

The Anglican Assertion in Lancashire: The Role of The Commissioners'
Churches in Three Lancashire Townships, 1818-1856

by

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Philosophy at the University of Central Lancashire.

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ABSTRACT

The years between 1818 and 1856 encompass the life of the Church Building Commission, one agency of a determined assertion by the Anglican Church. Under the Commissioners' aegis 82 of the 612 new places of worship were planted in Lancashire. The intention is to analyse the rationale and impact of a remarkable church building project and its role in the Anglican initiative in the county.

The thesis is the first detailed local study of the churches' distinctive role, beyond the assessment of their artistic worth. M.H. Port in *Six Hundred New Churches* (2006) produced the definitive work on the architecture and central administration of "Waterloo Churches".¹ He had less to say on their social and religious importance. In order to explore the rationale, impact and role of the churches, I adopted a case study approach selecting three churches in south central Lancashire, one from each deanery of Manchester Diocese which was created out of Chester Diocese in 1847. These were St George's Chorley (consecrated in 1825), its namesake in Tyldesley (1825) and St Stephen's Tockholes (1833). The sample provided variety in socio-economic and religious contexts but also some similarity, in that all three were townships on a Lancashire denominational frontier.

The thesis describes the immense diversity and complexity in causation and motivation behind these churches, but highlighting the presence at local level of a strong belief in reclaiming Protestant Dissenters for the national church. It concludes, in contrast with most previous judgements, that the Commissioners' churches in these townships achieved significant success, albeit in contrasting manner and pace and for different reasons. Their distinctively Gothic architecture was striking and more appropriate to worship than critics have allowed. The financial challenges were not as debilitating as routinely supposed. The changing parochial boundaries around Commissioners' churches were rational and encouraged community building rather than the destruction of identities. The intense commitment of clergy associated with the new churches helped to effect a type of Anglican counter-reformation in Lancashire.

¹ M.H.Port, *Six Hundred New Churches. The Church Building Commission 1818-1856*, (2nd ed., Reading, 2006).

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ABBREVIATIONS

BL	The British Library
BbL	Blackburn Library
CALS	Cheshire Archives and Local Studies
CERC	Church of England Record Centre, Bermondsey
ChL	Chorley Library
CHTL	Chetham's Library
JRUL	John Rylands University Library, Manchester
LA	Lancashire Archives, long known as Lancashire Record Office.
LPL	Lambeth Palace Library
MA	Manchester Archive
SCULL	Leeds University Special Collections at the Brotherton Library
SGC	St George's Church Chorley Archive
SGT	St George's Church Tyldesley Vestry Cupboard
TNA	The National Archive
WAS	Wigan Archive Service at Leigh Record Office
<i>DNB</i>	Dictionary of National Biography
<i>EcHR</i>	Economic History Review
<i>JEH</i>	Journal of Ecclesiastical History
<i>JMH</i>	Journal of Modern History
<i>LH</i>	Local Historian
<i>NH</i>	Northern History
<i>THSLC</i>	Transactions of the Historic Society of Lancashire and Cheshire

GLOSSARY

Anglican	Clergy or adherent of Church of England, a term used disparagingly by James I and only generally used after the 1830s
churchman	A member or supporter of Church of England. Commonly used early nineteenth century.
Church of England	Established Protestant church since the Reformation
Orthodox High Church	Indicating high church leanings of some high churchmen. They were Trinitarians, considered bishops were in Apostolic succession, socially conservative and looked to the State for support. Theologically they would tend to be Arminians.
orthodox	Most English clergy around 1800. Preferred traditional church government, accepted the 39 Articles and followed the 1662 Prayer Book. Their practice would be neo-Arminian. In Dissent, the term could mean those of Calvinist rather than rationalist persuasion. In general, it was a term sought by groups wishing to assert their tenets were traditional and legitimate.
Calvinist	A belief, associated with John Calvin the Protestant Reformation Leader in Geneva, that people were justified (i.e. saved) purely by God's grace.
Arminian	Holding to some extent the ideas of Jacobus Arminius (16th Cent. Dutch) that, although men must be saved by God's grace, there was a role for human decision and good works in the process.
Trinitarians	Most Christians, believers in God as three persons
Evangelical	Churchmen who believed the Gospel should be urgently taken to the people and carried out in society. After 1830 they were held to form a particular party within the Church.
evangelical	Any Christian who adopted an evangelical approach. The conversion experience was rated very highly, in relation to the more orthodox emphasis on baptism and the Eucharist.

Old Dissent	Position of older established Protestant sects such as Congregationalists, Presbyterians, Unitarians, General Baptists.
Independents	A term used to describe some Congregational chapel congregations, for example in Tockholes, by 1800.
Lady Huntingdon Connexion	Group of congregations in chapels established by Lady Huntingdon, outside Church of England but with Anglican liturgy.
Unitarians	Believers in a totally human Christ, separate from God and the Spirit.
Socinians	Used to describe Unitarians prior to 1760 and still deployed by nineteenth century critics. Derived from sixteenth century leader Socinus.
New Dissent	Common term for Methodists and offshoots from older Dissenting sects.
Nonconformists	More commonly used term for Dissenters in the seventeenth century after 1662 and once again, after 1850.
Methodists	Followed methodical path to life and salvation. Followers of John Wesley. Became split with establishment of New Connexion, Primitive, Independent, United, Methodists after 1791.
Deist	Believer in God or similar force, did not accept divinity of Christ.
catholic	Referring to the world-wide Christian church. Nineteenth century churchmen held that the Reformed English church was the true heir of catholic Christianity.
Roman Catholic	Usage by English churchmen to distinguish the catholic church of Rome.
Catholic	Used in this work to describe adherents of the Roman Catholic church, as they often preferred in the early nineteenth century.



Plate 1.1 St George's Church, Chorley, as it was in 2002.

CHAPTER ONE: THE NATIONAL CONTEXT

a) Foreword

‘It’s a Waterloo Church, you know’.¹ This brief comment, delivered in mildly apologetic tone, came from the incumbent of St George’s Church Chorley during a tour in 2002 and triggered no little curiosity. In the first place, why would a church be named after a battle? The persisting link arises from a contemporary proposal to erect churches in thanksgiving for Wellington’s victory in 1815. ‘Waterloo Churches’ has sometimes provided a more memorable label than the correct title ‘Commissioners’ Churches’. Also relevant is that one of the earliest of the churches was St John’s Church in Waterloo, London.² Secondly, why would the description sound slightly dismissive of such churches? Was there something lacking in their design or purpose? The succinct and downbeat description came as we viewed the tall lancet windows of the nave, slashed horizontally by galleries and the arresting but flat Tudor hammerbeam ceiling in a nineteenth century church, the style of which Pevsner elsewhere termed ‘associational Gothic’.³

Therefore the encounter initiated this study of 82 Anglican churches in Lancashire which were funded by the Church Building Commission between 1818 and 1856. It also provoked the standard questions historians pose: why did these churches come into existence and what impact did they have? Initial enquiry revealed that this government initiative, which established over 600 places of worship was unique, that it applied to all of England and Wales and that a significant tranche of these churches was built in Lancashire. The architecture and central administration of the Commissioners’ churches had been described by M.H.Port in 1961.⁴ An expanded, illustrated edition of his *Six Hundred New Churches*, with tremendously helpful appendices listing each church, was published in 2006, reflecting Port’s career- long involvement with the churches and familiarity with the Commission’s central records.⁵ The work was therefore a very useful starting point for

¹ Revd. Canon Kenneth Barrett, 12 September 2002.

² M.H.Port, *Six Hundred New Churches: The Church Building Commission 1818-56* (2nd ed., Reading, 2006), 43,288.

³ N.Pevsner, *The Buildings of England: North Lancashire* (London, 1969), 31.

⁴ Port, *Six Hundred Churches: The Church Building Commission 1818-56* (1st ed., London, 1961).

⁵ Port, *Six Hundred New Churches* 2nd ed., 326-7, 335.

research whilst leaving room for studies focussing on the local experience of a church like Chorley St George. The conclusions about causation, motivation and impact informed a judgement about what the project meant for the Church of England in Lancashire. The thesis emerged that they were a previously underrated key part of a nineteenth century assertion by the established church in the county.

b) The National Context: Causation

It was remarkable that the Church Building Commission was established and financed by Parliament in 1818, for it was over a century since there had been any state sponsorship of church building and there was never to be any again. Throughout England and Wales 612 Commissioners' churches were built, commencing with a grant of £1 million in 1818 and a further one of £500,000 in 1824.⁶ This church extension was one very visible feature of a long period of church reform, beginning around 1780 and described by Best in 1964 with the major work *Temporal Pillars*.⁷ Later, Burns, in *The Diocesan Revival in the Church of England* (1999), highlighted the diocesan role in a reform of the Anglican Church which began well prior to the efforts of the Oxford Movement from 1833.⁸ The reforms focused upon raising professional standards and increasing pastoral provision in parishes, the extension of church accommodation being just one part of a multi-faceted and piecemeal programme of moral reformation, amendment of abuses and institutional improvement by statute.⁹ Possibly Bishop Horsley at St David's was the first of the great nineteenth century diocesan reformers, along with Bishop Tomline at Lincoln and then van Mildert at Llandaff.¹⁰ Burns' classifying work still left some important questions to be answered. Why was church building an important element in a raft of reforms, why did government become involved and why was the measure introduced in 1818?

⁶ Port, *Six Hundred New Churches* 2nd ed., 227.

⁷ G.F.A.Best, *Temporal Pillars. Queen Anne's Bounty, the Ecclesiastical Commissioners, and the Church of England* (Cambridge, 1964), chapter 5.

⁸ A.Burns, *The Diocesan Revival in the Church of England, 1800-1870* (Oxford, 1999), 10,21.

⁹ A.Burns, 'English Church Reform Revisited, 1780-1840' in A.Burns and J.Innes (eds.), *Rethinking The Age of Reform, 1780-1850* (Cambridge, 2003), 139-147.

¹⁰ E.Norman, *Church and Society in England 1770-1970* (Oxford, 1976), 18; E.A.Varley, *The Last of the Prince Bishops* (Cambridge, 1992), 89,91.

The underlying factor leading to the establishment of the Commissioners' churches in 1818 was the realisation by churchmen that piecemeal attempts, such as installing galleries in existing churches, would not meet the perceived demand for church seats caused by the increasingly rapid expansion of the population.¹¹ Building churches, as opposed to simply increasing the numbers and professionalism of clergy, appealed to the parochially rooted stance of the High Church Orthodox churchmen who promoted the 1818 Act. To them the essential pastoral care British citizens required was inextricably linked to a minister located in a church and living in a parsonage house.¹² The other vital component of providing a reasonable salary for poorer clergy had already been a priority over the previous decade, partly promoted by Evangelicals, another wing of the Church but also enabled by High Church figures such as William Stevens, treasurer of Queen Anne's Bounty from 1782 to 1807.¹³ Yet Evangelicals could also agree to church building as an important element. The great guru of the Evangelical movement, Charles Simeon, rejected the strategy of itinerant preachers in favour of the settled parish priest.¹⁴ Ambitious Evangelicals had prepared a purchase fund in case patronage rights in the proposed government churches could be bought; Sir William Scott and the High Church bishops Howley and van Mildert ensured a clause allowing such was removed from the 1818 bill.¹⁵ At their end of the Church spectrum church extension would appear to carry no threat, whereas other measures might. Some bishops had been opposed to the Stipendiary Curates Act of 1813 as it seemed to threaten the rights and status of endowed incumbents.¹⁶

Thus church building could become a fairly common aim for churchmen, as Burns suggests in reference to the Church Building Act: 'And all churchmen welcomed the most spectacular demonstration of state support for the church in this period'.¹⁷ In 1800, Bishop Watson of Llandaff made the first proposals for a major church building effort in London.¹⁸ The primate Charles Manners -Sutton took a local initiative in the diocese of Canterbury in

¹¹ Port, *Six Hundred New Churches* 2nd ed., 17-18.

¹² R. Yates *The Church in Danger* (London, 1815), 19, 127-8.

¹³ P. Virgin, *The Church in The Age of Negligence* (Cambridge, 1989), 225-6; Best, *Temporal Pillars*, 122, 201-23.

¹⁴ Virgin, *The Church in The Age of Negligence*, 202.

¹⁵ G. Carter, *Anglican Evangelicals* (Eugene, Oregon, 2015), 42; Varley, *Last of the Prince Bishops*, 86-7; Virgin, *Church in The Age of Negligence*, 202.

¹⁶ Virgin, *Church in The Age of Negligence*, 227.

¹⁷ A. Burns, 'English Church Reform Revisited', 147.

¹⁸ *Lancaster Gazette*, 28 February 1818, quoting Bishop Watson's letter to William Wilberforce, 1 April 1800.

1809.¹⁹ Moreover the Church of England came to give church extension a higher priority amidst their other initiatives. One of the latter, from 1811, was the foundation of The National Society for the Education of the Poor in the Principles of the established church. Leading lay supporters such as Judge Park held it would be a waste if children educated in the national schools met no ongoing provision for religious instruction.²⁰

Why should the government be involved? In general ‘a public religiosity was a sine qua non for high office’ by 1818.²¹ Prime minister Liverpool’s father had been a school friend of Jones of Nayland, one of the spiritual guides of the High Churchmen.²² Liverpool’s biographer comments that, in the eyes of the premier, the government’s gift to the Church was ‘a congenial employment of public funds’.²³ The cabinet ministers were also professional politicians, seeking pragmatic solutions to administrative problems which seemed capable of solution.²⁴ A general act of parliament, possibly following the precedent of the general enclosure acts, might allow a speedier and fuller spate of church extension than the existing method open to the established church. Costly private acts of parliament were often necessary to amend local existing parochial rights. Providing funding by the standard method of warrants, called church briefs, issued by the Lord Chancellor’s office, was both tardy and insufficient in yields.²⁵ The delays during prominent voluntary building projects, such as one begun in St Pancras in 1811, illustrated the difficulty hampering individual effort.²⁶ In February 1818 concerned churchmen founded a voluntary church building society as a lobbying group, an adjunct to state provision or an alternative if government assistance was unforthcoming.²⁷ If the church- state alliance meant anything at all, then churchmen might expect that an Erastian state, which had taken responsibility since 1533 for ordering the Church, should intervene positively to meet a clear

¹⁹ W.M.Jacob, ‘Charles Manners-Sutton, Archbishop of Canterbury’, *Dictionary of National Biography*-henceforth *DNB* (Oxford,2004), 17964.

²⁰ LPL, Howley Papers vol 10, 215, J.A.Park et al., to Bishop of London, 4 May 1814.

²¹ J.J.Sack, *From Jacobite to Conservative. Reaction and Orthodoxy in Britain c.1760-1832* (Cambridge, 2003), 256.

²² Sack, *From Jacobite to Conservative*, 76.

²³ N.Gash, *Lord Liverpool. The Life and Political Career of Robert Banks Jenkinson, Second Earl of Liverpool, 1770-1828* (London, 1984), 134.

²⁴ J.E.Cookson, *Lord Liverpool’s Administration. The Crucial Years 1815-22* (London, 1975), 395-7.

²⁵ Port, *Six Hundred New Churches* 2nd ed., 23.

²⁶ E.Churton, *Memoir of Joshua Watson* (2nd ed. Oxford, 1863), 92.

²⁷ R.V.Parry, ‘The Incorporated Church Building Society’, unpublished M.Litt thesis, University of Oxford, (1984), 27.

contingency. Since the loss of Convocation in 1717, parliament had increasingly strengthened its hold over ecclesiastical legislation and indeed was the only body capable of effecting a legal change.²⁸ The unlikely association of William Pitt's political legacy with the interests of the Church may have given some hope.²⁹

Key amongst the enabling factors that brought about an Act in 1818 was the emergence of a committed pressure group.³⁰ Emanating from a circle around Bishop Horsley (d. 1806) and the lay administrator of Queen Anne's Bounty William Stevens (d. 1807), it came to be labelled 'the Hackney Phalanx' as it was led by John James Watson, vicar of Hackney, his brother Joshua, a retired wine merchant and government contractor who was prominent in church voluntary associations and charities, and the vicar's influential curate H.H.Norris.³¹ Joshua Watson became the key driver of the voluntary church building society and the Church Building Commission, both originating in 1818.³² The group successfully cultivated Manners-Sutton, Archbishop of Canterbury and William Howley, Bishop of London. From 1814, they also sought the support of the Prince Regent and Lord Liverpool, the prime minister.³³ The Regent had relinquished the idea of accommodation with the Catholics and, under the influence of mistresses Lady Hertford and later Lady Conyngnam, become serious in his responsibility to and for the Church.³⁴ The regular meeting of serious-minded, pro-Church politicians amongst Liverpool's supporters at the Alfred Club might have been another stimulus.³⁵ Crucial was the sympathy of some well placed cabinet ministers, especially Nicholas Vansittart, the chancellor of the exchequer and Earl Harrowby, Lord President of the Council.³⁶ A more immediate trigger was the impact achieved by fashionable Chelsea preacher, Richard Yates, who published *The Church in Danger* in 1815, a work bristling with passion and statistics in making the case for a major national initiative in church building. Most important was the conclusion of the costly French Wars in 1815; peacetime conditions might allow some government spending on church construction. Victory also fostered confidence in the cabinet and some reassurance

²⁸ Best, *Temporal Pillars*, 44.

²⁹ Sack, *From Jacobite to Conservative*, 64-5

³⁰ Port, *Six Hundred New Churches* 2nd ed., 18.

³¹ E.A.Varley, *The Last of the Prince Bishops* (Cambridge, 1992), 7,63

³² Port, *Six Hundred New Churches* 2nd ed., 19-20.

³³ Port, *Six Hundred New Churches* 2nd ed., 24.

³⁴ E.A.Smith, *George IV* (London, 1999), 192-3, 213.

³⁵ Hilton, *A Mad Bad and Dangerous People?*, 205.

³⁶ Port, *Six Hundred New Churches* 2nd ed., 25.

that the English Church deserved reward for contributing to the character that had withstood Napoleon.³⁷ The Act establishing the Commission was nevertheless delayed until 1818 because of the government's burden of war debt and the income tax lapsing in 1816.³⁸

However, in 1818 £1 million was deemed available, through the issue of exchequer bills. The Church Building Act was hurried through Parliament shortly before its dissolution prior to the 1818 election.³⁹ The possibility was that a year later, the resumption of cash payments and a Huskisson dominated bullion committee would have meant there could be no Church Building Act.⁴⁰ The further funding in 1824 was due to the unexpected repayment of war loans from Austria, allowing an additional £500,000 to be allocated.⁴¹ There was less general acceptance in Parliament for the second grant than the first and there were to be no more.⁴² This again suggests it was as well the major funding came in 1818. Therefore the Church Building Act was passed in a narrow window of opportunity, a mere "moment" in the continuum of history. However it was not a mere 'fluke of the moment', as Saint labelled the Act in 1995.⁴³ It was the brainchild of a highly committed, well-connected and astute group of Orthodox High Churchmen and had deep roots in a group of reforms adopted over near thirty years.

It is possible to see the Church Building Commission as solely the project of this elite metropolitan group of Orthodox High Churchmen. Was this their particular contribution in answer to an 'Evangelical' programme such as raising the income of poor clergy? Was it a visible response to what Hempton terms "heart religion" originating with the Jesuits and Pietists and more recently with the eighteenth century pan-denominational 'Evangelical Awakening'?⁴⁴ However the key ministers, Harrowby and Vansittart, are accounted Evangelicals and were certainly involved in the leadership of the cross denominational British and Foreign Bible Society, which the Hackney Phalanx shunned in favour of the

³⁷ *Lancaster Gazette*, 8 August 1818.

³⁸ Hilton, *A Mad, Bad and Dangerous People?*, 251-3.

³⁹ Gash, *Lord Liverpool*, 135.

⁴⁰ Hilton, *A Mad, Bad and Dangerous People?*, 259.

⁴¹ Port, *Six Hundred New Churches* 2nd ed., 227.

⁴² Port *Six Hundred New Churches* 2nd ed., 227.

⁴³ A.Saint, 'Anglican Churchbuilding in London 1790-1890: from state subsidy to the free market' in C.Brooks and A.Saint (eds.) *The Victorian Church. Architecture and Society* (Manchester, 1995), 32.

⁴⁴ D.Hempton, *The Church in the Long Eighteenth Century* (London, 2011), 142.

Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge.⁴⁵ The respective contributions of High Churchmen and Evangelicals and the relations between the two groups is an aspect this thesis will return to.

Another judgement is that the Church Building Act was largely a result of the initiative of lay churchmen whose momentum took weak willed ecclesiastics along with them.⁴⁶ Both John Bowdler and Justice Park were involved in petitioning Lord Liverpool in 1814-1815. Joshua Watson, the great administrator of the Commission and mentioned above, was the key layman.⁴⁷ The Archbishop of Canterbury and the Bishop of London do not appear as crusaders. The latter needed extensive external consultation on the bill and initially foresaw difficulties in the project rather than golden opportunity.⁴⁸ However the core of the Hackney men was around Watson's clerical brother John James Watson and the latter's curate H.H.Norris, who has been acknowledged as a key adviser to Liverpool on ecclesiastical appointments.⁴⁹ Liverpool himself may have been less enthusiastic once the securing of the Commission was achieved. In 1820 Bishop Law of Chester reported progress on securing church sites to the prime minister. He began with the aside: 'As your lordship appeared to take an interest in procuring additional churches for the manufacturing districts of my diocese, you will not I hope think me troublesome.....'⁵⁰

⁴⁵ J.Plowright, *Vansittart, Nicholas, First Baron Bexley*, DNB 28105; D.R.Fisher, *Ryder, Dudley, First Earl Harrowby*, DNB 24395; Churton, *Memoir of Joshua Watson*, 52.

⁴⁶ Port, *Six Hundred New Churches* 2nd ed., 29-30.

⁴⁷ *Six Hundred New Churches* 2nd ed., 24, 30-31.

⁴⁸ BL, Add MS 38272, Liverpool Papers f.110, Archbishop Manners-Sutton to Liverpool, 10 February 1818, and f.180, 24 June 1818; LPL, Howley Papers vol 10, f210.

⁴⁹ Port, *Six Hundred New Churches* 2nd ed., 18-19.

⁵⁰ BL, Add MS 38283, Liverpool Papers f.115, Bishop Law to Liverpool, 23 February 1820.

c) The National Context: Motivation

Similar, if more general, summaries of the causes of the Church Building Act of 1818 are readily available in the works of Soloway, Port and Snell.⁵¹ However what were the proponents' aims, motives and rationale behind the Commissioners' churches? These questions have received some coverage in historical writing. A close examination should begin with those aforementioned Orthodox High Churchmen who were the original initiators of the Act of 1818. Best had referred to 'the orthodox' amongst high churchmen representing a strain emphasising episcopal authority, the importance of baptism and a gradual growth of the individual into a state of salvation, rather than the sudden conversion Evangelicals and Methodists experienced.⁵² They accepted the reformed church in England as a pure example of the catholic church reflecting the teachings of Christ, the Evangelists and Early Fathers. They particularly looked to the Elizabethan apologist Richard Hooker and the seventeenth century Jeremy Taylor as more recent interpreters.⁵³ Hooker in writing *Of The Law of Ecclesiastical Polity (1594-97)* had provided what later generations of churchmen took to be a synthesis of a Church of England position between Catholic Rome and Calvinist Geneva. He did not see an 'invisible' or 'gathered' church distinct from the visible church.⁵⁴ The only church was the visible national church. Its theology was based firstly on what Scripture clearly delivered, secondly on reason and finally allowing some place for the voice of tradition.⁵⁵

At the turn of the eighteenth century, the simply 'orthodox', accepting the Thirty Nine Articles and the more catholic Prayer Book of 1662 might be the bulk of the ten thousand clergy. In the 1790s clergy of Orthodox High Church persuasion numbered around a hundred, in contrast to the known Evangelicals five times that number.⁵⁶ Consequent upon

⁵¹ R.A. Soloway, *Prelates and People. Ecclesiastical Social Thought in England 1782-1852* (London, 1969), 279-290; Port, *Six Hundred New Churches* 2nd ed., 15-29; K.D.M. Snell, *Parish and Belonging* (Cambridge, 2006), 393.

⁵² Best, *Temporal Pillars*, 243,245.

⁵³ P. Nockles, 'Church Parties in pre-Tractarian Church of England 1750-1833: The Orthodox-some problems of definition and identity' in J. Walsh, C Haydon, S. Taylor, *The Church of England c.1689 – c.1833 From Toleration to Tractarianism* (Cambridge, 1993), 336.

⁵⁴ A. Milton, 'The Church of England, Rome and the True Church: The Demise of a Jacobean Consensus' in K. Fincham (ed.), *The Early Stuart Church 1603-42* (London, 1993), 206.

⁵⁵ H. NcAdoo, 'Richard Hooker' in G. Rowell (ed.), *The English Religious Tradition and the Genius of Anglicanism* (Oxford, 1992), 112-17, 122.

⁵⁶ Sack, *From Jacobite to Conservative*, 189.

Nockles' work on early nineteenth century High Churchmen in *The Oxford Movement in Context* (1994), it was clear that the leaders of the Oxford Movement of 1833 were neither as original as they believed, nor more than simply one expression of the High Church tradition.⁵⁷ One strain of this tradition adopted the usage 'orthodox' possibly to avoid the negative connotations of 'high church' in relation to politics.⁵⁸ Burns employed the phrase 'orthodox high church', possibly from Best and Nockles, and depicted such men as the agents of the diocesan reform he detected from the start of the nineteenth century.⁵⁹ What motives drove some of these committed men to propose and execute a major project in church building?

After 1783 the Orthodox High Churchmen and the routinely orthodox were increasingly anxious men. Clark has suggested that their world was to survive until a short and spectacular aberration by government between 1828 and 1832.⁶⁰ However Best had already demonstrated that, after the relative stability in church affairs from around 1760 in what O'Gorman can term 'a confessional state', serious concerns had been raised by the impact of industrialisation and a growing population for what was a thinly stretched parochial system in the north and west of the country.⁶¹ There was the challenge to faith in the rationalism of the Enlightenment and the enthusiasm and activity of Methodism—increasingly seeming to be a separate sect after 1791—the revival of Old Dissent and a series of discouraging world events. By 1783, the success of the American Revolution with the consequent departure of loyalist clergy from that newly independent country, stimulated the feeling that all was not well with the British state and society. Thereafter the French Revolution of 1789 and its development to 1793 brought the threat of foreign invasion and an example of an overturned and plundered national church, added to disorder and radicalism within Britain during the 1790s.⁶² There seemed a pressing need for social peace throughout the 1790s, reawakened by the social and political discontent subsequent to 1812.

⁵⁷ P.B.Nockles, *The Oxford Movement in Context. Anglican High Churchmanship, 1760-1857* (Cambridge, 1994), 3, 109.

⁵⁸ Nockles, 'Church Parties in Pre-Tractarian Church of England', 338.

⁵⁹ A.Burns, *The Diocesan Revival in the Church of England 1800- 1870* (Oxford, 1999), 21.

⁶⁰ J.C.D.Clark, *English Society, 1668-1832* (Cambridge, 1985), 7, 87.

⁶¹ F.O'Gorman, *The Long Eighteenth Century: British Political and Social History 1688-1832* (2nd ed., London, 2016), 172, 303.

⁶² Best, *Temporal Pillars*, 137-143.

Thus the Church Building Act of 1818 can be seen as one weapon in the armoury of 'order'. Indeed Lord Liverpool openly stated social order as one of the aims when introducing the bill to the Lords in May 1818.⁶³ He wanted to counter the vicious habits and corrupting influences in the manufacturing towns as they were dangerous to public security as well as private morality. Hence Best, writing in the 1960s, selected 'social control' as the prime motive behind the new churches.⁶⁴ This was echoed by Norman who considered the 1818 Act as, 'The last occasion on which the British state employed the established church, at the public expense, as the machinery of social control.'⁶⁵ F.M.L. Thompson pointed out that 'social control' was an attempt at socialisation rather than a successful bid at real social control by a dominant class over the putty-like lower orders.⁶⁶ In fairness, this interpretation of social control as socialisation would fit best with the usage of the term by Best and its adoption by subsequent writers such as Port.

The concern with socialisation went beyond a simple determination to keep the peace. It was believed that moral instruction could only be furthered by religious instruction and that it was an obligation to 'train up' the young to take a place in society, including their employment. In this sense, provision of churches was part of the moral reformation movement manifest with Evangelicals such as Hannah More in the 1790s.⁶⁷ Social order linked with the Protestant religion, was also widely held to be responsible for Britain's prosperity.⁶⁸ In arguing for church extension in 1815, Richard Yates included detailed statistics showing a chronic lack of provision in the metropolis and pleaded for a uniform provision of churches.⁶⁹ His cause is of 'very high importance to the stability and prosperity of our Constitutional Government'.⁷⁰ Schools and factories gather young people who are then more accessible to the 'basest incitements' and who need religious instruction and the consequent moral restraint engendered by attending places of worship.⁷¹ Yates went on to argue that the Church's moral instruction was a service to the whole community: '...judicious and liberal Dissenters cannot but approve of the arrangement that may be

⁶³ Port, *Six Hundred New Churches*, 2nd ed., 39.

⁶⁴ Best, *Temporal Pillars*, 139, 145, 152.

⁶⁵ E.Norman, *Church and Society in England 1770-1970* (Oxford, 1976), 51.

⁶⁶ F.M.L.Thompson, 'Social Control in Victorian Britain', *ECHR* Vol 1 XXXIV, 2 (May, 1987), 189,193.

⁶⁷ J.Mori, *Britain in the Age of the French Revolution* (Harlow, 2000) , 86-8.

⁶⁸ Hansard, 1st series, 37, 1101-1142, 16 March 1818.

⁶⁹ Yates, *Church in Danger*, 36,71.

⁷⁰ *Church in Danger*, 3.

⁷¹ *Church in Danger*, 20-21, 83, 94.

necessary to give due effect to the claims of the Establishment in the exercise of those duties which afford security and peace equally to the whole community.’⁷²

However the moral reformation and law and order arguments are insufficient on their own. In any event the building of new Anglican churches was plainly a separate concern of the Church, whereas an interest in social order at the outset of the nineteenth century was not. E.P.Thompson considered Wesleyan Methodists also to be essentially socially conservative. Indeed landed gentlemen and the middling sorts of all religious persuasions were generally keen to dam any discontent from the labouring classes, fomented by radical agitators.⁷³ Hole’s work in *Pulpit, Politics and Public Order* (1989) on the theory behind preaching civil obedience, charts the shift from a theological base stipulating passive acquiescence to a social one.⁷⁴ It is also evident that just about every Christian sect was preaching acquiescence in the social order during the troubled last decade of the eighteenth century.⁷⁵ Preachers were prone to promising a future in Hell for those who resisted the state. Although there were real fears of disorder in 1810-13 and 1816-18, there had also been so in 1795-6 and 1800-01. Yet at these junctures there was no established church building measure or promise of one. A consideration of the forces promoting stability, that is loyal armed forces, an aristocracy and middle class generally accepting the social order, the continued operation of the Poor Law and the moral reformation movement, suggests there was no real requirement to build specifically Anglican churches purely for the sake of social peace.

The other main aim that both Liverpool and Vansittart were to advance in 1818, concerned the position of the Church of England relative to that of Dissenters.⁷⁶ Their publicist Richard Yates demonstrated the partisan churchman’s alarm, mainly because of the lack of provision, at the inroads made by ‘Dissent, Sectarian Enthusiasm and Infidel Atheism.’⁷⁷

⁷² R. Yates *The Basis of National Welfare :considered in reference chiefly to the Prosperity of Britain and Safety of the Church of England*, (London ,1818), 171.

⁷³ E.P.Thompson, *The Making of the English Working Class* (Pelican ed., Harmondsworth, 1980), 385-6 .

⁷⁴ R.Hole, *Pulpits, Politics and Public Order in England, 1760-1832* (Cambridge, 1989), 82, 86.

⁷⁵ Hole, *Pulpits, Politics and Public Order*, 23-28.

⁷⁶ Hansard, House of Commons Debates, 37, 1116-31, 16 March 1818; PP Debates XXXVIII, 709, 15 May 1818.

⁷⁷ Yates, *Church in Danger*, 51.

To Yates that is not surprising when ‘ numerous sheep are shut out.’⁷⁸ The sheer rise from 1790 of the numbers of Congregationalists from Old Dissent and Methodists from New Dissent attracted attention. Numbers of the former quadrupled between 1800 and 1837 and Methodists doubled their numbers between 1811 and 1831.⁷⁹ Their engagement might be with social causes, such as anti-slavery, which many churchmen could agree and join with. Yet, from 1810, the small but politically active Unitarians and Quakers, along with some Congregationalists, increasingly matched the activity of Anglican pressure groups. The Dissenters brought forward religious grievances in relation to tithes and church rates, exclusion from office and the inability to register their own rites of passage.⁸⁰ Since the foundation of rival missionary societies in the 1790s there had been a serious competition in religious ‘markets’.⁸¹ There could be a range of strategies for dealing with Dissent. Dissenters could be ignored, tolerated or attacked. If the aim was to bring them back within the Church, they could be told baldly to conform or attracted by a sweeter reasonableness. At the start of the nineteenth century, the Church and supportive government ministers teetered between reaction and appeasement. As the National Society was founded in 1811, Herbert Marsh claimed the established church should control all education and that Dissenting chapels and schools were all too easily licensed.⁸² Sidmouth’s bill to control itinerant preachers was introduced in 1809, if doomed to fail by 1811.⁸³ For a time a more tolerant attitude seemed to prevail. In 1812 dissenting meetings were permitted to be larger without licence. In 1813 Unitarians were brought under the provisions of the Toleration Act of 1689.⁸⁴ Yet this did not settle matters. Dissenters gained confidence and increased aspiration from success.

Local government provided a related thorny issue. From 1812, clergy such as Hammond Roberson in Yorkshire, were agitating for select vestries which would allow the Anglican interest more certain control of ecclesiastical and the other parish vestry functions.⁸⁵ In

⁷⁸ *Church in Danger*, 97.

⁷⁹ K. Hylson Smith, *The Churches in England from Elizabeth I to Elizabeth II*, vol 2, 1689-1833 (London, 1997), 250.

⁸⁰ *The Churches in England*, vol 2, 206.

⁸¹ F. O’Gorman, *The Long Eighteenth Century*, 306-8.

⁸² Hole, *Pulpits, Politics and Public Order*, 191.

⁸³ *Pulpits, Politics and Public Order*, 195-7.

⁸⁴ *Pulpits, Politics and Public Order*, 197.

⁸⁵ C.Webster, ‘“ Foremost among those who fully promoted the ancient style of architecture”: the churches of Thomas Taylor, 177/8-1826’ in C.Webster (ed.), *Episodes in the Gothic Revival* (Reading, 2011), 108.

1818 the Sturges Bourne Act aimed to restrict attendance at vestry meetings and award plural votes according to the value of property held. This could be seen as discrimination against politically involved Dissenters of the middling sort or artisan class.⁸⁶ The 1819 Act permitted the setting up of select vestries for control of the poor law and made resident clergymen ex officio members of the same.⁸⁷ Around the same time the government support for the building of an avalanche of new churches could look like another partisan measure. In one way the founders of the Church Building Commission could be seen as engaging in serious sectarian rivalry.

Yet the Act can also be interpreted as attempting a new form of comprehension, whereby Dissenters would not simply be opposed but brought back into a common Protestant fold, albeit on Anglican terms. As Tyacke has pointed out, since the Reformation the new national church had the problems of taking a deeper religiosity to the nation and also drawing in those Protestants who wished to take reformation beyond the position of the Church in England.⁸⁸ It was a professed aim of the advocates of the 1818 Act, like Richard Yates, to create sufficient churches for Dissenters to have the opportunity of returning from their conventicles.⁸⁹ It was alleged that the lack of church room was a principal cause of the proliferation of meeting houses. Port dismisses the motive as ‘delusional’.⁹⁰ Subsequent events may well have proved this to be so.

The espousers of the 1818 Act possibly ignored the implication of the Act of Toleration in 1689 with the concurrent loss of a comprehension bill and the hardening of denominational boundaries at the end of the eighteenth century. Schochet, in examining the promising events of 1688-89 in detail, considered that negotiation about comprehension was a tool employed by church parties to face the challenges of change. James II’s bid to win relief for Roman Catholics by attracting Dissenter support meant churchmen sought to wean away Presbyterians from him. His successor William III’s preference for wide religious toleration

⁸⁶ J.Vernon, *Politics and The People: A Stage in English Political Culture, 1815-1867* (Cambridge, 1993), 18-19.

⁸⁷ W.E. Tate, *The Parish Chest: A Study of the Records of Parochial Administration in England* (3rd ed., Cambridge, 1969), 21-22.

⁸⁸ N.Tyacke, ‘Introduction: rethinking the English Reformation’ in Tyacke (ed.), *Europe’s Long Reformation* (London, 1996), 1,22,24.

⁸⁹ Yates, *The Church In Danger*, 97.

⁹⁰ Port, *Six Hundred New Churches* 2nd ed., 17.

meant the same churchmen entered discussions in order to limit amendment to the liturgy and government of the Church.⁹¹ However, the Toleration Act of 1689 took away much of the English Presbyterians' need to seek comprehension and, on the Church of England side, William Jane, prolocutor of the lower house of Convocation, delayed a proposed bill introducing changes to the Prayer Book until prorogation in 1690.⁹² As early as the outset of the eighteenth century the prospect of a true national church may have been doomed. Between 1689 and 1710, 3900 new Dissenting congregations were licensed. The 1719 Occasional Conformity Act allowed Dissenters seeking office to take the required Anglican communion just once per year.⁹³

In the early nineteenth century churchmen supporting the Church Building Act took up varying positions on Dissent. One key apologist for the Church, Charles Daubeny in *A Guide to the Church*, published in 1798, had argued that men following their own conscience, 'straying sheep', would be better simply submitting to the authority of Scripture as interpreted by the Church.⁹⁴ In another approach, Liverpool was careful to distinguish Methodists, who he saw as churchmen merely attending additional worship, from true Dissenters.⁹⁵ Some, like Joshua Watson, chiefly wanted to maintain the position and numbers that the Church of England still had; Dissenters should be left alone.⁹⁶ Rector of Lambeth and later Church Building Commissioner, Christopher Wordsworth suggested, in 1815, that it would be better not to refer to Dissent, almost to imagine that the problem did not exist.⁹⁷ Yates himself thought that the established church rightly respected separate consciences and that in themselves 'sectaries' were a consequence rather than a root cause the problem.⁹⁸ Hammond Roberson, the originator of nineteenth century church extension in West Yorkshire, wrote that the conscientious dissenters were not the real field to

⁹¹ G.J.Schochet, 'The Act of Toleration and the Failure of Comprehension: Persecution, Nonconformity and Religious Indifference' in Hoak and Feingold (eds.), *The World of William and Mary. A Dutch Perspective on the Revolution of 1688-89* (Stanford, 1996), 178-81.

⁹² Schochet, 'The Act of Toleration and Failure of Comprehension', 183-5.

⁹³ F.O.Gorman, *The Long Eighteenth Century. British Political and Social History 1688-1832* (2nd ed., London, 2016), 177-8.

⁹⁴ C.Daubeny, *A Guide to The Church* (London, 1798), xxxviii, 129, 214.

⁹⁵ BL, Add MS 38328 f. 24, Liverpool to Archbishop Manners-Sutton, 3 July 1812.

⁹⁶ Churton, *Memoir of Joshua Watson*, 382.

⁹⁷ Churton, *Memoir of Joshua Watson*, 72.

⁹⁸ Yates, *Church in Danger*, 18.

cultivate; it was the great mass of indifferent absentees.⁹⁹ There is also the highly relevant question of how Dissenters might feel about returning to the fold. Subsequent to the easing of legal discrimination against them, particularly the repeal of the Test and Corporation Acts in 1828, there was little reason for them to come to accommodation with the established church. As Burns points out, by the 1830s many of them were more interested in seeing the establishment lose its privileged position.¹⁰⁰

However a decade earlier, Richard Yates' argument about reclaiming Dissenters, echoed by Vansittart and Liverpool in 1818, was sincerely held. The religious motive and the socio-political concern for order in the State were part of the same world view. Dissenters were Protestants. Colley has stressed that common Protestant assumptions were a vital force for cohesion in forging the British nation between 1707 and 1837.¹⁰¹ To many orthodox churchmen it would seem reasonable to attempt to recover the successors of those clergy and the attendant laymen lost in 1662. They believed that unity was good, nay essential for the local community and the nation. The tenet that 'every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation', was rooted in the New Testament.¹⁰² A comparative study of the European Reformations during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, has shown that, however far toleration of heterodoxy existed in practice, uniformity often continued as the official policy and philosophy.¹⁰³ In theological terms there was the belief that baptism and continuous observation of the sacraments formed more of the road to salvation than a justifying single conversion experience and an automatic receipt of grace, which appeared to be the key for some Dissenters. Finally, was it about reclaiming convinced separatists from Dissent or were the absent essentially churchmen who found it convenient to attend meeting houses due to the lack of church room? Clergy in Craven Deanery in the 1830s believed that lay people could hardly be blamed for drifting to Dissenting meeting houses, if there was insufficient provision by the Church. There was an accompanying belief that

⁹⁹ H. Roberson, *An Account of the Ceremony of Laying The First Stone at Liversedge Church* (Leeds, 1813), 16-17.

¹⁰⁰ A. Burns, 'English Church Reform Revisited, 1780-1840', 160.

¹⁰¹ L. Colley, *Britons. Forging The Nation 1707-1837* (London, 1996), 19, 57.

¹⁰² Matthew, 12, v. 25.

¹⁰³ J. D. Tracy, *Europe's Reformations, 1450-1650* (2nd ed., Plymouth, 2006), 215, 293-8.

ordained clergy of the Church were so much better equipped to tend men's souls than Dissenting preachers.¹⁰⁴

In 1688-89, despite the eventual absence of an outcome, a Commission had worked hard but fruitlessly on amending the Prayer Book in order to admit the consciences of most Dissenters.¹⁰⁵ Up to fifty Dissenting clergymen were reclaimed by the Church in the first half of the eighteenth century.¹⁰⁶ Comprehension was one aim of the Latitudinarian bishops in mid century.¹⁰⁷ Given that John Wesley did not see Methodism as separate to the Church, this was not an unreasonable idea in relation to his followers prior to his death in 1791. What indeed may have happened if government assistance had been successfully sought in the 1780s or the French Wars not intervened with the effect of delaying any possibility of a church building initiative until after 1815?

By 1818, sectarian boundaries in terms of church government, if not theology, had been hardened. Nonetheless the idea of comprehension was never lost. During debates on the task of the National Society in 1812, Charles Abbot, first Lord Colchester, had written 'the true spirit and policy of the Church of England was comprehension and not exclusion'.¹⁰⁸ Even subsequent to the Repeal of the Test and Corporation Acts in 1828, there were those who saw the Church as the natural home of all Protestants. Lord Henley's *Plan of Church Reform* urged a measure of comprehension for Trinitarian Dissenters at least.¹⁰⁹ As late as 1843 the younger Christopher Wordsworth, claimed by Joshua Watson's biographer to be a representative apologist for the Orthodox High Churchmen, asserted that Dissenters were part of the Church's responsibility and should be encouraged to return: 'It (*The Church*) ought to abstain from persecuting those who err, though at the same time it ought to endeavour to reclaim those erring.'¹¹⁰ *Theophilus Anglicanus* went through at least

¹⁰⁴ P.Rycroft, 'Church, Chapel and Community in Craven, 1764-1851', unpublished PhD thesis, University of Oxford (1988), 304-6.

¹⁰⁵ Best, *Temporal Pillars*, 36; R.D.Cornwall, *Visible and Apostolic: the Constitution of the Church in High Church Anglican and Non Juror Thought* (London, 1993), 34.

¹⁰⁶ J.Walsh and S.Taylor, 'Introduction: The Church and Anglicanism in the "long" eighteenth century', in *From Toleration to Tractarianism*, 58; W.Gibson, 'A happy fertile soil which bringeth forth abundantly: the diocese of Winchester, 1689-1800' in J.Gregory and J.S.Chamberlain (eds.), *The National Church in Local Perspective* (Woodbridge,2003), 111.

¹⁰⁷ Walsh and Taylor, 'Introduction', *From Toleration to Tractarianism*, 36.

¹⁰⁸ Diary and Correspondence of C.Abbot ii, 391, quoted by Best, *Temporal Pillars*, 266.

¹⁰⁹ Best, *Temporal Pillars*, 286.

¹¹⁰ C.Wordsworth, *Theophilus Anglicanus* (6th ed., London, 1850), 281.

fifteen editions, largely used as a primer in public schools which were nurseries for future clergy.¹¹¹ So the bishop founding Truro Cathedral in 1880 could envision it as the mother church for all Cornish Christians.¹¹² Furthermore if there was a ‘Broad Church’ within the establishment from 1845, its roots could be seen in earlier comprehension. Equally the national church of the Elizabethan Hooker and the nineteenth century Hackney Phalanx remained a constant idea, however chimerical and contrary to existing practice, throughout the nineteenth century. William Gladstone could embrace it in 1838, if not later.¹¹³ Southey could recommend it.¹¹⁴ A political group like Disraeli and Young England of the 1840s could hark back to it.¹¹⁵ Both Coleridge, with his proposed clerisy to lead the nation, and Thomas Arnold were searching for an updated version of this comprehensive church.¹¹⁶ Thus there was a strong religious motivation to church extension, which was not always given sufficient credence, alongside readily accepted social arguments.

S.J.Brown built a further interpretation upon this quest for a true national church. Writing in 2001, he constructed a stimulating and challenging case that a grand politico-religious plan existed for all the United Kingdom and Ireland after 1800/1. Essentially it comprised an exercise in state-building by means of heavily subsidised national churches encouraging the, ‘Parish system to revive social harmony and stability in the three kingdoms’.¹¹⁷ Indeed this was a plan to ‘combine the diverse peoples of the United Kingdom into a single (Protestant) state.’¹¹⁸ The Church Building Act of 1818 seemed an important component of the plan. Only with sufficient churches, it seemed, could there be a base for pastoral visiting, weekly sermons, more frequent services, including communion, the distribution of charity and the additional provision of necessary schools. Indeed the parish church would

¹¹¹ C.Wordsworth, *Theophilus Anglicanus; or instruction for the young student concerning the Church and the Anglican branch of it* (15th ed., London ,1890), frontispiece.

¹¹² D.G.Miller, ‘The Episcopate of Bishop Benson 1877-1883 and the beginning of Truro Diocese and Cathedral. The Umbrella and the Duck’, unpublished Phd thesis, University of Exeter (2012).

¹¹³ Hilton, *A Mad Bad Dangerous People*, 485-6.

¹¹⁴ T.Hunt, *Building Jerusalem The Rise and Fall of the Victorian City* (London , 2005), 91.

¹¹⁵ *Building Jerusalem* , 91.

¹¹⁶ S.J.Brown, *The National Churches of England Ireland and Scotland* (Oxford, 2001), 86; Varley, *The Last of the Prince Bishops*, 182.

¹¹⁷ Brown, *National Churches*, 79.

¹¹⁸ *National Churches*, vii.

be the ‘physical centre of the community’, the most important public building, the repository of records and the venue for secular meetings.¹¹⁹

However, although parish strengthening policies came to pass, did a grand and unified political strategy exist? The measures in support of the established church were piloted by a handful of sympathetic ministers and it is hard to term the legislation ‘government policy’. There was an aim to improve the moral nature of all three kingdoms but there could be little hope of a church-based initiative pulling them together. Scotland was unmistakably and constitutionally a Presbyterian nation, differing on one of the fundamental points, that of governance, which also divided Protestants in England. In introducing the church building measure in 1818, Nicholas Vansittart simply confessed Scotland was too different to be included in the forthcoming Act. A separate measure was needed.¹²⁰ In Ireland there was clearly no prospect of an Anglican state, although the proponents of the ‘second’ or ‘new’ reformation were encouraged for a few years prior to 1829. It has been contended that until 1830 at least Ireland was seen as different and in need of a separate approach.¹²¹ Indeed in 1800 prime minister Pitt envisaged Catholic Emancipation alongside the Act of Union as central to the pacification of Ireland. Fundamentally, as Brown himself explains, if there was a great national project, it was not adopted beyond thirty years. The repeal of the Test and Corporation Acts in 1828, Catholic Emancipation in 1829, the Great Reform Act of 1832 and the Irish Church Temporalities Act of 1833 were to destroy any political-religious project for the United Kingdom as a whole.¹²²

Therefore the two motivational springs behind the Church Building Act were much as Vansittart honestly stated them: a desire for socialisation and a reclamation of Dissenters. The latter, religious, motivation has generally received less coverage and credibility than it deserves and so is emphasised here. In fact there was an important theological underpinning to support for church building. With some impetus from Andrewes and Laud and later with Tillotson and William Law, most English clergy had adopted a neo- Arminian soteriological position. Hempton noted that by the mid eighteenth century ‘ the old Puritan

¹¹⁹ Brown, *National Churches*, viii, 74, 403-4.

¹²⁰ Hansard, House of Commons Debates, 1st series, vol 37, 1101-1142, 16 March 1818.

¹²¹ K.T.Hoppen, ‘National Mobilisation and Government Attitudes: Geography and Politics and Nineteenth Century Ireland’ in L.Brockliss and D.Eastwood (eds.), *A Union of Multiple Identities* (Manchester, 1997), 169.

¹²² *National Churches*, ix, 167-170, 404-6.

Calvinism was certainly extinct.¹²³ It was the next century before some Evangelicals made a bold re-assertion of the Reformed doctrine of justification by faith as the sole determinant. Laymen might have professed an undefined belief that salvation came by both faith and work and the clergy did not unduly trouble themselves to claim a brand of churchmanship.¹²⁴ However the same clergy worked out the implications of allowing some effective role to a good life and works in support of faith and God's grace. The practice of holiness was important in itself, rather than simply being a concurrent effect of a secured salvation. Inculcating and encouraging this holiness allowed the Church a key role. People would need to feel their lives had some purpose beyond baptism or the conversion experience. Clergy might feel a life of good works would be the same as that of a good citizen. Thus they would harmonise the quests for social order with a more observant Anglican population. Church buildings, and sufficient of them, would be the most important bases for generating this neo-Arminian practice. They were the visible base for a resident, assiduous minister. They could be the only place for a Eucharistic community. As a theatre of mission they could provide free seats for the poor, as the Church Commissioners' were to make very clear. The necessary place of preaching was in the church. The building could also be the centre for promoting good neighbourliness and charitable works. The vestry would be the initial venue for administering to neighbours through the poor law.¹²⁵ The approach to all parishioners and the urgent desire to reclaim Dissenters, described above, would be underpinned by the prevailing theological stance, giving ideological substance to this type of 'counter-reformation'. Furthermore, in reality the "world view" of the orthodox would be a composite whole and they would rarely distinguish themselves between what we might call social or religious. As Smith suggests the, 'Close alignment between good works as a condition of salvation and those factors tending to re-inforce the stability of the community at local and national levels.....generally allowed charitable activity to play both roles and be motivated by both considerations without requiring a distinction to be made.'¹²⁶

¹²³ D.Hempton, *The Church in the Long Eighteenth Century* (London, 2011), 145; J.L.Quanton, *The Church of England and Antiquity: the construction of a confessional identity in the seventeenth century*, (ebook, Oxford, 2009), 158-182.

¹²⁴ F.Knight, *The Nineteenth Century Church and English Society* (Cambridge, 1995), 48,,55,209.

¹²⁵ M.Smith 'The Hanoverian Parish: Towards a New Agenda.', *Past and Present*, 216,1 (August 2012), 99-105.

¹²⁶ 'The Hanoverian Parish. Towards a New Agenda', 101.

However there may also be some reservation about any noble interpretation of motives. A Namier- like view may claim that the clergy involved were primarily concerned about their group or individual interest. Ordained deacons and priests were in strong supply after 1815.¹²⁷ Oxbridge admissions were 37% higher in the decade 1810 to 1820 as compared with the ten years previous. Given that around 50% of graduates were normally ordained, this was a significant increase in demand, there being around 10,000 benefices in all and over 500 new ordinands every year.¹²⁸ The ending of the French Wars would reduce opportunity for gentry families- and the clergy had become increasingly gentrified- with regard to commissions in the army and navy.¹²⁹ One remaining career was clearly within the Church and providing Commissioners' churches would lead to an increase in benefices. Bishop Howley's gathered papers relating to the 1818 Act contain an extended complaint concerning the lack of endowment attached to eighteenth century churches and also a proposal to address lack of church accommodation by paying additional clergy to say additional services, rather than increase the number of churches.¹³⁰ 'Many more are ordained that can ever stand a chance of being adequately provided for by the Church', ran the latter.¹³¹ Were clergy more concerned with job opportunity and conditions of service than with church extension for its own sake? However, with most early Commissioners' churches, an uncertain salary from pew rents was not the necessarily the most attractive prospect. Chapter Five shows how Lancashire clergy could make light of their situation; that did not mean that multitudes would seek to join them.

A further issue concerns the relative importance of the church building project to those driving it. Lest the preoccupation of this thesis with the Commissioners' churches, suggests they formed the sole arm of an Anglican assertion, it should be recognised that the 1818 Act was at the close of two decades of other measures. Friends of the Church had responded to the fear of Dissent providing missions to the empire and instruction to the English young, by reviving two old voluntary societies, the Society for the Promotion of Christian Knowledge (S.P.C.K.) dating from 1698 and the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts (S.P.G.) originating 1701. They founded two new ones, the

¹²⁷ F.Knight, *The Nineteenth Century Church and English Society* (Cambridge, 1995), 107.

¹²⁸ Virgin, *The Church in The Age of Negligence* , 135.

¹²⁹ Brown, *National Churches* , 11.

¹³⁰ LPL, Howley Papers vol 10, 206,208,209.

¹³¹ LPL, Howley Papers vol 10, 221, AZ to Bishop Howley, 28 June 1817.

Church Mission Society in 1799 and the National Society for Promoting the Education of the Poor in the Principles of the Established Church in England and Wales in 1811. It was as though the 'Third Reform Movement' Best described, mirrored the 'Second' of a century earlier.¹³² Private members, or ministers like Harrowby, had introduced Acts of Parliament which aimed to raise clerical standards of residence and curates' pay.¹³³ In fact from 1811 as much was laid out in annual grants to support low paid clergy as was spent under the 1818 Church Building Act.¹³⁴ As individuals, the leading church builders had varied and pressing targets. Joshua Watson began with the National Society in 1811 and was soon enmeshed as treasurer of the German Relief Fund in 1814 and the Servicemens' Widows and Orphans Fund in 1815. He was, from 1814, treasurer of the S.P.C.K., strong supporter of foreign missions and the founding of colonial bishoprics, in addition to prosecuting purely personal acts of charity.¹³⁵ Early in the time of the Church Building Commission he confessed to Christopher Wordsworth the elder that he was preoccupied with the affairs of the S.P.G.¹³⁶ He can be seen as a wealthy committed Christian who responded to needs as they appeared before him or found his administrative talents and meticulous accounting secured for a friend's project. Towards the end of his life, his advice was sought as to the best distribution of Dr. Warneford's philanthropy. He spread the donation many ways, the main benefit being received by the orphans of clergy.¹³⁷

There were numerous fronts the Church sought to secure or advance upon during the time of the Church Building Commission. Individuals chose their own emphasis which may have led to a somewhat haphazard approach to assertion. Detailed local study should reveal who led church extension in a particular area, their motivation and churchmanship and the relative importance they placed upon the Commissioners' churches.

¹³² Best, *Temporal Pillars*, 12-33.

¹³³ Burns, 'English Church Reform Revisited', 139.

¹³⁴ Brown, *The National Churches*, 65.

¹³⁵ Churton, *Memoir of Joshua Watson*, 52,85,94,96-8,102,107,257.

¹³⁶ *Memoir of Joshua Watson*, 114.

¹³⁷ *Memoir of Joshua Watson*, 364.

d) The National Context: Impact

The assessment of the performance of the nineteenth century Anglican church has generally become more positive over the last fifty years. This is within the context that deep secularisation in Britain is now seen as delayed well beyond the nineteenth century, possibly to a moral and ethical shift of the 1960s.¹³⁸ Historians are no longer pre-occupied with the supposed alienation from religion of the nineteenth century urban working class. McLeod, reviewing a decade's literature on modern religious history in 1992 adopted a positive stance, alluding to an increased study of ideas and institutions which had led to an acceptance that there was a more competitive nineteenth century Anglican church, amid respectable success for most denominations.¹³⁹ He also pointed out the need for more studies of religious practice in individual parishes. Smith in *Religion in Industrial Society* employed a detailed local perspective to show reasonable Anglican success in Oldham and Saddleworth.¹⁴⁰ Knight, also took a positive view, firstly showing ordinary people engaging with a church which nationally had the largest share of worshippers in 1851 and secondly, taking a wider standpoint to suggest 'revival and renewal' could at least be set alongside 'dislocation and decline'.¹⁴¹ In fact there is an acceptance that substantial improvement was implemented from the 1830s onwards. Knight alluded to 'transformation' or 'renewal' and Obelkevich dubbed Anglican efforts in the nineteenth century 'resurgence'.¹⁴² O'Gorman, focusing on results more than reform itself, recognised the "comprehensive renaissance" and 'astounding rehabilitation' of the Church between 1832 and 1851.¹⁴³

There is still some divergence on the origins, timing and pattern of the reform associated with the revival. The early 1830s has been seen as a "watershed" in the history of the Church, as with political and constitutional history.¹⁴⁴ Given the impact of Clark's *English Society 1688-1832* and the concept of the long eighteenth century, this is understandable even though O'Gorman sees that religious diversity had generally been taken for granted

¹³⁸ C.G.Brown and M.Snape, *Secularisation in the Christian World* (Farnham, 2010), 1-10.

¹³⁹ H.McLeod, 'Varieties in Victorian Belief', *JMH* 64 (1992), 321-47.

¹⁴⁰ M.Smith, *Religion in Industrial Society, Oldham and Saddleworth, 1740-1865* (Oxford, 1994), 40-1,106.

¹⁴¹ F.Knight, *The Church in the Nineteenth Century* (London, 2008), 181.

¹⁴² Knight, *The Church In The Nineteenth Century*; J. Obelkevich, "Religion" in F.M.L.Thompson (ed.), *The Cambridge Social History of Britain 1750-1950* vol 3 (Cambridge, 1990), 329.

¹⁴³ O'Gorman, *The Long Eighteenth Century*, 392-94.

¹⁴⁴ A.Burns, 'English Church Reform Revisited 1780-1850', 137-8.

since around 1800.¹⁴⁵ Best's judgement was that the redistribution of finances by the Ecclesiastical Commission after 1835 and the disciplinary powers of bishops afforded by the 1838 Pluralities Act were the really significant steps.¹⁴⁶ Virgin, having made allowances for the onset of reform in rural Norfolk post 1815 and the significant step of the Stipendiary Curates Act of 1813, weighs the impact of the Ecclesiastical Commission from 1835 particularly on pluralism and non-residence, before concluding that there was 'much in our research that emphasises the centrality and importance of the 1830s.'¹⁴⁷ At a regional level, Rycroft's study of Craven Deanery showed Anglican revival came subsequent to 1838.¹⁴⁸ However by 2003 Burns was placing the origins of reform in the 1780s, the diocesan revival in the 1790s and the prime originator to be Bishop Richard Watson with the *Letter to The Archbishop of Canterbury* in 1783. He contended that, 'There are good reasons for tracing continuities in reform projects across the reform crisis.'¹⁴⁹ Brown's challenging work, at much the same time as Burns', depicted the 1820s as a highpoint of church reform.¹⁵⁰ This present study, by focusing on the Commissioners' churches, legislated for in 1818 with the first active by 1822, could support Burns' gradualist theory. An associated question concerns how far back in time the ameliorating process began. At the same time as Burns was dating the origins of diocesan reform to the 1790s, Taylor was suggesting the 'third reform movement' might in fact have been a continuation of the 'second' dating from 1688 or even previous to that.¹⁵¹ Admittedly this evidence for a continuing reform movement is fairly slim, being based merely upon Bishop William Wake of Lincoln's strict questioning of clergy from 1706, Bishop Edmund Gibson's proposals rather than actions and Bishop Horsley's call for an equalisation of diocesan finances from 1781.¹⁵²

The literature exploring the timing of reform also reveals room for debate on the importance of church extension, including that promoted by the Church Building Commission, in relation to a raft of other reforms. Despite the admission that a revival did occur, construction of additional churches by the Establishment started to keep pace with

¹⁴⁵ O'Gorman, *The Long Eighteenth Century*, 392.

¹⁴⁶ Burns, *The Diocesan Revival*, 9,

¹⁴⁷ Virgin, *The Church in the Age of Negligence*, 258-261.

¹⁴⁸ P.Rycroft, 'Church, Chapel and Community in Craven, 1864-1851', unpublished PhD thesis, University of Oxford (1988), 280-1,292.

¹⁴⁹ Burns, 'English Church Reform Revisited', 137-8,144-6,162.

¹⁵⁰ S.J.Brown, *The National Churches*, 2, 74-5.

¹⁵¹ S.Taylor, 'Bishop Edmund Gibson's Proposals for Church Reform' in S.Taylor (ed.), *From Cranmer to Davidson. A Church of England Miscellany* (Woodbridge, 1999), 171.

¹⁵² Taylor, 'Bishop Edmund Gibson's Proposals', 177-78,186.

population increase only after 1830.¹⁵³ Conversely, there was criticism from the outset that it was folly to provide places which were destined not to be filled.¹⁵⁴ Thus the church building movement has been criticised both for being initially insufficient and subsequently overblown. Moreover, the Commissioners' particular project, seemingly a distinctive and unique programme, is downgraded compared with voluntary church building and with alternative strategies which the Establishment aimed at efficiency and professionalism. Cookson, in writing a chronological narrative of the key years of Lord Liverpool's ministry failed to even mention the Church Building Act.¹⁵⁵ Port concedes that many of the Commissioners' churches were 'battleships.....soon obsolescent'.¹⁵⁶ Parry revealed that nationally the voluntary Incorporated Church Building Society assisted the construction of five times the amount of Commissioners' churches and that in Manchester funding from the Commission amounted to just one eighth of the total amount spent.¹⁵⁷ Furthermore there was the tortuous process of establishing and maintaining such a church. Snell assumed clergy in the new churches were of low ability, income and morale.¹⁵⁸ Chadwick held the funding systems to be defective.¹⁵⁹ A more recent writer, Chase, has at least conceded that the process of extension created at least a psychological lift for the Anglicans caught up with it.¹⁶⁰

In an administrative context, there is hitherto an easy acceptance that in the development of 'Waterloo Churches' central control worked poorly alongside local enterprise. Smith believed that extending church provision revealed, 'The problem of dealing with remote metropolitan bodies like the Church Building Commission which made external aid a decidedly mixed blessing'.¹⁶¹ The Board's fussiness about sites was one example.¹⁶² There were tensions, and even breakdowns in communication, between central commission and localities, diocese and vestry, mother parish and new church and architect and builder. With

¹⁵³ K.Hylson-Smith, *The Churches in England from Elizabeth I to Elizabeth II, vol 3, 1833-1998* (London, 1998), 49-50.

¹⁵⁴ *Preston Chronicle*, 21 March 1818; Port, *Six Hundred New Churches* 2nd ed., 38.

¹⁵⁵ J.E.Cookson, *Lord Liverpool's Administration 1815-18* 22 (London, 1975), chapter 3.

¹⁵⁶ Port, *Six Hundred New Churches*, 2nd ed., 278.

¹⁵⁷ Parry, 'The Incorporated Church Building Society', unpublished M.Litt. thesis University of Oxford (1984), 217, 234, 254.

¹⁵⁸ K.D.M.Snell, *Parish and Belonging: Community, Identity and Welfare in England and Wales, 1700-1950* (Cambridge, 2006), 415, 419.

¹⁵⁹ O.Chadwick, *The Victorian Church* vol 1 (London, 1966), 84-85.

¹⁶⁰ M.Chase, 'The Local State in Regency Britain' *LH* vol 43,4, (October 2013).

¹⁶¹ Smith, *Religion in Industrial Society*, 35, 39, 46.

¹⁶² Smith, *Religion in Industrial Society*, 74.

regards to church extension the established church ironically faced more legal barriers than the Dissenters. Moreover Snell is certain that the multiplicity and variety of districts attached to the new churches, confounded the old English parish system which had long provided a sense of communal identity.¹⁶³ As the township rather than the parish had been the chief unit of local administration in Lancashire, the outcome may well be different here. The physical features of the Commissioners' churches may not seem as important as those of the subsequent Victorian generations. Yates' suggests that the internal layout of Anglican churches was fairly consistent from the Restoration until the Ecclesiologists' impact, evident from 1840 and dominant from 1870.¹⁶⁴ Whyte emphasises the message and meaning in the media of church buildings commencing with Littlemore in 1835.¹⁶⁵ Judgements about architecture may be loaded with personal subjectivity and the fashions of the commentating age. They are nevertheless important because an unfavourable assessment of the churches' architecture may imply an overall negative view of their impact. The verdict is, at best, mixed. In 1961 Summerson's concession that there was 'honest ingenuity' and 'good workmanship' in the Commissioners' churches softened his earlier 'peculiar drabness' verdict, just as Pollard subsequently recognised the quality of some of their early efforts, which Pevsner initially dismissed as 'as a rule, clumsy'.¹⁶⁶ Hilton still finds the majority of Commissioners' churches to be 'trabeated neo-classical boxes'.¹⁶⁷ Port stands up for the 'rekindling of the art of building in the Gothic style'.¹⁶⁸ If value for money, rather than aesthetics are taken into account, it should be pointed out that the complete funding of 32 small Scottish churches built by Telford for a mere £54,422 formed an impressive project.¹⁶⁹

¹⁶³ Snell, *Parish and Belonging*, 428-9.

¹⁶⁴ N.Yates, *Buildings, Faith and Worship. The Liturgical Arrangement of Anglican Churches 1600-1900* (2nd ed., Oxford, 2000), 4,127,151.

¹⁶⁵ W.Whyte, *Unlocking the Church* (Oxford, 2017), 8-19.

¹⁶⁶ N.Pevsner, *The Buildings of England: North Lancashire* (London, 1969), 29.

¹⁶⁷ Hilton, *Mad Bad and Dangerous People?*, 254.

¹⁶⁸ A.Summerson, preface in Port's *Six Hundred New Churches* (1st ed., London, 1961), 7-8, as compared with *Architecture in Britain 1530-1830* (London, 1953), 516; N.Pevsner, *The Buildings of England :North Lancashire* (London, 1969), 29, as compared with N.Pevsner and R.Pollard, *The Buildings of England: Liverpool and South West Lancashire* (London ,2006), 65;.Hilton, *A Mad, Bad and Dangerous People*, 254; Port, *Six Hundred Churches* 2nd ed., 11,278.

¹⁶⁹ Brown, *The National Churches*, 73. Sir A.Gibb, *The Story of Telford* (London, 1935).

e) Questions Raised

A summary of the research questions addressed by the thesis is included at the end of the next, or second, introductory chapter. At this current stage, a number of interesting issues have already arisen. How far was the rationale of Liverpool and Vansittart replicated at regional and local level? The prevalence of clerical neo-Arminianism by the mid eighteenth century suggests it might have been. Who, or which group of churchmen, and at what level, drove the implementation of the 1818 Act? Was Burns right to refer to the importance of ‘diocesan hierarchies and parochial clergy’ with the ‘participation of churchmen of all hues’ in ‘a local community of belief’?¹⁷⁰ With regard to impact, how well would the diocese of Chester, in which Chorley St George lay, fare in introducing the churches to a county like Lancashire, in need of church extension but displaying a pluralist sectarian situation? What was the churches’ significance regarding the timing and efficiency of the Anglican assertion? The relative lack of attention amongst historians, apart from Port’s intensive study of the Commission’s administration and their churches’ architecture and construction, and the low assessment of effectiveness routinely accorded the churches, do not encourage optimism. Were they peripheral and poor?

¹⁷⁰ Burns, *The Diocesan Revival*, 21, 266.

a) The Regional Approach

The collection of studies entitled *The National Church in Local Perspective*, edited by Gregory and Chamberlain in 2003, revealed the difficulty of generalising about the performance of the established church during the long eighteenth century. Regional environment, custom, interests and personalities tended towards a diffused and diverse national pattern.¹ Thus the eighteenth century clergy of the diocese of Canterbury maintained assiduous catechism and double duty.² Kineton Deanery in the diocese of Worcester displayed keen catechising and church building renovation but may have held too few services and had clerical residence issues.³ In describing the Diocese of Salisbury Spaeth could write of ‘the failure of reform’.⁴ Similarly the reclamation of Dissenters varied from the success of Archdeacon Gibson and later Bishop Hoadly in the diocese of Winchester, to the failure to make any impression on the Presbyterian borderland north of the Tyne.⁵ It might be considered that increasing urbanisation and the growth of church parties in the nineteenth century would have made cementing a national church even more difficult in the period of the Commissioners’ churches.⁶

A key question concerns how far a national policy, like that of the Church Building Commissioners in 1818, could be widely implemented and how far that national policy itself was a response to demand from the localities.⁷ Eastwood, in *Government and Community in the English Provinces* (1997), pointed out the strength of localism remaining until at least 1834 and Snell, in *Parish and Belonging* (2006), the importance of the local

¹ J.Gregory and J.S.Chamberlain (eds.), *The National Church in Local Perspective. The Church of England and the Regions, 1660-1800* (Woodbridge, 2003).

² J.Gregory, ‘Archbishops of Canterbury, their diocese, and the shaping of the National Church’, in Gregory and Chamberlain, *The National Church in Local Perspective*, 42,45.

³ C.Haydon, ‘The Church in the Kineton Deanery of the diocese of Worcester,c.1660-c.1800’, in *The National Church in Local Perspective*, 173.

⁴ D.Spaeth, ‘“The Enemy Within”: The Failure of Reform in the diocese of Salisbury in the eighteenth century’, in *The National Church in Local Perspective*, 129-144,

⁵ W.Gibson, ‘“A happy fertile soil which bringeth forth abundantly”;the diocese of Winchester, 1689-1800’, in *The National Church in Local Perspective* 109,111; F.Deconinck-Brossard, ‘“We live so far North”:the Church in the North-East of England’, in *National Church in Local Perspective*, 242.

⁶ J.Gregory and J.S.Chamberlain ‘National and Local perspectives on the Church of England in the long eighteenth century’, in *The National Church in Local Perspective*, 26.

⁷ Gregory and Chamberlain, ‘National and Local Perspectives’, 13.

parish until the 1870s.⁸ Burns, in *The Diocesan Revival*, argued that a great body of the reforms emanated from a diocesan base and continued to do so until 1870, with no dependence on centralised action on a national scale.⁹ Snell suggested that regional and local need for provision partially influenced the creation of the Church Building Commission.¹⁰ Given the haphazard nature of English governance and the need for local involvement on every building project, there could be an array of different causes behind the securing of each new church. Equally, a single interpretation of motivation from a central government's perspective should not suffice. Politicians at the centre of government would not necessarily operate from the same motives as the clerical or lay leaders of the Church. The diocesan bishops and local landowners might have another set of perspectives. Local clergy and communities who supported the churches could add further diversity. The origins and performance of Chorley St George needs to be set in a regional context.

b) The Regional Context: Lancashire in Chester and Manchester Dioceses

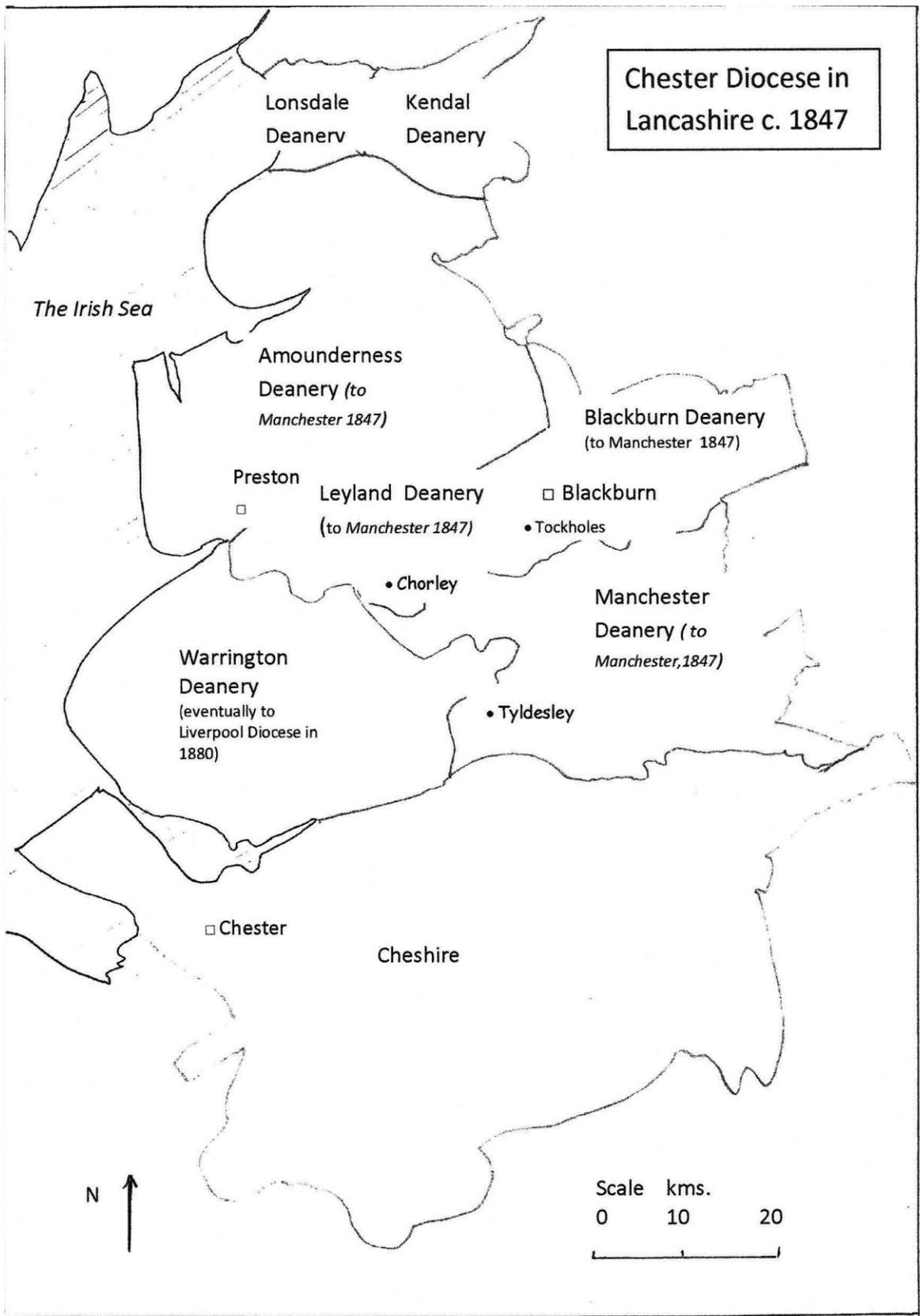
Chorley St George was a Commissioner's church, belatedly coming into a challenging area for the established church. The responsibility for Chorley and all Lancashire fell to Chester Diocese until 1847 before Manchester Diocese was created to take over most of the south and east of the county. It is tempting to expect very little of the Lancastrian Church of England in general and the Commissioners' churches in particular. Prior to the eighteenth century all of Chester Diocese can be seen as relatively poor and isolated. Unlike the south east and east midlands it was typified by large parishes, assisted by too few chapels of ease, in difficult terrain such as the Pennine foothills or the mosses of west Lancashire.¹¹

⁸ D.Eastwood, *Government and Community in the English Provinces, 1700-1870* (London, 1997), 9-10; K.D.M.Snell, *Parish and Belonging: Community, Identity and Welfare in England and Wales, 1700-1950* (Cambridge, 2006), 393.

⁹ Burns, *The Diocesan Revival*, 6, 273.

¹⁰ Snell, *Parish and Belonging*, 393.

¹¹ A..Crosby, *A History of Lancashire* (Chichester, 1998), 30,39,42.



Map 2.1 Chester Diocese in Lancashire c.1847

The relative poverty of the region meant there were few churches endowed in the eleventh and twelfth centuries when richer agricultural areas received the bulk of their parishes.¹² There had been a slight spurt in church building in the half century before the Reformation, stemmed by that upheaval, but efforts later in the sixteenth century tended to favour schools over churches.¹³ The predicament only worsened with the quickening pace of population growth and urbanisation.¹⁴ In 1811 Lichfield diocese contained parishes with a mean size of 4275 acres, whereas Lancashire and Cheshire parishes averaged 11,860 acres, that of Blackburn spanning 48,000 acres.¹⁵ Referring to the Religious Census of 1851, Sylvester has suggested a distinct 'parish line' between the north- west and the south, with parishes to the north containing several townships and manifesting weaker attendances.¹⁶

The lack of new provision in Lancashire from the sixteenth century onwards is partly explained by the significant adherence to Catholicism, retained by many despite the Reformation and discriminatory legislation. The 1767 Returns of Papists showed two fifths of all English Catholics listed for England and Wales were in Lancashire, in the Ribble Valley and the west but also in central towns, 1043 forming a fifth of Preston's population. If not numerically large, they were not a demoralised or static group and well placed to develop from a mission church after the Catholic Relief Act of 1791 allowed the open building of churches like St Wilfrid's Preston.¹⁷ There was also the commitment of others to Old Dissent and the New Dissent of Methodism.¹⁸ Puritan ministers had continued preaching exercises in Lancashire after 1589 despite Archbishop Whitgift's ban. In 1646 Lancashire was the second county in the land to set up a Presbyterian system and to see it function. Presbyterianism claimed 8% adherence, as compared with 3.3% nationally, in 1715. Twenty of the establishment's chapels of ease in Lancashire and the West Riding were in fact being maintained by Presbyterian ministers.¹⁹ Particular Baptists were recruited by the Rossendale missionaries and the Bolton Dissenting academy, under

¹² A.Jones, *A Thousand Years of the English Parish*, (London, 2002) ,21-2.

¹³ Crosby, *A History of Lancashire*, 54.

¹⁴ J.K.Walton, *Lancashire, A Social History, 1558-1939* (Manchester ,1987), 37-9,95,98.

¹⁵ Port, *Six Hundred Churches* 2nd ed., 16.

¹⁶ M.Watts, *The Dissenters*, vol 2 (Oxford ,1995), 37.

¹⁷ P.Doyle, *Mitres and Missions in Lancashire. The Roman Catholic Diocese of Liverpool 1850-2000* (Liverpool, 2005), 12-13,23.

¹⁸ Crosby, *History of Lancashire* ,107-8.

¹⁹ M.Watts, *The Dissenters*, vol 1 (Oxford, 1978), 60,116,197,270,304.

Thomas Dixon to 1729, was a fount of Unitarianism.²⁰ If rational Dissent nationally was on the wane by the end of the eighteenth century, the orthodox Congregational and Particular Baptist sects displayed renewed life in Lancashire. This has largely been explained as resulting from the work of missionaries such as Jonathan Scott who assisted the founding of new Independent chapels, having himself been a convert of Anglican evangelicals.²¹ The major historian of Dissent commented that by 1800:

Old Dissent and Methodism did to some extent benefit from the failure of the Church of England to adapt its machinery to the shifts in population brought about by the demographic and industrial revolutions but both.....also grew in areas where the ground had already been prepared by the Church of England.²²

Ditchfield considered that Lancashire and Cheshire Dissenting meeting houses and their adherents increased during the middle of the eighteenth century and continued to do so at a faster rate after 1780.²³

Thus, even after the north-west economy quickened after the famine of 1623 and the close of the Civil War in 1651, the fortunes of the established church in Lancashire did not significantly improve.²⁴ The large parish of Blackburn, next to Whalley, clearly had difficulty making adequate provision of services in the early eighteenth century.²⁵ In the face of challenge, the performance of the supervising diocese of Chester in the long eighteenth century has been judged as inadequate by Addy, Walker and Snape.²⁶ To some degree the verdict depends on the precise time limits and criteria deployed. Snape's work on the vast Whalley Parish focuses on the decline of church courts, the educational standards of clergy, charitable foundations and the lack of an evangelical approach.²⁷ By closing the study around 1804 rather than embracing a long eighteenth century until 1832, it disallows the tremendous impact of T.D.Whitaker, already at Holme chapel by 1788 but

²⁰ Watts, *The Dissenters*, vol 1, 389,465.

²¹ Watts, *The Dissenters*, vol 1, 451-3, 487.

²² Watts, *The Dissenters*, vol 2, 48.

²³ G.M.Ditchfield, 'The Campaign in Lancashire and Cheshire For The Repeal of the Test and Corporation Acts, 1787-1790' *THSLC* (1976), 115.

²⁴ J.Atherton, 'Church and Society in the North-West', in C.S.Ford, M.Powell, T.Wyke (eds.),*The Church in Cottonopolis* (Manchester ,1997), 37.

²⁵ LA, PR2965/5/4, List of Endowments of Blackburn Parish, 21 June 1719.

²⁶ R.B.Walker, 'Religious Changes in Cheshire, 1750-1850' *JEH* , 17 (1966), 78-81; M.F.Snape, *The Church of England in an Industrialising Society* (Woodbridge, 2003), 5,196.

²⁷ Snape ,*The Church of England in an Industrialising Society*, 116,161,173-7.

vicar of all Whalley Parish in 1809.²⁸ On the positive side, Smith, in a study of Oldham and Saddleworth, with wider reference to south Lancashire, points to the significant church extension of the eighteenth century, even if much of this was in rebuilds and the provision of galleries. However he does concede that, even if, ‘the Church was responding energetically just where the need was greatest’, faced with the sheer increase in population in the industrial areas after 1790, a willing church found itself swamped.²⁹ Again, summarising the state of the diocese between 1715 and 1795, Green could argue that, ‘ In short the clergy of the Diocese of Chester were motivated by deeply held conviction rather than complacency or self interest’.³⁰ However the evidence is largely drawn from exhortation in bishops’ sermons and does not demonstrate clerical efficiency in practice.

Further, in the body of literature, the national Anglican success after 1832 can be seen as limited in a county like Lancashire, with its distinctive, possibly unique, religious history. Whereas Knight’s national perspective might allude to ‘renewal’ and Obelkevich dub Anglican efforts in the nineteenth century ‘resurgence’, a regional standpoint might argue that the Church in Lancashire was only now asserting a serious presence beyond maintaining a skeleton staff offering access to the rites of passage. Walton in *Lancashire: A Social History* noted that in 1851 there were only four counties where Anglicans had a lower share of church attendees. Atherton referred to the creation of Manchester Diocese in 1847 as a symbol of ‘great revival’, but a relatively late one, and conceded that the Church of England became ‘a leading denomination’ rather than the truly established church.³¹ Within this partial success, what importance is allowed to church building? It is recognised as a visible and important strategy in some parishes. Lewis demonstrates this for important Lancashire towns with at least some reference in *The Middlemost and the Milltowns* to clerical-led building programmes by J.W.Whittaker in Blackburn, R.Carus Wilson in Preston and J.A. Slade in Bolton.³² However, Phillips and Smith show that, in Lancashire

²⁸ A.G.Crosby, ‘Whittaker, T.D.1759-1821’ *DNB* 29226 (2004, rev. 2013); B.Lewis, *The Middlemost and The Milltowns* (Stanford, 2001), 39-40.

²⁹ M.Smith, *Religion in Industrial Society*, 62.

³⁰ P.G.Green, ‘Charity, Morality and social control: clerical attitudes in the Diocese of Chester 1715-1795’, *THSLC* 141(1991), 229.

³¹ Walton, *Lancashire, A Social History*, 184; J.Atherton, *Church and Society in the North West 1760-1997*, in Ford (ed.), *The Church in the Cottonopolis* (Manchester, 1997), 41,47.

³² B.Lewis, *The Middlemost and the Milltowns* (Stanford, 2001), 153-4,167,170.

and Cheshire by 1851, the rate of Anglican church extension was outstripped and the total provision matched by the Wesleyan Methodists alone.³³

It is also necessary to isolate the Commissioners' churches from the prodigious efforts by voluntary societies. It has already been noted that Smith believed it was a 'mixed blessing' for a local church to be working with a central body.³⁴ As mentioned in Chapter One, Parry concluded that the Commission's funding in Manchester amounted to an eighth of the total amount spent.³⁵ Dale, examining the extension of church provision in Bolton, concluded that the Anglicans found the task far harder than the nonconformists and were relatively late mounting a programme.³⁶ Cruickshank, in focusing primarily upon school extension, had already decided that the foundation in the twenties of Parliamentary churches had barely relieved the situation and that any real improvement in Anglican fortunes came only in the 1840s from a source very different from the Commissioners: 'The erection of churches and schools and the establishment of new parishes was part of the great revival of the forties, a period when the Church was stirred to its very depths by the Oxford Movement.'³⁷ There has been one significant contrary voice. In 2007 Crosby, a reviewer from a Lancashire base, welcomed Port's *Six Hundred New Churches* for referencing the 'prominent and powerful landmarks'.... 'in an important social, cultural and spiritual context' that local Commissioners' churches were- a striking judgement at odds with previously prevailing opinion.³⁸ So how significant were the Commissioners' churches in Lancashire?

Was there any preparation of the ground for the major church building effort launched in 1818? Smith has shown that in the south of the county throughout the eighteenth century

³³ D.M.Thompson, 'The 1851 Religious Census, Problems and Possibilities', *Victorian Studies* XI, 1967, 87; Port *Six Hundred Churches* 278; C.B.Phillips and J.H.Smith *Lancashire and Cheshire from AD 1546* (London 1994), 218.

³⁴ Smith *Religion in Industrial Society* 35,39, 46.

³⁵ T.V.Parry 'The Incorporated Church Building Society', unpublished University of Oxford M.A. thesis (1984), 217,234,254.

³⁶ P.N.Dale 'A Study in the Growth of Churches in Bolton During The Industrial Revolution', unpublished University of N.Wales PhD thesis (1984), 215,221,254-5.

³⁷ M.A.Cruickshank 'The Anglican Revival and Education: A Study of School Expansion in the Cotton Manufacturing Areas of N.W.England, 1840-1850' *NH* 15:1 (1979), 176-180.

³⁸ A.G.Crosby *Waterloo Sunrise*, being a review of Port's *Six Hundred Churches*, *LH* 37, no3 (2007), 204.

repairs and rebuilding were carried out and accommodation extended in the process.³⁹ Within south central Lancashire, Croston Parish was rebuilt in 1764 simply by parishioners setting to and working on it.⁴⁰ St Peter's Salesbury in Blackburn Parish (1807) appeared through the good offices and purse of the patron.⁴¹ St John's Blackburn (1788) was the project of a group of wealthy middle class neighbours.⁴² St Paul's Blackburn, intended as an Anglican chapel but until 1829 within the Countess of Huntingdon aegis, was founded by Blackburn parishioners frustrated by vicar Starkie's lack of preaching ability and desirous of employing a more attractive minister.⁴³ There was considerable local activity in Whalley Parish after 1788 when Holme Church was renovated.⁴⁴

Thus the Diocese of Chester was not starting with a totally blank page. The table 2.1A below, which samples parishes and townships across the Lancashire sub- regions, illustrating the situation before the Commissioners' churches came into use, reveals a seemingly uncanny knack of the established church in providing a church or chapel per every 7,000 folk. Furthermore, a consideration of church sittings, as opposed to numbers of places of worship, leads to a more optimistic appreciation of the amount of provision in relation to total populations of townships and provision in Dissenter chapels and meeting houses. For example in Wigan Parish the Church of England, prior to the Commissioners church era, had two places of worship to five the Dissent but nearly the same amount of sittings.

However, this did not mean that the townships with densest populations had necessarily received the greater provision before the arrival of the Commissioners' churches. In Bolton-le-Moors Parish, for example, a small village like Rivington with some 500 souls had a long-established chapel, whereas Sharples with over 2000 did not.⁴⁵ Neither does the sample suggest that strongly Dissenting territory in townships in the south east of the

³⁹ M.Smith, 'The reception of Richard Podmore: Anglicanism in Saddleworth 1700-1830' in J.Walsh, C.Haydon and S.Taylor, *The Church of England c1689-c.1833, From Toleration to Tractarianism* (Cambridge,1993), 114-15.

⁴⁰ LA, PR3120/2/4, Croston Parish Papers, R.Master to Bishop of Chester, 15 September 1764.

⁴¹ G.C.Miller, *Blackburn, The Evolution of a Cotton Town* (Blackburn, 1951), 170.

⁴² D.Beattie, *Blackburn, A History* (Lancaster, 2007), 235.

⁴³ Miller, *Evolution of A Cotton Town*, 171.

⁴⁴ JRUL, Eng MS706, John Rushton's 'Notes on Lancashire Churches and Chapels' vol 8, List of Churches in Lancashire: Blackburn Deanery.

⁴⁵ Baines, *Lancashire*, vol 1, 529.

county, such as Ashton, Oldham had yet received especial or even routine consideration. Townships of recent new growth, such as Dukinfield in the south-east and Haslingden or Colne to the north of east of the textile belt, had not yet been catered for. The large urban centre of Manchester and Salford was considerably under-provisioned. It might be significant that the parishes which emerged with relatively high Anglican attendance in 1851, such as Garstang, were places with no more than 4000 souls to a church in 1824 or had strong earlier provision, as in Ulverston. Tables 2.1A and 2.1B indicate a better relative provision north of the Ribble than south of it. This pattern suggests how welcome the arrival of the Commissioners' churches would be, especially as the government had ambitious targets of providing sufficient seats to house a third of a population at one sitting.

	Population 1821 (<i>in thousands</i>)	Commissioners' Churches (seats)	Other Church of England	Roman Catholic churches	Dissenting Churches (seats)
Blackburn Parish-including	63	1	9	5	18
Blackburn Township	22	1 (2000)	3(2312)	2 (1226)	9 (5430)
Tockholes	1		1 (300)		2 (600)
Great Bolton and Little Bolton	31	1 (1906)	3 (3982)	1	14 (3960)
Whalley Parish: including-	85		17	4	43
Burnley	8		1 (2500)	1	3 (1931)
Colne	7		1 (900)		4 (2624)
Haslingden	7		1(1548)		6 (2311)
Chorley Parish and Township	7	1 (2012)	1 (440)	1 (630)	3 (984)
Preston Borough	25	2 (2509)	3 (3535)	2 (4750)	7 (5512)
Leigh Parish,including-	18	1 (1437)	3 (3073)	1(520)	7 (3669)
Tyldesley	4	1 (1437)	0	0	3 (1117)
Manchester, including Salford	155	3	14	3	47
Ashton-u-Lyne Township	9	1 (1821)	1(1350)	1 (500)	5 (3052)
Liverpool	141		16	5	27

Warrington	14		2	1	8
Wigan Parish, including-	38		5		
Wigan Borough	18		2 (2060)	2 (1950)	5 (2080)
Ulverston Parish	7		1 (1420)		3 (1135)
Garstang Parish	7		2	1	2
LANCASHIRE	672,731	358 (284,378 in 1831)			
CHESHIRE	85,965	157			

Table 2.1A: Numbers of Places of Worship, with sittings, in Lancashire Parishes, 1824.

Sources : Religious Census 1851;J.Rushton “Notes”;E.Baines *History, Directory and Gazetteer of the County Palatine of Lancashire* (2 vols London,1824) vol 1, 109-110 and individual parish entries.

Church of England Deanery	Parish Churches 1823	Other Chapels 1823	Hundreds	Catholic Chapels 1819	Catholic attenders (1000s)	Wesleyan Methodist Circuits	Wesleyan Members (1000s)
Manchester	11	56	Salford	5	16	Manchester area	9.7
Warrington	15	38	West Derby	32	33	Liverpool area	5.5
Blackburn	2	25	Blackburn	10	5	Blackburn area	3.3
			Leyland	9	6		
Amounderrn -ess	11	28	Amounderness	16	20	Preston	1.8
Furness	9	20					
Lonsdale	5	5	Lonsdale	5	13		
Kendal	4	4					
LANCASHIRE						160 chapels, 21,000 members, possibly 60,000 in congregations	

Table 2.1B Comparison of Relative Strength of Three Denominations, as illustrated by Baines, 1824. Sources: E.Baines *History, Directory and Gazetteer of the County Palatine of Lancashire* (2 vols London,1824) vol 1, 109-110.

The later, marked impact of the Commissioners' churches is clear.

Bishop	Dates	Years in Office	Rebuilds	New Churches	Of which, Commissioners'
Peploe	1726-1752	26	20	15	
Keane	1752-1771	15	15	15	
Porteus	1776-1788	12	8	6	
Cleaver	1788-1800	12	7	22	
Majendie	1800-1810	10	10	3	
Spark	1810-1812	2	2	1	
Law	1812-1824	12	20	28	15
Blomfield	1824-28	4	9	17	10
Sumner	1828-1848	20	41	217	55
Graham	1848-	8 (by 1856)	6	21	
Lee (Manchester)	1847-	9 (by 1856)	4	31	17

Table 2.2A Church Renewal and Extension by Bishops of Chester 1726-1848. Constructed from J.Rushton "Notes on Lancashire and Cheshire Churches and Chapels vol 6", *Port Six Hundred New Churches* 326-7,334-6.

Decade	Churches Built	Of which Commissioners'
Pre `1801	219	
1801-1810	+5	
1811-1820	+15	
1821-1830	+30	27
1831-1840	+95	20
1841-1850	+110	30
Date unknown to Rushton	58	

Table 2.2B New Anglican Church Building in Lancashire 1801-1850. Constructed from J.Rushton "Notes"; *Port Six Hundred New Churches* 326-7,334-6.

1770-1792	15
1793-1815	28
1816-1838	74

Table 2.1C Lancashire Gifts to Queen Anne's Bounty, in 22 year periods, 1770-1838. Source: J.Rushton "Notes" vol 5.

Church	Collection	Church	Collection
Bolton	£20 7s	Liverpool	£80
Bolton St George	£17	Everton Walton	£31
Blackburn St Mary's	£22 4s 6d	Manchester Collegiate	£22 17s 6d
Blackburn St Peter's	£8 16s	Stockport	£43
Burnley	£25	St Peter's in the East, Oxford	£18 11s
Chorley	£23 2 6		
Tockholes	£1 13s 6d		
Leigh	£5		

Table 2.2D Monies Collected for National Schools in Response to Royal Letter 1823. Source: Report of the National Society 1824, 16, Appendix.

Tables 2.2A and B above show that from initially 1790, but increasingly from about 1815, Chester Diocese mounted a spirited assertion on behalf of the establishment. Church building moved from one restoration and one new church per year, or fewer, before 1788, to double that number under Bishop Cleaver. Due to the impact of war or episcopal inertia and absence there followed a slackening of construction until George Henry Law's time in office. The proportional impact of the Commissioners' churches is then apparent in Chester Diocese as a whole and in Lancashire in particular. The score years 1821-40 reveal a sixfold increase in new builds over the previous two decades, 38% being Commissioners' churches, and Bishop Blomfield, a committed successor to Law. J.B.Sumner, at Chester until 1848 prior to becoming archbishop of Canterbury, was the first to have something approaching a co-ordinated plan for church building. Table 2.2C shows that the interest in church building was matched by an increased amount of gifts to Queen Anne's Bounty, in an effort to make clergy income more reasonable. Lancashire had a relatively high illiteracy rate of over 40% in 1841 reflecting a comparatively low proportion of young people being educated in any school, let alone a national school in 1818.⁴⁶ Yet the origins of a great effort to boost education of the poor, preferably in Anglican schools as far as the Church was concerned, was underway. Table 2.2D shows Lancashire churches collecting significant amounts towards the £27,358 donated nationally in response to the royal letter of 1823. Unsurprisingly it is those parishes currently benefiting from National Society largesse who contribute handsomely. The 1824 Report revealed the ambition behind the £200 grant to Chorley:

In another instance of their larger grants, Chorley in Lancashire, provision was to be made for a population of nearly 8000 persons, and it was proposed to establish a National School for 300 boys and 300 girls, the whole number requiring gratuitous instruction in the parish. The Committee always feel peculiar satisfaction in affording assistance to institutions which are formed on a scale commensurate with the entire demands of the population.⁴⁷

Therefore new churches, schools claiming to house all children of a religiously pluralist community and willing donations towards funding clergy and education, are all signs of a comprehensive awakening in Lancashire. The roots of the Anglican assertion can be traced earlier than the 1830s which used to be recognised as the starting point.⁴⁸ This was a belated assertion and amounted to a type of religious counter-reformation. The purpose of

⁴⁶ W.B.Stephens, *Education, Literacy and Society 1830-70* (1987), 16,24

⁴⁷ PP, Report of the National Society, 1824, 16.

⁴⁸ J.K.Walton, *A Social History of Lancashire 1558-1939* (Manchester, 1997),184.

internal reform in such movements is to present a stronger stance to competition, in Lancashire's case towards Catholicism from about 1810 but especially Protestant Dissent from 1787. In 1799 Bishop Cleaver expressed severe concern about the progress of Dissent in Manchester and suggested a lack of accommodation was relevant.⁴⁹ The weakness was that none of the bishops had a policy for raising new resources to match the enormity of the building needs and most of them had personal and national priorities which regularly took them beyond the bounds of the diocese.⁵⁰ Bishop Watson of Llandaff may be seen as something of a regional presence. He took little interest in his diocese and from 1787 was resident at Calgarth by Lake Windermere or in London.⁵¹ He also recommended government support for church building but confined his recommendations to the metropolis.⁵² Consciousness did not immediately produce action in church building.

A parish clergyman, rather than a bishop, should be seen as the originator of church extension in Lancashire. Thomas Dunham Whitaker was assiduous in doing duty across his vast northern parish of Whalley from 1809 and also took over the neighbouring large parish of Blackburn in 1819. He somehow combined these roles with that of a very active magistrate during the post Napoleonic War discontent in Lancashire, prolific authorship of topographical works and planter of a record number of larch trees.⁵³ He attended meetings of the National Society and the inaugural meeting of the voluntary Church Building Society.⁵⁴ He used the Leeds-based architect Thomas Taylor as an illustrator for his books and through him would have known of Hammond Roberson's church extension at Liversedge, Yorkshire (1811-16), where Taylor was the architect.⁵⁵ Whitaker met at least once with Bishop Watson, in 1809 at Browsholme Hall near Clitheroe and is said to have impressed his lordship with his knowledge of the writings of the early Fathers of the Church. How far church extension, and more particularly church extension through

⁴⁹ R.Garnett (rev. M.Cragloe), 'Cleaver William Bishop of St. Asaph 1742-181', *DNB* 5585, 2004..

⁵⁰ Garnett 'Cleaver'; N.Aston 'Markham, William, Archbishop of York 1719-1807', *DNB*. 18071, 2004; A.Robinson, 'Porteus, Beilby Bishop of London 1736-1809', *DNB* 22584, 2004; R.Hole, 'Majendie H.W. Bishop of Bangor 1754-1830', *DNB* 17842, 2004.

⁵¹ R.Hole, 'Watson, Richard Bishop of Llandaff 1787-1816', *DNB* 28857, 2011.

⁵² *Lancashire Gazette*, 28 February 1818, re Watson to W.Wilberforce, 1 April 1800.

⁵³ A.G.Crosby, 'Whitaker T.D. Antiquary and Topographer', *DNB* 29226, 2003; J.G.Nichols and P.A.Lyons, Introduction to *Whitaker's History of Whalley* (4th ed., Manchester, 1872), xiv-liv.

⁵⁴ *Lancashire Gazette*, 14 February 1818.

⁵⁵ C.Webster, '“Foremost among those who fully promoted the ancient style of architecture”: the churches of Thomas Taylor 1777/8-1826', in C.Webster (ed.), *Episodes in the Gothic Revival* (Reading, 2011), 110.

government- led action, was a topic of conversation is not recorded.⁵⁶ However, Whitaker rebuilt Holme Chapel at the heart of his family's estate in 1788 and was clearly in favour of such church building.⁵⁷ Whalley Parish saw ten rebuilds in his time.⁵⁸ The proposal, in 1818, to rebuild the parish church of St Mary's Blackburn, eventually came from Whitaker's friend, vicar of Blackburn Thomas Starkie.⁵⁹ Starkie himself had shown little initiative in the parish beyond letting out glebe land to builders on lucrative long leases and preaching an annual sermon for the girls' charity school.⁶⁰ Whitaker was the likely instigator and may have taken Blackburn Parish on Starkie's death in 1819 in order to ensure a safe continuance of the work. Before his untimely death in 1821 Whitaker was seen as a likely Commissioner.⁶¹ His orthodox political, religious and social views meant that he was an immediate supporter and exploiter of government church building, St Peter's Blackburn being the first Commissioners' church completed in Lancashire in 1821.⁶²

In the 1790s a churchman like Whitaker's stance would have a strong political tinge to it. In 1792 the Bolton Loyalist Association made an attempt to arrest Chorley's Presbyterian magistrate Abraham Crompton on the grounds that he was overheard muttering republican sentiments.⁶³ Ditchfield argued that the Church's committed response to the Dissenter campaign for the Repeal of the Test and Corporation Acts between 1787 and 1790 manifested suspicion of the wider motives behind the campaign and some 'deep hostility'.⁶⁴ Navickas' work on High Church and King Loyalism in south Lancashire showed that High Church clergy and Evangelicals and Methodists combined during the 1790s in facing the threat of the French Revolution and the ideas of Thomas Paine. In Manchester and Bolton co-operation weakened as the Jacobin threat faded and Dissent grew in confidence. Already in 1795 Revd. Cornelius Bayley of Manchester had issued a separate Sunday school catechism and banned the use of Dissenting meeting houses for classes. Anglican Whit

⁵⁶ *Gentleman's Magazine* vol 92 (1822), 107.

⁵⁷ Nichols and Lyons, Introduction to *History of Whalley*, xlvii.

⁵⁸ Rushton, 'Notes' vol 6.

⁵⁹ *Blackburn Mail*, 12 August 1818.

⁶⁰ Miller, *Evolution of a Cotton Town* 20-21; *Blackburn Mail*, 25 January 1797.

⁶¹ BL, Add MS 38272, Liverpool Papers f.82, Law to Liverpool, 10 June 1818.

⁶² B.Lewis, *The Middlemost and The Milltowns* (Stanford, 2001), 39-40; D.Beattie, *Blackburn .A History* (Lancaster, 2007), 235.

⁶³ www.jjhc.info/cromptonabraham18xx.htm, Lt.Harrison to T.Ainsworth, 17 December 1792.

⁶⁴ G.M.Ditchfield, 'Campaign in Lancashire and Cheshire for Repeal of the Test and Corporation Acts, 1787-1790' *THSLC* (1976), 125-7,132.

walks to the Manchester Collegiate Church began in 1801.⁶⁵ These would have some impact on religious practice due to the numbers of people, especially children, brought within Church activity but may also have been off-putting due to the partisanship behind the initiative.⁶⁶

There was a gap in the intensity of assertion in the first decade of the century, although the first provincial 'Church and King' newspaper, the *Liverpool Courier*, was founded in 1807.⁶⁷ The renewed origins of assertiveness in Lancashire and now north of Manchester may be seen, for example, in the setting up of National Schools local committees from 1812, the Blackburn District branch of the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge in 1815, the emergence of St Bees' trained ministers like Jacob Robson after 1816 or the decision to rebuild St Mary's Blackburn in 1818.⁶⁸ Bishop Law's programme for ten Commissioners' churches in 1820 was the most noticeable early step. Large imposing structures where none had been before formed a significant announcement and physical bases from which other associations could grow.⁶⁹ By the time of the first Commissioners' churches in Lancashire, there was an increasing consciousness of the Church's activity. Revd. G Pearson, J.W. Whittaker's university friend, writing in 1824 from a role in Chester cathedral as the impressive Blomfield took up the see, affirmed that it was: 'Impossible to speak too highly of him (*Blomfield*) in every respect...unfailing activity, heart completely in business. You will do something at Blackburn for the S.P.C.K. If we shoulder the wheel in the diocese, I hope it may stir up others with a long pole.'⁷⁰ Blomfield himself communicated the sense of a new beginning through internal reform preparing a church to face up to its rivals. On visitation to Preston in 1825, he averred that, 'The claims on the State were useless unless her (*the Church's*) usefulness was shown' and 'where a resident clergyman was zealous Dissent had not dared to approach!'.⁷¹ Although fervour in assertion may have lessened by 1850, Bishop James Lee of Manchester could still summon a sense of the Anglican counter-reformation when laying the foundation stone of St Peter's

⁶⁵ Navickas, *Loyalism and Radicalism in Lancashire*, 97-101.

⁶⁶ Fielding, 'Whit Walks', *Manchester Regional History Review* 1, 3-4.

⁶⁷ Navickas, *Loyalism and Radicalism in Lancashire*, 109.

⁶⁸ *Blackburn Mail*, 15 April 1812; *Preston Chronicle*, 4 June 1814; LA, PR1549/25/1, SPCK Coucher Book; *Blackburn Mail*, 12th August 1818.

⁶⁹ BL, AddMS 38283, Liverpool Papers f115, Law to Liverpool, 23rd February 1820, 7th April 1820.

⁷⁰ SJC, Whittaker Papers f.12, G.Pearson to J.W.Whittaker, 22 December 1824.

⁷¹ *Preston Pilot*, 6 August 1825, 22 October 1825.

Chorley in 1849. Formerly there had been just two churches in Chorley. He, ‘Thought of hill forts which once covered this land. Our armed forts now were the strongholds of the spirit. They were now met together to build a new fort....more particularly called upon to extend the Church of England as an institution which had long sheltered ourselves and our forefathers’.⁷²

How deep and even the consciousness of assertion ran is debatable. For example, how far did lay people see themselves as part of the Anglican assertion? Visiting societies, particularly encouraged by Bishop Sumner gave them a role, as did Sunday school teaching.⁷³ In 1850 at the foundation of the Manchester Church Building Society, there was a determined effort to include laymen, yet only as a third of the committee.⁷⁴ For their part, parish clergy understood their connection to the bishop but as men in incumbent livings tended to see their role as independent leader of their little empires. Probably a strong but separated incidence of assertion was due to the strong personalities of people like James Slade in Bolton, John William Whittaker in Blackburn and Roger Carus Wilson in Preston. Slade was reluctant to accept an invitation to preach in Blackburn.⁷⁵ Carus Wilson from Preston did try to promote the Bible Society in Blackburn and Chorley in 1817-18 but left well alone when Whitaker and then Whittaker came to Blackburn and Jackson to Chorley.⁷⁶ Because they held vast parishes, Whittaker, Carus-Wilson and Slade could make a wide impact in Lancashire but it does not follow that all their peers did so. The probability is that a regional study needs to become a local one in order to determine the role of the Commissioners’ churches and their clergy in Lancashire parishes.

Another reason for examining the experience of individual parishes, is that some benefited more than others from the Commissioners’ largesse. Snell has shown that over the nineteenth century, the creation of new parishes nationally, although only partly triggered by the establishment of Commissioners’ churches, displayed a rough correspondence to the distribution of population.⁷⁷ However when an analysis of the distribution of Lancashire

⁷² *Preston Chronicle*, 8 September 1849.

⁷³ N.Scotland, *The Life and Work of J. Bird Sumner 1780-1862* (Leominster, 1995), 48.

⁷⁴ Rushton’s ‘Notes’ vol 8, ‘Report on Manchester Diocesan Church Building Society’, 10 October 1851.

⁷⁵ LA, PR1549/28/1, Coucher Book S.P.G. 1819-38, J.Slade to J.W.Whittaker, 19 December 1825.

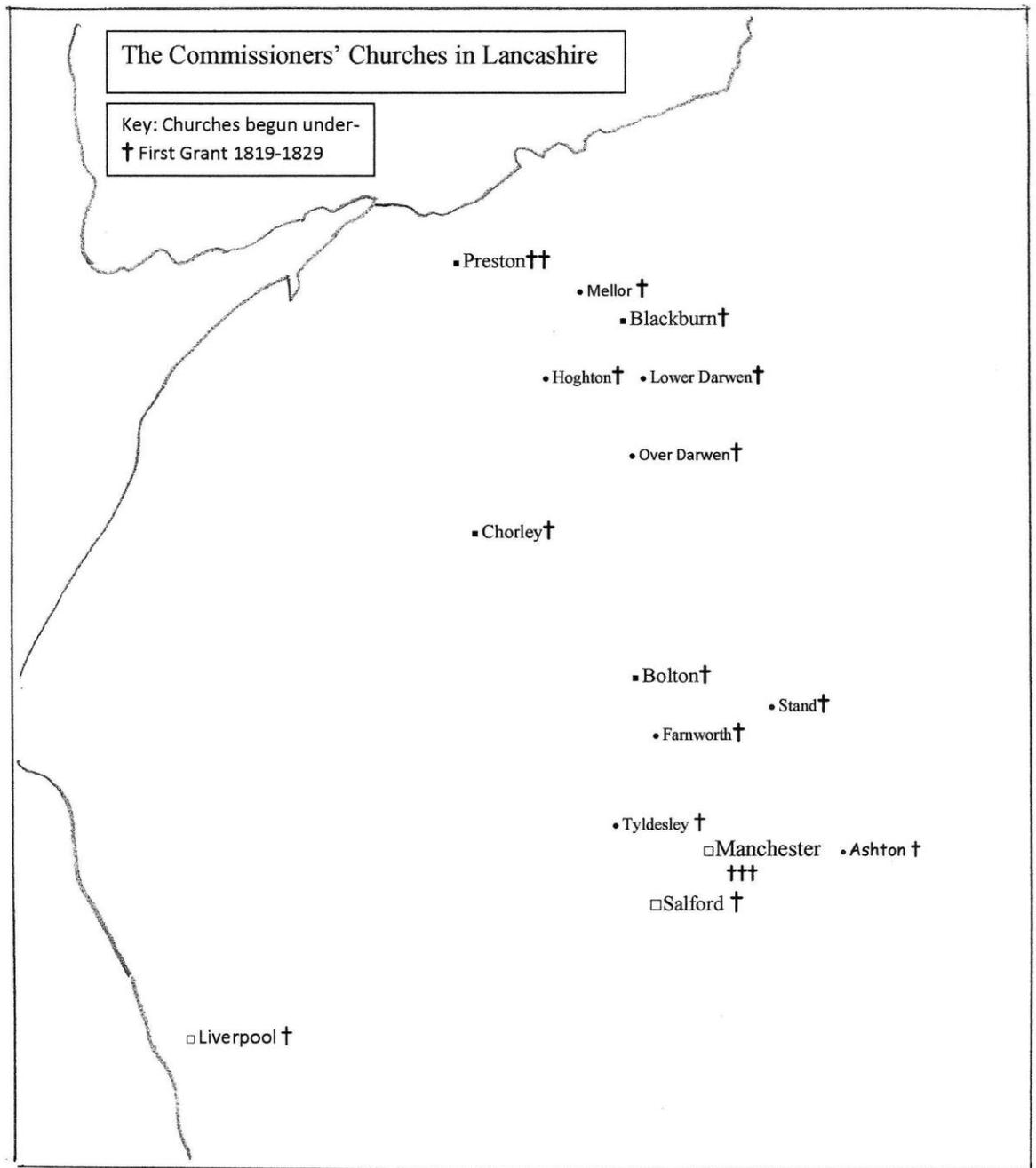
⁷⁶ *Blackburn Mail*, 22 April 1818, 29 April 1818; *Lancaster Gazette*, 2 May 1818.

⁷⁷ Snell, *Parish and Belonging*, 407,410.

Commissioners' churches is made, the incidence of the first wave, up to 1830, is shown not to match the great urban centres. The uneven provision alluded to earlier in this chapter was not addressed. A large part of the explanation may be that Liverpool had experienced a church building wave in the eighteenth century funded by its increasing mercantile wealth. Most significant is, given the existing unbalanced pattern of provision, that the distribution of the Commissioners' churches under the first grant should have been largely confined to a relatively narrow corridor in south central Lancashire. Given this is a cotton manufacturing district in an age of continued industrialisation, also characterised by increasing urbanisation after 1800, it might be expected the sub-region would receive a substantial proportion of attention but not in preference to areas that might have an equal or stronger claim on grounds of new social pressures. This heightens interest in the sub-region and the causes of this 'favouritism'.

Decade	West Lancashire: Liverpool, Wigan	Central Lancashire: Blackburn, Bolton, Deane, Chorley, Standish, Leigh, Winwick	East Lancashire: Whalley, Bury, Prestwich, Rochdale, Oldham, Manchester
1820s	1	11	10
1830s	6	8	6
1840s	3	2	23
1850s	2	2	13

Table 2.3 Geographical Spread of Commissioners' Churches in Lancashire Parishes. *Table constructed from Port Six Hundred New Churches 326-7,334-6.*



Map 2.2 The First Commissioners' Churches in Lancashire, 1818-1829

c) South Central Lancashire: The Local Case Study Approach

If the impact of the Commissioners' churches in Lancashire depended on the amount and location of provision, both under the Church Building Act of 1818 and previous to it, in addition to the quality of local clerical leadership, it is evident that studies at a local level are advisable. Furthermore, how homogenous, in the early nineteenth century, was a region such as the north-west, a diocese like Chester or a county like Lancashire? Support for the Commissioners' churches, could be affected by the socio-economic and religious differentiation between Liverpool and its hinterland, the forty miles around Manchester described by Aikin, and the less populated land north of the Ribble.⁷⁸

The current study began with Chorley in Lancashire and there is sufficient similarity and difference to be found between townships in this area alone to allow a comparative study. The sub-region selected can roughly be described as central southern Lancashire, abutting the western Pennine outliers, following the edge of the old fustian belt, and in the nineteenth century, located in the northern sector of the textile factory belt or Lancashire coalfield. There was little to encourage Anglican assertion in the socio-economic background. Thompson in analysing the Religious Census of 1851, indicated that New Dissent would thrive in new industrial villages with a fast growing population, much like Tyldesley. Upland territory, like Tockholes, especially with sparse previous church provision also favoured nonconformity. The Church of England was better attended in smaller agrarian townships with a dominant landowner, a scarce feature in Lancashire.⁷⁹ Coleman was to endorse these points and Snell and Ell reflected them in a wide-ranging quantitative approach.⁸⁰ Brown described the ambitious parish strengthening processes in *National Churches*.⁸¹ It would seem this 'frontier' in south central Lancashire was a most appropriate, if difficult, place to deploy these.

Ecclesiastically the area fell within the Diocese of Chester and more particularly, from 1843, the Archdeaconry of Manchester which four years later became a diocese. As stated

⁷⁸ J.Aikin, *A Description of the Country from Thirty to Forty Miles Round Manchester* (London, 1795), 299.

⁷⁹ D.M.Thompson, 'The 1851 Religious Census. Problems and Perspectives', *Victorian Studies* 11,1, (September, 1967), 87.

⁸⁰ B.I.Coleman, *The Church of England in the Mid- Nineteenth Century* (Historical Association, 1980), 10-11, 16-19; K.D.M.Snell and P.S.Ell, *Rival Jerusalems* (Cambridge, 2000), 5, 225, 304, 313, 373.

⁸¹ Brown, *National Churches*, vi-viii, 1, 9, 403.

at the outset, the research arose from curiosity concerning St George's Church, Chorley, then in Leyland Deanery of Chester Diocese. The sample also includes Tyldesley St George, consecrated as the Chorley church was in 1825, and Tockholes St Stephen's, consecrated in 1833. The townships, none of them yet towns, were all in what may be termed a denominational frontier area in which the Commissioners' churches could be truly tested, facing stiff competition from Roman Catholicism and both Old Protestant Dissent, including Baptists, Congregationalists, Presbyterians and Unitarians, and the New Methodist movement. There were areas of Roman Catholic presence in the Lancashire plain and the Ribble Valley, linking to a continuing central spine. Langton in 1999 brought out the centrality of Chorley at the heart of this Catholic core.⁸² To the south east, Bolton had been known as the 'Geneva of the North' as the hub of Old Dissent, whereas Methodism had moved along the clothier routes into much of east Lancashire.⁸³ However the exact sectarian dispositions could vary from one neighbouring township to another. For example at the beginning of the nineteenth century Tyldesley had few Catholics but Bedford, another Leigh township, was heavily populated by them. Lower Darwen and Livesey had many a Methodist but Tockholes contained just four.⁸⁴ Thus it was a very irregular frontier geographically but even so, a fluid meeting area of competitive denominations.

The sample comprises places wherein Commissioners' churches were the only new Anglican worship centres, all planted in communities mottled by Dissent and which have not yet received the intense attention paid to the larger Lancashire towns. As described above, there was also the interesting clustering of the first tranche of Commissioners' churches in the area. The differences between the townships and their religious provision are brought out in the separate profiles which follow.

⁸² J.Langton, 'The Continuity of regional culture:Lancashire Catholicism from the late sixteenth century to the early nineteenth century' in E.Royle (ed.), *Issues of Regional Identity. Essays In honour of J.Marshall* (Manchester, 1998), 91-3.

⁸³ A.Crosby, *Lancashire, A History* (Chichester, 1998), 53.

⁸⁴ CALS, EDV7 Mf44/14 4/152 , Enquiries Pre Visitation, Leigh 1811;LA, HO QDV/9/, Return of Dissenters' Meeting Houses 1829, 402,338,83,103,127.

i) St George's Chorley, consecrated 1825

Census Date	Population of Chorley	Other Key Events	Places of Worship
Pre 1801		1793 Chorley becomes an independent parish	15 th Cent. St. Laurence's Chapel (Croston Par.) 1725 Park St. Presbyterian, later Unitarian 1774 Weld Bank Roman Catholic Chapel 1792 Hollinshead St. Countess of Huntingdon Connexion, Congregational from 1805 1792 Chapel St Wesleyan Methodist
1801	4516		
1811	5182		1815 St. Gregory's RC Chapel Weld Bank
1821	7315	1825 National School set up	1821 Back Mount Baptist room 1825 St George's C of E Chapel of Ease 1829 West St Primitive Methodist
1831	9282	1835 St. George's District	1836 St George's St. Independent Chapel
1841	13,139	1847 St. George's takes over National School	1842 Park Road Wesleyan Methodist 1847 Chapel St RC Chapel 1848 Chapel St Particular Baptist
1851	12,684	1856 St. George's Parish	1851 St Peter's C of E Commissioners' 1853 St Mary's RC Church, town centre
In the aftermath of the Commission's work:			
1861	15,031		1866 Cunliffe St Primitive Methodists 1867 Railway St United Free Methodists 1868 Eaves Lane Wesleyan Methodist Church/School
1871	16,864		1875 Sacred Heart RC mission 1879 St James C of E 1879 Birkacre Mission (St. George's)

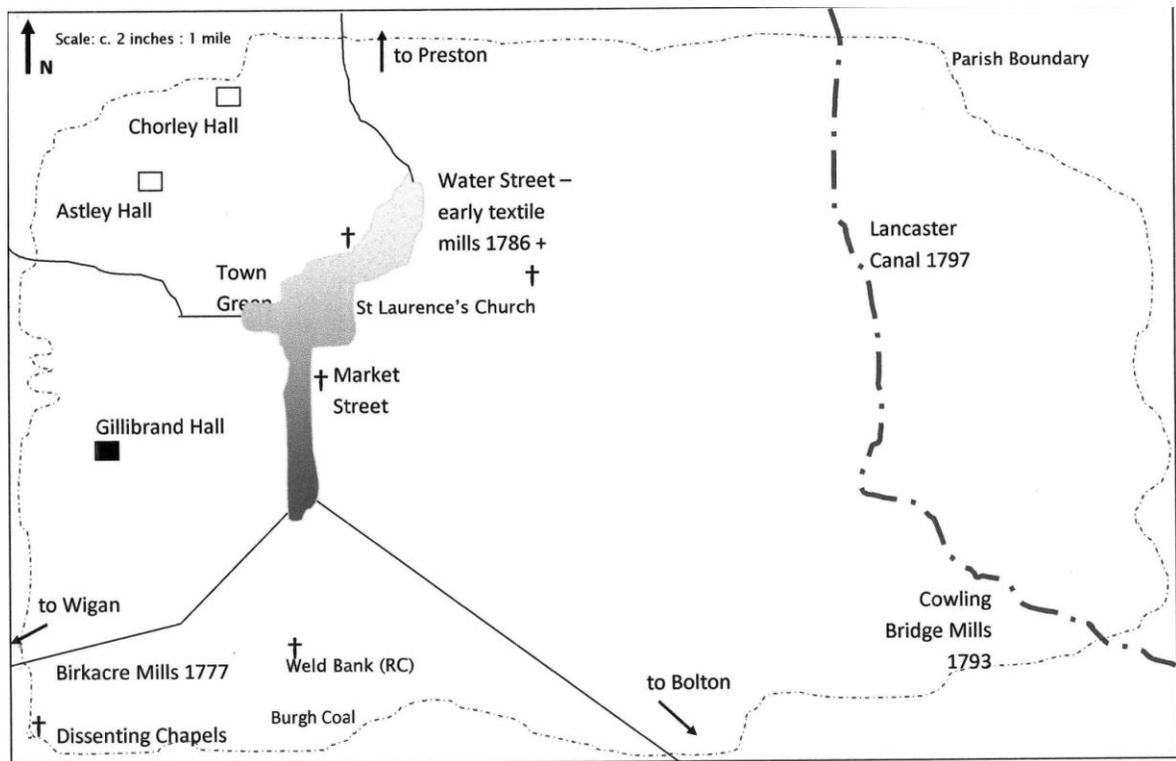
1881	19,478	1881 Chorley Borough. Gillibrand Estate sold off for building.	1884 Heapey Rd Wesleyan Methodist Chapel 1885 Market St Wesleyan Methodist School
1891	23,087		1895 Trinity Wesleyan Methodists 1898 Lyons Lane Independent Methodist Chapel 1900 All Saints C of E School/ church (St George's)
1901	26,852		

Table 2.4: The Growth of Chorley and its Places of Worship in the Nineteenth Century.

Constructed from :*Victoria County History*, vol 6, 138-141;Chorley Library Ephemera File ,J2 Co1-J6 Co1.;
Heyes History of Chorley.

Table 2.4 charts Chorley's growth and places of worship to the end of the nineteenth century. Although this study focuses primarily on the period of the Church Building Commission from 1818 to 1856, it is evident that the Commissioners' church came into a pluralist situation which continued after the Commission was wound up. Setting census figures for total population against the long list of new places of worship in Chorley might suggest a simple expansion of provision in response to perceived demand and competition, chapel of ease Chorley St George being the established church's first step in extension. Chorley's growth since the start of an interest in church extension in 1766, came in three linked phases. In the mid eighteenth century agriculture was still the base of Chorley's economy but the township had a long established market which had expanded beyond the original Town Square site and south of the one Anglican chapel, the fifteenth century St Laurence's. In addition, the domestic textile industry, originally based on linen, felts, fustians and woollens, had increasingly and successfully turned to cotton since 1750. There was a general increase in production before the introduction of bleaching, carding and printing factories.⁸⁵

⁸⁵ E.Baines, *History, Directory and Gazetteer of the County Palatine of Lancaster*, vol 1 (Liverpool, 1824), 601; J.Heyes, *History of Chorley* (Preston,1994), 61.



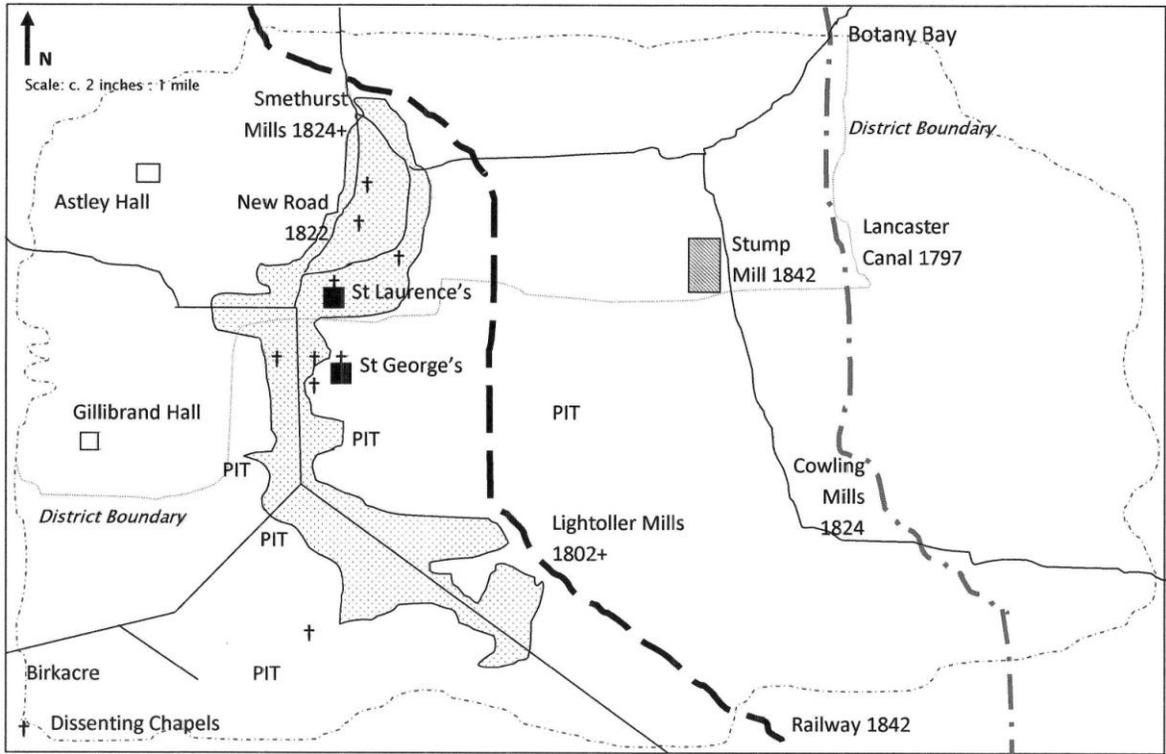
Map 2.3: Chorley in 1798

A second phase of development was marked by the gathering pace of growth in the first half of the nineteenth century. The Lancaster Canal of 1796 lying within a mile of Chorley's centre gave quarrying, mining and textile industries a real fillip.⁸⁶ A new, larger market site was founded in 1826. Additional spinning, then weaving mills were established. Chorley lay at the northern end of the Wigan coalfield and four small pits developed at the centre of the township by 1840. The Bolton and Preston railway in 1840 further encouraged Chorley's growth and by bringing navvies to the township, swelled the census figures in 1841.⁸⁷ In 1853 the ratepayers agreed to the setting up of an Improvement Commission which took over secular considerations from the vestry and eventually took on the guise of a quasi-town council.⁸⁸

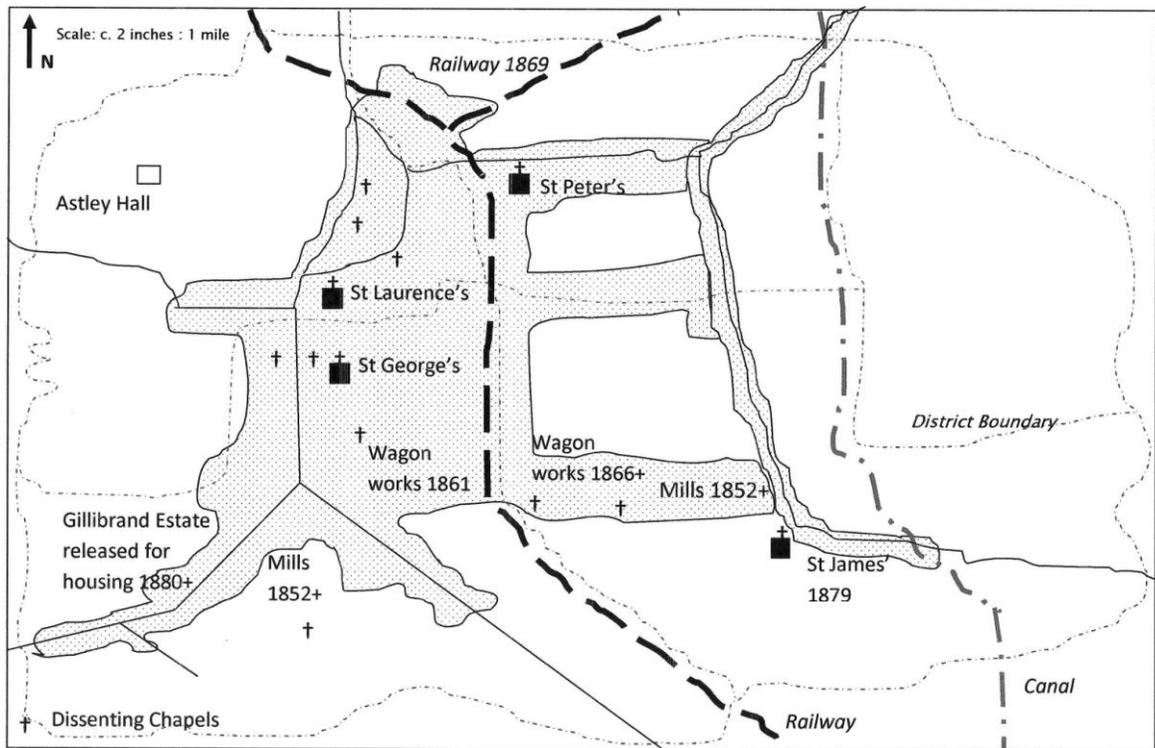
⁸⁶ Heyes, *History of Chorley*, 80,81.

⁸⁷ Heyes, *History of Chorley*, 100, 110,130.

⁸⁸ C. Robinson, *An Historical and Descriptive Account of the Parish of Chorley* (Chorley,1835); Heyes, *History of Chorley*, 115-117.



Map 2.4: Chorley in 1846



Map 2.5: Chorley in 1909

The third period of Chorley's growth, from 1851 to 1901 was nearly as vigorous as the second, demonstrated by the doubling of the population. The 1850s saw ten new weaving mills on the east side of the town centre. Deeper coal mines just beyond the southern parish boundary at Duxbury Park, Ellerbeck and Birkacre also provided employment, as did the Burgh Colliery within. Railway wagon building close to the south east centre of town, and therefore also to St George's Church, provided a major new employer from 1861.⁸⁹ Market Street, some hundred yards from the church, became a diverse commercial centre by 1890.⁹⁰ In governance, after much debate about the cost, Chorley's ratepayers opted to build a new town hall in 1879 and seek incorporation with a town council two years later. A hospital, sewage works, library and new fire station were established by 1900.⁹¹

At the outset of the nineteenth century there were several factors which might make Chorley a successful site for a Commissioners' church. The township had an uncommon homogeneity, in that manor, township and parish followed almost identical borders.⁹² Its 1988 acres were valued at £16,700 by 1824, making it relatively the richest of the three townships selected for case studies. Its genteel and professional classes in 1824 comprised 49 persons, compared with 12 in Tyldesley and 3 in Tockholes. Thus there should have been sufficient financial support to maintain some church extension, although the potential financial support available would be spread between supporters of various Christian persuasions. Of Chorley's 2000 acres Lady Hoghton of Astley Hall, a staunch supporter of the Church of England held over 800 but so did the Catholic Gillibrands.⁹³ If economic and financial power is taken into account, rate books demonstrate once more parity between Hoghton and Gillibrand but also the greater wealth of the Catholic Andertons of Burgh and the Methodist Smethursts of North Mills.⁹⁴ Admittedly the Church interest was strengthening. The Presbyterian Abraham Crompton left Chorley Hall in 1816 and was bought out by Robert Townley Parker who was the son of Lady Hoghton's first husband.⁹⁵

⁸⁹ Heyes, *History of Chorley*, 129,132,188

⁹⁰ Tillotson and Son, *Chorley Directory 1889-90* (Bolton, 1889), 79-81. Market Street comprised 60% shops, 12% crafts and small industries, 10% inns and beershops, 8% banks and agencies, 5% wholesalers.

⁹¹ W.Farrer and J.Brownbill (eds.), *Victoria County History of Lancashire*, vol 6 (London,1911) , 129-149,

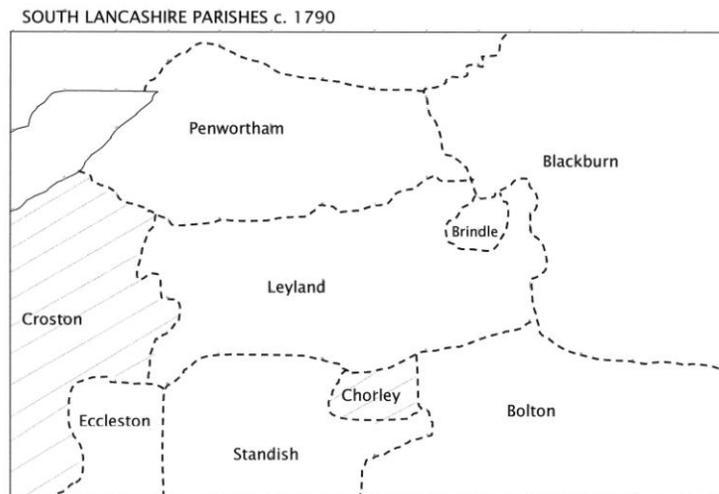
⁹² Heyes, *History of Chorley*, 18

⁹³ E.Baines, *History, Directory and Gazetteer of the County of Lancashire*, vol 1 (Liverpool, 1824), 598,;LA, PR3120/3/6, Chorley Tithes, 1843.

⁹⁴ LA, MBCh 18/4, Chorley Rate book 1818; MBCh 18/6, Chorley Rate Book 1828.

⁹⁵ Baines, *Directory* vol 1, 598, 602; Heyes, *History of Chorley*, 49,68.

Again, there is a local tradition that Thomas Gillibrand of Gillibrand Hall objected to priestly admonition for smoking during worship and withdrew his support from Weld Bank Catholic chapel.⁹⁶ In 1826 his lands passed to the Fazackerley family who became supporters of the established church at St George's.⁹⁷



Map 2.6 South Lancashire Parishes c. 1790

Furthermore, whereas historically there had been little evidence of government in all Lancashire townships, Chorley was perhaps best served amidst the sample with a working vestry from at least 1734 and an ongoing concern of the vestry was a lack of church room.⁹⁸ Dissenters and Catholics participated in the vestry and raised no exception to church extension plans mooted between 1773 and 1818, although they were reluctant to consent to a rate for financing this. Prior to St George's foundation, the Church of England offered St Laurence's, at the northern tip of the town centre and itself a chapel of ease dependent upon Croston until 1793.⁹⁹ The creation of the separate parish of Chorley in that year has been seen as a rational response to the township's growing population, although the following chapter casts some doubt upon this comfortable explanation.

⁹⁶ T.C.Gillett, *The Story of Weld Bank* (Chorley, 1974), 64.

⁹⁷ Heyes, *History of Chorley* 68; LA, PR3123/4/1, St George's Pew Rents, 1837-38.

⁹⁸ LA, DDX1861/1, Chorley Vestry Town Book, 8 March 1804, 5 September 1811, 30 January 1812.

⁹⁹ CALS ,EDV7 Mf44/3/1/246,, Enquiries Pre Visitation, 1778.

Despite these favourable conditions and a potentially increasing constituency due to a growing population, the new Church of England chapel of ease faced some problems. The chosen location may not have been the wisest. The growth of Chorley between 1801 and 1821 was primarily centred upon the existing core and this may well have influenced decisions concerning the siting of church extension. So the first “ Waterloo church”, the chapel of ease dedicated to St George, was placed to the south east of the original Chorley chapel of St Laurence but, for better or worse, within a quarter mile of it. Initially this may have encouraged the chapel of ease’s dependence on, or competition against, the mother church and later placed it at the very northern edge of its eventual parish.

Moreover, in religious terms, in 1804, the Anglican church in Chorley found itself facing three ways, two against two fifths of the population comprising Old and New Dissent.¹⁰⁰ There were already three Dissenting chapels at the heart of the township and a Catholic one at the southern edge. Chorley had retained Catholic families from the Reformation and Old Dissenters from the Commonwealth. Wesleyan Methodists ascribe the arrival of New Dissent to a zeal fired in a handful of Chorley residents subsequent to a Preston street meeting in 1785.¹⁰¹ This religious diversity would suggest a growing Chorley might merit a Commissioners’ church beyond the existing St Laurence’s but the same diversity might lead to a challenge in financing maintenance from the rates. The population growth of the first half of the nineteenth century saw all religious groups increase provision for worship. St George’s was opened in 1825, some thirty years after the first expansion of Dissenter chapels in the township.¹⁰² It was thrust belatedly into a competitive situation, soon heightened by the influx of additional Catholics from Ireland and Methodists amongst the railway workers.¹⁰³ By 1841 the still relatively small groups of Irish born residents in Standish Street and Bolton Street included hawkers, general labourers and some cotton workers; the age of their children born in Lancashire suggests they had begun arriving some

¹⁰⁰ CALS EDV7, Enquiries Pre Visitation

¹⁰¹ ChL, Ephemera File J61Co1, A.Singleton, *Wesleyan Methodism in Chorley with special reference to Trinity Church*, 1.

¹⁰² B.Nightingale, *Lancashire Nonconformity* (Manchester, 1891) vol 2, 12.

¹⁰³ Heyes, *History of Chorley*, 124.

ten years previously.¹⁰⁴ Some thirty years later this entailed St George's Parish containing the majority of the two thousand Catholics in the town.¹⁰⁵

Religious provision continued to increase and diversify in the second half of the nineteenth century, with Methodism in particular evincing an energetic approach. A sampling of the 1871 census of streets in St Georges' parish shows a fairly consistent balance of Chorley born residents, those from neighbouring townships and those from further afield.¹⁰⁶ Sometimes outsiders made a telling contribution to the balance of denominational worship, as supporters from Bolton played a founding role in the establishment of Lyons Lane Methodist Chapel in 1898.¹⁰⁷ Nevertheless, a possible sign that this challenge and competition promoted success rather than decline, was the fact that two additional Anglican parishes were hived off St George's parish by 1878, for much of the industrial growth had taken place in its southern section of Chorley. Further the most significant growth in residential housing was close to St George's. In 1881 half of the Gillibrand estate, bordering on the west side of Market Street and Pall Mall, was sold to builders.¹⁰⁸ It would be tempting to ascribe any success St George's attained in this later period primarily to the determinist influence of the expanding town around its walls.

ii) St. George's Tyldesley, consecrated 1825.

In 1818 Tyldesley was one of six townships in the parish of Leigh. Unlike Chorley, Tyldesley was not an established market site with established manufactories. In 1795 Aikin's "*A Description of the Country from Thirty to Forty Miles Round Manchester*" described the Tyldesley of 1780 as a place of just two farms and nine cottages. In truth, the author was describing the hamlet at the very western edge of Tyldesley with Shakerley township.¹⁰⁹ The township also included outlying farms and cottages at Cleworth, Shakerley, Chaddock and Garrett. It was an undeveloped area and not on a main route from Manchester to Wigan.

¹⁰⁴ HO 107/525/4-8, 6-9, Chorley Census 1841.

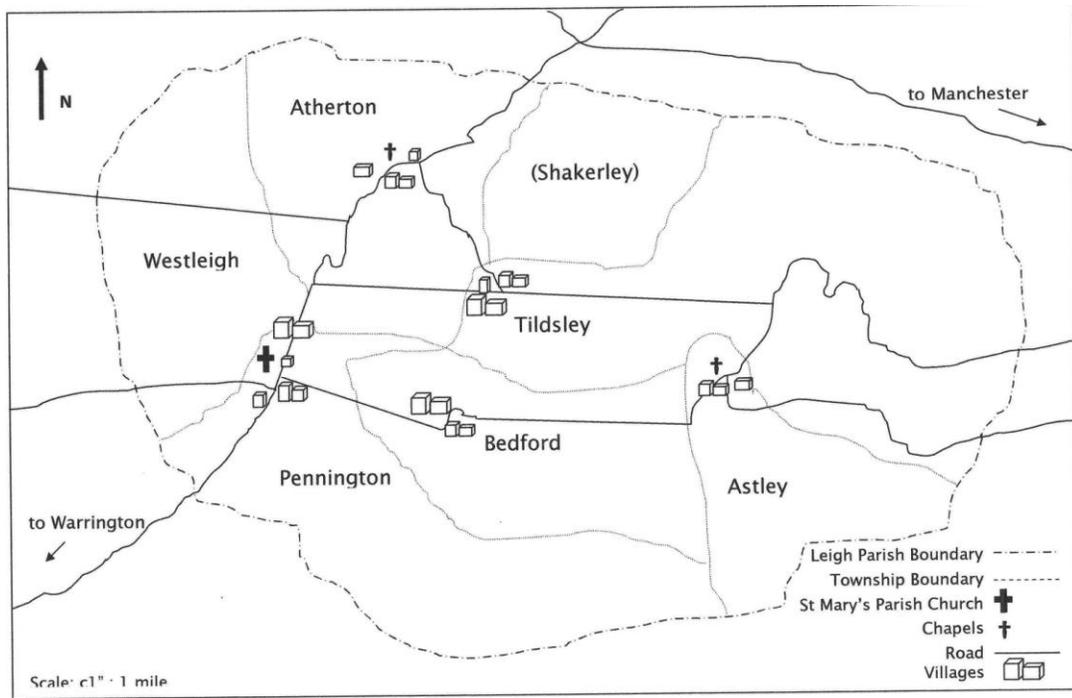
¹⁰⁵ Heyes *History of Chorley* 125; RG10/4197-10,12, Chorley Census 1871.

¹⁰⁶ RG10/4197-10,12, Chorley Census 1871.

¹⁰⁷ ChL, J6 Co1 Ephemera File, *Diamond Jubilee Booklet United Methodist Church*, 1927; J61Co1, R.Lowe, *Methodism in Chorley*; Heyes, *History of Chorley*, 179.

¹⁰⁸ Heyes, *History of Chorley*, 49, 140, 179.

¹⁰⁹ J. Aikin, *A Description of the Country from Thirty to Forty Miles Round Manchester* (Manchester, 1795) 299.



Map 2.7 Leigh Parish and its Six Townships c.1786

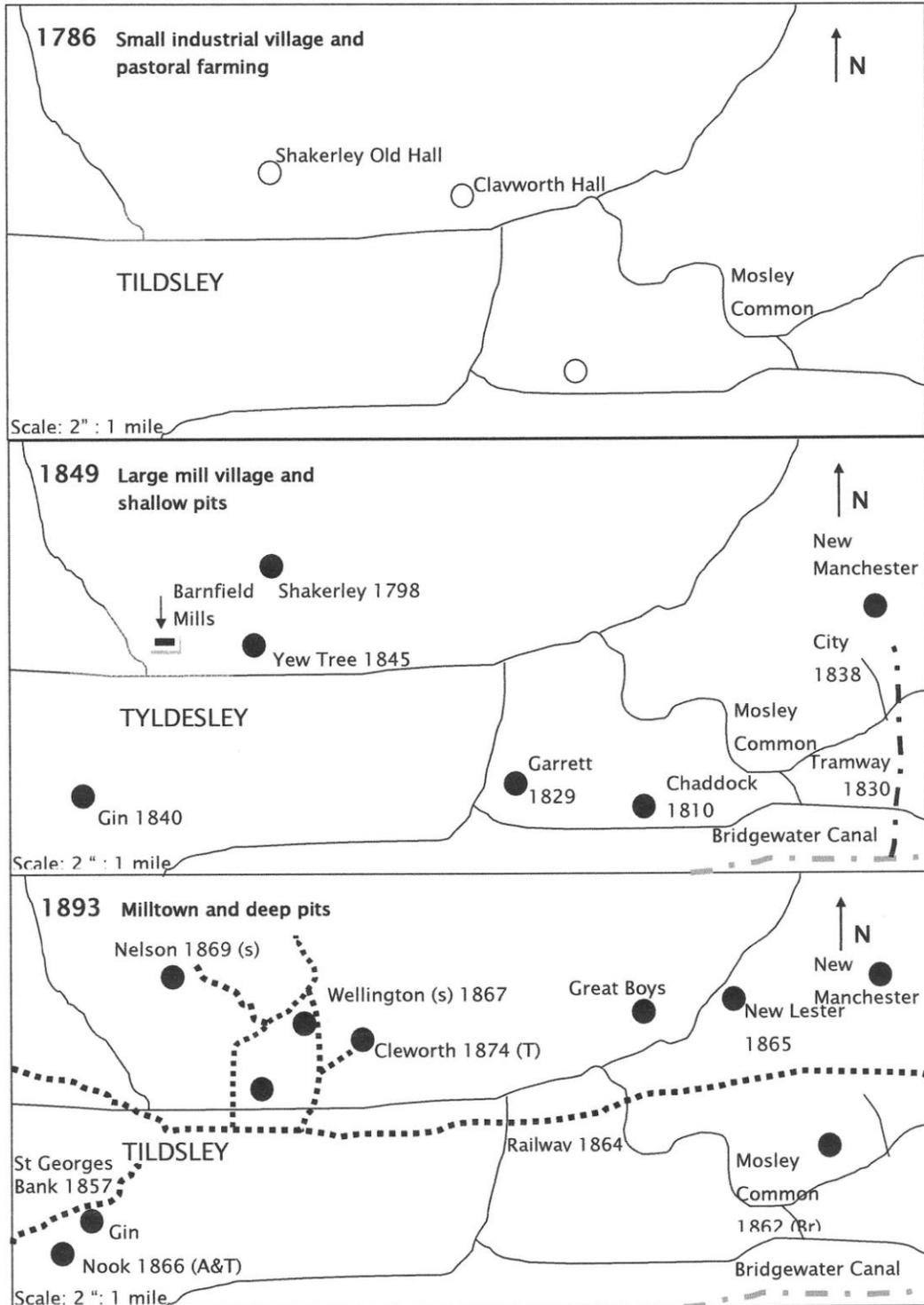
The industrial village of Tyldesley was essentially the creation of one man. If Richard Arkwright established the first successful textile factory at Cromford in 1771, Thomas Johnson was not far behind with Tyldesley.¹¹⁰ He built up an estate of nearly 300 acres at Tyldesley Banks at the western edge of the township and, after 1778, sought actively to develop it. There were many fustian and later, cotton weavers and by 1792 Johnson established at least two carding and spinning factories to supply their yarn. In similar fashion to Arkwright, Johnson needed to build something of an industrial village in order to attract operatives to his factories. Aikin noted that by 1795 there were 162 houses with a population of at least 976, 325 of these being handloom weavers.¹¹¹ Because Tyldesley Banks was something of a ‘blank page’, Johnson was able to lay out a regular grid pattern, the core forming an inverted ‘T’ around the junction of ways in Yates’ Map of 1786 and as a clear rectangular grid in Hennett’s of 1829. A public house, the Flaming Castle, 1776, was one of the first public facilities to appear and the stocks followed in 1784.¹¹² As with Cromford, a church or chapel was not to be a priority.

¹¹⁰ E.Baines, *History, Directory and Gazetteer of the County Palatine of Lancaster* (Liverpool, 1824) vol 2, 49 ; J.P.Hess, *George Ormerod, Historian of Cheshire* (Whitchurch, 1989), 69.

¹¹¹ Aikin, *A Description*, 299-300.

¹¹² J.Lunn, *A New History of Tyldesley* (Tyldesley, 1953), 97.

TYLDESLEY (with SHAKERLEY) c 1786 – 1893

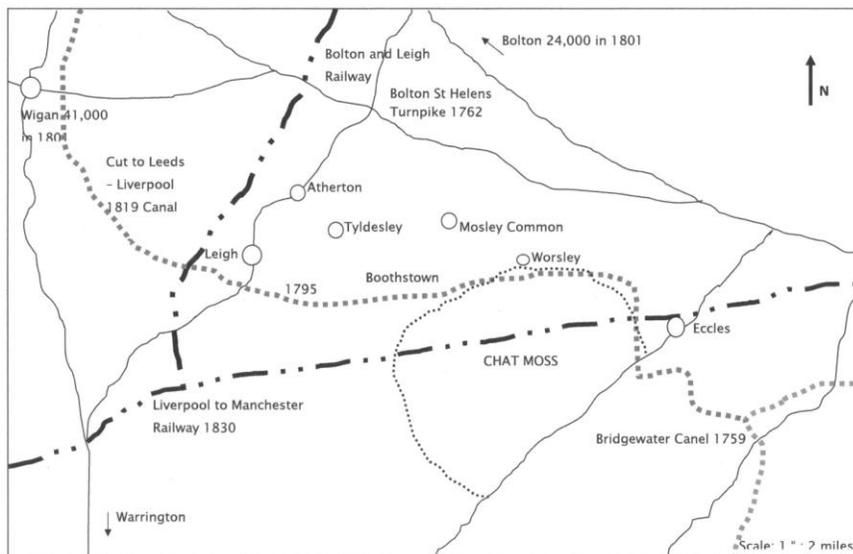


Map 2.8 The Growth of Tyldesley in the Nineteenth Century

A second wave of growth turned Tyldesley Banks, by 1841, into a large mill village of some dozen manufactories and a collection of shallow pits dispersed across the township. Thomas Johnson had decided to sell off 999 year long leases for others to build on. Entrepreneurs from beyond Tyldesley found this attractive, along with the relatively high and airy position, the plentiful good water for mill lodges or bleaching and the coal measures at the north west of the Manchester coalfield.¹¹³ The population figure for 1841 indicates a temporary setback in Tyldesley's growth, occasioned by a serious decline in handloom weavers' prospects, the 1837 slump affecting textile spinning, and the comparative distance of the coal pits from the greater urban markets. The Bridgewater Canal extension passed by in Bedford and Westleigh townships two miles to the south, with the Liverpool Manchester Railway beyond.

Census date	Tyldesley population
1801	3009
1811	3492
1821	4325
1831	5038
1841	4718

Table 2.5 Population Figures for Tyldesley 1801-1841



Map 2.9 Tyldesley's Location in relation to major towns and routes, 1770-1830

¹¹³ J.P.Hess, George Ormerod, *Historian of Cheshire* (Whitchurch, 1989) 13; S. Lewis, *A Topographical Dictionary of England*, vol. iv (London, 1831), 344.

Census Year	Population of Tyldesley
1851	5398
1861	6029
1871	6408
1881	9954

Table 2.6 Tyldesley's Population 1851-81

After 1860 new growth across the township came with new technologies allowing deeper coal shafts to be driven. Of particular importance, in 1864, was the creation of the Eccles-Wigan Railway and the Tyldesley loop to the Liverpool and Manchester line. Colliery sidings sprang from it allowing ready transportation for the Astley and Tyldesley, Tyldesley, and Shakerley Companies. In addition, the Bridgewater Trust developed Mosley Common colliery well to the east of Tyldesley town but within the township. These pits were deep ones, seriously large concerns contrasting with the smaller, earlier pits under Chorley's town centre. There was a flood of in-migrants, especially from North Wales. Simultaneously Barnfield Mills, another major employer developed around the site of the old Resolution Mill in Tyldesley town.¹¹⁴

The arrival of a small town necessitated increased government beyond the township vestry. In 1863 the Tyldesley Local Board was created. Gas works (1865), a cemetery (1876), swimming baths (1876), fire station and a town hall (1881) were to follow.¹¹⁵ Slater's Directory of 1865 still referred to Tyldesley as 'a large industrial village'.¹¹⁶ Even by 1901 the total population of some 15,000 represented a ceiling for the town. It is significant that, although Tyldesley joined with Astley as an urban district council in 1933, the local government reorganisation of 1974 deemed Tyldesley a mere part of Wigan and Leigh metropolitan borough.¹¹⁷ Nevertheless Tyldesley, in three phases, had grown from a rural backwater to a sprawling industrial township. Its growth to some degree mirrored that of Chorley but this was from a much lower base and owed a larger debt to coal. The position

¹¹⁴ Tyldesley UDC, *Official Guide and Industrial Review* (Tyldesley, 1970), 9-12.

¹¹⁵ F.F. Kelly, *Directory of Lancashire* (London, 1892), 856-7.

¹¹⁶ I. Slater, *Royal National Commercial Directory of Lancashire* (Manchester, 1865), 809-810.

¹¹⁷ *Tyldesley Official Guide*, 9-12.

of the mines caused a township of related but dispersed settlements to appear; Chorley was more concentrated.

Again, the expansion of the numbers of churches and chapels in Tyldesley may be seen as a natural response to growth. In the eighteenth century, Tyldesley had no Anglican place of worship. The parish church at Leigh was two and a half miles away to the south-west, astride the borders of Pennington and Westfield townships, offering two outlying chapels of ease in Astley and Atherton, which were not more than a mile and a half away from Tyldesley. The rapid creation of Tyldesley Banks offered both opportunity and challenge to the established church. However, the vicars of Leigh, answering the Bishop of Chester's pre- visitation enquiries between 1778 and 1821, demonstrate a blend of complacency, fatalism and inaction. In the parish, Bedford was half Catholic, while Atherton was half Presbyterian. Tyldesley's first chapel, in the very centre of the Banks village, known as Top Chapel, was of the Countess of Huntingdon's Connexion.¹¹⁸ Thomas Johnson, a churchman, had provided the site, some bricks and £200 to the chapel-builders. It may seem curious that a committed churchman like Johnson would be happy to do so. Probably, in 1789, he saw no reason to refuse a request from the supplicants, could see the social advantages of any chapel and was pleased someone else was paying for the construction. The chapel used the Prayer Book service and was still doing so in 1851.¹¹⁹

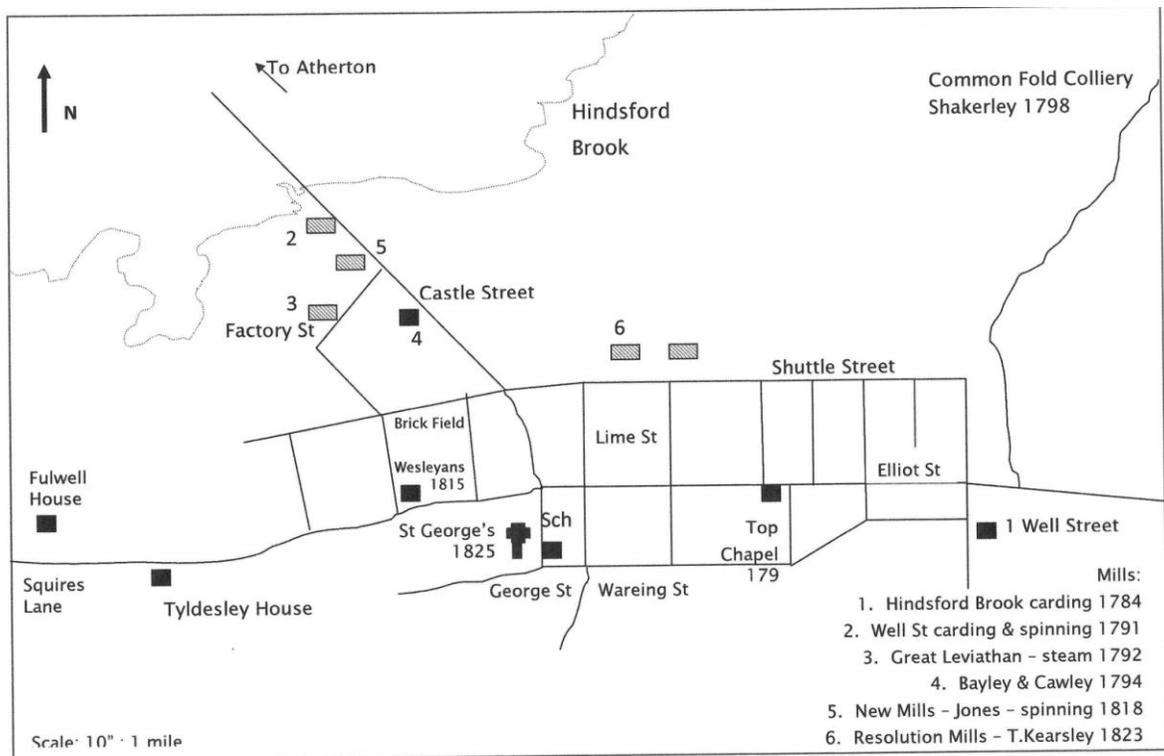
Although he could have chosen to make the first Tyldesley Banks a 'closed' village, the decision to let land on long lease soon after 1780, meant manufacturers of various persuasions built mills and attracted workers in the first half of the nineteenth century, thereby providing competition for St George's when it became the township's first Anglican church in 1825.¹²⁰ Ratebooks from the 1840s show ownership and wealth spread across multiple owners. For example in 1841 there were 58 owners dividing the 1034 properties listed, even though the more significant with between 5 and 13 holdings were known churchmen Lord Egerton, James Burton, George Ormerod and Thomas Kearsley.¹²¹

¹¹⁸ CALS, Mf44 EDV7/1/191, 12/3/292,14/4/152,21/6/87,21/7/340, Enquiries PreVisitation, Leigh 1778-1825.

¹¹⁹ HO129, 467.

¹²⁰ Lunn, *A New History of Tyldesley*, 100,106,120.

¹²¹ WAS, TTy C2/2/3, Tyldesley Ratebook, 30 April 1841.



Map 2.10 Tyldesley and its Places of Worship, 1828.

After 1860 new growth across the township could have produced a larger congregation for St George's and led to the establishment of satellites. However pluralism was only enhanced by the development of deep mines in the second half of the century. The in-migrant miners, especially the Welsh, were often seriously committed to nonconformity, forming an additional challenge to the Anglican position in Tyldesley.¹²² Given the absence of a Catholic church in Tyldesley until 1897 it would also be easy to overlook the groups of Irish born Catholics in Tyldesley Banks itself, particularly in streets bordering the Hindsford Bridge area of Atherton to the west where there was a Catholic chapel from 1869.¹²³ The continuing and widening pluralism of the later nineteenth century made it wise to chart the fortunes of the St George Tyldesley beyond the life of the Commission which gave it life. A church which thrived for merely a generation would hardly be a success.

¹²² Lunn, *A New History of Tyldesley*, 138,146.

¹²³ Lunn, *Tyldesley* 147; HO127/2205/467-1, Tyldesley Census 1851;RG10/3916-10,11 Tyldesley Census 1871; Lunn , *Tyldesley*, 134.

Existing in 1748: Leigh Parish Church (two and a half miles distant from Tyldesley Banks; Atherton and Astley outlying chapels of Leigh, each a mile and a half from Tyldesley.)

1748	First of four preaching visits by John Wesley	Tyldesley
1753	Dissenters' Meeting Room, Tyldesley- John Hindley	Tyldesley
1770	Dissenters' Meeting Room Shakerley Common- Joseph Hindle	Shakerley Common
1778	Estimate that 1000 Presbyterians, 100 Methodists, 100 Catholics in Leigh Parish	
1789	Tyldesley Top Chapel- Lady Huntingdon Connexion	Tyldesley
1795	Dissenters' "New building" Tyldesley	Tyldesley
1805-1819	Visiting preacher Tom Jackson from Wharton Methodists	Tyldesley
1807	Well Street Wesleyan Methodists- Thomas Radcliffe's room	Tyldesley
1810	"Ranters" or Primitive Methodists meeting room	Mosley Common
1815	Lower Elliot Street Wesleyan Methodist Chapel	Tyldesley
1821	New Jerusalem Swedenborgians- meeting room	Tyldesley
1822	Mosley Common School- Anglican	Mosley Common
1825	St. George's Church	Tyldesley
1826	Primitive Methodist Chapel	Mosley Common
1827	Primitive Methodist Meeting Room- John Halliwell's Shuttle Street	Tyldesley
1849	Wesleyan Methodist Sunday School	Boothstown, nearby
1859	Primitive Methodist Chapel Shuttle Street	Tyldesley
1866	Temperance Hall	Tyldesley
1869	Sacred Heart Roman Catholic Church	Atherton but serves Tyldesley
1870	Congregational Chapel, High Street	Tyldesley
1871	Anglican Day School and mission, Johnson Street	Tyldesley
1878	Welsh Baptists, wooden chapel Shuttle St.	Tyldesley
1880	Welsh Methodists, iron chapel Milk Street	Tyldesley
1892	Darlington Street Anglican mission school	Tyldesley
1893	Independent Methodists, Primrose Street	Tyldesley
1894	Welsh Baptists Shuttle Street new brick chapel	Tyldesley
1897	Holy Family, Roman Catholic Church	Boothstown, nearby

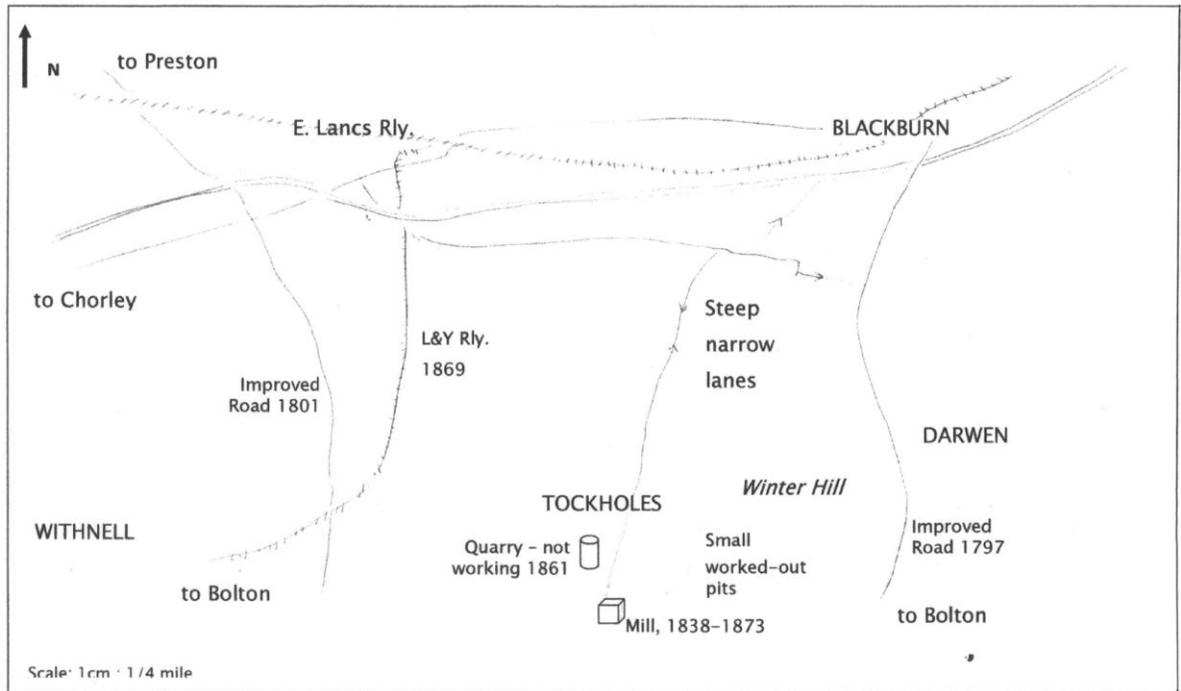
Table 2.7 Chronology of Places of Worship, Tyldesley with Shakerley, c.1750-1900

iii) *Tockholes St Stephen, consecrated 1833*

This third and final case study examined a Commissioners' Church later and smaller than the churches in Tyldesley and Chorley. Like the chapel of St Michael's it replaced, St Stephen's played a subordinate role within Blackburn Parish. Its heartland was a fairly remote, small township and both economic development in neighbouring townships and administrative decisions in the mother parish, meant that its status was minimised and its fate determined externally. Tockholes covered nearly 2000 acres but with just 168 houses and 758 people in 1804.¹²⁴ It described a rough triangle with its southern apex pressed into rugged moorland and its wide northern base being pasture land. Population was scattered around farms and cottages. Handloom weaving, allied with small scale coal mining and quarrying, was a complementary occupation to agriculture. Cotton printing occurred between 1805 and 1818 at Halliwell Fold. Power loom weaving took place from 1838 to 1872 at Redmayne's Victoria Mill and also at Hollinshead Mill, intermittently between 1859 and 1903. Several packhorse routes ran east-west through Tockholes but none of the turnpike roads linking those real towns of Blackburn, Preston and Bolton found their way to the township. The Leeds-Liverpool Canal ran, by 1816, tantalisingly close at Withnell but two miles distant. With particular difficulty experienced by handloom weavers, the population declined from 1826.¹²⁵

¹²⁴ CALS, EDV Mf44/15 4/232, Enquiries Pre Visitation, 1804.

¹²⁵ W. Farrer and J. Brownbill (eds.), *The Victoria County History of Lancaster* vol. 6 (London, 1911) 280-4; J.C. Jacklin and L.M. Robinson, *Tockholes, A Time Warp* (Tockholes, 2003), 92-4, 105, 116.



Map 2.11 Tockholes, The By-Passed Township 1780-1873.

Census date	Population of Tockholes
1801	758
1811	960
1821	1269
1831	1124
1841	1031
1851	938
1861	820
1871	646
1881	484
1891	448
1901	496

Table 2.8 The Population of Tockholes in the Nineteenth Century

Subsequent to the second decade of the nineteenth century the township would not find it easy to support a new church. Furthermore government was less evident than in Chorley and Tyldesley. The township poor law administration functioned through two or three overseers of the poor and two non-resident JPs.¹²⁶ In contrast to Tyldesley in 1800 it did have St Michael's, a parochial chapel belonging to the sprawling Blackburn Parish and this was separately endowed with an incumbent sometimes loosely named 'vicar' rather than 'curate'. Churchwardens could have been elected to Blackburn Parish, although in 1830 the incumbent curate claimed that none of the latter had appeared in living memory.¹²⁷ Quixotically it did have a self-appointed 'hereditary' churchwarden in William Pickering.¹²⁸ The vicar of Blackburn eventually involved the lord of the manor, Lawrence Brock Hollinshead in church affairs.¹²⁹ The major problem for St Michael's was that it was admitting the elements and in imminent danger of falling down.¹³⁰ Another significant weakness was the failure of several recent curates to reside; one could not even be troubled to sign some sketchy, scrawled returns for the bishop's pre-visitation enquiries in 1811.¹³¹ Further, Tockholes chapelry was awkwardly linked with the neighbouring township of Livesey, separate for Poor Law purposes since 1668, and even had pewholders from Withnell which was in a different parish and hundred, that of Leyland.

Paradoxically, these customary links with Livesey and Withnell meant that the catchment area assigned to St Stephen's in 1833 contained a populace of near 4000, which justified establishing a Commissioners' church. In 1842, when Tockholes became linked with a part of Livesey and also a section of Lower Darwen, there was still a relatively large district with nearly 2500 souls.¹³² Later, by 1877, church extension in these contiguous townships and administrative changes tipped the balance against Tockholes.¹³³

¹²⁶ LA, PR2761/1, Tockholes Parish Papers, Listing of Overseers of the Poor.

¹²⁷ CERC, ECE7/1/15217/1, Church Building File, Petition, 30 April 1830.

¹²⁸ LA, PR1549/29/7, Tockholes Coucher Book, J.W. Whittaker to Bishop of Chester, 2 June 1831.

¹²⁹ LA, PR1549/29/2, Coucher Book, Brock-Hollinshead to J.W. Whittaker, 9 January 1823.

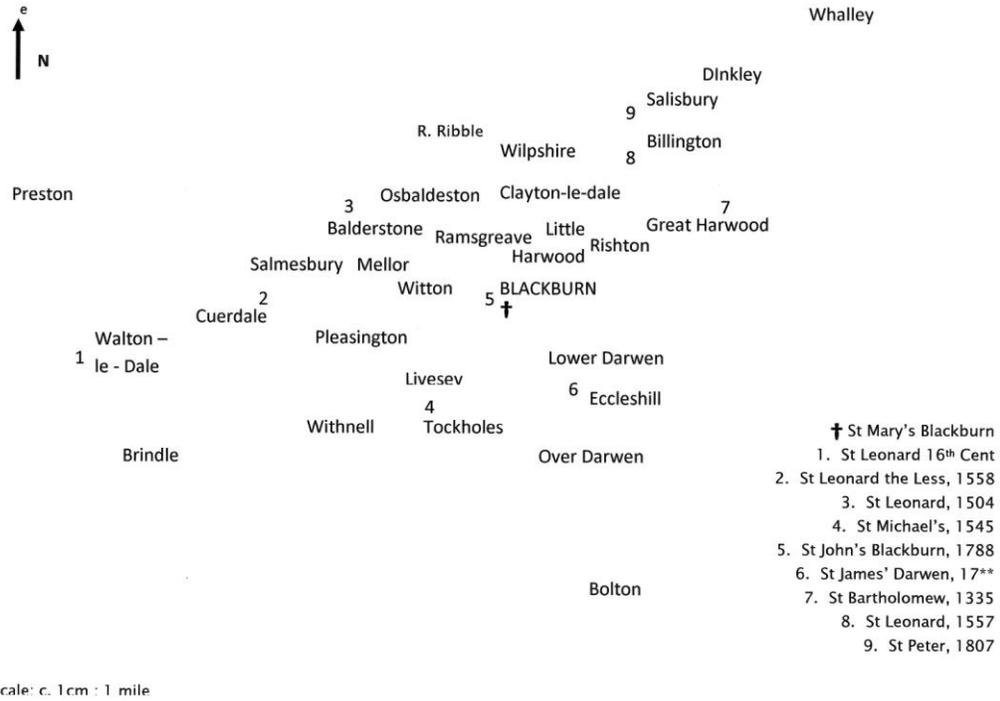
¹³⁰ CALS, EDV7 Mf44/10/53, Enquiries Pre Visitation, 1791.

¹³¹ CALS, EDV7 Mf44/15 4/232, Enquiries Pre Visitation, 1811.

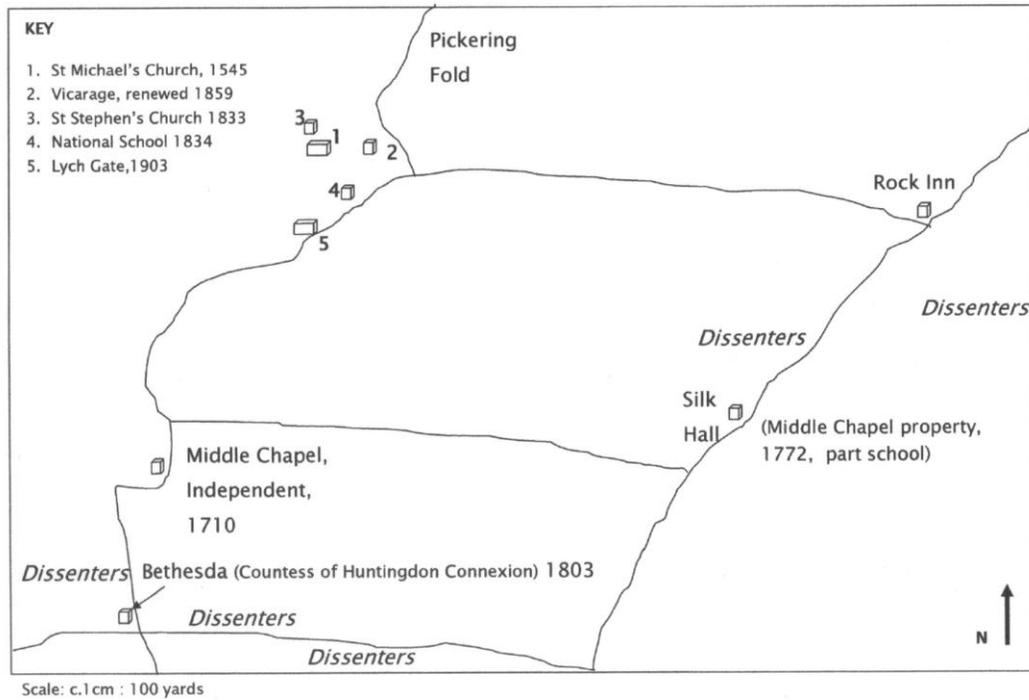
¹³² *London Gazette*, 3 May, 1842.

¹³³ LA, PR3149/14/9, Tockholes Parish Papers, Memoir re Tockholes Church, 1879.

Blackburn Parish c 1818: 1 Parish, 22 Townships, Parish Church & 9 Chapels



Map 2.12 Tockholes in Blackburn Parish c. 1818



Map 2.13 Church and Chapels in Tockholes 1833

As Map 2.13 indicates, the most significant challenge for the Anglican church arose from a tradition of Dissent. Tockholes history included two Presbyterian ministers during the Commonwealth period and, uncommonly, a later seventeenth century accommodation between Anglicans and Dissenters which for two generations allowed alternative use of St Michael's.¹³⁴ In the early nineteenth century Tockholes was a centre of committed Independence, its adherents vaguely estimated at a third of the population in 1804.¹³⁵ Analysis of ratebooks shows that Independents were spread all over the township but with significant clusters around the two chapels, a row of chapel- owned cottages and the remote Back of Wintry Hill. Both Anglican and Independent interests had their share of substantial and lesser farmers and were represented across all occupational groups and ages.¹³⁶ This reflects the pattern from the pre visitation enquiries of 1778 which noted 45 'Presbyterian' householders out of 70 in total.¹³⁷ Later, the Tockholes curates seriously underestimated these numbers, in 1825 alleging there were very few Dissenters.¹³⁸ Catholics, in contrast to Chorley and Tyldesley, were not represented in Tockholes and numbered just 25 in Livesey.

The previous weakness of the Anglican church and presence of strong Dissent would make it both a target and a test for a committed vicar of Blackburn, especially with a declining population by 1831. One historian to look closely at the nineteenth century history of Tockholes adjudged it was certainly not a closed, controlled community. It was not a model or factory village but rather an isolated one, if within five miles of cotton towns.¹³⁹ It may have benefitted from retaining a sole incumbent from 1833 to 1856. Despite the difficulties mentioned above, the church maintained an active congregation until the end of the twentieth century. This was despite two significant changes in ecclesiastical boundaries which lessened the number of souls included in the Tockholes district.¹⁴⁰ Neither could Tockholes be classed a suburban villa environment ripe for Anglican consolidation. How far do unfavourable contexts always condition the amount of success?

¹³⁴ *Victoria County History* vol 6, 283.

¹³⁵ CALS, EDV7 Mf44/14 4/232, Enquiries Pre Visitation 1804.

¹³⁶ LA, PR2761/18-24, Tockholes Ratebook 1838-1844; PR2765/2b ,Tockholes Population Book.

¹³⁷ CALS, EDV7 Mf44/3/1/22, Enquiries Pre Visitation 1778.

¹³⁸ CALS, EDV7/7 Mf44/22 7/48, Enquiries Pre Visitation, 1825.

¹³⁹ L.R.Parker, 'Forgotten Lancashire', unpublished PhD thesis, University of Lancaster (2008), 115-9,304.

¹⁴⁰ *Victoria County History* vol 6, 47-49.

d) The Local Sources

Therefore the three case studies tracked the fortunes of three Commissioners' churches in similar yet also differing socio-economic and religious contexts. Although, unclear at the outset of the research, the sub-region they were located within, had the interesting feature of being one which attracted the vast majority of the first tranche of Commissioners' churches. A further consideration in continuing with the selected sample was that sufficient and sometimes ample sources were available. The enquiry into motivation used public papers such as parish bundles, church building files and visitations, in addition to private papers such as Bishop Blomfield of Chester's Notebook (1824-28) and the family correspondence of J.W. Whittaker, the vicar of Blackburn (1822-1854).¹⁴¹ An attempt was made to measure the impact of the churches using statistics from the 1851 Religious Census, school returns and communicant lists.¹⁴² One deficiency in the source material was the lack of a Census return in 1851 for individual Chorley churches. This afforded a useful lesson in beginning with the source rather than a subject but the fun in finding other evidence and ruminating on the reasons for absence of enumerator records for 1851 proved welcome compensation. Material of a less quantitative nature has come from the regional press, parish magazines and minute books of Dissenter congregations.¹⁴³ Although the main focus has been on the churches' experience during the Church Building Commission years, they have been tracked until 1900, in order to allow a fair assessment and also to take into account the changing contexts. Initially a detailed case study was written up on each of the three townships.

Some of the literature described in Chapter One touches upon Lancashire and in some cases makes reference to church building in one of the large towns. Beyond this there are general accounts of the development of a particular church, sometimes with an uncritical use of material to hand, for example Wilson on St Laurence's Chorley, the mother church for St

¹⁴¹ LPL, Mf19, Bishop Blomfield's Notebook 1824-28 ; SJCL, Whittaker Family Papers; WAS, D/DZ EHC/204-220, Hall Collection; MA, MSf 929/2/W126 ,Whittaker Papers 1783-1817; BbL, G3WHI, Whittaker Papers.

¹⁴² LA, HO129/466-7,480-1 Enumerators' Returns Religious Census 1851; QDV9/ Returns re non- C.of E. Places of Worship /83-134, 139-177, 335-402; CALS, EDV7/ Mf44, Enquiries Pre Visitation Chester Record Office; MA, MSf 942.72.r121, Archdeacon Rushton's Visitation 1845, vols. 8, 19, 34-35; LA, Parish Papers PR1549, 2756-65, 3120, 3123, 3149, DDX1861/1-3.

¹⁴³ Newspapers chiefly used :*Blackburn Mail, Preston Pilot, Leigh Chronicle, Chorley Standard.*

George's or Cornish's guide to St George's itself¹⁴⁴. I produced a similar short monograph on the history of St George's Parish to 2009.¹⁴⁵ This was followed by a short article outlining initial work in progress on the current thesis.¹⁴⁶ Allred and Marsh authored a brief history of St George's Tyldesley.¹⁴⁷ Hess affords a good account of George Ormerod and his uncle Thomas Johnson, both key founders of St George's Tyldesley in *George Ormerod, Historian of Cheshire*.¹⁴⁸ There are some existing general histories of the relevant townships, such as Heyes' *History of Chorley*, Lunn's *History of Tyldesley* and Jacklin and Robinson on *Tockholes: A Timewarp*. Taylor gives a political context from the neighbouring town of Bolton and Paz some useful material on inter-denominational tension in the Leigh area, as did C.S.Ford on Manchester Diocese.¹⁴⁹ Added to related unpublished theses and contemporary directories and newspapers, they provide much material for the important socio-economic and political background which sets the context for the Waterloo churches¹⁵⁰. However the existing literature did leave the opportunity to look specifically at motivation and impact, and to determine the role of the churches in a local and regional context.

e) Themes Emerging and The Structure of the Thesis

Several issues emerged from the initial national, regional and local survey. A continuing theme concerns causation and motivation and Chapter 3 focuses on the local reasons behind the founding of the Commissioners' churches. Were they simply an imposition from above? The reference this chapter has made to T.D.Whitaker suggests local initiative played something of a role. Was church extension in the area linked solely to the High Church party? Secondly what were the paramount motives of the drivers and supporters

¹⁴⁴ J.Wilson, *Chorley Church* (Edinburgh, 1901); E.M.J.Cornish, *The Story of the Parish Church of St. George, Chorley* (Gloucester, 1971).

¹⁴⁵ SGC, W.Walker, 'The Making of a Parish' – for Heritage Open Days 2008 (Chorley, 2008).

¹⁴⁶ W.Walker, 'The Commissioners Churches on a Lancashire Religious Frontier- Vital Bastions of a Nineteenth Century Anglican "Counter Reformation" ?', *THSLC*, 163 (2014), 127-132.

¹⁴⁷ L.Allred and J.Marsh, *The Parish Church of St. George, Tyldesley* (Blackburn 1975).

¹⁴⁸ J.P.Hess, *George Ormerod, Historian of Cheshire* (Whitchurch, 1989), 12-23,28,67-82.

¹⁴⁹ P.Taylor, *Popular Politics in Early Industrial Britain: Bolton 1825-1850* (Keele, 1995); D.G.Paz *Popular anti-Catholicism in Mid-Victorian England* (Stanford, 1992), 145-147; C.S.Ford, *Pastors and Polemicists. The Role of Popular Anglicanism in South East Lancashire 1847-1914* (Manchester, 2002).

¹⁵⁰ L.B.Natras, 'The Governing Elite of Chorley', unpublished MA thesis, University of Lancaster (1974); K.P.C.Thorne, 'The Development of Education in Chorley and District, 1800-1902', unpublished M.Litt. thesis, University of Lancaster (1970).

behind local Commissioners' churches and how far did they reflect a national or diocesan rationale?

The other major theme concerns impact. Were the churches hampered from the outset? Chapter 4 examines the view in much historical writing that the churches were lacking in quality. Were the buildings characterised by defective building or poor design and aesthetics? Chapter 5 asks whether or not finance for equipment, maintenance and staffing was adequate? Examining the tortuous process of establishing and maintaining the Commissioners' churches will contribute to the economic history of the nineteenth century Church of England, a topic Snell considered required more attention.¹⁵¹ What effect did these churches have in an area of such diversity with a plethora of places of worship established by various sects becoming denominations? This is investigated in Chapter 6. Chapter 7 assesses the degree to which their advent created conflict and confusion due to consequent changes in parochial structure? In the most recent major work on parish life Snell pointed out that the architecture of new churches had received a lot of attention but the attendant parish creation was neglected.¹⁵² In a review of *Parish and Belonging* McLeod called for studies in the religious dimension of new parish identities emerging by the later nineteenth century.¹⁵³ If the Commissioners' churches did have an overall positive impact, what were the factors that produced this? Therefore the main chapters explore these issues using material from the case studies of townships in the sub region of south central Lancashire where the initial incidence of the Commissioners' churches was so marked.

A concluding section, solely chapter 8, aims both to draw together points emerging and to range more widely. In the end, was reality totally divorced from aspiration? Did the churches play a major role in an important assertion of Anglicanism in Lancashire, originating well before the well known Oxford Movement or reform readily acknowledged to have begun in the 1830s.¹⁵⁴ If they did, how does the experience of a handful of townships in south central Lancashire fit into the historical continuum through time.

¹⁵¹ K.D.M.Snell and P.S.Ell, *Rival Jerusalems* (Cambridge Virtual Publication, 2003), 358.

¹⁵² K.D.M Snell, *Parish and Belonging*, 373.

¹⁵³ H.McLeod, Review of *Parish and Belonging*, *Catholic History Review* vol. 92,2 (April,2008), 396-7.

¹⁵⁴ J.K.Walton, *Lancashire A Social History, 1558-1939* (Manchester, 1987) 184-5;J.Atherton, "Church and Society in the North West 1760-1997" in C.S. Ford, M.Powell,T.Wyke (eds.), *The Church in Cottonopolis* (Manchester ,1997), 41.

PART B: THEMATIC CHAPTERS

CHAPTER THREE CAUSATION AND MOTIVATION IN THE TOWNSHIPS

a) And Was A Commissioners' Church Built Here?

This chapter seeks to answer two questions arising from the Introduction. Who, and what factors, caused a particular township to receive the government's bounty of a Commissioners' church? Secondly, what motivated the local drivers of Commissioners' churches and did they subscribe to the rationale set out in London? Historians have written very little about the reasons why a Commissioners' church appeared in a particular township. Commentators contemporary to the Act assumed that they were intended for what were termed the 'populous places', particularly in the metropolis. National data was to hand showing deficient church accommodation.¹ In fact the government had furnished the Commissioners with two lists of benefices throughout the country that had the largest shortfall of accommodation, based on the assumption that every citizen was a potential worshipper in the Church of England. It was transparently clear that the funding was insufficient to meet all the country's perceived needs. Working on Vansittart's limited target of supplying sufficient churches to seat a third of the populace, the group of parishes with over a 50,000 shortfall in church seats would require 117 churches. Given that the Commissioners expected a suitable church might cost up to £20,000, just half of these most needy cases would be met from the funds available in 1818.² Lancashire was treated very fairly. A calculation from Port's listings of Commissioners' churches by county, shows that Lancashire received 19.6% of the first tranche of churches for a population comprising 8.77% of the population.³ A better measure is to look at the relationship between the number of churches and the recorded deficiencies in church seats. Chester Diocese received 21.6% of the first wave of churches to meet a recorded deficiency of 20.56% of the total

¹ PP 1818, House of Commons Papers, 005 xviii 137, 18, T.B. Clarke, Account of Benefices and Population, Churches, chapels and their capacity; number and condition of glebe houses; and income of all benefices not exceeding £150 per annum, 16 February 1818 ;List A, Account of Population and Capacity in all Benefices and Parishes of 2000 inhabitants and not containing capacity for one half; and List B, an Account of Population and Capacities in all Benefices and Parishes of 4000 inhabitants and capacity for not more than a quarter, 27 January 1818.

² LPL, Howley Papers vol 10, 210-212, 'Remarks on the Want of Church', copied from Lord Harrowby's Papers, 1818.

³ Port, *Six Hundred New Churches* 2nd ed., 326-9.

shortfall in church seats for England and Wales.⁴ Given that all the 21 Commissioners' churches in the diocese bar two were in Lancashire, the county can be said to have received just or better than just treatment. The immediate provision of 19 churches was handsome.

However Chapter Two suggested that the most populous townships of South Lancashire and those with least previous provision did not routinely receive the bulk of the new churches. A mapping of the locations of the first wave of Commissioners' churches reveals that central south Lancashire seemed particularly favoured. Chorley came twenty first on the list of parishes of 4000 or more inhabitants having church room for a mere quarter and might have expected to squeeze into the reckoning. Leigh was less well placed at twenty fifth. What seems careless is that Colne at fourteenth, Newchurch in Rossendale at sixteenth and St Helens at seventeenth received no provision. Wigan was unfortunate to be listed as two benefices and neither came higher than thirty-fourth in the county list. Based purely on the greatest lack of church room, all the Lancashire Commissioners' churches could have gone to Liverpool and Manchester or either.⁵ It was only at the end of the second wave, after the mid 1840s, or when Manchester Diocese was founded, that the relatively neglected south east of the county began to receive its due. In 1833, at the start of the second wave, Tockholes received a grant meeting 50% of the total building cost but by then was a township of a mere thousand and declining to boot. Therefore the question arises, for what reasons did these relatively small townships gain a Commissioners' church?

Technically, the terms of the 1818 Act, rather than the prior evidence provided to government, made an allowable case for building a chapel in each of the three sample townships. Applications were permissible from parishes with a population over 4000, providing they had not church accommodation for a quarter, or from those where at least 1000 lived more than four miles from the nearest church.⁶ Chorley, from 1793 a parish in its own right, had a population of over 5000 in 1811 and 7000 by 1818 and had not church room for a sixteenth of its inhabitants.⁷ Tyldesley township, with a population of 3492 in

⁴ PP 1818, 005 xviii 137,18, Account of Population... Benefices and Parishes of 2000 inhabitants, 30.

⁵ PP 1818, 005 xviii 137,18, List B, 27 January 1818, 34.

⁶ 58 Geo III c.45, xiii.

⁷ CALS, EDV7 Mf44/13, Enquiries Pre Visitation 1811, 4/72; Heyes, *History of Chorley*, 33-4,88.

1811, had no chapel, although was not two miles from others. The qualifying criterion was that Leigh, its mother parish, had experienced recent overall growth and qualified easily as having a population over 10,000 and not church room for more than a quarter.⁸ The growing population in Tockholes to 1821, but more especially in the traditionally linked townships of Livesey and Withnell, raised its catchment area to near 4000 with 200 church places. This meant that in 1826 the crusading *Preston Pilot* could claim that Tockholes was ‘a thriving and populous place’ and ‘we know of no place where a church was more wanted’.⁹ Furthermore, the old chapel of St Michael’s was hardly fit for purpose. On one occasion, in 1826, snow drifts had to be shovelled out the door before service. The estimated cost for necessary repairs almost equalled the price of a new build.¹⁰ All its pews were appropriated and therefore there were no ‘free’ seats for the poorer classes or ‘strangers’.¹¹ The parish papers contain several documents dating back to the early eighteenth century, which reveal that the original trustees endowing a curate were Presbyterian and therefore it might be supposed the vicar of Blackburn was intending a new chapel would provide a safer hold upon the place of worship in Tockholes.¹² However, although there was concern expressed a century previous in *Notitia Cestrensis*, the trustees had never caused difficulty and had probably joined the nearby Independent chapel built in 1710 and left the church to the Church.¹³ There is no sign of Whittaker being anxious about St Michael’s legal situation in any of his early correspondence about the proposal for St Stephen’s.¹⁴

Yet none of the sample townships appeared the most urgently in need of church room. Their success in securing a grant was due to enabling factors linked to the haphazard state of early nineteenth century English governance. Firstly, distribution of the first grant could not be based purely on need. Patrons and incumbents of existing parishes had to agree to a new church being built in an existing parish, with the possible sharing of fees for baptisms, marriages, churchings or burials and the splitting or enhancing of existing endowment for

⁸ PP 1818 (4) House of Lords XVIII, ‘Account of the Population of Certain Parishes, with the Capacity of their Churches’.

⁹ *Preston Pilot*, 7 January 1826.

¹⁰ LA, PR1549/29/4, Tockholes Coucher Book, J.W. Whittaker to Church Building Society, 27 May 1830.

¹¹ *Preston Pilot*, 7 January 1826.

¹² LA, PR1549/29/1, Tockholes Coucher Book, Account of money belonging to the church of Tockholes, 1694, Testimony of W. Walmsley, 17 October 1724.

¹³ W. Farrer and J. Brownbill, *Victoria County History of Lancashire*, vol 6 (London, 1911), 283.

¹⁴ LA, PR1549/29/1-3, Tockholes Parish Papers, 1825-30.

clergy salaries. Local vestries had to be willing to pay additional church rates for maintenance.¹⁵ Thus the Rochdale vestry blocked attempts to establish Commissioners' churches for seven years.¹⁶ Manchester was similarly resistant and the commissioners only marginally circumvented the problem by securing three sites themselves, much as they did in south London.¹⁷ The lack of Commissioners' churches in east Lancashire might generally be explained by the strong Dissent entrenched in the sub-region. Secondly, having no-one else to implement a programme, mindful of the diocesans' rights and including seven bishops, the Commission saw a bishop's recommendation as very important and bishops Law and Sumner of Chester were happy to support building in the relevant townships.¹⁸ Furthermore, in 1818, the first million grant had been handed to the Commission in one tranche, in the fond hope that a single rational plan might be speedily adopted.¹⁹ Non-active bishops could miss this single offer; active bishops were quick to access the fund.²⁰ Again, parishes with a suitable site waiting in a township were at an immediate advantage and the obvious ones for a bishop to proceed with.²¹ Being somehow connected to a network of influential people from London, in the Diocese of Chester and in the locality itself, was critical. The fact that Blackburn, for example, was in the gift of the Archbishop of Canterbury, meant that an assiduous agent of Anglican assertion could be placed purposefully into a large parish. The prime reason why south central Lancashire acquired so many of the early government churches may primarily be due to the partly planned, partly coincidental existence of proactive clergy or churchmen in the area.

Thus successful application for a church building project in these townships seemed to depend upon having a ready site, what passed as sufficient local advocacy, and the ear of the diocesan or a commissioner. Outside influence and assistance was important in all three of the Lancashire cases and all important in the case of Tockholes. Bishop Law of Chester was to the fore in reawakening the vestry of Chorley in August 1818, as he was in

¹⁵ Port, *Six Hundred New Churches* 2nd ed., 42.

¹⁶ A.J.Dobb, *Like A Mighty Tortoise. A History of the Diocese of Manchester* (Littleborough, 1978), 143.

¹⁷ W.R.Ward, *Religion and Society in England 1790-1850* (London, 1972), 110-11; Port, *Six Hundred New Churches* 2nd ed., 213-14.

¹⁸ *Lancaster Gazette*, 8 August/1818; CERC, CBC/2/2/, Church Building Commission Minute Book 1, 28 July 1818; 2 August 1818.

¹⁹ Hansard, House of Commons Debates 1st series, vol 37, 1101-42, 16 March, 1818.

²⁰ BL, Add MS 38272, Liverpool Papers, Bishop Law to Liverpool, 10 June 1818, 7 April 1820.

²¹ Port, *Six Hundred New Churches* 2nd ed., 42.

supporting Tyldesley.²² The latter also had its cause watched by another leading and conscientious commissioner, Lord Kenyon of Peel Hall.²³ Thomas Johnson was careful to mention Kenyon's approval when submitting proposals to the Commission.²⁴ St Stephen's Tockholes was almost totally due to external interest, beginning with the vicar of Blackburn's idea that the dilapidated St Michael's should be replaced.²⁵ The concept of a new church at Tockholes, along with many others in his under resourced Blackburn Parish, was purely the brainchild of Whittaker and he was to do the most to fund and realise it. The lord of the manor, Lawrence Brock-Hollinshead showed some interest from 1823, although his seat was in Cheshire and his solicitor's office at Manchester. He was also annoyed that the lord of the manor's advowson had been long lost to the patron of Blackburn parish, the Archbishop of Canterbury.²⁶ The sole extant local petition complains of lack of church room but only because of the need to serve people from Livesey and Withnell in addition to Tockholes and there are no solutions offered.²⁷ The then current bishop of Chester, John Bird Sumner, guided the vicar of Blackburn towards the Commission and eased the process of establishment over several contentious issues.²⁸ Tockholes benefitted from an increasing external interest. By the 1830s individuals in the wider Anglican community in Lancashire and beyond were willing to send their £5 or more, because by this time the seriousness position of the Church of England was provoking a national and voluntary response.²⁹

This partial reliance on external agency largely explains why church extension in Tockholes was delayed until eight years after Chorley and Tyldesley received their Commissioners' churches. In 1822, the year of Whittaker's arrival in Blackburn, existing ecclesiastical issues dictated his priorities. In addition to completing a rebuild of his parish church of St Mary's, there was the business of trying to bring St Paul's, a chapel fallen in with the Countess of Huntingdon Connexion, into the Anglican community.³⁰ There was the task of finding a willing architect to effect a triple build of Commissioners' churches from Mellor to Over Darwen in the least served but burgeoning and Dissenter -filled

²² LA, DDX1861/1, Chorley VestryTown Book, 27 August 1818.

²³ CERC, CBC/2/1/2, Church Building Commission Minute Book 3, 25 April 1820, 2 May 1820.

²⁴ CERC, ECE/7/1/17721, Tyldesley Church Building File, T.Johnson to CBC 30 October 1820.

²⁵ CALS, EDV7 Mf44/10/53, Enquiries Pre Visitation, 1791.

²⁶ LA, PR1549/29/2, Coucher Book, L.Brock-Hollinshead to J.W.Whittaker, 9 January 1823.

²⁷ LA, PR1549/29/2, Coucher Book "Advocate" to J.W.Whittaker, c. 1826.

²⁸ LA, PR1549/29/8, Coucher Book, J.W.Whittaker to Bishop of Chester, 19 July 1831.

²⁹ LA, PR1549/29/5, Coucher Book, PR1549/29/5 Circular, February 1830.

³⁰ WAS, Whittaker Papers, Sarah Whittaker to J.W.Whittaker, 23 August 1822, 20 October 1823.

regions of the parish.³¹ A further restriction was that Tockholes had an incumbent clergyman but a non-resident one; it would be hard to justify a new church if there was no one on the spot to look after it. Reverend James Dodgson (curate 1805-26) also held St John's Blackburn, which was a much more comfortable place to be. He sometimes failed to find a substitute to do duty at Tockholes, driving Bishop Blomfield to very pointed enquiry to Whittaker in 1825.³² The successor Richard Garnett was also an absentee, causing the exasperated Blomfield to license a poorly paid curate to do duty.³³ Garnett secured his coveted place on the staff of Lichfield Cathedral in 1830 and Whittaker finally found Gilmour Robinson, currently curate at Kirkham, a redoubtable ex-soldier, prepared to take on Tockholes and live in its draughty parsonage house.³⁴ He stayed until death in December 1856, outliving Whittaker and the Church Building Commission.³⁵

Tockholes had a Commissioners' church thrust upon it but local involvement did play a significant role in Tyldesley and Chorley. In these townships it took relatively few people to originate a church building project and there did not have to be a long tradition of support for church extension. In Tyldesley, enthusiast action appears to have begun just five years before St George's consecration. Thomas Johnson was a committed churchman, as evinced by the memorial tablet in Manchester Collegiate Church, and had committed most of his time to Tyldesley after 1800 but had mounted no church extension project.³⁶ Nevertheless, from 1820 Johnson provided the site and took a great interest in the construction of the church.³⁷ The heir to his estates, George Ormerod, was most effective in piloting the church to completion.³⁸ It is possible that his enthusiasm was the spark which instigated Johnson's commitment. Millowner Thomas Kearsley, who dug the first sod of St George's ground, was clearly bent on establishing himself as a leader in Tyldesley. He owned several mills, was churchwarden in 1828 and provided the bound book and survey work for an upwardly revised rating valuation in 1838.³⁹

³¹ CERC, ECE7/1/ 15217/1, Tockholes Church Building File, J.W.Whittaker to CBC, 18 December 1823..

³² LA, PR1549/29/8, Coucher Book, Bishop Blomfield to J.W.Whittaker, 13 September 1825.

³³ LPL, Blomfield Letter Book, 5 January 1826.

³⁴ LA, PR1549/29/8, Coucher Book, Robinson to Whittaker, 15 March 1830.

³⁵ J.C.Jacklin and L.M.Robinson, *Tockholes: A Time Warp* (Blackburn 2003), 51-2.

³⁶ Hess, *George Ormerod* 67,69-71.

³⁷ J.Lunn, *A New History of Tyldesley* (Tyldesley, 1953) ,109.

³⁸ J.P.Hess, *George Ormerod, Historian of Cheshire* (Whitchurch, 1989), 69-71.

³⁹ Lunn *A New History of Tyldesley*, 98; SGT, Churchwardens' Accounts Book, 1828; WAS, TRTyC3, Valuation of Tyldesley, 1838.

In contrast to Tyldesley, Chorley's perpetual curate Cooper had been an advocate in Chorley for half a century. The options for church extension wavered between repair and minor amendment, rebuilding the mother church of St Laurence or providing a large new chapel.⁴⁰ Cooper was partly assisted by a decision made beyond the parish. The creation of an independent parish of Chorley in 1793 (effective from 1798) was an enabling step in placing the Chorley vestry in a stronger position to pursue church extension.

If the path to successful establishment of a Commissioners' church was different across the three townships, there was at least one common feature. None of these churches would have come into being without funding from the Church Building Commission. Whittaker had by that time exhausted his alternative sources in raising just half of the funding.⁴¹ Chorley had raised around a fifth of the eventual cost of St George's, with little prospect of more, before the gift of 1818.⁴² George Ormerod's money ran to a school but it is doubtful whether he would have stumped up for a church. He was keen enough to leave Tyldesley for the south west very shortly after the consecration of St George's.⁴³

Nonetheless, the arrival of a church was not primarily as a result of a national, regional or local decision. Rather it is better to acknowledge the vertical links pervading the Church of England, with a successful outcome dependent upon the interest and commitment of people of influence at a minimum of two levels. The good offices of a person with power was the main reason for the selection of these township churches, which did not have the largest populations, greatest deficit of church accommodation in Lancashire or more proportion of Dissenters than townships to their east. The bishop of Chester most likely favoured Chorley because he adjudged it politically possible to plant a church, without the difficulties attendant on additional Manchester or Rochdale church extension. Lord George Kenyon kept a watchful eye over Tyldesley St George's birth and Whittaker determined Tockholes would have a church whether it wanted or not.

⁴⁰ J. Wilson, *Chorley Church* (Edinburgh, 1914), 95-102, 110.

⁴⁰ J. Wilson, *Chorley Church* (Edinburgh, 1914), 95-102, 110.

⁴¹ LA, PR1549/29/5, Circular, February 1830; PR1549/302, Account, 15 June 1842.

⁴² LA DDX1861/1 Chorley Vestry Town Book, 21 March 1816.

⁴³ Hess, George Ormerod, 71,75

b) Motivation in the Townships

If there was diversity across this small sample of townships regarding causation, was there similarly diversity in motivation? For what reasons did the local initiators and supporters further the establishment of a Commissioners' church? Do they reflect, diffuse or even help to create the rationale which was laid out at the centre of power in 1818? A concern for bolstering the forces of law and order through a church building measure, clearly in the prime minister's mind in 1818, was also reflected at local level. There was some cause. In 1808 some of the mass demonstrators for a weaver's minimum wage dispersed from Bolton to Tyldesley.⁴⁴ In April 1812 Rowe and Duncough's mill was destroyed at nearby Westhoughton.⁴⁵ In 1826 a mob gathered at Tockholes before smashing machines at Hilton's Water Street mill in Chorley.⁴⁶ The Church responded with exhortation in the face of disorder. In Lancashire clergy were not as ready to be magistrates as peers in Norfolk. In 1831 there were 24 qualified clerical magistrates and 112 lay, compared with respectively 78 and 119 in Norfolk.⁴⁷ However, Colonel John Silvester of Chorcliffe House, Chorley, was commander of the Manchester and Salford Rifle Volunteers, active against disorder in Manchester in July 1807, against Luddites in 1812 and at St Peter's Field in 1819.⁴⁸ He was one of a small Chorley delegation which first met architect Thomas Rickman in 1820 with a view to building St George's Church, Chorley.⁴⁹ Possibly he was simply fulfilling a role as a magistrate and leading inhabitant of Chorley but the need for promoting order could have been a strong motive for his interest. Routinely the churches had a role in building social conformity, thus making tension and disorder less likely. Schoolchildren marching to the first Commissioners' church in Blackburn carried banners demanding they be 'trained up'.⁵⁰

The concern for promoting social peace radiated from representatives of all the middling sorts and their denominational places of worship. Lewis, in dealing with the response to social threat in Blackburn, Bolton and Preston after 1790, treats religious leaders as one

⁴⁴ K. Navickas, *Loyalism and Radicalism in Lancashire 1798-1815* (Oxford, 2009), 201.

⁴⁵ Navickas, *Loyalism and Radicalism in Lancashire*, 191.

⁴⁶ *Preston Pilot*, 29 April 1826; J. Heyes, *History of Chorley*, 95-6.

⁴⁷ P. Virgin, *Church in The Age of Negligence* (Cambridge, 1989), 285.

⁴⁸ Heyes, *History of Chorley*, 96; Navickas, *Loyalism and Radicalism*, 122.

⁴⁹ RIBA. Library RiT2, Thomas Rickman Diary, 25 February 1820.

⁵⁰ *Preston Chronicle*, 24 July 1819.

social group seeking order, whatever their denomination.⁵¹ Furthermore, church extension, although relevant, was only one of the tools that ‘Order’ employed. The special constables were one traditional response, boosted from the 1790s by the Volunteers and then the Yeomanry. Henry Sudell, the great putter-out, even ‘employer’, in Blackburn handloom weaving, slaughtered five cattle every Christmas and saw the meat distributed to the poor.⁵² There were indeed other measures linked to the Church. From 1783 Sunday schools of all denominations and often cross denomination in Lancashire were a major arm of social policy. Day schools, including the Anglican National Schools from 1811, in addition to being tools of denominational competition, were useful in training up youngsters’ behaviour. Sabbatarianism and national fasting were also thought relevant tools.⁵³

Therefore the Commissioners’ churches were but one mechanism and they were late in the field by 1818. The raft of responses to the law and order issue or the need for socialisation was well developed much earlier. By the time of the Church Building Act, however volatile Lancashire could be, some of the leading protagonists of church building seemingly displayed remarkable *sang-froid* in the face of any disorder there was. Revd. T.D. Whitaker, contemplating the crisis of 1817, considered most folk steady and the disorder around Blackburn the temporary work of a few agitators and a fall in prices for weavers’ labour.⁵⁴ He is said to have proved capable of singlehandedly turning back an angry miners’ march in 1820.⁵⁵ In 1826 Revd. J.W. Whittaker, vicar and magistrate living at the very heart of urban Blackburn, showed monumental calm in the face of distress and disorder, just as he did when his church was occupied by Chartists in a less threatening situation in 1839.⁵⁶ In generations subsequent to the 1818 Church Building Act, the levers for encouraging order were further developed beyond church provision. From 1835 in Tyldesley the Conservative Operatives Association was an attempt to link workers in social harmony with their employers.⁵⁷ Later, in 1859, the Bishop of Manchester saw parks, the infirmary, sewers and

⁵¹ B.Lewis, *The Middlemost and the Milltowns*, 38-39.

⁵² *Blackburn Mail*, 25 December 1793.

⁵³ *Blackburn Mail*, 4 September 1797, 13 May 1801, 4 December 1805, 26 February 1806.

⁵⁴ *Blackburn Mail*, 19 February 1817.

⁵⁵ J.G. Nichols and P.A. Lyons, Introduction to *History of Whalley* (4th ed., London, 1872), xliii.

⁵⁶ *Preston Chronicle*, 10 April 1839.

⁵⁷ *Manchester Courier*, 28 January 1837.

schools in addition to a new church, as ways of showing working classes that the middling sorts cared to provide for them.⁵⁸

How well was the idea of a national church reflected in the townships? Local leaders in Tyldesley, show some understanding of the role of church building in supporting ‘the nation’. It is also interesting that both George Ormerod and Robert Smirke referred to the project as creating a ‘National’ church, whereas the Commission, architects and the public tended to refer to the buildings as simply ‘new’.⁵⁹ Married to this was a political motive, a clear Tory loyalty to the constitution and the government of the day. The very first toasts at the laying of the foundation stone on St George’s Day were to ‘George IV, the Constitution’, to be followed by others including ‘His Majesty’s ministers’, ‘Lord Kenyon’, ‘Lord Lilford’ (although a Whig), ‘the Duke of York and the Army, the Duke of Clarence, the magistrates’ and – just three years after ‘Peterloo’ - ‘the Yeomanry’. One of the bells proclaimed ‘Long Live George IV!’.⁶⁰ Thomas Johnson had long been a national patriot with a Tory hue, for he raised two groups of militia himself and gave the name Elliot to one of its main streets, in homage to the plucky defender of Gibraltar during the siege of 1779.⁶¹ Ormerod, whose father died shortly before George’s birth, was supervised by Johnson and received his schooling from Thomas Bancroft, one time vicar of Bolton, high church Anglican and Tory, with a predilection for order.⁶² Sturdy Anglicanism and Toryism did not necessarily have to go hand-in-hand but amongst the founders of St George’s Tyldesley, it seemingly did. The politics of the Leigh curate who came to look after the new chapel of Tyldesley, Jacob Robson, are not recorded. What is clear from the evidence which underpins Chapters Five and Six, is that he stayed until his death in 1850 and paid thorough attention to his pastoral tasks.

⁵⁸ *Blackburn Standard*, 24 August 1859.

⁵⁹ CERC, ECE7/1/17721/1, Tyldesley Church Building File, G.Ormerod to CBC, 9 December 1820.

⁶⁰ *Manchester Chronicle*, 27 April 1822; L.Allred and J.Marsh, *The Parish Church of St George Tyldesley* (Blackburn, 1975), 6.

⁶¹ Hess, *George Ormerod*, 13.

⁶² *Manchester Chronicle*, 27 April 1822; Hess, *George Ormerod*, 23.

The religious concern of Liverpool and Vansittart in 1818 was the position of the Church of England relative to that of Dissenters.⁶³ In general the clarity with which Vansittart set out the reasoning behind the Church Building Act in March 1818 or with which Yates argued so forcibly three years earlier, does not seem so apparent at regional level. The relevant bishops were all committed church builders but they laid varied emphasis at different times on which measures were the most vital. Was the priority clerical professionalism, provision of schools or building churches? As at national level, there was a varied approach to Dissent in the diocese, not as clearly championing bringing Dissenters back to the national church as Vansittart in March 1818. Bishop Law normally sought to stay Dissent and mark it as separate, although in 1817 he recognised Dissenting ministers' preaching abilities and chose to target those clergy within the Church who were straying towards Dissenting doctrine. There is a hint that he saw church extension as a way of stemming further desertion; he did not necessarily expect reclamation.⁶⁴ Blomfield respected Dissenting rights whilst asserting Anglican presence.⁶⁵ Sumner was on one occasion disparaging of Dissent; referring to the Dissenters as 'the worst species' during a public speech in 1833.⁶⁶ However, by 1839 he was speaking of the Church merely 'supplying all those who come under her care' and in 1841 conceded that the "fear of Dissent was dissipated."⁶⁷ At a major meeting of the Anglican interest in supporting National Schools, in Lancaster 1839, the main speaker Lord Stanley asserted that 'the field is wide enough for the committed exertions of all'⁶⁸

However, in the three townships, the statements at government level regarding Dissent were decidedly mirrored and from a remarkably early date in one of them.⁶⁹ Revd Whittaker in Blackburn Parish made the strategy a key part of his prestigious sermon at Cambridge in 1830. 'Many prejudices against the details of the Establishment have entirely

⁶³ Hansard, House of Commons Debates 1st series, vol 37 1101-42, 16 March 1818; Parl Debates XXXVIII, 709, 15 May 1818.

⁶⁴ CALS, EDV10/6, Bishop's Charge to the Clergy of the Diocese of Chester, 1817, 24,26.

⁶⁵ CHTL., 4C6.115/8 ,Charge to Clergy of Diocese of London at Primary Visitation, July 1830, 7-8.

⁶⁶ *Preston Pilot* , 1 June 1833.

⁶⁷ CHTL, WAT11c.4.33, Some Account of the Churches Consecrated in the Diocese of Chester in The Year 1839, 27; CALS, EDV10/8, Bishop's Charge, 1841, 8.

⁶⁸ *Preston Pilot* ,3 0 March 1839.

⁶⁹ CHTL, 4C3.7(9), Bishop G.H.Law, *Sermon Preached at the Parish Church Preston, 14 July 1817* (Preston, 1817); C4C6.115(8) ,Bishop C.J. Blomfield *Sermon Preached Before the King's Most Excellent Majesty*, 4 July 1830 (London,1830) ,20; CALS, EDV7 Mf44/10, 3,117, Enquiries Pre Visitation, Chorley 1804.

disappeared', he claimed in an over sanguine view, and, 'a lot are for returning to us- a national Church must welcome them'.⁷⁰ Gilmour Robinson, in Tockholes continually reported on the health or demise of Dissent and was watchful for any development. The announcement of a new mill at Withnell Fold to be built by a Methodist family provoked him to allege this was a deliberate ploy to annoy the largest Anglican landowner in the area.⁷¹ There are relatively sparse indications of Jacob Robson's thoughts in Tyldesley but by 1830 he was carefully recording numbers of churchmen and Dissenters in seeming preparation for circulating prayer books in addition to bibles and increasing the Anglican share of worshippers.⁷² At least one of the clergy in Chorley at the time of St George's foundation was committed in opposition to Dissent. He adopted an exclusionist rather than a comprehensive approach. Revd. James Jackson, curate at St. Laurence's from 1820 to 1823, was responsible for the vestry deciding to make the Charity School a National School. He was appointed secretary of the Charity School committee in 1820. By June 1821 minutes of a committee meeting were altered to substitute 'according to the principles of the established church' in place of 'of all denominations' and 'National' for 'improved' system of education. Subscriptions were taken up to build a National School in 1824 and in November 1825 the master of the Charity School was given notice of dismissal, to apply once he had conducted his pupils and equipment to the new school.⁷³

There was also a clear case of a minister bent on a type of comprehension by reclaiming Dissenters. Oliver Cooper, perpetual curate at Chorley St. Laurence had mounted a campaign, almost since his appointment in 1763, to persuade the rector of Croston to support church extension in Chorley.⁷⁴ An important background factor from the mid eighteenth century was the concern of churchmen in Chorley at the pressure upon church seats caused by an influx of migrants moving from the hinterland to work in local textiles. Secondly, the township contained one Anglican chapel that of the fifteenth century St Laurence, a mere outlying chapel to the mother church of Croston Parish. There was a feeling that recent incomers, only present due to 'trade and business' were not true

⁷⁰ CHTL, 4C6.6 (2), J.W.Whittaker, *The Present Posture and Future Prospects of the Church of England. A Sermon at the University of Cambridge, 4 July 1830*, (London, 1830), 21-2.

⁷¹ LA, PR1549/2, Tockholes Coucher Book, G.Robinson to J.W.Whittaker, 6 March 1838.

⁷² *Manchester Courier*, 6 November 1830.

⁷³ LA, PR3123/11/1, St George's School Minute Book, November 1825.

⁷⁴ LA,DDX1861, 8665/13, Enquiries Pre Visitation, Chorley, 6 April 1778.

inhabitants and should not take up church room. Some used this prejudice as an argument against church extension by suggesting there would be ample room if the incomers stayed away.⁷⁵ Yet Cooper consistently argued for extension and his chief targets were the souls who had allegedly wandered off to the Protestant Dissenting chapels. The case presented for a faculty in 1776 stated, 'The chapel's insufficiency occasions some of the established church to stay at home and others to frequent a dissenting conventicle'.⁷⁶

The *Manchester Mercury*, reporting the laying of Chorley St George's foundation stone in 1822, expressed Cooper's position clearly:

It may not be deemed a fond and foolish expectation, if a hope be expressed, that many of the inhabitants of the populous district in question, who have hitherto, from want of accommodation in their parish church, been led to the conventicles, and to get drunk with the new wine of enthusiasm.....an opportunity will be afforded them of imbibing the pure knowledge of God's word.⁷⁷

The creation of space to accommodate the floods of returning Dissenters became a commonly stated motive. In 1832 The *Blackburn Alfred*, reporting on Burnley Sunday School sermons alleged, 'So many in school advance to man and woman's estate with no chance to worship God on whose nurture and admonition they shall have been brought up.....many additions to the dissenting ranks were originally caused by want of church room.'⁷⁸

There are, as yet, no conclusive indications as to where Cooper's ideas originated. He may have simply been used to living in a society where churchmen and Dissenters, along with Catholics lived cheek by jowl and found pragmatic ways of co-existing. He was said to have Catholic friends.⁷⁹ Yet getting along in a tolerant manner may have precluded reclamation attempts rather than provoked them. Did individual influences, like that of Bancroft upon Ormerod in Tyldesley signify? Cooper's schoolmaster at Rivington Grammar School was John Norcross, who, educated at St John's Cambridge and also a curate in Horwich, showed no recorded tendencies towards comprehension in what was a

⁷⁵ LA,PR3120/4/9, Objections to Faculty by R.Master and T.Crosse, 14 December 1775.

⁷⁶ LA,PR3120/4/9, G.Harris' Case for Plaintiffs for extension, 19 June 1776.

⁷⁷ *Manchester Mercury*, 13 November 1822.

⁷⁸ *Blackburn Alfred*, 22 October 1832.

⁷⁹ LA, PR3120/2/6, Letter from R.Smith to R.Master, 20 October 1771.

school of orthodox Anglican foundation in Elizabethan times.⁸⁰ More probable might be the influence of Edmund Law, master of Peterhouse when Oliver became a student there in 1759, and a latitudinarian with an interest in comprehension and who subscribed to the work of the Presbyterian scholar Nathaniel Lardner.⁸¹ Whatever the reason, Cooper was consistent in seeking to reclaim Dissenters. This is prior to the urgings of any regional figure such as T.D. Whitaker or a national one like Nicholas Vansittart. Vansittart's aspiration expressed at the introduction of the Church Building Bill in 1818 would be no surprise in Chorley. Chorley did not receive the idea afresh in 1818; it came and stayed consistently with Cooper. Sadly, Cooper died of a sudden stroke in July 1825, a month prior to the consecration of St George's Church.⁸²

For the early nineteenth century, Webster identifies three other seemingly separate examples of Cooper's attitude towards Dissenters, which held them to be Anglicans unable to find a seat in their preferred church. One is T.D. Whitaker, another Hammond Roberson of Liversedge and the third some elements of the Hackney Phalanx around H.H. Norris.⁸³ Were these localised but independent pockets of ideological commitment to comprehension by extending accommodation? Hammond Roberson in Yorkshire is, in fact, a doubtful candidate to be a recouper of Dissenters. He seemed to give a grudging respect to those of committed conscience and felt there were sufficient from the ranks of the uncommitted or simply absent to justify building additional churches.⁸⁴ The London-based group is the best recorded for it was the one which proved instrumental in securing the 1818 Act. Vansittart could have picked up their ideas about reclaiming Dissenters, just as he plundered Richard Yates' work for persuasive statistics. There is no evidence of Cooper communicating with the government, or indeed church authority beyond the troublesome rector of Croston and the bishop of Chester. Thus links between the local advocates of a national church reclaiming lost sheep are hard to identify and indeed quantify. Most plausibly the Hackney

⁸⁰ M.Kay, *The History of Rivington and Blackrod Grammar School* (Manchester, 1966), 89.

⁸¹ S.Mills, 'Scripture and Heresy in the Biblical Studies of Nathaniel Lardner, Joseph Priestley and Thomas Belsham', in S.Mandkebrote and M.Ledger-Thomas (eds.), *Dissent and the Bible in Britain, c1650-1950* (Oxford, 2013), 89.

⁸² *Gentleman's Magazine*, vol 95 (July 1825), 92.

⁸³ C.Webster, "Foremost among those who successfully promoted the ancient style of architecture: the churches of Thomas Taylor, 1777/8-1826" in C. Webster (ed.), *Episodes In The Gothic Revival* (Reading, 2011), 109.

⁸⁴ SCULL, H-Liv-6.4 ROB, H.Roberson, *An Account of the Ceremony of Laying The First Stone of Liversedge Church* (London, 1813) ,16-17.

Group and Oliver Cooper ploughing his lone furrow in Chorley would come to the same position from observing their local situations and imbibing orthodox churchmanship as young men. Most clergy were probably simply orthodox, believing that the national church was there for everyone but varying in levels of expectation and expression regarding the prospects of recovering those worshipping elsewhere.

This focus on Dissent is not to deny that the local clergy were also conscious of the challenge from Catholicism as demonstrated by the faithfulness of the old Catholics in Lancashire, the church building in Preston and Chorley following the 1791 Relief Act, the establishment of Stonyhurst College and, in the early nineteenth century, the influx of Irish navigators, seasonal workers and then mill hands. As with Protestant Dissent, there was a variety in approach and aggression amongst the clergy. Chorley's clergy found friends amongst local Catholics until the rates controversy of 1827.⁸⁵ Whittaker in Blackburn was openly challenging in both published word and verbal debate.⁸⁶ What is distinctive is that, whereas Protestant Dissenters were to be found a home in the new churches, the local clergy and lay churchmen bore no apparent hope of 'converting' local Catholics. This is not altogether surprising, as Tyldesley in 1825 contained few Catholics and Tockholes had none at all.⁸⁷ Chorley did contain considerable numbers of Catholics.⁸⁸ However, it is striking how well Anglican clergy in Lancashire might take an interest in the reported if doubtful conversion triumphs of the Hibernian Society or Reformation Society in Ireland, yet did not really expect any local Catholic converts from their own efforts.⁸⁹ In 1827 the *Preston Pilot* ran the story of a former Catholic monk readily renouncing his faith for Protestantism. A triumphal tone to the reporting segued into one of pretended amused indifference when the errant gentleman was reclaimed by his original church.⁹⁰ Joshua Watson's memorialist stated that his hero believed 'there was only one successful convert from Roman Catholicism known to him.' The Commissioners' churches' practical role was with Protestants, although their Gothic face attempted to claim a continuity with the

⁸⁵ Chapter 7, 240-1.

⁸⁶ CHTL, Hhill.14(1), J.W.Whittaker, *Series of Letters Addressed to Reverend Nicholas Wiseman DD on the content of his late publication* (Blackburn, 1836); BbL, G3WHI, Whittaker Papers, Whittaker to Archbishop Howley, 4 June 1829.

⁸⁷ CALS, EDV7, Mf44 21 7/340, and EDV7 Mf44/22 7/48,49 Enquiries Pre Visitation, 1825.

⁸⁸ CALS, EDV7 Mf144 5, April 1825.

⁸⁹ *Preston Pilot*, 12 May 1827, 3 March 1832.

⁹⁰ *Preston Pilot*, 30 June 1827.

medieval church that might more correctly be thought Catholic.⁹¹ With regard to Protestant Dissent, as described above, there was a hope of extending Anglicanism by reclaiming lost souls, however illogical this was.

If an ideology was at the forefront of clerical minds in the sample townships, it might also be necessary to acknowledge more personal motives behind the ideas. A cynical interpretation of Oliver Cooper's motivation for church building in Chorley might allude to his bitter and extended quarrel with rector Robert Master regarding the terms of his employment as curate. Even allowing for the general meagreness of north country curates' livings, his remuneration was a pittance, with £20 due from the rector of Croston's endowments, £12 from farm rents at Clitheroe and around £7 from surplice fees for conducting baptisms, churchings, weddings and funerals. To add insult to injury the rector decided, when appointing Cooper in 1763, to cut the endowed £20 by half, alongside a proposal that the inhabitants of Chorley should permanently dedicate the £12 rental of the Clitheroe estate and raise subscriptions of around £200 in order to trigger a further sum from Queen Anne's Bounty.⁹² The leading folk of Chorley declined to guarantee any such sum, much as they seemed to favour Oliver Cooper.⁹³ In 1774 the rector was positively livid that a further church extension proposal had been mooted to Chester before he had even been consulted. He inferred that the real motive behind the plan was to justify an increased emolument for Chorley's curate. A larger church would entail more work and demand endowment or a larger stipend!⁹⁴ In 1791 a printed statement of Chorley's case was openly published. It was unsigned but if he did not write it, Oliver Cooper was the one who had both access to the detailed history and the sense of hurt indignation spilling from its pages. The rector was charged with, 'Exhibiting a Spirit of Meanness, Avarice and Oppression', and there is the familiar contention that:

⁹¹ E. Churton, *Memoir of Joshua Watson* (2nd ed., Oxford, 1863), vi.

⁹² LA, PR3120/2/1/10, Memorial of the Inhabitants of the town and vestry of Chorley to the Bishop of Chester, c. 1769.

⁹³ LA, PR3120/2/1, Croston Parish Papers, Memorial of Inhabitants of Town and Vestry of Chorley to the Bishop of Chester, c. 1770; PR3120/4/9, R. Master to J. Hawkshead, 25 March 1774.

⁹⁴ LA, PR3120/2/1, Agreement between R. Master and O. Cooper, 7 October 1763; T. Starkie to R. Master, 25 April 1765 and January 1765.

Can it be wondered that men should be too apt to turn their backs upon the Established Church, to fly from such a mercenary and hasten to join in some of the numerous Congregations of Sectaries who are very ready to conciliate and receive them? ⁹⁵

The subsequent foundation of Hollinshead Street Countess of Huntingdon chapel a year later would seem to support Cooper's point. The historian of Lancashire nonconformity states that in its early days the chapel, "must have appeared as a branch of the Established Church", using Anglican forms of worship and the Book of Common Prayer.⁹⁶ Possibly some of the congregation at St Laurence's had sought a building from another sect due to the disenchantment or lack of seating Cooper alluded to.

Cooper may well have believed that the prime motive behind the seemingly benign creation of the separate parish of Chorley in 1793 was the scheme of the donor rector of Croston to saddle the township- and Cooper- with his descendants as future incumbents. In 1793 Robert Master secured provision for his three sons by creating three separate livings from the amply provided parish of Croston.⁹⁷ On the old rector's death in 1798, John Whalley Master was presented by his widowed mother to the rectory of Chorley, which now formed a compact parish around St Laurence's.⁹⁸ The preamble to the 1793 Act establishing Chorley Parish alludes to the increasingly populous nature of Chorley and the prevalence of flooding between Croston and its chapel, but these phenomena had never previously moved Robert Master to action.⁹⁹ Instead he had threatened the township with a north country curate (obviously an inferior breed in his mind) and, allegedly with an unintelligible Welshman, but now contemplated a permanent connection with a Master.¹⁰⁰

Yet Cooper's justification, if not his only reason, for supporting church extension had an ideological base in a form of comprehension. The stance in Blackburn Parish, and Tockholes township within that, was standing up to Dissent, stemming its advance but also reclaiming some of its adherents. An awakening established church of the 1820s would be concerned about the level of Protestant Old Dissent in Tockholes. The 1811 Bishop's pre

⁹⁵ ChL, J2 CO1, Letter from Rector of Croston to one of Churchwardens Chorley with Observations, c.1791.

⁹⁶ B.Nightingale, *Lancashire Nonconformity* vol 2, (Manchester ,1891),13.

⁹⁷ An Act for separating the Chapels of Chorley and of Rufford from the parish of Croston. Anno XXXIII Georgii III, as reproduced in Magazine of Chorley Parish Church of St.Laurence, Bicentenary Edition, 1993.

⁹⁸ Heyes, *History of Chorley*, 31.

⁹⁹ 33 Geo III, Act for Separating Chapels of Chorley and of Rufford from Croston.

¹⁰⁰ ChL, J2 CO1, Letter from Rector of Croston c.1791.

visitation enquiries elicited that there were at least 264 Independents amidst 960 Tockholes' folk, largely at Middle Chapel with a minority at Bethesda, founded by schismatics from Middle Chapel in 1803 and attached to the Countess of Huntingdon Connexion¹⁰¹. On completion of the new church, Gilmour Robinson exulted in the boast that low pew rents and increased accommodation in St Stephen's as opposed to the old St Michael's, meant Dissenters were returning from the Independent chapel.¹⁰² In 1835, Revd. Whittaker claimed to have consistently kept church accommodation slightly ahead of demand throughout the mother parish of Blackburn. This way there would be sufficient comfortable space for attendance and no more losses to Dissent. Allied to a wide range of Christian theology across Blackburn churches, he claimed it was bringing people back to the established church. Prior to the construction of St Stephen's, the vicar of Blackburn imagined that, 'If we had a proper church all these sectarians would return'.¹⁰³ The ambivalence about Dissent is demonstrated by his reference to Dissenters as 'enemies' in the same letter. Given Whittaker's distaste for Dissent, it was curious he developed a personal friendship with Quaker architect Thomas Rickman, who by 1828 was a guest at Blackburn vicarage. Rickman's ready response as church architect, willingness to attend church service and Quaker meeting in Blackburn on the same day, and experiencing concurrently the birth of a young son, might have been contributory factors.¹⁰⁴

As with Cooper, there could be personal reasons underlying Whittaker's engagement with church extension. He was an insecure and driven man taking the lead in Blackburn in a committed attempt to establish a career. An able Cambridge student of Middle Eastern languages, he struggled to make his mark due to limited funds and connections, in addition to hiding a suspect family past emanating from his father's bankruptcy, abscondment and radical views.¹⁰⁵ Whittaker was tempted to take even a teaching's post at Sedbergh, his old school. He seriously contemplated taking up a challenging role at Calcutta College.¹⁰⁶ His commitment to Divinity, came only in 1819 with his erudite and spirited defence of the

¹⁰¹ CALS, EDV7 Mf44/15 4/232 Enquiries Pre Visitation, 1811; *Victoria County History*, vol 6, 283.

¹⁰² LA, PR1549/29/7, Whittaker to Bishop of Chester ; PR2765, Tockholes Sacraments Account.

¹⁰³ LA, PR1549/29/8, Tockholes Coucher Book, J.W. Whittaker to Bishop of Chester, 1 July 1831.

¹⁰⁴ RIBA, RiT3, Rickman Diary, 12 June 1825, 8 January 1828, 19 February 1818, 23 December 1831, 30 September 1832.

¹⁰⁵ WAS, D/DZ EHC/204, Whittaker Papers, Introduction; MA, MSf929 2 W126, Whittaker Papers, J.W. Whittaker to S. Whittaker (mother), 4 February 1795.

¹⁰⁶ WAS, D/DZ EHC 204, S. Whittaker to J.W. Whittaker, 14 June 1820, 17 June 1820.

English translators of the Bible, which led the Archbishop of Canterbury to make him examining chaplain in 1821.¹⁰⁷ He hoped for significant advancement, in spite of accommodation in Lollards' Tower and a hint from the archbishop that Whittaker might care to dine away from the palace more often.¹⁰⁸ He worried about the financial implications of the death of his uncle, London lawyer John Buck, in August 1821.¹⁰⁹ A salvation of sorts was at hand. In 1822 the Archbishop proposed to send his chaplain to Blackburn. After all, the primate reasoned, Whittaker hailed from those northern parts. It was an offer Whittaker could hardly refuse.¹¹⁰ It helped that, due to a previous vicar's policy, from 1796, of leasing glebe land to avid builders in a fast-expanding town, ground rents swelled the living to an attractive £800 per annum.¹¹¹

Whittaker's papers contain no reference to church extension before 1822. His first concerns on arrival in Blackburn were to conclude the rebuilding of the parish church of St Mary's, install a worthy organ therein and rebuild his own vicarage.¹¹² An early visit to George Henry Law, bishop of Chester, probably promoted church building as a worthy aim and something to impress by. He must have discussed it with his sister in Liverpool on his journey home, for her letter of March 1823 encourages him in his recently stated ambitions to 'build your churches and "write your book"'.¹¹³ The Archbishop of Canterbury recommended application to the Church Building Commission for a new church in Blackburn.¹¹⁴ Whittaker has been accorded a strategy which targeted Dissenter strongholds, especially where a new chapel was mooted. He would plant a mission in any serviceable building, provide a curate, then a Sunday School and finally a church.¹¹⁵ Whereas this progression may appertain to some other townships in Blackburn parish, it obviously did not apply in Tockholes, where a church previously existed and a school building followed

¹⁰⁷ WAS, D/DZ EHC 207, S.Whittaker to J.W.Whittaker 10 November 1819; SJC, Whittaker Papers f.2, J.W. Whittaker to S.Whittaker, 6 March 1821.

¹⁰⁸ WAS, D/DZ EHC207, S.Whittaker to J.W.Whittaker, 22 March 1821; SJC, Whittaker Papers f.2, J.W.Whittaker to S. Whittaker, 23 February 1821.

¹⁰⁹ WAS, D/DZ EHC207, S.Whittaker to J.W.Whittaker, 29 August 1821; SJC, Whittaker Papers f.2, J.W.Whittaker to S.Whittaker, 27 August 1821.

¹¹⁰ SJC, Whittaker Papers f.2, J.W.Whittaker to S.Whittaker, 20 January 1822.

¹¹¹ LA, PR1549/2/4, Coucher Book Blackburn St.Mary's, 1808 General Summary of Glebe.

¹¹² SJC, Whittaker Papers f.2, J.W.Whittaker to S.Whittaker, 12 February 1822.

¹¹³ WAS, D/DZ EHC/204, Sarah Whittaker (sister) to J.W.Whittaker, 8/3/1823.

¹¹⁴ SJC, Whittaker Papers, f.2, Whittaker to Jones, 7 July 1824.

¹¹⁵ D.Beattie, *Blackburn, A History* (Lancaster, 2007), 240.

the new church. However Tockholes was in his mind from as early as 1823 and he was to be the originator of St Stephen's realisation in 1833.¹¹⁶

Whittaker's church extension throughout Blackburn was indeed a remarkable achievement but it was a cause he came upon, not one he had always held dear. Arguably becoming a success and achieving security was what drove Whittaker throughout. His insecurity caused him to impose conformity, in those matters he cared about, upon his curates.¹¹⁷ It also meant he hung on to as many surplice fees as he could, thereby depressing the living standards of district ministers and earning him strong public rebuke in 1849.¹¹⁸ He has been seen as a 'miniature pope' by Lewis, a leader with a mission to build 'a religio-paternalistic mosaic'.¹¹⁹ He firmly asserted the Anglican interest in Blackburn, alongside a highly successful marriage with a bride he had to fight for and a large family of ten children.¹²⁰ As things turned out Blackburn claimed Whittaker until his death in 1854. Originally he may have hoped for further preferment which he initially hoped would follow. Certainly he enquired about Rochdale in 1824 when it was rumoured it might become available.¹²¹ However, the archbishop left him in Blackburn, which he probably saw as a large populous 'frontier' parish with a good man in charge.



Plate 3.1A J.W. Whittaker in his prime
(Ray Jackson Collection)



Plate 3.1B Whittaker in later life
(Blackburn Library)

¹¹⁶ LA, PR1549/29/2, Tockholes Coucher Book, L. Brock-Hollinshead to J.W. Whittaker, 9 January 1823.

¹¹⁷ B. Lewis, *The Middlemost and the Milltowns* (Stanford, 2001), 165.

¹¹⁸ *The Middlemost and the Milltowns*, 159.

¹¹⁹ *The Middlemost and the Milltowns*, 157-8.

¹²⁰ BbL, G3WHI, Whittaker Papers, Mrs M.H. Feilden to J.W. Whittaker, 30 May 1824, J.W. Whittaker to S. Whittaker, 12 September 1824; J.W. Whittaker, Will 12 November 1847; Mrs M.H. Whittaker Diary, 1857.

¹²¹ SJC, Whittaker Papers f.2, J.W. Whittaker to S. Whittaker, 16 June 1824.

The detailed look at the personal circumstances of Oliver Cooper and John William Whittaker highlights the ‘push’ factors which may have driven local leaders espousing the Commissioners’ churches. Yet it would be uncharitable to disallow the primacy of Cooper’s sincere campaign for church extension. He stayed with Chorley parish despite a very low income. His poverty and worthiness were recognised in 1811 by the award of the living of Otterden in Kent, in effect a small chapel attached to a lady’s hall.¹²² Cooper believed Bishop Majendie of Chester had secured this for him.¹²³ It was worth merely £67 per year and a curate would have to be paid to do duty.¹²⁴ Whittaker certainly looked after his personal financial interest and status but a vicar solely concerned with those would not have invested so much energy in the quest for a new church. Neither was Lancashire the most attractive home to many of the other graduates of the traditional universities. Hence the decision of Bishop Law to create St Bees College in 1816 and the recruitment by Bishop Sumner of Irishmen from Trinity College, Dublin. By 1865 one sixth of clergy in the Manchester area were graduates of Trinity.¹²⁵ There were still some supply issues in the north and Commissioners’ churches would not be essential in meeting a demand for employment. Beyond the townships, it is hard to find anything in their own writings or in what others wrote about them, bar a very pure motivation, in a national leader like Joshua Watson, the Commission’s administrator, or in John Rushton, Archdeacon of Manchester and Whittaker’s successor at Blackburn. According to the words they wrote and words written about them they were churchmen who laboured constantly on every Church cause and responded to events by reference to Christian faith and ethics.¹²⁶

There was a commonalty in the support for the underpinning neo-Arminian stance noted nationally in Chapter One and demonstrated in Tyldesley and Tockholes in Chapter Six through the broad practical approach to parochial holiness that clergy adopted. Whittaker in Blackburn noted the sharpening strains of Evangelical Calvinist and Arminian by 1835 but was prepared to house men of both persuasions for they would furnish an attractive range of choice across a large parish.¹²⁷ He himself left a sheaf of sermons which demonstrate an

¹²² *Gentleman’s Magazine* vol 116 , (181i), 585.

¹²³ CALS, EDV7 Mf44/13 4/72, Enquiries Pre Visitation, 1811.

¹²⁴ E.Hasted, *A Historical and Topographical Survey of the County of Kent*, vol 5 (London ,1798), 533-549.

¹²⁵ C.S.Ford, *Pastors and Polemicists* (Manchester, 2002), 45.

¹²⁶ Churton , *Memoir of Joshua Watson* ; LA, PR1565a , Cuttings re Funeral of Rev. J.Rushton.

¹²⁷ LA, PR1549/3/9 Whittaker to Bishop Sumner, 7th August 1835.

orthodox neo-Arminian position. He explained moral character may derive from faith but grace was not immediate upon evidence of repentance. The Church was there to lead one to holiness.¹²⁸ He told the Chartists occupying his church that they may one day join the elect but to learn and endure by attending regularly.¹²⁹ Supporters in all three townships would have seen the churches as a good step in promoting moral behaviour and good order, although the churches would not be an immediate tool in solving the violent disorder afflicting Lancashire between 1812 and 1820.

This stance included an initial strong commitment to the poor. Indeed across Lancashire's Commissioners' churches there was initially a high proportion of free seats to pews for rental.¹³⁰ Revd Agar Hunt at St James Lower Darwen spoke caringly of his 'little band of pious poor' and on an annual income of £40 prior to 1842 may have identified readily with his congregation.¹³¹ Revd. Rigg, minister at St Paul's Preston from 1829 to 1848 regularly gave his spare clothing to parishioners and took pastoral care of the local infirmary and workhouse.¹³² However it did not mean that all the community attended or that the poor were attracted to the new churches. Within twenty years of opening some free pews disappeared for rent, as seen at Tyldesley and Chorley. In 1857, this practice led Edward Herford, the Manchester coroner and member of the Statistical Society, to assert wrongly that the Million Act had given just a fifth of sittings to be free.¹³³ Some poor were said to prefer paying a small rent rather than occupying a free seat. Revd. Lamb at Holy Trinity Darwen told J.W.Whittaker in 1840 that £1 6s. would not be too much for poor man's annual seat rent.¹³⁴ Neither was a bench in the aisle as attractive as a designated pew. It was believed the lack of respectable clothes kept some away; hence the cottage churches appearing in Chorley in the 1870s. Fundamentally, however, there is no evidence that large numbers of poor went to any of the provision and a free pew in itself was not an irresistible attraction.

¹²⁸ CHETL, Main F.1.27 J.W.Whittaker, *Treatise on the Church of Christ intended for Young People*, (Blackburn, 1842), 66,287,290.

¹²⁹ LA,PR1549/4/1, Sermon to the Chartists, 4 August 1839.

¹³⁰ Port, *Six Hundred New Churches* 2nd ed., appendix 1, 326-347.

¹³¹ W.Horne, *Historical Jottings of Lower Darwen Church and School* (Blackburn, 1929), 12-14.

¹³² E.Hudson, *St Paul's Church Preston 1826-1926* (Preston, 1926), 22,25.

¹³³ PP 1858, Report of Select Committee House of Lords on Means of Spiritual Instruction and Places of Divine Worship, 2 July 1858, 432.

¹³⁴ Revd. Lamb to J.W.Whittaker, 22 May 1840, quoted in J.Pomfret *History of Holy Trinity Darwen* (Preston, 1930), 24.

Most notably at local level, a small group of clerical leaders in the three townships took on Dissent, an understandable position for a neo-Arminian aiming at practical holiness across the whole parish. In all three townships there is a declared sense of purpose which seems to reflect Yates' and Vansittart's commitment expressed in London. Whittaker had lately served as a chaplain to the Archbishop of Canterbury, Gilmour Robinson was an officer at Waterloo.¹³⁵ They might naturally have absorbed ideas discussed amongst the national elite. Yet Jacob Robson was from Northumberland and St Bees trained. Leigh was his only curacy before coming to Tyldesley.¹³⁶ It must be uncertain what determined his approach. Given that the register of Rivington Grammar School does not record Oliver Cooper's township of birth, which it routinely did for scholars from away, it suggests the future curate of Chorley was a local man.¹³⁷ He stayed with the same curacy all his life and possibly it was his time in Cambridge with Edmund Law that set his ideas.

Whatever the root the local leaders were acutely aware of Dissent's force. Of course these townships may be the exception in the county. On studying the 1811 visitation returns, Navickas commented, 'By 1811 only a few (clergy) specifically blamed the growth of Dissent for poaching potential attendees from the established church, perhaps because most took it to be inevitable or unstoppable.'¹³⁸ Within the townships, there were subtle differences in local approaches to Dissent. Revd. Agar Hunt at St James Lower Darwen was someone prepared to take turns with Dissenters in using a cottage for Sunday School.¹³⁹ Yet Robson in Tyldesley and Robinson in Tockholes (with Whittaker behind him) were keen to build up the market share of worshippers from the whole community including Dissent. Whittaker and Robinson also wished to weaken seriously the Dissenting chapels. This aggression was different from Cooper's position in Chorley. In some ways he was milder- he appeared to get on with members of other sects. Yet in one respect he had vaulting aspiration; he thought it the Church's mission to bring all Protestants back from conventicles into the fold of the national church. His words were picked up by the regional press as the foundation stone of Chorley St George was laid and then became something of

¹³⁵ LA, PR3149/2/2, Will of Gilmour Robinson, 23 February 1856.

¹³⁶ MA, MSf 942.72 r121, Archdeacon Rushton's Visitation 1845-6, vol 34.; CALS, EDV7/Mf44/14 7/340, Enquiries Pre Visitation, May 1825.

¹³⁷ LA, DDX 94/98, Rivington Grammar School Register, 1615 ff.

¹³⁸ Navickas, *Loyalism and Radicalism*, 105.

¹³⁹ W.Horne, *Historical Jottings of Lower Darwen Church and School* (Blackburn, 1929), 22.

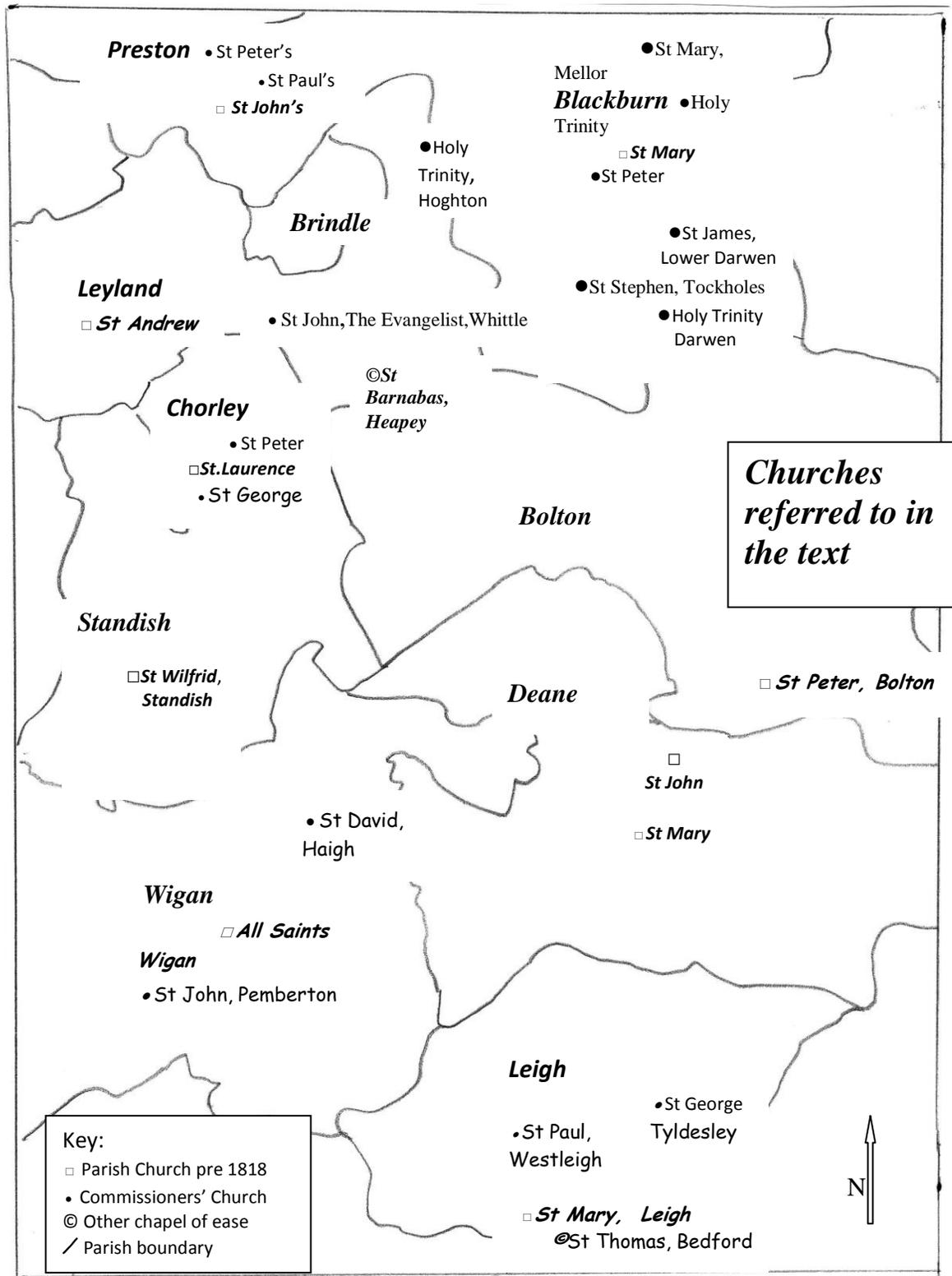
a mantra.¹⁴⁰ The aim of attracting Dissenters back to the Church by simply providing sufficient church room was the repetitive theme of Oliver Cooper from 1776, the mayor of Liverpool in 1792 and a cabinet minister such as Vansittart in 1818, even if an element of the High Church, as expressed by Charles Daubeny, did not expect many.¹⁴¹ It is this support for a 'delusional' idea appearing with Vansittart, the Evangelical politician, Watson the High Churchman and Cooper the humble curate, which is interesting. It may give a simple religious perspective, and an underlying theological stance, greater credence than a sociological and modern viewpoint might concede.

c) Commonality and Diversity

The three townships in south central Lancashire were all fortunate to attract a Commissioners' church. The causes behind a successful application varied from township to township and showed different degrees of co-operative facilitation across national, regional and local levels. However all needed some external assistance and used 'connecting rods' over at least two levels. Motivation was diverse, but possibly with local proponents reflecting the stated objectives of the national originators more clearly than at the diocesan level. Of particular interest is the strong commitment to reclaiming Dissenters, or churchmen temporarily lacking church accommodation, reflecting a deep-seated idea of a national comprehensive church in one sub region of Lancashire.

¹⁴⁰ *Manchester Mercury*, November 1822; *Blackburn Mail*, November 1822.

¹⁴¹ LA, PR3120/4/8-10, Croston Parish Papers, 1766-76; T. Watts, *The Dissenters* vol 2 (Oxford, 1995), 123; Hansard, House of Commons Debates, series 1, 37, 1101-1142, 16 March 1818; C. Daubeny, *Guide to The Church* (London, 1798), 220.



Map 4.1 Churches Referred to in the text, Chapter Four.

a) The Issues

This chapter examines the design and realisation of the Commissioners' churches. These facets are significant because the architecture indicated the rationale of the assertive Anglican church builders and they also have a relevance to their impact. As alluded to in Chapter One, the design of Commissioners' churches in general was severely criticised within two decades of their birth, fostering an assumption that there was little good about them in any respect. Initial disdain had been limited and perhaps born of a snobbery about churches of 'parliamentary dimension' which could not match those founded by a cultured local person of property.¹ Of lasting import, in 1836, was the publication of *Contrasts* by A.W.N. Pugin, who scornfully dismissed Commissioners' churches for their lack of medieval authenticity. Almost immediately Pugin's view gained credence, especially after the Camden Society, formed in 1839 by Cambridge Anglicans, also found similar fault.² The critical attitude could re-emerge well into the twentieth century as demonstrated by Summerson's assessment in 1953.³

Port was to publish the first thorough work on the design and construction of the Commissioners' churches in 1961.⁴ Just as biographers tend to adopt their subjects, it might be expected that Port would have some empathy with his six hundred churches. Indeed he did lament the erstwhile lack of notice and sympathy for the churches but did confess that many were neither inspired or inspiring.⁵ Some balance came with Pevsner in 1969 who, although pithily critical of oddities amongst Commissioners' churches, could give credit for stateliness and good general form.⁶ Port's life-long engagement with the 'Waterloo' churches led to his major, amplified, work in 2006. He could now claim that in 'the first fine flush' the churches played 'a vital role in the rekindling of church building in the Gothic style'. He found individual features such as light cast iron window tracery or a spirit-lifting tower by Goodwin praiseworthy, as he did general effective siting, form and

¹ LA, PR28461/1, Feniscowles Coucher Book, W.Feilden to J.W.Whittaker, 24 March, 28 April 1834.

² A.W.N.Pugin, *Contrasts* (2nd ed., London, 1841), 8,53; J.M.Neale, 'On Enlargement and Church Arrangement' (Cambridge, 1843), 7, in C.Webster (ed.), *Temples Worthy of His Presence'...the early publications of the Cambridge Camden Society*, (Reading, 2003).

³ J.Summerson, *Architecture in Britain 1530-1830* (London, 1953), 517-19.

⁴ M.H.Port, *Six Hundred New Churches. The Church Building Commission, 1818-1856* (1st ed., London,1961)

⁵ Port *Six Hundred New Churches*, 1st ed., xiii.

⁶ N.Pevsner, *The Buildings of England. Lancashire: The North* (London, 1969), 29.

proportion. However he had little praise for the churches built after 1830.⁷ Interesting, therefore, was Crosby's review of *Six Hundred New Churches* which asserted that Commissioners' churches had 'at last been recognised as of outstanding interest for their architectural merit and imagination...'⁸

Possibly there will be a growing appreciation of the churches. However the long period of sporadic criticism raised three key issues. Firstly, how good were the designs? Summerson found design drab in 'rectangular boxes', as did Pevsner with the 'flat elevations and monotonous plans' in south west Lancashire.⁹ Both critics thought the desire 'to make a great show at the west end', in Summerson's words, was overblown.¹⁰ Were the churches simply too large? J.M.Neale of the Camden Society criticised the emphasis on cramming people in, as did Summerson over a century later.¹¹ The latter also considered the need 'to keep within the spending limit' whilst housing so many people, a damaging factor.¹² Furthermore, were the later Commissioners' churches consecrated after 1830 even worse than those before? Was the alleged decline as a result of a more utilitarian approach or an indifference of evangelical churchmen to the symbolism favoured by the High Church? Did this alleged mediocrity have the positive effect of triggering a praiseworthy ecclesiologist reaction, as Clark claimed, or even the catholic revival in general, as Port adds?¹³ Were any of the available architects able to produce good work in the preferred Gothic style? How effective an architect could a self-taught enthusiast like Rickman be?

A second issue seems to be at the fount of the first, namely that of authenticity, which was raised by Pugin in 1836.¹⁴ He disliked Commissioners' churches for their lack of archaeological purity and the opportunity for profit that the building project allowed to unskilled jobbing architects.¹⁵ The Camden Society also complained of the loose way

⁷ Port, *Six Hundred New Churches*, 2nd ed., 280.

⁸ A.G.Crosby, review article 'Waterloo Sunrise' *LH* April 2007, 204.

⁹ R.Pollard and N.Pevsner, *The Buildings of England. Lancashire: Liverpool and the South West* (London, 2006), 65.

¹⁰ Summerson, *Architecture in Britain*, 517.

¹¹ J.M.Neale, *On Enlargement and Church Arrangement* (Cambridge, 1843), 7. ; Summerson, *Architecture in Britain*, 517

¹² Summerson, *Architecture in Britain*, 517.

¹³ K.Clark, *Gothic Revival* (2nd ed., 1950), 127.

¹⁴ Pugin, *Contrasts* (2nd ed., London, 1841), 8,53.

¹⁵ Pugin, *Contrasts*, 9.

medieval styles were adopted for recent church building and condemned the lack of real chancels and the installation of galleries and ‘pues’.¹⁶ A third criticism seems to go well beyond design to question the integrity of any of the participants in the church building programme. Summerson concluded there was, ‘Nothing much wrong except perhaps that neither administrator or clergy nor layman possessed conviction about what they were doing.’¹⁷ In a similar vein, Gowans, reviewing the first edition of *Six Hundred New Churches* alleged, ‘The Commissioners seem, from this record, to have been primarily concerned neither with Christianity or architecture as such.’¹⁸

This critical judgement of the architecture of the Commissioners’ churches has had an impact. This was not in the reality of the early nineteenth century but more in the way later writers and readers have tended to see the Commissioners’ churches. It clouds judgement, as if weakness in meeting one criterion must suggest failure on other counts. In 1875 Bishop James Fraser mentioned Tyldesley’s disappointing architecture alongside its equally disappointing inability to harvest more confirmands from those baptised.¹⁹ Amongst later writers, Elliott thought the churches ‘mean and lean’.²⁰ Ward judged, ‘The churches themselves were often too large and expensive to answer.....some never gathered a reasonable congregation.’²¹ Shortly before Ward was writing, Gowans considered Summerson had found the Commissioners’ churches ‘deflationary’ because, ‘The Commissioners’ churches were bad architecture serving a hollow religion. No wonder the passionate conviction of the High Victorian church builders swept all before it.’²² Hilton, much later in 2006, averred that the majority of Commissioners’ churches were, ‘Trabeated classical bodies.....the effect of Gothic clothes on a classical body was somewhat artificial, appropriately so perhaps for an enterprise in which religion was wielded as an instrument of social control’.²³ These were tough allegations, implying that a defective design must reveal a sorry purpose.

¹⁶ Neale, ‘On Enlargement and Church Arrangement’, 6-7.

¹⁷ J.Summerson, Introduction to *Port Six Hundred New Churches* (2nd ed., Reading, 2006), 7.

¹⁸ A.Gowans, review article in *Journal of Architectural Historians*, vol 24, 2, (May 1965), 178.

¹⁹ *Leigh Chronicle*, 25 September 1875.

²⁰ J.Elliott, ‘R.C.Carpenter 1812-1855: The Anglican Pugin’ in C. Webster (ed.), *Episodes in The Gothic Revival* (Reading, 2011), 151.

²¹ W.R.Ward, *Religion and Society in England, 1790-1850* (London ,1972), 110.

²² A.Gowans, Review of *Six Hundred New Churches*, 178.

²³ B.Hilton, *A Mad, Bad and Dangerous People* (Oxford,2006), 254.

In contrast to the long commentary on design, there has been less interest and criticism of the realisation. For example Summerson was charitable in praising ‘honest ingenuity’, ‘much good workmanship’ and ‘joinery of the finest quality’.²⁴ Port echoed him with plaudits about the ‘high standard of workmanship’ and ‘innovative handling of iron’.²⁵ Can the legions of masons and other craftsmen have been routinely so skilled? Could the whole project of effecting a Commissioners’ church be seamlessly achieved?

b) Design

The most dismissive comment is that of Gowans’ questioning the motivation of the men behind the churches. Far from lacking conviction, the architecture of Commissioners’ churches reflected and sought to inculcate the rationale behind them. Chapter 3 suggests the primacy of a religious aim behind the Church Building Act of 1818, that the national sponsors of the bill and committed local supporters, such as T.D. Whitaker, J.W. Whittaker and Oliver Cooper, believed the churches should provide sufficient accommodation in order to allow Dissenters into the national church. Hence the creation of churches Port called the two thousand -seater ‘battleships’.²⁶ In addition, churchmen in Lancashire gained something of a boost in morale when seeing the new places of worship multiply and took some pride in arguing, rightly or wrongly, that their churches were numerically outstripping those of Dissent and also dwarfing the meeting houses by the sheer mass of many individual structures. The pugnacious if short-lived *Blackburn Alfred* completed a leading article in 1833, a time of tense denominational rivalry, with the claim that the establishment were outbuilding Dissent, ‘to say nothing of the size of the churches of the Establishment’.²⁷ All three churches in the townships studied were the largest, most imposing buildings their neighbourhoods had yet seen.

²⁴ Summerson, Introduction to Port *Six Hundred New Churches*, 2nd ed., 8.

²⁵ Port, *Six Hundred New Churches*, 2nd ed., 280.

²⁶ Port, *Six Hundred New Churches*, 2nd ed., 278.

²⁷ *Blackburn Alfred*, 18 February 1833.



Plate 4.1 St George's Chorley from Market St. (Rickman, 1825)



Plate 4.2 St George's, Tyldesley (Goodwin/Smirke, 1825)

Even in the twenty first century, as routinely Anglican congregations diminish, the occasional importance of a large church is apparent. Most notably St George's Chorley is used for the mass service subsequent to the still popular annual Walking Day and, more sombrely, for funerals of British servicemen killed on active service, when many in the community wish to attend.²⁸

Moreover, in order to be an embodiment of assertion, these churches had to be clearly visible. It was not always possible to achieve a prominent site; it depended upon land that was on offer. In Tockholes only one site was available and it entailed St Stephen's nestling at one of the lowest points of the township, adjacent to the old church that was to be replaced. However in Chorley there was a clear open site donated. At St George's foundation the *Manchester Mercury* informed its readers:

It is intended to be built on the east side of Market Street, from which to the new church, a street will be opened in direct line, which will afford to the traveller through town a magnificent view of the western elevation. The site is, unquestionably the most elegant that could be procured for the purpose.²⁹ (Plate 4.1)

The ridge of Tyldesley Banks could hardly have been bettered as a location for an outward and visible sign. Thomas Johnson, at Tyldesley St George's origin in 1820, wrote in animation to the Commission of the necessity of the spire: 'This addition will very materially add to the effect of the elevation'.³⁰ The architect Robert Smirke developed the significance of the proposed location and height in a letter of March 1821: 'The church would stand on an eminence commanding to the south'.³¹ This point was picked up and amplified in the local press. Wheeler's *Manchester Chronicle*, reporting on the foundation ceremony, asserted, 'It will be a conspicuous object to all the circumadjacent parts of Lancashire and vast districts of Cheshire and Staffordshire!' Travellers on their first journey on the exciting Liverpool and Manchester Railway were distracted by the sight of Tyldesley St George's spire. They noted that it could be seen from seven counties.³² (Plate 4. 2)

²⁸ *Chorley Guardian*, 6 March 2007, 2 March 2010, 22 June 2015.

²⁹ *Manchester Mercury*, 13 November 1822.

³⁰ CERC, ECE/7/1/17721/1, Tyldesley Church Building File, T.Johnson to CBC, 18/7/1820.

³¹ CERC, ECE/7/1/17721/1, Tyldesley Church Building File, R.Smirke to CBC, 26/3/1821.

³² *Manchester Chronicle*, 27 April 1822.



Plate 4.3 St Mary Mellor, location (Rickman, 1829)

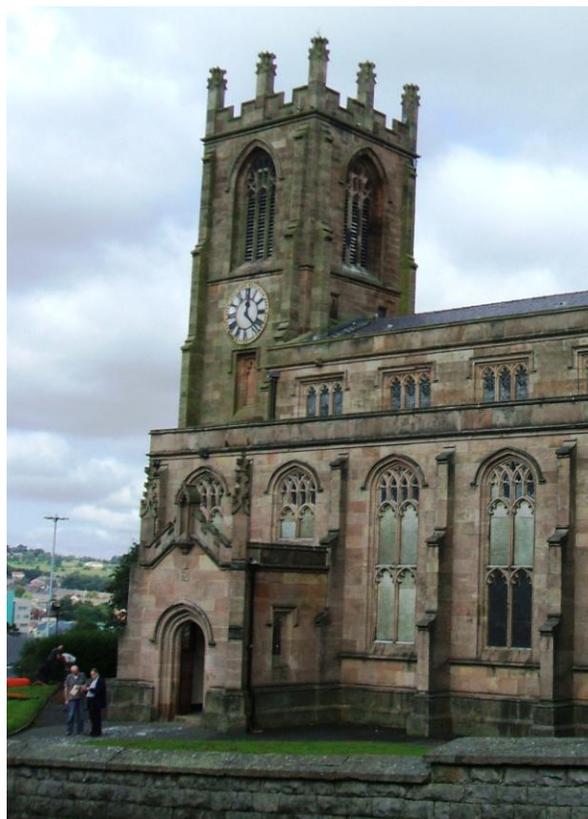


Plate 4.4 Holy Trinity Darwen (Rickman, 1829)



Plate 4.5 St George's Chorley in the Chorley Skyline



Plate 4.6 St George's Chorley from Pall Mall

This visible advertising was common in the Lancashire Commissioners' churches. Prominent elevated sites announced St Mary Mellor, Holy Trinity Darwen and St James Lower Darwen, which was in fact perched well above the centre of Lower Darwen on the Blackamoor ridge. (Plates 4.3, 4.4) A striking west end, especially if emphasised by a tall tower announced the presence of the established church. St George's Chorley still dominates the town's skyline, matched only by the competitive tower, an addition in 1893, of St Mary's Catholic Church, and the Town Hall of 1879. St George's tower is a strong landmark viewed from the long length of Pall Mall and Moor Road, streets which were to form the central paths of St George's eventual district. (Plates 4.5, 4.6)

The names selected for the churches also made a point. The new Chorley church may have taken its name from St George's Birmingham, much as it took the same internal plan.³³ In Lancashire traditional saints' names, such as St George, were the most popular. Amongst the Lancashire churches funded by the first 'Million' Act, 'St George' and 'St Peter' led the way with three dedications apiece. 'St Peter' might have seemed rather Catholic and in the second tranche of churches, from 1828 onwards, 'St Paul' was adopted twice as many times as 'St Peter'. 'St George' was not selected at all in this latter phase, possibly because George IV was not as popular a monarch as George III. 'Christ Church' was used in no dedications and 'St John' just once in the first period but both led the way in the second. 'Holy Trinity', with an implied statement against Unitarianism, features throughout, if not as markedly as in Kent where half the dozen Commissioners' churches were so named.³⁴ Tradition was an important tool and chimed with the Hackney Phalanx's belief that their church was in continuity with the Early Fathers and the pre-Reformation antecedents as well as the post-Reformation establishment. A modern spin doctor would have seen the advantage in fostering the perception that the government church building programme might be in thanksgiving for the victory at Waterloo. The contemporary sponsors of the Commissioners' churches never thought of relating them to the battle. It could have enhanced the later popularity of the new churches if they had so done.

³³ RIBA, RiT2, Rickman's Diary 25 February 1820.

³⁴ Port, *Six Hundred New Churches*, 326-347.



Plate 4.7 Whalley Parish Church



Plate 4.8 St Wilfrid's Standish



Plate 4.9 Christ Church Liversedge (Thomas Taylor, 1816)

Dignified and traditional design was also important, providing a comforting link, as Knight has pointed out, to what seemed a historic past.³⁵ The Church Building Commissioners, whilst making no regulations about which style to adopt, were clear that the buildings must have the character of a church- and that of a church of the establishment.³⁶ Judging by his selected images for publication an architect such as Pocock guessed rationally but wrongly, that they would favour Grecian styles.³⁷

In a ‘competing babel of styles’ Gothic was to prove most popular.³⁸ Why were 174 out of the 214 churches, receiving a full building grant, and all but two of the 82 in Lancashire, constructed in the Gothic style? ³⁹ In south central Lancashire there were particular reasons. Gothic provided contrast with the smaller compact, rectangular meeting houses of the Dissenters and, indeed, those unofficial ones of the Catholics in the eighteenth century. Furthermore, the parish churches in the sample townships were old medieval structures. The few great churches Lancashire held, leaving Liverpool to one side, were Gothic. Manchester Collegiate Church, Lancaster Priory, Whalley Parish Church or St Wilfrid’s Standish, Perpendicular although built as late as 1584, were the striking edifices.⁴⁰ (Plates 4.7, 4.8) Several privately built churches built just prior to the Commissioners’ era, such as Leyland St Andrew in 1816 or the rebuilt Brindle Parish church in 1815 were Gothic.⁴¹ There were several more notable and known regional examples of the style, for example Thomas Taylor’s at Liversedge, West Yorkshire (1811-1816). (Plate 4.9) Taylor, illustrator to T.D. Whitaker, came to hold that Gothic could be a cheaper style than classical.⁴² Trinity Church Preston, begun in 1814, was a Decorated church designed by a normally classical architect, John Foster Senior of Liverpool. Trinity may have provided the example for St Peter’s Blackburn, the first Commissioners’ church in Lancashire and also Decorated.⁴³ At the outset of his career Sir Charles Barry knew little of Gothic but learned in the process of

³⁵ F.Knight, *The Nineteenth Century Church and English Society*, (Cambridge, 1995), 61-2.

³⁶ Port, *Six Hundred New Churches*, 50.

³⁷ C.Webster, Introduction to W.F.Pocock, *Designs for Churches and Chapels 1819* (Reading, 2010), 26.

³⁸ T.Hunt, *Building Jerusalem. The Rise and Fall of the Victorian City* (London, 2005), 99.

³⁹ Summerson, *Architecture in Britain*, 519; Port, *Six Hundred New Churches* 2nd ed., 326-7,334-6.

⁴⁰ Pevsner, *North Lancashire*, 153-4, 257-9, 236-7.

⁴¹ *North Lancashire*, 76,166.

⁴² C.Webster, ‘Foremost among those who successfully promoted the ancient style of architecture’: the churches of Thomas Taylor’ in C.Webster (ed.), *Episodes In The Gothic Revival* (Reading, 2011), 112.

⁴³ C. Webster, as yet unpublished book on *The Late Georgian Parish Church*.

designing All Saints Stand and St Matthew Manchester, before building impressive Gothic churches in London.⁴⁴



Plate 4.10 St Philip's Salford (Smirke, 1824)

⁴⁴ G.L.Carr, 'The Commissioners' Churches in London, 1818-1837: A Study of Religious Art, Architecture and Patronage in Britain from the Formation of the Commission to the Accession of Victoria', unpublished PhD thesis, University of Michigan (1976), 642-3, 650-54.



Plate 4.11 Holme Chapel, Cliviger, 1788.



Plate 4.12 St Peter's Blackburn (Palmer, 1821), *Blackburn Library*

Thus local traditions appear to have had a strong effect on choice of style. The Commissioners' churches 'spoke' of tradition which was another tool of assertion.

So most of Lancashire was Gothic and this could entail employing Early English, Decorated or Perpendicular mode. Norman or Romanesque appeared with Edmund Sharpe returning from his tour of Germany in 1835 but he was to embrace Early English within five years.⁴⁵ Given that St Philips' Salford, at the time at the western approach to Manchester, along with St. Mathias in Liverpool were the only classical Commissioners' churches in Lancashire, it suggests that the Gothic style, or styles, was appropriate for beyond the metropolis, the great towns and the south.⁴⁶ (Plate 4.10) Interestingly Robert Smirke's only Gothic church for the Commissioners was at Tyldesley.⁴⁷ So it was that Lancashire played a part in the creation of what became known as Victorian or English Gothic. In the second half of the nineteenth century larger Congregational chapels in England, some Presbyterian churches in Scotland and Roman Catholic places of worship became overwhelmingly Gothic and in this 'English style.'⁴⁸ The designs were taken abroad and emerged in corners of the British Empire such as Nova Scotia, suggesting a kind of Anglican cultural imperialism.⁴⁹

Local clergy were influential leaders with frequently strong views on architecture and the message it communicated. None was more important in this respect than T.D.Whittaker, who may have rebuilt his home chapel at Holme in a modern style but ongoing antiquarian research ensured his first Commissioner's church, St Peter's Blackburn, was Gothic. (Plates 4.11, 4.12) By 1801 he could describe Whalley Abbey as 'magnificent', his subsequent history of the Leeds area was cool on classical and keen on Gothic examples, such as Wakefield Parish Church, and he lauded and promoted Taylor's work.⁵⁰ J.W.Whittaker professed to see Grecian as appropriate if there was site of high eminence to show off the portico, pediment and columns. He believed vast funding was needed to create beauty on

⁴⁵ G.Brandwood, *The Architecture of Sharpe, Paley and Austin* (English Heritage, 2012), 18,21-22.

⁴⁶ Port, *Six Hundred New Churches*, 2nd ed., 179.

⁴⁷ Port, *Six Hundred New Churches* 2nd ed., 73.

⁴⁸ G.Stamp, 'The Victorian Kirk: Presbyterian Architecture in Nineteenth Century Scotland' and J.Sheehy 'Irish Church Building: popery, Puginism and the Protestant Ascendancy', in C.Brooks and A.Saint (eds.), *The Victorian Church. Architecture and Society* (Manchester, 1995),101,148.

⁴⁹ M.Watts, *The Dissenters* vol 2, (Oxford, 1995), 604-5; P.Coffman, 'The Introduction of Ecclesiology Abroad' in A.Bremner (ed.), *Ecclesiology Abroad, The British Empire and Beyond*, (London, 2012), 79.

⁵⁰ Webster, as yet unpublished, *The Late Georgian Parish Church* ch 8, 4.

all sides of such a church.⁵¹ Therefore in the one church he designed personally, the private build of Feniscowles Immanuel in 1835, he considered all medieval styles- although Norman he thought costly- and had a slight preference for Decorated.⁵² It may be of some significance that he favoured this style before Pugin lauded it two years later.⁵³ Sadly the church appeared with rectangular nave windows. (Plate 4.13) Roger Carus Wilson at Preston was subsequently held to be an accomplished designer but the physical evidence is that he simply accepted Rickman's ideas in the 1820s and Latham's varied Romanesque in the 1830s.⁵⁴ The architects could have been almost as important as the clergy in this part of Lancashire. A year prior to the 1818 Act Rickman had published his *Attempt to Discriminate the Styles of English Architecture from the Conquest to the Reformation* describing the development of medieval styles.⁵⁵ His first accepted plans were Gothic. The successful plan for the Gothic St George's Birmingham went with him to Chorley St George's, albeit Chorley received Early English lancets rather than the Decorated style adopted at Birmingham.⁵⁶ Palmer's Pleasington Priory (1816-19) was well received locally and Palmer, although a Catholic, went on to rebuild St Mary's Parish Church Blackburn and the first Commissioners' church, St Peter's in the same town.⁵⁷ So a trend was set.



Plate 4.13 Feniscowles Immanuel. (J.W.Whittaker, 1835)

⁵¹ LA, PR2846/1, Fensicowles Coucher Book, Whittaker to Mrs G.Willis, 12 May 1834.

⁵² PR2846/1, Whittaker to W.Feilden, 5 March 1834.

⁵³ Pugin, *Contrasts*, 3.

⁵⁴ Obituary Notice *Church of England Magazine* vol 8, (1840), 72; N.Pevsner, *The Buildings of England: North Lancashire*, (London, 1969), 29.

⁵⁵ M.B.Aldrich, *Gothic Revival*, (London, 1994), 107.

⁵⁶ RIBA, RiT/2, Rickman's Diary, 25 February 1820.

⁵⁷ N.Pevsner, *The Buildings of England: North Lancashire*, (London, 1969), 62-3.

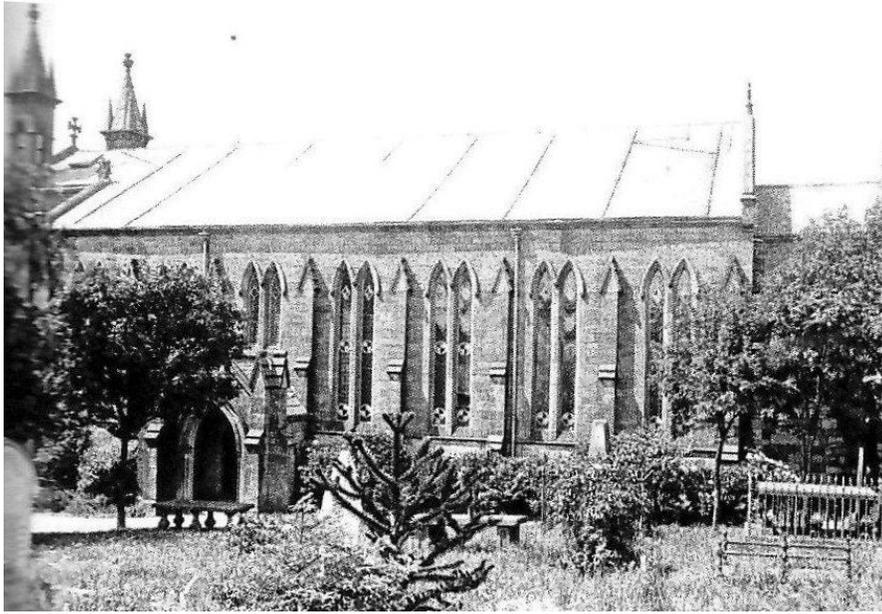


Figure 4.14 St Stephen's Tockholes (Rickman, 1833), *Blackburn Library*



Plate 4.15 St Paul Preston (Rickman, 1825)



Plate 4.16 St Peter's Preston (Rickman, 1825)

Thus the churches aimed at communicating clear, redolent and traditional messages in their design. Whyte, in *Unlocking The Church*, has demonstrated that Victorian churches meant something to their creators and also communicated, like a tract, to others.⁵⁸ Arguably the Commissioners' churches also conveyed a message through the medium. Yates points out that the dominant Ecclesiologist influence post 1870, was largely facilitated by the earlier predilection for redolent Gothic.⁵⁹ Admittedly, the attempt to include a distinguishing Anglican symbol could look like pointless desperation. St Stephen's Tockholes, suffered to be built at a quarter of the cost of the Chorley St George and Tyldesley St George, was always going to be, in the words of its architect 'but a poor church'.⁶⁰ (Plate 4.14) It was suffered to receive a stunted bell holder rather than a tower. Annoyingly to the locals its

⁵⁸ W. Whyte, *Unlocking The Church* (Oxford, 2017), 13, 33.

⁵⁹ N. Yates, *Buildings, Faith and Worship* (2nd ed., Oxford, 2000), xxii, 133, 140.

⁶⁰ LA, PR1549/29/4, Tockholes Parish Papers, Rickman to J.W. Whittaker, 17 March 1830.

bell had insufficient space to swing and resonate within.⁶¹ St Paul's Preston was probably the oddest looking cheaper church built. The *Preston Chronicle*, its Whig political stance unsympathetic towards Anglican churches, remarked, 'The aim was plain simplicity. The architect had been successful. It has a stunted appearance.'⁶² (Plate 4.15) In contrast, other Commissioners' churches looked both imposing and dignified. The *Chronicle* could concede that St Peter's Preston was 'a beautiful specimen of Gothic architecture.'⁶³ (Plate 4.16) The *Pilot*, as it would, considered St George's Chorley, 'one of the most beautiful modern structures in the county.'⁶⁴

Dignified surroundings were also important. The same *Manchester Mercury* article that praised the site in Chorley, also averred, 'None but buildings of the most respectable appearance will be suffered to be erected in the vicinity of the intended structure.'⁶⁵ This proved mostly true. Although some cramped cottages appeared at the southern side of the church, the direct line from Market Street to the west soon became known as St George's Street and was spared development until terraces of well proportioned and constructed mid Victorian houses lined it.⁶⁶ Today the streets leading to the church form one of the two conservation areas.⁶⁷ The local retail area is announced as 'St George's District'.⁶⁸ (Plate 4.18A, 4.18B) The earth underneath the church is undisturbed by mine shafts, the only part of central Chorley, east of Market Street that was not pitted during a period of intense coal getting between 1840 and 1865.⁶⁹ Those with local influence throughout time have accorded a Commissioner's church the consideration that might have been reserved for older and finer parish churches. (Plates 4.17; Map 4.2))

Thus there was also a strong claim in the size and positioning of the churches. The message may not have been quite as strong as the churchmen wished for they did not always claim the most significant space or place in the townships. For the last twenty years, since a

⁶¹ LA, PR1549, Tockholes Coucher Book 1833-1840, Rickman to J.W. Whittaker, April 1833; G. Robinson to Rickman, 3 October 1834.

⁶² *Preston Chronicle*, 16 September 1826.

⁶³ *Preston Chronicle*, 10 September 1825.

⁶⁴ *Preston Pilot*, 13 August 1825.

⁶⁵ *Manchester Mercury*, 13 November 1822.

⁶⁶ 6" Ordnance Survey Map 1848.

⁶⁷ www.chorley.gov.uk/local plan.

⁶⁸ See Plate 4.18, 4.19.

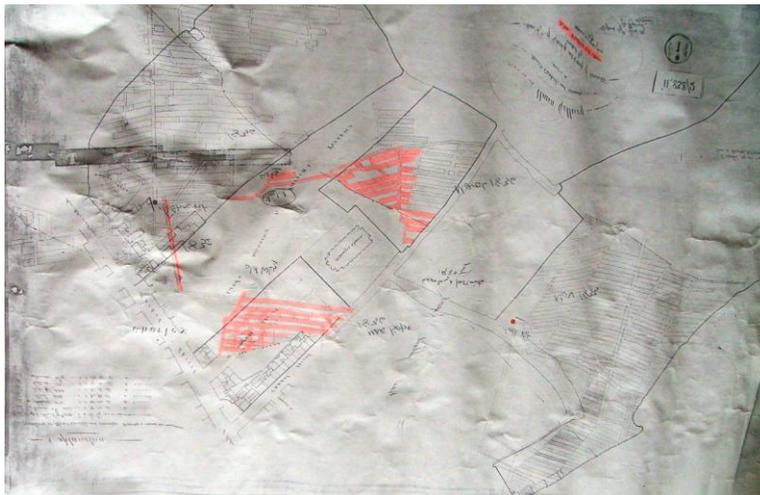
⁶⁹ Astley Hall Chorley: Old Mining Maps.



Plate 4.17 St George's Conservation Area, Chorley



Plates 4.18A and 4.18B St George's Retail Quarter, Chorley



Map 4.2. Chorley Coal Mine Workings c. 1855 , *Mining Map Collection, Astley Hall, Chorley*

‘spatial turn’ in historical writing, historians have brought out the importance local folk attached to associations with sites. Navickas has shown how the elite of Manchester in the 1790s set about denying radical groups any connection with customary public spaces.⁷⁰ Campfield St Matthew, an early Commissioners’ church, was built competitively close by St Peter’s Field. Interestingly the Manchester Political Union moved their platform away from the front of the church during a reform meeting in October 1831.⁷¹ The clergy at the church may have resented the nearby Manchester Hall of Science, a classical structure facing the Commissioners’ Gothic and housing radical meetings; the vicar in 1840 vindictively prosecuted the doormen at the Science Hall on a technicality.⁷² In Tyldesley, however dominant the Banks ridge was, St George’s church was not at the centre of the town; the earlier Countess of Huntingdon chapel was, at the very heart of the market square. In Chorley, St George’s was noticeable but not at the core of a new community and away from the kernel of the township around St Thomas’ Square, the original market cross and St Laurence’s church, which gave Chorley its strongest identity. In Tockholes St Stephen’s sat next to the former St Michael’s, so could at least claim continuity with the past.

Beyond its assertive purpose the architecture of the Commissioners’ churches should not be charged with a dearth of underlying religious conviction. Examination of the internal arrangement, reflecting liturgical purpose is important. The most stringent test of design quality would deploy the Camden Society’s wish that a place of worship be ‘temples worthy of His presence’ or Pugin’s ‘fitness for purpose’.⁷³ A fundamental point is that the Church Building Act came fifteen years before the Oxford Movement, nineteen years prior to *Contrasts* and twenty one years before the Camden Society was inaugurated. An examination of St George’s Chorley suggests it presented the orthodox Protestant Anglicanism of the 1820s. In this regard, it was ideal for its purpose. (Plate 4.19) The focal point is the combined reading desk and pulpit; Protestant services were centred on the Gospel and the sermon. Richard Yates in *The Church In Danger* pointed out that if the poor came there would be many who could not read.⁷⁴ It was essential they could hear. Yet the

70 K.Navickas , *Protest and the Politics of Space and Place 1789-1848* (Manchester, 2016), 6.

71 *Protest and the Politics of Place and Space*, 125.

72 *Protest and Politics of Place and Space* ,216.

73 Pugin, *Contrasts*, 1.

74 R.Yates, *The Church in Danger* (London, 1815), 94.



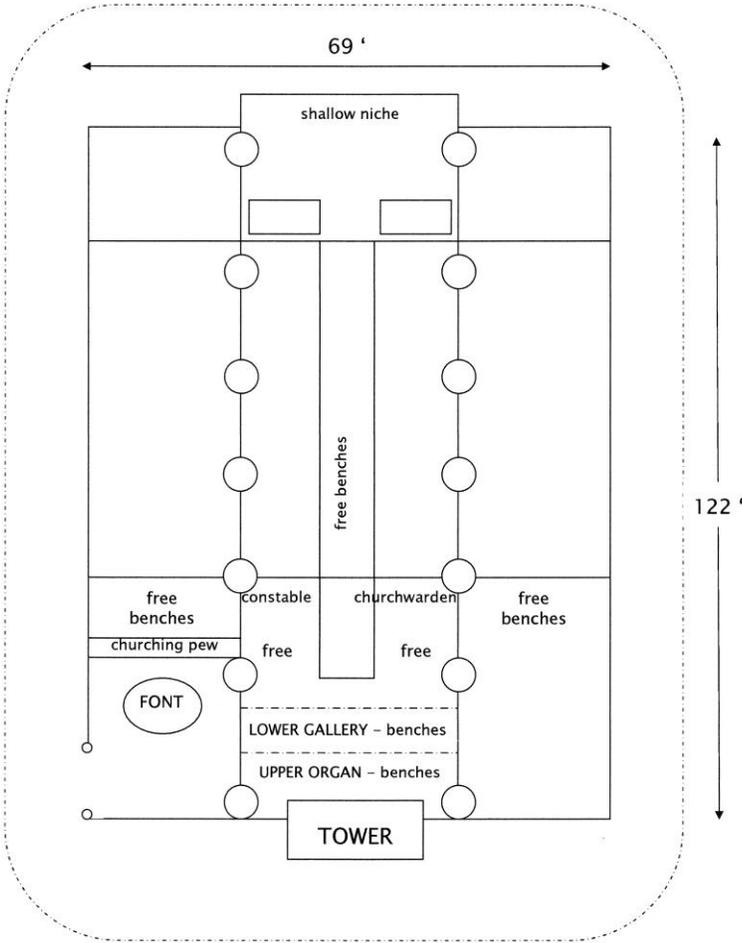
Plate 4.19 St George's Chorley, Interior prior to 1891.

access to the communion table is not blocked; the eucharist was not ignored and offered more frequently, often monthly, as had been apparent in Manchester and Warrington deaneries subsequent to 1780.⁷⁵ There are no private box pews with high sides and the rented seats at the front have only slightly higher backs than the free seats behind and in the galleries. In its more open seating plan, Tockholes St Stephen provided a contrast to its predecessor St Michael's.⁷⁶ In this respect the Commissioners diverged from some previous practice. Chorley's pews were just deep enough to allow the congregation to kneel in prayer. The cast-iron supports for the gallery are strong but thin and allow hearers in the aisles to hear. The stone piers of the nave are relatively slender too. All seats faced eastwards and towards the minister. His voice was expected to hold the attention of 2000

⁷⁵ Yates, *Buildings, Faith and Worship*, 59.

⁷⁶ Chapter 7, 270-1.

hearers up to a hundred feet distant. The Early English lancet windows certainly lead the eye heavenwards, as the Ecclesiologists would wish, and the texts inscribed below the east window hold the essentials of Christianity. The fundamental symbolism of Christianity is present: the font at the west door for the entry to life, the nave representing the passage through the world, the communion table in its niche representing the way to heaven. The Ecclesiologists and Ritualists added longer, raised and more beautified chancels. Chorley St George in 1825 offered the unvarnished Word.



SKETCH OF ST GEORGE'S TYLDESLEY 1825
 From Jacob Robson's notes Ms6.942.72 R121,34. c1 845

Figure 4.1 Plan of St George's Tyldesley Interior c. 1825

The interior of Tyldesley church displays similar features. According to what plans remain and Jacob Robson's notes, the internal layout of the church was again typical of the Commission's auditory approach. (Fig 4.1) There was hardly any niche at the east end. The pulpit and reading desk, unlike Chorley at either side of the east end. St Stephen's Tockholes, switching from the old St Michael's grouping of pulpit and clerk's desk at the nave's north wall, also now included separate reading desk and pulpit, whilst also keeping the traditional clerk's desk by the pulpit.⁷⁷ In Tyldesley's nave the only north and south facing pews were at the head of either aisle, probably designated for the Ormerods and the minister. The churching pew and font were conveniently by the door. The free seats were at the rear, in the two galleries at the west end (the higher of which also contained the organ) and on benches in the centre nave. The pews allowed merely 20 inches depth for an adult and 14 inches for a child. In this manner the church could contain 1132 free seats and 305 seats for rent, a relatively high proportion of free to other seats, which suggests the Commissioners imagined or hoped a large constituency of the poorer classes would enter.⁷⁸

Therefore, as regards the mode of worship and liturgical ordering of the church, it would be hard to contend that St George's Chorley or its namesake in Tyldesley made much difference to existing custom. Yates, in *Buildings, Faith and Worship*, charted from the Reformation the development of an Anglican ordering with the chancel less masked from the nave.⁷⁹ Experimental layouts, aimed at positioning the pulpit, reading desk and clerk's desk in a convenient auditory location, increasingly at the head of the nave but allowing a view of the communion table, were deployed over the eighteenth century.⁸⁰ The generation before 1818 would see some churches with all liturgical foci, including the font, concentrated at the east; others displayed a clear separation of reading desk and pulpit, allowing a clear view of communion, brought closer by means of a short chancel.⁸¹

The Commissioners' Churches, with their long naves and serried ranks of shallow pews and benches must have resembled continuity with the auditory past, an eighteenth century chapel or a more recent adult school, as the congregations listened to the Prayer Book,

⁷⁷ See Chapter 7, 271.

⁷⁸ CERC, ECE/7/1/17721/1, Tyldesley Church Building File, Smirke's Directions and Notes, 28 July 1821.

⁷⁹ N. Yates, *Buildings, Faith and Worship*, (2nd ed., Oxford, 2000), xvii-xviii, 41.

⁸⁰ *Buildings, Faith and Worship*, 70-86.

⁸¹ *Buildings, Faith and Worship*, 77, 86, 111, 116-19.

Gospel and sermons sounding from the common deal desk at the east of the church. This was no accident, for the Commissioners' churches can be seen partly as a continuation of the National School movement founded in 1811. The orthodox High Church pressure group which prodded the 1811 National Society and then the 1818 Act into being, were not the High Church folk of the later Oxford Movement or the Ritualists. They prescribed straightforward no-frills religious, and hence moral, instruction for the masses. The eighteenth century galleries were copied because of the numerous congregations planned for. The reading desk and pulpit were to be separate too, although Chorley St George and other churches presented just a slender reading desk, leaving the communion table visible but also recognising the likely shortage of manpower or the desirability of the hearers being offered a continuous focus. The Commissioners adopted the variant of an eastward facing seating plan, foreshadowing ecclesiology. However the Ecclesiologists and Ritualists made much more marked changes to liturgical ordering, if not structure and architecture, with longer, raised and more beautified chancels, ornamented stone altars and choir stalls. There also tended to be a clearer separation of liturgical functions.⁸² Fundamentally, after 1870 congregations became more observers than hearers in services, conducted by a priest mediating with the Almighty rather than a minister preaching the Word.⁸³

In this earlier Commissioners' era the emphasis on the Word imposed a simplicity upon the churches internally and also in the external architecture. Apologists turned this into a virtue. Just as the English Protestant Church was held to be a particularly 'pure' form of the Christian church, so the architecture of the new churches was often praised as 'chaste'. Possibly a battle of styles might be seen as one of purity against ornamentation or a Protestant restraint contrasting with Catholic imagery.

⁸² Yates, *Buildings, Faith and Worship*, 43, 170,173

⁸³ *Buildings, Faith and Worship*, 173; W. Whyte, *Unlocking The Church*, 64.

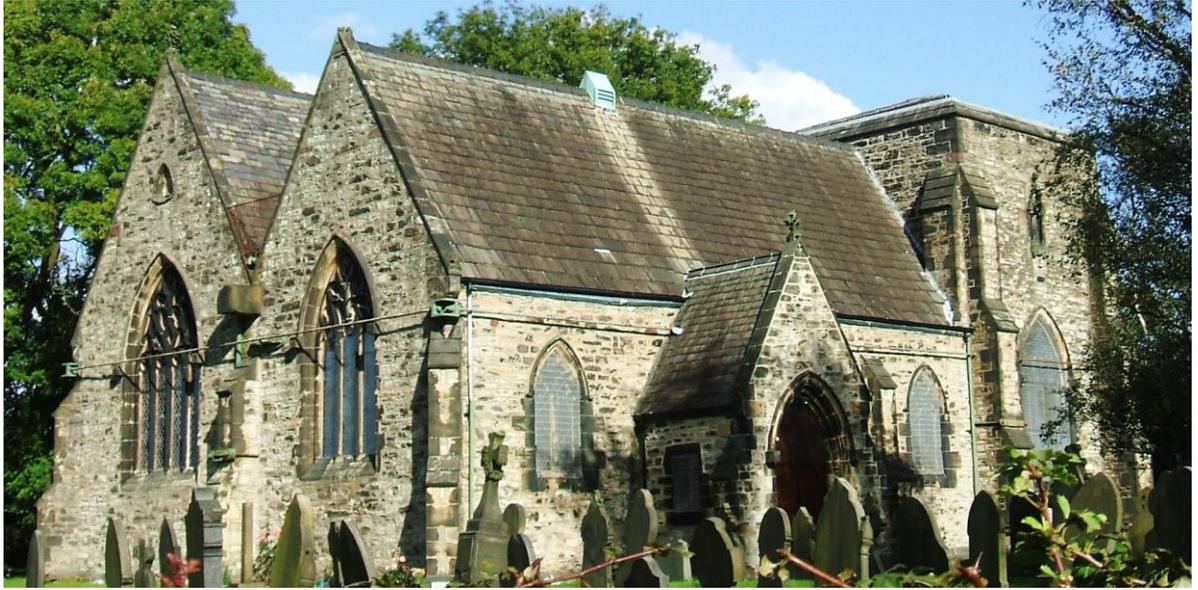


Plate 4.20 St Paul's Westleigh (Young, 1847)



Plate 4.21A St George's Chorley Interior, hammerbeam ceiling

Plate 4.21B Galleries



Plate 4.21C St George's Chorley Exterior, corbel

Wheeler's *Manchester Chronicle* considered the design for Tyldesley St George as a, 'pure and simple model of acutely pointed or lancet arched Gothic'.⁸⁴ The nearly completed St Peter's Preston it lauded as 'chaste and beautiful'.⁸⁵ One of the last Commissioners' churches, St Paul's Westleigh, close by Tyldesley, was reported by the Chester Diocesan Building Society as, 'considered elegance and built with solidity, in pure Gothic style.'⁸⁶ (Fig. 4.20) 'Chaste' was now a commonly summoned adjective and appeared in the Camden Society's *A Few Hints on the Practical Study of Ecclesiastical Architecture and Antiquities* (1843) as a descriptor for the best Decorated architecture.⁸⁷ Given the insistence on purity it is hard to understand why Rickman allowed pointless sculpted faces to appear at the capitals of internal arches within St George's Chorley and sporadically on the external corbel table. In partial redemption the dignified carving on the pew ends was understated and is now preserved as wainscoting on the walls. (Plate 4.21C)

Therefore the external and internal design of these Lancashire churches did meet contemporary thought on seamliness and what constituted a worshipful environment. It also made a very strong announcement to the locality that the national church was now asserting itself as never before in this region. Turning to consider the issue of quality, it is hard to accept Pugin's dismissive comment on the Commissioners' churches: 'A more meagre, miserable display of architectural skill never was made!'⁸⁸ Pugin, a recent convert to Catholicism and a furnishings designer in search of building commissions, scathingly compared modern designs with those of the late medieval period.⁸⁹ Occasionally the 'modern' designs were his own invention. Yet the comparison of the inexact, recent and real St Pancras Chapel with the fifteenth century Kirkstall Chapel in Leeds was fairly put.⁹⁰ Pugin, dubbed 'God's Architect' by his biographer Rosemary Hill in 2012, believed the English nation had been at its most holy in the pre Reformation days of the fourteenth century. To him it was no accident that the Decorated church architecture of the day had

⁸⁴ *Manchester Chronicle*, 27 April 1822.

⁸⁵ *Manchester Chronicle*, 23 October 1824.

⁸⁶ MA, MSf942.72 r121, Archdeacon Rushton's Visitation vol 35, Unattributed cutting of report at Chester Diocesan Church Building Society, 30 September 1846.

⁸⁷ J.M.Neale, *A Few Hints on the Practical Study of Ecclesiastical Architecture and Antiquities* (4th ed., Cambridge, 1843), 9.

⁸⁸ Pugin, *Contrasts*, 49.

⁸⁹ *Contrasts*, 8.

⁹⁰ *Contrasts*, 6.

inspired the populace with thoughts of heaven. The pointed arch led heavenwards.⁹¹ Pre-Reformation worship and architecture were authentic, whereas that which he perceived around him were not. As mentioned above, J.M.Neale and the Ecclesiologists of the Cambridge Camden Society (1839) soon weighed in with similar charges, in particular objecting to the inclusion of galleries and the lack of true chancels.⁹² Both Pugin and Neale were contemporary with the Oxford Movement which sought to emphasise the importance of the liturgy and especially the Eucharist in a reclamation of Catholic practice in a pre-Reformation setting. Possibly the strictures of the recent Catholic convert Welby Pugin and the Camden Society of a new High Anglican variant, were driven by competitive religious stances and the ambition of a younger generation. However it was a sincere and reasonable point that church design should primarily lead people to devout worship and, in the words of Neale, be ‘temples in some sort worthy of His presence.’⁹³

Even committed Anglican church builders could damn these churches with faint praise. Bishop John Bird Sumner in 1835 suggested, ‘The structure of many of them is worthy of their object’.⁹⁴ The inference is that even he thought some of them were not so. Bishop Fraser of Manchester, guest at the fiftieth anniversary celebrations of Tyldesley St George, plainly told a packed congregation that their ‘modern’ church was not really a patch upon the medieval St Mary’s Leigh, Tyldesley’s mother church.⁹⁵ He may not have been the best qualified judge because he also denied Robert Smirke could have been an ecclesiastical architect. Subsequently, architectural historians have routinely dismissed or simply ignored the Commissioners’ churches when describing the Gothic Revival. More general and popular accounts deal with the Revival by rushing to praise Pugin or possibly his successors Sir Gilbert Scott or John Ruskin.⁹⁶

⁹¹ Pugin, *Contrasts*, 3.

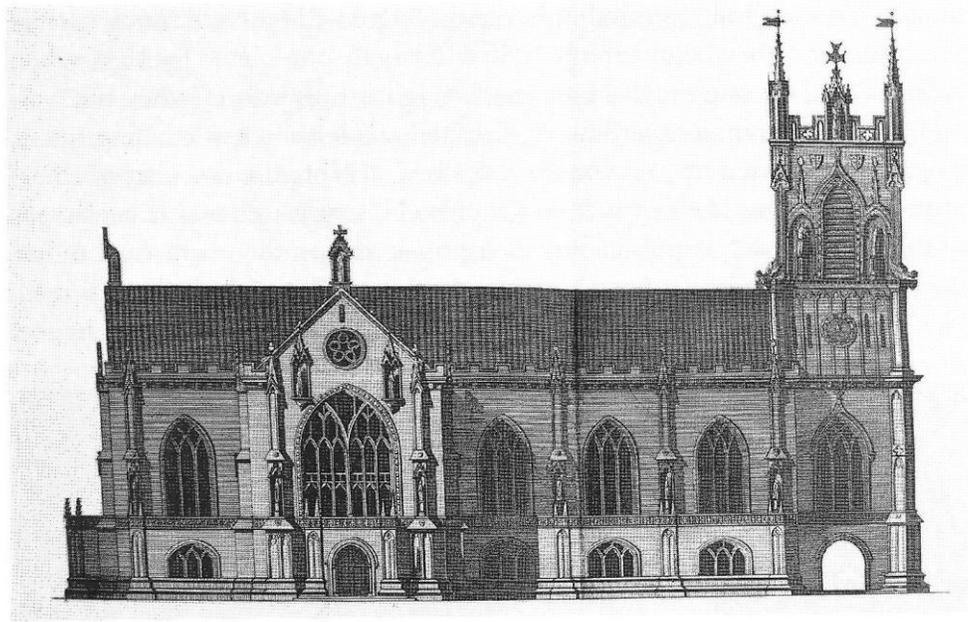
⁹² C.Webster (ed.), “*Temples Worthy of His Presence*”. *The Early Publications of the Cambridge Camden Society* (Reading , 2003), 12.

⁹³ J.M.Neale, *A Few Words to Church Builders* (Cambridge, 1841), 30.

⁹⁴ CALS, EDV10/8, Bishop Sumner’s Charge 1835, 30.

⁹⁵ *Leigh Chronicle*, 25 September 1875

⁹⁶ A.Graham-Dixon, *The Art of The Gothic. Britain’s Midnight Hour*, BBC4 TV 20 October 2014.



1.6: John Carter, 'Design for a Church ... Elevation of the North Front...from East to West', 1 February 1777, in the *Builder's Magazine*, 1779, pl. cxiii.

Plate 4.22 John Carter's Design for a Church, 1777 (C. Webster ed., *Episodes in the Gothic Revival*, 19)

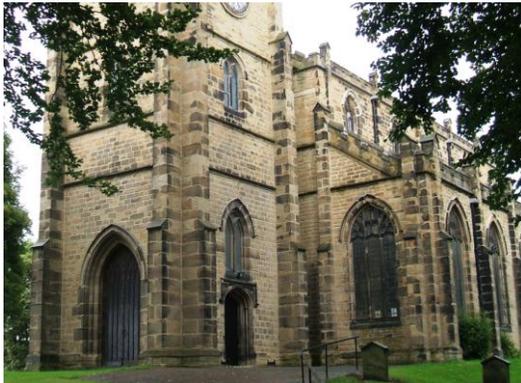


Plate 4.23A and B Christ Church Liversedge (Taylor, 1816)

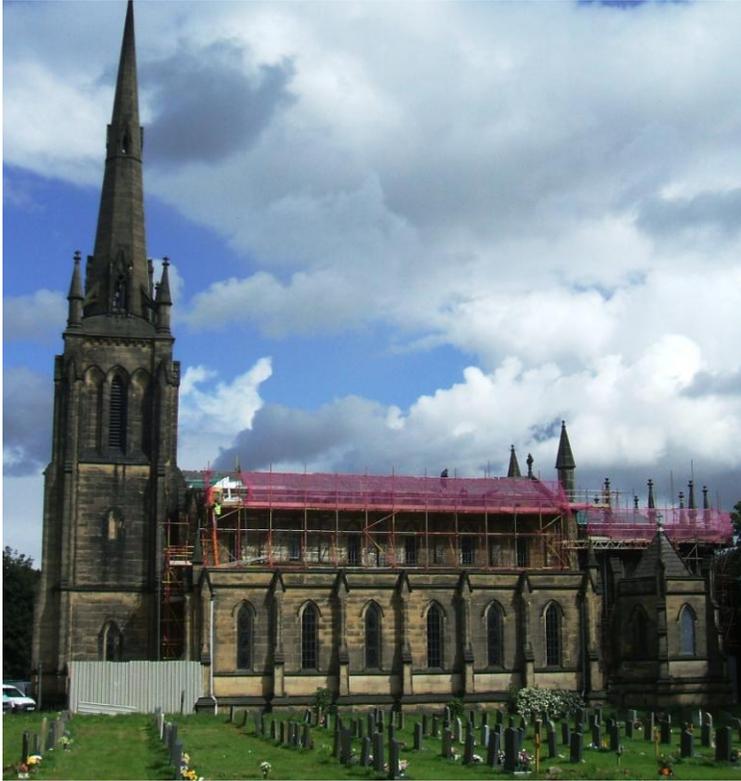
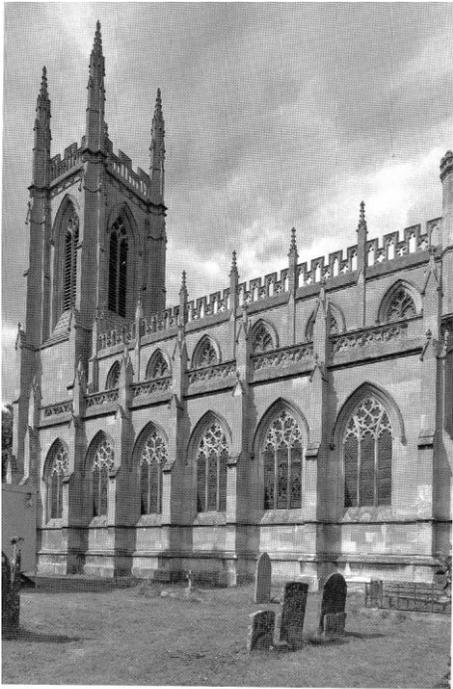


Plate 4.24 St John Oulton (Rickman,1829)



19: St Peter ad Vincula, Hampton Lucy, Warwickshire (1822-6). The richly ornamented tower, nave and aisle from the south-east. (Geoff Brandwood.)

Plate 4.25 Hampton Lucy (Rickman,1826) (*Geoff Brandwood*, from C.Webster *Episodes in the Gothic Revival*, 65)

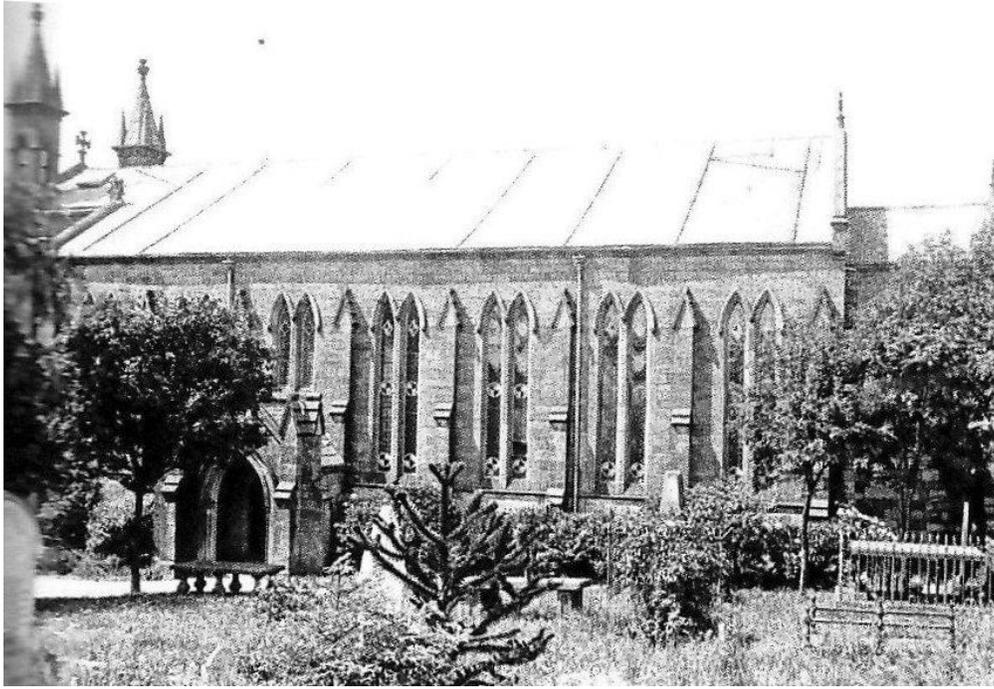


Plate 4.26 St Stephen's Tockholes (Rickman ,1833) *Blackburn Library*



Plate 4.27 St Andrew Exwick (John Hayward, 1842) *David Cornforth, Exeter Memories.*

Pugin's judgement was unfair to earlier architectural writers and practitioners. In 1776 John Carter produced a stunning design for a proposed church based wholly on authentic medieval styles, including the Decorated.⁹⁷ (Plate 4.22) In 1816 Thomas Taylor completed the construction of a church at Liversedge Yorkshire which was almost a perfect reincarnation of medieval style.⁹⁸ (Plate 4.23) The charge of lack of authenticity was particularly harsh on Thomas Rickman, a self taught architect who, in addition to experimenting with new materials and techniques, worked out the taxonomy widely used today to describe medieval styles and designed twenty two of the Commissioners' churches, including those at Tockholes and Chorley.⁹⁹ Images of St John Oulton and St Peter ad Vincula, Hampton Lucy, show the splendid Gothic architecture he achieved when given unlimited funds by a private sponsor.¹⁰⁰ (Plates 4.24, 4.25.)

In considering Rickman's Commissioners' churches, there is much to praise. The Ecclesiologists considered John Hayward's St Andrew, Exwick near Exeter (1841) to be the perfect small church.¹⁰¹ (Plate 4.27) It could be simply a matter of taste or opinion as to whether its external features were better designed than Rickman's Early English style at St Stephen's Tockholes, a Commissioners' church which hardly seems a blot on the landscape or a poor comparison. (Plate 4.26) After all, the Ecclesiologists considered Early English the most appropriate style for such smaller churches.¹⁰² Pugin lauded the Decorated style but many true medieval parish churches presented a mixture of styles as they developed from a small Norman nave and apse to a fifteenth century church with Decorated aisles and Perpendicular tower. St George Chorley may seem curious in having lancet windows in a tower of Perpendicular proportions but the large tower is well balanced by the long and high nave with its added clerestory. Internally the galleries necessary to house a large number of hearers cut the lancet windows in half but the unique hammerbeam roof can still inspire wonder.

⁹⁷ T.Friedman, 'John Carter (1748-1817) and The Late Georgian Struggle for Gothic Authenticity' in C.Webster (ed.), *Episodes in the Gothic Revival*, (Reading, 2011), 40.

⁹⁸ Webster, 'Thomas Taylor' in *Episodes in the Gothic Revival*, 125.

⁹⁹ M.Aldrich, 'Thomas Rickman's Handbook of Gothic Architecture and the Taxonomic Classification of the Past' in M.Aldrich and R.J.Wallis (eds.), *Antiquaries and Archaists*, (Reading, 2009), 72-74.

¹⁰⁰ M.H.Port, 'Thomas Rickman' ..in Webster, "*Episodes in the Gothic Revival*", 67.

¹⁰¹ M.Cherry, 'Patronage: the Anglican Church and the Local Architect in Victorian England', in Brooks and Saint (eds.), *The Victorian Church; Architecture and Society*, (Manchester, 1995), 181-2.

¹⁰² J.M.Neale, *A Few Words to Church Builders* (Cambridge, 1841), 4.



Plate 4.28 St George's Chorley c. 1910 *Luke Berry postcard, Chorley Library*



Plate 4.29 St George's Chorley, Galleries and hammerbeam roof,



Plate 4.30 St George's Tyldesley (Goodwin,, then Smirke, 1825)



Plate 4.31 St Peter's Ashton (Goodwin, 1824)



Plate 4.32 All Saints Stand (Sir Charles Barry, 1825)

Pevsner considered it ‘a stately and attractive building.’¹⁰³ (Plates 4.28, 4.29) Summerson believed Rickman to be one of the more ‘correct’ architects of Commissioners’ churches; he thought Goodwin less so.¹⁰⁴ Nevertheless the latter architect’s initial plans for St. George’s Tyldesley benefitted from Goodwin’s familiarity with the great East Anglian Decorated churches; hence the spire.¹⁰⁵ (Plate 4.30) Furthermore other of the northern Commissioners’ churches were fine works in their own right. St Peter’s Ashton under Lyne (1824), by Goodwin, is one of the finest, and Sir Charles Barry’s at Stand, Manchester (1825) may be thought a grand city church, although allowing that its high portico is more redolent of the classical than the authentic Gothic style. (Plates 4.31, 4.32. A contemporary vouchsafed a comforting thought to Revd. Whittaker in 1829; at least Rickman’s efforts in Darwen and Mellor were better than a recent new church in Birmingham. ‘Thomas Rickman...did not think the present specimen of his taste of architectural skills equal to those in the parish of Blackburn’.¹⁰⁶

A further point is that, in south central Lancashire the architecture of the Commissioners’ churches such as those at Chorley and Tyldesley were sometimes an improvement upon, and certainly more noticeable than, what had resulted from church extension in the previous century. This is not to condemn the conviction or the efforts of those rebuilding and re-ordering their local places of worship, very often with galleries installed to meet the perceived needs of a growing population. Yates’ *Building, Faith and Worship*, makes the points that the eighteenth century did not see generally dilapidated churches, alongside a slovenly and inefficient clergy and unamended abuses.¹⁰⁷ If, in Lancashire most of the new or rebuilt churches were simply shaped and small, then it is worth noting that Newman’s iconic Littlemore chapel of 1835 was later dubbed a ‘mere oblong shelf’ by the sympathetic Adam Beresford-Hope.¹⁰⁸ Again, Telford’s standard design for church building in Scotland produced serviceable T-shaped churches like Plockton.¹⁰⁹ Returning to Lancashire in the period before 1818, All Saints Hindley, built near Tyldesley in 1751, was indeed a brick box of a chapel but a very neat and light one. (Plate 4.35) Another good attempt at

¹⁰³ C.Hartwell and N.Pevsner, *The Buildings of England. Lancashire: North* (London, 2009), 214.

¹⁰⁴ J.Summerson, *Architecture in Britain 1530-1830* (5th ed., Harmondsworth, 1970), 519.

¹⁰⁵ Port, *Six Hundred New Churches* 2nd ed., 161.

¹⁰⁶ LA, PR1549/28/6, C.Craven to J.W.Whittaker, 29 October 1829.

¹⁰⁷ *Buildings, Faith and Worship*, 48,186

¹⁰⁸ W.Whyte, *Unlocking The Church*, (Oxford, 2017), 3.

¹⁰⁹ Whyte, *Unlocking The Church*, 44.

‘modern’ architecture was Blackburn St John’s in 1789 (Plate 4.36) Pleasington Priory, a Catholic church completed in 1819 was a stunning build in the area. It was decidedly Gothic and imposing, if with an eclectic use of symbols on the west façade which Pugin and Neale would have found displeasing. (Plate 4.37) However, the necessarily piecemeal approach, the insufficient funding and the lack of professional church architects, meant that some Anglican churches of the former period were undistinguished small boxes, barely discernible as places of worship for the national church. Salesbury St Peter, built in 1807 in Blackburn Parish, was more a box room. St Paul’s Blackburn, 1792, resembled a factory, as did Atherton St John the Baptist built in 1810. (Plates 4.33, 4.34) The Commissioners’ churches had the opportunity to larger, more imposing and more clearly symbols of the national church.



Plate 4.33 St Peter’s Salesbury, Blackburn Parish, 1807 *St Peter’s Church*

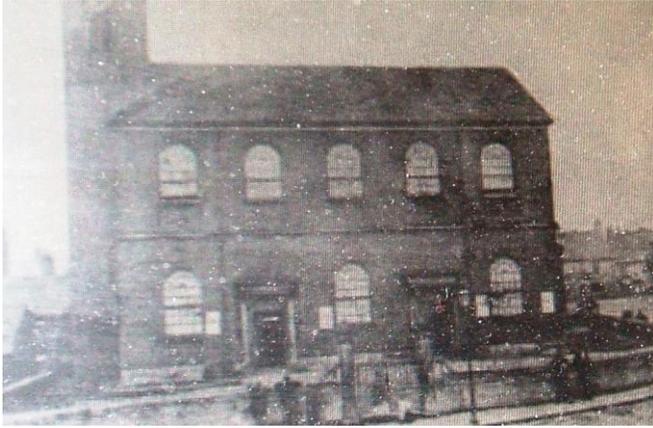


Plate 4.34 St John's Atherton, Leigh Parish, 1810

David Dutton



Plate 4.35 Christ Church Hindley, 1766



Plate 4.36 St John's Blackburn, 1789



Plate 4.37 Pleasington Priory (John Palmer, 1819)

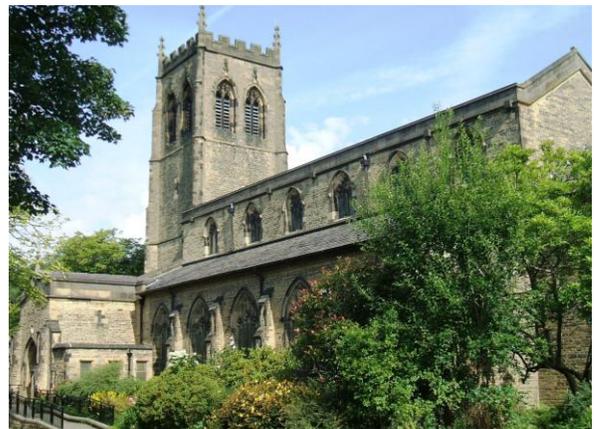
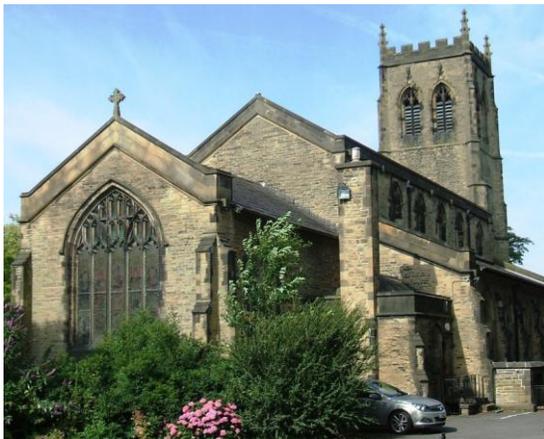


Plate 4.38A and B Christ Church Pennington (E.H. Shellard, 1853)



Plate 4.39 St Paul Withnell, 1841



Plate 4.40 Heapey St Barnabas, 1818 - 1856



Plate 4.41A St John Pemberton, (Rickman, 1832)



Plate 4.41B St John's, west front

Similarly local private churches built contemporary with the Commissioners' churches, vary in quality. Essentially it was a question of funding. A parish church like St Mary's Blackburn, 1824, could be a fine Gothic build and a future cathedral. It would be rivalled by Shellard's later rebuild of Preston St John's.¹¹⁰ Christ Church Pennington, constructed in 1854 by zealous sponsors, almost as a rival to the parish church of Leigh St Mary, was a particularly fine spacious sandstone church.¹¹¹ (Plate 4.38) However, with much less funding, Withnell St Paul's consecrated in 1841 was as uninspiring as some of the structures of the early part of the century and Heapey St Barnabas ended up with a confusion of styles due to piecemeal extensions. (Plates 4.39, 4.40) In the same way Commissioners' churches would tend to be finer in the first wave of construction when the

¹¹⁰ Pevsner, *North Lancashire*, 193.

¹¹¹ *Manchester Courier*, 17 June 1854.



Figure 4.42 Holy Trinity Blackburn (Edmund Sharpe, 1845)

Commissioners may have had the ambition of Queen Anne's day. Later examples, like Pemberton St John's in 1832, were the result of limited and partial funding from the Commissioners' diminishing funds. (Plates 4.41A and B) There were exceptions, for an unexpected decision to share funding between two projects could produce a Preston St Paul's, even as early as 1825. (Plate 4.15) Conversely Holy Trinity Blackburn, built in the second phase in 1845, was ranked by Bishop Sumner as one of the two finest churches in Lancashire.¹¹² (Plate 4.42) Funding was the key factor. If Commissioners' churches built after 1830 were poorer, even 'dreary god-boxes' as Port claimed, it was primarily because of a lack of finance rather than an outbreak of uncompromising Utilitarianism, lack of architectural skill or the differing priorities of Evangelicals.¹¹³ Bishop Sumner of Chester was later to become the first evangelical Archbishop of Canterbury but he could still delight in Holy Trinity Blackburn.¹¹⁴ An apparent High Church Tory, like James Slade, vicar of Bolton, could argue for licensing meeting rooms and adopting a standard pattern of church building.¹¹⁵

¹¹² CALS, EDV10/8, Bishop Sumner's Charge, 1841, 69.

¹¹³ Port, *Six Hundred New Churches*, 278-80.

¹¹⁴ Sumner's Charge, 1841, 69.

¹¹⁵ CHTL, 4C5.86 (4), J.A.Slade *Letter on Church Reform to the Lord Bishop of London* (London, 1830), 15.



Plate 4.43 St Peter's Chorley (C. Reed, 1852)



4.5: London, St Mary Magdalene, Munster Square, 1849-52, from the west. (*Geoff Brandwood.*)

Plate 4.44 St Mary Magdalene London 1852 (Thomas Carpenter, 1852) (*Geoff Brandwood, from Brooks and Saint (eds.), The Victorian Church: Architecture and Society, 198.*)

Architecturally, the Commissioners' churches cannot claim to be a totally new departure. The Gothic style in Lancashire, beyond Liverpool and Manchester, had been prevalent for centuries. However they were a forerunner to the much vaunted churches of the Ecclesiologists which were competing for attention from 1840 and dominant after 1870. The Ecclesiologists merely added longer chancels to the exterior and claimed medieval accuracy.¹¹⁶ These denigrators of Commissioners' churches probably put too much emphasis on authenticity. This obsession for the authentic medievalism, also displayed by Pugin, only persisted for a generation. As early as 1840 George Wightwick alluded to a 'vain harking back to the past'.¹¹⁷ Francis Close considered Ecclesiologist restoration to be Popery.¹¹⁸ Architects, such as Edmund Sharpe, John William Whittaker's cousin, adapted foreign influences such as Romanesque, to produce serviceable and handsome churches.¹¹⁹ St Peter's Chorley(1852) by Charles Reed, one of the last Commissioners' churches, boasts no large tower but is restrained and balanced, well set in its spacious yard. (Plate 4.43) In the same year R.C. Carpenter completed the praised St Mary Magdalene, Munster Square, London, with narrower aisles than was the fifteenth century custom.¹²⁰ (Plate 4.44) Ruskin was shortly, in 1853, to publish *The Nature of Gothic* and introduce a massive Venetian influence. Butterfield introduced structural polychromy in brick, a marked contrast with Commissioners' stone. George Gilbert Scott was not too respectful of works merely shadowing antiquity.¹²¹ By 1874 Micklethwaite would counsel against 'pedantic antiquity' and by 1895 William Morris' faithful restoration of Inglesham would be criticised as 'enshrining decay'.¹²²

A further point is that the Commissioners' churches were easily adapted to future tastes. Nineteenth century Evangelicals would make little change to layout, even if they would institute additional and separate services.¹²³ Similarly Tractarians may just open seats and

¹¹⁶ N.Yates, *Buildings, Faith and Liturgy* (Oxford, 2000), xxii,121,151,159.

¹¹⁷ Webster, *The Early Publications of the Camden Society*, 35,

¹¹⁸ J.S.Curl, *Piety Proclaimed. An Introduction to Places of worship in Victorian England* (London, 2006), 31.

¹¹⁹ J.M.Hughes, *Edmund Sharpe, Man of Lancaster: Architect, Engineer and Entrepreneur* vol 1(Stockport, 2010), 68,116,122.

¹²⁰ A.Symondson, 'Theology and Worship and The Late Victorian Church' in Brooks and Saint (eds.), *The Victorian Church: Architecture and Society*, 198.

¹²¹ T.Hunt, *Building Jerusalem.The Rise and Fall of the Victorian City*, (London, 2005), 116, 123, 124-5.

¹²² C.Miele, 'Their Interest and Habit: Professionalism and the restoration of medieval churches 1837-1877' in Brooks and Saint, *The Victorian Church*, 170.

¹²³ Yates, *Buildings, Faith and Liturgy*, 128-9.

add services.¹²⁴ The Ritualist could add ornamentation to and by the altar, the Ecclesiologist might extend the chancel and raise the altar.¹²⁵ The last quarter of the century saw “ritualist”, if now acceptable, changes at Chorley and Tyldesley, with enhanced chancels, lecterns and organs moved from the west to the east, yet with no necessary alteration to the external architecture.

The contemporary and subsequent assessment of the quality of the Commissioners’ churches’ architecture may be marginal in importance. The churches were there to be imposing and visible in as many previously untouched places as possible. They had, foreshadowing the workhouses subsequent to the Poor Law Act of 1834, to house the greatest number at the lowest feasible price.¹²⁶ If they met the character of a place of worship of the established church, that was answering their primary purpose. As argued above, the three churches subjects of the case studies and most of their neighbouring builds, were presented above that minimum standard. The local folk they sought to include have left no record of refusing to enter due to a deep distaste for the architectural style. Most importantly, there was a real conviction behind the churches which was reflected in their design, names, sites and, if possible, locations.

c) Realisation

Leaving architecture aside, the realisation of the churches was as important as the design. If churches were defective at their origin, their future impact may have been hampered. There were significant challenges concerning site, architect’s plans and construction. Firstly, the churches featured in the case studies all experienced some difficulty in relation to sites. Tyldesley St George benefited from a ready plot donated by Thomas Johnson, the founder of Tyldesley Banks village, but had to seek additional land from him in order to secure sufficient burial ground and also a reasonable setting for the size of the planned building.¹²⁷ Chorley’s vestry committee found it difficult to determine a site, rejecting land immediately opposite the existing church used to extract materials for highway repair in 1813, and then

¹²⁴ *Buildings, Faith and Worship*, 131.

¹²⁵ *Buildings, Faith and Worship*, 131,135,140-43.

¹²⁶ 58 Geo III c.45 Act for Building and Promoting the Building of Additional Churches in Populous Parishes, x.

¹²⁷ CERC, ECE7/1/17721/1, Tyldesley Church Building File, T.Johnson to CBC, 18 July 1820.

waste land at the opposite end of the main street. The eventual site, donated by Anglican landowners, was belatedly secured in October 1821, after plans had already gone to the Board.¹²⁸ Tockholes St Stephen could use the old St Michael's site extended by a land grant from the church's immediate neighbour William Pickering. However in 1831 he threatened to withdraw his offer, thus helping to delay building for a year.¹²⁹

Gaining the approval of the architect's plans could also cause delay. Chorley placed its fortunes in the hands of Thomas Rickman. His plans were returned twice during 1820 and Rickman was seemingly disbarred by the Commission during 1821.¹³⁰ The local committee was on the brink of looking for a new architect when approval was secured in April 1822.¹³¹ Tyldesley selected Rickman's rival Francis Goodwin, only to find that he was indeed limited to work already approved.¹³² They then considered local solutions before George Ormerod, Johnson's nephew with London connections and fame as a topographical writer, successfully approached a Crown Architect, Robert Smirke.¹³³

Construction of churches was not an unfamiliar craft, whereas building very large churches was a new challenge to provincial masons and architects. On the other hand recent useful developments included the practice of pre casting window frames and tracery in cast iron, allowing Rickman for example to repeat galleries from St Peter's Preston at St George Chorley. St Peter's Preston gained an East window the same design as St George's Birmingham.¹³⁴ Construction went well at Chorley and Tyldesley. Good stone was close at hand and able masons too.¹³⁵ Chorley benefited from a highly regarded clerk of works, the aptly named Thomas Goodman.¹³⁶ The one major setback at Chorley was due to a violent hurricane in December 1823 which hurled down the incomplete south wall.¹³⁷ The Commission's surveyor Edward Mawley reported by 6th October 1824 that the alignment of a tower wall to the nave was not perfect. Nevertheless both he and Rickman were soon

¹²⁸ RIBA, RiT2, Rickman's ,Diary, 27 October 1821.

¹²⁹ LA, PR1549/29/8, J.W.Whittaker to Bishop of Chester, 19 July 1831.

¹³⁰ Port, *Six Hundred New Churches* 2nd ed., 157.

¹³¹ Rickman's Diary, 30 April 1822.

¹³² Port, *Six Hundred New Churches* 2nd ed., 167.

¹³³ CERC ECE/7/1/17721/1, Tyldesley Church Building File, George Ormerod to CBC, 9 December 1820; R.Smirke to CBC, 26 March 1821.

¹³⁴ W.Makin , *St Peter's Preston* (Preston, 1975), 22.

¹³⁵ RIBA, RiT2, Rickman's Diary, 18 May 1822.

¹³⁶ Rickman's Diary, 10 July 1822.

¹³⁷ Rickman's Diary, 6 December 1823.

satisfied.¹³⁸ It was 2016 before remedial work at the north west corner became necessary due to subsidence, seemingly from the drying of the ground owing to the impact of global warming and unwisely modified drainage.¹³⁹ The raising of the floor to allow underpinning work in 2017 provided a great opportunity to inspect Rickman's foundations. Plate 4.45 would appear to show very sturdy support for the main columns but a sleeper wall holding the floor describes a wavy path. Reportedly, builders experienced in working with churches of the period, consider the rubble deposited from the collapsing wall during the hurricane might have been too hastily and readily pressed into service.¹⁴⁰

It was at the outset that Tockholes proved more problematical. Although built speedily between November 1832 and November 1833, in May 1832 Rickman was complaining of



Plate 4.45 Exposed foundations, St George's Chorley, June 2017

¹³⁸ CERC, ECE7/1 CBC Building Committee Minutes, 8 June 1824; Rickman's Diary, 4 December 1824.

¹³⁹ SGC, Unpublished Flyer, "*St George's To Close! –temporarily*", August 2016.

¹⁴⁰ Field visit 19 June 2017; Interview with churchwarden J.M.Bradley 25 June 2017.

the pace and quality of workmanship on the roof, ceiling, pulpit and pointing all round.¹⁴¹ On completion, roof damage was caused by a storm on the last night of 1833.¹⁴² Repairs and basic improvements continued for the rest of the decade, damp being an irksome presence. Thomas Walsh, the undertaker, considered Rickman stipulated the wrong sort of slate and used porous stone.¹⁴³ Repairs to the floor were necessary by 1882.¹⁴⁴ At much the same time, Tyldesley St George presented issues related to workmanship. In 1886 the vicar wished to remove paint shrouding the internal stonework. In October he announced the changes would cost £600 more than estimate and take longer because he had discovered ‘jerry work’ ascribed to the first builders; in some areas plaster had been substituted for stone.¹⁴⁵ The next year he discovered dry rot.¹⁴⁶ In mitigation, many churches, Commissioners’ or otherwise, suffered necessary rebuild and repair. Archdeacon Rushton’s *Notes on Lancashire Churches and Chapels* show that Newchurch in Pendle was rebuilt, rather than enlarged, in 1735 and then 1788. Tarleton Church was rebuilt in 1719 and 1747. Contemporary to the Commissioners’ churches, St Barnabas Heapey underwent rebuild in 1829, 1867, 1876 and 1898.¹⁴⁷ Finally by 2006, 1 out of 4.5 Lancashire’s Commissioners’ churches had failed to survive, open as places of worship, compared with 3 of 4 in Kent and 1 of 3 in Yorkshire.¹⁴⁸ Lancashire’s good record could be due to subsequent care but also to solid initial construction.

There were common factors underlying issues about site, plans and construction. Firstly, the 1818 Act was suddenly and hurriedly passed. The task was novel to its administrators, who were interested bishops and laymen but not necessarily blessed with relevant skill and knowledge. The Bishop of London’s decision to collect notes about the Queen Anne churches in London and the solutions proposed by Christopher Wren to seventeenth century church building issues, suggests Commissioners had little other experience and information to refer to.¹⁴⁹ Amongst the Commissioners, only archdeacons Wollaston and Cambridge and Colonel Stephenson, the Surveyor General of Public Works, had an interest in

¹⁴¹ LA, PR1549/29/9, Rickman to J.W. Whittaker, 28 June 1832.

¹⁴² RIBA RiT2 Rickman’s Diary, 31 December 1833.

¹⁴³ CERC, ECE7/1/15217/2, Tockholes Church Building File, G. Robinson to Board, 16 March 1835

¹⁴⁴ LA, PR3149/5/1, Tockholes Parish Minutes, 14 April 1882.

¹⁴⁵ TSG, Parish Magazine, October 1886.

¹⁴⁶ TSG, Parish Magazine, December 1887.

¹⁴⁷ JRUL, Eng. MS706, Archdeacon Rushton’s, *Notes on Lancashire Churches and Chapels*, vol 8.

¹⁴⁸ Port, *Six Hundred new Churches*, Tables 326-347.

¹⁴⁹ LPL, Howley Papers vol 10, 210-11.

design.¹⁵⁰ The driving force of the Commission, retired wine merchant Joshua Watson, was well versed in fundraising for the SPCK or the National Schools, administering a fund for military widows and orphans or wartime distress in Germany, but he was no architect.¹⁵¹ Funding and supervising a large scale building project involving so many interests was different. The task was complex in that it demanded buildings commensurate with the perceived status of the established church, whilst housing the largest feasible congregations and yet at an economical cost. Therefore at the outset, the Commissioners were possibly over strict on design and costs, rejecting plans and estimates which caused delay and frustration. Architects' plans went to the Crown Architects as well as the Commission's own building committee.¹⁵² The Commission preferred tenders for the separate trades involved, rather than from one contractor and also expected these to fall within an architect's prior overall estimate.¹⁵³ Conversely by the time Tockholes St Stephen was constructed in 1832-3 and the Commission were making grants rather than paying the whole cost, their grip may have slackened somewhat. They allowed a limited number of tenders and the adoption of the favoured contractor of the vicar of Blackburn.¹⁵⁴ Possibly, in this instance, they proved supine in bowing to the local preferences.

The church architects' profession was also new; the Institute of British Architects was not founded until 1834. Consequently a thinking builder such as John Palmer of Manchester who designed and built St Peter's Blackburn in 1819 or an enthusiastic and informed amateur like accountant Thomas Rickman could grab a career opportunity. Yet did they appreciate just how many projects they could manage efficiently and could they read the mind of the Crown Architects and Commission Building Committee? Rickman paid continuous attention to Tockholes and visited the site more than the six times required.¹⁵⁵ His diary reveals three visits in preparation between 1828 and December 1831.¹⁵⁶ His workbook refers to seven half day sessions during construction 1832-33.¹⁵⁷ However, he was much more assiduous in dealing with concurrent commissions for the Bishop of

¹⁵⁰ Port, *Six Hundred New Churches* 2nd ed., 180.

¹⁵¹ E.Churton, *Memoir of Joshua Watson* (2nd ed., Oxford, 1863) ,52,56,66,80,85.

¹⁵² Port, *Six Hundred New Churches* 2nd ed., 51.

¹⁵³ *Six Hundred New Churches* 2nd ed., 114.

¹⁵⁴ LA, PR1549/29/8, Coucher Book Tockholes 1648-1833, T.Rickman to J.W.Whittaker, 1 November 1831.

¹⁵⁵ RIBA, RiT3, Rickman's Diary, 1828-1833

¹⁵⁶ RIBA, RiT3, Rickman's Diary, 10 January 1828, 10 November 1831, 24 December 1831.

¹⁵⁷ BL, Add MS 37801, Rickman's Time Book and Sketches, vols 8,9, 2 January 1832 to 28 February 1834.

Carlisle at Rose Castle, the earl of Bradford at Weston Park and Sir Edward Blackett at Matfen Hall. The last named site received visits covering 28 days 1832-33.¹⁵⁸ Similarly masons and other tradesmen had to gain experience of building larger churches than had been attempted previously. John Palmer caused delay on three Blackburn churches by seeming to lose confidence after constructing St Peter's in that town.¹⁵⁹ Carpenter Thomas Walsh undertook the whole work of building St Stephen's and was the preferred choice of Revd. Whittaker on other projects.¹⁶⁰ However he too was away from site and Rickman found slow or sloppy work in Tockholes.¹⁶¹

Nationally a significant underlying factor arose from the political problem of a centrally administered fund, relying on advice from a regional authority, and requiring its work executed at a local level. English governance being what it was, several local powers had to be taken into account if projects were to be successfully realised. A patron, owning glebe or tithe and possibly both, could block plans to new church. The bishop may take a particular view, not conducive to the efficient development of a new church. Local vestries may flatly refuse to provide a site or rates to maintain a church. Building committees could be dominated by one landowner who wished the proposed church to serve his housing development. Local incumbents of a mother parish might have little wish to divide income from lands or fees for services.

The three townships studied here fared comparatively well. The patron of Blackburn, and so Tockholes, was the Archbishop of Canterbury who had personally sent his chaplain, Whittaker, to make a difference in the north and was unlikely to hamper him.¹⁶² Lord Lilford, the patron of Leigh, the mother church of Tyldesley, proved a very understanding supporter of aspirations for Tyldesley. He did not interfere in the planning for the church and was very supportive financially in the almost immediate bid for district status.¹⁶³ At Chorley, the incumbent and patron, John Whalley Master was no help; he retired for his

158 BL, Add MS 37801, Rickman's Time Books and Sketches, vol 8-9.

159 CERC, ECE7, CBC Building Committee Minutes vol 9, J.W. Whittaker to CBC, 16 March 1824.

160 LA, PR2846/2/1 Feniscowles Coucher Book, Certificate of T Walsh 9 June 1834.

145 LA, PR1549/29/9, Tockholes Parish Papers, T. Rickman to J.W. Whittaker, 15 March 1832, 28 June 1832, 1 October 1832, 14 December 1833.

162 SJC, Whittaker Papers f2, J.W. Whittaker to sister Sarah, 20 January 1822.

163 CERC, ECE7/1/17721/ 1, Tyldesley Church Building File, J. Robson to CBC 6 May 1826; 17721/2, Manchester Diocesan Registry to CBC, 7 August 1885.

health to Leyland and then Cheltenham.¹⁶⁴ His succession of curates were supportive, although the Revd. James Jackson, 1821-23, held up approval of Chorley's plans by insisting his minor modifications on internal arrangement were considered by the Board.¹⁶⁵ The bishops, be it Law, Blomfield or Sumner, created no problem and on several occasions proffered an enabling or intermediary hand. With reference to Tyldesley, Law urged the Commission to allow the necessary galleries to meet population increase and Blomfield found an adviser to assist with the first pew rent scale.¹⁶⁶

On the other hand, local supervising clergy did prove inhibitors within the sample townships. That great proponent of church building J.W.Whittaker was in one case a decided irritant. His decision, in 1831, to consider a nearby temporarily redundant Independent chapel as an alternative or possibly additional place of worship, caused the first of many disputes with the minister in Tockholes and triggered a year's delay in building.¹⁶⁷ Gilmour Robinson, arriving as the township's vicar in 1830, when plans were well advanced, came to claim the new build was nothing to do with him and even that he wished he had never set eyes upon it.¹⁶⁸ Correspondence regarding completion post consecration between the vicar of Blackburn and the vicar at Tockholes, became so heated, exacerbated in Robinson's case due to his obvious distaste for the architect Rickman who was a Quaker, that by 1836 Whittaker was disclaiming any responsibility for St Stephen's. Robinson retaliated by asserting that he, in turn, could not be held responsible for a church he had not been consulted upon, and referred all care of the fabric to the churchwardens of the mother church.¹⁶⁹

Again local laymen, if not a patron like Lilford, also caused a number of problems. Chorley St George benefited from assiduous supervision by the St Laurence churchwardens but they almost caused the chapel to miss consecration, due to a failure to research title to the site

¹⁶⁴ CERC, ECE7/1/18206/1, Bishop of Chester to CBC, 26 October 1834.

¹⁶⁵ CERC, CBC/2/1, Minute Book 3 186, 9 May 1820.

¹⁶⁶ CERC, ECE7/1/17721/1, Tyldesley Church Building File, Bishop of Chester to CBC, 5 January 1825.

¹⁶⁷ LA, PR1549/29/8, J.W.Whittaker to CBC, 19 July 1831; PR1549/29/9, G.Robinson to J.W.Whittaker, 5 December 1831.

¹⁶⁸ LA, PR1549/30/1, G.Robinson to J.W.Whittaker, 29 August 1835.

¹⁶⁹ CERC, ECE7/1/ 15217/2, G.Robinson to CBC, 26 March 1835; J.W.Whittaker to CBC, 17 September 1836.

and having the conveyance made to them rather than the Commission.¹⁷⁰ Again, the donors decided that, whereas the building site was freely given, they would want a fee for the adjoining burial ground. This might have been met from the subscriptions futilely collected previously for voluntary church building. However the Commissioners made plain that such subscriptions would not buy property rights in the new chapel of ease and so the indignant Chorley subscribers withdrew their money and supported the donor estate in asking the burial ground be paid for.¹⁷¹ This decision helped enmesh the churchwardens in a contracted loan with the Commission which took a long time to pay back.¹⁷² Tockholes held few Anglican laymen who had to be considered but did contain William Pickering, the church's neighbour and self appointed hereditary churchwarden, who took great exception at alternative plans being considered for seating Tockholes' churchmen or an unfamiliar placing of singers and threatened withdrawal of the site and access to stone, thus contributing to consternation and delay.¹⁷³

Amongst this clerical and lay support, where did power lie when it came to making decisions about the siting, design or funding of a church? Whilst it lasted, the Church Building Commission could play a strong role because it held the finance. The regional force, in the shape of the bishops was clearly being enhanced at the time.¹⁷⁴ However sub-regional and local powers frequently appeared to prevail. Property carried weight, whether it showed in the wishes of a landlord like Lilford or a main man in the township such as Pickering in Tockholes or Kearsley in Tyldesley. The property could be from land or manufactories. The power of property was supported by deference to what was seen as the legitimate authority of the Church. Whatever the turmoil in Tockholes in 1826, some signatories of a threatening petition felt the need to reassure the vicar of Blackburn of their respect for his position. Another competing influence was that of custom; there was no way Pickering and the old Tockholes pew holders were going to accept the Commissioners' normal and legal methods of funding.¹⁷⁵ Tockholes had its own office of 'hereditary churchwarden' or so William Pickering insisted. Pews in the Commissioners' church were

¹⁷⁰ CERC, ECE7/1/18206/2. G.Sumner to CBC 22 July 1825; LPL Mf19, Blomfield Letter Book, Letter to R.M.Master and G.Sumner, 2 August 1825

¹⁷¹ CERC, ECE7/1/18206/1, Chorley Church Building File, J.Jackson to CBC, 21 December 1822

¹⁷² CERC, ECE7/1/18206/3, Petition, 12 September 1825 .

¹⁷³ LA, PR1549/29/9, G.Robinson to J.W.Whittaker, 5 December 1831.

¹⁷⁴ A.Burns, *The Diocesan Revival in the Church of England 1800-1870* (Oxford, 1999), 23-29.

¹⁷⁵ LA, PR2765, J.W.Whittaker to CBC, 26 October 1836.

thought to be owned by pew holders in the replaced church. The parish clerk received no salary but depended upon the generosity of worshippers contributing to a hat being passed around church.¹⁷⁶ With such competing influences, a deciding factor in so many situations would appear to be the sheer power of personality. T.D. Whitaker sometimes appeared as the state's man in the north, most of the authority emanating from his industry and determination. J.W. Whittaker was a consummate politician. He knew what he wanted, refused to accept modification from any source, waited until an opportunity presented itself and then found ways of securing his aims. In Tockholes, Gilmour Robinson carried the charisma of Waterloo with him and feared nobody but God. Pickering felt his imaginary hereditary churchwarden's role was next to God's.

Despite the difficulties created by several interests, the most significant inhibiting factor was the absolute limit on funding. The government grants of £1,000,000 in 1818 and a further £500,000 in 1824 were a major budgetary commitment for the state. Yet these sums constituted a chronic shortfall matched against the ambition of the project. Both Chorley St George and Tyldesley St George had all their construction expenses paid. Tockholes, coming later, received only half its cost from a Commission which had spent most of its funds by 1830.¹⁷⁷ Local effort could not bridge the gap. After 1830 it was legal for a Commissioners' Church to take funding from a patron but there was none at hand for Tockholes and, in any event, Whittaker's view of patronage, meant that he wished the vicar of the mother church to control all advowsons.¹⁷⁸ Without the additional Commissioners' aid, Tockholes would have been left with old St Michael's chapel as a mere dilapidated ruin for a church. Even so, the diminution of available Commission funds subsequent to 1824 meant Whittaker experienced a tough slog in meeting the gap and Tockholes received, as noted above, a relatively 'poor church'. Despite all Whittaker's herculean efforts, the final sum raised near and far for St Stephen's peaked at £1009.¹⁷⁹

However none of the sample churches took longer than five years from application to consecration. In contrast, Goodwin's West Bromwich church was in construction from

¹⁷⁶ CERC, ECE/7/1/15217/1, Tockholes Church Building File, Robinson to CBC, 12 August 1836.

¹⁷⁷ Port, *Six Hundred New Churches* 2nd ed., 231,247.

¹⁷⁸ B.Lewis, *The Middlemost and The Milltowns* (Stanford, 2001), 155.

¹⁷⁹ LA, PR1549/30/2, Tockholes Parish Papers, J.W. Whittaker's Account, 15 June 1842.

1819 to 1829.¹⁸⁰ Given the difficulties, why then were all three churches constructed and opened in a relatively reasonable time? Firstly, Commissioners and architects learnt by experience. Secondly, as the funds at the Commission's hand began to dry up, regional and even national Anglican interests helped fill the gap. This was clear, by 1830, in the wide range of people Whittaker could importune for contributions to St Stephen's cause. Whittaker continually pleaded the poverty of the district and to a large degree he was correct. He wrung contributions from the very minimal Tockholes' sources and then turned to the Anglican establishment in Blackburn and the rest of Lancashire, former university friends and all the Church contacts he could think of. Then he asked them again.¹⁸¹ He made two attempts at petitioning the voluntary Incorporated Church Building Society extracting a total grant of £300.¹⁸² Fortunately the same individuals held leading positions in both the Society and the Church Building Commission and the niggardly ICBS grant was probably due to the knowledge that the Commissioners would meet fifty per cent of the cost. Thirdly, all the strong, frequently conflicting personalities at all levels wanted churches built. Again referring to Tockholes, Whittaker was mean after 1833 but almost totally responsible for the project until that time. Walsh the builder also revealed his helpful side. He returned to the site several times up to 1837 and patiently awaited payment for his repairs¹⁸³ Despite Robinson's misgivings about the construction, he importuned his personal friends, not least his freemasonry fellows, particularly Henry Brock-Hollinshead who donated £100 to clear debt.¹⁸⁴ He prevailed upon local men to level the new churchyard merely for the promise of refreshment, which in reality did not materialise.¹⁸⁵

Nevertheless, despite receiving the essential cost of erection, the Commissioner's church lot was not an easy one. It might be argued that because adherents at 'Waterloo' churches, after 1830, had to respond in times of new construction or financial hardship much as Dissenters did for their chapels, that there was little point in one respect of being part of the establishment, unless as a shareholder in a proprietary church. St George's Everton sold

¹⁸⁰ Port, *Six Hundred New Churches* 2nd ed., 171.

¹⁸¹ LA, PR1549/29/5, Circular, February 1830.

¹⁸² LA, PR1549/29/5, J.W. Whittaker to CBC, 7 September 1830.

¹⁸³ CERC, ECE7/1/15217/1, Church Building File, T. Walsh to CBC, 18 July 1837.

¹⁸⁴ LA, PR2763/15, Tockholes Sunday School Accounts, 64.

¹⁸⁵ LA, PR3149/14/10, Tockholes Coucher Book vol 2, 1833-1840, G. Robinson to J.W. Whittaker, 22 August 1836.

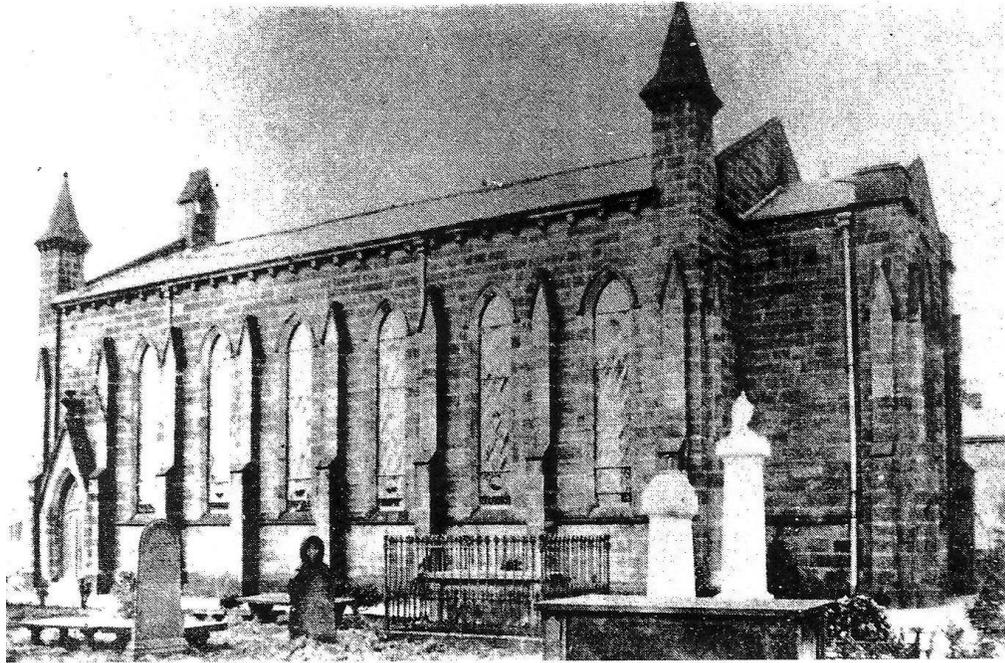


Plate 4.46 St John the Evangelist, Whittle-le-Woods (Thomas Rickman, 1829) *Chorley Library*



Plate 4.47 St Andrew's, Livesey (Paley and Austin, 1877)

sufficient shares at £100 each, with a prospect of profit and rights of appointment for forty years, quickly raised the necessary £11,500 and was consecrated in October 1814, eighteen months after the foundation stone was laid.¹⁸⁶ In Chorley, a glance down St George's Street in 1836-7 would have seen the rapid establishment of St George's Street Independent Chapel. This was created by a very small breakaway group from the old Hollinshead Street Congregational Chapel, fired by a distaste for narrow Calvinism and a lost dispute over choice of minister, but also by an issue of control. A handful of manufacturers used to having their way and conscious of how much wealth they had donated in recent years, opted to establish their own chapel. This they did with stupendous ease, completing the work in fifteen months, handling all the design and financial issues through a small committee of six and all at a cost not much above £1000. Subscriptions from their small band of supporters raised £480 and the mortgaged debt for the remainder was soon paid off by a further subscription which involved the mortgagees further contributing, having goaded others to match them.¹⁸⁷ A wider look at nonconformist chapels soon produces a range of examples where a serviceable church was produced with a minimum of fuss and fairly cheaply. Lower Elliot Street Methodist Chapel in Tyldesley was virtually rebuilt in 1866 for £1300.¹⁸⁸ The 'elegant and spacious' Independent chapel in Albion Street, Ashton-under-Lyne was opened in 1835 at a total cost of £3428, subscriptions raising £2599 of the total and massive collections at the first services yielding a further £367.¹⁸⁹ Realistic expectations on design and space helped; estimates for the cost of nonconformist chapel building nationally between 1840 and 1853 varied from £400 to £1000.¹⁹⁰

A related question concerns value for money, which the Commission may have been less successful in achieving than it wished. In relation to other early Commissioners' churches, the eventual cost of Tyldesley St George at £9646 and Chorley St George's at £12,387 would appear to be very good value.¹⁹¹ However, it is nevertheless true that Anglican churches which found their own local solutions without the Commission, managed to build at less cost accompanied by uncomplicated procedure. In Leigh Parish, Bedford St Thomas,

¹⁸⁶ R.F.Mould, *St George's Church Everton. The Iron Church* (Liverpool, 1977), 12,15,22.

¹⁸⁷ LA, CUCh 3/3, Account of St George's Street Chapel, 2 May 1835- 25 May 1837.

¹⁸⁸ J.Lunn, *A New History of Tyldesley*, 106.

¹⁸⁹ *Preston Chronicle*, 23 May 1835.

¹⁹⁰ M.Watts, *The Dissenters* vol 2, (Oxford, 1995), 223.

¹⁹¹ Port, *Six Hundred New Churches* 2nd ed., 327.

with a privately donated site, received its foundation stone on 31st November 1839 and was opened 12th October 1840. £100 was taken up at a collection that day, with operatives at a local factory contributing £49. Later, Commissioners' churches came to use similar initiative. Westleigh St Paul's, opened in 1847, benefitted from Lord Lilford's free site and stone, alongside Mrs. Hurst's legacy of £500 and the Chester Diocesan Society's £250 and was built for just £2350. Admittedly it was smaller than St. George's with just 500 free seats and 200 others.¹⁹² With time and experience the costs involved in all church building appeared to reduce and beyond a proportion due to a reduction in size. Holy Trinity Blackburn, a large and grand church was raised for £5019 in 1843-5.¹⁹³ Rickman himself in later days was saving up to ten per cent on original estimates.¹⁹⁴

Being later, did the small and restricted St Stephen's Tockholes produce value for money? It is true that the church had problems from the elements at the very outset and was far from being the best protected Commissioners' church. In this respect Tockholes was no worse treated than other Rickman churches in Lancashire when an exposed site was selected; St Mary Mellor and St James Lower Darwen were equally vulnerable to wind and water.¹⁹⁵ However at the time it was constructed St Stephen's could be accounted as giving good value. The cost at £2300, whilst matching the expense at Whittle-le-Woods (1829), was only the third of the cost of Rickman's other Blackburn churches at Over Darwen, Lower Darwen and Mellor, whilst providing a similar number of seats.¹⁹⁶ (Plate 4.46) St Andrew's Livesey (1866-1877) may have been architecturally more interesting with apse and transepts but cost £6000 for fewer seats.¹⁹⁷ (Plate 4.47)

If searching for value for money, an alternative approach to the empirical development with the English Commission in Lancashire, might have been to adopt a uniform approach through one architect, constrained by clear financial limits and realistic requirements on capacity. Such an approach was adopted in Scotland where 32 churches were constructed

¹⁹² MA, MSf942.71 r121, Archdeacon Rushton's Visitation 1845, vol 34.

¹⁹³ Port, *Six Hundred New Churches* 2nd ed., 334.

¹⁹⁴ CERC, MB36 CBC Minute Book, re Holy Trinity Darwen, 8 December 1829; Port, *Six Hundred New Churches* 2nd ed., 110.

¹⁹⁵ CERC, ECE7/1/15217/2, Blackburn Church Building File, Revd. Kirkpatrick to CBC, 7 March 1836; Revd. Arnold to CBC, 13 July 1840.

¹⁹⁶ Port, *Six Hundred New Churches* 2nd ed., 326-7.

¹⁹⁷ *Blackburn Standard*, 26 June 1866.

from a total funding of £54,422.¹⁹⁸ In 1820 the Commission for England and Wales was offered a standard template from Thomas Rickman, supported by Bishop Law but felt individual preference, materials and practice were a better way of doing things.¹⁹⁹

d) Worthy Temples?

The main issues around the design and realisation of the churches, call into question their fitness for purpose and even whether they had any religious purpose at all. In regard to architecture the bulk of the criticism may be of marginal importance and was a result of the emergence of a dominant fashion a mere score years subsequent to the Church Building Act. If they were not of outstanding architectural merit, they were of far more worth than subsequently allowed and better than many of the new modern churches in Lancashire in the half century previous to the Act. The architect of two of the sample churches, Thomas Rickman, was able in what he did and capable of producing beautiful buildings when the funding allowed. It was primarily the limited finance which sometimes produced meaner buildings after 1830; there is no great weight of evidence to suggest it was due to the different priorities of evangelicals or the triumph of Utilitarian philosophy.

These judgements concerning design are broadly similar to those of the one other historian to make an in depth study of a sample of Commissioners' churches. In 1976 G.L.Carr completed a thesis focusing on the early London churches and adjudged some of them, especially St Luke's, as fine examples of the architect's craft: 'Around 1820 artistic prospects were auspicious, and a few years later, so too were some of the results'.²⁰⁰ He does qualify praise by suggesting that the Commissioners wrongly considered themselves competent judges of design, revealed limited ambition in the appointment of a house painter and glazier as their first surveyor, that the skill of the artist was not evident in picture-less interiors with few altars of note, and that the later churches were cheap, 'when the Commissioners had learned how to save money.'²⁰¹ Nonetheless, as this current study

¹⁹⁸ S.J.Brown, *The National Churches* (Oxford, 2001), 72; C.Hartwell and N.Pevsner, *The Buildings of England, Lancashire:North* (London, 2009), 129.

¹⁹⁹ G.L.Carr, 'The Commissioners' Churches of London 1818-1837', unpublished PhD thesis, University of Michigan (1976), 201.

²⁰⁰ Carr, 'The Commissioners' Churches of London 1818-37', vi, 571.

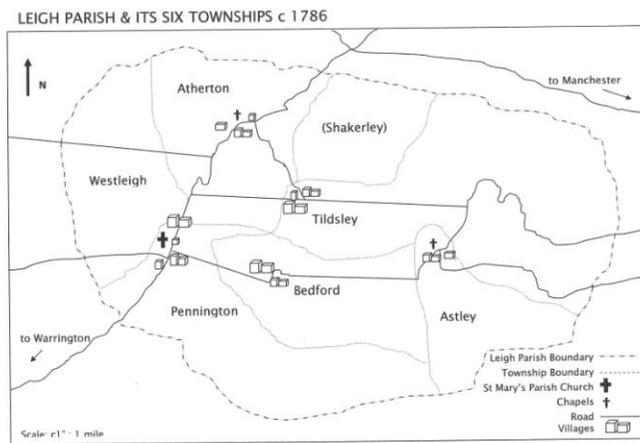
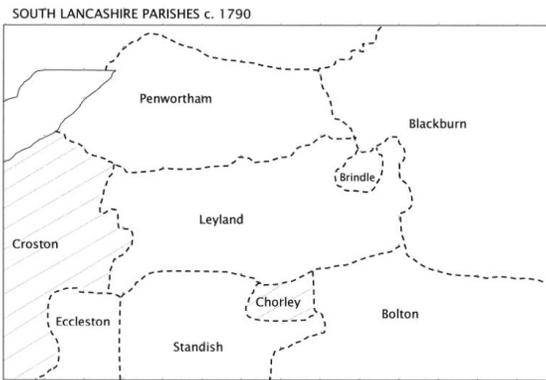
²⁰¹ Carr, 'The Commissioners Churches of London', 97-8, 112-13, 216, 681.

of Lancashire contends, he is conscious that previous routine comments had been 'uniformly negative' about the churches' worth.²⁰²

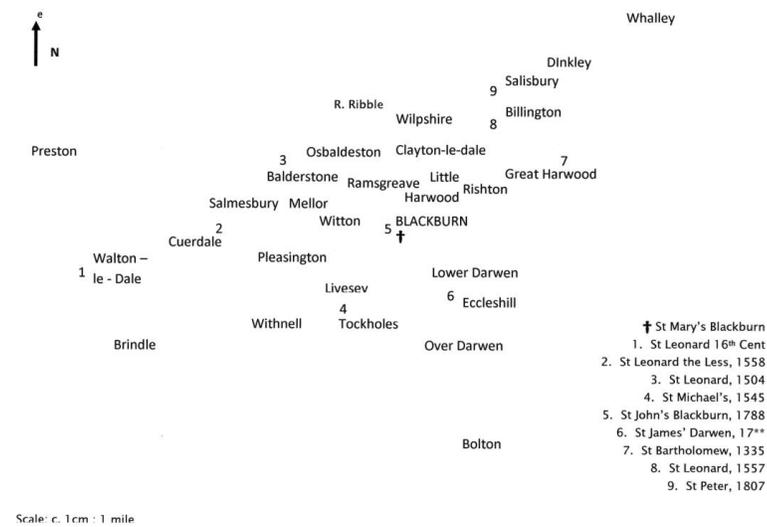
The large early buildings like Chorley St. George and Tyldesley St George were deliberately aimed at creating space for the lost sheep of Dissent and involving the whole community, including all classes. Hence the many seats, additional accommodation in the galleries, and the shallow chancels. The interior design aided the inculcation of orthodox Protestant belief. They were also a dramatic announcement of this Anglican assertion, hence the prominent sites, the size, the bold west facades and towers. In both architecture and liturgical ordering the churches did not mark a radical departure, although they made clear choices from the eighteenth century experimentation on seating and the reading desk. The Ecclesiologists and Ritualists were to fashion more liturgical change but the Commissioners' churches foreshadowed them in the preference for Gothic and the eastward orientation. The churches in Lancashire harked back to medieval regional styles and adopted Gothic to mark them as distinct from Dissent and expressing continuity with the medieval English church, if not the Catholic nature of those times. Therefore they were borne of a deep religious conviction which was not recognised by Summerson and Gowans.

The construction of the churches faced administrative and practical difficulties, not least through the novelty and suddenness of the project. Despite the play of conflicting interests and personalities the churches were successfully produced, although not perhaps in the most cost-effective fashion and not always with the ingenious and thorough workmanship that Port and Crosby claimed. The sample studies, compared with the critical positions outlined in the introduction to the chapter, suggest a greater tolerance towards the design of Commissioners' churches is due but with a harder look at their construction. If not ideal in all respects, they were generally worthy temples of the Anglican assertion.

²⁰² 'The Commissioners' Churches of London', 710.



Blackburn Parish c 1818: 1 Parish, 22 Townships, Parish Church & 9 Chapels



Map 5.1A-C Parishes and Townships referred to in Chapter Five

CHAPTER FIVE: PROCUREMENT- FATAL ANSWERS?

a) Issues Following Consecration

Serious financial challenges in establishing a Commissioners' church came after completion. How to equip, staff, maintain and repair a church provided from outside but with no effective thought or assistance for its future condition, posed serious questions. Indeed the churches could have been so hampered by these financial issues that their chance of making an impact proved minimal. Gloomy assessments largely prevail in secondary sources. Snell believed, 'The morale of many clergy in new parishes was low, as was their income...'¹ In relation to stipends, Gibson commented that meagre funding, 'Left many of those new churches and parishes without endowment which they sorely needed.'² Chadwick considered the approach to maintenance and other church expenses, that of raising a rate, as a 'fatal answer.'³ The torrent of controversy across Lancashire engendered by church rate issues, particularly from 1831 to 1840, primarily with Dissenters, has been well documented by Ward.⁴ The three case studies suggest that the clergy in the new Commissioners' churches had stiff challenges to face but adopted a variety of strategies in order to fare better than historians have hitherto found.

b) Equipping the Churches

Equipping the church with Bible, Prayer Book and communion plate was achieved by recourse to rates at Chorley and to sympathetic benefactors at Tyldesley and Tockholes. Tyldesley emerged the most blessed with East window, bells and walls paid for by George Ormerod, who had succeeded his uncle in ownership of Tyldesley Banks estates in 1823.⁵ The lord of the manor, Lawrence Brock-Hollinshead paid for the minimum equipment at Tockholes.⁶ Chorley St George was a sparse church. Unlike St Laurence's there was to be no paid beadle, pew opener, ringer or singer at the chapel of ease.⁷ Churchwarden of St

¹ K.D.M.Snell, *Parish and Belonging* (Cambridge, 2009), 414.

² W.Gibson, *Church, State and Society, 1760-1850* (London ,1994) ,119.

³ O.Chadwick, *The Victorian Church* vol 2 (London, 1970), 85.

⁴ W.R.Ward, *Religion and Society in England 1790-1850* (London ,1972) ,178-192.

⁵ CERC, ECE/7/1/17721/1, Tyldesley Church Building File, Bishop Blomfield to CBC, 5 January 1825; J.P.Hess ,*George Ormerod Historian of Cheshire* (Whitchurch, 1989), 23,67,69.

⁶ LA, PR3149/14/10, Tockholes Coucher Book vol 2, L.Brock-Hollinshead to G.Robinson, 6 June 1834.

⁷ MA, MSf 942.72 r121, Archdeacon Rushton's Visitation vol 19, 16 September 1845.

Laurence's, Robert Topping wrote to the Commission as early as September 1825 pointing out that St Laurence's had incurred a bill of £1117 to deal with its own repairs. Now there was the fencing and repairs for St George's to be funded. He extracted a loan from the Commission but then had the problem of repaying it.⁸ It was still necessary to make application for a rate to be levied which caused considerable disquiet in Chorley in 1827, as described in a later chapter.

If equipment did not prove an insurmountable problem, it may be because Commissioners' churches adopted a careful view of initial expenditure. All Saints Stand benefited from the largesse of James Rowbotham which stretched to silk and velvet covered cushions, hearse, organ, looking glass in the vestry and a salaried choir.⁹ Expensive silver communion plate for Commissioners' churches caused uproar in Manchester.¹⁰ Such indulgence was uncommon. Only two nineteenth century service books have survived at St George's Chorley. One was the liturgy of the United Church of Great Britain and Ireland printed in 1825 and the other with a new liturgy set to music from 1892, when the emphasis of worship changed with a new vicar.¹¹ When churchwardens' accounts become extant from 1863 they contain no reference to purchasing books. For £10 there was the acquisition of a reading desk, separate from the common one which had served as a joint pulpit and lectern since 1825.¹² Restraint was also evident in Tockholes. Lawrence Brock Hollinshead, lord of the manor, provided two service books, two prayer books and one Bible. A hint of comfort came with a cushion for the minister by the altar and another in the pulpit.¹³ Even the fortunate St George's Tyldesley waited until 1838 before furnishing an umbrella for use at rain swept funerals and a stick to hold a candle for the 'orchestra' to see by.¹⁴ A clock was bought in 1847 but as this was the first public clock in the town, a general subscription could be raised.¹⁵ It was 1860 before an organ was installed, replacing a small barrel organ which was sold to the Methodist chapel.¹⁶

⁸ CERC, ECE7/1/18206/3, Chorley Church Building File, R.Topping to CBC, 12 September 1825.

⁹ F.E.Lowe, *Scraps of Information on the Parish and Church of All Saints Stand, Manchester* (Whitefield, 1910), 4-6, 8.

¹⁰ W.R.Ward, *Religion and Society in England*, 111.

¹¹ SGC, Archive Cupboard.

¹² LA, PR3123/4/1, Chorley St George Churchwardens' Accounts, 13 November 1863.

¹³ LA, PR1349/14/10, Tockholes Coucher Book vol 2, L.Brock-Hollinshead to G.Robinson, 6 June 1834.

¹⁴ SGT, Vestry Cupboard, Churchwarden's Accounts, 1838.

¹⁵ L.Allred and J.Marsh, *The Parish Church of St George Tyldesley* (Blackburn, 1975), 8.

¹⁶ Allred and Marsh, *St George Tyldesley*, 10.

c) Endowment

The most significant issue concerned endowment of a minister. Richard Yates' ambitious vision of 1815 imagined the perfect parish with a church at a central place for every three or four hundred houses. A resident minister was crucial and so therefore were habitations for the ministers.¹⁷ Endowment, he suggested, could be secured from redistributed Church finances, division of existing parishes and, thirdly, rates paid by proprietors of land and those profiting from rented property.¹⁸ Yates believed the sort of compulsion used by the Enclosure Acts might equally be applied to endowing the Church.¹⁹ He chose to ignore the fact that enclosure was very much in the interest of property and division of tithes, glebe and patronage was not. Parliament was unwilling to empower the Commissioners to force redistribution of a patron or incumbent's wealth. The stance was in line with the Englishman's idea of property being sacrosanct and that the right of nomination to a living and the living itself were inherently a right of property. Nationally, the Commissioners' creation of over six hundred additional churches led to just forty genuine divisions of the original parish and its resources.²⁰ Subsequent legislation gradually modified the powers and finances of these chapels, so that seven distinct statuses, from separately endowed district parish, through district chapelries, which may or may not have power to perform offices and receive fees, to mere dependent chapel of ease, were attached to Commissioners' churches by 1846.²¹ In 1843 Peel's government had attempted to by-pass the issue by allowing uniform endowed districts of one minister to 1000 souls to be formed where necessary.²² A place of worship might or might not ensue.

Peel's decision highlights an underlying tension affecting the Anglican assertion of the nineteenth century. Which was better: to build a place of worship in the hope that minister, school and a flourishing parish would follow; or, to provide a minister to look after souls and set him to seek out support for providing the buildings? In 1843 what may be termed more of an evangelical view held sway and the government endowed uniform districts,

¹⁷ R.Yates, *The Church in Danger* (London, 1815), 127.

¹⁸ Yates, *Church in Danger*, 127-128,136.

¹⁹ Yates, *Church in Danger*, 127,134.

²⁰ G.A.Best, *Temporal Pillars* (Cambridge, 1964), 400.

²¹ MA, MSf942.72 r121, Rushton's Visitation 1845, vol 78.

²² A.Jones, *A Thousand Years of the English Parish* (Moreton in the Marsh, 2000), 265.

much as Yates had advocated in 1815, but with no promise of an additional church building. One great and possible decisive consideration was that this method was cheaper. Queen Anne's Bounty was to provide a loan of just £600,000 and this solely to fund endowment.²³ Diocesan building societies and wealthy locals were to provide the place of worship where they could. In 1818, in contrast, the Orthodox High Church view prevailed and the places of worship given priority.

Possibly, in 1818, they could have invited benefactors to fund endowment of the new churches, in return for the privilege of nominating the minister. The Commissioners were adamant, certainly until a compromise from 1830, that patronage rights were not to be allowed. With Orthodox High Church leanings they were wary of allowing Whigs or Evangelicals an opportunity to influence the complexion of the clergy.²⁴ In their early idealism the Commissioners also wished to protect free sittings for the poor and feared a patron's influence would spread beyond an initial nomination.²⁵ Holy Trinity Hoghton, in Leyland parish, missed out on a generous endowment from close neighbour Sir Henry P. Hoghton because his offer was conditional upon being granted the patronage of the new chapel.²⁶ Another source might have been the parish rates. Indeed the rebuilding of Blackburn's parish church, St Mary's, between 1819 and 1831, was later estimated at over £50,000, three quarters of which was a massive charge upon the local rates.²⁷ Given the size of this commitment and the increasing distaste after 1820 for levying the costs of the established church upon the general community of ratepayers, this was not an advisable route.

Hence, in general, the Commissioners adopted the only course seemingly open to them, that of endowing a minister, including a pittance for the parish clerk, by means of pew rents raised from a portion of the seats available. Other pews, or benches in the aisles, were to be kept for the poor who were intended to flood into the new churches. It has been claimed that pew rent scales were fixed ambitiously high and that there were insufficient

²³ Best, *Temporal Pillars*, 357.

²⁴ M.H.Port, *Six Hundred New Churches* (2nd ed., Reading, 2006), 252.

²⁵ Port, *Six Hundred New Churches* 2nd ed., 54-55.

²⁶ CERC, ECE7/1/18161/2, Hoghton Church Building File, H.P.Hoghton to CBC, 18 April 1824.

²⁷ CERC, ECE7/1/ 15217/1, Blackburn Church Building File, Petition 1822; LA, PR3073/2/4 , Blackburn Parish Papers, Statement of Rebuilding Costs 1819-1833.

worshippers to take them up.²⁸ An inhibiting factor was inbuilt in the Lancastrian sectarian landscape long configured by a millennium of Catholicism and a sincere and obdurate nonconformity spectacularly highlighted by the great ejection of clergy in 1662. The fact that this was a national church may have caused many local people to feel that it was an external provision, laid on from above and not particularly in need of or meriting support from their pockets. It was easy to believe the assertions by radical politicians and the press that the great wealth of some in the Church, for example some bishops and surplus prebendaries in cathedrals, should be redistributed.²⁹ In sum it could be understandable to conclude that the lot of the ministers in the new churches was not a happy one.

The problem with pew rents is well illustrated in all three churches. In 1835 £150 per year was thought to be a reasonable minimum emolument for a minister.³⁰ Chorley St George's claimed comparatively handsome potential rents at £270 per annum. In reality this brought in as little as £123 in 1826, although £152 accrued in 1828 when minister Thomas Birkett wrote to the Commission pointing out that potential tenants were migrating to free seats and consequently he should be allowed to ask for rents in the popular galleries and for payments for single seats rather than a whole pew.³¹ Judging by the first suggested scale, little was initially expected of Tyldesley's adherents. In January 1826 Jacob Robson was suggesting a rent which would accrue £87, less £10 for the clerk. In 1832 and 1835, the perpetual curate persuaded the Commission to allow him to let a few of the free pews, thus raising pew rents to £110 in 1833. The yield sank to £61 in 1845.³² At Tockholes the pew rent scale yielded a paltry £17 17s., occasioning an outbreak of incredulity at the Commission.³³ St Stephen's, being a replacement for St Michael's, faced the problem of William Pickering and the other former pew holders insisting they had a right to a pew in the new church. Holders of the seventeen appropriated pews in the former church might be little help or not even present, for they included Dissenter Eccles Shorrocks, John Cunliffe of distant Myerscough, a Mr. Fletcher of Wigan, Miss Boardman a Blackburn Baptist,

²⁸ Ward, *Religion and Society*, 110.

²⁹ Best, *Temporal Pillars*, 242,249.

³⁰ Gibson, *Church State and Society*, 119.

³¹ CERC, ECE7/1/18201/3, Chorley Church Building File, T.Birkett to CBC, 26 December 1828.

³² CERC, ECE/7/1/17721/1, Tyldesley Church Building File, J.Robson to CBC, 20 November 1825, 13. January 1830, 11 April 1832.; MA, MSf942.72 r121, Rushton's Visitation 1845-6, vol 34.

³³ LA, PR3149/14/10, Tockholes Coucher Book vol 2, Schedule of Pew Rents, April 1836.

Richard Whittle of Chorley and Lawrence Whalley of Clitheroe.³⁴ Fortunately Tockholes began with the benefit of £90 per annum from the rent of a farm at Goosnargh, a right of the old chapel of St Michael.³⁵ Table 5.1 shows the salary at Tockholes, as at Tyldesley if not Chorley, was provided by a variety of methods, pew rents being just one.

Church	Chorley St George	Tyldesley St George	Tockholes St Stephen
Source	Chapel of ease 1825 Chapel +district 1835 Parish 1856	Chapel of ease 1825 District Parish 1828 Parish 1856	Parochial Chapelry District chapelry 1842 Parish 1856
Prior Endowment			£90 from Goosnargh farm bought 1724/1801
Pew Rents	£123 -£152 by 1828 out of potential £270	£110 by 1878	Potential £17/17s/6d fixed
Surplice Fees for churchings, marriages and burials	None before 1835 Shared with mother church 1835-1856	£41 by 1878	Claimed £1 in 1842
Queen Anne's Bounty or Ecclesiastical Commission		£600 matching patrons' contributions 1827 and 1836, providing £84 per annum by 1878	£6 in 1837 £12 in 1842
Sundries			£16/7s Thornley Charity 1830; £2/13s Fleetwood Charity in 1842.
TOTAL	£123 in 1826 £152 in 1828 No figures 1835	£135 in 1835 £230 in 1878	£95 in 1835 £139/16s/8d in 1837

Table 5.1: The Three Commissioners Churches. A Variety of Funding for Endowment Table constructed from: Liber Ecclesiasticus 1835, Tockholes Coucher Books, Rushton's Visitation 1845, Chorley, Tockholes and Tyldesley Churchbuilding Files.

In 1835 the median income for an incumbent in England and Wales was £275.³⁶ Ten years earlier, the *Preston Chronicle* reported the *Times*' estimate of £250 per annum as

³⁴ CERC, ECE7/1/ 15217/1, Tockholes Church Building File, J.W.Whittaker to CBC, 26 October 1836.

³⁵ LA, PR1549/29/6, Tockholes Coucher Book, Valuation of Benefice, 25 December 1830.

³⁶ P.Virgin, *The Church in The Age of Negligence* (Cambridge, 1989), 90.

emolument for resident clergy.³⁷ However, in the townships studied, no minister enjoyed a certain £150 per annum before 1850. It may be indicative that the curates in charge of Chorley St. George during the first half of the nineteenth century all sought to move on as soon as they could. There were three in the first five years and eight altogether in the first twenty five.³⁸ Comparisons with mother churches make the subordinate ministers rewards look derisory. Croston Parish, from which Chorley was hived off in 1793, was worth £1538 in 1835 and Chorley St Laurence itself £900 after 1798.³⁹ Chorley Parish, being of recent foundation and the gift of a fond father to his son, had not lost its tithes to a lay impropiator. Blackburn Parish had done so but ground rents derived from 999 year leases of glebe land to house builders formed the main component of an annual £918 in 1832.⁴⁰ Tockholes appears the least favourable cure, but the £95 listed in the *Liber Ecclesiasticus* for 1835 seems erroneously low compared with other returns. The same document all too readily entered Blackburn chapelries as all receiving £125 which suggests some guesswork in the approach.⁴¹

This outline of the funding problems for ministers does not necessarily mean that those in charge of the churches in the sample were absolutely or even relatively poor. Other evidence may suggest that the ministers in these three Commissioners' churches were no worse off than others. Table 5.2A lists returns, in pounds sterling, recorded in the *Liber Ecclesiasticus* of 1835 for the first tranche of Commissioners' churches in Lancashire.

Ashton St Peter	137	Liverpool St Martin	210	Mellor St Mary	34
Bolton Holy Trinity	121	Lower Darwen St James	125	Oldham St James	72
Blackburn St Peter	153	Manchester St Andrew	144	Over Darwen Holy Trinity	74
Chorley St George	Not recorded	Manchester St George	236	Preston St Paul	67
Farnworth St.John	90	Manchester St Matthew	271	Preston St Peter	153

³⁷ *Preston Chronicle*, 2 September 1826.

³⁸ SGC, Church foyer board listing Curates and Ministers.

³⁹ *Liber Ecclesiasticus. An Authentic Statement of the Revenues of the Established Church, compiled from the Report of the Commissioners appointed to inquire into the revenues and patronage of the Established Church in England and Wales* (London, 1835), Table 4.

⁴⁰ LA, PR1549/3/5, Blackburn St Mary Parish Papers, Summary of Benefices, 1832.

⁴¹ *Liber Ecclesiasticus*, Table 4, 21.

Hoghton Holy Trinity	55	Salford St Phillip	410	All Saints Stand	Not recorded
Tyldesely St George	135	Mean for all churches	146	Mean excl. Manchester, Liverpool	101

Table 5.2A Returns (£) in the *Liber Ecclesiasticus* for the 19 Lancashire chapels built with the first grant under the 1818 Act.

Church Source	Samlesbury St Leonard The Less 12 Cent	Balderstone St Leonard 1504	Lango St Leonard 1557	Darwen St James	Tockholes St Michael 16 Cent Dem. 1833	Walton-le-Dale St.L'ard 16 th Cent.	Blackburn St John 1789	Salesbury St Peter 1807	Blackburn St Pauls 1809
TOTAL 1835	110	90	125	125	95	156	115	118	67
Other Dates					139 in 1837		126 in 1832, 191 in 1861		213 in 1851

Table 5.2B Blackburn Churches Consecrated Pre 1818. Value of Livings in 1835 (£)

The mean figure for what might be termed Commissioners' "country churches" outside Manchester and Liverpool was £101 per annum, suggesting that the churches in the sample townships fared as well as or better than average for such a "government church". If all 19 early Commissioners' churches in the county are included the mean figure is £146. Again, a comparison with traditional subordinate chapelries and chapels proves positive in one case study parish. In Leigh, the living of Astley Chapel was £126 and Atherton £100, less than Tyldesley's £135.⁴² In Blackburn Parish, a slightly obverse situation obtained. Table 5.2B containing returns in 1835 for chapels consecrated before the Church Building Act, shows the mean value of a living would be £111. Table 5.3 lists the returns for Commissioners' churches consecrated in thirty years subsequent to 1818 in Blackburn Parish. A mean figure for these would be £96 in 1835, the cause being a remarkably low figure for Mellor.⁴³ The relatively meagre remuneration was not uncommon. In 1836 national figures estimated the numbers of clergy with less than £150 per annum in parishes of more than 2000 souls, to number 300 out of some 10,000 incumbent clergy and over 15% of all clergy to receive less

⁴² *Liber Ecclesiasticus*, Table 4, 8,9.

⁴³ *Liber Ecclesiasticus*, Table 4, 21.

than £100.⁴⁴ Queen Anne's Bounty still had major work to perform in order to provide a minimum standard but not solely in new districts and parishes. Further, by focusing on the position in 1835, the imminent benefits of the Ecclesiastical Commission's Common Fund of 1840, with its stipulation that all incumbents of districts under the Church Building Acts with populations of 2000 or over, should be brought to at least £150 per annum, were yet to be realised.⁴⁵ J.W.Whittaker was speedily off the mark by 1842 creating district chapelries in Blackburn with sufficient souls to trigger the supplement required.⁴⁶

Church +foundation date.	St.Peter B'burn 1821	St.James Lower Darwen 1828	St.Mary Mellor 1829	Holy Trinity Over Darwen 1829	St.Stephen Tockholes 1833	Immanuel Feniscowles 1835 <i>Not by Church Building Com.</i>	Holy Trinity Blackburn 1845
Source (£)							
Initial Endowment					80 out of 90	600 capital to QAB below	
Pew Rents	80 out of 128	27 out of 65 in 1836	35 out of 74 in 1841	124 out of 150	18	10	20
Surplice Fees					1		
QAB and Ecclesiastical Commission 1841+	64 from grants in 1824 and 1827	21 in 1836 92 in 1842	74 in 1830	48 from grants in 1844 and 1850	6 in 1837 12 in 1842	52 Plus 70 from EC	70 Plus 10
Sundry					16 in 1830	10 from W.Feilden	
Total 1835	153	125 92 in 1832	109	74	95 139 in 1837	-	-
Later Total	180 in 1853	184 in 1870	129 in 1870	137 in 1850		149 in 1850 171 in 1871	150

Table 5.3 Blackburn Parish: New Churches Endowments (£) 1818-1845. Tables constructed from: Liber Ecclesiasticus 1835; JRUL Rushton's Notes vol 2 66,69,75; L.R.O. PR3073/2/31 Value of Certain Benefices 30 July 1861, PR3073/2/40 Schedule of Values of Blackburn Benefices 1840.

Possibly an acceptable living wage might be less than the perceived minimum. In absolute terms all the clergy in the three townships coped tolerably well. As with the basic equipping of the churches, one strategy was to cut expectations and expense. Another was to adopt a simple stoicism. As late as 1856 John Stock, first vicar of Chorley St George, put up with a dark dingy rented vicarage converted from an old warehouse close by the church. This

⁴⁴ W.Gibson, *Church State and Society, 1760-1850* (London, 1994), 114,119.

⁴⁵ Best, *Temporal Pillars*, 353

⁴⁶ LA, PR2846/2/2, Feniscowles Coucher Book, J.W.Whittaker to Revd. T.Walsh, 13 October 1841.

unrepossessing dwelling drove a later incumbent periodically to Whitby and finally to Preston for his health.⁴⁷ Jacob Robson in Tyldesley never had his own parsonage house. He lived in a rented cottage on the main street prior to living at Hindsford House in nearby Atherton township by 1848.⁴⁸ Gilmour Robinson in Tockholes constantly worried about the value of payments from the glebe farm at Goosnargh and was for once delighted with his supervising vicar Whittaker when, in 1843, he was allowed to let the farm for a guaranteed sum over a long term.⁴⁹ Robinson provided for a parish clerk by using the customary Tockholes' practice of taking a collection every six months and combining the clerk's role with that of schoolmaster.⁵⁰ Remarkably in his unconvincing financial position, Robinson managed to establish a National School in a part of the churchyard in 1834 and even procured a schoolmaster's house by 1841, with rents from cottages bought for the purpose. Gilmour Robinson claims to have spent up to £300 on improving his farm at Goosnargh and the benefice in general and so must have had recourse to other funds.⁵¹

It is apparent from the tables 5.1 and 5.3 above that the minsters started from varied positions and used a variety of sources to make ends meet. Luck, initiative, dogged pragmatism and external assistance were all factors. The idea that new parishes or districts were unable for some time to benefit from Queen Anne's Bounty was not borne out in Tyldesley. Indeed the funding problem was resolved earliest in this township. The vicar of Leigh's death in 1826 meant that under the Church Building Act of 1818, a vacancy in a mother church, allowed the Commission, if the patron could be persuaded, to create a district parish hived off from the original parish. Tyldesley was one of only ten Diocese of Chester Commissioners' Churches which fell into this category of district parish, separate but with no shared endowment.⁵² The Commission required some convincing that enhanced status could be maintained and the minister had to supply a list of thirty willing and

⁴⁷ LA, PR3123/2/1, Chorley St George Parish Papers, Surveyor's Report, 6 March 1849; PR3123/2/3, G. Northridge Letter Book, Report on Vicarage, undated.; SGC, Parish Magazine, June 1906.

⁴⁸ WAS, TRTy C2/2/3, Tyldesley Ratebook, 30 April 1841; www.lan-opc.org.uk, The Register of Baptisms Tyldesley St George, 1846-1852.

⁴⁹ L.A, PR1549/30/2, Tockholes Coucher Book, G.Robinson to J.W.Whittaker, 27 March 1843.

⁵⁰ CERC, ECE7/1/ 15217/1, Tockholes Church Building File, G.Robinson to CBC, 12 August 1836.

⁵¹ LA, PR3149,14/10, Tockholes Coucher Book vol 2, 1833-1840, G.Robinson to J.W.Whittaker, 8 March 1838.

⁵² F.Knight, *The Nineteenth Century Church and English Society* (Cambridge, 1995), 131-2.

respectable inhabitants to form a select vestry who might administer Tyldesley.⁵³ Under an Act of 1819 the Commissioners had the power to allow a select vestry to be formed on the advice of the bishop. Blomfield and Sumner appear to have been keen on using this instrument. All Saints Stand also submitted their list for such a vestry in 1829.⁵⁴

This new status, achieved in 1827 and announced in 1828, allowed Jacob Robson to retain surplice fees in Tyldesley, although it did entail a prolonged and bitter dispute with Leigh Parish clergy, clerk and churchwardens in regard to compensation for the share of churchings, baptisms, marriages and funerals inevitably lost from Leigh to Tyldesley. It was settled at a mere £11 per annum in 1831.⁵⁵ Robson also adopted a very open attitude towards burials, being prepared to conduct funerals from a catchment area well beyond his district. Some of the townships listed in Table 5.4 opted for Tyldesley over their own chapel throughout the period. Those in Leigh townships without a place of worship would normally be expected to use Leigh Parish Church. There was little reciprocity. Astley Chapel conducted funerals for 28 Tyldesley folk in 1824 prior to Robson's incumbency at Tyldesley but only 4 in 1850 the year prior to his death.⁵⁶ Atherton Chapel conducted 4 Tyldesley burials in 1830 and one in 1850.⁵⁷ Tyldesley's perpetual curate 'lost' only 16 burials to Leigh Parish between 1826 and 1851.⁵⁸ He also monopolised Tyldesley marriages. In 1843 a sole bride strayed to Leigh.⁵⁹ To assist his strategy Robson refused to raise his surplice fees above those of the mother church.⁶⁰ The accruing £40, providing 30% of the living's value in 1835, was a valuable addition.⁶¹

⁵³ CERC, ECE/7/1/17721/1, Tyldesley Church Building File, J.Robson to CBC, 28 March 1827.

⁵⁴ F.E.Lowe, *Scraps of Information on the Parish and Church of All Saints Stand, Manchester* (Whitefield, 1910), 8.

⁵⁵ CERC, ECE/7/1/17721/1, Tyldesley Church Building File, CBC to J.Robson, 26 April 1831.

⁵⁶ www.lan-opc.org.uk/Tyldesley/stgeorge/indexb.html, Register for Burials, 1825-1855; www.lan-opc.org.uk/Astley/StStephen/burials/html, Register for Burials at St Stephen, 1813-1856.

⁵⁷ www.lan-opc.org.uk/Athertonindexb.html, Register for Burials at Atherton St John the Baptist, 1813-52.

⁵⁸ www.lan-opc.org.uk/Leigh/stmary/indexp.html, Register for Burials at St Mary The Virgin, 1823-1856.

⁵⁹ Register for Marriages at Tyldesley St George, 1829-1852; Register for Marriages at Leigh St Mary, 1823-1870.

⁶⁰ CERC, ECE/7/1/17721/1, Tyldesley Church Building File, J.Robson to CBC, 1 May 1830.

⁶¹ *Liber Ecclesiasticus*, Table 4, 205.

	1828-32	1833-40	1841-48	1849-55
Total –mostly Tyldesley but 51 townships in total	203	720	783	686
Astley (Leigh)	15	23	16	15
Bedford (Leigh)-no chapel until 1840	9	17	25	30
Atherton (Leigh)	17	65	112	111
Bolton	1	10	10	15
Little Hulton	6	22	5	5
Pennington (Leigh)-no chapel until 1854	2	4	10	5
Westleigh (Leigh)-no chapel until 1847	1	13	12	15
Worsley	8	50	35	35

Table 5.4 Tyldesley St George: Townships of Residence for Those Buried, 1828-1855

In addition, Jacob Robson raised subscriptions amounting to £600, the core of which came from the amenable Lord Lilford, patron of Leigh and Tyldesley from 1825. Queen Anne's Bounty matched the subscription making a handsome £1200.⁶² The resultant augmentation to salary was over £80 per annum by 1878 and made the issue of pew rents considerably less taxing.⁶³

The experience of Tyldesley St George shows that the securing of independent financial status was a key step. In contrast, St George's Chorley was not given its head. It took the non-resident rector John Whalley Master until 1834 to resign effective power to his nephew and curate at St Laurence's, James Streynsham Master.⁶⁴ The rector still retained the proceeds of a living now worth £900, of which James was allowed £314.⁶⁵ St George's was still a mere chapel of ease. James Master wrote to the Commission averring that there was no chance of endowment for the subordinate chapel beyond the existing pew rents and it

⁶² JRUL, Eng.MS 706, Rushton's Notes on Lancashire Churches and Chapels vol 5, List of Augmentations at 31 December 1844.

⁶³ CERC, ECE/7/1 17721/2, Tyldesley Church Building File, Manchester Diocesan Registrar to Ecclesiastical Commission, 7 August 1885.

⁶⁴ CERC, ECE7/1 18206/3, Chorley Church Building File, J.S.Master to CBC, 9 October 1834.

⁶⁵ Chorley Church Building File, Petition to CBC, 1834.

was desirable that an ecclesiastical district be applied without delay. The bishop of Chester was agreeable and suggested that, in this case, surplice fees would be divided between the mother church and the district.⁶⁶ Thus in Chorley, until 1835, it was a case of deriving all financial support from the pew rents and after 1835, most of it. Ministers developed several approaches to enhance their returns. From 1830 rental of single seats was allowed and some pews shared. Charles Buller, minister in 1842, freed up extra seats for rent and made ten others teachers' pews. Henry Fletcher in 1848-1849 carried through Birkett's plan of creating eight new pews nearest to the free seats. Yet from 1837, possibly because some at St Laurence's thought a new district should need no further support, the lists show 28 pews with no takers. In 1845 14 families gave pews up. As late as 1856 only £162 was accruing- and very slowly collected. However it has to be admitted that compared with many a minister's salary this was a fairly good return, despite the problems in making it work. Again, some of the mother church, such as Lady Hoghton, Rector James Master, St Laurence's churchwarden John Pollard and private school owner Brierley continued to pay for a pew after St George's was a separate district.⁶⁷ Possibly here was a willingness of the wider Anglican community in a township, being prepared to lend a hand at a less fortunate chapel. As at Tyldesley the relatively wide social spread amongst pew renters is interesting. (Table 5.5) The landed proprietors, merchants and better –off manufacturers might be expected to feature in the list. However there is also the odd shopkeeper, artisan and general worker. Protestants may not have been as clearly divided on social and occupational lines as seemingly they were at Astley in Leigh Parish in 1822-24.⁶⁸

1825	Name	Details	Later holders	Details	Date
1	James Swift	Warehouseman Bolton St	Mr Houghton's servants		1841
2	Mrs Howarth	Hatter, Market St.	Mr.I.Hibbert	Flour mill owner	1846
3	G.Brindle		Mr and Mrs Whittle	Coalowner, Primrose Cottage	1850
4	Mrs Yates	Muslin manufacturer's wife	Richard Smethurst	Millowner	1842
5-7	A.S.Walter				

⁶⁶ Chorley Church Building File, J.B. Sumner to CBC, 29 November 1834.

⁶⁷ LA, PR3123/4/1, Chorley St George Pew Rents, 1825-60.

⁶⁸ BL, Add MS 40368, Peel Papers 112, Revd. T.Birkett to Peel, 7 September 1824.

9	Barton Beesley	Land agent, Hall Street			
10	J.Anderton	Mill and mine owner, Burgh Hall	R.Houghton	Bookseller	1842
11	James Hallows	Cotton spinner Water St/grocer Bolton St.			
12	John De Main	Draper, Market St.			
14	William Allanson	Wheelwright Bolton St			
15	W.Gorse	Joiner, Park Rd.	J.Anderton	Mill and coal owner	1841
16	J.Kerfoot	Muslin manufacturer, Chorley Moor			
19	John Bentley	Accountant, town clerk			
22	Mary Fairclough	Quarry owner, Market St.			
24	William Jones	Steward Gillibrand Hall	John Pollard	Doctor, churchwarden	1834
43	Richard Morce	Manufacturer, Botany Bay			
47			Mr Smethurst's servants		1840
48	John Rigby	Surgeon, High Street			
49	Timothy Lightoller	Cotton Spinner Standish Street			
54	Mrs Barton				
60			H.H.Fazackerley	Landowner, Gillibrand Hall	1837
65	Jethro Scowcroft		Mrs Brierley	Clerk and schoolmaster's wife	1837
72	Richard Smethurst	Cotton manufacturer, Chapel Street	Rev. J.S.Master	Rector, St. Laurence's	1849
82			J.Anderton esq		1839
92	John Smethurst				
95	J.F.Hindle esq				
101	John Pollard	Surgeon			

Table 5.5 Pew Holders at St George's Chorley, 1825-1849 Constructed from: L.R.O. PR3123/4/1
Pew Rents St George's 1825-1860; Pigot *Directory* 1822-3, Pigot and Dean *Directory* 1824-5, Baines
Lancashire 1824, Robinson *Account of Parish of Chorley*, 1835, Mannex *Directory*, 1851.

St Stephen's Tockholes also did not immediately receive district chapelry status. Whittaker suggested it should as early as September 1833.⁶⁹ However the vicar of Blackburn envisaged this as bestowing all financial responsibility upon the new church, whilst conceding none of his own right to most of St Stephen's surplice fees. Equally Gilmour Robinson believed – in great contrast to Tyldesley- that it would be impossible to create a committee of worthy locals, or even to appoint a genuine churchwarden, preferring to muddle on in his own hand-to-mouth fashion.⁷⁰ No district was adopted until 1842, when, probably to forestall the imminent Peel legislation or to trigger additional endowment from the Ecclesiastical Commission, Whittaker established districts for all his new chapels of ease in the Blackburn parish. He retained at least half the surplice fees, for his insecurity entertained no thought of diminishing the status of the vicar of Blackburn.⁷¹ He also had a family approaching ten children to provide for.⁷²

The initiative and drive Jacob Robson revealed, once he was largely in control of his own district is impressive, compared with the more restrained approaches in Chorley and Tockholes. Knight may well have been correct in commenting that an independent curate fared better than an assistant.⁷³ Nevertheless, all three chapels, if by varied routes, found a way of securing sufficient funding for a minister. The remuneration was also higher than some of the chapels around them.

d) Maintenance

A third area of cost beyond equipment and endowment, was that of ongoing maintenance and repairs. In 1818 it seemed there was no other source than that of the parish rate. This was Chadwick's 'fatal answer' and Ward termed rates 'the Achilles Heel' of the church

⁶⁹ LA, PR3149/14/10, Tockholes Coucher Book vol 2, J.W.Whittaker to CBC, 21 September 1833.

⁷⁰ LA, PR3149/14/10, J.W.Whittaker to G.Robinson, 2 March 1835; G.Robinson to J.W.Whittaker, 27 March 1835.

⁷¹ B.Lewis, *The Middlemost and the Milltowns* (Stanford, 2001), 153.

⁷² D.Beattie, 'John William Whittaker', unpublished lecture at Blackburn Parish Church, June 2008.

⁷³ F.Knight, *The Nineteenth Century Church and English Society* (Cambridge, 1998), 127-8.

building programme. Many were reluctant to pay and there was a relatively low yield from customary halfpenny and penny church rates.⁷⁴ Tyldesley St George, although a district parish, was also saddled with the duty of paying a proportion of the cost of maintenance and repairs to the mother church for twenty years. There were also periodic objections in Tyldesley to the levying of rates for Tyldesley itself.⁷⁵ Conversely, responsibility for a second place of worship in Chorley enmeshed the St Laurence churchwardens in a contracted loan with the Commission which took a long time to pay back. The Chorley vestry, containing Catholics and Protestant Dissenters in addition to Anglicans, did not particularly object to a new chapel; they just wanted to pay as little as possible towards its upkeep.⁷⁶ Blackburn vestry meetings revealed a real or adopted ignorance as to the law on chapels of ease and a distaste for paying anything to the upkeep of ‘parliamentary churches’.⁷⁷

Therefore a key factor in paying a church’s way was the attraction of sufficient local financial support and influence. Such men could show an example in prompt payment of rates, be called upon for what was in practice more commonly a voluntary rate subsequent to 1837 and to make single donations at times of particular need. They might also take responsibility for assisting the minister in conducting temporal church affairs. In March 1827 Jacob Robson of Tyldesley furnished to the Commission a list of respectable inhabitants suitable for the select vestry.⁷⁸ (Table 5.6) There is no record of a select vestry subsequently operating distinct from the general vestry but the list provides a useful insight into those who might be considered his supporters, even allowing that some may not have been committed Anglicans, for example the Grundys who also assisted Top Chapel.⁷⁹ They do contain just a couple of the nine independent gentlemen in Tyldesley, although seven of the nineteen were industrialists. They included just sufficient men of standing and wealth but sufficient was all that was needed. Thomas Kearsley heads the list; after his bankruptcy in 1842 he was replaced as a wealthy supporter by James Burton. The list contains smaller manufacturers and shopkeepers, in addition to the richer men and publicans expected as the

⁷⁴ Ward, *Religion and Society*, 110.

⁷⁵ SGT, Vestry Cupboard, Tyldesley St George Churchwardens’ Accounts, 1833,1837.

⁷⁶ *Preston Chronicle*, Letters 30 August 1827, 1 September 1827, 8 September 1827.

⁷⁷ *Blackburn Alfred*, 14 September 1830, 8 October 1832; *Blackburn Gazette*, 12 September 1832.

⁷⁸ CERC, ECE/7/1 17721, Tyldesley Church Building File, J.Robson to CBC, 28 March 1827.

⁷⁹ J.Lunn, *A New History of Tyldesley* (Tyldesley, 1953), 131.

natural support of Anglicanism in larger towns like Bolton.⁸⁰ The support was strongest in the main settlement of Tyldesley Banks, yet contained five from the eastern outliers at Mosley Common and Parr Brow, and several from intermediate parts of the township.

The minister referred to the 'names of respectable inhabitants, commencing with those most respectable'.

Name (from Robson's list)	Occupation (from Baines' Directory 1824 and Ratebook 1834)	Place (from Baines and Ratebook)
Thomas Kearsley	Muslin and fustian manufacturer	Fulwell House, Squires Lane
John Jones	Cotton spinner	Tyldesley
Robert Smith	Cotton manufacturer	Chaddock Hall
Thomas Smith	Manufacturer (power looms)	New House
James Overall	Shakerley Colliery manager	
William McClure	Fustian manufacturer	Bank House, Sale Lane
Peter Bromley	Gentleman	Davenport,s, Squires Lane
William Eckersley	?	?
John Hope	(a first churchwarden)	Shakerley
Charles Mosley	Gentleman	Mosley Common
Richard Worthington	Power loom weaver	Mosley Common
John Hill	?	?
Thomas Hill		Garret Hall
James Mort	Farmer?	Dam House?
Francis Atkin	Innkeeper	Elliot Street, Tyldesley
John Ratcliffe	Innkeeper+Cotton Waste	Tyldesley
James Summerfield	?	?
William Richardson	Shopkeeper	?
Jeremiah Hampson	?	Sale Lane
William Higson	Muslin manufacturer	Laurel House, Sale Lane
Hugh Hilton	?	?
John Crompton	Shopkeeper	Shakerley
Robert Taylor	Innkeeper	Sale Lane
Israel Unsworth	?	?
Christopher Petchey	Grocer (a first churchwarden)	Elliot Street, Tyldesley
John Sutcliffe	Shopkeeper	Great Factory Street, Tyldesley

80 P.Taylor, *Popular Politics in Early Industrial Britain: Bolton 1825-1850* (Keele, 1995), 25, 67.

Samuel Newton	Shopkeeper	Parr Brow
James Grundy	Wheelwright	Parr Brow
James Hurst	?	Parr Brow
Richard Shuttleworth	Fustian manufacturer	Elliot Street, Tyldesley

Table 5.6 Jacob Robson's Candidates for a Select Vestry, 28 March 1827. Table constructed from Tyldesley Churchwarden's Accounts; Robson's letter to CBC 28 March 1827; Baines' Directory 1824; Tyldesley Ratebooks.

The Tyldesley churchwardens' accounts reveal other features of Robson's financial strategy. One aim was to pay as little as possible towards Leigh Parish under the twenty year contribution rule. Indeed in 1827, before the separate parochial district of Tyldesley was created, they submitted their own expenses of £13 for the previous year to Leigh churchwardens, only to have the bill peremptorily returned with the assertion it was Tyldesley's to meet. From 1828 the Tyldesley vestry was reluctant to ask for more than a halfpenny or penny rate. The Tyldesley budget could be as low as £19 in 1834 and that of 1830 at £44 was unusual. The sexton had to make do with £2 per year and the ringers initially divided 2 guineas between them. By 1837 the vestry found it preferable to introduce voluntary subscriptions in addition to rate. This produced £22 and by 1853 generated £56.⁸¹ Great was the rejoicing at vestry meeting in 1846 when it was announced contributions to Leigh would terminate.⁸² A rate of one and half pence was instituted that year and the budget in 1847 soared to £98. This included the extravagance of a new hearse at £42 but it was immediately made available for hire by outside agencies at £2 a time. External painting could be done for the first time in 1851.⁸³ Essentially Tyldesley kept maintenance at a minimum, dug into the pockets of the most committed and waited until all funds raised went to their own church before they risked a bolder budget.

In Tockholes Robinson expressed no hope of appointing a churchwarden after William Pickering died in 1833, nor any optimism about setting up a committee, let alone a select vestry.⁸⁴ With regard to rates, he appreciated that none had been levied for St Michael's in living memory and chose to divert necessary monies from the handsomely supported

⁸¹ SGT, Vestry Cupboard, Churchwardens' Accounts, 1828, 1830, 1834, 1837, 1853.

⁸² *Manchester Courier*, June 1846.

⁸³ SGT, Vestry Cupboard, Tyldesley Churchwardens' Accounts, 1847, 1851.

⁸⁴ LA, PR3149/14/10, Tockholes Coucher Book vol 2, 1833-1840, G. Robinson to J.W. Whittaker, 3 December 1838.

collections for Sunday school. The budget could be as little as £10 in 1830 but as bulging as £34 in 1836. The largest sums paid out were modest. A slater was paid 13 shillings for working on the church roof in 1839, church repairs took £9 13s. in 1841 and £20 in 1854.⁸⁵ Tockholes had no hope of assistance from the mother parish of Blackburn. In some Blackburn vestry meetings there is the sense that the new churches belonged to an external agency and had been foisted upon the parish.⁸⁶ Possibly they had been.

The relative amount of yearly expenditure in the Blackburn townships is instructive. In 1835 the *Blackburn Gazette* published a list of church accounts for 1834-5.⁸⁷ The mother church, Blackburn St Mary's spent over £170, including salaries for sexton, bellringers, organ blower, beadle and clerk. In comparison St Peter's, another Blackburn town centre church and the earliest Commissioner's build, expended just £34. Beyond Blackburn township, the Commissioners' churches managed on even lower budgets. Darwen Holy Trinity's amounted to £13, with £7 12s. paid to their one 'official', the sexton and his salary included a payment for cleaning the church. Mellor St Mary spent £9 17s., £6 14s. 8d. being on coals. There were no figures for Tockholes St Stephen's, probably because Gilmour Robinson submitted none. Thus in another area of finance to equipment, one method of meeting a meagre income was to keep expenditure within tight bounds. For his own part, the vicar of Blackburn was keen to establish churches in his outlying satellite townships but not at any detriment to the funding of St Mary's. He seemed to think the town of Blackburn itself was his chief responsibility.⁸⁸

Robinson retaliated in kind. One reason he pinned the responsibility for post-consecration repairs upon the architect, the builder or the Blackburn churchwardens, was that he hoped to avoid paying anything towards the cost.⁸⁹ To some degree his stubbornness worked. Remarkably the Commission itself made two impromptu payments amounting to £89 for repairs estimated in 1835 at £94, although in 1841 it 'considered the chapel to be entirely

⁸⁵ LA, PR2763/15, Tockholes Sunday School Accounts, 26 January 1832, 18 June 1836, 14 April 1839, 27 June 1841, 19 June 1854.

⁸⁶ *Blackburn Gazette*, 12 September 1832.

⁸⁷ *Blackburn Gazette*, 2 September 1835.

⁸⁸ LA, PR1549/3/6, Blackburn Parish Papers, Return to Enquiry from Ecclesiastical Revenue Commissioners September 1832; PR1549/3/8, J.W.Whittaker to J.B.Sumner, 7 August 1832.

⁸⁹ LA, PR3149/14/10, Tockholes Coucher Book vol 2, J.W.Whittaker to CBC, 2 March 1835; G.Robinson to J.W.Whittaker, 23 May 1835.

out of its hands'.⁹⁰ Tockholes' accounts suggest the curate was a most assiduous book keeper and seemingly never mislaid a penny.⁹¹ Occasionally there was no remuneration necessary for maintenance, as in 1836 when Robinson rounded up forty men to spend their Mondays and Saturdays levelling the graveyard. He had hoped, to no avail, to have Whittaker pay for at least some refreshment. In several other instances, for example making good the initial defects in the church building, installing a somewhat unpredictable heating apparatus under the west end, carting coal for the school, maintaining the cottages bought in 1841 to supply rent for teachers' salaries, there was the market rate to be paid. It is clear from the accounts that all tasks, if at all feasible, went to local Anglicans, often breaking off from their farm work close at hand. They also had the good sense to return an occasional 'tithes' to a collection.⁹²

The church attracted a handful of well-disposed sponsors and they ensured maintenance and development costs might be met. Robinson used his personal friends, not least his freemasonry fellows, particularly Henry Brock-Hollinshead who donated £100 in order to clear debt.⁹³ (Table 5.7) After Robinson's death in 1856 and that of Hollinshead in 1858, Richard Rothwell of Sharples Hall, Bolton, significant landowner in Tockholes, gave £200 worth of land for an extended burial ground and stone for the wall around it.⁹⁴ He did spend five times that figure in attracting a title from the government of Piedmont.⁹⁵ Gradually other external agencies pitched in. For example the provision of the new parsonage in 1860 cost £1200, of which half came from the Ecclesiastical Commission and £50 from the Manchester Diocesan Fund.⁹⁶ Local Tockholes people were important in contributing to small weekly collections but more handsome subscriptions came from Robinson's friends and contacts beyond the township. For example in 1853 there were 59

⁹⁰ LA, PR3149/14/10, Tockholes Coucher Book vol 2, 1833-40, CBC to J.W.Whittaker, 13 December 1837; T. Walsh to CBC, 16 August 1837; PR1549/30/1, Coucher Book vol 1, CBC to J.W.Whittaker, 26 February 1841.

⁹¹ LA, PR3149/2/1, Cash Book of various accounts of Gilmour Robinson, clerk, incumbent curate of Tockholes.

⁹² LA, PR2763/15, Sunday School Accounts, 14 April 1839, 16 June 1839.

⁹³ LA, PR1549/30, Tockholes Coucher Book, G.Robinson to J.W.Whittaker, 27 June 1842.

⁹⁴ MA, MSf942 r121, Rushton's Visitation, 1845, vol 8.

⁹⁵ Rushton's Visitation 1845 vol 8, with additions to 1861, unattributed newspaper cutting.

⁹⁶ LA, PR1549/30/3, Coucher Book, 25 May 1860.

subscribers to a Sunday Schools appeal. 42 responses came from Blackburn, five from Over Darwen and one from Lower Darwen.⁹⁷

Name	Description	Paid for School, 1832-3	Schools Subscription 1841	School Trustee 1845	Subscribed Goosnargh barn rebuild	Left in Will
Ainsworth and Kay	Blackburn Solicitors			Y		
James Brandwood	Over Darwen		£1		£7	
James Cunliffe	Banker, Blackburn	£5			£7	
Thomas Dutton	Blackburn brewer			Y		Waterloo medal
Joseph Fielden	Witton landowner, man'facturer	£10			£5	
James Heald	Tockholes farmer, work for church		7 shillings			
Lawrence Brock-Hollinshead	Tockholes landowner, lord of the manor to 1838	£15				
Henry Brock-Hollinshead	Landowner, lord of manor post 1838		£58 free loan; £100 gift			Swords
Joseph Hornby	Landowner, Bibby House	£5			£10	
Richard Maitland	Blackburn doctor	£2	5 shillings	Y		
John Morley	Blackburn doctor					sermons
William Pickering	Tockholes landowner	£5				
Moses Sharples	Blackburn churchw'den	£5	£20	Y	£5	
Eccles Shorrock	Dissenting millowner; Hollinshead Hall 1845	£1		Y		
Thomas Walsh	Blackburn, builder of St Stephen's	£1				
George Whalley	Livesey innkeeper					Wellington print
Betty Willacy	Robinson's housekeeper					19 guineas
Thomas Willacy	Tockholes Farmer, publican					books

Table 5.7 Gilmour Robinson's Local Supporters, 1830-1857 Constructed from: Re. Robinson's Cashbook, LRO PR 3149/2, Will 23/2/1856 PR3149/2/

⁹⁷ LA, PR2763/15, Tockholes Sunday School Accounts, 1853.

In comparison with Tyldesley and Tockholes, little evidence is extant for the early financial strategy at St George's Chorley. There are two recently discovered broadsheets of 1827 and 1838, from clerk/cleaner Richard Tootell, begging first the St Laurence churchwardens and then the worshippers at St George's for a pittance.⁹⁸ The churchwarden's accounts of 1863 reveal a comparatively large budget of £210. This was met by, subscriptions, voluntary rate and weekly collections dedicated to a specific church need or external charity.⁹⁹ The latter gifts show that the church, by the second half of the nineteenth century, had some monies to spare from essential maintenance.

e) Fatal Answers?

The basic problems post consecration of equipping, endowing and maintaining a Commissioners' church were real enough. There was no national strategy for confronting these fundamental issues although the predicament was predictable. The papers of the responsible leaders in 1818 reveal a resentment that communities had not sought fit to support the endowment of the Queen Anne churches as fully as they might.¹⁰⁰ There were few realistic suggestions about solving the financial issues. Trading rights of patronage in return for endowment seemed unwise and improper to the Orthodox High Churchmen. Nor could the committed church builders simply pay for more ministers to hold unlimited services within existing structures, a proposal which had a deal of sense in it and was argued by some before the passing of the Act of 1818.¹⁰¹

Nevertheless the conclusion is that it is difficult to represent any of the three Commissioners' churches subjects of the case studies, as poor. Although they did not approach the riches of a Manchester Collegiate prior to 1847 or a Blackburn vicarage before 1854, once the churches reached the more stable ground of the second half of the nineteenth century, they seem relatively prosperous. At the outset endowment would appear to have been the biggest challenge but even in the first half of the century the clergy meet their needs and, as the next chapter describes, do not appear low on morale or commitment.

⁹⁸ ChL, Unattributed commonplace book in corner cupboard in Reference Library.

⁹⁹ LA, PR3123/4/1, Chorley St George Churchwarden's Accounts, 1863.

¹⁰⁰ LPL, Howley Papers vol 10, 206,208-11; R.Yates ,*The Church in Danger* (London ,1815), 22,30,128.

¹⁰¹ LPL, Howley Papers vol 10 ,221, AZ to Howley, 28 June 1817; 249, Joseph Brown to Howley, 27 April 1818.

Robson and Robinson remained in their respective cures until death. Curiously the great turnover of curates was in Chorley, which was the best funded of the three churches.

The Church in the three townships coped with the challenges of equipping places of worship adequately, supporting a minister and maintaining the fabric. Although the churches enjoyed varying statuses, there are some common reasons for their success. A respect for local traditions and conditions, married to a ready pragmatism and enterprising initiative, for example over surplice fees in Tyldesley or Sunday School pennies in Tockholes, were all contributory factors. Although there were serious tensions provoked by church rates in the townships, as Chapter 7 explores, there were ways of defusing the conflicts or finding other sources. They did not have to be totally dependent on church rates or pew rents and neither were Tyldesley or Tockholes slow to seek augmentation from the Bounty or later, the Ecclesiastical Commission. It was important to secure a sufficient number of rich friends to the church, and a sole one might be sufficient. Equally important was the ability to muddle through, keep going and if necessary, make do with very little. In some ways the survival strategies of new stations of the established church resembled those of the voluntary Dissenting congregations. All the clergy in the sample townships adopted realistic empiricism, from whatever side of churchmanship they came. The Anglicans from as early as the 1830s went some way to embracing the voluntaryism they publically rejected. Furthermore their varied solutions were far from fatal answers.

a) The Expected Impact

A modern assessment of an institution, for example an Ofsted report on a school, sensibly aims to provide the user with an overall assessment of performance, in addition to attempts at separate analysis of elements such as leadership or facilities. This chapter first follows the documentary material in looking at the whole before trying to estimate the relative contribution of church building to the Anglican assertion, as distinct from the role of individual clerics and wider contextual factors. By the time the Church Building Commission was wound up in 1856, what had it helped to achieve? The acid test of impact, and also a feasible one using the attendance and accommodation data collected for the 1851 Religious Census, would be how competitive with Dissent the churches proved. What percentage share of worshippers did the new churches secure? There should also be a consideration of the achievement as set against aspiration. The zenith of success would be securing the return of all or vast numbers of Protestant Dissenters to the established church, for that was the rationale behind building so many churches and so many large ones. Whilst focusing on relative performance to that of Dissent, there needs to be, certainly in Lancashire, a comparison with the new chapels of the Catholic Church.

A reasonable measure would be to ascertain whether the programme achieved Vansittart's stated ambition of providing seats for a third of a parish population or the quarter of the populace that the Act itself envisaged. With regard to the buildings themselves, were more sittings provided? Were sittings used efficiently? In fact churches that were too large or too numerous might have a detrimental effect, as Gill argued in *The Myth of the Empty Church*.¹ In Tockholes and Tyldesley the Commissioners' churches were the only Anglican churches and would seem to have an easier road to efficiency than Chorley St George, which was an additional chapel to a mother church.

¹ R.Gill, *The Myth of the Empty Church* (London, 1993).

A less quantitative criterion would be to estimate at what point the Commissioners' churches became 'accepted' as just like any other Anglican parish church, probably because they had engendered a real parish or district community.

When should the impact of the Commissioners' churches should finally be judged? The 1851 Religious Census will be the first evaluation point, before glancing to the last decade of the nineteenth century, by which time a Commissioner's church would have demonstrated its viability over at least three generations, thereby suggesting a degree of permanence and in a context wherein a decline in religious observance in some areas was already identified by some historians.² There is no comparable survey before or after 1851 but the diocesan visitation enquiries for 1821 and 1825, in addition to unofficial surveys such as Gilmour Robinson's in Tockholes in 1844, allow a tentative attempt at measuring change over time.

There is the possibility of selecting a variety of ecclesiastical or secular administrative units as areas of assessment. The choice of the township as the initial unit for examination was determined by the case study methodology, itself influenced by the knowledge that Lancashire had long administered itself in townships rather than within the parish unit. As the work progressed it became apparent that this also had the advantage of selecting townships which might form a natural catchment area for a group of competing or collaborating places of worship, making assessments of the performance of an individual Commissioners' church as plausible as it could be. If an eventual district attached to a church cut across township boundaries, as in the case of Tockholes and its neighbours in 1842, figures for both township and district can be considered. When widening the scope of the enquiry to a larger area of population such as Burnley, which ran into neighbouring Habergham Eaves, it seemed sensible to take the townships together. The selection of a Manchester township was avoided, given that it would be very difficult to be reasonably certain of a church's effective catchment area given the close proximity of a large populace to particularly numerous and adjacent places for Anglican worship.

² H.McLeod, *The Churches in England 1850-1914* (London, 1996), 171-2.

Port's considered judgement on the numbers using the Commissioners' churches is a touch scathing about the religious impact of a church the size and date of Chorley St George:

The erection of the churches, each with a minister, and the extension of the National schools system which went hand-in-hand with it, cannot have been without influence in the life of many of the poor. It is, however, arguable that too many churches were built, or the wrong sort of church. The 2000-seater battleships of the 1820s were soon obsolescent, the middle-class pew-renters migrating, as remarked above, to the suburbs, while a great part of the still-resident population was irredeemably secular in its outlook, and indifferent to religion."³

Possibly the writer had London in mind. The subjects of this study, as seen in Chapter One, were in two cases very large churches, even 'battleships' in intention, but in townships of less than ten thousand when constructed. Their success was generally better than that imagined above.

Chorley was a smaller Lancashire town in 1851, a category which Snell and Ell's analysis of the Religious Census stated did not perform well in terms of Anglican attendance at worship.⁴ Yet in many ways, of the three townships selected for the sample case studies, it was the best placed to prosper under the Church Building Act. As outlined in Chapter Two, it had a well-established market, sat on a sub-regional route centre and had prospects for growth, thereby creating additional demand for places of worship. The township displayed remarkable homogeneity in one sense; the manor, township and recently created parish followed virtually identical borders. It had a township meeting functioning a generation before the independent parish was created in 1798. It had a fifteenth century Church of England chapel and a long serving curate, respected beyond his cure and committed to church extension for half a century before 1818.⁵ In 1816 the sale of the old Chorley estate by Abraham Crompton, a leading Presbyterian magistrate, should have enhanced the Anglican interest, especially as the purchaser of the estate was Robert Townley Parker of Cuerden whose mother owned the Astley estate.⁶ The significant challenge was in the large numbers of Catholics and Protestant Dissenters in the township who, as the next chapter shows, were not fond of paying church rates. Yet as St George's chapel of ease opened in

³ M.H. Port, *Six Hundred New Churches*, (2nd ed., Reading, 2006), 278.

⁴ K.D.M.Snell and P.S.Ell, *Rival Jerusalems. A Geography of Victorian Religion* (Cambridge, 2000), 403.

⁵ LA, PR3120/4/9, Croston Parish Papers, Robert Master to Abel Ward, 2 August 1766; LA, DDX1861/1, Chorley Vestry Town Book, 29 August 1773; J.Wilson, *Chorley Church* (Edinburgh, 1914), 95-110; *Gentleman's Magazine*, 116 (1811), 585, 5 July 1825, 92.

⁶ J.Heyes, *A History of Chorley* (Preston, 1994), 49.

1825, it had a relatively impressive pew rent scale and had a man of commitment and ability, Robert Mosley Master, as curate.⁷

The other two Commissioners' churches appeared to look less hopeful prospects. Tyldesley had no Anglican church or minister before St George's was consecrated in 1825. The Leigh curate designated to take on the new chapel was Jacob Robson, described by Leigh's ill and failing vicar as, 'Poor Mr Robson..... he is not, I think, very strong'.⁸ Robson had served a mere three years at Leigh Parish Church and had not the education of a Cooper, being a St Bees' man.⁹ The first attempt at a pew rent scale provided a nugatory yield and Bishop Blomfield recommended his local expert as a necessary adviser.¹⁰ If, in 1825, there were few Catholics in Tyldesley, there were Dissenters, who supported the Countess of Huntingdon chapel, in addition to some Methodists.¹¹ Tockholes in 1833 did have an existing chapel but the new St Stephen's was to replace a decrepit building that could not have been attractive. Curates had been non-resident and inactive. One advantage was the existing endowment from the previous chapel, although this was a mere £90 per year in farm rents from a distant Goosnargh farm in marked need of repair.¹² There were two established Dissenter chapels in Tockholes and a long tradition of Independency in the township. No-one could remember the previous church rate levied and there seemed little prospect of pew rents, especially as historic owners, some Dissenters, of the St Michael's pews were unshakable in their belief that they were entitled to pews in the new chapel.¹³

All three churches were ultimately to prove successful in the long term, although they progressed at varying paces and on different paths. It would be reasonable to take 1851 as a dividing line. Not only was this the year of the only national census of religious attendance but the social context in which the churches operated changed after mid century. It is also interesting that the relative fortunes of the three churches altered at much the same time.

⁷ LA, PR3123/4/1, Chorley St George Pew Rents, 1825; Wilson, *Chorley Church*, 110.

⁸ LA, DDX211/6/21, Hodgkinson Papers 1820-29, Joseph Hodgkinson to David Hodgkinson, 7 June 1822.

⁹ CALS, EDV7, Enquiries Pre Visitation, 1825; MA, MSf.942.72 r121, Archdeacon Rushton's Visitation, 1845-46, vol 34.

¹⁰ CERC, ECE7/1/17721/1, Tyldesley Church Building File, J.Robson to CBC, 21 November 1825, 26 January 1826.

¹¹ CALS, EDV7, Enquiries Pre Visitation, 1811; *Manchester Courier*, 6 November 1830.

¹² LA, PR1549/30, G.Robinson to J.W.Whittaker, 7 June 1842.

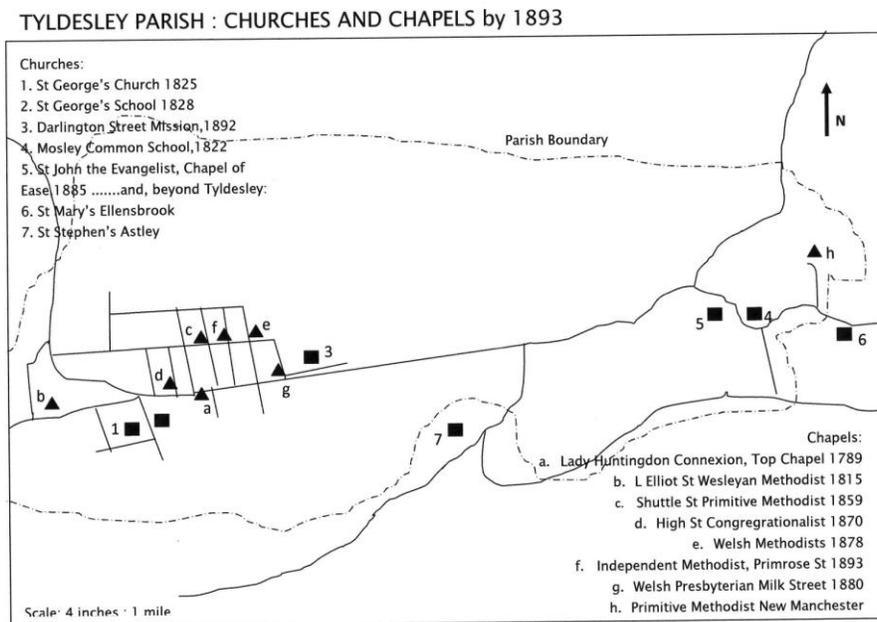
¹³ CERC, ECE7/1/15217/1, Blackburn Church Building File, J.W.Whittaker to CBC, 26 October 1836.

b) The First Generation, to 1851.

If Chorley St George was best placed in 1825, the impact of the three chapels in their first generation is surprising. Given Tyldesley St George's relatively weak starting position in 1825, a 37% share of attendances, or estimated 40% of attenders, in a multi-denominational context, by 1851, was a strong achievement.¹⁴ Also remarkable was the success achieved in Tockholes, given the distinct lack of enthusiasm of the curate (customarily termed 'vicar') for his church building and the meagre finance and independence available. Chorley St. George should have fared well. It stood still. The section seeks to assess and explain the relative fortunes of the churches, including the role of the buildings they were housed within.

i) Tyldesley

A statistical test of success highlights the growth in participation of churchmen as compared with other places of worship, of which there were four by 1826.



Map 6.1 Tyldesley Parish: Churches and Chapels by 1893

¹⁴ Table 6.1, 195.

Fd.	Place of Worship	Cost	Capacity	1829 adherents	1851 attendances
1789	Tyldesley Top Chapel- Lady Huntingdon Connexion	£800	363+200 free	170	172am, 200 pm,+ 200am, 225 pm in Sunday School. i.e. 31% of participant share.
1815	Lower Elliot Street Wesleyan Methodists Chapel	£800	400 (1851-300+200 standing)	250	56am, 80pm,40 evening +120am,130pm in Sunday School. i.e.15%
1821	New Jerusalem Swedenborgians	rented	One room	3 families	-
1825	St George's Church	£9,646	305+1132 free	Potentially 64% share of adherents	250am, 200pm +280am 290 pm in Sunday School. i.e. 40 %
1826	Primitive Methodist Chapel New Manchester		92+67 free	?	56am, 97pm +44am,46pm in Sunday School. i.e. 13%

Table 6.1 Statistical Evidence for Success of Tyldesley Churches and Chapels 1829-1851

Table constructed from: Lunn History of Tyldesley, CALS, EDV7, Enquiries Pre Visitation, 1825; Rushton Visitation of Lancashire, 1845, vol 34 ; HO129/467, 25-29, Religious Census 1851.

Figures for 1830 claim 64% of Tyldesley's population as 'Church of England'.¹⁵ Yet Robson's "visitation" figures counted 1794 of the 3226 adherents as under sixteen years of age and because he appears to have ascribed a denominational loyalty to all 5022 folk living in Tyldesley, he assumed all households not committed to another sect would be part of his flock, which was a high expectation. Thus it is difficult to be certain how many adherents the pro-active Robson had secured in his first five years in Tyldesley but it would be unfair to consider the 3226 accepted in 1830 as a fair baseline for his task. Using the numbers identified in 1825 of adherents to religious persuasions other than the Church of England, and the relative populations of the townships within Leigh Parish, would suggest an estimate of nearer 2500.¹⁶ The answers to enquiries pre bishop's visitation in 1821 and 1825 indicate a lacklustre Anglican performance across Leigh Parish prior to the consecration of Tyldesley St George.¹⁷ Robson's 'visitation' to Tyldesley township in 1830 found just 64 Prayer Books in households and he himself must have provided some of these

¹⁵ *Manchester Courier*, 6 November 1830.

¹⁶ MA, MSf.942.72 r121, Archdeacon Rushton's Visitation, 1845-6, vol 34.

¹⁷ CALS, EDV7/340 Mf44/21 6 6/87, Enquiries Pre Visitation, 1821 ; Rushton Visitation, vol 34.

from the £230 expended on ‘books’ since 1825.¹⁸ In 1824, the year before St George’s consecration, there were just 4 burials of Tyldesley folk out of 321 at Leigh Parish Church; taking into account the other Leigh chapels there were still only 35 burial services for Tyldesley folk in Anglican churches of the parish. Tyldesley baptisms accounted for 58 out of the 570 at Leigh, with 35 at Atherton and Astley chapels.¹⁹ The inference is that Tyldesley churchmen were using Dissenting chapels for the rites of passage or possibly not troubling to baptise some children at all. The later baptism records reveal Jacob Robson providing baptism ‘windows’ for the older unbaptised, for example eighteen at Christmas 1830.²⁰

It was a remarkably different picture by 1851 when St George’s narrowly claimed the highest attendance of the three main places of worship in Tyldesley. From late origins in 1825 it had done well to take the leading participant share of attendances, whereas the Wesleyan Methodists appeared to have lost attendees. Another simple indicator is the fact that fourteen of the twenty-five miners killed in the Yew Tree Colliery Explosion of 1858 were buried in St George’s churchyard.²¹ The church, and additionally the school, had some attraction for the labouring classes. In 1843 the congregation for the annual sermons was described as ‘crowded to overflowing’ with a collection containing largely copper.²² Could more have been achieved? Given the possible 4000 folk who were not nonconformists in 1851, the Anglican attendance might be seen at best as a quarter of its potential. In 1851 the Top Chapel filled two fifths of its accommodation at each service, whereas St George’s is near to a seventh only. In addition Top Chapel would seem to have adherents from 1829 who seemed to continue unflinchingly to attend worship and be increasing in number.²³ The enrolment of former Dissenting minister J.G. Mallinson at St Bees Anglican training college in 1845 was significant but only one case of a notable ‘reclamation’.²⁴

¹⁸ *Manchester Courier*, 6 November 1830.

¹⁹ www.lan-opc, Leigh St Mary Register of Baptism and Register of Burials; Atherton Register of Burials and Register of Baptism; Astley St Stephen Register of Burials and Register of Baptism; Rushton’s Visitation 1845-6, vol 34.

²⁰ www.lan-opc, the Baptism Register Tyldesley St George.

²¹ L.Allred and J.Marsh, *The Parish Church of St George Tyldesley* (Blackburn, 1975), 7.

²² *Manchester Courier*, 19 August 1843.

²³ LA, QDV/9/402, Return of Non Church of England Places of Worship, 28 July 1829; WAS, D/NP1/2/3, Register of Tyldesley Top Chapel, 1790; HO129/467, 29, Religious Census 1851, Tyldesley.

²⁴ *Manchester Courier*, 13 September 1845.

Looking beyond the statistics, there are signs that Tyldesley St George quickly developed the features of a church community. By 1828 it provided the additional facility of a school building, aiming at 250 boys but, by 1835, extended to accommodate 350 boys and the same number of girls.²⁵ The potential of building a constituency through day and especially Sunday schools was valuable. From 1822 there was a school at Mosley Common on the eastern edge of the township, often visited by clergy from St Mary's Church in Ellenbrook, plainly in Eccles Parish and Worsley township but nearer to the school than St George's.²⁶ The burial ground, open until the provision of a township cemetery shared with Atherton in 1857, was thoroughly used.²⁷ A nearby house was rented for the minister, some quarter of a mile away along Elliot Street. Later, from 1849, the church could afford to rent a vicarage at Hindsford in the bordering township of Atherton.²⁸ By 1849 there was an assistant curate paid £60 per year.²⁹

Tyldesley St George did have a wider impact within the process of a village becoming a town. The opening of the church was needed if only for an additional place of baptism, marriage and burial in a rapidly growing community. An examination of the funeral burial registers in Chapter Four revealed the relative popularity of holding a funeral at St George's, with significant numbers from Worsley and Atherton beyond the township being brought to Tyldesley.³⁰ Within Tyldesley itself both baptisms and burials at Top Chapel were roughly halved in the first three years of St George's establishment. Some folk had likely attended the Countess of Huntingdon's Connexion, as some Anglicans averred, purely for a want of church room. On the other hand use of church rather than chapel for baptism does not necessarily indicate a commitment and John Langridge, the energetic minister at Top Chapel, soon recovered the numbers using his place of worship for the rites of passage.³¹

²⁵ J. Lunn , *A New History of Tyldesley* (Tyldesley,1953), 114; I.Slater, *Royal National Commercial Directory of Lancashire* (Manchester, 1865) ,809-10.

²⁶ Lunn , *A New History of Tyldesley*, 107.

²⁷ *Manchester Courier*, 7 February 1857.

²⁸ Lunn, *A New History of Tyldesley* 102; Allred and Marsh ,*The Parish Church of St George Tyldesley*, 13.

²⁹ Allred and Marsh, *Parish Church of St George, Tyldesley*, 12.

³⁰ www.lan-opc. The Burial Register of Tyldesley St George.

³¹ WAS, D/NP1/2/3, Burial Registers of TyldesleyTop Chapel, 1790-1901.

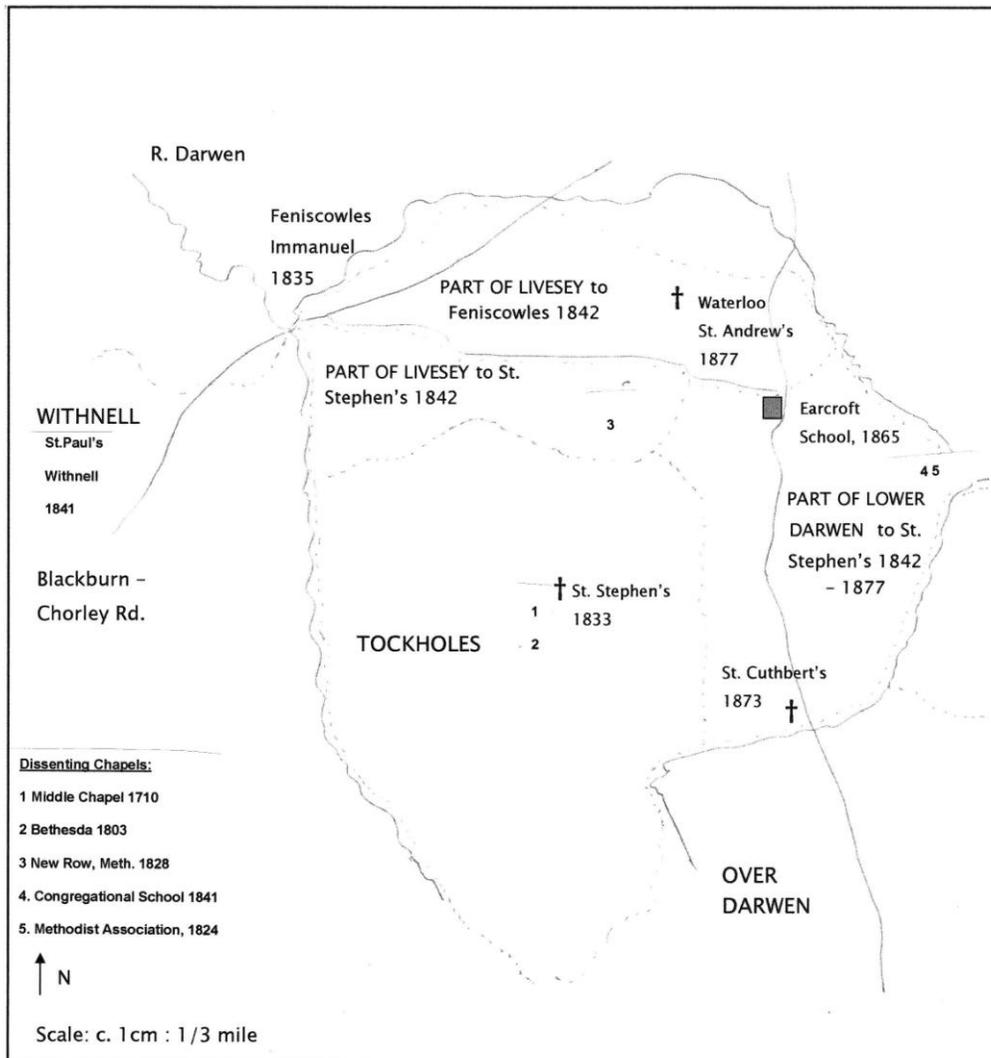
In sum, an estimate of the impact of St George's Church would allow that by 1851, it had established an accepted place as a leading place of worship in the town. The impetus was gained from a constant, committed and untrammelled minister in Robson. A period of growth in a township of this size did not therefore mean that the Anglican Church suffered as one writer suggests it might.³² It may not have reclaimed significant numbers of Dissenters but secured a leading share of attendance at worship. The statistics would suggest some attenders would come from the Wesleyan Methodists, a few from The Countess of Huntingdon Connexion, a bulk from the potential churchmen worshipping elsewhere before 1825 and a share of the thousand folk coming into the town between 1821 and 1851.³³ Migration in itself did not appear a severe threat in Tyldesley. The building itself was crucial, even though it was poorly filled, for it was the first and only Anglican church in the township, could accommodate a third of the township, was a focus for a quickly thriving parish activity, and attracting a wide constituency seeking rites of passage, not least the remedying of a backlog of baptisms.

ii) Tockholes

Tockholes St Stephen was another Commissioners' church successfully established and strong in the community by 1851. Previous custom at St Michael's, meant the replacement chapel reached beyond Tockholes township, to Withnell and Livesey. After 1842 it had no responsibility for Withnell and 'lost' half of Livesey to Feniscowles, but gained half of Lower Darwen. Detailed evidence is available for not only attendance at Sunday worship but also for communion and rites of passage. There are also figures for the attendant schools.

³² B.I.Coleman, *The Church of England in the Nineteenth Century* (Historical Association), 15.

³³ See Table 2.5, 58.



Map 6.2 St Stephen's District Chapelry 1842-1877

Name	Denomination	Date	Cost	Size	Adherents 1829	Attendances 1851
St Michael's, Tockholes	C of E	c. 1545	Unknown	170 seats	1822-100 attendees	Replaced 1833
Middle Chapel, Tockholes	Independent	1710		300, plus 338 extra	250 adherents	431 (average 300)
Bethesda Tockholes	Lady Huntingdon Connexion	1803	Less than £1000	300 seats	closed	
Tockholes Sunday School in a house	C of E	1807				Merged into National School
Meeting House Lower Darwen	Methodist Association	1824		300 free + 90 others (by	34	

				1851)		
New Row Chapel, Livesey	Wesleyan Methodist	1828		70 +150 free 50 standing	350 adherents	270
St Stephen's, Tockholes	C of E	1833	£2804 after early repairs	439 seats + 424 free	1835- 900 (alleged)	278+ 302 in Sunday School (no average figure)
Waterloo School, Livesey	C of E	By 1839				
Sunday School, Lower Darwen Mill	Congregational	1841	£410	200 free		162

Table 6.2 Places of Worship Tockholes Township (and relevant parts of Livesey and Lower Darwen) to 1851. Sources: CALS, EDV7 Mf44/22 7/48, Pre Visitation Enquiries 1825; QDV9,127, Returns re Dissenters 1829; HO129/480,69-77, Religious Census 1851.

	1831	1835 (new school)	1840	1845 (Waterloo added 1842)	1850	1854
Day School Boys on books	54	42	59	58	66	70
Day School Boys attending (ave.)	23	30	23	24	29	24
Day School Girls on books	52	30	34	35	43	52
Day School Girls attending (ave.)	23	20	16	14	22	18
Sunday School Boys attending	150	120	93	77	62	49
Sunday School Girls attending	150	180	127	109	109	74
Waterloo Day Boys Attending			18	20		
Waterloo Day Girls Attending			15	14		
Waterloo Sunday School Boys			75	49		
Waterloo Sunday School Girls			65	53		

Table 6.3A Church of England School Attendance Figures, Tockholes 1831-1854. Table constructed from: MSf942.72 r121 vol 6,8, Archdeacon Rushton's Visitation 1845.vol 6,8; LA, PR2763/34 Tockholes Sunday School Registers; PR1549/30/2, Tockholes Coucher Book.

		1830	1836	1839	1845	1849	1856
Churchings		38	49	30	39	30	
Baptisms	800 between 1817-1833			50	52	52	45
Burial Services	122 between 1817-1833	4	9	12	15	24	15
Marriage						1	

Table 6.3B Rites of Passage: Tockholes St Stephen, 1830-1856. Table constructed from :
Rushton's Visitation, vol 8,1845; PR1549/30, Coucher Book .

1811 (4 communion services/yearr)	August 1830	July 1833 (11 services per year)	1834	1860	1893 (communion service every week)
15- claimed	9	22	24-28	19-28	78 at Easter

Table 6.3C Numbers of Communicants, St Michael's and St Stephen's, 1811-1893.

Source: PR2765/2a, Gilmour Robinson's Sacrament Accounts.

The data available in Tables 6.1-3 indicates that St Stephen's proved a lot more popular and frequented than the old St Michael's. Communicant numbers trebled between 1811 and 1860 at a time when it was not yet possible or thought essential to receive the eucharist regularly. Furthermore, by 1851, there was a three quarter use of available seats, better than many Anglican churches. Large Sunday attendances, touching 800 souls, were recorded in 1835.³⁴ St Stephen's had also developed provision for schools and mission centres in Livesey and then Lower Darwen.³⁵ It has long been accepted that the Anglican church did relatively well in small, closed parishes. Tockholes may have been small but it certainly was not closed and its worshippers' habitations were well dispersed.³⁶ The church fared better than one of the Dissenter chapels, for Bethesda lost some of its original flock to Middle Chapel once the unpopular minister at the latter had departed in 1819 and the remaining congregation quitted it by 1829.³⁷ Even the Independents' long established Middle Chapel felt the competition, for the minister left suddenly a few days after Gilmour Robinson's arrival, allegedly fearing starvation through vastly reduced collections.

³⁴ CERC, ECE7/1/15217/2, Tockholes Church Building File, Whittaker to Robinson, 21 April 1836.

³⁵ LA, PR3073/2/20, Livesey St Andrew Coucher Book, Summary Account, 1854; LA, PR1549/30/3, Tockholes Coucher Book, Revd. Hughes 'Appeal to Respectable Friends', 29 May 1863.

³⁶ Snell and Ell, *Rival Jerusalems*, 5,14,304; L.R.Parker, 'Forgotten Lancashire? Rural Settlements in the East Lancashire Textile District, c. 1800-1914', unpublished PhD Thesis, University of Lancaster (2008), 304.

³⁷ B.Nightingale, *Lancashire Nonconformity* vol 2 (Manchester, 1891), 48-9.

Robinson's supervising vicar claimed significant success within a year, interestingly before the new Commissioners' church was even begun: 'The zealous and praiseworthy actions of Mr Robinson have succeeded in attaching to your Church or have brought back to her worship the chief of the Dissenting body at Tockholes.'³⁸ Following the construction of St Stephen's, Robinson claimed that Dissenters forsook their old chapel in order to avoid pew rents and took to the free seats in his new church.³⁹ He kept a careful check on adherent numbers, as evinced by his innocently named 'Population Book' of 1844 and claimed that whereas Dissenters in Tockholes township had outnumbered Anglicans by 4 to 3 in 1830, the proportions were 3.5 to 6.5 by 1845.⁴⁰ To Robinson this was something of a frontier war and he rejoiced over the four former Dissenters who came to the communion table.⁴¹ The list reveals around three quarters of communicants came from Tockholes itself, farmers predominating, as did older folk. Women narrowly outscored men.

Name	Age in 1841	Habitation	Occupation	Gilmour Robinson's comments
James Aspden, Mrs Aspden		Hollinshead		
Baring				
William Barker				
Nancy Baron Snr				
Ellen Catterall		Winter Hill		
John Catterall	61	Garstangs	Handloom weaver	
William Catterall		Tottering		
Betty Cowell		Waterloo, Livesey		
Margaret Cowell				
Mary Cowell				
James Cocker	60	Cocker Fold	Farmer ; landed proprietor	Ex Bethesda
Moses Greenhalgh		Moulden Water, Livesey		Ex Dissenter
James Hargreaves	60	Lower Gorse	farmer	
Mr and Mrs Harper		Hollinshead Hall	independent	
James Holden		Livesey		
Mary Holden				
Alice Holt				
Edward Kellett	35	Rock Inn	innkeeper	
George Kenyon				
Mrs Lonsdale		Over Darwen		
John Marsden		Livesey		New to area
Mrs R.Marsden		Chapels		
Rachel Melody				Lapsed?

³⁸ LA PR1549/29/7, Tockholes Coucher Book 1648-1833, J.W. Whittaker to Bishop of Chester, 1 July 1831.

³⁹ LA PR1549/29/7, Whittaker to Bishop of Chester, 1 July 1831.

⁴⁰ MA, MSf942.72 r121, Archdeacon Rushton's Visitation 1845-6, vol 8, Robinson to Rushton, 16 July 1844.

⁴¹ L.A, PR2765/2a, Tockholes Parish Papers, Sacraments Account.

Mary Parker	30	Chapels	farmer's wife	
Mrs Banister Pickup				Ex Dissenter
James Pickup		Livesey		
William Smalley	70	Higher Hill	weaver	
William Smith, Mrs Smith	60	Red Lee		
Betty Smith	55	Crook Row	shopkeeper	
Mr and Mrs Unsworth		Hole Bottom		irregular
Lawrence Ward and Mrs Ward	55	Lodge	Clerk and master	
Mrs R. Walsh		Mill Lane, Livesey		Ex Dissenter
Betty Whittle				
Betty Willacy	45	Parsonage	Curate's housekeeper	
Mr W. Willacy	53	Parsonage	Cabinet maker	
Henry Witton		Chapels	farmer	
Peggy Witton				

Table 6.4 Communicants at St Stephen's Tockholes, 1830-1844. Constructed from: 1841, 1851 Census; Gilmour Robinson's Population Book, 1844, LA, PR2765/2b and Sacraments Accounts, LRO PR2765/2a; Tockholes Ratebooks, 1838-44, LA, PR 2761/18-24.

However this dramatically positive picture requires some qualification. The upsurge in Anglican attendance began in 1830 and was clearly linked to the arrival of a committed, charismatic and resident incumbent, rather than being initiated by the new build. Indeed, Robinson suggested as early as 1831 that many villagers were unhappy that their old church, however defective, was to be no more.⁴² Secondly, whereas the impact of both Robinson and a more spacious church had a marked effect to 1836, there was a levelling off and even a decline in numbers by 1851. If there really were 800 attenders in 1835, there were fewer than 600 total attendances in 1851.⁴³ Surprisingly, for a keen collector of data, Robinson claimed he could not supply accurate average figures for the year preceding the Religious Census. He hazarded an estimate at an ambitious 650 by including Sunday School children and then crossed out his answer, citing the irrelevant reason regarding calculation of a mean annual figure, that attendance varied because of the mountainous terrain and variable weather. Sunday School numbers also show a decline as compared with those recorded prior to 1840.⁴⁴ Admittedly the loss of responsibility for Withnell in 1842 and the opening of Waterloo school in Livesey would take some away from St Stephen's, but the latter mission too showed some decline in attendance.

⁴² LA, PR1549/29/9, Tockholes Coucher Book, Robinson to Whittaker, 5 December 1831.

⁴³ TNA, HO129/480, 77, Religious Census 1851, Enumerators' Book, Blackburn District.

⁴⁴ TNA, HO129/480,77.

Neither were the Independents as fickle or defeated as both Whittaker and Robinson were suggesting in 1835. The Religious Census suggests they had maintained, or even increased adherents on 1829 by 1851 and could mount an effort for the census day. Robinson's own 1844 figures show that the proportion of Dissenters to Anglicans in Tockholes township was nearer 4 to 6 than 3.5 to 6.5.⁴⁵ Possibly pluralism and competition assisted all denominations. An index of attendance in St Stephen's District in 1851 would have been over 52%, above the Lancashire mean of 44%.⁴⁶

Despite the reservations, the established church in Tockholes subsequent to 1830 was a much more proactive institution than previously and did have a marked cultural impact. The National School involved more children in both day and Sunday schools, which had previously been held in the home of weaver/schoolmaster Lawrence Ward, now conducted in a new building in the extended churchyard. Robinson admitted that the new school's curriculum was fairly narrow and pedantic in method, for he continued to employ the ageing and apparently unimaginative Ward, who had the qualities of taking very little salary and being a loyal supporter of Robinson.⁴⁷ Robinson himself provided the religious instruction and claimed there were few districts where such education was better executed. In 1844 he assessed that almost every household in the township was equipped with at least one bible.⁴⁸ Other associational activities grew out of the schools, not least the summer tea party, deliberately held on a summer Sunday when attendance was always at its highest.⁴⁹ A flourishing burial society, involving 79 families, predominantly Tockholes township folk, provided some insurance for both sick and bereaved and the church took over the Female Friendly Society which had previously been based in public houses.⁵⁰ An evening school was begun and a small library of forty volumes built up.⁵¹ St Stephen's became a significant casual employer.⁵² Robinson's position in the village, his probity and eye for

⁴⁵ TNA, PR2765/2b, Tockholes Population Book, 1844.

⁴⁶ TNA, HO129/480, Enumerators' Book; MA, MSf942.27 r121, Archdeacon Rushton's Visitation 1845-6 vols 4,6,8;H.Mann, *Religious Worship in England and Wales 1851* (London, 1854), Summary Tables C,ccix.

⁴⁷ LA, PR2763/22, Robinson's Public Documents Book, replies to Questions from the Committee of the Council on Education 1839, 15.

⁴⁸ LA, PR2755/2b, Population Book, 1844.

⁴⁹ LA, PR2763/34-38, Tockholes Sunday School Registers, 1840-44.

⁵⁰ LA, PR2762/1, Burial Society Papers; PR2761/14 1-5, Female Friendly Society Papers.

⁵¹ LA, PR2765, Public Documents Book, 15.

⁵² LA, PR2763/15, Sunday School Accounts 1830-56, 5 November 1834, 16 March 1836, 18 June 1836, 4 September 1837, 21 February 1838, 1 May 1841.

detail made him the natural leader of any temporary committee for the alleviation of distress, for example that administering the London Manufacturers' Fund in 1841-2. On this occasion that at least one leading Dissenter was included, Thomas Sefton, and at least a quarter of the doles went to Dissenters.⁵³ There are only two cases where doles from the communion collections or Anglican Burial Society funds, or opportunities for paid labour, reached known Dissenters.⁵⁴

Wherever possible, Robinson chose to cement churchmen's loyalty. At least his charity reached the farthest corners of his district because Ewood or Golden Cup Darwen are mentioned in the accounts.⁵⁵ His will continued the charitable role of the church. After funeral and tombstone expenses were paid, he wished the rest of his estate to be used for the deserving poor- amidst Anglicans.⁵⁶ Obituaries showed he had an ancillary role as a health visitor. His time in the army had made him familiar with common treatments and herbs which he used or recommended to any sick parishioners.⁵⁷ Finally Robinson's residence, charisma and plain speaking could well have been a force for order in the village. There were occasional violent incidents such as the attack upon a policeman at the Rock Inn in 1853, but on this occasion the magistrates decided not to punish the guilty because Tockholes was normally 'the best conducted township in the area'.⁵⁸

St Stephen's Tockholes provides an example of a markedly individual Commissioners' Church. Rather than a totally new provision, it was a replacement for an old church, situated just sixteen yards to the north. St Stephen's real success in becoming a durable, majority church community from a very low starting base, achieving a significant reclamation of Dissenters and a strong district presence, was mainly due to the long commitment of a cantankerous clergyman, claiming a free hand, who hated his church but cared deeply for his Church. Yet the building was essential in replacing a crumbling edifice, increasing accommodation to match Robinson's success and sometimes presenting as full.

⁵³ LA, PR 3149/2/1, Cash Book, London Manufacturers' Relief Fund, 33,40.

⁵⁴ LA, PR2763/15, Sunday School Accounts; PR3149/2/1, Cash Book 1841, 23-33.

⁵⁵ LA, PR2763/16, Collections at The Lord's Supper; PR2765/2a, Sacraments Account, 1830-34.

⁵⁶ LA, PR3149/2/2, Copy of Gilmour Robinson's Will, 23 February 1856.

⁵⁷ *Preston Chronicle*, 3 January 1857.

⁵⁸ *Blackburn Standard*, 1853, quoted in Jacklin and Robinson, *Tockholes, A Timewarp*, 150.

iii) Chorley

Like its namesake in Tyldesley, St George's Chorley was successfully completed, opened and remains an active church today. Yet St George's Tyldesley showed more remarkable progress in its first thirty years, considering there was no prior Anglican church in Tyldesley. Although prospects for the Anglican church looked reasonably healthy in Chorley in 1818, it does not follow that a second place of worship would thrive. Constructed close to the heart of Chorley in 1825, St George's was too large for the existing numbers of potential churchmen, close to the mother church and had an ecclesiastical district only from 1835, with none of the separate endowment St George Tyldesley received from 1828. There was a National School, with Sunday school, close by from 1825 but the school initially belonged to the whole parish and contributed to no separate identity for St George's.⁵⁹ Chorley's experience demonstrates the difficulties in establishing a role for a chapel of ease.

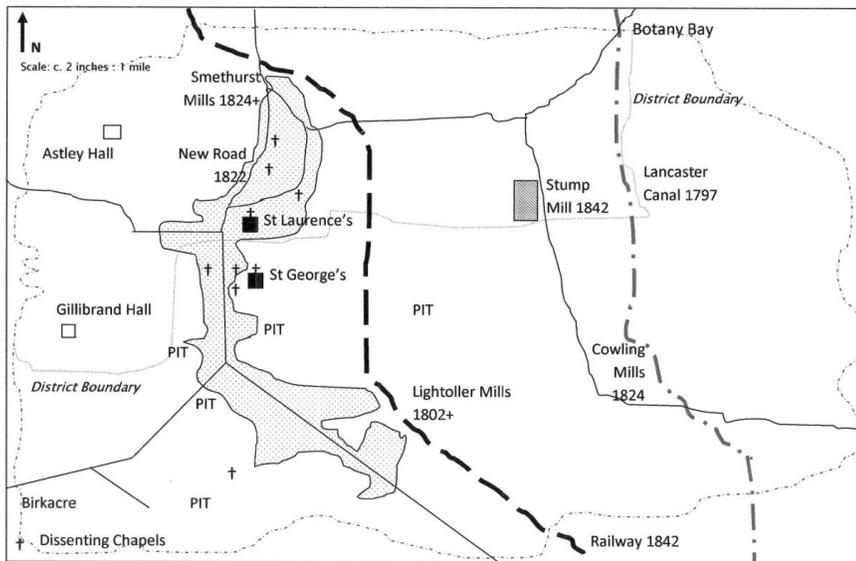
There is no evidence, prior to the committed vestry meeting of October 1818, that there had been any thought as to the appropriate size of the proposed new church. The figure of 2000 seats was apparently plucked from nowhere.⁶⁰ Oliver Cooper, James Jackson and Bishop Law might have known that other proposed early Waterloo churches were to be of similar extent. They would know that the Commission had rejected proposals lacking assurances that plenty free seats were available.⁶¹ Again, the vestry may have eyed the biggest grant available or considered that the population in Chorley would continue to increase at amazing rates. However it would be some time before additional seating would pay off. From statistics which Cooper himself had supplied to the bishop before visitation in 1825, he knew that the Dissenter communities he hoped to reclaim amounted to short of 1400 on an estimate of profession alone, not attendance.⁶² He would have known there was little or no chance of attracting the large numbers of Catholics. Just possibly it was a statement of intent, or the simple desire for a large church as an announcement of significant presence. It might be argued that they were slightly fortunate or unfortunate to gain such a large build.

⁵⁹ LA, PR3123/11/1 National School Logbook, Minutes 10 May 1821.

⁶⁰ LA, DDX1861/1, Chorley Vestry Town Book, 3 October 1818.

⁶¹ CERC, CBC2/1/1, Board Minute Book 97-199, 10 November 1818.

⁶² LA, QDV9/145, Return of Places of Worship Non Church of England and Numbers of Dissenters, Chorley Township, 30 July 1829.



Map 6.3 Chorley 1846. St George's District in South and East Chorley

Not surprisingly, therefore, there are signs that in the first stages of its history, St George's was less than fully employed. After the great set services of consecration in August 1825 and the ensuing mass confirmation, the first Sunday services were held in October.⁶³ Pews were let but there was no indication of habitual use and the incidence of broken windows in the first year may suggest a lack of interest.⁶⁴ Occasionally special events, such as sermons for the Sunday school or the Chorley Dispensary, would attract significant congregations. In 1833 the *Preston Pilot* reported that a Sunday afternoon gathering was 'never more crowded except at the consecration'. The *Pilot* was pleased to see the congregation consisted mainly of the lower classes and also admits that people of all denominations were there. The draw was an exceptional preacher, Revd. McGrath of Walton-le-Dale who garnered, at three venues that day, a very respectable sum of over £47 in aid of St George's schools. This was despite several of the St George's audience apparently avoiding the collection plate.⁶⁵ In 1853, the same newspaper could report that St George's was packed beyond capacity but again solely for a special occasion. This was a series of midweek lectures given by the Revd. D. Stock on what was a controversial and topical subject of the day- the nature of Catholicism. The report concedes that many of the attentive audience were indeed Catholics. Presumably all hung on the speaker's words for the slightest sign of

⁶³ *Preston Chronicle*, 20 August 1825.

⁶⁴ RIBA, RiT2, Rickman's Diary, 14 February 1826.

⁶⁵ *Preston Pilot*, 15 August 1829, 23 November 1833.

provocation or assertion, which he seems to have avoided. Given that the Catholics had recently rented a former Baptist chapel a stone's throw from St George's for a temporary chapel and were opening a church on the other side of Market Street, there would be considerable anticipation of these particular Lenten lectures.⁶⁶

A further revealing piece of evidence comes from the report of a vestry meeting to consider the extension of St Laurence's in 1859. Referring to St George's and the seven year old St Peter's, a speaker claimed there was, 'No occasion to enlarge the church so long as there are two others in the parish to a great extent unfilled'. The principal objection advanced was that a mother church with additional aisles would attract adherents across Chorley and rob St George's of its very necessary pew rents.⁶⁷ In 1858 the vicar of St George's confessed that even the schools had made little impact by the time of the religious census, 'Eight years ago the schools contained few children and laboured under the disadvantage of a bad name'.⁶⁸

	Name	Type	Cost	Size	1829 adherents	1851 attendances
15 th Cent.	St Laurence	C of E		300		No return
1725	Park Road	Presbyterian, becoming Unitarian	£850 endowment	180 +20 free	169	20 am, 30 pm
1792	Chapel St	Wesleyan Methodist		280	Became Mechanics' Institute	
1792	Hollinshead Street	Countess of Huntingdon Connexion; Congregat'al 1805	£481 recorded building costs	180 +320free	600	160 am, 132 evening.
1815	St Gregory (rebuild at Weld Bank)	Roman Catholic		630+200 standing	2000-counting all Chorley Catholics	400am, 370pm
1821	Back Mount meeting room	Baptist			48	Superseded by chapel
1825	St. George	C of E	£12,387	422+1590 free	Rarely full	No return

⁶⁶ *Preston Pilot*, 5 November 1853.

⁶⁷ *Preston Chronicle*, 9 July 1859.

⁶⁸ *Preston Chronicle*, 1 May 1858.

1829	West Street room	Primitive Methodist	c. £200	142 +142 free	194	83 am, 105 evening.
1836	St George's Street	Independent	£1375	340+60free	1841 66	70am, 89 evening.
1842	Park Road	Wesleyan Methodist	£2300	480+184 free	380	110 am, 140 evening.
1847	Chapel St	Temporary Roman Catholic		100 + 300 free		400 am, 209 pm, 40 evening.
1848	Chapel St	Particular Baptist		100		8 am, 11 pm, 9 evening.
1851	St Peter's	C of E	£1981	168 + 648 free		

Table 6.5 Statistical Evidence: Chorley's Main Places of Worship 1829-1851. Constructed from LA, QDV9; HO. 129/481, Victoria County History, vol 6; ChL, J1 CO1-J61 CO1, Chorley Library Ephemera File.

It would be useful to apply the same checks on participation and relative participation in 1851 at St George's Chorley, as previously with Tyldesley and Tockholes. Approaching the original enumerator's returns, rather than the published abstracts, the researcher feels a frisson of expectation- only to be deflated when it is clear that both the mother church and St George's chapel of ease were two of those Anglican places of worship out of the eleven in Lancashire, which neglected to make any return at all of their attendances on 30 March. This can only be due to a policy decision by the Rector, James Master. The established churches in Preston adopted the same attitude. Understandably John Stock, Master's ex-curate and new minister at St George's would follow a lead. James Master's motives are understandable. He reported that he had limited seats at St Laurence's but was shortly to gain some 800 more, in a clear reference to the mooted second chapel of ease dedicated to St Peter. By omitting statistics for both St Laurence's and St George's it prevented the obvious observation that he already had at his disposal 2000 adjacent additional seats provided in 1825.⁶⁹

On construction of sittings Chorley had done well. Sittings in place were important. There was a strong correlation, if not necessarily a definite causal link, between numbers of sittings and Anglican attendance in the 1851 Religious Census.⁷⁰ Craven Deanery in Yorkshire is one example of an area where historic Anglican provision matched positive

⁶⁹ TNA, HO129/481, 24,25, Religious Census, Enumerator's Returns, Chorley 1851.

⁷⁰ Snell and Ell, *Rival Jerusalems*, 62.

returns in 1851.⁷¹ Chorley Parish moved from being able to seat 9.9% of its population in 1801 to just 6.3 in 1821 but achieving 19.4% by 1851. This compared relatively well with 21.7% in Leigh, and the overall Manchester Diocese figure of 21.2%, also being better than 15.8% in Preston, 13.9% in Oldham and 16.4% in Bolton.⁷² This possibly augured well for the future but gave no strength by 1851; it is unlikely there was efficient use of this accommodation in Chorley. The Commissioners' church at Whittle-le-Woods revealed worse prospects. The minister Rowlandson, who significantly had no idea how many of the seats in church were free, neglected to include an average figure for recent attendance because, 'The mass of people are living a most abominable life, profaning the Sabbath and apparently without any concern for their eternal welfare.'⁷³ In contrast, Heapey Anglican church, not a Commissioners' church and in a township with few Dissenters, showed more respectable returns with an average 200 adults at morning service, 270 in the afternoon, with 150 Sunday school children also present, in a church with 620 seats.⁷⁴ Adlington Christ Church, a Commissioners' church consecrated in 1836, attracted 500 worshippers, and 50 communicants, to its 600 seats in a township of 2900, wherein lived many Catholics.⁷⁵

In context, the performance of places of worship outside the control of the Church of England reveals mixed success by 1851. St George's must have looked with some envy at the nearby Catholics in Chapel Street with just 400 places, all taken at morning service or the older Weld Bank chapel with 400 attendees in a chapel with 630 seats. Alternatively, some comfort may have resulted from considering the current fate of the Park Street Unitarians, filling just 20 of their 200 seats or the Particular Baptists with 8 attenders having the choice of 48 seats and the Wesleyan Methodists using around a fifth of their seats. However the Primitive Methodists were holding up at a third occupancy, as were both Congregational chapels, despite splitting their strength, at a quarter. A study of Hollinshead Congregational church records for the years immediately after the opening of St George's shows no leakage of members to the new Anglican chapel. Hollinshead St.

⁷¹ P.Rycroft, 'Church, Chapel and Community in Craven, 1764-1851', unpublished PhD thesis, University of Oxford (1988), 4,312.

⁷² PP 1858, Report from Select Committee of the House of Lords to Enquire Into The Means of Spiritual Instruction, 2 July 1858, Report of Manchester Diocesan Church Building Society 1851, 586.

⁷³ TNA, HO129/481/10, Enumerator's Returns, Chorley 1851.

⁷⁴ LA, HO129/481/35

⁷⁵ MA, MSf942.72 r172, Rushton's Visitation 1845-6, vol 8.

Chapel's few losses, 7 from 63 members, were to the Baptists.⁷⁶ Impact upon their whole congregation in 1825 is unrecorded.

Therefore St George's Chorley, although funded better than St George's Tyldesley or St Stephen's Tockholes, performed the worst of the three Commissioners' churches by 1851. The best that can be said is that some factors, associated with individuals and their decisions, would contribute to eventual success. The transition, in 1835, from a chapel of ease to a district church, if not one with the independence and endowment of a district parish like Tyldesley, meant that conducting rites of passage increased contact with potential adherents. Schools were also to become important. In 1811 the Chorley vestry had instituted a non-denominational town school in rented rooms, by 1821 referred to as 'The Charity School'. In June 1821, the annual general meeting of the Charity School appointed curate Robert Mosley Master secretary and Anglican landowner Sir Henry Hoghton president. Leading Congregationalists, John Cairns and Lee Lee, remained on the committee but the policy was decidedly Anglican, as a faintly scribed handwritten amendment to the rules show. Instruction was for the poor, but now 'according to the principles of the established church', rather than simply 'of all denominations'.⁷⁷ A new dedicated building was effected in a year, much more quickly than that of St George's chapel. On 9th November 1825 the existing master, James Taylor, was instructed by the vestry to bring both books and charges to the new 'National School' and then to relinquish his position.⁷⁸ The school began with 61 youngsters and limped through its first score years.⁷⁹ In 1847 the new rector of Chorley, James Master, came to a series of decisions about the future development of his parish. One was that he would delegate most responsibility for the school to the St George's clergy with the result that it became the new district's school, even though it was often randomly labelled in minutes as either 'National' or 'St George's' until the end of the century.⁸⁰

⁷⁶ LA, CUCh2/1, Independent Chapel Chorley, Chapel Book.

⁷⁷ LA, PR3123/11/1, St George's Day School Minutes, 7 June 1821.

⁷⁸ PR3123/11/1, 9 November 1825.

⁷⁹ PR3123/11/2, Accounts 1846-7.

⁸⁰ PR3123/11/1, Minutes, 12 July 1847.

Given that in 1825 the Sunday school was to be situated in the new day school, this school also was eventually understood to be St George's own.⁸¹ There was a threefold increase in the Anglican Sunday school numbers within that first year.⁸² By 1864 what was now St George's Sunday school roll held three times the number and twofold the attendees of St Laurence's, established in 1835.⁸³ Lacquer estimated that Sunday school classes yielded as few as one in twenty attendees to regular church attendance; day school classes would yield fewer.⁸⁴ However such were the large numbers involved, particularly in Sunday school, that by the 1860s the schools were feeding a core of young men and women into church life. The kernel for future growth, evident after 1851, was in the cadres of teachers the schools built up. In 1848 there were 56 teachers at the Sunday school.⁸⁵ The 1864 parish magazine lists seven working men who were there from the start and still seen a role models.⁸⁶ Additional association developed as the first generations matured. The arrival of the St George's organ in 1837 was important, even though an organist and choir had to be brought in from Blackburn for its opening.⁸⁷ A generation later the regular church singers numbered 120.⁸⁸

Despite these signs for a hopeful future, in 1851 Chorley St George achieved the least success and of the three its church building appears the least necessary Tockholes could claim significant lasting success in reclaiming a body of Dissenters previously 'lost' to the 'national' church. Both Tyldesley and Tockholes churches had provided a focus for real parish life and sufficient accommodation for the ambition of a national church. Given the the particular religious history of Lancashire, there was probably no serious chance of creating such as comprehensive church in the county, especially given the reduced support of the state after 1833. The reasons behind what success was achieved, would appear to be the opportunity for independent management, allied to some fortune and a tolerant patron in the case of Tyldesley, but mainly the presence of continued and committed clerical

⁸¹ LA, PR3123/11/1, Minute Book, 25 June 1827.

⁸² K.P.C.Thorne, 'Development of Education in Chorley and District, 1800-1902', unpublished University of Lancaster Master of Letters thesis (1970), 60.

⁸³ LA, PR3120/11/13, St George's School Logbook, 1864

⁸⁴ T.Lacquer, *Religion and Respectability. The Sunday Schools and Working Class Culture 1780-1850* (London, 1976), 80.160.

⁸⁵ LA, PR3120/11/13, Chorley Church of England Schools Statistics.

⁸⁶ SGC, Institute Bazaar Programme 1899, Introduction.

⁸⁷ *Preston Chronicle*, 8 April 1837.

⁸⁸ *Chorley Standard*, 17 January 1864.

presence. The church building was an announcement of presence and aspiration and an essential base for action.

c) After 1851

This section is a glance forward. Although the Church Building Commission, its grants dwindling to mere partial payments of the cost of a church, merged with the Ecclesiastical Commission in 1856 and the 1851 Religious Census provided the only standardised statistical evidence to judge the progress of the Commission's foundations during its lifetime, it is justifiable to cast further in time before making a considered judgement upon the impact of the chapels. Chorley St George's non-return to the enumerator makes it difficult to judge its progress in 1851. Could it ever be well used? Given Tockholes' declining population, the initial success of St Stephen's could rapidly have been set at naught. The clerical leadership in Tyldesley and Tockholes changed in 1851 and 1857 respectively; would this make a difference? In 1856 the new churches, even if central to community life, were not necessarily accepted as equals to the longer established churches. Real recognition might be at some point subsequent to the Parishes Act of 1856, which plainly said that they were to be of full parochial status when the incumbent of the mother church passed on.⁸⁹

Furthermore, the social and religious context changed around mid century. With the waning of Chartist direct action after 1848 there is the sense of a more stable society.⁹⁰

Underpinning a mid- Victorian equipoise was an economic base featuring less frequent and severe slumps and a small if steady rise in overall living standards in the second half of the century.⁹¹ From the mid 1860s, subsequent to the Cotton Famine, real wages in cotton, Lancashire's pre-eminent industry, increased more than in any other industry.⁹² Socially and politically the middling sorts had been included in the life of the nation and region. The reforming state had made sufficient concessions to provide an alternative to a more

⁸⁹ K.D.M.Snell, *Parish and Belonging* (Cambridge, 2006), 403.

⁹⁰ B.Hilton, *A Mad, Bad and Dangerous People? England 1783-1846* (Oxford, 2006), 630-1.

⁹¹ J.S.Curl, *Piety Proclaimed: An Introduction to Places of Worship in Victorian England* (London, 2002), 15.

⁹² J.K.Walton, 'The North-West', in F.M.L.Thompson ed., *The Cambridge Social History of Britain 1750-1950*, vol 1 (Cambridge, 1990), 391.

dramatic radical agenda.⁹³ A factory paternalism with provision of parks, libraries and railway excursions helped socialise the labouring classes, as did Sunday schools.⁹⁴ Religious affairs seemed less tense. Indeed by the 1870s, the fear of God and the absolute essential role of life in seeking salvation from an eternity in Hell, may have faded into the comforting perception of a forgiving God, personified by the incarnate Jesus.⁹⁵ In this changed environment, the task of a recruiting church may or may not have been easier. The social attractions of church life would be more accessible and even attractive; the fear of final judgement and the consequent need to attend church may have diminished.

Across the variety of Christian sects, with Dissenters termed ‘nonconformists’ and claiming most of the rights they fought for earlier, and the 1851 census demonstrating that this was indeed a denominationally pluralist society, the Anglican assertion nationally eased back into what was a keen rivalry for adherents rather than an intense battle for souls or a counter-reformation.⁹⁶ The target might be the gathering of a devout and committed congregation rather than the meeting of a whole community. There was not so much a drive for saved souls but a search for a satisfying share of supporters, partly attached by additional associational activities. This social aspect has been well described for the West Riding of Yorkshire.⁹⁷ The vision of Vansittart or Cooper of a national church reclaiming Dissenters would not seem as feasible or urgent. The strategies of churches and chapels may now look much the same across denominations.

Within this context, the two Lancashire churches which achieved the greatest impact in the first generation of Commissioners’ churches subsequently maintained a plateau of success rather than a sustained march. Equally, Chorley St George which appeared to merely mark time during its first quarter of a century, by 1891 appeared the most flourishing of all the churches featured in the case studies.

⁹³ B.Lewis, *The Middlemost and the Milltowns* (Stanford, 2001) 402.

⁹⁴ J.K.Walton, *Lancashire, A Social History 1558-1939* (Manchester, 1987), 190, 247; Lewis, *Middlemost and the Milltowns*, 7.

⁹⁵ B.Hilton, *The Age of Atonement. The influence of Evangelicalism in Social and Economic Thought, 1785-1865* (Oxford, 1988), 114,301.

⁹⁶ J.Obelkevich, ‘Religion’, in F.M.L.Thompson, (ed.), *Cambridge Social History of Britain*, vol 3 (Cambridge, 1990), 311.

⁹⁷ S.J.D.Green, *Religion in the Age of Decline*, (Cambridge, 1996), 184,214, 231.

A doubling of the size of the populace in the township did not automatically mean that the **Tyldesley St George** suffered relative to other denominations, as it was once suspected that Anglican churches in such a situation would. In 1876, a ‘religious census’ of Tyldesley in connection with allocation of ground in the new cemetery, showed that those professing to be churchmen outstripped Dissenters by 3 to 2.⁹⁸ Of course the survey gave no indication of active involvement and the progress, variety and chapel extensions of the Dissenting congregations in the second half of the nineteenth century suggest that, in this later period, no inroads were made in bringing back nonconformists to the ‘national’ church. The nonconformist denominations held large Sunday school cohorts and new chapels appeared, thus creating a wider range of provision.⁹⁹ The Wesleyans, seeming stronger than in 1851, were speedy in both construction and in paying off debt.¹⁰⁰ The large numbers of immigrants after 1861 who came to the Barnfield Mills or the deep mines, knew what they were, especially those of North Welsh origin, and stuck to their particular religious traditions, complete with small chapels, Bands of Hope, male voice choirs and, for some, the service in Welsh.¹⁰¹

In St George’s itself there was more of an accent on decoration and comfort. A new font was provided in 1853. A proper organ, paid for by subscription and brought from London, was opened in 1860. The old barrel organ was passed to the Wesleyan Methodists. An eagle lectern was the gift of mine owner William Ramsden in 1873.¹⁰² There was also a tendency to social elitism. In 1867 vicar George Richards wrote to the Ecclesiastical Commission alleging the existence of a clamour for additional rentable seats and, revealingly, distaste for simply making do with a free seat. The latter were dubbed ‘Bastille seats’ and for ‘old workhouse dwellers’. The vicar reported in 1874 that he had positioned the Sunday school in the free seats, as the scholars were less in a position to object than choosy adults.¹⁰³ In 1886 a later vicar admitted that few poor people attended church and suggested a welcoming smile from the regulars might help.¹⁰⁴

⁹⁸ *Manchester Courier*, 27 March 1876.

⁹⁹ WAS, D/NM(P)5/2/A1, Minutes of Trustees, Tyldesley Primitive Methodist Chapel, 1876-1906; Map 2.11, 76; Table 2.7, 75.

¹⁰⁰ *Leigh Chronicle*, 1 April 1887.

¹⁰¹ Tyldesley Library, Pamphlets, S. Smith *The Welsh Community in Tyldesley 1870-1900* (Tyldesley, 1980).

¹⁰² Allred and Marsh, *The Parish Church of St George*, 10.

¹⁰³ CERC, ECE7/177221/2, Tyldesley Church Building File, G. Richards to CBC, 2 June 1874.

¹⁰⁴ SGT, Parish Magazine, 1886.

As the congregation appeared to be tilting to the better off, the church showed signs of being well -financed. In July 1888, it was able to give £300 in order to assist the Bishop of Manchester's plan to buy out the Lilford advowson.¹⁰⁵ Furthermore, extension was feasible. When population growth suggested the construction of a church at Mosley Common this was begun in 1886 on a site given by the Bridgewater Trustees but with £4250 in subscriptions for building.¹⁰⁶ Meanwhile the home church itself easily found £1200 for restoration in 1886, subsequent to the fire of 1878.¹⁰⁷ Changes in Anglican liturgical preferences were accommodated by demolishing one of two western galleries and shifting the organ to the east end where a full chancel now appeared.¹⁰⁸

Attempting to measure the degree of sincere commitment to the Christian ethic and Anglican theology in St George's Tyldesley is virtually impossible, although there are occasional indications. The Bishop of Manchester's address to an 'overwhelming congregation' during the Jubilee celebrations of September 1875 is both challenging and revealing, for he contemplated the whole record of the church since its consecration. Although faintly and inaccurately praising St George's architecturally as 'a modern church', the Bishop implied it should have better answered its purposes by allowing more people to join and hear God's word and perform the act of communion. He thought the Jubilee card which listed former clergy and churchwardens contained no great facts. He wanted to hear of souls passing through the church. He wondered why burials exceeded baptisms by 25%. There had been 1900 baptisms in 24 years but only 472 confirmations. There was also the challenge in the growth of the town; he believed 350 cottages to be in process of erection. The other denominations were working hard. The time must be close when a new church would be necessary. The Church of England had a special franchise and must also grow. An amplification of 'special franchise' would have been valuable to the historian. Despite this inferred status the Bishop clearly understood that hereabouts the Anglican church was one of many competing denominations.¹⁰⁹ He had also said much to raise serious questions about the depth of real spirituality.

¹⁰⁵ Allred and Marsh, *The Parish Church of St George*, 12.

¹⁰⁶ Lunn, *A New History of Tyldesley*, 140,146.

¹⁰⁷ SGT, Parish Magazine, 1886.

¹⁰⁸ Allred and Marsh, *The Parish Church of St George*, 13.

¹⁰⁹ *Leigh Chronicle*, 25 September 1875.

From 1871 Johnson Street mission school was available solely for the children of the ‘poor and labouring classes’ but this may well have been to keep separate the thirty eight who joined the first classes.¹¹⁰ It was Pennington Christ Church, a Calvinist foundation of 1853 in another Leigh township, built in defiance of the Puseyite vicar of Leigh, which laid on a special service for miners on New Year’s Day 1859, followed up with a course of lectures for the working classes, commencing 15th January 1859.¹¹¹ By 1875 there was a Church of England Temperance Society in Pennington.¹¹² Whatever Reverend Robson’s stance in earlier times, the report on the Tyldesley Temperance Movement Tea Party of 1860 mentions Reverend Eastmead from Top Chapel as present, in addition to the leading Catholic layman John Holland and the Unitarian Caleb Wright. There is no mention of Reverend Richards, although Reverend Alfred Hewlett from Astley was there.¹¹³ From 1832 until his death in 1885 Hewlett made a telling contribution within the neighbouring Astley township. In 1851 Hewlett’s services attracted a thousand to over three services in a thousand -seater church for a township of 3000, which suggests he included a large proportion of the working classes in his congregation.¹¹⁴

It was partly lack of ambition- or more kindly, a sense of realism, added to the strength of the Dissenting leaders and adherents, which limited St George’s success. What success it did achieve between 1851 and the end of the nineteenth century can be attributed to the relatively easy context it operated within, a growing population and urban middle class providing sufficient souls to support the Anglican church - and others. The necessary financial support came from a handful of very rich patrons. The Lilfords did their duty, as did earls of Ellesmere, William Ramsden, Shakerley coal owner and James and Oliver Burton, owners of New Mills.¹¹⁵ By 1890 Tyldesley St George looked very much like any other large Anglican church. In every respect it could claim to be established, a judgement supported in particular by its ability to buy out the private advowson in 1888.¹¹⁶ It was at this point that it had truly ‘arrived’ but not at the point envisioned, or at least hoped for, in

¹¹⁰ Lunn, *A New History of Tyldesley*, 134.

¹¹¹ *Leigh Chronicle*, 1 January 1859.

¹¹² *Leigh Chronicle*, 14 August 1875.

¹¹³ *Leigh Chronicle*, 6 October 1860.

¹¹⁴ TNA, HO129/466, x/1 9347, Religious Census 1851, Enumerators’ Returns, Astley; MA, MSf.942.72 r121, Rushton’s Visitation, 1845-6, vol 35.

¹¹⁵ Allred and Marsh, *The Parish Church of St George*, 13.

¹¹⁶ CERC, ECE7/1/17721/2, Tyldesley Church Building File, 7 August, 1885.

1825. The drift away from encompassing all the community, particularly the poorest, would seem to negate part of the original rationale of a Commissioners' church. The planned reduction in seating effected was also indicative of reduced ambition. Nonetheless the building itself counted in that it housed sufficient of a congregation to people three services, although it was only on rare occasions, such as the opening of the organ or the Jubilee that the church was reported as overflowing.¹¹⁷ Furthermore, the building was very much the church and the focus of Church for the committed.

In the second half of the nineteenth century, **St Stephen's Tockholes** maintained its position as the strongest denominational presence in the township. There was funding to repair the church and build a new school. The previous cohort of communicants became a formalised devout core. The first extant parish magazine, for 1893, reveals 105 communicants on Easter Day, 170 attending the long-established Sunday school tea party, 92 in the Band of Hope, which ran its own football team, and 20 working men in the Bible class.¹¹⁸ There was also the establishment of new churches and districts within what was once its sphere. Withnell township had received St Paul's in 1841.¹¹⁹ The part of Lower Darwen under St Stephen's aegis from 1842, became part of Darwen St Cuthbert's district in 1873. Similarly the Waterloo area of Livesey was the catchment area for Livesey St Andrew's from 1877.¹²⁰

The relative success of St Stephen's was, firstly due to the lasting effect of Robinson's contribution and the labours of his clerical successors. Leadership by activity and example would appear to be crucial. In 1860-1 the decrepit parsonage house was rebuilt and the burial ground extended. In 1882, when faced with dry rot, Revd. Hughes raised and spent £1200 in replacing the church floor, installing a new east window and taking the opportunity to expand the niche into a chancel, in line with the increasing current focus upon communion.¹²¹ A similar charismatic figure to Gilmour Robinson and given to preaching outdoors, Revd. A.T. Cornfield held the parish from 1889 to 1910.¹²² Secondly,

¹¹⁷ Allred and Marsh, *A History of St George's, Tyldesley*, 12; *Leigh Chronicle*, 25 September 1875.

¹¹⁸ LA, PR3149/14/1, Tockholes Parish Magazine, 1893.

¹¹⁹ *Victoria County History*, vol 6, 47-49.

¹²⁰ *Blackburn Standard*, 2 August 1879.

¹²¹ LA, PR3149/5/1, Tockholes Parish Minutes, 14 April 1882.

¹²² Jacklin and Robinson *Tockholes, A Timewarp*, 52.

as with Tyldesley, the church always attracted a sufficient number of well off sponsors and they ensured extensions and refurbishment could succeed. Earlier, in Robinson's day, it was Henry Brock-Hollinshead, and Richard Rothwell of Sharples Hall, Bolton who contributed.¹²³ Later, in 1882, John Pickop, mayor of Blackburn and Anglican grandson of an old Tockholes Dissenting family became the necessary sponsor, for example finding £400 for the aforementioned east window.¹²⁴ Gradually other common agencies pitched in. For example the provision of the new parsonage in 1860 cost £1200, of which half came from the Ecclesiastical Commission and £50 from the Manchester Diocesan Fund.¹²⁵

In sum St Stephen's Tockholes in the late nineteenth century was a successful Anglican parish deriving no benefit from the growth of suburbia which assisted the Church of England elsewhere.¹²⁶ This achievement was also in the face of population decline in its home township to 448 in 1891. It could still, on occasion, fill all its pews in a building that was an important hub for the township and beyond. Being physically separated by a three mile steep step from Blackburn, its previous history as a parochial chapelry and Robinson's assumption that the district was his own fiefdom, all contributed to a perception that the Commissioners' church in Tockholes was of parity with other Anglican parishes, especially when John Rushton on becoming vicar of Blackburn in 1854, allowed district churches to keep all their surplice fees.¹²⁷ It maintained this presence until the 1950s when attendance seriously fell off and impending repairs were too challenging. Rickman's church was demolished and a 'temporary' wooden unit installed. In 1980 St Stephen's was made a co-parish with its former 'daughter' St. Cuthbert's Darwen and in 2001 was merged into the latter.¹²⁸ In comparison, the Independent Middle Chapel was to suffer greatly from the decline of the population of Tockholes township in the second half of the nineteenth century. Nevertheless, without any outside assistance the congregation of the Chapel was able to effect a rebuild over just seven months in 1880 and it still operative in 2017.¹²⁹

¹²³ MA, MSf.942.72 r121, Rushton's Visitation 1845-6, vol 8, Newspaper Cutting, unattr., 1860.

¹²⁴ LA, PR3149/14/9, Tockholes Parish Minutes, 1882.

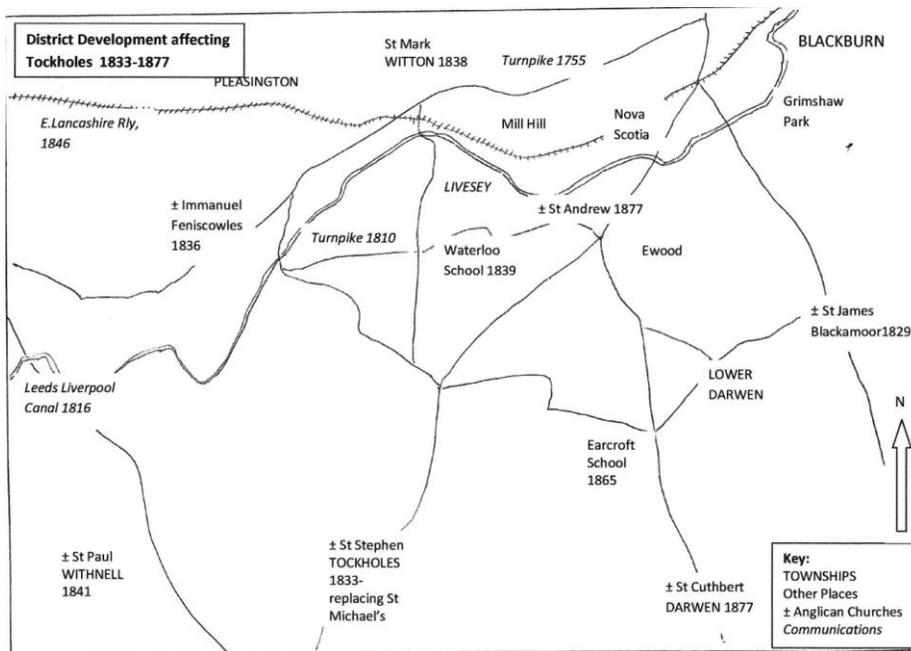
¹²⁵ LA, PR1549/30/3, Tockholes Coucher Book, 24 May 1860.

¹²⁶ B.I. Coleman, *The Church of England*, 38.

¹²⁷ MA, MSf.942.72 r121, Rushton's Visitation, 1845-6, vol 8.

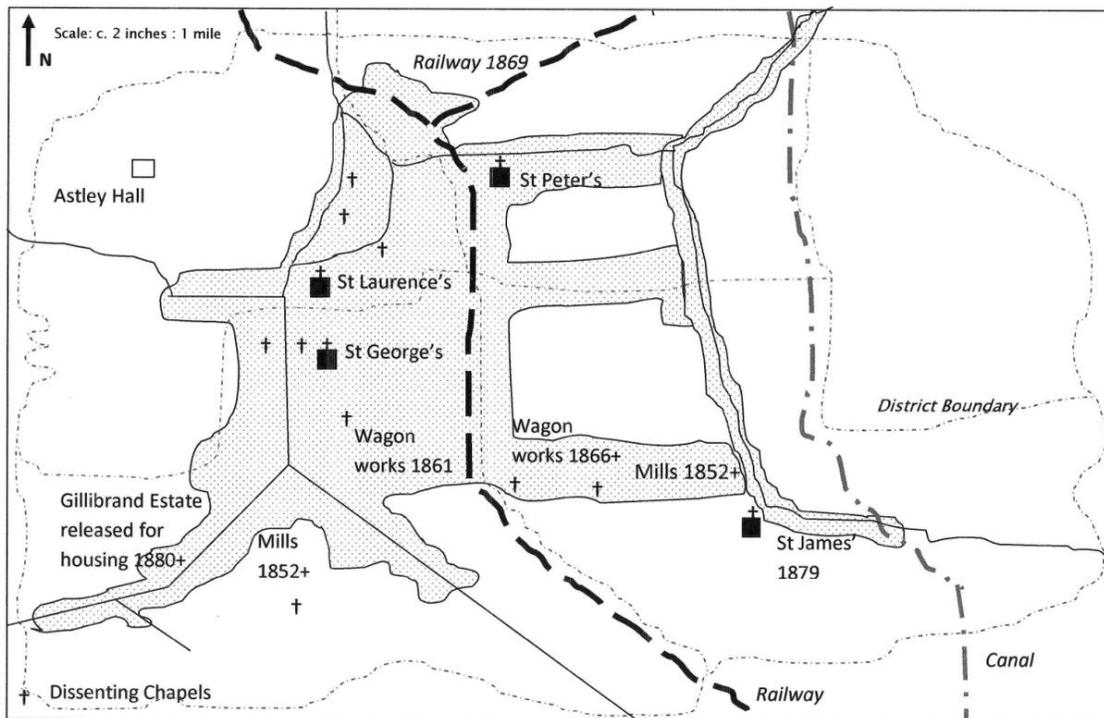
¹²⁸ Jacklin and Robinson, *Tockholes, A Timewarp*, 51.

¹²⁹ Nightingale, *Lancashire Nonconformity*, 53-4.



Map 6.4 District Development affecting Tockholes, 1833-77

Despite the tentative start prior to 1851, St George's Chorley by the 1890s was an established and flourishing parish.



Map 6.5 Chorley 1909:

In 1891 the population of Chorley was 23,078 and 10,420 of these folk lived in St George's Parish.¹³⁰ Chorley contained 7000 Catholics and a majority of these would live within St George's Parish, for it contained St Mary's Catholic Church and was neighbour to St Gregory's Weld Bank, the home of the first Catholic Chapel in Chorley. In the area of Standish Street and Brooke Street lived a good many of the town centre Catholics.¹³¹ There were also four Methodist chapels within the parish.¹³² Yet St George's was now attracting considerable support from the remainder of the parish population. In 1891, 1351 communions were made in 53 services, with the following year producing 2466 communions from 85. The numbers of highly committed would perhaps be within these communicants or the 271 who were regular attendees in the Bible Readers Union.¹³³ As at Tockholes, there would appear to have been an increase and a gathering in of the devout. Revd. J.A.Pattinson, from 1890 to 1901, tipped the liturgy more towards High Church practice and stood for a high sense of worship rather than simply social association.¹³⁴ The churchmanship was a contrast to the plain orthodoxy of 1825 that was a feature of the Commissioners' churches.

Given the continued, if lessening, diffidence of many Anglicans towards communion, attendances at other services would be significantly higher and contain a respectable proportion of an estimated maximum constituency of around 6000 folk. In terms of wider association 830 homes took the parish magazine in 1891.¹³⁵ The Parochial Tea Party, by now a traditional annual gathering which involved a splendid tea and a rattling 'state of the nation' speech from the vicar, attracted over 1000 in 1892.¹³⁶ Another Chorley tradition, Walking Day, displayed some 1600 affiliates in the St George's procession of the same year.¹³⁷ 2000 folk, sufficient to fill the church, attended the service following the Walking Day in 1897.¹³⁸ An analysis of contributions towards the Restoration Fund of 1892, shows

¹³⁰ SGC, Parish Magazine December 1893; 1891 Census.

¹³¹ *Preston Chronicle*. 10 July 1869.

¹³² ChL, J41CO1, Ephemera File, *Chorley Weasel*, 18 March 1882.

¹³³ SGC, Parish Magazine, May 1893.

¹³⁴ *Chorley Guardian*, 27 February 1892.

¹³⁵ SGC, Parish Magazine, June 1891.

¹³⁶ SGC, Parish Magazine, March 1892.

¹³⁷ SGC, Parish Magazine, July 1892.

¹³⁸ SGC, Parish Magazine, July 1897.

a quarter of the households contributing in one of the longer adjacent streets, Duke Street.¹³⁹

Chorley St George may have engaged more with the working man and the poor than its counterpart in Tyldesley. Birkacre Mission was established at the southern edge of the parish by 1879 and by 1892 cottage churches and Sunday schools were operating at Alfred's Court close by the church and Weld Bank in the south.¹⁴⁰ The roots of the policy came with curate Revd. G.B.McIlwain who initiated open-air services at the landmark Big Lamp by the school from 1860.¹⁴¹ McIlwan also ran a successful working men's choir.¹⁴² Compared with historians' verdicts on the national picture, the 1890s for this one Lancashire church is a decade of remarkable success. Green writes of diminishing density of association in West Yorkshire in the 1890s.¹⁴³ Hylson-Smith typifies the last twenty years of the century as a time of increasing indifference and the adoption of secular recreations.¹⁴⁴ McLeod discerned significant reduction in church attendance in London and several Midland and northern towns from 1886.¹⁴⁵

If this 'snapshot' of 1891-2 is much more positive than the admittedly sketchier evidence for 1851 suggests, why was it the new church eventually became a major presence in the town and could claim to be of a genuine parish church status? To some degree the demographic and economic context holds the explanation. The population of Chorley continued to grow throughout the nineteenth century, until it peaked at around 30,000. Because of St George's central position and ambitious wealth of accommodation, both disadvantages in its first three decades, it now had a good chance of attracting adequate congregations. This was despite increased provision for Anglican worship in the growing town, with St Peter's opened to the north in 1852 and St James, with a parish hived off from St George's south-eastern territory, consecrated in 1878.¹⁴⁶ The success of a diverse industrial, commercial and retail base in Chorley gave some people time and funds to

¹³⁹ SGC, Parish Magazine, August 1892.

¹⁴⁰ SGC, Parish Magazine, October 1892, November 1892, March 1895.

¹⁴¹ *Preston Chronicle*, 4 August 1860.

¹⁴² *Preston Chronicle*, 8 December 1860.

¹⁴³ S.J.D. Green, *Religion in the Age of Decline* (Cambridge, 1996), 358.

¹⁴⁴ K. Hylson-Smith, *The Churches in England from Elizabeth I to Elizabeth II*, vol 3, 1833-1998 (London, 1998), 94.

¹⁴⁵ H.McLeod, *Religion and Society. The Church in England 1850-1914* (London, 1996), 171-2.

¹⁴⁶ *Chorley Standard*, 4 January 1872.

support the aspects of church life they wished. The first donated stained glass window at St George's appeared at the east end in 1875.¹⁴⁷

A further background factor that aided St George's came from the competitive denominational situation. Historians have suggested competition damaged attempts to encourage church attendance; latterly they are less sure.¹⁴⁸ There was competition with the Catholic neighbours, not from the hope of making converts, more with the aim to recruit efficiently within St George's potential Protestant constituency. St George's, conscious of the significant Catholic church St Gregory's to the south at Weld Bank, developed the cottage church at Weld Bank Lane and the Birkacre mission from 1879. This then grew into the school church of All Saints in 1900.¹⁴⁹ Because of this pluralist situation all churches and chapels of whatever hue seem to have been on their mettle and each strove to provide a full range of worship and associational activity for their flocks. The process was again similar to that pertaining in the West Riding of Yorkshire.¹⁵⁰

The earlier education policy of insisting on a separate National School, which became St George's own in 1847, finally paid off. By 1893 St George's day school contained the largest number of seats in Chorley, with the highest roll and the highest average attendance.¹⁵¹ The same building housed the Sunday school. By 1872 there were 1352 names enrolled in 30 classes.¹⁵² As described earlier in the chapter, a core of these scholars became Sunday school teachers, members of the Young Men's Association and committed churchmen. Some moved to form night classes.¹⁵³ They continued their reading and talks, put on their concerts and outings and formed the Institute in 1889. They raised the funding for their own building next to the school and a sports field complex close by at St George's Park.¹⁵⁴

¹⁴⁷ D.Horsfield, *The Parish Church of St George Chorley Lancashire, A Guide* (Chorley, 1998), 16.

¹⁴⁸ Snell and Ell, *Rival Jerusalems*, 296.

¹⁴⁹ SGC, Parish Magazine, March 1887, October 1899, June 1900.

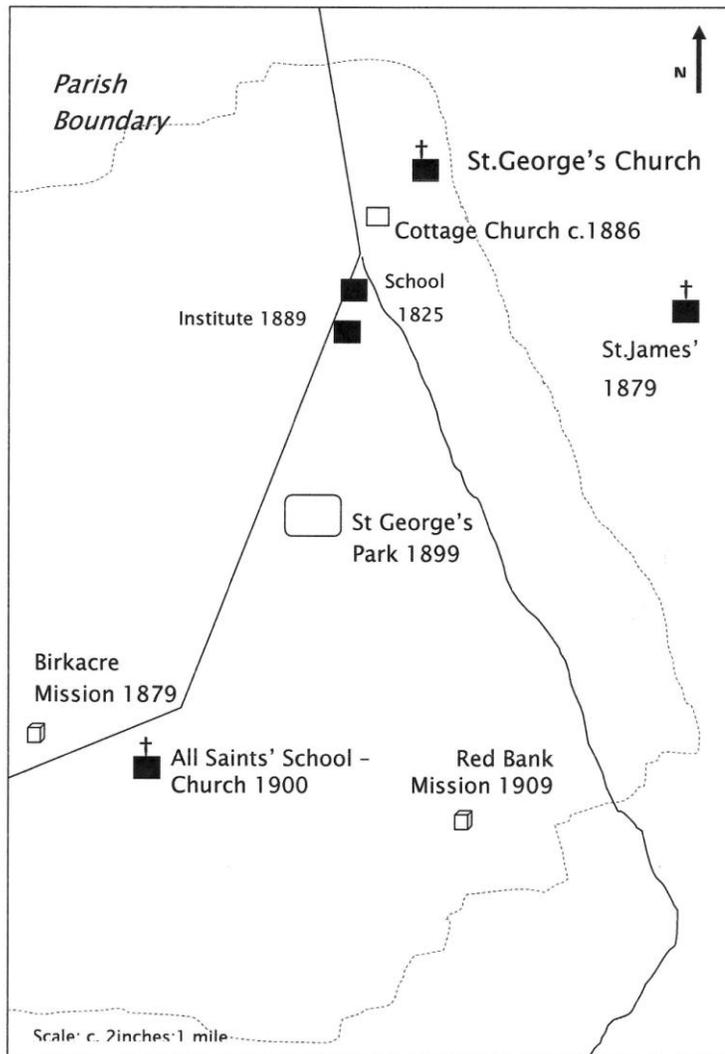
¹⁵⁰ Green, *Religion in the Age of Decline*, 184, 214, 231.

¹⁵¹ Heyes, *History of Chorley*, 122.

¹⁵² SGC, Sunday School Admissions Register, 1844-.

¹⁵³ *Preston Chronicle*, 5 December 1863.

¹⁵⁴ SGC, Institute Bazaar Programme 1899, Introduction.



Map 6.6 St George's Chorley: The Developed Parish by 1909

St George's was also fairly fortunate in its clergy. Revd. John Stock, curate in 1850, was prepared to be a long serving first vicar of St George's, from 1856 until his death in 1889, and at last provided some clerical continuity.¹⁵⁵ However, the impressive performance after 1890 would appear to be linked with the impact of Revd. J.A. Pattinson rather than the effect of a steady progress. Moreover, St George's, largely through the schools, gained sufficient committed laymen to produce additional leadership for a successful church community. None seems more pivotal than Thomas Brown, a native of Northumberland who came to Chorley around 1850.¹⁵⁶ He led 70 Sunday school teachers by 1854, became

¹⁵⁵ LA, PR3123/1/4, St George's Service Book; *Chorley Guardian*, 19 January 1889.

¹⁵⁶ TNA, RG9/3120, Population Census 1861; ChL, Ephemera File, Address by Clergy and Sunday School Teachers to Mr Thomas Brown, 25 December 1854.

head of the day school and inspired other leaders such as the future politician and educationalist Henry Hibbert and James Sandham, the driving force of the Institute.¹⁵⁷ Brown also edited and wrote most of the contributions for the first parish magazine in 1864.¹⁵⁸ St George's gained from having a number of the town's leading businessmen and politicians in the parish. John Whittle, a wagon builder from the neighbouring George Street works, determined to hold his mayoral service in a brighter church and paid for its beautifying and liturgical shift in 1891-2.¹⁵⁹ In addition to the leadership of professionals and businessmen, the church benefited from the large cohort of shopkeepers who could support social gatherings, bazaars and subscriptions.¹⁶⁰ Owning businesses, their families tended to stay across generations.

Demographic and economic growth supporting able leadership from clergy and schoolmaster appear the key factors behind St George's belated success. The church building itself had experienced a long wait to be really useful. However it was a landmark, a town presence and the eventual centre for successful community. Gill's thesis is not supported by the fortunes of St George's. The sparsely filled atmosphere of mid century had not discouraged greater numbers starting finally to fill more pews.¹⁶¹ For despite the tentative start to 1851, St George's by the 1890s was an established and flourishing parish. Parish status had replaced district status in 1856 although this would not be fully realised until 1878 with the death of James Streynsham Master, the rector of the mother church.¹⁶² Admittedly, the increased Anglican accommodation may not have attracted many of the original target group, those 'diverting' to the Dissenting chapels. The most famous local returnee, Methodist manufacturer Richard Smethurst junior in 1842, chose to join the original parish church rather than its offshoot.¹⁶³

¹⁵⁷ SGC, Institute Bazaar Programme, 1899, Introduction.

¹⁵⁸ SGC, Parish Magazine, 1864-5

¹⁵⁹ SGC, Parish Magazine, July 1891.

¹⁶⁰ SGC, Parish Magazine, June 1891; Bazaar Programme, December 1893.

¹⁶¹ R.Gill, *The Empty Church Revisited* (Aldershot, 2003), 52.

¹⁶² Snell, *Parish and Belonging*, 403; *Chorley Guardian*, 4 January, 1879.

¹⁶³ A.C.Howell, *Grove Mill, Canal Mill and Botany Bay* (Stroud, 2008), 68.

d) Reflections about Impact: The Three Townships and Beyond.

If an assessment takes a denominational, view, all three churches can be said to be successful, even if they did not achieve all they would have wished during the life of the Commission and one of them, Chorley St George, needed another half century to reach its zenith and achieve parity with older parishes. These were not ‘battleships.....soon obsolescent’.¹⁶⁴ The churches in Chorley and Tyldesley dedicated to St George continue today and in the same buildings. Yet the great urgency and ambition, even fervour, in the Anglican assertion was in the first few decades and two of the sample churches in this study were a success within a generation. St George’s Tyldesley came from nothing to be the leading place of worship by 1851 and maintained a strong presence thereafter. It probably secured a quarter of its potential Anglican constituency, one modest target of the Church in 1818. St Stephen’s Tockholes, more a ‘destroyer’ than a ‘battleship’, having begun as a neglected inferior chapel, became the leading place of worship in the township. Of all of the churches in the sample, it was the one that came nearest to being a national church encompassing the community and already assumed a *de facto* equality with established parishes. A reminder of the situation of denominations in the three townships in 1851 is summarised in Table 6.6. In terms of numbers and percentage of attendances, Table 6.6 gathers evidence for a relatively strong showing of Commissioners’ churches in Tyldesley and Tockholes. It also indicates the variance in denominational performance at a local level, showing the strength of Catholicism in Chorley, its absence in the other two townships, and the relatively poor showing of the Primitive Methodists in Tyldesley. Clearly the Independents remained a presence in all three townships but least so in Chorley.

Chorley	Fd	Free seats	Other seats	Am attendance	Pm attendance	Evening attendance	Total	% share
St George	1825	1590	422	?	?	?		?
St Laurence	1300	0	440	?	?	?		?
Baptist cottage	1790s	50	0	4+7	4+7	ns	22	
Particular Bapt	1848	0	100	8+6	11+9	9+3	46	
Unitarian	1716	20	180	20	32	ns	52	
Wesleyan Meth	1842	184	488	110+150	ns	140	400	
Primitive Meth	1829	142	142	83+72	0+81	105	341	
Independent	1792	320	180	160+60	ns	132	352	
Indep.Chapel	1837	60	340	70+80	ns	89	239	
St Gregory RC	1815	0	630	400+305	57--+120	ns	882	
St Mary’s RC	1847	300	100	400	209+191	400	1200	

¹⁶⁴ Port, *Six Hundred New Churches* 2nd ed., 278.

Tyldesley								
St George	1825	692	392	250+280	200+290	ns	1020	40
Wesleyan	1815	0	300	50+120	80+130	40	420	
Primitive Meth	1826	62	92	56+44	97+46	ns	243	
Independent	1790	200	363	172+200	200+225	ns	797	
Latter Day St	recent	50		24	36	50	110	
Tockholes								
St Stephen	1833	446	410	44+134	39+168	ns	585	62
Independent	1710	0	338	166 total	197 total	68 total	431	

Table 6.6 .Attendance Figures for The Three Townships 1851.

Sources: HO129/481,467,480 Enumerators' Books, Religious Census 1851.

Note: Attendance figures record adults followed by (+) children.

In terms of accommodation, and in this respect data is measuring the impact of the buildings themselves, all of the Commissioners' churches had made a contribution towards providing greatly increased seating, with the majority of the seats free from pew rents, appropriate for a Church hoping to receive a whole community including the poor. Yet none, in contrast with the Catholics in Chorley, could pretend that demand was outstripping supply and that the vast increase in seats was needed by 1851. Provision of a third service was not necessary, although this applied to all places of worship. Of the leading denominations, only the Wesleyans in Tyldesley held a third service in the evening, which filled just 40 seats. Chorley, being a compact settlement, was readier to hold evening services, but just three denominations opted for three and the strategy did nothing to add to the Particular Baptist strength. Again, use of accommodation was not always efficient. St George's Tyldesley was filling just a seventh of its seats in 1851 and was to reduce its seating during the reorganisation of 1886. However, even in Tyldesley, Anglican use of buildings was at least as efficient as the Wesleyan Methodists, whereas nationally the latter denomination led on 30 March 1851 with 45% occupancy to the establishment's 33%.¹⁶⁵ All three Commissioners' church buildings studied aimed to be the physical and moral centres of their communities that the supporters of a vibrant, unifying national church sought in the first quarter of the nineteenth century.¹⁶⁶ They were the base for a resident and active clergyman. There could be monthly communion at Tockholes. Schools were

¹⁶⁵ H.Mann, *Religious Worship 1851* (1854), 92.

¹⁶⁶ S.J.Brown, *The National Churches of England, Ireland and Scotland 1801-46* (Oxford, 2001), 403.

established next to each church. Charity was dispensed here. There were annual treats. The town clock was installed in St George's tower at Tyldesley.

In addition to showing relative attendance, Table 6.6 helps weigh one factor behind the success. To some extent a well established presence over a period of time would seem to assist any denomination. Examples would be the Independents in Tockholes and the Countess of Huntingdon Connexion in Tyldesley. However the Catholics in Chorley and Latter Day Saints in Tyldesley appear not to have suffered from a recent origin of their places of worship and therefore Commissioners churches should not necessarily have laboured under a disadvantage compared with older foundations. Gilmour Robinson's speedy success at Tockholes underlines this fact. 'Constant Reader', correspondent to the *Preston Pilot* in 1830 complained that at least two members of Parliament were systematic critics of the Commissioners' churches. However, he argued, it was hard to find more than one in Lancashire that could have its site improved upon. He claimed the damage to Dissent was dramatic in Preston, with some meeting houses reduced to a mere fifty attendants, St Peter's had made a great impact without damaging the other Anglican churches and the churches 'generally have or are likely to have overcome every obstacle'.¹⁶⁷

Table 6.7 below places the Commissioners' churches in relation to their denominational competition but also the nearby Anglican churches, for such proximity might have diminished the effectiveness of a Commissioners' church, as would appear to be the case with Chorley St George during its early phase. Table 6.8 presents further data about the individual Commissioners' churches considered in Table 6.7 and asks whether further factors in the churches themselves, such as capacity, grandeur, and a foundation date allowing time to build a congregation, might have had an impact by 1851.

¹⁶⁷ *Preston Pilot*, 19 June 1830.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
Township	Popn	Total Att'rs	CoE pow + sittings	CC seats	Total Att'rs CoE	Att'rs CC	C P S	C C P S	NC pow, seats	NC PS	RC pow, seats	R C P S
Chorley	12684	una	2 (1 CC) 2550	2010	una	una	?	?	7 2206	?	2 1030	?
<i>Leyland Township</i>	<i>3617</i>	<i>2155</i>	<i>1 (1250)</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>1515</i>	<i>-</i>	<i>70</i>	<i>-</i>	<i>2 740</i>	<i>30</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>0</i>
Whittle and Clayton	2310 747	2055	1CC 725	725	406	406	20	20	1 170	8	3 1654	72
Blackburn Township	46,536	14958	6 (2CC) 8613	3780	6736	1685	41	11	17- 8861	58	2 1650	1
Mellor	1668	1008	2 (1 CC) 1220	900	525	238	52	23	2- 794	48	0	0
Tockholes Township	939	800	1CC 856	856	496	496	62	62	1 338	38	0	0
(Tockholes District)	2548	989	1CC 856	856	496	496	51	51	2 558	49	0	0
Over Darwen	11702	6014	2(1 CC) 2058	1708	2175	1725	36	29	10 3737	64	0	0
Lower Darwen	3521	1876	1CC 981	981	547	547	29	29	2 - 1312	71	0	0
Pemberton	5253	1339	2 (1CC)- est. 1786	1586	498	269	37	20	6-778	63	0	0
<i>Astley</i>	<i>2237</i>	<i>1442</i>	<i>1 1003</i>	<i>na</i>	<i>1074</i>	<i>na</i>	<i>74</i>	<i>na</i>	<i>1 275</i>	<i>26</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>0</i>
<i>Atherton</i>	<i>4659</i>	<i>1439</i>	<i>1 1030</i>	<i>na</i>	<i>662</i>	<i>na</i>	<i>46</i>	<i>na</i>	<i>2 1100</i>	<i>54</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>0</i>
Tyldesley	5397	1968	1CC 1084	1084	780	780	40	40	4 1067	60	0	0
<i>Bedford</i>	<i>4885</i>	<i>2188</i>	<i>2 830</i>	<i>na</i>	<i>635</i>	<i>na</i>	<i>29</i>	<i>na</i>	<i>2 494</i>	<i>37</i>	<i>1 520</i>	<i>34</i>
Westleigh	3750	2782	2 (1CC una)	una	1164	na	42	na	5 1450	58	0	0
Horwich	3952	2325	1CC	1330	1300	1300	56	56	5 1196	44	0	0
<i>Wigan Township</i>	<i>31,941</i>	<i>11712</i>	<i>3 3233</i>	<i>na</i>	<i>5198</i>	<i>na</i>	<i>44</i>	<i>na</i>	<i>9 3516</i>	<i>25</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>31</i>
Burnley Habergham	14706, 12549	13516, 33332	7 (2 CC)- 6039	1615	4558	838	34	6	17- 9050	59	1 566	7
Ulverston	6742	3113	2 (1 CC) 2620	1200	1400	904	74	29	3 1135	26	0	0
<i>Haslingden</i>	<i>6154</i>	<i>4736</i>	<i>1 1548</i>	<i>na</i>	<i>1563</i>	<i>na</i>	<i>33</i>	<i>na</i>	<i>9 3431</i>	<i>67</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>0</i>

Table 6.7 Comparing Anglican Performance Across Townships, 1851

Source: Religious Census 1851, HO129/455,465,467,468,477480,481,486, Enumerators' Books.

Notes: *Italics* denote a township without a Commissioners' church

Column 3 Total attenders in the Township, using the Smith formula. M.Smith, in working on Oldham and Saddleworth chose a method of comparative computation which he believed matched likely behaviour in those townships. Treating adult attendances separately from children's but using both, he counted the figures at the best attended service of the day, then added half from the next best service and a third from any other.¹⁶⁸ Table 6.8 also uses estimated attenders.

Column 5 Seats in the Commissioners' church(es).

Column 7 Number of attenders in the Commissioners' church(es).

Column 8 Percentage Share of attenders in Church of England places of worship.

Column 9 Percentage Share of attenders in Commissioners' church(es).

Column 11 Percentage Share of attenders in Nonconformist places of worship.

Column 13 Percentage share of attenders in Catholic places of worship.

	2Att. PS %	3 Popn	4RV (£)	5 Fd. Dist.	6Nr	7 Cost	8 Seats	9 Rival C,N,R	10No Mins	11 £ Emol.
St Peter Blackburn	885 6%	46536	118476	1821 1842	0.3 0.3	11491	2000	6,17,2	5	112
Holy Trinity Blackburn	800 5%	46536	118476	1846 1850	1.0 1.0	5019	1626	6,17,2	3	87
St James Lower Darwen	547 29%	3521	7970	1828 1842	2.0 1.0	5491	980	0,3,0	5	(125) 149
St Mary Mellor	238 23%	1668	3279	1829 1842	3.0 2.0	5496	900	1,2,0	7	(34) 129
St Stephen Tockholes	496 62%	939	2437	1833 1842	3.0 1.5	2804	856	0,1,0	1	(95) 144
Holy Trinity Darwen	1725 29%	11702	26470	1829 1842	4.0 0.5	6786	1708	1,10,0	4	153
St George Chorley	una	12684	35965	1825 1835	0.25 0.25	12387	2012	1,7,2	8	(123) 152
St John Whittle	406 20%	2310+ 747	4900	1830 1845	2.5 2.0	2960	761	0,1,3	3	una
Holy T Hoghton	253 100%	1373	4952	1823 1842	3.5 1.5	2269	380	0,0,0	6	125
Christ Church Adlington	552 100%	1090	4180	1838 1842	3.0 2.0	1560	600	0,0,0	2	150
St George Tyldesley	780 40%	5397	14651	1825 1828	2.0 1.0	9646	1012	0,4,0	1	(135)
St John Pemberton	269 20%	5253	14723	1832 1838	1.5 1.5	4913	1186	1,6,0	3	226
St James Burnley	250 2%	14706+ 12549	37990+ 33332	1849 1845	0.3 0.3	2556	479	8,17,1	1	122
Holy Trinity Ulverston	904 29%	6742	15597	1831 1836	0.5 0.5	4978	1200	1,3,0	2	146

Table 6.8 Lancashire Commissioners Churches: Possible Factors Conditioning Performance.

Sources: HO129/465,467,480,481,486, Religious Census, Enumerators' Books ; PP 63 Return of Population and Rateable Value of Ecclesiastical Parishes in England and Wales, 1855-56; CERC, ECE7/1, Church Building Files.

¹⁶⁸ M. Smith, *Religion in Industrial Society*, 249.

Notes:

Column 2 Estimated attenders 30 March 1851, and, below, Percentage Share of attenders. *Holy Trinity Blackburn is estimated from other attendance to seats ratio at other Blackburn Anglican churches. The existence of just one other Anglican church in Chorley suggests it is unwise to estimate St George's attenders.*

Column 3 Population of Township in 1851.

Column 4 Rateable Value 1855-6.

Column 5 Date of foundation, and below, date status beyond chapel of ease secured.

Column 6 Distance to mother church and , below, to nearest Anglican church.

Column 7 Construction cost

Column 8 Amount of seats in 1851.

Column 9 Rival places of worship: Church of England, Nonconformist, Catholic.

Column 10 Number of ministers since foundation.

Column 11 Clergy emolument from all sources, 1851 (earliest known remuneration in brackets).

Inference from the evidence in Table 6.7 allows some assessment of the role of the churches themselves, rather than solely a composite judgement on parish performance. The Commissioners' churches certainly drove up capacity, thus creating the potential to compete with rival denominations and even bid to provide for the bulk of worshippers. The sheer number of seats made available make them the most significant contribution to the capacity of the established church in townships such as Over Darwen, Mellor, Pemberton and Chorley. Of course they constituted the sole Anglican presence in Tyldesley, Tockholes, Lower Darwen and Horwich. Table 6.7 would suggest that in some cases, as at Whittle, competition from the Commissioners' church might have driven up the overall local index of attendance, as was probably the case in Tockholes.

None of the Commissioners' churches could be said to be 'traditional' or very long established but in any event, a later one such as Christ Church Adlington could perform better than a St Mary Mellor, much as Table 6.7 showed some recent chapels of several denominations outstripping older foundations. Yet in general they were fulfilling the role designed for them. They were supplementing but not supplanting the ancient churches in some parishes and providing the first presence in previously deprived townships. There is no evidence that they hampered or diminished the work of neighbouring older established or mother churches in proximity, for example at Blackburn. Where no previous church existed, as in Lower Darwen, Adlington or Horwich, the Commissioners' church performed as well or better than some sole parish churches elsewhere, as in Atherton. In some cases an older established church, especially if it was led by a very active incumbent like Alfred Hewlett in Astley, might produce a higher percentage share in the township. There was also perhaps a certain social prestige in attending the ancient parish church,

judging by the figures for Haslingden and Leyland townships and even Leigh, where James Irvine, a committed Ritualist, ensured one section of his potential congregation fell away. Possibly being well clear of the mother church and other nearby Anglican churches was a key advantage. (Table 6.8, col 9) However this did not assist Holy Trinity Hoghton. The Catholic and then Presbyterian past of the de Hoghton family may be the explanation, as well as less than two miles distance to Methodist chapels in Withnell and Wheelton or Catholic chapel in Brindle.¹⁶⁹

The opportunity to have the cure of any new church seems to have motivated a minister, like Jacob Robson, who had potential within to succeed. The fortunes of St George's Chorley by 1851 do not suggest that grander architecture, as indicated by the construction cost, and large capacity of seats would enhance performance (Table 6.8, col 7,8). Indeed, Gill has suggested that a church with large numbers of empty seats would discourage the existing congregation and also potential new worshippers. Less finance would be available too.¹⁷⁰ However the evidence from this Lancashire sample is not conclusive. A smaller church such as Tockholes St Stephen or Adlington Christ Church did well on occupancy but Whittle St John and Burnley St James did not. Although Chorley St George was under-used in the first generation, this did not prevent a much greater use by the end of the century. Yet, whilst the building itself was important in a township, and vital if there has been no previous presence, the nature and size of the church did not decisively determine outcomes. Contextual factors and the role of the individual were more significant.

Gill has shown that the ability and application of incumbents in York made a decisive difference to three churches between 1837 and 1851.¹⁷¹ Knight has highlighted the crucial nature of the incumbent's preaching ability.¹⁷² The case studies suggest the presence of a committed minister in Tockholes and Tyldesley, and the absence of a long serving similar one in Chorley, was important before 1851. There does not seem to be a correlation between level of clerical income and performance in this sample, as Chapter 5 has already suggested (6.8, col 11). Continuity in ministry looks a more positive factor (6.8,col 10).

¹⁶⁹ TNA, HO129/480, 1-9.

¹⁷⁰ R.Gill, *The Empty Church Revisited*, (2nd. ed., Aldershot, 2003), 52.

¹⁷¹ *The Empty Church Revisited*, 176-8.

¹⁷² F.Knight, *The Nineteenth Century Church and English Society*, (Cambridge, 1995), 82.

Turning to context, the wealth per head of a township, broadly calculable from columns 3 and 4 would not seem to be a determinant factor, or else St George's Chorley may have been proud to display its attendance in 1851 and Tockholes would not have done as well. In a pluralist area industrial wealth could favour nonconformity as easily or more so. Commissioners' churches, like other Anglican churches, would normally appear to do well in townships of relatively lower total population, certainly below the 15,000 minimum limit to be accounted a large borough in the 1851 census (Table 6.8, col 3). Yet this was no guarantee of success, as the performance in Mellor and Pemberton showed. Pemberton would also have experienced the impact of recent relatively fast growth.¹⁷³ Mellor's established Methodism amidst large numbers of handloom weavers may have been the determinant background factor here; one of the ministers certainly thought so.¹⁷⁴

Overall, the data above supports the detailed documentary evidence in the sample churches. The most significant factor in achieving success at any period was the availability of a determined, resourceful and effective minister, given a church with a status beyond chapel of ease. (Table 6.8, col 5,10). Nevertheless the church still needed to be present and it was helpful if the existing religious pluralism was not overwhelming. Moreover, the accent placed here upon the variety of experience in different townships and the importance of the individual clerical presence and leadership, takes a view of causation which does not subscribe to the paramount nature of underlying social patterns. New industrial villages such as Tyldesley and Tockholes did not have to be easy ground for Dissent, as once believed.¹⁷⁵ The Anglican church could do well in an upland and 'open' township like Tockholes or one of rapid demographic growth like Tyldesley, contrary to what may seem the general picture nationally.¹⁷⁶ This calls into question the value for local study of a quantitative analysis of the 1851 Religious Census as a whole, for example that of Crockett demonstrating that overall there was 'a clear negative relationship between urban industrial development and church attendance.'¹⁷⁷

¹⁷³ W.Farrer,J.Brownbill (eds.), *The Victoria County History of Lancashire* vol 4, (London, 1911), 78-83.

¹⁷⁴ CERC, ECE7/1/15217/2, Blackburn Church Building File, Revd. Kirkpatrick to CBC, 7 March 1836.

¹⁷⁵ A.D.Gilbert, *Religion and Society in Industrial England*, (London, 1976), 118.

¹⁷⁶ K.D.M.Snell and P.S.Ell, *Rival Jerusalems* (Cambridge, 2000), 5.

¹⁷⁷ A. Crockett, 'Variations in Churchgoing Rates in England in 1851: Supply Side Deficiency or Demand-led Decline?', *University of Oxford Discussion Paper, Economic and Social History*, 36 (August 2000), 31.

These conclusions about the sample of Lancashire churches, particularly that a committed minister with a legal independence were key factors, were tested by a less detailed study of a wider group of fourteen churches ranging from Carlisle to Manchester and to Stretton in Cheshire. Stretton St Matthew, consecrated 1827, was in a highly competitive situation in Great Budworth Parish, holding twenty one places of worship, seven of them Anglican.. However it benefited from being nurtured by just two ministers, the second also being an interested patron from the wealthy Greenall family. Its district chapelry status arrived comparatively early in 1834. The Anglican percentage share in the Great Budworth Parish was 54%, 18% of that coming from St Matthew's alone. It had 340 attendants for its 430 seats.¹⁷⁸ St Catherine's Scholes in Wigan had a later start, in 1841, but had just one minister for a decade and was a of district chapelry status immediately on consecration. In 1851 it had an estimated 1075 attenders for 1173 seats.¹⁷⁹ In contrast St Andrew's Manchester, founded in 1831 and district status delayed until 1833, was host to 12 ministers by 1851 when it had cut free seats to raise more revenue from rented pews and had only 446 attenders for 1046 seats. The Manchester context was not the problem; St George's in Hulme was already spawning daughter chapels by 1851 and benefited from the long assiduous attention of Joshua Lingard.¹⁸⁰ The only churches from the sample which showed that a parish might thrive with a succession of clergy were: St Peter's Ashton-under-Lyne, with seven ministers between 1824 and 1851 but free seats increased by a tenth and 1500 attenders for its 1800 seats; also St John Farnworth with seven ministers 1826-1851 and 1150 attenders for 1008 seats.¹⁸¹ Early district status in 1828 could well have assisted the latter.

Including five of the latest founded Commissioners' churches in this wider sample allowed a testing of the importance of establishing the church building as the hub, for Peel's Act of 1843 followed the belief that an active clergyman could build up a congregation and then find a church from somewhere. The evidence limited evidence to date suggests ministers with a district but no church generally had a hard struggle to gather a significant congregation. Taking churches in a similar religious and social context, Audenshaw St

¹⁷⁸ TNA, HO 129/455, Enumerator's Returns, Religious Census, 1851; D.F and M.R.Hart, *St Matthew's Stretton, A Church Guide* (Stretton, 2001).

¹⁷⁹ HO 129/465/11.

¹⁸⁰ HO 129/473/32.

¹⁸¹ HO 129/474/14; 468/9.

Stephen, founded 1847 but with one active minister from 1844, is an exception, securing 873 attenders for its sensible number of 700 seats. However, Holy Trinity Coldhurst, district and church from 1848, had just 104 attending a building with 501 seats, and Christ Church Ashton-under-Lyne, a district 1846 with a church opened a year later, had managed 512 attenders for 850 seats.¹⁸² St Mary Trawden became a district in 1845 and the church also followed just a year later but it could only amass attenders totalling 115 on census Sunday for 500 seats. The minister claimed up to 300 might be possible; a Methodist festival had diverted folk on 30 March 1851.¹⁸³

Considering all the Lancashire Commissioners' churches as a group, there is an important point to make about the distribution of the Commissioners' churches in 1856, as compared with 1830. It is evident that under-provisioned or Dissenter-strong towns like Oldham, Rochdale and Burnley in the east of the county, received a more handsome tranche of the later Commissioners' churches by mid century. The foundation of Manchester Diocese might also have focused more attention on the urban centres close to the cathedral, yet it is noticeable that the major cities still lagged behind in provision. Horace Mann showed that London still contained the largest shortage of accommodation for Anglican worship but Liverpool came 28th in the national list, Salford 31st, Manchester 35th. The next tier of large towns also featured, Wigan at 34th, Oldham at 36th and Bolton at 47th.¹⁸⁴ On grounds of defective accommodation alone, there was a possible case for placing all Commissioners' churches in the emergent cities and larger towns in both 1818 and 1847. However in terms of width of presence the decision to spread them around industrial Lancashire from around 1833 was understandable. The distribution demonstrated in Map 6.6 below should have been more satisfying in the eyes of national and diocesan Anglican leaders.

¹⁸² HO 129/473;HO 129/475/4; HO 129/474.

¹⁸³ HO 129/478/57.

¹⁸⁴ H.Mann, *Religious Worship* 1854, Table 12, 74.

local communities should respond to the pump priming from the State and maximise their efforts to make adequate provision for the worship in the established church. As mentioned in Chapter Two, George Henry Law, bishop of Chester from 1812 to 1824 did take a lead in promoting the building of ‘parliamentary churches’, although he said little on the topic of church extension until a sermon in 1819.¹⁸⁵ His interest and role in a clearly under-resourced diocese had already led to him being appointed to the Church Building Commission and he was strong in attendance of it.¹⁸⁶ He appears to have been seen as the chief executive officer for the north west.¹⁸⁷ Law encouraged church building in some areas of priority such as Stockport and Manchester or places where a local need had been pressed upon him.¹⁸⁸ Law’s eventual translation to Bath and Wells in 1824 had the happy result of projecting Charles James Blomfield into the bishop’s chair. This future church building bishop of London and motor of the reforming Ecclesiastical Commission after 1835, became a church builder during his relatively short term at Chester.¹⁸⁹ By 1831, in the House of Lords, he was stoutly defending the Commission’s efforts.¹⁹⁰ A further positive step came with Blomfield’s successor at Chester in 1828, even if his work was not as unprecedented as his biographer claims.¹⁹¹ John Bird Sumner stayed until his translation to Canterbury in 1848 and was a great encourager of church extension funded from whatever source he could access. Even in 1824 the seeming reluctance of Parliament to add to the initial funding of 1818 demonstrated that increased government help was unlikely.¹⁹² Sumner, therefore, extracted what contributions he could from the Commissioners but also championed the 1830 Act permitting individual patrons to present to a new church they might pay for.¹⁹³ In 1833 he founded one of the first diocesan church building societies and published thorough analyses of the progress of church building with every Charge

¹⁸⁵ CHTL, *A Sermon Preached at the Opening of a Chapel for the Blind Asylum, Liverpool, 6 October 1819* (Liverpool, 1819), 8-9.

¹⁸⁶ CERC, CBC 2/1/1, CBC Minute Book 1, 28 July 1818.

¹⁸⁷ BL, Add MS38284 f.48, Liverpool Papers, Law to Liverpool, 7 April 1820.

¹⁸⁸ BL Add MS38283 f.115, Liverpool Papers, Law to Liverpool, 23 February 1820.

¹⁸⁹ CALS, EDV 10/7, Charge to the Clergy of the Diocese of Chester, August-September 1825, 11-36; LPL, Mf19, Notebook of Charles James Blomfield, 1825-1826, March 1825, May-June 1825, August 1825, November 1825; CHTL, 4C.6.115(8), Charge to the Clergy of the Diocese of London at the Primary Visitation, July 1830, 20; A. Burns, *Blomfield, Charles James Bishop of London, 1786-1857*, DNB 2668 (2008).

¹⁹⁰ PP 1831 House of Lords Debates vol 2 cc728-9, 21 February 1831.

¹⁹¹ N.Scotland, *Life and Work of John Bird Sumner 1780-1862* (Leominster 1995) 49.

¹⁹² Port, *Six Hundred New Churches* 2nd ed., 227.

¹⁹³ CALS, EDV 10/8, Charge to the Clergy of the Diocese of Chester, 1832, 67; EDV 10/8/Charge 1835, 31.

issued.¹⁹⁴ For the first time there appeared to be an overall analysis of local need and a resultant strategy.¹⁹⁵ After the founding of Manchester Diocese in 1847, the bishops, particularly James Prince Lee, embraced church extension and used the last of the Commissioners' grants to help improve provision in the urban areas within and proximate to the city of Manchester itself.¹⁹⁶

Just as a local clergyman T.D. Whitaker, was the originator of Commissioners' church building in Lancashire so was the cleric behind the later concerted plan. John Rushton, at Newchurch in Pendle, Whalley, from 1825, promoted Commissioners' and voluntary churches across all of the sprawling parish.¹⁹⁷ He built a tremendous reputation. On his appointment as archdeacon of Manchester in 1843, the *Church of England Magazine* asserted the news was, 'To the great satisfaction of all those in the districts who have for some years experienced the benefits of Mr Rushton's indefatigable and successful efforts in the cause of church and school extension.'¹⁹⁸ With more revered connections and education he may well have been chosen as bishop.¹⁹⁹ He played a role in researching local needs and supporting the work of the Diocesan Church Building Society and often acted as secretary and facilitator of church building committees.²⁰⁰ His modus operandi is well illustrated by a donor's letter to him in 1836 regarding a new church at Fence in Newchurch chapelry. There had been counts made of population and church seats in both Whalley parish as a whole and Newchurch in particular. Two local landowners had donated land and funds for endowment, repairs and maintenance. At least a third of the accommodation would comprise free seats. One of the donors was to have presentation rights for her life. This was agreed with the bishop and the patron and vicar of Whalley. Thus all interests are squared and used.²⁰¹ As demonstrated in *Notes on the Churches and Chapels of Lancashire*, Rushton's knowledge of all the places of worship within the archdeaconry was remarkable

¹⁹⁴ CALS EDV 10/8, Charges, 1829,1832,1835,1838,1841,1844; N.Scotland *Life and Work of John Bird Sumner*, 49.

¹⁹⁵ CHTL, WAT 11.C.4.33, J.B.Sumner 'Some Account of the Churches Consecrated in the Diocese of Chester in the Year 1839'.

¹⁹⁶ M.C. Curthoys Lee, *James Prince Bishop of Manchester and Headmaster, 1804-1869*, DNB. 16292, (2004).

¹⁹⁷ LA, PR1565a, Blackburn St Mary Coucher Book, Cuttings re Funeral of J.Rushton, undated.

¹⁹⁸ *Church of England Magazine*, 15 (1843), 25.

¹⁹⁹ *Church of England Magazine*, 15 (1843), 15.

²⁰⁰ *Blackburn Standard*, 31 October, 1838.

²⁰¹ LA, PR3182/2/3, Grindleton Parish Papers, J.Aspinall and E.Greenwood to Revd. Rushton , 25 January 1836.

and he proved a great diocesan recorder and collator of statistics.²⁰² From 1845 he had a list of necessary new churches prepared for the new diocese instituted in 1847.²⁰³ Certainly his exhaustive visitation of the Manchester archdeaconry in 1845-6 and his meticulous and rational listing of those localities in want of church room provided a thoroughgoing factual base for the diocese to meet its challenges.²⁰⁴

A willing ally in Whalley Parish was Robert Mosley Master who from 1826 did what he could to bring Commissioners' churches to the large textile town on Burnley.²⁰⁵ As mentioned in Chapter Two, Robert Carus Wilson vicar of Preston (1817-1840) was another committed to the opportunity of establishing Commissioners' churches, as was James Slade in Bolton (1817-1856).²⁰⁶ Preston received two of the earliest Commissioners' churches and Bolton took four.²⁰⁷ Like Whittaker of Blackburn (1822-54) these latter gentleman were fiercely independent in their own cures and rarely co-operated with one another but as individuals they forwarded the church extension programme. They resided in the largest Lancashire parishes, thereby maximizing their impact. Elsewhere, as in Manchester, Oldham or Rochdale, local resistance made comparable extension difficult.²⁰⁸ Neither did an incumbent like William Hay, in Rochdale after 1820, assist the cause, being absent for half of each year.²⁰⁹

Significant lay support was numerically quite limited. When John Rushton, before the Lord Committee in 1857, was asked to name families which contributed large sums to church building he named but thirteen and the largest contribution was £12,000.²¹⁰ South Lancashire was sparse in greater gentry, more a county of squirearchy with middle classes desirous of gaining entry to it.²¹¹ Consequently the Commissioners were fortunate in having

²⁰² JRUL, Eng MS706, John Rushton, Notes on Lancashire Churches and Chapels, vol 1, 1, 60, 66; vol 2 66,75; vol 5, 89.; vol 8.

²⁰³ Eng MS706, Rushton's Notes vol 2, 1,66.

²⁰⁴ MA, MS.ϕ42.72 r121, Archdeacon Rushton's Visitation 1845-6; JRUL Rushton's Notes, vol 8.

²⁰⁵ *Preston Pilot*, 25 March 1837.

²⁰⁶ CALS, EDV10/8, Bishop's Charge 1841, 61; *Preston Pilot*, 2 March 1839; B.Lewis, *The Middlemost and the Milltowns* (Stanford, 2001), 169.

²⁰⁷ Port, *Six Hundred New Churches* 2nd ed., Tables 326-7, 334-6.

²⁰⁸ *Manchester Chronicle*, 19 February 1821; W.R.Ward, *Religion and Society in England 1790-1850* (London, 1972), 110-11.

²⁰⁹ K.G.Bamford 'Revd Dr J.E.N.Molesworth, vicar of Rochdale 1839-1877', *TSHLC* 141(1991), 265.

²¹⁰ PP 1858 Report of House of Lords on Places of Worship, 2 July 1858, 633.

²¹¹ K.Navickas, *Loyalism and Radicalism in Lancashire 1798-1815* (Oxford, 2009), 23.

the support of several of the few greater gentry. Probably the most prominent was Lord George Kenyon. He was constant in his attendance as a Church Building Commissioner and with the estate at Peel Hall, just four miles from Tyldesley an important connecting rod to the centre.²¹² Other important landed figures played responsible roles as patrons, such as the Lilfords at Tyldesley or headed the subscribers' list for the Diocesan Church Building Society, such as George Grey (1765-1845) sixth Earl of Stamford and Warrington.²¹³ Similarly Francis Egerton, Earl of Ellesmere (1800-1857), commenced his family's interest in Tyldesley St George. In 1841 he made an impassioned speech in favour of church extension at a Manchester meeting of the S.P.G.²¹⁴ In the 1880s his descendants provided a site for its chapel of ease at Mosley Common, close to the Bridgewater mines.²¹⁵

The more numerous middling gentry made their contribution in the region. Sometimes the geographical spread of estates and interests turned a gentleman into a figure of cross regional importance, much as T.D. Whitaker had been. Le Gendre Nicholas Starkie (1799-1865) of Huntroyde, near Burnley was a magistrate for Yorkshire and Lancashire, briefly MP for Pontefract (1826-32) and captain in the Craven Yeomanry.²¹⁶ He contributed to subscription lists and, as Provincial Grand Master of the Western Division of Lancashire Freemasons, encouraged brothers to attend in large numbers at the laying of foundation stones of Commissioners' churches.²¹⁷ Susanna Brooke of Astley, Chorley is another pivotal figure. In 1787 her first marriage to Thomas Townley Parker of Cuerden created a strong Church interest at Chorley, Cuerden and Burnley, the last-mentioned through possession of the Extwistle estate.²¹⁸ Her son Robert Townley Parker's purchase of the Chorley Hall estate from the departing Presbyterian Abraham Crompton in 1816 was a symbol of strengthened Anglican presence in Chorley as plans were developing for a new church.²¹⁹ He also provided a site for the Commissioners' church at Habergham Eaves, Burnley in 1837.²²⁰ Susanna's second marriage was to Sir Henry Philip Hoghton in 1797,

²¹² CERC, CBC 2/1/1, Board Minute Book 1, 2 March 1819, CBC 2/1/2 Board Minute Book 3, 25 April 1820, 2 May 1820.

²¹³ *Preston Pilot*, 21 December 1833.

²¹⁴ *Manchester Courier*, 2th July 1841.

²¹⁵ SGT, Parish Magazine, May 1886; Lunn, *A New History of Tyldesley*, 140.

²¹⁶ historyofparliamentonline.org/1820-1832, M.Casey, *Starkie, Le G.N. of Huntroyde 1799-1865*.

²¹⁷ *Blackburn Standard*, 31 October 1838.

²¹⁸ Heyes, *A History of Chorley*, 49.

²¹⁹ Heyes, *A History of Chorley*, 73.

²²⁰ Heyes, *A History of Chorley*, 67.

of a Presbyterian family moving into Anglicanism. As Lady Hoghton, Susanna helped fund the late Commissioners' church of St. Peter in Chorley (1852).²²¹

The sponsor list for the rebuilding the ancient parish church of St Mary's in Blackburn contained the some 40 landed gentlemen, drawn from a thirty mile radius.²²² In 1828 the local petitioners for Darwen and Tockholes included three local landowners but some men still purely professional or commercial.²²³ Ambitious merchants or manufacturers would serve on local committees and provide some funding for churches, often after they had bought into some land. This lay support was not totally in place at the outset of the Commission and there were varying degrees of commitment. In 1818 they were a loose aggregate rather than a cohesive group. Some gentlemen such as Joseph Feilden of Witton and William Feilden of Feniscowles preferred to sponsor a voluntary church close to their own seats, rather than be seen as facilitators of a 'parliamentary church'.²²⁴ There might also be a favour to a favoured clergyman or family member. Commissioners' churches received increased lay support once patrons were allowed some appointment right under the 1830 Act.²²⁵ Clever initiatives like Whittaker of Blackburn selling the right to place coats of arms in the new Holy Trinity Blackburn (1835) had a useful financial effect.²²⁶

By 1830 groups of the gentlemen described above and supportive of Anglican assertion came to meet reasonably regularly for church purposes, for example at church consecrations, National School deanery committees and annual voluntary society meetings. It signifies an acceptance of responsibility for the Church. The founding of the Chester Church Building Society in 1833 would be an important step towards creating a collective consciousness, as indeed was the publication of John Rushton's statistical tables. The church building efforts were publicised and encouraged by several newspapers. The *Preston Pilot* came into existence in 1825 with the express purpose of supporting the interests of the Church. Its editor was Lawrence Clarke, brother of Preston churchwarden

²²¹ Heyes, *A History of Chorley*, 49.

²²² CALS, EDA 2/15, Blackburn Parish Papers, Act of Parliament for taking down and rebuilding Parish Church, 14 June 1819.

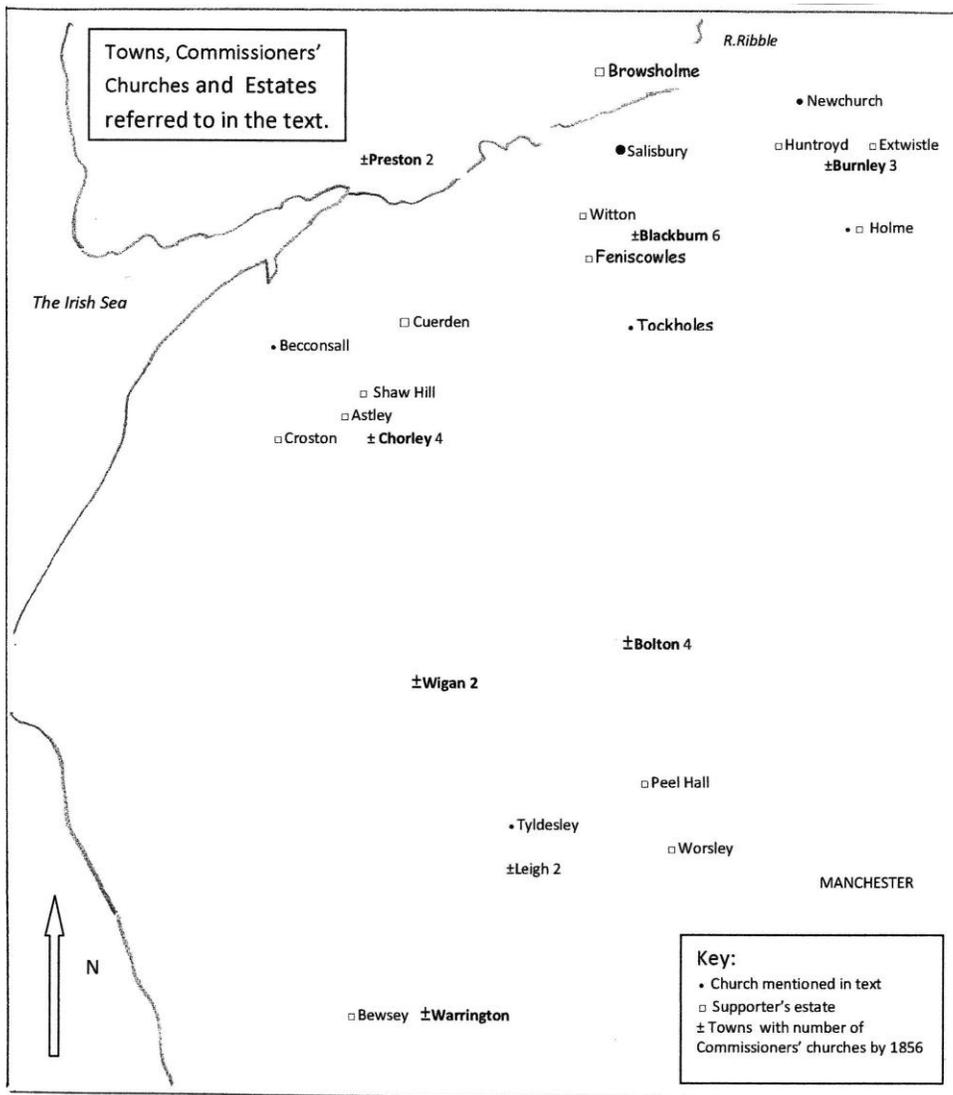
²²³ CALS, EDA 2/15, Site re Lower Darwen, 9 August 1828; LA, PR3148/11/1, Lower Darwen St James Parish Papers, 26 April 1832; LA, PR1549/29/4, Tockholes Parish Papers, Application to ICBS, 31 March 1830.

²²⁴ LA, PR2846/2/1, Feniscowles Coucher Book, W.Feilden to J.W.Whittaker, 24 March 1834.

²²⁵ PP 1831, WIV c38 House of Lords, 1831.

²²⁶ D.Beattie, *Blackburn, A History* (Lancaster, 2007), 77.

Thomas Clarke. The circulation was smaller than that of the *Chronicle* but it was important, with sales in Manchester, Liverpool, Bury, Blackburn, Chorley, Chester and Kirkby Lonsdale.²²⁷ It celebrated progress of church building efforts north and south of the Ribble and made known the individuals involved to like-minded folk. The *Manchester Mercury*, along with the *Manchester Courier*, played a similar role. Archdeacon John Rushton used the latter as one of his major sources for gleaning intelligence of events involving churches in south Lancashire.²²⁸



Map 6.8 Towns, Estates and Churches Referred to in Pages 225-227

²²⁷ *Preston Pilot*, 6 August 1825, 7 January 1826.

²²⁸ MA, MSf.942.72 r121, Archdeacon Rushton's Visitation 1845-6, vol 78.

How successful were Commissioners' churches in Lancashire as compared with the rest of the England and Wales? Overall relative Anglican success in diocese and county may be displayed by selecting data from the Religious Census.

Diocese	Population	CoE Places of Worship	Sittings	Other Places of Worship	Sittings
Chester	1,183,497	518	281,531(188,076 in 1818)	909	232,448
Manchester	1,395,404	352	256,600	844	305,747
Ripon	1,033,027	478	221,055	1124	337,243
Durham	701,381	327	120,554	801	192,754
London	2,558,718	486	398,825	658	261,346
Ely	482,412	576	164,941	649	145,330
England and Wales	17,927,629	14,077 (377 mean size)	5,317,915	20,390	3,937,163

Table 6.9A Church Provision and Sittings in Selected Dioceses, 1851. Constructed from Religious Census 1851, ccii; Mann *Religious Worship*, 1854 ,Table 24, 101.

County	Population	C of E Places of worship /total	Co E Sittings	% Seat To Pop	Number of Comm. Chs.	Seating in Comm. Churches	CoE Index of Attendance %	CofE % share of Attendance
Cheshire	421,801	252/835	125,652	29	22	16,460	24.3	46.5
Lancashire	2,031,236	529/1627	389,546	19	82	83,691	18.8	42.6
Westmoreland	58,187	78/165	24,766	42	1	1,254	30.7	61.2
W.Riding Yorks	1,548,501	583/2056	288,343	19	99	72,748	18.1	34.2
Durham	411,479	169/621	68,958	17	16	10,158	14.4	33.8
Norfolk	435,716	719/1441	187,210	43	2	2,696	34.2	52.3

Table 6.9B Numbers and Percentages of Sittings and Attendances for Denominations in Selected Counties, 1851. Sources: Religious Worship England and Wales 1851, ccix,cclxxvii; T.Mann *Religious Worship* (1854) Table E p112,Table G p136; Port *Six Hundred New Churches* Appendix 1; B.I. Coleman *The Church of England in the Mid-Nineteenth Century* 40.

In 1851 The Church of England could seat 29.7% of the population in England and Wales which was not far from Vansittart's ambition to accommodate a third, despite the rapid increase in the nation's population since 1818.²²⁹ Table 6.9B shows Lancashire, at 19.1% clearly fell well short, although other sources indicate there was tremendous variation between places. In 1841 Blackburn parish provided 25% of the total population with sittings in Anglican churches, whereas Oldham managed just 11%.²³⁰ Furthermore, this judgement on accommodation does not allow for the vast increase in the numbers of inhabitants. Looking at the area equivalent to the diocese of Manchester since 1801, the

²²⁹ H.Mann , *Religious Worship in England and Wales* (1854), Table 13, 75.

²³⁰ JRUL, Eng MS706 , Rushton's Notes on Lancashire Churches and Chapels, vol 8.

established church had doubled the number of its churches and chapels by 1851 and nearly tripled the seats in response to a two and a half fold increase in population.²³¹ If Table 6.9A shows the total places of worship for the national church in Chester and Manchester Dioceses was half or less than the sum of the other denominations, it was equal with the ‘competition’ on sittings. The north- west dioceses were providing additional sittings more strongly than in Ripon or Durham. The policy of increasing accommodation where needed would seem sensible. Norfolk and Westmoreland had reaped the benefit of a high proportion of seats to population in terms of percentage share of attendances and had been rightly passed over for government churches. (Table 6.9B)

The contribution of the Commissioners’ churches to the total Anglican accommodation is impressive. Table 6.9B demonstrates that the 82 churches contributed a fifth of the half million seats listed for the Chester and Manchester Dioceses. Put another way the Commissioners’ churches supplied nearly a quarter of the seats added in the area of the old Chester Diocese between 1818 and 1851. Examining Congregational places of worship in 1845, Archdeacon Rushton drew some comfort that the rival denomination was never going to provide sufficient seating to accommodate large sections of the community; it averaged one chapel to over 24,000 inhabitants in the large towns.²³² In Lancashire overall attendance of 44.1% at any place of worship and 18.8% at Anglican places of worship might well have been lower if it were not for the effort triggered by the Commissioners’ churches. This is borne out by the evidence of the local impact in Tyldesley and Tockholes and in the success of parishes like Ulverston where church extension prior to 1800 correlates with relative Anglican success indicated by the 1851 census. The research of Watts and Rycroft, then Snell and Ell suggest a large share of existing accommodation did have a significant effect on performance in 1851.²³³ A possibly significant feature of the 1851 returns is that, whilst Anglican attendance in relation to the total population was less than 20%, the percentage share of worshippers was over 40%.

²³¹ Eng MS706, Rushton’s Notes, vol 8.

²³² Eng MS706, Rushton’s Notes, vol 1, 60.

²³³ M.Watts, *Dissenters* vol 2 (Oxford, 1995), 42; P.Rycroft, ‘Church, Chapel and Community in Craven, 1764-1851’, unpublished PhD thesis, Oxford University (1988), 312; Snell and Ell, *Rival Jerusalems*, 58-9.

Before claiming over much particular significance for the Commissioners' churches, it must be remembered that previous analysis of the 1851 returns reflects a historic relative strength of the established church in enumeration districts such as Garstang and Ormskirk, not areas peppered with the new churches.²³⁴ Again Table 6.9B shows a tranche of Commissioners' churches in the West Riding of Yorkshire, exceeding the number in Lancashire, did not sufficiently dent Dissent and thereby produce a better percentage share of worshippers. It would be reasonable to ask whether or not the Church Building Act triggered an uncontrolled spate of church building which by 1851, the time when churchgoing reached a high point for the century, left the nation with half empty places of worship and by 1900 around two thirds under-used.²³⁵ However, for the Orthodox churchment of the second decade of the century, London and the new urban areas were desperately under- resourced. They had seen 550 Methodist chapels built between 1775 and 1805. Were they simply to watch idly a Dissenting takeover of space? The extension policies in Presbyterian Scotland after 1834, Chester Diocese, led by an Evangelical and the high church Blomfield's London Diocese from 1828, show that a wide range of churchmen thought the Commissioners' example a tremendously good one. If, by including all churches and chapels, there were just about sufficient seats by 1851, to a committed churchman this did not signify; he would still focus on the density of Anglican provision. Arguably the seemingly senseless inter-denominational competition in the first part of the century helped increase total participation in worship and in the second half left the over-extended free churches, unsubsidised as they were, with greater management problems than the establishment.²³⁶

Again, it might be argued that some of the churches were simply too big, creating a future embarrassment in empty seats and overwhelming issues of care. Yet Chorley St George, although needing a strong clerical voice to carry its nave, was not prevented from eventual success. Tyldesley church was easily adapted to more reasonable internal proportions by 1890. At the outset, these churches looming large expressed that which Gill dubbed 'religious physicality' and carried an assertive message outlined in chapter four here.²³⁷ In

²³⁴ C.B. Phillips and J.H. Smith, *Lancashire and Cheshire From AD1540* (Harlow, 1994), 209.

²³⁵ R.Gill, *The Empty Church Revisited*, 27,38.

²³⁶ *The Empty Church Revisited*, 36.

²³⁷ *The Empty Church Revisited*, 9.

the twenty first century it seems the imposing cathedral buildings seem the most popular Anglican churches; there were twenty-two of them in 1800, already seen as regional centres for music as well as worship.²³⁸

Another possible reservation about the Commissioners' programme is that it was a misguided government initiative, out of step with the pluralist nature of society. However, from the standpoint of Liverpool, Vansittart and Harrowby the health of the Church was a legitimate concern of the state. Confidence was high following the defeat of France and church extension unavoidably delayed. Their detailed evidence suggested many townships could not meet the necessary building cost. Certainly Chorley, Tockholes and Tyldesley would never have voluntarily raised the sums necessary for even a modest church. Even a national voluntary organisation, The Incorporated Church Building Society, could only make a limited impact. In its first three years, its first fifty grants averaged £314, its last fifty, £161. By 1868 the total raised in donations was £599,705 or roughly a third of that dispensed by the Commissioners. Admittedly the Society contributed to over a thousand new churches but, as matched funding was required, their grants were a small proportion of the total costs and tended to supply the suburban and rural parishes.²³⁹ Although diocesan societies achieved a great deal too, it must be acknowledged that the Church Building Act was the great and first initiator of ambition.

Focusing once more on Lancashire there are other indicators of the Commissioners' churches importance. To orthodox churchmen and, those who supported the national churches policies emerging after 1800, the parish church was at the base of the society they wanted to achieve. Admittedly Thomas Chalmers was to show in Leith that a congregation could be created before a building was constructed and Peel encouraged such an approach in England in 1843.²⁴⁰ Yet given sufficient funding, the orthodox would prefer the church first in place as the hub. Without it, where was the link to the past in local stone and style? Where would parishioners mark their rites of passage or, before about 1860, visit their ancestors' graves?²⁴¹ How else could the Church be distinct from itinerant ministry? John

²³⁸ S.J.Brown, *The National Churches*, 3.

²³⁹ Knight, *The Nineteenth Century Church*, 65-7.

²⁴⁰ Brown, *The National Churches*, 195.

²⁴¹ Knight, *The Nineteenth Century Church*, 61,68, 70, 86,91.

Rushton believed that ideally there should be one clergyman to 2000 people. A new church or chapel would bring a clergyman. Between 1835 and 1845 the numbers of clergy serving in Lancashire grew from 476 to 764.²⁴² By 1841 no parish had reached the ideal but Blackburn, with its six Commissioners' churches, had better than one minister to 3000.²⁴³ In 1844 Rushton drew hope from the significant increase in augmentations to clerical salaries since 1835.²⁴⁴ There was a creditable attack on non residence. In 1850 Chester Diocese had just 74 beneficed clergy out of 431, non-resident and not doing duty, Manchester contained 35 such out of 315. Chester's figures showed improvement upon the 168 non residents not doing duty out of 587 benefices in 1814. A not dissimilar diocese, Lichfield and Coventry, had 166 non residents avoiding duty out of 536 beneficed clergy.²⁴⁵ None of these figures are as alarming when it is remembered that an efficient bishop like Blomfield or Sumner would insist on a non resident providing a substitute.²⁴⁶ The improvement in the density of clerical provision can only have been assisted by the Commissioners' churches advent, especially when after 1830 these buildings came to be a more realistic size. Every one of them had a resident minister, unlike some of the smaller and more remote chapels of ease in previous centuries.

The current work has rarely looked at individual churches beyond Lancashire. Table 6.9B does show the contrast between Commissioners' church provision in Lancashire and the meagre effort in Durham. Maynard's detailed work on the Archdeaconry of Durham between 1801 and 1851 is instructive. It had the 'greatest concentration of resource....it was to suffer its greatest reverses.'²⁴⁷ The population increased one and a half times over the first half of the nineteenth century but the church accommodation fell to 17% of the total population from 37%. It appears that, at first, the considerable wealth of the bishopric and the Durham cathedral were not released for endowment. Then subsequent to the legislation of 1843/44 redistributing this diocesan and capitular revenue, there was a deeper reluctance to support church extension due to the belief that the Ecclesiastical Commission

²⁴² JRUL, Eng MS706, Rushton Notes vol 7, 111.

²⁴³ Eng MS706 vol 8.

²⁴⁴ Eng MS706 vol 2, 75.

²⁴⁵ P.Virgin, *The Church In The Age of Negligence* (Cambridge, 1989), 291.

²⁴⁶ LPL, Mf19, Notebook of C.J.Blomfield 1825-26, Blomfield to Dodgson, 20 May 1825, Blomfield to J.Master, 7 June 1825; CALS, EDV10/8, Bishop Sumner's Charge 1832, 88, Charge 1835, 21.

²⁴⁷ W.B.Maynard, 'The Response of the Church of England to Economic and Demographic Change :the Archdeaconry of Durham 1800-51' *JEH* 42 (July,1991), 437.

now had control and responsibility. The result was that Dissent, especially Methodism thrived and could seat 60% of the population by 1851.²⁴⁸ Rycroft showed that parts of the deanery of Craven suffered from a restricted historic Anglican provision, made a comparatively late start to extension after 1838 and returned and exhibited a low percentage share of attendances in 1851.²⁴⁹ The example of Durham and Craven enhances the importance of the work done by the bishops of Chester in Lancashire. Bishop Blomfield was to translate to London in 1828 and proved an avid church builder, where the Commission had already made a useful start. Carr executed a detailed study of the early Commissioners' churches in London and was primarily interested in the architecture and the gradual preference for Gothic above classical styles. Yet he pointed out the significance of the launch of the Commissioners' churches, given that 17 of 19 new churches built in London between 1822 and 1826 were those of the Commission.²⁵⁰ Even more strongly, he asserted that, 'The Act of 1818 directly supported the vast majority of the establishment erected in England between 1818 and 1840 churches.'²⁵¹ He concluded that there had been nothing like the Commissioners' church extension since the Middle Ages and that they 're-introduced church building into the national consciousness.'²⁵²

There are indications that studies similar to this one would be valuable in establishing similarity and difference between regions and sub-regions and arguably, individual townships. Dukinfield, Cheshire, would be interesting. This fast growing out-township of Manchester proved fertile ground for Dissent or infidelity.²⁵³ Yet two lately provided Commissioners' churches, St John in 1840 and St Mark in 1848, provided over 2000 additional seats and 31% of the creditable 36% Anglican percentage share of worshippers in 1851.²⁵⁴ They may have outperformed Gilmour Robinson's Tockholes St Stephen's. The clerical remuneration at Dukinfield was handsome, at £254 and £183. Did it signify in these cases? A very different context surrounded Chatham in Kent, a naval dockyard town and

²⁴⁸ Maynard, 'The Response of the Church of England', 442-3, 445,453,455.

²⁴⁹ P.Rycroft, 'Church, Chapel and Community in Craven', 4,7,280, 312.

²⁵⁰ G.L.Carr, 'The Commissioners' Churches of London, 1818-37: A Study of Religious Art, Architecture and Patronage in Britain from the Formation of the Commission to the Accession of Victoria', unpublished University of Michigan PhD thesis (1976), vi.

²⁵¹ Carr, 'The Commissioners Churches of London', 3.

²⁵² Carr, 'The Commissioners' Churches of London', 714-5.

²⁵³ K.Navickas, *Protest and the Politics of Space and Place 1789-1848* (Manchester, 2016) 158; R.B.Walker, 'Religious Changes in Cheshire, 1750-1850' *JEH* 17 (April, 1966), 88,90.

²⁵⁴ TNA, HO129/474/48,49, Religious Census 1851

parish with extra Anglican chapels for sailors on shore and in an establishment county. There was just one Commissioners' church by 1851 out of eight Anglican places of worship which collectively took a 70% share of all worshippers. Although comprising about a third of the Anglican accommodation the Commissioners' church attracted just over 20% of the Anglican adherents and was half full.²⁵⁵ Therefore, was it better to be in a safe establishment county or be like Robinson in Tockholes, surrounded by Dissent but manifestly successful? The range of experience across these few samples may only serve to emphasise the variation between individual churches and suggest the importance of the local case study.

e) The Impact of the Commissioners' Churches: A Summary

The case studies revealed divergence in the narratives of the three churches. All three churches could be termed successful in relative denominational terms, although Chorley St George had to await a continued increasing population, a freer hand and some committed leadership before it made a serious mark some seventy years subsequent to its foundation. The sample churches 'arrived' at different times. All eventually became hubs for functioning parishes and community life. If the Church of England was to be a national church for the whole community, provision, massively increased in Chorley due to the arrival of St George's, the first planting of the Established Church in Tyldesley and the replenishing and extension of seats in Tockholes, was important in itself. In performance terms, the building of a 40% share of worshippers in Tyldesley and a major reversal of fortunes in Tockholes, bore testament to what Commissioners' churches were capable of in one generation.

The glance forward to the end of the nineteenth century was useful, noticing Chorley St George's delayed success. It also revealed the maintenance of a Tockholes church in the face of a diminishing population and the continuation of Tyldesley St George, creating a comfortable congregation rather than stating the case for a national church. The changes to church plan and liturgy in Chorley St George by 1900, show that the orthodox Protestantism of the Word had shifted towards more sacramental worship, another

²⁵⁵ LA, HO129/54/80.

divergence from original perceptions of the role of the churches. In these studies it appears that a continuous committed clerical leadership, untrammelled by inferior parochial status were the main factors behind success. The clergy's background did not seem to matter. In Craven Deanery there was some local resistance to clerical leaders from 'outside';²⁵⁶ Robinson's Kentish origins, Whitaker's Norfolk connection, Whittaker's Cambridge background and Robson's Northumberland birth, do not seem to have dulled their missions. Neither did the lack of a university education hamper Robson or Robinson. University educated clergy did not avoid these churches. The five ministers serving Lower Darwen were all graduates.²⁵⁷ This aspect did not enhance performance in that church.

A differentiated pattern of success and progress in the sample townships, appears broadly true of the wider sample taken in other townships in south central Lancashire and beyond. In explaining relative performance, background conditioning factors, such as the recent quick growth of a quarrying and mining community in Pemberton or the inhibiting force of long traditions of Dissent in east Lancashire or Catholicism around Preston and Chorley, were important, but the role of the individual, like Revd Rigg who stayed and worked hard for a score of years, emerges at Preston St Paul's as it did at Tyldesley and Tockholes.²⁵⁸ These committed individuals worked from the hub that was the church. It is unwise to claim too much for the Commissioners' churches themselves, given the range of factors promoting the Anglican assertion and the cap on its overall success revealed in 1851. Nonetheless, it would be fair to say that the Commissioners' churches enhanced the presence of the established church in Lancashire and it would have been considerably less complete, visible and potent without their contribution. Contributory to this success, the buildings themselves in their timing, siting, numbers, size and design, were important, not least because they spoke about the nature of the parish community their supporters aspired to and the confident ambition of the Anglican church.

²⁵⁶ Rycroft 'Church, Chapel and Community in Craven', 300, 318.

²⁵⁷ MA, MSf942.72 r121. Archdeacon Rushton's Visitation, 1845-6, vol 4, 97-98.

²⁵⁸ Revd. E. Hudson, *St Paul's Preston* (Preston, 1926), 19.

CHAPTER SEVEN: THE WIDER IMPACT - CONFLICT AND CONFUSION?

a) Conflict, Confusion and Cohesion

The key theme to be addressed by the chapter is the extent to which the Commissioners' churches caused conflict and confusion, or conversely promoted community culture and cohesion. The initiative saw very large buildings suddenly thrust into Tyldesley and Chorley, with a less grand but nevertheless noticeable one constructed in Tockholes. The churches were built with the express aim of reclaiming Dissenters from their conventicles. This forward policy, which I have described elsewhere as a type of 'counter-reformation', might well have tended to provoke concern and resistance amidst Dissenters, who already held a series of issues relating to their civil rights. In addition there would be a general perception that the Commissioners' churches were new and externally provided. Moreover, as further Anglican churches, Commissioners' included, were established, ecclesiastical districts would be altered, possibly confusing existing community identities. Nonetheless there might be benefits arising from the construction of the churches which would work in favour of, rather than against, community cohesion. The Commissioners' churches in building a constituency would create new voluntary associations.

b) Conflict

As Snell put it, 'The campaign in England to abolish church rates probably started as a consequence of the 1818 Act.'¹ Nationally and regionally there was serious contention over church rates, especially in 1827 and 1837. The total amount raised by rates came to £446,247 in 1839, only a twelfth of Church of England revenue and a relatively small amount in comparison with a county rate of £761,901 and Poor Rates of £8,622, 920.² However it was irksome because the justification for existing rates lay in common law and was hard to avoid. The 1818 statute provided that any new districts were to be maintained from the rates and their inhabitants were also required to pay rates to the original parish church for a period of twenty years. The likelihood of a church rate being levied was bolstered by the Sturges Bourne Acts of 1818-19 which allowed property owners additional

¹ K.D.M.Snell, *Parish and Belonging* (Cambridge, 2006), 419.

² J.P.Ellens, *Religious Routes to Gladstonian Liberalism. The Church Rate Conflict in England and Wales, 1832-1868* (Philadelphia, 1994), 16.

votes in vestry according to the amount of property. The second Church Building Act of 1819 allowed for the administration of a new church to be in the hands of a select vestry appointed by the Church Building Commissioners.³ Apart from any resultant monetary imposition on Dissenters who had their own chapels to maintain, there were by 1830 an increasing number of Congregationalists, Baptists and Free Presbyterians who objected to paying rates to any established church and held to voluntaryism in principle.⁴

The mere prospect of new churches, with an attendant increase in rates, provoked resistance in London, the West Riding of Yorkshire and Manchester between 1818 and 1822.⁵

Although Smith found that empathy between Evangelical churchmen and Protestant Dissenters led to some co-operation in Oldham in the early nineteenth century, there were clashes in the West Riding, Sheffield and Lancashire from 1827 when the reality of maintaining the new churches became manifest.⁶ Later, church rates were only imposed in Manchester in 1833 and 1834, following a scrutiny of polls in order to overturn rejection of a levy in open meeting. Voluntary rates became the practice from 1835.⁷ Also in the 1830s Whig legislative attempts to substitute alternative funding were unsatisfactory to either those supporting or opposing the establishment. After 1844 some Dissenter energies were diverted into the Anti-State Church Association (later the Liberation Society) which focused on disestablishment rather than remedying the specific grievance of church rates.⁸ In 1853 the Braintree Decision by the House of Lords finally allowed a majority decision in a vestry to refuse to set any rate and compulsory, or church rates levied by common law, were abolished in 1868.⁹ Interestingly a spirit of compromise prevailed in 1868; Evangelical, Broad and old High Church supporters in the House of Lords won amendments which prevented Dissenters being excluded from proposed separate meetings

³ Ellens, *Religious Routes*, 15.

⁴ Ellens, *Religious Routes*, 7, 19-20.

⁵ W.R. Ward, *Religion and Society in England 1790-1850* (London, 1972), 111, 178; M.H. Port *Six Hundred New Churches* (2nd ed., Reading, 2006), 52-4, 249.

⁶ M. Smith, *Religion in Industrial Society* (Oxford, 1994), 229; Port, *Six Hundred New Churches* 2nd ed., 250-1.

⁷ Ellens, *Religious Routes*, 23, 28-30; K. Navickas, *Protest and the Politics of Space and Place, 1789-1848* (Manchester, 2016), 156-8.

⁸ Ellens, *Religious Routes*, 71.

⁹ Ellens, *Religious Routes*, 72, 263.

for levying voluntary rates or electing churchwardens. They feared Ritualists might dominate a closed meeting.¹⁰

Discord in Lancashire beyond Manchester arose in 1827. Serious dissension about payment of rates came only as the ‘parliamentary’ churches came on stream and required equipment and maintenance.¹¹ Chorley and Tyldesley were to experience several contests involving the levying of a rate, the amount of it, the budget accounts the rate was designed to meet and the election of churchwardens to administer it.

Date	Township	Issue	Challenger	Outcome
21 November 1822	Chorley	Church rate to purchase burial ground for new church	J.C.Crook (Catholic) and J.Wilkinson	Ground to be purchased solely by subscription
16 August 1827	Chorley	Church rate for repairs to St.Laurence’s and St. George’s; repayment of loan for burial ground to Commission	Abraham Turner (Catholic millowner)	Rate rejected by show of hands but carried by later poll
19 December 1833	Tyldesley	2 1/4d rate opposed; amendment to adjourn for 1 year	T. Isherwood and J.Buckley , Dissenters	Amendment carried by show of hands. Poll carried rate
14 January 1836	Tyldesley	Proposal for 1d rate met by adjournment amendment	Not stated	Poll carried rate 157-92.
27 March 1837	Chorley	Abraham Turner elected churchwarden	Catholic supporters of Turner	Poll overturned Turner’s election 342-173
April 1837	Tyldesley	Rejection of 1d church rate	J. Langridge, Dissenting minister	Rate carried by poll 226-186 (majority adjusted to 23 post scrutiny)
6 October 1837	Chorley	Churchwardens’ accounts rejected	Not stated	Poll arranged but no voters appeared.
13 October 1837	Chorley	3d rate for repairs to St. Laurence’s and St. George’s to be adjourned for 1 year	Revd. Clarke and Dissenters	Amendment carried on show of hands. Poll later carried rate 749-600
16 April 1838	Chorley	T. Gillibrand (Dissenter) elected churchwarden	2 weavers	Show of hands 46-31 in favour of Gillibrand. Poll reversed decision.
4 June 1852	Tyldesley	1d rate reduced to 1/2d on amendment	Not stated	1/2d rate taken
26 May 1853	Tyldesley	1d rate reduced to 1/2d on amendment	Caleb Wright, Unitarian millowner	Amendment not passed
May 1854	Tyldesley	Rate to be voluntary	Not stated	Voluntary rate agreed and used thereafter

Table 7.1 Tension Points in Chorley and Tyldesley Vestries 1820- 1856.

Sources:: LA DDX1861/1 Chorley Vestry Town Book, SGT Tyldesley Churchwardens’ Accounts,; *Preston Pilot*, *Preston Chronicle*, *Manchester Courier*.

¹⁰ Ellens, *Religious Routes*, 247-8, 262.

¹¹ *Bolton Chronicle*, 1 September 1827; *Preston Pilot*, 29 September 1827; *Blackburn Times*, 10 September 1827.

The Chorley rate of 1827 received detailed local press coverage, allowing a closer look at the interests brought to bear and the possible motives behind these. By 1827 there had been four successive years of church rates, with £7000 accrued. An attempt to move the raising of a church rate on 16th August was strongly opposed by Catholic millowner Abraham Turner, seconded by James Ormston, one of a body of weavers who suddenly appeared at vestry meeting.¹² The meeting was adjourned until October when the rate was refused on show of hands and a poll was demanded by the defeated churchmen. Following the Anglican victory in the poll, the leaders made a great attempt at avoiding triumphalism, even retiring with some opponents to Chorley's Royal Oak for welcome evening refreshment.¹³

An interesting feature of this clash is that it was initiated by the Catholic interest in Chorley, supported by James Crook who had also appeared as 'adviser' in the Blackburn rate controversy.¹⁴ He hailed from Middlesex but was a resident lawyer in Chorley and furnished awkward questions in vestry well into the 1850s.¹⁵ Given the numerical strength of Catholics in and around Chorley, this was understandable. Wolffe has described the several attempts at Protestant association against Catholic Emancipation, such as the short-lived Protestant Union of 1813 and the Reformation Society of 1827.¹⁶ The latter aimed at a 'Second Reformation' which might even secure Catholic converts in Ireland.¹⁷ However, Chorley normally revealed a practical tolerance by the Anglican clergy towards the 'old' Catholics. Robert Master of Croston accused Oliver Cooper of several sins and one was of 'having Catholic friends.'¹⁸ Ironically Robert Master's own son and grandson displayed similar tendencies. Streysham Master, rector of Croston from 1798 found himself financially embarrassed and took service as chaplain to the British embassy in Belgium. He returned from thence with the *Blackburn Mail* congratulating him on developing good relations with all sides of the religious spectrum in Brussels¹⁹. His son Robert Mosley Master, briefly curate at Chorley was presented with silver plate on his removal to Burnley.

¹² *Preston Chronicle*, 30 August, 1 September, 8 September 1827.

¹³ *Preston Chronicle*, *Preston Pilot*, 13 October, 20 October 1827.

¹⁴ *Preston Chronicle*, 29 September 1827.

¹⁵ TNA, HO107/525/1, Population Census 1841, HO107/2262, Census 1851; *Preston Chronicle*, 9 July 1859.

¹⁶ J. Wolffe, *The Protestant Crusade in Great Britain 1829-1860* (Oxford, 1991), 27, 29.

¹⁷ Wolffe, *Protestant Crusade*, 33.

¹⁸ LA, PR3120/2/7, R. Smith to R. Master, 20 October 1771.

¹⁹ LA, PR1316, Croston Parish Papers, 27 October 1820; PR1319, Croston Parish Papers, 20 November, 1825, Streysham Master's Sale and Recovery of Lands; *Blackburn Mail*, 15 May 1826.

Again the press noticed that the Catholic interest was perfectly content to join in donations, tributes and farewell gatherings for the departing curate. The *Blackburn Mail* quoted him recognising, ‘The kindest co-operation from individuals of every party and every denomination in town. ...May liberal feeling continue preventing any difference of religious opinion from interrupting the good offices of civil life.’ He tactfully referred to ‘friends of the Roman Catholic persuasion’ and ‘conscientious dissenters from our own church’, which was a gentle way of putting things.²⁰ His brother and successor at Chorley, James Master, also normally worked hard to build up the same conciliatory image. His obituary stated there was ‘never an unkind word to those differing. ...he was an embodiment of a fine old English gentleman.’²¹ When Chorley set up a select vestry in 1824, purely for Poor Law matters, the chair was almost invariably the rector but membership reflected the sectarian spread in Chorley.²²

The relative calm of this Lancashire interior requires some explanation.²³ It is not simply that ‘some at Chorley have been asleep so long’ as an agitated ‘Amorphus’ wrote in a letter to the *Preston Pilot* in 1827.²⁴ Commissioners’ churches were originally an Orthodox High Church project and clergy may have been reluctant to join with the evangelical activists in the Protestant Union or the later Reformation Society.²⁵ Another explanation is that the Catholic gentlemen known to the Chorley churchmen seemed socially more acceptable than the adherents of Methodist chapels or a radical incomer such as the Unitarian minister William Tate, who had protested forcibly over Dissenters being given a place behind Chorley’s Catholics in the procession to celebrate George IV’s coronation in 1821.²⁶ Many of the smaller country houses ringing Chorley had long been owned by quiet Catholic gentlemen such as the Andertons of Euxton, the Rigbys and Chadwicks of Burgh or Worthington of Blainscough.²⁷ Lord of half of the old Chorley manor, Thomas Gillibrand was also a Catholic, although there is a local tradition that he lapsed towards the end of his

²⁰ *Blackburn Mail*, 17 January 1827.

²¹ *Chorley Guardian*, 4 January 1879.

²² LA, DDX1861 Box 2, Chorley Vestry Town Book, 28 April 1824, 4 October 1826.

²³ Wolffe, *Protestant Crusade*, 56.

²⁴ *Preston Pilot*, 20 October 1827.

²⁵ Wolffe, *Protestant Crusade*, 36,40, 61.

²⁶ ChL, J2 CO1, Ephemera File, “The Protest of William Tate”, 19 July 1821.

²⁷ T.C.Gillett, *The Story of Weld Bank* (Chorley, 1974), 25.

life.²⁸ Local Catholics had done much to emphasise their loyalty to the Crown, for example in 1793, deploying a performance of the Messiah and the Coronation Anthem to celebrate the birthday of George III on the occasion of opening their new chapel in Preston.²⁹ The spread of Irish immigrants beyond Liverpool and Manchester was not a marked feature until after 1820.³⁰

The general vestry minutes show some prior points at issue in Chorley. In 1820 there was an expressed reluctance to spend on mourning cloth for the duke of York given the outlay on the occasion of Princess Charlotte's funeral two years previously.³¹ In 1822 the Catholic attenders insisted no rates be used to provide a burial yard for the forthcoming chapel of ease. However, previous to the spectacular row about rates in 1827 no real quarrel had been initiated by churchman or Catholic. In that year the rector's curate and nephew was determined to carry the rate. He needed it to avoid a mounting bill for repairs at the mother church and fencing at the new chapel. James Master was spotted at the National School urging the youngsters to turn their parents out to vote. Sympathetic mill owners were detailed to march supporters to the town hall.³² Whether or not Master used uncharacteristic anti-papist language to stir emotions was hotly debated at the time. Certainly he did not attempt to control the intemperate Thomas Birkett, temporary curate at St George's. Revd. Birkett seemed keen to stir the fears of what he termed a Catholic plot. He aimed personal criticism at Crook's Jesuit education at Stonyhurst.³³ Thomas Birkett's appearance is significant and revealing. He is almost certainly the same Thomas Birkett who was involved in a long running court case between 1822 and 1824, enforcing his right to the cure of Astley in Leigh Parish. The leading inhabitants claimed the customary right of presenting their own candidate and barred Birkett, who responded with litigation and a forlorn attempt to summon assistance from central government.³⁴ Birkett's notes on a copy of his opponents' memorandum indicate a classic case of a representative of the landed

²⁸ Gillett, *Story of Weld Bank*, 63-4.

²⁹ *Blackburn Mail*, 12 June 1793.

³⁰ Wolffe, *Protestant Crusade*, 16.

³¹ LA, DDX1861/1, Chorley Vestry Town Book, 10 February 1820.

³² *Preston Pilot*, 13 October 1827.

³³ *Preston Chronicle*, 13 October 1827.

³⁴ MA, MSf.942.72 r121, Archdeacon Rushton's Visitation 1845, vol 35, 46; BL, Add MS 40368, Peel Papers, Birkett to Peel, 7 September 1824.; J.Lunn, *History of Leigh* (Manchester, 1950), 173.

Anglican Tories at odds with the Dissenting radical small manufacturers and shopkeepers.³⁵ Birkett eventually won his case at appeal but had no chance of residing at Astley. In 1830 he was presented to a living at South Tawton in Devon but for a time assisted at Chorley, the Clerical Register listing him as 'Thomas Burkett'.³⁶ He certainly added spice to the proceedings in Chorley during 1827.

The Catholic position was not extreme or unreasonable. Crook made it plain he was not against extending burial grounds, nor even new Anglican churches- where they were needed, which was a clear reference to the recent arrival of the under-used St George's chapel of ease. He built his case purely on retrenchment; the churchwardens had been wasteful in buying expensive plate for St Laurence's and superior iron railings for St George's. A more fundamental point was his charge that the absentee rector, John Whalley Master, should have been able to find the funding to assist the additional expense.³⁷

The role of the leading Dissenters during the vestry debates of 1827 is also interesting. Events nationally and locally since 1790 had demonstrated the growing distinctness between Protestants who were churchmen and those of Old and New Dissent.³⁸ As with the Catholics, the approach of Oliver Cooper, and Robert Whalley Master to most of Dissent was normally tolerant. It was outside influences, the clerical magistrates Robert Master of Croston and Baldwin of Leyland who had attempted to have respected Presbyterian magistrate Abraham Crompton of Chorley Hall examined in 1793 for the treasonable intent in unguarded off hand comments about the future of Lords and King whilst chatting in the Chorley coffee chamber.³⁹ Chorley folk, such as Lt. Harrison of the Bolton Association, had stood up for Crompton. In vestry and local politics the leading Dissenters had to be managed. Thus when a quasi standing committee was appointed in 1806, leading Methodist Richard Smethurst Senior was included.⁴⁰ In 1816 he was a member of a sub committee seeking and managing shares for a potential chapel of ease.⁴¹ In 1811 the Charity school

³⁵ BL. Add MS 40368 f.114,115, Peel Papers, Birkett's Copy of Letter from Astley Committee, 31 July 1824.

³⁶ *The Clerical Guide and Ecclesiastical Registry*. 1829 and 1836, 197; *Preston Pilot*, 2 October 1830.

³⁷ *Preston Chronicle*, 13 October 1827; *Preston Pilot*, 13 October 1827.

³⁸ A.D. Gilbert, *Religion and Society in Industrial England* (London, 1976), 11; K.Navickas, *Loyalism and Radicalism in Lancashire* (Oxford, 2009), 19, 97.

³⁹ www.jjhc.info/crompton.abraham.18xx.htm. Depositions re Crompton, 1792-3.

⁴⁰ LA, DDX1861/1 Chorley Vestry Town Book, 7 April 1806.

⁴¹ Chorley Town Book, 21 March 1816.

management included Presbyterian Abraham Crompton.⁴² It had to be accepted in 1810, after representation from the Dissenting interest, that a clock for St Laurence's should be provided solely by public subscription and in 1811 that a new church should also be funded by subscription.⁴³ At a different social level there had been the appearance of a Church and King mob in Chorley in 1793 but no notable conflict since, despite the Anglican take over of the charity school in 1821.⁴⁴

In 1827, James Master prepared his response for the October vestry meeting by prior arrangement with some of the Protestant Dissenters, for it was Lee Lee, a Congregationalist mill owner and Nathaniel Brownbill, erstwhile agent for Presbyterian Abraham Crompton, who proposed the raising of the church rate.⁴⁵ The same men, along with Congregationalist manufacturer John Cairns, appeared as willing allies in the committee of the newly designated National school.⁴⁶ The Protestant Dissenters were not particularly in favour of a tax 'for another sect' as Brownbill put it, yet felt it was a matter of local honour to pay the debt the township's vestry had contracted through the loan from the Commissioners. Furthermore, as he openly admitted, there was also the small matter of the expected Repeal of the Test and Corporation Acts which was a prize and a price within grasp.⁴⁷ In addition, Brownbill had built up a career as land agent for Chorley's wealthy of all denominations and was sometimes paid official of the vestry as highway surveyor, assistant overseer of the poor and for a time, township clerk. In 1817 he was commissioned to draw up a plan for the proposed new church.⁴⁸ Lee and Brownbill must not be seen as representatives of Chorley Dissent in general. Lee was barred from membership at Hollinshead Street Congregational Chapel for taking a pew at St Laurence's and later was largely instrumental in founding a breakaway chapel from Hollinshead Street.⁴⁹ There was not the same degree of co-operation between Dissenters and Evangelical churchmen that Smith found in Oldham.⁵⁰

⁴² Chorley Town Book, 6 November 1811.

⁴³ Chorley Town Book, 21 June 1810, 5 September 1811.

⁴⁴ *Preston Review and County Advertiser*, 6 July 1793; LA, PR3123/11/2, St George's School Minutes, 7 June 1821.

⁴⁵ *Preston Pilot*, 13 October 1827.

⁴⁶ Chorley Town Book, 5 March 1819.

⁴⁷ *Preston Pilot*, 13 October 1827.

⁴⁸ Chorley Town Book, 15 August 1805, 24 April 1817, 12 June 1817.

⁴⁹ LA, CUCh 3/1, An Account of St George's Street Chapel, 1835-1837.

⁵⁰ M. Smith, *Religion in Industrial Society* (Oxford, 1994), 229.

There were further contests regarding church rates in 1837 and 1838, as there were attempts to elect a Catholic or Protestant churchwarden.⁵¹ 1837 saw the first serious challenge by Dissenters against the rate. This is hardly surprising as there was a wide campaign over Lancashire against a compulsory rate.⁵² The interest and competition must have been intense in Chorley judging by the high turnout at poll. There was clear evidence of factory workers being propelled by partisan employers to vote and also that multiple votes based on property values favoured the churchmen over the Dissenters.⁵³

Having noted Jacob Robson's determined and successful effort to set up a select vestry in Tyldesley it is surprising to find no record of the meetings of such a body. Possibly these are lost or it acted purely as an executive committee for the church. Given the total absence of any reference in the press, it is more probable that it never met. What is clear from the churchwardens' accounts is that a general vestry operated, met at times in addition to the annual meeting and could be a ground for debate with Dissent. In the first half of the nineteenth century, Catholics were numerically insignificant in Tyldesley and so do not feature as in Chorley. The issue over rates may have taken some time to intensify because the church leadership themselves were reluctant to raise rates to assist maintenance at the mother church and happy to plead poverty in their township. Nevertheless by 1833 there are attempts to adjourn the rate in Tyldesley.⁵⁴ The significant battle came, once again, in 1837 and was led by Revd. John Langridge of the Countess of Huntingdon chapel who had done much to stiffen Dissenter resistance in the face of Jacob Robson's attempt to reclaim the chapel congregations for the Church.⁵⁵ Eventually the rate was levied but not before a poll for which a hostile account records 'the church party swept every hole and corner of the factories and coal pits'.⁵⁶ There were no further overt signs of disagreement until 1852-3 when Caleb Wright, a Unitarian millowner and future Liberal politician, sought a slight reduction in a proposed penny rate.⁵⁷

⁵¹ *Preston Chronicle*, 21 October 1837, 1 December 1838; LA DX1861/2, Chorley Poll Book, 27 March 1837, 13 October 1837, 16 April 1838, 22 November 1838.

⁵² J.K. Walton, *Lancashire, A Social History 1558-1939* (Manchester, 1987), 137.

⁵³ LA, DDX1861/Box 2, Chorley Pollbook, 13 October 1837.

⁵⁴ SGT, Churchwardens' Accounts, 19 December 1833.

⁵⁵ SGT, Churchwardens' Accounts, 13 April 1837.

⁵⁶ *Manchester Times and Gazette*, 22 April 1837.

⁵⁷ SGC, Churchwardens' Accounts, 4 June 1852, 26 May 1853.

A more strident confrontation between Dissenter and churchman might be expected after the establishment of St Stephen's, Tockholes. The Independents were well established in the township. Middle Chapel dated from 1710. An analysis, from the 1851 census, of the birthplaces of the Independents noted in the 1844 Population Survey show that the vast majority were Tockholes residents from birth. 27% of the sixty three identifiable heads of households hailed from outside the township but over 60% of these came from the contiguous townships of Darwen, Withnell and Livesey. All originated from within ten miles, apart from the minister from St Helens This is in partial contrast to the 40% non-Independent household heads born outside the township, although 66% of these were from the aforementioned contiguous townships.⁵⁸ Gilmour Robinson's avowed intent of reversing the fortunes of the two denominations and his evident glee at seeing the Middle Chapel incumbent depart soon after his own arrival, may have caused resentment within the core of a religious community well rooted in its practice and belief.⁵⁹

That turbulence was less than it might have been was due to the absence of a church rate. The mother parish of Blackburn saw mass assembly and some rioting over the issue of a general church rate in 1827 and marked distaste for paying towards the upkeep of 'parliamentary churches' in 1832-33.⁶⁰ To Dissenters and some churchmen it appeared that the Commissioners' churches had been imposed upon them and had nothing to do with the Blackburn Parish. Dissenter George Dewhurst, inveighing at vestry against Church extravagance, considered the parliamentary churches must belong to the churchwardens at St Mary's or the Commissioners.⁶¹ Tockholes itself, despite the obvious battle for attendances initiated by Gilmour Robinson, saw no tension whatsoever about rates. Robinson could not discover when a church rate had last been applied and did not trouble to claim one on behalf of his own chapel or for St Mary's, the mother church in Blackburn.⁶² As Chapter Five shows, he was resourceful in finding other sources for maintenance.

Even in the combative Robinson's day, there had to be realism and practical co-operation. The negotiations concerning the possible purchase of Bethesda Chapel from the

⁵⁸ LA, PR2765/2b, Tockholes Population Book 1844; Census, Tockholes 1851.

⁵⁹ LA, PR1549/29/9, Tockholes Coucher Book, Robinson to Whittaker, 5 December 1831.

⁶⁰ D.Beattie, *A History of Blackburn* (Lancaster, 2007), 175.

⁶¹ *Blackburn Gazette*, 5 September 1832.

⁶² CERC, ECE7/1/15217/2, Tockholes Church Building File, Robinson to CBC, 12 August 1836.

Independent secessionists in 1832 and 1839 required at least some polite and honourable contact. It is noteworthy that the trustees of the proven Dissenters of Bethesda were willing to consider very seriously the prospect of selling their place of worship to the established church.⁶³ The distribution of the London Manufacturers' Fund during the 1842 slump was in the joint hands of Robinson and Thomas Sefton, the long serving overseer of the poor and committed Dissenter.⁶⁴ Gilmour Robinson would gain some general respect due to his participation at Waterloo and his medical service- there is no evidence the latter was used in a way to discriminate against non Anglicans, even though what meagre patronage he held was. He was believed to treat all men well.⁶⁵ He suppressed his distaste for stepping into or near a Dissenter chapel when attending Revd. Abram's funeral in 1852.⁶⁶ Subsequent to Robinson's time, co-operation was apparent in the cotton famine of the 1860s, although the two camps could not co-operate on the provision of a common First World War Memorial.⁶⁷

The depth of feeling in the 1827 Chorley controversy was largely to do with the personalities involved. James Crook was clearly a Catholic activist, a kind of Lancastrian Daniel O'Connell. Crook was still resident in Chorley in 1859 and asking awkward questions about the enlargement of Chorley St Laurence.⁶⁸ Thomas Birkett, fresh from a costly court controversy with Dissenters in Astley, proved very capable in fanning the flames from the other side. Much as John Bright was necessary to heighten the debate over rates in Rochdale from 1837, Unitarian Caleb Wright proved a doughty if moderate opponent to anything but a voluntary church rate in Tyldesley in 1853.⁶⁹ Between 1818 and 1853 the years of serious contention were fewer than years when a low rate charge was quietly passed or no rate attempted at all. Smith found that some Dissenters happily paid church rates in Oldham and if Cairns and Lee were prepared to help move a rate in Chorley in 1827 they would pay too. James Crook, it seems, would have paid a 'reasonable' rate.⁷⁰ Therefore, in the sample townships, conflict with Dissents was not endemic or usual.

⁶³ LA, PR1549/29/9, Tockholes Coucher Book, Robinson to Whittaker, 5 December 1831.

⁶⁴ LA, PR3149/2/1, Cash Book London Manufacturers' Relief Fund, 1841-2.

⁶⁵ *Preston Chronicle*, 3 January 1857.

⁶⁶ *Blackburn Standard*, 6 May 1852.

⁶⁷ J.C Jacklin and L.M.Robinson, *Tockholes, A Time Warp* (Blackburn, 2003), 68.

⁶⁸ *Preston Chronicle*, 9 July 1859,

⁶⁹ SGT, Vestry Cupboard, Tyldesley Churchwardens' Accounts, 31 May 1853.

⁷⁰ Smith, *Religion in Industrial Society*, 241; *Preston Chronicle*, 13 October 1827.

Similarly Chorley, Tyldesley and Tockholes were never part of the ‘Protestant Crusade’, which in any event Wolffe has shown to be sporadic and disunited.⁷¹ There was interest in the efforts of the ‘Second Reformation’ in Ireland in the 1820s but no real aspiration that conversion of local Catholics was possible. Thus the idea of the strengthened parishes as creators of a unified Protestant state, as outlined by Brown, was limited in reality.⁷² There was potential opportunity in Chorley where there was a strong ‘old’ catholic presence and newer in-migrants by 1841, yet no branch of the Reformation Society or Protestant Association. Tyldesley was close to the Salford base of Howell and the Astley church of Hewlett but Jacob Robson remained detached from aggressive Protestantism. Again, the personality of the local leaders was crucial. By 1850, in South Lancashire it was clear voluntary rates were the only option. Bolton had adopted such a stance from 1832.⁷³ Tyldesley did so from 1854.⁷⁴ St Peter’s Chorley, consecrated in 1852, only ever used voluntary rates.⁷⁵ As the frontier warriors amongst churchmen realised by 1851 that total triumph might be desirable but impossible and several, if not all, great causes of Dissent had been settled, denominational rivalry tended to replace sectarian strife. In Chorley, during the Cotton Famine of the 1860s, all denominations supported the Relief Committee headed by the rector.⁷⁶

With regard to the Catholic presence the situation went beyond church rates and civil rights. It might have been expected that Commissioners’ churches, founded as a key element of Anglican assertion and designed for orthodox worship could have been significant bases for agitation against both Catholic claims and ritualist practices. Ireland was close to Lancashire. Orange lodges were one result of Lancastrians returning from service in Ireland during the rebellion of 1798. Increasing numbers of Irish were arriving for seasonal and then permanent work, especially due to the steamship services after 1820. They swelled Catholic numbers and were not as familiar as the older Catholic community in Lancashire. The reduction of Church of Ireland bishoprics in 1833 and grants in support of Catholic education in Ireland inflamed Protestant fears for their church and

⁷¹ J.Wolffe, *The Protestant Crusade in Great Britain 1829-1860* (Oxford, 1991), 61, 84,143, 247, 292-4.

⁷² S.J.Brown, *The National Churches*, (Oxford, 2001), vi.

⁷³ *Preston Pilot*, 25 March 1837.

⁷⁴ SGT, Churchwardens’ Accounts ,1854.

⁷⁵ LA, PR3125/5/1, St Peter’s Chorley Vestry Minutes, April 1870.

⁷⁶ *Chorley Standard*, 10 September 1864.

the Union. English converts to Catholicism became a cause for alarm. Later the establishment of the Catholic hierarchy in 1850 seemed a direct provocation to the Anglican church.⁷⁷ Lord George Kenyon, supporter of the establishment of Tyldesley St George, was chair of the Protestant Association of 1835 and prominent in the National Club of 1846.⁷⁸ After 1840, pastors such as McNeile in Liverpool and Hugh Stowell in Salford were strong local leaders of assertive Protestantism, Stowell calling for the reversal of Emancipation.⁷⁹ There was also tension over “Catholic” practices or ritualism within the Anglican church.⁸⁰ Alfred Hewlett of Astley became a ringleader against the James Irvine, the Ritualist vicar of Leigh and was instrumental in the founding of the strictly Protestant Pennington Church in 1854.⁸¹

It was not inevitable that there would be Protestant-Catholic conflict in the nineteenth century. Sutherland has shown how reaction to enhanced Catholic presence in Birmingham was more moderate than that in Liverpool.⁸² Even in Ulster, Holmes argues that the joint Presbyterian- Anglican ‘anti-Catholic frame of mind’ only formed in the 1850s.⁸³ In south central Lancashire of the early nineteenth century there was no common position held by ministers in Commissioners’ churches. The stance of a particular incumbent seems to have been the deciding element. Jacob Robson in Tyldesley did not show any sign of being caught up in either anti-ritualist or anti-Catholic meetings. This was possibly due to a natural diffidence but also to a shrewd avoidance of extreme positions and taking up a stance as spokesman for the general mass of people in his district parish. His one involvement in wider issues was signing second on the list of Leigh clergy petitioning against Russell’s appointment of the liberal theologian Hampden to the see of Hereford in 1847.⁸⁴ Tockholes contained no Catholics to provoke dissension. In 1829 Whittaker in Blackburn had attempted to draw local Catholic priests into public debate and in 1835

⁷⁷ Wolffe, *The Protestant Crusade*, 79-81, 86, 251.

⁷⁸ *The Protestant Crusade*, 89,199.

⁷⁹ C.S.Ford, *Pastors and Polemicists. The Character of Popular Anglicanism in South East Lancashire 1847-1914* (Manchester, 2002) ,40,49; Wolffe, *Protestant Crusade*, 171.

⁸⁰ Ford, *Pastors and Polemicists*, 65-69.

⁸¹ *Manchester Courier*, 17 June 1854.

⁸² P.Sutherland, ‘Sectarianism and Evangelicalism in Birmingham and Liverpool 1850-2010’ in J.Wolffe (ed.), *Protestant-Catholic Conflict from the Reformation to the Twenty First century. The Dynamics of Religious Difference* (Basingstoke, 2013), 133-7, 139.

⁸³ A.R.Holmes, ‘Religious Conflict in Ulster c.1780-1886’ in J.Wolffe, (ed.), *Protestant and Catholic Conflict*, 105,115,125.

⁸⁴ *Manchester Courier*, 22 December 1847.

penned a series of articles challenging the future cardinal Wiseman but his activity did not draw in the Tockholes ministers.⁸⁵ Chorley, as we have seen, had clerics in the early nineteenth century who, apart from when combat arose over an issue like church rates in 1827, enjoyed good relations with their neighbours.⁸⁶ This does not mean that there was always religious peace. At street level, there could be serious tensions. In 1869 there were elements of the Chorley St George's Walking Day procession that prevailed upon the hired Orange band to play provocative Protestant tunes as they passed known 'Catholic streets' and several days of skirmish ensued.⁸⁷ Such events were exceptional. C.S. Ford has shown how generally Anglicanism in Manchester diocese gradually mellowed by 1900 and there was a growing acceptance that a robust and decent Catholic church was here to stay.⁸⁸

A provisional conclusion would be that the Commissioners' churches increased the possibilities of conflict, although in the case of the Catholic community the flashpoints were also provoked by events external to the founding of new Anglican places of worship. Nonetheless, workable solutions were found to most problems. There was a kind of practical toleration.

c) Tension Between Anglican Churches

Although not as severe as inter sectarian conflict, tension also existed within the established church as a result of the Commissioners' programme. A root cause was the varying status of the new churches in relation to the mother parish. In the 1820s, at origin the majority would be no more than chapels of ease. Power and responsibilities were gradually added. Archdeacon Rushton calculated that by 1846 there were seven separate legal statuses. They comprised: endowed parish totally separated from the old parish; district parish (as Tyldesley was); consolidated chapelry under 1819 Act; consolidated chapelry under 1846 Act; parochial or district chapelries (as Tockholes was and Chorley St George became in 1835 and the vast majority of new churches in Chester Diocese were); chapels built,

⁸⁵ CHTL, 4C6.6 (2), Correspondence between J.W. Whittaker and Fr. R. Norris, E. Kenyon and J. Sharples, 6 November 1829 to 23 November 1829; CHTL, Hhill.14(1), Series of Letters Addressed to Rev. N. Wiseman DD, 1836.

⁸⁶ W. Farrer and J. Brownbill, *A History of the County of Lancashire* vol 6 (London, 1911), 147; *Chorley Guardian*, 27 February 1892.

⁸⁷ *Blackburn Standard*, 10 July 1869.

⁸⁸ C.S. Ford, *Pastors and Polemicists* (Manchester, 2002), 20, 98.

endowed by patron under the 1827 Act; chapels built, endowed and with patron's rights under the 1831 Act.⁸⁹ By the time Rushton analysed these categories, there were also the "Peel Districts" under the 1843 Act providing for a curate to minister to a district pending the construction of a church. In Blackburn and elsewhere they were referred to as "conventional districts".⁹⁰ Finally the Act of 1856 allowed all districts with churches to assume full parochial status, once the incumbency of a supervisory parish became vacant.⁹¹

Understandably there was some difficulty for local people in navigating the legal implications of the new and varying statuses. The resentment at Leigh St Mary's regarding Tyldesley's reluctance to contribute to whole parish costs or readily pay compensation for surplice fees lost by St Mary's, led to a threat to sue from Leigh churchwardens.⁹² Clearly at the Blackburn vestry there was a reluctance to recognise any responsibility for Tockholes St Stephen.⁹³ Equally Tockholes contributed nothing to Blackburn but Gilmour Robinson sent several reminders to the parish churchwardens that he held them responsible for any costs in repairing his church building.⁹⁴ Chorley too had its problems. This was not so whilst St Laurence's was in charge of a dependent chapel of ease but after the inauguration of St George's District in 1835, there was scope for disagreement. In 1835 James Master, currently curate at St Laurence's, enquired of the Commission whether or not the curate at St George's could legitimately read banns of marriage or take tombstone fees, as Reverend Strong at St George's allegedly did.⁹⁵ In 1844, an anxious James Master enquired if St George's might become a guaranteed incumbency once his uncle's death voided St Laurence's.⁹⁶ Might he not be able as rector to remove a hypothetical troublesome minister at the district church? In 1847, by now rector of Chorley, Reverend Master enquired whether he could alter the new district's boundaries and, possibly ironically or provocatively, contemplated moving himself into St George's territory in order to claim what was a mooted new parsonage house there.⁹⁷ None of this materialised. Master stayed

⁸⁹ MA, MSf.942.72 r121, Archdeacon Rushton's Visitation, 1845-6, vol 78, 34-96.

⁹⁰ Snell, *Parish and Belonging*, 402; LA, PR3073/3/20, St Andrew's Coucher Book, unattr. cutting 1861.

⁹¹ Snell, *Parish and Belonging*, 403.

⁹² CERC, ECE7/1/17721/1, Tyldesley Church Building File, Weeton to Robson, 22 November 1831.

⁹³ *Blackburn Alfred*, 3 September 1832, 24 September 1832.

⁹⁴ CERC ECE7/1/15217/2, Tockholes Church Building File, Robinson to CBC, 26 March 1835; Whittaker to CBC, 17 September 1836.

⁹⁵ CERC, ECE7/1/18206/3, Chorley Church Building File, Master to CBC, 17 May 1845.

⁹⁶ ECE7/1/18206/3, 8 November 1844.

⁹⁷ ECE7/1/18206/3, 19 March 1847.

with the mother church. St George's did not receive a splendid new parsonage, rather a former warehouse in nearby Halliwell Street where damp dank darkness drove at least one later vicar to resign shortly before it was replaced.⁹⁸

Was there a fair division of pastoral responsibility? A cursory analysis of the initial district hived off to St George's in 1835, could claim that some of the wealthier citizens might live at the foot of Halliwell Street in St George's but a lot more lived in Park Road, safely retained in St Laurence's cure.⁹⁹ St George's aegis ran to the market, the crowded poorer streets to the south of town and the Catholic enclaves. In fact, in Table 7.2, a comparison of the occupations of fathers of brides and baptised children in St George's district and parish compared with St Laurence's, shows a fairly even social balance between the two. St George's also gained its useful cohort of professional men and shopkeepers by 1886. True, after an initial period of seeming reluctance amongst its district folk to use the new provision for baptism and weddings, it eventually had to cope with much larger numbers- but it had by far the bigger building. Although more numerous than St Laurence's, St George's congregation could embrace its inferior status, a few older members of the congregation in the 1980s still referring to their place of worship as "t' chapel".¹⁰⁰ On other occasions, the inferior community might cock a snook at the mother. Indeed, the current strapline on the St George's website refers to it as "*the* town centre church."¹⁰¹

⁹⁸ LA, PR3123/2/1, St George's Chorley Parish Papers, Surveyor's Report 6 March 1849; SGC, Parish Magazine, 1906.

⁹⁹ CERC, ECE7/1/18206/3, Chorley Church Building File, Ker's Note 28 March 1835; G.Robinson, *History and Directory of Chorley* (Chorley, 1835).

¹⁰⁰ Interview with David Horsfield, Chorley St George churchwarden, 12 December 2005.

¹⁰¹ SGC, Promotional Leaflet 2015.

Occ.gps of fathers	1836				1857				1886				1899			
	St. Geo		St. Laur		St.Geo		St.Laur		St.Geo		St.Laur		St.Geo		St.Laur	
	Ba	M	Ba	M	Ba	M	Ba	M	Ba	M	Ba	M	Ba	M	Ba	M
Textiles	50		123		53	9	50	10	71	7	35	1	37	11	15	4
Farmer	1				1	2	4	1	1	1	11	1		1	1	1
Servant			9		5		2		9	2	4	3	12	4	10	
Labourer	9		32		21	5	12	4	24	7	9	5	33	10	17	4
Miners	4		10		27	3	10		18	7	6	3	33	9	1	4
Crafts	10		58		15	5	53	4	40	7	16	2	31	14	16	3
Publican			3		1		3				1					
Shopkpr.	4		4		5	1	5	4	22	4	4	1	15		3	2
Manuf.			6		3		1	1	4	3		1	1		1	3
Indep.	3					3	0	1				1				
Prof.	1		3		1	2	5		11	3	9	2	23	4	7	2
Marriage numbers		41		46		35		27		41		13		58		23
Marks		65		63		24		23		20		2		2		1

Table 7.2 Occupations of People Attending St George's Chorley for Rites of Passage, 1836-1899. Sources: St George's and St. Laurence's Parish Registers.

Notes:

Ba: Occupations of fathers of child baptized

M: Occupations of bride's father

Marks: Number of those being married who used marks rather than signatures.

The rivalry between Anglican parishes was not as potentially divisive as that between denominations. The disagreements about maintenance between Blackburn St Mary and Tockholes St Stephen disappeared after 1856 with the passing of J.W. Whittaker and Gilmour Robinson. The bitterness between Leigh and Tyldesley in the early days of St George's Tyldesley did not persist beyond the first generation and there is no evidence that Chorley St Laurence took serious exception to the growth of its offspring chapel. In these three townships the emergence nationally of church parties after 1833 did not create serious difficulty. In Chorley the rector of the original parish church and the vicars of the two Commissioners' churches were accounted mild evangelicals and then 'Low Church' until 1880.¹⁰² At the end of the century the rector of St Laurence's and the vicar of St George's

¹⁰² J. Wilson, *Chorley Church* (Edinburgh, 1914), 130-32.

exhibited, in relation to liturgy at least, High Church leanings. Happily clerical views coincided. In Tockholes, Robinson was in broad agreement on churchmanship with Whittaker who appointed him after seeking answers to his habitual test questions.¹⁰³ After 1854 local clergy found John Rushton, a mild evangelical, a tolerant encouraging presence in Blackburn parish.¹⁰⁴ With his virtual independence from 1828, Jacob Robson of Tyldesley avoided both further conflict with the high church vicar of Leigh and also a close association with the Evangelical clergy and ministers of Astley.

d) Confusion of Community Identities

Snell highlights the implications for communal identities in church extension. Although the English parish remained remarkably strong until the 1870s, the redrawing and subdivision of ecclesiastical boundaries as new churches appeared caused confusion.¹⁰⁵ Nationally, these ecclesiastical changes also took place in a century when the civil powers of the parish were being eroded or separated from those of the Church. It might be hardly surprising that many people discarded both a religious faith and a sense of belonging to 'their' parish and looked elsewhere for their sense of identity.¹⁰⁶

Snell uses the Forest of Dean as a case study. In the nineteenth century this largely extra-parochial area was subject to the creation of two new large townships, further divided by fourteen new ecclesiastical districts in one township and three in the other. Some parts were annexed to neighbouring parishes. There followed a plethora of further adjustments to the new boundaries running into the twentieth century.¹⁰⁷ Snell rightly suggests, 'Working class consciousness and a Forest of Dean identity tended to eclipse loyalty to the parish or village which were subsequently sub divided or amended in bewildering fashion.' A particular issue for the established church in the Forest of Dean was that it was late in making provision and, largely High Church, remained remote from the people it was trying to serve and win.¹⁰⁸

¹⁰³ LA, PR1549/29/4, Tockholes Parish Papers, Robinson to Whittaker, 8 April 1830.

¹⁰⁴ LA, PR1565a, Cuttings re J.Rushton Funeral, 1868.

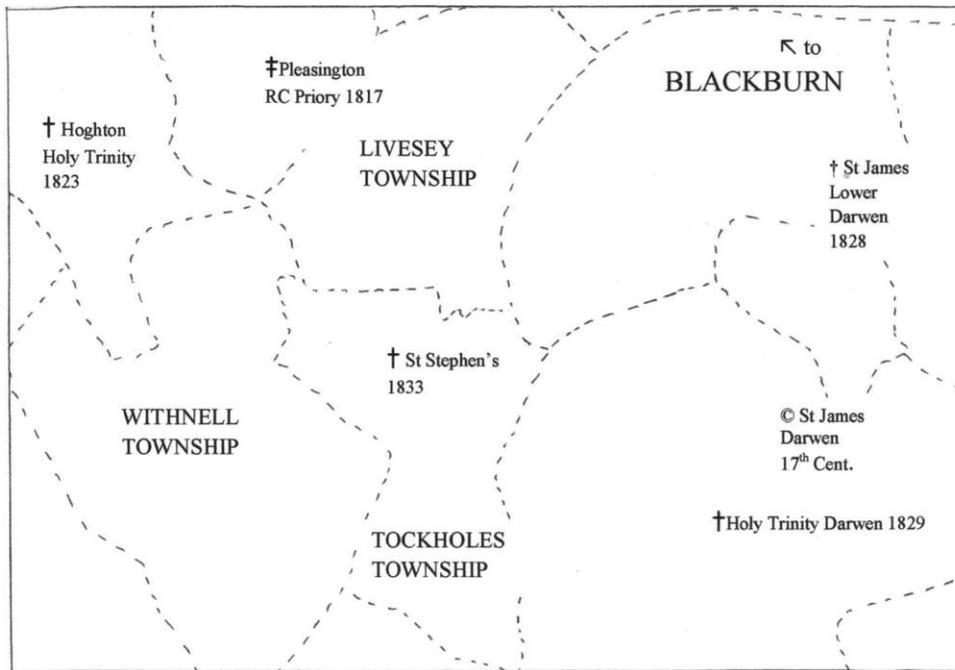
¹⁰⁵ Snell, *Parish and Belonging*, 414,441-442.

¹⁰⁶ *Parish and Belonging*, 439.

¹⁰⁷ *Parish and Belonging*, 422.

¹⁰⁸ *Parish and Belonging*, 432

Although Snell recognises the special case of the Forest of Dean, he does extend the contention that shifting boundaries caused confusion elsewhere.¹⁰⁹ What was the case in south central Lancashire? Superficially Tockholes, within the large parish of Blackburn, looked to have suffered through change. In 1856 its bounds were still not settled when the Commission which spawned it terminated and the Parish Act aimed to codify the status of new districts. Tockholes St Stephen found its district boundaries altered three times between 1833 and 1877. In 1800 Tockholes was very much a self-contained township with a parochial chapel dependent on Blackburn.¹¹⁰ There was some connection with Livesey for poor law purposes and with Livesey and Withnell in terms of pew ownership within St Michael's chapel.¹¹¹ In 1833, at the consecration of the new St Stephen's, it was determined that the chapel should serve Tockholes, Livesey and Withnell townships.¹¹²



Tockholes Chapelry District 1833: Tockholes, Livesey and Withnell

Map 7.1 Tockholes District Chapelry 1833: Tockholes, Livesey and Withnell.

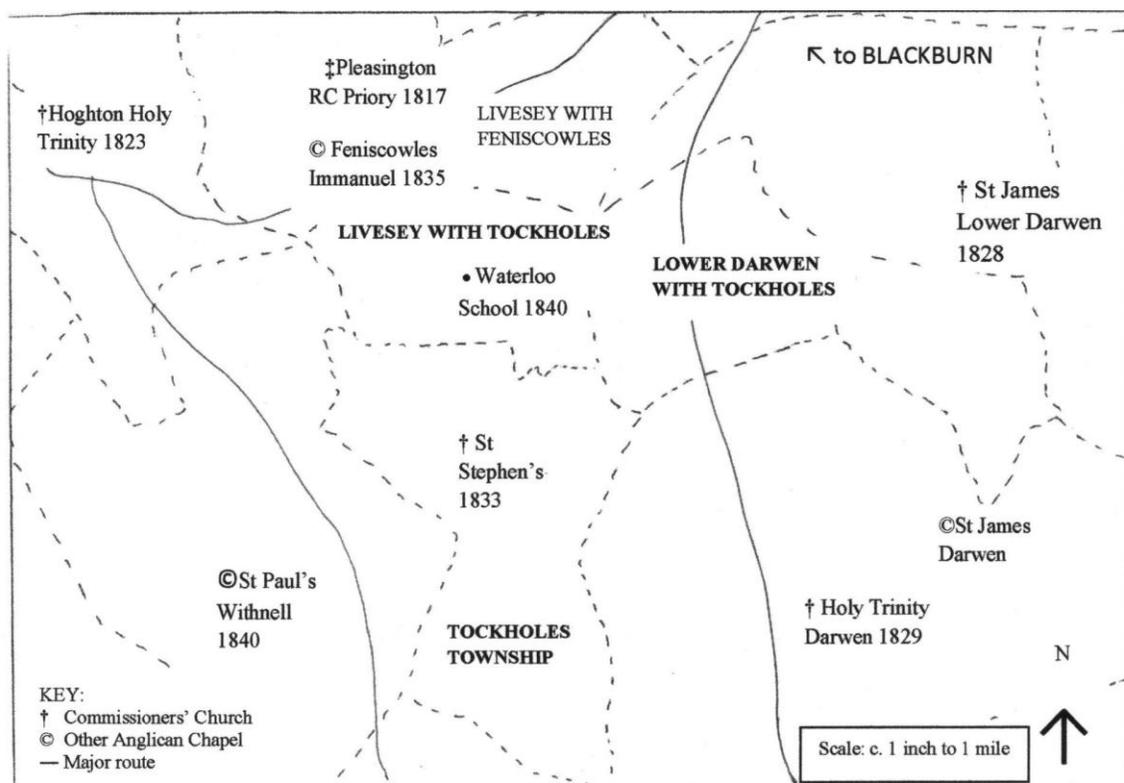
¹⁰⁹ *Parish and Belonging*, 444.

¹¹⁰ *Victoria County History of Lancaster*, vol 6, 280-4.

¹¹¹ CERC, ECE7/1/15217/1, Tockholes Church Building File, Whittaker to CBC, 26 October 1836.

¹¹² MA, MSf942.72 r121, Archdeacon Rushton's Visitation 1845-6 vol 6, 328.

In 1842 Tockholes became a district chapelry. It lost Withnell for this now had the chapel of St Paul's. It lost half of Livesey because Immanuel Feniscowles had been consecrated in 1836. It retained the other half and was also made responsible for half of Lower Darwen.¹¹³



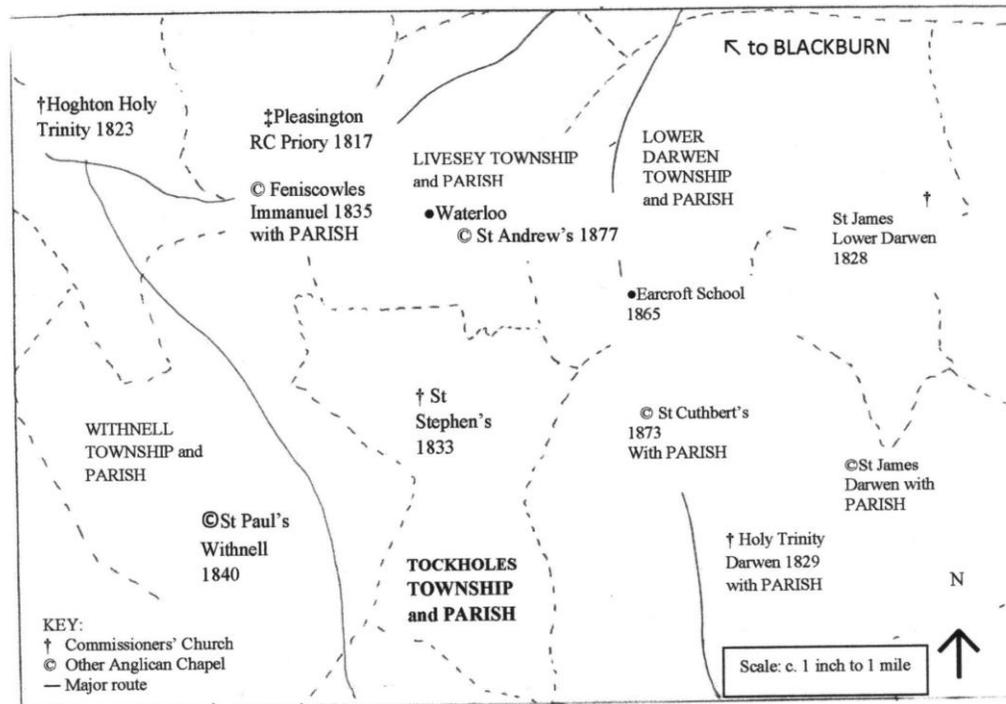
Tockholes Chapelry District 1842

Map 7.2 Tockholes District Chapelry 1842: Tockholes and some of Livesey and Lower Darwen

Yet the situation stayed fluid. In 1877 Tockholes lost both areas beyond its township, the Lower Darwen segment going to the newly created Darwen St Cuthbert's and that of Livesey forming a new parish of Blackburn St Andrew.¹¹⁴ As Tockholes' population declined further it found itself having to support a relatively new church from a population of under 500, a strong minority of whom were nonconformists.

¹¹³ *London Gazette*, 3 May 1842.

¹¹⁴ LA, PR3149/14/9, Tockholes Parish Papers, Memoir re Tockholes Church, 1879.



Tockholes Parish 1877

Map 7.3 Tockholes Parish and its neighbours, by 1877.

Such a series of developments may suggest both managerial indecision and damage to communal identities. An assessment of the damage will be conditioned by the interpretation of how communal identity is created and maintained and, further, how easily and quickly it might be modified. Subsequent to a debate in the 1990s, some sociologists would see the possibility of multiple and overlapping identities, both for individuals and communities.¹¹⁵ Furthermore, instead of being seen as objective, identity could be a construction, and if so capable of change.¹¹⁶ Calhoun argues that, 'In the modern world identity is always constructed and situated in a field amid a flow of contending cultural discourse'.¹¹⁷ Castells asserts identities are not fixed norms of society; they are 'sources of meaning for the actors themselves'.¹¹⁸ Community identity, Griswold argues, depends partly upon a shared history rooted in topography or experience but also upon the resources devoted to consolidating

¹¹⁵ W.Griswold, 'History and Resources=A Sense of Place' in *Maine Policy Review* 2,1 (2002) ,80.

¹¹⁶ W.Griswold, *Cultures and Societies in a Changing World* (3rd ed., London, 2008), 101; M.Castells, *The Power of Identity* (2nd ed., Oxford, 2010), 6.

¹¹⁷ C.Calhoun (ed.), *Social Theory and the Politics of Identity* (Oxford, 1994), 12.

¹¹⁸ Castells, *The Power of Identity*, 6-7.

and articulating it.¹¹⁹ A church community could be strong in several methods used to build a common identity, for example with rituals, symbolism, aesthetics and repetitive meetings.¹²⁰

An empirical examination of Tockholes township would suggest both the persistence of an old identity and the possibility of creating positive new ones. Generally the changes made perfect sense at the time each was inaugurated. Fundamentally different from the Forest of Dean, this part of Lancashire was not a large extra parochial area. The parish of Blackburn might be large but Tockholes St Stephen was the successor to a long established chapelry of St Michael acting as the centre of a township, which from at least 1662 had been managing its poor law and other local affairs.¹²¹ As with other local townships, Tockholes comprised less than 3000 acres, had natural topographical boundaries in a river or stream and contained a manageable size of population. In 1833 the responsibility for Withnell and Livesey was the only way of justifying building a Commissioners' church in a township that was already exhibiting some population decline. There were traditional ecclesiastical ties, demonstrated by pew ownership, with both Livesey and Withnell. Withnell was in a separate parish and hundred of Leyland but it was sensible to step to Tockholes church rather than the distant mother church at Leyland. Folk in Livesey could be served by Blackburn Parish Church or Tockholes. Evidence from baptism registers shows that people from the three townships willingly used St Michael's and then St Stephen's. In 1829 there were 21 baptisms of children with mothers living in Tockholes, 8 from each of the other townships. The presence of Robinson after 1830 possibly explains the 1833 figures, with 28 baptisms from Tockholes, in addition to 14 from Withnell and 17 from Livesey. The total figures in 1834 of 84 baptisms may indicate the availability and even popularity of the new church, despite Robinson's comment that some mourned the loss of the old St Michael's.¹²² Therefore the catchment area for St Stephen's recognised its customary links and practice and the new Commissioners' church and its wide bounds appeared a strength rather than a weakness.

¹¹⁹ Griswold, 'History and Resources=A Sense of Place', 77,79.

¹²⁰ Griswold, *Culture and Societies*, 174.

¹²¹ *Victoria County History*, vol 6, 283; LA, PR2756/2, Tockholes Township Accounts, 28 April 1764.

¹²² www.lan-opc.org.uk, Tockholes St Stephen baptisms, 1829,1833,1834.

Equally it was understandable to reflect links with half of Livesey in the formalised district chapelry of 1842. Topography was significant. The southern boundary of St Stephen's district followed the turnpiked Preston to Darwen road.¹²³ Beyond the land fell sharply towards Blackburn. St Stephens retained Waterloo which was the nearest of the various small hamlets in Livesey and was as yet a small cluster of inn, farms and handloom weavers' cottages, separate from the outskirts of Blackburn proper. It may have been more than symbolic to place Waterloo in the care of Gilmour Robinson of Tockholes, a holder of the Waterloo medal and current chairman of the Waterloo veterans in South Lancashire.¹²⁴ Developments elsewhere meant that not all of Livesey now fell to St Stephen's. At the western end Immanuel Feniscowles, consecrated in 1835, enjoyed its own district from 1842.¹²⁵ J.W.Whittaker, the vicar of Blackburn had fought off an approach of the two Feilden families to endow and nominate to a church half way between their Feniscowles and Witton estates. Whittaker had no intention of yielding nomination rights to them and argued that a place of worship at halfway between would serve neither.¹²⁶ He prevailed and both Witton and Feniscowles shortly gained their own church. Feniscowles served people largely from the farms of William Feilden's estate in Livesey and Pleasington, was close to a printing mill and was a deliberate challenge to the Catholic presence at Pleasington Priory.¹²⁷

The resulting shortfall of souls because of the loss of part of Livesey township meant that St Stephen's Tockholes could take half of Lower Darwen township into its care. Again there was much sense in this. Established carters' routes and the one highway ran direct to Lower Darwen. The Commissioners' church at Lower Darwen was in fact at Blackamoor nearly a mile eastwards of the main settlement and beyond a sharp hill. The old route from Tockholes to Blackburn ran straight to the north western end of Lower Darwen at Ewood and a newer turnpike road to Earcroft at the west of the same township¹²⁸ Moreover if anyone was likely to adopt a forward policy towards the Methodists of Lower Darwen, it

¹²³ Ordnance Survey, Old Series, Maps103, Blackburn and Burnley, 1842-59 (Southampton, 2006); Beattie, *A History of Blackburn*, 47.

¹²⁴ *Preston Chronicle*, 3 January 1857; *Lancaster Gazette*, 24 June 1843.

¹²⁵ MA, MSf.942.72 r121, Archdeacon Rushton's Visitation 1845-6, vol 4, 300-307.

¹²⁶ LA, PR2846/2/1, Feniscowles Immanuel Coucher Book, Whittaker Bishop Sumner, 14 December 1833; Whittaker to W.Feilden, 23 January 1834, 11 June 1834.

¹²⁷ Beattie, *History of Blackburn*, 56; LA, PR2846/2/1, Feniscowles Immanuel Coucher Book, Whittaker to W.Feilden, 11 June 1834.

¹²⁸ Ordnance Survey 103, Blackburn and Burnley, 1842-59; Map 7.4, 273.

would be Gilmour Robinson. There was some ready identification with St Stephen's on the part of folk in Lower Darwen and the remaining half of Livesey, for people in these attached townships did use St Stephen's for baptisms and burials. In 1858 the baptismal registers hold the names of 16 Tockholes children, 7 from Livesey and 6 from Lower Darwen. The burial registers show 8 from Tockholes, 19 from Livesey and 33 from Darwen.¹²⁹

One reason why the new district boundaries of 1842 within Blackburn Parish generally made sense was that Whittaker had set his ministers to work out the best possible solution as they saw it.¹³⁰ He asked for fairly evenly populated districts, of at least 2000 souls knowing that such a populace might attract augmentation of stipends from the Ecclesiastical Commission.¹³¹ A glance forward to 1877 beyond Gilmour Robinson's and the Commission's time and the withdrawing of Tockholes into itself, further changes in the local economy and population had meant there was a new arrangement of districts. Livesey, around Waterloo, now needed its own church. The whole of Livesey experienced rapid growth between 1850 and 1870 due to the impact of the relatively late railway of 1846-8 and the establishment of large weaving mills.¹³² A population of 1996 in 1841 became 4500 by 1871. There was a growing nonconformist presence to face. A Congregational school was founded in 1844, prior to a chapel in 1859. There was also a United Free Methodist chapel at the northern edge in 1864 and an iron Primitive Methodist chapel from 1866.¹³³ The Anglican response was to license Waterloo school for services in 1861 as the centre of a conventional district named for St Andrew.¹³⁴ In 1877 a fine church, designed by E.G.Paley, was consecrated due to the persistence, determination and funding from Ewood millowners and their workforces.¹³⁵

¹²⁹ www.lan-opc.org.uk, Tockholes, Baptism Register 1858, Burial Register 1858.

¹³⁰ LA, PR2846/2/2, Feniscowles Coucher Book, J.W.Whittaker to T.Walsh, 13 October 1841.

¹³¹ *Blackburn Standard*, 24 January 1849; Best, *Temporal Pillars*, 353.

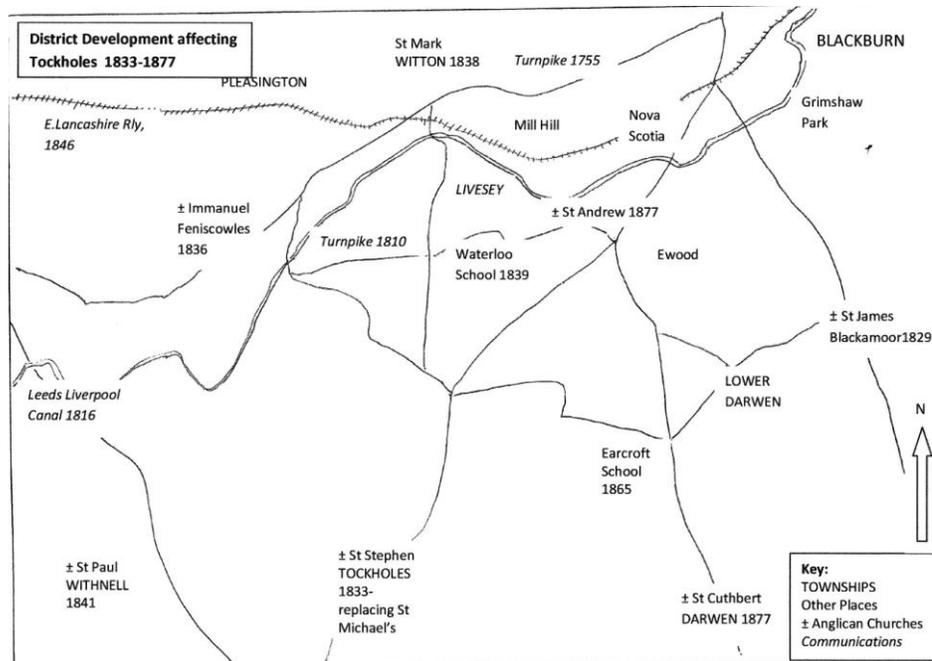
¹³² www.cottontown.org/ Mill Hill, M.Sumner, 'The Area Where I Grew Up.'; *Blackburn Standard*, 3 July 1861, 30 April 1881.

¹³³ www.cottontown.org/ Mill Hill, M.Sumner, 'The Area Where I Grew Up.'

¹³⁴ LA, PR 3072/2/20, Livesey St Andrew Coucher Book, Summary Memorandum 1853, Accounts 1854, J.Rushton Memorandum 5 May 1855; unattributed newspaper cutting 1861.

¹³⁵ LA, PR3073/2/20, W.Maudsley to J.Rushton, 3 November 1858; unattr. newspaper cutting 1861; *Blackburn Standard*, 26 June 1866.

Darwen too had experienced tremendous growth by 1870 and Tockholes gained a daughter church between Lower and Over Darwen at St Cuthbert's, having already established a school church at Earcroft in Lower Darwen in 1865.¹³⁶ The ecclesiastical district of St Stephen's had also now withdrawn to the historic township.



Map 7.4 Ecclesiastical District Development around Tockholes, 1833-77.

Thus there were several and varied considerations which determined the drawing of ecclesiastical boundaries, centred upon the Commissioners' church at Tockholes. There were three ecclesiastical boundary changes for Tockholes and its neighbouring townships in forty five years but there were understandable explanations for these. Further there was little damage to Tockholes' identity because St Stephen's continued at the heart of the township, a unit of historic boundaries where civil functions continued after 1877. In fact the Local Government Act of 1894 confirmed Tockholes ecclesiastical parish as the new civil parish which remains today.¹³⁷ The neighbouring emergent communities caught up in St Stephen's district were capable of identifying with St Stephens at least for rites of passage and later constructed new recognisable identities. Feniscowles, although not a historic township, eventually became a recognizable suburban village within Blackburn.¹³⁸

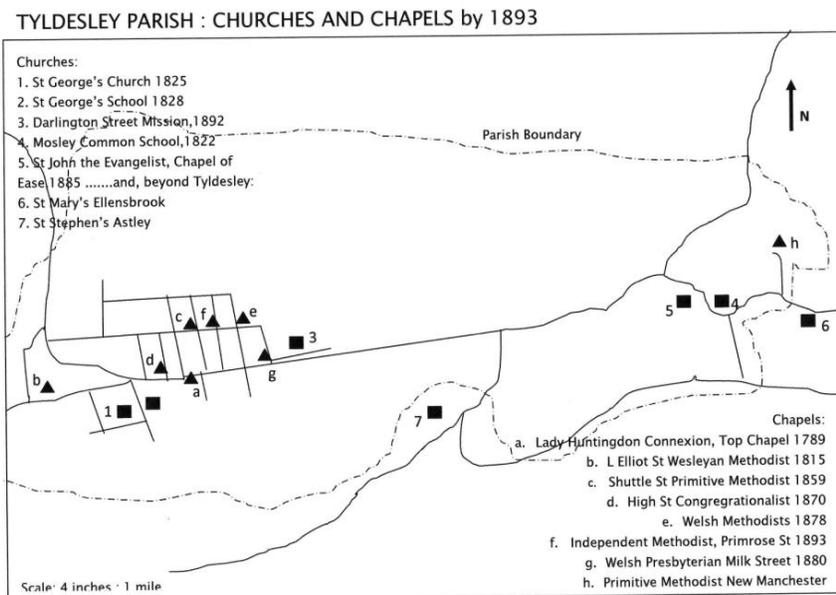
¹³⁶ MA, MSf942.72 r121, Archdeacon Rushton's Visitation 1845-6, vol 8, 24, Land Conveyance for National School at Earcroft, October 1865; Jacklin and Robinson, *Tockholes, A Timewarp*, 51.

¹³⁷ Jacklin and Robinson, *Tockholes, A Timewarp*, 165.

¹³⁸ Beattie, *A History of Blackburn*, 308.

Waterloo became the heart of Livesey.¹³⁹ The second half of the nineteenth century saw the rapid creation of new identities in Blackburn parish and they were almost everywhere built around a mill with a millowner of a particular religious persuasion and political outlook, which the workforce largely adhered to. This was re-inforced by the relatively high proportion of neighbouring houses owned by the local millowners.¹⁴⁰

The development of ecclesiastical districts in Tyldesley and Chorley would also support the conclusion that rational decisions were taken and identities built rather than damaged. Tyldesley township in 1800 was essentially Tyldesley Banks village at the western end plus separate clusters of farms elsewhere.¹⁴¹ The growth of the deeper coal mines in the second half of the century meant that some spots east of the Banks became much more populous. This was especially true of the Mosley Common at the eastern edge, grown as a result of the Egerton mines.¹⁴² Accordingly a mission school was established there from 1822 and eventually a separate church of St John's, 1885-95.¹⁴³



Map 7.5 Tyldesley Churches and Chapels by 1893

¹³⁹ Beattie, *A History of Blackburn*, 106.

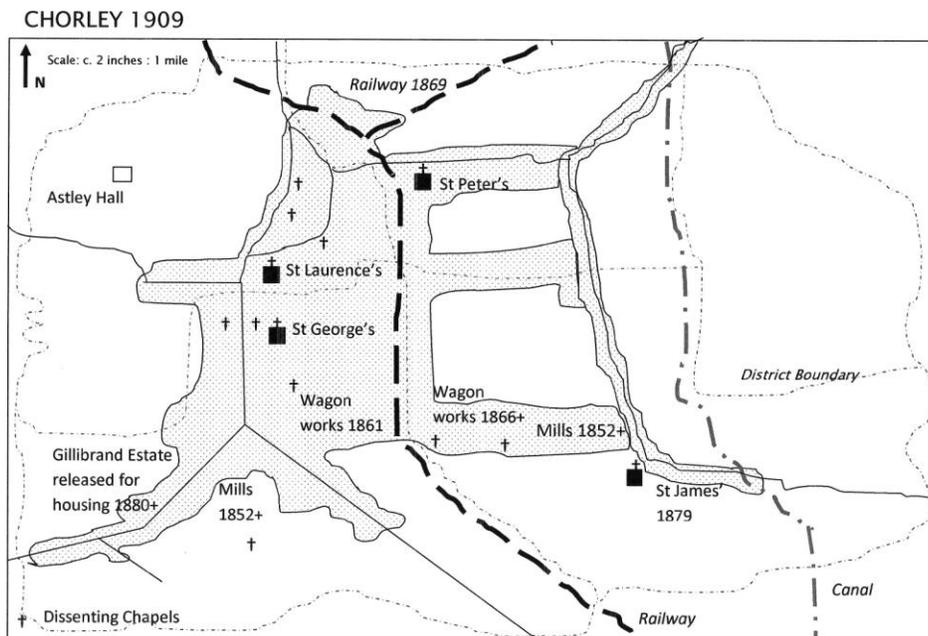
¹⁴⁰ Beattie, *A History of Blackburn*, 84-90.

¹⁴¹ J.Aikin, *A Description of the Country from 30 to 40 Miles Round Manchester* (Manchester, 1795), 299.

¹⁴² L.Slater, *Royal National Commercial Directory of Lancashire* (Manchester, 1865), 809-10; F.F.Kelly, *Directory of Lancashire* (London, 1892), 856-7.

¹⁴³ J. Lunn, *A New History of History of Tyldesley* (Tyldesley, 1953), 107, 140.

Chorley's ecclesiastical boundaries also show a rational development and a tendency to maintain identities, or at least those connected with places of worship and the associated education and social life. The establishment of St Laurence's and St George's ecclesiastical districts on a north-south basis in 1835 recognised the recent growth of the township and denoted a clear demarcation of responsibilities.¹⁴⁴ As subsequent commercial and industrial growth took place predominantly in St George's district, further divisions made sense. In 1852 St Peter's district, founded in the north east of Chorley from both previous districts, would target the mills of Botany Bay and North Chorley, encouraged by the accession to the established church of the Methodist Smethurst family.¹⁴⁵ St Peter's was less than a mile from St Laurence's but by mid century it seems worshippers were not expected to walk as far as they used to be. The 1818 Church Building Act allowed a new build if a community of a thousand souls was more than four miles from an existing church. The 1831 Act



Map 7.6 Chorley in 1909

¹⁴⁴ C. Robinson, *A History and Directory of Chorley* (Chorley, 1835); Heyes, *A History of Chorley*, 115-17; CERC, ECE7/1/18206/3, Chorley Church Building File, Bishop Sumner to CBC, 26 October 1834.

¹⁴⁵ CERC, ECE7/1/18206/4, Chorley Church Building File, Petition to CBC, 31 March 1849; Heyes, *A History of Chorley*, 150; A.C.Howell, *Grove Mill, Canal Mill and Botany Bay* (Stroud, 2008), 65-68.

accepted that just 300 folk at 2 miles distant was sufficient cause.¹⁴⁶ St James', founded in 1878 from the east of St George's district, would answer the growth of large weaving factories to the east of the railway, in addition to the presence, from 1875, of the Catholic mission and then church at Sacred Heart.¹⁴⁷ St George's church lay at the northern extremity of its district but countered this by establishing Birkacre mission in 1879 and by 1900 All Saints school church in the south west. This was the basis for the eventual All Saints' Parish in 1957.¹⁴⁸ There was also a mission room in the south east of St George's Parish from 1909.¹⁴⁹

Snell recognises that some regions must have been different from the Forest of Dean and that that 'ecclesiastical parish subdivision was little researched for the nineteenth century'.¹⁵⁰ The experience of these Lancashire townships would not demonstrate a confusing meddling with boundaries and a resultant loss of community identity. The development of the ecclesiastical map was at root based upon historic townships and subsequently on developing religious and industrial patterns. It also seemed acceptable to build new identities fairly rapidly, as places and practices changed through time. It was possible for people to hold composite, several and additional identities, if not yet multiple ones.¹⁵¹

e) The Cultural Contribution

The churches had a positive cultural impact beyond their buildings. In Tyldesley the opening of the church was needed if only for an additional place of baptism, marriage and burial in a rapidly growing community. The relative popularity, amongst some inhabitants of neighbouring townships, of holding a funeral at St George's Tyldesley, has already been noted in Chapter Five. During his ministry from 1825 to 1851, Jacob Robson appreciated his role as a leader within the township. Local historians assert he personally led the procession at the commencement of the September cattle fair, an annual gathering which

¹⁴⁶ Port, *Six Hundred New Churches* 2nd ed., 238.

¹⁴⁷ Heyes, *History of Chorley*, 142,151.

¹⁴⁸ SGC, Parish Magazine, March 1891, May 1900; SGC, All Saints Church, Reference Book and Souvenir Programme 1957.

¹⁴⁹ SGC, Parish Magazine, December 1908.

¹⁵⁰ Snell, *Parish and Belonging*, 371.

¹⁵¹ L.Brockliss and D.Eastwood, *A Union of Multiple Identities* (Manchester, 1997), 2.

could lend itself to much rumbustiousness. In 1826 he was happy to have the inverted church bells, waiting to be hung, filled with ale for the workmen to drink. He was equally content to allow early temperance meetings at the church door. He retained staff, such as Peter Bent the first schoolmaster and parish clerk and the Sixsmith family who were to supply sextons for three generations.¹⁵² Very usefully, as early as 1827, he sought out all the charities that Tyldesley folk might have a claim to and identified seven such.¹⁵³ He established a flourishing Sunday School Sick Club, which in 1845 paid out over £84, yet retained a balance of £69. As payments were just three shillings per week for a limited number of weeks, the club should have had a considerable membership.¹⁵⁴ Robson's successor, Revd. Richards was one of those proposing the formation of a Leigh Rifle Corps in December 1859 and he invited the 55th Company of Volunteers to pack the nave of the church during the service celebrating the opening of the organ in October 1860.¹⁵⁵

One qualitative addition from the outset was the sense of theatre that the new churches brought. Chorley St George's foundation ceremony was something of an exception, this being done late and with a minimum of fuss in November 1822.¹⁵⁶ However, the consecration and the ensuing confirmation brought crowds or participants and onlookers. Six or seven thousand persons were estimated to have attended the consecration day services at St George's. The Anglicans developed something of a show: the bishop being welcomed, the procession of the worthy down the central aisle, the sentence of consecration, the magisterial address, the blessing of the burial ground, a handsome collection and a splendid set of feasts. The *Preston Pilot* commented that behaviour at the inaugural confirmation at St George's was not as respectable as it might have been.¹⁵⁷ One explanation was that many young men were being brought to confirmation cursorily prepared, sometimes propelled by employers, for what was essentially an opportune catch-up exercise. This was mirrored by the excitable scenes in other towns. Perhaps deliberately so, St Peter's Preston was founded at the height of Guild celebrations.¹⁵⁸ At its consecration, Bishop Blomfield at one point sat down for a rest whilst hard pressed

¹⁵² L.Allred and J.Marsh, *The Parish Church of St George Tyldesley* (Blackburn, 1975), 10.

¹⁵³ MA, MSf942.72 r121, Archdeacon Rushton's Visitation 1845-6, vol 34.

¹⁵⁴ MA ,MSf942.72 r121, Archdeacon Rushton's Visitation 1845-6, vol 34.

¹⁵⁵ *Leigh Chronicle*, 6 October 1860.

¹⁵⁶ *Manchester Mercury*, 13 November 1822.

¹⁵⁷ *Preston Pilot*, 13 August 1825.

¹⁵⁸ *Preston Chronicle*, 7 September 1822.

churchwardens restored a modicum of order.¹⁵⁹ Again, the scene on the arrival of St George's first organ in 1837 was that of a full church aping a theatre.¹⁶⁰ Later, after 1860, theatre became more participatory with Walking Days and Rose Queen festivals.¹⁶¹ Burns put it well: 'The Victorian epidemic of church building meanwhile ensured, through bishops' attendance at consecration, that areas previously poorly assimilated were theatrically incorporated into the diocesan community.'¹⁶²

The round of necessary fundraising for new churches, school buildings, repairs, bibles, missions and additional curates, triggered another art form, possibly recommended by Methodist success, namely that of the rousing preacher. A church the size of Chorley St George was an ideal venue for a star performer. Gilmour Robinson from Kirkham and then Tockholes was often sought after, as was John Fisher of Heapey who in July 1830 could crowd Holy Trinity Hoghton to excess with his 'effective and powerful manner'.¹⁶³ Of the bishops, Blomfield, occasionally 'allowing a tinge of faltering emotion to affect his tone' was a favourite of the *Preston Pilot*.¹⁶⁴ James Master of Chorley was simple and understated, only 'occasionally drawing on pathos but always attended to'.¹⁶⁵ Possibly Revd. H.W. McGrath, who appeared before overflowing audiences at Hoghton and Chorley in 1833, capped them all. Such men enhanced many a dowdy Waterloo church interior.¹⁶⁶ Frequently Anglican clergy sought support from the freemasons' lodges and this was gladly given to the new Anglican churches, particularly in the foundation ceremonies.¹⁶⁷ In Chorley the Oddfellows were James Master's particular friends. On one occasion in 1833, a gathering at the Gillibrand Arms marched to collect Master from his rectory and conduct him to St George's preparatory to hearing him preach. They then marched back for a convivial dinner. Once again, there was a touch of show connected with the church.¹⁶⁸ In all these areas of theatre, local folk seemed to sense they were part of something worthwhile and enjoyable happening.

¹⁵⁹ *Preston Pilot*, 10 September 1825.

¹⁶⁰ *Preston Chronicle*, 8 April 1837.

¹⁶¹ *Chorley Standard*, 17 September 1864, 21 August 1875, 8 August 1885; SGC, Parish Magazine, August 1886.

¹⁶² A. Burns, *The Diocesan Revival in the Church of England 1800-1870* (Oxford, 1999), 132.

¹⁶³ *Preston Pilot*, 9 September 1829, 14 December 1833, 24 July 1830.

¹⁶⁴ *Preston Pilot*, 10 September 1825.

¹⁶⁵ *Preston Chronicle*, 16 September 1826.

¹⁶⁶ *Preston Pilot*, 14 September 1833, 19 October 1833.

¹⁶⁷ *Blackburn Mail*, 17 June 1818; *Preston Chronicle*, 7 March 1829; *Blackburn Standard*, 31 October 1838.

¹⁶⁸ *Preston Pilot*, 3 August 1833.

There was also some economic impact. Local quarries were used for building the Commissioners' churches, those in nearby Heapey and Duxbury in Chorley's case.¹⁶⁹ A local architect, should one be available at a time of a hurriedly developing profession, did not necessarily gain, for Thomas Rickman was a southerner who made his name in Liverpool before deliberately basing himself in the central location of Birmingham.¹⁷⁰ Palmer was a Manchester builder turned architect. Given the rash of church construction in Lancashire the building trades should have done well, although the tight payment policies of the Commission made it difficult for the contracting mason to make healthy profits.¹⁷¹ Thomas Walsh, Whittaker's preferred 'undertaker' was one who did well enough, continually taking up contracts and eventually becoming Clerk of Works at Blackburn Cemetery. His son showed ability in drawing whilst assisting at Feniscowles, which later led him to be classed an 'architect' with Edmund Sharpe's office in Lancaster.¹⁷² In Chorley the contractors were of the region but not Chorley folk. The 1841 census reveals at least fourteen masons then domicile in central Chorley but born beyond. The ages and birthplaces of their children identify none arriving in 1822 in order to build St George's but it does suggest a paucity of local masons within five years of its consecration, a condition which may have been present in the 1820s.¹⁷³ Rickman recommended the Bennetts who had worked with him in Birmingham and Yorkshire, only for the Commission to insist on the cheaper firm of Utley and Miller, with a base at Preston.¹⁷⁴ The carpenter William Rich came from Wigan. Chorley tradition has it that he contracted for the whole project and that it ruined him. What is true is that he and the masons were told no claim for lost materials in the hurricane of December 1823 would be considered until completion. Miller and Rich submitted a joint claim for £460 but it is uncertain they were recompensed. Rich was in financial difficulty- if not ruined- in July 1825, for Rickman arranged credit at Martins' Bank for him.¹⁷⁵ It was not easy to make money from engagement with the new church and Chorley tradesmen themselves did not benefit. A study of Holy Trinity Darwen shows a

¹⁶⁹ RIBA,, RiT/2, Rickman's Diary, 10 September 1822.

¹⁷⁰ M.Aldrich, 'Thomas Rickman's Handbook of Gothic Architecture and the Taxonomic Classification', in M.Aldrich and R.J.Wallis (eds.), *Antiquaries and Archaists*, 62; Port, *Six Hundred New Churches*, 154-5,158.

¹⁷¹ *Preston Pilot*, 12 October 1833.

¹⁷² LA, PR2846/2/1, Feniscowles Coucher Book, J.W.Whittaker to Sir W.Feilden, 10 June 1834; G.Brandwood, *The Architecture of Sharpe, Paley and Austin* (Swindon, 2012), 198.

¹⁷³ Census 1841, HO107/525 1, 4/8, 7, 11-15.

¹⁷⁴ CERC, CBC/2/1 Board Minute Book 5, 21 May 1822; CBC Building Committee Minutes, 18 June 1822.

¹⁷⁵ CERC, ECE7/1/18206/3, Chorley Church Building File,1824; RIBA, RiT2, Rickman's Diary, December 1823, July 1825.

similar pattern; the initial contractors hailed from Preston and as far as Birmingham but were not local.¹⁷⁶ One Commissioners' church that might be an exception to the rule, clearly using very local tradesmen, was Holy Trinity in Ulverston, consecrated in 1832.¹⁷⁷

Workmen assisting the contractors should at least have had extended local employment opportunities. Chorley St George had some thirty masons working on it in 1823.¹⁷⁸ In a small community like Tockholes, a relatively significant building like St Stephen's was a major economic hub. True, the construction was managed by Thomas Walsh, a Blackburn joiner but at least he was of the parent parish. Repairs and maintenance however fell to very local farmers, carters and labourers, some of them living very next the church.¹⁷⁹ As noted in a previous chapter, this was very much part of Gilmour Robinson's strategy for enhancing the Anglican position in the township and can be set alongside the schools and charitable activities as powerful levers for loyalty. Employment in servicing the churches was limited. Clerk and sexton fees were minimal, few staff beyond the minister were employed.¹⁸⁰ The one general clerk/cleaner/'dogsbody' at Chorley St George was a volunteer and reduced to composing humorous doggerel as a means of begging some tips for his work.¹⁸¹

An important aim in the foundation of the Church Building Commission was to promote improved moral behaviour in the industrial towns. Given their relatively high rates of attendance in comparison with church and day school, the Sunday schools attached to the new churches may have been the biggest single influence in promoting positive behaviour in the community. A case study of Chorley St George also shows how powerful a lever its Sunday school was in creating a district loyalty and cohesion. In 1844, 45 of the 54 members first listed were from one of 18 streets within a quarter mile of the school. The streets adjacent to the church, especially the cluster of crammed terraces in the cleft of Pall Mall and Bolton Street housed 37 of these members. Their most accessible focal point for education and Sunday worship would be St George's Church. Some forty older Chorley

¹⁷⁶ J.Pomfret, *History of Holy Trinity Darwen* (Preston, 1930), 3.

¹⁷⁷ L.R.Ayre, *Holy Trinity Church Ulverston. A Sketch* (Ulverston, 1921), 16.

¹⁷⁸ RIBA, RiT2, Rickman's Diary, 26 September 1823.

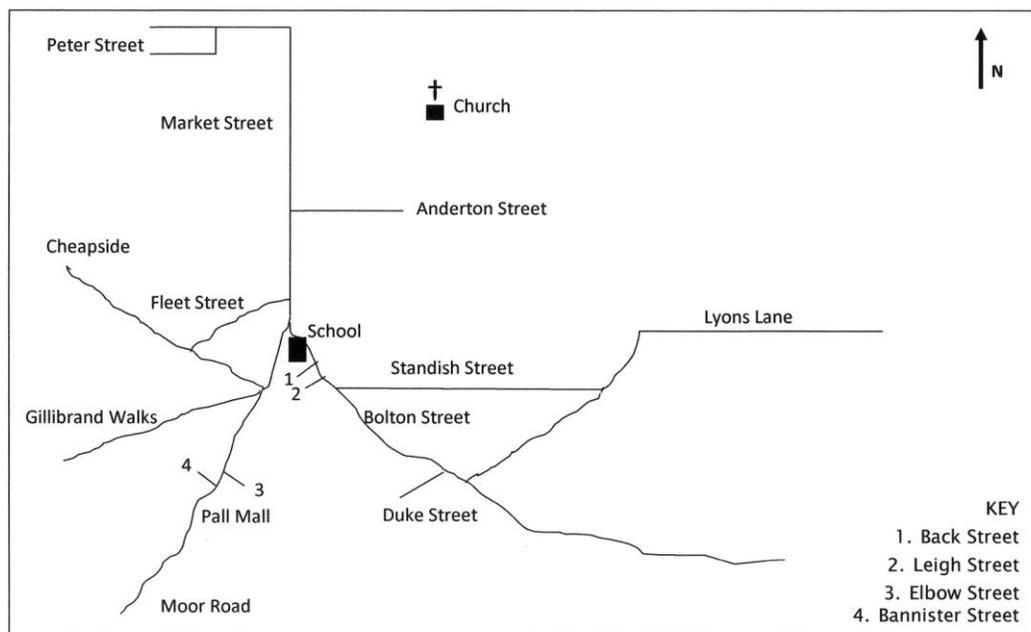
¹⁷⁹ LA, PR2763/15, Tockholes Sunday School Accounts 1830-56; PR3149/2/1, Robinson's Cash Book.

¹⁸⁰ SGT, Tyldesley Churchwarden's Accounts, frontispiece notes, Accounts 1828, 1830, 1842.

¹⁸¹ ChL, Ephemera File, Petition April 1828; Richard Tootell, 'An Appeal to the Congregation of St George's' 1838.

folk, gathering in September 2016, spoke of themselves as ‘belonging to St George’s’, although many did not attend church much. They speak of their formative years in Sunday school and day school when they lived close to the schools.¹⁸²

ST GEORGES SUNDAY SCHOOL: Boys 1844–1902
Streets providing highest proportion of starters



Map 7.7 St George’s Sunday School Sphere of Influence 1844. Source: SGT Sunday School Admission Register 1844-

Possibly the most relevant cultural impact should be to do with religious perceptions, practice and worship. This thesis argues that the arrival of the Commissioners’ churches increased attendance at the established church and may, through competition, have encouraged the maintenance and increase of numbers at other places of worship. What is harder to ascertain is what was changed, if anything, in the perceptions of the person in the pew. A tentative conclusion is that ideas about religion and church changed little in the first part of the nineteenth century. For example there was much in common orthodox Anglicans and nonconformists at Protestantism church and chapel could still agree on. In Astley township in 1822, ostensible churchmen had acted like an Independent congregation in the matter of appointing a curate, for that was the custom. In Tockholes both Anglicans and

¹⁸² Unpublished talk by retired teacher Isobel Robinson ‘St George’s c. 1950’, 9 September, 2016.

Independents would prefer to appoint their choice as minister or curate. In 1826, admittedly at a time of great unrest amongst handloom weavers, a petition was submitted to the vicar of Blackburn demanding a popular curate who had done temporary duty, rather than the vicar's choice. There was some fanciful language about the Devil stalking the land, which hinted at older superstition or words transferred from a loom breaker's note, but the central point was that the villagers wanted a resident minister and one who stuck simply to the bible. In such a remote township, residence was vital in bringing succour to the sick and dying. The petitioners noted that occasionally they were forced to send for a Calvinist, Methodist or other. They threatened to switch to a revived Bethesda if their claims were not met.¹⁸³ Yet some of their number respected a decent clergyman or deferred to a traditional hierarchy. Shortly after the petition was sent, several men of Tockholes and Livesey sent a message to the vicar of Blackburn reassuring him that they would always pray for him.¹⁸⁴ Much later in 1861, a group of St. Stephen's Sunday School teachers forwarded an encouraging memorial to Revd. Haslewood, temporarily vicar in Tockholes, but now serving with little success in Great Harwood. It is clear that they considered him a good clergyman because of his approachability, decency, visitations to the sick and simple doctrine.¹⁸⁵

Given the straightforward simple Protestantism it would be unlikely that the advent of a Waterloo church would alter practice and doctrine. Fundamentally, the theology and practice known to Tockholes was exactly what the Commissioners sought to purvey with what Hilton later called, their 'trabeated preaching boxes'.¹⁸⁶ (Fig. 7.1 below)

¹⁸³ LA, PR1549/29/2, Tockholes Coucher Book, Petition, 20 January 1826.

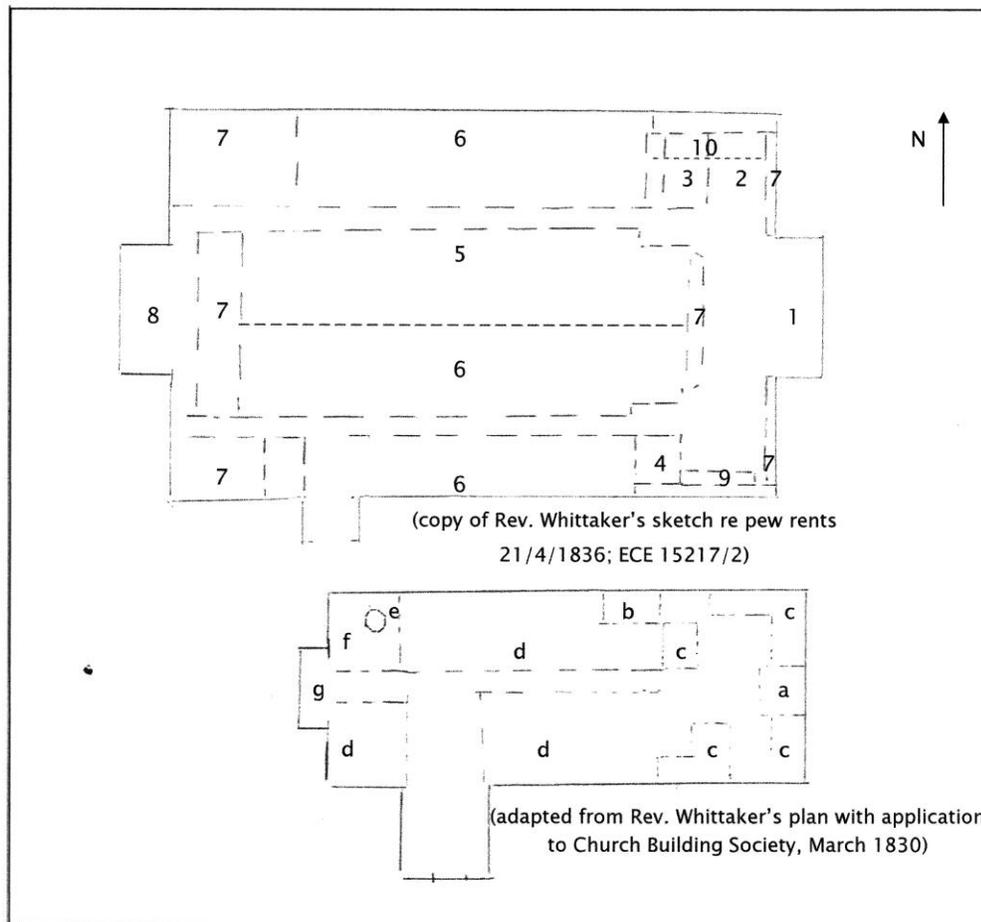
¹⁸⁴ PR1549/29/2, Banister Pickop to Whittaker, 24 March 1826.

¹⁸⁵ MA, MSf942.72 r121, Archdeacon Rushton's Visitation 1845-6 vol 8, Memorandum to Revd, Haslewood, 14 December 1861.

¹⁸⁶ B.Hilton, *A Mad Bad and Dangerous People England 1783-1846* (Oxford, 2006), 254.

Scale: c1 cm to 5 feet

- | | |
|-------------------|--|
| 1. Niche | 6. Rented pews |
| 2. Reading Desk | 7. Free seats or benches |
| 3. Clerks Desk | 8. Vestry with "tower" alcove & internal free gallery (with singers) |
| 4. Pulpit | 9. Clergyman's pew |
| 5. "Private" pews | 10. Clergyman's servants' pew |



- | |
|-----------------------|
| a. Communion table |
| b. Desks & pulpit |
| c. Box pews |
| d. Other private pews |
| e. Font |
| f. Singers' pew |
| g. Tower |

**THE NEW ST. STEPHEN'S STANDS
BY OLD ST. MICHAEL'S, 1833**

Figure 7.1 The new St Stephen's stands by the old St Michael's, 1833

William Pickering's insistence that his provisions for the internal arrangement of the new church be adopted, whilst holding the trump card of a free site, ensured St Stephen's was not that different from St Michael's. There would be a comforting continuity for locals concerned about the layout of a place of worship. The Commissioners' precepts meant that box and private pews were ousted from the east end, although Robinson ensured his servants' pew was replaced. There were the free benches at the rear and the singers used a small western gallery rather than gathering near the font. Gilmour Robinson purveyed a simple Protestant line without over-emphasising faith or grace. The one sermon stored for recurring use in his papers conveys a neo-Arminianism, highlighting justification by faith but pointed out that a good attitude and works was necessary for the salvation of people living after two thousand years of Christian teaching and who should therefore know how to behave.¹⁸⁷ Whittaker of Blackburn parish deliberately sought to provide a range of Protestant usage; it maximised numbers through choice.¹⁸⁸ His first part of his 1839 sermon to the Chartists is often quoted for its cool assertion that the working men of Britain lived in the best of all possible worlds. Rarely described is the closing section which is a re-iteration of salvation by justification and a continuing good life.¹⁸⁹ Whittaker was most careful to write that religious liberty must not be overridden in seeking Dissenters' compliance.¹⁹⁰ This was despite his willingness to attack Dissent in print and his insistence that none of his clergymen have any truck with the British and Foreign Society or the Church Missionary Society.¹⁹¹

Evidence from another sample township, that of Tyldesley, suggests that whatever divided churchman and Dissenter it was not essentially belief or forms of worship. Apart from preserving an institution, was the Anglican assertion really necessary? A later minister at Countess of Huntingdon Connexion Top Chapel, Reverend Potter, strikingly added an unsolicited personal gloss to the statistical worship returns for the census enumerator in 1851. The chapel was:

¹⁸⁷ LA, PR2759/1, Tockholes Parish Papers, Sermon used by Revd Robinson.

¹⁸⁸ LA, PR1549/3/9, Blackburn Parish Papers, Whittaker to Bishop Sumner, 7 August 1835.

¹⁸⁹ *Preston Chronicle*, 10 April 1839; LA, PR1549/4/1, Blackburn Parish Papers, 'A Sermon to The Chartists 1839'.

¹⁹⁰ CHTL, 4C6.6(2), J.W. Whittaker, *The Present Posture and Future Prospects of the Church of England. A Sermon at the University of Cambridge 4 July 1830* (London, 1830), 28.

¹⁹¹ LA, PR1549/3/9, Whittaker to Bishop Sumner, 7 August 1835; PR1549/25/4 .SPCK Papers, 1823 Report.

... essentially that of the English and the other reformed churches. The form of worship generally adopted is the English liturgy abridged at the discretion of the minister, plus extempore prayer. The ordination of ministers was originally Episcopal but at present in general, Presbyterian. The form of worship and the modes of church government are points of minor importance. Sound Protestant truth in doctrine is the indispensable requisite to a mission amongst us .¹⁹²

Reverend Potter could have been concerned to rally a Protestant union in the face of the establishment of the Roman Catholic hierarchy and the Anglo-Catholicism at Leigh Parish Church.¹⁹³ He might even have been seeking to reassure the establishment that no further Anglican church was really necessary in Tyldesley. He may have been restating the tenets of the Countess of Huntingdon Connexion, a movement that was within the Anglican communion until some of the preachers were proscribed in 1779.¹⁹⁴ However, he may simply have felt moved to emphasise the common ground between denominations of the same religion.

The Anglican assertion in Lancashire, epitomised by the Commissioners' churches certainly looked for common ground but it was a comprehension on the terms of the Church. The previous chapter looked at relative attendance at denominational places of worship. If the established church did exceptionally well in two of the three sample townships by 1851 that is creditable but not the same as bringing significant numbers of Dissenters back into the Church. There were signs it could happen elsewhere in the nation. There were signs of social mobility leading some to the Church of England, as early as 1798.¹⁹⁵ At the time some affluent Presbyterians disconcerted by the Church and King mobs were persuaded into the arms of the Church.¹⁹⁶ Some Quakers in Sheffield and the West Riding of Yorkshire became members of the Church of England in the first decade of the new century.¹⁹⁷ Later, in the 1820s, dissension within Methodism accompanied 'persistent rumours of a substantial move towards the Church.'¹⁹⁸ By mid century there were notable individuals such as F.D.Maurice from Unitarianism Edward Ackroyd from

¹⁹² HO129/467, 25, Enumerator's Returns Religious Census 1861, Tyldesley Top Chapel.

¹⁹³ *Manchester Courier*, 17 June 1854.

¹⁹⁴ M.Watts, *The Dissenters* vol 1 (Oxford, 1978), 447.

¹⁹⁵ Watts, *Dissenters* vol 3, 117

¹⁹⁶ W.R.Ward, *Religion and Society in England 1790-1850* (London, 1972), 65,

¹⁹⁷ Watts, *Dissenters* vol 2 (Oxford, 1995), 315-6.

¹⁹⁸ Ward, *Religion and Society*, 153.

Methodism in Halifax.¹⁹⁹ However, Watts dates the serious faltering of nonconformity nationally to the last quarter of the nineteenth century. Partly this was due to a failure to recruit as formerly but involved some losses to the Established Church, where possibly social aspiration was the main driver.²⁰⁰ This timing did not match the first flush of the Commissioners' church project.

Within Lancashire, Navickas thought people in the early nineteenth century exercised a changing choice from the great variety of worship places.²⁰¹ By 1856 at the official close of the Commissioners' project there were signs of movement of important individuals such as the Dissenting minister in Tyldesley or the Pickop and Cocker families in Tockholes.²⁰² There was obvious co-operation between a handful of Congregationalists, like Lee Lee and John Cairns and the Anglican church in Chorley in the 1820s but Cairns chose to found a separate chapel when he and others left Hollinshead Street in 1835 rather than take up ample available space in the churches of the establishment.²⁰³ In 1827 Lee Lee took a pew at St Laurence's Chorley but went no further and as alluded to earlier it was interesting he chose the more ancient church, as did the Methodist Smethursts on 'converting'.²⁰⁴ The Chorley diarist William Tootell wandered between several churches but having left St Laurence's as a young man they were all Dissenting.²⁰⁵ Looking for larger groups in transfer, the recorded fall in numbers of Methodists at Tyldesley in 1851 might suggest that some transferred to help comprise the 40% share of attenders at St George's. Robinson demonstrated there was a 'floating' constituency to be attracted away or back from the Independent chapel at Tockholes after 1833 but the 1851 figures suggest at least a slight readjustment the other way once a returning Dissenter set up Redmayne's Mill in 1838 and the Independents secured a minister to rival Robinson in the form of Revd. Abram in

¹⁹⁹ Watts, *The Dissenters* vol 3 (Oxford, 2015), 52-4; K.Tiller, 'Religion in the Nineteenth Century' in J.Colby (ed.), *Communities and Families* (Open University, 1994), 168.

²⁰⁰ M.Watts, *The Dissenters* vol 3, 85, 93, 97-8.

²⁰¹ K.Navickas, *Loyalism and Radicalism in Lancashire 1798-1815* (Oxford, 2009), 107.

²⁰² *Manchester Courier*, 13 September, 1845; LA, PR27652a, Tockholes Sacraments Account; Jacklin and Robinson, *Tockholes: A Time Warp*, 153-4.

²⁰³ LA, CUCh 2.1, Minutes of Proceedings New Street Chapel 7 August 1835; CUCh 3.1, Minute Book St George's Street Congregational Chapel, 2 February 1836.

²⁰⁴ *Preston Pilot*, Letter from "Catholicus", 3 April 1826; A.C.Howell, *Grove Mill, Canal Mill and Botany Bay* (Stroud, 2008), 68.

²⁰⁵ Heyes, *History of Chorley*, 89.

1847.²⁰⁶ Altogether it does not amount to a seismic shift. Possibly the sects around the south central Lancashire frontier were too set in their ways and beliefs. Catholicism was rooted in continuity; it was not simply a product of nineteenth century immigration as was the more the case in areas like Oldham. Similarly Old Dissent went back to the sixteenth century when Puritanism was encouraged as a buffer to Catholicism. This was again a contrast with Oldham where evangelical co-operation across sects was more readily adopted because Dissent lacked the deeper root.²⁰⁷

The nature of the Anglican assertion can now be defined more clearly. From the coming of T.D. Whitaker to Whalley in 1807 until the demise of Robinson and Whittaker by 1856 there was a real determination of several leading churchmen to stand up to Dissent and diminish it. There could be real fervour in their public and private statements and this was encouraged and reflected in the pages of the *Preston Pilot*, the *Blackburn Alfred* or the *Manchester Courier*. It is possible to see a counter-reformation progressing because the Church was undergoing both extension and reform in order to make itself fit for purpose in promoting the national church, particularly by bringing Dissenters back within its copious walls. Some like Roberson placed more emphasis on condemning Dissent; others like Cooper in Chorley hoped to fashion a welcome- if on a churchman's terms. There was really little alternative, given the law of the land from 1689 and especially 1828, and for many clergy, the very Gospel they subscribed to. As Rushton replaced Whittaker in Blackburn in 1854, the fervour abated and the dream dimmed. By 1850 more churchmen are prepared to acknowledge that all Protestants might be about much the same business, certainly in relation to society. The national increase in numbers of evangelical clergymen and ministers, as opposed to Orthodox High Church or simply orthodox, was mirrored in Lancashire and may be partly an explanation.²⁰⁸ The co-operation that was evident in Oldham early in the nineteenth century could be more widely adopted, for example on the occasion of the Cotton Famine in Chorley.²⁰⁹

²⁰⁶ TNA, HO129/480, 73-77, Religious Census 1851, Tockholes Enumerator's Book; Jacklin and Robinson, *Tockholes, A Timewarp*, 107.

²⁰⁷ Smith, *Religion in Industrial Society*, 230

²⁰⁸ G.Brandwood, *The Architecture of Sharpe, Paley and Austin*, 5; N.Scotland, *The Life and Work of J. Bird Sumner 1780-1862* (Leominster, 1995), 52-3.

²⁰⁹ *Chorley Standard*, 22 October, 10 December 1864.

f) Conflict and Confusion? A Summary

Earlier conflicts had arisen because of the advent of the Commissioners' churches but they were not ultimately damaging or endemic. In both Chorley and Tyldesley the new churches' maintenance and repairs required church rates to be raised and this triggered sporadic contention in vestry meetings. Chorley is interesting in that the contests began early, in 1822 and were initially with the Catholic, rather than the Protestant Dissenting, side of the community. In addition to conflict, there was sufficient potential for confusion in the plentiful and rapid legislation on district and parish status between 1818 and 1856. However serious issues between parent church and the new passed within a generation in Tyldesley and Tockholes and Chorley St George's quarrels with St Laurence's Parish Church were mere pinpricks. Neither was there serious confusion about ecclesiastical parish boundaries, as Snell suspected there must be, even beyond the particular area of the Forest of Dean. In the sample Lancashire townships, the proliferation of churches and their concomitant and changing district boundaries did not destroy community identities but reflected old and new ones. This is admittedly a small sample but does something to meet Snell's complaint that 'ecclesiastical subdivision is little researched for the nineteenth century.'²¹⁰ The Commissioners' churches created significant impact in their communities beyond the mere assertion of Anglicanism. If they entailed little change in religious worship this was partly because custom ran deep but also that the Commissioners' churches were intended to retain orthodoxy. Positive cultural effects can be seen in the impetus all the churches gave to community association in music, theatre, the local economy, especially in Tockholes, and voluntary associations.

²¹⁰ Snell, *Parish and Belonging*, 377.

PART C: CONCLUSION

CHAPTER EIGHT: THE ROLE OF THE COMMISSIONERS' CHURCHES

a) Introduction to the Conclusion

The historical literature referred to in Chapter One and Two contained just one enthusiastic endorsement of the role of Commissioners' churches in Lancashire.¹ Beyond that, Carr's study of London stressed the importance of the churches both in London and nationally but the judgements were short addenda to a thesis focusing on the development of church art and architecture and had no grounding in research focused on the churches' impact.² One secondary text, comprising a chronological account of Lord Liverpool's post war government, neglects to notice the Church Building Act altogether.³ Another, addressing the performance of the nineteenth century Anglican Church, simply referred to church building in general.⁴ Where coverage is more specific, some adjudged that the churches were possibly unnecessary, originally over-sized, of unauthentic design emanating from a lack of spiritual conviction, under-resourced and poorly- endowed, staffed by disheartened clerics and lacking in positive impact.⁵ Port himself, despite his thorough and fair examination of the administration of the Commissioners and the construction of the churches, was reluctant to claim much for them, beyond, 'The erection of churches...cannot have been without influence on the life of many of the poor' and, 'Million churches in particular have notable qualities of effective siting, form and proportion, picturesque grouping of architectural elements, effective and lively features in the landscape.'⁶ The positive reviewer of the Lancashire churches had formerly curtly dismissed the churches as including 'many in a characteristic and long despised style of watered down Gothic'.⁷ His later, rosier judgement was derived from an acknowledgement of a noble effort as outlined in Port's work of 2006 and from an appreciation of the

¹ A.G.Crosby, 'Waterloo Sunrise' review article *LH*, 37, 3 (August 2007), 204.

² J.L.Carr, 'The Commissioners' Churches of London, 1818-37', unpublished PhD thesis, University of Michigan, 1976).

³ J.E.Cookson, *Lord Liverpool's Administration, The Crucial Years 1815-22* (Edinburgh, 1975), 152-170.

⁴ W.Gibson, *Church, State and Society 1760-1850* (London, 1994), 60.

⁵ Chapter 1. 25-6.

⁶ Port, *Six Hundred New Churches* (2nd ed., Reading, 2006), 278,280.

⁷ A.G.Crosby, *A History of Lancashire* (Chichester, 1998), 110.

situation, locations and sometimes design of the Commissioners' churches in Lancashire which he had encountered whilst during a long life of field studies.⁸

Thus there was an opportunity for a fresh look at the rationale and impact of the churches. Two reservations about methodology periodically gave pause to this work. Firstly were the Commissioners' churches a discrete entity in public worship provision, worthy of separate study? It could have proved hard to distinguish their impact within the factors promoting church building and the Anglican assertion as a whole. Some successful clergy in these churches made light of legal and monetary distinction and operated much like any incumbent or minister. However the sudden injection of six hundred churches, the unique nature of the Church Building Act of 1818, plus its particular rationale and the halting road to equal legal status and acceptance as churches on a par with older ones, all fed a conviction that they formed one project and possessed distinct significance. This great raft of buildings and the organisation behind them allowed good clergy to flourish, even if they did not guarantee a positive impact. Secondly, any local study bears the prospect of being but a little narrative.⁹ Yet the little narratives are important. Given the sheer variety of motive, starting position and path to success of just three selected churches, operating at this level is justified. The sub region of south central Lancashire had a particular significance given the bulk of Commissioners' churches founded therein with the first parliamentary grant. The local study has the advantage of being as 'true' as possible for the particle of local history examined, if not representative of a regional or national experience. In time a pointillist effect made up of further studies, possibly beginning from a reading of Professor Port's lists, will provide a better general picture, an approach generally suggested by a long term researcher in ecclesiastical history.¹⁰ There is also the opportunity to focus more on issues related to government, society and politics than this study chooses to do.

Thus this concluding chapter begins with a short synthesis of the causation and motivation behind the churches in the three local townships and considers the extent of their impact and the factors contributing to this, in particular the role of the church buildings themselves.

⁸ Interview with Alan Crosby, Preston, 9 January 2017.

⁹ C.Haydon, *John Henry Williams (1747-1829) 'Political Clergyman. War, The French Revolution and the Church of England'* (Woodbridge, 2007), 11.

¹⁰ Haydon, *John Henry Williams*, 11.

A further section summarises the importance of the Commissioners' churches within the nineteenth century assertion of the Anglican Church in Lancashire. There is some indication of the relative importance of Lancashire to the Commissioners. Section d moves to the national picture, outlining the relevance of the Commissioners' churches to the timing of Anglican assertion nationally and recalling how tenaciously the rationale of providing a seat in the national church for everyone gamely persisted beyond the life of the Commission. A final section looks at how the Commissioners' churches might fit into the wider historical continuum.

b) The Role of the Churches Locally

The comparative local study pointed up several conclusions. Firstly, although detailed evidence existed which would have allowed a very rational and just distribution of the churches, local conditions, power and contacts, meant that the first wave were deposited where they most easily could be. The three townships in the case studies were relatively small in populace and not the most obvious townships suffering from lack of church room. Two of the churches appeared to have a church thrust upon them. In contrast, Chorley demonstrated a forty year previous commitment to church extension, although it could not have created a large church like St George's without the extraordinary government aid, a feature of all three townships' situation. Therefore the three townships in south central Lancashire may be deemed fortunate to attract a Commissioners' church. The causes behind a successful application varied from township to township and showed different degrees of co-operative facilitation across national, regional and local levels. All needed some external assistance and used 'connecting rods' over at least two levels. Motivation in the townships was very diverse, ranging from personal ambition and political attitudes to the religious motive of a Cooper, echoing the perceived and idealistic role of the Church over the centuries, and mirroring as well as anywhere the 'delusional' aim of Vansittart expressed at the introduction of the Church Building Bill in 1818. If the importance of religious ideas in history was restated by historians like Clark and McLeod, in the 1980s, then a noble interpretation of Oliver Cooper's campaign for church extension in Chorley would certainly support this contention. An appreciation of the churches' architecture would also support the existence of a clear religious rationale. These churches did not, as

Yates demonstrated, signal a radical step in liturgical ordering.¹¹ However their presence spoke as firmly as the churches of the Oxford Movement or Ecclesiologists, both of which Whyte highlights.¹² The commitment to Gothic connected with the few good churches of Lancashire's medieval past, claimed continuity for the Reformed church with the old English church. There is a commitment to a scripturally- based Protestantism communicated by the Word, rather than by the eye as later movements sought to do. There is also a role for the church building as a base for fostering the practical holiness central to the dominant neo-Arminianism of the previous century.

As regards perceived status, it may have been the 1890s before St George's Chorley was seen as a church the equal of the mother, St Laurence's. St Stephen's Tockholes had the advantage of following on immediately from the old chapel of St Michael's. St George's Tyldesley soon made its mark but Bishop Fraser reminded them of their recent origins in 1875. Subsequent commentators and historians, possibly dazzled by the works of Pugin or the Ecclesiologists and distracted by the star of the Oxford Movement, made little of the Commissioners' churches. However Tyldesley and Tockholes made an immediate impact and Chorley did so eventually. In Tockholes an absolute increase in attendance was recorded in a township of a declining population, which makes the success of St Stephen's all the more remarkable. In general Snell and Ell did not see much success for the established church in Lancashire towns.¹³ Only Ulverston amongst the lesser towns seemed to present a good index of attendance in 1851.¹⁴ R.B. Walker, writing of Cheshire, characterised Anglican performance in the new towns as poor and it might be expected this could be true of Lancashire.¹⁵ Yet, in 1851, Tyldesley church performed well in the category of smaller towns with a population between 10,000 and 15,000. Nor were these Commissioners' churches only successful where the historian of Manchester Diocese expected them to be, in middle class suburbs.¹⁶ The churches in Tyldesley and Chorley were at the town centres and not in the smartest streets. Tockholes St Stephen was in a struggling rural community with hardly anyone beyond clergy or nonconformist ministers

¹¹ N.Yates, *Buildings, Faith and Worship* (Oxford, 2000), 66, 117.

¹² W.Whyte, *Unlocking the Church* (Oxford, 2017), 19, 35, 52, 64.

¹³ K.D.M. Snell and P.S. Ell, *Rival Jerusalems* (Cambridge, 2000), 403.

¹⁴ K.D.M. Snell, *Parish and Belonging* (Cambridge, 2006), 67.

¹⁵ R.B.Walker, 'Religious Changes in Cheshire, 1750-1850', *JEH*, 17 (1966),89, 94.

¹⁶ A.J. Dobbs, *Like A Mighty Tortoise. A History of the Diocese of Manchester* (Manchester, 1978), 138.

who might be termed middle class. There were other positive signs beyond the numbers of worshippers and a striking building. The clergy were no poorer than their contemporaries in Lancashire and none of them displayed a lack of morale.¹⁷ Gilmour Robinson in Tockholes led with brio and Robson in Tyldesley was conscientiously diligent and determined to stand up for Tyldesley. The curates in Chorley frequently moved on in the first generation but none complained of their personal lot, some showed initiative in confronting funding problems and one in particular, Robert Mosley Master, was later to serve with distinction as curate in Burnley, archdeacon of Manchester and eventually rector of Croston.¹⁸

How important were the buildings themselves? Two of these churches were in townships wherein they were the only Anglican places of worship and the responsibility for building a constituency was totally with them. In Tyldesley's case, there had been no church of the Establishment before the consecration of St George's in 1825. All three local churches were in the vanguard of Anglican assertion in their townships. The assertion in Lancashire had several levers but in these townships the arrival of the Commissioners' church was the most noticeable and fundamental step. They reserved space and used it. Schools were also important and the Sunday schools would house more impressionable minds than the churches themselves, particularly in Chorley. The schools, however, followed upon the church base. Later strategic flexibility and increased costs might dictate a smaller, unpretentious building to suffice as an initial base, much as All Saints church-school Chorley did, established by St George's in 1900 and replaced by a parochial church in 1957.¹⁹

Tockholes' success is useful in illuminating other crucial factors, beyond the physical provision of a new building, contributing to the success of a Commissioners' church. It clearly could not be a simple case of filling the seats as population increased or Chorley St George would have flourished immediately and Tockholes St Stephen failed miserably. The key causes of success were quality leadership and dedication. Immediate success in Tyldesley and Tockholes was associated with the dogged Jacob Robson and Gilmour Robinson. The eventual success in Chorley was due to layman Thomas Brown and the

¹⁷ Chapter 5. 160-8.

¹⁸ *Burnley Express*, 3 March 2010.

¹⁹ SGC, Parish Magazine, June 1900, All Saints Reference Book and Souvenir Programme, 1957.

opportunism and ambition of Revd. A.J.Pattinson. It was also important that such characters were given their head. Chorley suffered from an absentee rector of Chorley during the first generation of St George's church but Gilmour Robinson in Tockholes, although seemingly in constant disagreement with his supervising vicar, forwarded the interests of his church and district with gusto.

A historian writing as recently as Snell in *Parish and Belonging*, adjudged that the necessary expansion and alteration of ecclesiastical boundaries attendant upon the new churches would have a deleterious effect on community identities.²⁰ The establishment of districts attached to the sample churches in this study, did not create illogical boundaries and destroy community identity. In a changing world, they built on old identities and proved capable of fashioning new ones. Conflicts with sects could be spectacular in the first half of the nineteenth century but were not continuous and did not cause fundamental or violent splits between neighbours of different persuasions. The churches perpetuated accepted worship practices and also, in the case of Tyldesley and Chorley, contributed to the culture of townships which were becoming towns. Tockholes and Tyldesley churches were at the centre of a flourishing communal life within a generation; they demonstrated something of the enhanced role of the parish in promoting social harmony and stability which Brown argues was central to the strategy of churchmen from the orthodox, to Romantics like Carlyle and Southey and the evangelical Chalmers in Scotland.²¹ This concern may seem more in tune with the first expressed aim of Vansittart in 1818, namely the encouragement of an ordered society. The associational approach has been criticised as not being sufficiently evangelical or even religious.²² Or the local church could easily become 'a resort for the devout rather than a resource for the community'.²³ Yet the Church had positioned itself well for building a congregation, just as Dissenting groups did. The provision of a church at the centre of a parish gave both orthodox and Evangelicals assessing the state of the Church around 1850 something they could join rather than drift to

²⁰ Snell *Parish and Belonging*, 400, 429,439.

²¹ S.J.Brown, *The National Churches of England, Ireland and Scotland 1801-46* (Oxford, 2001), 74,79,84-90.

²² S.J.D.Green, *Religion in the Age of Decline* (Cambridge, 1996), 379,387.

²³ A.Burns, "The Authority of The State" in P.Mandler (ed.), *Liberty and Authority in Victorian Britain* (Oxford, 2006), 192.

Dissent or Rome. It was the extension of a traditional model which lacked the smack of innovation or unorthodoxy.

At a more demanding level, judgement should look beyond an estimate of denominational success. Did they match the highest aspirations of a Richard Yates or an Oliver Cooper in hoping to bring back to the Church those straying to conventicles before 1818? If the early supporters and incumbents were aiming at a real counter-reformation against Dissent which pulled great numbers back from their meeting houses and filled their own large buildings to capacity, then they can be counted ultimate failures. If survival, staunching the inroads of Dissent, accruing an increased share of worshippers and the successful establishment of a local worship and community centres be considered reasonable tests, then they performed well.

c) The Regional Impact of the Commissioners' Churches

By 1851 the presence of the established church in Lancashire was undoubtedly stronger than it had been before the 1818 Church Building Act. From 1847 there was a new Manchester diocese, fashioned out of Chester, serving the industrial heart of south Lancashire.²⁴ By mid nineteenth century in both dioceses high standards of professionalism were demanded of clergy. Pluralism had all been eradicated.²⁵ In terms of provision, Oldham had one clergyman to 4000 souls in 1861, compared with 2500 in 1790 but, given the five fold increase in population over the same period, this was an achievement.²⁶ There was a diocesan appreciation of the distribution of places of worship and strategies to repair gaps. Two voluntary church building societies, Chester in 1833 and Manchester in 1850, had taken responsibility to raise funds.²⁷ As early as 1839 the Church in Preston and Blackburn could seat 25% of all ages.²⁸ Despite very rapid increases in population Lancashire maintained one Anglican church per 4400 inhabitants consistently between 1831 and 1861.²⁹ Local committees had furthered the work of the National Society in

²⁴ C.S.Ford, 'Prospects of the Manchester Diocese since 1847' in C.Ford, M.Powell and T.Wyke, *The Church in Cottonopolis* (Manchester, 1997), 4-5.

²⁵ CALS, EDV10/8, Bishop's Charge 1844, 9-12.

²⁶ M. Smith, *Religion in Industrial Society* (Oxford, 1994), 84.

²⁷ N.Scotland, *The Life and Work of J.Bird Sumner 1780-1861* (Leominster, 1995), 49.

²⁸ Smith, *Religion in Industrial Society*, 243.

²⁹ W.L.Dickinson, *Growth of the Church in Lancashire During The Present Century* (Manchester, 1868), 20.

schools and by 1839 there was a massive county-wide commitment to cornering as much of the government grant to schools as possible.³⁰ It can be asserted with Navickas that, ‘From the early nineteenth century there was the beginning of a slow process of Anglican renewal that would continue well into the century’.³¹

A reservation about the statement above is the use of the word ‘renewal’. Although the eighteenth century church in Lancashire was not moribund, it had never been in such a position of strength, to regain similar heights through a process of ‘renewal’. If O’Gorman can speak of a ‘confessional Church’ in the England of 1760, it could only be an ideal and not a reality in Lancashire.³² Snape’s judgement of Whalley parish pre Whitaker was well substantiated and Whalley parish was a very big segment of Lancashire.³³ Therefore the period of the Anglican assertion in Lancashire, beginning in Manchester in 1790 and outlying Lancashire by 1815, is more a time of a new movement, rather than resurgence of previous progress. It could be a case of the biggest town first, followed by the lesser towns and then the outliers. Certainly the first practical steps in defining Anglican Protestantism from separatist Methodism occurred in Manchester in the 1790s, whereas the church in Chorley was accused of ‘sleeping’ until the 1820s.³⁴ The key turning point in Chorley was the decision in 1818 to build a Commissioners’ church, followed by Revd. James Jackson’s capture of the charity school for a National School in 1821.³⁵

No longer was it a county of thin provision where duty was done but little more. It was a period of raised expectations and internal reform within the church but also with an external purpose. By 1830 J.W. Whittaker was ready to enter public debate with the Catholic church and five years later set Feniscowles Immanuel within a mile of the splendid Pleasington Priory.³⁶ By the late 1830s he could pick a target from infidelity, socialism, Dissent and popery.³⁷ In the 1820s Protestant Dissent was the original and major target, with

³⁰ *Preston Chronicle*, 30 March 1839.

³¹ K. Navickas, *Loyalism and Radicalism in Lancashire* (Oxford, 2009), 103.

³² F.O’Gorman *The Long Eighteenth Century. British Political and Social History* (2nd ed., London, 2016), 179; J.K Walton, *Lancashire A Social History 1558-1939* (Manchester, 1987), 91-3.

³³ M.F.Snape, *The Church in an Industrialising Society. The Lancashire Parish of Whalley* (Woodbridge, 2003), 6.

³⁴ *Preston Pilot*, 20 October 1827.

³⁵ LA, PR3123/11/1, St George’s National School Logbook 1811-55, Minutes, 7 June 1821.

³⁶ LA, PR2846/2/1, Feniscowles Immanuel Coucher Book, W.Whittaker to W.Feilden, 23 January 1834.

³⁷ *Blackburn Standard*, 9 October 1839.

Commissioners' churches in three outlying townships containing Methodists and Independents, There were varied levers in this assertion. Separate Sunday schools formed one arm. The S.P.C.K. influence, working with the National Schools is apparent from 1812 in Chester Diocese and from 1815 in Lancashire.³⁸ Blackburn had one of the first local societies in the country. Whittaker, after 1822, collected attendance figures and targeted new day schools in areas of population growth or Dissenter density.³⁹ Subsequent to the first government grant to education in 1833, Chester Diocese created a diocesan board followed by subordinate deanery committees in 1839, in order to create training colleges, raise subscriptions, build schools and provide inspection. The National Society had a proactive approach, a tight organisation and a good start, in contrast to the British and Foreign Society which waited for individual school proposals to be forwarded to their notice.⁴⁰ Yet, over the cotton district as a whole in 1843 only 9% of the 7000 factory children were being taught in national schools.⁴¹ Although Manchester had two model schools doing well by 1843 and there were twenty one National Day Schools over Manchester and Salford by 1847, urban resentment of the county influence in the Diocesan Board appeared to restrict otherwise positive progress.⁴²

The Commissioners' churches were very important within this overall picture of advance. Although Carr claims London was the first priority of the Commissioners, the early funding given to Lancashire and the strong initiative of Bishop Law in Chester Diocese suggests Lancashire had equal priority and a fair share, or better, of the available resources. As described in Chapter 2, in the first tranche of Commissioners' churches, Lancashire received 19.66% of the churches for a county with 8.7% of the population. If Chester Diocese's accommodation shortfall was adjudged to be 20.56% of the total deficiency in England and Wales, this was matched by an allocation of 21.6% of the churches awarded under the first grant. Indeed, over the whole life of the Commission Lancashire did very well. By 1856 Lancashire had received 13.4% of the Commissioners' churches, with a population in 1851 comprising 11.3% of the country's total populace. The county had

³⁸ LA, PR1549/25/1, Blackburn S.P.C.K. Coucher Book 1815-34, Minutes 30 November 1815.

³⁹ Sanderson, 'The National and British Societies in Lancashire', 6-7.

⁴⁰ Sanderson, 'The National and British School Societies in Lancashire', 6-8.

⁴¹ M.A.Cruickshank, 'The Anglican Revival and Education: A Study of School Expansion in the Cotton Manufacturing Areas of N.W.England, 1840-1850', *NH* 15,1, (1979), 179.

⁴² Cruickshank, 'The Anglican Revival in Education', 188.

received 13.9% of the additional seats generated. More impressively 16.6% of the total value of Commissioners' grants was spent in Lancashire. The churches cost an average of £5110 each, whereas those in the West Riding of Yorkshire averaged £3766. Particularly in the first wave, the county's churches habitually received full grants, a happy situation shared with most northern counties, apart from Durham, and very different from the partial grants to Kent and Dorset.⁴³ It seemed the Church knew all about its regional, if not local, priority needs and there was at least an element of positive discrimination.

By 1856 the churches had accomplished much, firstly in south central Lancashire and later across the county, as a trigger to voluntary effort and as a significant component of all the churches constructed between 1818 and 1856. The large churches were the most visible sign of the establishment. A former secretary of T.D. Whitaker's, Revd. S.J. Allen, preaching before the bishop of Chester in 1835, spoke of, 'The ten thousand stations where the pure Gospel is regularly proclaimed' in 'National Temples'. He went on to survey the social uses of the parish church but continued, 'I prefer to confine myself chiefly to the spiritual advantages from the settlement of a parochial order.'⁴⁴ A school on its own would not have had a resident minister. A school on its own would not have had an adult provision for continued contact with the church.

Turning from impact to motivation, how far did the motives of bishops, key clerics and their lay allies mirror the key ideas set out by Vansittart and or indeed of Oliver Cooper or T.D. Whitaker? Concern for order, improved moral behaviour and opposition to Dissent were certainly present. Indeed Lancashire was first in the field in defence of the Test and Corporation Acts in 1787 and the break up of Protestant co-operation came early in Manchester from 1795. How far did motivation spread? Generalisations even about Lancashire are hard to be certain of. Initially it was a relatively small group of committed clergy in Lancashire which ensured the 1818 Act was exploited. T.D. Whitaker, J.W. Whittaker, Oliver Cooper, Jacob Robson and Gilmour Robinson in south central Lancashire were the initial drivers and their parishes and townships were the early

⁴³ Port, *Six Hundred New Churches* 2nd ed., tables 325-47; PP 1818 Account of Benefices and Population, 16 February 1818.

⁴⁴ CHTL, 4C5.53(4), S.J. Allen, *A Sermon for Bishop John Bird Sumner Preached at The Visitation at Blackburn 7 July 1835* (Blackburn, 1835), 6, 10, 14.

beneficiaries. After 1830, the cohort widened to ministers such as Robert Mosley Master in Burnley, supported by the likes of John Rushton and Bishops Blomfield and Sumner. Each minister largely followed his own path; they were not a band of brothers and, subsequent to 1830, they also represented varying strands of churchmanship. Their work was not largely 'diocesan consciousness'. Whittaker had a definite sense of his independence in Blackburn and the clerics and laymen mostly encountered in this study seemed to exhibit an identity with the national church as a whole and their own cure in particular. There were few key personnel but with sufficient linkage between centre, region and locality to somehow make a project work. The Archbishop of Canterbury's patronage of the large parishes Whalley, Blackburn and Rochdale injected trusted, briefed and generally able emissaries into large swathes of Lancashire during the first half of the nineteenth century. This would give some cohesion and co-operation with the centre of Anglican power.

d) Beyond Lancashire

Norman alluded to the modest boom in institutional Christianity in England in the first half of the nineteenth century, being, 'Hugely important in terms of influence. It represented the adhesion of the middle classes and most of the intelligentsia as the vehicle of their moral seriousness.'⁴⁵ As Knight has pointed out, in terms of attendance the Established Church was the leading denomination in 1851.⁴⁶ The Church of England had also maintained its established status, despite the serious fears between 1833 and 1841 that it might not. It was also aware that a sterling voluntary effort would be required and a wary eye kept upon the government. The expectation of efficiency meant that the Ecclesiastical Commission, set up in 1835, found the will and the powers to manage the resources of the Church better than previously. It was this body that absorbed the powers of the Church Building Commissioners in 1856. The nineteenth century Church continued to emphasise that it performed a function for all sections of society through its presence. As Curl puts it, when commenting on the civilising of urban masses, 'Without the heroic efforts of countless

⁴⁵ E.Norman, *Church and Society in England 1770-1970* (Oxford, 1976), 10.

⁴⁶ F.Knight, *Church in the Nineteenth Century* (London, 2008), 26.

clergymen and laity it is doubtful if anything like stabilisation would have been achieved at all.⁴⁷

The recognition of a tide of reform in the Anglican church from around 1820, suggests there was significant progress in most dioceses. There are detailed studies to suggest this was true of Durham under Bishop Barrington, well prior to 1825.⁴⁸ However there were some bishops indifferent to this wind of change, notably Bathurst at Norwich to 1837 and Philpotts at Durham in succession to van Mildert.⁴⁹ Individual bishops and their clergy would display varying amounts of assertion and an individual choice of levers, although nationally priorities were better directed by Archbishop Howley after 1832.⁵⁰ As described in Chapter One, the timing of the church reform nationally, in addition to its nature and prevalence, is of interest to historians. Were the 1830s the key ‘watershed’ in the history of the Church, as with political and constitutional history?⁵¹ This present study, by focusing on the Commissioners’ churches, legislated for in 1818, with the first active by 1822, supports Burns’ gradualist theory of the timing of serious Church reform and renewal. Yet the narrative of the Commissioners’ churches would suggest they formed a significant upturn within the gradual progress. In 1810-1820 the Church had managed to build 152 churches, whereas there were 15,601 additional non-Anglican places of worship.⁵² Wesleyan Methodists responded to news of the Church Building Act by establishing a General Chapel Fund and a church building committee of Conference. However Conference was licensing and supporting chapel building from 1775 and 550 new ones were built in the thirty years to 1805.⁵³ Hence the pressing necessity for the Commission.

The Commissioners’ churches were just one contribution towards improving the Church’s presence and performance. In the early nineteenth century the Church also embraced missionary work and school building. The government, in the ten years before 1818, gave £1 million in support of enhancing clerical salaries, the same amount as was committed to

⁴⁷ J.S.Curl, *Piety Proclaimed. An Introduction to Places of Worship in Victorian England* (London, 2002), 16.

⁴⁸ Best, *Temporal Pillars*, 239.

⁴⁹ Best, *Temporal Pillars*, 240, 245.

⁵⁰ J.Garrard, *Archbishop Howley, 1828-1848* (Farnham, 2015), 50, 61-2.

⁵¹ A.Burns, ‘English Church Reform Revisited 1780-1850’ in A.Burns and J.Innes (eds.), *Rethinking The Age of Reform 1780-1850* (Cambridge, 2003), 137-8.

⁵² O’Gorman, *The Long Eighteenth Century*, 305.

⁵³ *Magazine of the Wesleyan Methodist Church*, 67 (1844), 238-9.

the Church Building Commission in 1818.⁵⁴ A sense of proportion arises when considering that £482,926 had been spent from the national budget on improvements to Buckingham Palace by 1828 and £800,000 on rebuilding Windsor Castle by 1830.⁵⁵ If direct support for church building was eschewed after 1824, government chose, from 1833, to supplement voluntary school provision, which the Church exploited better than any other body, holding 84% of school accommodation in 1858.⁵⁶ However the ‘government’ churches made a resounding start to the building programme and in their very size were a powerful set of symbols. Of all the efforts, that Best termed the ‘third reform movement’ the Commissioners’ effort must measure as one of the most potent and the most noticeable. The Commissioners’ churches numbering 612, went way beyond the efforts of Queen Anne’s day, which produced a mere 17 for London itself. The amount of Commissioners’ churches alone outreached the prime minister’s estimate in 1818. In moving the second reading on the Bill in the Lords, he intimated, ‘It might not be unreasonably expected, with the aid of subscriptions, from 150 to 200 churches will be built’.⁵⁷ Lancashire was one of the counties where low church building rates prior to 1800 correlated with a strong Dissenting presence.⁵⁸ Therefore if the major aim was to attack Dissent, the church building programme would seem to make eminent sense. In addition church building was good for morale; churchmen gained a psychological boost.⁵⁹ Furthermore the Commission had set a precedent that was hard to ignore. Once private patronage was admitted, church building by association and private patrons took up the task. After 1830 ‘acts were passed which snapped the fetters of the Church’.⁶⁰ The 1840s saw a great spate of church building nationwide, a phenomenon repeated in the 1860s. Snell estimated that £30 million was spent in the second half of the nineteenth century.⁶¹

If the nation, in 1851, was concerned about there being sufficient accommodation overall for public worship, there was no need to be. Horace Mann concluded that ‘unless they

⁵⁴ Brown, *The National Churches* 65, 71-2.

⁵⁵ E.A.Smith, *George IV* (London, 1999), 250-1.

⁵⁶ Dickinson, *Growth of the Church in Lancashire*, 42.

⁵⁷ Hansard, 1st series, 38,709-21, 15 May 1818.

⁵⁸ M.Watts, *The Dissenters* vol 2 (Oxford, 1995), 44-6.

⁵⁹ M.Chase, ‘The Local State in Regency Britain’ *LH* 43,4 (October 2013), 276.

⁶⁰ Dickinson, *Growth of the Church in Lancashire*, 10.

⁶¹ Snell, *Parish and Belonging*, 405.

should all select to attend the same service, there is ample room for all'.⁶² However what is interesting about the assumptions of the Report of the House of Lords Committee on Places of Worship in 1858, is that the Anglicans producing the report, had taken Mann's estimate of 58% of population attending any place of worship as a new benchmark for the Anglican church to aim at, almost double the target of Vansittart in 1818. The mindset behind the launch of the Commissioners' churches was still present. Aspiration had not totally diminished. In 1857 William Rivington of the London Church Building Society believed, in contrast to Lord Aberdeen, that the government grants were still required to supplement the voluntary exertion.⁶³ There was no chance of this happening but given the opportunity, many churchmen would have embraced a continuing church building commission. Indeed the Commission's very last report is written in expectation of continuity, although this might have been primarily a political gambit.⁶⁴ In the later nineteenth century, despite some seemingly deserted churches, there were still enthusiastic champions of church extension. W.L.Dickinson could point out that Anglican accommodation in Rochdale only matched 20% of the population and that over all Lancashire a ratio of one church to 2683 persons in 1801 had declined to around 1 to 4000 at any time between 1831 and 1861, despite the great energies placed in church building.⁶⁵ Another proponent Hugh Birley, writing in 1880, referred to the continuing misappropriation of free seats, creating a shortage in some Manchester churches, and complaining that building of additional places had been but in 'desultory fashion'. He clung to the old vision of a parish church for the whole community: 'The Parish Church should be regarded as a sacred fortress, centre of the affections for all these church workers'.⁶⁶

Given the state of denominational competition by 1851, aspiring to comprehension was more unrealistic than in 1818.⁶⁷ For the Church could not claim to have established a fully functioning and totally supported parish system in every area of a few thousand souls, as

⁶² H.Mann, *Religion and Worship in England and Wales 1851. Abridged from the Official Report by H.Mann* (London, 1854), 89.

⁶³ PP Report from the Select Committee Appointed to Enquire into the Deficiency of Means of Spiritual Instruction and Places of Divine Worship, 2 July 1858, 231.

⁶⁴ PP 1856 (390) Commission for Building New Churches 36th Annual Report, 13 July 1856.

⁶⁵ Dickinson, *Growth of the Church in Lancashire*, 42, Appendix.

⁶⁶ CHTL, 4C7.40(11), H.Birley, *Letter to the Lord Bishop of Manchester on the Utility of Churches*, 1880.

⁶⁷ PP 1858, Report on Places of Divine Worship, 2 July 1858, iii, vii.

Yates hoped for in 1815.⁶⁸ New sects, now including varieties of Methodism which could have been counted still part of the national church before 1791, had joined Dissent, which supports the judgement of MacCulloch that, ‘English Protestantism was much more riven than Protestantism in any other part of Europe, apart from the kingdom of the Netherlands’. Yet the same author points out that the hostility to the established church may well have encouraged a greater attendance at all the Protestant churches, including the Anglican.⁶⁹

e) The Place of the Commissioners’ Churches in History

What was the place of the Commissioners’ churches in the historical continuum? This study has tended to accentuate the genuinely religious motivation influencing churchmen’s decisions. In a wide sense the Commissioners’ churches form part of a renewed attempt to create a godly nation, and a Protestant one, housed in a common national church, an ideal which had seen sporadic effort since the Reformation.⁷⁰ Apart from including all sects, such a church would include ranks or classes, especially making ample provision for the poor in free pews. Both aims were implied in the provision of so much seating for every community. The practice of keeping at least half the seats in government churches for the poor was modified in practice, particularly it seems in Manchester.⁷¹ The aims of a godly nation or a national church encompassing the poor, must be seen as ideals and secularism active from the eighteenth century and pervading from the 1960s may show their futility in reality. Even so, the Church probably achieved a lot more than it would have done, by harbouring its ambition longer than seemed tenable. There was a wisdom in ‘the reach exceeding the grasp’, as Victorian poet Robert Browning put it.⁷² The effort also meant that it might claim to be a seriously reformed church by 1900.⁷³ It could be argued that more relative progress was made in the ‘Long Reformation’ in the first half of the nineteenth century than in any other period. Possibly a churchman’s main regret was that the reform

⁶⁸ R.Yates, *Church in Danger* (London, 1818), 19.

⁶⁹ D.MacCulloch, *A History of Christianity* (London, 2009), 838-9.

⁷⁰ N.Tyacke, ‘Rethinking the English Reformation’ in Tyacke (ed.), *Europe’s Long Reformation* (London, 1998), 24.

⁷¹ PP 1858, Report on Places of Divine Worship 1858, 432,445,609.

⁷² Robert Browning, ‘Andrea Del Sarto’ in *Men and Women and Other Poems* (1855).

⁷³ C.S.Ford, *Pastors and Polemicists. The Character of Popular Anglicanism in S.E.Lancashire 1847-1914* (Manchester, 2002), 169.

movement and the church building had not begun half a century earlier, particularly in a county like Lancashire. Mori puts it too strongly in asserting that the million grant came ‘too late to revive the fortunes of English and Welsh Anglicanism’.⁷⁴ However what might have been achieved if the programme had begun before the revival of Congregationalism and the diverging path of Methodism?

Alternatively, the ‘third reform movement’, which the churches were an integral part of, can be seen as a kind of ‘counter reformation’, although no-one at the time referred to it as such. There had been a reluctance to use the term ‘reformation’ subsequent to its association with Oliver Cromwell’s rule.⁷⁵ However, there were several examples of attempted counter reformations by 1856, for example the ‘Second Reformation’ of the Protestant Association in attempting to convert Catholics in Ireland during the 1830s, the Oxford Movement seeking a holier status against an Erastian state, and the Catholic Revival within Protestant Britain after 1850. Tracy saw reformations in history, if certainly not identical, as seeming responses to a recent perceived erroneous accretion. They also commonly harked back to tradition and ‘lost’ writings and enlist the assistance of the state.⁷⁶

Possibly, then, counter reformations could also have common traits. True, the Catholic Reformation of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries displayed an internal spiritual flowering of its own.⁷⁷ Arguably it became ‘counter’ in 1542, with the establishment of the Holy Office aiming to convert heretics as well as the heathen. Equally it could be dated from the establishment of the Index of approved books in 1557 or the Council of Trent in 1563 which sought uniformity in practice and belief.⁷⁸ It was also a delayed response to the challenge of Luther from 1517.⁷⁹ Similarly, the ‘third reform movement’ of the Church of England seems triggered in response to the Unitarian campaign of 1788 against the Test and Corporation Acts and the licensing of separate preachers by the Countess of

⁷⁴ J.Mori, *Britain in The Age of The French Revolution* (Harlow, 2000) ,113.

⁷⁵ J.Innes, ‘Reform’ in *English Public Life: the fortunes of a word* in A.Burns and J.Innes (ed.), *Rethinking The Age of Reform, 1780-1850* (Cambridge, 2003) ,76.

⁷⁶ J.D.Tracy, *Europe’s Reformations 1450-1650* (2nd ed., Plymouth, 2006), 310.

⁷⁷ N.Davies, *Europe* (Oxford, 1996), 496; D.MacCulloch, *History of Christianity* (London, 2009), 656-8.

⁷⁸ A.G.Dickens *Reformation and Society in Sixteenth Century Europe* (London, 1966) ,189; MacCulloch *History of Christianity* ,667,685.

⁷⁹ Davies, *Europe*, 496; MacCulloch, *History of Christianity*, 656-8.

Huntington Connexion and the Methodists. Again the origins of the seaborne, second empire and the activity of Dissenting missionary societies in the 1790s would seem to trigger a response from the Church, as did the failure to restrict itinerant preachers in 1811. The Catholic 'Counter-Reformation' and the 'third reform movement' bore several other similarities. Both had a strong impulse to internal reform and an improvement of their clergy, and both enhanced the power of bishops, the Catholic version increasing the bishop of Rome's authority in particular. Both embraced a sense of theatre and spectacular symbolic building. Looking outward, both aimed to reclaim those not conforming. As in nineteenth century Anglicanism, at the root of the earlier Catholic Reformation was a 'belief in the rejuvenation of the parish system'.⁸⁰ Both adopted methods of extension, on the one case the educative mission of the Jesuits, in the other the fleet of new churches and the attendant parish schools.

There were of course differences between the two movements. The Church of England, although in its list of recommended S.P.C.K books and tracts in some way aping the Index, did not aim at absolute uniformity in worship and theology, beyond acceptance of the Thirty Nine Articles and the 1662 Book of Common Prayer. By the mid eighteenth century it was comfortable with a rigorous or reassuring neo-Arminianism. Later it had to accept the Tractarian and then Ritualist persuasions as part of the Church. Neither could the Archbishop of Canterbury claim the authority that the Pope did from 1563.⁸¹ Nevertheless the six hundred churches built by the English Church Building Commission were a visible and assertive way of announcing the determination of a church, which saw itself, within its perceived borders, as the one and legitimate heir of Christ, the Apostles and the Early Fathers, with a duty stand up to Catholicism and reclaim Dissenters.

Another legitimate comparison can be made with the assertive policy of the Anglican church under Charles I between 1625 and 1642, prosecuted particularly by Archbishop William Laud. Indeed Parry, impressed by the accent on holiness expressed in the Arts, refers to this period as 'a brief Anglican Counter-Reformation'.⁸² Certainly there was

⁸⁰ E.Duffy, 'The Long Reformation: Catholicism, Protestantism and the multitude' in N.Tyacke (ed.), *Europe's Long Reformation* (London, 1998), 34.

⁸¹ McCulloch, *History of Christianity*, 663.

⁸² G.Parry, *Glory, Laud and Honour. The Arts of the Anglican Counter-Reformation* (Woodbridge, 2006), 24.

emphasis on authority and the traditional nature of the national Church running back to the Elizabethan Hooker but also the pre Reformation Church. There was the same accent on raising internal standards with positive results in increased numbers of literate, educated, resident clergy focusing on preaching and pastoral work.⁸³ The profile of the visible Church was raised in building and adorning churches. What was different to the nineteenth century Protestant Anglican revival was the insistence on a particular avowed theology, with Arminianism, according to Tyacke, being at the root of Laud's thinking since 1589, and the high, seemingly Catholic, sacramentalism and ceremony.⁸⁴ The Laudian emphasis on the importance of the Eucharist, the significance of the chancel and the placing of the altar had more in common with the Ecclesiologists of the 1840s and the Ritualists thereafter, rather than the orthodox churchmen of 1818.⁸⁵ Brancepeth Church, County Durham, with ornate carved chancel screen and pulpit installed in the seventeenth century, was very different from St George's Chorley in 1825, with no chancel and a plain reading desk.⁸⁶ Although the Carolingian church sought to demonstrate the beauty of holiness and buildings were highly decorated, there was no preferred architectural style at the time.⁸⁷ This contrasts with the Commissioners' churches overall tendency to Gothic for the reasons discussed in Chapter Four. The comparison with other counter reformation movements, helps define what the churchmen at the time of the Church Building Act were like and what they were not. Similarly, although rooted in the past, they were not possessed by medieval romanticism.

From a different, institutional viewpoint, the Commissioners' church project could also be seen as a major defensive project. The building programme was an expression of a corporation's fear of recent events but also as an attempt to exploit a favourable situation post victory by extracting major practical support from a state that the Church may have felt owed it something in return for the support flowing abundantly from sermon and tract. Virgin's judgement that the timing of the forward policy of church building was impolitic in providing ammunition to the strengthening opponents of the establishment is debatable,

⁸³ K.Fincham, 'Introduction' in Fincham (ed.), *The Early Stuart Church 1603-42* (London, 1993), 15,18.

⁸⁴ N.Tyacke, 'Archbishop Laud' in *Early Stuart Church*, 55,70.

⁸⁵ Parry, *Glory Laud and Honour*, 170,180-1; C.Webster (ed.), Introduction to '*Temples Worthy of His Presence*'-the early publications of the Cambridge Camden Society' (Reading, 2003), 12, 14.

⁸⁶ Parry, *Glory Laud and Honour*, 41, 91.

⁸⁷ Parry, *Glory Laud and Honour*, 6.

for the Hackney Phalanx probably felt it was in its strongest position ever between 1815 and 1818.⁸⁸ In the imagination of Yates in 1815, there could have been a truly national church linked to the State. Continued government support for a national church proved illusory, and much sooner illusory than might have been imagined at the time of the Act, as the monopoly of state appointments for churchmen was ended in 1828 and there was a real fear of Disestablishment in the 1830s. There seemed to be two options: one to form a ‘real church’ separate from the State; a second to work with the State in promulgating reforms which would preserve the endowments and the established position of the Church. The Oxford Movement took the former choice, the Ecclesiastical Commission was an outcome of the latter. Extension could still occur but it had to be by voluntary effort.

As early as 1835 Sir Robert Peel was signalling that there would be no more Million Acts. Speaking in the House of Commons he affirmed, ‘Great evils arise, not from the want of church accommodation, than from the want of pastoral care’.⁸⁹ Peel, once in power from 1841, was sympathetic to the Church but merely diverted a mere £600,000 of funding from Queen Anne’s Bounty and decided to set up uniform new districts where the need arose and hope a church would follow a minister in charge. Now, voluntaryism was the only way forward, as a widely reported, repositioning and realistic but assertive speech of Archbishop Howley in 1832, made clear during a visitation to the church in Maidstone. It was keenly reproduced in Blackburn:

He lamented the numerous schisms.....recommended to their notice and strenuous support the societies of the Establishment and in particular those for the propagation of Christian knowledge and the building and repairing of churches... The clergy should order their lives as not to afford any ground of accusations by those endeavouring to ridicule and destroy the Church establishment.⁹⁰

The irony is that the local case studies of Commissioners’ churches suggest that the Church was in many ways voluntaryist before 1833. The Church Building Act paid purely for the construction of a church, and very soon could only pay part of that cost. The pew rents for a salary, the rates and subscriptions for equipment and maintenance had to come from the

⁸⁸ Virgin, *The Church in the Age of Negligence*, 16-17.

⁸⁹ JRUL, EngMS 706, J.Rushton, Notes on Lancashire Churches and Chapels, vol 2, 140, note on House of Commons Debates, 5 May 1835.

⁹⁰ *Blackburn Alfred*, 27 August 1832.

community. It was clear in Manchester and Blackburn after 1832 that only those who wished to pay would be subject to doing so. In facing up to this challenge the Commissioners' churches were sturdy self-reliant, almost 'voluntaryist' institutions, no matter how the theory of a state church persisted. To some extent the Church borrowed the strategy of sects in not taking a congregation for granted and behaved very much like any emergent denomination in building up a community. It was a mutually mirrored process. Vibrant outgoing Dissenting sects took on more of the organisation of an established church as they responded to internal and external challenge and became 'denominations' and by the 1860s 'nonconformist churches', later still 'free churches'.⁹¹

The challenge of the Enlightenment and Utilitarianism was taken seriously too. Both Blomfield and J.B.Sumner emphasised the concept that the church must be 'useful'.⁹² That way lay survival. The provision of churches to inculcate good moral behaviour was a service often alluded to by the Church as a benefit to all society. The Church continued to absorb intellectual challenges posed by Reason, as it was to in the 1860s in adapting to the impact of German scholarship focusing on the bible as a historical text of its time.⁹³ As one historian of Christianity indicates, 'The relationship of Protestantism to the Enlightenment was much more ambiguous than that of Rome.'⁹⁴ The Church chose to be useful in its own way. The option by High Church Orthodox, taken up by all sides of the church, to adopt a traditional time-honoured approach to religious advance which involved fleshing out the existing parochial system with more places of worship and attendant districts, set a very definite course. It was a conservative approach, possibly an uninspiring one. It implied that the Church was as it always was, at the centre of communities and accessible to everyone should they choose to attend assiduously or employ it for the rites of passage. The emphasis was not to be on team ministries or evangelical missions. This embracing of the parish, or sometimes district, was at least consistent in continuing a known and legal role. When Evangelicals came to fear the revived Catholic church after 1850, it was not too difficult for the bulk to remain within the Church's system, even if around a hundred Evangelical

⁹¹ W.Ward, *Religion and Society*, 236; M.Watts, *The Dissenters*, vol 3 (Oxford, 2015), 216.

⁹² CHTL, 4C61.5(8), C.J.Blomfield, Charge to the Clergy of London, July 1830, 33; CALS, EDV10/8, Bishops' Charge 1835, 18.

⁹³ K.Hylson Smith, *The Churches in England from Elizabeth I to Elizabeth II*, vol 3, 1833-1998 (London, 1998), 27.

⁹⁴ MacCulloch, *History of Christianity*, 830.

clergymen had left in the preceding half century.⁹⁵ Another advantage of the church extension programme was that churchmen by 1858 could claim that so many more clergy needed funding.⁹⁶ A critic could say that it was a problem of the Church's making.

It is important to recognise that the Commissioners' churches were not the province of a mere High Orthodox clique. True, the Hackney Phalanx was a pressure group grown out of a particular High Church view that found Wilberforce and the Saints, seemingly obsessed with countering vice, to be an unwelcome strain.⁹⁷ Burns has alluded to the importance of the Orthodox clergy but the bulk of orthodox need not be termed 'High Church' in order to distinguish them from the Evangelicals.⁹⁸ Furthermore the key government ministers in piloting the Act, Vansittart and Harrowby, are normally accounted Evangelicals.⁹⁹ Supporters of the Commissioners' churches contained the old fashioned Christian humanitarian like Bishop Law but also the political economist C.B.Sumner, both key bishops of Chester.¹⁰⁰ Roger Carus Wilson in Preston was a committed church builder and exploiter of the 1818 Act and evangelical in approach, even prepared to extend the work of the British and Foreign Society to other parishes in 1817-18. The Evangelical bishop, J.B.Sumner of Chester, was an avid church builder who gladly utilised the Church Building Commission, as did his main aide, the mild evangelical Archdeacon John Rushton. It is fair to say that both men saw the Commission as just one source of funding and encouraged voluntary effort strongly, but their work was after 1824 when the large tranches of initial funding had been committed by the Commission. Admittedly Evangelicals, with an accent on the invisible church may have hoped involvement with church building would aid 'internal capture' of the visible church, as Carter has suggested.¹⁰¹ Charles Simeon established a fund to buy up advowsons and so insert favourable clergy.¹⁰² It is probably safe to recognise the co-operation across groups within the church, especially before 1833, when Nockles adjudges 'parties' to have been informal alliances based on family and

⁹⁵ G.Carter, *Anglican Evangelicals* (Oxford, 2001), 3,394-7.

⁹⁶ PP 1858 Report on Places of Divine Worship, 2 July 1858, xx-xxi.

⁹⁷ J.J.Sack, *From Jacobite to Conservative. Reaction and orthodoxy in Britain c.1760-1832* (Cambridge, 2004), 204,209,213.

⁹⁸ Burns, *Diocesan Revival in the Church of England*, 21; J.C.D Clark, *English Society 1688-1832* (Cambridge, 1985), xiii.

⁹⁹ B. Hilton *The Age of Atonement. The Influence of Evangelicalism in Social and Economic Thought, 1785-1865* (Oxford, 1988), 226-8.

¹⁰⁰ Sack, *From Jacobite to Conservative*, 178.

¹⁰¹ Carter, *Anglican Evangelicals*, 1-2.

¹⁰² P.Virgin, *The Church in The Age of Negligence*, 202.

friendship networks, rather than anything like the Tractarians or Low Church sects within the Church recognised later.¹⁰³ He also judged that ‘a silent majority may have belonged to no particular sub-group in the Church’.¹⁰⁴ More visible churchmen could be placed in both camps. Sir Thomas Dyke was both a Hackney Phalanx man and an Evangelical.¹⁰⁵ Bishop Burgess of St David’s and later Salisbury, was a defender of Orthodox doctrine but recruited Evangelical clergy and adopted evangelical activism.¹⁰⁶ Even after 1833, J.W.Whittaker in Blackburn was scathing about those who claimed to be committed particularly to a ‘party’ within the Church. He looked for a common charity amongst his clergy, allied with a loyalty to himself rather than party.¹⁰⁷

If the Commissioners’ churches were not solely the project of the High Church Orthodox, neither were they purely a high Tory vehicle. At the outset of the nineteenth century politicians who were termed ‘tories’, largely by others, did have a ‘deep and abiding commitment to an Anglican spiritual basis for the national life’, as Sack put it.¹⁰⁸ There were plenty of these in Lancashire, Lord George Kenyon, referred to as a ‘Neanderthal’ by Hilton, and Thomas Bancroft, tutor to George Ormerod, being important examples in relation to Tyldesley church.¹⁰⁹ However the church and its lay supporters cannot simply be labelled ‘Old Corruption’ and seen as all alike, which one study of a Lancashire town almost suggests.¹¹⁰ Nockles is nearer the mark by judging, ‘Orthodoxy was bound up with and infused by political Toryism and loyalism; it was not a mere appendage of it.’¹¹¹ T.D.Whittaker and J.W.Whittaker, both seeming ‘tories’ as vicars of Blackburn, clearly

¹⁰³ P.Nockles, ‘Church Parties in the Pre-Tractarian Church of England, 1750-1833: the “Orthodox”- some problems of definition and identity’, in J.Walsh, C.Haydon, S.Taylor (eds.), *The Church of England c.1689-c.1833. From Toleration to Tractarianism* (Cambridge, 1993), 356.

¹⁰⁴ P.Nockles, *The Oxford Movement in Context . Anglican High Churchmanship, 1760-1857* (Cambridge, 1994), 273.

¹⁰⁵ Sack, *From Jacobite to Conservative*, 195.

¹⁰⁶ M.Smith, ‘Thomas Burgess, Churchman and Reformer’, in N.Yates (ed.), *Bishop Burgess and his World* (Cardiff, 2007), 12, 25, 29-31.

¹⁰⁷ LA, PR2846/2/2, Feniscowles Coucher Book, J.W.Whittaker to J.N.Prill, 18 July 1836; J.Pomfret, *History of Holy Trinity Church, Darwen* (Preston, 1930), 20. ;

¹⁰⁸ Sack, *From Jacobite to Conservative*, 253

¹⁰⁹ B. Hilton, *Mad, Bad and Dangerous People* (Oxford, 2006), 195; G.P.Hess, *George Ormerod* (Whitchurch, 1989), 21-22.

¹¹⁰ P.Taylor, *Popular Politics in Early Industrial Britain: Bolton 1825-50* (Keele, 1995), 9, 25, 43.

¹¹¹ P.Nockles, ‘Church Parties in the pre-Tractarian Church of England 1750-1833: The Orthodox-some problems of definition and identity’, in J.Walsh, C.Haydon and S.Taylor (eds.), *The Church of England c.1689-c.1833. From Toleration to Tractarianism*. (Cambridge, 1993), 339.

disagreed on political grounds, although the precise reasons are not clearly evident.¹¹² J.W. Whittaker found his predecessor 'politically obnoxious' and referred to T.D. Whitaker's record as a magistrate during 1819 and 1820.¹¹³ J.W. Whittaker may well have been influenced by his mother who would write to her son in strongly liberal terms about current affairs and tease him about 'St John's High Tories'.¹¹⁴ Earl Grey and Lord Lilford were both Whigs and strong supporters of the church building movement, like many members of the older Whig families in the 1820s and 30s.¹¹⁵ Even the 'Neanderthal' was not consistently so. Although an early and leading member of the Orange Order and strongly against Catholic Emancipation, Lord George Kenyon was pro factory legislation, unsympathetic to the Corn Law of 1815 and, on religious grounds, a defender of Queen Caroline's claim to be crowned.¹¹⁶

However, the Commission's role could certainly be seen as conservative. There was a strong conservative tide throughout Europe after 1815, married with a religious revival.¹¹⁷ Nonetheless, it would be unreasonable to see the English church building advocates as reactionaries comparable to supporters of the regimes of Louis XVIII and Charles X in France.¹¹⁸ The Church had not the political and legal domination exercised by counterparts throughout most of Europe.¹¹⁹ Again, J.W. Whittaker was totally insistent on the principle of toleration, even though he profoundly disagreed with both Catholics and Dissenters.¹²⁰ If there was undoubted sympathy for the plight of Catholic priests in France of the 1790s, the next decade saw a revival of anti-Catholicism in England which makes it difficult to see too strong a parallel with religion in continental Europe.¹²¹ The Commissioners' churches were symbols of a distinctive English nationalism and Protestantism. After 1830 even those

¹¹² LA, PR1549/3/8 Blackburn Coucher Book, J.W. Whittaker to Bishop of Chester, 7 August 1835.

¹¹³ PR1549/3/8, J.W. Whittaker to Bishop of Chester, 7 August 1835.

¹¹⁴ WLRO, D/DZ EHC207, Hall Letters, S. Whittaker to J.W. Whittaker, 10 November 1819; BbL, G3WHI, S. Whittaker to J.W. Whittaker, 26 April 1826; und. 1829.

¹¹⁵ Sack, *From Jacobite to Conservative*, 253.

¹¹⁶ *From Jacobite to Conservative*, 108, 141, 238.

¹¹⁷ *From Jacobite to Conservative*, 218.

¹¹⁸ *From Jacobite to Conservative* 247.

¹¹⁹ O'Gorman, *The Long Eighteenth Century*, 396.

¹²⁰ CHTL, 4C6.6(2), *Correspondence Between J.W. Whittaker and R. Norris 1829* (London, 1829), 10, Whittaker to Norris, 23 November 1829.

¹²¹ Sack, *From Jacobite to Conservative*, 218, 223, 235-242.

politicians accounted ultra-tory in England, were more favourable to Louis Philippe in France than the legitimate but deposed Charles X.¹²²

The Church Building Commission did have some political implications. The Commission was important in administrative history because it was an early attempt by government to delegate responsibility to a motivated and informed non-governmental group tasked with researching a social issue and then forming a board to execute the resulting policy. It shows a transition from the private individual with a state responsibility, such as the head of Queen Anne's Bounty, to more of a semi-public body. The process of using the same experts for enquiry and execution was later developed by Chadwick in the Poor Law Commissions (1832-4) and he and Southwood Smith in the Public Health Board (1848).¹²³ The use of inspectors, significant subsequent to the Factory Act of 1833, was foreshadowed in the Church Building Commission's use of Mawley the surveyor, although his impact was meagre given the territory he had to cover.¹²⁴ The history of the Commission with its voluntary engine Watson, supported by half dozen attendees and handful of staff, shows how cheaply, even by 1818, parliament expected government agencies to operate. It suggests a more minimalist state beginning to succeed the former fiscal-military state well before the Whig reforms or Gladstone's retrenchment.¹²⁵ Conversely it also hints at a partly interventionist state. The Church Building Commission was addressing a social need. Dicey's period of limited intervention may well be predated in his supposed age of laissez faire.¹²⁶ The Commission can be seen as a government response to a demonstrated need, if not a social 'abuse' and bureaucratic action implemented to meet that, to be subsequently amended in the light of empirical evidence, if McDonagh's 'tory' interpretation of governmental development is allowed to operate as early as 1818 and in the ecclesiastical sphere.¹²⁷

¹²² Sack, *From Jacobite to Conservative*, 247.

¹²³ E.J.Evans, *The Forging of the Modern State* (3rd ed., Harlow, 2001), 361-5.

¹²⁴ Port, *Six Hundred New Churches* 2nd ed., 89-90.

¹²⁵ *Six Hundred New Churches* 2nd ed., 278-9

¹²⁶ P.Harling and P.Mandler, 'From Fiscal Military State to Laissez-faire State, 1760-1850', *Journal of British Studies* 32,1 (January, 1993), 44-70.

¹²⁷ O.MacDonagh 'The Nineteenth Century Revolution in Government, A Reappraisal', *The Historical Journal* (1958), 1, 52-67.

The Commissioners' church building programme also casts some light upon the relationship of central powers to regional and local ones. The authority vested in the central commission did not prove a particular problem to the church building programme in the townships studied. This chapter earlier alludes to the very fair distribution of churches and funding Lancashire received. The full grant to Chorley was a boon, despite the early difficulties over Rickman's plans and the correct conveyance of the site. Once the number of Goodwin's commissions was restricted, the central Commission was nothing but helpful to Tyldesley. Later the Commission showed ample willingness to extend the monies given to Tockholes, put up with William Pickering's intransigence and accepted a pitiful pew rent scale. This may contrast with the experience in Shropshire in 1854 when it seems the Board were still being far too fussy over sites.¹²⁸ Oldham had earlier experienced a frustrating insistence on the unconditional conveyancing of sites to the Board.¹²⁹ In general Smith believed: 'The new churches in Oldham had a much more difficult passage, as the promoters became enmeshed both in a mass of bureaucratic detail and in disputes with government representatives, who seemed not to appreciate local conditions.' However the execution of the Commissioners churches at Greenacre Moor and Birch went smoothly. The greater problems were with the private Act of Parliament facilitating the reconstruction of St Mary's.¹³⁰ A contrary, seemingly paradoxical, complaint is that the Commission bowed too easily to local interests.¹³¹ There would be a problem in Tockholes case deciding where localism was expressed; was it with Blackburn Parish or Tockholes parochial district? A rival judgement is that the churches were too readily distributed on a regional basis, rather than a local one.¹³² Chapter Four suggests that the Commissioners' project worked through a not always smooth reconciliation of powers at different levels which ultimately wanted to achieve the same goal. Further the Commission experience showed that the Church of England did 'work' prior to the reforms of the Ecclesiastical Commission.

¹²⁸ Port, *Six Hundred New Churches* 2nd ed., 273.

¹²⁹ Smith, *The Church in Industrial Society*, 74.

¹³⁰ *Church in Industrial Society*, 45-6.

¹³¹ Port, *Six Hundred New Churches* 2nd ed., 279.

¹³² Snell, *Parish and Belonging*, 395,

The recognition of the Church Building Commission's role in a continuum of ecclesiastical and administrative History does not allow the deployment of structural theories in explaining the origin and impact of their churches. Admittedly, a Namier-like case could be made for interpreting the sudden arrival of the church building as a surface symptom of an underlying move by an entrenched interest group in order to maintain their way of life. Norman, for example, has argued that the Church routinely responded to national issues in a manner which protected their particular corporation.¹³³ The limited number of cures available to be distributed amongst an increasing graduate body and half pay or decommissioned officers after the onset of peace in 1815, would make Yates' vision of an incumbent attached securely to a parish church in every neighbourhood, a popular prospect to new would-be clerics. However, the evidence from Lancashire at least shows that the graduate body at large were not fleeing north in large numbers to make ends meet. Bishop Law had to found St Bees College in 1816 to give northern men a chance to train for the ministry without enrolling at the great universities and Bishop Sumner brought in Irishmen to meet his staffing shortfall in the 1830s.¹³⁴

Neither do other determinist structures quite fit what happened in the church building project. Mori outlines Cannadine's argument that there was a dominant supranational and largely aristocratic elite dominating politics and society by 1820.¹³⁵ Certainly the bench of bishops reflected the strength of the peerage until 1830.¹³⁶ Support for church building could be seen as a useful adjunct to the elite's means of maintaining a favourable social structure. This would sit with Clark's belief that a monarchical, hierarchical and theocratic society clung on to power until the sudden cataclysm of 1828-32.¹³⁷ Yet the aristocracy and greater gentry, barring Lord George Kenyon, had little to do with government church building. In Lancashire in the 1830s, Grey of Warrington and Stamford was more concerned with private building, Lord Stanley with schools.¹³⁸ The main activists at central and Chester diocesan level were clergy of diverse origins and gentry, often of recent merchant or manufacturer origins like Joshua Watson in London or Henry Sudell and

¹³³ E.Norman, *Church and Society in England 1770-1970* (Oxford, 1976), 8,106,122.

¹³⁴ N.Scotland, *The Life and Work of J.Bird Sumner* (Leominster, 1995), 52.

¹³⁵ J.Mori, *Britain in the Age of the French Revolution, 1785-1820* (London, 2000), 125.

¹³⁶ S.R.A.Soloway, *Prelates and People* (London, 1969), 11.

¹³⁷ Clark, *English Society*, 4,6,349-50,409.

¹³⁸ *Preston Chronicle*, 30 March 1839; *Preston Pilot*, 30 March 1839.

William Feilden in Blackburn, allied with smaller manufacturers like Thomas Kearsley and Oliver Burton in Tyldesley. People paying pew rents in Tyldesley, Chorley or Tockholes would include the gentry like Lady Hoghton in Chorley but also small manufacturers, shopkeepers, tradesmen and a few artisans.¹³⁹ Because of this vertical co-operation in society it would be equally unreasonable to see the church building movement as linked to a rising bourgeoisie or in any way representative of a society split into patricians and plebians, as Thompson once suggested, or as fitting into a society of three competing classes, as Perkin believed.¹⁴⁰ Again, early nineteenth century society could not be divided into the aristocratic idealists, comprising landed literary metropolitan Anglicans, on the one hand and the entrepreneurs, evinced by a scientific, industrial, provincial and Dissenting middle class. More recent attempts to produce a subtler structural model recognising the importance of religious ideas, such as Hilton's suggestion of a Utilitarian rational force confronted by an Anglican Evangelical movement, or the mechanistic against the organic view of society, would not be illustrated by the men displaying traces of both world views and represented in the church building movement.¹⁴¹ Similarly Mori's division of successful emotional religion displayed by Methodists, Particular Baptists and Congregationalists, from the failing rational Christianity of Unitarian, General Baptist and Anglican, ignores the evangelical Anglican and the great variety in Methodism.¹⁴² As Norman put it, 'The Oxford Movement was not so much a protest against a totally arid religious terrain as itself a manifestation of an existing religious renaissance'.¹⁴³

f) Summary: The Role of the Commissioners' Churches

The thesis is that during the first half of the nineteenth century the Commissioners' churches in south central Lancashire played a vital role in a type of strong and new Anglican counter-reformation within a religious frontier. These parliamentary churches, products of a unique initiative, bear consideration as a distinct group. The case studies also suggest that, whilst motivation at a township level was certainly diverse, there was a well-understood orthodox, neo-Arminian churchmanship driving the clerics participating in their

¹³⁹ LA, PR3123/4/1, Pew Rents St George's Church Chorley, 1825-60.

¹⁴⁰ H.Perkin, *The Origins of Modern English Society* (2nd ed., Abingdon, 1972), 176,252,272.

¹⁴¹ B.Hilton, *A Mad, Bad and Dangerous People*, 162, 313, 691.

¹⁴² J.Mori, *England in the Age of the French Revolution*, 114.

¹⁴³ Quoted by E.A.Varley in *The Last of the Prince Bishops* (Cambridge, 1992), 3.

establishment. Particularly noteworthy was Oliver Cooper's commitment to employing church extension in order to bring Dissenters back to the national church, from as early as 1776, thus well before the routine deployment of this argument subsequent to 1815. The churches' presence and design strongly communicated this ideology, even if there are grounds for challenging some of the workmanship that hitherto has been assumed to be of good standard. The detailed examination of resources in chapter 5 demonstrated that the financial and administrative difficulties, later assumed to be connected with the churches, were made light of, in producing an immediate impact from two of the churches and a delayed response from the other. The factors behind the successful Commissioners' churches would seem to be continuity in the cure of an able minister who could overcome the restricted ecclesiastical status that attended Commissioners' churches at foundation. The buildings enabled the ministerial function in addition to providing an assertive physical presence. In an especially pluralist area, with its particular religious history, the new churches caused tension. Chapter 7 brought to light that the initial clash over church rates in Chorley was with Catholics rather than Dissenters. Ultimately conflicts were resolved and the churches assisted in building community identities in their districts rather than destroying them, even with the necessary changing ecclesiastical boundaries which disrupted local communities elsewhere.

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