

**‘Efficient Members’:
The Early Years of Methodism in Hunsonby and Winskill,
1821-1871**

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The growth of the Hunsonby Wesleyan Methodist Society, its place within the Penrith Circuit, and the role of many individuals, is revealed through a detailed study of surviving Methodist records, and a wide variety of other personal and official sources. The society emerged in the early 1820s; it quickly acquired its own chapel and by 1862 had built a larger replacement. While not the earliest society to take root in the surrounding villages of the Fellside and Eden valley, it grew steadily to become one of the strongest and most influential of the rural societies. By 1871, when another division took place, it was the fourth largest out of the 18 in the new Kirkoswald Circuit. Methodism by then had become the most prominent denomination in Hunsonby, as in many local villages, in an area not noted in 1851 for its strong religious observance.

IN reckoning the circuit membership numbers for 1836, ready to submit his return to the Methodist Conference and to leave all clear for his successor, the superintendent minister of the Penrith Wesleyan Methodist Circuit wrote: ‘NB You will find more on the Class Books but I counted the above to be efficient Members’.¹ What did Benjamin Barrett mean exactly by his unusual but, to the historian, welcome interpolation of this subjective judgment? Regular in attendance at class? A frequent worshipper at chapel? Observant in private religious life? An active and effective evangelist? Were all or any of these necessary hallmarks of the ‘efficient’ Methodist? And why did Barrett feel it necessary to make this remark? Was he perhaps worried about the level of real commitment at that date, at a time when Methodism was feeling the strain of internal conflicts? ‘Efficient’ is an interesting choice of word if this were the case – why not, for example, ‘committed’ or ‘faithful’? Perhaps, as superintendent of a circuit that was often chronically in debt and lacking the endowments of the Church of England, he was as interested in the members’ financial contributions of 1d. weekly and 1/- quarterly as in their spiritual efforts.

This article examines the origins and early growth of just one society in the circuit, based in the village of Hunsonby. It covers its first 50 years, from its earliest mention in Hunsonby in 1821, until 1871, when the Penrith Circuit was divided in two, and the local society found itself in a new and entirely rural circuit headed by the village of Kirkoswald.² The surviving evidence for my research is, in general, somewhat factual and statistical. The world beyond the circuit intrudes only occasionally into what was noted down, and personal information is rare, but we may nevertheless seek to find amongst and through all the statistics ‘the now-shadowy figures of ordinary men, women and children with their problems, beliefs and aspirations, responding each in his or her own way to the zeal and fervour of the dissenting evangelists.’³ Methodist records for this period are frequently frustrating to the researcher and Hunsonby in particular seems to have suffered from some of their defects. For example, there

appear to be no surviving records kept by the local society (if indeed any such records were ever kept) and those produced by the various circuit bodies are discontinuous, so that, although we have circuit account books for the half century 1821-71, they are missing for the years 1823-25, when the first chapel was probably built in Hunsonby, while the district minutes, which do cover the vital years, omit any mention of such a building (but do note when permission was given for the building of many other chapels). The schedule books cover most of the period but the minute book of the local preachers' meeting covers only the central period from 1830-52. The local newspaper, *The Penrith Herald*, ceased publication for several years just at the point when the new chapel was being built (although *The Cumberland and Westmorland Advertiser* covered the opening in 1862).⁴ When the nearby village of Glassonby replaced its existing chapel with a new building in 1869, the opening was described in *The Penrith Herald*, and details were given of the old building, but when Hunsonby was opened almost nothing was said about the previous building.⁵ Even the 'full and authoritative record' of chapels published by the Royal Commission on Historic Monuments makes no mention of Hunsonby.⁶ However, I was fortunate enough to be given a whole series of documents by a neighbour, all relating to land deals in Hunsonby, which had survived a flood in the 1980s in a Penrith solicitor's office. These included the 1832 indenture for the sale of the land on which the original tiny chapel had been built but, frustratingly, this is one of the most damaged of the surviving papers and many details are unclear.⁷ By chance, I came across the diary of John Sutherland, a schoolmaster living in Crosby Ravensworth who often visited his Methodist relations in Winskill, but although he recorded his visits to both chapel and church, he made no particular comment when he started attending services in a brand new chapel in 1862.⁸ The records that list the names of the circuit chapel trustees also include beautiful little plans of the chapels, and where the new one was built on the same site or was attached to the old chapel, there is sometimes also a drawing of the previous one – but not for Hunsonby, because it was on a completely new site.⁹

The limited stock of both given and surnames and a population that was much intermarried – common problems in a rural area at the time – caused further difficulties. From 1800-1820 three different Thomas Halls were buried and yet another was witness at two weddings, while in 1858 there was a wedding at which bride, groom, both fathers and two witnesses were all surnamed Falder: both Hall and Falder were prominent Methodist family names.¹⁰ Minute keepers, however, were casual about the way they referred to people; sometimes they gave Christian names, which may help in identification, and sometimes they gave a place of residence and sometimes it seems as if even they got muddled up. Hence it has been difficult to produce reliable statistics based on individuals; I have made use of such material where there is reasonable certainty, while acknowledging that total accuracy is impossible and necessarily making frequent use of the qualifiers 'perhaps', 'probably' and 'about'.

Hey has pointed out that each Nonconformist chapel has its own local story to tell,¹¹ and Hunsonby differed from other societies in the Penrith Circuit in several important respects. Leslie Church writes, 'The normal progress of Methodism ... was from the cottage-room or farm-kitchen to some larger temporary shelter ... the next stage [was]

the building of actual chapels',¹² but once Hunsonby appeared in the account books, it seems to have rapidly established itself, with none of the false starts, the coming on and off the preaching plan, the moving to different meeting places, that characterised many other local societies. Lazonby, for example, only four miles away and first heard of in the records at the same time, followed a very different pattern and did not build its own chapel until 1850.¹³ Hunsonby membership numbers were quite high from the beginning and, compared with many circuit societies, they were fairly stable. It was one of the first societies to have its own chapel and it was the first to build a replacement. The first chapel, unlike many others which were leased, rented or built by money-raising efforts, appears to have been a gift, although the society trustees later bought the ground on which it stood.¹⁴ It belonged to the connexion and in 1845 was debt free.¹⁵ Compared with other local chapels, Hunsonby's second chapel was particularly large, with a higher percentage of rented pews.¹⁶ It seems, unusually, to have had no prominent date stone. Hunsonby produced more local preachers than other societies (apart from Penrith) and some who were individual enough to emerge as awkward members of the circuit team. Penrith Circuit normally held the local preachers' meeting in Penrith itself; Hunsonby was the only other place recorded as hosting this meeting – but, since no minutes were written up on these two occasions, we do not know why it was accorded this privilege.¹⁷

The broader issues of Methodist growth – whether Methodism took root in this area because of the state of the Established Church, whether it was affected by the prevalence or absence of the old Dissent, or whether it thrived during periods of general economic prosperity or of hardship – cannot be entirely ignored, but these are not the focus of this investigation. Everitt observes, 'What is essential, if we are to explain the pattern of rural Nonconformity in England, is not large-scale generalization but a microscopic examination of the society of these places', an approach which concentrates on 'individual chapels, since the chapel is in many ways the most important social and cultural unit of Methodism'.¹⁸ My intention here – and in a subsequent article for the journal – will be to conduct just such an examination of the relationship of Methodism and its local membership with one small rural Cumbrian community.

The early years

Hunsonby and Winskill today are two hamlets, still just about geographically discrete, in the Eden Valley area of Cumbria (Figures 1 and 2). In 1821, at the time of the first recorded reference to Methodism there, Hunsonby was a compact settlement of red sandstone houses set around a green with a narrow entrance to the top and a ford over Robberby Water at the bottom. Only a small footbridge crossed the river until 1854, when a road bridge was built. The hamlet was part of a joint township with Winskill, about half a mile away, over the beck and the unenclosed Winskill Moor; enclosure of the Moor, part of Little Salkeld Common, did not come until 1849.¹⁹ Both villages were at the end of their roads. There were several outlying settlements, hardly more than individual farms, but at various times differentiated as Winskill Moor, Robberby, Farmanby and Elder (or Eller) Cow Hill, which were included with the township in later censuses (Fig. 2). There were many small freeholders, no resident landlord and the vicarage was a mile distant over the fields. In 1821, the population of Hunsonby

and Winskill was 151, while that of their parish of Addingham, in Cumberland but not far from the Westmorland border, was 694.²⁰ As can be seen (Fig. 3), the parish was a long, thin L shape, stretching from the River Eden eastwards to halfway up Cross Fell, and from just north of Glassonby southwards to Briggle Beck, outside Langwathby. The parish church for Addingham was situated in fields a little outside Glassonby, about two miles from Hunsonby and Winskill, and a similar distance from its other townships at Gamblesby and Little Salkeld. Even the vicar himself, in his Little Salkeld vicarage, was rather inconveniently distant from his church.

This part of the Eden Valley was a stock and arable area, described by the vicar in 1857 as still 'entirely agricultural'.²¹ The censuses for 1841-1871 show that the people of the township were mostly farmers or following one of the trades necessary to an isolated agricultural community. There were victuallers at the three public houses in Hunsonby (there were none in Winskill) and large numbers of servants, both agricultural and domestic, many of whom were young and living in with their employers.

Unlike the communities around Sheffield investigated by Hey, where the absence of a single dominating landlord allowed Dissent to persist in varying forms for centuries, there is limited evidence of older Dissenting congregations in the immediate area around Hunsonby and Winskill, apart from a Congregational chapel at Park Head, near Kirkoswald.²² In his description of a number of Cumberland parishes in 1797, Sir Frederick Eden made no mention of any Methodists (although he did so in his accounts of other counties) and listed only the odd Presbyterian, Quaker or Roman Catholic congregation; the population, he stated, were mostly of the Established Church.²³ It was, perhaps, rather more likely that Cumberland was akin to the Midland area described by the Methodist preacher Dinah Morrison in 'Adam Bede', where 'people lead a quiet life among the green pastures and the still waters, tilling the ground and tending the cattle [and] there's a strange deadness to the Word'.²⁴ Although Hey noted that Methodism could flourish in farming villages even where the old Dissent had failed to establish itself, the 1851 Census of Religious Worship revealed Cumberland to be a county whose inhabitants were still largely uninterested in attending any church or chapel: only Middlesex, with 37.2 per cent of its population attending worship on census Sunday, ranked lower than Cumberland, which returned 37.3 per cent.²⁵ Literacy, which has been seen as inversely related to religious practice, was generally high in Cumberland.²⁶

Quite how Methodism arrived in Hunsonby is unclear. John Wesley made three visits to Gamblesby, in 1749, 1751, and 1780 and an early class meeting was established at Melmerby, near Gamblesby but just outside the parish. By 1765 this was sending a financial contribution to the Dales Circuit, based in Barnard Castle, on the other side of the Pennines.²⁷ Gamblesby had its first chapel by 1784, and one of its sons, Joseph Benson, was President of the Methodist Conference in 1798 and 1810.²⁸ By 1801, the nearby villages of Kirkoswald, Skirwith, Langwathby and Renwick – all of which were later in the same circuit as Hunsonby – had made at least a fleeting appearance in the records, but Hunsonby had yet to be listed. It seems odd that the new ideas did not also take earlier root here, so close to Gamblesby, in the same parish and amongst people who were meeting and intermarrying: perhaps Methodism had an impact in

ways that have left no formal record. There are many accounts of individuals walking long distances to hear or preach the word and Hunsonby Methodists may also have been prepared to travel three miles to join a class.²⁹ In 1803 the circuit was divided, with the Eden valley now headed by Brough, around which the real strength of the new circuit lay.³⁰ It was not until 1821 that 'Hounsonby' was recorded sending in 4 shillings class money to the Brough Circuit.³¹ It appeared on the preaching plan for February-April that year, with one service at 2pm every fortnight, the normal arrangement for smaller societies.

The name 'Thomas Hall', which crops up several times in these early records, may be the key to why Methodism apparently took a long time to reach Hunsonby but then became quickly and strongly established, supporting Everitt's comment that 'the influence of a single forceful individual or family is a recurring theme in the fortunes of most Nonconformist chapels.'³² There are many Thomas Halls in the parish registers for Addingham and they are not easy to disentangle. One, in Gamblesby, was the object of some censure from Wesley himself for his wealth but may have laid the foundation stone for the chapel there.³³ He died in 1800.³⁴ One was probably the circuit steward for Brough; the account book reported itself on three occasions 'indebted to Thos Hall'.³⁵ Yet another Hall donated money towards the furniture for the preacher's house in Brough and one was a local preacher in the Brough Circuit.³⁶ The Thomas Hall who died in 1829 at Robberby warranted an obituary in the *Wesleyan Methodist Magazine*.³⁷ One, when he died in Hunsonby in 1843, left a will revealing a network of relations in Brough and in Middleton-in-Teesdale, an early Methodist stronghold in the Dales Circuit which was, apparently, revived by Hannah Stagg, who moved into the area in 1789 and married Anthony Steele.³⁸ Staggs and Halls were living and intermarrying in Addingham in the 1750s and 1760s and an Anthony Steele was an executor of the 1843 will.³⁹ Did Methodism, instead of coming straight over from Gamblesby, arrive by a circuitous route from Teesdale via Brough and up the Eden Valley, along with Thomas Hall? It was later claimed that the society first met in Thomas Hall's house.⁴⁰ The interval between the first record of a meeting in Hunsonby, in 1821, and the society's acquiring its own chapel was unusually short; the Religious Census gave the year of construction as 1825, while Parson and White noted in 1829 that in 'about 1823, Mr Thomas Hall erected here at his own expense a small Methodist chapel'.⁴¹ Many other societies waited years for their own place of worship. The probability of its being a gift is supported by the absence of the usual permission to build being granted in the Carlisle District Minutes.

In 1832 Thomas Hall sold the 22ft x 22ft plot, on which the chapel stood, for £15 to the 19 society trustees, the sale indenture stating that 'a chapel or meeting house has lately been erected upon the land with money raised by the Wesleyan Methodists'.⁴² So it is still not quite clear how the chapel was built and paid for so quickly. By 1836, however, Addingham parish had three Methodist chapels, conveniently sited in three of the four townships, as an alternative to the church sited near none of them. Methodism in this part of the Eden valley was poised for rapid growth.⁴³

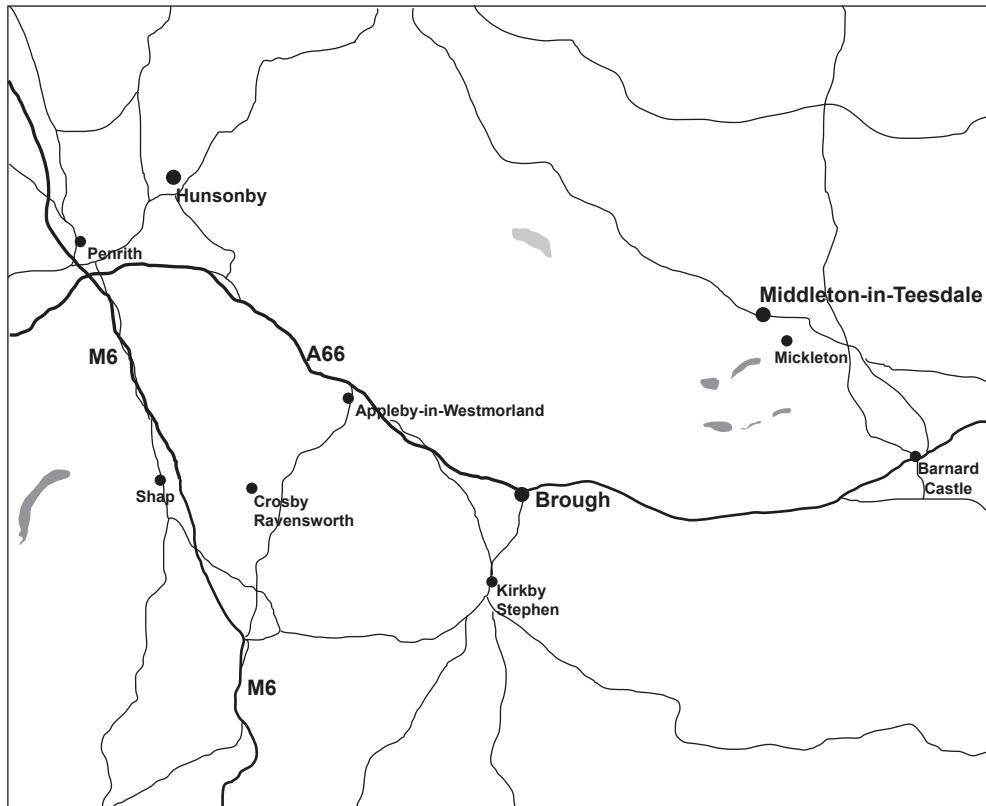


FIG. 1. Hunsonby in its geographic context.

Circuit and Society

The Hunsonby society first featured in circuit records in 1821, at the end of a period of low growth in the wider Wesleyan Methodist Church, which was then followed by several years of rapid expansion.⁴⁴ Locally, calculations based upon the Carlisle District Minutes show that the Brough and Penrith Circuit grew by 16 per cent from 1821-1822, and the Wigton Circuit by 22 per cent, although other Cumberland circuits remained rather static.⁴⁵ The surviving records of the Brough and Penrith Circuit are patchy, and reveal little about Hunsonby. They indicate the involvement of the previously mentioned Thomas Hall and also of Joseph Falder (again a common name in Hunsonby) and detail the society's financial contributions to circuit funds. Judging by its increasing remittances, Hunsonby must have established itself quickly, which may be indicative of an already existing local following. At the same period, contributions from the older societies at Gamblesby and Renwick, although greater, were falling.⁴⁶

Penrith became head of its own separate circuit in September 1825, when it had 319 members, and by September 1830 membership had grown by over 25 per cent to reach 400. In 1825, the account books listed 15 societies, which held weekly classes



FIG. 2. Hunsonby on Greenwood's map, surveyed 1821-22.

Source: C. J Greenwood, *Greenwood's Map of Cumberland from an actual survey made in the years 1821-22* (George Pringle Jnr, 1823)

for an examination of the personal faith and lives of members under the guidance of a class leader, a local layman. Preaching plans for 1821 and 1824 also listed services at Melmerby, Lazonby and Ousby, places which did not as yet feature in the account books. Only two societies in the circuit, Pooley Bridge and Tyrril, were outside the Eden valley area. In the 15 years after 1825 perhaps 32 different meeting places were named in the account books, but both the rapid growth and the location of the main strength of the circuit in these early years was clearly in the villages to the east of the River Eden, apart from in Penrith itself.⁴⁷ The first Hunsonby chapel was the seventh to be erected in the circuit: all, apart from Penrith, were in the Eden valley and three, Kirkoswald, Renwick and Gamblesby, were in nearby villages. The number of societies rose steadily to peak at 40 in 1850, before falling back slightly and then recovering to 40 again by 1865. It is difficult to see any pattern to the membership figures or any particular reason for the peaks and troughs. Penrith Circuit seems to have been relatively unaffected by the national controversies in the Wesleyan Methodist church in the 1830s and later 1840s; the only direct reference in the circuit records is to disaffection at Askham, where the society expressed 'entire hostility to Wesleyan Methodism' in 1852, at the time of the Fly Sheet controversy, and was dropped from the plan.⁴⁸ Total circuit membership rose, somewhat unsteadily, to reach 897 by 1871, meeting in 40 societies, either in one of the 21 chapels owned by the Wesleys, or

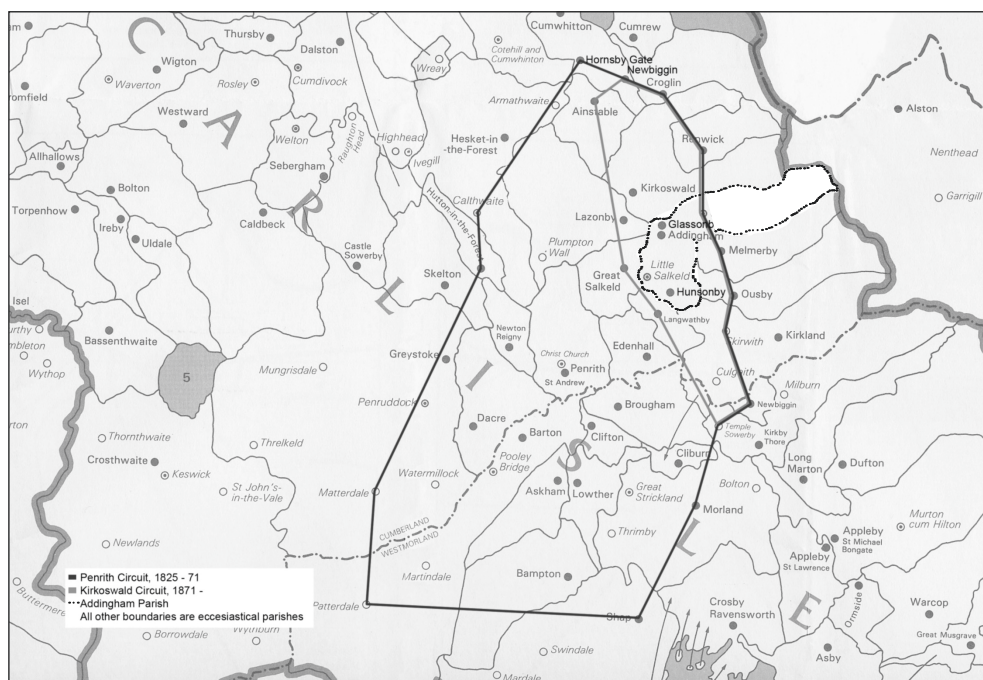


FIG. 3. Parish and circuit boundaries.

(Based upon *Church of England: Parishes in Cumbria*, 3rd ed. (Cumbria Archive Service, 1998), reproduced by kind permission of Cumbria Archive Service).

in one of the four worship buildings which were rented, lent or privately owned, or in private houses. Since 14 chapels then became part of the Kirkoswald Circuit, it is clear that many members, but particularly the 437 in the new Penrith Circuit, were still meeting in ordinary homes in 1871.⁴⁹

As early as 1825 Hunsonby had 24 members and so was exceeded only by Penrith, Renwick and Kirkoswald. Over the whole period 1821-1871, membership at Hunsonby only twice (in 1840 and 1864) dipped below 20, while there were peaks in 1828, 1843, 1853-4, and in 1867, the highest during our period, at 63 members.⁵⁰ After this, numbers began to slide rather rapidly down to 43 in 1871 but, just as in 1825, only Penrith, Renwick and Kirkoswald were higher. Again, I have not as yet been able to identify any obvious reason for this growth pattern.⁵¹

The Hunsonby class met weekly in 1826 and 1828 under John Dixon, and in 1829 William Lancaster joined him as class leader; both subsequently emigrated.⁵² At this early stage the loss from one village of a large family such as the Lancasters must have affected Methodist numbers: the membership of 34 recorded for 1829 was not again reached until 1842, although the wider troubles in Wesleyan Methodism may also have been a factor.⁵³ In 1830 the 26 members of society were meeting under the class leadership of Robert Davidson, a shoemaker. There were nine men and 17 women, at least half aged 30 or under, and including probably five married couples; again the name problem makes certain identification difficult. Of those who can be

identified, four lived in Hunsonby and seven in Winskill. This is the only list of names to have survived. In 1842, with numbers rising again, the 33 members were divided into three classes, led by George Dryden, the village schoolmaster, George Wilson, a farmer from Long Meg, a mile north of the village, and Davidson. They formed a very stable and committed set of leaders; Davidson continued to lead a class until about 1860, Wilson until 1862, and Dryden carried on beyond 1871. It seems possible that Dryden's group, always the smallest, came from Hunsonby, where he lived, while Davidson drew his larger membership from neighbours in Winskill and Wilson served Little Salkeld, near Long Meg.

Information on the number of adherents (i.e. those attending worship, and perhaps considering themselves to be committed Methodists, but not actually members of a class) is available only at one point, from the returns of the 1851 Census of Religious Worship.⁵⁴ Fortunately, since Hunsonby had only one service, the uncertainty caused by the double counting of 'twicers' (those who attended two services on the same day) is absent. Multipliers of between three and six have been suggested for extrapolating congregational totals from membership figures.⁵⁵ The numbers in Hunsonby do not support the more extravagant figures suggested: with a membership of 26, there were 47 at the evening service (although an average of 60 was claimed) and 19 pupils attended Sunday School (average claimed of 20), giving a total of 66. Dividing the number of actual attenders by the number of members produces a multiplier of perhaps 2.5. There were problems throughout the country with the way the forms were interpreted and filled in at the local level,⁵⁶ and the numbers for some chapels were increased by having two services on census day: Culgaith, for example, with two services but no Sunday School, had a membership of 34 and returned a total attendance of 245. Nevertheless, Hunsonby was low, even when compared with other local societies which also had only one Sunday service.⁵⁷ The only other insight into attendance came from the vicar, Edward Brown, in his 1861 episcopal visitation returns, when he claimed an average attendance at the three chapels in his parish of 50-200; it is not clear whether he intended this rather vague answer to apply to all three in total or to each individually.⁵⁸

By the later 1860s, Hunsonby seems to have been going through difficulties. A sudden surge and subsequent rapid fall in membership between 1866 and 1871 may have been caused by a failure to recruit or by the markedly higher removals.⁵⁹ The lists of recipients of the 'poor money' in the late 1860s shows a sudden increase from 14 in 1869 to 28 in 1870, including 12 people who had never claimed relief before. Seven of these, five of whom had been prosperous enough to have obtained the vote, were probably Methodist.⁶⁰ In earlier years few Methodists had been recipients and those who did need help were mostly widows or the elderly. In 1870 a number of younger men were included: this was, perhaps, a sign of the hardship produced by agricultural problems, including foot and mouth, affecting the area.⁶¹ Others may well have followed John Richardson, the son of a local Methodist family, to Canada.⁶² The Primitive Methodists in the area attributed their own losses to a relapse in one of their periodic revival movements and to families moving in search of employment.⁶³ By 1881 many members of apparently well-established Methodist families had moved away from Hunsonby and Winskill, to other farms or new occupations.⁶⁴

Paid itinerant ministers lived in the town which was the head of the circuit; in 1821 there were three in Brough, but this fell to two in Penrith in 1825, rose again to three in 1845 and to four in 1867; by August 1869 one was based at Kirkoswald.⁶⁵ Cumberland was an unpopular stationing: 'ministers looked upon a posting to Cumbria as a sign of disfavour on the part of the conference'.⁶⁶ It is clear from the circuit preaching plans that in the early days most societies never had a service conducted by a minister and therefore if members wished to receive communion they had to go to the parish church.⁶⁷ Wesley's original rules ordained that the ministers should meet with the class leaders weekly and visit the societies quarterly;⁶⁸ whether this actually happened in Hunsonby we have no way of knowing. When Hunsonby first appeared 'on plan' in 1821, along with 30 other societies, nine had one or two services per quarter conducted by a minister, with all of their other services being taken by one of 20 local laymen. The unpaid local preachers and exhorters were entirely responsible for the worship at the remaining 21, which included Hunsonby. However, by 1836 Hunsonby had a service of Holy Communion twice in the quarter and was one of only nine societies (out of 27 listed) which had at least one service weekly.⁶⁹ In 1856 the itinerant minister was conducting two services per quarter, one of them with the sacrament, and there was an extra monthly service at 6 pm; around this time the vicar, Edward Brown, was also trying to establish an evening service but without success.⁷⁰

By 1865 there had been quite significant change; Hunsonby now had two services each Sunday, normally in the afternoon and evening but also once per month at 10 am, and it therefore, for the first time, had a service coinciding directly with one at the parish church. In addition, there was now a monthly service taken by the itinerant minister on a Thursday evening.⁷¹ The arrival of the evening service was a notable change throughout the circuit, perhaps in acknowledgement of the unpopularity of class meetings and recognition of the need for something different, something perhaps less demanding, challenging or intrusive than a weekly public examination of conduct and conscience.⁷² Currie, Gilbert and Horsley make the point that as the age structure of a maturing religious movement changes, so also must the nature of the organisation change, together with its devotional and ascetic demands, in order to accommodate the needs of the very young and the elderly. From the later 1850s onwards in Hunsonby, membership increasingly included many young families, while also still including some of the older original members.⁷³ The change in service pattern may have been in response to their needs. Equally, it may be evidence of an inability to recruit the lay leadership necessary to conduct the weekly classes or it may suggest a wish to replace lay leadership of the classes with proper ministerial oversight, a desire now made possible by improved transport. Alternatively, the establishment of clergy-led evening services could be read as evidence of concern in the Church's leadership that Methodism was in danger of being perceived as nothing more than 'sleek grocers, sponging preachers, and hypocritical jargon'.⁷⁴ At the same time, as Currie has pointed out, ministers could be seen as 'birds-of-passage', resented both for their power to discipline local lay preachers of long standing and for the cost of their support.⁷⁵ There is some evidence that this resentment may have been felt in Hunsonby.⁷⁶ The tendency for itinerant ministers to monopolise the big town services, without also taking their fair share of the rural ones, contributed to the conflicts in Wesleyan Methodism in the 1830s,⁷⁷ and even as late as 1865 there were still 17 societies in the Penrith Circuit

which never had a service led by a minister. By 1869, when only Penrith had more Sunday services than Hunsonby, ordained ministerial provision seems to have been much more evenly distributed, with only the four smallest societies completely missing out.⁷⁸

There were many official roles through which Hunsonby members could demonstrate and strengthen their commitment to their faith, thus fostering a sense of participation in Methodist affairs, and also enlarging their contacts over a wide geographic area. Some became unpaid local preachers, travelling each Sunday to take services in local chapels; the system could not have managed without them. Each quarter they held a morning meeting with the ordained ministers, almost invariably in Penrith: since most people had to travel some distance, this was followed, in the afternoon, by the Quarterly Meeting, with its overlapping but rather broader membership. Although the potential membership of both meetings was large, attendance was very variable: out of about 102 individuals named in some way in the minutes of the local preachers' Meetings from 1830-1852, 38 were never actually present.⁷⁹ The sheer numbers would also seem to indicate a considerable turnover in the group of lay preachers. The usual attendance was below ten, although it rose slightly in the 1840s, with a core of perhaps eleven regular attenders, all from Penrith or the Eden Valley societies. Circuit plans show an increase from 20 preachers and exhorters in 1821, to 44 (nearly all from Penrith or the Eden Valley) in 1859 and 56 (including those 'on trial') in 1871. Hunsonby members were well represented in this group. A Thomas Hall was planned in 1821 but since no place of residence was given he cannot be positively identified. Adam Dryden, the Hunsonby class leader, attended a meeting in December 1834,⁸⁰ although no Hunsonby men appeared on the 1836 plan. By 1856 Adam Dryden, Samuel Lancaster, a shoemaker and, later, a substantial farmer, of Winskill and John Wilson, a labourer and subsequently mason, of Hunsonby were planned, and they were later joined by John White Harrison, a farm steward, of Robberby, one Richardson of Hunsonby,⁸¹ John Hodgson, a farmer, of Winskill, William Davidson, a substantial farmer, of Winskill Moor and Joseph Varty, a carpenter, of Hunsonby.⁸²

Most of the local preachers connected with Hunsonby were appointed after the one surviving minute book ends in 1852, but Joseph Grisdale (a member of the 1830 class at Hunsonby whose name is on none of the extant preaching plans) and Adam Dryden were at some of the early meetings in the 1830s, when they seem to have been a source of more concern than most. In September 1830 Grisdale was 'on trial' as a local preacher but in 1831 he resigned because he found the work 'not convenient'. In 1832 he signed the indenture to buy the Hunsonby chapel land as a trustee.⁸³ In June 1834 he was urged to attend the next meeting so that he could be accredited – he failed to do so and was therefore, at this stage, not accepted as a local preacher. In March 1836 it was decided that 'Brother Grisdale' should be dropped from the plan unless he could give a satisfactory reason for his non-attendance since, the minutes record, he had been 'frequently admonished', but in March 1837 he was received into full connexion as a local preacher and in September 1841 he attended the local preachers' meeting. By September 1845 Grisdale was in trouble again and in January 1846 he was 'discontinued from our Plan': he died later that year.⁸⁴ Adam Dryden, after his first attendance in December 1834, was not mentioned again until March

1838, when it was decided to send him a note 'in consequence of his neglecting his [preaching] appointments'. In June 1842, September 1844 and June 1846 Dryden was again accused of neglect. Complaints about preachers missing appointments were not, in fact, uncommon, but Adam Dryden seems to have been reprimanded more often than others. In December 1844 it was minuted that:

A report, has been in circulation, somewhat prejudicial against Mr Dryden in regard to the part he took in the alteration of the Will of the deceased Mr Hill of Hunsonby. This meeting after hearing an explanation from Bro Dryden is of opinion, that he is free from moral blame [underlined in original] in that affair. Also that the reason of Bro Dryden's omission of some of his appointments is considered satisfactory.⁸⁵

No death of a 'Mr Hill' is recorded at around this time in the records of deaths in Addingham parish that I have examined; although Thomas *Hall* died in 1843, his will being proved in April 1844, Adam Dryden was not listed as executor, beneficiary or witness. John *Hill*, who lived in the same house as this Thomas Hall at Hunsonby, died in 1856 and his will did name Adam Dryden as executor – but it is dated 1854. Hill did, however, resign his position as chapel steward somewhat early, in July 1844.⁸⁶ The minute is intriguing and highly unusual in its very personal nature but Dryden nevertheless went on to serve as a local preacher until at least 1871.

In the Methodist church order, local preachers and class leaders were expected to exercise spiritual gifts and authority, but there were other, more practical ways, in which members could serve their church and demonstrate their commitment: some, for example, served as chapel or society stewards, responsible respectively for the fabric of buildings or for the arrangements for worship and teaching. Others were involved in administrative roles at circuit level as well: William Workman and Adam Dryden of the Hunsonby society, for example, were fairly regular at the Quarterly Meeting, which organised circuit affairs, while George Wilson attended its meetings in 1854 and was appointed its secretary in March 1855, although the minutes then ceased until September 1857, when someone else took over. Workman, a tenant farmer of land owned by his father-in-law Thomas Hall, replaced John Hill as chapel steward in 1844 and was also a society steward. He served as circuit steward from 1860-3, the only person definitely from the Hunsonby society to hold a post more commonly held by Penrith society members (although a Thomas Hall was circuit steward in 1832-3): was this an indication not only of Workman's personal ability and willingness but also of the relative importance and influence of the Hunsonby society within the circuit? Some members were also chapel trustees: perhaps 13 Hunsonby and Winskill Methodists held trusteeships during these 50 years, all, apart from William Workman, for nearby chapels. The latter was unusual in holding seven separate trusteeships, for Hunsonby and nearby Langwathby and Melmerby, but also for more distant Ainstable, Morland, Cliburn and Newby. These roles have proved, in fact, to be one of the main ways of identifying Hunsonby and Winskill men as Methodists: women, who as providers of hospitality for the itinerant ministers, were often actually the first point of contact in a community, were not eligible at that time to be trustees, stewards or local preachers and, while some were class leaders elsewhere, no women led in Hunsonby.⁸⁷

It was not a cheap option to be a Methodist. Members in theory paid 1/- per quarter for their class tickets and a further 1d. each week as they attended meetings, which went

towards the maintenance of their itinerant ministers: in practice here, as throughout the country, these obligations were often not met and members had to be reminded of their duty on several occasions.⁸⁸ The circuit schedule books bear witness to an ever-growing system of named collections throughout the year for the support of specific areas of the Church's work and they record the payment of regular subscriptions by individuals to some funds. There was also a system for the purchase and dissemination of Methodist literature throughout the circuit. Messrs Dixon, Hall and Falder were regular early contributors to the preachers' and the school funds, and also purchased magazines, including the *Shilling*, *Sixpenny* or *Miscellany* (the most popular in the circuit), while Falder gave generously to the Mission fund.⁸⁹ Public missionary collections also raised generous sums in the 1830s and 1840s. By 1867, however, with membership in Hunsonby at a peak, missionary collections had fallen in both absolute terms and also relative to many other societies, while Adam Dryden is the only Hunsonby person listed as subscribing to a magazine: was this due to hardship, indifference, or to the readier availability of other reading matter?⁹⁰ Contributions were also sought for outside causes including, in 1862, for the distressed in the manufacturing districts, hit by the closure of the cotton mills during the American Civil War (1861-5).⁹¹ At a time when only six societies had a larger membership, Hunsonby's 10 shillings contribution to the latter cause was the fifth lowest out of 31 societies; Blencowe's nine members managed a generous £2 2s. Was fundraising for their new chapel absorbing all their spare resources?

Conclusion

It is clear that, although Hunsonby's relationship to the Penrith Circuit developed and changed over our 50-year period, the society's position was one of increasing significance, with a large and relatively steady membership, including several very committed individuals but also some possibly awkward personalities. By 1871 it was undoubtedly the largest religious group in Hunsonby and Winskill, and the villagers lived in a society where Methodism was more the norm than was attendance at the parish church. It seems likely, however, that it was now growing more through its existing Methodist families than through the conversion of new people, thus reducing its impact upon the growing number of new and non-Methodist households, and creating a situation where the loss of even one family from the society in difficult economic times would have an immediate and serious impact upon membership. Nevertheless, the success of the Hunsonby society in 1871 would surely have been more apparent than any problems that its very success may have created and obscured.

The Chapel, Hunsonby CA10 1PN

Acknowledgements

This article investigates the relationship between the Wesleyan Methodist society based in Hunsonby, Cumbria, and its Circuit, based in Penrith. A further article investigating the relationship between the Hunsonby Methodists, their Anglican parish of Addingham and their village neighbours should appear in a later volume of the *Transactions*. My work began as a dissertation for the Certificate in Local History

at Lancaster University but the research is ongoing, and is now considering the relationships of the Methodists and Anglicans throughout the parish of Addingham from c.1800 to 1932. I should be very pleased to hear from anybody who may have further information or comments.

Many people have helped me to research this article. Thanks are especially due to my supervisor for the Certificate in Local History at Lancaster University, Professor Michael Mullett, and the staff at the Cumbria Record Offices in Carlisle and Kendal, and also many people local to Addingham who put themselves out to assist me and provided much valuable information.

References

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2. 'Hunsonby and Winskill' is a mouthful. I have used 'Hunsonby' when referring to the society which was based there and 'Hunsonby and Winskill' when referring to the joint township from which it drew its membership.
3. E. M. Tranter, "Many and diverse dissenters" – the 1829 religious returns for Derbyshire', *Local Historian*, 18 (1988), 165, quoted in K. D. M. Snell, *Church and Chapel in the North Midlands: Religious Observance in the Nineteenth Century* (Leicester, 1991), 51
4. *The Cumberland and Westmorland Advertiser* [hereafter *Advertiser*], 11.11.1862, 3a-c
5. Glassonby details from Peter Boustead, *Rural Methodism in Parts of East Cumberland and Westmorland during the Nineteenth Century, with special reference to its social background*, Lancaster University Dissertation (M.A.) (1973), quoting from *The Penrith Herald* [hereafter *Herald*], 10.11.1869
6. Christopher Stell, *An Inventory of Nonconformist Chapels and Meeting-houses in the North of England* (London, 1994)
7. CAS(C), DX 1874, Papers relating to property in Hunsonby, 1787-1907
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9. CAS(C), DFCM 4/1/6A, Kirkoswald Wesleyan Methodist Circuit [hereafter KO Ct], Trustees' lists book with site plans, 1871-1919.
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11. D. G. Hey, 'The Pattern of Nonconformity in South Yorkshire, 1660-1851', *Northern History*, 8, (1970), 118
12. Leslie F. Church, *The Early Methodist People* (London, 1949), 52
13. Boustead, *Rural Methodism*, 30
14. CAS(C), DX 1874, Papers relating to property in Hunsonby, 1787-1907
15. CAS(C), DFCM 3/1/35, Pen Ct, Schedule Book, 1845-1853, 35
16. Alterations, which I have not yet fully investigated, occurred in 1905, when the roof was raised: *Herald*, 24.3.1906, 5f. Pew rentals from CAS(C), DFCM 4/1/6A, KO Ct, Trustees' lists book with site plans, 1871-1919
17. E.g. CAS(C), DFCM 3/1/7, Pen Ct, Minutes of the Local Preachers' Meeting [hereafter LP Minutes], March 1836 (Joseph Grisdale); March 1838 (Adam Dryden); March 1842 and March 1843
18. Alan Everitt, 'Nonconformity in Country Parishes', *Agricultural History Review*, 18, supp., (1970), 182-3; Robert Currie, 'A micro-theory of Methodist growth', *Wesley Historical Society Proceedings*, 36, (Oct 1967), 73
19. CAS(C), QRE/31, Enclosure award for Little Salkeld Common, 1849
20. William Parson and William White, *History, Directory and Gazetteer of Cumberland and Westmorland and that Part of the Lake District in Lancashire* (Leeds, 1829), 450. Both population and acreage (5453) of Addingham parish were large by English, but not by Cumbrian, standards: Morris, Harrison and Co, *Directory and Gazetteer of Cumberland 1861* (Whitehaven, 2000, facsimile of the 1861 edition), 311; see James Obelkevich, *Religion and Rural Society: South Lindsay, 1825-1875* (Oxford, 1976), 8-9

21. CAS(C), DRC Acc HC 3966, Diocese of Carlisle, Clergy Visitation Queries and Returns [hereafter Visitation] 1857
22. Hey, ‘The Pattern of Nonconformity’, 87
23. See Frederick Morton Eden, *The State of the Poor* (London, 1966, facsimile of the 1797 edition), II, Cumberland, *passim*; see also J. D. Marshall, *Portrait of Cumbria* (London, 1981), 44–5
24. George Eliot, *Adam Bede* (Ware, 1997), 78
25. Hey, ‘The Pattern of Nonconformity’, 117; B. I. Coleman, *The Church of England in the Mid-Nineteenth Century: a Social Geography* (London, 1980), 40
26. J. D. Marshall and J.K. Walton, *The Lake Counties from 1830 to the Mid-Twentieth century: a Study in Regional Change* (Manchester, 1981), 14, 26; Obelkevich, *Religion and Rural Society*, 79
27. Durham Record Office, M/BC 1, Dales Wesleyan Methodist Circuit [hereafter Dales Ct], Accounts (collections and disbursements), 1765
28. G. H. Bancroft Judge, ‘The beginnings of Methodism in the Penrith district’, *Wesley Historical Society Proceedings*, 19, (1915), 153–4 and TNA, HO 129/565, Census of Religious Worship, 1851; Simon Ross Valentine, ‘Benson, Joseph (1749–1821)’, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford 2004). [<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/2142>, accessed 23 Nov 2011]
29. E.g. George G. S. Thomas, *The Christian Patriarch: the life of Mr Robert Gate* (London, 1869), 59. Judge, ‘The beginnings of Methodism’, 154, specifically mentions Hunsonby as a place where converts were made and suggests that Melmerby was a convenient central location for the class. The Vicar of Addingham suggested in his visitation returns that people were *not* prepared to travel far.
30. Durham Record Office, M/BC 1, Dales Ct, Accounts (collections and disbursements) shows significant expansion around Brough, after the town’s first listing in 1776
31. CAS(K), WDFC/M/1/54, Brough Wesleyan Methodist Circuit [hereafter Brough Ct], Quarterly Collection Book of Accounts, Jan 1821
32. Alan Everitt, *The Pattern of Rural Dissent: the Nineteenth Century* (Leicester University Department of Local History, Occasional paper, 2nd series, no. 4, 1972), 12
33. John Wesley, *Journal*, 4, quoted in Judge, ‘The beginnings of Methodism’, 156
34. *Advertiser*, 3.5.1864, 4a–c
35. CAS(K), WDFC/M/1/54, Brough Ct, Quarterly Collection Book of Accounts, 1812, 1813
36. CAS(K) WDFC/M/1/54, Brough Ct, Quarterly Collection Book of Accounts; Preaching plan, Feb–April 1822
37. *Wesleyan Methodist Magazine*, Dec 1830, p. 852, gives his death as 22 November 1830. It does not mention that he had anything to do with the chapel building. The parish registers and bishop’s transcripts give his date of burial as 25 November 1829, although it is certainly the same man: PR29/10, Addingham, Register of Burials, 1813–1880, entry 170 and DRC6/1, Addingham, Bishop’s Transcripts, 1829, entry 169
38. A. Steele, *A History of Methodism in Barnard Castle and the Principal Places in the Dales Circuit* (London, 1857), 157
39. CAS(C), DX 1874, Papers relating to property in Hunsonby, 1787–1907
40. *Advertiser*, 29.4.1862, 2g
41. Parson and White, *Directory*, 450; TNA, HO 129/565, Census of Religious Worship, 1851; this chapel is marked on Ordnance Survey, Cumberland, Hunsonby and Winskill, sheet L7, c.1860, 1:2,500.
42. CAS(C), DX 1874, Papers relating to property in Hunsonby, 1787–1907
43. The presence of the vicarage may have prevented a society taking root in the fourth township of Little Salkeld; see Robert Currie, ‘A micro-theory of Methodist growth’, 69
44. Robert Currie, Alan Gilbert and Lee Horsley, *Churches and Churchgoers; Patterns of Church Growth in the British Isles since 1700* (Oxford, 1977), 40; such high growth did not recur, apart from in 1833, until 1859, just before the new chapel was built at Hunsonby. Penrith, independent from 1807, rejoined the Brough circuit in 1818
45. Methodist Archives and Research Centre, John Rylands Library, Manchester, 1977/598, Carlisle Wesleyan Methodist District Meeting, Minutes, May 1822
46. CAS(K), WDFC/M/1/54, Brough Ct, Quarterly Collection Book of Accounts, 1821–1822
47. It is not always possible to be certain of the precise identification of places. An apparently different group could be the same people meeting in a different house and it seems likely that the absence of a financial contribution did not necessarily indicate the demise of a meeting. I suspect also that nomenclature depended very much on the person doing the recording and his local knowledge.
48. CAS(C), DFCM 3/1/1, Pen Ct, Quarterly Meeting [hereafter QM], March 1852. The *Fly Sheets*

- were four anonymous pamphlets, published 1846-8, containing strong criticism of the way Wesleyan Methodism was being run. The controversy they provoked resulted in the loss of some 100,000 members nationally.
49. CAS(C), DFCM 3/1/1, Pen Ct, QM, Dec 1870 lists the 18 societies that became the Kirkoswald Circuit; of these, four (Raygarthfield, Temple Sowerby and nearby Newbiggin, and Croglin) did not own their own building; DFCM 4/1/8, KO Ct, Return of chapels and preaching places, 1873
 50. Most figures compiled from CAS(C), DFCM 3/1/11A, DFCM 3/3/12, DFCM 3/1/13, Pen Ct, Stewards' Account Books, 1825-1871 [hereafter St Accts] with additional figures from CAS(C), DFCM/3/1/34-36, Pen Ct, Schedule Books, 1838-1871 and CAS(K), DFC/M/1/54, Brough Ct, Quarterly Collection Book of Accounts, 1821-1822
 51. Popular political agitation nationally (see Stuart Andrews, *Methodism and Society* (Harlow, 1970), 87); conflict in the wider Wesleyan church (see J. D. Marshall, 'The Rise and Transformation of the Cumbrian Market Town', *Northern History*, 19, (1983), 189, who writes that the Eden valley districts were 'seriously affected' in 1835 and 1850), and epidemics of cholera (see Hugh McLeod, *Religion and Society in England, 1850-1914* (Basingstoke, 1996), 215) have all been suggested as reasons for growth or decline but the dates suggested by the various authors do not seem to bear a clear relationship to Hunsonby membership figures
 52. CAS(C), DFCM/3/1/11B, Pen Ct, Stewards' Account [Schedule] Book 1826, 1828, 1829; information from CAS(C), DX 1874, Papers relating to property in Hunsonby, 1787-1907. (No. 4 is the will of Joseph Dixon, probably father to this John, which has the pencil addition 'America' next to his son's name) and from Mrs Evelyn Burton of Hunsonby, who has the family tree of the Lancaster family
 53. The 1830s were troubled by opposition to Jabez Bunting, at different times both Secretary to and President of the Methodist Conference, and his plans for a Theological Institution for ministerial training.
 54. TNA, HO 129/565, Census of Religious Worship
 55. David Hempton, *Methodism: Empire of the Spirit* (New Haven and London, 2005), 1, gives 3-5 as the 'conventional' multiplier; W. J. Townsend, H. B. Workman and George Eayrs, *A New History of Methodism* (London, 1909), 368, suggests 5-6; R.B. Walker, 'The Growth of Wesleyan Methodism in Victorian England and Wales', *Journal of Ecclesiastical History*, 24, 3, (July 1973), 276, suggests 5 (including children)
 56. See K. D. M. Snell, and Paul S. Ell, *Rival Jerusalems: the Geography of Victorian Religion* (Cambridge, 2000), part 1, chapter 1, for a succinct account of the way the census was conducted
 57. TNA, HO 129/565, Census of Religious Worship, 1851
 58. CAS(C), DRC Acc HC 3966, Visitation, 1861
 59. John Burgess, *A History of Cumbrian Methodism* (Kendal, 1980), 63, writes that Penrith Circuit had an annual turnover of membership of over 15 per cent from 1835-1870, largely on account of the loss of single people seeking work: I cannot be as certain about the reason. The schedule books are often very incomplete, and even where they do note removals, no reason or marital status is given. R. Hazellhurst, *Mining for God: Methodism in the Lake District in the Nineteenth Century*, Diploma Dissertation, Lancaster University, (1998), 7, has a useful discussion of the problems of dealing with the records.
 60. The parish of Addingham had been left money and land under the will of Joseph Hutchinson in 1726 to pay for a school and to give a dole to the poor of the parish: CAS(C), PR29/11 & 12, Addingham, Churchwardens' Book of Accounts [hereafter Addingham, CW Accts] gives names of recipients 1841-70; CAS(C) QRP 2/1/2, Electoral Roll, Leath Ward, 1834-1874
 61. J. M. Stratton and Jack Houghton Brown, *Agricultural Records, A.D. 220-1977* (London, 1978), 116-7; CAS(C), DFCM 3/1/12, Pen Ct, St Accts, 1842-1869 has several references to "cattle plague", 1865 onwards; *Advertiser*, 16.11.1869, 3e
 62. *Herald*, 24.4.1869, 4e
 63. CAS(C), DFCM 3/1/10, Mission Quarterly Meeting Minute Book. This was listed at the CRO as Wesleyan but is almost certainly Primitive Methodist.
 64. TNA, RG11/5146, Census 1881: Joseph Falder was listed as a butcher, while both Thomas and William Grisdale were policemen.
 65. Pen Ct, Preaching plan, Aug-Oct 1869 in possession of John Huggon, formerly Carlisle Methodist District Archivist
 66. John Burgess, *Methodist Ministers in Cumbria*, Vol. 1, Wesleyan Methodists (Wesley Historical Society, Cumbrian branch, Occasional paper no.2, Autumn 1977), introduction
 67. Church, *The Early Methodist People*, 175, mentions one society which waited 17 years for the Methodist administration of the sacrament.

68. Townsend *et al*, *A New History of Methodism*, I, 286; II, 563
69. CAS(C), DFCM 3/1/7, Pen Ct, LP Minutes, Mar 1832; Pen Ct, Preaching plan, May-Oct 1836 held by Duke University, USA
70. Pen Ct, Preaching plan, 1856-7, in possession of John Huggon; CAS(C), DRC Acc HC 3966, Visitation, 1858
71. This evening service first appeared in 1855; CAS(C), DFCM 3/1/36, Pen Ct, Schedule Book, June 1855
72. Walker, ‘The Growth of Wesleyan Methodism’, 276, points out its later unpopularity in the 1890s; Currie notes that alienation from the class meeting may have coincided with rising notions of respectability: Robert Currie, *Methodism Divided: a Study in the Sociology of Ecumenicalism* (London, 1968), 126
73. Currie *et al*, *Churches and Churchgoers*, 70
74. Eliot, *Adam Bede*, p. 31. The novel is set in 1799 but was published in 1859. Henry D. Rack ‘The Decline of the Class Meeting’, *Wesley Historical Society Proceedings*, 39, (Feb, 1973), 12-21, discusses the reasons for the nationwide decline of the class and its replacement with other structures
75. Currie, *Methodism Divided*, 47-8
76. See my subsequent article, due for publication in the *Transactions* 2013
77. Geoffrey Milburn and Margaret Batty, *Workaday preachers: the Story of Methodist Local Preaching*, (Peterborough, 1995), 149
78. Pen Ct, Preaching plans, 1869, Aug-Oct, 1869-70, Oct-Jan, both in the possession of John Huggon
79. CAS(C), DFCM 3/1/7, Pen Ct, LP Minutes, 1830-1852
80. CAS(C), DFCM 3/1/7, Pen Ct, LP Minutes, Dec 1834 – although this date appears out of sequence and should possibly be 1833
81. Presumably Robert Richardson, farmer, of Elder Cow Hill: TNA, RG9/3905, Census 1861
82. Pen Ct, Preaching plans, 1821-1871
83. CAS(C), DX 1874, Papers relating to property in Hunsonby, 1787-1907
84. CAS(C), PR 29/10, Addingham, Register of burials, 1846, entry 370. The year 1845 was a difficult one for Joseph Grisdale; his son Joseph died aged nine and his baby son George was buried (just before Joseph himself) in 1846, aged eight months. His wife then became a long-term recipient of parish poor relief. His daughter Mary, married Joseph Gedling, baptised her last two children as Methodists at Hunsonby, then had another child too long after her husband’s death for it to be legitimate, ran the Hunter’s Cottage Inn, arranged wrestling matches and was declared bankrupt in 1862 – an interesting family.
85. CAS(C), DFCM 3/1/7, Pen Ct, LP Minutes, Dec 1844. The lack of moral fault was important, since imputation of a bad character could lead to a man’s being prevented from serving as a local preacher, leader or even being a member: David James Waller, *The Constitution and Polity of the Wesleyan Methodist Church, on the Plan of the Work by H. W. Williams* (London, 1900), 13
86. CAS(C), PR 29/10, Addingham, Register of burials, 1813-1880; CAS(C), DX 1874, Papers relating to property in Hunsonby 1787-1907; Resignation: CAS(C), DFCM 3/1/34, Pen Ct, Schedule Book, 24
87. Details of trustees and stewards from CAS(C), DFCM 3/1/34-36, Pen Ct, Schedule books, 1838-71; David Hempton, *The Religion of the People: Methodism and Popular Religion, 1750-1900* (London, 1996), 186
88. E.g. CAS(C), DFCM 3/1/1, Pen Ct, QM, Oct 1849; W. R. Ward, *The Early Correspondence of Jabez Bunting, 1820-29* (London, 1972), 145
89. CAS(C), DFCM 3/1/11B, Pen Ct, Stewards’ Account [Schedule] Book 1826-1839; CAS(C), DFCM 3/1/18, Pen Ct, Penrith Wesleyan Missionary Society, Account Book, 1824-42
90. CAS(C), DFCM 3/1/17, Pen Ct, Offerings Book, 1849-1866 [I believe this originated from the Penrith Wesleyan Missionary Society]; CRO(C), DFCM 3/1/36, Pen Ct, Schedule Book, 1853-1871
91. CAS(C), DFCM 3/1/35, Pen Ct, Schedule Book, Feb 1847; CAS(C), DFCM 3/1/36, Pen Ct, Schedule Book, Oct 1857, 1862

Glossary of Methodist terms

The Methodist church in the nineteenth century had a well-established organisational structure consisting of the following tiers:

Connexion – name used for the whole Methodist Church

Conference – the annual national meeting of the Methodist Connexion

District – the organisational level below 'Conference', which held regular quarterly meetings of the paid circuit ministers within its area. Penrith was in the Carlisle District.

Circuit – a group of local societies. One town would be chosen as circuit 'head', with the itinerant paid ministers living there. Circuits often changed, splitting up and rejoining as was considered necessary for pastoral or financial reasons. Each circuit held a Quarterly Meeting to manage its own affairs. Ministers, lay preachers and stewards could attend.

Society – the most local level, based upon the meeting together of members and adherents. Societies often started in private homes and often waited many years before they could build their own chapels.

Class – the regular weekly meeting in the nineteenth century of society members with a local lay leader in a public forum for the examination of their beliefs and behaviour.

This Methodist structure was run by the following officials, who all generated their own records:

Stewards (chapel/society/circuit) – the officials chosen to run the affairs of the church at its various levels.

The chapel steward was responsible for the running of the building, the society steward was responsible for matters pertaining to worship and the circuit stewards (two at this time in Penrith) managed the financial affairs of the circuit.

Trustees – each chapel had a group of trustees, generally numbering about 12-15, in whom the chapel building was vested. If numbers fell too low, because of deaths or removals, a new group was appointed. The trustees had their own annual meeting.

Methodism had two forms of preaching ministry: I have kept the roles distinct by referring to 'itinerant ministers' (paid) and 'local preachers' (unpaid):

Itinerant or travelling preachers/ ministers – the paid ministry.

Local preachers – unpaid lay volunteers who maintained the regular services in most places. They travelled widely but generally, in the Penrith circuit at this date, within a range of perhaps five miles from their home. They were trained and examined in the circuit. The Local Preachers' Meeting was attended by itinerant ministers and lay preachers to examine issues of conduct by the latter group and to arrange the training of those 'on trial'. They also arranged matters relating to the planning of services.

Exhorters – in this circuit, this seems to have been a trainee role, a step towards becoming a full local preacher.

The following terms could be used of the membership:

Leaders – those prominent local laymen who led a weekly class.

Members – those who chose to pay 1/- per quarter for a class ticket and 1d as they attended each week

Adherents – those who attended Methodist public worship ('heard' the word) but were not full members

On trial – a term for anybody waiting to be received as a full Methodist, or training as a lay preacher. It could last several months or even years.

Connexion/full connexion – those who had been 'on trial' would then hope to be received, either as a member or as a lay preacher. The minister would give them a note admitting them into full connexion.

Removals – those members who had to leave their home class, perhaps to find work. They would be given a note to recommend them to their new local society.

Backsliders – those members who ceased to attend class without good reason.

The circuit produced different types of record:

Account books were kept by the circuit stewards, giving details of income and expenditure, and of membership.

Schedule Books were a quarterly return of the number of members in each society. They usually list class leaders by name. They also detail subscribers to connexional funds and magazines, and list stewards and trustees.

Baptismal Registers were kept by the ministers for the whole circuit.

Preaching plans were generally produced quarterly to give details of all the services planned for the circuit, with the time, the name of the person officiating, the type of service and the cause towards which the collection would be put. Plans list itinerant ministers and local preachers, who were then referred to as 'on plan' or 'planned'.