

# **Skelmanthorpe and District U3A**

## **THE INFLUENCE OF RELIGION IN THE LOCALITY**

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boundaries of the area itself. High Hoyland and Emley were to be the only parish centres contained within the area, and they embraced parts of the settlements of Scissett, Skelmanthorpe and Clayton West. Other parishes reaching into the valley included Penistone (which included Denby); Kirkburton (which incorporated parts of Cumberworth); Silkstone (which embraced Cawthorne and other parts of Cumberworth); Sandal Magna (which included portions of West Bretton) and Thornhill (of which Flockton was a chapelry). Cawthorne and Cumberworth were to become independent parishes in the 17<sup>th</sup> Century.

Gradually, purpose-built churches of some substance replaced cruder and more temporary structures. By the middle of the twelfth century, stone buildings had been erected in Emley and High Hoyland. Some time between 1158 and 1189 a chapel was built in Cumberworth under the patronage of the Dronsfield family (lords of Cumberworth and West Bretton) whilst in West Bretton itself, members of the same family erected a chapel-of-ease in 1358. A substantial church had been built in Cawthorne by the early thirteenth century .... ("Exploring the Upper Dearne Valley", John Wilkinson, (Bridge Publications, 2002) Chapter 6 : The Place of Religion)

### **The Contribution of Monasteries to the Community, "Know your District, No. 129" by John Addy**

The arrival of the Cistercian monks at Waverley in West Sussex in 1138 had a great impact on the development of the North. The Cistercians offered a reformed monastic life of severity, simplicity and order. As new abbeys were opened by them they always selected remote inaccessible spots like Fountains, Byland and Rievaulx where the land was rough grazing pasture and the people few. Very quickly the Cistercians began to accumulate flocks of sheep. Wool was the centre of the economy in the Middle Ages. In the archives of Bretton Hall are leases made by the Dronsfields to the abbot of Byland giving him grazing rights in Bretton and by the Fitzwilliams of Sprotborough giving grazing rights at Emley to the abbots of Rievaulx and Byland. Six hundred sheep were pastured in Emley, Bretton and Flockton by these abbeys and they acquired the right to build a farmhouse with farm buildings and a chapel. The Cistercians emerged as businessmen of the first order and their economy survived to be taken over by the rising gentry on the closing of the monasteries and the sale of their properties in 1539.

Some impetus may have been given to Christian advance by the presence of Byland and Rievaulx monks in the Emley, Flockton and West Bretton settlements. It is known that, at Bentley Grange the monks erected a chapel dedicated to St Werburgh – no trace of which now remains....

### **The Reformation**

How far the cataclysm of the Reformation of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries affected the lives of valley people is very difficult to estimate. Apart from such immediate changes as the dissolution of the monasteries, and the introduction into church services of the English language in place of Latin, many people were probably more bemused than estranged....

In 1642 the Civil War began and in 1644 Cromwell's Parliament abolished the Church of England under the "Root and Branch" Bill which declared the Church of England to be "utterly abrogated and put down for ever". Following the Royalist defeat and the creation of a Commonwealth, Presbyterianism became the recognised form of worship and event the use of the "Book of Common Prayer" was forbidden. Extreme Protestant sects came to the fore and alongside the Presbyterians, the Independents and the Baptists infiltrated

the parishes. The restoration of the King (Charles II) in 1660 led to the restoration of the Church of England.

### **Archbishop Neile's Visitation of Huddersfield and District 1632**

By John Addy

The church in the North was in disorder. Parishes were large and much of the area, especially the Pennine parishes, were ungovernable. So in 1632 Richard Neile, Bishop of Winchester, was translated to York at the age of seventy to try to bring it to order.

Neile immediately set about a visitation of all the parishes to find out what conditions they were in. The aim of the visit was to see that all observed the rules of the church concerning worship, attendance at church, and observance of Sunday.

Arriving in Emley the visitors found the rector, Laurence Farrington, at work. He was a Lancashire man who had graduated at Oxford in 1608 and been presented with the living at Emley in 1626. He was charged with not observing Holy Days and not walking the parish bounds. The visitors found that the church wardens had seats behind the altar - they were ordered to remove the seats, put the altar against the wall and rail it in to prevent dogs fouling the same. The rector failed to implement the orders and was suspended from his living until he did so.

From Emley the visitors went to Kirkburton where the vicar was Gamaliel Whittaker, a relative of the Earl of Strafford. Here too prayers were omitted and parish bounds were not walked.

The lay folks did not escape the net. James Horsfall of Slaithwaite and Samuel Hope spent Sunday drinking in Samuel Kemp's alehouse. In Emley, Robert Oxley entertained visitors drinking on Sundays whilst Edward Haigh of Huddersfield was charged with "talking and prating in church during Divine Service and being beastly drunk"!

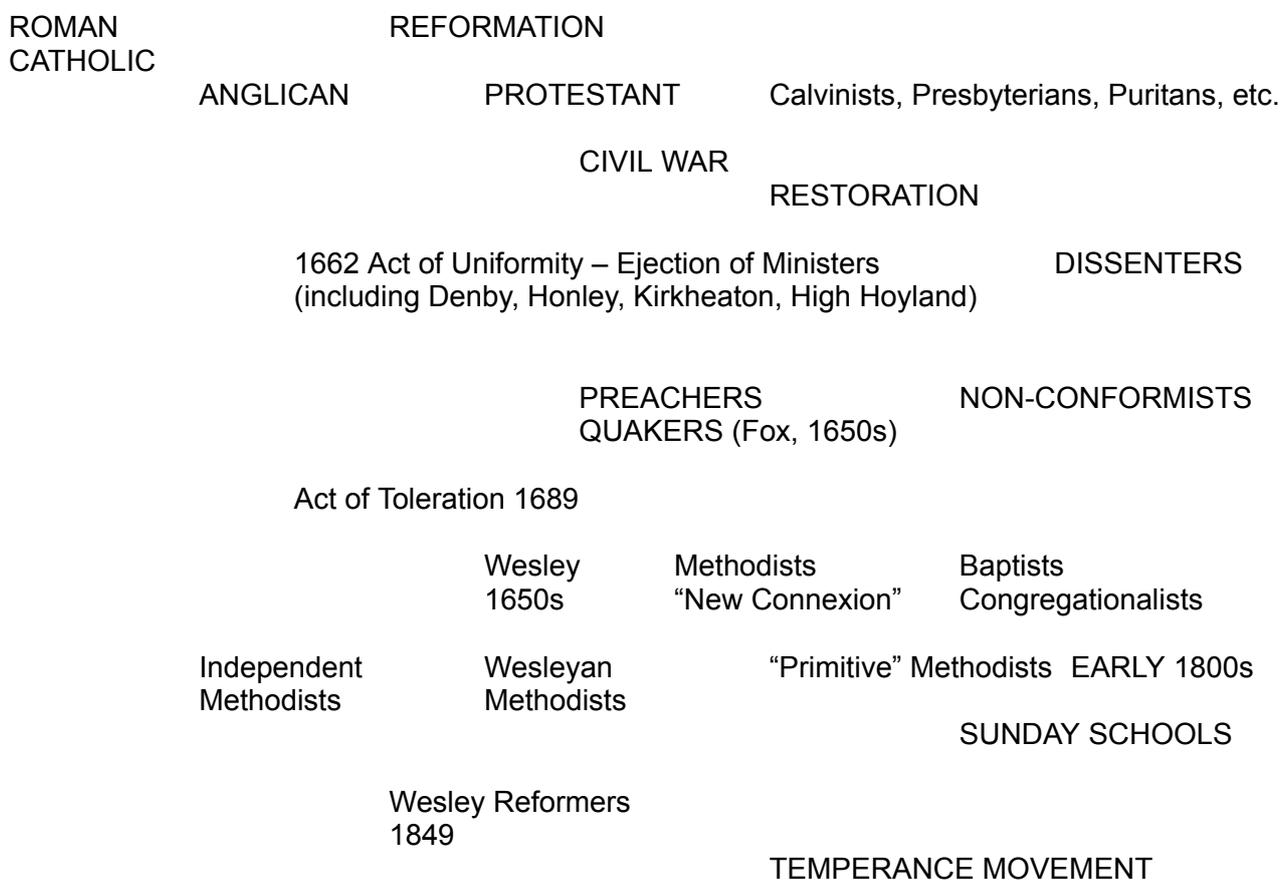
Artisans and craftsmen attended church no more frequently than they tend to do today. Many never went to church except at Christmas, Easter and for funerals. Often they went about their daily work instead. Thomas Shaw of Huddersfield refused to close his shop on Sundays but kept it open for the sale of cloth. Godfrey Hinchliffe of Slaithwaite absented himself from church to work his fulling mill.

Morality was low. Men and women frequently lived together unmarried and often had children. At Emley, Robert Bayle lived openly with Mary Oxley. In Kirkburton, Janet Greenwood allowed such a couple to lodge at her house along with Cesar Jackson and Susanna Green. The punishment was public penance. The accused had to stand in the church porch on a Sunday as the congregation went in. After the gospel the parties were brought into the church and made to stand on a stool. They had to repeat the full details of their offence and ask for pardon from the congregation. The prize for immorality must go to Marsden where in 1632 the church wardens said they had thirty illegitimate children to provide for in one year.

Therefore, as the seventeenth century developed, the more extreme form of Protestantism known as Puritanism gained support in the area. Having read their Bibles and some of the writings of continental reformers, the Puritans decided that changes had not been far-reaching enough for their liking. Some remained within the Church of England, hoping to reform it from within.... Others found, however, that their reforming zeal meant that they were pushed out of the Established Church. In 1662 the Rev. Robert Inman, the Rector of

High Hoyland, was ejected from his living, though he continued to live in Clayton West until his death and prepared the way for subsequent non-conformist activity.

### Non-Conformity



Dissenting or independent worship was on the increase by the mid nineteenth century. The problem being that the parish churches were regarded by the working classes as places of authority - by landlord, employer or local gentry, with the Church of England exercising authority as of right whereas the Dissenting places of worship had to earn such authority that they held over their worshippers, who were often proud and fiercely independent self-made individuals.

### The Quakers

By the end of the seventeenth century, a Quaker society, representing almost the most radical of the religious groups of the Reformation, was living and meeting at High Flatts. A converted barn served as their Meeting House – a building which is still in use. Presumably their congregation was drawn from a considerable area, for there are references to isolated Quaker families in several of the villages in the Visitation Returns of the Diocese of York.

John Firth of Lane Head registered his house as a dissenting place of worship (Quaker) in 1689. He had previously been persecuted for his beliefs in 1683. His son, Joseph, re-licensed it in 1694 under his own name most likely because of the death of his father. Joseph married Martha Haigh and had three children. All of these married into another celebrated High Flatts Quaker dynasty, the Dickinsons. The eldest son, another Joseph Firth, married Hannah Dickinson. Joseph and Hannah had three children, including

another Joseph and it was down the latter two Joseph's that the family fortunes were built. Joseph II and Joseph III were also far more active Quakers than Joseph I and saw to affairs at Lane Head and acted as representatives at other meeting houses further afield. Joseph III married Martha Greenwood and had a son in 1752 named John who in turn married Ann Burrow and had four children including Joseph IV and John. By this time Lane Head had ceased to be a meeting house and the family turned its attention to High Flatts. Ann became a prominent member of the High Flatts Quaker community, but she died of jaundice aged only 39.

The couple's son, John, became a clothier at Fulstone and married Mary, the daughter of Elihu Dickinson a clothier of High Flatts. John is remembered for establishing a First Day School at this home for children of both sexes of poor parents in the area which ran for many years. A lifelong Quaker, he refused to pay church rates and appeared before magistrates in 1841 three times in five weeks for this. When he died in 1847 he was buried in the Quaker cemetery at High Flatts.

(Chris Heath, "Denby & District II", Warncliffe, 2004)

Archbishop Drummond's visitation 1764

There are 120 families and 11 Quakers taught by Henry Dickinson at the Quaker Meeting place.

## **Methodism**

The golden era for the Protestant nonconformists in the valley dawned, however, in the nineteenth century. Population movements into the rising centres of Clayton West, Denby Dale, Scissett and Skelmanthorpe rendered the existing parochial system of the Church of England quite inadequate to cope with the spiritual needs of the people. Parish Churches like High Hoyland became remote from the hub of human activity. Where a spiritual vacuum was in danger of developing, the nonconformists stepped in – providing a warm, 'simple' faith and much opportunity for lay participation. Throughout the area, the spread of their societies began, starting with the Independents at Clayton West who were meeting from about 1794, the Independents at Flockton in 1802 and the Baptists of Clayton West in 1824.

*The year 1770 saw the introduction of Methodism to the villages of Skelmanthorpe, Clayton West, Thurlston, Hardingley, and Shelley. Mr. Wesley visited Shelley Bank more than once, and took special interest in the establishment of Methodism there. Under the date May 1st, 1788, there is the following entry in his Journals: "The congregation at five a.m. at Huddersfield was exceedingly large, coming from many miles but that at Shelley, lone place six or seven miles from Huddersfield, where was constrained to preach in open-air at nine a.m., was six or seven times larger; indeed, the largest have ever seen since left Manchester; and the power of God was eminently present both to wound and to heal." The congregation at the Sunday services at the chapel was from fourteen villages. In 1783 land was secured for the erection of a chapel, which was opened on Whit Sunday, 1785. A stable was built for the convenience of those who came on horseback, and in the yard were mounting-steps, by means of which ladies took their seats on the pillion on horse's back. The chapel was settled on nine trustees for term of 999 years. The deed contained the following extraordinary clause: "If after the death of Mr. Wesley there should be two Conferences, the trustees shall choose from which Conference they will be served with preachers: provided always, that the persons so appointed shall not preach any other doctrine than is contained in Mr. Wesley's notes upon the New Testament and his four volumes of Sermons."*

*About midway between Huddersfield, Wakefield, and Barnsley is Clayton West. Here the round preachers and others conducted cottage and open-air services. On the window of farmhouse near the village is an inscription dated August 1st, 1771, and initialled S.B.,” believed to be the initials of the Rev. Samuel Bardsley, who was in the Carver Street Circuit, Sheffield, and was closing his ministry there at that time.*

*Emley was favoured with Methodist meetings and services. For many years Briestfield had a Society Class, led by John Green, to which Jonathan Bedford and others from Emley went. According to Birstall Circuit plan for 1776, there was preaching in the village once month. John Green, leader of the class at Briestfield, exercised his gifts as local preacher. On several occasions he and his friends were mobbed. There was no resentment, but quiet persistence. Affection for the people, conviction of duty, and earnest purpose rose superior to the sentiment of peace at any cost, and with dignified serenity he calmly pursued his holy duties and charged the ungodly to “flee from the wrath to come.” The Rev. Mr. Wooler, incumbent of Emley, rode over to Briestfield to persuade John Green to desist from preaching at Emley, but failed in his purpose; neither promise nor compromise was conceded. In 1798 room in the village was duly registered as place of worship for Protestant Dissenters, and was entered as licensed room in the Consistory Court of his grace the Lord Archbishop of York, and the licence signed by Joseph Buckle, the Deputy Registrar. John Silverwood.*

*(“HISTORY OF METHODISM IN HUDDERSFIELD, HOLMFIRTH, AND DENBY DALE.” V REV. JOEL MALLINSON. 1898)*

“Even more influential was the rise of Methodism – at first a purifying movement within the Church of England – developing into a separate denomination after the death of its founding father, John Wesley in 1791 – and later splitting into a number of sub-groups. Several of these sub-groups took root in the area. In 1760, Wesleyan Methodists were meeting in Flockton, and, in spite of much opposition from the Rector, had gained a foothold in Emley by 1776. Denby Dale saw the formation of a society in the 1790s and Cawthorne, Clayton West and Skelmanthorpe by the opening years of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century. Such societies usually began as cottage-meetings before developing the confidence and resources to erect purpose-built chapels as they were allowed to after the Act of Toleration 1689. In Denby Dale, the first Methodist services were conducted in a textile mill belonging to John Wood (a convert to the movement) whilst in Skelmanthorpe the Town School was used...”

By the 1790s, the Wesleyan Methodists were torn asunder in some parts of the country by the followers of Alexander Kilham, a minister who was expelled by the Methodist Conference for his radicalism – in particular for advocating a greater lay participation in the movement’s affairs. The effects of the ensuing agitation were particularly felt in the Huddersfield district and it is hardly surprising that it spilled over into the area. Considerable numbers of members seeded and founded what was to become known as the Methodist New Connexion. In Clayton West, Cumberworth, Denby Dale, Emley, Haigh and West Bretton the new movement’s adherents met.

Again, when Primitive Methodism began to spread through the North of England, the people of the area were often responsive to its ideals. A charismatic development, deliberately using the title ‘Primitive’ as an indication of a return to the original ideals of Methodism, it had a particular appeal to working-class people. Between 1819 and 1850 its societies were established in Clayton West, Cumberworth, Denby Dale, Emley, Flockton, High Hoyland, Skelmanthorpe and West Bretton.

("Exploring the Upper Dearne Valley", John Wilkinson, (Bridge Publications, 2002), Chapter 6 : The Place of Religion)

Amongst other nonconformist groups that appeared in the valley were the Wesleyan Reformers – another breakaway movement from Wesleyan Methodism – which began in 1849 and whose adherents formed societies in Birdsedge, Cumberworth, Clayton West, Denby Dale, Emley and Skelmanthorpe.

## **Emley**

In all probability there was a pre-Conquest church in the centre of Emley. The remains of a tympanum (the semi-circular or triangular decorative wall surface over an entrance, door or window) and Anglian grave slabs, which were originally on the floor of the church in the Eleventh Century are evidence that Christianity has been in Emley since very early days.

The present church, **St Michael the Archangel**, belongs to the 12<sup>th</sup> Century. The Fitzwilliams of Sprotborough were the Lords of Emley who built the church. During the following century Emley was the centre of the medieval industrial revolution which brought great prosperity and a market with an annual fair to the village.

The church was again modified in the Fifteenth Century when the east window was inserted and a tower added in perpendicular style, being then the latest fashion.

During the Civil War, Lawrence Farrington was the rector and also a royalist. The Parliamentary troops plundered the rectory, destroyed his library and stole his sheep. Bishop Henry Tilson, who came to Cumberworth in 1651 was a close friend of Farrington. Both men defied the regulations making the use of the prayer book a punishable offence, and Bishop Tilson ordained in public the first vicar of Meltham in Emley church in 1652.

In true 18<sup>th</sup> Century style, a west gallery and box pews were installed together with a three-decker pulpit.

When Bishop Longley of Ripon visited the church in 1839, he found it to be "cold and damp". The rector was Robert Pym who had been instituted in 1830. He held two services each Sunday. In summer the congregation averaged between 100 and 200 in number but this decreased to 50 in winter. One assumes that those from Skelmanthorpe and Scissett did not attend in winter.

The Visitation of 1858 reported:

*The rector at **Emley** was the famous Robert Pym whose name is still recalled by many. The population was 1760. There was a housing problem and a church seating problem in Emley. In his return the rector wrote, "Many dilapidated houses have been pulled down, others are empty unfit for human habitation and only a few new ones built. The church seats 500 but the pews are enclosed and belong to farms. These were allotted when the church was new pewed before I came in 1830." The services were at 9.45 and 3 pm but the members attending varied with the weather from 50 to 200. The congregation thought mattins was far too long and refused to remain for public baptisms after the service ended. The average number of baptisms was 70. Holy Communion was celebrated monthly for 10 communicants and there was great reluctance to attend preparation courses for confirmation. Emley had a British School founded by Mr Leah to "prevent distinctions between church and dissent." There were 100 pupils and a*

*Sunday School of 140. The founder of the school also contributed to a school connected with the four chapels in the parish. The rector clearly objected to the creation of Scissett for he wrote, "Scissett is a district chapel but I do not consider it to have been taken from Emley in a legal manner." He made the following comment on Emley, "This is a poor place not a person in it of education or independent property with the exception of the son of a neighbouring manufacturer. The rents are taken by the Earl of Scarborough and Mr Beaumont. The people are farmers, weavers, carpenters, coal miner and labourers."*

The interior of the church was reordered in 1874 when the pulpit, gallery and box pews were removed. A new altar with rails and a chancel screen were installed.

The 1875 Visitation reported Emley to be a poor parish of around 1600 people but with no free seats in the church. The mining industry was expanding with the opening of pits at Emley Moor and Park Mill. This expansion brought many new families into the parish but there was no room in the church for them unless they could buy a seat. So the newcomers had to either to the Methodist chapel or nowhere at all. To take a seat in a private pew was regarded as an outrage and an offence to the owner. There were no church schools in the parish, only a British or Nonconformist school, but four Methodist chapels had recently been erected to accommodate those who wished to worship. (John Addy)

Methodist Church, Emley

### **High Hoyland**

Why was a church built here in the first place? Slowly the story is piecing itself together. Aerial photographs reveal marks on the ground that indicate that this was an Iron Age settlement more than 2000 years' ago. The primitive road track, from the church across the top of Hoyland Bank to Winterhill Farm is an Iron Age and Celtic road leading over to Denby and Penistone. When St Aidan and his monks brought the Christian faith to this area they set up a preaching station on this spot. A cross head found at High Hoyland was dated about 800AD so Christian worship had been taking place there long before a church was built.

When the first church was built here we do not know. About 1150 Adam fitzSwain, Lord of Cawthorne erected a new church at High Hoyland **The Church of All Saints**, and dedicated it to All Hallow (All Saints). It was built from local stone and was larger than the present building. In 1804 this church was demolished to build a new one. A century later this was in poor shape and was pulled down again and the present one built. In 1977 it was declared redundant.

In 1858 the Visitation returns of Bishop Bickersteth showed High Hoyland and Clayton West as a parish of 2000 of which some 130 lived in High Hoyland village, the remainder living in Clayton West, Bretton and Haigh. The church was far larger than the present building for it seated 400 but only 40 seats were free, the remainder were privately owned. The congregation varied from 90 to 150. The National School at High Hoyland provided education for 60 regular attenders, but it was never inspected by a HMI. There was a Sunday School of some 60 pupils. (John Addy)

### **Kirkburton**

By 1086 Kirkburton was the centre of a parish. The original parish included Kirkburton and Holmfirth with the villages of Shepley, Shelley, New Mill, Hepworth and Thurstonland. Until 1711 all who lived in these villages had to attend Kirkburton church. In 1711 Archbishop Sharp allowed Holmfirth chapel to celebrate the sacraments. (John Addy)

All Hallows, Kirkburton (9<sup>th</sup> C cross; first church before Normans but 12<sup>th</sup> C buildings)



THE CHURCH OF BURTON

W. & A.K. Johnston of Edinburgh., "The Church of Burton.," Huddersfield, accessed June 20, 2018, <http://huddersfield.exposed/archive/items/show/2089>.

The history of Christianity in Kirkburton goes back a long time before the first recorded church was built. Evidence of the antiquity of the site came to light last century when, during repairs to the chancel walls, a stone cross (more properly a crucifix) was found. The cross, ascribed by experts to the ninth century or earlier, is thought to have been a preaching cross set up to mark the place where itinerant priests sent out from the Mother Church at Dewsbury preached the Gospel and celebrated the Mass.

Although there is no mention of a church at Burton in the Domesday Book this does not rule out the possibility of a rudimentary church existing in the eleventh century which would have been built, initially, as a small shelter near to the cross. If such a building did exist it would, in due course, become a chapel of ease within the Dewsbury parish and, as such, it would be unendowed with glebe land and, therefore, overlooked by the Domesday Commissioners.

Many years ago, Canon Raine published a theory in the "Archeological Journal" that the first church at Burton was dedicated to All Hallows. If this is so it seems likely that the church was rededicated to St. John the Baptist when it was rebuilt in the twelfth century by William de Warrenne 2nd Earl of Surrey whose father had died on St. John's day, June 24th, 1088. Whatever the truth of the matter, the church remained St. John's until comparatively recent times. The church was built on a fine, elevated site and, like the churches at Almondbury and Huddersfield, it stands at the eastern extremity of its large parish by the side of the old north-south highway.

The Norman church is thought to have been rebuilt during the reign of Edward III (1327-1377) and there is an interesting legend connected with the rebuilding which was still common in 1861 when Dr. Moorhouse published his "History of the Parish of Kirkburton". Apparently, when the rebuilding was proposed a new central site was chosen at Stocksmoor for the convenience of the people living in the western part of the parish. When building materials were taken to the chosen spot it was found that what had been taken each day was by some miraculous means removed to Kirkburton each night. In the end, the parishioners, presumably accepting God's will, gave in and accepted the traditional site. Was it a miracle or was it a touch of sharp practice by the people of

Burton? Whatever the truth, a chapel of ease was soon provided in Holmfirth to minister to the needs of the western parts of the parish.

A great deal of alteration and renovation has gone on at the church in the centuries since the rebuilding and not much that is obvious now remains of the Early English church although the handsome west door in the tower, with its dogtooth ornamentation is thought to be of that period. However, the door must have been re-set at some time as the tower is of a later date. It is seventy eight feet (24 metres) high and it was built in two stages with diagonal buttresses to the first stage which was originally a small belfry with a single bell. A glance up at the eastern face of the tower will reveal that the roof of the nave was once much higher than it is today. The chancel was rebuilt from the foundations to the roof in 1872 and if the lancet windows on the south side are, as is thought, Early English then they must have been reset at that time.

In 1858 the Bishop's Visitation reported:

*Kirkburton was by far the largest parish for the vicar, Richard Collins, claimed there were 6000 people who were connected with the parish church. He was very fortunate in that he had three curates to assist him. One was his son, John Collins, who was in priest's orders, the two others were deacons. There were seats in the church for 1980 persons and all these were free - a most unusual state of affairs at this date - except 8 pews in the chancel. There was a gallery in the church built by private persons and the seats in these were rented. The rents were collected by "private person" and went into their own pockets. Sunday was the only day in the week when the church was open. There were services at 10.30 am and 3.00 pm but no service was ever held on saints days. Only Easter, Whitsuntide and Christmas were the exceptions. In the morning the congregation filled up two thirds of the church but less so in the afternoon. The congregation was slowly increasing. Two full services were also provided in Thurstonland and Hepworth every Sunday in mission rooms holding about 400 but the average congregation never exceeded 200. The vicar claimed that the introduction of the Act of 1837 making the registration of births compulsory the number of baptisms had fallen to 180 a year on average. Holy Communion was celebrated on the first Sunday in each month and also on the great festivals but never on weekdays. The communicants averaged 60 in number and 70 candidates were presented for confirmation in 1856. There was a National School of 430 children with an average attendance of 318 and a strong Sunday School of 354 boys and 363 girls. The day school was under inspection by the HMI and the catechism was taught as well as an understanding of the book of Common Prayer. On the whole, a sound and healthy parish for this date taking into consideration the area.*

Primitive Methodist Chapel, Slant Gate, Kirkburton (on 1892 maps)

Wesleyan Methodist Chapel, North Road, Dean Top, Kirkburton

## **Cumberworth**

No one knows when Christianity first arrived in Cumberworth, but it was firmly established by the reign of Henry II when a chapel, **St. Nicholas's**, had been erected to serve the parish which was a very large one. Since the right to appoint a rector was in the hands of the Dronfields of Bretton Hall, it could well have been that this family built the chapel.

In 1255, for some reason not apparent, the church was appropriated to the Cluniac Priory of St John of Pontefract and in future they would provide the incumbent. Certainly the tithes of the parish were owned by the Priory since in the 14<sup>th</sup> Century there was a long

legal dispute argued out at York concerning the refusal of the Cumberworth parishioners to pay tithes.

By 1603, the chapel was in the possession of the Wentworth family of Bretton Hall who retained it until the reforms of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century.

During the Commonwealth the church became ministered by Bishop Tilson who had been exiled from Ireland where he had been Dean of Dublin. A letter from Bishop Tilson to a friend in 1651 is in the archives of Bretton Hall and was written when it was a criminal offence to use the prayer book or conduct Anglican worship. The bishop wrote,

*“You shall know that I am not altogether idle for I pray after the directory of the Church of England and preach every Sunday at a place in the mountains called Cumberworth, two miles beyond Emly, where I have Laurence (Farrington) to my hosts and where the people are barbarous and uncouth and prefer their sermons as they fodder their cattle at two foddings instead of one. It was preferred me by a gentleman, Mr Wentworth of Bretton whom I never saw saving once, before he sent to me; and because it came without my seeking, and because it is a donative, and in his power to give or to detain, and I will accept it though it will not reach forty marks (£45) a year.”*

Nothing now remains of that church in which he ministered except a rough interior plan. The present tower was built about 1740 and the entire body of the church in 1870 for it was in decay, “some parts are 800 years’ old” wrote the incumbent to the Bishop of Ripon in 1858.

In 1837 the incumbent was one William Roulton who was also vicar of Penrith and employed an unlicensed curate, C.B. Dunn. Even the parsonage house was unfit for human habitation, “the church is in decay and the bible old and torn”. There were two services each Sunday and three communions each year for ten person.

In 1858 Cumberworth was a chapel in the Silkstone parish. The population was returned as 1000 with 2 Methodist chapels in the parish. The congregation fluctuated with the weather for sometimes the church was full whilst at other times only 30 attended. The National School had been founded in 1821 with a very nominal role of 120 children of whom 80 were compulsory attenders. For some strange reason this school was inspected by the factories inspector and not by HMI. (John Addy)  
(John Addy)

Methodist Church, Lower Cumberworth

Primitive Methodist Chapel, Top Road, Lower Cumberworth

Salem Wesleyan Reform Chapel, Barnsley Road, Upper Cumberworth, Cumberworth

Wesleyan Methodist Chapel, Cumberworth Road, Denby Dale, Cumberworth

### **Denby and Denby Dale**

Prior to 1854, Denby was a chapelry within the parish of Penistone, and had been since 1627 when the inhabitants of Gunthwaite and Denby petitioned Archbishop Tobias Matthew of York for licence to erect a chapel for the convenience of the inhabitants of the two places. From early days until 1627 people had to walk to Penistone church to worship.

Godfrey Bosvile of Gunthwaite Hall had the right to appoint the vicar of Penistone. The Bosviles built Denby Chapel of ease. To protect the rights of the vicars of Penistone and their fees, no sacrament was to be administered at Denby, only the offices of morning and evening prayers.

After a range of puritan vicars during the Commonwealth, from 1662 until the close of the 18<sup>th</sup> Century the masters of Penistone Grammar School also acted as curates of Denby Chapel and had to leave the school to undertake funerals.

The Visitation of Bishop Longley in 1839 reported on Denby as:

*"I have never seen such a miserable, filthy and ruinous chapel in my life. I have told them they must pull it down and raise money to rebuild immediately."*

Within four years, assisted by Bruce Bronwen, the curate, a new church had been built. In 1858 Denby was a lively parish of 2000 people. Here the congregation was increasing but fluctuated between 20 and 150. There was a Sunday School of 100 children and 16 adults. There was no National School but a number of very small private schools that were never inspected. (John Addy)

In 1870 Denby was a parish of 1500 people - it included a large part of Denby Dale. The new church could hold 300, but the average congregation was 40 and there were no communicants. The pews in church were rented out and the services were depressingly dull. Dissent was rising, and at its meeting to elect new trustees for the management of the church school, all those elected were in favour of secularising education. ("Church Life in 1870", John Addy)

Not until 1893 did the Anglican Church obtain a foothold in Denby Dale. Walter Norton of Rockwood House was disturbed by the rapid growth of the methodists in the village. He gave a plot of land in Bank Lane and appointed a body of trustees.

An iron building was erected and the church dedicated to the **Holy Trinity**. The church was to be served by the assistant curate of Cumberworth. Not until 1939 was the old iron building replaced by a neat stone church and the old one converted into a church hall - later destroyed by fire.  
(John Addy)

Methodist Church, Denby Dale

Zion Wesleyan Reform Church, Denby Dale

## **Scissett**

The first attempt to reduce the large parishes in this area to a more manageable size was made in 1839 when the district of Scissett was carved out of High Hoyland and Emley parishes.

**St Augustine's Church** at Scissett was one result of the Napoleonic war which ended in 1815. To encourage people to attend church a Building Commission was set up by Parliament to provide church buildings in industrial areas. These church buildings were built to a common pattern known as Waterloo churches. In the 1830s a second building commission was set up and one of the areas designated was Scissett.

The moving force behind the church at Scissett was Joseph Norton who was ambitious to convert the small community into a country-style community with himself as squire and a church where he could be patron. In 1838 he purchased a plot of land as a site from Colonel Beaumont of Bretton Hall, who at that time was short of money and needed some ready cash.

The new church was a typical oblong box type of the period and was consecrated by Bishop Longley in 1839. It was to be regarded as a district chapel to Emley. The patron of the living was to be the Beaumont family of Bretton Hall. The rector of Emley, Robert Pym, was furious for he claimed that the church had been illegally erected, without his consent; further he would lose the fees due to him for wedding and other matters from the people of Scissett.

In 1854 the Norton family purchased the advowson from the Beaumont family and became the patrons able to appoint the incumbents. Improvements were made in 1901 when a small chancel was placed at the east end. The new church was intended to serve the needs of both Skelmanthorpe and Scissett but Skelmanthorpe folk never came down to Scissett, especially from the West End of the village.

In 1858 the vicar was Henry Newland who had the oversight of a population of 4000. The church contained 320 private pews. There were two services each Sunday with an average congregation of 150/200. In 1858, the educational side of the parish was provided by two schools, a National School in Scissett and a Church of England school in Skelmanthorpe endowed under the Enclosure Act of 1800. The school in Scissett had 130 pupils and additional 20 on a Sunday. While the Scissett school was inspected not inspection took place at Skelmanthorpe.

In 1870 the population was 3000 including Skelmanthorpe. Pews were rented out at 6 shillings per sitting and the centre of the church was reserved for children of the school. There were no free seats and it was a common sight to see one person rent a whole pew so that poor persons would not sit next to them.

(John Addy)

### **Clayton West**

On Thursday, 1<sup>st</sup> April 1875, Dr. Bickersteth, Bishop of Ripon, consecrated the new church of **All Saints** to serve the prosperous and expanding village of Clayton West in the parish of High Hoyland.

The Industrial Revolution had changed the nature of the parish since 1780. Clayton West, formerly a tiny village community, saw numerous wool textile mills erected with the consequent expansion of the population, leading in turn to a decline in the number residing at High Hoyland. The Anglican Church made no provision for the spiritual welfare of the people in the village, but insisted that all must make their way, usually on foot in all weathers, to High Hoyland for baptisms, weddings and be carried their for burial.

Since 1800, therefore, Clayton West had been "abandoned" to the care of the Nonconformists, the strongest and largest body being the Independents, the remainder being small adherents of the Quakers and Methodists. Internecine quarrels amongst the members led to the multiplying of chapels on a scale unequalled elsewhere in a small community. Only one thing united them and that was their combined hatred of the

Anglican Church.

Change was on the way with the appointment of a young, vigorous rector named Fitzgerald Thomas Wintour in 1867 who modernised and revived Anglican church life at High Hoyland. The Rector planned to build a church in Clayton West and within a year moves had been made towards this. An old joiner's shop on the site of the present Church Hall was rented for use as a Sunday School and for occasional services. John Kaye, the mill owner, who now owned most of the central part of the village was approached for land. At first he refused, but to save face and not be outbid by his rival manufacturer, Joseph Norton of Nortonthorpe Hall who regarded himself as a parishioner, John Kaye conveyed on the 28<sup>th</sup> July 1868 to the Church Commissioners some 780 square yards of the Well Yard on which to erect a new church. At this new, the Nonconformists united in a militant opposition to the project and were determined to do all in their power to prevent the building of a new church. It was this attitude and disputes with the contractors that caused the completion of the building to extend to April 1875.

A Mr. Hughes of Huddersfield was appointed as architect and a building committee consisted of the Rector, Walter Spencer Stanhope of Cannon Hall, Joseph Norton, Thomas Norton of Bagden Hall, William Waites of Dearne Lea and Joseph Armitage of Holmfield. Plans were drawn up and approved and tenders invited from contractors. The successful tenders were those from George Hinchcliff and Sons of Skelmanthorpe for the masonry, and Burton of Clayton West for joinery. By the late summer of 1871 the foundations had been prepared and the foundation stone was laid on 1<sup>st</sup> November by Lady Margaret Beaumont of Bretton Hall.

The church was intended to have a nave, north and south aisles, a chancel and seats for 250. By the Spring of 1875 the new church was ready for consecration with the north aisle omitted. The Consecration took place in Easter week 1875. In the end the building was left unfinished, the north aisle has never been built. In 1879 the rights and privileges of a parish church were transferred from High Hoyland to Clayton West. The old church was closed except for funeral services and by 1908 was so decrepit that it had to be rebuilt on a smaller scale as a mortuary chapel when it was also used for services on three Sundays in the year. The church was declared redundant in 1976 and sold. (John Addy, "The Church of All Saints, Clayton West 1875-1975")

### **Rise of the Chapel in Clayton West**

The site of the parish church in such a remote part at the far end of High Hoyland, the enormous size of the parish and the gross spiritual neglect caused by absentee rectors, for whom a series of ill-educated curates served, created a religious vacuum. This vacuum was to be filled by the Wesleyans and other bodies.

The first in the field were the Independents or Congregationalists who came in 1791. In 1764 the returns of Archbishop Drummond showed no dissenters in the village. In April 1791, Richard Bottomley, butcher, sold a plot of land called Armyn Croft to be used 'by the Protestant Dissenters called Independents for the purpose of erecting a chapel or meeting house.' The land was bought for £23 and the first chapel opened in 1794. The Trustees were: George Wildsmith, butcher, Thomas Leake, weaver, Joseph Thackra, weaver. Later George Wildsmith took over the duty of minister to the congregation and remained in office for 22 year. Clayton West Congregational Church (1795)

By 1850 the chapel was found to be damp, cold and in a poor state of repair so steps were taken to build a new one. The old chapel was closed in 1864 and the New Connexion Chapel in High Street was loaned for worship. Additional land was bought from the Nowell Estate and the foundation stone laid on Easter Tuesday 1865. The present chapel has served the community for almost two hundred years as the Independent Chapel. In 1973, following the union of the Presbyterian and Congregational churches it became the United Reformed Church.

The next group to arrive were the Strict and Particular Baptists, founded by a Declaration of 14 March 1824. The depression of the 1830s made it difficult to raise money to build, and indeed, the land that had been bought for the purpose had to be sold. Finally a chapel was built in the 1840s, a Sunday School added in the 1860s and a baptistry in 1898.

The Primitive Methodists began life in what later became the Public Hall in Chapel Hill in 1842. This building proved to be inconvenient since many members came from Scissett and climbing Chapel Hill was no easy task for elderly members. In 1857 it was moved to a more convenient site on Wakefield Road.

When Wood and Walker, worsted spinners from Bradford bought Spring Grove Mills, the company brought their skilled key workers with them. Since those were all Wesleyan Methodists land was bought and the Parkside Wesleyan Chapel built. By 1972 the declining number of members and the condition of the roof led to its closure and subsequent demolition.

The Wesleyan Reform, known as Mount Tabor, was built in the 1860s and opened for services in June 1867. The decline in membership and weakness in the fabric led to the building being closed in the late 1970s and it has since been demolished.

The Methodist New Connexion Chapel in High Street was built in 1840 and was part of the Mapplewell circuit until transferred to Denby Dale. This too has suffered a similar fate with most of it being demolished and the rest converted into a bungalow.

United Reform Church, Clayton West

It seems strange that a community with a population of some 1500 should have given rise to five nonconformist chapels. One reason was the influx of small craftsmen connected with the textile trade and the other was keen rivalry between the manufacturers themselves. Ever since 1560 artisans had tended to be hot Protestants in religious thought and radical in politics. After 1660 those groups formed into a variety of dissenting bodies in the growing industrial area. John Wesley and his movement provided satisfaction for those social groups which in the last century became anti-Church of England and Liberal in politics though towards the close of the century many were moving towards supporting the Labour Party.

### **Skelmanthorpe**

From John Addy

Until 1839, Skelmanthorpe was shared between two parishes, High Hoyland and Emley. The problem of walking to either church in winter or bad weather daunted all but the bravest. Religious life in the village was at a low level for the rectors of both parishes were often absentees who left to work to be done by poor ill-paid, often semi-literate, curates. By 1730 Skelmanthorpe was to all practical purposes a "neo-pagan" village and had a religious vacuum ready to receive the Wesleyan movement when it arrived in 1785. The

then vicar of Huddersfield, Henry Vern, was a close friend of Wesley who encouraged the expansion of Wesley's work in the Huddersfield district. Therefore, it is of no surprise to discover that the non-conformist tradition replaced that of attending Anglican worship.

In the early days, Wesleyan services were held in the Town School as reported by the Charity Commission in 1827. By 1815 the Wesleyans decided that the time had come to erect their own place of worship. John Field purchased from John Morehouse a parcel of land in the Shaw Croft for £40 on which to erect a chapel. The signatures of the first trustees reveal that the entire body were clothiers or weavers so following the tradition of artisans in support for dissent. On 18th November 1816, the chapel was open for services by the president of the Wesleyan Conference. By 1874, additional land was bought on which to erect a Sunday School at a cost of £800. (John Addy)

### **Fields and Methodism**

Joseph Field had a great influence on the introduction of Methodism into Skelmanthorpe.

On 24th July 1815, Joseph, along with his son, John (by now 35 years' old) bought a piece of land which covered part of Shaw Croft on the south side of Back Lane costing £40. The chapel was opened in 1816 and John Wood, the chief instigator of Methodism in Denby Dale, made the following comment in a letter to the Rev. Isaac Clayton, dated 25 December 1816:

*"I forgot to tell you that we have a good and very handsome chapel at Skelmanthorpe. It was opened by the president, Mr. Reece, on the 10 November, 1816, and is rather larger than ours. I hope it will be made a blessing for the inhabitants of that place for many of them want both civilising and humanising."*

The Field family continued to be involved with developments to the chapel and the subsequent school, and were highly influential in creating the village of today. All the Field sons were educated at the Wesleyan College in Sheffield.

Charles Edwin Field born 1869 was a member of the Mutual Improvement Society and a staunch supporter of the Wesleyan Chapel. In 1909 he gave a loan for the building of the Liberal Club.

All the Fields gave bequests to local charities, Huddersfield Royal Infirmary and the Wesleyan Chapel.

Richard Field (1804-1879) was described in "A History of Methodism in Huddersfield, Holmfirth and Denby Dale" by Rev. Joel Mallison in 1898 as:

*"Mr Richard, son of John, followed the parental example. His manner was reserved and retiring, his piety deep and fervent, and his services, as class leader, chapel and Society steward and Sunday School teacher, were loving and faithful. On attaining his sixtieth year, he retired from business and devoted his income, beyond a given sum, to various religious and charitable objects."*

Richard was a member of the first Local Board formed on 23 March 1863. He played a large part in running the old Town School and when this closed in 1860, he opened the Sunday School, the date stone of which is 1875. He was one of the first people in Skelmanthorpe to take up shares when the Gas Company was formed in 1879 and is buried with his wife in the Wesleyan graveyard in Skelmanthorpe.

Samuel Field (1829-1896) like his father was involved in Skelmanthorpe village life. He was a trustee and secretary of the Wesleyan Chapel, a founder member and secretary of the School Board and a member of the water board which brought the first piped water to the village. When the old Wesleyan Chapel became too dilapidated to use, he was instrumental in the erection of the new chapel on the same site.  
(Chris Heath, Denby and District III, Wharncliffe Books, 2006)

In 1895, it was considered that the old building had become dilapidated and the fabric was very insecure so a decision was made to build a new chapel. Plans were drawn and estimated cost for the new building was £1900. The members responded and the end result was the Central Methodist Church to which a Sunday School was added in 1904.

The Wesleyan Reform originated as a result of the domineering spirit of Jabez Bunting, president of the Methodist Conference in 1849 and dissension spread. Its arrival in Skelmanthorpe was hastened by the fact that one of the Wesleyan ministers stationed in Denny Dale was frequently seen in a drunken and disorderly state. In the course of one of his drunken bouts he broke all of the windows in the chapel at Denny Dale. Those in Skelmanthorpe decided that they were not going to support a drunken minister. They met in the Town School to discuss what could be undertaken. A plot of land was available in Gib Lane and it was decided to build a chapel. A Sunday School was added in 1913 and the building re-built in 1926.

The primitive Methodists arrived in 1821, but the group suffered persecution and had to worship in the safety of Blacker Wood. Their chapel was built in 1836 and extended and rebuilt in 1864.

The PM Connexion emerged as an offshoot of the mainstream Wesleyan Connexion between 1807 and 1812. Its founders wished to return to the simplicity and purity they believed Wesley had practised - including a commitment to evangelising all classes in contrast to the more respectable Wesleyans they asserted the primacy of a lay ministry and espoused a fervent emotional form of worship.

PM's creators use of camp meetings, conversational preaching and open air evangelism led to their expulsion from the Wesleyan church.

*"A Primitive Methodist revival in the handloom-weaving village of Skelmanthorpe provoked a "holy rivalry"; camp meetings, preaching services, cottage prayer meetings and house to house visitation were followed by such a ....."*

(Getting Into Liberty: The Background and Early History of the Primitive Methodist Connexion, Volume 2 Julia Stewart Werner)

Fear of invasion and republican sentiment at home during the French wars led to Wesleyanism being suspected of being subversive and the Church imposed strict discipline on local congregations and forbade open air meetings. "Ranter" preachers - contemporary name for the Primitives - were considered political as well as religious dissenters.

An Annual Chapel Mission tent was pitched in Skelmanthorpe at site later occupied by Savoy. Photo available from 1930 L. Robinson collection.

Primitive Methodist Chapel, Pilling Lane, Skelmanthorpe (also known as: Providential Chapel (1854 map), Pilling Lane Methodist Church (1960 map), Skelmanthorpe Methodist

Church (current name) (Built 1836, enlarged 1864). First Primitive Methodist preaching in Skelmanthorpe 1820. Society established 1821, using Town School in Pilling Lane for meetings. Society met with some persecution so held meetings in Blacker Wood for a while c.1820s. Chapel built in Pilling Lane 1836. Chapel enlarged 1864. Sunday School built on behind chapel 1886-87; plot of land used for Sunday School included site of old Town School which had been demolished 1886. Amalgamated with Central Methodist Church 1977-78. Chapel refurbished and reopened 1978. Now still in use as Skelmanthorpe Methodist Chapel. Records relating to Pilling Lane (P) Methodist church can be found at WYAS: Kirklees under the reference numbers: NM/DD/CW, KC845, KC879, KX277. Records relating to Skelmanthorpe Methodist Church can be found at WYAS: Kirklees under the reference numbers: NM/DD/CW and WYK1513.

Central Wesleyan Methodist Church, Skelmanthorpe (1815)

Class connected with Shelley Wesleyan Methodist Church, existed at Skelmanthorpe 1788; may have existed as early as c.1770. House of Joseph Dyson at Skelmanthorpe licensed for Methodist worship 1796. The Methodists at Skelmanthorpe remained Wesleyan when chapel at Shelley went over to New Connexion 1797. Services were held in houses from 1797. Also used Town School in Pilling Lane for services by 1809. Chapel built in Shaw Croft (later known as Commercial Road) 1815-16. Sunday School established 1840, using Town School; Town School also used as a Wesleyan Day School to 1876. Sunday School built on behind chapel 1874-75. Old chapel demolished and new chapel built on same site 1895-97. Called Central Wesleyan Methodist Church from 1897. Sunday School enlarged 1904. Closed 1977; congregation joined Pilling Lane Methodist Church. Chapel made into flats 1980s. Records relating to this church can be found at WYAS: Kirklees under the reference numbers NM/DD/CW, WYK1515 and KX237.

Zion Wesleyan Reform Union Church, Gib Lane, Skelmanthorpe

Established by Wesleyan Reformers who seceded from Central Wesleyan Methodist Church c.1849. Used Town School in Pilling Lane for services. Chapel built in Gib Lane 1854 and enlarged in 1865. Sunday School built behind chapel 1913-14. Old chapel demolished 1924-25 and new chapel built on same site 1926. The last service held at the chapel took place in April 2012 and the last christening took place on 8<sup>th</sup> April 2012. The diminishing congregation saw the reluctant closure of the chapel. It did not have a full time minister for many years with services being conducted by local preachers. During the 1990s the upper level of the chapel building was removed as the congregation had shrunk to less than a dozen people. Demolished 2017. N.B. This church never became part of the United Methodist Free Churches.

## **St Aidan's**

The establishment of a Church of England parish in Skelmanthorpe was a result of the creation of the parish of St Augustine in Scissett in 1839.

As early as 1850 the vicar of Scissett was holding house meetings in Skelmanthorpe at Mrs Margaret Bolton's and John Shaw's houses, but these ceased on 24 July 1864. By the Autumn of the same year, sufficient funds had been raised to purchase the old Royal Oak inn together with some cottages. The large upper room at the Royal Oak was converted into a mission room so that services could be continued. Provision was also made for a school in November 1864 and a Sunday School with 57 attending quickly

followed.

Sir Joseph Radcliffe, owner of considerable land in Skelmathorpe, gave an acre of land and an adjoining acre was also purchased as a site for a school, Church and parsonage.

The National School, which was built in 1866 was licensed by Bishop Bickersteth of Ripon for public worship.

By 1889 concern was expressed that no further move had been made to erect a church and by this date the mission was in danger of closing down. An approach was made to Thomas Norton of Bagden Hall and the vicar of Scissett upon the need for a church. The then Bishop of Wakefield approved and the interest of the Spencer Stanhope family of Cannon Hall was enlisted and progress began.

In October 1892 a building committee was formed and the land acquired. On 28 September 1894 the foundation stone of **St Aidan's church** was laid and by 1895 was ready for consecration. On 11 January 1900 the new parish of Skelmanthorpe was established and money to endow the living raised. All Skelmanthorpe tithes formerly paid to High Hoyland and Emley. (John Addy)



The Anglican church of St Aidan has an ikon of St Mary Sumner, hanging in the Lady Chapel. Mary Sumner founded the Mothers Union, an international organization of the Church of England, towards the end of the 19th Century.

George Frederick Bodley designed this and other churches in the English Decorated Gothic style. He was a friend of several Pre-Raphaelite artists and William Morris.

Bodley's parish church designs became influential and include various parish churches plus Queen's College Chapel, Cambridge, secular buildings for King's College and Magdalen College, Oxford. Bodley was the also the architect for the Cathedral of St Peter and St Paul, Washington DC; St David's Cathedral, Hobart, Tasmania; and All Saints Cathedral, Nagpur, India.

The building has never actually been completed. Although construction finished in 1895 it was always intended to create a new South entrance in the "temporary" south wall, and it was intended to have a tower, but there were insufficient funds. A planning application was submitted in 2015 to provide a new south entrance and to update the church's facilities, without damaging the the traditional layout. Traditionally the altar faces east, and inside the church is a late Anglo-Saxon/early Norman font believed to have been sculpted about 1080 AD, which came from the original church at High Hoyland. The High Hoyland church was rebuilt in 1804, and it is thought that the font was disregarded during the rebuilding process. It was later discovered by Sir Walter Stanhope of Cannon Hall being used as a cattle trough on Wheatley Hill Farm and presented to the church for safe-keeping.

The Cemetery and Cemetery Chapel took just as long to build:

*“THE SKELMANTHORPE CEMETERY CHAPEL. LAYING THE CORNERSTONE. On Saturday afternoon an interesting ceremony was performed at Skelmanthorpe, namely, the laying the corner stone of the new cemetery chapel. The Skelmanthorpe Cemetery Committee met at the Boardroom, and went in procession to the new burial ground, when the following was the order of service : The Rev J.W. Waits gave out the hymn beginning- Eternal power whose high abode Becomes the grandeur of a God. After which Mr Wilson Fishes, clerk to the Board read the following report : — The commencement of the scheme for the providing of a cemetery for the township of Skelmanthorpe was, as is doubtless pretty generally known in the district, necessitated by the fact that the hitherto only available burial ground in St Augustine's Churchyard at Scissett, was rapidly becoming full. The matter coming before the members of the Local Board at Skelmanthorpe, was discussed by them but nothing determined upon. The want of further accommodation, however, came to the knowledge of the various landowners and others Interested In the township, resulting in an offer by Mrs William Child of Shelley, of an acre of ground for a cemetery. This was accepted by the Local Board, but a farther acquaintance with the requirements of the case demonstrated to them that the area of the ground offered was too small. Then an offer by John Kaye, Esq. of Clayton West, of 14 acres, taking In exchange the one acre given by Mrs Child, was accepted, but this also proved too small. Ultimately Thomas Norton, Esq., of Bagden Hall, offered ground containing 2 acres, taking In exchange the field given by Mr Kaye. This offer, after the land had been properly tested as to its suitability as a burial ground, was unanimously agreed to by the Local Board, who resolved to call a special meeting of the ratepayers to consider the matter and decide as to how the project should be carried out. This meeting was called accordingly, and held in the Skelmanthorpe Board School on the 26th of February, 1886. when, after the details had been duly considered, it was unanimously decided that the action of the Board should be confirmed and the undertaking proceeded with at once, and to put the matter in working order a committee of ratepayers was elected to carry out the decision of the meeting. It was also deemed advisable that the cost of the cemetery should be defrayed by voluntary subscriptions, it having been explained that this would prove a much less costly affair than having to borrow the money , and thus put the township In the hands and subject to the legal technicalities with their attendant expenses of the Local Government Board, a course which would have been a heavy burden upon the rates for many years. The committee were to be called the Skelmanthorpe Cemetery Committee, and their duties were first of all to arrange amongst themselves, to canvass the township in sub-districts for donations, and afterwards make all necessary contracts for the laying out, walling, and planting the ground, and the building of a chapel, thereon. The success attending the canvass for subscriptions may be judged from the fact that up to now the sum of £930 3s. 9d. has been given or promised. Out of this we have received In cash £920 7s. 3d. In conducting the canvass for donations the committee thought that though 2 acres of ground had been considered sufficient, yet if, by further efforts, another acre could be added it would be a great advantage, and to this end an appeal was made to Sir Percival Radcliffe, through his agent. Mr Mallinson, of Huddersfield, to grant a portion of his land which adjoined the west side of the field provided by Mr Thomas Norton. These negotiations were successful, and the area of the cemetery has now grown from the original one acre to 3 1/2 acres. The south end of the ground, allowing 360 graves, will be set apart for the Roman Catholics, the remaining portion is to be divided Into two equal parts by a road 10ft. wide, the eastern half being consecrated and the western half unconsecrated, each part*

allowing 1,620 graves, thus giving a total of 3,600 graves, which at an average of six Interments for each, will give provision for 21,600 Interments. The chapel, which is now in course of erection, is 36ft. by 18ft., with a small projecting bell turret at the north end, porch, vestry, and lavatory; the whole carried out in a simple Gothic character, faced externally with local brown pitch-faced wall stones, with blue local ashlar dressings to windows, string courses, &c, the roof to be covered with green Westmoreland slates. The interior will be fitted up with open benches to seat 48 persons, reader's and clerk's desk, and open pitch pine roof, surrounded with wall-boarding three feet high, the wall being finished in cement. The various works for the chapel have been let to the following contractors: Masons, Messrs John Hollingworth and Son, Cumberworth; joiner, Mr John Burton, Clayton West; plasterer, Mr John Hallas, Clayton West; plumber, Mr James Haley, Skelmanthorpe; painter, Mr George Lindley, Shepley; slaters, Messrs Fickles Bros., Huddersfield. The site is being surrounded with a dry fence wall five feet high, the estimate of Messrs A. Deamley and Sons, High Flatts, Denby Dale, having been accepted for this portion of the work. The total amount of the accepted estimates is £821. Estimates have been obtained for the roads and drains; these have not been accepted, as it is intended to make the entrance gateway and drive only at present, and to proceed with the centre road and drains as the ground is filled up. The completion of the scheme includes the building of a lodge of simple character, with Boardroom attached. This will involve an outlay of £325 13s. 6d., which, when added to the cost of laying out the ground, making walks, and planting, &c, will leave a deficiency of some £700, which the committee trust will be made up by farther subscriptions at an early date. The plans show the whole of the site surrounded with planting of various widths, grass margins to walks, and ornamental grounds in front of chapel and lodge. The work is proceeding from the plans and under the superintendence of Messrs John Kirk and Sons, architects, Huddersfield and Dewsbury. Mr Benjamin Norton of Nortonthorpe Hall, the chairman of the committee, made a few appropriate remarks on the report, and called upon Mr James S. Kirk to present the trowel and mallet, which bore the following inscription: — Presented to William Child, Esq., by Messrs John Kirk and Sons, architects, on the occasion of his laying the corner stone of the Skelmanthorpe Cemetery Chapel, February 5th, 1887. Mr Child laid the stone, and afterwards the Rev Robey B. White gave the hymn commencing Brief life is here our portion; Brief sorrow, short-lived care. During the singing of the above hymn a collection was made, which realised £37 14s. The Chairman (Mr B. Norton), on behalf of the Cemetery Committee, thanked Mr Child for so kindly coming forward to lay the corner stone of the new cemetery chapel. Mr Child then addressed the assembly as follows: The simple ceremony which calls us together to-day is the near consummation of a work which, starting on a small scale and for a lesser object has, as most of you will be aware, been brought to its present onlooked for dimensions, by the kindness of Mr John Kaye, in his desire that the wider needs of the whole of the inhabitants of Skelmanthorpe should be met, and this object was nobly seconded by Mr Thomas Norton, and was completed by a grant of land by Sir Percival Radcliffe. I may also, whilst thanking the chairman, Mr Benjamin Norton, for his kind expressions towards myself and on behalf of Mrs Child, be allowed to express my admiration of the heartiness with which he has entered into and joined with the committee, so far brought this work nearly to a successful close and it is also due to notice the hearty response which has been made by all the inhabitants of the neighbourhood, both rich and poor, as the subscription list shows. I suppose there has been no greater need felt in the village than that which is now to be supplied, as for many years back there has been a painful feeling abroad that there was not a fitting resting-place for

*those who passed from our midst. I need say but very few words on the subject of a Christian burial, but you all know that our common Christianity, whilst not encouraging profuse expenditure In this respect, has always been noted for its simple reverence for the departed, and has kindly laid them to rest In sure and certain hope of a resurrection beyond the grave. There is a latent feeling in most people that when they have finished their work here that they prefer to be buried in some quiet spot far from the busy throng, and I am sure that the situation of this cemetery is all that you can desire, and that It is admirable in every respect, and you have not only provided for the present, but for a few generations to come. Allow me, In conclusion, to congratulate you on the advances you have made in your town, in your schools, in your places of worship, your water supply, and many various other matters. (Applause.) Mr John Kate. J.P., Clayton West, proposed a vote of thanks to the chairman, which was ably responded to by Mr B- Norton The Rev Bobey R. White offered a dedicatory prayer and pronounced the Benediction, which concluded the proceedings.*  
(Huddersfield Chronicle, 12 February 1887)

### Evangelical Churches

- Trinity Evangelical Church, Skelmanthorpe (was Mortuary Chapel)

### Christian Brethren Gospel Hall

- Saville Road Hall, Skelmanthorpe

### Flockton

**Flockton** had a population of 1000 with rented seats for 600. The congregation numbered 300 and the church was filled to capacity. Baptisms were always in private and averaged 39 each year. There were 20 communicants and 15 confirmation candidates annually.

The church school was in private hands but the vicar was allowed to visit and instruct the children in Common Prayer. There were no weddings since double fees were charged to preserve the rector of Thornhill's interests. The vicar, Alexander Luscombe, made a plea for Flockton to be made into a parish for "Thre is no future for the church in Flockton until this is done. Parish boundaries cause great confusion and need defining. In 1866, Flockton was separated from Thornhill and made into a parish in its own right.

### Shepley

Another new parish carved out of Kirkburton was **Shepley**. The church was built in 1848 by means of a parliamentary grant to serve a population of 1200. The church seated 403 but only 303 were free, the rest were rented. Pew rents survived in this church until the 1950s. There were two services each Sunday at 10.30 and 3.00 pm with a morning attendance of 50 and in the afternoons 70, but the Sunday School increased the numbers to 160. The congregation was increasing. Baptisms were always held in private and Holy Communion was celebrated monthly with the communicants numbering eight. Marriage fees were paid to the vicar of Kirkburton as his right. There was a mixed day school under a certificated master whose sister taught needlework. There were 99 pupils but only 55 attended regularly.

Providence Methodist New Connexion Chapel, Marsh Lane, Shepley  
Wesleyan Methodist Chapel, Lane Head Road, Shepley (1876)

Catholic services have been held at St. Paul's Church, Shepley since 1996

## **Shelley**



Kirklees Image Archive

Church of Emmanuel, Shelley (1868)

HUDDERSFIELD ROAD. Shelley. Church of Emmanuel.

Gothic Revival church. 1868. Hammer dressed stone with ashlar dressings and quoins. Pitched slate roof. Nave, three bays to north, south aisle of four bays. Two-bay chancel. Square three-tier tower in south-west corner. The tower has angle buttresses, and the entrance is on the south side with deep, moulded surround. Two-light deeply chamfered bell-chamber openings with traceried heads. Clock face to three sides. Crenelated parapet with gargoyles. Squat, pyramidal slated spire. Nave windows, north side, are three-light with intersecting tracery with two quatrefoils and one trefoil in head. Aisle windows are two-light with tracery. Rose window at east end of aisle. East window is three-light with traceried head. Large west window is four-light with Curvilinear tracery. INTERIOR: four-bay arcade to south on quatrefoil piers. Chancel arch on paired red granite colonnettes on corbel brackets. Arched braced hammer beam roof. 'Tulip' type font of 1868 with tall, carved oak, counterbalanced cover of 1894.

Methodist New Connexion Chapel, Shelley Far Bank Lane, Shelley Far Bank, Shelley (known as Trinity Chapel). Opened on Whit Sunday 1785 and seceded to the Methodist New Connexion in 1797. An organ loft was added mid-nineteenth century. It is now one of the oldest Methodist chapels still in use.

Shelley Congregational Church (1798)

Primitive Methodist Chapel, Drinker Lane, Roydhouse, Shelley

## **Kirkheaton**

St. John the Baptist, Kirkheaton (8<sup>th</sup> C crosses. First church before Normans)



(Extract from [Discovering Old Huddersfield](#) (1993-2002) by Gordon & Enid Minter:)

The Parish Church of **St. John the Baptist** was founded circa 1200 A.D. but ancient stone fragments found at the church indicate some form of worship on this site dating back to the ninth century. As the church was badly damaged by fire in 1886, much of what we see is Victorian re-building but the tower survived the fire and dates back to the fifteenth century. The Beaumont Chapel which, until the Reformation, was probably a chantry chapel, also escaped the flames. It contains a collection of monuments, brasses and banners all

relating to various members of the Beaumont family who were lords of the manor for more than four hundred years. This old chapel dates back to the fourteenth century and the stonework contrasts well with the more regular Victorian work and may easily be seen from the churchyard near to the east gate.

“The oldest gravestones are near the porch, the oldest one of all being that of John Horsfall who died in 1624. This, we believe, is the oldest surviving outdoor gravestone in the Huddersfield area. In 1859, the graveyard as it then existed was deemed to be full and a new piece of land, to the southwest of the church, called Church Close was consecrated in that year and brought into use to extend the burial ground. Today this 'new' graveyard is overgrown, neglected and desolate whilst the 'old' graveyard is much easier to inspect as, during the last two decades, it has been tidied and, in parts, cleared. In the cleared area in front of the eastern end of the church there may be seen, under a gravestone, the massive stump and extensive root system of a yew tree which in the early 1900s, when it was still growing, was said, credulously perhaps, to be a thousand years old.

The gate on the south side of the churchyard is known as Deadman's Gate for it is the gate through which, over the centuries, have passed so many coffins and so many mourners. Near to the East gate, which was traditionally the way brides entered the church, is the most noticeable feature in the churchyard. This is the monument to seventeen girls who died in a fire at Atkinson's cotton mill at Colne Bridge in 1818. The monument tells the full story but don't overlook the girls' gravestone which lies near the foot of the column.”

Wesleyan Methodist Chapel, Upper Heaton Lane, Upper Heaton, Kirkheaton

Thus by the dawn of the twentieth century, the religious life of the area was both vigorous and complex. A strong (though divided) nonconformity competed for the allegiance of people with a Church of England that had increasingly been forced to recognise a need for its own reformation. As far back as the 1830s the parish of Scissett (including Skelmanthorpe township) had been carved out of parts of the parishes of Emley and High Hoyland, and a new church building was consecrated. Flockton had acquired parochial status in 1860 becoming independent of its mother church at Thornhill. All Saints Church in Clayton West was consecrated in 1875, the rights of the parish church being transferred to it from the isolated High Hoyland building. High Hoyland itself continued in occasional use until 1980 when it was declared redundant and sold. In 1893 a church was built at Denby Dale within the parish of Cumberworth and this was followed two years' later by St Aidan's in Skelmanthorpe. Skelmanthorpe became an independent parish in 1900.

### **Sunday Schools**

The earliest Sunday Schools were interdenominational and had paid teachers, but by 1811 the denominational schools with voluntary teachers was becoming the norm. The original purpose of the schools was to teach on a Sunday those basic skills of literacy which middle-class children could expect to learn at weekday school. Indeed some turned away any children who attended day school as, "it is contrary to the original design of Sunday Schools, and also to common equity and reason". By 1822 there were 22 schools in the Huddersfield Sunday School Union with 3666 children and 959 teachers, but by the celebration of the centenary of the Sunday School movement in 1880 the growth had been extraordinary.

Sunday Schools in Huddersfield 1880

Wesleyan	3587
New Connexion	2238
Primitive	602
United Methodist	2524
Baptist	2580
Congregational	3117
Other	893
Anglican (1858)	4580
<b>TOTAL</b> participants	20,121

These huge church and chapel Sunday Schools dominated religious life in the Huddersfield area for a hundred years until between the two world wars. "Religion in Huddersfield since the Mid-Eighteenth Century", Edward Royle in "Huddersfield : a Most Handsome Town", ed E.A. Hilary Haigh (Kirklees Cultural Services, 1992)

1707 Primitive Methodist Chapel, Cumberworth Half. Erected 1836. It is a Chapel. Sittings Free none SS none Other 140 Free Space 100. On 30 March Morning GC None SS 122 Afternoon GC 220 SS 130 Evening GC 134 SS none. Average during 12 months Morning GC X SS 130 Afternoon GC 120 SS 130 Evening GC 140 SS X. Signed Milton Radley, Chapel Steward, Skelmanthorpe, nr Huddersfield. [497/54]

1708 Green School (Wesleyan Reformers), Skelmanthorpe. Erected Before 1800. Separate Building. Day School. Sittings Free 160 Free Space 40. On 30 March Afternoon GC 70 Evening GC 140. Average during 2 months Morning X Afternoon GC 160 Evening GC 200. Remarks NB This School has been open about 2 months for religious worship. The Town of Skelmanthorpe includes part of Cumberworth and part of Cumberworth Half. Dated 26 March. Signed David Lawton, Schoolmaster, Skelmanthorpe, nr Huddersfield. [497/55]

Yorkshire Returns of the 1851 Census of Religious Worship: West Riding (South)

*"SKELMANTHORPE Sunday School Anniversary. — The third annual celebration of the commencement of the Wesleyan Reform Sunday School, in this place, was hold on Sunday, 30th of April. Two sermons were preached to crowded audiences by Mr. Blenkhorn of Sheffield. The number of scholars is 141. There is a very good library in connection with the school. The collection amounted to £5 15s. 6d. Some time since the foundation stone of a new chapel for this body was laid ; the edifice is in rapid course of erection, and in a few months the society may worship in their own house of prayer".* ('Huddersfield Chronicle', 3 May 1854).

*"SKELMANTHORPE. Sunday-school Anniversary. — Two sermons were preached in the Wesleyan (Conference) Chapel, on the afternoon and evening of Sunday, the 21st inst., ou the occasion of the anniversary of the Sunday-school in connection with the congregation. Mr. Isaac Marsden, of Doncaster, officiated. A most efficient band conducted the musical services. The collections amounted to £6 17s. Id., of which Mr. Marsden, who is a native of Skelmanthorpe, gave £1.* (Huddersfield Chronicle, 27 May 1854)

*"KIRKBURTON The Sunday School Dispute. — The dispute in the Wesleyan*

*Sabbath school, between the conference and reform parties, we are sorry to say still continues, without any prospect of an amicable settlement. The conference party kept the school closed on Sunday last, and the scholars who attended at the doors were forced to go to some other school, or anywhere else they chose. However, a teachers' meeting was held on Thursday night, attended chiefly by the reform party ; and it was decided to open a Sabbath-school, in connection with the reform meeting-house. The dispute is not, however, likely to end here— for the reformers having a large majority of teachers and scholars on their side, lay claim to a portion of the school furniture, such as books, forms, which will not, we believe, be readily given up. The funeral money, too, is a matter of dispute, not likely to be adjusted without legal interference. It would, we presume, be far better, and more creditable in Sunday-school teachers, for the two parties to make a little sacrifice, and meet each other half-way, and thus put an end to the strife.” (Huddersfield Chronicle, 27 May 1854)*

*“The annual festivity of Dogley Lane (Kirkburton) Independent Sunday School was held on Monday. The scholars and teachers, about 300 in number, met at the chapel, where a short service was held, and a suitable address to the young was delivered by the Rev. F. E. Henson, the pastor. A procession was afterwards formed, and preceded by the Kirkburton Temperance Brass Band and the school banner, proceeded to a large field at Woodsome Lees, where a couple of hours of hearty exercise was indulged in. The procession was then marched back to school, where buns and coffee were provided for them, and after a short entertainment by the band, they were dismissed.”*

*“Kirkburton Wesleyan Sunday School.— On Wednesday, the children of the above school partook of their annual Trinity treat, At half-past one o'clock the scholars and teachers, numbering about 220, assembled in the school-room at the Dean Chapel, from whence, headed by the Kirkburton Temperance Brass Band, a procession was formed, and marched through the village to Mr. Benjamin Mellor's field at Riley, where several hours of recreative exercises were thoroughly enjoyed. The large party then returned to the schoolroom, where buns and tea were abundantly supplied to them. After they had been dismissed, the teachers, superintendents and friends partook of tea together in the same room, and then proceeded to join their friends in the general feast.”*

*“Primitive Methodist Sunday School, Highburton. The scholars and teachers connected with the Primitive Methodist Chapel, Highburton, held their annual feast on Monday. The children assembled about half-past one o'clock, and headed by the Kirkburton Temperance Band, proceeded through the village of Highburton, accompanied by their superintendent Mr. Joseph Robinson, to a field, kindly lent for the occasion by Mr. Edmund Dyson, where numerous rustic and athletic sports and pastimes were indulged in for several hours. The procession was then reformed and proceeded through Burton to the School, where they were plentifully regaled with tea, coffee, buns, currant cake. Having satisfied their appetites with these good things, the children and teachers returned to the field and spent the evening in exhilarating recreations.”*

*“Kirkburton Church Schools. Last Wednesday, being "Trinity Wednesday," and the great day of Kirkburton Feast, the scholars belonging to the Parish Church assembled at their school at half-past twelve o'clock in the afternoon, where a procession, consisting of about 210 girls, and 170 boys, was formed, and*

*accompanied by their superintendents and teachers, and the Victoria Brass Band (the scholars carrying innumerable small banners), proceeded to a field, kindly lent by George Hey. Esq., where they amused themselves in various healthy recreations for a couple of hours. The procession was then re-formed, and proceeded to the Parish Church, where a short and appropriate service was held, and a feeling address delivered by the Rev. R. Collins, vicar, to the young. After the service, the procession, headed by the band, proceeded from the church to the vicarage grounds, the trees in which were tastefully hung with many coloured flags, and banners, the brilliance of which contrasted greatly with the various hues of their luxuriant foliage. A number of tables were arranged under the shadow of the widespread trees, where the children and their teachers partook of tea, with an abundance of currant cake, and it was a pleasant sight to see the happy countenances of the children, the anxiety of the teachers to supply their wants, and the smiling faces of more than a thousand persons who had assembled to witness the children's feast. At the conclusion, the scholars were arranged in front of the vicarage, where, under the conductorship of Mr. Henry Jackson, seven<sup>1</sup> hymns were sung, and the blending of nearly 2 000 voices, accompanied by the powerful and well-trained band of instruments, produced a charming effect. After a few remarks from the vicar, who feared the rain would spoil the festive scene, the National Anthem was sung, and the proceedings brought to a close. Each child was, before leaving the grounds, presented with a large bun and a packet of sweetmeats. The teachers and friends, to the number of about 100, afterwards partook of tea together in the old schoolroom, and then dispersed to enjoy the fair as best they felt inclined." (Huddersfield Chronicle - Saturday 01 June 1872)*

*"School Trip. On Saturday last, the scholars, teachers, and friends in connection with the Primitive Methodist Sunday School, Skelmanthorpe, had trip to Wentworth Castle, near Barnsley. They were conveyed in wagons by way of Scissett, Clayton West, and Darton. Leaving Skelmanthorpe about 7 a.m., they astonished and charmed the inhabitants of the villages through which they passed, by emulations of joy, and singing. After arriving their destination, they spent their time in innocent games, singing, and inspecting the interesting features which are found in the hall and grounds. On their return they were entertained at Alpha Villa, the residence of Mr Henry Lodge, with tea and buns. They arrived home about 10 p.m. thoroughly satisfied with the entertainment. (Barnsley Chronicle, 18 August 1871)*

*"Primitive Methodist Anniversary. — The Primitive Methodists at Clayton West held their Sunday school anniversary on Sunday last, when Mr. C Duce, of Huddersfield, preached special sermons in the afternoon and evening to large congregations. The collections were in aid of the school trust. Chapel Anniversary — The anniversary of the Baptist Chapel, Clayton West, was held last Sunday, when Mr. Hart, of Hindley, was the special preacher. The attendance both at the morning and afternoon services was very good. The collections, amounting to over £11, were in aid of the chapel trust." Huddersfield Chronicle, 13 June 1891)*

Photo available of Joint Sunday School Whitsun walk around the village on Commercial Road, 1910. (L. Robinson collection)

## **Temperance**

The Temperance movement is a social movement against the consumption of alcoholic beverages. Temperance movements typically criticise alcohol intoxication, promote complete abstinence (teetotalism), or use its political influence to press the government to

enact alcohol laws to regulate the availability of alcohol or even its complete prohibition.

Many of us will have heard of signing the pledge and groups such as the Band of Hope and the Rechabites. But few people now remember why temperance was so important to millions of people. If temperance was the solution, what was the problem? As a reaction to the destructive effects of cheap gin, the Beer Act of 1830 was meant to encourage beer drinking as a healthier alternative. But the effect was disastrous, especially in the crowded industrial regions. We have a newspaper account of the effect in Blackburn: "Monday last (October 8th, 1830) being the day on which houses licensed under the Beer Bill commenced to sell beer, the most disgraceful scenes of drunkenness were witnessed in different parts of the town from early morn to midnight. The drunkenness and profligacy introduced by this measure exceeds belief. Men, women, and children in the evening were in the streets in a disgusting state of intoxication. Six, stripped of all but their trousers, fought till blood streamed from their faces."

Drink was a national problem, and temperance societies which encouraged moderation sprang up throughout the country. But in 1832, Joseph Livesey and six companions made history in Preston, when they signed a pledge to abstain from all forms of intoxicating liquor soon known as teetotalism. Livesey himself - aided by pairs of apostles - spread the message southwards throughout the country. The word temperance soon meant, not moderation, but drinking no alcohol at all. Livesey argued that it was the only safe way, comparing moderation to a dangerous bridge or a slippery slope.

### **Growing radicalism and influence**

During the Victorian period, the temperance movement became more radical, advocating the legal prohibition of all alcohol, rather than just calling for moderation. It was also perceived to be tied in with both religious renewal and progressive politics, particularly female suffrage.

There was also a new focus on the working class and children; the Band of Hope was founded in Leeds in 1847 by the Reverend Jabez Tunncliffe and it aimed to save working class children from the parents of drink by teaching them the importance and principles of sobriety and teetotalism. In 1855, a national organisation was formed amidst an explosion of Band of Hope work. Meetings were held in churches throughout the UK and included Christian teaching. The group also campaigned politically for the curtailment of the influence of pubs and brewers. The organisation also became quite militant, ordaining rallies, demonstrations and marches to influence as many people as possible to "sign the pledge" of allegiance to the society and to resolve to abstain "from all liquors of an intoxicating quality, whether ale, porter, wine or ardent spirits, except as medicine."

### **Transition to a mass movement**

The Temperance movement was a significant mass movement at this time and encouraged a general abstinence from the consumption of alcohol. A general movement to build alternatives to replace the functions of public bars existed, so the Independent Order of Rechabites was formed in England, with a branch later opening in America as a friendly society that did not hold meetings in public bars; there was also a movement to introduce a variety of temperance halls and coffee palaces as replacements for bars. Numerous periodicals devoted to temperance were also published.

In 1864 the Salvation Army was founded in London with a heavy emphasis on both

abstinence from alcohol and ministering to the working class, which led publicans to fund a Skeleton Army to disrupt their meetings. The Salvation Army quickly spread internationally, maintaining an emphasis on abstinence.

In 1884, a corps of the Salvation Army was founded in Denby Dale. In 1907 General William Booth, the Army's founder, visited the village and was greeted by large crowds.

### **Legislative successes and failures**

A favourite goal of the British Temperance movement was to sharply reduce the heavy drinking by closing as many pubs as possible. Advocates were Protestant nonconformists who played a major role in the Liberal Party, which adopted a temperance platform focused on local option. In 1908 Prime Minister H.H. Asquith—although a heavy drinker himself—took the lead by proposing to close about a third of the 100,000 pubs in England and Wales, with the owners compensated through a new tax on surviving pubs. The brewers controlled the pubs and organised a stiff resistance, supported by the Conservatives, who repeatedly defeated the proposal in the House of Lords. However, the "People's Tax" of 1910 included a stiff tax on pubs. Beer and liquor consumption fell in half from 1900 to 1920, in part because there were many new leisure opportunities.

The movement gained further traction during the First World War with the imposition of sharp restrictions on the sale of alcohol in many combatant countries in order to preserve resources for war use. In the UK the Liberal government passed the Defence of the Realm Act 1914 when pub hours were licensed, beer was watered down and was subject to a penny a pint extra tax, and in 1916 a State Management Scheme meant that breweries and pubs in certain areas of Britain where armaments were made were nationalised.

*"Skelmanthorpe Temperance Society.— This village, for so long sunk in lethargy and indifference to all march-of-intellect movements, seems to have roused itself within the last few months back. It is earnestly to be hoped that this may not prove a mere "flash in the pan," but a steady and ever-increasing light, which may effectually dispel the darkness of other days. Some well-wishers to the cause of temperance, and to a certain extent, the consequent comfort and increased happiness of the natives, lately made the endeavour to form a "total abstinence society." The pledge, in the course of a few weeks, has been signed by upwards of forty, who wish to present a testimonial to Father Matthew and his co-workers, in the shape of the adoption of those principles which it has been that philanthropist's unceasing endeavour to uphold and promote. On the evening of Saturday last, May 6th, a meeting was held in the town school, for the purpose of advocating and expounding those principles. The meeting was addressed by Mr. Lawton, of Skelmanthorpe, a friend from Emley, and Mr. Sievewright (town schoolmaster). The attendance was most respectable both numerically and otherwise. The last-mentioned speaker, in a very humorous address, urged the extensive adoption of the principle of total abstinence, and backed his appeal by sundry incontrovertible arguments. A few more signatures were added to the pledge.*  
(*Huddersfield Chronicle*, 3 May 1854).

The Skelmanthorpe United Temperance Committee ran from 1900 to 1927.

*"Kirkburton Temperance Festival. — The leading men in the cause of temperance here are making strenuous efforts to promote it in the neighbourhood, and are earnestly appealing to friends of sobriety to patronise them. We understand it is their intention to have a tea-party, on a large scale, in the Wesleyan Methodist*

*schoolroom, on the 28th inst., after which a lecture on the subject will be given by Mr. Trumble, of Huddersfield. The proceedings are to be enlivened by the temperance brass band, and altogether the entertainment is intended to be of such a character as will be worthy of the approbation and patronage of the teetotallers in the village and vicinity."*

(Huddersfield Chronicle, 24 December 1852).

*"Kirkburton Temperance Society.— The members of the temperance society held an open air meeting in the evening of Sunday, on Fiddlers-green, when the principles of teetotalism were ably enforced by Mr. Ramsden, of Moldgreen; Mr. Hawkins, of Huddersfield; and Mr. Taylor, of Holmfirth. The proceedings were conducted in a most creditable manner by Mr. G. Garner, president of the society. We understand that the members intend to hold another open air meeting in a fortnight. (Huddersfield Chronicle, 26 August 1854)*

#### CLAYTON WEST.

**TEMPERANCE LECTURE.**—On the evening of Wednesday last, Mr. Penrose, of Barnsley, delivered a discourse on **Temperance** in the Primitive Methodist Chapel, taking for his text Jeremiah ix. 1. The lecturer urged upon moderate drinkers the necessity of joining the **temperance** ranks, with the view of lending the force of their example to the movement, and was listened to with much interest by a respectable auditory.

**BURGLARY.**—On Wednesday night se'nnight, the **Skelmanthorpe** Co-operation Shop was broken into, and a number of handkerchiefs and other goods taken therefrom. The thieves were however disturbed before they had finished their work.

**TEMPERANCE FESTIVAL.**—On Shrove Tuesday a temperance tea meeting was held in the Spring Grove school-room. Full three hundred persons sat down to a substantial tea, after which they adjourned to the chapel, where addresses were delivered by Mr. J. Marsden, Mr. Reed, and Mr. J. Forster. During the intervals between the speeches, several **temperance** melodies were sung by Mr. W. Waite and Mr. Taylor, and several tunes were played by the Kirkburton brass band which was present on the occasion. After tea the chapel was densely packed in every part, great numbers of people having to go away from want of room. On the same day a tea meeting was held in the Independent chapel. After tea the meeting was addressed by the Rev. John Glendenning, of Huddersfield, the Rev. J. R. Smith, Mr. Boothroyd, and several other excellent speakers.

## Rechabites and others - the Temperance friendly societies

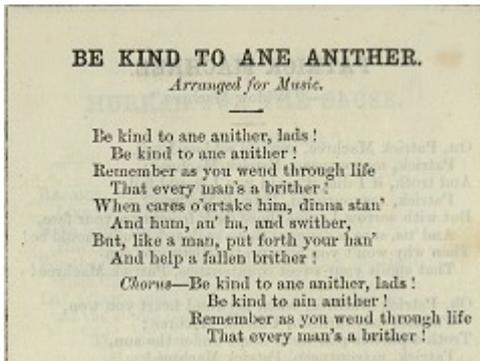
In the early nineteenth century many friendly societies were strongly associated with individual pubs or drinking dens, which in many towns were often the only venues where a substantial body (of men) could meet. The association of society with venue could be so strong that Foresters, Gardeners, Carters and others were still remembered in some public house names at the end of the twentieth century. In fact, one strand of thought held that friendly societies arose directly from harmonious clubs' promoted at the end of the eighteenth century by the proprietors of public houses or inns themselves. These clubs, otherwise simply existing to facilitate drinking, organised welfare by 'passing the hat'. In time members paid a regular subscription in return for welfare protection. From these clubs developed the affiliated orders - Oddfellows, Buffaloes, Foresters, Shepherds, Druids and others.

However, as ideas about temperance spread through the United Kingdom in the 19th century, some activists saw that there was an advantage in linking temperance with mutual aid. Subscriptions could be lower when the effects of alcohol were removed from the benefit equation.

The International Order of Rechabites take their name from an eponymous biblical tribe who were commanded to drink no wine' by their leader Jonadab son of Recab, and successfully resisted when tempted to do so. Taking their inspiration from the story, the founders of the Order opened their first 'Tent' or branch in Salford on 25 August 1835, in effect relaunching and subsuming an older Salford Temperance Burial Society. The first Scottish Tent was Caledonian No 73, which opened in January 1838. The 'Tents' spread so quickly that to co-ordinate the movement in Scotland an Edinburgh District was created by the end of that year.



The Order bought whole-heartedly into the ethos of their Biblical namesakes and modelled their ritual, titles and structure along Biblical and tribal lines (as interpreted through the rituals of Freemasonry, with which many of the founders were familiar). Each Tent was ruled by a High Chief Ruler, assisted by a High Deputy Ruler, Corresponding Secretary, Sick and Tent Stewards, Inside and Outside Guardians, a 'Levite of the Tent' and a number of 'Elders'. Each had their own regalia and insignia; each had their own place and role in meetings of the Tent, particularly in ceremonies surrounding the induction of new members.



Titles and rituals were important because they afforded the membership in each Tent a structure or hierarchy with which they could identify and through which the committed could strive to progress. They gave the membership a means of identifying with the organisation, so counting themselves distinctive from competing organisations and other friendly societies. The Order was important because through membership the individual was part of a greater whole. By holding to their pledge, with the mutual support of the other members, all benefited.

By the end of the 19th century many other bodies offered friendly society benefits in a temperance environment. The Independent Order of Good Templars arrived in Scotland from America in 1869. It was a total abstinence movement for the whole family. Other organisations with a branch structure simply propagated the temperance message in an atmosphere of mutual support.

The British Women's Temperance Association was formed in England in 1876.

Since 2004 The Rechabite Friendly Society has traded as Healthy Investment, a financial services organisation that continues to specialise in providing ethical savings and investment products, not restricted to teetotallers. The Society avoids direct investment in companies in the alcohol, arms, tobacco, gambling and pornography industries. It is a with-profits provider, which as a mutual insurance company means that there are no shareholders to benefit from members investments. The Society provides Tax Exempt Savings Plans only offered by Friendly Societies, and other savings products.  
(Wikipedia)

## Band of Hope

The Band of Hope was first proposed by Rev. Jabez Tunnicliff, who was a Baptist minister in Leeds, following the death in June 1847 of a young man whose life was cut short by alcohol. While working in Leeds, Tunnicliff had become an advocate for total abstinence from alcohol. In the autumn of 1847, with the help of other temperance workers, the Band of Hope was founded. Its objective was to teach children the importance and principles of sobriety and teetotalism. In 1855, a national organisation was formed amidst an explosion of Band of Hope work. Meetings were held in churches throughout the UK and included Christian teaching.

Set up in an era when alcoholic drinks was generally viewed as a necessity of life, next only to food and water, the Band of Hope and other temperance organisations fought to counteract the influence of pubs and brewers, with the specific intention of rescuing unfortunates, whose lives had been blighted by drink and teach complete abstinence.

Christians and Temperance Societies saw this as a way of providing activities for children that encouraged them to avoid alcohol problems. Alcohol-free premises were established, rallies, marches and demonstrations were mounted to oppose the "evils" of hard liquor that were attended by thousands of supporters, and coffee taverns were established to keep teetotalers on the straight and narrow path.

"Signing the pledge" was one of the innovative features. The pledge was a promise not to drink alcohol and millions of people signed up. There were also lectures that were illustrated by magic lantern, the technological equivalent to present day computerised PowerPoint displays, and noted personalities were invited to speak at public meetings in support of the cause.

In 1887 the movement had about 1½ million members out of 8 million young people in Britain of Band of Hope age. By 1891 it had 2 million members and in 1897, Queen Victoria's Jubilee year, the estimated membership was 3,238,323. By the early 1950s, however, the temperance movement had all but succumbed to a changing society and cultural habits. Lack of support for the Band of Hope eventually brought about their transformation into Hope UK.

Hope UK remains concerned with children's welfare, giving priority to the development of resources and training for parents and children's workers of many kinds. The charity also attempts to persuade churches and other Christian organisations to include drugs awareness work within their programmes and play their part in helping to reduce the UK's alcohol and other drugs problems.

(Hope UK - Wikipedia)

Photos available showing:

Band of Hope temperance movement assemble in Board School yard in June 1909

Band of Hope fete at Pond End by Board School

Band of Hope Skelmanthorpe demonstration on Commercial Road, 1907 - photo S. Sheead

Band of Hope demonstration gather at "The Triangle", 1907 - photo S. Sheead

Temperance gatherings at Skelmanthorpe possibly organised by the Rechabite Society - photo S. Sheead

Primitive Methodist Chapel, decorated wagon for the Band of Hope demonstration at Jebson Fold, 19 June 1909. (L. Robinson collection)

Wesleyan Chapel wagon - Band of Hope fete, on Commercial Road, at the bottom of

Smithy Lane, 19 June 1909. (L. Robinson collection)  
Temperance Demonstration held 1910.

The temperance societies not only campaigned against excessive drinking but played a key role in the improvement of manners and morals. They declined after the Temperance Acts of 1869 and 1904 which controlled licensing laws and helped to diminish their support. Photos - S. Sheead.

### **The Influence of Religion**

Religion among the working class of the late 19th Century may well have been more pervasive and more widely accepted than is usually assumed. While it may be conceded that the regular church and chapel-goers were drawn in large measure from the upper reaches of the working class, religious sentiment and chapel attachment were by no means absent from the main body of the working class. Religion offered hope and a sense of coherence and self respect in a hostile world as well as many practical benefits such as education through Sunday Schools and welfare through Friendly Societies and chapel communities.,

*"Labour aristocracy" upper stratum of the working class founded upon church and chapel, friendly society, craft unions lending their support to reformist political demands provided many of the leaders for, and lent its distinctive tone to the working class movement."*

("Religion in the Working Class Community, and the Evolution of Socialism in Late Nineteenth Century Lancashire: A Case of Working Class Consciousness" by A. J. AINSWORTH).

Study of the Primitive Methodist Church and the MPs associated with it between 1886 and 1922. This was the zenith of the Church's political activism. Traces PM evolution from an apolitical body, preaching individual salvation and with a particular mission to the working classes to one that also promoted social salvation through progressive politics. This increasing engagement with progressive national manifested itself in the election of December 1885. In the wake of the franchise extension of 1884, Twelve working class MPs were elected, five of whom were closely associated with the Church. This influx of plebeian MPs was an event unprecedented in parliamentary history. The proportion drawn from a minor religious denomination was also notable. All told the work identified 44 MPs associated with PM between its foundation in the early 1800s and 1932 when PM merged with the rest of Methodism. Although it is often said that PM was not wedded to any one political party, the reality was different. Initially the Church and its MPs were firmly Liberal. Gradually this diminished and an increasing number of Primitives supported other parties, particularly the emergent Labour Party.

Historians have shown the importance of PM in the foundation and leadership of a number of trade unions, particularly those for coal miners and agricultural labourers. Eric Hobsbawm considered that PM had mutated from a purely religious organisation into one that provided the Labour Movement with leaders. ("National Politics of Primitive Methodism 1886 to 1922", Melvin Johnson, PhD Thesis, Hull, Nov 2016)

For Keir Hardie Christ's teachings in his interpretation was focused upon salvation in this world through a re-ordering of human society., This was because late 19th Century laissez faire destroyed human dignity. Non-conformatists in the labour movement lambasted traditional churches for failing to practice what they preached.

The subsequent rise of the Labour Party led Nonconformist historians to suggest the Free Churches played a prominent role in the origins of the new movement. Such views reflected the ideas both of the relative prominence of the working classes in nonconformity and the opportunity provided by the chapels for them to develop their speaking talents in the pulpit and their organisational skills in the diocese.

It was suggested that the relationship between nonconformity and working class organisations was more than one merely of personnel. Nonconformity was felt to have given British labour movement distinctive characteristics.

Since the 1960s, however, the idea that the labour movement was nurtured by the Free Church tradition has come under critical scrutiny. For these commentators, Wesleyanism provided forms of social control whilst close relationship was fairly brief and only at a level of personnel essentially moving from nonconformity towards a new religion of socialism.

There was a split within nonconformity between those sympathetic to labour movement and those still for "King and Country" whilst nonconformity was mostly aligned with Liberalism at a time that Labour began to emerge politically.

National developments were changing attitudes. The franchise reform of 1867 ensured that the nonconformist voice now spoke for greatly enhanced numbers of nonconformist voters often noisily aligned with the Liberal party. It also for the first time, enfranchised many working class voters and this led to growing interest in working class representation either through or in opposition to the Liberals.

The rise of Labour was also marked in 1867 by the Royal Commission on Trade Unions, before whom union officials challenged the notion of a reciprocity of interests between masters and men so redolent of mid-Victorian and contemporary nonconformist political economy. The following year the Trades Union Congress was formed. Following the Royal Commission in 1871 the trade unions acquired a much improved legal status. With state legitimisation went greater nonconformist condoning of lay involvement in trade unionism. Nonconformist employers responded to the rise of labour in ways ranging from profit sharing introduced by Cooke Taylor of Bradford to the model towns and workplace conciliation machinery promoted by the chocolate manufacturing Quakers - Cadburys and Rowntrees.

However, the depression of the 1880s and growing international competition self-help and conciliation - which fitted well with the ethos of the chapel and its alignment with Gladstonian Liberalism came to be challenged by those such as Fred Jowett who felt that the industrial system did not need to be managed rather it needed to be transformed. The lock-outs in Bradford in 1892 in response to American textile tariffs, for example, were an important backdrop to the founding in that town of the Independent Labour Party by Hardie the following year.

Some in the nonconformist churches in the 1880s felt that they had to re-connect with the urban poor and turn their attention to social injustice and poverty. Some members of the Fabian Society were nonconformists and the Christian Socialist League was set up in 1887. There were a handful of nonconformist ministers of all denominations who were Socialists and other ministers who moved on from nonconformity to be committed socialists. Some congregations also moved leftwards, but in general socialism was resisted by the liberal majority on congregations and some ministers were driven from the pulpit. These social tensions within the chapels helped to create a sense of conflict

between nonconformity and labour particularly strong in Yorkshire and Wales. The First World War caused many changes - not least a split in Liberal Party in 1916. ("Non-Conformity and the Labour Movement", Peter Catterall, Queen Mary University of London)

The industrial revolution was the impetus of great change. However, it was only in combination with the Methodist movement that the change occurred in the way it did and Britain did not see an uprising of the working class similar to the one in France.

Wesley and George Whitefield saw the Anglican Church as being unresponsive to the needs of the working class. Marx believed that the conditions in Britain should have created unrest in the oppressed working class. He would explain this lack of unrest as a result of religion and specifically the Methodist movement creating an illusion. Religion was a distraction from the real pursuit.

Thus the economist indicates that the followers of Methodism acted in a way that was counter to their own economic gain and was not intended to make any grand social change. Rather their focus was to receive salvation. As there was no economic motive of the Methodism, there was also no political agenda in their doctrinal teachings.

The largest impact of the Methodist movement was the social changes that it enabled, although again, an unintended consequence. It produced an educated working class organised through friendly societies, Co-ops and trade unions.

The political impact of the Methodist movement had the greatest effect on society during the Industrial Revolution. Working class resistance to their oppression led to efforts to combine their forces in order to bring strength to their views and influence over the employers. The organisation and discipline provided by the Methodist movement aided this as did instruction in Sunday Schools where workers and their children were educated and learnt to read.

Along with education, another of the gifts of the Methodist movement was making the working class responsible for the governing of the chapel. The governing involved making decisions regarding leadership and direction of the local congregation. It gave the working class an understanding of how democracy works on a basic level that eventually brought political success to the working class. ("The Impact of Methodism on the Industrial Revolution in England." Bill Polson, NEH Seminar, 2006)

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