry.<sup>534</sup> The modern Anglican churches were indicative of the varied response to the demand for places of worship produced by early nineteenth century population growth. The variety of methods for funding these has already been considered in Chapter 2. The more recent Nonconformist chapels and meeting places showed the comparative ease or difficulty of the spread or development of the different denominations. The analysis of this development and its links with continuity of provision continues in Chapter 4.

Anglican clergy were not compelled to complete the section on Endowments and Income but many did. The responses indicated not only a wide variation in income sources, but also a considerable difference in income totals. This topic is investigated further in Chapter 5a which shows that the Religious Census can provide a starting point for the creation of a socio-economic profile of the Anglican clergy.

Individual congregations ranged in size from more than 2,000 at large Birmingham

---

<sup>533</sup> H0129.403.5.5.5; H0129.404.3.6.9; H0129.404.4.8.10; H0129.395.3.1.1; H0129.401.3.3.4 and H0129.403.1.5.5

<sup>534</sup> For example H0129.394.3.1.1; H0129.394.8.1.2; H0129.395.1.2.2; H0129.395.2.1.1; H0129.395.3.5.10 were all built in the 1840s in the Birmingham/Aston conurbation.

parish churches (sometimes including Sunday scholars) to tiny groups of Quakers and other Nonconformists, especially in rural areas, sometimes meeting in members' cottages. Differences in geographical distribution are apparent, regardless of the method used to calculate attendants from attendance figures and even allowing for inadequacies caused by methodological failings. This is further analysed in Chapter 4. Although the data regarding Sunday Schools is in many respects the least satisfactory, it is still possible to recognise the variety of provision and uneven distribution both across the county and within the different denominations.

The returns revealed evidence of the provision of worship at different times of the day in every possible combination, along with some provided alternately morning and afternoon. These were usually adjacent parishes served by a single clergyman who could provide for the needs of the entire parish at one time if the population were so minded. This was also the case in many of the parishes where the incumbent did single duty at the same time every Sunday.

Taken overall, the returns showed that there were marked differences in the religious experience on offer in rural and urban areas. The rural experience was, for many, very basic fare. In small rural parishes the sole provision was at a single parish church service, once a week, with limited education at Sunday School provided, perhaps, by the female members of the incumbent's family or that of the squire. Variety in the shape of some version of Nonconformity was available in a limited number of these parishes, probably catering also for surrounding villages. Otherwise those who sought an alternative to the Anglican monopoly would have had to walk to nearby towns, where provision was more varied. On the other hand, the urban

experience was based on a much wider variety of provision, all within close proximity. Even the smaller towns had more than one alternative to the established church, while at the apex of the urban hierarchy, the Birmingham-Aston conurbation had the widest selection on offer, including several denominations (such as the Methodist New Connexion, Countess of Huntingdon's Connexion, Welsh Calvinistic Methodist and Swedenborgians) which were unavailable elsewhere in the county.

Chapter 4  
Geographical Distribution of Denominations in  
Warwickshire

This chapter is concerned with showing the value of the Religious Census to illustrate the geography of religion in mid-nineteenth century Warwickshire. It attempts to answer a number of questions. The first is how far the major denominations reciprocated or undercut each other spatially. Some were found primarily in large urban centres, while others had more success in the countryside. In some rural parishes, more than one Nonconformist denomination had success and religious diversity was demonstrated by the larger amount of choice offered to worshippers. Elsewhere only one denomination had managed to survive in 1851 and in some cases this survival had been a struggle. The only ubiquitous denomination was the Church of England, being present by definition in rural and urban parishes throughout the county.

This leads to the second question – how far religious geography was influenced by the social controls exercised particularly through landowning patterns. This is especially important when considering the relationship between ‘close’ parishes and those with an Anglican ‘monopoly’, but is also relevant when considering seigneurial Catholicism and the link between the distribution of rural Roman Catholic chapels and the major Catholic landowners. The third question concerns the durability over time of the major Dissenting denominations, Protestant and Catholic. Consideration is given to some of them through denominational histories, while an attempt is made to paint an overall picture using the snapshots provided by the Warwick County Records, the Compton Census, *Evans List*, *Return of Papists* and the *State of*

*the Bishoprick of Worcester*,<sup>535</sup> with comparisons nationally using examples from Snell and Ell.<sup>536</sup>

---

<sup>535</sup> *Warwick County Records*, vol. 8, pp. xlix – cxxxviii; A. Whiteman (ed.), *The Compton Census of 1676* pp. 183-187, 449-453, 538-540; J. Evans, *John Evans List of Dissenting Congregations and Ministers, 1715-*; E. Worrall, *Return of Papists 1767* vol. 2; M. Ransome (ed.), *The State of the Bishoprick of Worcester 1782-1808*.

<sup>536</sup> K.D.M. Snell and P.S. Ell, *Rival Jerusalems* Chapter 8. This was developed from A. Crockett and K.D.M. Snell, 'From the 1676 Compton Census to the 1851 Census of Religious Worship: Religious Continuity or Discontinuity?' *Rural History*, 8, pp. 55-89 (April 1997).

## Church of England

Much of the Church of England's great effort during the early nineteenth century to recover lost ground was substantially based on the assumption that it was essential to provide church buildings and clergy in the new areas where people lived and that it would then follow that the buildings would be used and the clergy gainfully employed. The enlargement of the old and the provision of new churches had, by the end of the 1840s, gone far. With funds and direction partly from the centre (Church Building and Ecclesiastical Commissioners), partly from diocesan or single city initiatives, the supply of churches in some urban areas had been brought near enough to estimated potential demand. However, one of the conclusions to be drawn from the Religious Census was that the main reason the urban masses were not attending church was not because of a lack of accommodation.

In Warwickshire, the first half of the nineteenth century had seen 65 new or rebuilt churches and licensed schoolrooms (including two workhouse chapels). On 50 returns there is information of how the cost was defrayed; 28 were entirely by private or public subscription or benefaction. Only two were solely funded by Parliamentary Grant, with another three relying on the same source for the vast bulk of their funding. Other grants nationally came from the Church Building Commissioners and the Incorporated Church Building Society, while locally bodies such as the Birmingham Church Building Association, the Coventry Church Building Society, the Coventry Archdiaconal Society and the Diocesan Society all made financial contributions to the provision of increased church accommodation.<sup>537</sup> As to

---

<sup>537</sup> HO129.394.5.1.2; HO129.394.2.1.2; HO129.394.5.1.3; HO129.400.2.1.1; HO129.399.1.3.9; HO129.398.1.3.5

whether this was sufficient for the 'urban masses', it varied from parish to parish. In the Birmingham conurbation, the total attendance on Census Sunday at Anglican morning service (the largest of the three sessions) filled almost 65% of the available space, meaning one seat in three was empty. However, of the 29 Anglican churches, ten were more than 75% full, including four which were more than 90% full.

It can be argued that the Religious Census showed that by the middle of the nineteenth century the Church of England could no longer lay claim to being the 'national' Church. Legitimate religious pluralism had emerged in no small part due to the decline of established social systems and a transition to an open and more pluralistic society.<sup>538</sup> Yet as the Established Church, the Church of England still operated as a national body. But as the returns of the Religious Census demonstrate, it was also very much a local institution. In rural areas it remained as a social constant, providing rituals which marked significant points in human life as well as meeting educational needs and dispensing charity. The reduction of clerical pluralism and non-residence, along with some re-distribution of income made the rural Church a more efficient organisation. In urban areas reforms helped the Church respond to change which was occurring on an unprecedented scale by creating new parishes, building new churches and providing more clergy, though for many people, especially among the working classes this may have been too little, too late.

### **Nonconformity**

The geography of rural Nonconformity was somewhat different from that of the Established Church shown in Map 4. Some parishes had no Nonconformist chapels or meeting houses of any denomination, which meant that Dissenters living in those

---

<sup>538</sup> R. Brown, *Church and State in Modern Britain* pp. 468-471

parishes had no option but to travel into an adjacent parish (or even further afield) to worship, while some denominations were almost exclusively urban. In the case of Methodism in particular, its organisation not only transcended parish boundaries but also counties. Thus some Warwickshire chapels and societies were administered as part of circuits centred on Banbury, Chipping Norton, Daventry, Hinckley, Evesham and Dudley.

The first distribution to consider is that of the parishes where the Census of Religious Worship recorded no Nonconformist places of worship, shown in Map 4. These parishes, containing only an Anglican church (or two) formed an almost continuous band from north to south. This ran from Seckington and Shuttington on the Staffordshire border, to Little Compton and Great Wolford bordering Oxfordshire and Gloucestershire respectively. The line broadened especially along the Avon valley (from Church Lawford and Brownsover to Arrow and Dorsington) and westward into the Forest of Arden. There was a scattering of similar parishes on the eastern periphery, bordering Leicestershire and Northamptonshire and in the west was the apparent anomaly of Edgbaston.

This does not mean, however, that these parts of the county were an Anglican preserve. The Census of Religious Worship only tells us where Nonconformists worshipped, not where they lived and a close examination of Map 4 reveals the fact that Atherstone on Stour was the only parish which did not have at least one adjacent parish containing a Nonconformist place of worship, and even there, the inhabitants were probably no further than three miles from their nearest Nonconformist chapel or meeting place.

There were 212 rural parishes in Warwickshire nine of which had no place of worship at all. Of the 203 with at least one church, 112 had only one, a parish church, while Milverton, Stoneleigh, Arrow and Tanworth in Arden had two Anglican places of worship. In other words, in more than half of Warwickshire's rural parishes, it appears that the Established Church had a monopoly of places of worship in 1851. Beaudesert, Milverton and Wibtoft are the only parishes in this group which are impossible to designate as either 'open' or 'close' (see Map 3).<sup>539</sup> This leaves 93 'close' parishes and only 20 'open'. The 'close' parishes ranged in population size from Claverdon (710) and Keresley with Coundon (683) to Chadshunt (32) and Upper Shuckburgh (30). The much larger 'open' parishes, in contrast, ranged from Tanworth, Berkswell, Tredington and Balsall, all with more than 1,000 inhabitants to Chesterton (232) and Preston Baggot (219). As we have seen in Chapter 2 the ratio of 'close' to 'open' parishes in Warwickshire was not quite 2:1 (65.7% 'close'), so we would expect a similar proportion of 'close' to 'open' parishes with an Anglican monopoly. However, more than 80% of the 'monopoly' parishes were 'close' parishes, which indicates that there was a strong association between the 'close' parish and an Anglican monopoly. These include a swathe of parishes from Kinwarton, Arrow and Weethley in the west, skirting Stratford on Avon and Warwick, to Church Lawford and Brownsover in the east. One of the significant factors is that these tended to be parishes with smaller populations, but there is also strong evidence that the squire/parson influence was responsible for keeping out the Nonconformist places of worship. This can be seen by comparing Map 3 which shows 'open' and 'close' parishes with Map 4 which shows the distribution of parishes with

---

<sup>539</sup> The nature of 'close' and 'open' parishes and the application of these designations to Warwickshire parishes have been considered at length in Chapter 2.

and without Nonconformist places of worship. Throughout the first half of the nineteenth century, attempts had been made to establish Nonconformist congregations in many of these parishes. In Stoneleigh, for example, the Independents tried in the 1820s but they met with much opposition (including physical violence) and clerical magistrates offered no legal redress. At Ladbroke in 1835-6, the Independents held services, but the attendance was very small “the poor people being forced to keep away solely against their will, by the squire and parson”.<sup>540</sup>

The Census of Religious Worship recorded 310 non-Anglican places of worship, which are shown on Maps 5 to 11. Methodists of all kinds numbered 138 (44%), the vast majority (92) being Wesleyan (see Map 5), the secessions of 1835 and 1849-51 having had relatively little impact in Warwickshire. There were just 2 Wesleyan Methodist Association and 2 Wesleyan Reform Association chapels (see Map 7).<sup>541</sup> The largest group of non-Wesleyans were the Primitives (see Map 6), with 33 places of worship. The total was completed by three Methodist New Connexion, four Independent Methodists and one Welsh Calvinistic Methodist (also Map 7). Methodism in mid-nineteenth century Warwickshire therefore displayed considerable variety and diversity. Foremost was the number of branches found in the county. Although the vast majority were Wesleyan, no fewer than six other branches had at least one place of worship. There was also diversity in the nature and size of their places of worship, comprising as they did a mixture of purpose built chapels, large and small, as well as cottages and other unlicensed buildings. These

---

<sup>540</sup> J. Sibree and M. Caston, *Independency in Warwickshire*: p. 375

<sup>541</sup> The Wesleyan Reform Association originated from the Flysheet Controversy of 1847-51 and by the time the Religious Census was compiled, had not had much time to become established.

variations were reflected in an uneven distribution pattern across the county. Not only are there the expected contrasts between urban and rural areas, in part a product of their social and economic geography, but the Religious Census also reveals differences between towns and between different rural areas.

There were about 110 parishes where the Established Church had the company of (or direct competition from) Dissenters of one shade or another. Wesleyan Methodist chapels were found in 67 (or slightly fewer than two-thirds of them). A further nine had Primitive Methodists but no Wesleyans and yet another, Bourton on Dunsmore had only an Independent Methodist Chapel. At one extreme was Birmingham (with Aston) which, in addition to 16 Wesleyan and three Primitive Methodist Chapels, had all three of the county's chapels in the Methodist New Connexion, the sole Welsh Calvinistic Methodist, both of the Wesleyan Reform Association and one of the two Wesleyan Methodist Association chapels, the other being in Foleshill. In fact, of Foleshill's thirteen places of worship, no fewer than eight belonged to one branch of Methodism or another. This was in marked contrast to Coventry, where only two out of 19 places of worship were Methodist, and Warwick (with only one out of eight). Of the major centres of population outside Birmingham, Methodism appeared to struggle in Sutton Coldfield, Leamington and Stratford on Avon, where, as in Warwick, Anglicanism was particularly strong, and in Kenilworth which, though smaller, shared similarities with Coventry, where Old Dissent flourished alongside the Established Church. Methodism, however, took firmer root in the smaller industrial centres of the eastern coalfield. In addition to Foleshill there was strong representation in Atherstone (five out of twelve), Nuneaton (four out of eight), Bedworth and Rugby (each with three out of seven).

This indicates that Methodism had much more success in establishing itself in the expanding urban centres rather than in the older corporate towns. Overall, in the towns and cities, Wesleyan Methodists and Independents had almost equal numbers of chapels, but a comparison between Maps 5 and 8 reveals that the Wesleyans were stronger in the rural areas, a process made easier by the circuit system.

Wesleyan Methodism had been present in Warwickshire since the eighteenth century. Three chapels (Belmont Row, Aston, Cherry Street, Birmingham, and Hill at Sutton Coldfield) dated from before 1800, and in the first decade of the nineteenth century eight new chapels were opened, all of them in the south and east of the county. These were located in a mixture of large 'open' parishes - Harbury, Tysoe, Welford and Bidford, and smaller 'close' farming parishes – Long Compton, Shotteswell and Stourton (part of Whichford), along with the 'close', industrial parish of Chilvers Coton. The expansion of Wesleyanism as shown by chapel building was slow at first. A further eight chapels were constructed between 1810 and 1819, but thereafter there was a positive explosion – sixteen chapels in the 1820s, nineteen in the 1830s and the same number in the following decade. This involved consolidation in Birmingham, development in smaller towns such as Alcester and Rugby, and steady progress across the rural parishes. The building of chapels in Coventry and Warwick was delayed until the second half of the 1830s (by which time eight chapels had been built in Birmingham and Aston). This may well be explained by the fact that the older towns had already been 'colonised' by alternatives to the Church of England.

By 1851, 79 Wesleyan Methodist places of worship could be described as chapels, the remainder were mainly cottages, with the occasional service being held in other

licensed buildings, such as an almshouse in Aston. 88 of these places of worship have seating figures in the Religious Census, totalling 20,581. But the mean of 284 conceals the fact that the largest Birmingham churches have more than 1,000 seats (and in one case 1,500), while more than one third (mainly rural) have 100 seats or fewer and the median of 145 gives a slightly more realistic picture. It would seem unnecessary to attempt to amend the numbers of seats by adding the average (either mean or median) in each missing case. For two of the five we have no other information to help, but Allesley was described as “an ancient dwelling house” and had congregations of fifteen (morning) and twenty (evening), while Stretton on Fosse was also a dwelling house which managed to accommodate 53 at an evening service. It would be unreasonable to discount these sittings entirely, but it seems unlikely that any of these would accommodate comfortably more than 50 or 60, so adding about 300 more to the total number of Wesleyan sittings. Turning to attendances, the problem of missing figures is even greater.<sup>542</sup> For the Wesleyan Methodists as a whole, the recorded total of 19,247 should probably be increased by over 3,400. This would give a new total of 22,657, of which about 65% were in towns and 35% in rural areas, slightly different from the ratio of 75:25 for the county’s population as a whole.

The date of the first Primitive Methodist chapel in Warwickshire, at Long Lawford, was given as 1824, which reflects a remarkably rapid expansion from its North Staffordshire heartland and was contemporaneous with the arrival of Primitive

---

<sup>542</sup> In this analysis I have concentrated on total attendances in order to make comparisons between and within the different Dissenting denominations. To compensate for those chapels with no attendance figures (in the case of the Wesleyan Methodists, fourteen out of 93), I have taken the mean of those given and ascribed that figure to the missing chapels. By treating rural and urban Wesleyan Methodists as separate populations, total ‘estimated’ attendances fall by just 64.

Methodist missionaries at Witney, in Oxfordshire. One third of the places of worship were not separate buildings, most of them being cottages, though Clemens Street Chapel in Leamington was described as “a room (fitted up in chapel form) in the Temperance Hall.”<sup>543</sup> Moreover the date of the building was not given in one third of the entries. Of those which are given, it seems that fifteen of the 22 date from 1835 onwards, with the majority after 1840.

The geographical pattern of the Primitive Methodists, as Map 6 shows, was quite a distinctive one. Apart from those in the urban centres, there seem to be three main clusters of parishes where the Primitive Methodists had succeeded in establishing themselves. The largest was based on the eastern coalfield, primarily between Coventry and Nuneaton, where there were miners, stockings and ribbon weavers as well as farm labourers. The other two groups were in the agricultural (Felden) lands of the southeast. A linear group of parishes extended to the east of Leamington (Harbury, Southam, Napton on the Hill and Priors Marston) appear to have been served by itinerants from the major town, while a group of six parishes lie along the Oxfordshire border and may well have owed at least some of their success to the development of the Banbury circuit (formed in 1842) and whose influence in the 1850s stretched as far as Stratford upon Avon.

It has long been argued that the Primitive Methodists travelled in the wake of the Wesleyans, following them into villages where the way had been prepared for them. Tiller contested this view and showed that, in Oxfordshire at least, this was not the case.<sup>544</sup> She found that in almost three-quarters of the places where the Primitive

---

<sup>543</sup> HO129.403.2.1.13

<sup>544</sup> K. Tiller, ‘The desert begins to blossom’ p. 103.

Methodists had chapels or meetings, the Wesleyans did not. However, from Warwickshire in 1851 the orthodox view receives emphatic support. There were only nine parishes where Primitive Methodists were found and Wesleyans absent. In several of these, such as Avon Dassett, most of the surrounding parishes had an already established Wesleyan presence and in only three parishes (Harborough Magna, Exhall (near Coventry) and Napton on the Hill) were the Primitive Methodists the only Dissenting place of worship, filling in small gaps in the Wesleyan framework. Another long-held view is that Primitive Methodism was an overwhelmingly rural movement. Obelkevich provided good evidence for this in his analysis of South Lindsey<sup>545</sup> and Tiller found much in the Oxfordshire data to support this view.<sup>546</sup> But these two case studies are of predominantly rural counties. In Warwickshire, thirteen of the 33 (or 39%) Primitive Methodist places of worship were found in urban centres, a significant minority. The distribution of these is not without interest. Their three chapels in Birmingham and Aston, set against sixteen Wesleyan, fourteen Independents and ten Baptists was a relatively poor showing. In sixteen of the other seventeen towns, there were only seven chapels, the exception being Foleshill, which boasted three Primitive Methodist chapels among its eleven Nonconformist places of worship. Foleshill contained two extensive collieries (mining coal and ironstone) and a substantial proportion of its 7,810 inhabitants were employed in ribbon weaving. So it seems reasonable to conclude that Primitive Methodism struggled to establish itself in Birmingham and Coventry, where there were already significant numbers of other outlets for Nonconformity, and in the

---

<sup>545</sup> J. Obelkevich, 'Religion' pp. 238-56.

<sup>546</sup> K. Tiller, 'The desert begins to blossom' p. 103.

smaller market towns which did not have much of an industrial base but was relatively successful in gaining converts in the industrial and mining communities as well as those including poorer agricultural groups. When attendances are analysed a rather different picture emerges.<sup>547</sup> The thirteen 'urban' chapels had a total attendance on Census Sunday of 3,684, about a quarter more than the twenty 'rural' chapels' 2,723 (a significant difference of more than 900 worshippers). However, since by 1851 about 75% of the Warwickshire population lived in towns, it could be argued that urban Primitive Methodists, with only 57.5% of their attendances were under-performing in comparison with their rural counterparts. Alternatively it can be argued that with 42.5% of their attendances in the rural areas, Primitive Methodism can be regarded as a more rural denomination than their Wesleyan counterparts.

Primitive Methodist chapels could be found in nineteen rural parishes in Warwickshire. Seven of these (37%) could be described as 'close' parishes in terms of landownership, although in at least three of these (Monk's Kirby<sup>548</sup>, Newbold on Avon and Brailes) the parish had a scattered population and included several hamlets. This suggests that the Primitive Methodists had somewhat greater success in evangelising the 'close' parishes than their fellows did in Lincolnshire, where their 41 parishes included twelve 'close' (or 29%). In terms of population size, though, the smallest Warwickshire parish to house Primitive Methodists was Avon Dassett (population 307), which would be classed as a 'large' parish in Lincolnshire.

---

<sup>547</sup> In the case of the Primitive Methodists, nine out of 33 chapels gave no attendance figures. By treating rural and urban Primitive Methodists as separate populations, total 'estimated' attendances fall by about 100.

<sup>548</sup> Monk's Kirby was a large, polynuclear parish with almost 2,000 people. The Primitive Methodist chapel was located in the hamlet of Pailton, where could also be found a Particular Baptist chapel, an Israelite chapel and a Latter Day Saints meeting place.

Obelkevich's sample (from Lincoln and Horncastle) showed more Primitive Methodists in smaller parishes (fewer than 300 population) than larger.<sup>549</sup> This indicates that perhaps the Primitive Methodists were more successful in 'close' parishes in Warwickshire because these parishes were larger, with less intense social control. In other words, as indicated in Chapter 2, there is more to 'close' parishes than merely landownership.

Primitive Methodist chapels were generally quite small. The mean of all 33 was only 130 seats (median 100), but this included larger chapels in Birmingham, Coventry and Foleshill. Those in rural areas averaged barely 100 seats (median 75). Snell and Ell gave the mean size for all Primitive Methodist chapels as somewhat larger than the Warwickshire examples at 154 (median 124), and concluded that "this may have rendered Primitive Methodism a less visually impressive denomination compared to some others, but it probably both appealed to lower social classes and helped to avoid inflexibly high costs of maintenance and administration".<sup>550</sup> Flexibility also appeared in the variety of buildings used, including barns and cottages as well as formally designated chapels.<sup>551</sup> This reflects the greater area of both 'close' and 'open' parishes in Warwickshire compared with Lincolnshire discussed in Chapter 2.

A further significant feature of the distribution of Primitive Methodist chapels appears when this pattern is compared to that of the Baptist chapels. There were 43 parishes which had either a Baptist chapel (or chapels) or a Primitive Methodist

---

<sup>549</sup> J. Obelkevich, *Religion and rural society* p. 238.

<sup>550</sup> K.D.M. Snell and P.S. Ell, *Rival Jerusalems* p. 139

<sup>551</sup> Primitive Methodists in Priors Marston worshipped in a barn (HO129.407.1.17.25), while their friends in Avon Dassett and Southam met in cottages (HO129.163.3.4.19, HO129.407.1.11.13).

chapel. But only ten parishes had both, nine of these in the most populous urban centres and the tenth was the scattered multi-nuclear parish of Monk's Kirby. The likeliest explanation for this is that of the denominations of Old Dissent, the Baptists had greatest appeal to those in the lowest strata of society, as did the Primitive Methodists. Thus it perhaps made more sense for the Primitive Methodists to concentrate missionary efforts where the needs of the lowest classes were not being currently catered for by the Baptists.

The remaining five Methodist groups, the results of various secessions from 1797 to 1849-50 mustered a dozen places of worship between them, which are shown on Map 7. The largest in terms of sittings was the Methodist New Connexion, whose three chapels in Birmingham would seat nearly 1,400 people and had attendances at morning and evening services in excess of 500 each time. Although the Methodist New Connexion had a thriving circuit in Dudley to the west of Birmingham, it seems to have had no success in establishing itself elsewhere in Warwickshire. The same was true of the Wesleyan Reform Association, though being the result of a very recent schism (the Fly Sheet Controversy) this was more understandable. Their preaching room in Birmingham, used as an infant school on weekdays, had a congregation of 25 on Census Sunday, but as it had only just opened, no average could be given. The chapel at Nechells Green, in Aston, had been built in the previous year to accommodate 150 and attracted 100 in the morning and 130 in the evening. The Wesleyan Reformers are the likeliest group to have been under-

recorded, as they may have been meeting, maybe as classes, in informal buildings and not picked up by the Religious Census.<sup>552</sup>

The Wesleyan Methodist Association (dating from the 1835 secession) also had two chapels, its first having been established not in Birmingham, but in the Methodist hotbed in east Warwickshire, at Foleshill in 1837. This chapel had seating for 150 but on Census Sunday was less than half full at either service. Their much larger chapel in Birmingham (seating 600) was reopened on 30 March 1851, and not surprisingly had larger than average congregations, being almost full in the morning and completely full in the evening. Robson pointed out that the effect of these secessions, especially the most recent, caused the combined membership of the East and West Birmingham Wesleyan circuits, which had reached a peak of 3,665 in 1847 to have dropped to 2,490 by 1852, over 1,000 members having been lost since 1849. In the same period, the Primitive Methodists also lost almost a quarter of its 500 members, but membership of the Methodist New Connexion had grown slightly (from 247 to 271).<sup>553</sup>

---

<sup>552</sup> In his review of the present author's county transcription of the Warwickshire returns, Clive Field has suggested that Albion Wesleyan Methodist Chapel, Kenilworth (HO129.403.3.6.9) where the Remarks state "The Chapel belongs to the (Particular) Baptists but is lent to the Wesleyans for a short time." may in fact be a Wesleyan Reformers chapel. (*Wesley and Methodist Studies* Vol.8 No 1, (Pennsylvania 2016) p. 86.)

In private correspondence he offered two pieces of contextual information: (1) The advice given in the Reform newspaper (*The Wesleyan Times*, 24 March 1851, p. 189) was that chapels occupied by Reformers should be described as belonging to the Wesleyan Methodists ('we would not they should add any other distinctive appellation'), the addition of 'Reformer' only being recommended for Sunday schools and temporary places of worship.

(2) As late as 1873 the Wesleyan Chapel Committee cautioned: 'It must ... be borne in mind that when the religious worship census of 1851 was taken, many places of worship were included under the designation "Wesleyan Methodist", which did not actually belong to the connexion at that time, but were held by persons who had seceded in the troublous times immediately preceding ... ' (*Returns of accommodation provided in Wesleyan Methodist chapels and other preaching places, obtained by the Wesleyan Chapel Committee in pursuance of a minute of the Conference of 1873*, London: Wesleyan Conference Office, 1875, pp. vi-vii).

<sup>553</sup> G. Robson, *Dark Satanic Mills?* p. 97

The presence of Welsh Calvinistic Methodists, also in Birmingham, was one of the responses to the Welsh Nonconformist Diaspora postulated by Powell.<sup>554</sup> He found evidence for Welsh services in the 1820s at Bond Street Baptist Meeting House and Carr's Lane Independent chapel and an early venture at obtaining their own chapel was supported by the Welsh minister at the Countess of Huntingdon's chapel. The most positive stimulus came in 1832 with the influx of Welsh craftsmen from Anglesey and Caernarvonshire, who had been brought in to work the Anglesey marble used in the construction of Birmingham Town Hall. Of these 30 stonemasons and carpenters no fewer than 28 were Calvinistic Methodists (the other two being Independents). The continued survival of the denomination and its ability to construct a chapel was in no small measure due to help from outside – John Jones (Countess of Huntingdon's Connexion) and John Angell James (Carr's Lane) both taking a personal interest and offering financial assistance. They had met in a series of rooms, before obtaining land and building a chapel, which opened in 1842. But despite having a ninety-nine year lease, the chapel was compulsorily purchased by the London and North Western Railway Company within five years and a new chapel was built and opened in 1849. (The returns of the Birmingham Registration District reveal that this was a not uncommon occurrence. The Salem Calvinist Chapel was built in lieu of one called the Cave of Adullam; St Jude's Parish Church, Birmingham was a new Church under Sir Robert Peel's Act which replaced the schoolroom previously licensed, while Lady Huntingdon's Connexion, had no place of worship,

---

<sup>554</sup> W.E. Powell, 'The Contribution of the Welsh Nonconformist Diaspora in the West Midlands of England' in A.P.F. Sell, *Protestant Nonconformists and the West Midlands of England* (Keele, 1996), pp. 119-133.

their chapel having been taken down by the railway company in January of 1850 and was occupying the Oddfellows Hall on Sundays.)

The presence of Independent Methodists in Warwickshire is something of an enigma. Chronologically they were the second Methodist schismatic group after the Methodist New Connexion and were an association of early nineteenth century self-governed groups including Quaker Methodists (Warrington), Camp Meeting Methodists (some of whom became Primitive Methodists), Revivalists (Leeds), Tent Methodists (Manchester & Bristol), Magic Methodists of Delamere Forest, Bandroom Methodists of Manchester and Independent Methodists (Oldham).<sup>555</sup>

These groups began their association as early as 1805. The earliest churches had varied origins, some seceding from the Methodist New Connexion, some being expelled by the Wesleyan Methodists, while those in Oldham (the first to call themselves Independent Methodists) were ex-Anglicans.

As with all the other major secessions, the main issue of dispute was the question of ministerial supremacy. Following Quaker principles, the Independent Methodists had probably the most radical solution. "We set before the world a church in which there are no distinctions of ministers and laity. We discard the prefix 'Rev' and other clerical titles..."<sup>556</sup> This was the logical conclusion to the argument put forward by Peter Phillips of Warrington – one of founding fathers – "If it can be shown that a man's preaching is better because he is paid for doing it, I will admit my error."<sup>557</sup>

However, it can also be argued that the rejection of a paid ministry may be allied to

---

<sup>555</sup> The two standard works on Independent Methodists are J. Vickers, *History of Independent Methodism* (Bolton, 1920) and J. Dolan, *The Independent Methodists: A History* (Cambridge, 2005)

<sup>556</sup> J. Vickers, *History of Independent Methodism* p. 18.

<sup>557</sup> J. Vickers, *History of Independent Methodism* p. 13.

poverty of members.<sup>558</sup> They adopted a number of fundamental Methodist characteristics including Arminianism, Wesley's hymns, class and outdoor meetings. Where several societies existed in the same area, they followed the Methodist practice of joining together in circuits or districts to further the common cause, to exchange ministerial labour (preaching plans) and to assist each other financially. The growth in number of societies between 1818 and 1824 (including two of the Warwickshire chapels) has been attributed to the poverty brought about by the combination of increased bread prices due to the Corn Laws and the lowering of wages caused by a glut of labour. Among those who suffered greatly were handloom weavers of which east Warwickshire had many. The self-employed status of the weavers gave them a natural affinity with the local autonomy offered by Independent Methodism.<sup>559</sup> Further growth took place in the 1830s and 1840s. Some Wesleyan societies in financial straits left the original Connexion, while Revivalists and Gospel Pilgrims left the Primitive Methodist Connexion and affiliated to the Independent Methodists. Others favoured the political freedom allowed by the Independent Methodists.

The small Independent Methodist chapel in Bourton on Dunsmore<sup>560</sup> dated from 1822. It is the only Methodist chapel in this small 'close' parish, and was much better attended than the other Nonconformist chapel (that of the Particular Baptists) which although larger and older would normally muster only a dozen worshippers. The other three chapels are found in urban areas in the northeast of the county, one in

---

<sup>558</sup> J. Dolan, *The Independent Methodists: A History* p. 15.

<sup>559</sup> J. Dolan, *The Independent Methodists: A History* p. 42.

<sup>560</sup> HO129.401.3.8.13

Atherstone<sup>561</sup>, and two in outlying parts of Nuneaton parish at Tuttle Hill<sup>562</sup> and Stockingford, the latter having previously been a Revivalist chapel built in 1820.<sup>563</sup> Remarks on two of the returns indicate adherence to the Independent Methodist principles of no paid preachers and their presence in working class areas conforms to the pattern set in their heartland of industrial south Lancashire, where they tended to draw their support from the poorest sections of society.

The Countess of Huntingdon's Connexion derives its name from Selina, Countess of Huntingdon (1707 – 1791) who was greatly influenced by Wesley and especially Whitefield.<sup>564</sup> In the second half of the eighteenth century she opened chapels in various places, and even a college to train men for the ministry. Her Connexion might be regarded as a missionary association rather than a denominational body. It was her wish and arrangement that the prayers of the English Church should be read in her chapels and they were at first chiefly supplied by Anglican clergymen. "Nevertheless she cordially sympathised with and aided Christian effort wherever put forth and gladly availed herself of the services of faithful ministers of Christ, whatever their ecclesiastical predilections might be."<sup>565</sup> Consequently, by 1781 she felt forced to secede from the Church of England. Of the preachers associated with her, some ceased to preach in her chapels; some retained their livings but continued

---

<sup>561</sup> HO129.397.1.16.30

<sup>562</sup> HO129.398.1.3.10

<sup>563</sup> HO129.398.1.3.11. As late as 1846 there was an Independent Methodist chapel in Birmingham, which reported to the annual conference. F. White & Co. *Post Office Directory of Birmingham, Staffordshire & Worcestershire, 1850*, (Sheffield, 1850) p. 180, also listed this as a Free Gospel Church but it seems that the members had joined the Wesleyan Reformers by the time of the Religious Census.

<sup>564</sup> This section owes much to J.B. Figgis, *The Countess of Huntingdon and her Connexion* (London 1892)

<sup>565</sup> J.B. Figgis, *The Countess of Huntingdon and her Connexion* p. 33

to preach; some gave her full support and seceded also. These men began to ordain from the ranks of students, and these in turn ordained others to minister in the chapels, so that in time, men ordained by presbyters took the place of men ordained by bishops.<sup>566</sup> She also drew up her own Articles of Religion, based on the Thirty Nine Articles of the Established Church and generally maintained an independent stance between Church of England and Dissent.

In Warwickshire, the Countess of Huntingdon's Connexion was entirely urban, its two chapels being found in Birmingham, where the first chapel was built as early as 1743, and Leamington built in 1830, quite soon after this town began its spectacular growth as a resort for the respectable classes. These chapels provided 960 seats but the registrar states that the Leamington chapel was closed<sup>567</sup>, so the only valid attendances are the 420 across three services in Birmingham, held in the Oddfellows Hall, as their chapel had recently been demolished.

The Independents had 62 places of worship in Warwickshire in 1851 whose distribution is shown in Map 8. This was fewer than half the number of Methodist chapels and meetinghouses; the Wesleyans alone had exactly half as many again. In the Birmingham conurbation Independents and Wesleyans had the same number of chapels and the general pattern across urban Warwickshire was similar, though the Independents (along with the Baptists) made Coventry a stronghold of Old Dissent in which the Wesleyans had only limited success. In the rural areas the Independents had far fewer chapels. These tended to occur in clusters in the north and east of the county, for example around Polesworth, Nuneaton and to the east of Coventry, but

---

<sup>566</sup> J.B. Figgis, *The Countess of Huntingdon and her Connexion* pp. 47-48

<sup>567</sup> J. Sibree and M. Caston, included a description of Mill Street Chapel, in Leamington, even though it was not Congregational, and pointed out that the closure in 1851 was only temporary as it reopened in January 1852. *Independency in Warwickshire* p. 308

were widely scattered in the south and west. They were often close to large urban churches which supported rural chapels both financially and with preachers and teachers. The more scattered chapels often owed their origin to the presence of an individual with personal motives for setting up a chapel, though occasionally it was due to secession from another denomination.

In terms of sittings and attendances however, the Independents were actually the largest single Nonconformist denomination in Warwickshire, falling behind the Methodists only when the Primitives and others were added to the Wesleyan totals. Their 62 chapels had seating for more than 23,000 worshippers, almost 3,000 more than the Wesleyans. Four of these chapels had in excess of 1,000 seats and a further thirteen (all urban) would seat more than 500. In fact, the 37 chapels in towns had a mean capacity of nearly 500 seats, while the 25 rural chapels would seat on average over 200. Thus in both types of area, the Independents had larger premises than the Methodists.

Their attendances, too, were impressive. Only one chapel did not return figures for Census Sunday, so the recorded total attendances of just over 23,600 needs very little amendment. This is almost 1,000 more than the figure computed for the Wesleyans. The distribution of these worshippers between town and country (76% to 24%) almost exactly reflects the general distribution of population, which indicates firstly that the Independents had equal success in both types of area, and secondly, that they were more successful than the Methodists in attracting townspeople to Nonconformity, though their success may have been due in part to a longer period of activity. Individual congregations were equally noteworthy. John

Angell James attracted 1,630 for the evening service at Carr's Lane<sup>568</sup>, by some way the largest Dissenting congregation in Birmingham and exceeded by only three parish churches (St Thomas's and St Martin's at both morning and evening services and St George's in the morning)<sup>569</sup> and at the morning service at the Roman Catholic Cathedral.<sup>570</sup> Not one single Wesleyan congregation numbered close to half of that. In fact the only other two Dissenting congregations of more than 1,000 were at Ebenezer Independent Chapel and the non-sectarian Church of the Saviour presided over by the ex-Baptist, George Dawson.

Of the 59 chapels whose date of erection was given, twelve were built before 1800.<sup>571</sup> The early years of the nineteenth century saw very little new building; only six chapels were built between 1800 and 1819. However, the next three decades saw significant growth – thirteen new chapels in the 1820s and fourteen in each of the following two decades. This reflected, firstly, the expansion of population in the urban areas, especially in the conurbation, which had created a demand for more places of worship. However, in the rural areas, successful missionary activity led to new chapels, some of which may have replaced cottages which had previously been used, while some congregations, especially in rural areas, rebuilt their churches. A similar pattern emerged in towns, as in 1820 when Carr's Lane Chapel in Birmingham was erected on the site of a previous one.

---

<sup>568</sup> H0129.394.4.1.4

<sup>569</sup> H0129.394.2.1.2; H0129.394.3.1.3; H0129.394.8.1.1

<sup>570</sup> H0129.394.7.1.4

<sup>571</sup> The congregation at New Hall Street was in temporary accommodation, its chapel having been compulsorily purchased by the London and North Western Railway Company.

In 1851 almost a quarter of Warwickshire Independent chapels were located in the Birmingham conurbation.<sup>572</sup> Foremost of these was Carr's Lane, where 1,500 regularly congregated to hear John Angell James, one of the leading preachers of the period. The success of Carr's Lane had inspired the building of chapels in various parts of the district, including Lozells (Aston), Yardley (Worcestershire) and Minworth, while they supported a Town Missionary, first at Garrison Lane and then at its replacement in Palmer Street. Next in standing was Ebenezer in Steelhouse Lane (formerly in Livery Street), which boasted congregations in the morning in excess of 1,000 and in the evening of more than 500. Ebenezer also supported chapels in Bickenhill, Coleshill, Erdington and Solihull. The oldest chapel (Ebenezer) only dates from 1818, though Carr's Lane's earlier building, dated back to 1748. However, it has been claimed that Dissenters in Birmingham date back to at least 1643<sup>573</sup>, and that premises were licensed after the Restoration (as Birmingham was neither a borough nor a corporate town it did not come within the provisions and prohibitions of the Five Mile Act). The earliest records date from 1687 and meeting-houses were built early in the eighteenth century. However, when the congregations at the Old and New Meeting Houses embraced Unitarianism, a substantial proportion of the congregation seceded and formed Carr's Lane in 1748.

The impact of Birmingham Independents was seen in a number of places in the west of the county, most notably in Solihull, where after numerous unsuccessful attempts to introduce preaching had been made over many years, a chapel was built in 1825.

---

<sup>572</sup> This section owes a great deal to J. Sibree and M. Caston, *Independency in Warwickshire*

<sup>573</sup> J. A. James, *An Account of the Rise and Present State of the Various Denominations of Nonconformists in Birmingham* (1849) cited in J. Sibree and M. Caston, *Independency in Warwickshire* pp. 174ff

In the following decade the minister established chapels at Knowle, Hampton in Arden, Henley in Arden and Hockley, as well as ministering to congregations at Balsall Street and Shirley Street.<sup>574</sup> Unfortunately in the Religious Census no trace can be found of most of these, the only ones being recorded at Solihull, Knowle and Hampton in Arden.<sup>575</sup> Some groups appear to have had somewhat fragile foundations and their failure to appear in the Religious Census may well be due to their ephemeral nature, rather than omission by the enumerators, though the description by Sibree and Caston indicates that Hockley may have been missed.<sup>576</sup> Although it was only the second most populous urban centre in the county, Coventry may well have a better claim to be the oldest Nonconformist centre in Warwickshire. All the Independent chapels in Coventry and district can trace their roots, directly or indirectly back to Vicar Lane, established in 1724.<sup>577</sup> In the 1820s and 30s Vicar Lane opened chapels at Well Street in the city<sup>578</sup> and at Stoke and Potter's Green in neighbouring rural parishes.<sup>579</sup> Prior to that, in 1776, a secession from Vicar Lane resulted in West Orchard chapel being built.<sup>580</sup> That pattern of a town congregation supporting and nurturing village stations with itinerant preachers and Sunday School

---

<sup>574</sup> J. Sibree and M. Caston, *Independency in Warwickshire* pp. 331 -335

<sup>575</sup> HO129.402.1.3.10; HO129.402.2.1.7,;HO129.396.2.3.3

<sup>576</sup> J. Sibree and M. Caston, *Independency in Warwickshire* p. 331

<sup>577</sup> HO129.400.1.1.6

<sup>578</sup> HO129.400.2.1.3

<sup>579</sup> HO129.399.2.5.10; HO129.399.2.7.14

<sup>580</sup> HO129.400.2.1.5

teachers was repeated on a smaller scale throughout the county.<sup>581</sup> Comparison with *Independency in Warwickshire* allows us to place the 'snapshot' of the Religious Census within the process of continuous (or sometimes discontinuous) development over time, a process which is examined later in this chapter.

Independents in the towns could frequently trace their history back to the Great Ejection of 1662, when ministers who refused to accept the Act of Uniformity were deprived of their livings.<sup>582</sup> The Independents at Warwick, who numbered Lord Brooke among their number, dated back to before 1700.<sup>583</sup> They spawned Lowsonford (at Rowington<sup>584</sup>) and cared for Emscote<sup>585</sup> (though it had been built by Spencer Street, Leamington). Stratford upon Avon's Independents claimed descent from late sixteenth century Calvinists, built their chapel on Rother Street<sup>586</sup> in 1702 and had responsibility for stations such as Shottery and Wilmcote.<sup>587</sup> Two other towns which traced their first Nonconformist preachers to the 1662 ejections were Nuneaton and Bedworth both of which had Old Meeting Houses dating back to the early years of the eighteenth century.<sup>588</sup> The similarity does not end there. The

---

<sup>581</sup> Outlying villages where chapels were erected and served from Atherstone included Polesworth and Baddesley Ensor. Also in the same parish as Atherstone, the hamlet of Hartshill had seen preaching from Merevale in the 1790s leading to the building of a chapel in 1807. This congregation developed a small chapel at Ansley in the 1820s. Bedworth Independents also provided preachers for Bulkington, where a chapel was built in 1811.

<sup>582</sup> In the county of Warwick there were 35 clergymen ejected from their livings by the Act of Uniformity, five of whom afterwards conformed to the Church of England.

<sup>583</sup> HO129.403.4.1.4

<sup>584</sup> HO129.403.1.2.2

<sup>585</sup> HO129.403.4.2.10

<sup>586</sup> HO129.404.4.10.18

<sup>587</sup> HO129.404.3.2.5; HO129.405.2.3.5

<sup>588</sup> HO129.398.1.6.16; HO129.399.1.1.3

second chapel in each case was the result of a nineteenth-century secession from the Old Meeting House<sup>589</sup>, in 1815 and 1845 respectively.<sup>590</sup>

In Kenilworth the earliest Nonconformists were Presbyterians, but Independents became important in the early eighteenth century. The site of the Independent chapel at Abbey Hill<sup>591</sup> had previously been occupied by forerunners who had since moved into Arianism and Unitarianism. Atherstone's early Dissenters too were Presbyterians who morphed into Unitarians, though declining numbers led to closure of the Old Meeting House. The Independents, on the other hand, grew and opened a new chapel in the 1820s.<sup>592</sup> The period after 1848 however saw the secession of four deacons and a number of members who re-opened the Old Meeting House as a temporary place of worship.<sup>593</sup>

Two towns which present very different pictures of the development of urban congregationalism in mid-nineteenth century Warwickshire are Foleshill and Leamington. Foleshill, was another town from which the minister was ejected in 1662. It was a large scattered parish housing 7,810 people, many of its inhabitants being employed in ribbon weaving, due to its proximity to Coventry. From the early 1780s there had been open-air services held by preachers from Coventry, who followed this up with a Sunday School, cottage preaching and finally the building of a

---

<sup>589</sup> Long Compton (H0129.162.2.5.21) was unusual in that it originated in 1825 as the result of a secession from the Wesleyan Methodists. J. Sibree and M. Caston, *Independency in Warwickshire* pp. 316-317

<sup>590</sup> H0129.398.1.3.6; H0129.399.1.1.2

<sup>591</sup> H0129.403.3.6.13

<sup>592</sup> H0129.397.1.16.28; J. Sibree and M. Caston, *Independency in Warwickshire* pp. 240-241

<sup>593</sup> H0129.397.1.16.29

chapel (Little Heath) in 1795.<sup>594</sup> At first sight, Foleshill does not seem to be such a hive of activity for the Independents, its one chapel being heavily outnumbered by the eight of the Methodists. However, that one chapel contained more seats than all three Primitive Methodist put together and almost as many as the five Wesleyan Methodist chapels and Meeting Houses, highlighting the danger of using merely the number of chapels as an indicator of comparative strength of denominations. This may also reflect the fact that the Methodists were more successful in establishing close contact with the inhabitants of the individual hamlets, or that worshippers at Independent chapels were prepared to travel longer distances on a Sunday for worship and to meet less formally in houses during the week. In terms of attendances too, the Independents made a good showing. Boosted by an attendance of 154 Sunday Scholars at both morning and afternoon services, total attendances reached 1,278<sup>595</sup>, second only to the Baptists (2,241) and significantly greater than the Wesleyan Methodists' 1,075 and the Primitive Methodists' 817.

Congregationalism in Leamington began in the 1780s as a village outstation from Warwick, at a time when the population was around 300 souls. This developed into Spencer Street Chapel, built in 1826.<sup>596</sup> By 1851 Leamington had become a town of over 15,000 people, after having experienced rapid growth through the first half of the century. Its development as a spa was responsible for the in-migration and settlement of many of the more respectable classes who were attracted to

---

<sup>594</sup> HO129.399.1.4.14

<sup>595</sup> The Independent minister at Foleshill was one of many to comment on the impact of 'Mothering Sunday' on attendances, but one of the few who attempted to quantify it. "The Old Practice of making special visits on Mid Lent Sunday prevails in the locality which reduces our congregation at least 20%." (HO129.399.1.4.14)

<sup>596</sup> HO129.403.2.1.11

Congregationalism. The Independents' cause there flourished to the extent that the second chapel in the town was the result of a separation in response to population growth rather than theological or personal disagreement.<sup>597</sup> The main church also developed an outstation of its own (jointly with Warwick) at Ashorne<sup>598</sup> in Newbold Pacey parish, while the chapel at Bishops Itchington<sup>599</sup>, nominally ministered from Southam, was also supplied mainly from Leamington.

The influence of an individual, often a member of the local gentry, or even aristocracy, in the establishment or continued development of Independent chapels is a recurring theme. In addition to Lord Brooke in Warwick, Stretton under Fosse<sup>600</sup> a hamlet in the parish of Monks Kirby (five miles from Rugby and thus outside the limits of the 1665 Five Mile Act) grew in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries due to the support of the Earl of Denbigh at Newnham Padox. A parishioner in Marton heard Angell James preaching in Birmingham and was so affected that she licensed a house which became the centre of missionary activity in various of the surrounding villages and hamlets such as Birdingbury, Bascote, Grandborough and Stockton. A chapel in Marton opened in 1833 but declined in the 1840s and by the time of the Religious Census, the chapel had been taken over by the Primitive Methodists.<sup>601</sup> The chapel at Eatington dated from the beginning of the nineteenth century, when a local man who had been in business in Oxford, retired to

---

<sup>597</sup> HO129.403.2.1.10

<sup>598</sup> HO129.404.2.4.6

<sup>599</sup> HO129.407.1.5.6

<sup>600</sup> HO129.408.1.3.7

<sup>601</sup> HO129.401.3.10.18

his native village and set up a Congregational chapel.<sup>602</sup> In Rugby, the Independents cause was also intertwined with that of the Baptists, particularly in the form of Sir Egerton Leigh, local preacher and sometime Baptist pastor.<sup>603</sup> Leigh was among the local gentry to give support to Churchover where a chapel was developed in the 1820s, although preaching had been carried on there since the middle of the previous century. Revivalism in Atherstone after 1800 met with a good deal of persecution, but the cause of Dissent was supported from the Bench by Sir Roger Newdigate and by a local manufacturer through whose generosity a chapel had been built in 1792,<sup>604</sup> while a new one in North Street was opened in 1827.<sup>605</sup> This illustrates the point that a seigniorial arrangement was not universally Anglican friendly and hostile to Nonconformists.

However, in a similar manner, the opposition of an individual, often the local Anglican clergyman supported by the squire, could prevent the Nonconformists from establishing a worshipping community. In Solihull, attempts were made to procure a cottage to rent and use as a preaching room but they failed because the proprietor thought it would give offence to the Rector. In Long Itchington, too, Independents were faced with much local opposition. Allotments of land had been appropriated to the villagers, but if any of them attended the chapel, they were at once deprived of these privileges. There were several attempts to establish evangelical preaching by various Nonconformists in Stretton on Dunsmore but these ended in failure due to

---

<sup>602</sup> HO129.404.1.3.7

<sup>603</sup> Their joint chapel (HO129.401.1.15.24) was built as the result of a secession in 1848, but sadly only survived for seven years and was closed in 1855.

<sup>604</sup> J. Sibree and M. Caston, *Independency in Warwickshire* pp. 240-241

<sup>605</sup> HO129.397.1.16.28

much clerical opposition. In 1837, Independents from Coventry obtained a cottage for preaching, “but great opposition was exercised by the Puseyite vicar who employed every means to prevent the poor from attending the chapel and sending their children to the school.”<sup>606</sup> That, plus the establishment of a nunnery and Roman Catholic chapel at Princethorpe made it “impossible for sound, structural Protestantism to maintain its standing and after some years the chapel was closed.”<sup>607</sup>

Numerous other parishes also saw attempts by the Independents to establish congregations and chapels but with little lasting success. These included Allesley, Anstey and Shilton, Berkswell, Bubbenhall, Keresley, Ryton on Dunsmore, Maxstoke, Shustoke and Studley. In Wolvey, a preaching room had been set up in the early nineteenth century and a minister was appointed in 1824. But when another evangelical clergyman was appointed, the congregation “being not dissenters but absenters” returned to the Church of England and the private room was discontinued.<sup>608</sup> These examples of the difficulties faced by Nonconformists in establishing places of worship to expand the opportunities for Dissenters to meet near to their homes illustrate the variety of opposition and problems they faced in many parishes in the first half of the nineteenth century.

As Map 9 shows, the distribution of the 50 Baptist places of worship in Warwickshire in 1851 was very uneven. In the southwest, there was a cluster of seven parishes with chapels, whereas the southeast was completely barren. In spite of great efforts in the Southam area, the Religious Census showed that these parishes were part of a

---

<sup>606</sup> J. Sibree and M. Caston, *Independency in Warwickshire* p. 377

<sup>607</sup> J. Sibree and M. Caston, *Independency in Warwickshire* p. 378

<sup>608</sup> J. Sibree and M. Caston, *Independency in Warwickshire* pp. 415-416

region completely devoid of Baptist places of worship; both the Wesleyan and Primitive Methodists had greater success in these areas, but even that was limited. The two major strongholds were Birmingham and Coventry and the area to the east of it. Birmingham and Aston had no fewer than ten Baptist chapels of one kind or another, while an almost circular belt of twelve parishes to the east of Coventry, contained seventeen chapels in addition to the three in the city itself. Baptists were also found in the extreme northeast at Austrey and Polesworth. Slightly more than half of their places of worship were in towns, but in terms of recorded attendance, the imbalance was enormous. More than 80% of the worshippers attended the urban chapels, with those of the three largest Birmingham congregations alone (Mount Zion, Cannon Street and Circus) outnumbering those at the 24 rural chapels. Compared with the Primitive Methodists there were relatively few chapels which returned no figures (just four in rural areas, one of which had only weekday services, plus one in Sutton Coldfield). Total attendances (using the method outlined previously) have been calculated at 21,700, of which 17,744 were in the urban churches. Rural chapels and meetinghouses were generally smaller, averaging about 160, while those in towns would hold 500 on average and extended up to over 2,400 at Mount Zion, though this included standing room for nearly 700.

Baptists<sup>609</sup> had been active in Warwickshire since at least the middle of the seventeenth century. According to the Religious Census, the Baptist chapels at Alcester and Warwick both date from 1640<sup>610</sup>, though the existence of correspondence between English Baptists and Dutch Mennonites suggests that there

---

<sup>609</sup> This section owes a great deal to J.C.G. Binfield, *Pastors and People* (Coventry, 1984) and A. Betteridge, *Deep Roots, Living Branches*

<sup>610</sup> H0129.405.2.6.12, H0129.403.4.2.8

was a Baptist congregation in Coventry as early as 1626 while it has been claimed that evidence exists showing Baptists there in 1606.<sup>611</sup> There are some who suggest an even longer ancestry dating back to the Lollards of the late fourteenth century. “If there is anywhere in the Midlands where a link between Lollards and Baptists could ever be shown, it would be Coventry.”<sup>612</sup> Lollards appear in records in 1486 and again in 1511-12, and this heretical community appears to have had an offshoot of followers in Birmingham. In the sixteenth century there were active Puritans in a number of places in Warwickshire in addition to Coventry, including Southam and Warwick, while the Marprelate Tracts<sup>613</sup> were printed in Wolston. It should be remembered that most of these early Puritans remained Anglicans until the early years of the seventeenth century, when separatist meetings or conventicles began to be held. Except during the Commonwealth, these meetings were illegal until the Act of Toleration in 1689.

It appears that Warwickshire had congregations of both General Baptists and Particular Baptists from the mid-seventeenth century and that both groups engaged in church planting missionary activity, many developing from the General Baptist church at Coventry first mentioned in 1626. The churches in Warwick and Alcester were fully active by 1646, and both had conventicles in neighbouring villages. The eighteenth century saw a number of significant developments. In Birmingham, the

---

<sup>611</sup> J.C.G. Binfield, *Pastors and People* pp. 11-12

<sup>612</sup> A. Betteridge, *Deep Roots, Living Branches* p. 1.

<sup>613</sup> The seven anonymous pamphlets of Martin Marprelate were published on a secret printing press between 1588 and 1589 and argued for the abolition of Bishops and the setting up of a form of Presbyterianism in England. Discussed in some detail in A.N. Wilson, *The Elizabethans* (London, 2011) pp. 280-283.

Particular Baptists formed the Cannon Street Church in 1737<sup>614</sup>, while in 1784 the General Baptists of the New Connexion<sup>615</sup> opened their chapel in Lombard Street, Aston.<sup>616</sup>

Church planting was not always successful and some meetinghouses were never 'converted' into chapels. In some places, new chapels were built as a result of secession because of internal disputes within a local church and also to establish a presence in a newly settled area, especially in the towns. Bond Street, Birmingham<sup>617</sup> was an example of both, being set up in response to disagreement with the minister of Cannon Street in 1786 but opening a new chapel in the western part of the city, in the burgeoning residential area which catered for the workers in Boulton and Watts' Soho Factory and the workshops which developed around it.

The influence of individuals in the development of Baptist chapels can be seen especially in the eastern part of the county where the latter years of the eighteenth century were dominated by the Reverend Sir Egerton Leigh, a notable local Nonconformist. Initially he licensed houses in many villages surrounding his home, a number of which, such as Wolston and Dunchurch were subsequently converted into chapels.<sup>618</sup> To these can be added the chapels which Leigh had built in Rugby and

---

<sup>614</sup> H0129.394.5.1.7

<sup>615</sup> The New Connexion of General Baptists was formed in 1770 "to revive experimental religion or primitive Christianity in faith and practice." It was a child of the Methodist Revival and manifested two Methodist characteristics – strong evangelical zeal and strong corporate feeling. It was called "New Connexion" to differentiate it from old general Baptists who had virtually become Unitarian. (A.C. Underwood, *A History of English Baptists* (London, 1947) p. 153)

<sup>616</sup> H0129.395.1.1.6

<sup>617</sup> H0129.394.8.1.5

<sup>618</sup> H0129.401.1.3.6; H0129.401.3.1.2

Hillmorton.<sup>619</sup> Leigh's influence continued after his retirement as a pastor, when he was succeeded by one of his protégés<sup>620</sup>, while another became the first minister at Monks Kirby.<sup>621</sup>

The first half of the nineteenth century saw continued growth in Warwickshire by both General and Particular Baptists though it was neither continuous nor unreservedly successful.<sup>622</sup> Another individual who was important in successfully establishing a Baptist presence was found in the far north of Warwickshire, where several villages around Tamworth were newly entered by the New Connexion. John Barnes, a well-to-do Austrey sheep farmer had contact with the ministers at Castle Donington and Packington and preaching began in his wool room as early as 1802. His son, also John, was pastor from 1810 to 1852 (but only ordained in 1822). Austrey became a separate church in 1808 and a chapel was built in 1819.<sup>623</sup> Close connections were maintained with chapels in adjacent and nearby parishes such as Warton and Polesworth.<sup>624</sup>

Expansion in the period leading up to the Religious Census took place in Birmingham, which had four Baptist Chapels by 1815<sup>625</sup> and four more significant chapels were added by 1850<sup>626</sup> plus various mission rooms.<sup>627</sup> At Heneage Street, in Aston, schools

---

<sup>619</sup> HO129.401.1.15.25; HO129.401.2.12.19

<sup>620</sup> A. Betteridge, *Deep Roots, Living Branches* p. 105.

<sup>621</sup> HO129.408.1.1.4

<sup>622</sup> A. Betteridge, *Deep Roots, Living Branches* p. 118

<sup>623</sup> HO129.376.1.8.11

<sup>624</sup> HO129.397.1.6.11; HO129.397.1.6.14

<sup>625</sup> HO129.394.5.1.7; HO129.394.6.1.5; HO129.394.8.1.5; HO129.395.1.1.6

<sup>626</sup> HO129.394.3.1.4; HO129.394.8.1.7; HO129.394.9.1.2; HO129.395.2.1.4

were built in 1837 by Cannon Street (to celebrate their centenary) and a chapel opened in 1841 with Charles Roe as its first minister.<sup>628</sup> He invited a revivalist, then set up class or experience meetings and by 1851 had established 20 weekly services in private homes. When Roe left for the USA in 1851 the church had over 600 members and 1,200 children, adults and teachers in Sunday and day schools. The building had 1,175 seats and its evening congregation of 850 was the largest Baptist congregation in Birmingham at that time - a significant achievement by an individual in fifteen years.<sup>629</sup> In 1848 the People's Chapel<sup>630</sup> (and its Sunday School) was formed as the result of a secession from Newhall Street by Baptists who wanted to run a church on revolutionary principles which they thought would be more suitable for a crowded area without any local church life. These principles involved no paid minister, democratic elections for church offices, no seat rents, and no seat to seat collections. Thomas Cooper, Chartist turned General Baptist preacher, thought the church's designation 'a great title' which would require some living up to.<sup>631</sup>

From around the turn of the century, the most notable Baptist individual in Coventry was the minister at Cow Lane, Francis Franklin.<sup>632</sup> Many of the chapels in the surrounding settlements owed either their origin or their continuing existence to his efforts. Those which survived until the Religious Census included Attleborough,

---

<sup>627</sup> HO129.394.1.1.3; HO129.394.5.1.10

<sup>628</sup> HO129.395.2.1.4

<sup>629</sup> A. Betteridge, *Deep Roots, Living Branches* pp. 160, 164-167

<sup>630</sup> HO129.394.8.1.7

<sup>631</sup> cited in W.L. Burn, *The age of equipoise: a study of the mid-Victorian generation* (London, 1964) p. 273

<sup>632</sup> He was the model for Rufus Lyon, minister of the Independent Chapel in Malthouse Yard, Treby Magna in George Eliot's *Felix Holt the Radical* (London, 1866).

Draycote (Bourton on Dunsmore) and Ryton on Dunsmore.<sup>633</sup> Expansion also took place in and around the centre of Coventry, as Cow Lane reached out northwards. The Lenton's Lane area (Hawkesbury, but then called Wyken Square) housed coal miners as well as ribbon weavers. They established a Sunday school and the colliery built them a chapel in the Square in 1825. A new chapel was built on a fresh site in 1845.<sup>634</sup> Missionary work continued when three men from Lenton's Lane began meetings in Shilton in 1848 where subterfuge was necessary to thwart Anglican opposition when they wanted to purchase a better site.<sup>635</sup> Another example of the way in which opposition had to be circumvented can be found in Dunchurch, where the Baptists met in the house of Jeremiah Heath, a basket maker with osier beds nearby, whose livelihood depended on staying where he was. The Dunchurch 'parish authorities' (rector and churchwardens) threatened him with eviction and the demolition of his house which had been built on waste land 50 years earlier by his father. However, a well-wisher from Coventry gave land nearby, between Thurlaston and Dunchurch, and a chapel opened in 1823.<sup>636</sup>

Two further settlements are worthy of mention as they display some significant contrasts. In the early nineteenth century, Leamington Spa was developing rapidly as a holiday resort. To cater for some of its respectable inhabitants, Particular Baptists had moved there by 1827; services commenced in 1829 and a church started in 1830 (eight out of seventeen being former Warwick members). They met first in Grove

---

<sup>633</sup> HO129.398.1.3.12; HO129.401.3.8.14; HO129.401.3.12.22

<sup>634</sup> Lenton's Lane is called Sowe Baptist Chapel in the 1851 Religious Census (HO129.399.2.5.9)

<sup>635</sup> HO129.399.2.2.3

<sup>636</sup> HO129.401.3.1.2

Place, then in the ex-Wesleyan Methodist Chapel in Brunswick Street. In 1831 they built a chapel in Guy Street and finally, three years later opened one in Warwick Street.<sup>637</sup> From 1839 to 1857 the congregation was served by Octavius Winslow, one of the few Baptist ministers of the time to have a university degree.<sup>638</sup> In Foleshill, on the other hand, General Baptists opened a chapel in 1765.<sup>639</sup> This time the individual who played a major part in its development was of a more lowly background. John Cramp, son of another John, a deacon, was a Longford silk weaver with little education. He visited the minister at Castle Donington and returned to be Longford's minister from 1791 to 1827, though he was not formally recognised until 1806. The split in Longford which occurred in 1827 was due to a clash between leaders which led to Union Place being built.<sup>640</sup> However, this seems to have done the Baptist cause little harm, and the total attendance on Census Sunday at these two chapels exceeded the Wesleyan and Primitive Methodists combined by more than 300.

Another issue was that of secession, of which Coventry had two. The first lasted from 1820 to 1830 and the second led to formation of Little Zoar in 1850.<sup>641</sup> In Rugby, St John's (for Baptists and Independents) seceded when a group followed a failed candidate as new minister in 1848,<sup>642</sup> but died out in 1855,<sup>643</sup> while in Longford a split caused by personality clashes occurred in 1827, when Union Place

---

<sup>637</sup> HO129.403.2.1.8

<sup>638</sup> He features, along with other Nonconformist clergy in Chapter 5b.

<sup>639</sup> HO129.399.1.4.13

<sup>640</sup> HO129.399.1.4.22

<sup>641</sup> HO129.400.2.1.6

<sup>642</sup> HO129.401.1.15.24

<sup>643</sup> A. Betteridge, *Deep Roots, Living Branches* p. 185

separated from Salem. But probably the most significant breakaway occurred in Birmingham and was led by George Dawson. Dawson had an M.A. degree from Glasgow and began his ministry at Graham Street. However, as the congregation were unhappy with his leanings towards Arian ideas on the person of Christ, he seceded in 1846 and opened Church of the Saviour in 1847 as non-sectarian "United Christians".<sup>644</sup> In the Religious Census returns, his congregations were only exceeded in number by three Anglicans (St Thomas's, St Martin's and St George's) Carr's Lane Congregational, the Mormons in the evening and the Roman Catholics (where there were special services at St Chad's Cathedral). The major casualty in terms of attendance was Graham Street which lost significant numbers of people during the second half of the 1840s.

There were, according to the Religious Census, 589 places of religious worship in Warwickshire, including a synagogue. Having accounted for the Established Church and the principal denominations of Old and New Dissent (including all forms of Methodism), we are still left with 61 chapels and meetinghouses. These include Roman Catholics, who, although not generally considered as Nonconformists will be included here, though considered separately, for the sake of completeness. The remaining widely disparate group of Protestant Dissenters comprised eleven denominations or sects, and occupied 37 places of worship, which are shown in Map 10. With one exception, each of these groups had a place of worship in Birmingham and for some of them, all of their buildings were in either Birmingham itself or the conurbation. This is not surprising; such a dominant head of the settlement hierarchy was able to support the largest number and greatest variety of service

---

<sup>644</sup> H0129.394.1.1.5

activity and places of religious worship were no different from other service activity providers in this respect.

Of the 30 which returned figures, 12,984 sittings were provided, and the total attendance at services recorded was 10,150. Because of the nature of the groups involved it is difficult to amend these figures, but they represent a significant addition to the number of Nonconformists worshipping on 30 March 1851. The one exception to Birmingham's domination of these other denominations was the Moravian Church, which had its only chapel at Priors Marston, at the south-eastern edge of the county, in the charge of the minister of the mother church at Woodford cum Membris in Northamptonshire and whose 50 worshippers on Census Sunday morning almost half-filled the chapel which had been there since the beginning of the century.

The largest of these other groups in terms of buildings, was the Unitarians. They were an exclusively urban denomination – five of their chapels were in Birmingham, the others being in Coventry, Kenilworth and Warwick. Their chapels in the main were large, six of them seating in excess of 400 and only Kenilworth with a capacity of fewer than 100, while their congregations totalled more than 3,100. Apart from the Lawrence Street Mission Chapel, which was originally built by Southcottians, the others all have dates of building going back to the 1690s, though both the Old and New Meeting Houses had to be rebuilt after being destroyed in the Church and King riots of 1791. To these should probably be added the two Presbyterian Chapels in Birmingham and Alcester, the latter dating back to 1721, with another 1,200 sittings and attendances of 741 and 200 respectively.

The Quakers were the next largest in terms of returns, with seven meetinghouses. Their returns are the most confusing of any denomination. According to the Parliamentary Report of 1853, there were two meetings in Birmingham and two in Brailes, with one in each of Coventry, Warwick, Easington (near Stratford upon Avon), Radway and Shipston on Stour.<sup>645</sup> However, in Birmingham, Easington and Brailes, both entries have identical details in terms of location, the building's erection and congregation sizes on Census day, suggesting that there was only one meeting house in each of these locations. In each case, two forms were returned, completed by different individuals.<sup>646</sup> Although this duplication was recognised in the case of Easington, those of Birmingham and Brailes were double counted in the official reports. This confusion may have arisen because the Quakers were allowed to return a copy to the Friends' Meeting House in London to be kept for their own records. The upshot is that instead of having a relatively modest attendance on Census Sunday of 965, the reality was an even more modest attendance of 537. Isichei<sup>647</sup> linked Warwickshire to Gloucestershire and Oxfordshire on the strength of the large meetings at Bristol and Birmingham and her map showing the distribution of the Society of Friends in 1851 proportionate to the general population shows the three counties as among the eight or nine with the highest concentration at 1 in 800

---

<sup>645</sup> H. Mann, *Census of Great Britain, 1851: Religious Worship, England and Wales* and accepted (in error) by E.A. Isichei, *Victorian Quakers* (London, 1970) pp. 168ff

<sup>646</sup> In the case of the Birmingham Meeting, John Cadbury claimed that he was "appointed by the Society to attend to this duty", which he did on the standard non-Anglican form on Census Sunday. His fellow tea and coffee dealer, William Nutter, returned Quaker forms to the Friends Meeting House (on 9<sup>th</sup> April) and to the Census Office 3 days later. He also countersigned "for Warwickshire North Monthly Meeting, William Nutter, Clerk" on the returned Quaker forms to the Friends Meeting House for Coventry, Stourbridge and Warwick.

<sup>647</sup> E.A. Isichei, *Victorian Quakers* pp. 169-171

or over.<sup>648</sup> Using the county population total in the Parliamentary Report along with its figure of 598 for morning attendance, gives a proportion of 1 in 796, just inside the boundary for the highest concentration. But when the double counting is taken into consideration, this ratio leaps to 1 in 1381 and drops Warwickshire well into the 'second tier', along with sixteen other counties. Nevertheless, her identification of the most important difference being between urban and rural areas (nearly all Warwickshire's Quakers lived in Birmingham) and the recognition that many meetinghouses in country areas were deserted or almost empty remain valid and are supported by the Warwickshire returns. Evidence of their declining numbers in Warwickshire can be seen in the return for Radway which gave no information. According to Stell<sup>649</sup>, meetings at Radway ceased in 1851, which followed the closure of Sutton Coldfield and Long Compton in about 1830, Atherstone in 1846 and Baddesley Ensor a year later.<sup>650</sup> Isichei also pointed out that "the importance of Quakers in Victorian England and the impact they made on contemporaries was quite disproportionate to their numbers."<sup>651</sup>

Next in order of size was the Church of Jesus Christ of the Latter Day Saints, or Mormons, whose missionary activity began in England in 1837. However, according to Allen and Thorp's denominational account<sup>652</sup>, the most historically significant

---

<sup>648</sup> E.A. Isichei, *Victorian Quakers* p. 170

<sup>649</sup> C. Stell, *An inventory of Nonconformist chapels and meeting-houses in central England* pp. 225-243

<sup>650</sup> W. White, *Friends in Warwickshire in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries* (Birmingham, 1873) (*frontispiece*) has a map showing that meetinghouses had also existed in Berkswell (closed 1783), Harbury (closed 1795), Wigginshill (closed 1800), Henley in Arden (closed 1800), Grendon (closed 1821) and Hartshill (closed 1838).

<sup>651</sup> E.A. Isichei, *Victorian Quakers* p. xix.

<sup>652</sup> J.B. Allen and M.R. Thorp, 'The Mission of the Twelve to England 1840-1: Mormon Apostles and the Working Classes' (*BYU Studies* Vol. 15:4, Summer 1975) pp. 499ff

boost to that activity came in 1840-1 when the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles was sent from America to take charge of the work. By the time they left England in April 1841, they had not only personally baptised hundreds of people, but had established an effective missionary system that would soon become the most productive in the Mormon Church. In the 1840s, more than 34,000 were baptized and in the following decade a further 43,000.<sup>653</sup> Recruited largely from among working classes, many of these Mormon converts were already actively seeking a religious faith that would speak more to their fundamentalist and democratic inclinations than the Established Church and had joined various sects in their quest for religious truth. Some were converted directly from Primitive Methodism, others came via sects like the “United Brethren” in Gloucestershire, which had broken away from the Primitive Methodists, before finding their spiritual home with the Mormons.

The Apostles came into a country which was experiencing great economic difficulty. The early 1840s saw industry stagnating, and unemployment was high, especially among working classes in manufacturing districts. Although in the long run the middle years of the nineteenth century saw economic prosperity even for the working classes, the depression of the early 1840s saw many of them sink into destitution and suffer starvation. The depression naturally hit hardest among working classes of urban communities and it was from among these people that most Mormon converts came. Some came from rural communities, but relatively few were wealthy property owners. Allen and Thorpe argued that one reason for Mormon success in Britain was the failure of major religious bodies to attract

---

<sup>653</sup> Baptism and emigration statistics are taken from R.L. Evans, *A Century of Mormonism in Great Britain* (Deseret News Press, 1937) pp. 244-5.

working class converts, though this ignored the fact that in many areas, the working classes were Anglican. They claimed that even the Methodists, who had such success in the eighteenth century had, by early years of Victoria's reign, gained middle class respectability, which was true, and were no longer active in missionary work among the working classes, which was not. The appeal of Mormonism lay in a number of features, including lay ministry and Millennialism, the imminence of the Second Coming, which allowed them to interpret national and international economic and physical catastrophes as portents. "The apostles saw social turmoil as a sign of the times which foreshadowed the toppling of existing governments and the establishment of the reign of Christ."<sup>654</sup>

The Religious Census provides some support for their arguments. The six places of worship in Warwickshire provided in total almost 2,000 sittings, but 1,600 of these were in the Birmingham chapel and another 250 were in Coventry. Fillongley had a small purpose-built chapel but the remainder worshipped in rooms in dwelling houses, squeezing in up to 60 people. In terms of worshippers too, there is a marked imbalance between urban and rural. Of 2,101 attendances 1,865 were in Birmingham, a further 141 in Coventry, and the remaining 95 scattered between four fairly evenly spaced settlements, Fillongley (large, 'open' parish), Pailton (part of the large, 'close' but polynuclear parish of Monks Kirby), Welford (fairly large and 'open' parish) and Avon Dassett (small and 'close' parish, but where there was already a Primitive Methodist meeting place). The Mormon presence in the last three may be linked to the Primitive Methodists, from which the Mormons were known to recruit, and Welford is reasonably close to significant Mormon missionary

---

<sup>654</sup> J.B. Allen and M.R. Thorp, 'The Mission of the Twelve to England 1840-1' p. 513.

activity in the 1840s.<sup>655</sup> The strength of the Mormons in Birmingham caused great surprise to Gill, even though he only credited them with their morning attendance of 665. However, as he also pointed out that Birmingham was a town long known as a centre of Nonconformity, it probably should not have been quite so surprising.<sup>656</sup>

Of the remaining groups, the Catholic Apostolic Church claimed fellowship with all, but was acknowledged by none, asserting for itself, not exclusively, but jointly with others, the title of “The One Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church”, stressing their belief in a special mission to reunite “the scattered members of the one Body of Christ”.<sup>657</sup> They had chapels in Birmingham, Aston and Leamington, seating 630, with attendances of 273 spread over five services. Also in Birmingham, the Brethren attracted 45 (morning) and 55 (evening) to their meetings held in the ““British School” Room for Girls”, while the Swedenborgians New Jerusalem Church, which would seat 500, was almost full in the morning and just under half full in the evening.<sup>658</sup>

Two returns included the word “Israelite” in their designation. Christian Israelites [sic] in Birmingham had 23 worshippers, while the Israelites in Pailton had nine in the morning and eight in the afternoon.<sup>659</sup> Two returns were made by “Calvinists” but it can be argued that neither is relevant. The Salem Calvinist Chapel in Birmingham was unfinished on Census Sunday, so the Trustees ignored the request for information

---

<sup>655</sup> R.L. Evans, *A Century of Mormonism in Great Britain* p. 114

<sup>656</sup> C. Gill, *History of Birmingham Vol. 1* p. 374

<sup>657</sup> F.V. Woodhouse, *The Census and the Catholic Apostolic Church* (London: Thomas Bosworth, 1854)

<sup>658</sup> H0129.394.5.1.4; H0129.394.8.1.3

<sup>659</sup> H0129.394.6.1.4; H0129.408.1.2.5

until they received a further request later in the year. Vicar Lane Calvinist Chapel in Coventry appears on an unsigned information sheet dated 7<sup>th</sup> August 1852, with no attendance information and seating figures which are suspiciously similar to those of Vicar Lane Independent Chapel.<sup>660</sup>

Finally two returns are for congregations claiming to be non-sectarian. These illustrate contrasts which typified mid-nineteenth century Nonconformity. At one extreme was the Church of the Saviour in Birmingham, set up in 1847 by George Dawson when he left Mount Zion Baptist Church for theological reasons. His supporters provided him with a 1,400-seat chapel to which up to 1,000 thronged to morning and evening services.<sup>661</sup> At the other end of the scale was the Harbury Railway Mission Chapel<sup>662</sup>, with no services on 30 March, but with an average of 25 attending morning services at this chapel “not connected with any religious denomination but is supplied by Mr Peto for the benefit of the men employed in the brickworks” and ministered to by the Railway Missionary, who was also minister at Southam Independent Chapel.<sup>663</sup>

### **Denominational Reciprocity or Complementarity**

In attempting to assess the nature and degree of reciprocity or complementarity in Warwickshire Nonconformity, it is necessary to examine the claims Tillyard made.<sup>664</sup>

He concluded that the older Dissenting groups were strong where the Church of England was strong, while Methodism complemented the other, older

---

<sup>660</sup> HO129.394.1.1.9; HO129.400.1.1.14; HO129.400.1.1.6

<sup>661</sup> HO129.394.1.1.5

<sup>662</sup> HO129.407.1.9.10

<sup>663</sup> HO129.407.1.11.14

<sup>664</sup> F. Tillyard, ‘The Distribution of the Free Churches in England’

Nonconformist denominations and tended to be strongest where the others were weak. This was true in Warwickshire, as we have seen, to the extent that Methodism appeared to struggle in Sutton Coldfield, Leamington and Stratford on Avon, where, as in Warwick, Anglicanism was particularly strong, and in Kenilworth which, though smaller, shared similarities with Coventry, where Old Dissent flourished alongside the Established Church. The Independents (along with the Baptists) made Coventry a stronghold of Old Dissent in which the Wesleyans had only limited success. In the rural areas the Independents had far fewer chapels. These tended to occur in clusters in the north and east of the county, for example around Polesworth, Nuneaton and to the east of Coventry, but were widely scattered in the south and west. A comparison between the Primitive Methodists and Baptists reveals a similar pattern, only ten parishes having both, nine of these in the most populous urban centres and the tenth was the scattered polynuclear parish of Monk's Kirby.

Tillyard maintained that Old Dissent was better adapted to urban rather than rural conditions, and in particular to middle class urban congregations rather than working class industrial ones. But in Warwickshire, in the urban centres, Wesleyan Methodists and Independents had almost equal numbers of chapels. Moreover, the distribution of Independent worshippers between towns and country (76% to 24%) almost exactly reflects the general distribution of population, which indicates firstly that the Independents had equal success in both types of area, and secondly that, they were more successful than the Methodists in attracting townspeople to Nonconformity, though their success may have been due in part to improved practice over a longer period of activity. In terms of chapels and number of worshippers, the Unitarians were an exclusively urban denomination, while the

Quakers had almost reached the same point, the bulk of their members being found in Birmingham and Coventry.

Tillyard claimed that the Methodists found it easier to maintain chapels in villages, which were served by itinerant ministers from the towns. In support of this, a comparison between Maps 5 and 8 reveals that in Warwickshire, Wesleyan chapels were more commonly found in rural areas than Independents. This was particularly true in the parishes which were more remote from urban centres. Primitive Methodists, too, had strong representation in the agricultural (Felden) lands of the south east, especially among the poorer agricultural groups. Lovegrove<sup>665</sup> has argued that itinerancy, or village preaching, led to the development of a “chapel culture”, which was conscious of its Nonconformity rather than specific denominational allegiance. This was clearly reflected in the distribution of Warwickshire places of worship, and especially in the complementarity of the two principal denominations of Old Dissent - Independents and Baptists. In the urban areas, both of these groups had chapels, and in the case of the larger towns, more than one. But in the villages (and even some of the smaller towns) a very different pattern emerges. Seven of the smaller towns have either Independent or Baptist chapels (plus the shared chapel in Kineton), while in the rural areas there are 37 parishes with only one or other and only two parishes (Bedworth and Wolston) with both. In fact, 59 parishes had only one Nonconformist chapel or meeting place of any denomination, 17 had two, while just nine had three or more. In 32 of these the Wesleyan Methodists were the sole

---

<sup>665</sup> D.W. Lovegrove, *Established Church, Sectarian People*. p. 164

provider of a Protestant alternative to the Church of England, compared to 13 Independents, nine Baptists, four Primitive Methodists and one Quaker.

Finally, Tillyard suggested that the Methodists were also more successful than Old Dissent in establishing a base in many of the new industrial areas. Ward also suggested that itinerant preaching was less likely to meet hostility where workers were less dependent on agriculture, and thus on the influence of their social superiors. Hence the knitters, stockings and miners, being of a more independent nature, were more amenable to Nonconformist preaching.<sup>666</sup> This can be seen in Warwickshire where Methodism took firmer root in the smaller industrial centres of the eastern coalfield, where there were miners, stockings and ribbon weavers as well as farm labourers. In addition to Foleshill, where of thirteen places of worship, no fewer than eight belonged to one branch of Methodism or another, there was strong representation in Atherstone (five out of twelve), Nuneaton (four out of eight), Bedworth and Rugby (each with three out of seven).

### **Distribution of Roman Catholicism**

The geographical distribution of Roman Catholic places of worship shown in Map 11 reflects three strands in the development of Catholicism in Warwickshire - seigneurial, ecclesiastical and migrant. No fewer than nine traced their origins back to English gentry families who had stayed true to the 'Old Religion' from the Reformation onwards. This was the seigneurial Catholicism referred to in Chapter 2. Typically they originally maintained a room in part of the manor house or hall in

---

<sup>666</sup> W.R. Ward, *Religion and Society in England 1790 - 1850* (London, 1972) p.46

which mass was said, and the priest was a member of the family's payroll. Subsequently, in more peaceful times, a chapel may have been built alongside the house and opportunities for worship were extended to other inhabitants of the parish. Some of the oldest examples are at Brailes, Salford Priors and Coughton. At Brailes in 1726 the Bishop family added a Roman Catholic chapel on the upper floor of the manor house, while at around the same time, the Stanford family were converting the ground floor of the north range of Salford Priors into a chapel. Probably a century earlier, the Throckmortons at Coughton had built their chapel at the west end of the Hall. However, at Coughton, no more than a fifth of the population was given as Catholic in the 1670s. Bossy argued that since these figures came from the West Midlands they are likely to represent the greatest degree of landlord influence outside the North.<sup>667</sup>

Other noted recusant families included the Cannings at Foxcote (Ilmington) who used a room in the house before the chapel was built and the Ferrers at Baddesley Clinton who rebuilt the chapel alongside their manor house in the early nineteenth century. The chapel at Hampton on the Hill (in Budbrooke parish) had been built by the Dormer family and was given to the village by the tenth Baron when he succeeded in 1819. Though a Catholic, he conformed to the Church of England and took his seat in the House of Lords. At Wootton Wawen, a chapel at Wootton Hall was erected in 1813 by Dowager Lady Smythe, while thirty years later, Richard Brome Debary, the owner of Weston Hall near Bulkington built a chapel at his home to celebrate his conversion to Catholicism and the new one at Wappenbury, opened

---

<sup>667</sup> J. Bossy, *The English Catholic community, 1570-1850* (London, 1979) p. 177

in 1849, was built on a site given by the Lord of the Manor, Lord Clifford, the old chapel being converted into a house for the priest.

In Solihull, the manor had belonged to the Throckmortons until about 1620, when it passed to the non-Catholic Archer family. Thus by the 1670s it no longer had resident [Catholic] gentry and Solihull Catholics were no longer numerous in the Edgbaston register but by 1767, Solihull had its own priest – Henry Dixon, aged 40 and resident 12 years. The mission had a small endowment but the priest had to subsidise his ministry from his own resources. Solihull was a very small town in a parish of over 11,000 acres; even in 1811 the population of town and parish combined was still only 2,500. Most of the Catholics here were farmers and labourers and few of them lived in the little town. One of the few who did was Hugford Hassall, a scrivener, who came from a family of minor gentry and had several priests among his relatives. He was the benefactor who gave the land for the chapel in about 1760.<sup>668</sup>

Three more Roman Catholic chapels were attached to religious houses of varying dates. These formed part of the ecclesiastical response to the growth of Catholicism over the previous century and a half. At Coventry the chapel belonged to the early eighteenth century Franciscan mission, whose large congregations in 1851 reflected the influence of William Ullathorne, before he became Bishop of Birmingham.<sup>669</sup> St Mary's Priory, Princethorpe (in Stretton on Dunsmore parish) was founded in the late eighteenth century by nuns fleeing the French Revolution and their chapel was opened in 1837. In the same year the foundation stone of the Convent of the

---

<sup>668</sup> M.B. Rowlands (ed.), *English Catholics of parish and town, 1558-1778* (London, 1999) pp. 101, 320-1

<sup>669</sup> See J. Bossy, *The English Catholic community, 1570-1850* pp. 318-320

Dominican order dedicated to Our Lady of the Rosary was laid at Atherstone, the chapel being completed in 1841. One of the Aston chapels was attached to St Mary's College, Oscott, which had had Roman Catholic missions as early as the seventeenth century. In 1851 the congregation was described in great detail "... consists of the Inmates of the College – viz. Superiors 20, Students 87, Servants 16 & about 50 variable attendants, 123 + 50 = 173 total."<sup>670</sup> Another apparently 'urban' chapel was in the parish of Rugby, where a congregation had been set up in 1844 by the chaplain of Bilton Grange, whose tenant, John Washington Hibbert was related by marriage to the Roman Catholic Earls of Shrewsbury.

The rural chapels comprise almost half of all Roman Catholic places of worship in Warwickshire in 1851, and the survival of rural Catholicism through the lean years between the Reformation and the removal of legal and political disabilities from 1829 ensured that in the mid-nineteenth century, there was an strong element of English Catholicism to be added to the influx of Irish Catholics in the major urban centres. But in terms of numbers of worshippers, the urban Roman Catholics in the county outnumbered their rural counterparts by more than four to one. In addition to Coventry, whose friary was founded in the early 1700s, Birmingham's St Peter's Church dated back to 1786, a clear indication that English urban Catholics had existed long before the large-scale Irish immigration of the 1830s and 1840s swamped them. There had been a chapel alongside a convent in Masshouse Lane from 1687 but it was destroyed in 1688.<sup>671</sup>

---

<sup>670</sup> HO129.395.3.3.9

<sup>671</sup> M.B. Rowlands (ed.), *English Catholics of parish and town, 1558-1778* p. 73; M.A. Mullett, *Catholics in Britain and Ireland, 1558-1829* (Basingstoke, 1998) p. 81

Nevertheless, the development of Roman Catholic chapels by the mid-nineteenth century also recognized the influence of migrants. Champ pointed out that long before the Irish migration urban Catholics were well organized. “By the middle of the nineteenth century, the English entrepreneurs had usurped much of the power of the aristocratic families. The towns had replaced the landed estates as the hub of Catholic life, but in Birmingham it was an English, not an Irish hub.”<sup>672</sup> The Birmingham congregation, by all accounts, was a prosperous body containing a number of wealthy businessmen as well as working class Catholics. They built their first chapel (St Peter’s) in 1786 and the second (St Chad’s) in 1809, and by 1834, the number of English Catholics in Birmingham was given as about 1,000.<sup>673</sup> Birmingham did not receive as much Irish immigration during the nineteenth century as the northern industrial cities. According to Bossy, there seems to have been no Irish community there until about 1820, though by 1834 priests thought there were about 6,000 half of whom did not come to church.<sup>674</sup>

Despite their devotion, Irish Catholics were not universally welcomed inside their churches. MacRaild pointed out that mass Irish settlement often brought affluent, middle class English Catholics into contact with the proletarian Irish labourers and their families. He argued that this led to a kind of religious apartheid between the groups in terms of where they worshipped and who ministered to their needs citing as evidence the situation in Birmingham with St Chad’s, for a long time the ‘poor

---

<sup>672</sup> J.F. Champ, ‘Assimilation and Separation: The Catholic Revival in Birmingham c1650 – 1850’ (unpublished Ph.D. thesis, University of Birmingham, 1984)

<sup>673</sup> J. Bossy, *The English Catholic community, 1570-1850* p. 310

<sup>674</sup> J. Bossy, *The English Catholic community, 1570-1850* p. 310

Irish' chapel, and St Peter's providing for the 'better off English'. But in the 1840s Pugin preferred the site of St Chad's to build Birmingham's Catholic Cathedral which led to a striking cross migration, with the Irish moving to colonise St Peter's while English Catholics crossed to St Chad's Cathedral.<sup>675</sup>

In common with all major urban-industrial centres in the nineteenth century, Birmingham's population growth was the result of a combination of factors. Although a high birth rate and declining death rate would have led to an increasing rate of natural increase, this alone would have been insufficient to maintain the rate of population growth experienced throughout the century. The extra people therefore had to be in-migrants, some of whom travelled from distant parts of the kingdom, especially from Ireland in the 1830s and 1840s. But also important were the migrants who had travelled much shorter distances, in the case of Birmingham from the rest of Warwickshire and adjacent counties such as Worcestershire. It has been argued that many of these brought their rural religious practices with them<sup>676</sup> and this means that not all of Birmingham's mid-nineteenth century Catholics would have been Irish, but would have included some from surrounding villages. These poor English have been rather neglected, and although the Religious Census does not tell us about them, further research perhaps could.

In the Religious Census returns the most significant Roman Catholic congregations were found in the conurbation. Although in terms of seating capacity, St Osburgh's in Coventry was the largest (space for 1,800) and on Census Sunday recorded 2,200 worshippers at all services, the largest single congregation appears to have been the

---

<sup>675</sup> D.M. MacRaild, *Irish migrants in modern Britain, 1750-1922* (Basingstoke, 1999) p. 84

<sup>676</sup> I. Sellers, *Nineteenth-Century Nonconformity* p. 54

1,700 who packed St Chad's Cathedral. According to the officiating priest "The attendance on 30 March was above average owing to a particular reason -----."<sup>677</sup> The incumbent of St Peter's offered a further clue "A grand service in the Cathedral diminished our numbers today."<sup>678</sup> In fact, the Oratory recorded a larger total number of worshippers on that day, including 1,000 in the morning, though this was the total congregation at four masses.<sup>679</sup>

### **Denominational Continuity**

Sibree and Caston argued that Nonconformity's history can be "traced up to the period and labours of the immortal Wickliffe"<sup>680</sup> in the late fourteenth century. They claimed that Congregationalists existed in Coventry from the early seventeenth century<sup>681</sup>, though the oldest chapel recorded in the Religious Census, that of Vicar Lane, was only built in 1724.<sup>682</sup> Moreover, although our direct evidence from the fourteenth to the seventeenth century is fragmentary and continuity difficult to prove, Binfield has made out a persuasive case as far as the Baptists in Coventry are concerned, based on its economic and social development from the early Middle Ages onwards. He argued that a successful commercial and manufacturing town was bound to be socially unstable and that in an age when church and society were not to be separated, social instability presupposed spiritual instability. He claimed that

---

<sup>677</sup> HO129.394.7.1.4

<sup>678</sup> HO129.394.1.1.2

<sup>679</sup> HO129.395.1.1.5

<sup>680</sup> J. Sibree and M. Caston, *Independency in Warwickshire* p. 3

<sup>681</sup> J. Sibree and M. Caston, *Independency in Warwickshire* p. 48

<sup>682</sup> HO129.400.1.1.6

the energy and ability of merchants and industrialists to adapt to changing economic conditions, moving over three centuries from cloth production via hatting and knitwear, to ribbon weaving reflected the wider horizons of the commercial community. He contrasted their well-established, urban, capitalist society with the traditional pre-industrial society of Coventry's hinterland and thus found it unsurprising that Dissent had flourished and developed from Lollardy, through Puritanism, leading to the appearance of the Baptists.<sup>683</sup>

Furthermore, in assessing the effects of the Clarendon Code of 1662, Underwood made special reference to the fact that Coventry had a Baptist butcher, Thomas Hobson, "who must be displaced from the mayoralty".<sup>684</sup> Thus in spite of the legal disabilities imposed by this and other Acts of Parliament, Dissenters were politically very active in Coventry, where between 1662 and 1720, 33 Dissenters held municipal office, eleven of them as Mayor and in 1735, eleven of the Presbyterian Great Meeting's seventeen Trustees were members of the Council.

Snell considered the question of denominational continuity from the Compton Census to the Religious Census.<sup>685</sup> He began by addressing the most serious problem with the Compton Census, namely what was being enumerated. The intention was to count males and females over the age of sixteen. However, "some counted all heads of households, or all males or all men and women, while others tallied the entire population and still others may have adopted alternative criteria. In some

---

<sup>683</sup> J.C.G. Binfield, *Pastors and People* p. 15

<sup>684</sup> A.C. Underwood, *A History of English Baptists* p. 96

<sup>685</sup> K.D.M. Snell and P.S. Ell, *Rival Jerusalems* Chapter 8. This was developed from Crockett A. and Snell K.D.M. 'From the 1676 Compton Census to the 1851 Census of Religious Worship: Religious Continuity or Discontinuity?' *Rural History*, 8, pp. 55-89 (April 1997). The returns for Warwickshire parishes are found in A. Whiteman (ed.), *The Compton Census of 1676* pp. 183-187, 449-453, 538-540

cases it is not clear whether servants or lodgers were included. To compound this the first column of Compton data in some cases refers to inhabitants, in others to conformists”<sup>686</sup> However, it seems safe to assume that each incumbent would have applied the same criteria across all the categories he was returning figures for. Arkell claimed that in Warwickshire most returns were for adult males<sup>687</sup>, though in Barford one papist was a very old woman and in Idlicote two papists were “old maydes”<sup>688</sup>, while the return for Combroke recorded that an Anabaptist woman had been excommunicated. In eight parishes it was specifically mentioned that “inhabitants” had been returned, in Preston Bagot “Conformists 59 males and females”, while in Bidford, Whiteman claimed that “it can be seen that inhabitants were reported”.<sup>689</sup> In fact in the Warwickshire returns there are only four parishes (Newbold Pacey, Halford, Tredington and Whichford) which referred to counting males only. As a result of the enumeration difficulties, the safest way to deal with the numbers of Roman Catholics and Nonconformists seems to be as percentages.<sup>690</sup> The question of completeness did not feature significantly in Snell’s analysis of a dozen counties, but in Warwickshire at least seventeen parishes were omitted.<sup>691</sup> While some of these such as Compton Wynyates and Billesley were very small,

---

<sup>686</sup> K.D.M. Snell and P.S. Ell, *Rival Jerusalems* p. 233

<sup>687</sup> K. Schurer and T. Arkell (eds.), *Surveying the People the interpretation and use of document sources for the study of population in the later seventeenth century* (Oxford, 1992) p. 108

<sup>688</sup> A. Whiteman (ed.), *The Compton Census* pp. 184-5

<sup>689</sup> A. Whiteman (ed.), *The Compton Census* p. 185

<sup>690</sup> For Warwickshire as a whole, Whiteman seemed certain that Papists and Dissenters were included in the “conformists” column. A. Whiteman (ed.), *The Compton Census* pp. 172, 434-5

<sup>691</sup> Rowlands claimed that in the Lichfield diocese there 442 returns and 100 omissions (or 18.4%). The Worcester diocese was much more complete, with 255 returns and only 4 omissions (1.5%). *English Catholics of parish and town, 1558-1778* p. 82

others, such as Baddesley Clinton were significant centres of Catholic Nonconformity. Rowlands listed 22 rural parishes nationally which recorded most Roman Catholics. Of these, three were found in a small area of South West Warwickshire – Arrow (ranked 4<sup>th</sup> with 75 Papists), Coughton (ranked 8<sup>th</sup> with 67) and Bidford (ranked 11<sup>th</sup> with 61).<sup>692</sup> Rowlands also used the Edgbaston register as a document which was contemporaneous with the Compton Census to relate papists to priests and landlords. This showed that Franciscans were administering the sacraments to families from Solihull, Tanworth in Arden, Edgbaston and Birmingham. It seems possible that the priests were based at Baddesley Clinton and that Catholics were being visited rather than coming to a centre. Almost all the baptisms and marriages recorded were of common people living in farms, cottages and small towns and this was clearly reflected by the Compton Census.<sup>693</sup>

From the period between 1660 and 1851 there is a considerable amount of evidence for the existence in many areas of papists and Dissenters. Nationally these include the *Original Records of Nonconformity*<sup>694</sup> and the *Evans List*<sup>695</sup> for Dissenters and the *Return of Papists 1767*<sup>696</sup> for Roman Catholics. Among local records for the earliest part of this period are the presentments to Quarter Sessions<sup>697</sup>, while from the earliest part of the nineteenth century is a survey of the Worcester diocese which

---

<sup>692</sup> M.B. Rowlands (ed.), *English Catholics of parish and town, 1558-1778* p. 86. She also erroneously locates the Lancashire parish of Great Mitton in Warwickshire.

<sup>693</sup> M.B. Rowlands (ed.), *English Catholics of parish and town, 1558-1778* p. 91

<sup>694</sup> G.L. Turner (ed.), *Original records of early Nonconformity under persecution and indulgence* (London, 1911-14)

<sup>695</sup> J. Evans, *John Evans List of Dissenting Congregations and Ministers, 1715-29*

<sup>696</sup> E. Worrall, *Return of Papists 1767* vol. 2

<sup>697</sup> The Quarter Sessions records to 1696 have been printed as *Warwick County Records*, vols. 1-9. The relevant volumes for the period after 1660 are vols. 4-9.

included the Warwickshire deaneries of Kineton and Warwick.<sup>698</sup> A very extensive survey of documents relating to Dissenters was made in the 1950s as a supplement to the introduction to volume 8 of *Warwick County Records*.<sup>699</sup>

The Compton Census recorded 690 papists in 73 parishes. These were dominated by Arrow, Coughton, Bidford and Solihull, which contained 276 between them, while a further 42 were found in eight parishes adjacent to the first three<sup>700</sup>, meaning that this small corner of South West Warwickshire contained almost one-third of the county's recorded papists. In addition, another 35 were found in Brailes and eight other parishes<sup>701</sup> in the south east of the county. Worrall's 1767 list gave 82 parishes in Warwickshire which contained papists, slightly more than were returned in 1676, and with continuity apparent in 51 of the cases, though the other 31 included six which were omitted in the Compton Census. Of the 66 parishes in the deaneries of Kineton and Warwick, Ransome listed 34 with papists in 1808. Seven of these had no papists in the Compton Census and eight had none in the 1767 list, while four had none in either return. Although numerical analysis is impossible due to the different presentations of the statistics, it is still possible to make some assessment of continuity, since each of these collections of data refers to residents of parishes.

However, a major difficulty in comparing the geography of Roman Catholicism (and Nonconformity) found in the Compton Census and the Religious Census is that in 1676 people were recorded where they lived, but in 1851 they were recorded where

---

<sup>698</sup> M. Ransome (ed.), *The State of the Bishopruck of Worcester 1782-1808*.

<sup>699</sup> *Warwick County Records*, vol. 8, pp. xlix – cxxxviii

<sup>700</sup> Great Alne, Weethley, Wilmcote, Wixford, Haselor, Alcester, Stratford on Avon and Exhall.

<sup>701</sup> Ilmington, Halford, Idlicote, Cherington, Tysoe, Long Compton, Shipston on Stour and Whichford.

they worshipped. This led Snell to conclude that the Religious Census has “a tendency to spatially concentrate data”.<sup>702</sup> Thus, worshippers recorded in four or five parishes in 1676 would be found in only one (but at a higher level) in 1851. Snell illustrated this with the East Riding of Yorkshire, where of 43 parishes where papists had been reported in 1676, only three had Catholic congregations in 1851, “... a remarkable contraction, even after one has taken into consideration the contrasted nature of the two sources. It reinforces accounts which have stressed the decline of Catholicism in many rural parishes, especially during the eighteenth century.”<sup>703</sup> However, using the same methodology it is immediately apparent that the contraction in Warwickshire was much less severe. Of 73 parishes where Papists were reported in the Compton Census, no fewer than fourteen had Roman Catholic congregations in 1851, with three in Aston, two in Birmingham and Sutton Coldfield and one each in the other eleven, and of the eight parishes with congregations in 1851 but not 1676, three were among those omitted from the Compton Census (Baddelsey Clinton, Bulkington and Chilvers Coton), and two others, Atherstone and Leamington, had worshippers recorded in 1767. This apparent concentration of worshippers in 1851 was recognised at the time by at least one Warwickshire priest, James Duckett, of Brailes, who remarked that “The census of my congregation is about 400. They live in 16 parishes.”<sup>704</sup> Brailes had long been a stronghold of Roman Catholicism; the thirteen papists reported in 1676 had risen to 190 less than a century later, so it seems likely that at least half of Father Duckett’s congregation

---

<sup>702</sup> K.D.M. Snell and P.S. Ell, *Rival Jerusalems* p. 245

<sup>703</sup> K.D.M. Snell and P.S. Ell, *Rival Jerusalems* p. 256

<sup>704</sup> HO129.406.3.7.10

lived nearby. Some of the remainder would have travelled from Oxfordshire parishes, since Brailes is located on the county boundary, while of the Warwickshire parishes within five miles, Cherington with 25, Tysoe with 12 and Long Compton with 48 reported significant numbers of Catholics in 1767. Further study of the *List of Papists* indicates that Catholic numbers in other rural parts of the county also exhibited an increase during the eighteenth century, albeit not as rapid as that in the urban areas. Nevertheless for the county as a whole, comparison between the Compton Census and the Religious Census suggests that the number of Roman Catholics rose from 2% of the adult population in 1676 to 3.5% in 1851. If we try to convert these to actual numbers, two things must be borne in mind. In the first place, the population increase between 1676 and 1851 means that we are looking at a larger percentage of a very much larger number. Secondly, the Religious Census figure only reflects those who attended Mass on Census Sunday, to which should be added those who attended less frequently or not at all.

It is possible to find qualified support in Warwickshire for Snell's conclusions about Catholicism between 1676 and 1851. There is plenty of evidence of continuity and growth in the archetypical Catholic estate parishes, though the apparent spatial concentration of Catholicism seems to be due entirely to the difference in the nature of the sources. The emergence of large Catholic communities in the urban areas was, in part due to Irish immigration, to which can be attributed the major share of the increase in numbers thanks to the equally archetypical large families and higher birth rate.

The Compton Census returns for Warwickshire indicated that in excess of 5.1% of the adult population in 1676 were Nonconformists. This was above the national

average of 3.89% found by Snell<sup>705</sup>, but in line with Watts's estimate of 5.7% in the early eighteenth century<sup>706</sup>, and offers some support to the argument that the count included not only Baptists and Quakers, but also Presbyterians and Independents, who, in early eighteenth century Warwickshire comprised almost two-thirds of recorded Dissenters.<sup>707</sup> The Compton Census also records conventicles which were reported in existence in 1669, even though they may not have met in separate buildings until a later date. In Warwickshire there were about 40 of these groups, which formed the basis of most of the congregations found in *Evans List*, though these were found almost exclusively in the main towns and were primarily Presbyterian and Independent (Quaker Meetings were not recorded in *Evans List*).

Of the 66 parishes listed by Ransome<sup>708</sup> only twenty are listed as definitely containing no Dissenters of any kind, including Papist (three give no indication). With the exception of the somewhat surprisingly large parish of Wellesbourne (813 souls), all of these are small parishes; in 1808 the largest (Newbold Pacey) had 56 families, while in 1851 Lighthorne was the largest with 372 inhabitants. All but two are 'close' parishes and by 1851 all except three still had an Anglican 'monopoly'. Only 24 'Ransome' parishes contained Protestant Nonconformists (including Methodists at Stratford on Avon and Oxhill), which is little more than half of the 60% found in the Compton Census. Eighteen of these contained Nonconformists in both 1676 and

---

<sup>705</sup> K.D.M. Snell and P.S. Ell, *Rival Jerusalems* p. 265

<sup>706</sup> M.R. Watts, *The Dissenters Vol. 1 From the Reformation to the French Revolution* (Oxford, c1978) p. 509

<sup>707</sup> It has been argued that the Compton Census underestimated the number of Dissenters by excluding 'occasional conformists' as well as 'Church Papists'. See J.J. Hurwich, 'Dissent and Catholicism in English Society' pp. 29-31

<sup>708</sup> M. Ransome (ed.), *The State of the Bishoprick of Worcester 1782-1808*. pp. 160-214

1808, indicating the possibility of some degree of continuity. By 1851 there were Nonconformist chapels in all except five of the group of 24 Nonconformist parishes, three of which had no Compton Census Nonconformists and all had very small populations in 1808. The remaining 42 parishes contained no fewer than 24 which had Nonconformists in 1676 but not in 1808, suggesting a lack of continuity in these areas. Finally there were twenty parishes which in 1808 were recorded as having no Dissenters at all and these included no fewer than seventeen which possessed only an Anglican church in 1851. The parishes which seemingly had Nonconformist representation throughout the period were primarily large and urban – both Warwick parishes, Stratford on Avon, Shipston on Stour, Alcester and Studley – while those with little or no evidence of Dissent are, in the main, the ‘close’ parishes of the Felden.

Turning to the interaction between Roman Catholic and Protestant Nonconformist Dissent, Snell put forward two arguments. In areas noted for religious tolerance, both groups were likely to be found in close proximity.<sup>709</sup> On the other hand, mutual hostility would discourage them from locating in the same parish. Just over 60% of Compton parishes contained Nonconformists, both nationally and in Warwickshire. If there were no association between the groups, then that figure would be the same in both Papist and non-Papist parishes. Snell found that in fact, 72% of parishes with Papists also had Nonconformists, and in Warwickshire, the figure was even higher, at 77%. His statistical tests showed that whereas Papist strength was weaker in parishes with Nonconformists present, Nonconformist strength was unaffected by

---

<sup>709</sup> K.D.M. Snell and P.S. Ell, *Rival Jerusalems* p. 266

the presence of Papism.<sup>710</sup> This, too, is borne out in Warwickshire. In the rural areas, Roman Catholic strongholds such as Coughton, Baddesley Clinton, Wootton Wawen, Wappenbury and Budbrooke and their surrounding parishes had little or no competition from Nonconformists in either 1676 or 1851, suggesting that either mutual antipathy may have existed there or that there was simply no demand, as the Catholic landlords ensured that they had a predominantly Catholic tenantry. On the other hand areas where both Roman Catholics and Nonconformists could coexist included major urban areas such as Solihull, and polynuclear villages such as Bulkington, Ilmington and Salford Priors (with its Dissenters in the hamlet of Dunnington), areas, perhaps, of greater religious tolerance.

Thus there would seem to be support for Snell's overall conclusion that for Roman Catholicism there is fairly strong evidence for selective continuity. In Warwickshire this is particularly true where long-standing Catholic families had provided funds to support a priest and a place to worship for 200 years or more. For Protestant Nonconformism, however, there is slighter evidence for parochial continuity. Nevertheless, the Religious Census showed considerable diversity of provision in Warwickshire. While some Nonconformist groups remained static or declined numerically, others, both old and new, were rising to meet the challenge of providing opportunities for different types of religious experience across the county.

---

<sup>710</sup> K.D.M. Snell and P.S. Ell, *Rival Jerusalems* p. 267

## Chapter 5

### Social & Economic Characteristics of Warwickshire

#### Clergy and Lay Nonconformists

## Introduction

This chapter investigates two questions to which the returns of the Religious Census provide a starting point. The first part considers an important aspect of the question of how far the Church of England had responded to the criticisms of the Hanoverian Church and the legislation of the early nineteenth century. Having examined the provision of worship in Chapter 3, I now turn to the issue of clerical abuses, by attempting to create a socio-economic profile of the Warwickshire clergy. This demonstrates the potential of the Religious Census as a gateway for the examination of various aspects of clergy life using additional contemporary sources via nominal record linkage. Sources used include: the 1851 Population Census, the Clergy Lists for 1850-1852, Oxford & Cambridge University Alumni Lists, the Clergy of the Church of England Database (although this ends in 1835), Crockford's *Clerical Directory* (although this doesn't start until 1860), and White's *Directory of Warwickshire 1850*.<sup>711</sup> These were used to provide evidence about: age (Population Census), birthplace (Population Census), household size (Population Census), education and qualifications (Clergy List, Religious Census and Alumni Lists), marital status and family size (Population Census), family background (Alumni Lists) (including squarson (clergyman magistrate) (White's *Directory*) endowment and clergy income

---

<sup>711</sup> TNA HO 107 *Census Returns of England and Wales, 1851*; *The Clergy of the Church of England Database 1540-1835* <<http://www.theclergydatabase.org.uk>>; *The Clergy List for 1850, 1851, 1852* (London); J. Venn and J.A. Venn, *Alumni cantabrigienses: a biographical list of all known students, graduates and holders of office at the University of Cambridge, from the earliest times to 1900* (Bristol, 2001); J. Foster, *Alumni Oxonienses: the members of the University of Oxford, 1715-1886* (Bristol, 2000); *Crockford's Clerical Directory* (London, 1858- ); F. White & Co., *Gazetteer and Directory of Warwickshire*

(Clergy List and Religious Census), pluralism (Clergy List and Religious Census), nature of benefice and patronage (Clergy List).

The second part of the chapter considers Nonconformity using the names of the signatories on the Nonconformist returns to consider whether or not the returns of the Religious Census provide evidence of social and economic differences between the different Nonconformist denominations. I investigate some aspects of the social and economic life of the Nonconformist clergy, principally using data from the Population Census. Almost all of the names of laymen in the returns have been identified in the 1851 Population Census and often in trade directories and an attempt has been made to group them using Armstrong's classification.<sup>712</sup>

---

<sup>712</sup> W.A. Armstrong, 'The use of information about occupation' in E.A. Wrigley (ed.), *Nineteenth-Century Society* (Cambridge, 1972) p. 205 and Appendix A, pp. 215-223

### a. Socio-economic Profile of Anglican Clergy

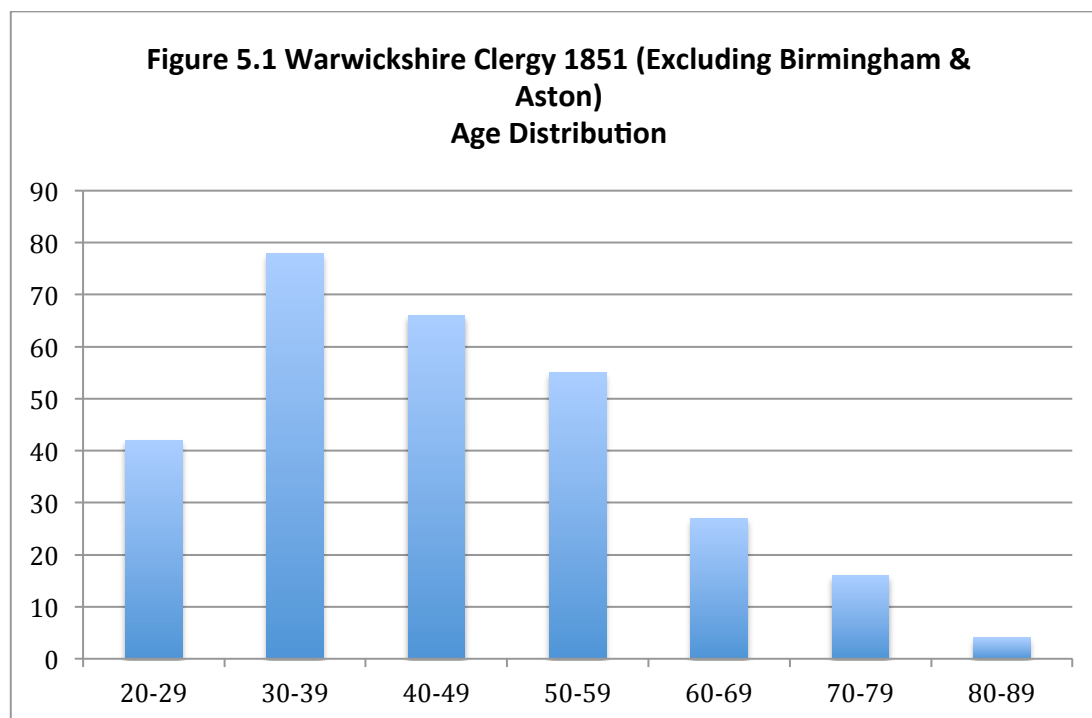
The Religious Census returns reveal the identity of many Anglican clergy who were either incumbents or stipendiary curates of the churches whose forms they completed. This provided a starting point for an exercise in nominal record linkage which involved the use of contemporary or near contemporary sources such as the Clergy List which was initially used to help decipher names, but also provided invaluable additional information about individuals and their posts, as well as details about livings such as nature of benefice, value and patron. Information about qualifications was given only rarely, both in the Religious Census and the Clergy List, so it was necessary to check the Alumni Lists for Cambridge and Oxford Universities (Venn and Foster)<sup>713</sup>, as well as the Church of England Database and *Crockford's Clerical Directory*. Venn and Foster also provide other biographical material. The final piece of the jigsaw came from the 1851 Population Census, which furnished household details, including places of birth.

---

<sup>713</sup> J. Venn and J.A. Venn, *Alumni cantabrigienses*; J. Foster, *Alumni Oxonienses*:

## Age

The age profile of the Warwickshire clergy, excluding Birmingham and Aston is shown in Figure 5.1 below.



The mean age is 44.6 and the median 43, though the most common age group is actually 30 to 39. The oldest was Samuel Heming, rector of Caldecote (and Fenny Drayton) variously listed as 82 or 88, with three others in their eighties. At the other end of the scale was Edward Johnson, the curate of Farnborough who was just 23 years old, along with another half dozen who were a mere year older. These younger men were all curates with the exception of William Bedford, who was already rector of Sutton Coldfield. One of the young curates was Morris Thomas, Curate of Hampton, and it is illuminating to consider the contrast between his career and that of Samuel Heming. Heming was born in Caldecote probably in 1768 (the son of a gentleman and grandson of a clergyman). He was educated at Rugby and Cambridge

(St John's then Clare College). On his ordination as deacon in 1794, he returned to his native Warwickshire to become Curate of Mancetter, and after being ordained priest three years later, he became Rector of Weddington (five miles away) until 1816. For ten of those years he was also Rector of Ravenstone (Leicestershire/Derbyshire) [patron Lord Chancellor.] These two parishes were sixteen miles apart. After a six-year spell as Chaplain to Lord Rawdon, Heming became Rector of the Leicestershire parish of Fenny Drayton in 1824, a post he held until his death in 1856. For the last fifteen years of his life he was also Rector of Caldecote, his birthplace, which although in a different county from Fenny Drayton, was actually an adjacent parish, on the other side of Watling Street.<sup>714</sup> The return for this parish (part of the Nuneaton Registration District) was actually made by the Rector of Weddington (also an adjacent parish), who was also curate of Caldecote.<sup>715</sup>

Within this small area can be recognised a number of aspects of mid-nineteenth century clerical life in rural England. The presence of an octogenarian incumbent of two parishes could be considered as evidence that, since there were no old age pensions, parochial clergy had to work until they died, and beyond an age when they were actually capable of providing effective ministry. There are strong indications that Heming had private means – according to *White's Directory* he was a major landowner in Weddington<sup>716</sup> and the *Post Office Directory* described him as lord of the manor of Fenny Drayton,<sup>717</sup> and at some point he had resigned as Rector of

---

<sup>714</sup> J. Venn and J.A. Venn, *Alumni cantabrigienses* Vol iii p. 325

<sup>715</sup> H0129.398.1.1.1; H0129.398.1.2.2

<sup>716</sup> F. White & Co., *Gazetteer and Directory of Warwickshire*, p. 842

<sup>717</sup> Kelly & Co., *Post Office, Directory of Leicestershire and Rutland 1855*, (London, 1855) p. 36

Weddington (of which he was patron). However, the good people of Fenny Drayton (1851 population 115) and Caldecote (1851 population 107) did have their spiritual needs met, as their rector employed curates from adjacent parishes. Caldecote's curate, George Sanford, was also Rector of Weddington, which had been enclosed and depopulated at the end of the fifteenth century and numbered only 54 souls in 1851, hardly requiring his full-time attention. His weekly Sunday service there alternated morning and afternoon, dovetailing with those of Caldecote. Estimates of Sanford's benefice income as Rector of Weddington vary from £215 to £330<sup>718</sup>, to which he would no doubt have added a curate's stipend for the work he did at Caldecote. Such a situation is not untypical of the small 'close' parishes of rural Warwickshire, but provide a marked contrast with the large urban parishes, particularly in the conurbation. While the issues of non-residence and pluralism here may be regarded as technicalities, it may be argued that the inequalities in income indicated that clerical abuses were still some way from being eradicated by 1851.

Morris Thomas was the son of a linen draper from London. Born in 1826, he was educated at St Paul's School before going up to Cambridge (Trinity) in 1845. He was ordained deacon in 1850 and priest the following year. Immediately after ordination he took up his first curacy at Hampton in Arden,<sup>719</sup> which is where we find him in the 1851 Population Census.<sup>720</sup> However, by the end of 1851 he had moved to Sussex, for the first of his two spells as Curate of Hartsfield. This was interspersed with a

---

<sup>718</sup> HO129.398.1.2.2; F. White & Co., *Gazetteer and Directory of Warwickshire*, p.842 gives a higher figure than the *Clergy List 1851*

<sup>719</sup> J. Venn and J.A. Venn, *Alumni cantabrigienses* Vol. 6 p. 154

<sup>720</sup> HO107/2063/222/8

couple of years in Suffolk followed by a similar period in Kent. By 1861, a mere ten years after becoming a priest, he commenced his fifth curacy, this time at Holy Trinity, Marylebone,<sup>721</sup> where he served for seven years. After seventeen years as a curate, he finally obtained a benefice in the East End of London, serving as Vicar of St Mary's, Spital Square for 28 years until his death, aged 67, in 1894.<sup>722</sup>

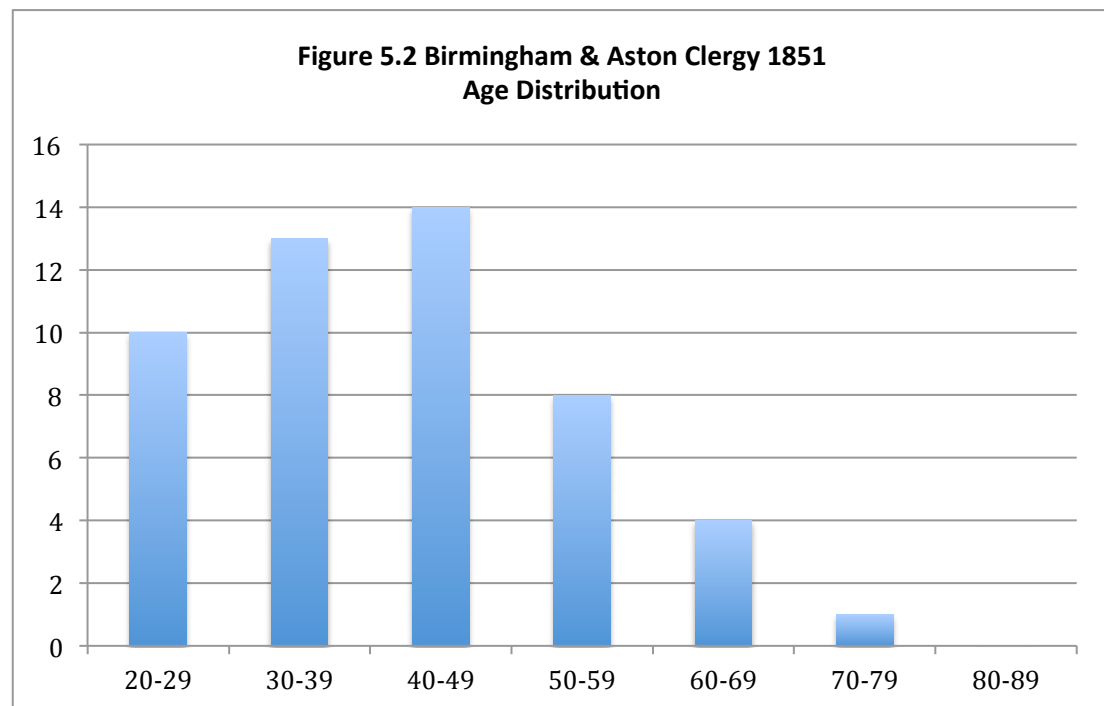
The contrast between these two men is stark. Heming, still a magistrate in his eighties, was something of a throwback to the eighteenth century Hanoverian church. Born with a silver spoon in his mouth, he had obtained a preferment before the age of 30 and was, perhaps, the archetypal 'squarson'. Thomas, on the other hand, seems to have had far fewer advantages. Born a tradesman's son, he spent many years as a 'pale young curate' in different parts of the country (reminiscent of Methodist circuit life), before finally settling in an urban parish for the remainder of his ministry.

---

<sup>721</sup> RG9/52/11/24

<sup>722</sup> J. Venn and J.A. Venn, *Alumni cantabrigienses* Vol. 6 p. 154

As Figure 5.2 shows, the profile for Birmingham and Aston is rather different.



Although the most common age group is that of 40 to 49 year olds, the mean of this group is 41.6 and the median only 40 meaning that half of the clergy in the conurbation were under forty. This and the associated marked decline in the over 60s age groups points quite strongly to the conclusion that being an urban clergyman in 1851 was more suited to the young or less attractive to the old. The oldest group included the 67 year old Vicar of Aston, which was the best endowed parish in the county, who had no fewer than four curates, two of whom were aged 24 and 26.

### **Birthplace**

Viewing the Warwickshire clergy as a whole, it is possible to identify 338 birthplaces.

These can be seen in Table 5.1.

Table 5.1 Birthplaces of Warwickshire Clergy

County of Birth	In Warwickshire	of which in Birmingham and Aston
Warwickshire	72	13
Middlesex	35	
Oxfordshire	14	1
Worcestershire	14	1
Gloucestershire	11	1
Northamptonshire	11	1
Kent	10	2
Staffordshire	9	4
Devon	8	3
Somerset	8	1
Yorkshire	8	
Essex	7	2
Leicestershire	7	2
Hampshire	6	1
Buckinghamshire	6	1
Derbyshire	6	1
Lancashire	6	1
Suffolk	6	1
Cumberland	5	
Norfolk	5	1
Nottinghamshire	4	2
Shropshire	4	1
Surrey	4	
Wiltshire	4	
Berkshire	4	
Cheshire	3	1
Herefordshire	3	2
Sussex	3	
Bedfordshire	2	
Cornwall	2	
Dorset	2	2
Durham	2	
Hertfordshire	2	
Isle of Wight	2	
Cambridgeshire	1	
Huntingdonshire	1	
Lincolnshire	1	
Westmorland	1	
Ireland	17	3
Wales	10	1
Scotland	4	
East Indies	3	1
Bermuda	1	
Ceylon	1	
Isle of Man	1	
West Indies	1	

Sources: 1851 Population Census; J. Venn and J.A. Venn, *Alumni cantabrigienses*; J. Foster, *Alumni oxonienses*

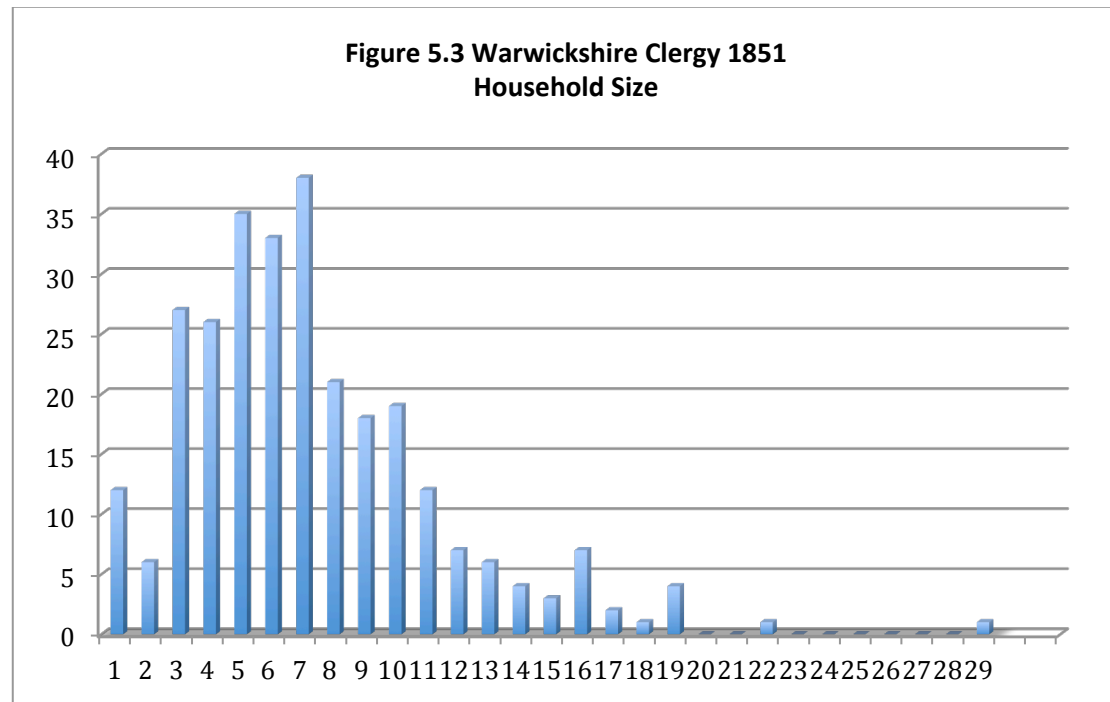
In the county as a whole it can be seen that 72 (21%) clergymen were born in Warwickshire and had thus returned to their 'native heath' to minister. In addition to the half dozen Birmingham men who were ministering in the conurbation, nineteen returned to their home parishes and most of the rest to within a few miles of their birthplaces. The same number came from adjacent counties in all directions, while the rural parishes also proved attractive to 35 Londoners. Of these just three were non-resident, two of whom were pluralists although only one resided in London. Almost half of them were aged 40 and under and all except one of the youngest were curates. The remainder represented 30 English counties with no discernible pattern. Ireland supplied seventeen, Wales ten and Scotland four, while seven were born overseas, mainly in the Indies, East and West. Warwickshire would appear to have been attractive to clergy from the 'Celtic fringe' as these men from the Anglican periphery comprised almost 10% of those ministering in the county. More than three-quarters of the Irish were comparatively young (45 and under), whereas all of the Scots were over 45, while the Welsh were more evenly divided, with six under 45 and four over 55. Most of the younger men were curates, though surprisingly only two in Birmingham (along with one incumbent). Fifteen had been in the county no more than eight years and were often transient, moving to benefices of their own within a decade or so. At the other extreme, there were men who had arrived in Warwickshire as young men and found it so congenial that they had stayed for almost half a century. The Vicar of Harbury, a 74 year old Scot had been appointed in 1806, while the Rector of Arrow and Exhall, a 66 year old Irishman, had been ministering in Arrow since 1807 and Exhall since 1815.<sup>723</sup>

---

<sup>723</sup> *Clergy List 1851*, pp. 7, 73, 89

The principle of distance decay (or friction of distance) seems to operate more clearly in Birmingham and Aston, with no Londoners among the clergy there. Presumably, London born clergy wanting to serve an urban parish would return home rather than moving to Birmingham.

### Household size



In 1851, the mean size of clergy households in Warwickshire was 7.8 (with a mode of 7). This was significantly larger than the mean household size of 4.75 which Laslett claimed was the case throughout the nineteenth century<sup>724</sup>, though he did suggest that there were links between variations in household size and social class, pointing out that “in most village communities, the families of craftsmen, labourers and paupers tended to be smaller than the families of yeomen, and those of gentry to be the largest”.<sup>725</sup> Clearly in many cases the Warwickshire clergy had more in common

<sup>724</sup> P. Laslett, ‘Size and Structure of the Household in England over Three Centuries’ *Population Studies* 23 (1969) p. 200

<sup>725</sup> P. Laslett, *The World We Have Lost* (New York, 1965) p. 69

with the gentry than any other social group. At the lower end there were a dozen clergymen who lived alone and another six bachelors who survived with just a single servant. At the other extreme were households which were even less typical. John Congreve, curate of Harborough Magna<sup>726</sup>, had no fewer than 21 pupils living in his household from as far afield as India and Scotland, while James Young, rector of Whitnash, boosted his household to nineteen with eight scholars<sup>727</sup>. Another household of nineteen that was that of Fortescue Knottesford, rector of Billesley, who populated the Manor House at Bridgetown, Alveston, with an extended family which included his daughter and her four girls, plus two other grandsons, and ten servants.<sup>728</sup> Richard Seymour, rector of Kinwarton lived with his wife, eight children and seven servants and completed his household with a governess and a tutor, who also served as his curate.<sup>729</sup> The total 'population' of the 283 clergy households in the whole county was 2,213 of whom 927 were servants of one kind or another (including 22 governesses and a tutor). The remainder included 120 from extensions to family - cousins, sisters (and in law), nephews and nieces etc. and half a dozen visitors. Many rural clergymen made a significant contribution to the local economy, directly providing employment to servants, both domestic and farm, as well as providing land for tenants to farm or bailiffs to manage. Moreover, some of the older and more affluent men seem to have provided a social support network for members of their extended families. This provides support for Laslett's suggestion

---

<sup>726</sup> HO107/2069/155/8

<sup>727</sup> HO107/2073/666/1

<sup>728</sup> HO107/2074/633/15

<sup>729</sup> HO107/2075/251/21

that the demographer would argue that a larger mean household size implied more children (hence higher fertility) or lower mortality or both, while the sociologist and anthropologist would claim that it provided grounds for assuming the presence of the extended family in the society.<sup>730</sup>

The situation in Birmingham and Aston is far more complex. Although the mean household size of 6.9 is slightly smaller than for the county as a whole the distribution is much more skewed than in the rest of the county with a modal class of just four. The largest household, that of Sidney Gedge, one of the Chaplains of the Magdalen Chapel, who was also second master of King Edward's School. His household of 22 included his eight children, his wife's aunt and cousin, four servants and no fewer than seven scholars.<sup>731</sup> The sixteen in Daniel Walton's house also included half a dozen scholars.<sup>732</sup> The largest conventional families were those of Joseph Oldham, Perpetual Curate of St Luke's and John Cale Miller, Rector of St Martin's who each had eight children and six and four servants respectively (each including two nurses).<sup>733</sup> At the other end of the scale, two of the Aston clergy were bachelors who lived alone, a childless married couple managed with no servants while another had just one. However, compared with their counterparts in the rest of the county, the Birmingham and Aston clergy kept fewer servants. One possible explanation for this lies in the greater availability of jobs and higher rates of pay in the factories and workshops of the industrial centre. Moreover, in general terms the

---

<sup>730</sup> P. Laslett, 'Size and Structure of the Household in England over Three Centuries' pp. 199-200

<sup>731</sup> HO107/2055/338/13-14

<sup>732</sup> HO107/2024/179/ 33

<sup>733</sup> HO107/2049/50/23; HO107/2052/353/27

clergy in the conurbation appear to be less affluent and would have found difficulty in affording many servants. Of the twelve curates identified in the population census, five were lodgers and another five (with small households) had only one or two servants, while of the incumbents of the District Churches, according to the *Clergy List*, almost half had an average annual benefice income of less than £160.

### **Education and Qualifications**

In the 1830s and 1840s, Oxford and Cambridge men comprised over 80% of the total of new clergy, though a substantial decline in their contribution was under way and by the end of the nineteenth century this proportion was down to 60%. In the eighteenth century there had been many non-graduate clergy, especially where stipends were poor and status was low. In the Chester diocese at least half of ordinands throughout the second half of the eighteenth century were non-graduates, while in St Davids at the same period, fewer than 6% had degrees. Haig argues that Oxford and Cambridge were simply too small to supply all eighteenth century clerical recruits.<sup>734</sup>

Between the 1810s and the 1830s the number of students at one or other doubled in total, and since alternative occupations for graduates did not grow at the same rate, the universities continued to be, first and foremost, educators of the clergy of the Established Church. It is likely that in the 1820s the proportion of graduate ordinands was greater than at any other time in the eighteenth or nineteenth centuries, reaching 91% in 1827-8, so that Henry Gauntlet in 1835 could look back to the 1780s and claim that “a University degree was not at that period considered so

---

<sup>734</sup> A. Haig, *The Victorian Clergy* (London, 1984) p. 31

essential a qualification for holy orders as at present it is”,<sup>735</sup> while by 1841-2 even Chester’s non-graduate ordinands had declined to a mere one in eight.

Of the 337 Anglican clergy in Warwickshire in 1851, it has been possible to trace the education of 327 of them. Eleven of these appear to have attended a university but do not appear to have taken a degree. The bulk of them (294, or 90%) were Oxbridge graduates, with a smattering from Dublin, especially in Birmingham, while Oxford men outnumbered their Cambridge counterparts by five to four. According to Haig, during this period the proportions nationally of Cambridge and Oxford graduates were 39% and 33%.<sup>736</sup> Interestingly, where more than one such graduate was serving a parish, they tended to be graduates of the same University, although occasionally, as in Berkswell, an Oxonian incumbent employed a curate from “the other place”. Of the remainder, a further seventeen were graduates of Trinity College, Dublin, one was a graduate of King’s College, London and one obtained first class honours at St David’s College Lampeter. For only three was the educational status recorded as ‘lit’ – a common abbreviation for ‘literate’ or ‘literatus’, whose use indicates that a clergyman did not possess a degree, but that he was judged by the bishop to possess sufficient learning to qualify for ordination. According to Haig, at Cambridge, the two dominant societies were Trinity and St John’s (the largest in terms of both numbers and wealth), while a group of six other colleges – Clare, Corpus Christi, St

---

<sup>735</sup> Quoted (from his *Sermons*, 1835) in C. Smyth, *Simeon and Church Order*, (Cambridge, 1940) p. 98

<sup>736</sup> A. Haig, *The Victorian Clergy* p. 32

Catharine's, Christ's, Emmanuel and Sidney Sussex, seemed to provide more clergy than others.<sup>737</sup>

Table 5.2 Cambridge Colleges Attended by Warwickshire Clergy 1851

St John's	36
Trinity	23
Clare	11
Queens'	11
Peterhouse	9
Christ's	8
Caius	7
Sidney Sussex	5
Emmanuel	5
Corpus Christi	3
Magdalene	3
King's	2
Pembroke	2
St Catharine's	2
Downing	1
Jesus	1
In addition a further seven seem to have been students but do not appear to have graduated.	

In Warwickshire, following the national trend, the dominance of St John's and Trinity can be seen from Table 5.2. These two colleges provided 45% of Warwickshire's Cantabrigians. In total, sixteen colleges are represented, of which those in Haig's list produced another 35 clergymen. Of the remainder, significant numbers were educated at Queens', Peterhouse and Caius, with smaller numbers from the rest. This concentration from a few colleges may have added to their cohesion as a body, but this may have simply been derived from a virtually identical university background.

---

<sup>737</sup> A. Haig, *The Victorian Clergy* p. 35

Table 5.3 Oxford Colleges Attended by Warwickshire Clergy 1851

Worcester	22
Wadham	15
Trinity	15
Christ Church	13
St John's	12
Magdalen/Magdalen Hall	12
Brasenose	10
Exeter	8
Balliol	7
Merton	7
University	7
Lincoln	6
Oriel	5
Pembroke	5
Queen's	5
St Edmund Hall	5
Jesus	3
Corpus Christi	2
St Mary Hall	2
New Inn Hall	1
All Souls	1
Merton/Exeter	1
New College	1
One of the Pembroke graduates also had a degree from Trinity College, Dublin, while a further three seem to have been students but do not appear to have graduated.	

At Oxford, there was a much more dispersed pattern, with no fewer than 22 colleges represented in Table 5.3. The largest contingent came from Worcester, with significant contributions from Wadham and Trinity. These three, along with Christ Church, St John's, Brasenose and Magdalen Hall provided almost 60% of Warwickshire's Oxonians. In terms of educational background, Warwickshire clergymen in the middle of the nineteenth century were drawn almost exclusively from an 'Oxbridge élite' displaying only minimal diversity, indicating that even in an expanding county like mid-nineteenth century Warwickshire it was still possible to recruit an almost exclusively graduate clergy.

### **Marital Status and Family Size**

Three fifths of the clergy in Warwickshire were married, while a further 9% had been so, but by 1851 were widowed. Their resident families included 191 sons but 281 daughters. Of the sons, 20 were aged 21 or over, 42 were aged between eleven and twenty, while the rest were under 10 years old. Of the daughters, 47 (one in six) were legally adults (including a 49 year old widow) and a further 100 were aged between eleven and twenty. Since the number of boys and girls in the population under the age of eleven was almost identical, it seems logical to suggest that the missing adolescent boys were away at school. Moreover it would appear that adult daughters stayed at home until they married, and sometimes returned when widowed.

In Birmingham and Aston the marital status of 48 clergy is given. A roughly comparable percentage were married (63%) but only three were widowed, and there is a marked imbalance between the two urban areas, with Aston having more unmarried clergy than Birmingham. While some were clearly 'pale young curates', there were other bachelors who were beneficed and much longer in the tooth. This contrast between Birmingham and Aston continues when looking at clergy families. Though only slightly fewer in number, the Aston clergy had 27 resident children while the Birmingham clergy had 49. The significant difference is that the Birmingham clergy had as many sons living at home as daughters – no fewer than twelve over the age of eleven. All these older boys were scholars; four were sons of the second master of King Edward's School, while two had a resident tutor. The remainder, it seems likely, were day scholars or were home educated by their fathers.

## Family Background

The family background of almost three-quarters of the Warwickshire clergy can be ascertained, mainly from University alumni records. Statistical analysis is rendered difficult because in Venn the occupation of a third of all fathers is not given. Haig argued that Venn's sources preclude the "possibility of such men being clergy, career officers in the forces or members of families with claims to gentility. What remains is, of course far too various to bear one description: men in commerce, industry and finance, the mass of minor gentry and bond-holders, many professional - or aspiring professional - men, and most obscurely, the farmers, shopkeepers and artisans."<sup>738</sup> In the case of the Warwickshire clergy, 85 occupations are not known, and of these 72 are Cambridge men.

Those that we have seem to have been drawn very largely from the upper or upper middle class. Aristocratic representatives included Lord Charles Paulet (second son of the Marquess of Winchester), vicar of Wellesbourne<sup>739</sup>, the Honourable William Somerville (grandson of Baron Somerville), vicar of Barford,<sup>740</sup> the Honourable Charles Twiselton (grandson of Baron Saye and Sele), rector of Ashow<sup>741</sup>, the Honourable and Reverend Grantham Yorke<sup>742</sup> (fourth son of Admiral Sir Joseph Sidney), rector of St Philip's, Birmingham and Aubrey Spring Rice (fourth son of

---

<sup>738</sup> A. Haig, *The Victorian Clergy* p. 33-4

<sup>739</sup> HO129.404.2.2.2; J. Venn and J.A. Venn, *Alumni cantabrigienses* Vol. v p. 50

<sup>740</sup> HO129.403.1.11.10; J. Venn and J.A. Venn, *Alumni cantabrigienses* Vol. v p. 591

<sup>741</sup> HO129.403.3.1.1; J. Foster *Alumni Oxonienses*: p. 1453

<sup>742</sup> HO129.394.5.1.1; J. Venn and J.A. Venn, *Alumni cantabrigienses* Vol. vi p. 617

Baron Monteagle), curate of Lapworth.<sup>743</sup> Four more were the sons of baronets, 67 were the sons of gentlemen and another 52 were sons of armigeri (squires), who were generally better represented in the source than any other group, and might all be fairly described as 'gentry'. Eighteen came from professional classes (including nine sons of medical men and four sons of lawyers) while just eight came from 'trade'. Only two came from a plebeian background, one of these was Benjamin Richings, Vicar of Mancetter<sup>744</sup>, and he founded a 'dynasty' of clerics – two sons and three grandsons following him. Although they both ended up as beneficed clergy, the two sons had very different ecclesiastical careers. Frederick (the elder) was awarded his B.A. degree in 1840 and ordained deacon in the same year. The following year he was ordained priest and installed by his father as Perpetual Curate of Atherstone<sup>745</sup>, where he remained until his death 47 years later. His younger brother, Alfred, graduated three years later and was ordained in successive years, as deacon and then priest. As deacon, he commenced the first of three 2-year curacies (in the Warwickshire parish of Austrey). Then there followed three more moves in 15 years, to benefices in Leeds, Dorset and Buckinghamshire, before he settled as Vicar of Boxmoor (Hertfordshire) for the remaining 34 years of his life.<sup>746</sup> Three sons of Frederick followed their father into the clerical profession, one via Cambridge (like his father and uncle) while two of them followed their grandfather to Oxford.<sup>747</sup>

---

<sup>743</sup> J. Venn and J.A. Venn, *Alumni cantabrigienses* Vol. v p. 610

<sup>744</sup> HO129.397.1.15.23; J. Foster, *Alumni Oxonienses*: p. 1196

<sup>745</sup> HO129.397.1.16.24; J. Venn and J.A. Venn, *Alumni cantabrigienses* Vol. v p. 297

<sup>746</sup> J. Venn and J.A. Venn, *Alumni cantabrigienses* Vol. v p. 297

<sup>747</sup> J. Venn and J.A. Venn, *Alumni cantabrigienses* Vol. v p. 297; J. Foster, *Alumni Oxonienses*: p. 1197

But the largest individual group were clergy sons, of which there were 88 in Warwickshire in 1851. Some of these came from a long line of clerics. The Seagraves of Tysoe were part of a dynasty who had served in several parishes in southeast Warwickshire, including at least nine clergymen spanning six generations from the last quarter of the seventeenth century<sup>748</sup>, while the rector of Sutton Coldfield's family had occupied the living since 1689, with only a seven-year break between the death of his father in 1843 and his presentation in 1850.<sup>749</sup> There certainly seems to be a very marked degree of social stability among the Warwickshire clergy in rural areas, with many of them conforming to the 'identikit' picture which I have drawn later in the chapter.

### **Endowments and Clergy Income**

Of the Warwickshire incumbents, 49 could be considered to hold 'plum' livings, having an income of more than £500 a year, of which nine had more than £1,000 a year. Another fifty-seven had incomes in excess of the £300 threshold required to live as a gentleman. The contemporary clerical writer Sydney Smith went even further, stating that "If you place a man in a village in the country, *require* that he should be of good manners and well educated, that his habits and appearances should be *above* those of the farmers to whom he preaches, ... and if upon his village income he is to support a wife and educate a family ... such a person ought to receive £500 per annum and be furnished with a house."<sup>750</sup> He further pointed out

---

<sup>748</sup> J. Foster, *Alumni Oxonienses*: p. 1269

<sup>749</sup> J. Foster, *Alumni Oxonienses*: p. 86-87; *The Clergy of the Church of England Database* Location ID 2609

<sup>750</sup> S. Smith, *Third Letter to Archdeacon Singleton (2<sup>nd</sup> Edition)* (London, 1839)

that the average income of the 10,700 parishes in England and Wales was £285 per annum.

At the other extreme were the 'church mice' in 87 parishes with benefice incomes of less than £150 per annum. Half of these poorer parishes had their income supplemented from other sources (private benefactions, Queen Anne's Bounty<sup>751</sup> and Parliamentary Grants), though the Vicar of Ansley, whose endowment was a mere £116 with no additional supplements, could afford to be non-resident and pay a curate to officiate for him. His case is considered in some detail in a discussion of pluralism and non-residence below. The incumbent of Merevale (income £64 per annum) supplemented his income by acting as curate for the absentee Vicar of Bentley and Shustoke.<sup>752</sup> By combining the endowment incomes of Bidford and Salford<sup>753</sup> the vicar was able to enjoy £324 a year, while the Vicar of Radway and Ratley<sup>754</sup> with endowments of £110 11s. 0d. and £111 6s. 0d. respectively managed to raise his income from his livings to over £200, which, although not in the 'gentleman' category, did leave him reasonably comfortably off and contributed to the general impression that the rural clergy in mid-nineteenth century Warwickshire (or at least the beneficed ones) were generally prosperous. However, even two parishes sometimes produced insufficient endowment. The Vicar of Weston under

---

<sup>751</sup> It has been maintained that for Queen Anne's Bounty, the extra income generated was about 5% of the capital invested. Thus an augmentation of £200, when converted into land, raised the value of the living by about £10 a year. P. Virgin, *The Church in an Age of Negligence: Ecclesiastical Structure and Problems of Church Reform 1700-1840* (Cambridge, 1989) p. 6

<sup>752</sup> H0129.397.1.2.4, H0129.397.1.3.5

<sup>753</sup> *Clergy List 1851*, pp. 20, 177

<sup>754</sup> H0129.163.2.12.9, H0129.163.2.13.10

Wetherley and Wappenbury<sup>755</sup> received less than £150 from the two benefices combined. Fourteen clergy held other posts in addition to their incumbency. These included three headmasters, Augustus Saunders, Vicar of Tanworth, at Charterhouse,<sup>756</sup> Thomas Medwin, Minister of the Chapel of the Holy Cross and Headmaster of the Grammar School at Stratford upon Avon<sup>757</sup> and Thomas Sheepshanks, Head Master of Coventry Grammar School, rector of St John's, Coventry, from whom Marian Evans (George Eliot) received lessons in Greek and Latin.<sup>758</sup> Most of the remainder acted as curates for the incumbents of neighbouring parishes, some of whom were non-residents, pluralists or both.

In general terms the rural parishes in Warwickshire were less well endowed than those in urban areas. The mean value of endowments in rural parishes was about £238, while for urban parishes the equivalent figure was £398, although the population size of rural parishes was often small enough to enable clergymen to minister to the needs and thus receive the income of two or even three parishes. Within the rural areas, significant disparity existed between the wealthiest parishes (30% having more than £300) and the poorest – 70 parishes had endowments of less than £150. In the rural areas, too, there were discrepancies between neighbouring parishes (often with similar population sizes). Thus Astley with £63 6s 0d lies next to Arley with £351<sup>759</sup>, and Hunningham (£68) next to Offchurch (£442)<sup>760</sup>. Contrasts

---

<sup>755</sup> HO129.403.5.4.4, HO129.403.5.1.1

<sup>756</sup> *Clergy List 1851* (Alphabetical List of Clergy) p. 228

<sup>757</sup> HO129.404.3.2.3

<sup>758</sup> O. Browning, *Life of George Eliot* (Cambridge, 2012)

<sup>759</sup> HO129.398.1.5.14; HO129.398.1.4.13; *Clergy List 1851* pp. 11, 7

also existed in urban areas between those parishes with very large endowments and those with much less, but fewer than 25% were endowed with less than £150.

In 1843, *The Times* carried a leader on the 'Peel parishes'.<sup>761</sup> It expressed considerable doubt about the practicality of setting up parishes endowed with only £150 a year, basically on the grounds that men with the backgrounds and expectations of clergy could not settle for such an income. "£150 a year is not an income which, by its own inherent power, will induce a poor gentleman, the class of which our clergy is perhaps principally composed, to plant himself permanently." A number of the poorer livings, especially in the urban areas, were 'Peel Parishes' endowed with the £150 a year deemed insufficient, but in most of these the large population size produced pew rents and surplice fees which generated at least as much again and propelled the incumbent into the realms of 'gentlemanly income', though some of these (as at Walmley and St Mary's Leamington<sup>762</sup>) went to the churchwarden to defray expenses such as for building maintenance or to pay the organist.<sup>763</sup>

The unbeneficed clergy, however, were a different matter. As Haig points out, "The achievement of incumbent status was undoubtedly the normal desire of the clergy, representing their establishment in life and in the Church. But for all clergy there was some period – always at least one year, as incumbencies could not be held before

---

<sup>760</sup> HO129.403.5.3.3; HO129.403.5.7.8; *Clergy List 1851* pp. 101, 157

<sup>761</sup> Leader 8 March 1843 cited in A. Haig, *The Victorian Clergy* p. 306

<sup>762</sup> HO129.395.4.4.7; HO129.403.2.1.2

<sup>763</sup> HO129.395.4.4.7; HO129.403.2.1.2

ordination as a priest – when some other occupation was required'.<sup>764</sup> Many became assistant curates, though some found alternative employment either as teachers, chaplains or as missionaries. A curate's function began to change from being the man who did duty for an absentee or pluralist incumbent to one who served as assistant to a resident incumbent. The reduction in pluralism as a result of the Pluralities Act (1838) meant that effectively the number of benefices available to clergy increased, and this process was supplemented by the creation of new parishes. At first this made it easier for a newly ordained clergyman to obtain a benefice, but fairly soon the rapid growth in clergy numbers exceeded the number of benefices and made it necessary for curates to wait longer for preferment.

In the mid nineteenth century curates' pay was poor, though it did rise during the second half of the century. Parliamentary Returns tell us that in 1848, 51% of curates received less than £100 and only 15% more than £120, while advertisements in the Ecclesiastical Gazette show that in 1853 average curate's stipend was a mere £79<sup>765</sup>, in spite of the Stipendiary Curates Act of 1813 which had set a minimum payment of £80 p.a. or full value of benefice if worth less. In two Warwickshire benefices, Hillmorton and Monks Kirby with Withybrook, we have information about the amount paid to curates, as these benefices had been sequestered.<sup>766</sup> The curate of Hillmorton was paid £135 and the curate of Monks Kirby £120, making them slightly better off than many of their contemporaries. Warwickshire had almost a hundred

---

<sup>764</sup> A. Haig, *The Victorian Clergy* p 215

<sup>765</sup> A. Haig, *The Victorian Clergy* p. 223

<sup>766</sup> "Benefices sequestered. Return of all the benefices in England or Wales which have been sequestered for the purpose of discharging the debts of any incumbent, since the passing of the act 1 & 2 Vict. c. 106." (Parliamentary Papers, London 1851)

stipendiary curates. Two or three were schoolmasters who preached and conducted services though technically were “without cure of souls”. Some were curates for more than one parish, usually, though not always, employed by the same incumbent, while others supplemented their income by taking pupils.

In Birmingham and Aston, the assistant curates were all serving in large parishes, so should have been in receipt of at least £150 a year under the 1813 Act and, without the expenses of the incumbents, would seem to have been some way above the bread line, especially as almost all of them were under 35. In fact the only two older curates were Thomas Farebrother (curate of Aston) who was also perpetual curate of Ward End (value £70)<sup>767</sup> and 64-year-old Daniel Walton, another of the Aston curates, whose household included half a dozen pupils, and so was apparently also earning a living as a schoolteacher or as a private tutor.<sup>768</sup>

### **Pluralism**

A common stereotype of rural Christianity in the early nineteenth century is of the typical parish in which the squire owned all the land except the glebe and all the parishioners, except the vicar, were his tenants. In addition to owning the manor and the land, the squire had the right to nominate the incumbent to the benefice. But as Chadwick<sup>769</sup> argued, this was a far from accurate picture. Firstly, in more than half of the parishes the incumbent was non-resident, either because they held sinecures or were pluralists (or both). He pointed out that many parishes possessed no squire, in

---

<sup>767</sup> HO107/2062/8/8; *Clergy List 1851*, p. 9

<sup>768</sup> HO107/2024/179/33

<sup>769</sup> O. Chadwick, *Victorian Miniature* (Cambridge, 1960) pp. 10 – 11

the sense of a landlord who owned all the land (the classic 'open' parishes) and also that in many areas the squire was not the patron of the living. These non-resident patrons included the bishop, the dean and chapter, the Crown and Oxford and Cambridge colleges.

In the eighteenth century, the laws controlling pluralism had lost their effectiveness leading to serious inequalities among the clergy. It was legally possible for a clergyman to hold a post in every one of the 28 chapters in England and Wales simultaneously. Durham was regarded as the most scandalous cathedral, its twelve canons receiving about £3,000 per year. But the Dean was Bishop of St Davids, among the canons were the Bishops of Bristol, Chester and Exeter while the 8<sup>th</sup> Earl of Bridgewater held a prebendal stall for 49 years while residing in Paris.<sup>770</sup>

It was argued that clergy ought to be 'gentlemen' and this was regarded as being impossible with a stipend as little as £200 or £250 a year. Using two case studies from the beginning of the nineteenth century (James Plumtre and Parson Woodforde), Virgin shows that by 1830 a reclusive bachelor with a single servant could have met his basic needs on about £100 a year, while a moderately hospitable incumbent with a household of seven needed about twice as much, though this left nothing for travel, books, wine or charity. For incumbents with more than £300 a year, a large range of personal pleasures came within the ambit of possibility, and for the elite with over £500 a year, life was very easy indeed.<sup>771</sup> But there was a major contrast between clerical opulence and clerical poverty.

---

<sup>770</sup> O. Chadwick, *The Victorian Church (3<sup>rd</sup> edition) Part 1 1829-1859* (London, 1987) p. 39

<sup>771</sup> P. Virgin, *The Church in an Age of Negligence* pp. 94-99

Thomas Arnold stated that the parochial system of the Church of England “is designed to secure for every parish the greatest blessing of human society – that is, the constant residence of one individual who has no other business than to do good of every kind to every person”.<sup>772</sup> The question of pluralism was an abuse which had been tackled at the beginning of the century with the Pluralities Act of 1803. This was only a limited measure and between 1813 and 1827, the number of non-residents declined from 6,405 to 6,120.<sup>773</sup> It was estimated in 1832 that 3,853 clergy held only one title, 3,304 held two, 370 held three, 73 held four and 59 held five or more. This pluralism was sometimes excusable by the very low income of some benefices, but the son-in-law of Archbishop Manners-Sutton held an archdeaconry, a chancellorship, two prebends, two rectories and one curacy worth in all £10,000 per annum.<sup>774</sup> Not surprisingly a further Pluralities Act was needed (in 1838), which resulted in more resident clergy during the latter half of the nineteenth century. The 1838 Pluralities Act stated that no incumbent could hold more than two livings and the joint value must not exceed £1,000 a year. As a result it was claimed that the earnings of beneficed clergy fell by over 30%. In fact, the restriction to two benefices affected barely 6% of clergy who held three or more livings, while with regard to the £1,000 limit, only 386 incumbents (5%) had ecclesiastical incomes greater than this. The 1838 Act replaced the canonical limit of 30 miles by a new limit of ten miles. The force of the Act was not felt immediately, as life interests were respected. A further Act of 1850 reduced the limits of permitted pluralism from ten miles to three and

---

<sup>772</sup> T. Arnold, *Principles of Church Reform* (London, 1833) p. 9

<sup>773</sup> E. Royle, *Modern Britain: A Social History 1750 – 1997* p. 307 and O. Chadwick, *Victorian Miniature* p. 10

<sup>774</sup> D. Bowen, *The Idea of the Victorian Church* (Montreal, 1968) p. 11

also stated that the value of one of the two livings held in plurality should not exceed £100 a year.<sup>775</sup> In fact, after 1850 only two classes of parish were still held in plurality: those where there was a pastoral justification for holding a living in conjunction with somewhere else – remote areas, dwindling population, livings so poor they did not provide sufficient income for a beneficed clergyman; and places still held by a hard core of determined pluralists who were not easy to move. These Acts were passed towards the end of a period of parliamentary action which had far reaching effects on many aspects of nineteenth century Christianity. However, the 1830s and 1840s saw the virtual eradication of pluralism and non-residence.

Of the Warwickshire clergy, relatively few could be regarded as real pluralists. 143 incumbents lived in the parish which was their single benefice, or, in the case of Birmingham and Aston clergy, within the conurbation. 56 were technically pluralists in that they possessed more than one benefice, though seven of these were incumbents of combined benefices, so were not pluralists. 41 either held more than one Warwickshire benefice, in one of which they chose to reside, or preferred to live in their Warwickshire parish, while employing a curate in their out of county benefice. Seventeen of these held adjacent benefices and a further seven held pairs which were less than ten miles apart. There were eleven who preferred to live in their non-Warwickshire parish though just over half of these lived across the border in a neighbouring county (which might even house their adjacent parish). Another eleven were non-residents, but not pluralists in that although they did duty in their parish they did not live there, but lived in an adjoining town or neighbouring village.

---

<sup>775</sup> P. Virgin, *The Church in an Age of Negligence* p. 210

Throughout England and Wales, many clergy had either dilapidated or 'unfit' parsonages; the Vicar of Haselor complained on his Census return that there was "No Parsonage House and no house to be hired within 4 miles of the Church".<sup>776</sup> Such incumbents, living close by their parishes, kept to the spirit if not the letter of the law.

This leaves just thirteen who could justifiably be called the hard core of non-resident clergy. Some were aged, infirm or sick; and who found spas and seaside resorts more amenable places in which to live than their benefices. Such a one was George Salmon, Vicar of Shustoke. Born in 1789 in Bath, the son of an attorney, he was educated in Bath and at St Paul's London, before studying at Clare College, Cambridge. After graduating (B.A. 1813 and M.A. 1816) he was appointed Curate of Castle Combe in Wiltshire. Ten years later he moved to Warwickshire, as stipendiary curate at Coleshill, where he served for 7½ years. He had a brief spell at Maxstoke before his appointment as Vicar of Shustoke with Bentley in 1831, a post which he held for more than forty years.<sup>777</sup> On Census night 1851 he was visiting his son in Nottingham, while his wife was listed as Head of a household in Bath. He and his wife were living together in Bath in 1861, while ten years later, by now widowed, he was still living in Bath, with at least three of his granddaughters.<sup>778</sup> John Boudier, vicar of St Mary's Warwick and rector of Farmington, Gloucestershire also lived in Bath, while Benjamin Winthrop, rector of Wolverton lived on the opposite side of

---

<sup>776</sup> HO129.405.2.4.7

<sup>777</sup> J. Venn and J.A. Venn, *Alumni cantabrigienses* Vol. v p. 403

<sup>778</sup> HO107/2133/ 573/24; RG9/1697/26/10; RG10/2478/40/6

Bristol, in Clifton.<sup>779</sup> Samuel Holland, rector of Beaudesert, lived in Brighton and served as a precentor at Chichester cathedral, while Charles Crump, rector of Holford found Ilfracombe more congenial<sup>780</sup> and Robert French (rector of Seckington, rector of Weston on Trent, and perpetual curate of Osmaston by Derby) lived in London “under a commission of lunacy”.<sup>781</sup> Also residing in London, were Giles Powell (vicar of Hillmorton) in Finsbury and Charles Watling (rector of Tredington) in Hampstead.<sup>782</sup>

“Non-resident Vicar of Ansley” is how John Charles Lucena is described in the 1851 Population Census returns for the Surrey parish of Windlesham.<sup>783</sup> He was born in London in about 1800. His father, also John Charles (or perhaps Juan Carlos) was a native of Portugal, and in addition to being a merchant, served as Portuguese and Brazilian Consul.<sup>784</sup> The son was sent to Harrow and then Oxford (Brasenose), from where he obtained his M.A. in 1824. He was ordained deacon in September 1822 and priest 18 months later. He was appointed Curate of Swinford at his ordination, but in April 1823 he moved to Kent, as Curate of North Cray, where two of his daughters were born. In 1830 he became Stipendiary Curate of Churchover, near Rugby, where a further daughter was born, and three years later he moved 18 miles

---

<sup>779</sup> HO107/1943/358/22; HO107/1952/452/54

<sup>780</sup> HO107/1646/280/26; HO107/1893/85/35

<sup>781</sup> HO107/1491/368/26

<sup>782</sup> HO107/1513/159/37; HO107/1492/280/9

<sup>783</sup> HO107/1593/559/24

<sup>784</sup> J.S. Gurock (ed.), *American Jewish history: the colonial and early national periods, 1654-1840* (New York, 1998) pp. 93-96

or so to become Assistant Curate of Ansley, to which living he was appointed Vicar in 1835. At about the same time his twin daughters and subsequently a son were born at Fillongley, just over three miles away. (His non residence letter to Bishop in 1837 cites “unfit residence” as the reason for not living at Ansley.) His period of ‘real’ non-residence appears to have begun soon afterwards, as his wife gave birth to a daughter and a son in 1840 and 1843 respectively, both in Windlesham. However, by 1861, he had returned to Ansley, accompanied by his four unmarried daughters and two sons. He died in Chertsey, Surrey, in 1868.<sup>785</sup> It is significant that all of these pluralists were aged 50 or over, thus having been presented before the 1838 Act and therefore claiming vested interest. It is difficult to escape the conclusion that in rural Warwickshire the Religious Census presents us with evidence of the last vestiges of traditional pluralism in the Anglican Church and thus gives an indication of a considerable degree of success in responding to criticism of clerical abuses.

The situation in the major towns, especially the Birmingham conurbation, was rather different from the rural areas of the county. One of the curates of Aston, Thomas Farebrother, was also the perpetual curate of Ward End.<sup>786</sup> None of the other clerics in Birmingham and Aston had more than one benefice and only one or two combined teaching with their parish duties. This is hardly surprising, considering the population of the conurbation was fast approaching a quarter of a million. However there was a greater degree of non-residence in the case of the Birmingham and

---

<sup>785</sup> *Harrow School Register 1801-1893* p. 745; J. Foster, *Alumni Oxonienses*: p. 880; *The Clergy of the Church of England Database* Person ID 338; Worcester Diocesan Records, Non-residence papers 1825-1837, BA 2064; RG9/2191/6/6; *England & Wales, Civil Registration Death Index, 1868 Vol. 2a p. 24*

<sup>786</sup> *Clergy List 1851* p. 9

Aston clergy. In Aston there were two examples, a curate living in Handsworth and an incumbent in a neighbouring parish. More significantly at least 14 Birmingham clergy appeared to be non-resident, though this was sometimes illusory – living in subdivisions of the mother parish. Two more lived in each of Aston and Handsworth, while no fewer than six lived in Edgbaston. This was described by White as a very attractive village; the houses are neat mansions and villa residences.<sup>787</sup> Such housing was less likely to have been available to clergy in inner city areas. However, considering how short the distances are between different parts of the urban area, any non-residence here must surely be regarded as technical. As in the rural cases considered above, these could be classed as non-resident but doing duty, and certainly gave the impression that they are focussed on the job.

### **Nature of benefice & Patronage**

There were 267 benefices in the county, 81 rectories, 96 vicarages and 78 perpetual curacies. The remainder were donatives and curacies. Of the 262 benefices whose patron can be ascertained, no fewer than 25 were in the hands of the Lord Chancellor, ten in the hands of the Crown (plus another three which alternated with the Bishop) and a further fourteen in the hands of the two bishops whose dioceses covered Warwickshire (Worcester with eleven and Lichfield with three) along with one held by the Bishop of London. An assortment of clergy titles and groups, including the dean and chapter of both cathedrals and the archdeacon of Worcester, held another six. Local groups of inhabitants, usually as trustees, nominated incumbents to 22 benefices. The majority of these were in urban areas, especially in

---

<sup>787</sup> F. White & Co., *Gazetteer and Directory of Warwickshire*, p. 70

the Birmingham-Aston conurbation. In total, 35 were presented by another clergyman, 21 of which were by virtue of their office. Most of these were patrons of additional chapels, district chapels or chapels of ease, especially in the urban areas with a rapidly growing population. In rural areas, the advowson was often held by a member of the 'gentrified clergy'.

There were sixteen benefices whose patron was an Oxford or Cambridge College (plus Eton College). As can be seen from Table 5.4, in no fewer than ten cases, the incumbent is an alumnus of the College while in the other six cases, the incumbent studied at the same University, albeit at a different College.<sup>788</sup>

---

<sup>788</sup> Information about parishes, incumbents and patrons is from *Clergy List 1851*; College information is from J. Venn and J.A. Venn, *Alumni cantabrigienses* and J. Foster, *Alumni Oxonienses*:

Table 5.4 Oxbridge Colleges and Warwickshire Parishes

Benefice	Patron	Incumbent	College
St Lawrence Parish Church, Barton on the Heath	Trinity College, Oxford	Henry Guillemard	Trinity
All Saints' Parish Church, Withybrook *	Trinity College Cambridge	Ralph Simpson	Trinity
St Edith's Parish Church, Monks Kirby *	Trinity College Cambridge	Ralph Simpson	Trinity
St Nicholas Parish Church, Willoughby	Magdalen College, Oxford	Thomas Whorwood	Magdalen
Lapworth Parish Church	Merton College, Oxford	Arundell St John Mildmay	Merton
Newbold Pay [Pacey] Parish Church.	Queen's College, Oxford	John Gibson	Queen's
St Peter's Parish Church, Wootton Wawen	King's College, Cambridge	John Ellis	King's
Tidmington Church	Jesus College, Oxford	William Evans	Jesus
St David's Parish Church, Newbold on Stour	Jesus College, Oxford	Richard Prichard	Jesus
St Michael's Parish Church, Stockton	New College, Oxford	C. Pilkington	New College
Fenny Compton Parish Church	Corpus Christi College, Oxford	C.A.Heurtley	Corpus Christi
St Denis Parish Church, Little Compton	Christ Church College, Oxford	Thomas S.Hellier	Lincoln
St Peter's Parish Church, Bearley	King's College, Cambridge	Thomas Jones	St John's
St Michael's Parish Church, Wolford	Merton College, Oxford	G.Domvile Wheeler	Wadham
St Nicholas Church, Burmington	Merton College, Oxford	G.Domvile Wheeler	Wadham
Tredington Parish Church	Jesus College, Oxford	Charles HenryWatling	Merton
St Peter's Parish Church, Butler's Marston	Christ Church College, Oxford	G.F.Thomas	Worcester

\* Withybrook and Monk's Kirby was a combined benefice.

In slightly more than half of the benefices, the patron was an individual. Family background was often reflected in the case of patronage. A number of men were both incumbents and patrons, shown in Table 5.5 while many of the noble and gentry families were represented in the lists of patrons of benefices to which they presented their relatives.

Table 5.5 Patron/Incumbents in Warwickshire Parishes

Benefice	Patron & Incumbent
Ladbroke Parish Church	Arthur Turner
All Saints' Parish Church, Harbury	Clement Newsam
St Martin's Parish Church, Barcheston	G.Domvile Wheeler
St Mark's Parish Church, Bilton	J.T. Parker
All Saints Parish Church, Allesley	William Thomas Bree
Oldberrow Parish Church	Samuel D'Oyley Peshall
Berkswell Parish Church	Rev S.B. Sheriff
Barston Parish Church.	Rev S.B. Sheriff
Ilmington Parish Church	Rev. E.J. Townsend
All Saints Parish Church, Stretton on Dunsmore	Rev H.T. Powell
St Nicholas's Parish Church, Curdworth	Rev W Wakefield
Atherstone on Stour Parish Church.	Rev. T. Cox
Dassett Parva or Avon Dassett Parish Church.	Robert Green Jeston
Preston Bagot Parish Church	T.J. Cartwright
Mancetter Parish Church	Benjamin Richings
Burton Hastings Parish Church	W.S. Bucknill

Sixteen more parishes were in the gift of another clergyman, often living in the same area. The largest single group of patrons, unsurprisingly, was the nobility, led by Lord Leigh (of Stoneleigh) with seven, the Earl of Aylesford (of Packington Hall) with five, and Lord Willoughby de Broke (four). Earl Digby, the Earl of Craven, Lord Calthorpe, the Earl and Countess of Warwick and the Earl and Countess Amherst were patrons

of three benefices, while a further fourteen members of the aristocracy held the advowson of one or two benefices. These were major landowners in many of the parishes in the county.

In addition, members of the squirearchy held another dozen while the remaining patrons also tended to be members of local landowning families. As Table 5.6 shows, many of these benefices had as incumbent a family member of the patron.

Table 5.6 Patronage by Family Members in Warwickshire Parishes

Benefice	Patron	Incumbent
Corley Parish Church	A.F.Gregory	Arthur W Gregory
St James's Parish Church, Stivichall	A.F.Gregory	Arthur W Gregory
St David's & St Chad's Parish Church, Caldecote	D. Heming	Samuel Bracebridge Heming
St John the Baptist Parish Church, Cherington	Dan. Turner Esq.	Power Turner
St Paul's District Parish Church, Birmingham	E. Latimer Esq (White names Rev.G.B.P.Latimer)	George B.P.Latimer
Leamington Hastings Parish Church	E.D.Sitwell Esq	Henry W Sitwell
St Peter's Church, Coleshill	Earl Digby	John Digby Wingfield
Meriden Parish Church	Earl of Aylesford	Charles Finch
Little Packington Parish Church	Earl of Aylesford	Charles Finch
Great Packington Parish Church	Earl of Aylesford	Charles Finch
St Peter's Parish Church, Hampton Lucy	Geo. Lucy Esq.	John Lucy
St Leonard's Parish Church, Charlecote	Geo. Lucy Esq.	John Lucy
St Mary Magdalene Parish Church, Lillington	Mat. Wise Esq.	John White
Holy Trinity Parish Church, Sutton Coldfield	R.Bedford Esq (White names Rev W.K.R.Bedford)	William K R Bedford
Pillerton Hersey Parish Church	Rev. F.Mills	Henry Mills
St Wilfred's Parish Church, Arley	Rev. Roger R Vaughton	Robert Vaughton
Birdingbury Parish Church	Sir T. Biddulph, Bt	Henry Biddulph
St Botolph's Parish Church, Farnborough	William Holbech	Charles W Holbech
St Mary's Church, Atherstone	Vicar of Mancetter (Benjamin Richings)	Frederic H Richings

The Honourable and Reverend Charles Finch, incumbent of Great and Little Packington and Meriden, was the son of Heneage, 4<sup>th</sup> Earl of Aylesford and brother of the 5<sup>th</sup> Earl, lord of the manor and principal landowner in Great Packington and Meriden. Finch took up the posts at Packington in 1824 (at the age of 25) succeeding his older brother Edward as Vicar of Meriden on the latter's death in 1825.<sup>789</sup> Another parish with family interest was Corley, whose vicar, Arthur William Gregory, was the younger brother of the patron (who had inherited the right to present from his father). The Gregorys were a family of longstanding in Stivichall (six miles away) dating back at least to the early Elizabethan period and where the vicar of Corley was also perpetual curate.<sup>790</sup>

In Birmingham and Aston, there were seven rectories, two vicarages and 22 perpetual curacies. The pattern of patronage was substantially different from that in the rest of the county. In four of the seven rectories and seven of the perpetual curacies, patronage was in the hands of trustees, a further two were in the hands of the bishop alone, and he shared two more, one with the Crown and one with trustees. In ten cases the patron was a local clergyman. These were mainly the major clergy in the district – the rectors and the vicar of Aston having patronage over daughter or district churches within their parishes, but also including three who were their own patrons, while the patronage of the plum vicarage of Aston was vested in the executors of the previous vicar. In addition to Lord Calthorpe, who was patron of both Edgbaston churches, there were three cases where the patrons were drawn from the ranks of the gentry or nobility. Two of them were Members of

---

<sup>789</sup> J. Foster, *Alumni Oxonienses*: pp. 461-462

<sup>790</sup> F. White & Co., *Gazetteer and Directory of Warwickshire*, pp. 593, 815

Parliament while the third was the Earl of Bradford (principal landowner in Castle Bromwich and Water Orton).

### **Squarsons**

One of the unfortunate consequences of enclosure was the effect on relations between priest and people in rural parishes. Since time immemorial the village priest had been the friend and adviser to the poor, living among them, ministering to their needs in health, sickness and death.<sup>791</sup> However, in the process of enclosure, many clergy were separated from the people who most needed them. “The good old times, when a poor clergy lived and prayed with their flock went out when pauperism and enclosures came in.”<sup>792</sup> Before enclosure could be brought about, the tithe holder had to agree. Since many landlords wished to free their expected increase in output from the burden of the tithe, it was in many cases commuted on terms favourable to the holder, for an allotment of land. The result was that the glebe, and consequently the value of livings in many cases doubled or trebled almost overnight. “In a generation, many of the parsons rose to gentry status. Their new affluence often separated them from the people in the most literal sense.”<sup>793</sup> Clergy became allied to the interests of farmers, with increasing numbers serving as magistrates. At the beginning of George III’s reign, clergymen accounted for 9% of

---

<sup>791</sup> J. Obelkevich, ‘Religion’ p. 313

<sup>792</sup> W.R Ward, *Religion and Society in England 1790 – 1850* p. 11

<sup>793</sup> W.R. Ward, *Religion and Society in England* p.9; these would include clergymen who were patron/incumbents such as those in Warwickshire listed in Table 5.5 above.

the Bench in Warwickshire (a little lower than the national average of 11%). This rose to 36% in 1831 and in some counties where much enclosure had been more recent, this figure was even higher.<sup>794</sup> The Georgian enclosure movement had increased the social standing of the clergy, turning them into landowners and clearing the path to magistracy. Furthermore in some rural areas the clergyman was the only person qualified for such appointments by virtue of education and property.

In the 1830s and early 1840s there was increasing opposition to the appointment of clergy as magistrates both in government and among the clergy themselves. In 1837 the Chairman of the Warwickshire Quarter Sessions, Sir Eardley Wilmot told the House of Commons that he had 'long contended' that clergy should not be put into commissions but that he was prevented from supporting an absolute prohibition by the extreme difficulty of filling the benches 'in many counties' without them.<sup>795</sup> In this he was supported by the earl of Warwick, who in 1839 told the House of Lords that in the seventeen years that he had been Lord Lieutenant of the county he had placed twelve clergy in commissions – six in his first year of office and the other six at various times over the remaining sixteen. In the latest commission, for 1839, only one cleric had been appointed.<sup>796</sup> The earl remained Lord Lieutenant until his death in 1853 and after 1840 'hardly any more clergy' were made magistrates in Warwickshire. According to White's *Directory*,<sup>797</sup> the County Magistrates List in 1850

---

<sup>794</sup> E.J. Evans, 'Some Reasons for the Growth of English Anti-clericalism c1750 – c 1830' in *Past and Present* no 66 (1975) p. 104

<sup>795</sup> P. Virgin, *The Church in an Age of Negligence* p. 120

<sup>796</sup> P. Virgin, *The Church in an Age of Negligence* p. 120

<sup>797</sup> F. White & Co., *Gazetteer and Directory of Warwickshire*, pp. 437-8

totalled 130 of whom nineteen were clerics – at 14%, returning to 1760 levels. In Birmingham there were a further eighteen magistrates, all lay: if these are added to the county total, barely one Warwickshire magistrate in eight was a clergyman. While there was undoubtedly a rising reluctance among the clergy to appear on the Bench, often under the influence of Tractarianism, this shows that there was an equally strong aversion on the part of the laity to appoint them.

It is possible to produce an 'identikit' picture of the typical Warwickshire clergyman of the mid-nineteenth century.<sup>798</sup> He was aged 44 years old, born no more than about 50 miles from his parish, of a gentry or clerical background, though unlikely to be a magistrate. He was married with three children living at home with two servants. He was an Oxbridge graduate and was more likely to be an incumbent serving one parish than an assistant curate; in rural areas a rector or vicar, in towns, a perpetual curate, and would have been reasonably affluent from his benefice income. In rural areas his patron would be local gentry or nobility, in towns, trustees. There were, however, three significant variants. There was the elderly incumbent who was a throwback to the Georgian era – often the 'squarson'. G.O. Fenwicke's entry in *Alumni Cantabrigienses*, described him as "a perfect gentleman, a High Churchman without any leaven of bigotry, a thorough-going conscientious Conservative, and altogether a noble specimen of the learned minister of God's Word of other days".<sup>799</sup> The over-sixties still numbered almost 60, with a significant

---

<sup>798</sup> Statistically the age profile of Warwickshire clergy shows a normal distribution pattern, with two-thirds of the population being between the ages of 31 and 59. (The mean age of the clergy was 44.5 with a standard deviation of 14.2. For a normal distribution 68% of the population lie between  $\pm$  one standard deviation of the mean.)

<sup>799</sup> J. Venn and J.A. Venn, *Alumni cantabrigienses* Vol. ii, p. 482

proportion retaining their social as well as economic status, especially in rural parishes but as magistrates they were not being replaced. Then there was the young man born into the right family ('with a silver spoon in his mouth') who became a rector or vicar as soon as he was priested. These are found in Table 5.6, although for some, youth had been left behind some years before 1851. Finally there was the young assistant ('a pale young curate') in the first of several posts, serving the fifteen years or so until he could finally get preferment. These formed the bulk of the 50 or so under 30s, although some were merely 'in transit' on their way to early preferment.

## **b. Who were the Nonconformists?**

### **i. Nonconformist Clergy in Warwickshire**

In attempting a similar study of the Nonconformist clergy in order to make comparisons with the Anglican clergy described above in Chapter 5a, the first problem to be faced is the considerable diversity between the different denominations in many respects. The sample used here consists of those men who signed the Warwickshire returns of the 1851 Religious Census and who can be identified in the 1851 Population Census. Further information was derived from *Independency in Warwickshire, Deep Roots, Living Branches, Leary's Ministers & circuits in the Primitive Methodist Church* and alumni lists for Cambridge and Glasgow Universities.<sup>800</sup> In total, 86 ministers have been identified, representing thirteen different denominations<sup>801</sup>, including two who were officiating at non-sectarian places of worship.<sup>802</sup> These are shown in Figure 5.4

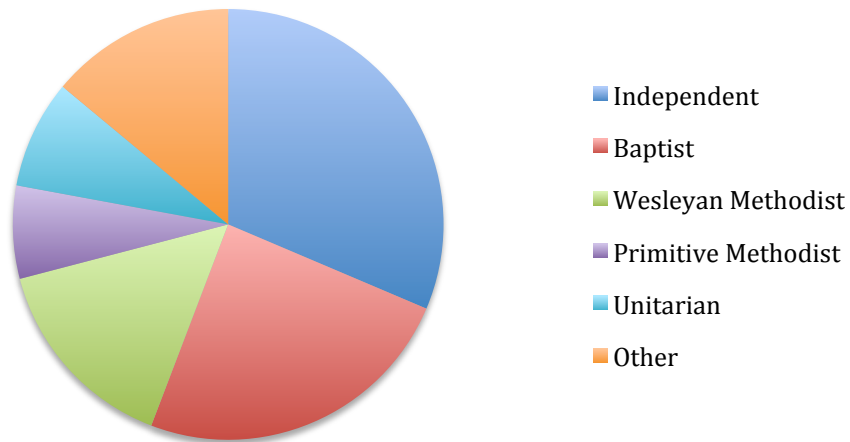
---

<sup>800</sup> J. Sibree and M. Caston, *Independency in Warwickshire*; A. Betteridge, *Deep Roots, Living Branches*; W. Leary, *Ministers & circuits in the Primitive Methodist Church: a directory* (Loughborough, 1990); J. Venn and J.A. Venn, *Alumni cantabrigienses*; W.I. Addison *A roll of the graduates of the University of Glasgow from 31st December, 1727 to 31st December, 1897: with short biographical notes* (Glasgow, 1898)

<sup>801</sup> Baptists have been considered as one group for the purposes of analysis.

<sup>802</sup> George Dawson at the Church of the Saviour in Birmingham (HO129.394.1.1.5) and Peter Crawford at the Harbury Railway Mission (HO129.407.1.9.10)

**Figure 5.4**  
**Nonconformist Clergy in Warwickshire**  
**1851 Religious Census**



### Age

The average age of these Nonconformist ministers was a little over 43, which was almost identical with that of the county's Anglican clergy. However, this masks considerable denominational variation - the average age of Independent ministers was 49, Baptists 44, Unitarians 41, Wesleyans, 40, while the average age of the Primitive Methodist itinerants was a mere 30. They ranged from 77-year-old Independent James Bourne at Maney (Sutton Coldfield) to 20-year-old Primitive Methodist Charles Waters who had just begun an itinerant ministry which would subsequently take him to Australia.<sup>803</sup> Thus they were slightly younger at either end than their Anglican counterparts. The youngest (aged 20 and 21) were two Primitive Methodist preachers who had taken advantage of the failure 40 years earlier of Sidmouth's Bill to prevent anyone taking out a licence as a preacher under the age of

<sup>803</sup> HO129.395.4.4.8; HO129.162.2.5.20; W. Leary, *Ministers & circuits in the Primitive Methodist Church* p. 224

22.<sup>804</sup> Another reason why the itinerant preachers were slightly younger than any of the Anglican clergy is that the latter were still, in Warwickshire at least, as we have seen, primarily graduates, who were usually 22 at least before they could be ordained deacon. It seems reasonable to suggest that in any denomination, the younger clergy would be more energetic, and that based on the Warwickshire returns, the Primitive Methodists (along with most of the Mormon preachers) were more energetic than most. In fact, with the amount of travelling undertaken by many of the itinerants, such youthful energy would appear to have been an essential requirement.

### **Birthplace**

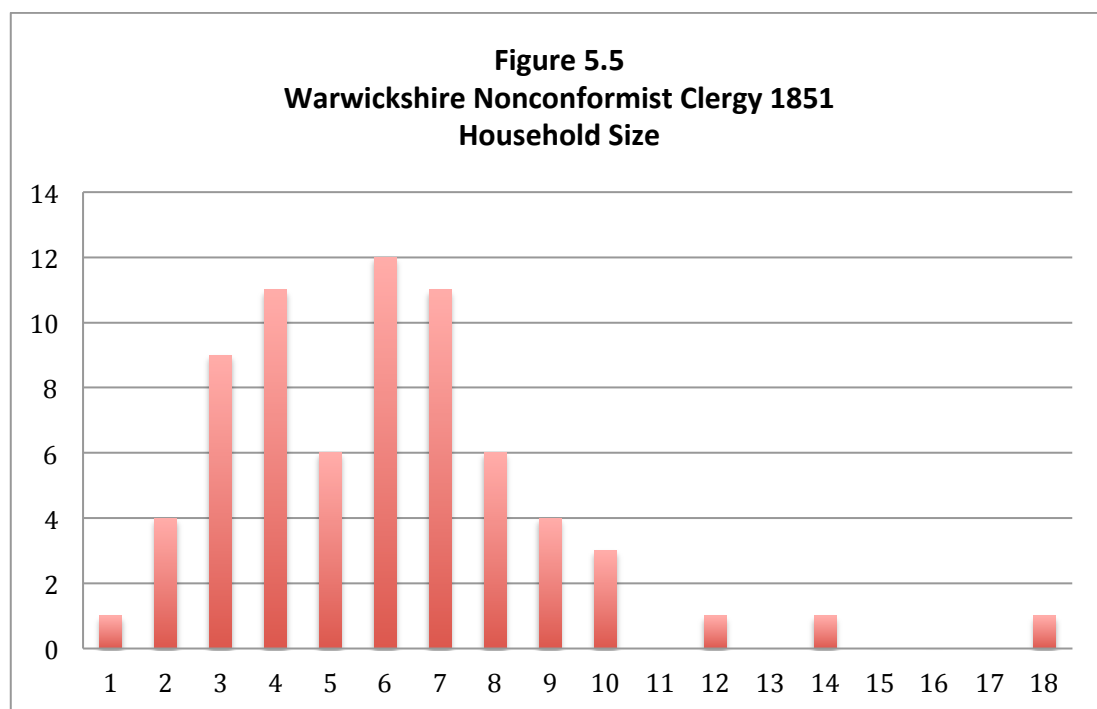
Of the 85 identifiable birthplaces, 70 (83%) were in England. The remainder comprised a Unitarian from Canada, a Mormon elder from the United States and the remainder (15%) from the 'Celtic fringes'. This last compares with only 10% of Anglicans. The six Welshmen came from six different counties and were spread across five denominations, the Scots comprised two Independents, one Presbyterian and one minister of the Catholic Apostolic Church, while the Irish consisted of two Unitarians and a Baptist. Only twelve of the total (about one in seven) were Warwickshire born, including five Independents and five Baptists, several of whom were ministering in their home village. This compares less favourably with more than a fifth of Anglicans who had returned to their native heath. Almost a fifth were born in adjacent counties, roughly the same proportion as the Anglican clergy, while the remainder were drawn from 21 counties, as far afield as Kent, Cornwall and Durham.

---

<sup>804</sup> J.M. Turner, *Wesleyan Methodism* (Peterborough, 2005) p. 13

The largest group were the seven Yorkshiremen, including four Wesleyan Methodist ministers, and six Londoners (at 7%, a slightly smaller proportion than the 10% of Anglicans). The Methodist circuit system would make for a more heterogeneous geographical background, with the home areas perhaps reflecting strongholds where there was a robust structure for developing men from local preachers into ordained ministers.

### Household Size



In 1851, the mean size of Nonconformist ministers' 71 identifiable households was 5.83 (with a mode of 6), which, while still larger than Laslett's 4.75, was significantly smaller than their Anglican counterparts. The largest household was the 18 of Samuel Bache, the Unitarian Minister of the Birmingham New Meeting House, which included seven teenage boys who were pupils of his wife, a private teacher. The total 'population' of the 71 households in the whole county was 414 of whom just 64 were servants of one kind or another. The remainder included 22 from extensions to

family - cousins, sisters (and in law), nephews and nieces etc. and sixteen non-family members (visitors, boarders, lodgers and a friend). The proportion of extended family members was somewhat larger in Anglican parsonages than in Nonconformist manses, but the really significant difference, which accounts almost entirely for the difference in mean size of household was in the numbers of servants, with Anglican clergymen employing, on average, more than three each, while the Nonconformist ministers averaged fewer than one each. There was, however, some denominational diversity, with the five Unitarian households employing eleven servants, the same number as the nineteen Baptist ministers. The eleven Wesleyan Methodist ministers employed almost as many as the 26 Independents, while the four Primitive Methodists managed only a single servant. Overall, this would indicate that although the Nonconformists were as likely to provide a social support network for members of their extended families, they were not sufficiently affluent as to be able to afford a great deal of domestic help. It is not surprising that the Unitarian ministers appeared to be more affluent and that many of the Baptists and Methodists were less well off. This corresponds well with their stereotypes and with the socio-economic profile of their lay memberships. What is more surprising is that the Wesleyan Methodist ministers appeared to have greater need of resident domestic help than their Independent counterparts; only two of the eleven Wesleyan Methodist ministers had no servants, whereas of the 26 Independent ministers, no fewer than nine had no servants. This may reflect the upward mobility of the Wesleyan Methodists during the first half of the nineteenth century as the denomination became more respectable and middle class. An examination of the

individual families reveals no discernible pattern, although it must be remembered that these are very small samples.

### **Education**

Probably the greatest contrast between Anglican and Nonconformist clergy can be seen in their educational backgrounds, though there was also considerable disparity within Nonconformity. Since the older Universities in England had yet to open their doors to Nonconformists, it is not surprising that the only Nonconformist minister to be Oxbridge educated was F.C.B. Earle, M.A.(Cantab.), of the Catholic Apostolic Church, who had recently defected from the Church of England. A further two, Unitarian Hugh Hutton and former Baptist George Dawson, definitely received M.A. degrees from Glasgow University, and Presbyterian John R MacKenzie M.A. may also be a Glasgow alumnus, while Octavius Winslow, Baptist Minister of Leamington, who was subsequently ordained Anglican deacon and priest appears to have been educated in New York.<sup>805</sup>

However, these five apart, the absence of University graduates from their ranks does not mean that Nonconformist clergy were uneducated.<sup>806</sup> By the end of the seventeenth century, Presbyterians and Independents had established their own academies, while an early Baptist academy was set up in Bristol as early as 1720.<sup>807</sup> By 1838, according to Bennett, there were eighteen Nonconformist academies in England and Wales, nine Independent, four Particular Baptist, two Presbyterian/Unitarian, one General Baptist, one Wesleyan, and one Calvinistic

---

<sup>805</sup> *Crockford's Clerical Directory*, 1872, 1874

<sup>806</sup> M.R. Watts, *The Dissenters Vol. 2* pp. 265-277

<sup>807</sup> M.R. Watts, *The Dissenters Vol. 2* p. 268

Methodist along with three interdenominational colleges, at Hackney, Cheshunt, and Newport Pagnell, which were open to Anglicans as well as to Dissenters but which in practice were increasingly supplying the Congregationalist pastorate.<sup>808</sup>

There are three important points to note about the education of Nonconformist clergy. The first is that it was not universally regarded with approval. There were many in the tradition of evangelical Nonconformity who believed that too much learning could interfere with the saving of souls. Watts pointed out that “Evangelical Nonconformity had particular appeal in largely illiterate communities and as a consequence some ministers who devoted themselves to learning aroused the suspicions of their congregations and of their colleagues”.<sup>809</sup> The ambivalent attitude of evangelicals towards education was illustrated by the fact that the Countess of Huntingdon founded a college to train preachers but discouraged them from learning Greek and Hebrew “lest they be deflected from their task of saving souls”.<sup>810</sup> However, by the middle of the nineteenth century, most Nonconformist denominations had concluded that “study could deepen one's knowledge of the Bible and understanding of the Christian message, and that an educated ministry was better placed than an ignorant one to defend Dissent from the assaults of Anglicans, papists, and secularists”.<sup>811</sup>

Secondly, there had been considerable variability in the standards of teaching in

---

<sup>808</sup> M.R. Watts, *The Dissenters Vol. 2* p. 272

<sup>809</sup> M.R. Watts, *The Dissenters Vol. 2* p. 266

<sup>810</sup> G. F. Nuttall, *The Significance of Trevecca College* (London, 1969), p7 cited in M.R. Watts, *The Dissenters Vol. 2* p. 269

<sup>811</sup> M.R. Watts, *The Dissenters Vol. 2* p. 266

Nonconformists colleges in the first half of the nineteenth century. Many of them were still dependent on one or two tutors and offered limited curricula which failed to stretch the minds of more able students. But by the middle of the century the situation had improved considerably, with the best colleges offering their students a wide-ranging education. Thirdly, in delivering a firm grounding in biblical knowledge and theological studies, the Dissenting colleges gave to future ministers one clear advantage over their Anglican counterparts. Since the majority of Anglican clergy graduated at either Oxford or Cambridge, their education was based largely on the Classics and they left university without having received either formal education in theology or vocational training in the ministry, though they may have attended some lectures by the Professor of Theology. This led Watts to conclude that “There can be little doubt that those Dissenting ministers who received a college education were better prepared for their future careers than were Anglican clergymen”.<sup>812</sup>

In Warwickshire, the Independent clergy were drawn from a number of institutions. The college at Hoxton numbered Peter Sibree (Birmingham) and Samuel Hartnell (Nuneaton) as alumni before its move to Highbury, at which a further five ministers studied.<sup>813</sup> By 1838 Spring Hill College was established in Birmingham and at least one of the ministers in the Religious Census was an alumnus. Among the Baptists it is possible to identify Henry Angus, minister in Rugby who had been a student at Horton Baptist College, Bradford, and married his predecessor’s daughter and James

---

<sup>812</sup> M.R. Watts, *The Dissenters Vol. 2* p. 277

<sup>813</sup> Alfred Pope (Leamington), George Eustace (Zion Chapel, Nuneaton), John Harrison (Stretton), Richard Williams (Well Street Chapel, Coventry) and Samuel Dyll (Hartshill)

Jones who was baptised at Rugby in 1812 and sent to Bristol Baptist College in 1816. He stayed at Monks Kirby until his death in 1860.<sup>814</sup>

### **Marital Status and Family Size**

Slightly more than three quarters of the Nonconformist clergy in Warwickshire were married, while a further 10% had been so, but by 1851 were widowed. Their resident families included 93 sons and 85 daughters, a much more even balance than was found in Anglican homes. As with the Anglicans, it would appear that adult daughters stayed at home until they married, which would account for the imbalance between daughters and sons over 21, a ratio of four to one, while two found homes for their widowed mothers in law. The oldest 'children' in each case are the unmarried son and daughter of the widowed Samuel Hartnell of Nuneaton. Although there is an imbalance of children under 12 - at almost every age there are more boys than girls, and overall there are almost twice as many boys as girls, the small size of the sample means that the likeliest explanation is that this distribution occurred by chance. The eleven unmarried ministers had mean age of 32, but this was raised by the existence of two elderly bachelors. Most of the young men were lodgers or visitors in the case of the itinerant preachers. although one lived with his parents.

### **Family Background and Income**

It is clear that Nonconformist clergy came from a wide variety of backgrounds. Hugh Bourne, born on a farmstead and trained as a carpenter, was an auto-didact with a knowledge of Greek, Hebrew, Latin and French. His fellow Primitive Methodist,

---

<sup>814</sup> A. Betteridge, *Deep Roots, Living Branches*; pp. 105, 118

William Clowes, was a potter, while the founder of the Bible Christians, William O'Bryan was the son of a wealthy farmer.<sup>815</sup> Edward Miall, Independent minister and leading figure in the Voluntaryist movement had been a schoolmaster and was a schoolmaster's son.<sup>816</sup> Within Warwickshire, too, there was great diversity. At the beginning of the nineteenth century, one of the Rugby ministers was a member of the gentry - the Rev. Sir Egerton Leigh, of Little Harborough Hall, in his early days an Independent, but subsequently a Baptist minister.<sup>817</sup> Robert Vaughan, minister at Ebenezer Independent Chapel in Birmingham from 1850 to 1855 was the son of the Tutor of the Lancashire College<sup>818</sup>, while Baptist Francis Franklin at Cow Lane, Coventry had been a cabinet and chair maker's apprentice in Oxford.<sup>819</sup> In Long Compton, Samuel West had been a linen weaver, who, having led the separation of a group of Wesleyan Methodists to form an Independent church, became their pastor and was subsequently ordained. Sibree and Caston pointed out that "During the whole period of his ministry he was engaged through the week, either as a shopkeeper or schoolmaster ... his people being too poor to render him much assistance."<sup>820</sup> At least two of his lay occupations would have classed him little higher than many in his congregation.

---

<sup>815</sup> R. Davies, *Methodism 2<sup>nd</sup> ed.* (London 1976) pp. 115, 118; M.R. Watts, *The Dissenters Vol. 2* p. 252

<sup>816</sup> J.C.G. Binfield, *So Down to Prayers*, p. 111

<sup>817</sup> J. Sibree and M. Caston, *Independency in Warwickshire* pp. 395-398; A. Betteridge, *Deep Roots, Living Branches* pp. 104-105

<sup>818</sup> J. Sibree and M. Caston, *Independency in Warwickshire* pp. 185-186

<sup>819</sup> A. Betteridge, *Deep Roots, Living Branches* pp. 131-132

<sup>820</sup> J. Sibree and M. Caston, *Independency in Warwickshire* p. 316; H0129.162.2.5.21

Clergy incomes also reveal great disparities, both between and within denominations. The Quakers and the Independent Methodists eschewed paid ministry on principle. But as Watts pointed out, in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries a large number of Nonconformist ministers (Wesleyan Methodists excepted) earned their living in secular occupations, not because their congregations had conscientious objections to supporting them, but, like the aforementioned Long Compton Independents, because they were too poor to do so.<sup>821</sup> Nationally in 1847 Congregational churches employed around 1,400 ministers, while in 1851 the various Methodist connexions had 1,935 full time ministers in post, including 560 Primitive Methodist travelling preachers.<sup>822</sup> At that time the Congregational Union was told that 217 of its ministers were still being paid less than £70 a year, and of those, 97 got less than £50 a year.<sup>823</sup> Four years later, the Baptist Reporter claimed that while 60 Baptist churches paid their ministers £300 or more a year, and another 120 paid £200 a year, most Baptist ministers received less than £80 a year.<sup>824</sup> Thus the pay of the average Baptist or Independent minister in the middle of the nineteenth century was comparable to that of Anglican curates, whose average salary in 1853 was £79 a year<sup>825</sup>, but their salaries were well below those of Anglican incumbents in Warwickshire, as we have seen above, whose mean income in 1851 in rural parishes was about £238, while for urban parishes the equivalent

---

<sup>821</sup> M.R. Watts, *The Dissenters Vol. 2* p. 240

<sup>822</sup> K. D. Brown, *A Social History of the Nonconformist Ministry in England and Wales* (Oxford, 1988) p. 11; R. Davies, *Methodism 2<sup>nd</sup> ed.* p. 117

<sup>823</sup> R.T. Jones, *Congregationalism in England 1662 – 1962* (London, 1962) p. 230

<sup>824</sup> M.R. Watts, *The Dissenters Vol. 2* p. 249

<sup>825</sup> A. Haig, *The Victorian Clergy* p. 223

figure was £398 a year. It is true that Binfield's "Olympian ministers, chiefly Congregationalists, might expect between £700 and £1000 in the second half of the nineteenth century"<sup>826</sup>, and that as early as 1826, John Angell James got £300 at Carr's Lane and was offered £1,000 if he moved to Craven Chapel.<sup>827</sup> But the vast number of ministers must have been living near destitution. Watts pointed out that the Primitive Methodist ministers were paid less than either Wesleyan itinerants or Baptist and Congregational pastors.<sup>828</sup> By 1845 married ministers' salaries were still less than £50 a year, while unmarried preachers received much less, sometimes as little as the poorest agricultural labourers.<sup>829</sup> A consequence of such low stipends is that the most poorly paid have less capacity to be full-time ministers.

Unlike their Anglican counterparts, the Nonconformist churches had little in the way of endowment with which to support their ministers. The Independent chapel in the Warwickshire village of Stretton under Fosse had "some small endowments amounting to about £30", while in Hampton in Arden, the sum of £10 was "directed by the late Mrs Simons to be appropriated to the support of divine worship in this place. It is greatly to be desired that all our village congregations should enjoy such support as that which Hampton in Arden has been favoured."<sup>830</sup> It would seem that this was something of a pipedream.

---

<sup>826</sup> J.C.G. Binfield, *So Down to Prayers* p. 17

<sup>827</sup> R.T. Jones, *Congregationalism in England 1662 – 1962* p. 229

<sup>828</sup> M.R. Watts, *The Dissenters Vol. 2* pp. 252-254

<sup>829</sup> K.D.M. Snell, *Annals of the Labouring Poor: social change and agrarian England* (Cambridge, 1985) p. 126

<sup>830</sup> J. Sibree and M. Caston, *Independency in Warwickshire* pp. 224, 333

However, by the middle of the nineteenth century, some improvement in living standards can be detected, as manses or lodgings were provided by most denominations, and provision was starting to be made for older ministers to retire and for the support of their widows. In 1855, John Angell James at Carr's Lane offered the £700 which a grateful congregation had offered him as a retirement gift to form the basis of an annuity fund for which all Congregational ministers might be eligible.<sup>831</sup> Meanwhile at Cow Lane, a meeting to consider the stipend of Franklin's successor, W.T. Rosevear in March 1853 also agreed to pay an annuity of £40 to "the Widow of our late aged Pastor during her life".<sup>832</sup>

### **Pluralism**

One area of diversity between Nonconformist clergy was length of tenure. Binfield pointed out that the Wesleyan ministry "had originated to meet the need for peripatetic evangelism. Congregationalists, and to a lesser extent, Baptists, retained the tradition of a settled pastorate and in many churches an intense partnership developed between ministers and people in which personality outweighed status. [These partnerships] were the glory of a congregational system, possible in neither the Methodist connexional system nor in Anglicanism with its parson's freehold."<sup>833</sup> R.T. Jones claimed that 1815 – 1850 was the age of the popular preachers. "People crowded the chapels to hear their favourites, to study their style, to memorise their sayings," and that "Carr's Lane, Birmingham, was packed during John Angell James's

---

<sup>831</sup> K. D. Brown, *A Social History of the Nonconformist Ministry in England and Wales* p. 196

<sup>832</sup> J.C.G. Binfield, *Pastors and People* p. 46

<sup>833</sup> J.C.G. Binfield, *So Down to Prayers*. pp. 17-18

ministry.”<sup>834</sup> Many of the ministers of the denominations of Old Dissent were extremely long-serving, some occupying the same pulpit for the whole of their ministerial career. These national characteristics were also found in Warwickshire and seen in the careers of Independents Samuel Hartnell (in Nuneaton since 1801), John Angell James (in Birmingham since 1805) and John Sibree (in Coventry since 1820).<sup>835</sup> In Monks Kirby, the Baptist, James Jones, had “long been a respected minister”, while in Coventry, the legendary Francis Franklin had been minister of Cow Lane Baptist Chapel since 1798.<sup>836</sup> However, by the middle of the nineteenth century, this situation was changing, with Kenneth Brown suggesting that three-quarters of Independent and 70% of Baptist pastorates begun between 1841 and 1861 lasted for less than ten years, while as many as half of Independent and 43% of Baptist pastorates lasted for less than five years.<sup>837</sup> The Methodists on the other hand, had developed the circuit system, so ministers were not expected to preach three times a day to the same congregation. They changed circuits every two or three years, which, although providing them with “fresh woods and pastures new”, placed great strain on their home life. Moreover, the rigours of the itinerant system often made the job of a Methodist minister more physically demanding than that of settled pastors. The lot of Primitive Methodist preachers was especially burdensome before the Connexion started to provide horses in the 1840s<sup>838</sup>, although the

---

<sup>834</sup> R.T. Jones, *Congregationalism in England 1662 – 1962* p. 222

<sup>835</sup> J. Sibree and M. Caston, *Independency in Warwickshire* pp. 210, 78, 179

<sup>836</sup> J. Sibree and M. Caston, *Independency in Warwickshire* p. 226; A. Betteridge, *Deep Roots, Living Branches* pp. 131-132

<sup>837</sup> K. D. Brown, *A Social History of the Nonconformist Ministry in England and Wales* p. 166

<sup>838</sup> M.R. Watts, *The Dissenters Vol. 2* p. 257

presence in the Population Census of three of the six Warwickshire Primitive Methodist preachers as visitors in the homes of families<sup>839</sup> in the villages where they had been preaching on Census Sunday suggests that they may have walked rather than ridden from their homes or lodgings in neighbouring towns.

The fact that Independent, Baptist and Unitarian clergy generally ministered to a single congregation, plus, in some areas, sponsored mission churches, meant that they were not subjected to the same criticism of being pluralists as some of the Anglican clergy were. In contrast the Methodist circuit system enforced a kind of pluralism, although unlike Anglican pluralists, they did not get multiple incomes. This can be clearly seen in the Warwickshire returns of the Religious Census, where Methodist ministers completed the forms for several places of worship.<sup>840</sup>

### **Summary**

Binfield averred that in her portrayal of the life of a Dissenting minister, George Eliot highlighted clearly the poverty and social conditioning which was at odds with their education - "the social ambiguity of Dissent"<sup>841</sup> seen most clearly in manse life, where "looked at from a secular point of view, a poor minister must be below the substantial householder who kept him... the weaker tea was thought good enough for him; and even when he went to preach a charity sermon in a strange town, he

---

<sup>839</sup> HO107/1733/45/1; HO107/2077/285/13; HO107/2077/354/8

<sup>840</sup> John Anderson, Wesleyan Minister of Kineton signed no fewer than seven forms, HO129.163.2.13.17; HO129.404.1.3.8; HO129.404.1.3.6; HO129.404.1.5.10; HO129.406.4.7.7; HO129.406.4.11.14; HO129.406.4.13.16

<sup>841</sup> J.C.G. Binfield, *Pastors and People* p. 42

was treated with homemade wine and the smaller bedroom ..." <sup>842</sup> Yet in Warwickshire, the Nonconformist minister had, from a humble background risen with comparative ease in the social scale, with a regular if uncertain income, which was not the case for millions of his fellow countrymen. Moreover, for many Dissenting ministers their education in a theological college was the means of escaping from the life of a labourer or artisan with little previous schooling and entry into the world of scholarship and learning.

---

<sup>842</sup> G. Eliot, *Felix Holt, The Radical*, (London, 1866, Penguin edition, 1972) p. 158

## **b.ii a Lay Nonconformists**

In 2010, Field published an extensive survey tracing the economic and social characteristics of Dissenters Old and new, from their beginnings to the present-day.<sup>843</sup> In addition to his own research he drew heavily on many local studies for his detailed examples, and on Watts' *The Dissenters* for his overview, especially on the subject of occupational structure.<sup>844</sup> He highlighted the difficulties in making comparisons between different studies because of ambiguities and inconsistencies of descriptions, both spatially and temporally, and advised a cautious approach to the interpretation of occupational data. Nevertheless in spite of these difficulties he concluded that, in the main, the evidence supports the widely held views of mid-nineteenth century Nonconformity.

Among the Dissenting groups, the Quakers and the Unitarians had the highest social standing. Somewhat lower in rank were the Congregationalists, Baptists and Wesleyan Methodists. Of the smaller groups, the Countess of Huntingdon's Connexion added tone to Congregational church life; their "liturgical forms and genteel atmosphere and impression of being on the fringe of both the Establishment and of the most respectable Dissent, won over persons of quality who might otherwise have held aloof".<sup>845</sup> In the middle years of the century, Irving's Catholic

---

<sup>843</sup> C.D. Field, 'Zion's people; who were the English Nonconformists?' *The Local Historian*, Vol.40 No.2 (May 2010) pp. 91-112; Vol.40 No.3 (August 2010) pp. 208-223; Vol.40 No.4 (November 2010) pp. 292-308

<sup>844</sup> Including C.D. Field, 'The Social Structure of English Methodism: Eighteenth-Twentieth Centuries' *The British Journal of Sociology*, Vol. 28, No. 2 (Jun., 1977), pp. 199-225 and M.R. Watts, *The Dissenters* Vol. 2 Appendix II 'The Reliability of Baptismal Registers as a Guide to the Occupational Structure of Nonconformist Congregations'

<sup>845</sup> I. Sellers, *Nineteenth-Century Nonconformity* p. 1

Apostolic Church also, for a time, attracted many wealthy and influential adherents.<sup>846</sup> At the bottom of the social scale sat the Primitive Methodists and smaller groups such as the Mormons and the Millenarianists. The Primitive Methodists were increasingly seen as the working class arm of Dissent, a title which many of them bore with pride, especially in the period up to 1843 “a heroic period when their permanent proletarian image was formed”.<sup>847</sup>

The most prominent Victorian Quakers were engaged in commerce, banking and manufacturing, dominating much of the iron industry. They possessed a higher social profile (no fewer than seven of Birmingham’s nineteenth century mayors were Quakers<sup>848</sup>), and had greater personal wealth than members of any other denomination. Their influence, both locally and nationally, was out of proportion to their small numbers<sup>849</sup> (which in Warwickshire were actually smaller than the Parliamentary Report<sup>850</sup> suggested, due to double counting – details of which are given in Chapter 4 and page 340 below). Isichei concluded that their occupational structure and their high life expectancy reflected the fact that Victorian Friends were a predominantly middle class group. But Quakers were also found at either end of the social scale, those “‘in humble life’, who do not figure prominently in Quaker affairs and whose existence, in consequence, tends to be overlooked” and at the

---

<sup>846</sup> E.A. Payne, *The Free Church Tradition in the Life of England* (3<sup>rd</sup> ed. London, 1951) p. 130

<sup>847</sup> A. Armstrong, *The Church of England, the Methodists and Society, 1700 – 1850* (London, 1973) p. 200

<sup>848</sup> A. Briggs, *Victorian Cities* (London, 1963) p. 202

<sup>849</sup> E.A. Isichei, *Victorian Quakers* p. xix

<sup>850</sup> H. Mann, *Census of Great Britain, 1851: Religious Worship, England and Wales*

other, there was also “a glittering superstructure of great industrialists and financiers.”<sup>851</sup>

The Unitarians, too, were dominated by prosperous business and professional families, who were also imbued with a strong sense of civic responsibility. They provided even more mayors of Birmingham than the Quakers<sup>852</sup>, – one of the earliest, Samuel Beale (mayor in 1841) was a glass and lead merchant, founded what was to become the Midland Bank, and subsequently became an iron manufacturer, while the most famous was Joseph Chamberlain who was mayor from 1873 to 1876. It was possible in some areas to find a broader social range – the membership lists in Bolton revealed a substantial working class component as the result of a rationalist schism.<sup>853</sup> Like the Quakers, the Unitarians were numerically small, but their social significance was out of all proportion to their membership.<sup>854</sup>

Manufacturers and shopkeepers dominated most Congregational/Independent chapels, but there was also a significant number of skilled working men and their families included in their membership. But as for the lower classes, they were not considered on an equal footing by middle class chapel-goers. This led to the practice of arranging special services for the poor, while the Sunday schools were almost the exclusive preserve of the ‘operative classes’.<sup>855</sup> Baptists, too, included shopkeepers and manufacturers, but perhaps in fewer numbers than the Independents, together

---

<sup>851</sup> E.A. Isichei, *Victorian Quakers* pp. 186-187.

<sup>852</sup> A. Briggs, *History of Birmingham Vol. 2.* (Oxford, 1952)

<sup>853</sup> D.W. Bebbington, *Victorian Nonconformity* p. 7; H. McLeod, *Religion and the Working Class in Nineteenth Century Britain* (London, 1984) p. 14

<sup>854</sup> I. Sellers, *Nineteenth-Century Nonconformity* p. 51

<sup>855</sup> R.T. Jones, *Congregationalism in England 1662 – 1962* p. 229

with a number of skilled workers. However, it has been argued that there is a tendency to write all Nonconformist history in the light of a Congregational norm and that this has led historians into over-emphasising the middle class dominance of Nonconformity as a whole, when certain parts of it, most notably the Primitive Methodists and the Baptists had a more proletarian profile.<sup>856</sup> Briggs includes numerous studies which attest to the working class nature of Baptist congregations<sup>857</sup>, including those in Nottinghamshire, where it was found that all the Baptist churches included a much greater proportion of working class people among their members than the other classes put together. In agricultural villages, members were farm workers or tradesmen, and in the industrial villages they were lace-makers, stockings or miners.<sup>858</sup>

Although General Baptist churches had fewer middle class members than Particular Baptists, even Particular Baptist churches could be largely working class. Birmingham boasted two excellent examples - Arthur O'Neill's Newhall Street congregation and the neighbouring People's Chapel in Great King Street which had the support of Thomas Cooper, Chartist turned General Baptist preacher, who thought the church's designation 'a great title' which would require some living up to. More support for this view of Baptist sociology came from Hugh McLeod who showed that Baptist churches recruited their members from all social classes except the aristocracy and the lowest order of the working class. "The largest number of 'converted working men' was probably to be found among Baptists, who had a large lower middle class

---

<sup>856</sup> J.H.Y. Briggs, *The English Baptists of the Nineteenth Century* (Didcot, 1994) p. 265

<sup>857</sup> J.H.Y. Briggs, *The English Baptists of the Nineteenth Century* pp. 267ff

<sup>858</sup> J.H.Y. Briggs, *The English Baptists of the Nineteenth Century* p. 273

membership and a few distinctly wealthy chapels, but also a considerable working class element in most of their chapels.”<sup>859</sup> Such membership has been linked by a number of writers with the clarity with which Baptists expounded Evangelical doctrines. But there was also a paradox in this successful recruitment of working class Baptists. As they became more respectable, they often left to join the Anglicans or more respectable Dissenters. Those who stayed may have changed their habits but this was not always appreciated. “When they are converted, they give up drink. This adds 5/- to their wages and soon makes a difference in their appearance. Indeed it is a distinct hindrance that our people look such decent folk.”<sup>860</sup>

As for the Methodists, we have already seen that in the first half of the nineteenth century there was not one Methodism, but ‘many Methodisms in many places at many times’.<sup>861</sup> Hempton pointed out that the ‘chapel culture’ varied widely between rural and urban areas, while “the sermons of Conference dignitaries had little in common with those of Cornish folk preachers, and the political aspirations of Lancashire cotton manufacturers were poles apart from those of Durham trade unionists”.<sup>862</sup> Early Methodism could be conservative in outlook; Jabez Bunting, four times President of the Wesleyan Methodist Conference and known as ‘the Methodist pope’ was a high Tory, who is reputed to have declared that

---

<sup>859</sup> H. McLeod, *Class and Religion in the Late Victorian City* (London, 1974) p. 69

<sup>860</sup> W.S. Caine, of Baptist origins though in Lambeth, ministering to Congregationalists cited in J.Cox, *English Churches in a Secular Society, Lambeth, 1870 – 1930*. (Oxford, 1982) pp. 140-141

<sup>861</sup> R. Samuel (ed.), *People's History and Socialist Theory* (London, 1981) p. 357), cited in D. Hempton, *Methodism and Politics in British Society 1750-1850* (London, 1984) pp. 11-12

<sup>862</sup> D. Hempton, *Methodism and Politics in British Society 1750-1850* pp. 11-12

“Wesleyanism is as much opposed to democracy as it is to sin”,<sup>863</sup> though many Wesleyan members held more liberal views. The newer connexions were more democratic, allying themselves with working class struggles for improvements in living and working conditions. Surveys of occupations among Methodists in the nineteenth century have shown an increasing predominance of craftsmen even more so than in the previous century (some estimates put their membership as high as 70% among Wesleyan Methodists), though the term ‘artisan’ covers a very large range of jobs and incomes. There is a widely held view that Wesleyanism had little impact on the ‘unskilled masses’, and that even among the seceding groups, membership was more likely to be drawn from the semi-skilled rather than the unskilled groups, although according to Field, the Methodist New Connexion was most highly represented among the labour aristocracy and highly skilled groups<sup>864</sup> and it is true that in the case of Primitive Methodism, both the leadership and the rank and file in general were drawn from lower social groupings than those in the original Connexion. Smith argued that this consensus did not sit comfortably with his findings in Oldham and Saddleworth.<sup>865</sup> He claimed that the proportion of unskilled in the population at barely 1 in 10 hardly constituted ‘masses’ and that if the term ‘masses’ were extended upwards to include all lower status industrial workers, then Wesleyanism was having a significant impact on the ‘masses’. Moreover, this generalisation also breaks down when examined from a number of other viewpoints. In the first instance, many of the people who absented themselves from worship

---

<sup>863</sup> cited in H. Davies, *The English Free Churches* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed. London, 1963) pp. 156-157

<sup>864</sup> C.D. Field, ‘Zion’s people; who were the English Nonconformists?’ pp. 292-299

<sup>865</sup> M.A. Smith, *Religion and Industrial Society* pp. 198-199

readily sent their children to Sunday School. There is also evidence that in many areas, Methodist congregations contained a significant gender imbalance – that women were members and regular attenders and that it was the men who stayed away.<sup>866</sup> Finally there is the geographical dimension to consider. In the towns, much the greater proportion of the working classes were employed in retail and other service industries or were skilled or at least semi-skilled workers in manufacturing industry. It was only in the rural areas, where agricultural labourers formed a substantial percentage of the working population that the term ‘unskilled masses’ may be applicable.

#### **b. ii. b. Lay Nonconformists in the Warwickshire Returns**

Many ministers completed returns for the Nonconformist chapels and meeting places, especially the denominations of Old Dissent, though some Wesleyan Methodist Superintendent Ministers collected up the forms for each of the chapels for which they were responsible (such as Anderson (Kineton) & Ford (Rugby)). Elsewhere though, among Primitive and Wesleyan Methodists and General Baptists in particular (as well as the Quakers who had no ordained ministers) we can see the value of the Religious Census in bringing us face to face with individuals from the mid-nineteenth century religious communities. Two facts stand out. Firstly, virtually all of the forms were signed by the person who completed them. ‘Mark of ...’ appears on only five occasions (two of them at chapels in Pailton). This is perhaps understandable as these generally were officials of the church (stewards, class

---

<sup>866</sup> M.A. Smith, *Religion and Industrial Society* pp. 133, 201

leaders for example) of whom a reasonable standard of literacy might be expected. Secondly, the Religious Census returns indicate quite clearly that men predominate as officials, since all the forms except four were completed by men. The exceptions were the Radway Friends Meeting House, Small Heath Wesleyan Methodists, Harbury Primitive Methodists and the Pailton Israelites.<sup>867</sup> This should be set against the statistics cited by Field that around this time, every Nonconformist denomination had more women members than men.<sup>868</sup>

Of the 48 returns made for Baptist places of worship, 24 were completed by clergy, and a further five by men who simply described their official position in the church. These included a local preacher, School Superintendent, two Church secretaries (one also an elder) and a Church Manager. Those whose occupations were given included an accountant and a farmer (landed proprietor). Craftsmen included three wheelwrights, two shoemakers, two handloom weavers, a button maker and a lime burner and mason, while tradesmen included a druggist and chemist, a printer and bookseller and a baker and flour dealer. Edward Godson, who completed the returns for both Shipston on Stour and Stretton on Fosse<sup>869</sup>, combined the two, as tailor and shopkeeper.<sup>870</sup>

62 Independent chapels made returns. Of these 36 were signed by ministers, though several of them completed more than one. Alfred Pope from Leamington returned three. In addition to his town chapel, he was responsible for those in the villages of

---

<sup>867</sup> HO129.163.2.12.32; HO129.395.1.2.5; HO129.407.1.9.9; HO129.408.1.2.5

<sup>868</sup> C.D. Field, 'Zion's people; who were the English Nonconformists?' pp. 95-97

<sup>869</sup> HO129.406.3.9.17; HO129.406.2.9.17

<sup>870</sup> HO107.2076.534.29; F. White & Co., *Gazetteer and Directory of Warwickshire*, p. 743

Bishop's Itchington and Ashorne.<sup>871</sup> The influence of ordained clergy in the Independent chapels is reinforced by two of the comments made by the laymen who filled in the returns. The Warwick minister was preaching in Coventry on Census day<sup>872</sup>, while in one of the Leamington chapels, the deacon bemoaned the fact that a successor had not been appointed to replace their pastor who had moved to Fetter Lane, London.<sup>873</sup> Of the remainder, three were completed by deacons, who gave no further information about themselves and one was an information form completed by a registrar. A variety of church officers completed the remainder - deacons, local preachers, managers and especially superintendents of Sunday Schools. Their occupations reveal a wide range of employment, particularly in the urban areas. In rural areas such as Long Itchington, Little Kineton and Newton Biggin, the officials were older farm labourers, but these were exceptional. Shopkeepers were well represented, three drapers, a chemist/druggist, a bookseller/printer and a hosier/haberdasher. Older crafts were represented by a cooper and a handloom weaver, while three in Birmingham were representatives of the various metal trades which had developed in the town, particularly since the Industrial Revolution. In the case of the Independents, these tended to be factory owners rather than factory employees. Daniel Holloway was a Master Fancy Steel Toy Manufacturer employing 4 men, 3 boys, 5 women and 8 girls; Samuel Cornforth was a wire manufacturer, while Thomas Gibson was a patent axle manufacturer and Henry Edward Price, Deacon of Rehoboth Calvinist Independent Chapel was listed in the directories as a

---

<sup>871</sup> H0129.403.2.1.11; H0129.407.1.5.6; H0129.404.2.4.6

<sup>872</sup> See H0129.403.4.1.4

<sup>873</sup> H0129.403.2.1.10

“Powder Flask, Shot Belt &c Manufacturer”. The metal trades also provided an engineer, William Hewitt, in Sowe. The most unusual combination of occupations appears to be that of William Standish, superintendent of the Sunday School in Warwick, who completed the return for Emscote and whom the census enumerator recorded as a “hairdresser and reporter”. There was a small number of farm labourers representing the working classes, while at the opposite end of the social hierarchy there were a landed proprietor and a house agent, but the vast majority of respondents were drawn from the ranks of the middle classes. An indication of the fact that Dissenters were no longer disbarred from public office can be seen in Warwick, where Richard Grant Reading, chemist and druggist, is also listed in the 1851 Census as an alderman.<sup>874</sup>

Although there were only seven Quaker Meeting Houses in the county, ten returns were made, with duplicates for Easington, Brailes and Birmingham.<sup>875</sup> At Easington, two members of the Lowe family - a father and son - made a return. The elder man is listed as landed proprietor, with another son living at home and farming almost 200 acres.<sup>876</sup> The other son, also a substantial farmer, lived in nearby Wellesbourne.<sup>877</sup> In the same part of the county Edward Simms, a Master Grocer,<sup>878</sup> completed the return for Shipston on Stour and one of those for Brailes<sup>879</sup> while the other Brailes

---

<sup>874</sup> HO107/2073/257/9

<sup>875</sup> HO129.404.1.5.11; HO129.406.3.7.11; HO129.394.7.1.3; HO129.394.8.1.11

<sup>876</sup> HO107/2074/64/3

<sup>877</sup> HO107/2074/106/6

<sup>878</sup> HO107/2076/23/1

<sup>879</sup> HO129.406.3.9.18; HO129.406.3.7.11

return was made by the Meeting House manager, George Gillett, who, aged only 22, was unusual in being so young. However, his family background fitted the expected picture, of rural Quakers as being men of substance. His father was not only a farmer of 100 acres, but also a manufacturer of agricultural implements.<sup>880</sup> The form for the Vicar Lane Meeting House in Coventry was returned by Joseph Cash, described in *White's Directory* as a gentleman living in Sherbourne House.<sup>881</sup> His census entry lists him as a retired stuff and cloth merchant, while John Richardson, who completed the Warwick Meeting House return, was a watchmaker finisher representing the craftsmen of the sort that Isichei found.<sup>882</sup> But it was in Birmingham that the archetypal Quakers 'in trade' were found. One of the returns was completed by William Nutter, a wholesale tea and coffee dealer, while the other was completed by John Cadbury, also listed as a tea and coffee merchant, but perhaps better known as the founder of the chocolate firm bearing his name.

Thirteen of the 33 Primitive Methodist forms were completed by ministers. After removing two places of worship one of whose forms was completed by the local Registrar and one returned by a steward who gave no additional information and cannot be traced in the Population Census, we are left with eighteen individuals. No fewer than five of these individuals were agricultural labourers, while Ann Young, manager of Harbury Primitive Methodist Meeting Place, and one of the very few

---

<sup>880</sup> HO107/2076/462/11

<sup>881</sup> F. White & Co., *Gazetteer and Directory of Warwickshire* p. 544

<sup>882</sup> F. White & Co., *Gazetteer and Directory of Warwickshire* pp. 122, 221

women to appear in the Religious Census, lodged with an agricultural labourer.<sup>883</sup>

Among the craftsmen were a bootmaker, journeyman wood turner, rope maker, weaver, nailmaker and brickmaker, while with slightly more status were a tailor's foreman and a provision dealer. Three bakers combined such work with other jobs, one was a carrier, two were grocers, while in Middle Tysoe, Absalom Harris was a mole catcher.<sup>884</sup>

Twenty-five of the 92 Wesleyan Methodist returns were signed by superintendent ministers, especially John Anderson of Kineton (seven) and William Ford of Rugby (four). The laymen who signed were primarily stewards and/or class leaders, though some forms were completed by the local preacher who had conducted the services on that day. On occasions we find a chapel manager, a secretary or even the owner of the chapel or occupier of the house in which the services were held. Of the 57 identifiable Wesleyan Methodist lay people, nine belonged to the labouring classes (agricultural and otherwise), while only one was a proprietor of houses. The remainder were almost equally divided between the middle-class group, composed of nine farmers, seven shopkeepers and master craftsmen, three merchants and manufacturers, four teachers and clerks, and nineteen craftsmen (of whom no fewer than seven were shoemakers). Other craftsmen included a brush maker, comb maker, carpenter, needlemaker, wheelwright and woodturner.

Occupation is regarded as a key variable in creating a hierarchy based on social class.

Thus in attempting to analyse the social structure of lay Nonconformists in Table 5.7,

---

<sup>883</sup> H0129.407.1.9.9; H0107/2077/99/14

<sup>884</sup> H0107/2076/625/4

occupation has been used as a proxy, applying Armstrong’s classification to signatories of the Religious Census returns.<sup>885</sup>

I - professional occupations - upper and (upper) middle class

II - intermediate occupations - intermediate between middle and working classes, including shop keeping trades, including many members of both [“lower middle classes”]

III - skilled occupations

IV -partly skilled occupations

V - unskilled occupations

(III, IV and V are all categorised as working classes)

Table 5.7 Nonconformists and Social Class

	I	II	III	IV	V
Baptist	1	6	9	1	0
Independent	1	7	10	3	0
Independent Methodist	1	1	1	0	1
Latter Day Saints	0	0	1	2	0
Methodist New Connexion	0	0	2	0	0
Moravian	1	0	0	0	0
Presbyterian	0	0	1	0	0
Primitive Methodist	0	0	9	7	1
Quaker	1	2	2	0	0
Wesleyan Methodist	1	24	23	7	2
Wesleyan Methodist Association	0	0	1	0	0
All	6	40	59	20	4

Great caution must be exercised when trying to draw conclusions from the data presented in Table 5.7, as there are several major issues with the sample. In the case

---

<sup>885</sup> W.A. Armstrong, ‘The use of information about occupation’ p. 205 and Appendix A, pp. 215-223

of several denominations the very small numbers cannot be regarded in any sense as representative. The domination of the table by Wesleyan Methodism, with almost half of the entries, may be seen as indicative of the greater reliance on laymen in the circuit system, John Anderson notwithstanding.<sup>886</sup> It must also be remembered that the people identified here are all office holders in their denomination. Since many of their duties were administrative, it was essential that they could read and write. Hence only five forms contained "Mark of ..." and these may have been able to read if not write. This means that the sample would not accurately reflect the social or employment structure of the membership, since the office holders would be drawn from the ranks of those who were more literate and were employed in occupations which placed a premium on literacy. Hence, even among the Primitive Methodists, the least skilled are not represented here, although the table does provide collateral evidence to support claims that the Primitive Methodists catered for the lowest strata of society.

It is also possible to recognize differences between urban and rural Nonconformity. In the towns the Nonconformists, including the Wesleyan Methodists had more paid ministers, who concentrated their efforts in urban areas, although they did preach and evangelise in rural areas. Rural Nonconformity depended more on laymen as preachers and evangelists. It is almost axiomatic that a wider range of occupations was represented in urban Nonconformity. This represented the much more varied employment structure in towns and cities. Compared with the rural areas, there was a greater tendency for the signatories to be drawn from the middle and upper

---

<sup>886</sup> As previously mentioned this minister completed forms for seven Wesleyan Methodist places of worship.

working class; in the rural areas, there were fewer occupations represented, and, although there were several farmers among the Wesleyan Methodists, they were mainly tradesmen, rural craftsmen and agricultural labourers.

One of the most contentious, and confused, issues of mid-nineteenth century Nonconformity concerns the 'respectability of Dissent'.<sup>887</sup> On the one hand there is considerable evidence of upward social mobility among working class Nonconformists and at the same time much concern over working-class alienation from church and chapel. Watts cited a contemporary Wesleyan minister, John Dyson, who claimed in 1856 that "although Methodism had not reached the outcast and dregs of society", it had "taken hold of the comparatively poor and lifted them up and bettered their condition".<sup>888</sup> But at the same time there are many indications of the appeal of Dissent to the working classes, from, among others, John Angell James, minister of Carr's Lane Congregational Chapel in Birmingham who argued that Wesleyan societies were chiefly gathered from the working classes. The major problem with much of the literature is with the different applications of terms like "poor", "masses" and "working-class".<sup>889</sup>

---

<sup>887</sup> So significant as to have been used as the title of Chapter V of M.R. Watts, *The Dissenters* vol. 2

<sup>888</sup> M.R. Watts, *The Dissenters* vol. 2 p. 596

<sup>889</sup> The extensive literature on this subject includes M.R. Watts, *The Dissenters* vol. 2 Chapter V and Appendix II; H. McLeod, *Religion and the Working Class in Nineteenth Century Britain*; J. Obelkevich, 'Religion'; D. Hempton, Religion and Industrial Britain 1830-1914 in S. Gilley and W.J. Sheils (eds.), *A History of Religion in Britain* and C.D. Field, 'The Social Structure of English Methodism: Eighteenth-Twentieth Centuries' pp. 199-225

## **Conclusion**

The 'identikit' Warwickshire clergyman of the mid-nineteenth century can indicate a degree of stability which may be reassuring or may bear the hallmarks of conservatism or complacency. There were already signs, especially in Birmingham, that the Church had accepted the need to involve itself in more than just spiritual matters and during the second half of the century this became increasingly apparent. The Nonconformist ministry exhibited a greater diversity. The denominations of Old Dissent relied much more on ordained clergy, many of whom came from a similar middle class background to their Anglican counterparts. In the main, they were educated in their own theological colleges (and those of the Countess of Huntingdon), though the occasional Scottish graduate found his way into the county. The denominations of New Dissent relied more heavily on laymen and itinerant ministers (especially in the Primitive Methodist Church), who were more often drawn from lower socio-economic classes, which perhaps gave them greater empathy with their congregations.

## Conclusion

Warwickshire in 1851 was a county of contrasts. Although lacking the extremes of altitude, relief and climate which affected some English counties, it possessed sufficient variation in soils and geology to give rise to a wide variety of settlement types and economic activity. Parts of it were predominantly rural and exhibited similar economic, social and religious characteristics to adjacent counties such as Oxfordshire and Northamptonshire. Rural Warwickshire can be fairly described as 'middle England'. As a geographical description, this term merely states the obvious but as a socio-economic construct it can be argued that the county merits the term as it avoids (and has avoided) extremes of wealth and poverty and their concomitant social issues. However, unlike many counties, especially in southern and central England, Warwickshire contains more than just a rural area, and one with a number of subdivisions too. Even in early medieval times, it possessed, in Coventry, one of the country's most important urban centres outside London, while along its eastern edge its eponymous coalfield led to both mining and manufacturing industry. However, it was the explosive growth of Birmingham during the Industrial Revolution, which irrevocably transformed the county, turning it into a microcosm of the nation as a whole. The nature of that rural-urban interdependence and the impact that it had on the religious development of nineteenth-century Warwickshire was a crucial factor in the ecclesiastical history of the county. This is shown in chapters 3 and 4, for example, in the successful establishment of Independent chapels in some areas and not others, compared with the development of rural Wesleyan chapels via the circuit system.

The religious diversity illustrated by the Religious Census took many forms. Fundamental to all manifestations, physical, social and economic, are both **inter-**

denominational and **intra**-denominational differences. The churches serving the ancient parishes had, at the Reformation, passed to the Established Church. These had been modified and sometimes replaced on or near to their original sites but by the middle of the nineteenth century, had been supplemented by new buildings as efforts were made to cater for a changing population distribution. This contrast between old and new buildings was mirrored to a lesser extent in the nonconformist chapels of which there were very few earlier than 1700. By incorporating the use of other documentary evidence, relating to variations in building age, it has been possible to draw on the Census material in an attempt to analyse historical continuity and durability of the Nonconformist denominations (including Roman Catholicism) over the century and a half since the Restoration and also to examine the response of the Church of England to criticisms of the Hanoverian Church. In the case of the Nonconformists, there is some evidence to show both historical continuity and durability, but also evidence of new growth and development, while the Church of England's new buildings and attempts to rid itself of non-residence and pluralism addressed some of the earlier criticisms, though the inequalities in income indicated that clerical abuses were still some way from being eradicated.

In terms of building size too, there were stark contrasts. Rural parishes with small populations generally had churches commensurate with their size, not infrequently seating fewer than 100. At the other extreme, some large urban churches could seat as many as 2,000 and this was not a phenomenon confined to the Church of England. Large Nonconformist chapels were also found in the major towns, contrasting even more sharply with the small chapels and cottages which were used for preaching and worship in sparsely populated rural settings. The physical

manifestation of building size must be considered in conjunction with the organisational information about the frequency of services as well as the number of free and appropriated sittings, in order to consider the diversity of the provision of accommodation for worship provided for the people of Warwickshire in 1851. Put simply, clergy who held several services each Sunday had the potential to provide opportunities for worship for a greater number of people in a parish than those who did single duty, while the presence of more appropriated sittings could, in some circumstances, be considered as an indication of exclusivity.

There were differences in the distribution of places of worship of the various denominations. The presence of Anglican churches in virtually every parish is in marked contrast to the location of Nonconformist chapels and meeting places. In more than half of Warwickshire's rural parishes in 1851, the Established Church appears to have had a monopoly of places of worship but Nonconformists who had no chapel in their parish of residence could usually find one nearby, at least as regards members of Old Dissent (Independents, Baptists and Quakers) and Methodists of the Original Connexion and some of its schismatic groupings. It was necessary to discover denominational distribution at parish level, to observe the spatial relationship of parishes to each other, to identify social controls via landowning patterns and to consider urban-rural interdependence. To illustrate the diversity behind these factors lay the necessity for cartographic illustration, and thus the importance of the denominational distribution maps (4-11).

As befitted its place at the head of the settlement hierarchy, the Birmingham conurbation contained the largest number of different nonconformist groups, including at least one example of every denomination except the Moravians. Some

groups, such as the Unitarians, were exclusively urban, while others spread their net across both urban and rural settlements. Within the Roman Catholic community too, there was a contrast between groups in rural areas worshipping in chapels built by local long-standing Catholic gentry, and those in the towns swelled by nineteenth-century Irish migration.

At the personal level, the returns of the Religious Census are less revealing than they might be. Some Anglican clergy opted to reply to the question on endowments even though it was optional, others added comments about a range of topics, and some included information about their qualifications as part of their description of title, which allowed the exploration of their socio-economic background in Chapter 5. Some lay Nonconformists provided information about their occupations and while this alone was insufficient to enable any conclusions to be drawn, it provided a starting point from which, using nominal record linkage and readily available contemporary sources, it was possible to find evidence for the social diversity (and similarity) of many of the people involved in the various religious denominations in mid-nineteenth century Warwickshire.

Another area of concern over the reliability and accuracy of the Religious Census was in the number of Sunday scholars, since it is certain that some of those who completed the returns included Sunday scholars in the general congregation. Within Warwickshire there would seem to be some scope for a further study based on a comparison between the Religious Census returns and Sunday School registers.

Opinion is divided about the value of the 1851 Religious Census. Some consider that it towers above all other sources for the modern history of the religion of England and Wales and represents a supreme endeavour of its period while others take the

more pessimistic view that estimates of church attendance on a rainy Sunday in 1851 do not go far to illuminate the changing relationship between religion and industrial communities. Those who have worked on the figures have done so with caution, but claim that, whatever degree of error there might be, it can be assumed that this would be equally distributed over the country and that, even if the census offers only a moderately accurate record of church-going in absolute figures, its results are still of value in determining the relative strength of various churches both in rural and urban areas. As the information presented in Chapters 3 and 4 has shown, this is truer in urban areas than in rural ones, where the records show where Nonconformists worshipped rather than where they lived. The value of the Religious Census has also been undermined by the fact that it was not repeated. This was proposed at succeeding national censuses but was not implemented because the Anglicans and Nonconformists could not agree on the format it should take. The Anglicans preferred a simple profession of belief which would have shown them in a better light, while the Nonconformists felt that the 1851 format better suited their purposes.

As this dissertation has shown, the Census was not simply about how many people went to church on a single day but also about how the churches were keeping up with change, particularly whether the churches had managed to keep pace with the rapid growth of the population in England and Wales which since the beginning of the century had doubled. Many contemporaries took the pessimistic view that the Religious Census provided evidence that the nineteenth-century church was failing, though other commentators have pointed out that this is only true in the context of the ultimate ambition of churches to draw in all of the people and that even in the

second half of the eighteenth century, before the rise of industry and large towns, many people were infrequent attenders at church. As remarks in the returns have indicated, frequency of attendance at worship was not the sole yardstick of religiosity. However, whatever the differing views, this study has sought to justify the application of Hoskins's maxim that 'it is easy to criticise this type of analysis on the grounds of deficiencies in the records ... [but] if we are not prepared to use these records in this way we leave ourselves completely in the dark on an important subject. They represent the best source we have'.<sup>890</sup>

---

<sup>890</sup> W.G. Hoskins, *Local History in England* (London, 1959) p. 143

# Appendix A

CENSUS OF RELIGIOUS WORSHIP 1851

THE RETURNS FOR WARWICKSHIRE

## **Editorial Comments**

The transcript aims to be exact as far as the information is concerned. The returns have been transcribed retaining the original spelling, punctuation and numerical calculations, discrepancies being indicated by [sic].

Locational data in the opening questions have been rationalised and information about denomination has been included in the title. The title of places of worship is given in a consistent format. If no indication is given, I have designated Nonconformist (and Roman Catholic) places as chapels or meeting places, the former being described as “separate and entire buildings used exclusively for worship”.

The population of each parish is that given in the Population Census of 1851. The returns from this have been used to identify lay signatories of Nonconformist forms, to give age, occupation and birthplace. Information about Anglican clergy has been obtained from volumes of the Clergy List for 1851 and occasionally 1850 and 1852. Additional information has been obtained from White’s 1850 Directory of Warwickshire.

For each return the full reference number is given. This is divided into five parts. HO129 is the class code under which all the 1851 Ecclesiastical Census returns are filed at the National Archives. The four parts which follow constitute a unique identifier, comprising Registration District, sub-district, parish and finally place of worship. e.g. Edgbaston Parish Church (HO129.393.2.2.6), 393 is King’s Norton Registration District, 2 is the Edgbaston sub-district, 2 is Edgbaston Parish and 15 is the running number within the Edgbaston sub-district. The order of the returns has been kept as closely as possible to the filing of the originals. Subheadings in italics reflect the questions on the forms, while material in standard type represents the answers on the original forms.

Editorial additions are given in square brackets.

The Returns themselves are Crown Copyright and are reproduced here under the waiver that has existed since 1999 in unpublished Crown Copyright protected public records that are open for public inspection.

CHIPPING NORTON REGISTRATION DISTRICT – 162

Chipping Norton Sub-District

**Little Compton** **Population 378**

**St Denis Parish Church, Little Compton.** HO129.162.2.3.3

*Consecrated:* Before 1800

*Sittings:* Free 170, Other 60, Total 230.

*On 30<sup>th</sup> March:* *Morning:* General Congregation 40, Sunday Scholars 36, Total 76.  
*Afternoon:* General Congregation 70, Sunday Scholars 36, Total 106.

*Average:* *Morning:* General Congregation 30, Sunday Scholars 36, Total 66.  
*Afternoon:* General Congregation 100, Sunday Scholars 36, Total 136.

*Remarks:* The afternoon of the 30<sup>th</sup> was very stormy one accompanied with much rain which may account for the diminished number of persons at that service.

*Signed:* James Vokins<sup>1</sup>, Registrar (Dated 7th October 1851).

The foregoing particulars were kindly given by the Revd T.S. Hellier, incumbent of Little Compton.

<sup>1</sup> 1851 Census: aged 22, occupation, Registrar of Births & Deaths, born in Leafield, Oxon.

Clergy List Valuation: £66

Incumbent: T. Shaw Hellier. [Patron: Christ Church College, Oxford.]

**Barton on the Heath** **Population 202**

**St Lawrence Parish Church, Barton on the Heath.** HO129.162.2.4.4

*Consecrated:* Before 1800

*Endowed with:* Tithe commuted £337 15s, Glebe £59, Fees average of 3 years £1

*Sittings:* Free 58, For children 28 Other 60, Total 146.

*On 30<sup>th</sup> March:* *Morning:* General Congregation 50, Sunday Scholars 23, Total 73.  
*Afternoon:* General Congregation 59, Sunday Scholars 22, Total 81.

*Average:* *Morning:* General Congregation 55, Sunday Scholars 24, Total 79.  
*Afternoon:* General Congregation 67, Sunday Scholars 24, Total 91.

*Remarks:* The value of the rent charge in lieu of tithe and of the glebe is given in the gross, not deducting anything for Rates or Taxes except the

sum of £27 paid annually for Land Tax.

*Signed:* Henry P. Guillemard, Minister, Barton Rectory, Moreton in Marsh.

Clergy List Valuation: £364

Incumbent: Henry Peter Guillemard, B.D., Rural Dean and Rector. [Patron: Trinity College, Oxford.]

**Long Compton**

**Population 845**

**St Peter and St Paul's Parish Church, Long Compton.**

HO129.162.2.5.5

*Consecrated:* Before 1800

*Endowed with:* Land £140, Tithe £20, Fees £1, Dues 3s 3d Easter Offerings 9s, Other 15s, Aggregate annual amount £162 8s 0d [sic].

*Sittings:* Free 500, Other 300, Total 800.

*On 30<sup>th</sup> March:* *Morning:* General Congregation 65, Sunday Scholars 60, Total 125. *Afternoon:* General Congregation 108, Sunday Scholars 58, Total 166.

*Remarks:* Sir G. Philips, Bart and his family when residing at Weston House attend church regularly, but has been living abroad for several months.

*Signed:* Narcissus George Batt, Curate, Long Compton, Shipston on Stour, Worcestershire.

Clergy List Valuation: £191, augmented with £200 private benefactions and £200 Queen Anne's Bounty.

Incumbent: Francis Ellis Jervoise, M.A., Vicar of Long Compton and Rector of Lasham, Hants [since 1822, value £324.] [Patron: Eton College.] Curate: Narcissus George Batt.

**Long Compton Wesleyan Methodist Chapel**

HO129.162.2.5.16

*Erected:* 1807, a separate and entire building used exclusively for worship.

*Sittings:* Free 35, Other 100.

*On 30<sup>th</sup> March:* *Morning:* General Congregation 50. *Evening:* General Congregation 90.

*Signed:* William Jelleyman<sup>1</sup> Trustee and Steward, Long Compton.

<sup>1</sup> 1851 Census: aged 44, occupation, Ropemaker, born in Great Rollright, Oxon.

**Long Compton Wesleyan Methodist Chapel**

HO129.162.2.5.16

[This is a duplicate of previous. The only slight difference being in the size of the evening congregation.]

*Erected:* 1807, a separate and entire building used exclusively for worship.  
*Sittings:* Free 35, Other 100.  
*On 30<sup>th</sup> March:* *Morning:* General Congregation 50. *Evening:* General Congregation 100.  
*Signed:* Sam<sup>1</sup> Cooke<sup>1</sup>, Minister, Chipping Norton, Oxfordshire. (Dated 29<sup>th</sup> March.)

<sup>1</sup> 1851 Census: aged 37, occupation, Wesleyan Minister, born in Dursley, Glos.

**Ebenezer Independent (or Congregational) Chapel, Long Compton.** HO129.162.2.5.21

*Erected:* 1825, a separate and entire building used exclusively for worship.  
*Sittings:* Free 93, Other 87.  
*On 30<sup>th</sup> March:* *Morning:* General Congregation 82, Sunday Scholars 20, Total 102.  
*Afternoon:* General Congregation 12, Sunday Scholars 21, Total 33.  
*Evening:* General Congregation 94.  
*Signed:* Samuel West<sup>1</sup>, Minister, Long Compton.

<sup>1</sup> 1851 Census: aged 72, occupation, Independent Minister, born in Long Compton, Warks.

**Long Compton Primitive Methodist Meeting Place**

HO129.162.2.5.20

*Erected:* unknown, not a separate and entire building used exclusively for worship.  
*Sittings:* Free 50.  
*On 30<sup>th</sup> March:* *Afternoon:* General Congregation 79.  
*Average:* *Morning:* General Congregation 70.  
*Signed:* Charles Waters<sup>1</sup> P.M.P., Thomas Ratliff<sup>2</sup>, Long Compton.

<sup>1</sup> 1851 Census: aged 20, occupation, not known, birthplace not known. [Visitor at the home, in Hook Norton, Oxon, of William Harris, Agricultural Labourer, and his family, born in Long Compton, Warks.]

<sup>2</sup> 1851 Census: aged 41, occupation, Agricultural Labourer, born in Long Compton, Warks.

## BANBURY REGISTRATION DISTRICT – 163

### Swalcliffe Sub-District

**Radway** **Population 344**

**Radway Friends Meeting House.** HO129.163.2.12.32  
(Standard non-Anglican form used.)

*Erected:* Before 1800, a separate and entire building used exclusively for worship.

*Signed:* Hannah Palmer<sup>1</sup>, Manager, Radway, Banbury Oxon.

<sup>1</sup> 1851 Census: aged 38, annuitant, born in Radway, Warks.

**Radway Parish Church** [There is a second copy, with smudges!] HO129.163.2.12.9.

*Consecrated:* [blank]

*Endowed with:* Land £9, Glebe £94 10s, Other Permanent Endowment £5, (On second copy summed to £108 10s.) Fees £1 5s, Easter Offerings 16s.

*Sittings:* Free 107, Other 137, Total 244. Children in chancel.

*On 30<sup>th</sup> March:* *Afternoon:* General Congregation 130, Sunday Scholars 53, Total 183.

*Average:* *Morning:* General Congregation 100, Sunday Scholars 64, Total 164.  
*Afternoon:* General Congregation 130, Sunday Scholars 64, Total 194.

*Remarks:* There is only one duty on Sunday, morning & afternoon alternately.

*Signed:* Edw<sup>d</sup> Miller, Vicar, Radway, Banbury

Clergy List Valuation: £111

Incumbent: Edward Miller.

**Ratley** **Population 471**

**Ratley Parish Church.** [There is a second copy, with smudges!] HO129.163.2.13.10.

*Consecrated:* [blank]

*Endowed with:* Land £12 12 s, Tithe £39 9s 6d, Glebe £54, Other Permanent Endowment £3, [on second copy summed to £109 1s 0d] Fees £1 5s.

*Sittings:* Free 101, Other 119, Total 220. Children in chancel.

*On 30<sup>th</sup> March:* *Morning:* General Congregation 87, Sunday Scholars 92, Total 179.

*Average:* *Morning:* General Congregation 87, Sunday Scholars 100, Total 187.

*Afternoon:* General Congregation 110, Sunday Scholars 100, Total 210.

*Remarks:* There is only one service on Sunday, morning & afternoon alternately.

*Signed:* Edw<sup>d</sup> Miller, Vicar, Ratley, nr Banbury

Clergy List Valuation: £110  
Incumbent: Edward Miller.

**Ratley Wesleyan Methodist Chapel.**

HO129.163.2.13.17.

*Erected:* 1823, a separate and entire building used exclusively for worship.

*Sittings:* Free 90.

*On 30<sup>th</sup> March:* *Afternoon:* General Congregation 49.

*Average:* *Afternoon:* General Congregation 85.

*Signed:* John Anderson<sup>1</sup>, Wesleyan Minister, Kineton.

<sup>1</sup> 1851 Census: aged 36, occupation, Minister of the Wesleyan Chapel, Kineton, &c, born in High Wycombe, Bucks.

**Ratley Primitive Methodist Chapel.**

HO129.163.2.13.24

*Erected:* 1839 \*, a separate and entire building used exclusively for worship.

[\*Number 3 has a line through suggesting that the intention was to write 1840 before changing his mind.]

*Sittings:* Free 64, Other 66. *Free Space or Standing Room for:* 90

*On 30<sup>th</sup> March:* *Afternoon:* Total 126. *Evening:* Total 221.

*Average:* *Afternoon:* Total 100. *Evening:* Total 120.

*Signed:* William Berry<sup>1</sup>, Steward, Baker & Carrier [sic], Ratley

<sup>1</sup> 1851 Census: aged 35, occupation, Baker and Carrier, born in Radway, Warks.

## Cropredy Sub-District

### Shotteswell

Population 328

#### Shotswell Wesleyan Methodist Chapel.

HO129.163.3.2.13.

*Erected:* 1804, a separate and entire building used exclusively for worship.

*Sittings:* Free 100.

*On 30<sup>th</sup> March:* *Morning:* General Congregation 58, Total 58. *Evening:* General Congregation 100, Total 100.

*Average:* *Morning:* General Congregation 80, Total 80.

*Remarks:* A family occupies two rooms under the Chapel.

*Signed:* Thomas Bull<sup>1</sup>, Manager. Rev. R. Hornabrook<sup>2</sup>, Wesleyan Minister, Banbury.

<sup>1</sup> 1851 Census: aged 56, occupation, Farrier and Farmer of 10 acres, born in North Newington, Oxon

<sup>2</sup> 1851 Census: aged 48, occupation, Wesleyan Minister of Banbury, born in Launceston, Cornwall.

#### St Lawrence Parish Church, Shottiswell.

HO129.163.3.2.2

*Consecrated:* Before 1800

*Endowed with:* Glebe £160.

*Sittings:* Free 180, Other 30, Total 210.

*On 30<sup>th</sup> March:* *Afternoon:* General Congregation 86, Total 86.

*Average:* *Morning:* Service once a month. *Afternoon:* General Congregation 48, Sunday Scholars 42, Total 90.

*Remarks:* A vicarage endowed by land.

*Signed:* W.T.Loveday, Minister, Arlescott, Banbury.

Clergy List Valuation: £157

Incumbent: Edward Gibbs Walford, Curate: William Taylor Loveday.

**Warmington****Population 523****St Nicholas Parish Church, Warmington.**

HO129.163.3.3.3.

- Consecrated:* Before 1800
- Endowed with:* Land 189 acres, Tithe 164 acres, Other Permanent Endowment £450, Fees £1.
- Sittings:* Free 150, Other 110, Gallery 25, Total 285.
- On 30<sup>th</sup> March:* *Morning:* General Congregation 95, Sunday Scholars 58, Total 153.  
*Afternoon:* General Congregation 62, Sunday Scholars 58, Total 120.
- Average:* *Morning:* Total 200. *Afternoon:* Total 150.
- Remarks:* The church is situated on a hill apart from the village.
- Signed:* W. Harrison, Rector, Warmington, Banbury.

Clergy List Valuation: £450  
Incumbent: William Harrison

**Warmington Wesleyan Methodist Chapel.**

HO129.163.3.3.14

- Erected:* 1811, a separate and entire building used exclusively for worship.
- Sittings:* Free 130, Other 72.
- On 30<sup>th</sup> March:* *Morning:* Sunday Scholars 12. *Afternoon:* General Congregation 125, Sunday Scholars 16. *Evening:* General Congregation 102.
- Average:* *Morning:* Sunday Scholars 14. *Afternoon:* General Congregation 140, Sunday Scholars 16. *Evening:* General Congregation 160.
- Signed:* John Cambray<sup>1</sup>, Chapel Steward, Warmington, nr Banbury, Oxon.

<sup>1</sup> 1851 Census: aged 59, occupation, Farmer of 24 acres employing 2 labourers, born in Little Rissington, Gloucs.

**Warmington Primitive Methodist Meeting Place.**

HO129.163.3.3.18

- Erected:* unknown, not a separate and entire building used exclusively for worship.
- Sittings:* 70 (across both columns).
- On 30<sup>th</sup> March:* *Morning:* General Congregation 55. *Evening:* General Congregation 42.
- Signed:* Thomas Haynes<sup>1</sup>, Class Leader, Warmington, nr Banbury, Oxon.

<sup>1</sup> 1851 Census: aged 25, occupation, Agricultural Labourer, born in Warmington, Warks.

**Avon Dassett** **Population 307**

**Dassett Parva or Avon Dassett Parish Church.** HO129.163.3.4.4.

*Consecrated:* Before 1800 (ancient)

*Sittings:* Free 43, Other 154, Total 197.

*On 30<sup>th</sup> March:* *Morning:* General Congregation 117, Sunday Scholars 47, Total 164.  
*Afternoon:* General Congregation 134, Sunday Scholars 45, Total 179.

*Average:* *Morning:* General Congregation 75, Sunday Scholars 40, Total 115.  
*Afternoon:* General Congregation 100, Sunday Scholars 30, Total 130.

*Remarks:* Each cottage in the parish has a certain number of sittings in pews. The Sunday scholars sit in the chancel & not included in the return of sittings

*Signed:* Rob<sup>1</sup> Green Jeston, M.A., Rector, Avon Dassett, Banbury.

Clergy List Valuation: £366  
Incumbent: [& Patron] R.G. Jeston

**Avon Dassett Primitive Methodist Meeting Place.** HO129.163.3.4.19.

*Erected:* unknown, not a separate and entire building used exclusively for worship (used for dwelling house).

*Sittings:* 60 (across both columns).

*On 30<sup>th</sup> March:* *Evening:* General Congregation 47.

*Average:* *Evening:* Total 47.

*Remarks:* Service held only evening. No. 47 March 30 being something about the averadge[sic]. Held in part of a cottage.

*Signed:* Thomas Bayliss<sup>1</sup>, Steward and Leader, Avon Dassett.

<sup>1</sup> 1851 Census: aged 40, occupation, Farmer's Labourer, born in Avon Dassett, Warks.

**Avon Dassett Latter Day Saints or Mormons' Meeting Place.** HO129.163.3.4.24

*Erected:* unknown, not a separate and entire building; a dwelling house.

*Sittings:* 20 (across both columns)

*On 30<sup>th</sup> March:* *Evening:* General Congregation & Sunday Scholars 10, Total 10.

*Remarks:* Only evening servis [sic] held in part of dwelling house.

*Signed:* William Barnes<sup>1</sup>, Avon Dassett, near Banbury.

<sup>1</sup> 1851 Census: William P Huband, aged 24, occupation, Travelling Mormon Preacher, born in Arrow, Warks. Lodger at home of John Barnes, Proprietor of Houses, whose grandson, William Barnes, shoemaker, signed return.

**Farnborough**

**Population 349**

**St Botolph's Parish Church, Farnborough.**

HO129.163.3.5.5.

*Consecrated:* Before 1800

*Endowed with:* Tithe £371, Fees £1 4s, Easter Offerings 16s.

*Sittings:* Free 118, Appropriated 128 School 40, Total 286.

*On 30<sup>th</sup> March:* *Morning:* General Congregation 77, Sunday Scholars 42, Total 119.  
*Afternoon:* General Congregation 92, Sunday Scholars 42, Total 134.

*Average:* Rather above that on 30 March.

*Signed:* C.W.Holbech, Vicar, Farnborough Vicarage, Banbury.

Clergy List Valuation: £304

Incumbent: C.W. Holbech. [Patron: William Holbech.]

TAMWORTH REGISTRATION DISTRICT – 376

Tamworth Sub-District

**Austrey**

**Population 555**

**Austrey Parish Church**

HO129.376.1.8.10[IF]

*Remarks:* Sir, I have written to the Rev W.H. Dyott, Vicar of Austrey and he refuses to give me the information required. Being a native of Austrey miself [sic], I beg to say the following will be found near the amount.

*Sittings:* Free 120, Other 200.

*Average:* *Morning:* General Congregation and Sunday Scholars 70 mor...[page torn]. *Afternoon:* General Congregation and Sunday Scholars 50.

*Signed:* John Wright<sup>1</sup>. (Dated 10<sup>th</sup> July 1852.)

<sup>1</sup> 1851 Census: aged 68, retired from business, born in Austrey, Warks.

Clergy List Valuation: £162

Incumbent: William Henry Dyott, M.A., Vicar of Austrey and Domestic Chaplain to Lord Viscount Combermere

**Austrey General Baptist Chapel**

HO129.376.1.8.11

*Erected:* 1819, a separate and entire building used exclusively for worship.

*Sittings:* Free 200. *Free Space or Standing Room for:* 60 persons in schoolroom 60 persons. [This may be 60 in each of the schoolrooms which open into the chapel – see Remarks.]

*On 30<sup>th</sup> March:* *Afternoon:* General Congregation 100. *Evening:* General Congregation 80.

*Average:* *Morning:* General Congregation 100.

*Remarks:* 3 school rooms, 2 of them can be opened to the chapel. Have accomadated[sic] occasionally upward of 400 congregation.

*Signed:* John Barnes<sup>1</sup>, Minister or Pastor, Austrey, near Atherstone.

<sup>1</sup> 1851 Census: aged 74, occupation, Baptist Minister, born in Austrey, Warks.

**Newton Regis****Population 487****The Annunciation of St Mary the Virgin Parish Church,  
Newton Regis.**

HO129.376.1.9.12

- Consecrated:* Before 1800
- Endowed with:* Tithe £258, Glebe £58, Fees 15s.
- Sittings:* Free 56, Other 110, Total 166. With sufficient room in the chancel to place benches to accommodate 70 children.
- On 30<sup>th</sup> March:* *Morning:* General Congregation 65, Sunday Scholars 70, Total 135.  
*Afternoon:* General Congregation 40, Sunday Scholars 70, Total 110.
- Average:* *Morning:* General Congregation 70, Sunday Scholars 75, Total 145.  
*Afternoon:* General Congregation 60, Sunday Scholars 75, Total 135.
- Remarks:* On mid-Lent Sunday fewer poor persons attend Church than on any other day in the year, excepting the Wake Sunday.
- Signed:* C.H.Sale, Curate, Newton Regis, Newton, Tamworth

Clergy List Valuation: £300

Incumbent: Wm Heacock, B.A., Rector of Newton in the Thistles, Vicar of Barrow [value £115] and Incumbent of Foremark [value £30], Derbyshire

**Seckington****Population 128****All Saints' Parish Church, Seckington.**

HO129.376.1.11.13

- Consecrated:* Before 1800
- Endowed with:* Tithe £180, Glebe £60, Other Permanent Endowment, House & Garden £15.
- Sittings:* Free 30, Other 70, Total 100.
- On 30<sup>th</sup> March:* *Afternoon:* General Congregation 36, Sunday Scholars 23, Total 59.
- Average:* *Morning:* General Congregation 20, Sunday Scholars 25, Total 45.  
*Afternoon:* General Congregation 30, Sunday Scholars 25, Total 55.
- Signed:* Alexander J L Cavie, Curate, Seckington, Tamworth.

Clergy List Valuation: £274

Incumbent: Robert Nicholas French, M.A., Rector of Seckington, Rector of Weston on Trent, and Perpetual Curate of Osmaston by Derby. [The three parishes combined gave him an income of £1148, though he employed a curate in each.]

**Shuttington****Population 168****St Matthew's Parish Church, Shuttington.**

HO129.376.1.12.14

*Consecrated:* Before 1800*Endowed with:* Land contingent £220, Glebe £67, Other Permanent Endowment Queen Anne's Bounty £7, Fees £1.*Sittings:* Free 20, Other 60, Total 80.*On 30<sup>th</sup> March:* *Morning:* General Congregation 25, Sunday Scholars 17, Total 42.*Average:* *Morning:* General Congregation 25, Sunday Scholars 15, Total 40.  
*Afternoon:* General Congregation 40, Sunday Scholars 15, Total 55.*Signed:* Alexander J L Cavie, Incumbent, Seckington, Tamworth.

Clergy List Valuation: £318

Incumbent: A.J.L. Cavie, Perpetual Curate.

**Amington and Stony Delph (Tamworth parish)****Population 383****Amington Wesleyan Methodist Meeting Place.**

HO129.376.1.16.17

*Erected:* unknown, not a separate and entire building used exclusively for worship.*Sittings:* Free 30.*On 30<sup>th</sup> March:* *Evening:* General Congregation 16, Total 16.*Remarks:* The place of worship to which this return has reference is a dwelling house in the occupation of William Clarke<sup>1</sup> in which divine service is performed every Sunday evening.*Signed:* Thos Argyle<sup>2</sup>, Local Preacher, Tamworth.<sup>1</sup> 1851 Census: aged 43, occupation, Gardener, born in Newborough, Staffs.<sup>2</sup> 1851 Census: aged 36, occupation, Solicitor's Managing Clerk & Clerk to Magistrates, born in Heage, Derbys.**Amington Chapel, Tamworth.**

HO129.376.1.18.24

(Name of dedication of the ancient chapel unknown. It is a chapel of ease to Tamworth Church, &amp; with others in this parish was served by the prebendaries of this Church (then Collegiate) till they fell into ruins. In the township of Armington &amp; Stonydelph, Warwickshire, but being part of Tamworth parish is considered in the Diocese of Lichfield.)

*Consecrated:* Licensed on rebuilding August 4<sup>th</sup> 1836. But the ancient fabric was

consecrated ages ago. Rebuilt from the ruins at the date of Licence as a Chapel of Ease for the use of the hamlet.

*Cost, how defrayed:* Rebuilt by private subscription. Cost £500.

*Endowed with:* Other Permanent Endowment £20, Fees 6s. Total Endowment £20 6s 0d

*Sittings:* Free 98, Total 98.

*On 30<sup>th</sup> March:* *Afternoon:* General Congregation 62, Sunday Scholars 25, Total 87.

*Average:* *Morning:* General Congregation 80, Sunday Scholars 26, Total 106.  
*Afternoon:* General Congregation 80, Sunday Scholars 26, Total 106.

*Remarks:* There is only one service on Sunday in the above Church.

*Signed:* Edward Harston Vicar of Tamworth & Minister of Amington Chapel, Vicarage, Tamworth.

Clergy List Valuation: (Tamworth with Amington and Hopwas St John) £200  
Incumbent: Edward Harston, M.A. Vicar of Tamworth and Rural Dean

#### Fazeley Sub-District

**Kingsbury** **Population 1416**

**Dosthill Chapel, Kingsbury.** (An ancient chapel attached to Kingsbury Church.) HO129.376.2.8.1

*Consecrated:* Blank

*Endowed with:* Other Permanent Endowment £5.

*Sittings:* Free 44, Other 30, Total 94 [sic].

*On 30<sup>th</sup> March:* *Afternoon:* General Congregation 38, Sunday Scholars 17, Total 55.

*Average:* *Morning:* B. *Afternoon:* General Congregation 55, Sunday Scholars 23, Total 78.

*Remarks:* The Endowment here stated is for service once in the month. The additional services depend on the subscriptions raised for the Curate. B. When service takes place in the morning, not so many in attendance.

*Signed:* Charles Thomas Cary<sup>1</sup>, Minister, Dosthill, Kingsbury, nr Fazeley.

<sup>1</sup> See next

**St Peter & St Paul's Parish Church, Kingsbury.**

HO129.376.2.8.5

- Consecrated:* Blank (ancient).
- Endowed with:* Land £29, Tithe £45, Glebe £14, Fees £3, Other £22.
- Sittings:* Free 156, Other 344, Total 500.
- On 30<sup>th</sup> March:* *Morning:* General Congregation 119, Sunday Scholars 61, Total 180. *Afternoon:* General Congregation 79, Sunday Scholars 59, Total 129 [sic].
- Average:* *Morning:* General Congregation 150, Sunday Scholars 66, Total 216. *Afternoon:* General Congregation 100, Sunday Scholars 60, Total 160.
- Remarks:* More people would have been in attendance but parents and children were absent, being Midlent or Mothering Sunday.
- Signed:* Charles Thomas Cary, Minister, Kingsbury, nr Fazeley.

Clergy List Valuation: £118

Incumbent: Charles Thomas Cary, B.A. Curate: John Taylor

[No 6 Ch of E missing is written on this form, but on the covering list at the beginning of this section is ~~6 Dosthill Chapel C of E missing.~~]

**Bodymoor Heath Wesleyan Methodist Chapel, Kingsbury**

HO129.376.2.8.7

- Erected:* 1844, a separate and entire building used exclusively for worship.
- Sittings:* Free 90, Other 50.
- On 30<sup>th</sup> March:* *Morning:* General Congregation 15, Sunday Scholars 21, Total 36. *Afternoon:* General Congregation 40, Sunday Scholars 16, Total 56. *Evening:* General Congregation 46, Total 46.
- Average:* *Morning:* General Congregation 15, Sunday Scholars 21, Total 36. *Afternoon:* General Congregation 40, Sunday Scholars 16, Total 56. *Evening:* General Congregation 46, Total 46.
- Signed:* Thomas Austin<sup>1</sup>, Steward, Bodymoor Heath, Kingsbury, nr Fazeley.

<sup>1</sup> 1851 Census: aged 34, occupation, Wheelwright and Carpenter, born in Kingsbury, Warks

**Kingsbury Wesleyan Methodist Chapel.**

HO129.376.2.8.8

*Erected:* about 1825, a separate and entire building used exclusively for worship.

*Sittings:* Free 100.

*On 30<sup>th</sup> March:* *Morning:* General Congregation 40, *Afternoon:* General Congregation 60, Across both columns: Total 100.

*Signed:* Thomas Pearson<sup>1</sup>, Wesleyan Minister, Hinckley, Leics.

<sup>1</sup> The Hinckley returns for the 1851 Census are virtually unreadable.

**Middleton****Population 492****St John the Baptist's Parish Church, Middleton.**

HO129.376.2.9.9

*Consecrated:* Before 1800

*Endowed with:* Blank

*Sittings:* 250. Nothing is paid for sittings.

*On 30<sup>th</sup> March:* *Morning:* General Congregation 81. *Afternoon:* General Congregation 58.

*Average:* *Morning:* General Congregation under 100. *Afternoon:* General Congregation under 90.

*Remarks:* The incumbency being a Donative, there is no endowment, but a stipend of £100 year is paid by Lord Middleton, £20 being deducted for house & land.

*Signed:* H.V.Hodge, Incumbent or Perpetual Curate, Fazeley, Staffordshire

Clergy List Valuation: £145

Incumbent: H. Vere Hodge M.A.

**Holy Trinity Chapel of Ease, Wilnecote. (Diocese of Lichfield\*)**  
(A hamlet in the parish of Tamworth)

HO129.376.2.12.12

*Consecrated:* Before 1800

*Endowed with:* Land £25, Other Permanent Endowment £54, Other £10,

*Sittings:* Free 400, Other 200, Total 600.

*On 30<sup>th</sup> March:* *Morning:* General Congregation 122†, Sunday Scholars 81, Total 203. *Afternoon:* General Congregation 185†, Sunday Scholars 75, Total 260.

*Remarks:* \* The Parish Church of Tamworth being in the county of Staffs and therefore the whole parish accounted in the Diocese of Lichfield. This Chapel was rebuilt in A.D.1822 by private subscription

† Thin congregations as usual on Midlent Sunday.

*Signed:* R.W.Lloyd, Incumbent Curate of Wilnecote, Tamworth.

Clergy List Valuation: £90

Incumbent: Robert Watkins Lloyd, M.A. Perpetual Curate of Wilnecote and Wigginton [Value £92] Curates: Benjamin T.A. Mayou and Francis Llewellyn Lloyd [the incumbent's son and next door neighbour].

**Wilnecote Independent Chapel.**

HO129.376.2.2.2

*Erected:* 1848, a separate and entire building used exclusively for worship.

*Sittings:* Free 75, Other 75.

*On 30<sup>th</sup> March:* *Afternoon:* General Congregation 70, Sunday Scholars 50, Total 120. *Evening:* General Congregation 40, Total 40.

*Signed:* Thomas Johnson<sup>1</sup>, Independent Minister, Tamworth.

<sup>1</sup> 1851 Census: aged 32, occupation, Independent Minister at Tamworth, born in Wigston Magna, Leics.

**KING'S NORTON REGISTRATION DISTRICT – 376**

**Edgbaston Sub-District**

**Edgbaston** **Population 9269**

**Edgbaston Parish Church.** HO129.393.2.2.6

*Consecrated:* Before 1800 (Ancient)

*Sittings:* Free 104, Other 275, Total 379.

*On 30<sup>th</sup> March:* *Morning:* General Congregation 275, Sunday Scholars 79, Total 354.  
*Afternoon:* General Congregation 200, Sunday Scholars 61, Total 261.

*Remarks:* Besides the Parish Church, there is St George's Chapel in the Parish of Edgbaston, which holds 1004 persons.

*Signed:* Isaac Spooner, Vicar, Edgbaston Vicarage, Birmingham.

Clergy List Valuation: £542

Incumbent: Isaac Spooner.M.A. (Surrrogate) [Patron: Lord Calthorpe.]

**St George's Chapel, Edgbaston.** HO129.393.2.2.7[IF]

*Consecrated:* 1839

*Sittings:* Free 200, Other 760, Total 960.

*Average:* *Morning:* General Congregation 550, Sunday Scholars 115 also 34 Deaf & Dumb Girls. *Afternoon:* General Congregation 300.*Evening:* General Congregation 300.

*Signed:* Edward Baker<sup>1</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> 1851 Census: aged 36, occupation, Relieving Officer and Registrar of Births & Deaths, born in Harborne, Staffs.

Clergy List Valuation: not given

Incumbent: Edward Lillingston. M.A. [Patron: Lord Calthorpe.] Curate Philip Browne, B.A.

**BIRMINGHAM REGISTRATION DISTRICT – 394**

**Birmingham**

**Population 173 951**

**Ladywood Sub-District**

**St Mark's Parish Church, King Edward's Road, Birmingham.**

HO129.394.1.1.1

*Consecrated:* July 29<sup>th</sup> 1841, as an additional church. District Church under provisions of 1&2 Will<sup>m</sup> IV

*Cost, how defrayed:* about £3300, by subscription, by the Birmingham Church Building Association.

*Endowed with:* Other Permanent Endowment £92 per ann. from 3% Consols £1000, Pew Rents £75.

*Sittings:* Free 330, Other 670, Total 1000.

*On 30<sup>th</sup> March:* *Morning:* General Congregation 335, Sunday Scholars 350, Total 685.  
*Evening:* General Congregation 350.

*Signed:* Daniel Ledsam, Minister, St Mark's Church, Birmingham.

Clergy List Valuation: not given

Incumbent: Daniel Ledsam, Perpetual Curate.

**St Peter's Roman Catholic Chapel, Birmingham.**

HO129.394.1.1.2

*Erected:* 1786, a separate and entire building used exclusively for worship.

*Sittings:* Free 56, Other 352A. *Free Space or Standing Room for* 200.

*On 30<sup>th</sup> March:* B. *Morning* General Congregation 510, Sunday Scholars 130, Total 640. *Evening* General Congregation 250.

*Average:* *Morning* General Congregation 550, Sunday Scholars 130, Total 680.  
*Afternoon* General Congregation 40, Sunday Scholars 40, Total 80.  
*Evening* General Congregation 250.

*Remarks:* A. - Only about 145 or about that number let on average.  
B. - A grand service at the Cathedral diminished our numbers today. There are two services here in the morning. The afternoon is chiefly for catechising children.

*Signed:* Bernard Ivers<sup>1</sup>, Incumbent, St Peter's Place, Birmingham.

<sup>1</sup> 1851 Census: aged 42, occupation, Roman Catholic Priest, born in Ireland.

**Crescent Baptist School, Cambridge Street, Birmingham.** HO129.394.1.1.3

*Erected:* unknown. Not a separate and entire building used exclusively for worship.

*Sittings:* Free 70.

*On 30<sup>th</sup> March:* *Morning:* Sunday Scholars 10. *Afternoon:* Sunday Scholars 14.  
*Evening:* General Congregation 25, Sunday Scholars 12, Total 37.

*Average 6 months:* *Morning:* Sunday Scholars 10. *Afternoon:* Sunday Scholars 14.  
*Evening:* General Congregation 20, Sunday Scholars 10, Total 30.

*Remarks:* Called part in Sch return 394-1-1-1. This room has only been open for Divine Service six months.

*Signed:* James Rathbone<sup>1</sup>, Member & Occasional Preacher, 35 Cambridge Street, Birmingham.

<sup>1</sup> 1851 Census: aged 40, occupation, Shoemaker, born Ashton, Lancs

**Broad Street Presbyterian Church in England Church, Birmingham.** HO129.394.1.1.4

*Erected:* 1849, a separate and entire building used exclusively for worship.

*Sittings:* Other 700.

*On 30<sup>th</sup> March:* *Morning:* General Congregation 314, Sunday Scholars 150, Total 464.  
*Evening:* General Congregation 277.

*Average:* *Morning:* General Congregation 380, Sunday Scholars 182, Total 562.

*Remarks:* Of our 700 sittings there are 200 devoted to the accommodation of our Sabbath school children. Our Church is so seated as to be able to supply accommodation for 100 additional when required.

*Signed:* J.R.MacKenzie<sup>1</sup>, M.A., Minister, 4 Crescent Street, Birmingham.

<sup>1</sup> 1851 Census: aged 39, occupation, Presbyterian Minister of the Presb. Ch. Broad street, born in Scotland

**Church of the Saviour, Edward St. Birmingham.** HO129.394.1.1.5

*Erected:* 1847, a separate and entire building used exclusively for worship.

*Sittings:* Free 200, Other 1200.

*On 30<sup>th</sup> March:* *Morning:* General Congregation 950. *Evening:* General Congregation 1000.

*Average:* *Morning:* General Congregation 1300.  
*Remarks:* Not connected with any sect in the Marriage Registry. We are called "United Christians". We are a free, unsectarian Church. Sunday Scholars do not attend service in a body.

*Signed:* George Dawson<sup>1</sup>, Minister, Edgbaston nr Birmingham

<sup>1</sup> 1851 Census: aged 30, occupation Minister & Lecturer, M.A., born in St Pancras, Middlesex.

**Trinity Tabernacle (Independent), Lady Wood, Birmingham.** HO129.394.1.1.6

*Erected:* 1840, a separate and entire building used exclusively for worship.

*Sittings:* Free 14, Other 180.

*On 30<sup>th</sup> March:* *Morning:* General Congregation 90. *Afternoon:* General Congregation 20. *Evening:* General Congregation 60.

*Average:* across all three columns – General Congregation 100, Sunday Scholars none.

*Signed:* James Jay<sup>1</sup>, Minister, Chapel House Parade, Birmingham.

<sup>1</sup> 1851 Census: aged 50, occupation, Independent Minister of Trinity Tabernacle, born in Clapton, Middx Surry[sic].

**Boatman's Chapel (Independent), Lady Wood, Birmingham.** HO129.394.1.1.7

*Erected:* 1841, a separate and entire building used exclusively for worship.

*Sittings:* Free 150.

*On 30<sup>th</sup> March:* *Afternoon:* General Congregation 58, Sunday Scholars 61, Total 119. *Evening:* General Congregation 99, Total 99.

*Signed:* Robert Humphrey<sup>1</sup>, Superintendent of the School, Mary Street, Balsall Heath, nr Birmingham.

<sup>1</sup> 1851 Census: aged 36, occupation, Woollen Draper, born in Daventry, Northants.

**Newhall Hill Christian Unitarian Church, Birmingham.** HO129.394.1.1.8

*Erected:* 1839, a separate and entire building used exclusively for worship.

*Sittings:* Free 300, Other 400.

*On 30<sup>th</sup> March:* *Morning:* General Congregation 200, Sunday Scholars 250. *Evening:* General Congregation 100.

*Signed:* James Cooper<sup>1</sup>, Summer Hill, near St Mark's Street.

<sup>1</sup> 1851 Census: aged 22, occupation, Unitarian Minister, New Hall Chapel, born in Ireland.

**Salem Calvinist Chappel [sic] Ladywood, Birmingham.**

HO129.394.1.1.9

*Erected:* 1850 & 1851, a separate and entire building used exclusively for worship.

*Sittings:* Free about 50, Other about 350. *Free Space or Standing Room for* about 50.

*On 30<sup>th</sup> March:* *Morning:* General Congregation about 50 crossed out.

*Average:* *Morning:* General Congregation 300. *Evening:* General Congregation 350.

*Remarks:* This chapel was in an unfinished state at the time of taking the Census and therefore no notice was taken of it then; it is built in lieu of one called the Cave of Adullam situate in Bartholomew Street, but pulled down for railway purposes. J.Wood<sup>1</sup>, Reg<sup>r</sup>.

*Signed:* Ephraim Hill<sup>2</sup>, for the Trustees, Summer Lane, N<sup>o</sup> 370, Birmingham. Dated 18<sup>th</sup> November 1851. [By Registrar]  
[Not at 370 Summer Lane in 1851 Population Census.]

<sup>1</sup> White 1850: Registrar for Ladywood. 1851 Census: aged 67, occupation Clerk & Registrar, born in Burton on Trent, Staffs.

<sup>2</sup> 1841 Census: aged 20, occupation Brass Founder, born in Warks

**Magdalen Episcopal Asylum Chapel, Broad Street, Birmingham.**

HO129.394.2.1.1

*Consecrated:* April 28<sup>th</sup> 1839. Chapel opened[sic] by Episcopal Society. Licensed as an additional place of worship, a general congregation assembling morning and evening.

*Cost, how defrayed:* £6400, by private subscription.

*Endowed with:* Pew Rents about £140.

*Sittings:* Free 224 including School Children, Other 323, Total 547.

*On 30<sup>th</sup> March:* *Morning:* General Congregation 260, Sunday Scholars 120, Total 380.  
*Evening:* General Congregation 185.

*Signed:* Thomas Arden, B.A., Stipendiary Chaplain, George Street, Edgbaston, Birmingham.

Clergy List Valuation: not given

Curates Jno Riland, M.A., Sidney Gedge, M.A. Second Master of King Edward School, Birmingham

**St Thomas's Parish Church, Birmingham.**

HO129.394.2.1.2

*Consecrated:* 1829. Built under the Million Act, by the Church Building Commissioners.

*Cost, how defrayed:* £15000. By Parliamentary Grant.

*Endowed with:* Glebe £60, Pew Rents and Fees £300 nett.

*Sittings:* Free 1600 (of these 600 children's), Other 600, Total 2200.

*On 30<sup>th</sup> March:* *Morning:* General Congregation 1435, Sunday Scholars 635, Total 2070. *Afternoon:* Sunday Scholars 350. *Evening:* General Congregation 1650.

*Average:* The same. *Morning:* Total 2070. *Afternoon:* Total 350. *Evening:* Total 1650.

*Remarks:* The morning congregations are  $\frac{2}{3}$  males. The evening a larger portion ( $\frac{1}{2}$ ) females.

*Signed:* George S Bull, Rector, Birmingham.

Clergy List Valuation: £560

Incumbent: G.S. Bull.

**Birmingham Hebrew Congregation, Severn Street, Birmingham.**

HO129.394.2.1.3

*Erected:* 1833, a separate and entire building used exclusively for worship.

*Sittings:* Free 60, Other about 300. *Free Space or Standing Room for:* 80 or 100.

*On Sabbath 29<sup>th</sup> March:* *Morning:* General Congregation 160, Scholars 25, Total 185. *Afternoon:* General Congregation 30, Scholars 10, Total 40. *Evening:* General Congregation 72, Sunday Scholars 20, Total 92.

*Average:* *Morning:* General Congregation 200, Scholars 35, Total 235. *Afternoon:* General Congregation 35, Scholars 15, Total 50. *Evening:* General Congregation 90, Scholars 30, Total 120.

*Remarks:* Saturday March 29<sup>th</sup> – on which day this was taken was a wet day which no doubt diminished the attendance. The Jewish population here being engaged in travelling, the attendance except on holidays is limited. At the holiday time it is at least 50% more than here stated.

*Signed:* Philip Abraham<sup>1</sup>, Secretary, 237, Gt Colmore Street, Birmingham. S.K.Marks<sup>2</sup>, Warden, 57, Edgbaston Street.

<sup>1</sup> 1851 Census: aged 45, occupation, Professor of Languages, born in London, Middx.

<sup>2</sup> White 1850: Simon Marks, occupation, Cabinet Maker and Upholsterer, 57 Edgbaston

Street.1851 Census: aged 50, occupation Cabinet Maker, born in Poland.

**Islington Wesleyan Methodist Chapel, St Martin's Street, Birmingham.** HO129.394.2.1.4

*Erected:* Commenced in 1824, opened in 1825, enlarged in 1840, a separate and entire building used exclusively for worship.

*Sittings:* Free 332, Other 566.

*On 30<sup>th</sup> March:* *Morning:* General Congregation 481, Sunday Scholars 183, Total 664. *Afternoon:* General Congregation 44. *Evening:* General Congregation 618, Total 618.

*Remarks:* In addition to the Chapel there are four vestries containing an area of 805 superficial feet.

*Signed:* Edward Brice, Wesleyan Minister, 18, Bath Row, Birmingham

<sup>1</sup> 1851 Census: aged 40, occupation, Wesleyan Minister, born in Bristol, Gloucs.

**Rehoboth Welsh Calvinistic Methodist Chapel, Wood Street, Birmingham.** HO129.394.2.1.5

*Erected:* 1849, a separate and entire building used exclusively for worship.

*Sittings:* Free 10, Other 22<sup>1</sup>.

*On 30<sup>th</sup> March:* *Morning:* General Congregation 50. *Afternoon:* Sunday Scholars 65. *Evening:* General Congregation 80.

*Average:* *Morning:* General Congregation 90, Sunday Scholars 60, Total 150.

*Signed:* Richard Owens<sup>2</sup>, Elder, N<sup>o</sup> 6 Wood Street, Birmingham.

<sup>1</sup> Are these pews? At 6 per pew, Chapel would accommodate 132. But Parliamentary Report accepts 10/22/32 as sittings, with morning congregation only – but with attendance of 130!

<sup>2</sup> 1851 Census: aged 31, occupation, Saddler, born in Llanbadarn, Cardiganshire.

**Wesleyan Reform Preaching Room, St Thomas's, Birmingham.** HO129.394.2.1.6

*Erected:* Blank. Not a separate and entire building used exclusively for worship. Used as an infant school on weekdays.

*Sittings:* Free about 120.

*On 30<sup>th</sup> March:* *Evening:* General Congregation 25.

*Average:* only just opened.

*Signed:* William Watton<sup>1</sup>, Sec. to the Committee, 90 Hill Street, Birmingham.

<sup>1</sup> White 1850: William Watton, Printer, 90 Hill Street. 1851 Census: aged 41, occupation, Printer employing 3 men, born in Tamworth.

**St John's Primitive Methodist Chapel, Birmingham.**

HO129.394.2.1.7

*Erected:* can't say; a separate and entire building used exclusively for worship.

*Sittings:* Free 160, Other 140.

*On 30<sup>th</sup> March:* *Morning:* General Congregation 130, Sunday Scholars 90, Total 190[sic]. *Evening:* General Congregation 160, Sunday Scholars 30, Total 190.

*Average:* *Morning:* General Congregation 160, Sunday Scholars 90, Total 250. *Evening:* General Congregation 230, Sunday Scholars 30, Total 260.

*Signed:* John Thomas Wilkins<sup>1</sup>, Chapel Steward, Belgrave Street, Balsall Heath, Birmingham.

<sup>1</sup> 1851 Census: aged 35, occupation, Tailor's Foreman, born in London, Middx.

**Bristol Road Wesleyan Methodist Chapel, Birmingham.**

HO129.394.2.1.8

*Erected:* 1834, a separate and entire building used for both church and Sunday School.

*Sittings:* Free 302, Other 108. *Free Space or Standing Room for:* 100.

*On 30<sup>th</sup> March:* *Morning:* General Congregation 250, Sunday Scholars 84, Total 334. *Evening:* General Congregation 350, Sunday Scholars 40, Total 390.

*Average:* *Morning:* General Congregation 250, Sunday Scholars 84, Total 334. *Evening:* General Congregation 300, Sunday Scholars 40, Total 340.

*Signed:* Thomas Townsend<sup>1</sup>, Chapel Steward, 292, Bell Barn Road.

<sup>1</sup> 1851 Census: aged 41, occupation, House Agent, born in Birmingham.

**Rehoboth Calvinist Independent Chapel, Thorp Street, Birmingham.**

HO129.394.2.1.9

*Erected:* Converted from warehouse into chapel 1835, a separate and entire building used exclusively for worship and Sunday School.

*Sittings:* Free 36, Other 250.

*On 30<sup>th</sup> March:* *Morning:* General Congregation 39. *Afternoon:* Sunday Scholars 25. *Evening:* General Congregation 50.

*Remarks:* In the possession of the present tenants about 18 months, being a new congregation.

*Signed:* Henry Edward Price<sup>1</sup>, Deacon, 41, Loveday Street, Birmingham.

<sup>1</sup> White 1850: Henry Edward Price, Powder Flask, Shot Belt &c Manufacturer, 41 Loveday Street. 1851 Census: aged 51, occupation Powder Flask Maker, born in Birmingham.

### St Martin's Sub-District

**St Luke's District Parish Church, Bristol Road, Birmingham.** HO129.394.3.1.1  
(1 & 2 Will 14.C.38)

*Consecrated:* September 28<sup>th</sup> 1842. As an additional.

*Cost, how defrayed:* £2800, by voluntary aid.

*Endowed with:* Other Permanent Endowment £1000, Pew Rents yes, Fees yes.

*Sittings:* Free 450, Other 650, Total 1100. (See Letter.)<sup>1</sup>

*On 30<sup>th</sup> March:* *Morning:* General Congregation 659, Sunday Scholars 235, Total 894.  
*Evening:* General Congregation 546.

*Signed:* J.O. Oldham, Incumbent, Norland House, Edgbaston.

<sup>1</sup> The words "See Letter" and the number of sittings are written in red ink and by a different hand, which implies that they were added by a clerk in the Census Office at a later date.

Clergy List Valuation: not given

Incumbent: J.O. Oldham M.A. Rector. Curate: Richard Hughes B.A.

**Macdonald Street Schoolroom, St Luke's, Birmingham.** HO129.394.3.1.2

*Licensed :* 1849 (Additional).

*Cost, how defrayed:* £1060, various sources – Parliamentary Grant £177; National G<sup>1</sup> £45; Birm Infant Sch Ass<sup>n</sup> £400; Other £438.

*Sittings:* Free 250.

*On 30<sup>th</sup> March:* *Afternoon:* General Congregation 69.

*Signed:* J.O. Oldham, Incumbent, Norland House, Edgbaston. [Page sliced]

<sup>1</sup> [As near as I can tell.]

**St Martin's Parish Church, Birmingham.** HO129.394.3.1.3

*Consecrated:* Before 1800 (ancient).

*Sittings:* Free 200, Other 1900, Total 2100.

*On 30<sup>th</sup> March:* *Morning:* General Congregation 1700, Sunday Scholars 300, Total 2000. *Afternoon:* General Congregation 400 Total 400. *Evening:*

General Congregation 2000, Total 2000.

*Average:* *Morning:* General Congregation 1700, Sunday Scholars 300, Total 2000. *Afternoon:* General Congregation 400 Total 400. *Evening:* General Congregation 2100, Total 2100.

*Signed:* John C. Millar, M.A. Rector, St Martin's Rectory, Birmingham.

Clergy List Valuation: £1048

Incumbent: John C. Miller. M.A. Rector. Curate: H.J.R. Rathbone.

**Circus Baptist Chapel, Bradford Street, Birmingham.**

HO129.394.3.1.4

*Erected:* 1848, a separate and entire building used exclusively for worship.

*Sittings:* Free 50, Other 950.

*On 30<sup>th</sup> March:* *Morning:* General Congregation 320, Sunday Scholars 70, Total 390. *Evening:* General Congregation 850.

*Remarks:* This building was formerly an amphitheatre and was altered and in part rebuilt as a chapel in 1848.

*Signed:* William H. Thornbery<sup>1</sup>, Secretary, 72, Grant Street, Birmingham.

<sup>1</sup> 1851 Census: aged 35, occupation Accountant, born in Worcester.

**Hurst Street Unitarian Domestic Mission Chapel, Birmingham.**

HO129.394.3.1.5

*Erected:* October 1844, a separate and entire building used exclusively for worship.

*Sittings:* Free All 400 vide Remarks. No standing places except the aisles – these very narrow.

*On 30<sup>th</sup> March:* *Morning:* General Congregation about 40 including the teachers, Sunday Scholars 185, Total 225. *Afternoon:* vide Remarks. *Evening:* General Congregation 85, Sunday Scholars do not attend. Total 85.

*Average:* *Morning:* General Congregation 35 to 40 with teachers, Sunday Scholars about 200, Total 235 or thereabouts. *Afternoon:* vide Remarks. *Evening:* General Congregation 120, Sunday Scholars vide above. Total 120.

*Remarks:* No afternoon service in the chapel – a short service in the schoolroom on alternate afternoons during the winter months at which some 8 or 10 adults attend besides the teachers. Supposed to seat about four hundred persons, every sitting free. N.B. there are no pews – the seats are moveable benches with backs to them. Sometimes many more – vide below. (This being Mid-Lent Sunday – a general holiday in Birmingham, many in consequence absent.)

*Signed:* Thomas Bowring, Minister, 2, Witley Place, Pershore Road, Birmingham.

<sup>1</sup> White 1850: Rev Thomas Bowring, Unitarian Minister. 1851 Census: aged 48, occupation Unitarian Minister of Hurst Street Chapel in Birmingham, born in Exeter, Devon.

**Oxford Street Methodist New Connexion Chapel, Birmingham.** HO129.394.3.1.6

*Erected:* Before 1800, a separate and entire building used exclusively for worship.

*Sittings:* Free 80, Other 320.

*On 30<sup>th</sup> March:* *Morning:* General Congregation 100, Sunday Scholars 85, Total 185. *Afternoon:* Sunday Scholars 105, Total 105. *Evening:* General Congregation 200, Total 200.

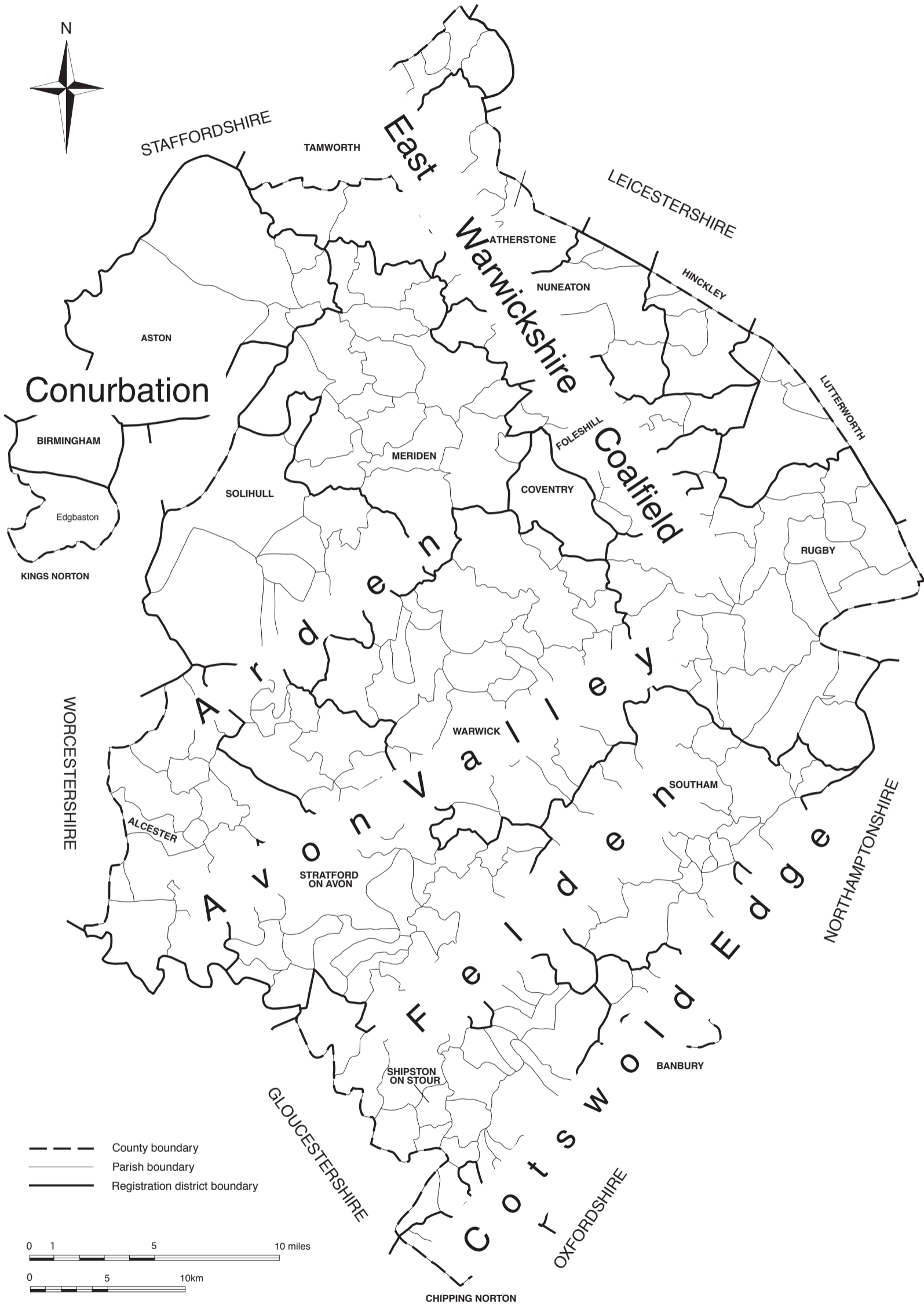
*Signed:* William Wilshaw<sup>1</sup>, Minister, 157, Bradford Street, Birmingham.

<sup>1</sup> 1851 Census: aged 26, occupation Minister Methodist New Connexion, born in Stafford.

# Appendix B

MAPS 1 - 11

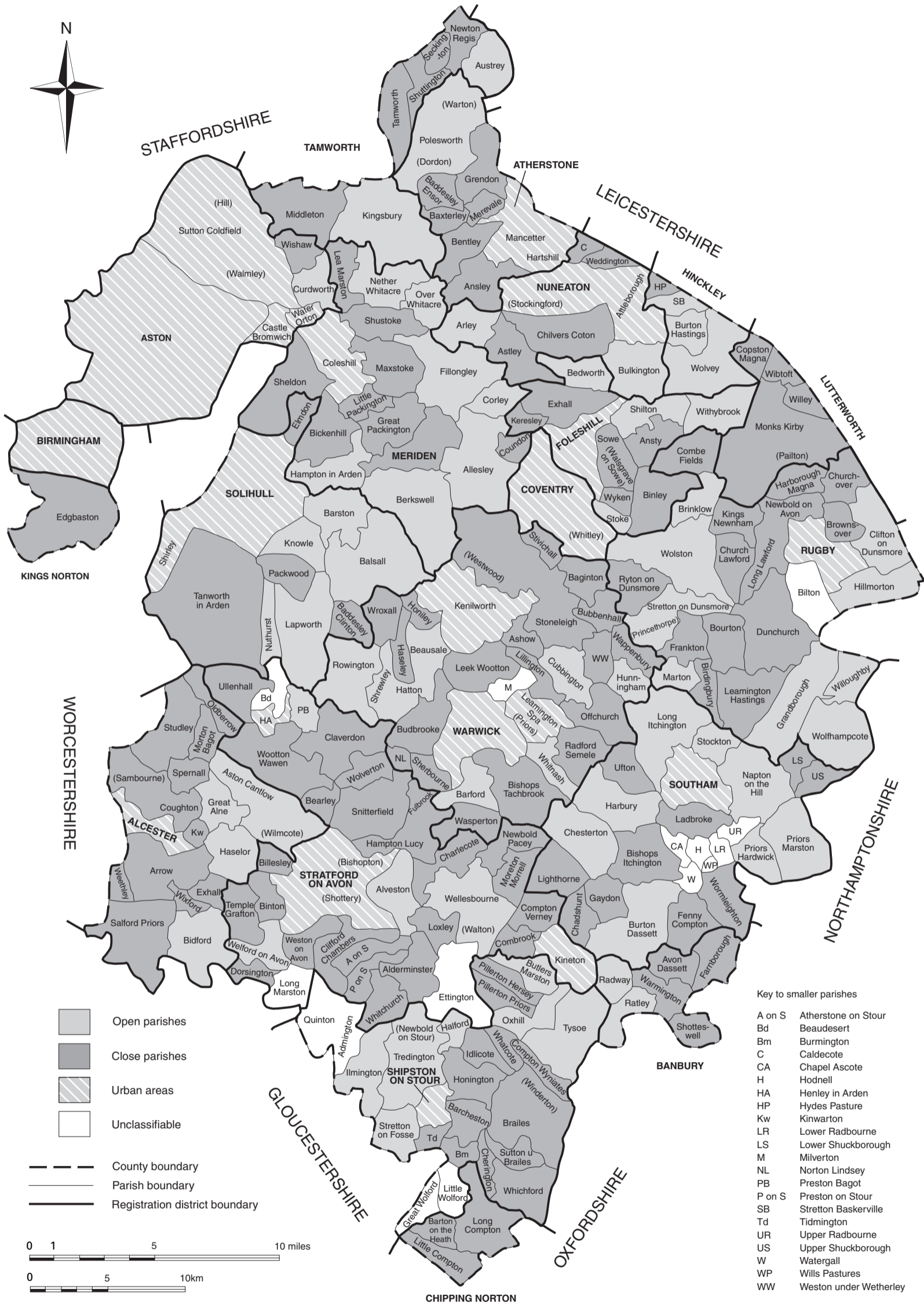
WARWICKSHIRE PARISHES  
AND DENOMINATIONAL DISTRIBUTION



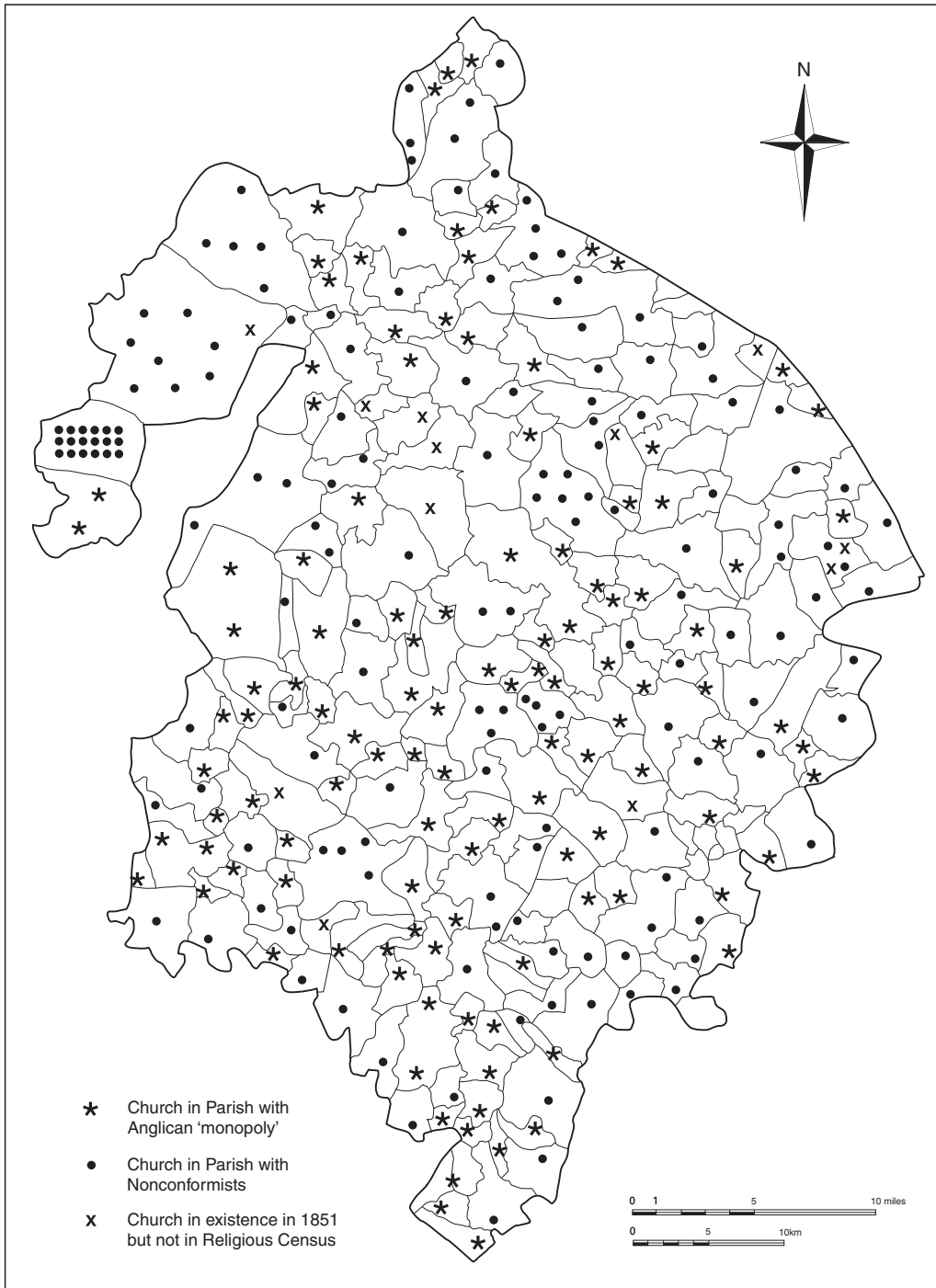
Map 1 - Warwickshire Registration Districts and Sub-regions



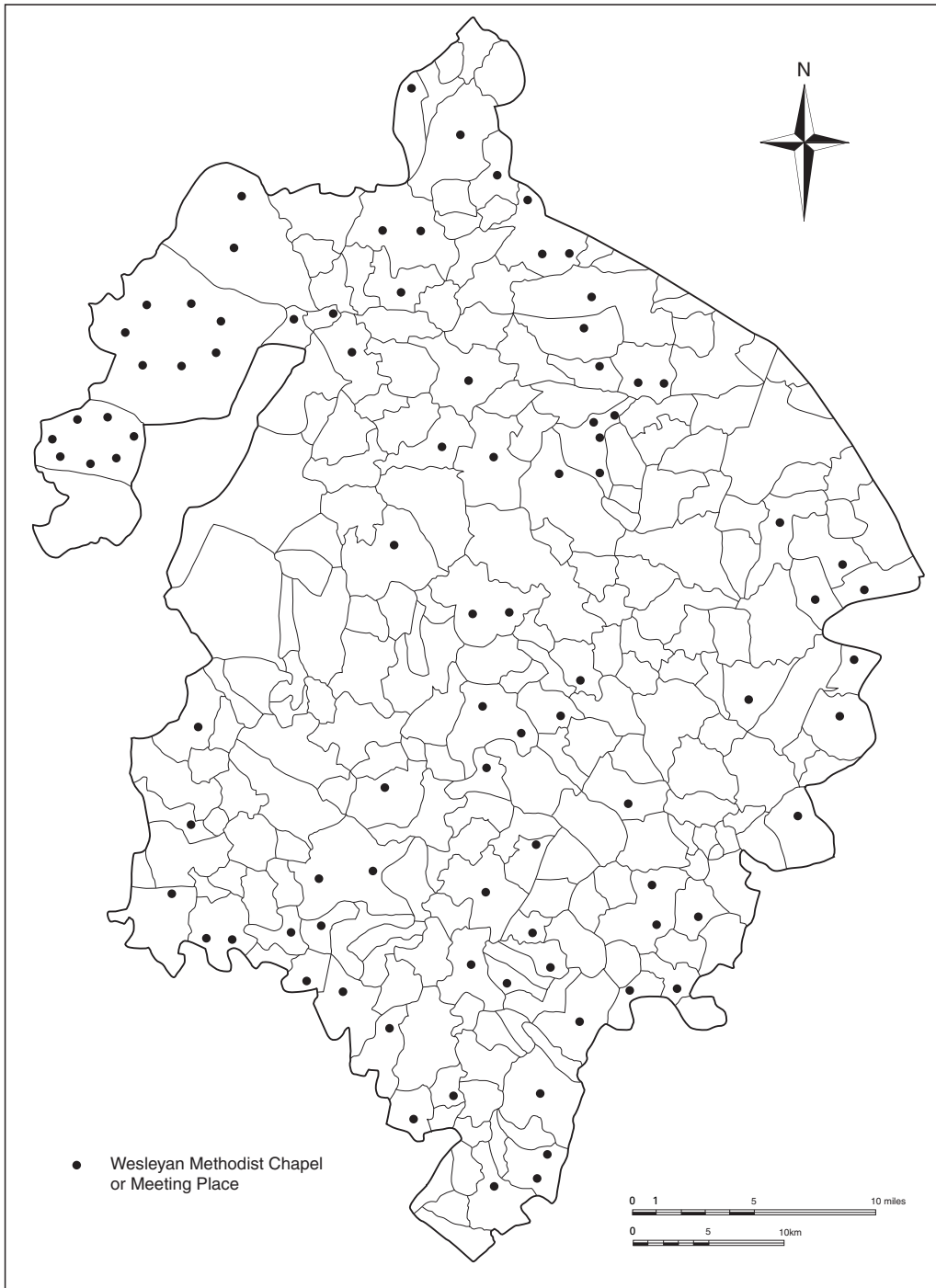
Map 2 - Warwickshire Parishes and Registration Districts



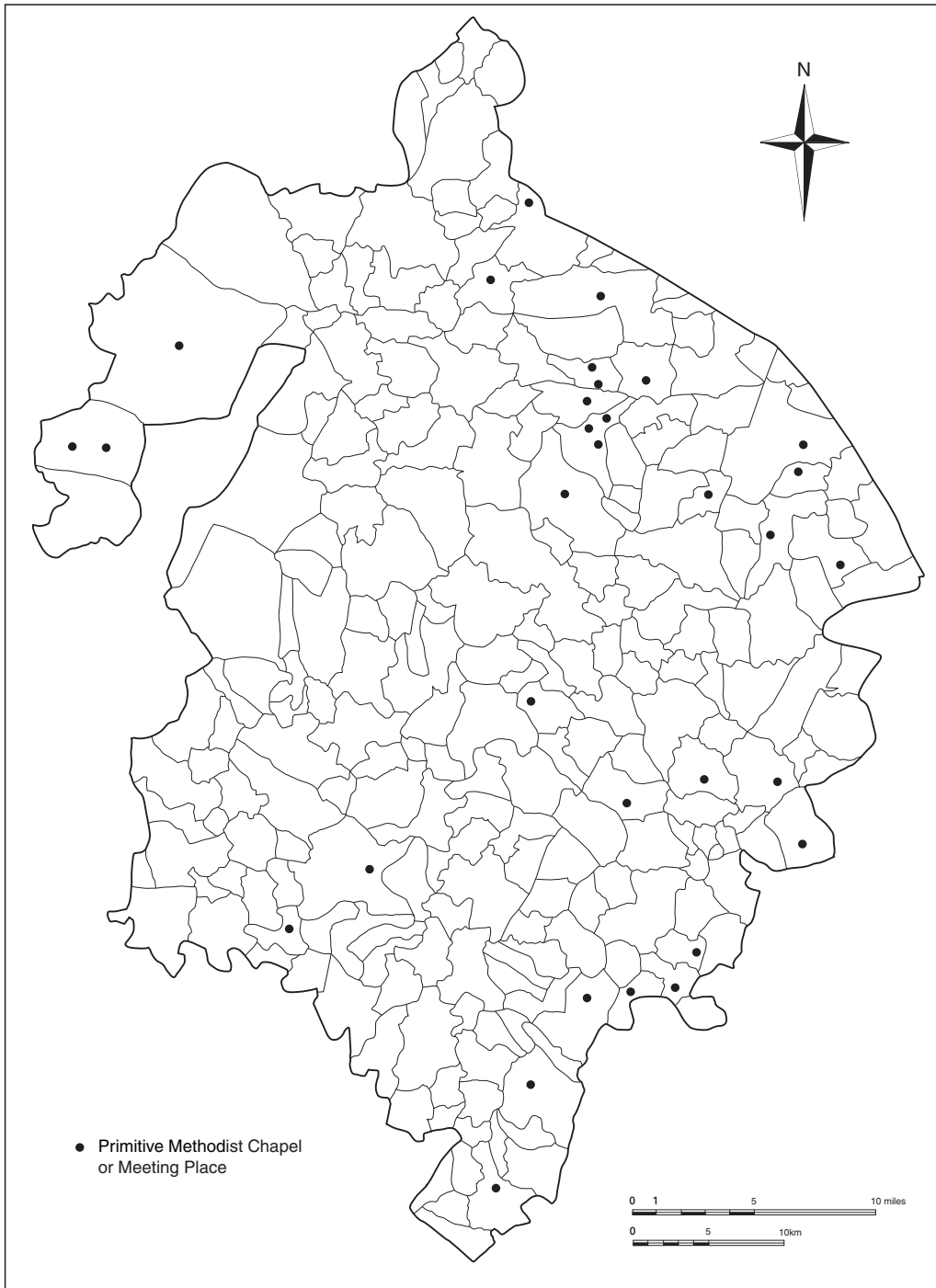
Map 3 - Warwickshire 'Open' and 'Close' Parishes



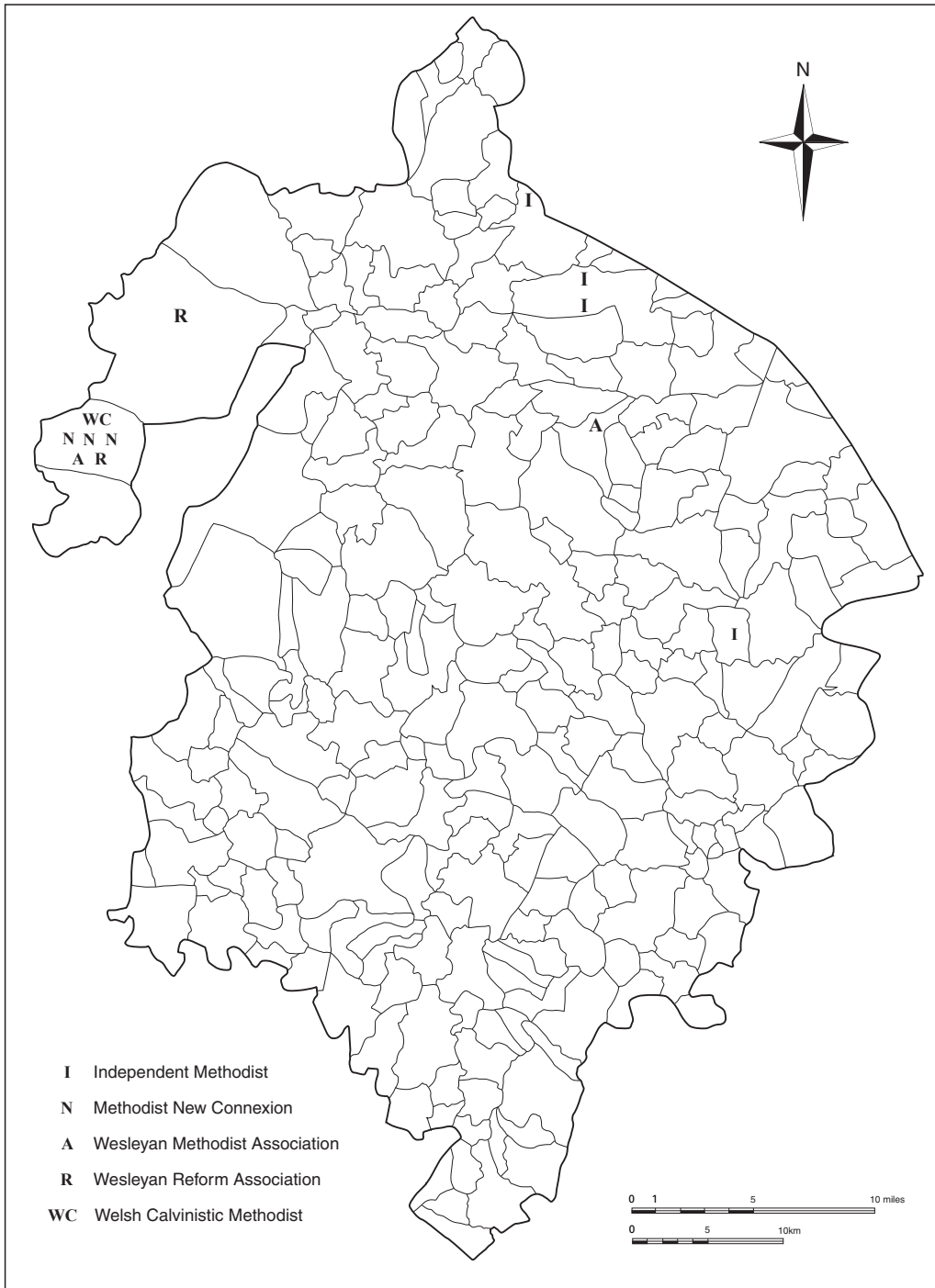
Map 4 - Distribution of Anglican Churches



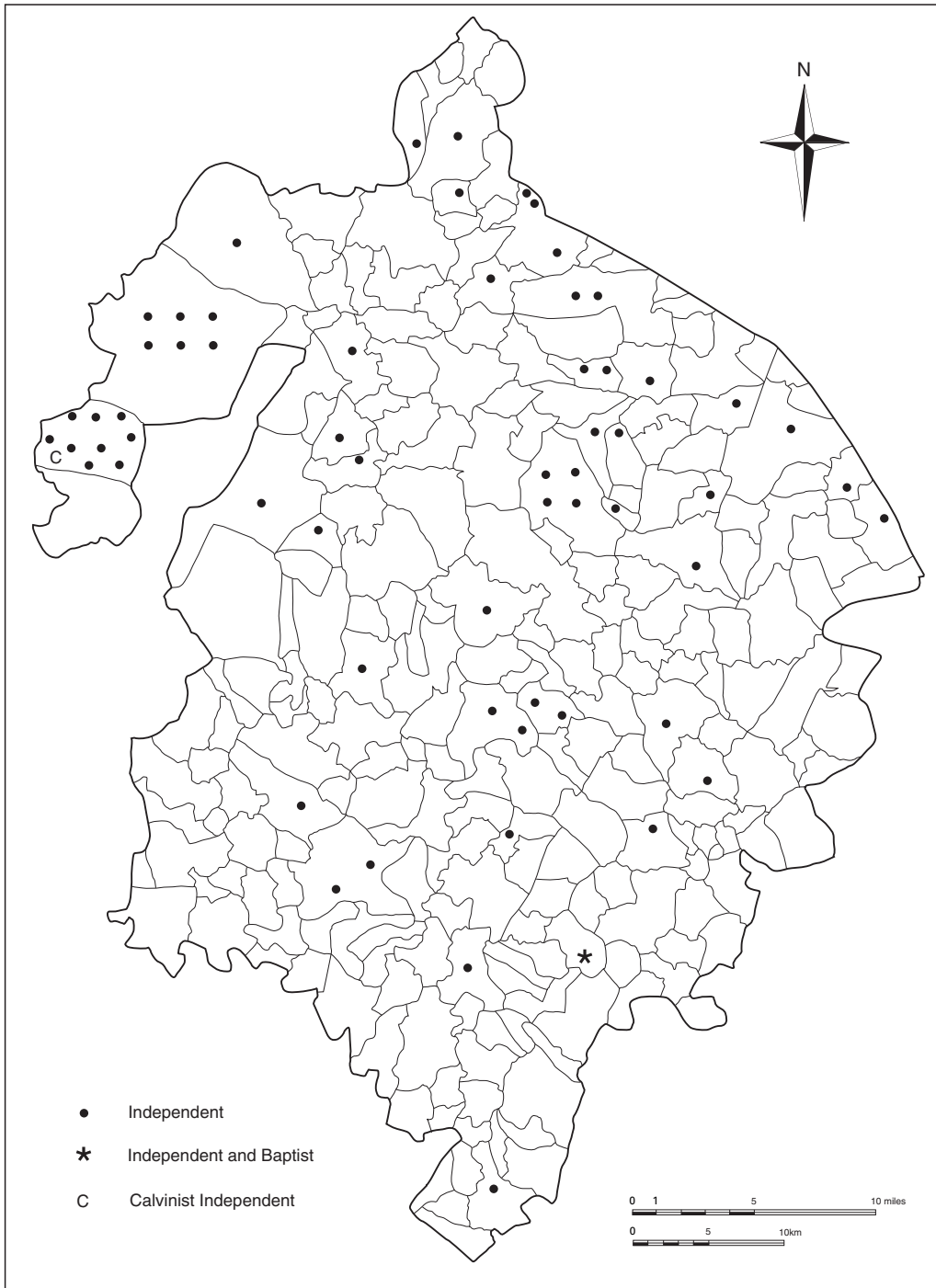
Map 5 - Distribution of Wesleyan Methodist Chapels and Meeting Places



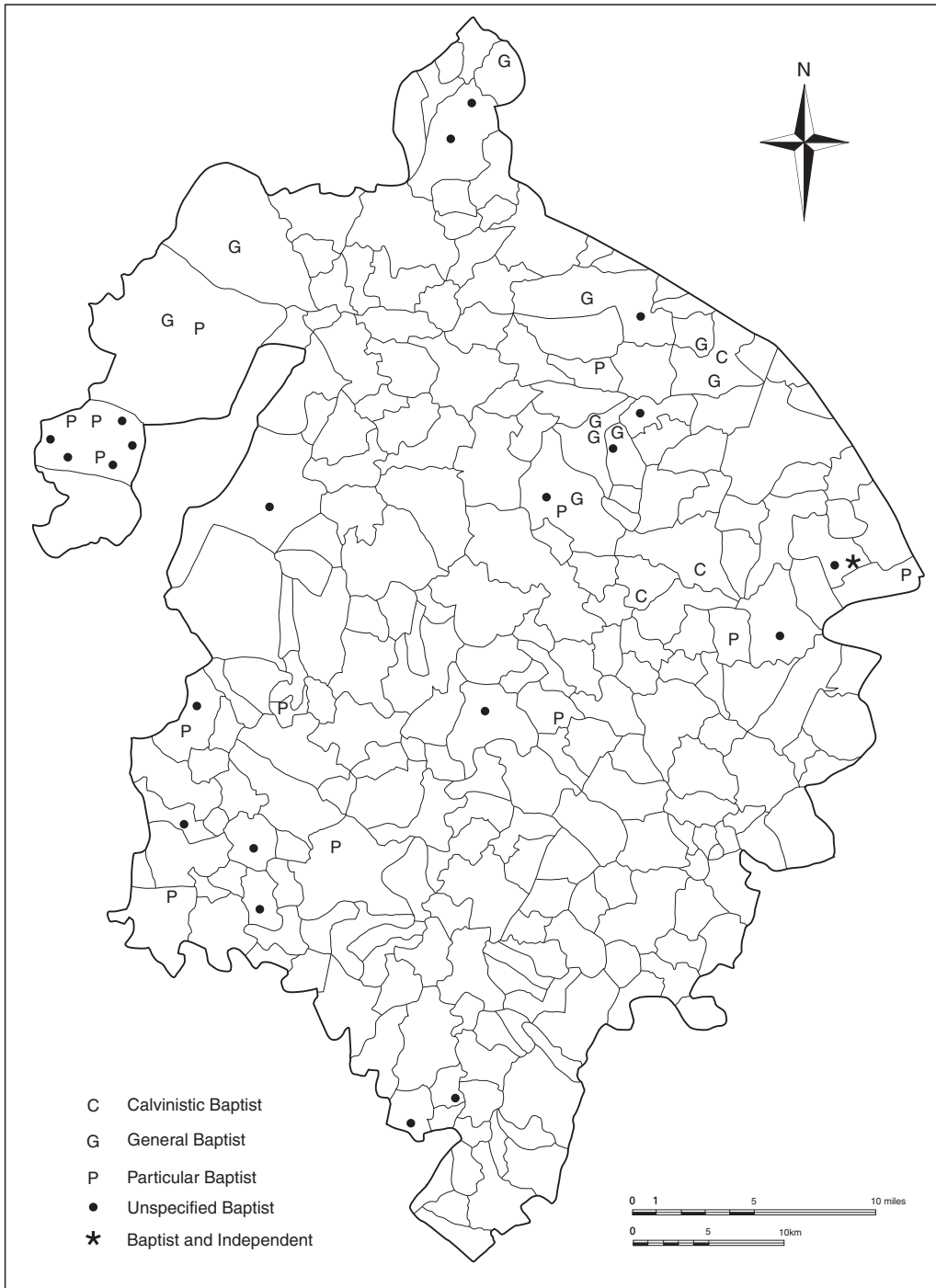
Map 6 - Distribution of Primitive Methodist Chapels and Meeting Places



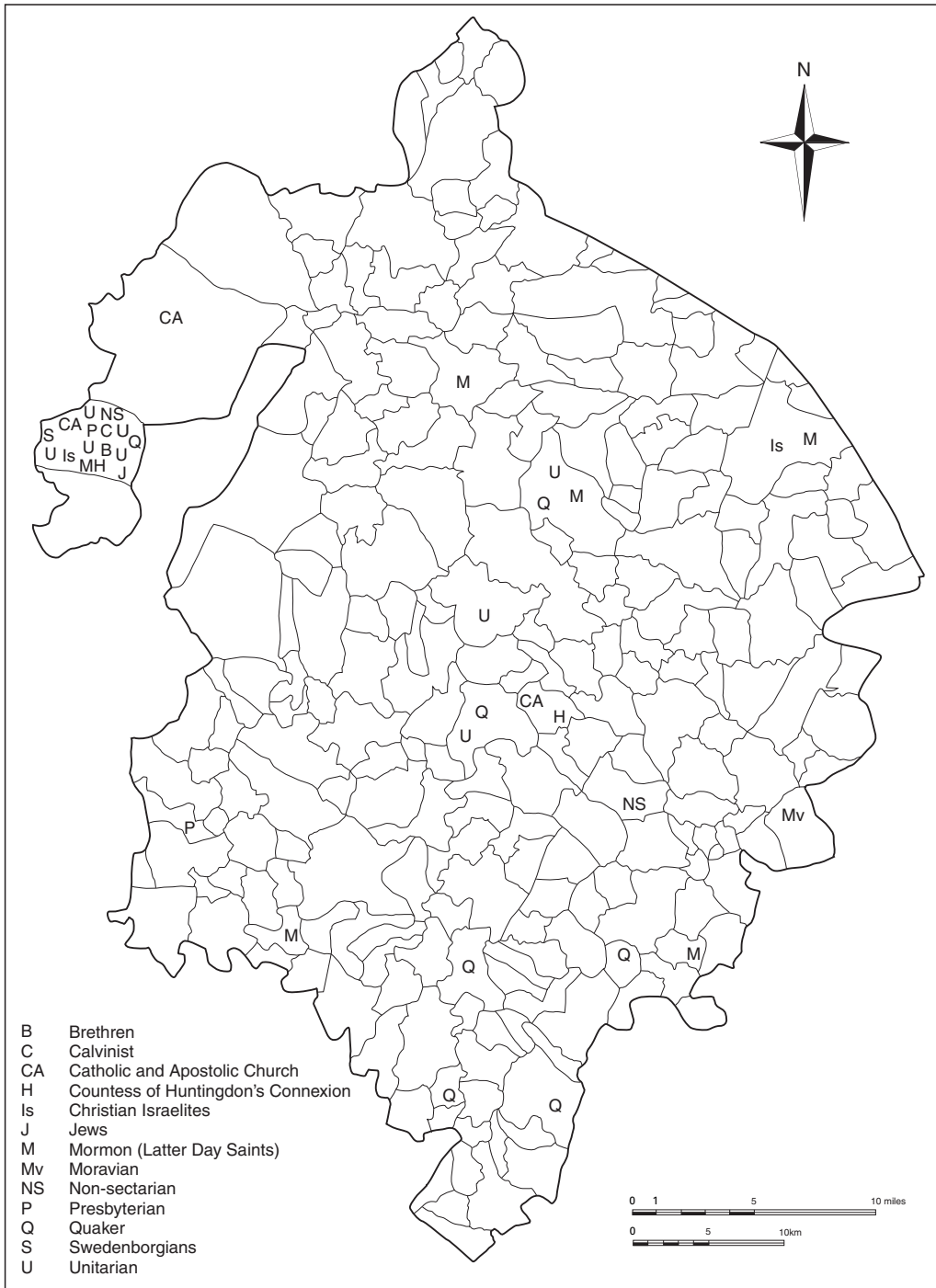
Map 7 - Distribution of other Methodist Chapels and Meeting Places



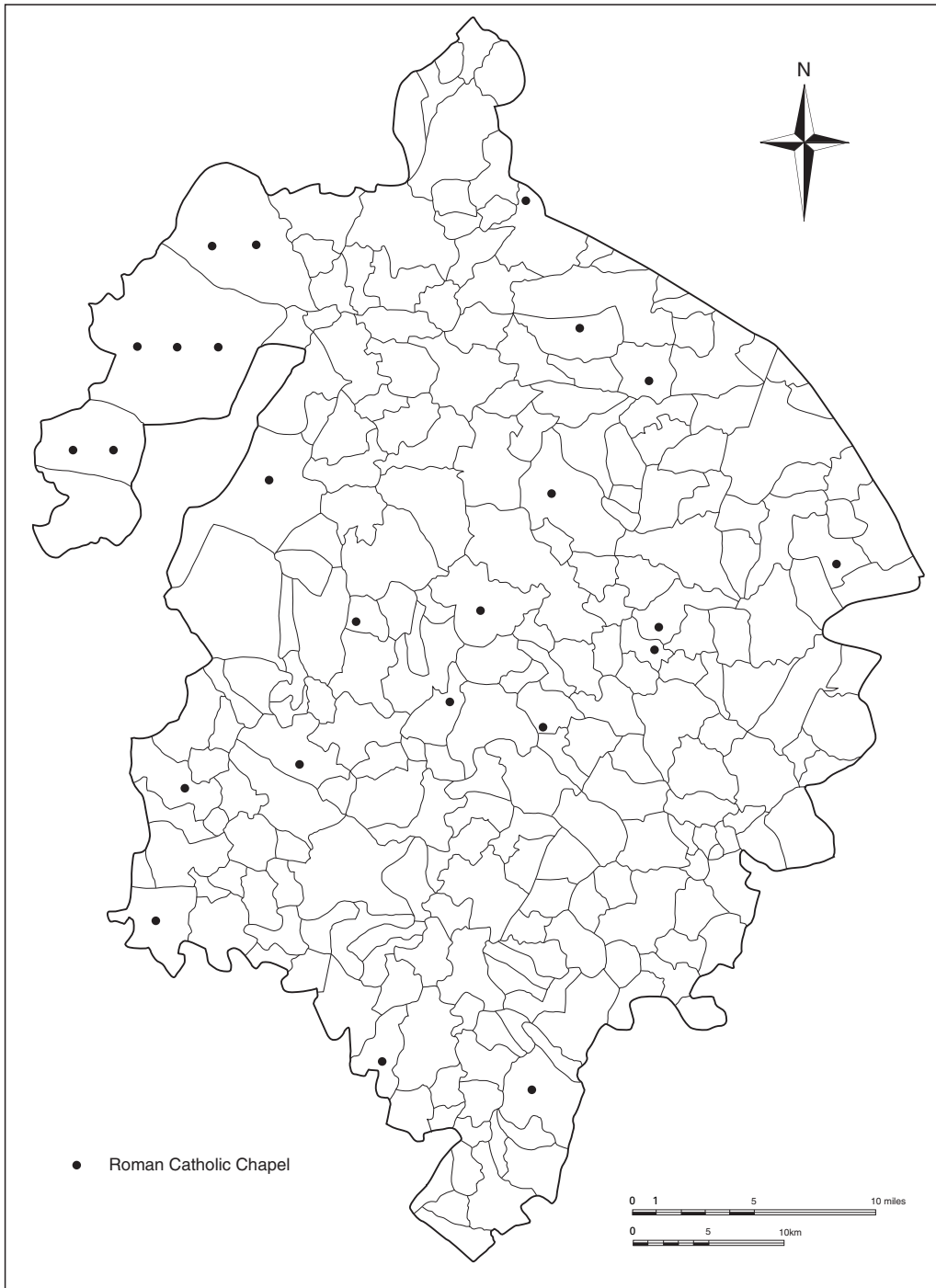
Map 8 - Distribution of Independent Chapels and Meeting Places



Map 9 - Distribution of Baptist Chapels and Meeting Places



Map 10 - Distribution of other Nonconformist Denominations' Chapels and Meeting Places



Map 11 - Distribution of Roman Catholic Chapels

## Bibliography

### (1) Manuscript and archival sources

Worcester County Record Office, Worcester Diocesan Records, Non-residence papers 1825-1837, BA 2064

The National Archives, Home Office, Ecclesiastical Census Returns, HO129/162, 163, 376, 393, 394, 395, 396, 397, 398, 399, 400, 401, 402, 403, 404, 405, 406, 407, 408, 412

Also viewed online at <http://discovery.nationalarchives.gov.uk>, and on microfilm at Warwick County Record Office.

Methodist Archive and Research Centre, John Rylands University Library of Manchester, Methodist Circuit Plans: Hinckley Wesleyan Methodist 1850-1851, Banbury Wesleyan Methodist 1851, Banbury Primitive Methodist 1844

Shakespeare Birthplace Trust, Evesham Wesleyan Methodist Circuit Plan 1854-1855.

Oxford Centre for Methodism and Church History, Primitive Methodist Conference Minutes, Wesleyan Methodist Conference Minutes

### (2) Printed primary sources

“Benefices sequestered. Return of all the benefices in England or Wales which have been sequestered for the purpose of discharging the debts of any incumbent, since the passing of the act 1 & 2 Vict. c. 106.” (Parliamentary Papers, London 1851)

*The Clergy of the Church of England Database 1540–1835* accessed via <http://www.theclergydatabase.org.uk>

*Congregational Year Book, 1851* (London, 1851)

*England & Wales, Civil Registration Death Index 1837-1915* accessed via <http://search.ancestry.co.uk>

*Harrow School Register 1801-1893 1915* accessed via <http://search.ancestry.co.uk>

Mann H. *Census of Great Britain, 1851: Religious Worship, England and Wales - Report and Tables* (London, 1853)

<http://www.statistics.gov.uk/census2001>

The National Archives, Home Office, Population Census Returns HO 107 *Census Returns of England and Wales, 1851*, RG9 *Census Returns of England and Wales, 1861*

(3) Printed secondary works

Addison, W.I., *A roll of the graduates of the University of Glasgow from 31st December, 1727 to 31st December, 1897: with short biographical notes* (Glasgow, 1898)

Aitken, J. (ed.), *Census of Religious Worship, 1851, The Returns for Worcestershire* (Worcester, 2000)

Allen, J.B. and Thorp, M.R., 'The Mission of the Twelve to England 1840-1: Mormon Apostles and the Working Classes' (BYU Studies Vol. 15:4, Summer 1975) pp. 499ff

Ambler, R.W., 'The 1851 Census of Religious Worship', *Local Historian*, Vol. 11 (1974-75)

Ambler, R.W., *Lincolnshire returns of the census of religious worship, 1851* (Lincoln Record Society. (Fakenham, 1979)

Ambler, R.W., *Ranters, Revivalists & Reformers* (Hull, 1989)

Ambler, R.W., *Churches, Chapels and the Parish Communities of Lincolnshire (1660-1900)* (Lincoln, 2000)

Arch, J., *Joseph Arch: the story of his life told by himself* (London, 1898)

Armstrong, A., *The Church of England, the Methodists and Society, 1700 – 1850* (London, 1973)

Arnold, M., (ed. J. Dover Wilson) *Culture and Anarchy* (London, 1932)

Arnold, T., *Principles of Church Reform* (London, 1833)

Banks, S. 'Nineteenth-Century Scandal or Twentieth-Century Model? A New Look at 'Open' and 'Close' Parishes, *The Economic History Review*, New Series, Vol. 41, No. 1. (Feb., 1988), pp. 51-73

Bebbington, D.W., *Victorian Nonconformity* (Bangor, 1992)

Beckerlegge, O.A., *The United Methodist Free Churches : a study in freedom* (London, 1957)

Benson E.C. and Doxey C., 'The Ecclesiastical Census of 1851 and the Church of Jesus Christ and the Latter-day Saints in *Local Historian* (May 2004)

- Best G., *Temporal pillars: Queen Anne's bounty, the Ecclesiastical Commissioners, and the Church of England* (Cambridge, 1964)
- Betteridge, A., *Deep Roots, Living Branches, A History of Baptists in the English Western Midlands*. (Kibworth Beauchamp, 2010)
- Binfield, J.C.G., *Pastors and People* (Coventry, 1984)
- Binfield, J.C.G., *So Down to Prayers. Studies in English Nonconformity 1780 – 1920* (London, 1977)
- Birmingham Statistical Society for the Improvement of Education 'Report on the State of Education in Birmingham' *Journal of the Statistical Society of London* Vol. 3, No. 1 (April 1840)
- Bolam, C. G., Goring, J., Short, H.L., Thomas, R., *The English Presbyterians: from Elizabethan Puritanism to modern Unitarianism* (London, 1968)
- Bossy, J., *The English Catholic community, 1570-1850* (London, 1979)
- Bowen, D., *The Idea of the Victorian Church* (Montreal, 1968)
- Briggs, A., *Victorian Cities* (London, 1963)
- Briggs, A., *History of Birmingham* Vol. 2. (Oxford, 1952)
- Briggs, J.H.Y. and Sellers, I. (eds.) *Victorian nonconformity* (London, 1973)
- Briggs, J.H.Y., *The English Baptists of the Nineteenth Century* (Didcot, 1994)
- Brown, C.G., *The death of Christian Britain: understanding secularisation 1800-2000* (London, 2001)
- Brown, K. D., *A Social History of the Nonconformist Ministry in England and Wales* (Oxford, 1988)
- Brown, R., *Church and State in Modern Britain* (London, 1991)
- Brown, S.J., *The national churches of England, Ireland, and Scotland, 1801-46* (Oxford, 2001)
- Browning, O., *Life of George Eliot* (Cambridge, 2012 version of the 1890 edition)
- Bull, G.S., *Sheep Without Shepherds. (The difficulties of populous parishes and suggestions as to remedial measures.)* (London, 1854)
- Burg, J. (ed.), *Religion in Hertfordshire, 1847 to 1851* Hertfordshire Record Society, 11, (s.l., 1995)

- Burn, W.L., *The age of equipoise: a study of the mid-Victorian generation* (London, 1964)
- Bushby, D.W. (ed.), *The Ecclesiastical Census, March 1851, Bedfordshire* (Amphill, 1975)
- Butler, D.M., 'Places of Worship in the National Census of 1851', *Journal of the Friends' historical Society* Vol. 55, (1983-89) pp. 25-34
- Chadwick, O., *Victorian Miniature* (Cambridge, 1960)
- Chadwick, O., *The Victorian Church (3<sup>rd</sup> edition) Part 1 1829-1859* (London, 1987)
- Church of England, *Clergy List 1850, 1851, 1852* (London 1841-1917)
- Church of England Commissioners, *Crockford's Clerical Directory, 1872, 1874* (London, 1858- )
- Cliff, P.B., *The Rise and Development of the Sunday School Movement in England 1780-1980* (Redhill, 1986)
- Coleman, B. I., *The Church of England in the Mid-Nineteenth Century: a Social Geography* (London, 1980)
- Coleman, B.I., Religion in the Victorian City *History Today*, 30:8 August 1980
- Coleman, B.I., 'Southern England in the Census of Religious Worship, 1851' *Southern History*, 5 (1983) pp.154 - 188
- Colligan, J.H., *Eighteenth-Century Nonconformity* (London, 1915)
- Cowherd, R.G., *The Politics of English Dissent* (London, 1959)
- Cox, J., *English Churches in a Secular Society, Lambeth, 1870 – 1930.* (Oxford, 1982)
- Crockett, A. and Crockett, R., 'Consequences of Data Heaping in the British Religious Census of 1851', *Historical Methods: A Journal of Quantitative and Interdisciplinary History* Vol. 39 (1) (2006) pp. 24-46
- Crockett, A. and Snell, K.D.M. 'From the 1676 Compton Census to the 1851 Census of Religious Worship: Religious Continuity or Discontinuity?' *Rural History*, 8, pp. 55-89 (April 1997).
- Crossick G. (ed.) *The Lower Middle Classes in Britain 1870-1914* (London, 1977)
- Currie, R., *Methodism divided: a study in the sociology of ecumenicalism* (London, 1968)

- Currie R, Gilbert A. D. & Horsley, L. S., *Churches and churchgoers: patterns of church growth in the British Isles since 1700* (Oxford, 1977)
- Davies, H., *The English Free Churches* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed. London, 1963)
- Davies, R., George, A.R and Rupp, G. (eds.), *History of the Methodist Church in Great Britain Vol. 2* (London, 1978)
- Davies, R., George, A.R and Rupp, G. (eds.), *History of the Methodist Church in Great Britain Vol. 3* (London, 1983)
- Davies, R., *Methodism 2<sup>nd</sup> ed.* (London, 1976)
- Dick, M., 'The Myth of the Working-class Sunday School', *History of Education: Journal of the History of Education Society*, Vol. 9:1, pp. 27-41(1980)
- Dickens, C., *The Chimes, Second Quarter* (London, 1844)
- Dolan, J., *The Independent Methodists: A History* (Cambridge, 2005).
- Ede, J. and Virgoe, N. (eds.), *Religious Worship in Norfolk*, Norfolk Record Society, 62, (Norwich, 1998)
- Eliot, G., *Felix Holt, The Radical*, (London, 1866, Penguin edition 1972)
- Ell, P.S., 'The Geography of Religious Worship in England and Wales - 1851 Census', *GIMMS Newsletter* No. 12 (October 1991)
- Ell, P.S. and Slater, T.R., 'The Religious Census of 1851: a computer-mapped survey of the Church of England' *Journal of Historical Geography*, 20, 1 (1994) pp. 44-61
- Elliott, M., 'Belief and Unbelief in Victorian Leicester', *Transactions of the Leicestershire Archaeological and Historical Society* Vol. LVI (1981) pp. 88-96
- Engels, F., *The Condition of the Working Class in England* (1844, Oxford, 1993 edition)
- Evans, E.J., *The Forging of the Modern State*, 2nd ed. (London, 1996)
- Evans, E.J., 'Some Reasons for the Growth of English Anti-clericalism c1750 – c1830' in *Past and Present* no 66 (1975)
- Evans, J., *John Evans List of Dissenting Congregations and Ministers, 1715-29* (London, 1729)
- Evans, R.L., *A Century of Mormonism in Great Britain* (Deseret News Press, 1937)

- Everitt, A., *The Pattern of Rural Dissent: the Nineteenth Century*, University of Leicester Department of English Local History Occasional Papers, Second Series, No 4 (Leicester, 1972)
- Field, C.D. (ed.), *Church and Chapel in Early Victorian Shropshire: Returns from the 1851 Census of Religious Worship*, (Keele, 2004)
- Field, C.D., 'The 1851 Religious Census: A Select Bibliography of Materials Relating to England and Wales' *Proceedings of the Wesley Historical Society*, Vol. XLI (1977- 78)
- Field, C.D., 'The Social Structure of English Methodism: Eighteenth-Twentieth Centuries' *The British Journal of Sociology*, Vol. 28, No. 2 (Jun., 1977), pp. 199-225
- Field, C.D., 'Methodism in the 1851 Religious Census' in Macquiban, T. (ed.), *Methodism in its cultural milieu: proceedings of the Centenary Conference of the Wesley Historical Society in conjunction with the World Methodist Historical Society, held 26-30 July 1993 in Cambridge, England, Westminster Wesley Series No.2 (Summer 1994)*
- Field, C.D., 'Zion's people; who were the English nonconformists?' *The Local Historian*, Vol.40 No.2 (May 2010) pp. 91-112; Vol.40 No.3 (August 2010) pp. 208-223; Vol.40 No.4 (November 2010) pp. 292-308
- Field, C.D., Methodism in Shropshire 1851, *Shropshire History and Archaeology*, Vol. LXXX (2005) pp. 176-189
- Figgis, J.B., *The Countess of Huntingdon and her Connexion* (London, 1892)
- Finke, R., Guest, A.M. and Stark, R., 'Mobilizing Local Religious Markets: Religious Pluralism in the Empire State, 1855 to 1865' *American Sociological Review* vol. 61:2 (1996)
- Foster, J., *Alumni oxonienses: the members of the University of Oxford, 1715-1886* (Bristol, 2000)
- Gay, J.D., *The Geography of Religion in England* (London, 1971)
- Geary, K. (ed.), *The 1851 Census of Religious Worship: Church, Chapel, and Meeting Place in Mid Nineteenth-Century Warwickshire* (Stratford, 2014)
- Gilbert, A.D., *Religion and Society in Industrial England* (London, 1976)
- Gill, C., *History of Birmingham Vol. I. Manor and Borough to 1865* (Oxford, 1952).
- Gill, R., *The Empty Church Revisited* (Aldershot, 2003)

- Gilley, S. and Sheils, W.J. (eds.), *A History of Religion in Britain; Practice and Belief from Pre-Roman Times to the Present* (Oxford, 1994).
- Goodridge, R.M., 'The Religious Condition of the West Country in 1851', *Social Compass*, Vol. XIV (1967)
- Gurock, J.S. (ed.), *American Jewish history: the colonial and early national periods, 1654-1840* (New York, 1998)
- Haig, A., *The Victorian Clergy* (London, 1984)
- Harding, A., *The Countess of Huntingdon's Connexion: A Sect in Action in Eighteenth-Century England* (Oxford, 2003)
- Hempton, D., *The religion of the people: Methodism and popular religion c. 1750-1900* (London, 1996)
- Hempton, D., *Methodism and Politics in British Society 1750-1850* (London, 1984)
- Hempton, D., *Methodism, Empire of the Spirit* (New Haven, c2005)
- Holderness, B.A., 'Open and Close Parishes in England in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries', *Agricultural History Review* xx (1972) pp. 126-139
- Horn, P., *The Victorian Country Child* (Kineton, 1974, Gloucester, 1985 edn)
- Horn, P., *Joseph Arch* (Kineton, 1971)
- Horn, P., *The Rural World 1780 – 1850* (London, 1980)
- Hoskins, W.G., *Local History in England* (London, 1959)
- Hume, A., *Remarks on the Census of Religious Worship for England and Wales* (London, 1860)
- Hurwich, J.J., 'Dissent and Catholicism in English Society: A Study of Warwickshire, 1660-1720', *The Journal of British Studies*, Vol. 16, No. 1, (Autumn, 1976), pp. 24-58
- Inglis, K.S., 'Patterns of Religious Worship in 1851', in *Journal of Ecclesiastical History*, xi (1960) pp. 74-86
- Inglis, K.S., *Churches and the working classes in Victorian England* (London, 1963)
- Isichei, E.A., *Victorian Quakers* (London, 1970)
- Johnson, D.A., *The Changing Shape of English Nonconformity 1825 – 1925* (Oxford, 1999)

- Jones, I.G. (ed.), *The Religious Census of 1851: A Calendar of the Returns relating to Wales, Volume II, North Wales* (Cardiff, 1981)
- Jones, I.G. and Williams, D. (eds.), *The Religious Census of 1851: A Calendar of the Returns relating to Wales, Volume I, South Wales* (Cardiff, 1976)
- Jones, R., 'The 1851 Religious Census in Pembrokeshire', *The Journal of the Pembrokeshire Historical Society* No 18, (2009), pp. 49-58
- Jones, R.T., *Congregationalism in England 1662 – 1962* (London, 1962)
- Jones, W.H., *History of the Wesleyan Reform Union* (London, 1952)
- Kelly & Co., *Post Office, Directory of Leicestershire and Rutlandshire 1855* (London, 1855)
- Kendall, H.B., *History of the Primitive Methodist connexion* (London, 1885 -1890)
- Kirby, G., *The Elect Lady* (East Grinstead, 1972)
- Kitson Clark, G., *The Making of Victorian England* (Oxford, 1962), 1965 edition
- Langley, A. (ed.), *Joseph Ashby's Victorian Warwickshire* (Studley, 2007)
- Laqueur, T.W., *Religion and Respectability: Sunday Schools and Working Class Culture, 1780-1850* (London, 1976)
- Laslett, P., *The World We Have Lost* (New York, 1965)
- Laslett, P., 'Size and Structure of the Household in England over Three Centuries' *Population Studies* 23 (1969)
- Lawton R. (ed.) *The Census and Social Structure* (London, 1979)
- Leary, W., *Ministers & circuits in the Primitive Methodist Church: a directory* (Loughborough, 1990)
- Legg, E. (ed.), *Buckinghamshire Returns of the Census of Religious Worship* (Aylesbury, 1991)
- Lewis, S., *A Topographical History of Wales* (London, 1849)
- Lovegrove, D.W., *Established Church, Sectarian People. Itinerancy and the Transformation of English Dissent, 1780-1830* (Cambridge, 1988)
- Lovegrove, D.W. (ed.), *The Rise of the Laity in Evangelical Protestantism* (London, 2002)

- MacLaren, A.A., *Religion and Social Class. The Disruption Years in Aberdeen* (London, 1974)
- MacRaild, D.M., *Irish migrants in modern Britain, 1750-1922* (Basingstoke, 1999)
- Mann, H., 'On the Statistical Position of Religious Bodies in England and Wales' *Journal of the Statistical Society of London*, Vol. 18, No. 2 (Jun. 1855), pp. 141 - 159
- McLachlan, H., *The Methodist Unitarian Movement* (Manchester, 1919)
- McLeod, H., *Religion and the People of Western Europe 1789-1970* (Oxford, 1981)
- McLeod, H., *Religion and the Working Class in Nineteenth Century Britain* (London, 1984)
- McLeod, H., *Class and Religion in the Late Victorian City* (London, 1974)
- Martin, J. M., 'The Parliamentary Enclosure Movement and Rural Society in Warwickshire', *Agricultural History Review* xv (1967), pp. 19-39
- Martin, J. M., 'Village Traders and the Emergence of a Proletariat in South Warwickshire, 1750 - 1851', *Agricultural History Review* xxxii (1984) pp. 179-88
- Martin, J. M., 'The Small Landowner and Parliamentary Enclosure in Warwickshire' *The Economic History Review*, New Series, Vol. 32, No. 3. (Aug., 1979), pp. 328-343
- Mearns, A., *The Statistics of Attendance at Public Worship* (London, 1882)
- Miall, E. *The British Churches in Relation to the British People*, (1849)(cited in Thompson, D.M., 'The Religious Census of 1851')
- Milburn, G.E., 'The Census of Worship of 1851' *Durham County Local History Society Bulletin* 17, July 1974
- Milburn, G.E., 'Religion in Sunderland in 1851' *Durham County Local History Society Bulletin* 18, April 1975
- Milburn, G.E., *Primitive Methodism* (Peterborough, 2002)
- Moore, R., *Pit-men, preachers and politics* (Cambridge, 1974)
- Mills, D.R., *Lord and Peasant*, (London, 1980)
- Mudie Smith, R. (ed.), *The Religious Life of London* (London, 1904)
- Mullett, M.A., *Catholics in Britain and Ireland, 1558-1829* (Basingstoke, 1998)

- Munden, A.F. (ed.), *Religious Census of 1851: Northumberland and Durham* (Woodbridge, 2012)
- Munden, A.F. (ed.), *Religious census of Bristol and Gloucestershire, 1851* (Cheltenham, 2015)
- Norman, E.R., *Church and Society in England 1770 - 1970: a historical study* (Oxford, 1976)
- Norman, E.R., *The English Catholic Church in the Nineteenth Century* (Oxford, 1984)
- Obelkevich, J., *Religion and Rural Society: South Lindsey, 1825-1875* (Oxford, 1976)
- Obelkevich, J., 'Religion' in Thompson, F.M.L. (ed.), *Cambridge Social History of Britain vol. 3* (Cambridge, 1990)
- Orme, N., *Unity and variety: a history of the church in Devon and Cornwall* (Exeter, 1991)
- Parsons, G., *Religion in Victorian Britain vol. I: Traditions* (Manchester, 1988)
- Parsons, G., *Religion in Victorian Britain vol. II: Controversies* (Manchester, 1988)
- Patterson, G., 'The Religious Census – A Test of its Accuracy in South Shields' *Durham County Local History Society Bulletin* 21, April 1978
- Payne, E.A., *The Free Church Tradition in the Life of England* (3<sup>rd</sup> ed. London, 1951)
- Pickering, W.S.F., 'The 1851 Religious Census - A Useless Experiment?' *British Journal of Sociology*, xviii (1967)
- Pickering, W.S.F., 'Abraham Hume (1814-1884), A Forgotten Pioneer in Religious Sociology', *Archive de Sociologie des Religions* Vol. 33 (1972)
- Powell, W.E., 'The Contribution of the Welsh Nonconformist Diaspora in the West Midlands of England' in Sell A.P.F. *Protestant Nonconformists and the West Midlands of England* (Keele, 1996), pp. 119-133
- Probert, J.C.C. (ed.), *West Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly* (n.d.)
- Ransome, M. (ed.), *The State of the Bishoprick of Worcester 1782-1808* Worcester Historical Society (Worcester, 1968)
- Rinaldi, F.W., *The Tribe of Dan: the new connexion of General Baptists 1770-1891: a study in the transition from revival movement to established denomination* (Milton Keynes, 2008)
- Roake, M. (ed.), *Religious Worship in Kent: the Census of 1851*, Kent Archaeological Society, Kent Records, 27, (Maidstone, 1999)

- Robson, G., 'Between Town and Countryside: Contrasting Patterns of Churchgoing in the Early Victorian Black Country', *Studies in Church History*, xvi, (1979), pp. 400 – 414
- Robson, G. *Dark Satanic Mills? Religion and Irreligion in Birmingham and the Black Country* (Carlisle, 2002)
- Rogan, J., 'The Religious Census of 1851', *Theology*, Vol. LXVI (1963) pp. 11 - 15
- Rogers, A., 'The 1851 religious census returns for the city of Nottingham', *Transactions of the Thoroton Society of Nottinghamshire* Vol. 76 (1973 for 1972), pp. 74-87
- Routley, E. *English Religious Dissent* (Cambridge, 1960)
- Rowlands, M.B. (ed.), *English Catholics of parish and town, 1558-1778* (London, 1999)
- Royle, E., *Modern Britain: A Social History 1750 – 1997* (London, 1997)
- Schurer, K. and Arkell, T. (eds.), *Surveying the People the interpretation and use of document sources for the study of population in the later seventeenth century* (Oxford, 1992)
- Sellers, I., *Nineteenth-Century Nonconformity* (London, 1977)
- Shaw, P.E., *The Catholic apostolic church, sometimes called Irvingite: a historical study* (New York, 1946)
- Sibree, J. and Caston, M., *Independency in Warwickshire: a brief history of the Independent or Congregational churches in that county; containing biographical notices of their pastors; with an illustrative map and vignette engravings* (Coventry, 1855)
- Smith, M.A., *Religion and Industrial Society* (Oxford, 1994)
- Smith, S., *Third Letter to Archdeacon Singleton (2<sup>nd</sup> Edition)* (London, 1839)
- Smyth, C., *Simeon and Church Order* (Cambridge, 1940)
- Snell, K.D.M., *Church and Chapel in the North Midlands* Occasional papers (University of Leicester. Department of English Local History); 4th series, no. 3. (Leicester, 1991)
- Snell, K.D.M., *Annals of the Labouring Poor: social change and agrarian England* (Cambridge, 1985)
- Snell, K.D.M. and Ell, P.S., *Rival Jerusalems: The Geography of Victorian Religion* (Cambridge, 2000)

- Snell, K.D.M., 'The Sunday-School Movement in England and Wales: Child Labour, Denominational Control and Working-Class Culture', *Past & Present*, No. 164 (Aug., 1999), pp. 122-168
- Society for the liberation of religion from State patronage and control  
*Voluntaryism in England and Wales or, The Census of 1851* (London, 1854)
- Stell, C., *An inventory of nonconformist chapels and meeting-houses in central England: Royal Commission on Historical Monuments* (England) (London, 1986).
- Thompson, D.M., 'The 1851 Religious Census: Problems and Possibilities' *Victorian Studies*, Vol. 11, No. 1 (Sep., 1967)
- Thompson, D.M. (ed.), *Religious life in mid-19th century Cambridgeshire and Huntingdonshire: the returns for the 1851 census of religious worship* (Cambridge, 2014)
- Thompson, D.M. (ed.), *Nonconformity in the nineteenth century* (London, 1972)
- Thompson, E.P., 'Time, Work-discipline, and Industrial Capitalism', *Past and Present* (1967)
- Thompson, E.P., *The Making of the English Working Class* (London, 1980)
- Tiller, K., "'The desert begins to blossom": Oxfordshire and Primitive Methodism'. *Oxoniensia*, Vol. LXXI (2006) pp. 85-111
- Tiller, K. (ed.), *Church and Chapel in Oxfordshire, 1851: The Return of the Census of Religious Worship* (Oxford, 1987)
- Tiller, K. (ed.), *Berkshire Religious Census 1851* Berkshire Record Society (Reading, 2010)
- Tillyard, F., 'The Distribution of the Free Churches in England' *The Sociological Review* (1935)
- Timmins, T.C.B. (ed.), *Suffolk Returns from the Census of Religious Worship of 1851*, Suffolk Records Society, 39, (Woodbridge, 1997)
- Tomalin, P., 'The Returns of the Rutland Districts to the 1851 Census of Religious Worship in Rutland', *Journal of the Rutland Local History & Record Society* No 22, (2002) pp. 51 - 67
- Tomalin, P., 'The returns to the 1851 Census by the Rutland parishes in the Stamford Registration District', *Journal of the Rutland Local History & Record Society* No 24, (2004)

- Turner, G.L. (ed.), *Original records of early Nonconformity under persecution and indulgence* (London, 1911-14)
- Turner, J.M., *Wesleyan Methodism* (Peterborough, 2005)
- Tranter, M., Barton, D.A. and Ell, P.S. (eds.), *The Derbyshire Returns to the 1851 Religious Census* Derbyshire Record Society, 23, (Chesterfield, 1995)
- Underwood, A.C., *A History of English Baptists* (London, 1947)
- Venn, J. and Venn, J.A., *Alumni cantabrigienses: a biographical list of all known students, graduates and holders of office at the University of Cambridge, from the earliest times to 1900* (Bristol, 2001)
- Vickers, J., *History of Independent Methodism* (Bolton, 1920)
- Vickers, J.A. (ed.), *The Religious Census of Sussex, 1851* (Lewes, 1989)
- Vickers, J.A. (ed.), *The Religious Census of Hampshire, 1851* (Winchester, 1993)
- Virgin, P., *The Church in an Age of Negligence: ecclesiastical structure and problems of church reform 1700-1840* (Cambridge, 1989)
- Ward, C.G. (ed.), *The 1851 Religious Census of Northamptonshire*, (Northampton, 2007)
- Ward, W.R., *Religion and Society in England 1790 – 1850* (London, 1972)
- Warwick County Records*, vol. 8, pp. xlix – cxxxviii (Warwick, 1935)
- Watts, M.R., *The Dissenters Vol. 1 From the Reformation to the French Revolution* (Oxford, c1978)
- Watts, M.R., *The Dissenters Vol. 2 The Expansion of Evangelical Nonconformity* (Oxford, 1995)
- Watts, M.R. (ed.), *Religion in Victorian Nottinghamshire: The Religious Census of 1851*, (Nottingham, 1988)
- Webb, C. and Robinson D. (eds.), *The 1851 Religious Census: Surrey*, Surrey Record Society, 35, (Guildford, 1997)
- Werner, J.S. *The Primitive Methodist Connexion* (Wisconsin, 1984)
- White, F. & Co., *History, Gazetteer and Directory of Warwickshire* (Sheffield, 1850)
- White, F. & Co., *Post Office Directory of Birmingham, Staffordshire & Worcestershire, 1850*, (Sheffield, 1850)

- White, W., *Friends in Warwickshire in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries* (Birmingham, 1873)
- Whiteman, A. (ed.), *The Compton Census of 1676: a critical edition* (London, c1986)
- Wickes, M.J.L. (ed.), *Devon in the Religious Census of 1851* (Bideford, c1990)
- Wickham, E.R., *Church and People in an Industrial City* (London, 1957)
- Wilson, A.N., *The Elizabethans* (London, 2011)
- Wilson, J.M., *The Imperial Gazetteer of England and Wales*, (London, 1872)
- Wilson, J.M., *The Imperial Gazetteer of England and Wales*, (London, 1886)
- Wolffe, J., 'Elite and Popular Religion in the Religious Census of 30 March 1851', *Studies in Church History* Vol.42 (2006) pp. 360 – 371
- Wolffe, J. (ed.), *Yorkshire Returns of the 1851 Census of Religious Worship Vol.1*, (York, 2000)
- Wolffe, J. (ed.), *Yorkshire Returns of the 1851 Census of Religious Worship Yorkshire Volumes 2&3*, (York, 2005)
- Wolffe, J., 'The Religious Census of 1851 in Yorkshire', *Borthwick Paper* 108, (2005)
- Wolffe, J., 'The 1851 Census and Religious Change in Nineteenth-Century Yorkshire', *Northern History*, XLV: 1, March 2008, pp. 71 – 86
- Woodhouse, F.V., *The Census and the Catholic Apostolic Church* (London: Thomas Bosworth, 1854)
- Worrall, E., *Return of Papists 1767 vol. 2* (London, 1989)
- Wrigley E.A. (ed.), *Nineteenth- Century Society* (Cambridge, 1972)
- Yates, N., Urban Church Attendance and the Use of Statistical Evidence, 1850 – 1900, *Studies in Church History*, xvi, (1979)
- Young, G.M., *Victorian England: Portrait of an Age 2<sup>nd</sup> ed.* (London, 1960)
- ΦΙΛΑΔΕΛΦΙΑ, *Augmentation of Small Livings to the Minimum Value of £200 per annum by a Clerical Income Tax upon Existing Incumbents of Dignities and Large Benefices and a Ten Years' Appropriation of a Fifth of the Net Income of Their Successors. Recommended in a Letter to the Right Honourable the Premier (the Earl of Aberdeen) and the Right Honourable the Lord Chancellor (Lord Cranworth)* (London, 1854)

(4) Unpublished theses

Champ, J.F., 'Assimilation and Separation: The Catholic Revival in Birmingham c1650 - 1850' (unpublished Ph.D. thesis, University of Birmingham, 1984)

Leese, R., 'The Impact of Methodism on Black Country Society 1743 - 1860' (unpublished Ph.D. thesis, University of Manchester, 1972)