

THE UNIVERSITY OF HULL

Social Change and Religious Experience: aspects
of rural society in south Lincolnshire with
specific reference to Primitive Methodism, 1815-1875

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SUMMARY

Summary of Thesis submitted for Ph.D. degree

by R. W. Ambler

on

Social Change and Religious Experience: aspects
of rural society in south Lincolnshire with
specific reference to Primitive Methodism, 1815-1875.

During the nineteenth century there were considerable changes in the social life and economy of south Lincolnshire. Rapid population growth to the middle of the century and agricultural change led to the development of new ways of life among the people of the area. Their attitudes were shaped by the particular local community in which they lived and by how and where they earned their livings.

The Primitive Methodists entered south Lincolnshire in 1817. Their preaching was appropriate to the needs of the people in this period. It gave a sense of coherence and significance to the lives of its converts, although in the early stages of their activities the Primitives also incurred the hostility of crowds who sought to maintain traditional patterns of behaviour. By the 1830s this type of communal action seems to have disappeared in south Lincolnshire, leaving only clandestine acts as a vehicle for rural protest. The Primitives, who were establishing their place in the new social order, appear to have had no links with these protesters but concentrated their energies on building up the structures of the connexion.

By the time of the 1851 Census of Religious Worship Primitive Methodist chapels tended to be concentrated in open villages where the connexion was free to develop into an established part of the lives of these communities. As they became increasingly concerned with maintaining and servicing the connexion's institutions the Primitive Methodists avoided any action which would threaten their position, while their local communities were brought into contact with the wider world of nonconformity through the connexion's organisation and links with the towns of the area. This development paralleled that of other bodies and by 1875 Primitive Methodism was one of a number of village organisations from which the rural worker could draw social and spiritual sustenance.

PREFACE

I have incurred a large number of debts both to individuals and institutions over the years during which I have been working on this thesis. The greatest of these is to Professor John Saville of the Department of Economic and Social History of the University of Hull, who has constantly provided encouragement and stimulus. I owe much to his kindness over a long period. I am also indebted to the present and former staff of the Lincolnshire Archives Office, including former county archivists Mrs. J. Varley and Mr. C. M. Lloyd, and also to the present acting archivist, Dr. M. Finch. The President and Council of the Spalding Gentlemen's Society kindly allowed me to work on south Lincolnshire Methodist archives in their custody and in this context I am particularly indebted to their Honorary Curator, Mr. Norman Leveritt, whose knowledge of the records and of the area has been of great help to me. When I first began work on the history of Methodism in south Lincolnshire the national Methodist Archives and Research Centre was housed at City Road, London, and the archivist, the Revd. Dr. J. C. Bowmer, and his staff gave me much help at that stage of the work. After the move of the Centre to the John Rylands University Library of Manchester I received valuable assistance from Mr. D. W. Riley, Keeper of Printed Books at the Library. I am grateful to the Revd. Dr. E. W. Baker, Secretary of the Methodist Conference, who gave me permission to consult Primitive Methodist Conference journals when they were in his custody, and the ministers of the Boston, Holbeach, Sleaford and Spalding circuits for access to material

in their care. The Revd. A. G. du Feu and his wife kindly allowed me to work on material which was stored at Spalding Methodist Manse. Mr. R. Warnes of Messrs. Godsons, solicitors, Sleaford, arranged for me to see Primitive Methodist material kept in his office. Mr. M. W. L. Brown of Quarrington, the Lincolnshire Standard Group of Newspapers, Boston office, and the East Midland Allied Press, Spalding office, kindly allowed me to consult newspaper files in their custody and I was able to work on the Grantham Journal at Grantham Town Library. The staff of the Public Record Office, the Brynmor Jones Library, University of Hull, and the Librarian of the former Hartley Victoria College, Manchester, were all of great assistance at various stages of the work, while Mr. D. Wattam of Grimsby Central Library was a constant source of help.

Mr. M. J. Norman, formerly of the Computer Centre, University of Hull, gave me assistance with the analysis of material from the 1851 Census of Religious Worship and Primitive Methodist baptismal registers. Dr. J. M. Bellamy of the Department of Economic and Social History, the University of Hull, gave me much help in the final stages of the preparation of this thesis. My thanks are also due to Miss A. Nicholson, Miss J. Wallace, Mrs. R. Smith, and especially Mrs. D. Rawlinson, who helped with typing. Mrs. M. Y. Evans prepared the typescript of the thesis and Mr. D. Waite drew the maps.

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ABBREVIATIONS

<u>A.H.R.</u>	<u>Agricultural History Review</u>
* <u>B.G.</u>	<u>Boston Guardian ...</u>
* <u>B.L.L.H.</u>	<u>Boston, Lincoln and Louth Herald ...</u>
C.L.L.	City Library, Lincoln
* <u>D.S.N.</u>	<u>Drakard's Stamford News ...</u>
ed.	editor(s)
edit.	edition
<u>E.L.</u>	<u>English Labourer</u>
* <u>G.J.</u>	<u>Grantham Journal ...</u>
<u>J.R.A.S.E.</u>	<u>Journal of the Royal Agricultural Society of England</u>
<u>J.R.L.</u>	John Rylands University Library of Manchester
<u>L.</u>	<u>Labourer</u>
<u>L.A.A.S.R.P.</u>	<u>Lincolnshire Architectural and Archaeological Society Reports and Papers</u>
L.A.O.	Lincolnshire Archives Office
<u>L.N.Q.</u>	<u>Lincolnshire Notes and Queries</u>
<u>L.R.S.M.</u>	<u>Lincoln, Rutland and Stamford Mercury</u>
<u>L.U.C.</u>	<u>Labourers' Union Chronicle</u>
n.d.	no date
n.p.	no place
n.s.	new series
<u>P.M.Mag.</u>	<u>Primitive Methodist Magazine</u>
P.P.	Parliamentary Papers
P.R.O.	Public Record Office, London
repr.	reprinted
* <u>S.F.P.</u>	<u>Spalding Free Press ...</u>
* <u>S.G.</u>	<u>Sleaford Gazette ...</u>
S.G.S.	Spalding Gentlemen's Society

* Full titles for these newspapers, together with details of title changes, are given in Section C.1. of the Bibliography.

NOTES TO READERS

Percentages have been worked to one decimal place in the case of larger figures, except where they are taken from other sources and where they have been used in discussion and for comparative purposes, where they are generally worked up or down to the nearest whole number.

For place-name spellings modern usage has been followed wherever possible. In quotations from source material the modern form of a place-name has been added in parentheses where it can be identified. See also p.155 footnote 3.

Where Lincolnshire villages are mentioned in the text which are not in the area of this study they are identified by the addition of the word Lindsey to indicate that they are in the third and northern Part of the ancient county of Lincolnshire.

I

THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL BACKGROUND

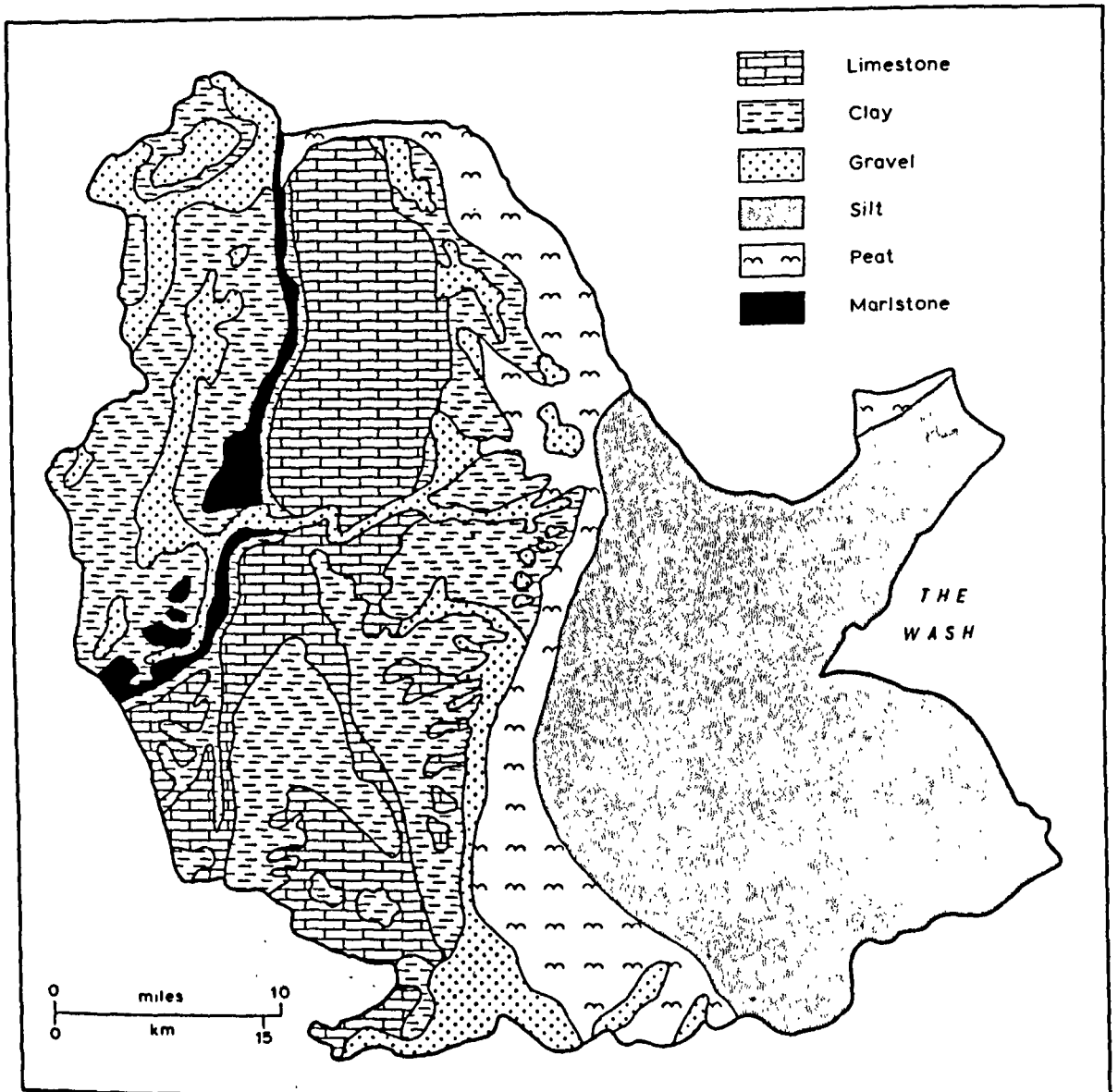
The area covered by this study is the southern half of the ancient county of Lincolnshire. It is some forty miles from Lincoln in the north to Stamford in the south where the former counties of Huntingdon, Northamptonshire and Rutland joined the borders of Lincolnshire. The counties of Nottinghamshire and Leicestershire lie to the west and south-west, while the eastern side of the area is along the shores of the Wash. On the north-east the border with the northern part of the county of Lincolnshire, formerly known as Lindsey, is in the fens to the north of Boston and it is some thirty miles from here to the county boundaries of Cambridgeshire and Norfolk in the south-east. The River Witham and the Fosdyke navigation mark the northern boundary of the area from the fens in the east to Nottinghamshire in the west.

In simple terms, the Ordnance Survey map shows south Lincolnshire to be an area of alternating bands of low and high land. On the west a low plain is crossed by the Rivers Brant and Witham. This is succeeded by the heath, which dips away to the fens in the east. However, the description of land as 'high' or 'low' is only relative, since most of the area is not more than 200 feet above sea level. Only in the

south-west does the heath rise above 400 feet.¹

South Lincolnshire was divided into the administrative Parts of Holland and Kesteven. Holland lay to the east and had an area of 294,427 acres excluding the borough of Boston. Kesteven was 462,540 acres excluding the borough of Stamford.² The boundary between Holland and Kesteven ran from north to south through the fens.

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1. David Grigg, The Agricultural Revolution in South Lincolnshire, Cambridge, 1966, pp. 13-16; see Map 1 for the geology of south Lincolnshire.
 2. P.P. 1852-53 LXXV (1631) Population of Great Britain. Population Tables I, Number of Inhabitants in 1801, 1811, 1821, 1831, 1841, 1851, p. clxxxv.



MAP 1

The Simplified Surface Geology of South Lincolnshire

(based on David Grigg,
The Agricultural Revolution in South Lincolnshire, p.15)

Table I - The Population of Holland and Kesteven 1801-1871
with Percentage Increase or Decrease and Percentage
Increase for England and Wales.

	1801	1811	1821	1831	1841	1851	1861	1871
Population: Holland	38152	44291	55131	62547	72361	77386	78905	81211
% Increase	-	16.1	24.5	13.4	15.7	6.9	2.0	2.9
Population: Kesteven	51807	62004	73192	81488	92357	107941	103525	101949
% Increase/Decrease	-	19.7	18.0	11.3	13.3	16.9	-4.1	-1.5
% Increase Population England and Wales	-	14.0	18.1	15.8	14.3	12.6	11.9	13.2

Note: These figures do not include the City of Lincoln

Sources:

PP.1801-2 VII (9) Population of Great Britain Abstract of Answers and Returns Pursuant to Act 41 Geo.3, for Taking an Account of the Population of Great Britain in 1801, p.206;

1812 XI (316) Population Returns of 1811, Abstract of Enumeration Returns 1811, p.191;

1822 XV (502) Population of Great Britain, 1821, p.187;

1831 XVIII (348) Comparative Account of the Population of Great Britain, in the years 1801, 1821, and 1831 ..., p.412;

1843 XXII (496) Population Enumeration Abstract, 1841, pp.158-164, 175;

1852-3 LXXXV (1631) Population Tables, pp. clxxxiv-v;

1862 L (3056) Population (England and Scotland). Census of England and Wales ... Numbers and Distribution of the People, p.68

1872 LXVI Part I (C.676) Census of England and Wales 1871 ... Area, Houses and Inhabitants, vol.I, Counties, pp.217-18;

for England and Wales, John Saville, Rural Depopulation in England and Wales 1851-1951, 1957, p.2.

The population of Holland more than doubled in the period 1801 to 1871 (see Table I), while Kesteven's grew slightly less overall. Both areas grew most rapidly between 1801 and 1821. After 1841 the rate of population increase in Holland began to slow down significantly, but Kesteven continued to grow at a relatively high rate until 1851-61, when there was a decrease of 4.1% following 16.9% growth in the decade 1841 to 1851. The increase in 1841 to 1851 was partly due to the growth of Grantham (see Table V), but there was also considerable growth in rural areas where an influx of workers involved in railway construction boosted the population of some parishes in 1851.¹ The population of Holland continued to grow at a reduced rate to 1871, but the decline which had begun in Kesteven in the decade 1851-61, continued to 1871.

Population growth was due to natural increase and not migration into the area. In 1841, 88% of the population of Holland and 90% of Kesteven had been born there.² In the whole of Lincolnshire the proportion of the population born in the county was 90% in 1841 and had dropped to 85% by 1871.³

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1. PP.1852-53 LXXXVI (1632) Population of Great Britain. Population Tables I, Number of Inhabitants in 1801, 1811, 1821, 1831, 1841, 1851, Division VII, North Midland Division, pp.31, 37.
 2. PP.1843 XXII (496) Population 1841, pp.158-63.
 3. Ibid., Preface, p.14; EP.1873, LXXI Part I (C.872) Population (England and Wales). Census of England and Wales, ... Age, Civil Condition, Occupations and Birth Places of the People, vol.III, p.397.

There was also considerable outward migration. Between 1851 and 1860, nearly 100% of the natural increase of the combined populations of Holland, Kesteven and the city of Lincoln, left the area. In the period 1861 to 1870 this proportion dropped to 68%¹.

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1. These migration proportions are calculated from data on population, births and deaths in PP.1862 XVII (2977) Births, Deaths and Marriages (England). Twenty-third Annual Report of the Registrar General for Births, Deaths and Marriages, pp.296-9 and 1872 XVII (C.667) Births, Deaths and Marriages (England). Thirty-third Annual Report of the Registrar General for Births, Deaths and Marriages in England (Abstracts for 1870); with summary of Marriages, Births and Deaths registered in Ten Years, 1861-70, pp.336-9. The registration areas used by the Registrar General do not coincide exactly with the county boundaries. Data have been used for those registration sub-districts which include as nearly as possible the Holland and Kesteven divisions and also the city of Lincoln. These are: Stamford, Barnack, Corby, Aslackby, Bourne, Deeping, Pinchbeck, Donington, Gosberton, Spalding, Moulton, Deeping St. Nicholas, Gedney Hill, Long Sutton, Holbeach, Kirton, Benington, Boston, Swineshead, Billingham, Sleaford, Leadenham, Heckington, Aswarby, Colsterworth, Denton, Grantham, Lincoln South West, Lincoln Home, Bassingham, Benington, Claypole. For the basis of the calculation of migration proportions see Saville, Rural Depopulation, pp.43-4.

Table II - The Sex Ratio (Females per 100 Males) in Holland and Kesteven and England and Wales 1801-1871.

	1801	1811	1821	1831	1841	1851	1861	1871
Holland All Ages	102.8	105.0	100.9	99.0	99.9	100.1	104.4	102.8
Kesteven All Ages	102.7	105.1	98.4	100.0	98.1	95.8	100.6	102.3
England and Wales All Ages	105.7	104.5	103.6	104.0	104.6	104.2	105.3	105.4
Holland Under 20	-	-	-	-	100.6) 97.7	99.3	97.6
Kesteven Under 20	-	-	-	-	97.3			

The figures for males and females under 20 are calculated from figures for those registration sub-districts which include, as nearly as possible the Holland and Kesteven divisions and the city of Lincoln. For details of these see p.6 above footnote 1.

Sources:

As for Table I and P.P. 1852-3 LXXXVIII Part II (1691 -II) Population, Ages, Civil Condition, Occupations, etc., Table II, pp.535, 537; 1863 LIII Part II (3221) Population (England and Wales), Census of England and Wales, 1861 ... Abstracts of Ages, Civil Condition, Occupations, and Birthplaces of the People, Division IV, Eastern, to Division XI, Welsh ..., pp.543, 545; 1873 LXXI Part I (C.872) Census of England and Wales, 1871, vol. III, pp.355-7. For England and Wales Saville, Rural Depopulation, p.90.

The rate of outward migration was greater among women than men and the sex ratio of the total populations of Holland and Kesteven differed markedly from that of the country as a whole from 1821 until 1861 and 1871 (see Table II). The position is more complex in the case of people under 20. The figures for 1841 suggest that migration affected this group to a greater

extent in Kesteven than in Holland. In 1861 and 1871, when population growth was greatly reduced in Holland and declined in Kesteven (See Table I), a greater proportion of women aged under 20 than men in the same age group, left south Lincolnshire.¹

The slow down of the rate of population increase in Holland from 1851 and the decrease in Kesteven's population from 1861, was associated with decreases in the population of many villages and changes in the occupations of the people of south Lincolnshire as agriculture became a relatively less important employer. In 1801 agricultural employment predominated in all the wapentakes of south Lincolnshire.² The situation had not changed by 1851, when agriculture still employed the largest group of adult males in the area (Table III), but by 1871, the agricultural sector had declined both in terms of the absolute numbers and the percentage of the population employed in it. (See Table IV). Industrial development had only a limited impact on the population of Holland and Kesteven and the section of the population working in industry in south

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1. For details of the figures used in these calculations see the note on sources used for Table II.
 2. RP.1801-2 VII (9) Population 1801, p.206. The one exception is the wapentake of Beltisloe where the figures for those employed in agriculture and those employed in trade, manufacture or handicrafts seem to have been transposed (Ibid, pp.188 and 206). Despite the fact that they have not been corrected in any totals given in the census report it is unlikely that there would be only 458 people engaged in agriculture and 2,562 in trade etc., in this predominantly rural area. Moreover, these figures are not consistent with those for 1812 which show that agriculture was the most important employer of labour in the area (RP.1812 XL (316) Population 1811, p.191). The Anglo-Saxon and medieval local government unit of the wapentake was still used in census returns for the period of this study.

Lincolnshire declined between 1861 and 1871 except in the Bourne and Grantham registration districts. In the former, although the number of adults in industry declined the percentage of the adult population employed in this way remained the same. However, in the Grantham district there was an increase in both the number and percentage of adults employed in industry.

Table III - Number and Percentage () of Males Aged 20 Years and Upwards Employed in Agriculture in South Lincolnshire Registration Districts 1851.

<u>District</u>	<u>Out-door Labourers</u>	<u>Indoor Servants</u>	<u>Shep- herds</u>	<u>Farmers</u>	<u>Graz- iers</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>Total Males 20 and Upwards</u>
Stamford	1198(22.2)	91(1.7)	44(0.8)	227 (4.2)	7(0.1)	1567(29.0)	5400
Bourne	2208(34.3)	263(4.1)	65(1.0)	546 (8.5)	5(0.1)	3087(48.0)	6431
Spalding	1795(31.9)	183(3.3)	33(0.6)	722(13.1)	8(0.1)	2741(49.8)	5512
Holbeach	1973(39.4)	298(5.9)	29(0.6)	663(13.2)	3(0.1)	2966(59.2)	5011
Boston	2730(27.7)	135(1.4)	33(0.3)	1100(11.2)	8(0.1)	4006(40.6)	9859
Sleaford	2212(34.2)	541(8.4)	38(0.6)	649(10.0)	2(0.03)	3442(53.3)	6462
Grantham	2249(26.5)	306(3.6)	45(0.5)	440 (5.2)	2(0.02)	3042(35.9)	8473

Source: RP.1852-53, LXXXVIII Part II (1691 - II). Population Tables II, pp. 576, 578.

Table IV - Number and Percentage () of Adults Aged 20 Years and Upwards Employed in Agriculture and Industry in South Lincolnshire Registration Districts 1861 and 1871.

District	<u>1861</u>		<u>1871</u>		Total Adults 20 and Upwards	
	Number Agricultural	Number Industrial	Number Agricultural	Number Industrial	1861	1871
Stamford	2085(21.0)	2615(26.3)	1627(16.6)	2271(23.1)	1861 9934	1871 9821
Bourne	4247(37.4)	1837(16.2)	2923(29.3)	1383(16.2)	1861 11366	1871 10650
Spalding	3973(35.5)	2159(19.3)	3740(30.1)	1480(16.0)	1861 11205	1871 12408
Holbeach	3985(41.1)	1382(14.2)	3258(31.2)	1332(12.7)	1861 9705	1871 10444
Boston	5800(28.3)	4366(21.3)	5016(23.6)	4040(19.0)	1861 20503	1871 21248
Sleaford	5081(38.3)	2058(15.5)	4208(31.3)	2015(15.0)	1861 13247	1871 13446
Grantham	4095(26.2)	3581(22.9)	3435(21.0)	3825(23.3)	1861 15648	1871 16391

Source: RP.1863 LIII Part I (3221) Population (England and Wales). Census of England and Wales, 1861 General Report, p.129; 1873 LXXI Part I (C.872) Census of England and Wales, 1871, vol.III, p.386.

At the beginning of the nineteenth century the largest towns in the area were Boston, Grantham, Lincoln and Stamford. (See Table V). There were also the market towns of Bourne, Holbeach, Sleaford and Spalding, while the village of Long Sutton developed as a market and as a result^{of} the growth of the Wash port of Sutton Bridge¹.

1. For the growth of Long Sutton in the first half of the century see William White, History, Gazeteer and Directory of Lincolnshire ..., 1856, repr. Newton Abbot, 1963, pp. 858-9.

Table V - The Population of South Lincolnshire Towns
1801-1871.

<u>Town</u>	<u>1801</u>	<u>1811</u>	<u>1821</u>	<u>1831</u>	<u>1841</u>	<u>1851</u>	<u>1861</u>	<u>1871</u>
Lincoln	9197	8599	9995	11217	13896	17536	20999	26766
Boston	5926	8180	10373	11240	12942	15132	15078	15156
Grantham	4288	4777	6077	7427	8691	10870	11116	13225
Stamford*	4022	4325	5050	5837	6385	7332	6814	6686
Spalding	3296	4330	5207	6497	7778	8829	8723	9111
Holbeach	2683	2962	3621	3890	4637	5191	4956	5332
Long Sutton	1723	1801	2390	3510	3736	4416	4051	4253
Sleaford	1609	1957	2309	2722	3529	3729	3697	3989
Bourne	1664	1784	2242	2569	3361	3717	3730	3850

* Includes the parishes of All Saints, St. George, St. John, St. Mary and St. Michael, which are that part of the town lying within the county of Lincolnshire.

The figures for Boston, Grantham, Spalding, Holbeach, Long Sutton, Sleaford and Bourne are included in the totals for Holland and Kesteven in Table I.

Sources: RP. 1852-53 LXXXVI (1632) Population 1801-51. Division VII, pp. 28-41; 1872 LXVI Part II (C.676 - I) Census of England and Wales, 1871 ... Area, Houses, and Inhabitants, vol.II, Registration or Union Counties, pp. 347-353.

While the number of retail tradesmen in south Lincolnshire grew between 1851 and 1861 the number of craftsmen declined. Separate detailed figures are not available for Holland and Kesteven for 1871, but in the county of Lincolnshire as a whole, the number of tradesmen continued to grow and the number of craftsmen began to increase again. There were 7,893 craftsmen in the Holland and Kesteven registration districts in 1851, and 7,292 in 1861, while the number of tradesmen rose from 2,532 to 2,592. There was a similar pattern in the whole of Lincolnshire during the same period. The number of craftsmen declined from 18,591 in 1851 to 17,924 in 1861, while the number of tradesmen grew from 5,224 to 5,498.¹ In 1871 there were 18,215 craftsmen and 6,147 tradesmen in the whole of Lincolnshire.²

1. RP.1852-53 LXXXVIII Part II (1691 - II) Population Tables II, pp.576-83; 1863 LIII Part II (3221) Census of England and Wales 1861 Division IV, Eastern, to Division XI, Welsh, pp.574-81. Craftsmen have been defined as including millers, brickmakers and dealers, sawyers, cabinet makers, coopers and turners, wheelwrights, blacksmiths, builders, carpenters, and joiners, bricklayers, marble masons, masons and paviors, slaters and tilers, plasterers, paper-hangers, painters and glaziers, saddlers, tailbrs and shoemakers, based on the categories used in Saville, Rural Depopulation, p.74. Tradesmen include shopkeepers, butchers, bakers and confectioners, grocers and tea dealers, publicans, beersellers and innkeepers, ironmongers and drapers.

2. RP.1873 LXXI Part I (C.872) Census of England and Wales 1871, vol.III, pp.374-8.

These figures indicate the changes which took place in rural trades and crafts in the second half of the nineteenth century. Work which had been done by village craftsmen was increasingly performed in towns, although the timing of this process differed between crafts so that rates of growth or decline were not uniform.¹ The drop in the number of craftsmen in south Lincolnshire between 1851 and 1861 coincided with the decrease in the population of some towns in the area.² The growth in the number of tradesmen reflects developments in the trade and service sectors of the economy which spread into country towns and villages in the second half of the nineteenth century and replaced traditional means of retail distribution such as the market and the fair by shops and similar settled outlets.³

Domestic service and work in occupations based on sewing and clothing were the most significant areas of female employment in the period 1851-61.⁴ The number of adult women employed in sewing in south Lincolnshire increased from 1,848 to 2,125 between 1851 and 1861. However, the number of domestic servants decreased from 5,106 to 4,889. In the same period the number of women employed in work in sewing in the whole

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1. J. A. Chartres and G. L. Turnbull, 'Country Craftsmen', in G. E. Mingay (ed), The Victorian Countryside, vol. 1, 1981, pp. 314-15, 317, 327.
 2. See Table V.
 3. J. A. Chartres, 'Country Tradesmen', in Mingay (ed) The Victorian Countryside, vol. 1, pp.300-302, 304.
 4. Work in sewing and clothing has been defined as including milliners, seamstresses, dressmakers and shirtmakers. Domestic servants include general domestic servants, housekeepers, cooks, housemaids, nurses, laundrymaids and inn servants.

of Lincolnshire increased from 4,069 in 1851 to 4,715 in 1861 and there was a further increase to 4,880 in 1871. There were 11,281 domestic servants in the whole of Lincolnshire in 1851, 11,414 in 1861 and 13,573 by 1871.¹ The growth in employment opportunities in these sectors, despite the decrease in the number of domestic servants in south Lincolnshire between 1851 and 1861, helped to check female migration so that the proportion of females to males of all ages began to move closer to the national norm, although this was less marked in the case of people under 20 years of age.²

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1. P.P.1852-53 LXXXVIII Part II (1691 - II) Population Tables II, pp. 582-587; 1863 LIII Part II (3221) Census of England and Wales 1861, Division IV Eastern, to Division XI, Welsh, pp.582-587; 1873 LXXI Part I (C.872) Census of England and Wales, 1871, vol. III, pp.379-381.
 2. Saville, Rural Depopulation, pp. 31-32; see Table II above.

These changes in the structure of the population were associated with a period of considerable agricultural change and development. This affected the physical landscape as well as bringing new experiences in social relationships and patterns of work and leisure. In physical terms the changes were more dramatic in the fens and uplands of the heath, but no part of south Lincolnshire was untouched by them. By the middle of the nineteenth century, the geological and geomorphological variations between the different areas of south Lincolnshire had begun to have a less marked effect on agriculture than they had in 1800.¹ Yet these differences were not entirely eliminated. The different ways in which the various parts were affected by agricultural change are an important factor in the development of the area.

The villages of the Holland fenland stood on a low ridge known as the townland. This ran parallel to the sea shore with the interior fenland on its landward side and the marsh lying towards the sea. The fen was largely made up of peat with some silt, while the marsh was an area with a variety of silt soils. There had been piecemeal embankment and enclosure on either side of the townland and some secondary hamlets had developed away from the villages from the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. Parish boundaries were elongated and ran down to the sea shore at right angles, enclosing a portion of fen, townland and marsh. Most of the parishes in the wapentake of Elloe in Holland were twelve or thirteen and some were sixteen miles long. Holbeach, with 26,666 acres, was one of the

1. Grigg, The Agricultural Revolution, p.188.

largest parishes in England.¹

The peat fens of the Kesteven division lay along the west bank of the River Witham. They were divided by the east-west parish boundaries of the villages on the eastern edge of the dip-slope of the heath. A narrow clay ridge, which ran north-west to south-east, cut off the fens of the parishes between Scopwick in the north and Howell in the south from the river, and the villages of Martin, Timberland, Thorpe Tilney, Walcott and Billingham, which stood on the clay ridge were largely fen parishes. Most of their land lay between the village sites and the Witham.² About half the area of the parishes in the fen margin to the south of Sleaford was fen and within them the areas of silt and peat were approximately equal.³ They joined the interior fens of Holland along the line of the Forty Foot Drain north of Bourne.

The landscape and economy of the fens and the marsh of south Lincolnshire was transformed by drainage and enclosure at the end of the eighteenth and beginning of the nineteenth centuries. Before drainage, large areas of the low lands were subject to inundation by water, although some areas were better protected than others.⁴ Their economy was based on

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1. Grigg, The Agricultural Revolution, pp. 21-22; H. E. Hallam Settlement and Society: a study of the early agrarian history of south Lincolnshire, Cambridge, 1965, pp. 3, 40, 71.
 2. Dennis R. Mills, 'Regions of Kesteven devised for purposes of Agricultural History', Lincolnshire Architectural and Archaeological Society Reports and Papers (subsequently L.A.A.S.R.P.) 7, part I, n.s., 1957, pp. 69-71, 72, 80.
 3. *Ibid.*, p. 74.
 4. H. C. Darby, The Draining of the Fens, second edit., 1956, repr. Cambridge, 1968, pp. 144-148; Grigg, The Agricultural Revolution, p. 23.

pastoral husbandry; the rearing of beasts, sheep and horses; the manufacture of butter and cheese; the sale of fish, fowl, hemp and flax.¹ After drainage and enclosure, this was replaced by arable husbandry which increased in efficiency as drainage was further improved in the course of the nineteenth century.

The pastoral economy was based on a shared, if unequal, exploitation of the rich natural resources of the area. The by-laws which regulated agricultural practice, show a community which had developed an organisation suited to both the possibilities of the environment and the characteristics of the social structure of the area. It also provided the basis for an independent lifestyle, which became a cause of concern to the agricultural reformers of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.² In 1794 Thomas Stone described how the common lands between the Rivers Welland and Glen in East and West Deeping were grazed without stint and almost every cottage in the villages had common rights belonging to it.³ A few years later, Arthur Young saw 'the disorder in stocking' of the area as 'unprofitable'.⁴ In his opinion, anarchy in

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1. T. W. Beastall, The Agricultural Revolution in Lincolnshire, Lincoln, 1978, p.7.
 2. H. E. Hallam, 'The Fen By-laws of Spalding and Pinchbeck', L.A.A.S.R.P. 10, part I, n.s., 1963, p.45; Joan Thirsk, English Peasant Farming: the agrarian history of Lincolnshire from Tudor to recent times, 1957, pp.212-13, 216-17.
 3. Thomas Stone, General View of the Agriculture of the County of Lincoln, with Observations on the Means of its Improvement, 1794, p.22.
 4. [Arthur Young], General View of the Agriculture of the County of Lincoln, second edit., 1813; repr. Newton Abbot, 1970, p.261.

agricultural practice led to anarchic social relationships. The common lands of the fens raised 'a mischievous race of people'.¹

There was enough substance in the criticisms of the old fenland economy, to weaken opposition to change and tilt the advantage in favour of new schemes, which were seen as bringing a more rational and commercial approach to the development of the area.² The new style of exploitation of the fens was epitomised by Matthew Allen of Brothertoft who

before the enclosure and draining of Holland Fen, paid 20s. rent for a cottage and croft. His stock on the fen was 400 sheep, 500 geese, seven milch cows, ten or twelve young horses, and ten young beasts. Such a person, if ever one was heard of, must have been injured by an enclosure; for never could be known a more perfect contrast between the rent and stock of a holding. He now rents about 50 acres of the enclosure at 25s. an acre; has a wife, five children, and two servants, and greatly prefers his present situation, not only for comfort, but profit also.³

Large scale drainage schemes were begun in the late eighteenth century, but it was not until the mid-nineteenth century that many places could be said to be fully and completely drained.⁴ Nor was enclosure an inevitable sequence to drainage. In some areas the process dragged on well into the nineteenth century.⁵ The communal exploitation of the fen and marsh was ended by this activity, but it did not in itself cause the type of crop

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1. [Young], General View, 1813, p.255.
 2. Thirsk, English Peasant Farming, pp.207 and 213; [Young], General View, 1813, pp.261-2.
 3. [Young], General View, 1813, p.273.
 4. Thirsk, English Peasant Farming, p.209.
 5. Ibid., pp.212-214.

grown in the area to change. This came as a result of changing demands. The fen grazier continued to play an important part in the agricultural life of the area in the early nineteenth century. Arthur Young, repeating information he had given in 1799, said in 1813 that former common land in Long Sutton carried large quantities of stock, while the hundred of Skirbeck, comprising the parishes of Skirbeck, Fishtoft, Freiston, Butterwick, Benington, Leverton, Leake and Wrangle were about two-thirds under pasture and a third under tillage.¹

The old enclosed townlands around the original settlements in Holland provided grazing lands of some quality and at the end of the eighteenth century could be matched in few parts of England.² This tradition of pastoral farming meant that the habits of the grazier often predominated, and any conversion to arable was not necessarily effected with the most advanced techniques.³ However, there were also farmers who were more advanced in their methods such as the 'very attentive cultivator' Cartwright of Boston.⁴

Arable increased under the stimulus of the high prices of the Napoleonic Wars. William Marratt noted in 1814 how the increased demand for corn was reducing the amount of pasture, although there was still a great deal of grazing land left

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1. [Arthur Young], General View of the Agriculture of the County of Lincoln, 1799, pp.186 and 188; General View, 1813, pp.201 and 213.
 2. Grigg, The Agricultural Revolution, pp.22, 109-110.
 3. Ibid., p.58.
 4. [Young], General View, 1813, pp. 25, 66.

in the fens, including some of the richest in the kingdom.¹ Despite the fall in prices at the end of the Napoleonic Wars, the ploughing of rich grazing land continued.² There were, however, changes in the type of arable crop grown. Wheat replaced oats, especially after 1830. In 1829, 72,964 quarters of wheat was sold in Boston and this had risen to 131,370 quarters by 1834.³ The cultivation of flax and hemp had been encouraged by wartime conditions, but they largely ceased to be grown after 1832.⁴

Sheep and cattle continued to be important in the fens even after the expansion of arable farming. There was considerable sheep breeding by the smaller farmers of the area as well as rearing and fattening. Cattle were either brought in for over wintering or summer grazed on the older pastures. This diversified the agrarian economy of the area and offset losses when corn prices fell.⁵ Moreover, the smaller fen

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1. W. Marratt, The History of Lincolnshire: topographical, historical and descriptive, vol.I, Boston, 1814, pp.88, 92-4.
 2. Grigg, The Agricultural Revolution, p.121; P.P. 1836 VIII part I (189) Second Report from the Select Committee appointed to Inquire into the State of Agriculture, p.193.
 3. P.P. 1836 VIII part I (79) First Report from the Select Committee appointed to Inquire into the State of Agriculture, p.65; 1836 VIII part II (465) Third Report from the Select Committee to Inquire into the State of Agriculture, p.16.
 4. P.P. 1836 VIII part I (189) Second Report from the Select Committee on Agriculture, pp.193-194.
 5. Thirsk, English Peasant Farming, pp.232-234; Sir John Clapham, An Economic History of Modern Britain, vol.1: the early railway age 1820-1850, second edit., Cambridge, 1930, p.455. vol.2: free trade and steel 1850-1886; repr. Cambridge, 1952, pp.280-281.

farmer was not restricted by his soil to one course of husbandry and could diversify the crops he grew to meet changing circumstances.¹ These crops included potatoes, grown on old pasture broken up for the purpose, and in the course of the nineteenth century, as communications improved with the coming of the railways, cabbages, broccoli, celery, mangolds, onions and soft fruit for sale in the large towns.²

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The limestone mass of the Lincolnshire heath runs south from Lincoln to the Ancaster Gap. Its western edge is an escarpment facing across the western valley of Kesteven, while to the south it faces south-west to the Leicestershire border. There is a line of settlements along the escarpment with elongated parish boundaries running east-west and stretching from the western valley on to the heathland above the villages. South of the Ancaster Gap a second marlstone escarpment runs parallel to the limestone and has another row of villages along it. The villages on the eastern dip-slope of the heath are situated close to, or actually at the point where the limestone dips under the mixed clays and gravels of the fen edge. The parish boundaries of these villages include an area of fenland to the east and limestone to the west as well as the mixed soils on which the settlements are sited.³ South of the Ancaster Gap

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1. Thirsk, English Peasant Farming, p.314.
 2. W. H. Wheeler, A History of the Fens of South Lincolnshire: being a description of the Rivers Witham and Welland and their estuary, and an account of the reclamation, drainage, and enclosure of the fens adjacent thereto, second edit., Boston 18967, pp.399, 402-405.
 3. Mills, 'Regions of Kesteven ...', loc.cit., pp.69-71, 72; see also above p.17.

the heath is covered with chalky boulder clay. Only a very narrow bed of limestone is left uncovered to the west as well as an area between Stamford and South Witham. This part of the heath is characterised by small parishes with villages in the valleys which cut the upland.¹

The varied pattern of soil types on and around the heath was reflected in different agricultural practices at the end of the eighteenth and beginning of the nineteenth centuries. The limestone areas were not naturally rich in resources.² The small 'heath' sheep could find a living on the extensive sheep walks of the area, while rabbit warrens were another way in which the land could be used.³ A relatively swift period of parliamentary enclosure preceded arable cultivation of the limestone heath. Whereas there were still a hundred parishes with open fields in the area in 1750, only forty remained unenclosed by 1790, and by 1815, there were only 6,000 acres of unenclosed land in the whole of Kesteven. Some of the last, which was enclosed in 1823, was part of the Chaplin estate on the heath at Blankney.⁴

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1. Mills, 'Regions of Kesteven ...', loc.cit., pp.13-15,
 2. Grigg, The Agricultural Revolution, p.66.
 3. J. A. Perkins, Sheep Farming in Eighteenth and Early Nineteenth Century Lincolnshire, Sleaford, 1977, p.9; [James Creasey], Sketches Illustrative of the Topography and History of New and Old Sleaford, in the county of Lincoln, and of several places in the surrounding neighbourhood, Sleaford, 1825, p.365.
 4. Grigg, The Agricultural Revolution, pp. 50-52; Ph.Pusey, 'On the Agricultural Improvements of Lincolnshire', Journal of the Royal Agricultural Society of England (subsequently J.R.A.S.E.) IV, part II, 1843, p.302.

The permanent conversion of the limestone heath to arable, depended upon a four course rotation of turnips, barley, seeds and wheat. The level of fertility of the land was maintained by generous applications of manures, including bones, while a further supply came from the well-fed animals which were an integral part of the rotation.¹ Without good management the limestone heath could revert to gorse and rabbit warren, and some marginal land which was enclosed and ploughed under the stimulus of high prices quickly became exhausted.²

Philip Pusey described the heath between Lincoln and Sleaford in November 1842 when it presented

a cultivated exuberance such as I had never seen before. Farm succeeded farm, each appearing to be cultivated by the owner for example - not, as was really the case, by a tenant for profit; and so for miles we passed on through fields of turnips without a blank or a weed, on which thousands after thousands of long-woolled sheep were feeding in netted folds; and so large as well as regular were the turnips in the narrow rows, that the lower halves which remained in the ground, when the upper half had been consumed, seemed to pave these sheep-folds. Every stubble-field was clean and bright; all the hedges kept low, and neatly trimmed; every farm-house well-built, with spacious courts, and surrounded by such rows of high, long saddle-backed ricks, as showed that the land did not forget to return in August what it had received from the fold in December ...³

Once the heathland farmers had embarked on a course of high farming they could not change dramatically in the face of price fluctuations. Their response was to go on making their farming more efficient by continuing to reduce costs and raise

1. John Algernon Clarke, 'Farming of Lincolnshire', J.R.A.S.E., XII, parts I and II, 1851, p.399; Thirsk, English Peasant Farming, p.259.

2. Grigg, The Agricultural Revolution, pp.66 and 105.

3. Pusey, 'On the Agricultural Improvements of Lincolnshire', loc. cit., p.287.

output.¹ By the middle of the nineteenth century wheat had replaced barley and oats as the main crop on the heath, although barley came a close second.² The livestock on the heath farms contributed more than manure to the agricultural economy of the area, for the rise in the price of livestock products after the Crimean War compensated for the general failure of wheat prices to increase.³

The landscape and agriculture of the southern heath, with its broken relief, small, hedged fields and winding roads, contrasted with the newly enclosed limestone heath and the fens. The area where the limestone is covered by boulder clay was more remarkable in the nineteenth century for its woods, parks, and game preserves than for the excellence of its farming.⁴ Enclosure had been early and at the beginning of the nineteenth century there was a high proportion of grassland so that arable farming was subsidiary to the breeding and fattening of cattle.⁵ By the middle of the nineteenth century the proportion of arable had increased. It is estimated that 56% of the land in the area was under the plough by 1875 and it had become an area of mixed farming.⁶

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1. Beastall, The Agricultural Revolution in Lincolnshire, pp.173-174; Grigg, The Agricultural Revolution, pp.127-129.
 2. Grigg, The Agricultural Revolution, p.162.
 3. E. L. Jones, Agriculture and the Industrial Revolution, Oxford, 1974, pp.192-197.
 4. Grigg, The Agricultural Revolution, pp.15 and 100; R. J. Olney, Lincolnshire Politics 1832-1885, Oxford, 1973, p.28.
 5. Grigg, The Agricultural Revolution, pp.50, 105-106.
 6. Ibid., p.181.



The low plain of Kesteven to the west of the heath is made up of lias clays. To the north these are covered by gravels, which form a number of ridges to the west and south-west of Lincoln known as the Graffoe Hills.¹ At the beginning of the nineteenth century about two-thirds of the agricultural land of the area was under grass with the better pastures to the south. Sheep and cattle were bred and fattened here, while the livestock reared on the poorer grazing lands of the heath were also brought in to be fattened. However, despite the preponderance of grassland the area was not as strongly orientated towards grazing as south-east Kesteven or the townlands of the fens. The arable farming of the western valley of Kesteven was technically backward but it did produce cash crops such as wheat and barley as well as supplying fodder for its livestock. The early enclosure of the clay lands under the pressure of the needs of the graziers had allowed improvements to take place in livestock husbandry² About 24 per cent of the gravels of the Graffoe Hills survived as open moorland and meadow into the period of parliamentary enclosure.³ The few remaining open field parishes which were left in the area were enclosed in the second half of the eighteenth century. The

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1. Grigg, The Agricultural Revolution, pp.15-17; Mills, 'Regions of Kesteven ...', loc.cit., p.69.
 2. Grigg, The Agricultural Revolution, pp.79-100; Dennis R. Mills, 'Enclosure in Kesteven', Agricultural History Review, (subsequently A.H.R.) 7, 1959, p.85.
 3. Mills, 'Enclosure in Kesteven', loc.cit., pp.84-85.

last of these was Long Bennington, in 1796.¹ This eighteenth century enclosure activity was not necessarily a prelude to the improvement of arable farming. Old habits lingered on, and in parishes which had been long enclosed the open field rotation of wheat, beans and fallow persisted. The lack of under-drainage until after 1831 reduced the quality of cereal crops and made the sheep in the area vulnerable to disease.²

There had been some under-drainage as early as the 1820s and 1830s but it had in many cases failed because it was too shallow.³ As the century progressed there was, however, a continuous increase in the amount of arable land in the area which was most marked between 1825 and 1835. As in the other grazing areas of Lincolnshire, the old style grazier of the end of the eighteenth century, who had little arable land, was replaced by a new style of mixed farmer.⁴

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1. Grigg, The Agricultural Revolution, p.100.
 2. Ibid., p.100; Thirsk, English Peasant Farming, pp.301-303.
 3. Clarke, 'Farming of Lincolnshire', loc.cit., pp.376-377.
 4. Grigg, The Agricultural Revolution, pp.156-159.

The general division of south Lincolnshire into the lowlands of the fen and marsh, the heath and the western valley of Kesteven is based on the geomorphological and geological structure of the area. At the end of the eighteenth and beginning of the nineteenth centuries these differences were reflected in a diversity of agricultural practice which began to break down in the first half of the nineteenth century as new agricultural techniques made farmers less dependent on the inherent characteristics of their soils.¹ By 1825 the amount of arable land in south Lincolnshire had been increased by the conversion of the fens and heath to tillage and further increases were to come from ploughing permanent grassland. Despite price fluctuations this expansion went on continuously from the 1820s.² Whereas in 1801 the proportion of arable acreage under grain varied from 87% to 66% from area to area in south Lincolnshire, this variation was much less marked by 1875 with between 52% and 57% of arable occupied in this way. In 1801 25% of all parishes in south Lincolnshire for which records survive had wheat as the leading crop, 38% barley and 37% oats. Wheat had become the leading crop in every area by 1851 and by 1875 it was the main crop in 90% of the parishes for which records were collected. In 1801 the proportion of arable given over to fodder crops varied between 14% and 27%. By 1875 this was between 24% and 27%.³

Changes in the agricultural economy of south Lincolnshire were associated with social change. Whereas the lowlands of

1. Grigg, The Agricultural Revolution, p.175.

2. Ibid., pp.155-157.

3. Ibid., pp. 182-183.

the fen and marsh and the limestone heath experienced a radical change in land use and farming methods, the experience in other pastoral areas was less dramatic, although ultimately also of fundamental importance.

In the lowlands of fen and marsh exploitation by individuals of the rich natural resources of the area within a framework fixed by nature and custom was reinforced by the concept of 'manurance'. This recognised that by exercise of his labour on the natural economy of the fen the commoner established a right which was inheritable and saleable. The sale and exchange of these rights was carefully controlled by the townships to ensure that the profits taken in this way did not exceed what was deemed reasonable.¹ In addition the exploitation of the lowlands was ultimately controlled by natural checks and balances. For example, Thomas Stone wrote of the way in which a commoner could build up his stock of cattle and geese only to find most of them swept away in a bad season.² On the commons of East and Deeping Fens occupiers frequently lost four-fifths of their stock through the ravages of nature.³ Drainage and enclosure brought the lowlands from out of a state of nature and, the writings of the agricultural improvers implied, introduced a more rational regime in terms of enhanced productivity and ultimately the introduction of scientific farming techniques. However, the strength of the traditional fenland economy and way of life was demonstrated by the intensity of popular opposition to change. Its public

1. Hallam, 'The Fen By-laws ...', loc. cit., pp.43-44.

2. Stone, General View, p.19.

3. Ibid., p.22.

manifestations, as in Holland Fen in 1768, might take forms rooted in traditional patterns of behaviour, such as a communal football match over the disputed lands; a form of protest with a long history in disputes of this kind as well as in other contexts.¹

There is no corresponding evidence for opposition to the enclosure and arable cultivation of the limestone heathlands but, in terms of both the landscape and the economy of the area, the changes which took place were equally fundamental. Like the lowlands of the fen and marsh, an agricultural system organised according to rational and commercial criteria replaced one in which custom and nature provided the parameters for the exploitation of the area. However, the limestone heath lacked the natural riches of the fens and only gave a limited yield from traditional agricultural techniques. This meant that those who used the heath before enclosure and improvement did not constitute a well-defined interest which would be disturbed by change. The village of Digby stood on the edge of the Witham fens in Kesteven and its parish included limestone heath, the mixed clay and gravel of the fen edge and fenland. A survey made in 1801, when it was still unaffected by agricultural improvement, showed that the grassland of the fen assumed a far greater importance in the economy of the village than its heathland, which was not given any separate valuation.²

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1. Marratt, The History of Lincolnshire, vol.I, pp.84-85; James Saunby Padley, The Fens and Floods of Mid-Lincolnshire; with a Description of the River Witham in its Neglected State before 1762, and its Improvements up to 1825, Lincoln, 1882, pp. 39-43; Robert W. Malcolmson, Popular Recreations in English Society 1700-1850, Cambridge, 1973, pp.36-37, 39-40.
 2. W. H. Hosford, 'Digby in 1801: the anatomy of a Lincolnshire village', Lincolnshire Historian 2, no.3, 1955-56, pp.26-32.

After the heath was enclosed and converted to arable it developed a distinctive economy for which the labour force was provided by increased population. That of Kesteven rose rapidly between 1775 and 1825 with a rise of just over 41% between 1801 and 1821. The parish registers of the wapentake of Langoe, which included the villages of Washingborough, Potterhanworth, Nocton, Billingham, Scopwick, Kirkby Green, Dunston, Metheringham, Blankney and Timberland showed a sudden rise in births, as measured by baptisms, in the 1780s, which was continued into the nineteenth century. This coincided with a period of very active enclosure with increased demand for labour providing a basis for population growth.¹

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The way of life of individuals could be changed dramatically as a result of drainage and enclosure in the fens, while on the uplands the advance of the plough also transformed the life of the area.² On the old enclosed areas of the heath and in the western valley of Kesteven, the disappearance of the old style grazier whose farming was based on permanent pasture with very little arable, if a less sudden change than in other areas, nonetheless brought changes in outlook. The decline of the independent interest in politics was an indication of this. The grazier, with a comparatively lower level of rent and labour

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1. Dennis R. Mills, 'Population and Settlement in Kesteven (Lincs), c.1775-c.1885, University of Nottingham, M.A. thesis, 1957, pp.63, 79-80, 83; E. A. Wrigley and R. S. Schofield, The Population History of England 1541-1871: a reconstruction, 1981, pp.473-475.
 2. See above p.19; Beastall, The Agricultural Revolution in Lincolnshire, p.120.

bill than the arable farmer, had different priorities in the disposition of his wealth and the pursuit of his livelihood.¹

The situation in which a large number of people had an interest in the common rights of the fen and marsh, was carried over after drainage and enclosure to create a distinctive social structure in the Holland division. Property in every parish was divided among many owners and although several leading Kesteven landowners had estates in Holland the resident squire was almost entirely absent. There were a few large corporate landowners, but it was left to such families as the Everards of Fulney and Gosberton, the Moores of Spalding, the Tunnards of Frampton, the Beridges of Algarkirk, the Gleeds of Donington and the Calthorps of Swineshead, who stood socially midway between the owner-occupying farmers and the squirearchy, to provide social leadership through their involvement in local affairs. The numerical importance of the small freeholders of the lowlands can be seen in the fact that at the beginning of the nineteenth century a parish like Gosberton had 160 landowners and Quadring over 150.² Few parishes had a high proportion of land owned by one landlord and in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries at least 20% of the occupiers in every parish in Holland, except one, farmed their own land.³ However, the proportion of land taken up by small owner-occupying farmers varied from

1. Grigg, The Agricultural Revolution, p.159; Olney, Lincolnshire Politics, pp.53-54.

2. Grigg, The Agricultural Revolution, pp.83-84; Olney, Lincolnshire Politics, p.20.

3. D. B. Grigg, 'The Land Tax Returns', A.H.R. XI, 1963, p.89.

parish to parish. In a few places they farmed at least half the land, but in the fenlands of Kesteven there were parishes such as South Kyme which were almost entirely owned by one landlord.¹

Whether farmed by its owner or not, the small farm was a significant part of the lowland economy. In the early nineteenth century 86 and 79% respectively of the farm holdings in the 46,000 acres of the Holland wapentakes of Kirton and Skirbeck were between 5 and 49 acres.² This was a continuing and distinctive characteristic of the area throughout the nineteenth century. In 1881, S. B. L. Druce commented to the Royal Commission on Agriculture on the large number of small farms in Lincolnshire. He noted that there were many holdings much smaller than fifty acres. Some of these were rented, but others, in many cases less than an acre in size, were occupied by their owners. There were many small freeholds to be found south of Boston, notably at Kirton and other villages in that area. In almost every case the small freeholders had acquired their land by purchase, although in some cases, which were by no means usual, they had inherited them from relatives. Many of the men had been farm servants, or in some cases farm bailiffs, who had invested some of their earnings in land, paying a deposit with their accumulated savings and borrowing

1. Grigg, The Agricultural Revolution, pp.83-84, 88; Grigg, 'The Land Tax Returns', loc.cit., pp.89-90.

2. Grigg, The Agricultural Revolution, pp.92-93.

the rest of the purchase price.¹ The large farm was not, however, entirely absent from the area. Drainage and enclosure had frequently presented the opportunity to lay out new farms and some of south Lincolnshire's largest farms were to be found in the fens.²

If the lowlands of south Lincolnshire were characterised by their large number of small farmers and owners, the heath was an area in which estates of resident landed gentry were an important element in the structure of landowning and holding. Over 90% of the land of the region at the end of the eighteenth and beginning of the nineteenth centuries was farmed by tenants and although there were a few parishes in the area where over a tenth of the occupiers were also owners, they only paid more than a tenth of the land tax in one place.³ Many of the landed gentry who owned land on the heath lived in Kesteven and there were a large number of proprietors of estates between 7,000 and 20,000 acres in the division. Some were absentee landlords but of these only the Earl of Bristol, whose Lincolnshire estate was centred on the Sleaford area, had a seat distant from Kesteven. The leading Kesteven-based estates were those of the Brownlows and the Ancaster property, although the actual dukedom of Ancaster became extinct in 1809 and the Grimsthorpe estate descended in the female line.

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1. P.P. 1881 XVI (C.2778 - II) Agricultural Interests. Digest and Appendix to Part I of Evidence taken before the Royal Commission on Agriculture; together with Report of the Assistant Commissioners, pp.384-385, 387; Ibid. XVII (C.3096) Agricultural Interests, Minutes of Evidence taken before Her Majesty's Commissioners on Agriculture, part II (23rd February - 4th August 1881), p.2.
 2. Grigg, The Agricultural Revolution, p.171.
 3. Grigg, 'The Land Tax Returns', loc.cit., p.89.

There was a group of large estates to the north and south of Grantham. Sir John Thorold, Sir William Welby, Lord Brownlow, Sir Montague Cholmeley and Edmund Turnor all lived in the area. John Algernon Clarke described the undulating landscape in which these estates were situated. Where the heath was covered with boulder clay the 'large trees of beech, lime, ash, &c,' made it an attractive area for a landed gentleman to live in and pursue his leisure activities. In north Kesteven the Chaplin estate, centred on Blankney, lay near the border of the heath and fen. Large parts of its 15,500 acres were on limestone heath which was enclosed and converted to arable at the beginning of the nineteenth century. There were also a number of lesser gentry families in the area who owned estates of up to 5,000 or 6,000 acres.¹

The heath contained some of the largest farms in south Lincolnshire, especially to the north of Sleaford and to the south of Grantham.² James Creasey noted in his history of Sleaford, published in 1825, that many of the farms in the area 'contain from three hundred to one thousand acres and more upon the heath, and are conducted with spirited management'.³ These large farming units made possible the considerable capital investment and management economies which were necessary

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1. Grigg, The Agricultural Revolution, p.83; Olney, Lincolnshire Politics, pp.16-20, 28; Clarke, 'Farming of Lincolnshire', loc.cit., p.267.
 2. Grigg, The Agricultural Revolution, p.91.
 3. [Creasey], Sketches Illustrative of the Topography and History of New and Old Sleaford, p.370.

to bring the limestone heathlands into cultivation.¹

Estate surveys of the first two decades of the nineteenth century, but also including one made in 1780 and another in 1830, covering 43,000 acres in Kesteven, show that on the northern part of the heath, the largest number of farms were of 300 acres and over. These constituted some 40% of the total with 10% between 100 and 299 acres, 20% between 50 and 99 acres, and 30% between 5 and 49 acres. On the southern heath, although there were some large farms of over 500 acres, only 10% were over 300 acres, 14% between 100 and 299 acres, 12% between 50 and 99 acres, while the largest group, 62%, were between 5 and 49 acres.²

There is little evidence to suggest that there had been any dramatic change in this by the 1870s, although some contemporaries thought that the twenty or thirty years following the Crimean War had seen a great deal of amalgamation. It is possible to find examples of farms being put together and of the absorption of smaller units. There is also, however, evidence which shows that large farms were being broken up, which would offset any amalgamations which were taking place.³ There was also little change during the period in the importance of the great estates or in the numbers of owner-occupiers. The tenant farmer continued to be the main type of occupier, while the same families who were the dominant landowners in the early nineteenth century were still to be found in the 1870s.⁴ The significance of the Willoughby de Eresby estate, formerly

1. Thirsk, English Peasant Farming, p.264.

2. Grigg, The Agricultural Revolution, pp.92-93, 171.

3. Ibid., pp.168-170.

4. Ibid., pp.171-172, 175.

that of the Duke of Ancaster, continued together with that of Brownlow, while the gentry maintained their positions.¹ Like the Welbys, the Turnors, who had about 9,000 acres in the south of the county by the 1870s, had enhanced their estate by purchase.²

The farms of the western valley of Kesteven were predominantly small, although, as in the other agricultural regions of south Lincolnshire, there were considerable differences. Some 73% of the farms in that part of the area covered by estate surveys in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries were between 5 and 49 acres, 5% between 50 and 99 acres, 11% between 100 and 299 acres and 10% 300 acres and over.³ The region also had a greater proportion of large farms than any other parts of south Lincolnshire except the heath, but the medium sized farm was rare. The landed estates of the Thorolds of Syston, Sir Robert Heron of Stubton and George Hussey Packe of Caythorpe were an important influence in the area between Grantham and Newark, the southern half of the western lowlands of Kesteven. However, in a number of parishes over a fifth of the farmland was occupied by its owners and their numbers had increased noticeably during the

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1. John Bateman, The Great Landowners of Great Britain and Ireland, fourth edit., 1883, repr. Leicester 1971, pp.84 and 480. For the descent of the Ancaster lands see above pp.34-35.
 2. Bateman, The Great Landowners ..., pp.57, 61, 88, 194, 440 and 450; Olney, Lincolnshire Politics, p.18.
 3. Grigg, The Agricultural Revolution, pp.91-93.

French and Napoleonic Wars.¹

The small farmer was also important in that part of the western Kesteven lowlands to the west and south-west of Lincoln, which was overlaid by gravels. The great number of small farmers in this area were not distributed in a uniform way and parishes with a predominance of small farms lay next to those with a few large farms. While a few parishes had a remarkable number of owner-occupiers, others were in the sole ownership of a squire.² Like the rest of south Lincolnshire, there is no indication of any significant change in either the size of the farms or the pattern of landownership in the whole of the western valley of Kesteven in the course of the nineteenth century.³

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The pace of agricultural improvement at the beginning of the nineteenth century was reflected in rent levels. In 1806 Lord Boston raised the rents on his Moulton estate by 21% and in 1801 Lord Bristol's rents were increased by 25%. The rate of increase on the Heathcote estate in 1813 was between 20% and 35%. In 1727 the total rental of Canwick was £350, by 1760 this was £730, £1,380 by 1790, £1,782 in 1802 and £3,200 in 1812. At Threckingham land which had been rented at 20s. an acre in 1795 was 36s. an acre in 1814. The lordship of Rauceby was

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1. Grigg, The Agricultural Revolution, pp.93 and 101; Olney, Lincolnshire Politics, pp.19-20.
 2. Grigg, The Agricultural Revolution, pp.102-103.
 3. Ibid., pp.172-173, 175.

said to have been worth £223 per annum until 1771. By 1825 its value was estimated in round figures as about £3,000. Rent increases did not, however, keep pace with the improved value of the land and when they came after 1815 they were moderated by decreasing profitability. Many old-established landlords were also reluctant, on paternalistic grounds, to increase rents simply on the basis of high grain prices and in the 1800s particularly in the fens, very low rents were asked. Improving farmers therefore had the leeway to continue to make improvements even in depressed conditions, while on the large upland farms, with the considerable capital investment which they involved, there was scope for more economical management.¹

Livestock prices held up better than grain during the period of depression following the Napoleonic Wars. Wool prices also held up well until about 1820, and it was not until the mid 1820s that south Lincolnshire graziers began to suffer distress. Low prices encouraged them to begin ploughing up grassland to grow wheat, although they then probably suffered from falling wheat prices from 1832, while wool began to rise in price compared with wheat until it fell again in the 1840s.² However, on the clays of south-east and west Kesteven, where the grazier predominated, the rent rises of the war period were lowest, although there is some evidence to suggest that rents had risen by 50% between 1790 and 1800 and continued to rise up to about 1850. There had been a more immediate response

1. Thirsk, English Peasant Farming, pp. 259-260, 263-264, 305; Grigg, The Agricultural Revolution, pp.36-37; [Creasey], Sketches Illustrative of the Topography and History of New and Old Sleaford, p.369.

2. Grigg, The Agricultural Revolution, pp.120-123.

to the high prices of the prosperous years than in those regions which had to be brought into cultivation and once rents had reached a higher level, it was difficult to get them reduced. Clayland farmers, who up to 1856 had spent on under-drainage and improvement, were then caught by a series of bad harvests without a corresponding rise in the price of corn.¹

On the Ancaster and Welby estates rents fell substantially after 1822 and in that year the Ancaster receipts were 85% of the war level and those on the Welby estates 60%. There was some recovery in the later 1820s but they still remained below the war levels and there was again a slight decline in the early 1830s. On the Ancaster estate this went below the low point of 1822. In the later 1830s rent levels recovered, but while the Ancaster receipts increased very slowly, and it was not until 1851 that they exceeded the wartime level, those on the Welby estate rose rapidly from 1836 to 1879 with only a temporary setback in 1851. The Thorold estate records show a steady upward trend in rent from 1837 with only a slight fall in 1851.²

These rent receipts give no indication of the landlords' losses through reductions or abatements of the contractual rent. The Ancaster, Thorold and Welby estate records show that while tenant debt was already growing before 1820 it did not become considerable until after this date. However, it then

1. Grigg, The Agricultural Revolution, p.37; Thirsk, English Peasant Farming, p.305.

2. Grigg, The Agricultural Revolution, pp.123-125.

continued at a fairly high level throughout the 1820s and 1830s and only disappeared after 1850. The worse times were in the early 1820s and 1830s when debts were accumulated by tenants which were often carried over into the later period.¹

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Distinctive settlement patterns also developed in the various areas of south Lincolnshire as a result of agricultural change. These were still marked in the 1870s. Before enclosure and drainage the heath, fen and marsh were largely devoid of habitation outside the villages, but when they were settled this happened in different ways because of the structure of landownership and size of farms on them.² However, all areas were affected to some degree by settlement dispersal as farms, public houses, the lodges of estates, windmills and the buildings associated with railways were developed away from village centres.³

As new houses and barns were built at the centre of the new farm units on the limestone heath following enclosure, fear of creating poor law settlements for labourers employed on them led to the restriction of the number of cottages built.⁴

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1. Grigg, The Agricultural Revolution, p.125.
 2. Mills, 'Regions of Kesteven ...', loc.cit., pp.69-75; Thirsk, English Peasant Farming, p.8; G. Joan Fuller, 'Development of Drainage, Agriculture and Settlement in the Fens of South-East Lincs. during the 19th Century', East Midland Geographer 1, no.7, June 1957, pp.6-7.
 3. Mills, 'Population and Settlement in Kesteven ...', p.39.
 4. Beastall, The Agricultural Revolution in Lincolnshire, pp.156-159; Clarke, 'Farming of Lincolnshire', loc.cit., p.409; Mills, 'Population and Settlement ...', p.136.

The pattern of landownership which facilitated this was described by Edward Stanhope, the Assistant Commissioner on the Employment of Children, Young Persons and Women in Agriculture in 1867:

The Heath district between Lincoln and Sleaford, comprises a large tract of land recently brought into cultivation, and belonging to a few large landowners, such as Mr. Chaplin, Lord Bristol, and Mr. Nisbit Hamilton. Two lines of villages, from five to seven miles apart, form its eastern and western boundaries, and between them there is not only an absence of villages, but almost of cottages also. Brauncewell, for instance, comprises 3,470 acres, divided into three farms, all the property of Lord Bristol. For the supply of labour to this parish there are 13 cottages (five of them with one bedroom only). Ashby-de-la-Lund (sic), Bloxholm, and Temple Bruer are not better supplied, while the tract north of these villages is almost entirely without cottages. The main feature therefore of this district is that the labourers are all congregated into the larger towns.¹

A different pattern had developed on the parts of the boulder clay covered southern heath, where in large parishes secondary settlements had grown up in the middle ages and the influence of the landed estates of the area had already shaped the landscape by the beginning of the nineteenth century. In those parts where limestone was the predominant soil type settlement was similar to that of the northern limestone heath between Grantham and Lincoln.²

There was considerable movement of population into the newly drained areas of the fens and marsh as farmers moved out to live on the hitherto uninhabited lowlands. The first edition

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1. P.P.1867-68 XVII (4068) Agriculture (Employment of Women and Children). First Report of the Commissioners on the Employment of Children, Young Persons, and Women in Agriculture, with Appendix, part I, p.73.
 2. D. R. Mills, 'The Poor Laws and the Distribution of Population c.1600-1860, with special reference to Lincolnshire' Transactions and Papers of the Institute of British Geographers 26, 1959, pp.189-190; Dorothy M. Owen, Church and Society in Medieval Lincolnshire, Lincoln, 1971, pp.6-10; Mills, 'Population and Settlement in Kesteven ...', p.39.

of the Ordnance Survey map of 1824 shows dispersed or very loosely group^{ed} settlement spread along the roads and drains which provided access to the area.¹ The large number of small holdings increased the dispersal of the population. In 1881, there was a total of 213 holdings under 20 acres in Kirton in Holland, a parish of some 5,000 acres. 119 of them were owned by their occupiers and 80 of these had a house and buildings standing on them, while 38 of the 94 which were rented also had buildings. Since this last group included 30 occupiers of a rood each of charity land, there was a marked tendency for the small farmers to live on their holdings. Similarly in Leake, where there were 156 farms owned by their occupiers and 72 which were rented, all under 20 acres in size, 130 of the owner-occupied and 54 of the rented farms had a house and buildings on them. At Wrangle there were 103 owner-occupied and 53 rented farms of under 20 acres; 85 of the former and 35 of the latter had a house and buildings situated on them. It was said to be characteristic of the area that when small freeholders purchased property they either built houses or farm buildings on it or added to those that were already there.² In those parts of the lowlands where larger farm units were created after drainage and enclosure they

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1. G. Joan Fuller, 'Development of Drainage, Agriculture and Settlement ...', loc.cit., pp.11-12.
 2. RP.1881 XVI (C.2778 - II) Agricultural Interests. Digest. Appendix to part I of the Evidence, pp.386, 389.

were also built away from the older centres of population in the middle of their fields.¹

In the course of the nineteenth century, cottages were provided on the marsh and the fens to house the labour force needed on the larger farms. Several were reported as being built by 1856. It was hoped that the erection of sufficient cottages would attract a better class of labourer, but until the number was increased 'the laborers (sic) there (many of whom are single men) must have a roof to lie under, and the horrible "lodging houses" will therefore continue as they have long been, a disgrace to humanity and civilization.'²

In 1867 the labourers who lived in large villages were reported as still having to travel long distances to work.³ In Deeping Fen extra labour had to be drawn from Spalding and Market Deeping.⁴ The shortage of cottages meant that on the larger lowland farms there was a similar situation to that on the limestone heath with the regular farm servants living near their work, while the day labourers came in from the outside. This was described by E. Morris, the medical officer to the Spalding union: 'The want of cottages is the great evil here.

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1. Kenneth Healey, "Methodism or Nothing ..." (in Gedney Marsh, 1856)', Epworth Witness and Journal of the Lincolnshire Methodist History Society 2, part 8, Autumn 1974, p.120.
 2. Lincoln, Rutland and Stamford Mercury (subsequently L.R.S.M.) Supplement, 14th March 1856.
 3. BP.1867-68 XVII (4068) Agriculture (Employment of Women and Children, p.74.
 4. Ibid., (4068 - I) Agriculture (Employment of Women and Children Evidence from the Assistant Commissioners, Appendix part II, p.306.

The rule in Deeping Fen is that the farmhouse is at one end of the farm and the foreman's at the other. The latter lodges all the young waggoners (sic)'.¹ It was not until the end of the nineteenth century that the provision of labourers' houses began to catch up with the needs of the men who worked on the larger farms.²

In those parts of the western valley of Kesteven where parliamentary enclosure took place, it led to a similar pattern of settlement dispersal to that in other parts of south Lincolnshire enclosed in the eighteenth or nineteenth centuries. At Doddington neither the farms on the Moor nor those known as Top House, the Grange, the Birk Springs, the Carr Lane, nor the Carr Farm had homesteads built on them in 1749, but by 1778 they all had houses.³ It has been estimated that by the 1880s between 30 and 40% of the population of the Graffoe Terraces were dispersed from the main centres of population.⁴

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1. PP.1867-68 XVIII (4068) Agriculture (Employment of Women and Children) Evidence from the Assistant Commissioners, Appendix part II, p.308.
 2. PP.1893-94 XXXV (C.6894 - VI) Royal Commission on Labour. The Agricultural Labourer, vol.I, England part IV, Reports by Mr. Edward Wilkinson, (Assistant Commissioner), upon certain selected districts in the counties of Derbyshire, Lincolnshire, Staffordshire and Yorkshire. (North, East and West Ridings) pp.12 and 22.
 3. M. W. Barley, 'The Lincolnshire Village and its Buildings', Lincolnshire Historian, 7, Spring 1951, p.257; R. E. G. Cole, History of the Manor and Township of Doddington, otherwise Doddington-Pigot, in the County of Lincoln ..., 1857, p.150.
 4. Mills, 'Population and Settlement in Kesteven,' loc. cit., p.221.

The structure of landownership not only affected the settlement patterns of the various geographical areas of south Lincolnshire, but was also an important factor influencing the development of individual village communities. The differences between villages led to the development of characteristic types of social structure within them. An analysis of these various types provides the basis for understanding the religious and other social institutions which they evolved.

These various types of village were familiar to commentators in the nineteenth century. The terminology 'open' and 'close' or 'closed' villages which was used to describe them, probably dated from around 1830 although the different types of parishes were recognised by writers in the eighteenth century. Contemporary writers described the characteristics of these villages and had little problem in deciding which were 'open' and which were 'closed'. However, few defined their terms of reference clearly and the majority relied on their own observations and the common knowledge of the district which they were describing to decide whether a parish was 'open' or 'closed'. Those who analysed the difference saw the 'closed' parish as one in which the ownership of land and house accommodation was in the hands of one, or at the most three, proprietors who shared similar interests. The owners had the power, whether or not they possessed the inclination, to exclude potentially chargeable families from settlement. In an 'open' parish it was not possible, because of divided ownership, to apply control to settlement. The cottage owners in the 'open' villages were often tradesmen or

speculative builders who profited from the demand for accommodation in a situation in which settlement was uncontrolled.¹

The description of villages as 'open' or 'closed' does not represent a perfect typology. Within the broad framework described by writers on the question there existed a variety of village types, so that a more refined method of distinguishing them than the impressionistic accounts of contemporary writers provides the means of analysing their social ethos. Dennis Mills has suggested a fourfold classification of village types based on the sub-division of the two main types of parish - 'open' and 'closed'.

A. Closed Villages:

1. Squire's village; one in which a resident landlord owned at least half the acreage of the township.
2. Absentee landlord's village; one in which at least half the acreage of the township was owned by the absentee proprietor.

B. Open Villages:

3. Freehold or peasant village; one in which there were more than forty proprietors; alternatively one in which there were between twenty and forty proprietors owning less than an average of forty acres each.

1. B. A. Holderness, '"Open" and "Close" Parishes in England in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries,' A.H.R. 20, 1972, pp.126-132.

4. Divided villages; all those not qualifying for one of the classifications above.¹

Alan Everitt has also suggested a fourfold classification: parishes where the property was in one person's hands; where it was in a few hands; where it was subdivided or was much subdivided. He groups the first two types of villages together as estate parishes, since all the land in these appears to have been held by a single magnate or a few dominant landowners. The two latter types, where land was divided among the many proprietors are grouped together as freeholders' parishes, containing many small and independent owners.² James Obelkevich also distinguished four types of village in his study of south Lindsey. These were 'squire's' parishes in which one landlord owned more than half the land; 'oligarchic' parishes in which a few landlords owned most of the land but none had more than half; 'freeholders' parishes in which the land was owned by smallholders averaging less than forty acres each; and 'divided' parishes, which were all the rest in his area, in which there were often several large landlords with small or medium holdings and a large number of smallholders. It was not always easy, he found, to distinguish between 'freeholders' and 'divided' parishes,

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1. Dennis Mills, 'English Villages in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries; a Sociological Approach, part I: the concept of a sociological classification', Amateur Historian 6, no.8, Summer 1965, p.272.
 2. Alan Everitt, The Pattern of Rural Dissent: the nineteenth century, Leicester, 1972, pp.20-21.

but the basic distinction between the first two types of village, those which were 'open' and the second two, which were 'closed' was clear.¹

The purpose of any classification is to provide a framework for use in analysing the social climate of individual village communities. As such it needs to be relatively clear cut in its application while at the same time being relevant to the social conditions with which it is concerned. While various sources have been used by writers on 'open' and 'closed' villages as the basis for their classifications, the material found in contemporary directories, gives us a fairly complete coverage of the whole of south Lincolnshire, and provides a measure of the social milieu of a particular place. Using the material in White's 1856 Directory of Lincolnshire a four-fold classification of settlement types similar to those used by other writers has been devised. This is:

- I. Village where the land, except the glebe, is in the hands of one resident proprietor.
- II. Village where the land, except the glebe, is in the hands of one or two proprietors who may be non-resident, or as many as three proprietors if one of the three is resident.
- III.. Divided village which may have as many as three non-resident owners.

1. James Obelkevich, Religion and Rural Society: South Lindsey 1825-1875, Oxford, 1976, p.12.

IV. Much divided village having many owners and occupiers where the directory usually refers to other small owners, apart from the families which it lists by name, as owners in the general description of the village.

Types I and II may be described in general terms as 'closed' villages, while types III and IV are 'open' villages.

This division of villages is an attempt to express the social reality of the situation in the various villages of south Lincolnshire, it can, however, never be applied with rigid uniformity. Thurlby, for example, which was 8½ miles south-south-west of Lincoln, was described in White's Directory as having 'Thurlby Hall, a neat mansion, ... the seat of Sir Edmund Gonville Bromhead, Bart., who owns a great part of the parish, and is lord of the manor, and impropiator of the great tithes.'¹ This description puts it into category II, since the directory description leaves the complete ownership of the village in some doubt, although with its resident squire the village might well seem to belong to category I. Similarly, there are problems in deciding in which category the parish of Blankney belongs. It had Blankney Hall, 'a large and handsome mansion, with a well-wooded lawn, ... the seat of Charles Chaplin, Esq., the lord of the manor, owner of most of the soil, and patron of the rectory ...'² The village, which had been laid

1. White, Directory of Lincolnshire, 1856, pp.350-351.

2. Ibid., p.355.

out in the 1830s and 1840s, is cited as an important example of the influence of the landed estate in Lincolnshire.¹ Yet there was within the parish, three miles east of the village, the hamlet of Linwood where 700 acres belonged to Henry Collins.² It might be argued that Linwood and Blankney should be treated as two separate settlements, yet such division in the case of one place to make it conform to an idealised picture of a closed village might perhaps also be applied in the case of Doddington with its hall 'a large handsome mansion in the Elizabethan style, with pleasant grounds and thriving plantations, ... the seat of Geo. K. Jarvis, Esq., ...'³ Jarvis was, lord of the manor of Doddington, owner of nearly all the soil, and patron of the rectory ...'⁴ Since the completeness of Jarvis's ownership is placed in doubt by the directory description and since Doddington also contained the outlying hamlet of Whisby owned by Robert Vyner, the two could be treated as separate settlements. Such a split does not, however, ultimately decide whether the qualifications of the description of Jarvis's complete land-ownership of the parish of Doddington was because of the presence

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1. Nikolaus Pevsner and John Harris, The Buildings of England: Lincolnshire, Harmondsworth, 1964, p.459; R. J. Olney, Rural Society and County Government in Nineteenth-Century Lincolnshire, Lincoln, 1979, p.33; Beastall, The Agricultural Revolution in Lincolnshire, pp.113, 219-220.
 2. White, Directory of Lincolnshire, 1856, p.355.
 3. Ibid., p.343.
 4. Ibid., p.344.

of Whisby or other factors.¹ Doddington has therefore been assigned to category II.

There are also examples of villages in the hands of one proprietor when the Hall was not used by the owner himself. All the land, except the glebe at Little Ponton, belonged to Christopher Turnor, who was also lord of the manor and patron of the church. There was a Hall in the parish. This was not occupied by Turnor himself but by Vere Fane Esq.² This type of village has been placed in category I since the social character of the place was likely to differ very little from one in which the owner was resident in the Hall. Such a village would, however, depend very much on the ability or inclination of the occupier of the Hall to fill the role of the non-resident owner, so a village like Harrington, near Spilsby, Lindsey, which belonged to the Revd. H. J. Ingilby, where the Hall was 'occupied by the gamekeeper' was likely to have a different social tone from Little Ponton.³

In assigning villages between categories I and II, the division is between two variants of a single type - the 'closed' village. The point at which a village ceases to be 'closed' and becomes 'open', represents a significant change in its social ethos. Silk Willoughby, near Sleaford, was said to belong to the Earl of Dysart, who was lord of the manor and 'owner of most of the soil', and also partly belonged to the Thorold and Scott families.⁴ If one of these families lived

1. White, Directory of Lincolnshire, 1856, p.344.

2. Ibid., p.124.

3. Ibid., pp.728-729.

4. Ibid., pp.552.

in Silk Willoughby, it could be placed in category II. It is therefore necessary to use the list of residents provided in the directory, and since neither the Scott nor the Thorold families are included in this, it has to be assumed that Silk Willoughby is a divided village in category III.

The year 1856 is a convenient point, just after the middle of the nineteenth century and near the 1851 Census of Religious Worship, an important source for the religious history of the area, at which to base any categorisation of village types.¹ It does, however, only provide a picture of the state of the villages and towns of south Lincolnshire at about that period. The social framework of a village was not immutably fixed, but could be altered by the sale or break up of a landed estate. At Washingborough and Heighington, south of Lincoln, Sir W. A. Ingilby had sold his extensive estates to three men from Lincoln in 1840. They were later resold, so that by 1856 both places were open villages in category IV.² South Rauceby, near Sleaford, was an 'open village at the beginning of the nineteenth century, but from the late 1840s it passed largely into the possession of the Willson family, who were resident in the village.³ The south Kesteven village of Corby was largely a closed parish in the eighteenth century, with its owners living in neighbouring Irnham, but from 1763, on the marriage of its heiress, it became part of a large complex of estates owned by

1. See below pp.135-6, 302.

2. White, Directory of Lincolnshire, 1856, pp.367-368.

3. Alan Rogers (ed.), Stability and Change: some aspects of North and South Rauceby in the nineteenth century, Nottingham, 1969, especially pp.17-20.

Lord Arundell based largely in the south and south-west of England. Its peripheral position meant that the whole Irnham estate, including Corby, was used as a source of finance and in the course of the nineteenth century Corby became a more open village. After a period of land sales between 1811 and 1815, no one estate dominated the village.¹

Corby's position on the periphery of a landed estate was an important factor in its development. If the economic ties between a landlord and his estate were weakened by distance so were also the social links which cemented a great estate. A correspondent from Sleaford, where the absentee Marquis of Bristol owned large amounts of land, and who signed his letters as from 'An old Tenant who has never seen his Landlord', noted that the Marquis drew many thousands of pounds from his Sleaford estates, yet kept no establishment there whatsoever. In forty years he had only paid one flying visit to the area, which had lasted for not more than a few hours. It was said that no more than half a dozen people on his estate were known personally to him, which contrasted with the other large proprietors of the neighbourhood, who were 'Ever easy of access, kind and courteous on all occasions, presiding at their own audits, &c., they are fully acquainted with the feelings and requirements of those who have the happiness to live under them, and are looked up to as the friend and benefactor of all.'²

1. David I. A. Steel, A Lincolnshire Village: the parish of Corby Glen in its historical context, 1979, pp.25-26, 30.

2. L.R.S.M., 31st October 1856.

The strength of the ties between landed proprietors and the village which they owned, might be as great in some villages in the second category (II), as in those where the landlords actually resided. Woolsthorpe near Grantham on the Leicestershire border included '90 acres of wood, a lake of 15½ acres, and part of the plantations and pleasure grounds of Belvoir Castle, in Leicestershire, the splendid seat of the Duke of Rutland, the lord of the manor of Woolsthorpe, owner of most of the soil, and patron of the Church ...'.¹

Woolsthorpe was in category II, because the Duke of Rutland was not resident in the parish, but his influence was probably as great there as anywhere else on his estate. Similarly, in the parish of Wyville cum Hungerton, about four miles from Woolsthorpe, George Gregory, the owner of most of the soil, lived in Harlaxton Hall in the adjoining parish, while Hungerton Hall was occupied by a farmer.² Since there was no church surviving at either Wyville or Hungerton, the parish had been virtually annexed to that of Harlaxton where the inhabitants attended church. This was probably a reflection of the situation in other matters also, so that the parish, although belonging to category II under a strict adherence to the scheme of classification, was in reality very much like a place in category I.

It has been suggested that, just as the outlying parishes on the most highly capitalised Lincolnshire estates bore less outward evidence of paternal landlordism, so the personal

1. White, Directory of Lincolnshire, 1856, p.395.

2. Ibid., p.396.

influence of the landlord was correspondingly weaker.¹

However, mere distance of part of an estate from its centre, was not the only determinant of the strength of its ties between landlord and tenant. The village of Digby belonged to the Harrowby estates from the early eighteenth century to 1877. The Earl of Harrowby lived at Sandon in Staffordshire, yet the celebrations of the marriage of Viscount Sandon, the Earl's son, with Lady Mary Cecil, point to the cultivation of ties which extended beyond those of the economic relationship between landlord and tenant. The estate's agent proposed that the Revd. J. Mackinnon took the chair, and Mackinnon referred to this strong relationship in his speech. There had been in the village 'for a series of years occupiers of the same land and the same cottages.' This, he said, 'showed the landlord had a deep regard for his tenantry, and that he considered them a part and parcel of his own family.'² Even allowing for hyperbole the relationship between landlord and tenant in Digby seemed to have been somewhat more positive than that on the Marquis of Bristol's estate.

Any scheme which attempts to classify villages according to their structure of landownership, cannot in the last analysis provide an infallible guide to conditions within them, but helps to identify points within a wide spectrum. The two extremes of this spectrum can be seen in the villages of Ashby de la Launde and Leake, which have been placed in categories I and IV respectively. Ashby was described in White's 1856 Directory:

1. Olney, Rural Society and County Government, p.33.

2. Hosford, 'Digby in 1801 ...', loc.cit., p.26 ; White, Directory of Lincolnshire 1856, p.407; L.R.S.M., 10th October 1861.

a pleasant scattered village, on a broken declivity, 7 miles N. of Sleaford, has in its fertile parish 170 souls, and 2519 acres of land, all the property and manor of the Rev. J. W. King, B.D., of Ashby Hall, the impropiator, and patron and incumbent of the vicarage ... The manor ... has belonged to the family of King since the reign of Henry VIII, and one of them built the present Hall, in 1595. This mansion, which stands in the village, has an extensive and well-wooded lawn, and has recently been much altered and improved by the Rev. J. W. King, B.D., who supports a school for his poor parishioners.¹

Leake was said to be

a large stragglng village, 8 miles N.E. of Boston, [which] has several hamlets in its parish, and increased its population from 1744 souls in 1841, to 2062 in 1851; and contains 7048 acres of land, including an allotment of 1522 acres in the East Fen The parish has more than doubled its population since 1801, and this increase, like those in the neighbouring parishes, may be attributed chiefly to the enclosure of the fens. On the west side of the parish are Sibsey and Old Leake Stations, on the East Lincolnshire Railway. S. R. Fydell, Esq., is lord of the manor, but the soil belongs to many freeholders, among whom are the Johnson, Wing, Welch, Kirton,² Brookes, Chaplin, Percy, Fountain, and Blenkarn families.²

Between these two types of village were those in categories II and III represented by Digby in category II:

a retired village, in the vale of a small rivulet; and its parish contains 340 souls, and 2351 A. of land. It was formerly a seat of the Digby family, one of whom was created Earl Digby, of Digby, county of Lincoln, and Viscount Coleshill, county of Warwick, in 1793. The manor was sold by the Thornton family, to Sir Dudley Rider, and now belongs to the Earl of Harrowby, who owns all the soil, and the great tithes.³

Alternatively, Cranwell, also in category II, was said to be

a secluded village and parish, containing 240 souls, 2506 acres of land, and a fine spring, issuing out of the cleft of a rock, and falling into a stone cistern. Sir J. C. Thorold is impropiator, lord of the manor, and owner of all

1. White, Directory of Lincolnshire, 1856, p.444.

2. Ibid., pp.324-325.

3. Ibid., p.446.

the parish, except one farm belonging to St. John's College, Cambridge. The manor has been held by his family about three centuries, and they resided here for many generations, in a mansion which was taken down in 1816, when a farm-house was built on its site.¹

Howell was a village in category II, which had as many as three proprietors, one of whom, J. W. Dudding, was resident and according to the list of village inhabitants, lived at the Hall:

Howell, a small secluded village, 5 miles E. of Sleaford, has in its parish 85 souls, and 1659 acres of land. J. V. Machin, Esq., is lord of the manor, and owns about a third of the soil, and the rest belongs to J. W. Dudding and Wm. Werge, Esq., the latter and J. V. Machin, Esq., are patrons of the Church, (St. Oswald) ...²

The village of North Witham can be taken as an example of a village in category III, it was described in 1856 as

a pleasant village, on a lofty acclivity, above the river Witham, 2 miles S. of Colsterworth, and 9 miles S. of Grantham [which] has in its parish 309 souls and about 2370 acres of land, including the hamlet of Lobthorpe, which has 42 souls, and 1300 acres, extending two miles E. of the village. A moat and fish ponds still mark the site of Lobthorpe Hall, which was the seat of Sir Brownlow Sherard ... This hall was taken down many years ago ... The Trustees of the late G. A. F. Heathcote, Esq., are owners and lord of the manor of Lobthorpe, in which are 400 acres of woodland. The Earl of Dysart is lord of Witham manor, but³ part of the soil belongs to Brown's Hospital, Stamford.

If the towns and villages of Kesteven and Holland are broken down according to this fourfold classification the following distribution emerges:

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1. White, Directory of Lincolnshire, 1856, pp.445-6.
 2. Ibid., p.547.
 3. Ibid., p.471.

Table VI - Types of Settlement in South Lincolnshire in the Mid-Nineteenth Century.

<u>Category</u>	<u>Holland</u>	<u>Kesteven</u>	<u>Percentage of Total</u>
I		12	5
II		79	33
III		13	5
IV	39	94	56
Total	39	198	99

The distribution of these types of village in south Lincolnshire was related to the pattern of landownership and agricultural practice which have already been discussed. (See Map 2). The Holland division with its predominance of freeholders had none except open villages in category IV. This type of village also predominated along the eastern dip slope of the heath where the settlements of this area of Kesteven stretched across a number of different types of land from the fens on the east to the heath on the west. Similarly on the escarpment overlooking the western valley of Kesteven open villages constituted the majority of settlements except to the immediate north and south of Grantham where the estate villages of Syston, Belton and Little Ponton, together with villages in category II, such as Great Ponton, Stoke Rochford and Harlaxton, made the area one in which the estates of the landed gentry were of greater importance than other parts of south Lincolnshire. This was also true of the boulder clay covered heath of south Kesteven, and the limestone heath where settlements in categories I and II were the norm. In the western valley of Kesteven, there was a mixture of open and closed settlements, with a cluster of villages in category

IV in the Foston, Long Bennington, Hougham, Westborough, Dry Doddington and Claypole area, while North and South Hykeham, together with Thorpe on the Hill, Swinderby and North Scarle with Bassingham and Carlton le Moorland, a few miles to the north, were also in category IV.

* * *

The differences between open and closed villages were not only marked by the ownership of land within them and their physical appearance, but also by their social structure and economic life.¹ The village of Bloxholm, which was in category I, had its squire, rector and four farmers, out of a population of 105, listed in the 1856 Directory.² As the degree of landlord control diminished, so the social structure tended to broaden out and become more varied. Digby, in category II, owned by an absentee landlord, had a butcher, blacksmiths, a shopkeeper, wheelwrights, shoemakers, tailors, a carpenter, a public house and a beer-house, as well as farmers and a resident land agent.³ Similarly, at Cranwell, owned by an absentee landed gentleman and St. John's College, Cambridge, the vicar represented the top of the social scale, and as well as the farmers there were shopkeepers, a shoemaker, a wheelwright and a higgler.⁴ North Witham, which was a village in category

1. Mills, 'English Villages ...' loc.cit., pp.273-5.

2. White, Directory of Lincolnshire, 1856, pp.444-445.

3. Ibid., pp.446-447.

4. Ibid., pp.445-446.

III divided among three non-resident landowners, had tradesmen, craftsmen and farmers in 1856, while the parish of Leake in Holland, had 2,062 inhabitants in 1851, including five blacksmiths, three boot and shoe makers, 71 farmers and graziers, five shopkeepers, four wheelwrights and joiners as well as five inns and taverns and four beerhouses. The vicar resided in the parish and there was also a saddler; a tailor; a brewer, malster, and brick and tile maker; two millers and bakers; a bricklayer; a corn miller; a veterinary surgeon and a plumber, painter and glazier. There were said to be two gentlemen living in the parish but the fragmented nature of landownership with 'many freeholders' living in Leake meant that the village clearly belonged to category IV.¹

Charles Chaplin, the squire of the neighbouring village of Blankney, owned the largest amount of land in the parish of Scopwick, but there were enough other landowners and farmers to make it an open village in category IV.² It was described by its vicar in 1838, as divided into four principal farms and a few cottages as well as several freeholds which conferred parliamentary votes. Chaplin had 2,760 acres, the bishop of Lincoln 500, and the vicar 17 acres. In addition there were eight landowners with between just over 71 acres and just over an acre.³ White's 1856 directory lists seven farmers in the village out of a total population of 413

1. White, Directory of Lincolnshire, 1856, pp.471, 824-827.

2. Ibid., p.357.

3. [George Oliver], Scopwickiana; or Sketches and Illustrations of a Secluded Village in Lincolnshire, Lincoln, 1838, p.14.

as well as two boot and shoe makers, two corn millers, two grocers and two tailors. There was also a blacksmith and a gardener as well as a beerhouse and a public house.¹ In 1856 the parish of Ruskington, which was also in category IV, was said to belong to 'many freeholders, some of whom are resident occupiers; but the Earl of Winchilsea is the largest owner ...' It had 27 farmers of whom four were owners, and there were four blacksmiths, five boot and shoe makers, three grocers, four joiners, two wheelwrights and five tailors. In addition there were butchers, bakers, corn millers, veterinary surgeons, victuallers, beerhouse keepers, a surgeon and a resident vicar.²

As well as having a broader social structure, open villages were larger and reflected in their population levels the growth of the population of the area as a whole while the closed villages exhibited the characteristics of a controlled situation, in which population levels were less predictable in terms of general growth. The village of Ashby de la Launde, which was in category I, had a population of 127 in 1801. This fluctuated in the course of the period 1801-1871 with its highest level of 178 being reached in 1831 and the lowest of 124 in 1811. Similarly, the neighbouring parish of Bloxholm, also in category I, had a population of 81 in 1801. Its highest level was 116 in 1811 and its lowest 67 in 1841. These somewhat irregular population figures fluctuating around

1. White, Directory of Lincolnshire, 1856, p.357.

2. Ibid., pp.453-454.

a comparatively low initial level, contrast with those for the open parish of Ruskington in the same wapentake. Here the population was 483 in 1801 and rose each decade until 1871 when it was 1,156. Similarly, Scopwick, although a smaller village than Ruskington with a population of 183 in 1801, grew to a high point of 413 in 1851, fell to 383 in 1861 and then rose again to 404 in 1871. In the Holland division the village of Leake had a population of 911 in 1801 and reached its height in 1851 with 2,062, falling to 1,912 in 1861 and then rising again to 1,952 in 1871.

Of the villages in category II, Digby had a population of 242 in 1801, which dropped to 227 in 1811. It rose to 277 in 1821, and continued until it reached a peak of 364 in 1841. It then declined until it was 307 in 1871. Cranwell grew from 88 in 1801, to 240 in 1851. It then declined to 219 in 1871. Howell, (also in category II), like Digby had a higher population in 1801 than in 1811, when it dropped from 75 to 62. Also like Digby, it rose steadily after 1811, but reached one peak a decade later in 1851 with a population of 85, declined to 72 in 1861, and then rose again in 1871 to 86. North Witham (category III) had a population of 186 in 1801. This rose steadily to reach a peak of 309 in 1851 and then declined to 236 in 1871. Kirkby Green (also category III) had a population of 62 in 1801. This increased decade by decade to reach its height in 1861 with 175 inhabitants. By 1871, it had declined to 141.¹

1. Individual population figures for villages from P.P.1852-53 LXXXVI (1632) Population 1801-51, Division VII, pp.28-41, 64-66; 1872 LXVI part II (C.676 - I) Census of England and Wales, 1871, Population Tables, vol.II, pp.349-351.

As the population of the area as a whole grew, so did those villages whose growth was uncontrolled. This meant that in Kesteven, which, unlike Holland had a range of contrasting village types, the open villages were the places in which the growing population of the area was housed until it began to decline in the second half of the century. Villages which lay between the extremes of categories I and IV, tended to fluctuate around the norm for the area as a whole. As a centre of trades and craftsmen, the open village was also affected by their changing importance as well as changes in the relative position of agriculture in the economy of the area.¹ The different ways of life which emerged in south Lincolnshire out of the interaction between the agrarian changes of the nineteenth century and the development of the varied types of village to be found in the area, were the milieux in which its religious life evolved and developed.

1. See pp.8-10, 13-14.

II

THE DEVELOPMENT OF NEW WAYS OF LIFE

There were no fundamental changes in the distribution of open and closed villages in south Lincolnshire in the nineteenth century.¹ The influence of a landed estate in a particular place might be increased by purchase, while the character of other villages could be modified by the sale of land or the removal of a resident landlord. However, these changes took place within a fairly stable structure of landownership up to the 1870s.² Where changes did occur the maintenance or improvement of the geographical unity of the estate was an important influence on the families concerned. Those families who were active in the land market purchased a wide range of type and size of property in pursuit of this objective. In 1830 the Ancaster estate was involved in negotiations for a charity estate of 30 acres in Edenham where its purchase would help to complete their control of the village.³ Lord Willoughby de Eresby purchased five cottages in Little Bytham and a former parish workhouse at Swinstead when they came on the market following the Poor Law Amendment Act of 1834. Similarly, Sir Gilbert Heathcote bought 17 cottages in Rippingale, 5 in Kirkby Underwood and 10 in Walcot from the poor law authorities in 1837 and 1838 as well as other small

1. See Map in sleeve.

2. See above, pp.36-37.

3. Lincolnshire Archives Office (subsequently L.A.O.),
2 ANC 7/4/36.

properties in south Lincolnshire.¹

The Fane family had begun to build up their estate in the village of Fulbeck in the seventeenth century and continued to acquire land until 1857. After a period when they purchased little they resumed in 1888. Their transactions ranged from the exchange of a *parcel* of land containing a hedge, fence and trees with their neighbour Henry Reeve of Leadenham in 1810 and the acquisition of small freeholds such as the 4 acre 3 rood 2 perch plot which was bought from the heirs of a stone-mason in 1837, to larger purchases of 100 acres.² Colonel Fane was particularly active in the period from about 1845 to 1851 when he bought land valued in total at £5,727.16s.0d.³ A younger son of the family who was rector of Fulbeck from 1807 until 1862 also acquired an estate in the village with purchases he made between 1818 and 1859 and by inheritance from his mother. This was later consolidated with the main estate by purchase from his heirs in the last two decades of the nineteenth century.⁴

The Reeves of Leadenham pursued a similar policy of land purchase to their neighbours the Fanes. William Reeve had inherited 1,147 acres in the village in 1789 and his son

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1. Lincolnshire Archives Committee. Archivists' Report, no.11, 15th March 1959 - 23rd March 1960, pp. 6-7 and 5; L.A.O. ANC 1/4/7,9 and 5.
 2. L.A.O., FANE 1/1/2a.
 3. Ibid., 3 FANE 1/3.
 4. Lincolnshire Archivists Report, no.12, 24th March 1960 - 20th March 1961, p.23.

William Reeve the younger began to consolidate the estate when he succeeded in 1791. His purchases were mainly small, but in 1795 he bought the manor consisting of 1,172 acres 3 roods 17 perches. The family continued to invest in land in Leadenham throughout the nineteenth century and there are titles to 34 purchases between 1820 and 1894 in the Reeve muniments. There were initially small acquisitions although one transaction in 1853 involved a purchase price of £17,920.¹ The pace and timing of these purchases seems to have been dictated by the financial position of individual families but there are indications that land purchase was given priority over other forms of investment. In 1830 G.R.P. Jarvis of Doddington Hall arranged to sell as much of his four per cent stock as would give him the £14,000 he needed to buy the rest of Doddington from Lord Mexborough.² The purchases of land made by the Reeves in the nineteenth century do not seem to be a result of increasing wealth but a change in the family's investment policy. William Reeve the younger directed in 1820 that his trustees should sell stocks and shares and invest the proceeds in land purchase. A marriage settlement of 1857 continued this policy and in 1872 part of a stock in the three per cent reduced annuities was sold to cover some of the cost of land being bought at the time.³

1. Lincolnshire Archivists' Report, no.14, 21st March 1962 - 18th March 1963, p.23.

2. L.A.O., JARVIS V/C/2.

3. Lincolnshire Archivists' Report, no.14, 21st March 1962 - 18th March, 1963, p.24.

Not all landed families were in a position to add to their estates. The financial problems of some led to the dispersal of their property. When this did happen it was often a protracted process beginning with the raising of money through mortgages, followed by the piecemeal disposal of outlying property. This meant that there was not usually a sudden change in the position of villages on these estates. The King family of Ashby de la Launde had considerable debts in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries which caused them to mortgage property in Ashby and elsewhere. In 1813 they sold land in the parish of Martin for £35,722, most of which was applied to discharge debts. Ashby Hall, the family seat, was let as a girls' school between 1814 and 1835 when Colonel King lived in Lincoln in what seems to be an attempt at economising.¹ The Thorold family of Harmston carried a substantial burden of debt from the late eighteenth century, which was compounded by further mortgages and marriage settlements in the nineteenth. Benjamin Hart Thorold was declared bankrupt in 1842. Like his parents, who had succeeded to the estate in 1820, he had done little to reduce the burden of debt on the property. No purchasers came forward when his life estate and its encumbrances were put up for auction. The Hall was leased out from 1843. Further mortgages and claims on the estate built up and an attempt to sell it by public auction was made in 1865, but there appear to have been no sales. The various mortgages and

1. Lincolnshire Archivists' Report, no.13, 21st March 1961 - 20th March 1962, p.21.

claims on the property were gradually amalgamated and the estate was wound up over a long period, the process being completed in 1912.¹

In the closed estate village the squire stood at the apex of its hierarchical social structure with the parson and tenants of the largest farms beneath him, going down to their labourers at its base.² On the larger Ancaster estates the landlord operated through a land agent who had sub-agents working under him in charge of groups of property. The system was highly centralised and the sub-agents had little autonomy. Even such matters as the granting of a few thousand drainage tiles or bricks, as well as every detail of tenancy had to be referred to Lewis Kennedy the general agent. He was constantly on the move between London and the estates in Lincolnshire, Perthshire and North Wales, so that there was a stream of letters between him and the sub-agents. Over 12,000 letters which were sent to Kennedy between 1817 and 1868 survive.³ The smaller estate did not require such an elaborate system of management. General Sir Henry Fane who was squire of Fulbeck from 1802 to 1840 appears to have been in direct charge of his property.⁴

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1. Lincolnshire Archivists' Report, no.8, 22nd March 1956-23rd March 1957, pp.51-53.
 2. Olney, Rural Society and County Government, p.77.
 3. Lincolnshire Archivists' Report, no.7, 1st April 1955 - 21st March 1956, p.18; no.7, 1st April 1965 - 31st March 1966, p.6; L.A.O., 2 ANC 7, 3 ANC 7/23.
 4. L.A.O., FANE 1/4/A/2; Lincolnshire Archivists' Report, no.12, 24th March 1960 - 20th March 1961, p.23.

The Doddington estates of the Jarvis family seem to have been under the detailed supervision of G. K. Jarvis, the son of G.R.P. Jarvis in the 1840s, probably until he succeeded to the estate on his father's death in 1851.¹ In the 1870s G. E. Jarvis employed William Cooling of Lincoln to manage his affairs at Doddington.²

The social order of an estate village was expressed in an account of the celebrations held in Irnham to mark the arrival in the village of its new squire in 1833. The three days of festivities were structured according to the status of the participants. The type of entertainment which was offered to each of the social groups on the estate not only divided them from each other but also defined their place in the village hierarchy by expecting them to behave in ways which were appropriate to their position in life. At the rent day dinner which co-incided with the event

the worthy landlord, ... invited his friends, visitors at the house, to proceed to the capacious dining-room, where about 20 of the principal tenants awaited his coming: a sumptuous dinner was served up, suited to all sorts of appetites, - solids for the robust, and lighter delicacies for the unfortunately weak. About 70 of the smaller holders were assembled in the great hall adjoining, for the same laudable purpose. Cloth removed, Non Nobis Domine finished, and the King's health drunk with truly patriotic feelings, the health of the noble host and hostess, and may the house of Clifford live for ever, were given and received with an enthusiasm which to be credited must have been witnessed, each toast with all the cheers, being responded to, upon the word given, by those assembled at the tables in the hall ... Wednesday the votaries of Terpsichore assembled early in the evening, in the magnificent ball-room, splendidly decorated for the occasion, where the principal tenants' wives and families had been invited to join the dance.

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1. L.A.O., JARVIS V/A/11, passim; Lincolnshire Archivists' Report, no.15, 19th March 1963-31st March 1964, pp.9-10.
 2. L.A.O., JARVIS III /A/5/6, passim.

This proved a very animated scene ... Thursday morning was ushered in by field sports of various descriptions, to enumerate which would prove no easy task. First, there were donkey races ... Then there was jumping in sacks for a prize of considerable value ... Next there were foot races both for the hardier and softer sex; of the former about eight started, - fine noble looking fellows, 'a hopeful peasantry is the pride of the country' ... There was a fine race, and the prize a bran-new smock frock. - Of the softer sex, only four could be persuaded to come to the scratch ... The prize was an article of cloathing (sic) ... and the successful heroine received amidst shouts of applause the well-merited honors (sic) of gown and ribbon from the hands of the fair patroness, whose amiable condescension in honoring (sic) with her presence, and encouraging by her smiles, such innocent mirth and real enjoyment, cannot be too highly appreciated. - But there is more yet; for example climbing a pole for a leg of mutton ... There was also another sport: boys, hands tied behind back, bobbing open mouthed at apples and pears hung just within reach of the mouth; which apples and pears, to make the bait more alluring, had been previously immersed in treacle ... Then there was scrambling for apples and plum cake up on the lawn. - It may appear to those accustomed only to pleasures of a more refined and expensive character, that such homely rustic amusements are insipid and heartless. Such is not the case: had they been present, gentle and simple must have joined in the laugh. - After the morning sports, at two o'clock precisely the tables groaned again in the great hall under hecatombs of meat and mountains of pudding, provided for the poor of Irnham and neighbouring villages to the number of 200, the Hon. Mr. Clifford and a few of his private friends assisting and carving. Every one ate and drank to his heart's content, or else it was his own fault. Nothing could exceed the kindness, urbanity, and condescension of the noble host and hostess throughout, except perhaps the happiness they diffused around them, and the gratitude visible in every countenance. The whole passed off with the utmost decorum, and without a single instance of inebriety, as far as the writer of this was enabled to observe.

Control over the behaviour of its inhabitants was a feature which distinguished the estate village from its neighbours. Arthur Young described the 'sober and industrious' lives of the inhabitants of Lord Carrington's village of Humberston, Lindsey, where no man was said to live 'in habitual immorality'².

1. L.R.S.M., 1st November 1833.

2. [Young], General View, 1813 p.464.

Labourers living on the estates of the Duke of Ancaster were also said to be 'remarkable for being orderly, decent, church-going men, who behave themselves well.'¹ It was said in 1846 that in places where 'the chief personage of the village' resided on his property 'the result was ... hard-working, sober, and no really poor men, and the necessity for appeals to the magisterial bench a circumstance of the rarest occurrence.'

The resident landlord in these places spent his time

occupying himself and his means in furthering the best interests of those around him, - with what beneficial results the striking distinction ... conclusively proves, no less than it indicates that a large amount of social evil might be remedied, if those who had the means and the controlling influence would arduously undertake the task of rendering the rural population susceptible of intellectual pleasures,² the taste for which can co-exist with manual occupation.

The closed village continued to be distinguished by its good behaviour and deference until the end of the nineteenth century and later. When George Ewart Evans talked to villagers in the course of his work on East Anglian rural life he found that the attitudes engendered among the inhabitants of the model estate village of Helmingham, Suffolk, were still evident among people who had been born towards the end of the nineteenth century.³

By carefully vetting the character of all his tenants, whether they were farmers, labourers or craftsmen, a landlord could attempt to ensure that they would behave in an acceptable

1. [Young], General View, 1813, p.468.

2. L.R.S.M., 20th February 1846.

3. George Ewart Evans, Where Beards Wag All; the relevance of oral tradition, 1970, pp.117, 122, 123.

way. If they did not he had the ultimate sanction of eviction. Considerable care was taken to select the right tenant for a farm on the Grimsthorpe estate which became vacant in 1857. Lord Aveland eventually recommended a candidate to Lord Willoughby who was said to be a steady young man and an Anglican. He had voted conservative at the last election.¹ When William Patchett, the parish clerk of Little Bytham wished to rent a cottage on the Ancaster estate he obtained the support of William Tennant of Castle Bytham who wrote in March 1830 of Patchett's 'honest, steady and industrious' character.² In January 1847 a former gardener at Grimsthorpe who wished to return to the village was supported by the Revd. W. E. Chapman in his bid to take a house in Edenham which was likely to become vacant. In this case his wife's character and attainments were also used to support his case. She was said to be an 'excellent hand at ironing, a good cook, and in short a very useful person to go out for a day's work in a house, a character much wanted in this parish.'³ When a saddler called Harrison applied for the tenancy of a house in the village G. G. Scott, the Edenham sub-agent, said in a letter in April 1854 that he believed that Harrison was 'a person who will not succeed anywhere as he is too fond of gaiety. He had about £100 left to him two years ago, and has been fixed in three different places during the last two years and people say he has spent all his money.'⁴

1. Olney, Lincolnshire Politics, pp. 36-37 quoting L.A.O, 2 ANC 7/35/53 and 55.

2. L.A.O., ²ANC 7/3/25.

3. Ibid., 2 ANC 7/14/67.

4. Ibid., 2 ANC 7/28/54.

A valuation of what was to become the Jarvis estate at Doddington made in 1811 shows that the tenancies of cottages and the small amounts of land which went with some of them were held directly from the landlord.¹ These small tenants continued to be an important element in the life of the estate. Separate arrangements were made for their rent day in 1874.² Surveys made in 1819 and 1826 show that a similar arrangement existed on the Fane estate at Fulbeck and in 1849 a number of small plots and gardens were held on direct tenancies.³ On the Grimsthorpe estate the direct tenancies of the labourers meant that the sub-agent was able to exercise control over whom the farmers employed. In 1854 G. G. Scott wrote that he did not think a labourer called Starkie 'the proper sort of man to take into the parish'. The farmer should 'try to get some man who has a good character and who would be useful as a labourer.'⁴ When a shepherd on the estate died in 1867 his former employer, John Beridge of Careby, had to request that the shepherd's son, whom Beridge wished to appoint in place of his father, be granted the tenancy of a house and garden.⁵

Unacceptable behaviour could be dealt with by terminating a tenancy. The Revd. W. E. Chapman wrote from Edenham on 2nd May 1844 to call attention to the conduct of 'Old William Higgins, or rather his housekeeper (and mistress):' As a pauper in receipt of relief Higgins would, Chapman said, be better in the

1. L.A.O., JARVIS III /A/1/1; Lincolnshire Archivists' Report no.8, 22nd March 1956 - 23rd March 1957, p.47.

2. L.A.O., JARVIS III/A/5/6/46.

3. Ibid., 3 FANE 1/1; FANE 1/4/A/2.

4. Ibid., 2 ANC 7/28/57.

5. Ibid., 55/6.

Union Workhouse. The woman and her daughters were not entitled to be tenants of Lord Willoughby de Eresby. She and Higgins had:

long kept a very disorderly house; the woman seeing company at all hours. But now, I am sorry to say, two of Higgins' daughters are at home carrying on a very vile trade to the horror of all prudent parents in the parish. One of these girls lately had a child born in the house- and the other, who only came home a few days back, has been living at Bourn,¹ for about a year, publicly kept by one of Mr. Arden's sons.

The detailed supervision of the behaviour of tenants is illustrated by a note in the Ancaster estate papers written in 1854 by Thomas Taylor, the police officer at Swinstead, a village on the estate, to Lord Willoughby de Eresby. It has notes on the characters of some labourers and details of any offences they had committed.² Daniel McCulloch, a tenant of Lord Willoughby at Careby was given notice to quit his house and garden after he had appeared before the magistrates in 1867, although he was not in fact convicted but only had to pay expenses. Lord Willoughby, it was said, would 'not hear of McCulloch being employed any longer on the estate or railway.'³ McCulloch had used rabbit traps on the estate where their use was severely restricted. He was also said to be 'too fond of drink, and was suspended two weeks, some few years back by the late Lord Willoughby, but was put back into work again upon promise of better behaviour.'⁴

1. L.A.O., 3 ANC 7/23/44/27.

2. Ibid., 2 ANC 7/28/70.

3. Ibid., 55/30.

4. Ibid., 55/37.

As well as conferring privileges on its owner the estate village also bought obligations, the fulfilment of which could at the same time both enhance the status of the donor while confirming the subservient position of the recipients. The provision of housing on the landed estate was an example of the power of its owner to regulate the lives of its inhabitants, while through the creation of model dwellings, suitably ornamented, he also added to the visual impact of his property. Cottages were being improved and rebuilt on the Ancaster estate in 1830. When Lord Willoughby accompanied Frederick Wood the sub-agent to view his property at Edenham and Scottlethorpe he went into most of the cottages and promised that several would be dealt with. Some, Lord Willoughby said, were 'worse than any highland cottage or hut he ever saw.'¹ Rebuilding and improvement gave the opportunity for re-arranging tenancies and so tightening up the control exercised by the estate.²

The rebuilding of the village of Belton on the Brownlow estate with cottages dated between 1828 and 1839 and in a style which is Tudor to Jacobean created what has been described as a 'very complete and visually very satisfying' whole.³ It was a strong statement of the authority of the family who owned it. Similarly, Blankney was rebuilt by the Chaplins with Tudor style stone houses in the 1830s and 1840s.⁴ An account of the Christmas celebrations of 1848 at Blankney sums up the social relationships which lay behind this architectural expression of

1. L.A.O., 3 ANC/7/23/23/100.

2. Ibid., 2 ANC/7/3/70.

3. Pevsner and Harris, The Buildings of Lincolnshire, p.451.

4. Ibid., p.459.

the position of the Chaplins. The celebrations were held in the village's new school, which had been built as part of the improvements. An illuminated Christmas tree was decorated with the fruit of 'the taste, industry and munificence of the owners of the mansion' and gifts from it were distributed to the children of the village by Charles Chaplin and his lady in a ceremony which emphasised his pre-eminent position in the local community and the ultimate source of its well-being.¹

The way in which the building activities of a landed estate re-enforced deference while at the same time conferring prestige on the owner is summed up by an account of the village of Londonthorpe, near Grantham, which belonged to Earl Brownlow and which was rebuilt by him in 1849.² As the writer and his companions

approached the pretty village [they were] ... at once struck with the neatness of its newly erected, and as we supposed, model cottages and gardens, with a wash-house in common on the opposite side of the road, containing a mangle and 'other appurtenances thereto belonging', - not omitting to mention a useful as well as ornamental looking pump placed under cover at the entrance and for the joint use of the fortunate tenants. There has evidently been great pains bestowed upon making matters comfortable in this village. It must be a solid gratification to the landowner to know that his humble cottagers are contented and grateful, while his more wealthy tenants admire him³ for the amount of happiness he dispenses about them ...³

Allotment and large cottage gardens might be provided by the owner of an estate. They enabled tenants to improve their standard of living by growing extra food and so made them less

1. L.R.S.M., 19th January 1849.

2. White, Directory of Lincolnshire, 1856, p.391; Pevsner and Harris, The Buildings of Lincolnshire, p.390.

3. Grantham Journal and Lincolnshire, Leicestershire and Nottinghamshire Advertiser (Subsequently G.J.), 9th July 1859.

likely to become a charge on the parish through the poor law. They were also a means of absorbing the leisure time of the tenants and their families, so providing a degree of supervision of their activities. At the same time the rules laid down for the management of allotments and gardens frequently enforced methods of cultivation which differentiated their tenants from small farmers and so re-enforced their position in the social hierarchy. Any independence the gardens might give their cultivators was constrained by these conditions.

In his account of Scopwick published in 1838, George Oliver described how the allotments on land belonging to the Blankney estate in the village were provided for spade cultivation by the village's labourers.¹ Among the conditions for letting allotment gardens to labourers at Morton and Hanthorpe in 1843 were rules that no occupier was to work in them or enter a public house on a Sunday. Every person renting a garden was to attend divine worship regularly or show reason why he was absent. Swearing and drunkenness were not allowed. Even in the town of Spalding allotments were run on paternalistic lines and, like the gardens at Morton and Hanthorpe, they were to be cultivated by hand husbandry and no wagon was to be brought on to the land. The Spalding rules also prohibited work on a Sunday, Christmas Day and Good Friday except for taking up vegetables for consumption on the day.² In an essay on the condition of the agricultural

1. [Oliver], Scopwickiana, p.27.

2. PP. 1843 XII (510) Reports of the Special Assistant Poor Law Commissioners on the Employment of Women and Children in Agriculture, pp.272-273.

labourer published in 1843 George Nicholls saw the labourer's garden as a means to occupy 'his intervals of leisure.' It kept him 'from idle associates, and from falling into dissipated or vicious habits' and prevented him from seeking 'refuge in the alehouse'. Nicholls described an idealised life in which 'His cottage and his garden will be associated in the labourer's mind with his wife and children, the whole constituting a little world within which his domestic affections are centred.'¹

The ties of deference by which the inhabitants of estate villages were bound to their landlords were strengthened by acts of charity and benevolence such as the distribution of food, clothes or fuel at times of hardship, in the winter or at Christmas. When rice was purchased and distributed at half price in the villages on the Ancaster estate in 1846 the administration of the scheme seems to have been in the hands of the agent. Forty-eight hundred weight was to be delivered every fortnight and distributed in return for tickets.² The recipients of 218 yards of flannel in January 1847 were carefully selected with 'those oldest and most needful' being given cloth first.³ In February 1855 G. G. Scott was asked to purchase twenty tons of coal, but said that he first wished to enquire who really needed it since there was a coal club in every parish on the estate and all able-bodied men were fully employed on the farms or building a new road.⁴

1. George Nicholls, 'On the Condition of the Agricultural Labourer; with Suggestions for its Improvement,' J.R.A.S.E. 7, part I, 1846, p.22.

2. L.A.O., 2 ANC/7/14/49 and 51.

3. Ibid., 14/58.

4. Ibid., 30/64.

The distance of a village from the centre of an estate of which it was part could weaken its ties to its landlord.¹ However, if an owner began to reside in a place where they had previously not done so, their influence was likely to become stronger. This was the case in the village of Honington where Miss M. E. Trafford Southwell, who had bought the parish from the Apreece family in 1851, transformed it by a programme of rebuilding.² It was reported that the village had undergone a 'complete renovation':

The old mud and stud buildings have given way to commodious erections of stone and slate - elegant farm houses and extensive farm steads, good substantial cottages with large gardens attached and every appearance of a place somebody cares for is given to it ... and now the proprietor is erecting a small mansion which will be a quiet retreat from the bustle of Hyde Park Corner ...³

Any attempt to define the extent of paternalism and deferential behaviour in south Lincolnshire in the nineteenth century must look beyond the confines of the relatively limited number of strictly closed villages with their resident squires. This can be seen in the rules which were enforced on allotments in the town of Spalding and the spread of the influence of the Blankney estate into neighbouring Scopwick. Lord Brownlow's paternalistic interest stretched beyond the confines of his Kesteven estate to include his property in the Holland division. In 1816 he was in correspondence with his agent about the distribution of Bibles and Prayer Books to the poor of Gosberton and the maintenance of the National School in the village.

1. See above pp. 54-56.

2. White, Directory of Lincolnshire, 1856, p.388.

3. G.J., 4th August 1860.

He was also involved in a programme of poor relief through the distribution of flour, wheat and coals in Pinchbeck.¹ The correspondence of the Ancaster estate shows a network of patronage throughout Lincolnshire. Clergymen sought aid for schools, clothing clubs or church restoration, while old tenants or servants who had fallen on hard times sought charity. There were also those who had no possible claim on the estate and their letters were probably duplicated by appeals to most of the noblemen of England.² An appeal to Lord Willoughby in 1847 measured the possible extent of his patronage in the village of Aslackby against the amount of land he owned there. He was asked to contribute a quarter of the salary of a schoolmaster for the parish where he owned 1,150 out of 3,800 acres.³

In an open village the source of authority was less clear than in one dominated by a landed estate. There was no single arbiter of behaviour so that although the inhabitants lacked the supportive patronage of the large landlord they were not bound by ties of deference. The people of the open villages were free to develop independent ways of life and in the course of the nineteenth century a range of new institutions took root in them, including Primitive Methodism.

The Revd. Samuel Hopkinson, writing in about 1825, described how the lack of a landlord's influence affected behaviour in the open village of Morton:

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1. L.A.O., 2 BNL/23/9 and 10; Lincolnshire Archivists' Report no.10, 1st April 1958 - 14th March 1959, p.18.
 2. Lincolnshire Archivists' Report no.17, 1st April 1965 - 31st March 1966, p.7.
 3. L.A.O., 2ANC 7/14/8.

Let the magistrates be ever so active, let the resident clergy be ever so attentive, while the property of this large parish continues divided and in so many hands, each individual proprietor will consider himself at liberty to act independently. His example is insensibly imitated by his inferiors who gradually growing up in ... lawless habits, have no notion of that decent deportment and necessary subordination visible in market towns and villages belong(ing) solely either to some virtuous nobleman, or to a resident gentleman.¹

In his report on rural housing published in 1865

Dr. H. J. Hunter contrasted conditions in open and closed villages. His description not only referred to housing conditions but also to the way in which the people of the open villages behaved. The division between open and closed villages was, he wrote:

doing more mischief by its operation on the quality, quantity, and locality of cottages.

It is a hiding away of the cottage population in certain villages and this is effected by unsparing destruction in others.

...

In the close village the scene is beautiful but unreal; without its open neighbour it could not exist. Turning to this latter, one sees miserable hovels, neglected cabbage gardens, the inhabitants seeking work many miles from home; abandoned by persons of competent means; the penal settlement for people of bad character from all the country round.²

The Hon. Edward Stanhope also described the social conditions he had encountered in the 1860s in the course of his investigations into the employment of women and children in agriculture. He described the general character of the open villages as 'neglected':

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1. L.A.O., DIOC. MISC. 1/10, Notebook of the Revd. Samuel Hopkinson, Vicar of Morton with Hacconby, 1795-1841.
 2. P.P. 1865 XXVI (3484) Public Health, Seventh Report of the Medical Officer of the Privy Council, with Appendix 1864, p.135.

Many of the men get irregular and uncertain work. Their employers take little or no interest in them or their families. The men themselves have no feeling for the place and are ready to leave it any day; they are always in an unsettled state, living from hand to mouth ... The clergyman of the parish has little chance of getting at them.

In his account of 'A Few of the Persons I have known' written in 1875 after nearly fifty years in the parish of Ruskington the village schoolmaster, Thomas Ogden, described the lives of the inhabitants². Ruskington was an open village which in 1856 belonged to 'many freeholders, some of whom are resident occupiers' among whom the Earl of Winchilsea was 'the largest owner and also lord of the manor.'³ In 1872, three years before Ogden concluded his chronicle of life in the village it had changed very little in terms of ownership. It still had 'many freeholders', while the Honourable M. E. G. Finch-Hatton had succeeded to the Earl of Winchilsea's estate.⁴

There were people in Ruskington who earned their livings in neighbouring closed villages such as Bloxholm and the Winchilsea estate at nearby Haverholme had tenanted farms in the village; nonetheless Ogden described a situation in which deference and order seems to have been largely absent. The management of village affairs rested with farmers such as

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1. P.P.1867-68 XVII (4068) Agriculture Employment of Women and Children, pp.72-73.
 2. Humberside Libraries, Grimsby Central Library; copy of Thomas Ogden's manuscript 'A Few of the Persons I have known' (R801: 920 OGD), 1835-75.
 3. White, Directory of Lincolnshire, 1856, p.453.
 4. William White, History, Gazeteer and Directory of Lincolnshire ..., Sheffield, 1872, p.625.

Richard Hubbard or William Parkes, a tenant of the Haverholme estate, who acted for a time as surveyor of the highways. The vicar's position as a possible centre of authority was weakened in this particular case by his indebtedness. When he died in 1865 his living had been sequestered to pay his creditors. The fluctuating state of landownership within a village in divided ownership meant that power was divided and frequently shifted its base. The behaviour of the people of the village was less easily regulated than in a closed community. Ogden described street fights and brawls in the yard of a public house in which women such as Hephzibah Scott 'of a masculine build and unprepossessing appearance - low in morals, coarse in language and altogether a disgrace to her sex', fought stripped to the waist with another woman 'of the same class.'¹

The lack of any strong source of authority meant that open villages could also become centres of criminal activity where there was some tolerance, among a working population who were not as well insulated from hardship as the people who lived in communities protected by a degree of paternalism, of such crimes as poaching, incendiarism, the theft of food and animal maiming.² In this respect alone the difference between the lives of the people in the open and closed villages was particularly marked. In 1831 arrangements were

1. Ogden, loc. cit.

2. For a discussion of 'social' crime in the nineteenth century countryside see below p.270.

being made to pay the Grimsthorpe estate labourers to watch with the gamekeeper for poachers. This effort to preserve the estate's game would divide these men from their counterparts in the open villages, creating fundamentally different patterns of behaviour among them as a result of the different social conditions in which they lived.¹

Thomas Ogden's account of Ruskington emphasises the way in which the open village afforded freedom for small tradesmen and farmers to move up the social scale. He saw their advancement as being the result of diligence and hard work, while failure was seen as caused frequently by intemperance or lack of thrift. Richard Hubbard, who occupied the Manor Farm which belonged to the Winchilsea estate 'was started in the world under favourable circumstances. His farm was large and cheap. There are two roads through life, in a pecuniary sense - the Road to wealth and the Road to ruin. He took the wrong turn at starting, went the down-hill way, and at last found the bottom.'²

The small freehold properties which were available in open villages are frequently mentioned by Ogden as the basis of an individual's prosperity. The loss of these might precipitate their owner's decline into the ranks of the village's day labourers. The Reast family was an example of upward mobility. They were noted sheep washers and thatchers. They first acquired a small amount of property which had been built on the waste land of the village and by gradually adding

1. L.A.O., 3 ANC 7/23/23/105.

2. Ogden, loc. cit.

to this they built up a small holding. There were also the families who held on to their land over a few generations and imparted an element of continuity to village affairs. The Moors were 'old standards in Ruskington, and were among the Leading Men of the Village. There were several children born to them and the Father, at his decease, left each of them a nice share of property, and the widow a good maintenance for life and then her part to be shared among the children,'¹

* * *

The development of agriculture in south Lincolnshire in the course of the nineteenth century put new demands upon the labour force of the area. These compounded the social strains of the open villages while the closed villages were only isolated from these problems at the expense of their neighbours. It was from the interaction of working and living conditions, with their effect on leisure activities and personal conduct, that the people of the open villages developed their distinctive ways of life.

The cultivation of the fens and the heath as well as the greater amount of arable in areas which had previously been predominantly pastoral led to an increased demand for labour. This was not met by movement of population into these areas, particularly where landlord control of settlement restricted the supply of housing.² A distinction developed between those

1. Ogden, loc. cit.

2. For the dispersal of settlement, see above p. 41.

people who were seen to be a part of the regular labour force and those who provided a floating reservoir of labour which was employed at busy times of the year, but laid off when work was slack. As well as the floating labour force there were those trades and craftsmen, together with some professional men such as surgeons, druggists and veterinary surgeons who provided their services on an occasional basis. The open villages and market towns of south Lincolnshire housed this floating labour force and became centres for trades, craftsmen and some professional men.

The provision of houses in a closed village was limited to the regular workers on its farms and on the estate, together with some for former regular workers who were old or unfit, or for their widows. For example, the estate village at Belton included a group of almshouses built in 1827.¹ When John Wood, a mason on the Ancaster estate at Grimsthorpe died in 1848, he left 'a wife and 5 young children.' They had 'very few friends' and William George petitioned Lord Willoughby on their behalf. He hoped that they would be able to keep the house in which they lived, for the mother was a 'quiet, sober, honest, hard working, ill used woman' and if she obtained the tenancy of the house 'I doubt not but she would be able to support herself and children.'²

In February 1830 the Ancaster estate agent responsible for the Grimsthorpe area was involved in calculations of the number of labourers needed for the farms in Edenham, Grimsthorpe, Scottlethorpe and Swinstead, together with the proportion Lord

1. Pevsner and Harris, The Buildings of Lincolnshire, p.452.
 2. L.A.O., 3 ANC 7/23/47/23.

Willoughby should employ and at what rate of wages.¹

Calculations were also made of the number of labourers each person holding land in Edenham ought to employ in proportion to his rental and arrangements were made to apportion men to the larger farmers.² Similar arrangements were also made for other villages.³ The house, park and gardens of a large estate also needed a substantial labour force as well as craftsmen to maintain buildings. In 1830 the labour force at Edenham was said to comprise twenty labourers and a garden labourer, a fisherman, a pump man and a groom, while at Grimsthorpe there was a mason, a slater, two carpenters and an apprentice carpenter as well as a brewer living at Scottlethorpe.⁴ In 1841 the Grimsthorpe agent was involved in an adjustment of the labour force in the garden where a new young man had been brought in from the Ancaster Scottish estate at Drummond Castle to replace two men who had become 'infirm and unable to work like younger men.' They were, on Lady Willoughby's orders, to be found work in the park.⁵ The control of the labour force living on the Ancaster estate also extended to the regulation of wage rates. In 1847 the wages of the labourers at Grimsthorpe were raised on the orders of Lord Willoughby de Eresby in proportion to the rise which had taken place in the price of wheat and in accordance with a scale prepared by Lewis Kennedy, the estate's

1. L.A.O., 2 ANC 7/3/26.

2. Ibid., 3/75.

3. Ibid., 3/79.

4. Ibid., 3/77.

5. Ibid., 7/46.

chief agent.¹

The Ancaster estate papers also contain some evidence of the regulation of the number of trades and craftsmen who would be needed to enable the settlements on it to function efficiently. The support of another landed gentleman could provide a strong recommendation for someone who wished to move into an estate village from elsewhere. In November 1854, Robert Barrande of Sleaford applied for the position of shoeing and general smith on the Ancaster estate at Edenham. This application was supported by Anthony Willson of South Ranceby Hall and the Revd. Richard Yerburch, vicar of Sleaford.² In 1875, the agent of the Jarvis estate at Doddington warned G. E. Jarvis against making any rash promises about the tenancy of a cottage, since Jarvis might wish to look further at the requirements of his house and estate. In the event of him keeping up hunting at Doddington it might be advisable for him to have a resident blacksmith in the parish.³

Restrictions on settlement also meant that where farms were built in newly cultivated areas the amount of accommodation for their workforce was limited. The regular work of the new farms was then carried on by unmarried men, hired on a yearly basis, who lived in the farmhouse as farm servants and who could be kept employed throughout the year. Some married men lived in the limited amount of cottage accommodation which was built on the farm. In this way the farms' needs for regular

1. L.A.O., 3 ANC 7/23/14/58.

2. Ibid., 29/3.

3. Ibid., JARVIS III/A/5/6/83.

foremen, shepherds, stockmen, wagoners and horsemen were supplied, while the custom of hiring farm servants for a limited period avoided creating a poor law settlement for them in the parish where they worked.¹ The less regular needs of these farms were met by labourers, who lived in the open villages and walked out each day to work when and where they were needed. Women and children also became part of this labour force until their employment was regulated by legislation in the 1860s and 1870s.²

A report in the Lincoln, Rutland and Stamford Mercury in 1847 contrasted the appearance of these farms with the villages from which they drew their casual labour force. There was

the Prince - farmer's mansion, fortified by stupendous outbuildings, and beautified by streets of corn stacks of high and exact architecture. Three or four pretty cottages and gardens are also to be seen, indicating humble comfort: I plead only for an increased number of these: for where are to be found at night the strong men whose labour during the livelong day produces all this plenty? Travel on to the neighbouring village, and you will find their habitations, three or four miles distant. Rows of tenements, cheaply run up, in the long street of villages whose soil belongs to many proprietors. Here they have found that shelter which is denied them upon the scene of their honest labour!

In those parts of the marsh and fen where, as in Gedney Marsh, large farms were worked by substantial tenant farmers, or where a farmer or grazier might build up an estate of some 2,000 acres, a large labour force was needed to bring the land under cultivation and then keep it under the plough.⁴ Lack of

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1. Thirsk, English Peasant Farming, pp.268-269; Beastall, The Agricultural Revolution in Lincolnshire, p.112; S.G. and E.O.A. Checkland (ed), The Poor Law Report of 1834, Penguin edit., Harmondsworth, 1974, p.245.
 2. W. Hasbach, A History of the English Agricultural Labourer, repr. 1966, pp.268-71.
 3. L.R.S.M., 23rd July 1847.
 4. Kenneth Healey, "Methodism or Nothing ...", loc.cit., p.120; Thirsk, English Peasant Farming, p.217.

sufficient housing in these newly settled areas meant that a situation developed similar to that in other parts of south Lincolnshire where accommodation was restricted. In this case, lodgings for the regular farm servants were often provided by the foreman while the labourers used lodging houses to avoid the long walk back to the village before and after a day's work.¹ Irish labourers were also needed to bring in the fen harvest as well as gangs of women and children to undertake seasonal work.²

The number of day labourers and farm servants in the working population depended on local conditions. George Oliver calculated that out of a population of 328 in the village of Scopwick in 1838 there were 35 labourers and 32 farm servants.³

According to the 1851 census returns nearly 20% of the adult male farm workers in the Sleaford registration district were farm servants. This was the highest proportion in the south Lincolnshire registration districts and reflected the importance of the large heathland farms in the local economy of the area. The next highest proportion was in the Holbeach district. Here, the substantial lowland farms which needed farm servants, meant that 13% of the adult male labour force was engaged in this way, while the lowest percentage in south Lincolnshire was in the Boston district. In this area of small farms nearly 5% of the labourers were employed as servants. By 1861, partly as a result of modifications to the law of settlement and also because of the provision of more houses in the fens and marsh,

1. See also above pp. 43-45.

2. Thirsk, English Peasant Farming, p.217.

3. Oliver, Scopwickiana, p.20.

the situation had changed. The percentage of farm servants had dropped in all districts except Boston, where it had risen to over 9%. Sleaford registration district still had the highest proportion with over 14% of the adult male farm labour force employed in this way, but now Boston had the next largest, while Stamford had the lowest, with just over 4% in 1861 compared with nearly 7% in 1851. There had been a sharp decrease in the Holbeach district so that by 1861, farm servants were between 4 and 5% of adult male farm workers.¹

The day labourers of the open villages show up in the census returns as surplus to the stated labour requirements of the villages. The total population of Heckington increased from 1,581 in 1851 to 1,725 in 1861 and 1,865 in 1871, while the percentage of agricultural labourers in the population grew from nearly 12% in 1851 to nearly 13% in 1861 and reached just over 14% in 1871. It has been estimated that in 1851, 52 of these were casual labourers and the number increased to 88 in 1861 and 108 in 1871. They found employment in surrounding villages such as Burton Pedwardine, Howell, Kirkby Laythorpe, Asgarby and Evedon, but in the winter months a considerable number of them were out of work for several weeks, while the increased mechanisation of the farms in the area also diminished employment opportunities.²

In 1838, George Oliver described the importance of women and children in the agricultural work of his village. At busy

1. P.P. 1852-53 LXXXVIII - Part II (1691-II) Population Tables II, p.578; P.P.1863 LIII Part II (3221) Census of England and Wales 1861 Division IV Eastern to Division XI Welsh, p.576; for settlement and housing see above pp.44-45.

2. Heckington in the Eighteen Seventies, Heckington [1980], pp.24-25.

seasons of the year the labourer, 'attended by his wife and children, will "wend his way" to the corn-field and at that early hour all his family are industriously employed. The man in shearing or mowing: the elder children in constructing bands; the wife in binding up the sheaves ...'.¹

As well as the work of the hay and corn harvests:

the women are employed at stated periods of the year - for every season brings its peculiar labours - in picking stones, dragging turnips, collecting twitch, &c The boys, from the age of six years, are employed by the farmers, first in 'tenting birds' and then advance through the grades of weeding, picking stones, dragging turnips and doing anything to which their strength and judgement are considered equal, till they are fourteen years of age and capable of following the plough ...²

The extent to which women and children were used depended on local needs. When Mr. Stephen Denison, a Special Assistant Poor Law Commissioner appointed in December 1842, spent thirty days examining the employment of women and children in agriculture in the counties of Norfolk, Suffolk and Lincolnshire he noted that their use was widespread in Lincolnshire, although practices varied from area to area.³ However, in 1847, G. G. Scott the Grimsthorpe sub-agent of the Ancaster estates commented that 'in this part of the country there is no such thing as for women to go out to hoe or to do any sort of farming work'.⁴ This was in the boulder clay covered area of south Kesteven where, as in the western lowlands of south Lincolnshire, the change from pastoral to arable farming was a more gradual process than on the limestone heath and newly drained fens and marsh.⁵ The greater use of field drainage after the 1820s increased the demand for labour in the clay lands, but with no

1. [Oliver], Scopwickiana, p.17.

2. Ibid., p.20.

3. P.P. 1843 XII (510) Women and Children in Agriculture, pp.xiii, 215, 251-257.

4. L.A.O., 2 ANC 7/14/27.

5. See above pp.25-26.

corresponding need for women and children to weed and carry out similar operations. In the clays, for example, the couch grass was not picked up by hand but either burnt or killed by letting the land lie fallow.¹

In those parts of south Lincolnshire where women and children were involved in field work there was, by 1867, a tendency to employ children instead of women because they were 'cheaper, their wages ... less, and children (even many girls) can be got to begin work at six in the morning whereas women (with few exceptions) will not go before eight.' Smaller farmers, however, still preferred to employ women since they were said to need less supervision.²

On the heath, as on the wolds of north Lincolnshire, the main employment for women and children in the months of November, December, January, February and March was pulling and preparing turnips for sheep. There was also some stone picking and manure spreading in the winter months. In April, boys and girls from seven years upwards, with a few as young as six, kept the birds off the growing crops, while in May, June and July women and children pulled up twitch or couch grass. Turnip hoeing and singling was also carried out in June, while harvest work occupied August and September. In October there was some work tending the autumn-sown crops.³

In the fens and marshes of south Lincolnshire, boys and girls over eight or nine years of age were planting beans in February,

1. Thirsk, English Peasant Farming, p.308.
2. PP. 1867-68. XVII (4068). Agriculture (Employment of Women and Children), p.76.
3. Ibid. (4068 - I) Agriculture (Employment of Women and Children), Appendix, part II, pp. 278, 287.

while in March and April women and children worked planting potatoes and mangolds, spreading manure and pulling twitch. Twitching continued in May and June together with weeding of corn, potatoes, and woad, which extended into July. There was also cabbage planting and root crop singling in June. Harvest work occupied August and September, while October and November were said to be the busiest months of the year, with potato, mangold and carrot lifting. Twitching also went on in October and November. Both boys and girls of from seven upwards were employed on work on potatoes, while from the age of seven boys 'tented' crops and went weeding with women and a few girls. Women also worked on threshing machines and from the age of ten boys were also sent to work with horses.¹

By the 1860s the work done by women and children was, where it could be organised in this way, performed by gangs. They were either 'public' gangs where the ganger sub-contracted work from the farmer or 'private' gangs, which were directly employed by a farmer and placed under the supervision of one of his men.² In his 1843 report, Mr. Denison only seems to have found two instances of the operation of the gang system in Lincolnshire, at Holbeach. These chiefly involved married women, no men were mixed with the gangs and the workers were paid directly by the farmer.³ However, when Mr. F. D. Longe prepared a report on agricultural gangs in Lincolnshire in 1865 and 1866, he found a ganger in Billingham who had been going out

1. PP.1867-68 XVII (4068) Agriculture (Employment of Women and Children). Appendix, part II, p.299.

2. PP.1867-68 XVII (4068) Agriculture (Employment of Women and Children), p.77.

3. BP. 1843 XII (510) Women and Children in Agriculture, p.280.

with women and children to weed for forty-one years. In Deeping Fen, where there had been a shortage of labour since the area was effectively drained in the 1830s, women's and children's gangs were used to a considerable extent, while a ganger at Metheringham said that he had been taking children out to work in the fields for eighteen years.¹

The smaller farms of the fen and marsh needed less outside help, although the farmers' own children could be either employed or sent out to work elsewhere to supplement the family income. The farmers themselves might also undertake some skilled piece work such as thatching, hedging and ditching, as well as extra harvest work in addition to the work on their own holdings.² The small freeholders were described in 1867 as

a class in many cases very little raised above the hired labourer, and more hardly worked and less well fed and housed. They are very numerous in many parts of the Fens. Cowbit is entirely composed of small freeholders, cultivating the land with the help of their children

Where the amount of land occupied by them is sufficient to employ fully a man's labour throughout the year, or where it is only 4 or 5 acres, and the owners will consent to hire themselves out whenever their own land does not require their labour, the small freeholders appear to be prosperous, in spite of the heavy incubus of debt, under which they often live. At Billingham, some are paying 3 and 4 per cent for borrowed money. But the ownership of land seems to beget a sort of independence, which is not consistent with hiring themselves out to others. Sometimes they will help each other, either in person or by lending their horse, if they have one. Their children are worked earlier, and have less schooling than those of hired labourers.³

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1. PP. 1867 XVI (3796) Children's Employment Commission (1862), Sixth Report of the Commissioners, with an Appendix, pp.vii, 7, 28, 33.
 2. Wheeler, A History of the Fens of South Lincolnshire, p.414.
 3. PP. 1867-68 XVII (4068) Agriculture (Employment of Women and Children), p.74.

A Mr. Bills, who occupied twenty acres at Tydd St. Mary explained how child labour fulfilled a definite function on his type of farm: 'My boy there (10) I can trust with my own horse, because it knows him; but I don't consider him fit to go with other people's horses. I have known women go with them. I took a boy of 6 years old to be my regular boy. He was with me 5½ years; then he went to someone else.'¹

* * *

The activities of the trades and craftsmen of the open villages extended beyond the local community so that the villages became service centres for the surrounding countryside. In 1838, George Oliver counted 15 tradesmen among the population of Scopwick.² At the 1851 Census, 18% of the population of the village of Corby were craftsmen and 8% were tradesmen. This made it more akin in its occupational structure to the market town of Bourne than to the neighbouring villages of Burton Coggles and Irnham, where just over 9% and nearly 7% respectively were craftsmen and nearly 1% and 2.5% were tradesmen.³ The open villages of the western lowlands of Kesteven had a similar social structure to those which served the heath and fens. In a village such as Claypole there were, in 1856, a considerable number of trades and craftsmen who met the needs of neighbouring villages such as Stubton as well as their own community.⁴

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1. PP. 1867-68 XVII (4068 - I) Agriculture (Employment of Women and Children). Appendix, part II p.302.
 2. [Oliver], Scopwickiana, p.14.
 3. Steel, A Lincolnshire Village, pp.168-169.
 4. White, Directory of Lincolnshire, 1856, pp.381-382, 393-394.

Francis Sutton, a Ruskington carpenter, found most of his work out of the village. When he died in 1860, he was said to have been 'generally employed ... on the Brauncewell farms ...'. William Richardson, who died in 1865 at the age of 69 had begun his working life as a handloom weaver, but later became a hawker, travelling out with a pony and cart from Ruskington to villages in the neighbourhood.¹ In 1871 the craftsmen of Heckington were its second largest occupational group and comprised just over 17% of the adult population, while just over 8% were shopkeepers. Their custom was drawn from the surrounding villages as well as from Heckington itself and a blacksmith's account book of the period shows a considerable trade with farmers in smaller neighbouring villages.²

Village trades and craftsmen did not, however, serve a homogeneous market and there was a distinction between those who depended on the farmers of the area for most of their custom, like Francis Sutton of Ruskington, or the Heckington blacksmith, and those who met the needs of all classes, like William Richardson, the hawker. Some craftsmen went from farm to farm doing their work, while others put down their roots in one village where work was brought to them, although this would depend to some extent on the type of work they were doing. Pedlars and travelling salesmen would have a different set of loyalties from those of the village shopkeepers. As well as the men who worked on their own, there were also trades and craftsmen who were employers of labour, with either apprentices

1. Ogden, loc. cit.

2. Heckington in the Eighteen Seventies, pp.1, 3.

or men who had finished their training and worked as journeymen.¹

There were considerable numbers of trades and craftsmen who served the large fen and marsh parishes. Some of them lived away from the ancient parish centre in the outlying settlements which were characteristic of the area.² Three of the six blacksmiths in the parish of Kirton in 1855 lived in the outlying areas of Kirton End and Sea Dyke or Sea Bank, while three of its eight boot and shoemakers lived at Kirton End or Kirton Holme. Similar patterns can be seen in parishes such as Surfleet and Swineshead.³

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A variety of ways of life developed out of the differing social and occupational structures of the villages of south Lincolnshire. An individual's place within them depended on whether they lived in an open or a closed village, what they did for a living and by whom they were employed. Their position also changed as they found work, left their parental home, married, settled in a particular place and had children. The paternalistic structure of the closed villages seems to have provided a more stable environment than the open villages. The deferential behaviour expected of their inhabitants gave little scope for the development of individual lifestyles beyond those permitted by their landlords.

1. Olney, Rural Society and County Government, pp.63-64.

2. See above, pp.16, 42-43.

3. White, Directory of Lincolnshire, 1856, pp. 810, 813-814, 817-818.

As long as the structure of the landed estates of south Lincolnshire remained intact, this was unlikely to change. There is, however, evidence to suggest that there were long term changes in the ways of life and attitudes of the people of the open villages, which took place within the relative freedom afforded by these communities.

Contemporary commentators wrote of the changes which they thought were affecting the quality of the relationship between farmers and their employers in the course of the nineteenth century. In 1829, in an address to the Society for the Encouragement of Industry, John Denson of Waterbeach, Cambridgeshire, referred to the lack of sympathy which existed between employers and their employees. In his opinion, the link that bound them was broken, 'the labourer has no longer his employer's interest at heart; he becomes an eye-servant; his conduct is regulated by the opinions of his own class, alike oppressed ...'¹ In an article written in 1846, George Nicholls commented on what he saw as the deterioration in personal relationships which was the result of the new arable farming economy, such as that which had developed in south Lincolnshire:

To discharge labourers at every trick and turn, tends to break up the kindly relation which ought ever to subsist between master and servant. Can the labourer be expected to feel attachment to the person or regard for the interest of an employer, who, the moment it becomes possible to do without him, will, he knows, throw him upon the union for support? Can that kindly confidence exist between them, which ought always to exist between persons so intimately connected and mutually dependent? Does not their position, in fact, become

1. 'Condition of the English Peasantry', Quarterly Review vol.41, 1829, p.255, reprinted in C. J. Wrigley (ed.), The Working Classes in the Victorian Age vol. IV: Rural Conditions 1815-70: debates on the issues from 19th Century Critical Journals, Farnborough, 1973.

in some sense antagonistic, and of a nature to awaken evil passions, tending to the demoralization of the labourer and the injury of the employer?¹

John Algernon Clarke, in an essay published in 1852, supported the argument that changes were taking place in the quality of the lives of Lincolnshire labourers as a result of agricultural change:

we cannot affirm that the poor are abundantly better off since the inclosure of commons, and that they have obtained a proportionate share of the new fruits, to the raising of which they so largely contributed by their toil. Instead of their individual incomes having increased, we believe that, in comparison with the price of food, their main necessary, wages are no higher than they ever were. But supposing that by cheaper clothing, and the thousand advantages which improved manners and customs have made general, the labouring classes are somewhat better off than they formerly were, are they not more dependent upon masters than they were? And the slave is not reconciled to his fate because his driver finds that a man, like a horse, works best upon good keep. When their common-rights, for the defence of which they so manfully struggled, were absorbed into the hands of large occupiers, was not their independence lost, and their private property diminished and taken away? Are they much advantaged by having to pay exorbitant rents for houses, and by being driven by proprietors unwilling to augment the poor's-rate, to crowded freehold villages many miles from the place of their labour - instead of inhabiting even mud cottages close by their own plot of ground, and the farm where they worked, and feeding not merely a pig or two at a time, but also having a cow pastured upon the common? Does the present cost of coal recompense them for the lost privilege of digging turf-fuel? Is the labourer's present life, with the fear of the Union-house as the final reward of his toil, and without the hope of leaving to his children any better lot, so vastly preferable to what the fishing, bird-catching, free but often hard living of the poorer fen-men once was?

We know that population has increased, so that a new mode of agriculture has been necessary to feed the multiplying mouths; fishing and fowling would not suffice now as it did once, but why should the change bring individual gain only to certain classes? Why should

1. George Nicholls, 'On the Condition of the Agricultural Labourer ...', loc. cit., p.9.

not the poor have progressed in personal comforts as much as those who have been enriched in too many instances by merely owning land which became improved; those who have manipulated the improvements, as much as those who devised them; the hard-working many, as much as the fortunate few? A similar state of things is found upon the Wolds and Heath of Lincolnshire, and probably in any district of England where great improvements have been made.

The changes also affected those farm workers who were farm servants. When Charles Richardson of Fulletby, Lindsey, became a farm servant with Mr. William Rigall of Tetford, Lindsey, at the age of 19, he found an employer who seems to have been prepared to extend his interest in Richardson beyond the concerns of work. This might well have been otherwise and, according to Richardson's biographer

it was one of the crowⁿing mercies of his life that God sent him to reside with the Methodist farmer of Tetford, just at this period. Had he been placed in such a godless household as that of Tennyson's 'Northern Farmer', the very type of which was to be found in more places than one, not far from Tetford, he might have been utterly undone for time and eternity. When a peasant youth enters the market place on the annual hiring day in search of an engagement for the next year, he has little else to guide him than the providence of God. And if ever that providence directed and controlled Charles Richardson, it was at₂ the 'Horncastle Statutes' in the month of April, 1811

In his account of English agriculture in 1850 and 1851, James Caird suggested that what other commentators saw as a general trend towards boarding farm servants outside the farmers' own houses was in fact being modified by economic considerations

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1. John Algernon Clarke, Fen Sketches, being a Description of the Alluvial District known as the Great Level of the Fens, with a Brief History of its Progressive Improvements in Drainage and Agriculture, 1852, pp.262-264.
 2. John E. Coulson, The Peasant Preacher: memorials of Mr. Charles Richardson, a Wesleyan evangelist, commonly known as the "Lincolnshire Thrasher" ..., 1865, pp. 12-13.

and especially by the prevailing price of provisions: 'The system of boarding farm servants in the farmer's house is again coming into practice and is likely to continue to do so if provisions are moderate in price. Some board the servants with their bailiff, but this plan is not said to work well.'¹ F. C. Massingberd, a Lindsey clergyman, commenting in 1856 on the tendency of farmers to lodge annually-hired farm servants with their foreman, said that the men developed a different set of habits and attitudes to those which were instilled when they were under the close supervision of the farmer himself:

In the times when the farmer lived in his own kitchen, his servants were a sort of inferior members of his own family, and it could not be but that their character would be elevated by his influence and example. No man would dream of restoring this state of things as regards the occupier of the land; but the elevation in his social position involves corresponding duties, which he will hardly be fully aware of unless he is alive to the change. One result in the change of his position has been that in some instances his farm servants are no longer the inmates even of his own house. They are boarded at the house of his foreman, who has no control over them whatever after their day's work is done. And the results of this practice in a few instances extend much further than might be supposed. For the habits of insubordination acquired in such services are carried next year into other places, and the young men who have learned to tell the foreman that he has nothing to do except to feed them when they have² done their work, will soon say the same to their masters.

It is difficult, with the type of contemporary evidence which is available, to measure with precision any changes that were made in the arrangements for farm servants. There were also differences from area to area. In 1867 farmers in Deeping Fen were said to board out their young wagoners with the farm

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1. James Caird, English Agriculture in 1850-51, 2nd. edit., 1968, p.197.
 2. L.R.S.M., 6th June 1856.

foreman. In many cases the houses had only two bedrooms, one for the family and the other for the men.¹ There seems to have been a gradual change in the village of Heckington in the second half of the nineteenth century towards boarding farm servants with ground-keepers, who acted as resident farm foremen or managers. By 1871, there were ten of these in the parish.²

An important influence on the relationship of farmers and their employees was the size of the farm and the number of men who worked on it. A correspondent signing himself EF. and probably Revd. Field Flowers, vicar of Tealby, Lindsey, made this point when he said that from his experience of ministering for 33 years in large open villages, he was troubled by, 'The gradual absorption of cottage farms, involving a destruction of gradations between prince farmers and labourers (this materially affects the social condition and morals of the people) ...'³ His comment reflects the changing relationship between farmers and their employees, but the reasons he gives for this are not supported by the statistical evidence for south Lincolnshire which shows that after 1815 there was no marked change in the overall balance of farm sizes apart from a slight increase in the importance of the larger farm.⁴

There is information for the census returns of 1851, 1861, and 1871 on the size of the workforce on Lincolnshire farms.

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1. PP. 1867-68 XVII (4068 - I) Agriculture (Employment of Women and Children), Appendix, part II, p.308.
 2. Heckington in the Eighteen Seventies, p.23.
 3. L.R.S.M., 4th April 1862.
 4. Grigg, The Agricultural Revolution, p.169; see also above p.36.

This covers the whole of Lincolnshire and is limited by the fact that in 1851, 5,922 out of a total of 11,017 farmers gave the necessary information. By 1861, the proportion had risen and there is information on 6,791 out of 8,852 farms. It dropped in 1871, when there are returns for 4,949 out of 10,093 farms. (See Table VII).

Table VII - Size of Workforce on Lincolnshire Farms 1851-1871. (The number of farmers is given by date under the number of men employed.)

No. Men	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10-14	
<u>Date</u>											
1851	1635	1150	810	574	284	311	147	185	91	394	
1861	2241	1298	746	473	296	290	203	195	143	468	
1871	1251	969	614	444	326	255	181	189	115	370	
<hr/>											
No. Men	15-19	20-24	25-29	30-34	35-39	40-44	45-49	50-54	55-59	60 & up	Total No. Farms
<u>Date</u>											
1851	138	95	27	33	14	12	9	7	4	2	5,922
1861	186	118	56	33	15	12	2	3	3	10	6,791
1871	112	67	27	10	4	9	3	-	1	2	4,949

Note: Information was not supplied by 5,095 farmers in 1851, 2,061 in 1861 and 5,144 in 1871.

Sources: PP. 1852-53 LXXXVIII part II (1691-II) Population Tables, II, p.597; 1862 L (3056) Census of England and Wales 1861, p.141; 1873 LXXI part II (C.872 - I) Population (England and Wales) General Report, vol.IV, Appendix A, p.127.

Despite their limitations, these figures show that any generalisations about changing relationships between farmers and their workforce need to be seen against a wide range of possible experiences, from the small farm unit which employed only one man to those which had a labour force of over sixty.

They also show that the small work unit remained a significant element in the agricultural life of the area. The distribution of various types of workforce was to some extent determined by geography, but the labourers who worked on different sized farms never became rigidly separated from each other.¹ The village of Ruskington had both small farmers and their workmen as well as men who went out as day labourers on the large farms of the heath.² In Heckington in the 1870s there were 34 individual holdings under 50 acres, 5 between 50 and 100 acres, 7 between 100 and 200 acres, 4 between 200 and 500 acres and 1 over 500 acres.³

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The changing relationship between farmers and labourers can also be traced through the levels and type of payments made for work. There are, however, considerable problems in the discussion of the level of agricultural wages even for a single region. The picture is complicated by the adoption of piece and task work at certain times of the year, higher wages paid at harvest and other busy seasons, as well as allowances in kind, which might be taken as part payment of wages.⁴ In general terms, the ties between master and man became less

1. See above pp. 43-44.

2. Thomas Ogden, loc. cit.

3. Heckington in the Eighteen Seventies, pp.17-18.

4. BP 1893-94 XXXVII part II (C.6894 -XXV) Royal Commission on Labour. The Agricultural Labourer, vol.V, part I, General Report by Mr. William C. Little, pp.70-78; 1893-4 XXXV (C.6894 -VI) Royal Commission on Labour. The Agricultural Labourer, vol.I, part VI pp.20-22.

rooted in custom and practice and increasingly based on cash payment in the course of the nineteenth century. Richard Healy, of Laughton near Folkingham, in a letter published in the Farmer's Journal in 1827, pointed out how market forces were changing the relationship between farmers and their employees. Referring to a leading article in the Journal, he said that it

catches the ear to talk of paying a fair price for labour, but in practice it is impossible; a farmer has no more right to be called upon for labour he does not require, than a manufacturer. What would a hosier or a spinner say, if he were told to pay his workmen wages that would enable them to live in comfort, whether his profits could afford those wages or not? Every respectable farmer is anxious to pay his labourers fair, aye, ample wages - it is in his interest to do so ... To talk of farmers paying wages to labourers, to maintain them in comfort, is downright nonsense -¹ they have not the means to maintain themselves ...

A list of payments for various types of work in 1832 among the papers of the Fanes of Fulbeck show a mixture of cash and payments in kind. Day rates for labourers at hay time, for example, were 2s. with a quart of ale and a quart of small beer, or 2s. 6d. Regular harvest labourers could receive two bushels of malt in lieu of ale and beer, while those who were not engaged for the whole harvest were to be allowed a gallon of ale and a gallon of small beer per acre for reaping wheat and tying.²

There developed what was seen as a more rational work discipline in which relationships between employers and employed were unencumbered by inefficient custom and practice. In 1871, the Grantham Journal drew the attention of its readers to the

1. Drakard's Stamford News and General Advertiser ... (subsequently D.S.N.), 24th August 1827.

2. L.A.O., 3 FANE 1/1.

moral advantages as well as increased efficiency which resulted from the use of machinery in the harvest field, so that the mechanical reaper was seen as a moral force which enabled 'the time honoured custom' of supplying food and drink to be commuted to cash payments. In an article which it quoted from the Chamber of Agriculture Journal, it was said that before machinery was introduced there was

feeding and swilling from early dawn until nightfall, converting the farm kitchen into a place very much akin to the taproom of a public house. Prior to the advent of the reaper, whenever anything like extra rapidity had to be enforced, the common method was to supply the labourers with almost unlimited quantities of food and drink ... Cask after cask had to be tapped in the cellar and the throats of the rustics formed channels down which flowed, one day after another, innumerable gallons of ale and cider. Only by such extraordinary stimulants could the harvest be rapidly and effectively gathered in. Drunkenness, as a matter of course, extensively prevailed and accidents in the harvest field were of frequent and almost daily occurrence, attributable in some instances to the quarrels of the inebriated and the battles of hot headed reapers ... but oftener consisting of ugly falls, beneath wagon wheels and off ladders and corn stacks.¹

In the case of the farm servants and those married workers such as foremen and shepherds who lived in cottages on the farm as part of the regular workforce, there is some evidence that the amount and type of payment in kind which they received was reduced. In 1832, head carters on the Fulbeck estate, who were hired by the year, received 14s. a week, a quart^{of} of malt and the carriage of two tons of coal. A second carter had 12s. a week, four bushels of malt and carriage of two tons of coal. The wage rates given in this document are

1. G.J., 9th September 1871.

not, however, sufficiently detailed to show whether or not these men also had cottages as part of their payment. An annual wage of over £36 is considerably higher than the rates quoted in other sources. It seems to have been customary in the early part of the nineteenthth century to allow the married workers on a yearly hiring to keep a cow and pigs at the expense of the farmer, but this had declined by the 1850s when John Algernon Clarke noted that 'Paying in kind is not a common practice ...'¹ However, even at the end of the nineteenth century, payment in kind had not entirely disappeared. In the Holbeach area in the 1890s, a farm foreman could earn 14s. a week. He would always have a house provided for him, £6 in lieu of pork, 36s. in lieu of beer, potatoes as he needed them, two tons of coal and 1d. an acre for drilling, bringing an additional £52 to £53 value income per year.² Potato ground was frequently provided for labourers at this period, especially for those who were on a yearly hiring if they had only small gardens at their houses. It was sometimes rent free, but in other cases let at 10s. a rood. The farmer sometimes manured the land which was rent free and always that for which rent was paid.³

The decline in the practice of payment in kind was not accompanied by any significant rise in money wages, and indeed, during the period 1800 to 1850, the annual wages of a first

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1. L.A.O., 3 FANE 1/1; Olney, Rural Society and County Government, pp.78-79; Clarke, 'Farming of Lincolnshire', loc. cit., p.404.
 2. PP. 1893-94 XXXV (C.6894 - VI) Royal Commission on Labour, The Agricultural Labourer, vol.I, part VI, p.22.
 3. Ibid., p.32.

wagoner declined from about £16 to £12. There is little evidence for any significant rise in the second half of the century.¹ Those workers who were lower in the farm hierarchy were paid less than this. John Algernon Clarke said in the 1850s that

In most parts of the county it is customary to pay a shepherd and a waggoner (sic), or 'head man' at a higher rate; a 'middle man,' and very frequently two, three or four ... young men-servants are boarded in the farmer's house, or in a cottage on the premises - their yearly wages being from 4l. to 7l, and their fare bread, bacon, milk and beer.²

It is important to distinguish, with the day labourers, between the general level of wages which prevailed and their actual earnings. There were variations from farm to farm, from season to season as well as from occupation to occupation on the farms. They could be laid off on rainy days and were paid lower rates in the winter months, a practice which continued until the beginning of the twentieth century.³ There were also regional variations in wage rates related to the supply of labour. It was said that 'The rate of wages for agricultural labourers in the Fenland has always ranged higher than in other parts of England ...'⁴ On the other hand there was reported to be 'a "superabundance" of labourers' on the clays of south-west Lincolnshire in the 1850s who were 'more than the occupiers of the cold lands think they dare employ' and consequently many were out of work for a long time together.⁵

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1. Olney, Rural Society and County Government, p.79.
 2. Clarke, 'Farming of Lincolnshire', loc. cit., p.404.
 3. Olney, Rural Society and County Government, pp.78-79.
 4. Wheeler, A History of the Fens of South Lincolnshire, p.414.
 5. Clarke, 'Farming of Lincolnshire', loc.cit., p.405.

In comparative terms, Lincolnshire was a high wage county. Arthur Young commented that 'labour is probably higher than in any other county in the Kingdom.'¹ This general analysis was borne out by other commentators. In 1843, Philip Pusey said that he knew

no county in which the labourer is better provided for. His wages vary from 10s. to 12s. and 15s. a week: he obtains a great deal of taskwork, for more labour is thus paid here than elsewhere - filling dung-carts for instance, at 2d. per load, and the harvest-waggon (sic) at 1s. per acre, which diffuses activity throughout the whole operation.²

John Algernon Clarke reported that 'the common rate of wages' in 1849, in central Lincolnshire was from 10s. to 12s. a week, with those labourers employed on piece work earning 2s. 6d. a day. Wages on the heath were 10s. a week by 1850.

The general wages in the Fen and Marsh are 12s. in summer and 10s. in winter, the hours being generally between half-past six and half-past five o'clock, but many farmers have at present dropped to 9s. The reaping and mowing in harvest varies from 8s. to 14s. per acre, all by the piece. The average of the foregoing minutes is about 11s. per week, excluding harvest, but the average of the county is probably more.³

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1. [Young], General View, 1813, p.451.
 2. Pusey, 'On the Agricultural Improvements of Lincolnshire', loc.cit., p.315.
 3. Clarke, 'Farming of Lincolnshire', loc.cit., pp.403-404.

As the relationship between farmers and their workers changed, there emerged among the labourers, indications of a growing spirit of independence. However, as a report in 1849 indicated, this was not in this particular case to the extent that they were prepared to ignore any paternalistic means which might be available to redress their grievances. During the harvest of that year, English reapers combined in many places to raise harvest wages, but in the Blankney area, both farmers and labourers sought the mediation of the local landed magnate, Charles Chaplin, who was reported as conciliating between the two parties.¹

In the second half of the nineteenth century, there were indications of a greater willingness to become organised in pursuit of improved working conditions. Labourers were able to make an impact at threshing time, when the farm workforce was concentrated in one place to carry out the work. If the farmer had hired equipment from an outside contractor, he was particularly vulnerable to delays. Moreover, the men who operated the machinery and went with it from farm to farm may have provided a catalyst for action by men who were otherwise isolated. In 1853, all the men employed by a wealthy farmer at North Thoresby, Lindsey, refused to start threshing unless wages were raised. Their demands were met.² It was reported in 1855 that men working at a threshing machine at the Black Swan inn in Spalding had gone on strike following the refusal of beer at 'lowance' hour'. Work had been resumed after the beer was supplied.³

1. L.R.S.M., 31st August 1849.

2. L.R.S.M., 22nd April 1853.

3. Spalding Free Press and Eastern Counties Advertiser (subsequently S.F.P.), 16th October 1855.

The men from a village in the Lincoln area were well enough organised to meet the farmers as a body when their wages did not follow the general movement in the district from 2s.3d. to 2s.6d. a day: 'The labourers went in a body to their masters, like cool, practical men, to talk the matter over, and the result was a determination not to lower wages under existing circumstances.'¹ By 1866, the labourers employed on a farm at Wrangle Common had reached the stage of striking for an advance in wages on the 2s.6d. a day which was being paid.²

The annual hiring fairs provided an occasion at which farm workers were able to enjoy themselves, free from any constraints exercised by their employers. They were, according to George Oliver, writing in the 1820s,

the Saturnalia of servants; and every kind of licence is indulged with impunity. The young men appear, like sailors on shore after a long voyage, to have no idea of order or propriety; and the unpopular master is sure to hear of his faults, real or imaginary, at these places, if he is to be seen amongst the crowd. Drinking, dancing, fighting and every other irregularity prevail; and practical jokes, without regard to personal consequences, are played off to an unlimited extent ... Old quarrels between farmers' servants are generally postponed till the fair, when they terminate in battle. In this respect the statute bears some resemblance to the Irish 'pattern', and the civil power is frequently in requisition to check those ebullitions of private feelings.³

Commentators continued to react with horror at the 'licence' of the fairs. In the 1860s, the Revd. F. T. Wintour, late rector of Hawerby, Lindsey, said that he had

1. L.R.S.M., 29th May 1857.

2. Ibid., 10th August 1866.

3. [Oliver], Scopwickiana, pp. 21-22.

seen the great evil of 'Statutes' and have often cried out against them. There are several during April in the neighbourhood of Louth. The farm lads and servant girls from 12 upwards will go from one to the other; and, if hired at the first, will often stipulate to go to the others. They have just received their year's wages and have therefore plenty of money. It is degrading to the servant to be chosen as you would choose an ox, and the immorality that ensues is frightful. Public houses open early, and by 10 a.m., there will be dancing in all of them, and the lads half way to drunkenness. Then the next morning you will find them repeating it somewhere else. I have never heard any tenable argument for them and I think them entirely vicious and unnecessary.¹

The attitude of farm workers to the hiring fairs was, however, changing. In the late 1860s, Mr. Charles North, a farmer of 1,400 acres at South Thoresby, Lindsey, said that labourers were no longer prepared to stand 'like beasts to be sold'. This change reflected the independence which they had developed in their relationship with their employers: 'They begin to inquire about their masters' character. They are beginning to combine a little for some purpose. I notice it,' said Mr. North, 'at the threshing machines, and they combine for extra holidays.'²

These changes in farm workers' attitudes reflected the narrower type of relationship which had developed between them and their employers as a result of agrarian change. The extent to which a farmer was able to influence the behaviour of his workmen outside their working hours was affected by whether he actually lived in the centre of a village or outside, and whether

1. RP. 1867 - 8 XVII (4068 - I) Agriculture (Employment of Women and Children). Appendix, part II, p.282.

2. Ibid., p.281.

the village was open or closed. Nonetheless, the relationship was reduced to a level which was purely contractual and based only on the workplace, so that the leisure and recreation activities of his workmen ceased to be an area over which the employer had any influence, particularly in the open villages. Harwood Mackinder, who had a large holding at Halton Holegate, Lindsey, said in the 1860s that he could play no significant role in the lives of the labourers who lived away from his farm. He commented, 'Where my labourers live now, neither my wife nor I can take any real interest in them or in their families; put them on my farm and we shall feel it our duty to look after them and do what we can for them.'¹

The freedom and independence of farm workers was reflected in reports of the behaviour of farm servants during their leisure time. On Sundays, in the village of Swaton, 'very many respectable females are compelled to absent themselves from church sooner than have to pass through the ranks of a score or more of the men servants who invariably congregate on the paths and make use of language to passers-by, which is offensive to any respectable person ...'²

The village authorities at Hough on the Hill were unable to control the youths who appeared in the village on Sunday evenings. It was said that 'the vicar has frequently remonstrated with the evil-doers, but in vain, as would surely be the case

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1. PP. 1867 - 8 XVII (4068 - I) Agriculture (Employment of Women and Children). Appendix part II, p.279.
 2. Sleaford Gazette and South Lincolnshire Advertiser (subsequently S.G.), 14th February 1863.

when the lads find their conduct unnoticed by masters and churchwardens.' The 'scene of riot, insult and disorder' which the church porch and yard presented would hardly be credited

The youths in the employment of farmers and some idle lads, who hang about the village, instead of being out at service, are the principal aggressors. The nuisance has attained such a pitch that respectable and quiet parishioners can hardly pass into church, owing to the insult and obstruction; and¹ respectable girls are actually afraid to go at all.

The demands of field work on women and children meant that they also evolved a way of life which seemed to reject the values of polite culture and Victorian ideals of feminine conduct.² Such attitudes were more likely to prevail in the open villages, which were the centres of this type of employment and become more pronounced as this work increased in its importance in the local economy. It was said as early as 1843 that 'owing to the comparative freedom which they enjoy (their evenings and Sundays being at their own disposal) the girls of 16 and upwards much prefer fieldwork to going into service'.³

The evidence for the development of this distinctive way of life is greater from the 1860s because of the work of the government commissioners on women and child workers over this period. Children who were involved in fieldwork were said to

1. G.J., 11th January 1868.

2. Jennie Kitteringham, 'Country work girls in nineteenth-century England', in Raphael Samuel (ed.), Village Life and Labour, 1975, pp.111-112.

3. BP. 1843 XII (510) Women and Children in Agriculture, p.216.

attend school irregularly and leave at an early age.¹ Charles Webb, a schoolmaster from Holbeach, who had been in the town for 27 years, not only noted the effect of the extension of arable farming on school attendances, but also the way in which the limited opportunities afforded for education after the demands of work had been met seemed to be rejected:

Since the great cultivation of potatoes, the school has been much more affected by fieldwork than formerly. Out of the 190 boys on the books, 72 are farmers' sons. Seven-eighths of these are cottage farmers, and send their children a little better than the hired labourers. They are just a step above them. These children attend about one third of the school year (10 months). Eighty-three are sons of agricultural labourers, who attend on average less than this. We begin in January with 100, increase to 150; at the end of February, if the weather is open, the number decreases, till, in May, we average 85. After harvest holidays I begin with 30, and this number gradually increases. Now (November 21st) we have 100. I've had children come five miles to school. When the attendance is bad, it often arises from the carelessness as much as the indifference of the mother. In the Marsh there are two or three dames' schools; but there are plenty of children who get no schooling at all. They live a long way from here. I don't think the average of boys who leave school can read and write properly. Some boys even of 8 can write mechanically, but they often can't even read what they write. Girls seem to me to forget quicker than boys. I have to register births. And numbers of girls whom I know to have been able to write quite well at 14 can't do it at 18 or 19 years of age ...²

Irregular school attendance meant that children had greater freedom to develop their own way of life, which was not imposed from above by the educational system. J. B. Pratt, who taught at the British school in Spalding and who had lived in the town for thirty years said

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1. EP.1867 - 68 XVII (4068) Agriculture (Employment of Women and Children), pp.86-87.
 2. PP. 1867 - 68 XVII (4068) Agriculture (Employment of Women and Children). Appendix, part II, pp. 302-303.

they come to me at 6 years old, and at 7 will begin to go to work and to come irregularly. One reason why they come irregularly after they once go to work is that going to work gives them a sort of independence, and makes them masters of their mothers. When they come back, and I put them under discipline, they are inclined to rebel and leave altogether.¹

Children involved in field work were also left, according to contemporary clerical commentators, without formal religious instruction. The Revd. Henry Leigh Bennett, curate of Long Sutton, said that 'in the face of the immense difficulties in the management of the boys, at both Sunday and night schools' that it was difficult to believe it possible to inculcate 'any real moral or religious training, or ... habits of obedience' during the week.² According to the Rector of Waddington

The state of education among the young of both sexes is very indifferent. Many of the children employed in field labour never learn to read and write. They are usually sent to a Sunday school; but scarce anything can be taught thus, when the body is exhausted from the week's work, and the mental powers are dormant. Taking the lowest standard of a sufficient education for an agricultural labourer, i.e., reading, writing, and some knowledge of arithmetic, with an elementary knowledge of scripture and the formularies of the Church, I believe that more than one-half of the population is growing up without it.

It was not only the children of the labourers whose education was neglected because of field work. The children of small farmers were also sent out to work at an early age. The relieving officer of the parish of Billingham, where 'Small freeholders of from 2 to 40 acres' were said to own most of the soil, commented that they were 'more indifferent

1. PP 1867-68 XVII (4068 - I) Agriculture (Employment of Women and Children). Appendix, part II, p.308.

2. Ibid., pp.299-300.

3. Ibid. p.291.

to education than the hired labourers, or, if not indifferent, sometimes less able to afford it. Some of them are paying 3£ or 4£ an acre for borrowed money. Land sells at over 100£ an acre. A great many children are employed by them here in carrot weeding ...¹

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The trades and craftsmen of the villages and market towns of south Lincolnshire were also affected by agricultural change and development in the course of the nineteenth century. Like the agricultural workers, there was an important difference between those who lived in open and those who lived in closed villages, which helped to determine their attitudes and the way of life they were able to develop. There were also important differences between the self-employed, the journeymen and the apprentices. In the open villages, a master trades or craftsman could develop an even greater degree of independence than the farm worker. It was possible for him to build up some capital, which could be invested in a house or even land. His relationship with his smaller customers, who might be indebted to him, gave the master trades or craftsman some degree of influence over them. However, if his business was on a small scale, he might be vulnerable to the influence of his more powerful customers such as the clergy, gentry and farmers.²

The trades or craftsmen in an open village might invest

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1. P.P. 1867-68 XVII (4068 - I) Agriculture (Employment of Women and Children). Appendix, part II, p.314.
 2. Olney, Rural Society and County Government, p.64.

in building cottages for day labourers to rent. In the village of Ruskington, George Hutchinson, who was a journeyman bricklayer and seems to have been active some time in the first half of the nineteenth century, was said to have built 'a lot of trumpery buildings' on land he bought on mortgage. William Headland, who also lived in the village and who died in 1875 was a joiner and owner of 'a block of tenements.'¹ The ownership of this type of property could increase a man's influence in a village. It was said in 1864 that to 'make a successful builder for the poor man you must either be his employer or his purveyor' and that

beside his employer, the hind finds another master in his grocer, or his beerseller; he must be tenant and customer (when a house is vacant), or be neither ... the hind who in addition to the 4l. rent is obliged to buy, at the seller's own terms, his modicum of tea, sugar, flour, soap, candle and beer, is good for the grocer also to do business with.²

It has been suggested that although craftsmen and small tradesmen enjoyed in at least some cases, a superior economic position to that of labourers, they were socially closer to them than they were to the farmers. Work on marriage registers in south Lindsey has shown that in the case of the marriages of ninety sons of craftsmen, thirty two married the daughters of other craftsmen and fifty five the daughters of labourers.³

1. Thomas Ogden, loc. cit.

2. P.P. 1865 XXVI (3484) Seventh Report of the Medical Officer of the Privy Council, 1864, p.132.

3. Obelkevich, Religion and Rural Society, p.61.

A craftsman might be his own master or be employed by the day but whatever his precise economic position, his independence was ultimately determined by the social constraints of the place in which he lived. His position in the closed villages was similar to the 'regular servants' there, 'where none but persons who are needed as shepherds, gardeners, or gamekeepers are allowed to live.' There they received 'the good treatment usual to their class' but lost the freedom which their counterparts in the open villages possessed.¹

The position of a journeyman trades or craftsman or an apprentice was more akin to that of an agricultural labourer. An apprentice, like a farm servant, might lodge with his master. On the other hand, a married man who worked for a master would live in his own home and their contact would be to a greater extent confined to the workplace. Journeymen trades and craftsmen had developed enough independence by 1853, in the case of the Louth, Lindsey, shoemakers to attempt to form a trade union. By 1872, this spirit had become more widespread among them so that they influenced the formation of the agricultural labourers' unions of the period.² The amount of control which employers exercised over the behaviour of apprentices who lived with them would determine whether they were free to join, for example, the groups of youths who disturbed the Sabbath in the open villages.³ Their behaviour

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1. PP 1865 XXVI (3484): Seventh Report of the Medical Officer of the Privy Council 1864, p.135. See also above p. 89.
 2. Olney, Rural Society and County Government, p.63; see also below p. 388-389.
 3. See above p.115-116.

might have been more inhibited than that of the farm servants who lived on farms away from the villages, since their weekday work also brought them into contact with the local community.

The important influence a master could exert on the life of a young apprentice was emphasised in Methodist biographies. Thomas Fawcett of Sleaford completed his apprenticeship as a linen and woollen draper with a Wesleyan Methodist in Manchester where he was converted.¹ Joseph Bush, who became a Wesleyan Methodist minister and president of the conference in 1888, began his working life as an apprentice grocer and druggist in Horncastle, Lindsey. His conversion experience was completed during family prayers in his master's household.²

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The towns of south Lincolnshire also offered significant employment opportunities to trades and craftsmen. As the organisation of manufacturing work in them developed from the smaller workshops, which were more akin to those of the villages, into a factory-based system, the attitudes of the workforce also changed. First generation migrants from the countryside brought with them many of the ideas and assumptions of village dwellers. These ideas were probably to some extent sustained by maintaining contacts with friends and relatives who were still living in villages and many attitudes which had rural

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1. [Cornelius Greenwood], A Short Account of the Late Thomas Fawcett, to which is added the Rise and Progress of Methodism in Sleaford, Sleaford, 1839, p.7.
 2. [Jane Bush], Joseph Bush, A Memorial: with a brief memoir by the Revd. Arthur Hoyle, [1907] pp.20-21, for Bush's career see the chronological table pp. 9-10.

origins were still alive in Lincolnshire towns in the 1870s.

Not all the larger settlements were manufacturing centres. While at the 1811 census, Boston, Bourne, Sleaford, Spalding, Grantham and Lincoln had more families employed in trade, manufacture or handicrafts, towns like Holbeach still had more in agriculture. In Holbeach in 1811 there were 412 families chiefly employed in agriculture and 156 in trade or manufacture, out of a total population of 2,962.¹ Moreover, those towns where trade or manufacture predominated were heavily dependent on agriculture for their work. It was said in the middle of the nineteenth century that Boston owed its prosperity to the rich countryside around it. The town's Phoenix Foundry had been started in 1803 and it was claimed that the first movable threshing machine ever made was built there in 1841. Tuxford's Boston and Skirbeck Iron Works were said to be 'upon an extensive scale' and their products had both a foreign and a colonial market. However, like the Phoenix Foundry their work was based on the needs of Lincolnshire agriculture.²

By the 1830s a considerable number of towns and large villages had machinery makers. Grantham's importance as an engineering town supplying the needs of agriculture was already evident at this period. It had iron and brass founders as well as machine makers. In addition there were the services which the towns provided to agriculture, including the production and

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1. BP 1812 XI (316) Population 1811, pp.170-172, 174, 190-191; for the general growth of towns in south Lincolnshire in the nineteenth century, see above pp.11-12.
 2. Pishey Thompson, The History and Antiquities of Boston ..., Boston, 1856, p.348.

distribution of bone and rape dust and the importation and sale of lime and guano. In 1835, Spalding had oilcake merchants, bone and cake merchants as well as lime burners.¹

Not only the business, but also the personnel of many of these trades, came from the villages of Lincolnshire. Richard Hornsby, the Grantham agricultural engineer had been born at Elsham, Lindsey, where his family farmed. After an apprenticeship with a Barnetby, Lindsey, wheelwright, he moved to Grantham in 1810 and by 1815 was a partner with Richard Seaman when they began to manufacture horse threshing machines.² Most of the men who promoted new enterprises in Lincoln in the nineteenth century were immigrants including a number from the surrounding countryside. John Cooke, who was born at Eagle in 1821, served an apprenticeship as a wheelwright and began in business as a blacksmith and agricultural implement maker. After inventing a new type of plough he brought it to Lincoln in 1857 and by the time he died in 1887 he was employing 70 men. George Glasier, a partner in a chemical manure business in the city, was the son of a South Hykeham farmer.³

These links with the countryside were important not only at the level of those who became successful entrepreneurs, but also in the case of their employees. There is still insufficient knowledge of the origins of the workmen who

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1. Beastall, The Agricultural Revolution in Lincolnshire, pp. 186-188.
 2. G.J., 9th January 1864; Michael Honeybone, The Book of Grantham: the history of a market and manufacturing town, Buckingham, 1980. p.113.
 3. Sir Francis Hill, Victorian Lincoln, Cambridge, 1974, pp. 118-124.

contributed to the growth of the towns to make precise statements about their backgrounds and origins. However, work on the development of the iron manufacturing industry in the Scunthorpe, Lindsey, area shows that the men with experience in the trade had come from established centres of the iron industry. They provided a framework of skills, while many of the less skilled or unskilled operatives were from the Lincolnshire countryside, often not too far distant from Scunthorpe.¹ In the early part of the nineteenth century, the influx of people into Lincoln was faster than could be absorbed by trade and industry. Railway work produced a short term boom, but then left families who had expected to settle permanently in the town stranded without work.² In 1851, Lincoln had twice as many men as in 1831 and although only 62 people were said to be employed in iron manufacture, there were 98 blacksmiths. Like the entrepreneurs who built businesses in the city, these skilled craftsmen could have acquired their training in the villages of the area, but by 1870, when there were 2,500 men and youths employed in the factories of Lincoln, the situation had been transformed.³

In terms of the experience of the people caught up in it, such a transition paralleled that of the inhabitants of the villages of south Lincolnshire. Relations between

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1. R. W. Ambler (ed.), Workers and Community: the people of Scunthorpe in the 1870s. A Study based on the 1871 Census Returns, Scunthorpe, 1980, p.18.
 2. Hill, Victorian Lincoln, pp. 130-131.
 3. Ibid., p.124.

employers and their workmen became increasingly remote as the size of the workplaces increased. Labour organisations developed in response to this although they continued to have a strong element of deference in them and the friendly society aspect of their work was still important in the 1870s. Their successes in bringing about improvements in working conditions need to be viewed against the general background of economic prosperity in the early 1870s and the agitation for the nine hour day, which was part of a national movement, did not bring the same degree of confrontation as in other parts of the country.¹ In 1871, Lincoln's engineering employers promised to consider and eventually granted, a nine hour working day. They were publicly thanked by the workmen for this.² When the men at Hornsby's Grantham works were attempting to gain a two hour reduction in the working week, they were said to have been 'met in a generous manner' and an hour's reduction was granted.³ There were also occasional strikes for an increase in wages or to protect skilled work against unskilled workmen. In 1867 the moulders at Hornsby's Grantham works were reported as being on strike and other workers were brought in to replace them.⁴ Boys who began at 4s. a week, rising by 1s. a year up to the age of 21, struck

1. T. W. Fletcher, 'The Great Depression of English Agriculture, 1873-1896', repr. in W. E. Minchinton (ed.), Essays in Agrarian History, vol. II, Newton Abbot, 1968, p.242; James B. Jeffreys, The Story of the Engineers 1800-1945, 1945, pp.85-89; Joyce M. Bellamy and John Saville (ed.), Dictionary of Labour Biography, vol. II, 1974, pp.72-73.

2. Hill, Victorian Lincoln, p.207.

3. G.J., 21st October 1871.

4. G.J., 27th July 1867.

in 1871 for an extra 1s. a week and 2s. in their last year. Their protest included a parade of the streets singing 'hang old Robey on a sour apple tree', rolling a tar barrel and throwing stones.¹

Migration by rural workers into the towns gave them greater opportunity to develop more effective organisations than had been possible in villages. Relatively unskilled workers such as the builders' labourers of Grantham began to organise themselves and in 1866 about fifty men were involved in a strike for an extra 3d. a day. They were reported to have a fund to support them during their action.² Former agricultural labourers would be likely to find employment in less skilled jobs in the towns, such as builders' labourers, just as they did similar work in the Scunthorpe iron industry. However, the support which the Amalgamated Society of Engineers gave the Lincolnshire-based farm workers' Labourers' League, as well as Arch's Union in 1874, suggests that there was some concern that agricultural workers moving into towns might affect the working conditions of the engineers.³

The beginnings of a greater degree of organisation among the workpeople of the towns of south Lincolnshire did not mean that the anarchic anti-social behaviour which had been a characteristic of open villages came to an end. In a conflict

1. Hill, Victorian Lincoln, p.207.

2. G.J., 12th May 1866.

3. Jeffreys, The Story of the Engineers, p.90.

between youths from the village of Heighington, near Lincoln, and a similar group from the city, deep-rooted loyalties and affiliations were revealed, which showed that urban life had not completely eradicated older behaviour patterns. The village youths were reported as fighting in defence of Methodism against what was described as 'the elite of the foundry roughs', who descended on the village on Good Friday. This was the day on which the village's Free Methodists held an annual tea drinking. Village loyalties were brought to the defence of a well established social event, and the annual fight with the intruders from Lincoln became an almost ritual occasion, legitimised by its defence of Methodism, now part of the established pattern of village social life.¹

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Any attempt to describe the varied ways of life of the people of south Lincolnshire in the nineteenth century needs to take account of the local community in which they lived. In this context, the divide between open and closed villages, as also between town and country is important. These divisions cannot be rigid since the categorisation of villages into types shows that there was a spectrum between the two poles of open and closed communities, as there was in the case of some towns which had, in terms of their occupational and social structures, more rural than urban characteristics.² Moreover, some of the problems arising out of the difference between open and

1. L.R.S.M. , 18th April 1873.

2. See above p.123.

closed villages were ameliorated by various measures which, together with changes in the law from 1846 culminating in the Union Chargeability Act of 1865, mitigated some of the worse hardships caused by the law of settlement. There was, however, considerable opposition by Lincolnshire farmers to the Act and problems still existed until at least the 1880s and 1890s despite the building of new cottages and the relief afforded by rural depopulation.¹

As well as the place of residence, the outlook and attitudes of the people of south Lincolnshire were also affected by where they worked. Changes in the type of farming and its structure and location were accompanied by an increase in the social gap between master and man on the larger farm units of the area. This was accentuated by the separation of work and leisure activities resulting from the effect of settlement patterns on the distribution of labour. On the larger holdings, customary relationships, which affected the whole of the lives of farmers and their employees, were replaced by contractual ties.

However, the expansion of the arable was not inevitably

1. Thomas Mackay, A History of the English Poor Law, vol.III: from 1834 to the present time, repr.1967, pp.347; 351-355; Sidney and Beatrice Webb, English Local Government, vol 8; English Poor Law History, part II: the last hundred years, vol.I,1929, pp.419-431; B. A. Holderness, "'Open" and "Close" Parishes in England in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries,' A.H.R. 20, 1972, pp.126-127; Olney, Lincolnshire Politics, pp.173-174; PP 1893-94 XXXV (C.6894 - VI), Royal Commission on Labour. The Agricultural Labourer, vol. I, part VI, pp.11, 23.

accompanied by the development of large holdings. Smaller farmers also needed labourers while the position and status of an employing farmer was to some extent dependent on whether he was a freeholder or tenant and whether or not he lived in the centre of a village. In the fens, the small holder and owner had greater importance, although in his case enclosure and drainage had brought fundamental change in his life pattern.

The day labourer on the large farms of the heath and the fen who was linked to his employer by a contractual relationship lived and spent his free time in the open village. Yet the fact that men from villages such as Ruskington also found regular and to some extent protected employment on the neighbouring large estates, shows that paternalistic attitudes could permeate the social structure of the open villages. Similarly, the craftsmen and tradesmen who depended on the large estate for custom were also subject to paternalistic pressures, even though they lived in an open village. Despite the fact that the allotments at Morton, Scopwick and Spalding were operated in open villages, their owners attempted to enforce the type of behaviour on their tenants that they would expect to find in a closed village.¹ A social hierarchy also developed in the open villages. Cottage tenants were to some extent dependent on their landlords, while trades and craftsmen, who were their own masters, were able to play a role in the management of village affairs alongside the farmers. In many of their attitudes they would have more in common

1. See above p.78.

with these farmers than with the journeymen they employed, or even the independent village workman or shopkeeper who had no employees.

It was possible to escape, at least in a circumspect manner, from the supervision of behaviour which took place in a closed village into the relative freedom of an open village. The farm servants who gathered on Sundays to disturb respectable church-goers came from the farms of the district and their behaviour might have been a release from the constraints of a more strictly controlled environment. However, the distancing of the labourer, or indeed any inhabitant of the closed village, from the freedoms of open village life, minimised the extent to which they might seek them out. Marshall Heanley, a farmer from Croft, Lindsey, made this point when he said that it was only the labourers from the villages or small towns who frequented public houses. Labourers were generally a steady class of men who did not drink a great deal of beer and 'the more they live apart, the better they are'.¹

The place where a person lived and their workplace might change in the course of a lifetime. Different employment opportunities were available at different periods of an individual's life and these might involve moves from one parish to another. George Oliver described how after the age of fourteen, when the boys of the village of Scopwick were judged

1. BP. 1867-68 IX (420) Report from the Select Committee on Malt Tax; together with the Proceedings of the Committee, Minutes of Evidence and Appendix, p.23.

'capable of following the plough', they left irregular field work and became annually-hired farm servants. After marriage Oliver said they 'quit their desultory servitude' and endeavoured 'to return to their native village for the purpose of working as confined labourers.'¹ Although Oliver idealised and simplified the stages of an agricultural labourer's life, from its beginnings with field work as a child, through a period living as an unmarried farm servant to eventual work as a regular labourer attached to one farm, his account shows three important aspects of the farm worker in nineteenth century south Lincolnshire. Where his account is deficient is in any discussion of the irregularly employed day labourers who, to use a description of them from the Lincolnshire Wolds, which is equally applicable to the heath, did not enjoy the 'plentiful and certain work' of the inhabitants of closed villages or of the yearly-hired or confined farm workers.²

The extent of individual mobility can be seen in those villages for which detailed analyses of census returns are available. Among the adult males in the village of Heckington, the largest group, 41.6% had been born in the village, the next largest group, 14.9% had been born within five miles of Heckington, 13.1% within ten miles and 13.0% within twenty miles, but within the county of Lincolnshire. Less women had been born in Heckington itself, but more women than men had been born near the village, probably a reflection of the importance of female servants in the local economy, who moved

1. [Oliver], Scopwickiana, p.20.

2. BP. 1867-68, XVII (4068) Agriculture (Employment of Women and Children), pp. 72-73.

into a village to seek work, as well as of the fact that some Heckington men may have married women from outside the village but in its immediate neighbourhood.¹

It is, however, difficult to assess precisely, within this pattern of high but constrained mobility, the extent to which individuals moved in or out of open and closed villages, or between the various types of employment available. A farm labourer like John Rylatt, who was living at Bullywells Farm in South Rauceby, had lived, at all the points where it is possible to identify his place of residence from the 1851 census returns, in open villages. He had been born in North Rauceby and married a girl from Ruskington. His eldest son, aged eight, had been born in Anwick, his eldest daughter, aged six, at Ruskington, and his three youngest children at South Rauceby. In the case of the craftsmen who were living in Rauceby in 1851, 17 out of a total of 23 had been born outside the village, but their possible progress from apprenticeship, through journeyman status to the ownership of a workshop and even the employment of journeymen cannot be measured.²

It has been suggested that in the south Lindsey area of Lincolnshire, landlords, tenant farmers and labourers each evolved a class consciousness and culture in the course of the nineteenth century.³ This analysis, while providing some

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1. Heckington in the Eighteen Seventies, p3. In the case of Rauceby, the majority of the people who had moved into the village from outside had been born within a few miles of it. (Rogers, (ed.) Stability and Change, pp.11-12.)
 2. Rogers (ed.) Stability and Change, pp.11-12.
 3. Obelkevich, Religion and Rural Society, p.25.

insight into the changing social relationships within Holland and Kesteven in south Lincolnshire, does not do complete justice to the various ways of life which evolved in the area as a result of agricultural change and development. The complex inter-relationship between a person's place of residence, their place of work and their occupation does not make for a simple categorisation of the place of any particular social group within this framework. What all social groups shared, however, was the experience of considerable economic and social change and development. As part of this process, new horizons and the opportunity to create new ways of life, which also extended to religious experience, emerged, particularly in the open villages, alongside the more static mode of life which could be found in the closed villages. Even in these, however, there could not be total isolation from the rest of the local community on which they depended for their continuing existence.

III

THE ESTABLISHMENT OF PRIMITIVE METHODISM
IN SOUTH LINCOLNSHIRE

In his comments on what he described as the 'neglected' state of open villages Edward Stanhope drew attention to the religious dimension of the distinction between various village types. He noted that in the open villages, 'The clergyman of the parish has little chance of getting at them.'¹ It had been said some years earlier, in the case of Riseholme, Lindsey, that where the law of settlement drove labourers into open villages:

society loses in the disruption of all ties between the labourer and the soil on which he labors (sic), the abrogation of all bonds save that of interest between him and his employer, and the removal of himself and his family from the genial influence of intercourse with the owner, the pastor, and the instructor₂ of the village whence he has been expelled.²

This relationship between religious life and the type of village community in which it flourished or otherwise provides a basis for understanding the role of the churches and chapels in the villages at this period. The returns for south Lincolnshire of the 1851 Census of Religious Worship provide a reasonably complete picture of the extent of religious practice

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1. BP 1867-68 XVII (4068) Agriculture (Employment of Women and Children), pp.72-73.
 2. L.R.S.M., 26th April 1850.

in the area.¹ They indicate the denomination of a place of worship; in the case of nonconformist and some Anglican churches, the date of the erection of the building; whether nonconformist places of worship are separate buildings entirely given over to religious worship; the number of sittings and whether these were free to all comers or appropriated by rent or usage; and attendance at religious worship on Sunday 30th March 1851 with the number of scholars present. Returns of the average attendance at each time of the day for both general congregation and Sunday scholars were also asked for.² By comparing these returns with the social structure of the villages of the area it is possible to attempt to relate the actual presence or otherwise of a nonconformist as well as an Anglican place of worship and levels of religious observance to the various types of village community in south Lincolnshire in the nineteenth century.

The difficulty of establishing a nonconformist place of worship where control of landownership lay with an unsympathetic landlord was recognised by contemporaries. It was not until the Earl of Dysart had consented to grant a piece of land to the Primitive Methodists at Great Ponton that they could build a chapel in which to hold their services instead of the small cottage they had used hitherto.³ When the foundation stone of Burton Coggles Primitive Methodist chapel was laid in 1870, the Revd. T. F. S. Whitehead in his address 'complained against

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1. The returns are bound up by registration district, at the Public Record Office, London (subsequently P.R.O.), H.O. 129/175, 421-428, 442.
 2. David M. Thompson, 'The Religious Census of 1851', in Richard Lawton (ed.), The Census and Social Structure: an interpretive guide to nineteenth century censuses for England and Wales, 1978, p.242.
 3. G.J., 12th June 1858.

landed proprietors who objected to grant sites of land on which to erect places of Dissenting worship ...'¹ It was reported that at Sedgebrook there had been regular Sunday evening and occasional week night services in the village but

they have never yet had the privilege of purchasing a site of land, or renting any rooms or building in which to worship God. The services have been held from time to time, by kind permission of the tenants, in their dwelling houses ... all attempts to secure more suitable accommodation of the lord of the manor who owns and holds the place having failed.²

In these cases the problem lay with the refusal of a landlord to allow a piece of land to be used on which to erect a place of worship or, in the case of Sedgebrook, to allow a room or building to be rented. In other instances landlord control went deeper and attempted to regulate the religious behaviour of tenants by refusing to allow them to hold non-Anglican services in their houses or in buildings which belonged to their house or farm. The tenant of a farm at Welbourn allowed his barn to be used for preaching until he was told either to cease this, or to quit the farm.³ At the 1851 Census of Religious Worship, the Primitive Methodists had still been unsuccessful in establishing themselves in the village, nor is there any record of them achieving any success there.⁴

1. G.J., 24th September. 1870.

2. Ibid., 23rd May. 1874.

3. Primitive Methodist Magazine, (subsequently P.M. Mag.) VII, n.s., March 1837, p.106.

4. P.R.O., H.O. 129/426/3/2/3 and 3/2/4.

The level of control which landlords chose to exercise varied. While some sought to inhibit the development of nonconformity, others seem to have been more concerned that nonconformist allegiance did not prevent their tenants from making such appearances at the parish church as were deemed necessary to display loyalty to the established social and religious order. The Revd. H. L. Hobart seems to have taken this view when he commented in 1844 that in the closed parish of Nocton he had 'no complaint of non-attendance on a Sunday morning'. The church was 'well filled, even with some who are known to be regular dissenters.'¹

However, it is important not to identify the landlord as a figure always unsympathetic to the development of nonconformity on his estate and exercising his controlling influence against it. It is possible to point to 'the contrast between Anglican "estate" parishes and the Dissenting "freeholders" parishes' and to emphasise the 'remarkable number of overweening magnates in the county, like the Earl of Yarborough, who had acquired control over the land in their own and neighbouring parishes, and virtually never suffered Nonconformity to appear.'² In fact the Earl of Yarborough was an exception to this generalisation and tolerated dissenting chapels on his estates. The steward of the Brocklesby estates was reported as saying that the Methodists were 'some of the best tenants Lord Yarborough had.'³ In 1841 it was reported that there were twelve Wesleyan

1. L.A.O., Correspondence of Bishop Kaye, Cor B5/4/117/7.

2. Everitt, The Pattern of Rural Dissent, p.49.

3. George Lester, Grimsby Methodism and the Wesleys in Lincolnshire (1743-1889), 1890, p.110.

chapels on Lord Yarborough's Lindsey estates which only paid a nominal rent, while he had given land for a Primitive Methodist chapel at Keelby, Lindsey, and also granted a site at Habrough, Lindsey, when petitioned for it.¹

The extent of landlord control in a village did not then absolutely determine its religious life. However, the 1851 religious census returns provide the means of relating the landownership structures of the area to the establishment of nonconformist places of worship. There were returns for 302 non-Anglican places of worship in the Kesteven and Holland divisions. They comprised 147 Wesleyan Methodist, 59 Primitive Methodist, 41 Baptists, 20 Independent, 6 Friends, 11 Wesleyan Reform, 4 Roman Catholic, 3 Mormon and 11 various other places of worship. Wesleyan Methodism's position as the non-conformist denomination with the largest number of places of worship, was maintained throughout the area. However, although Primitive Methodism had the second largest number of places overall, it was either exceeded or equalled by the Baptists in the fenland areas covered by the Holbeach and Spalding registration districts.² There was also a cluster of Baptists chapels in the Bourne area.

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1. L.R.S.M., 16th July 1841; P.M. Mag. VII, n.s., December 1837, p.454.
 2. The Holland and Kesteven divisions were covered by the Bourne, Holbeach, Sleaford, Spalding and parts of the Boston, Grantham, Lincoln, Newark, Peterborough and Stamford registration districts, P.R.O., H.O. 129/422, 424, 426, 423, 425, 427, 428, 442, 175 and 421.

The distinctions between a purpose built place of worship, one which had been adapted from other purposes, and a house or building which was only temporarily used for services, represented important phases in the development of the institutional life of a religious community. When studied against the background of the type of local community in which these various types of meeting were to be found, they provide an indication of the effect of social conditions on the development of religious institutions. The 1851 Census of Religious Worship returns provided for a distinction to be made between buildings which were 'separate and entire' and 'used exclusively as a place of worship, except for a Sunday School as contra-distinguished from a mere Room or Part of a Building.' In filling up the schedule the respondents were asked to

Bear in mind that, for the purpose of this Return, a building must not be deemed the less a 'separate' Building by reason of its adjoining, or having an internal communication with, a Dwelling House or other Building, as frequently happens in the case of Roman Catholic Chapels and those of some other Religious Denominations; the term 'separate' being employed simply to denote a Building which is separated or set apart for religious uses.¹

Thus, the Primitive Methodist chapel at Crowland, erected in 1838, was described quite clearly as a separate building, which was used exclusively as a place of worship.² However, at Ripplingale in 1851 the Primitive Methodists met in what was described as a 'dwelling house,' which was said to be 'tenanted' and not used exclusively as a place of worship.³ These are

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1. PP. 1852-53 LXXXIX (1690) Population of Great Britain, 1851. Religious Worship, (England and Wales), pp. clxxix, clxxv.
 2. P.R.O., H.O. 129/175/3/8/16.
 3. Ibid., 422/2/11/13.

examples of a separate building devoted entirely to religious worship and a meeting in a private house. However, not all meeting places fall clearly into these categories. Hosannah Primitive Methodist chapel at Pinchbeck West was described as not being a separate and entire building but it was used exclusively as a place of worship,¹ while at Dunston a place of worship is described as a chapel but said by the respondent to be 'In my dwelling house.'² They may have been like the cottage and adjoining Primitive Methodist place of worship in Heckington Fen, which was destroyed by fire in 1855, when the fire originated in a stove used to warm the part of the building which was a chapel and spread rapidly through the old thatched building.³ The obituary of George Bee, who died in the cottage describes it as a barn, which was 'very neatly fitted up as a place of worship at some considerable expense.' During his last illness Bee could hear revival services in the chapel.⁴ It is not included in the 1851 religious census returns but was probably an old farm building with a barn and cottage sharing one roof or at least a party wall, but adapted into the type of building separated or set apart for religious worship. It was also possible to find a room set aside exclusively for religious worship in a house. This seems to have been the case at Bicker, where 'An apartment in a house

1. P.R.O., H.O. ¹²⁹423/1/1/3.

2. Ibid., 428/1/5/10.

3. L.R.S.M., 12th January 1855.

4. P.M. Mag. XIII, third series, May 1855, p.320.

for the convenience of the Primitive Methodists' had been used exclusively for seventeen years.¹ Some types of premises defy every categorisation, such as the Pinchbeck Bars Wesleyan chapel, which was described as a separate and entire building and used exclusively as a place of worship but was also said to be 'Domestic'.² The Wesleyan meeting at Marston, which met in a separate and entire building used occasionally as a barn was clearly at a transitional stage in its development.³ Since Marston already had a Wesleyan chapel erected in 1828, it was probably a congregation of Wesleyan Reformers.⁴ While a barn might merely be the equivalent of a house meeting on a larger scale, and like the one used by the Primitive Methodists at Welbourn, be vulnerable to landlord pressure, it could, like the farm building in Heckington Fen, also be a separate chapel in all but name.

1. P.R.O., H.O. 129/425/5/10/15.

2. Ibid., 423/1/1/5.

3. Ibid., 442/5/3/7.

4. Ibid., 442/5/3/6; Wesleyan Reformers were advised by the Wesleyan Times, 24th March 1851, to record themselves as Wesleyan Methodists: 'They are so in reality; and we would not they should add any other distinctive appellation. In the case of the Sunday-schools and the temporary places where separate worship is held, the word "Reformer" might be added in parenthesis, thus - Wesleyan Methodist (Reformer).'

The exact status of hired rooms presents a greater problem. The Catholic (not Roman) congregation at Market Deeping met in a room used exclusively as a place of worship although not in a separate and entire building.¹ Such a gathering might have been vulnerable to pressure from a landlord, although since Market Deeping was an open village, this is unlikely in this particular case.² However, it is clear that the large congregation of Wesleyan Reformers who met in Lincoln Corn Exchange, although using a building which was not exclusively a place of worship, would be free from the sort of pressures which might be brought to bear on a village meeting.³

Congregations such as the Primitive Methodists at Langrick Ville, Lindsey, might eventually succeed in obtaining a plot of land on which to build a chapel to replace the uncomfortable barn which they had used hitherto.⁴ However, the problem of obtaining a site on which to build, meant that not all congregations could develop in this direction and their growth was either permanently arrested or long delayed by landlord

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1. P.R.O., H.O. 129/422/4/3/8. This congregation appears to have been a purely local religious movement. It is not mentioned in such publications as John Henry Blunt's Dictionary of Sects, Heresies, Ecclesiastical Parties and Schools of Religious Thought, 1891, and also escaped the attention of the compilers of White's 1856 Directory of Lincolnshire, if it survived to that date. In the remarks on the religious census return for the congregation it was said to rent a room 'for the instruction of the most neglected part of the population ... The instruction imparted is quite unsectarian. The public worship is identified with no sect. Its object is to diffuse the great doctrines of Christianity.'
 2. White, Directory of Lincolnshire, 1856, pp.872-873.
 3. P.R.O., H.O. 129/428/2/16/27.
 4. P.M.Mag. X, third series, September 1852, p.559.

control. The Wesleyan Methodists at Welby, finally obtained a piece of ground on which to build a chapel from Sir G. E. Welby-Gregory, after several attempts, in 1866. They had met for seventy years in the kitchen of a farmhouse.¹ The Primitive Methodists at Sedgebrook had made no progress towards obtaining a chapel site after 25 years. They had developed into a strong community and had, as part of the Bottesford circuit

the preaching of the Gospel on the Sabbath evenings, and also by one of its ministers from time to time during the week, and the services have been, and still are, well attended. ... An excellent society has under these precarious circumstances been formed, and still holds its way ...

The problem of establishing a purpose-built chapel in a village where the landlord was unwilling to release land, as in the case of Sedgebrook, meant that the possession or otherwise of a chapel was not necessarily an indication of a congregation's inner vitality, although in so far as its strength was measured in institutional terms, lack of a building might be taken as being a considerable drawback to its development. As well as obtaining land for a chapel, a congregation also needed to raise the necessary money to erect a building and maintain it. In this context it is useful to compare the situation of the Primitive Methodists at the time of the 1851 Census of Religious Worship with that of the other nonconformist denominations.

Using the two definitions given on the census forms as a

1. G.J., 24th March 1866.

2. Ibid., 23rd May 1874.

basis, the buildings not used exclusively as a place of worship, have been separated from those which are clearly separate chapels.¹ In doing this, places which are not both separate and entirely given over to religious worship are classified with house meetings and the like even if, like the Market Deeping congregation who described themselves as 'Catholics (not Roman)', they used a room which was exclusively a place of worship, since the absence of a separate and exclusive place of worship might make a congregation's existence more vulnerable to outside pressure. Even this distinction is not free from problems, and buildings like the Hosannah Primitive Methodist chapel at Pinchbeck West, the place of worship at Dunston, or that in Heckington Fen, may not be separate and entire because of their architectural shape.² Cases like this need careful consideration and the Hosannah chapel, because of the way it has been described as a chapel, has been included with the separate buildings.

1. For the definitions of types of building see above pp.140-143.

2. See above p.141.

Table VIII - Non-Anglican Places of Worship in South
Lincolnshire in 1851 Divided by Denomination
into Separate Chapels or their Equivalent
and House Meetings or their Equivalent and
the Percentage () of Separate Chapels and
House Meetings.

	<u>Separate</u>	<u>House Meetings</u>	<u>Total</u>
Wesleyan Methodist	129 (88)	18 (12)	147
Primitive Methodist	44 (75)	15 (25)	59
Baptist	39 (95)	2 (5)	41
Independent	19 (95)	1 (5)	20
Wesleyan Reform	6 (54)	5 (45)	11
Roman Catholic	4 (100)	- -	4
Mormons	2 (67)	1 (33)	3
Friends	5 (83)	1 (17)	6
Various	7 (64)	4 (36)	11
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Total	255 (84)	47 (16)	302
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These figures suggest that the success or otherwise of a non-Anglican religious body in establishing permanent places of worship was strongly related to the time it had been established in the area, with the older nonconformist bodies such as the Baptists and Independents having achieved a higher percentage of separate buildings than, for example, the newly established Wesleyan Reform movement. This explains the position of the Primitive Methodists behind the better established Wesleyan Methodists and in front of newer religious movements in terms of their success in establishing separate places of worship. It does not, however, account for the numerical

success of Primitive Methodism as the second largest denomination in terms of the number of places of worship, both separate and house meetings, which it had in south Lincolnshire.

The 302 non-Anglican places of worship were distributed among a total of 130 settlements including the city of Lincoln. The majority, 106, of these settlements were in category IV, while 20 were in category II, 1 in category I and 3 in category III.¹

Table IX separates the places of worship in these 130 places into those which are separate or are house meetings or their equivalent.

Table IX - Non-Anglican Places of Worship in South Lincolnshire in 1851 Divided by Type of Village with their Status as Chapels or House Meetings Distinguished.

<u>Category</u>	<u>Separate</u>	<u>House Meetings</u>
I	1	-
II	15	12
III	2	1
IV	234	34
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TOTAL	252*	47

* see footnote 1.

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1. These figures do not take account of the Wesleyan chapel at Hale Fen, the Wesleyan Methodist chapel at Whaplode Washway and the Wesleyan Methodist chapel at Guthram in the Sleaford, Holbeach and Bourne registration districts. These could not be definitely located in any particular place. For example, the Hale Fen chapel could be in either Great or Little Hale; see above pp.49-50 for the village categories.

The concentration of separate chapels in villages in category IV bears out the literary evidence on the problems which faced nonconformist denominations in establishing permanent chapels in closed villages. In fact the only non-Anglican establishment in a closed village in category I was the Roman Catholic chapel in the village of Irnham, which had been a centre of Roman Catholicism since the sixteenth century under the patronage and protection of Catholic squires, while a high proportion of the non-Anglican meetings in category II were house meetings.¹

The position which had developed by 1851 in the Kesteven division can be compared with the situation 22 years earlier, using a set of returns of non-Anglican places of worship made in 1829.² The return, which does not include the boroughs of Grantham and Stamford, was made by the Clerk of the Peace following a House of Commons resolution of 19th June 1829. Only the returns for the county of Lancashire were published and those for the Holland and Lindsey divisions of Lincolnshire have not survived.³ They have details of 95 places of worship in 73 places ^{in Kesteven} comprising

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1. P.R.O., H.O. 129/422/1/2/13 and 1/10/13; T. P. Trappes-Lomax, 'The Owners of Irnham Hall, co. Lincoln and their Contribution to the Survival of Catholicism in that county', L.A.A.S.R.P. 9, part 2, n.s., 1962, pp.164-177; Lincolnshire Archivists' Report, no.23, 24th March 1971 - 29th February 1972, p.36.
 2. L.A.O., Parts of Kesteven, Clerk of the Peace's Papers, 'A Return of the Number of Places of Worship not of the Church of England, June 1829'.
 3. Journals of the House of Commons, 5th February - 10th December 1829, vol. 84, pp.406-407; vol.85, 4th February - 23rd July 1830, pp.458, 634.

63 Wesleyan Methodist, 10 Primitive Methodist, 4 Baptist, 5 Independent, 1 Roman Catholic, 1 Society of Friends, 9 Calvinist, 1 Lady Huntingdon's Connexion and 1 unspecified place of worship.

The number of non-Anglican places of worship in Kesteven had increased to 154 by 1851, but this increase was accompanied by changes in their distribution among the various types of village and the proportion of places of worship which were either separate or house meetings. The percentage of places of worship in villages in categories I, II and III decreased between 1829 and 1851 while there was a corresponding rise in the number of those in category IV. The percentage in category I decreased from 1% to 0.6%, from 23% to 18% in category II and from 4% to 2% in category III, while the percentage in villages in category IV rose from 71% in 1829 to 79% in 1851. As well as these changes in the number and distribution of places of worship there was also a decline in the proportion which were house meetings. In 1829 20, or 31%, out of 65 non-Anglican places of worship which can be classified in this way, were not meeting in separate buildings. By 1851 the proportion had dropped to 24%, which was 37 out of a total of 154 meeting places.

It is more difficult to make valid comparisons of this kind in the case of Primitive Methodist places of worship because of the smaller numbers involved. There were 10 in the 1829 Kesteven returns and 31 returns from the same area in the 1851 Census of Religious Worship. However, when it is possible to distinguish the type of meeting it is noticeable that the Primitives had a much higher proportion of house meetings, particularly in 1829, than was the general case with non-Anglican

religious groups. There were only 3 separate Primitive Methodist places of worship in Kesteven in 1829 compared with 19 in 1851. This meant that in 1829 70% of their congregations met in houses or buildings which were not exclusively used as chapels. By 1851 the proportion had dropped to 39%.

There had also been a considerable amount of change between 1829 and 1851 in the actual places where the Primitives had places of worship. This was associated with a move into open villages which took place in the period. The ten Primitive Methodist meetings which were returned in 1829 were at Norton Disney, Caythorpe with Frieston, Fulbeck, Hougham, Westborough, Martin, Rippingale, Edenham with Grimsthorpe, Elsthorpe and Scottlethorpe, and Welby. There was also a group at Claypole, who were described as 'now Protestant Wesleyan Methodists, formerly Ranters.' However, since they were said to meet in a room, they had probably abandoned the chapel which, according to the 1851 returns, had been built in 1826 at Old Lane, Claypole. By 1851 it was back in use as a Primitive Methodist place of worship.¹ Only three of the ten Primitive places which existed in 1829, still had places of worship in 1851. These were at Fulbeck, Martin and Rippingale, of which Fulbeck and Martin had separate chapels in 1829. The type of place of worship of two more Primitive Methodist groups in 1829 is not known, and of the rest all met in houses except the group at Hougham which had a chapel. Thus, as far as the limited evidence permits comparisons to be made, it seems that in places where Primitive Methodists

1. P.R.O., H.O. 129/442/5/12/23.

were able to establish a separate chapel their chances of survival in the first half of the century were considerably greater. All the places in which they had chapels were in open villages in category IV. Despite the fact that they were able to penetrate places such as Edenham, a closed village in category I, and Welby and Norton Disney in category II, they were not able to sustain their position there.

The evidence for some of the places which were established at about the time of the 1829 returns, points to an unstable situation in which Primitive Methodist preachers moved around the countryside quickly, establishing places of worship without necessarily providing for their long-term viability. Such centres could rise and decline quickly. For example, a class was established in the large open village of Ruskington by the beginning of 1821. According to W. Fieldsend's account, it had all the characteristics of a well-established centre of Primitive Methodism, although meeting in a house:

Sunday, 21 (January). I spake at Ruskington to a crowded house, and had liberty of soul. I met a class, but did not speak to half before some seemed in deep distress. We turned it into a prayer meeting; one or two got liberty, and three were added to the society.¹

Yet despite this beginning in a village where the social climate might have favoured the further development of Primitive Methodism and the eventual erection of a permanent chapel, the society in Ruskington seems to have ceased to exist by 1829. On the other hand at Rippingale, a village in category IV, there was a licensed house meeting 'attended by some seven or eight persons' in 1829 and a house meeting still

1. P.M. Mag. 2, June 1821, p.131.

existed in 1851 with an afternoon general congregation of 70 and one in the evening of 60.¹ There had been a highly successful beginning to Primitive Methodism in the village in terms of the 'great numbers' reported as attending meetings in about 1820 but it is difficult from the evidence to ascertain how fully developed an organisation emerged in the first half of the nineteenth century. Mrs. Grace Meadows, who died in January 1826, was said to have 'opened an effectual door for the preaching of the gospel, and received the heralds of salvation to the hour of her dissolution.'² A Primitive Methodist chapel was, however, eventually opened in Rippingale, so what might have seemed a less promising base eventually led to a more stable presence in the village than in Ruskington.³ The unstable character of the early Primitive Methodist congregations was also brought out in the return of Francis Thurland, curate of Rowston, who noted in 1829 that 'The "Ranters" also frequently migrate on the Sunday, and form part of the congregation in places where they are otherwise strangers.' Similarly, it was said that many attended the Fulbeck Primitive Methodist chapel from other districts.⁴

The 1829 returns reflect the early stages of Primitive Methodist activity in south Lincolnshire in terms of the places where it was to be found and type of presence the connexion

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1. L.A.O., Kesteven, Return of Places of Worship 1829; P.R.O., H.O. 129/2/11/13.
 2. P.M.Mag. 9, 1828, pp.257-260.
 3. L.R.S.M., 5th October 1855.
 4. L.A.O., Kesteven, Return of Places of Worship, 1829.

established. There was also a marked concentration of Primitive Methodist activity in 1829 in the west of the Kesteven division which was due to the connexion's geographical origins and the expansion into Lincolnshire by the Nottingham circuit beginning in 1817 which brought Primitive Methodist preachers into south Lincolnshire.

* * *

George Herod, who witnessed personally the events of this period, described the progress of the 1817-18 revival:

In about one year and nine months not less than seventy-five towns and villages were missioned, and regular worship established at them on Lord's days; and not less than seventy-five local preachers and exhorters were raised up, and had their talents brought into operation, in supplying appointments, and aiding and holding Camp-Meetings.¹

Much of this work seems to have been sporadic and unco-ordinated. William Clowes and John Wedgwood were working on the Lincolnshire-Nottinghamshire border in 1817. They met at Newark, where both preached, and later at Grantham, following Wedgwood's imprisonment after preaching on the market cross.² When Clowes came to visit Wedgwood he saw something of the prospects opening as a result

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1. George Herod, Biographical Sketches of some of those Preachers whose Labours Contributed to the Origination and Early Extension of the Primitive Methodist Connexion, n.d., p.300; the word 'mission' is frequently used as a verb by Methodist writers to describe the process of establishing a mission or presence in a place. For this sense see Collins Dictionary of the English Language, 1979 edit.
 2. William Garner, The Life of the Rev. and Venerable William Clowes: one of the patriarchs of the Primitive Methodist connexion, 1868, p.210.

of the work of John Benton.¹ Benton, like Wedgwood, was not paid from connexional funds and had asked not to be placed on any regular preaching plan.² If the fruits of his activities were to be consolidated into the connexion, an organisation was needed since he

paid very little attention to forming classes, and introducing rule and order;- his sphere was to break up the fallow ground, by entering into new places, preaching the truths of the Gospel, and converting sinners from the error of their ways ...³

Clowes's presence in 1817 and his work in Nottinghamshire, Leicestershire and Lincolnshire in 1818, may represent an attempt to bring some sort of order into this work.⁴ A short-lived society was formed in the town of Grantham after John Wedgwood had been imprisoned for preaching from the town's market cross.⁵ This was not the first time that Wedgwood had preached in the town, but it was not until after his arrest and that of William Lockwood of East Bridgford, who had driven up to Grantham to support him, that the connexion became involved there and any formal organisation was attempted.⁶

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1. Herod, Biographical Sketches, p.428.
 2. Ibid., p.428.
 3. Ibid., p.429.
 4. Ibid., p.477.
 5. John Petty, The History of the Primitive Methodist Connexion, from its origin to the Conference of 1860, the First Jubilee Year of the Connexion, revised and enlarged by James Macpherson, 1880, p.73.
 6. H. B. Kendall, The Origin and History of the Primitive Methodist Church, vol.I [c.1905], pp.255-256; Herod, Biographical Sketches, pp.292-293; Petty, History of the Primitive Methodist Connexion, p.73.

The female preacher, Sarah Kirkland, was also working in the Vale of Belvoir at this time and was near enough to Grantham to visit Wedgwood in prison.¹

William Clowes arrived in the Grantham area after Wedgwood's release in time to join him in conducting a camp meeting at Buckminster near the Lincolnshire-Leicestershire border.² Clowes in fact located the meeting in his account at Shillington (Skillington)³ a village on the Lincolnshire border near Buckminster.⁴ It is, however, difficult to construct a precise chronology of the movements of even a leading personality in the movement like William Clowes, but he was active in Lincolnshire, Nottinghamshire and Leicestershire at this period.⁵ Moreover he kept his links with the centre of Primitive Methodism as a letter written to Hugh Bourne after the camp meeting shows. It is also interesting for the picture it gives of the heady atmosphere of religious revival and the prospects which seemed to be opening up for the Primitives: 'Such a field for labour I never saw. All around the country - east, west, north and south, they were crying, Come and help us!'⁶

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1. Herod, Biographical Sketches, p.321; Kendall, Origin and History, vol.I, p.259.
 2. Garner, William Clowes, pp.211-212.
 3. Several village names given in early Primitive Methodist sources do not correspond with modern usage, and probably represent the attempts of their authors to write down names with which they would have been more familiar through the spoken than written word. Where these places have been identified, the modern form of village or place-name is given in parentheses after the spelling given in the source material.
 4. Garner, William Clowes, p.214.
 5. *Ibid.*, p.213.
 6. *Ibid.*, p.215.

In fact Clowes's visits to the frontiers of missionary activity seem to have been something of a two way educative process, which helped to bind the mission field to the centre and vice versa. He had been

confined in one round for six years, and the hundreds that had been converted in the counties of Nottingham, Leicester and Lincoln, by the preaching of Benton, Kirkland, Wedgwood and others, were ignorant respecting such a man of faith and usefulness in the Connexion, and also he little thought₁ of finding such an extraordinary revival going on.

During the course of the Buckminster camp meeting Sir William Manners of Buckminster Hall, took John Benton, one of the camp meeting preachers, to Grantham and allowed him to preach from a stone pulpit, which he had erected on his land a few days before. This was near to the town's Guildhall and Sir William's patronage of the Primitive Methodist preachers sprang from a desire to pay back the burgesses of Grantham for rejecting a parliamentary candidate who had his backing.² This entanglement with aristocratic patronage and local politics seems to have done Primitive Methodism little immediate good in the town. It caused suspicion among people who were alienated by this aspect of borough life, or to whom it had little relevance, and it was not until 1835 that a permanent presence was established in the town despite determined efforts.³ These included visits to the town by preachers such as T. Jackson who, after visiting

1. Herod, Biographical Sketches, p.415.

2. Garner, William Clowes, p.214; Kendall, Origin and History, vol. I, pp.260-261.

3. Kendall, Origin and History, vol. I, p.262.

the village of Bitchfield, preached on a Sunday afternoon from Grantham cross.¹

Preachers who went to Spittlegate, a township in Grantham parish, also seem to have gone into the town of Grantham itself.² Hugh Bourne preached from Grantham Cross in April 1818 at what he described as a camp meeting and was also in the town in September 1818.³ Spittlegate was the only place in south Lincolnshire which appeared on the connexion's preaching plan for the period May to July 1818. Fortnightly services were held at 2 p.m. on Sundays. Otherwise, Newark and Balderton, together with Harby, all places over the county boundary in Nottinghamshire, provided organised centres for missionary work in Lincolnshire.⁴

In the period from 1812 to 1818, Hugh Bourne was playing an important role in helping to shape into connexional form the free-ranging missionary work of preachers like Benton and Wedgwood who had little formal contact with Primitive Methodist organisation. Their work and those of others, such as John Oxtoby in north Lincolnshire, meant that not all early Primitive Methodists in Lincolnshire were necessarily converted by official Primitive Methodist preachers.⁵ Conversion by a freelance

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1. G.J., 21st March 1868, quoting Jackson's journal of January 1818.
 2. Herod, Biographical Sketches, p.425.
 3. Kendall, Origin and History, vol. I, p.262; John Walford, Memoirs of the Life and Labours of the Late Venerable Hugh Bourne, vol.II, 1856, p.36.
 4. Herod, Biographical Sketches, p.425.
 5. Herod, Biographical Sketches, p.479; George Shaw, The Life of John Oxtoby, ('Praying Johnny'), Hull, 1894, pp.14-15, 21-26; Kendall, Origin and History, vol.I, pp.365-367.

preacher might be followed by the activities of Bourne or others who 'gathered the converts into classes, appointed leaders, and made arrangements for local preachers to supply newly opened places ...'¹ In this atmosphere, where the edges of what was official connexional activity were blurred, what might at first sight appear to be the first visit of a Primitive Methodist preacher to a place was, in fact, the first visit recorded in a diary or memoirs, or which resulted in an established organisation. For example, the travelling preacher Francis Birch visited one of the Suttons in September 1820. However, there had apparently been preaching there previously but all that remained of it was the memory that his predecessor had eggs thrown at him.²

It seems that a society was formed in Norton Disney near the Lincolnshire-Nottinghamshire border soon after, if not as a result of, the visit of two female preachers.³ John Hallsworth noted in August 1820 that he had preached from the cross in Fulbeck about two years before when 'a number of people set the bells a ringing.'⁴ Similarly, when he preached in Lincoln in 1820, Hallsworth recalled in his journal the difficulties he had faced more than two years previously when he was 'wandering up and down in this part of the country, sowing the word of God; and I found some blessed, for they had heard the word of God and kept it.'⁵ This implies that on his later

1. Herod, Biographical Sketches, p.479.

2. P.M. Mag. 2, March 1821, p.59.

3. P.M. Mag. 1, November 1820, for November and December 1819, p.257.

4. P.M. Mag. 2, February 1821, pp.45-46.

5. P.M. Mag. 2, February 1821, p.45.

visit he picked up again the previously unorganised converts from his earlier preaching tour. His work in Lincoln may just have preceded the visit to the city by William Clowes and John Wedgwood in 1818, or he may have been one of their associates at the meeting they held there. This was certainly carefully planned and had been announced a fortnight in advance. Before they went to Lincoln they took part in a camp meeting at Wellingore, which may have been the result of Hallsworth's work in the area.¹ The Lincoln meeting produced converts from outside the city who formed the basis for later work in the area. Among these was a tradesman from Eagle who said that the way in which Clowes bore the insults and prayed for the person who was throwing stones at him, led to his own conversion.²

The extension of Nottingham circuit, which included the early Primitive Methodist missionary efforts in south Lincolnshire, was carried out by young men who had themselves been

hewn out of nature's quarry through the instrumentality of the missionaries; and in less than two years after their conversion they were sent forth into different counties to break up the fallow ground and sow in righteousness under the direction of some of those judicious, enterprising and benevolent officials who were at the head of affairs in the Nottingham circuit.³

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1. Herod, Biographical Sketches, p.419; John Davison, The Life of the Venerable William Clowes: one of the founders of the Primitive Methodist Connexion, 1854, pp.96-97; William Clowes, The Journals of William Clowes, a Primitive Methodist Preacher ... from the year 1810 to that of 1838, 1844, p.142; Garner, William Clowes, pp.218-219; For a description of the Lincoln meeting see below p.262.
 2. John T. Wilkinson, William Clowes 1780-1851, 1961, p.42.
 3. Herod, Biographical Sketches, p.419.

Despite the efforts of the organisers and administrators of the connexion to keep it on a sound organisational and financial footing, the Nottingham circuit was over extended by September 1818. For a time it had to rely on money raised in the Primitive Methodist heartland of the Tunstall circuit for its support. Supervision of the circuit's activities seems to have been tightened by the appointment of a quarter day committee to deal with its finances and generally to put its affairs in order. The committee also seems to have dealt with a number of other problems as they arose so that by the December quarter day it was claimed that the circuit was already beginning to recover. Similar committees developed into a permanent part of Primitive Methodist polity.¹

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Following the visit of Clowes and Wedgwood to the city of Lincoln in 1818, the Primitive Methodist community seems to have become well enough organised and sufficiently strong to attract the attention of the local press. It was reported that on the day of the Queen's funeral 'the occasion was made use of by the fraternity of Ranters, who have for some time past made a practice of performing their religious exercises in the public streets of Lincoln and the neighbourhood.'² In March 1819, W. Wildbur, together with a female called Perry, was appointed by the Nottingham Quarterly Meeting to go to Lincoln. A chapel

1. P.M. Mag. 3, August 1822, pp.196-197.

2. L.R.S.M., 4th December 1818.

was opened in July of the same year. It was provided by a member of the society, but 'his conduct becoming such that he could not continue, the chapel, being private property, was lost', and a school room capable of seating a hundred people was taken in Mint Lane.¹ In the course of 1819 Lincoln's Primitive Methodists were reported as taking to the streets to sing hymns at a public execution. They were also said to have organised camp meetings to the north of the city.²

Wildbur was, however,

a man of weak abilities, and was much in the habit of neglecting his appointments. The country societies made great complaints to the circuit steward, but neither he nor the leaders could remedy the evil. The following quarter-day therefore formed a committee to look after him, and to attend to those things which he omitted: after this circuit committees became general.

A number of societies and preaching places were established in the vicinity of Lincoln by early 1819. The camp meeting which Clowes and Wedgwood had held in Wellingore about the time they visited Lincoln had probably led to the formation of a class in the village.⁴ John Harrison, the travelling preacher,⁵ met it on 4th January 1819, before going to Lincoln the next day:

1. L.R.S.M., 9th July 1819; 16th July 1819; P.M.Mag. X, n.s., May 1840, p.81.

2. L.R.S.M., 26th March 1819; 28th May 1819.

3. Herod, Biographical Sketches, p.366 and note pp.362-363; P.M.Mag. 3, March 1821, p.57.

4. Kendall, Origin and History, vol.I, p.464.

5. The term 'travelling preacher' was used to describe full-time, paid Primitive Methodist ministers while 'local preachers' were unpaid, part-time and voluntary, combining their preaching activities with their full-time employment.

I met the class in the house of Mr. Cottam at ten o'clock; it was a good time; I preached at two, to a very good and attentive congregation. In the evening the house was crowded to excess; we had some persecution but it did not prevent us from proceeding into worship. - The people in this place are so much in earnest; the prayer-meeting was carried on until nearly eleven o'clock at night.¹

In February he returned with his wife, the former Sarah Kirkland, by order of the Nottingham leaders' meeting, to open a new chapel in the village. The class met at ten o'clock and his wife preached in the afternoon when 'The chapel was crowded, there were many who could not get in. The persecutors raged so that I was obliged to go out and admonish them. I believe much good was done.'² The couple also visited and preached in Navenby, where there appear to have been some Primitive Methodist families, and on Tuesday 9th February they were in Lincoln where they joined a preacher who was going out to Washingborough. There is no indication that a class existed there but the group organised a meeting in a house where Sarah Harrison preached to them and she reported

Many were affected; I expected every minute to see them fall on all sides; in the midst of the congregation there was a drunken man who rather disturbed the people; I desired them to let him alone; the Lord streamed power down. We held a prayer-meeting,³ at which four found peace and many were in distress.

After preaching in Lincoln, which seems to have been the base to which they always returned, the Harrisons were in Washingborough Fen on 12th February, then went back to Lincoln to take a Saturday night meeting and preach three times in the

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1. Herod, Biographical Sketches, p.362.
 2. Ibid., p.364.
 3. Ibid., p.364.

city on the Sunday. The next day they left for Nottinghamshire. In his account of the meeting at Washingborough Fen, Harrison refers to a pulpit, although this need not imply that the meeting was held in anything other than a house fitted up or adapted for religious meetings:

Almost as soon as I entered the pulpit four drunken men came in, whose ungodly proceedings caused great confusion. In the midst of their tumultuous conduct I took a text and preached... God blessed the Word, and several wept much. I believe many would have been brought in, but we were obliged to conclude the meeting.

After six months in Lincoln W. Wildbur moved on to Boston. He may have worked here with a preacher called Moss who was reported as having entered the town with others in 1819.² Wildbur claimed that 'the Lord raised up many societies' during the period he worked in Lincoln with the assistance of the female preacher.³ However, there is little positive evidence for this work in the south of Lincolnshire until 1820, apart from some indictments at Sleaford Sessions in October 1819 'for assaulting the Ranters at Heckington, which were settled and not brought into court.'⁴

Up to September 1820, when Lincoln circuit was created, south Lincolnshire was covered by Nottingham. At the first annual meeting ^{of the Primitive Methodist connexion} held in Hull in May 1820 Nottingham was reported as being one of the eight circuits into which the connexion was divided. No circuit membership figures are available at this

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1. Herod, Biographical Sketches, p.364-365.
 2. Ibid., p.303.
 3. P.M.Mag. 2, March 1821, p.57.
 4. L.R.S.M., 29th October 1819.

stage but at the Hull meeting it was reported that the whole connexion had 7,842 members, with 42 full-time travelling and 277 part-time local preachers. Its work was based on Tunstall, Nottingham, Loughborough, Hull, Scotter, Sheffield, Derby and Darlaston.¹ According to Hugh Bourne the newly-created Lincoln circuit had been recognised as such for some time, although it was formally only a branch of Nottingham.² Its creation coincided with a period of expansion in this part of the Nottingham circuit.³

Much of the widespread activity reported in south Lincolnshire in 1820 was the result of the work of John Hallsworth in the Lincoln circuit, together with William Doughty and Francis Birch, who seemed to have covered large areas. Hallsworth preached in Heighington - where two early converts soon became local preachers - Fulbeck and Roulson (Rowston). Doughty ranged across the county, taking in villages in west Lindsey, such as Willingham and Kexby, and then moving on to preach at a camp meeting at Rowsby (Rauceby). In late September 1820, he preached in Wilsford and Swaby (probably Swaton or Swarby).⁴ Wildbur established a society in Boston after his

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1. 'General Minutes of a Meeting held at Nottingham in August 1819, and of the First Annual Meeting held at Hull in May 1820, by the Delegates of the Society of the People called Primitive Methodists,' p.3 in Robert Smith (ed.), Minutary Records: being rules, regulations, and reports made and published by the Primitive Methodist Connexion I, 1814-1830, Leeds, 1854; Petty, History of the Primitive Methodist Connexion, pp.91-92; Kendall, Origin and History, vol.I, pp.462-3; P.M. Mag. 3, January 1821, p.45; details of national membership and the membership of south Lincolnshire circuits are given in Appendix A.
 2. Kendall, Origin and History, vol.I, p.463.
 3. P.M. Mag. 1, November 1820, for November and December 1819, p.244.
 4. Ibid. 2, February 1821, pp.45-46.

move to the town, despite much opposition, and also preached in Wainfleet, Lindsey, and Friskney, Lindsey.¹ Francis Birch also worked in Boston and district in 1820, preaching regularly in Boston and Fishtoft as well as 'to several hundreds in the market-place at Donington.' He was also active in Kesteven, covering the villages of Aslackby and Rippingale, which seem to have become the bases for further preaching in the area. When Birch preached at Hackarby (Hacconby) 'a dark place' some of the 'friends' from these villages went with him.²

When a camp meeting was held at Spalding on Sunday 1st October 1820, it seems that it was not the first visit of Primitive Methodists to that area, since Birch referred in his journal to a revival of the work in the town. A camp meeting would probably involve a degree of preparation that would not have been possible had the town, or at least the surrounding district, been entirely fresh territory. Similarly, when Birch preached at Holbeach in the week following the Spalding camp meeting he entered a town where 'our preachers have been used ill' in the past. He then moved on to one of the Suttons, where again there had been preaching earlier, before returning to Boston and joining W. Wildbur there. Preaching was also reported in the Holland villages of Butterwick and Maplode (Whaplode).³ A society had been established at Spalding by late November 1820 and a prayer meeting was held at Whaplode at the same period.⁴

1. P.M. Mag. 2, March 1821, pp.57-58.

2. Ibid. 2, March 1821, pp.58-60.

3. Ibid. 2, March 1821, pp.58-60.

4. Ibid. 2, March 1821, p.59.

Boston was described in 1820 as a branch of the Nottingham circuit.¹ After the quarter day meeting there in December, Francis Birch wrote in his diary that

truly the presence of the Lord did crown our meeting. The preachers, both travelling and local, appeared to be of one heart, and one mind. And, glory to God, it rejoiced my soul to hear how the work of God is reviving all over the circuit. The Lord is pouring out of his Holy Spirit in a wonderful manner.²

In the Lincoln area Primitive Methodists had preached at Washingborough in 1819 at the time of the village feast.³ They may have been connected with the group that the Harrisons met in February 1819.⁴ By 1820 preachers had visited Branston and a flourishing society was established there.⁵ Primitive Methodist preachers had been invited to a house on Branston Moor, about a mile from the village, by John Prestwood at Christmas 1819. He had been 'awakened' during preaching in Bardney,⁶ but his connections were with Potterhanworth where Primitive Methodists first preached in 1820. Prestwood later built a chapel in this village, which was settled on the connexion in 1838.⁷ Bassingham, a village to the west of Lincoln and not too far from the Nottingham border, was another village visited by the Primitives soon after they came into the county, although it

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1. Petty, History of the Primitive Methodist Connexion, p.119.
 2. P.M.Mag. 2, March 1821, p.60.
 3. Ibid., February 1821, p.31.
 4. See above, p. 162.
 5. P.M.Mag. 2, February 1821, p.32.
 6. Ibid. XII, n.s., October 1842, p.364.
 7. Ibid. X, n.s., January 1840, pp.6-7.

was later abandoned by them until 1839.¹ Timberland, which was first visited about 1820, became a centre with a continuous Primitive Methodist presence. The obituary of Samuel Toynbee of Timberland, who died on 25th September 1850, aged 88, refers to Primitive Methodist missionaries in the village 'upwards of thirty years ago.' Toynbee joined the connexion and 'for more than thirty years he was a bright ornament to the little church meeting in his house. He was delighted to see his cottage crowded with attentive hearers.'²

At the annual meeting held at Tunstall in May 1821 it was decided to divide the sixteen circuits of the connexion into districts. At this date Lincoln, Grimsby and Scotter were the only circuits based in Lincolnshire and they were grouped under Scotter. However, the Nottingham district, which comprised Nottingham, Loughborough and Derby circuits, still had a strong interest in south Lincolnshire. Boston was made a circuit in June or July 1821 and Spalding became a branch of the Nottingham circuit but it was not until 1822 that preachers were shown as being stationed at Boston. Boston's independent status as a circuit only lasted for a year and it did not regain this position until 1826.³

1. P.M.Mag. X, n.s., May. 1840, p.182.

2. Ibid. IX, third series, March 1851, p.189.

3. Ibid. 2, June 1821, p.137; 'General Minutes ... 1821', pp.1-2; '1822 General Minutes ...', p.18 in Smith (ed.), Minutary Records I, 1814-30; Petty, History of the Primitive Methodist Connexion, p.149; Kendall, Origin and History, vol.I, p.559.

J. Oscroft was sent to work in Boston branch in May 1821. He was appointed to labour in this branch with five other preachers, though at this time there was not sufficient work for two. We therefore opened a mission in the county of Norfolk, where the work of the Lord spread rapidly and hundreds were soon converted to God.¹

These developments were part of a rapid expansion of the whole of the connexion which grew from 7842 members in 1820 to 16,394 in 1821 and 25,066 in 1822.

At a local level, W. Fieldsend, working in the Lincoln circuit in 1821, preached in south Lincolnshire at Scregginton (Scredington), Ruskington and Heckington. The first part of his published journal covers the period from January to February 1821 and shows the wide geographical area he covered as a travelling preacher ranging from Donington in the south of the county to Minting in Lindsey.² By the time the 1821 annual meeting was held Fieldsend, whose name is given as Fielden in the printed minutes, had three other preachers working with him on the Lincoln circuit - J. Hallsworth, T. Saxton and J. Forman.³ Fieldsend seems to have been active in the Lincoln area in June and July 1821, when, after visiting the city for the quarter day, he preached at Welbourn, Waddington and later at Heckington, where he 'found them not in such a flourishing state as I expected.'⁴ He noted continuing persecution at Waddington and Welbourn.

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1. Petty, History of the Primitive Methodist Connexion, p.149.
 2. P.M.Mag. 2, June 1821, p.131; see also above p.151.
 3. 'General Minutes of Meetings held by the Primitive Methodist Connexion, Halifax, 1821', p.16 in Smith (ed.), Minutary Records I, 1814-1830.
 4. P.M.Mag. 3, April 1822, p.94; Petty, History of the Primitive Methodist Connexion, p.158.

In December 1821, a farm servant at Wellingore was charged before the magistrates with disturbing Primitive Methodist worship in the village. Further proceedings against him were, however, stopped 'on his paying a guinea to the poor of the parish and making a public acknowledgment of his offence.'¹

A large camp meeting was held on Canwick Common in Lincoln on the Saturday preceding the Lincoln Quarter Day, 17th June 1821. Fieldsend noted that 'thousands flocked to hear the word' and the Lincoln, Rutland and Stamford Mercury estimated the number present as 'between 2 and 3,000'.² There was evidently growth over a wide area and 'the good work prospered at Horncastle, Donnington (sic), Heckington, Coddington ... and other places.'³

* * *

A preaching plan which survives for the Lincoln circuit covers part of July, the whole of August and September, together with part of October 1821.⁴ The circuit had 57 places with Sunday services, and extended into north Lincolnshire, taking in Horncastle and villages in the area as well as places to the north and west of Lincoln. It also included parts of Nottinghamshire. In addition to the city of Lincoln, there were 23 places in south Lincolnshire which were visited for

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1. L.R.S.M., 7th December 1821.
 2. P.M.Mag. 3, April 1822, p.94; L.R.S.M., 22nd June 1821.
 3. Petty, History of the Primitive Methodist Connexion, p.158 referring to Fieldsend's journal.
 4. City Library Lincoln (subsequently C.L.L.), Broadsheet 946, Lincoln Circuit. The Lord's Day Plan of the Preachers called Primitive Methodists, (known also by the name of Ranters) .

Sunday preaching: Branston and Branston Moor, Washingborough, Heighington, Wellingore, Screddington (Scredington), Heckington, Ruskington, Timberland, Walcot (Walcott), Roulestone (Rowston), Norton Disney, Bassingham, Hougham, Claypole, Wilsford, Swaby (Swarby), Sleaford, Rauceby, Beckingham, Leadenham, Fulbeck, Frieston, and Normanton. The plan gives no insight into the type of meeting place occupied by these congregations, but few, if any, of them, apart from Lincoln, can have been purpose-built chapels at this stage.¹

These congregations were served by 7 people described as 'Preachers', John Hallsworth, J. Saxton, W. Fieldsend, J. Forman, W. Knott, Thomas Muxlow and A. Otter. They seem to have been full-time preachers, although the 1821 Annual Meeting of the connexion only stationed J. Hallsworth, T. Saxton, J. Forman and W. Fielden as travelling preachers on the Lincoln circuit. However, William Knott, Thomas Muxlow and Ann Otter carried out a similar full Sunday and weekday programme of work to the 4 travelling preachers. W. Knott had become a full travelling preacher by Midsummer 1822 when he was stationed on the Lincoln circuit.² He was therefore, in 1821, about to embark on a career as a travelling preacher and this period may well have been for him, and the other preachers who were similarly placed on the Lincoln plan, a period of probation or preparation.

1. See above p.150 for details of Kesteven chapels in 1829.

2. 'General Minutes ... 1821', p.16; '1822 General Minutes ...', p.19 in Smith (ed.), Minutary Records I 1814-1830.

In addition to the full-time preachers there were 26 local preachers, 2 local preachers on trial, 12 exhorters, a group of what seem to have been exhorters described as 'Co' (Company), together with an un-named person or persons denoted by an asterisk.¹ The distinction between local preachers, local preachers on trial and exhorters was not clearly laid down in the connexion minutes at this date. A local preacher was subject to the quarter day board and circuit committee. He was obliged to have his name on the preachers' plan and to be duly authorised by the authorities. He could not act as a local preacher if his 'life and conversation' did not 'adorn the gospel', if he was not generally received by the people and if he did not meet in class according to rule.² The distinction between local preachers, those on trial, and exhorters, became clearer by the 1840s, when the various grades can be seen as representing a hierarchy with the office of local preacher at the summit. By this date a meeting of the people who appeared on the circuit plan as preachers or exhorters vetted new preachers

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1. There is no evidence comparable to that of the published lists of full-time travelling preachers which provides a basis for determining how many of these local preachers were women. In the 1818 Nottingham circuit plan women preachers were indicated by the use of their initials only, but this has not been done with Ann Otter at Lincoln. (Kendall, Origin and History, vol.I, p.208). It is possible that the person or persons indicated by an asterisk may be women.
 2. General Minutes of the Conferences of the Primitive Methodist Connexion Corrected and Consolidated at and by the Annual Meeting or Conference held at Tunstall, which commenced May 14th, 1828, Bemersley, 1828, p.24.

and received any complaints against ones who were already on the plan.¹ Such a structure is implied by the make-up of the 1821 Lincoln plan with the names of the local preachers appearing above and with the exhorters below those local preachers on trial.

Of the places in south Lincolnshire which appeared on the 1821 plan only Lincoln and Wellingore had two Sunday services. These were at 2 p.m. and 6 p.m. in each place. The frequency of services may reflect the fact that each place is known to have had a chapel by this date.² The other places had services at either 2 p.m. or 6 p.m., except Timberland and Hougham, where the services were at 10 a.m. The preaching places at Norton Disney and Bassingham, Wilsford and Swarby, Sleaford and Rauceby, Leadenham and Fulbeck, and Frieston and Normanton were grouped in pairs in the plan. Each place had a service at 2 p.m. and 6 p.m. respectively. All of these places, together with Scredington, Timberland, Walcott and Rowston had Sunday services at fortnightly intervals.

The wide geographical spread of the circuit seems to have meant that, in practice, it was broken down into smaller areas. This is clear in the planning of week day services.³ Five of the 7 of the group of travelling preachers were planned to take services in the south Lincolnshire area and one of these, Thomas Muxlow, only appeared in Lincoln. Similarly, J. Forman

1. General Consolidated Minutes of the Primitive Methodist Connexion, approved by the 30th Annual Conference, Sunderland, 1849, 1850, pp.28-30.

2. See above pp.160-162.

3. See below pp.181-182.

moved out of Lincoln and into south Lincolnshire to preach only at Branston and Branston Moor, which are relatively close to the city. This left W. Fieldsend, Ann Otter and W. Knott carrying the bulk of the work of the travelling preachers in south Lincolnshire.

Twenty-seven of the local preachers and exhorters, excluding 3 who only appeared at engagements in Lincoln and the 'company', had preaching engagements in south Lincolnshire. Local centres of Primitive Methodism were not served equally in the distribution of preaching engagements between full-time and local preachers. The 1821 plan shows that in the period under examination Walcott, Sleaford and Rauceby were served on Sundays by travelling preachers only. Other places, such as Lincoln, had them for the majority of services - 10 out of a possible 13; while Norton Disney and Bassingham, Hougham and Claypole, Wilsford and Swarby, Beckingham, Leadenham and Fulbeck, together with Frieston and Normanton never had a Sunday service taken by a travelling preacher, although all these places were visited by travelling preachers in the course of their week night duties.

It is difficult to assess why such centres as Sleaford and Rauceby and Walcott were singled out for the attention of the travelling preachers. This could at least be partly explained as a matter of convenience in that it fitted the planned movements of the preachers to have the services grouped in this way. On all Sundays except 2, after a preacher had been to Walcott for a 2 p.m. service, he moved on to Rowston, which was within walking distance. Some Sundays he took a 10 a.m. service in nearby Timberland before moving on to Walcott,

so supplying Timberland with a travelling preacher on the 3 Sundays out of 6 on which it had services in the quarter. Sleaford and Rauceby were planned as a pair so that preaching at 2 p.m. at Sleaford was always followed by a 6 p.m. service at Rauceby. These places had no particular importance as centres of Primitive Methodism which might explain their close relationship with the travelling preachers. They stand out on the plan because of this relationship rather than for other reasons. The 1821 plan is, in fact, the only reference that exists to Walcott as a centre of Primitive Methodist activity. It is the first reference to Sleaford, which did not, despite the fact that it was a market town, develop in any significant way as a Primitive Methodist centre until 1835, when the travelling preacher Joseph Middleton opened a room for worship there. The superintendent minister lived in the town before 1843, but it did not give its name to a circuit until then.¹ Rauceby had been visited by Primitive Methodists as early as 1820 and had a chapel by 1834, but beyond this it did not have any remarkable importance.² If Rauceby had not been included in the number of places entirely served by travelling preachers, it might be argued that weaker centres which subsequently vanished at least for a time, like Sleaford, or Walcott which vanished permanently, were given the attention of full-time ministers. However, Lincoln, the head town of

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1. P.M.Mag. VII, n.s., March 1837, p.104; 'Various Regulations ... , 1842', p.16 and '1843 General Minutes ...', p.6 in Smith (ed.) Minutary Records III, 1841-50, Leeds, 1852.
 2. P.M.Mag. V, n.s., May 1835, p.189; Ibid. 2, February 1821, p.46.

the circuit with its chapel and greater prestige, status and strength, had twice daily Sunday services at 2 p.m. and 6 p.m., and was served by 2 travelling preachers, J. Forman and Thomas Muxlow, for every Sunday of the quarter except 3.

These developments in early Primitive Methodist work, which do not follow any pattern dictated by demography or even accord with subsequent development within Primitive Methodism, reflect the unstructured growth of the connexion at this stage, when spiritual imperatives seemed to outweigh worldly considerations. This led to places like Walcott or Rowston being covered by the travelling preachers rather than places which were important because of the size of their population, or their role as a local administrative or marketing centre. H. B. Kendall noted the importance of villages and village chapels in the development of Primitive Methodism. He argued that at least until the 1850s rural Primitive Methodism gave the impetus to the connexion's work.¹

A similar process can be seen in attitudes to the full-time ministry. Spiritual imperatives were more powerful than any structures imposed by circuit or connexional authorities. William Fieldsend's journal covers his movements and work on one Sunday of the 1821 plan. On Sunday 12th August he was planned at Balderton, Nottinghamshire, at 2 p.m. and Newark, Nottinghamshire, at 6 p.m., but his diary shows him to have been in the village of Coddington, Nottinghamshire, about two miles outside Newark in the morning, and then at Balderton, which was about two miles away, in the afternoon. There was a love feast at Balderton, although this did not appear on the plan as such, but simply as a renewal of tickets. Fieldsend's

1. Kendall, Origin and History, vol.I, p.532.

description of this contrasts with the evening meeting he attended at Newark in accordance with the plan when he simply noted, 'In the evening spoke at Newark.'¹ The Balderton meeting

was a love-feast indeed. The power of God came down and all were bathed in tears. I think I never felt my soul so humbled before God. One cried aloud for mercy, two more were in deep distress. The effect of this glorious meeting will be seen in eternity. Glory to God.'²

These activities show that the plan was not the final source of authority for either the type or even the location of all activities within Primitive Methodism at this period. The Coddington meeting does not occur on it; the Balderton ticket renewal became a love feast at which strong emotions were outpoured; while the Newark meeting, also for ticket renewal and also part of the routine round of the travelling preacher's work, assumes no great importance in his estimation. Thus the preaching plan, at this period, only represents a very rough framework within which the value of any particular place is measured by what was accomplished in terms of Primitive Methodist spirituality. Such a view of connexional life, which placed great stress on spiritual success, would tend to blur the distinctions between travelling and local preachers so that the vagaries of planning, which emphasised what in secular terms might seem relatively unimportant places, counted for very little in an atmosphere where the spirit seemed to flow dramatically and perhaps unpredictably.

1. P.M.Mag. 3, April 1822, p.94

2. Ibid.

This relaxed attitude to the relative value of the ministrations of full or part-time preachers was well suited to a situation in which local preachers took the bulk of Sunday preaching engagements. On the 13 Sundays which appear on the plan, 27 local preachers and exhorters fulfilled a total of 83 engagements in south Lincolnshire, although this figure does not allow for double preaching by an individual at a particular place on any Sunday, or those places which have a double heading on the plan, where one preacher moved from one to the other to fulfil an engagement. All the places which were joined in pairs on the plan, except Branston and Branston Moor, had 2 services. Wellingore, which was on its own, had services at 2 p.m. and 6 p.m. Table X analyses the work of local preachers on the Lincoln circuit from the August to October 1821 plan, both in terms of the amount of contact each local centre had with individual local preachers and also in terms of the number of preaching engagements undertaken by each local preacher or exhorter. Thus, Branston and Branston Moor were visited by 9 different local preachers and J. Metham's work as a local preacher took him out to 3 different centres in south Lincolnshire - Branston and Branston Moor, Washingborough and Heighington, and Wellingore. Local preachers in south Lincolnshire undertook 83 engagements compared with the 35 Sunday appointments filled by full-time preachers in the area. However, while showing the amount of contact which places within the area had with preachers and the number of times individual preachers visited a particular place, Table X underestimates the actual number of services taken by local preachers because it does not allow for double engagements by one person on one

Sunday at one place.

The experience of each preaching place on the 1821 plan also varied in terms of the preachers they received. The tendency for travelling preachers to be at a limited number of places on Sundays has already been noted.¹ Places like Screddington, where the 6 fortnightly Sunday afternoon meetings were attended alternately by travelling and local preachers, were provided for in a different way from Hougham and Claypole, where the whole of the provision for Sunday services was by local preachers. In addition, the variety of contact which a place had with local preachers, as measured by the number of different people who preached there, varied a great deal. Washingborough and Heighington had 13 Sunday services attended by as many as 10 different local preachers, a travelling preacher, and the company, as well as a prayer meeting on one Sunday. The Primitive Methodists in these places therefore had an extremely varied religious life measured in terms of the number of preachers who took services there. Similarly, Branston and Branston Moor were visited by 9 local preachers, one of whom went twice, during the Sundays on the plan. They were also visited twice by the travelling preacher, J. Forman. Washingborough, Heighington and Branston were early centres of Primitive Methodist activity where the connexion's preachers had met with some degree of success in 1819 and 1820. It is probable that the W. Knott, who appears on the 1821 plan as a full-time preacher, was one of the early converts made by J. Hallsworth during his first missionary efforts in Heighington,

1. See above pp.173-175.

Table X - Local Preachers' Engagements, Lincoln Circuit, August - October 1821

Preachers	Branston & Branston Moor	Washingborough & Heighington	Wellingore	Scredington	Heckington	Ruskington	Timberland	Rowston	Norton Disney & Bassingham	Hougham & Claypole	Wilsford & Swarby	Beckingham	Leadenham & Fulbeck	Frieston & Normanton	TOTAL
J. Metham	1	1	1												3
J. Vickers	1	1													2
W. Harrison			1		2	2			1	2	1		2	2	13
T. Scott	2	1	1												4
J. Wood									1	2		1			4
T. Joynes									1	2		1			4
E. Swinton	1	1													2
M. Needham										2		1			3
W. Sharp									1	2		1			4
T. Isott	1	1	1												3
T. Pepperdine			2		1	1					1	1	1	2	9
C. Hare			1						1	1		1	3		7
J. Hall	1	1	1												3
M. Cotham						1								1	2
- Cheadle										1					1
T. Dance	1	1						1							3
W. Nelson	1	1	1											1	4
W. Yates		1													1
M. Nelson	1														1
A. Brothwell				2	1	1	1	1			2				8
M. Hollsworth		1			1	1						2			5
H. Hoff			1						1	1					3
J. Baildham					1										1
G. Vickers			1												1
A. Smith				1		1					1				3
M. Allen						1									1
J. Harrison					1	2					1	3		1	8
TOTAL PREACHERS	9	10	10	2	6	8	1	2	6	8	5	8	3	5	<u>103</u> <u>83</u>

which produced 2 local preachers.¹ These vigorous centres, with their varied spiritual life, contrast with the places which needed greater attention from the full-time preachers.

The distribution of engagements among the local preachers who appear on the 1821 plan provides further evidence for the relatively unstructured state of the connexion at this stage of its development, or at least, the lack of weight given to secular status as opposed to spiritual worth in this formative period. It was usual for Methodist preaching plans which did not show preachers' names in alphabetical order to give some sort of rank to them in terms of their seniority.² Preachers' names on the 1821 plan were not listed in alphabetical order, but the presence of the full-time preachers' names at the head of the list, again not in alphabetical order, suggests that some sort of ranking according to status was being employed. However, this order does not seem to accord with any special status enjoyed by preachers in terms of the number of engagements they undertook. Thus it was possible for a local preacher on trial, such as A. Brothwell, to undertake a total of 8 engagements over the whole circuit, one more than the 2 preachers who headed the list of local preachers and above the average for the whole list of local preachers. This also considerably exceeded those of some of the experienced local preachers such as M. Cotham, who took 3, and - Cheadle who took 2. Brothwell was one of a minority of preachers who had 8 or more engagements. Such a situation fitted a stage in the connexion's development when

1. P.M.Mag. 2, February 1821, pp.31-32; Ibid. X, January 1840, p.6; Ibid. 2, February 1821, p.45.

2. William Leary, Methodist Preaching Plans, Sudbrooke, Lincoln, 1977, p.12.

ideas of status and position within it were not yet fully developed. It also represented the tradition of 'free gospelism' which had been part of the ideology of the connexion's formative period when divine inspiration was seen as the criterion for leadership in religious life.¹

The links between the head town, Lincoln, and the other places in the circuit were weak measured in terms of the flow of preachers between them. Only 3 local preachers occupied the pulpit at Lincoln in the period of the 1821 plan and none of these was active in south Lincolnshire, while only one of the 2 full-time ministers who preached in Lincoln, J. Forman, visited any of the south Lincolnshire preaching places. These were Branston and Branston Moor, and Washingborough and Heighington, which were near to the city. In view of the great distances which needed to be covered to reach all parts of the circuit, the spiritual fare of the country places would tend to reflect local conditions. Their lives would be shaped more from within themselves than from outside. This weakened the connexion's institutions and, despite the efforts of such leaders as Bourne and Clowes to impose order on the connexion as a whole, became a factor in the period of crisis which developed in the connexion between 1824 and 1828.

However, the weeknight activities shown on the 1821 plan show a different pattern from that on Sundays. All places were visited on a regular basis by a travelling preacher and the circuit was divided into an East Part, South Part and

1. See, for example, John T. Wilkinson, Hugh Bourne 1772-1852, 1952, p.79.

Lincoln Circuit. A group of full-time preachers, W. Fieldsend, W. Knott and Ann Otter, worked in the South Part which comprised all the south Lincolnshire preaching places together with Newark and Balderton, Nottinghamshire, but excluding Lincoln, Branston, Branston Moor and Heighington, which were on the Lincoln section of the weeknight plan. All the places which had Sunday preaching, except Washingborough, appear on this plan. They had fortnightly meetings except at Lincoln, where there were weekly meetings. There are no places with weeknight services which do not appear on the Sunday service plan, although provision is divided between North and South Rauceby. The pattern which lay behind this regular round of visiting by the full-time travelling preachers, was at least in part based on geographical considerations. For example, on Monday 30th July, Ann Otter was at South Rauceby, on Tuesday at North Rauceby, on Wednesday at Wilsford, Thursday at Swarby, and at Screddington on Friday, where she also preached at 2 p.m. on Sunday afternoon before moving on to Heckington for a 6 p.m. service. William Knott undertook almost exactly the same range of engagements a fortnight later, although he did not preach at Screddington on the Sunday afternoon, but was at Ruskington instead. He then moved on to a round of engagements at Heckington, Sleaford, Walcott, and Timberland. On the weeknight plan each travelling preacher repeated the itinerary of the other at fortnightly intervals.

This well-ordered and tight pattern of weeknight services served the solid inner core of Primitive Methodist membership. It meant that the full-time preachers could be kept in touch with the weekly or fortnightly leaders' meetings of preachers,

stewards and class leaders. Through these official or through personal contact they would also be in touch with the weekly class meetings of local societies which were the spiritual heart of Primitive Methodism at which each member stated, 'with simplicity their religious experience, and the various dealings of God with them: the leader to give such advice, instructions, etc., to each of as their state may require.'¹ As well as supervising an individual's spiritual life, the class meeting encouraged him or her to turn their backs on worldly pastimes and was a means of supervising individual moral conduct.²

Despite the great amount of variety and local freedom which existed around the more highly controlled inner core of Primitive Methodism at this stage of its development, the demands of the regular preaching round as set out on the plan in fact inhibited the missionary initiatives of the full-time preachers. The Sunday services on the plan represented the public face of Primitive Methodism which the less committed could drift in and out of without necessarily becoming involved in the regular weeknight activities of the connexion, but the need to expand was also recognised. The weekday plan set aside a number of days on each full-time preacher's programme for 'Mission'. Each of the 3 travelling preachers in the South Part of the Lincoln circuit was committed to spending Tuesdays to Fridays inclusive once a fortnight on missionary work after

1. 'Minutes of a Meeting held at Nottingham ... 1819 ... ,' p.11 in Smith (ed.), Minutary Records I, 1814-1830.

2. Ibid.

visiting Normanton on the Monday evening. In all cases except one, this followed Sunday preaching at Sleaford and Rauceby and was followed by a Sunday without a preaching engagement. The other missionary activity on the plan for this part of the Lincoln circuit was a regular Monday engagement after preaching on Sundays at either Walcott and Rowston or just at Rowston. This was followed by Tuesday at Rowston again. Similarly, a Tuesday was given over to missionary work on the Western Part of the circuit when the travelling preachers were at Beckingham on the Monday preceding and at Leadenham on the following Wednesday. There was also provision for missionary work on the Lincoln section of the circuit, but this seems to have been less directly concerned with the south Lincolnshire area and probably involved work to the north and east of Lincoln.

This tight planning of missionary activity, with the need to fulfil other engagements before and after, would tend to limit its geographical extent and location, as well as the amount of time devoted to it. This is especially true of the single days given over to mission which had a fixed engagement on either side. The four consecutive days of mission work gave greater flexibility, and since the travelling preachers were free on the Sunday following them was a more open-ended commitment. The travelling preachers on the South Part of the plan were more strongly tied to missionary work than those on the Lincoln and East Part. This could reflect the needs of the area as perceived by the compiler of the plan or reflect the amount of time available to the travelling preachers after fulfilling their weeknight obligations. The greater the number of societies

needing their attention during the week, the less the time the full-time preachers would have available, so that an increasingly strong organisation inhibited missionary work. The inclusion of it on the circuit plan represents an attempt to continue to give it emphasis, but work within even this sort of restraint represented a move away from the free-ranging initiatives of the connexion's early preachers.

This development is paralleled by the 1819 rule which gave a greater measure of control by the circuit committee over the travelling preachers. They were to be kept informed of 'the spread of the work of God' and the work of the societies through the journal which the travelling preachers were to keep,

from which extracts shall be made, giving an account of their success, and other necessary information [which] shall be communicated monthly to the Superintendents. ... the Superintendents must transmit the same, or copies thereof, to their respective Circuit Committees, together with extracts from their own journals.¹

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The period from 1824 to 1828 was described by Kendall as one of 'depression and crisis', when despite expansion in the north and west of the country, other parts of the connexion either lost members or were at best in a static situation.² There were signs of this approaching crisis in a slowdown in the overall growth rate of the connexion compared with earlier periods. The Lincoln circuit grew from 655 to 664 between

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1. 'Minutes of a Meeting held at Nottingham ... 1819 ...' in Smith (ed.), Minutary Records I, 1814-1830, pp.6-7.
 2. Kendall, Origin and History, vol.I, p.434.

1822 and 1823, an increase of 1% compared with nearly 18% in the connexion as a whole. This was not due to any diminution of the circuit's activities in terms of the number of travelling preachers it employed. There were 4 stationed there in 1822 and 6 in 1823. Similarly, in the connexion as a whole their numbers grew by 33% from 152 to 202, without any corresponding growth in members.¹

The report of an open air camp meeting which was held at Lincoln in June 1822, reflected this loss of momentum. It contrasted the 'several hundred persons' who attended it with the larger attendance the previous year and commented that,

These enthusiasts, from some cause or other, seem to have declined in public interest in our neighbourhood; and we understand that the chapel recently erected by an enterprising brother is likely, notwithstanding its stable foundation,² to prove a rather precarious speculation.

By 1824 Lincoln circuit's membership had dropped by just over 49% to 338, while the number of ministers was down to 3. This can be explained, at least in part, by changes to what had become a very fluid circuit boundary.³ There are no membership figures available for the developing Boston circuit at this period, which may well have taken away members from Lincoln and thus depressed its rate of growth in 1822-23. Balderton became the head of a circuit in 1824 covering the area which became Fulbeck circuit in 1833, so taking away members from Lincoln in that area. Grantham area was covered

1. '1822 General Minutes ...', pp.17, 19, and 'Primitive Methodist Connexion Minutes ... 1823', Leeds, p.7 in Smith (ed.), Minutary Records I, 1814-1830; for south Lincolnshire and national membership statistics see Appendix A.
2. L.R.S.M., 21st June 1822.
3. 'Large Minutes of the Primitive Methodist Connexion, 1824', p.33 in Smith (ed.), Minutary Records I, 1814-1830.

by Nottingham, although Lincoln ministers were working near Grantham in 1822.¹ In 1825 it was resolved at the December Quarterly Meeting that a room was to be fitted up in Grantham and the town, together with Billingborough, Aslackley (Aslackby), Edenham and Rippingale, was to form a separate mission. Money was allocated to support this in 1826.²

In 1825 and 1826 no circuit membership figures are available. By 1827, Lincoln had 234, Boston 153 and Balderton 240 members. By 1828, Boston had declined to 143 and Lincoln to 221, but Balderton had increased to 249, including 39 members on trial. Like Lincoln and Boston, its number of full members had declined over the year.³

John Petty, in his history of the connexion, analysed the reasons for the period of crisis in Primitive Methodism, which shook Hugh Bourne's confidence in the possibility of its continuance:

The extension and increase of the connexion had been amazingly rapid. Societies arose in quick succession in most parts of England, and speedily became both self-sustained and self-governed. These were composed of members whose experience in church affairs was small, and whose views of ecclesiastical discipline were necessarily limited and imperfect. It is no wonder that when trials came many of these young, inexperienced, societies should be greatly agitated and suffer material declension in numbers.⁴

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1. P.M.Mag. 4, November 1823, p.252; '1822 General Minutes ...', p.19 in Smith (ed.), Minutary Records I, 1814-1830.
 2. Kendall, Origin and History, vol. I, p.262.
 3. John Rylands University Library of Manchester (subsequently J.R.L.), Methodist Archives, MAW MS 730, Primitive Methodist Connexion, Journal of the Conference or Annual Meeting 1, 15th May 1827 - 11th June 1847, pp.11-12, 25-26.
 4. Petty, History of the Primitive Methodist Connexion, pp.250-251.

Difficulties in the government of the connexion brought financial problems. Many circuits had large debts by 1826 and the Nottingham Conference of that year refused to allow circuits to fall into further debt and left them to overcome this by reducing preachers' salaries. This put pressure on preachers to increase membership and hence contributions to the connexion and in the course of a year 30 travelling preachers left the connexion.¹ The rapid increase in number of full-time ministers in the connexion, which Lincoln circuit had shared, had meant that

sufficient numbers possessing the requisite qualifications could not be obtained, and too little care was exercised in the selection. Unsuitable persons were thus introduced into the regular ministry, who proved to be a burden, and, in some instances, a curse rather than a blessing. The societies languished under their inefficient labours, and even once flourishing circuits became feeble.²

In 1827 Conference tightened the connexion's control over new travelling preachers.³ However, after allowing for problems in interpreting the figures caused by circuit boundary changes, there is no evidence to suggest that there was any massive retrenchment in the numbers of travelling preachers in south Lincolnshire. Lincoln circuit had 3 in 1824, 3 in 1825, 1 in 1826 with 'One to be sent', 2 in 1827 and 2 in 1828, while Boston had 2 in 1826, 2 in 1827 and 2 in 1828.⁴ Lincoln

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1. Kendall, Origin and History, vol. I, p.435.
 2. Petty, History of the Primitive Methodist Connexion, p.251.
 3. J.R.L., MAW MS 730 Primitive Methodist Conference Journal 1, 1827-1847, p.15.
 4. 'Large Minutes ... 1824', p.33; 'Large Minutes ... 1825', p.11; '1826 Minutes ...', pp.21-22; '1827 Minutes ...', pp.20-22; '1828 General Minutes ...', pp.51 and 59 in Smith (ed.), Minutary Records I, 1814-1830.

circuit was able to 'call out' or support, at the start of his ministry in 1825 one new travelling preacher, Richard Saul, and had previously called out William Paddison in 1823. However, Boston, which had supported two new ministers in 1822, brought none forward in the period of crisis.¹ A preaching plan for the Lincoln circuit for 1828 also reflects the tighter degree of control over the whole organisation of the connexion which developed after the crisis years of 1824 to 1828. As many as 5 travelling preachers are detailed on this to attend a camp meeting at Scamblesby, Lindsey, on 22nd June.²

Until circuit statistics appear again on a regular basis from 1827, it is difficult to build up a general picture of the state of Primitive Methodism in south Lincolnshire. Places where a presence had been established as early as 1818 or 1819 were lost and missionary work in them had to be repeated.³ In others there was continuity from the 1820s.⁴

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The collapse and retreat which ended the first expansionist charismatic phase of the connexion's development was succeeded by a period of consolidation and expansion. This was, however, built on a different basis with an increasing

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1. 'General List of the Travelling Preachers', in General Consolidated Minutes 1828, pp.57-59.
 2. C.L.L. Broadsheet 1957, Lincoln Circuit. Plan of the Primitive Methodist Preachers, 1828.
 3. Kendall, Origin and History, vol.I, p.465.
 4. For example Timberland, see above p.167, and Claypole P.M.Mag. 9, April 1828, p.141.

reliance on secure institutions to safeguard the future of Primitive Methodism. Chapel building was an important part of this process and provided a tangible measure of the connexion's development. This aspect of the connexion's life, depended on such outside circumstances as the acquisition of land and a favourable social environment. The 1829 returns for Kesteven were made at the beginning of this process and after the period of crisis. They showed, in the scattered distribution of places of worship, that the social and economic constraints which might have affected more highly developed institutions were less important to the early Primitive Methodists.¹ By 1851 the Primitive Methodists of south Lincolnshire had been successful in increasing the number of separate chapel buildings which they possessed, and were an increasingly successful institution in village life. At the same time their work was becoming increasingly confined to open villages in category IV.²

The developing institutional life of the connexion meant that a tighter discipline had to be imposed on preachers. The older style of evangelisation was represented by Edward Vaughan, a travelling preacher at Boston who died in 1828. He was said to be a man 'of slender abilities in regard to management; but in the converting line the Lord put great honour upon him.'³ The 1821 plan showed the beginnings of a curtailment of missionary activity, which was limited by the constraints of the plan.⁴ By 1834 punctual attendance at

1. See above pp.150-151.

2. For the classification of types of village see above pp.49-50.

3. P.M.Mag. VI, n.s., November 1836, p.438.

4. See above pp.183-185.

appointments in fulfilment of the obligations imposed by the organisation had become an important element in the life of the connexion's preachers. Joseph Middleton, a travelling preacher on the Fulbeck circuit, drew attention to the need for regularity in keeping appointments in an address on the circuit's December preaching plan:

Address to the Preachers

Dear Brethren, - It is particularly requested that you will carefully look over the plan, mark your appointments, and punctually attend to them; and, as you value your souls' salvation, admit nothing as an excuse for neglecting any of them, but what will bear the strictest scrutiny at the judgment day. Remember, Brethren, it is upon your faithfulness, zeal, and united efforts that the prosperity of God's cause in the circuit, in a very great measure depends. If you neglect your appointments, you miss your reward - injure your souls - stab the cause of God - expose the members to reproach, and strengthen the hands of the enemy.

To avoid these evils is certainly desirable; and this you may do by conscientiously attending to your appointments.

Think within yourselves, 'If I neglect this appointment I may die before I have another. And if I should live, some of the congregation, who are yet in their sins, may die, and their souls be eternally lost.' Now for ought you know, and had you been there, you might have been instrumental in the saving of these. May the great Head of the Church stir you up to diligence, and prosper Zion.
Amen.¹

A chapel building not only gave an institutional base to a local congregation, but also conferred increased respectability in the eyes of the outside world. It was necessary to expand the seating provision in the Primitive Methodist chapel at Kirton-in-Lindsey, Lindsey, by erecting a gallery in 1835.

1. P.M.Mag. VIII, n.s., March 1837, p.104.

The chapel was described as the best in the town and the society was characterised as 'both respectable and numerous.' Institutional respectability brought with it a type of spirituality which was both accepted and understood by the outside world:

The ministers and official characters of this body of professing christians stoop not to meddle or take part in either political or religious controversy: inspired by a nobler principle, they go right forward in the good work of preaching the unsearchable riches of Christ: this being their motto and practice, their hands are pure that bear the vessels of the Lord and God has prospered them ...¹

Primitive Methodist chapels being built in the Grimsby, Lindsey, area were seen as the means whereby 'their members will be augmented and their respectability increased.'² The opening of a chapel in the village of Lutton, which was divided by tithe disputes and said to need a resident clergyman, meant that the Primitives could be seen as a viable alternative to the established church. They represented 'religion in reality' as opposed to the 'gospel according to law.'³

When the chapel at Donington was opened on Christmas Day 1834, it was seen as a source of spiritual strength for the village's Primitive Methodists: 'The presence of the Lord was felt in a very peculiar manner; yea, the divine glory overshadowed us, and the shout of triumph ascended to the skies.' The chapel conferred prestige on the local society, which was less than two years old and, as well as being a sign of the society's enhanced status, it also played a modest part in the village's economic life since it contained a water cistern.

1. L.R.S.M, 24th July 1835.

2. Ibid., 6th March 1835.

3. Ibid., 20th June 1834.

This held nearly twenty hogsheads of water which were to be sold to pay for chapel lighting and cleaning.¹ The chapel probably had the words Primitive Methodist included in its title causing a correspondent to the Stamford Mercury to contrast what he thought was an assumed name with the general usage of Ranter.² In this case the acquisition of a chapel building marked a turning point between the Ranter past and the increasingly institutionalised future, which was marked by the use of the official title Primitive Methodist on the new building. However, in August 1842, a few months before the Donington Primitive Methodists were to further improve their chapel by adding a gallery to it, they retained enough of their Ranter origins to shock an Anglican sympathiser with their 'prayers, singing, shouting, and preaching' at a camp meeting held outside the village.³ According to the travelling preacher Joseph Middleton, the expansion of Primitive Methodism in Rauceby depended on the right sort of building being available for it. It had 'been impeded for want of a larger place of worship.' At the opening services of the new chapel in October 1834 liberal collections were reported and the fact that nearly all the seats in the chapel were let was thought to open up 'a good prospect.' The opening of the Whaplode chapel in February 1836 meant, it was reported, that the prospects for Primitive Methodism in the place had become 'very encouraging.' Frieston chapel, opened in the same year, had a 'well built BRICK pulpit' - a sign of increased status for

1. P.M.Mag. V, n.s., October 1835, p.392.

2. L.R.S.M., 5th June 1835.

3. Ibid., 19th August 1842; 16th June 1843.

the preacher in the newly institutionalised Primitive Methodism.¹ Open air evangelism still retained an important role in the life of local Primitive Methodist communities even after they had acquired chapels, but the buildings provided a focus for this. When camp meetings were held at Claypole, Fulbeck and Rauceby, in the summer of 1835, they were followed by love feasts in the more controlled atmosphere of the villages' chapels.²

If it was at all possible, buildings for worship were provided fairly quickly after a society had been established. Whaplode's chapel was begun in 1835 after the village had been re-evangelised earlier that year following a history of periodic attempts to establish Primitive Methodism. Previously preachers 'met with persecution from some of the baser sort of its inhabitants; and after having expended much labour upon it, have had to leave it.'³ Similarly, Moulton Seas End chapel was begun in May 1835 following renewed preaching in the hamlet by preachers from the Wisbech circuit in 1833.⁴ A school room had been opened for worship in Sleaford in April 1835 while there was still only 'a prospect of raising up a cause in this town' and barns were used as temporary meeting places at Welbourn Navenby and Leadenham.⁵

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1. P.M.Mag. V, n.s., May 1835, pp.189-90; VI, n.s., September 1836, p.347 ; the chapel at Frieston was probably in the hamlet of Frieston, in the parish of Caythorpe, where there was preaching in 1821. (See above p. 170)
 2. Ibid. VIII, n.s., March 1837, pp.104-105.
 3. P.M.Mag. VI, n.s., September 1836, p.347.
 4. Ibid., p.346.
 5. Ibid. VIII, n.s., March 1837, pp.104-105.

The outward characteristics of a chapel building were seen as a reflection of the spiritual attributes of the community who worshipped in it. The Donington Primitive Methodists became in the eyes of outsiders as prosperous in spiritual terms as the building they opened in December 1834.¹ They had 'a very commodious building greatly admired by the public for strength and neatness', which was said to reflect much credit on the builders. With a brick wall on both sides and iron palisades 30 feet in width at the front, the chapel had 'a very pretty appearance', which was lovingly described in the Primitive Methodist Magazine².

Visits by the Primitives in 1833 to Holbeach Bank, 'a small benighted hamlet situate about two miles from Holbeach town', brought success there. The future prosperity of Primitive Methodism in the place was seen as directly related to the need for a chapel. This was expressed in Old Testament imagery:

In 1835, we found that the cause had suffered, and was likely to suffer for want of a convenient place to rest the ark of the Lord. The cry of the people was, 'Give us room that we may dwell'. We decided upon building a chapel. The Lord made our way plain before us; the building was completed ...³

Signs of divine favour often marked chapel openings, thus sanctioning the step the local community had taken. Holbeach Bank 'was crowded to excess. A gracious influence rested upon the congregations, and the collections exceeded our most sanguine expectations.'⁴ The congregations at the opening

1. See above pp.192-193.

2. P.M.Mag. V, n.s., October 1835, p.392.

3. Ibid. VI, n.s., September 1836, pp.346-347.

4. Ibid., p.347.

services of Whaplode Primitive Methodist chapel in February 1836 'were large, and the services were made a blessing. We are happy to say that since the opening of the above chapel, our prospects in this place have become very encouraging. To God be all the glory.'¹

At Gosberton Clough chapel opening in April 1835 the services were said to have been 'a powerful time' and 'Many tears were shed ... and the glory of God filled the place. Halleluia! Halleluia! for the Lord God Omnipotent reigneth.'² The conversions which marked the opening services at Martin chapel, in the Lincoln circuit in July 1837, were a sign that 'the spirit of God accompanied the word of his grace.' This atmosphere spilled over into the weeknight services, not only in the village but also in the neighbourhood, so that 'Several souls were convinced of sin, and one, on the Monday evening, professed to obtain peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ; and two more on the Tuesday evening at Timberland.'³

* * *

The Primitive Methodist chapel at Fulbeck was among the earliest belonging to the connexion in south Lincolnshire. It was described in 1851 as a separate building used exclusively as a place of worship built in 1825.⁴ Claypole, which was also a separate building used exclusively as a place of worship,

1. P.M.Mag. VI, n.s. September 1836, p.347.

2. Ibid. V, n.s., October 1835, p.393.

3. Ibid. VII, n.s., December 1837; pp.472-473.

4. P.R.O., H.O. 129/442/5/8/16.

had been built in 1826.¹ Fosdyke chapel was built in the same year. The site for it was conveyed by John Johnson and others to a group of trustees on 18th February 1826 for a sum of £2. When Johnson died in 1828, it was said that he had opened his house to Primitive Methodist preachers 'though it was almost at the peril of his life; for the parishioners were so irritated against anything that was good, that in every point that was possible, they frowned upon him.'² There was a chapel at Little London, near Spalding, in 1829, which appeared in the 1851 religious census returns, although this building may have replaced an older one.³ The Primitive Methodists in Timberland met in 1851 in a building said to have been used exclusively as a place of worship and described as a meeting house, but it was not a separate building. The return was signed by a Samuel Toynbee, the owner of the building, so it is probable that this was the same house which another Samuel Toynbee, who died in 1850, had allowed to be used for Primitive Methodist meetings from about 1820, or a meeting which had developed on the property of one of his relatives.⁴

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1. P.R.O., H.O. ^{129/}442/5/12/23.
 2. Ibid., 425/11/2; Boston Centenary Methodist Church Circuit Chapel Deeds, Packet No.31, Fosdyke; P.M.Mag. I, n.s., November, 1830, p.396.
 3. Spalding Gentlemen's Society (subsequently S.G.S.), Methodist Archives, Primitive Methodist Church, Account Book for Little London 1842-1883. The cover is endorsed 'The Sunday School was begun in the old chapel at Christmas 1829 by Thomas Hurdy'; P.R.O., H.O. 129/423/4/12/13.
 4. P.R.O., H.O. 129/426/1/4/10; see above p. 167 for early Primitive Methodism in Timberland.

By 1830 there were 13 chapels in the Fulbeck, Boston, Lincoln, Balderton, Bottesford and Donington circuits, which covered south Lincolnshire. The number had increased to 19 in 1838, but no figures are available for 1839. Boston circuit had 5 chapels in 1827 and this continued to be the number until 1832 when they increased to 8 and then to 11 by 1835. There was a drop to 10 in 1836, an increase to 11 in 1837, and a further decrease to 7 in 1838. Chapel statistics are available for the Lincoln circuit from 1829 when there were 6 chapels. The number did not increase until 1831, when there were 8. The number of chapels in the Fulbeck circuit increased from 3 to 5 in 1835 and remained at 5 until 1838. The period of greatest increase in the number of chapels in Lincoln circuit was between 1830 and 1831, when the number rose from 6 to 8. This reached 11 in 1835 and 1836.¹ Of the 44 Primitive Methodist chapels enumerated in south Lincolnshire in the 1851 Census of Religious Worship 19 had been built in the 1830s, although these figures do not include chapels which had been built in the period but replaced by 1851. Four had been built in 1834, 3 in 1835, 2 in 1836, 2 in 1837, 4 in 1838, and 4 in 1839.²

Building chapels laid increased financial obligations on the local Primitive Methodist community. The Boston circuit report for the year ending March 1839 showed that 4 chapels had been built during the year. It had been possible, in these cases, to ensure that they were 'placed in easy

1. J.R.L., MAW MS 730, Primitive Methodist Conference Journal 1, 1827-1847, pp. 11-12, 25-26, 37-38, 54, 67-68, 77-78, 90, 103-104, 121, 141, 161, 179.

2. P.R.O., H.O. 129/175, 421-428, 442.

circumstances.' The circuit was 'doing well' and its financial situation was 'good.'¹ Chapels had been opened in 1837-38 at Freiston Shore, Benington and Wrangle Bank. There had been a society at Freiston Shore for about 14 years, with a membership of about 9. However, this group did not build the chapel unaided and the degree of middle class support which the Freiston Shore chapel attracted, together with the amount of help which seems to have come from outside the connexion when other chapels were being built in the area, shows how chapel building could attract this type of support. Even if the social base of a local Primitive Methodist community was a comparatively humble one, once it began to create institutions with which outsiders could identify, it gained their approval.² The social status of the benefactors of Holbeach chapel, which was opened in July 1834, were the subject of special comment: 'Mr. Flint, the builder, kindly gave us fifty pounds. Mrs. Brown, a respectable lady at Holbeach, laid the first stone and gave five pounds, and other friends were very liberal.'³

Freiston Shore was a bathing resort about five miles outside Boston. By the middle of the century it had 'a number of comfortable lodging-houses and two good hotels pleasantly situated near the sea bank' and was 'much resorted to in summer by the people of Boston, and other places, desirous of enjoying the salubrious exercise of sea bathing, for which there is ample accommodation.'⁴ There was also a community of fishermen

1. P.M.Mag. IX, n.s., November 1839, p.438.

2. Ibid., December 1839, pp.458-62.

3. Ibid. IV, n.s., October 1834, p.399.

4. White, Directory of Lincolnshire, 1856, p.323.

in the village. The resort was therefore very much in the public eye and the erection of a chapel there would confer a measure of prestige and respectability on the Primitive Methodist community. Middle and upper class patronage was fully exploited as a means of raising money for the building. The travelling preacher, Jeremiah Gilbert, begged a sovereign subscription from Henry Handley the M.P. for south Lincolnshire. The ground for the chapel was given by a Mr. Bates 'a gentleman bather', who, although he belonged to the Church of England, was also a liberal contributor at the time the chapel opened and helped to beg funds for it. The building was not, however, entirely funded by outsiders. William Simpson, a fisherman, contributed a sovereign, and when it was opened over £50 of its total cost of £70 remained to be paid off by the 13 members of the local society. They were, however, now part of the established religious scene in the area and by filling a gap as the only place of religious worship within two miles of Freiston Shore, gained additional prestige for their society. The chapel was used by strangers who came to bathe, while the number of members in the society increased from 9 to 13 by the time it was built.¹

Like Freiston Shore, Benington had been a centre of Primitive Methodist activity for a number of years before its chapel was built in 1838. There had been preaching in the village for ten years or more and the society had looked for a piece of ground for several years. The travelling preacher, Jeremiah Gilbert, was the driving force behind the building of

1. P.M. Mag. IX, n.s., December 1839, p.459.

the chapel. He solicited the money to buy the land from a local family of farmers, graziers and landowners. In addition £30 of the £95 needed to meet the cost of the chapel was raised from its trustees and inhabitants of the village, together with outside help from people in other villages. The Benington Primitives were not in a position to tap such a wide range of patronage as those at Freiston Shore, since the village was predominantly a community of small landowners and working farmers. However, the erection of the chapel there evoked a fairly widespread degree of support from both inside and outside the local community. When it was opened in October 1838 its seats were all let, more were wanted and the chapel was said to be in easy circumstances.¹

Wrangle Bank chapel was opened in December 1838 after about four years' missionary work in the area, which followed earlier attempts at preaching. One family, called Hobson, had entertained Primitive Methodist preachers and allowed preaching at their house. They were able to give the land on which to build the chapel, Mr. Hobson also headed the subscription list with a donation of a sovereign, led all the bricks for the building as well as dealing with other matters. In addition Mrs. Hobson subscribed 5s., their son 2s.6d., their daughters 2s.6d., and 1s., and their servant 1s. Collections were also made among the inhabitants, the trustees are said to have subscribed liberally and to have carted slate, lime, sand, wood, and other building materials. In this case a local élite, not

1. P.M. Mag. IX, n.s., December 1830, p.460; White, Directory of Lincolnshire, 1856, pp.319-320.

too far removed socially from their neighbours, since Mrs. Hobson agreed to clean the chapel free for a year, provided the leadership round which the travelling preacher was able to establish a presence in a place. Like Freiston Shore, the chapel at Wrangle Bank was distant from other places of worship. There was no other within two miles of it, while some of the inhabitants of the fen were about three and a half miles from any place of worship so that it could develop into a local religious establishment in the absence of any alternative opportunities for worship.¹

The process by which Primitive Methodism began to occupy a more central place in the life of the communities where it was established, and to acquire chapel buildings as part of this, can also be seen in the towns of south Lincolnshire. Boston's new chapel was built in 1839, the same year that the Wesleyan Methodists, the Methodist New Connexion and General and Particular Baptists were engaged in building or were about to build.² The chapel at Boston replaced a smaller building.³ Its place at the head of a circuit, together with the need to compete with other non-conformist bodies in the town, probably accounts for its much greater cost compared with the chapels built in villages at that date. The debt on the building when it was completed, together with what remained of the debt on the old building, was nearly £600 and although it was reduced to £430 by 1841, it continued to be a burden on the society.⁴

1. P.M. Mag. IX, n.s., December 1839, pp. 461-462.

2. L.R.S.M., 13th September 1839.

3. P.M. Mag. XI, n.s., November 1841, p.409; L.R.S.M., 29th October 1847.

4. P.M. Mag. XI, n.s., November 1841, p.409.

Lincoln's Primitive Methodists opened their Portland Place chapel on Christmas Day 1839. Until a piece of ground had been bought in this 'respectable' situation near the middle of the city, they had used a succession of premises. Six months earlier a newspaper report had compared Primitive Methodism's activities in the Lincoln area to

the ostrich dropping its eggs to be hatched by the sun or devoured by the crocodile ... scattering good that seldom or never comes to perfection in the hearer. Were they to cease their itinerancy, and station their ministers, they might obtain a just influence in the religious community.¹

Their progress in Lincoln from a relatively obscure position was described in August 1839:

The humble dissenters composing this lowly sect, retaining to an iota all their pristine peculiarities of dress and mode of worship, have for many years held their meetings in a small chapel situate in one of the most forbidding parts of the city, want of means precluding their removal to a more commodious and respectable site. Poor, unrecognised, despised by their opulent Wesleyan brethren, they have at length from the force of circumstances risen into a renewed and increasing importance.²

The opening of the Lincoln chapel was the culmination of a long climb to respectability and a permanent position in the local community. It was felt that if they were able to 'retain their zeal and humility', they would 'quickly rise to importance in Lincoln: the want of a fit place of worship has hitherto been the main drawback on this progress ...'³ At the time of the chapel opening it was said that

1. L.R.S.M., 7th June 1839.

2. Ibid., 16th August 1839.

3. Ibid., 13th September 1839.

The friends of dissent will be glad to learn to what an extent the endeavours of the humble Primitive Methodists have been patronised in Lincoln; the public subscriptions towards building their chapel amount to 80 £, and 50 £.8s. was collected on laying the foundation-stone and at the opening meetings; the sittings in the chapel are all let readily, and the various dissenting ministers in the city, in the true spirit of christianity, have cordially taken the Primitive ministers by the hand, and determined to second their efforts; so that now the Primitives may be pronounced to have obtained a foot-hold amongst the community, and to be in a fair way for ensuring permanent prosperity.¹

The chapel, including the land on which it stood and its fittings, had cost £765. Subscribers had included the city's M.P., Sir Edward Lytton Bulwer, and at the opening services the connexion's own preachers were joined by a Baptist minister. When the foundation stone of the chapel was laid, the large gathering had included some of the city's gentry who had contributed liberally to the collection.²

Grantham had 'been frequently attempted by our preachers, and as frequently given up, without any hope of success.'

Sometimes the prospects for success

were flattering, and at others they were withered and blasted. Sometimes we were ready to faint with excessive labour beneath the scorching sun; and at others, towards the close of the summer, shivering with chilling blasts, and a number of other things with which we had to contend for the space of twenty-one weeks in the open air before we could obtain a suitable place in which to worship God.³

The acquisition of a room capable of containing three hundred people brought success. A society of over seventy people was formed and it was reported that

1. L.R.S.M., 17th January 1840.

2. P.M. Mag. X, n.s., February 1840, p.40; May 1840, pp.181-182.

3. Ibid. VI, n.s., November 1836, p.429.

In this place sinners have been awakened, penitents have cried for mercy, and have earnestly and sincerely sought salvation; and, what is still more gratifying, we have not only seen them seeking and crying for mercy, but have also witnessed their happy deliverance from₁ darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God.

* * *

There seems to have been no clear relationship between the growth rate of the membership of the Primitive Methodist connexion as a whole and the growth in the number of its buildings. Years of high membership growth did not produce an immediate effect in terms of the number of chapels which were built, nor is there any evidence of a time lag with an increase in the number of chapels following at an interval behind membership increases. The number of chapels which were built increased steadily in the whole connexion and was proportionately greater than the growth in the number of members.

There were 421 chapels in the whole connexion in 1830 and 1025 by 1839. In the same period membership nearly doubled from 35,535 to 70,396. The years of greatest growth in the number of chapels in this period were 1834-1835, when the total increased by nearly 14% from 601 to 684, 1835-1836, when the number increased by just over 17% from 684 to 802, and 1836-1837, when there was a 15% increase in chapels from 802² to 923.

1. P.M.Mag. VI, n.s., November 1836, p.429.

2. 'Minutes of Conference, 1830 ...', p.9, in Smith (ed.), Minutary Records I, 1814-1830; 'General Minutes 1831', p.8; 'Conference Minutes, 1833 ...', p.18; 'Minutes of 1834 Conference ...', p.9; 'Minutes of Annual Conference of 1837 .. p.22; 'Minutes of Conference ...1838', p.9; 'Minutes of Conference ... 1839', p.10, in Smith (ed.), Minutary Records II, 1831-1840; P.M.Mag. V, n.s. July 1835, p.276; for the sources for membership figures see note on sources in Appendix A.

Any attempt to relate chapel building to membership figures is vitiated by the effect of circuit boundary changes on membership levels and by the relatively small number of chapels involved. For example, Lincoln circuit's membership grew by over 26% in 1833-34 and nearly 25% in 1837-38, but there was a loss of nearly 54% in 1836-37 which was apparently due to boundary adjustments, since the circuit report for 1837 referred to an increase of 19 in the number of members and to the prosperity of the circuit.¹ Balderton circuit, based in Nottinghamshire, but whose boundaries extended into Lincolnshire, had a steady period of membership increase to 1833, when its membership dropped by nearly 24% and it became the Fulbeck circuit. The new circuit then grew, although in an irregular manner up to 1839, apart from a decrease of nearly 10% in 1837-38.² Boston also grew irregularly during the 1830s. There was a decline of nearly 5% in 1831-32 which cannot be easily accounted for, unlike the decrease from 360 to 261 members in 1837-38, when Donington was formed into a separate circuit from Boston.³ The changes in circuit boundaries during the 1830s also involved members from outside Lincolnshire. Just as Balderton circuit included members in the west of the county, the circuit based on the town of Wisbech in Cambridgeshire included Gedney and Holbeach.⁴ Bottesford, Leicestershire, circuit extended well

1. P.M.Mag. VII, n.s., July 1837, p.261.

2. Ibid. III, n.s., November 1833, p.420.

3. P.M.Mag. VII, n.s., July 1837, pp.257 and 258; September 1837, p.358.

4. Ibid. IV, n.s. October 1834, pp.398-399.

into Lincolnshire and included Grantham. It had become a circuit in 1835 when it had 284 members and had 300 by 1836. Before this, it may have been a branch of Nottingham circuit when it 'was favoured with large prosperity ... in the home part.' However, its members declined rapidly from 1836 until the end of the 1830s. This was apparently a real decline rather than one caused by boundary changes since the 1838 annual conference examined the reasons for the decline and accepted as satisfactory the explanation offered by the circuit for this.¹ However, by 1851 the Primitive Methodists had begun to attain a secure institutional position in the local community. This was reflected in the growth of the proportion of separate chapel buildings and the increasing tendency of Primitive Methodist places of worship to be concentrated in open villages where it was possible to build chapels. The need to maintain and service these chapels meant that the Primitives moved away from the unco-ordinated, wide-ranging missionary work of the Ranter phase of their development which had characterised the early stages of their activity in south Lincolnshire.

1. P.M. Mag. VI, n.s., July 1836, p.284; November 1836, p.429; Petty, History of the Primitive Methodist Connexion, p.376; Kendall, Origin and History, vol,I, pp.262-263; J.R.L., MAW MS 730, Primitive Methodist Conference Journal 1, 1827-1847, p.181.

IV

PRIMITIVE METHODISM AND POPULAR BELIEFS

Early reports of Primitive Methodist activity emphasised the socially isolated position of the connexion's adherents. It was, however, the Primitives' ability to reach those social groups who were threatened or being pushed in new directions by the changes taking place in the south Lincolnshire countryside which was the basis for their early successes. They provided a religious dimension in the lives of country workers at a time of rapid social change when older values and attitudes were being eroded.

The fears which were being expressed about the potential of the Primitives to stir up disaffection also emphasised the way in which they were to be found at points of possible social tension. A clergyman living in the Spalding area expressed these fears in 1820 and set the connexion's roving preachers alongside other agents of social unrest:

In times when the heralds of disaffection, and emissaries of republicanism with revolutionary principles, are traversing the country in all directions, 'with good words and fair speeches, deceiving the hearts of the simple'; when runagates and vagabonds are feeling the national pulse, and agitating the public mind with impunity; when, under the specious pretext of religion, the peace of society is disturbed, mobs are collected, and great numbers of the lowest rabble concentrated by imposing novelties, upon the approach of evening; when the vitals of our excellent constitution are mangled through the sides of our Established Church; when schism, sedition, and blasphemy combine to raise their brazen crest, stalking through the kingdom, and unfurling their factious banners in every corner of the island; when the Church is openly assailed by an organized banditti of strolling Methodists, vociferating Ranters, and all that impious train of et coeteras, who, without either the substance or form of

Christianity, nestle under the wings of toleration, ¹
and hurl defiance at all constituted authorities ...¹

Others adopted a derisory tone and the report of a camp meeting held to the north of Lincoln in May 1819 said that, 'Pity and disgust by turns filled the rational part of the auditors.'² Such proceedings were said to bring religion into disrepute and a camp meeting held near Caistor, Lindsey, which was attended by between three and four thousand people gave an opportunity 'for scoffing at all piety' and doing 'incalculable harm to the cause of religion.'³ The majority of those present were said to be farmers' servants, day labourers and village mechanics whose conduct was seen as harmful to morals and decency:

From a regard for public decency we forbear detailing what other recreations contributed to fill up the time of such an ill spent sabbath, except that in the middle of the day the attention of the company was divided by some dogs hunting in the plantations; which plantations were afterwards ⁴ appropriated to still more iniquitous purposes.

After a camp meeting held in August 1821 at Waltham, near Grimsby, Lindsey, attended by about 1600 people it was reported:

That the evening might not be without amusements adapted to its sombre shade, the whole closed with what they call a love feast, where flesh and spirit are too intimately connected to be productive of any good to our poor rates ... To explain myself more clearly - it is worthy of notice that, after a Camp Meeting held near Caistor, there were no less than 12 cases of bastardy made out before Mr. Tomline of Riby, which all bore date from that meeting!⁵

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1. Letter on the Ranters, Christian Remembrancer III, no.27, March 1821, pp.130-137.
 2. L.R.S.M., 28th May 1819.
 3. Ibid., 20th August 1819.
 4. Ibid., 20th August 1815.
 5. Ibid., 17th August 1821.

Specious references to the connection between the Primitives and the Ranters of the seventeenth century were used in an attempt to discredit them during correspondence which arose out of a camp meeting held at Scamblesby Hill, between Louth and Horncastle, Lindsey, in May 1821. Attacks on the conduct of Primitive Methodist members were added to these:

The cause of Religion cannot be the genuine motive that calls forth the exertions of the Ranters; for in those places where they endeavour to gain a footing, the great truths of Christianity are preached, and the importance of its doctrines already inculcated - their proceedings have a tendency to confusion, rather than order; some of their preachers are known to have led wicked lives; and even women, in their public harangues, conceal not from their hearers their former iniquities, but laying aside all bashfulness, proclaim the baseness of their previous lives. To such a pitch of frenzy are they at times wound up, that their gesture and actions assimilate nearer to the orgies of the Heathen, than to the dignified deportment and calm devoutness of the Christian worshipper.¹

Other accounts of the conduct of people attending Primitive Methodist meetings described prayers

consisting of violent ejaculations, familiar and repeated invocations of the name of Jesus, rapturous exclamations uttered with such clamour as if heaven were to be opened by their loud speaking, must readily be conceived to be as distant as possible from that humility, sober-mindedness, and lowly adoration of soul and body, which becomes sinful men in their addresses to the throne of Grace.²

The hymns sung by the Primitives were said to be 'composed in strains of presumptuous exultation, or indecent and disgusting familiarity, approaching, in some cases, to sensuality and blasphemy.'³ They savoured

1. L.R.S.M., 16th June 1820.

2. Letter on Ranter Meetings, Christian Remembrancer I, no.8, August 1819, p.469.

3. Letter on Ranter Meetings, loc. cit., p.469.

too much of sensuality; their expressions on divine love are, in many instances, too strong, tending rather to create improper ideas, than those sublime and correct notions of heavenly purity, which ought at all times to be strictly attended to in sacred poetry; for the imagination, where devotion is concerned, must never be suffered to soar beyond the limits of propriety.¹

It was not only the open air meetings which attracted the attention of those concerned with law, order and social discipline. At the opening of Lincoln's new chapel in 1819 there was said to be

a scene seldom witnessed, perhaps never equalled, in this city. The principal speakers on this occasion, after having worked themselves up to a state of the utmost phrensy, were succeeded by such of their brethren as felt themselves moved for the purpose. At the close of the evening, a circle being formed, and two girls whom the Ranters had converted being upon their knees within it, five or six of these enthusiasts began loudly to harangue at the same time. What with the confusion necessarily arising from this circumstance, the cries and groans of the infatuated followers of the sect, and the noise of others who were collected to see them, a tumult arose which defies all description: happily it was allayed without the violent and desperate consequences which those without the walls fully expected from the disorder within. It is truly lamentable to witness the baneful effects which this ranting fraternity has produced upon the minds of the lower class of society; but we trust that the disgraceful circumstances attendant on this meeting may open their eyes, and show them the folly and the wickedness of such proceedings.

* * *

Attendance at Primitive Methodist meetings was no guarantee that people would be converted and to the extent that these meetings were general social occasions, attracting large crowds, there was some substance in the criticisms of their detractors.

1. L.R.S.M., 16th June 1820.

2. Ibid., 16th July 1819.

However, for those who did become converts the Primitives were successful in providing a religious experience which was appropriate to their lives, giving them inner coherence and meaning when many of the mental horizons which had been familiar to them were disintegrating and, as the accounts of the meetings show, when their behaviour and conduct was coming under increasingly critical scrutiny. The popular beliefs and superstitions of the rural working classes, which were also related to their attitude to the established church, constituted an important element in this experience since Primitive Methodist preachers seem to have appreciated and been able to build a new religious structure on them.

There is abundant evidence that, in common with other parts of the country, various forms of popular belief and superstition were widespread among the rural working classes of nineteenth century Lincolnshire. These do not seem to have had any distinct form or pattern that was peculiar to the county: 'Nearly every superstition and custom of the county appears to be a local variant of something already familiarly known in other parts of the British Islands, or beyond their limits.'¹ Nor did they form a coherent structure which offered a comprehensive view of the world, an explanation of human existence or the promise of a future life, but were a collection of miscellaneous recipes and not a comprehensive body of doctrine.²

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1. Mrs. Gutch and Mabel Peacock, Examples of Printed Folk-Lore Concerning Lincolnshire, repr. Liechtenstein, 1967, p.57.
 2. Keith Thomas, Religion and the Decline of Magic: studies in popular beliefs in sixteenth-and seventeenth-century England, Penguin edit., Harmondsworth, 1973, p.761.

It has been suggested that popular beliefs changed in the course of the nineteenth century contracting in their scope and range, so that what was left at the end of the period was a situation where a narrower range of phenomena were explained by means of magical and supernatural forces and also in less dramatic and anthropomorphic terms. Superstition could also be seen as engaging and expressing a diminishing range and depth of emotions and a cooler tone, which was less intense, more neutral and impersonal.¹ However, such changes are difficult to chart in the mass of folklore material which was collected at different times, for differing purposes, using different systems of classification. Nonetheless, folk beliefs were an important part of the emotional and intellectual climate in which the Primitive Methodist missionary operated in Lincolnshire. Despite their lack of coherence they were still tenaciously held by the Lincolnshire countryman in the nineteenth century and were 'as real to him, and perhaps more so, than the fact of the Reformation or the Battle of Waterloo.'² They were also seen as inimical to orthodox Christian teaching by many Anglican clergymen. One who met J. J. Hissey on his travels in the south of the county said that, '"To get on in Lincolnshire before all things it is necessary to believe in game and not to trouble too much about the Catholic faith".' He went on to assert from personal experience that both devil worship and witchcraft were practised in the county.³

1. Obelkevich, Religion and Rural Society, pp.328-329.

2. Gutch and Peacock, Folk-Lore Concerning Lincolnshire, p.57.

3. James John Hissey, Over Fen and Wold, 1898, pp.222-223.

It is possible to detect among the fragmentary medley of beliefs and customs certain elements which might have a pagan origin and others which have their basis in pre-Reformation church teaching. Others seem to have originated as a result of practical experience but were lost beneath a vaguely formulated desire to find 'luck'. The 'wiseman' who acted as both a seer and a medicine man and who was believed to have 'the faculty of discovering and foretelling what will happen in the future, and ... also the art of coercing evil influence by means of secret actions and words ...,' is an illustration of the way in which popular beliefs dealt with individual circumstances. It was said that he also 'wards off, or cures, many forms of ill. He obtains benefits, and he dominates that region which is tacitly assumed to lie outside the sphere directly controlled by the creating and upholding God. Wide as the Kingdom of God is, in popular belief there is still place for the magic energy which works for good.'¹

In the 1840s, following a robbery, a farmer's wife persuaded her husband to send for Wosdel, a Lincoln wizard, who brought with him a blackbird which he claimed was his familiar spirit. The bird was used to help him with his divination and

1. M.G.W. Peacock, 'Folk-lore and Legends of Lincolnshire', unpublished typescript, Folklore Society Library, University College, London, FLS B70 PEA, p.158; Joseph Wright's English Dialect Dictionary defines a 'wiseman' as a wizard, fortune teller and dealer in astrology or magic; The Oxford English Dictionary describes 'wiseman' as general dialect or vulgar usage for a man skilled in hidden arts such as magic, witchcraft and the like, a magician, a wizard.

caused great confusion and apprehension in the farmyard by fluttering around among the cattle. One of the thieves identified himself by rushing into the room to ask what he was to do, although he had only shortly before been set a job. The other was said to have been shown by Wosdel on the wall.¹ A wiseman's practice might also include dealing with the emotional problems of individuals such as the Billingham villager who travelled to Lincoln to discuss a romantic problem.²

If the 'Wosdel' of the report from the 1840s can be identified with John Worsdale, the astronomer and astrologer, his bizarre rural detective agency evidently attracted wide support and earned both the money and status for him to be commemorated by a monument in Spanby churchyard complete with iron palisades which attracted a great deal of attention when it was erected in 1850.³ As well as his practice Worsdale was the author of several books on astrology.⁴

This type of practice not only depended on detailed local knowledge by the practitioner, but also on strong faith in his ability. It was said of a wiseman near Burgh le Marsh, 'the terror of evil-doers in the adjoining fens', that after his failure to locate one of his own lost sheep it was feared that the influence which he had 'long exercised over the minds of

1. Gutch and Peacock, Folk-Lore Concerning Lincolnshire, p.104.

2. L.R.S.M., 30th July 1852.

3. Ibid, 4th October 1850.

4. Obelkevich, Religion and Rural Society, p.288.

the illiterate of his neighbourhood' would be diminished and thefts would consequently increase.¹ The wiseman's work was based on the beliefs of

a certain class of the community that, if an instance arises of a party stating a circumstances that has happened or is to happen, they believe that person must have communion with some supernatural being, and are the more ready to consult him as to their future destiny.²

This dependence on the faith of those who consulted him meant that the wiseman often sought to stage manage his work, using charms and spells to enhance his status. Even the type of fee for which he worked needed to be special, paid in either silver or gold and certainly not in base metal.³

These practitioners of folk magic were the last of a line whose techniques reached back to the middle ages and had direct links with Anglo-Saxon and classical practice.⁴ They were likely to be particularly efficacious in a community which was well enough integrated for the intimate affairs and personal problems of individuals within it to be of real concern and even to affect a wider number of people than those who were personally involved. As their credibility declined the wisemen became increasingly isolated. A deaf and dumb wiseman who had practised in the west of the county was reported as being confined to Folkingham House of Correction in 1838. He had been arrested while holding court in a beershop at Carlton le Moorland after anticipating the due processes of the law in a

1. L.R.S.M., 20th November 1846.

2. Ibid., 27th August 1841.

3. M.G.W. Peacock, 'Folklore and Legends', p.159.

4. Thomas, Religion and the Decline of Magic, p.271.

number of cases, including a murder investigation. Crowds of women were said to have been saddened by his arrest since he was alleged to have a gift granted from above. His powers were enhanced in popular eyes by the belief that he had no ear holes and was one of seven deaf sons, but another viewpoint held that he pretended to be deaf and so picked up beer shop gossip on which he could base his predictions.¹ The isolation of the wiseman meant that his position was increasingly based on his individual prowess as a practitioner rather than from any place he had as part of a coherent system of belief and practice. If he failed in his work the whole system which he purported to uphold became discredited, together with those who followed him.²

There was a strong element in many popular beliefs which was parasitic on or only tangentially related to orthodox Christianity. The writer of an article on 'The Church in Lincolnshire' published in 1865, emphasised the Christian element in many folk beliefs and referred to the 'traditional beliefs, practices, sayings, ways of interpreting Holy Scripture, which now indeed have in them much perchance of superstition, in some cases ... entirely erroneous ...' which were prevalent in the county. He went on to comment that although such beliefs only remained in the minds of those who held them and did not manifest themselves in any great regard for church buildings or furniture

1. Boston, Lincoln and Louth Herald and County Advertiser (subsequently B.L.L.H.), 18th September 1838.

2. Peter Rushton, 'A Note on the Survival of Popular Christian Magic,' Folklore 91, no.1, 1980, p.118.

few things can be more interesting than to trace indications or remnants of the pre-Reformation customs, or doctrines, or practices, or prevalent feelings and habits of thought which three centuries of, to a great extent, antagonistic principles have not been able to root out. It shows how such things will still linger on in obscure haunts in spite of all opposition, and it proves it to be at least probable that no power on earth could succeed in entirely eradicating them.¹

The pre-Reformation church had seemed to be a vast reservoir of magical power which could be deployed for a variety of secular purposes. The magical practices associated with popular devotion might be seen as parasitic to the main corpus of medieval Catholicism, yet this distinction was not upheld at popular level and the magical aspects of the Church's functions were often inseparable from the devotional.² This attitude to the church continued into the nineteenth century in Lincolnshire. The magical aura which surrounded the Roman Catholic church was seen in the belief that places with associations with it had a particular quality. Holm Hall in the parish of Bottesford, Lindsey, which had belonged to the "papist Morleys" was troubled by ghosts and it was reported that at Twigmoor, near Scunthorpe, Lindsey, a house associated with the Gunpowder Plot, one door or gate could never be shut securely and the whole place had an uncanny feeling.³

The Church of England also retained, in popular eyes, fragments of the magical properties possessed by the church before the Reformation. The idea that the consecrated host had supernatural potency was carried over into the belief that

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1. 'The Church in Lincolnshire', *Union Review* III, 1865, pp.265, 271-272.
 2. Thomas, Religion and the Decline of Magic, pp.51 and 57.
 3. M.G.W. Peacock, Folklore and Legends, p.97.

the person who did not swallow the bread administered at the service of Holy Communion, but carried it away from the church in his mouth, was in possession of a source of magical power.¹ In nineteenth century Lincolnshire it was believed that if a woman wished to compel a man to marry her she should go to the early morning celebration of Holy Communion. Instead of eating the bread which was administered there she should keep it in her mouth until the service was over, when she would see a toad in the churchyard. When she spat out the bread the toad would eat it at once and the next time the woman met the man who was the object of her attentions he would be ready to marry her.² In a similar vein, a young man who had recently been confirmed was advised to keep half the consecrated bread from his first communion which would give him supernatural powers.³

Other remnants of medieval beliefs were to be found in the idea that a silver ring made of money which had been offered at the altar as part of the Communion collection was a cure for fits. The vicar of one parish was asked by a woman who was a Primitive Methodist if he would exchange a shilling of the 'Sacrament Money' for another shilling so that she could hang it round the neck of a son who had epileptic fits.⁴

A similar set of beliefs had become attached to the rite of confirmation which was regarded as being a cure for rheumatism, so that some old people were in the habit of presenting themselves for it as often as they could.⁵ When the bishop

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1. Thomas, Religion and the Decline of Magic, p.38.
 2. Gutch and Peacock, Folk-Lore Concerning Lincolnshire, p.131.
 3. Lincolnshire Notes and Queries (subsequently L.N.Q.) II, January 1890 - October 1891, p.43.
 4. Gutch and Peacock, Folk-Lore Concerning Lincolnshire, pp.107 and 108.
 5. *Ibid.*, p.108.

of Lincoln held a confirmation at the cathedral in 1848 it was

said that a superstitious and stupid old woman presented herself for the fourth or fifth time to undergo the rite, and that upon being subsequently asked why she did this, she replied that she was afflicted with rheumatism, and that she believed confirmation was good for it.¹

The rhythms and disciplines associated with the medieval church's calendar still remained in the popular mind in a very fragmented form. The solemnity of Good Friday was reflected in a number of beliefs and practices which had only a slight relevance to the theological importance of the day. There was some confusion about what could or could not be done then, or even on Holy Thursday, the day before Good Friday. A smith might refuse to use his hammer and nails on Good Friday, although in many parts of the county it was considered a propitious day on which to sow potatoes and peas.² The prevalence of cock fighting and other popular recreations on Shrove Tuesday until well into the nineteenth century illustrates the way in which customs could still cluster around a day which had otherwise retained little validity as a significant point in the year and when the majority of people, 'Peaceably pursued their labours as on other days.'³

Holy days which were no longer formally observed in the church's calendar also retained an importance in folk belief because they were considered especially propitious for certain

1. L.R.S.M., 23rd June 1848.

2. Gutch and Peacock, Folk-Lore Concerning Lincolnshire, pp.190-192.

3. L.R.S.M., 15th February 1839.

practices. For example, if a girl used the words 'Pater, Pater Noster' on St. Agnes's Eve while putting on her nightgown she might see the man she was to marry.¹ If a person fasted on St. Mark's Eve it was believed that they would dream of their lover when they went to bed.² This was a day which was especially associated with divination, when people who watched the church at night would see the spirits of those who were to marry in the coming year.³ One method of seeing a future husband was to pick twelve sage leaves one by one as the clock struck twelve on St. Mark's Day.⁴

Even when shorn of their official religious associations such days might still be used as points of reference in the agricultural calendar.⁵ They now related to work and any importance they might have had to the community as a whole as periods of leisure and recreation had largely disappeared. Only village feasts and fairs retained something of their communal associations and people may have clung to them and given them greater vigour in the face of Sabbatarianism.⁶ Even these had in many cases become detached from the holy days in the church's calendar on which they had originally been held, usually the feast day of the parish church's dedication. At Heckington there were four calendar months between the annual feast on the second Sunday after St. Mary Magdalene's Day,

1. M.G.W. Peacock, 'Folklore and Legends', p.167.
2. L.N.Q. II, January 1890 - October 1891, p.44.
3. Gutch and Peacock, Folk-Lore Concerning Lincolnshire, pp.136-137.
4. L.N.Q. III, January 1892 - October 1893, p.209.
5. Thomas, Religion and the Decline of Magic, pp.738-739.
6. E.P. Thompson, 'Time, Work - Discipline and Industrial Capitalism', Past and Present 38, December 1967, p.76.

22nd July, and the church's dedication feast of St. Andrew, 30th November.¹ However, the fact that another saint's day was used to date the feast shows the continuing strength of the medieval calendar, although the exact reasons and associations which lay behind this change are lost in this case.

Those who kept up these beliefs and customs became increasingly isolated and vulnerable to the attention of reforming clergymen and others who, in the interests of religious or social orthodoxy, attempted to suppress any manifestations of this type of popular culture. Moves to reform and control village feasts and other occasions such as Shrove Tuesday, when popular beliefs manifested themselves in a communal way, left these beliefs as the property of individuals with their validity no longer accepted by the community as a whole. In this form they played an important function by helping individuals to overcome moments of crisis in their lives and by giving them points of reference and possible explanations for the problems which they faced. These included the events surrounding birth, adolescence, marriage and death, as well as the misfortunes and calamities which people met in the course of their lives. Personal beliefs could be held within the privacy of the home untouched by the conventions of society as a whole and only clashed with these conventions when they moved out of the domestic and personal sphere.

The beliefs and customs which surrounded death had an important subconscious function in helping individuals to face the crisis of bereavement.² Premonitions of death such as the

1. Gutch and Peacock, Folk-Lore Concerning Lincolnshire, p.311.

2. Thomas, Religion and the Decline of Magic, pp.722-723.

way a candle burned, an exploding coal on the fire, the howling of a dog at midnight, the hooting of owls, the crowing of cocks before midnight and the ticking of insects together with the blooming of fruit trees at unusual seasons, the breaking of a looking glass and the sounding of church bells with a dull and heavy tone were a miscellaneous conglomeration with little specifically Christian content.¹ However, they probably had an important therapeutic role, since an individual looking back on a sudden and unexpected death might feel that it could have been explained or at least foretold by those who were able to interpret the signs correctly.

The rituals and observances which were part of the folklore of death also played a role in helping individuals to face up to and overcome the crisis of bereavement. The custom of touching the corpse by members of the family or household brought individuals face to face with the reality of death while at the same time it helped them to accommodate themselves to it. If this were not done, it was believed that the spirit of the dead person would trouble the individual who omitted to perform the ritual.² Other rituals had a less obvious function and belonged to the area of beliefs and practices which had survived in an inchoate form from the middle ages and earlier. Nonetheless, their lack of coherence should not be allowed to obscure their importance as a series of observances which helped an individual over a difficult period in life. The mere

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1. Gutch and Peacock, Folk-Lore Concerning Lincolnshire, p.147; Florence Peacock, 'Traditions and Customs Relating to Death and Burial in Lincolnshire', Antiquary XXXI, 1895, p.333.
 2. M.G.W. Peacock, 'Folklore and Legends', p.75.

performance of them might confer a pattern and intelligibility on events at a time when other fixed points of reference were disappearing.

Pre-Reformation beliefs survived in the custom of burning a candle around a dead body, said to be for the purpose of warding off ghosts or evil spirits and for which wax candles were said to be more efficacious than those made of tallow.¹ It was the general custom to open the window of a room in which a death had just taken place to allow the spirit of the departed a clear passage on its way from the scene of death.² Similarly, the house door of the dead person was left open during the funeral so that if the spirit wished to return to its old home it would not find itself shut out.³ Pagan beliefs also seem to lie behind the corpus of material relating to a dying person who was not to be placed in a cross direction with the rafters of a room or they would have difficulty in dying.⁴ A feather bed which contained goose feathers was said to be more difficult to die on and pigeon feathers in a bed had a similar effect. There is a strong element of hard practicality in the practice that if a dying man seemed to find it impossible 'to go' he was sometimes got up from his bed, wrapped in a blanket, and placed in a chair or on the floor so that the struggle might be ended.⁵

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1. Gutch and Peacock, Folk-Lore Concerning Lincolnshire, p.247; M.G.W. Peacock, 'Folklore and Legends', p.75.
 2. F. Peacock, 'Traditions and Customs relating to Death ...', loc. cit., pp.330-331.
 3. Gutch and Peacock, Printed Folk-Lore Concerning Lincolnshire, p.143.
 4. M.G.W. Peacock, 'Folklore and Legends', p.74.
 5. Gutch and Peacock, Folk-Lore Concerning Lincolnshire, pp.38 and 41; M.G.W. Peacock, 'Folklore and Legends', p.74.

The actual conduct of a funeral was an important element in folk beliefs and customs. The maintenance of proper observances would give satisfaction and some form of relief to the participants as well as looking back to pre-Christian attempts to conduct the ceremony in such a way that the spirits of the departed were appeased. In this context elaborate funeral processions, which continued to be accompanied by singers until the end of the nineteenth century, played an important role. As late as 1902 stories were being told of a blind woman who was very fond of singing at funerals and who "was set on the brig, to sing 'em to the South Kelsey Churchyard" (Lindsey).¹ When the body was carried to the grave, in order that the dead person might rest in peace and be ready to rise at the judgement signal, they were laid with their feet towards the dawn. It was also necessary for the person who had laid out the body to untie its feet before burial, if they had been tied earlier, otherwise the dead person would be unable to rise at the first resurrection.² The actual place of burial was important. It was not usual to bury on the north side of the churchyard, although lack of space towards the end of the nineteenth century prevented universal observance of this custom, since it was believed that those who were buried there would rise from their graves later on the Day of Judgement than those buried in more favoured positions.³ In the wapentake of Aslaoe, Lindsey,

1. M.G.W. Peacock, 'Folklore and Legends', p.79.

2. Gutch and Peacock, Folk-Lore Concerning Lincolnshire, p.243.

3. F. Peacock, 'Traditions and Customs relating to Death ...', loc. cit., p.331.

funerals were brought to church by what seemed to be a roundabout way which was probably deemed to be the proper route. It was believed that the spirit of the dead person would not rest until this was done and that it was unlucky not to follow this route. This could also be seen as an attempt to confuse the ghost of the dead person which might still be lingering about the coffin or to confuse death itself.¹

The custom of taking off the hat when meeting a funeral procession probably mixed conventional respect for the dead with pagan beliefs in evil spirits. It was regarded as unlucky to meet the procession, but the removal of the hat served as a mark of respect for the evil spirits which were believed to be hovering around the corpse.²

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Since the Church of England liturgy also provided rituals to mark the rites of passage there were occasions when the public manifestations of popular beliefs and practices could clash with the ideas of clergymen performing the appropriate ceremonies. As long as clergymen were prepared to accommodate their parishioners there were few problems. It was recalled in 1828 that Cornish clergymen had in the eighteenth century been prepared to accede to the views of the laity and might even pretend to possess such powers as that of being able to lay ghosts. In return for this the clergymen would expect their status

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1. F. Peacock, 'Traditions and Customs relating to Death ...', loc. cit., p.80-81.
 2. G.L. Gomme (ed.), The Gentleman's Magazine Library: Popular Superstitions, 1884, p.118.

and influence to be respected by their parishioners.¹ Three 'parsons' were called in to capture a spirit or witch which haunted a bridge near Normanby, Lindsey.² However, an important aspect of the social changes in the nineteenth century countryside was the transition which was taking place in the role of clergymen and the place of the Church of England in society.

Clergymen, such as those in Cornwall and Lincolnshire, who were prepared to accommodate popular beliefs, had a view of the Anglican church which saw it as part of society in which the poor imposed on the rich some of the duties and functions of paternalism. In return for this the rich or those in established positions expected a measure of quiescent behaviour, although the price which was paid for this was substantial.³ This attitude to the church belonged to the eighteenth century and gradually disappeared, with changes in church and society, in the course of the nineteenth. The eighteenth century church was a laicised institution in which its lay members had a clear perception of their role and function and acted upon this with vigour and conviction. In the absence of a coherent professional attitude on the part of the clerical order, there was plenty of scope for the laity.⁴ The church was strongly identified with

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1. J.G. Rule, 'The Labouring Miner in Cornwall 1740-1870', University of Warwick Ph.D. thesis, 1971, p.250.
 2. Ethel H. Rudkin, Lincolnshire Folklore, second edit., Wakefield, 1973, p.33.
 3. E.P. Thompson, 'Eighteenth Century English Society: class struggle without class?', Social History 3, no.2., May 1978, p.163.
 4. Norman Sykes, Church and State in England in the XVIII Century, Cambridge, 1934, p.379.

the secular aspirations of society and its religious tradition could be characterised as homespun and practical. There was no gulf between the standards of the clergy and the rest of society and their concept of the church was essentially moderate. It was seen as the counterpart of civil society, with churchmanship as complementary to citizenship. Attendance at church was to join neighbours and acquaintances to hear their duties explained to them, to join in worship and to converse with one another.¹

As the church began to move away from this position it became a more 'professional' organisation in which the terms and benefits of its ministrations were dictated by its professional officers, the clergymen. They developed the ideal of a distinctive clerical character, which, although it accorded with their professional ideals, made them feel less comfortable in local secular society.² Clergymen like the Revd. J. W. King, squire and vicar of Ashby de la Launde, who had been ordained in the early part of the nineteenth century seemed anachronistic figures by the 1870s. Quoting a leading article in the Times about King's activities as a race horse owner the Lincoln Rutland and Stamford Mercury noted:

Half a century ago, when Mr. King was educating for the Church, the most zealous and conscientious of clergymen

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1. E. R. Norman, Church and Society in England 1770-1970: a historical study, Oxford, 1976, p.16; Sykes, Church and State, p.283.
 2. Brian Heeney, A Different Kind of Gentleman: parish clergy as professional men in early and mid-Victorian England, Hamden, Connecticut, 1976, p.109.

might have had conceptions of the responsibilities of his office which would now be condemned as lax and worldly. Mr. King, who seems to have been in his younger days a Fellow of Corpus Christi College, Oxford, very possibly, when he entered into orders, believed conscientiously that a country clergyman was only a particular variety of the country gentleman.¹

The clash which occurred between the ideas of the new generation of professionalised clergymen and popular ideas of the church's role is illustrated by the way the Revd. J. H. Overton, of Legbourne, Lindsey, dealt with the traditional village customs surrounding the service of 'churching' or thanksgiving after childbirth and baptism. Traditional beliefs and practices surrounded the ceremony with a range of prohibitions. It was commonly believed that a woman should not go beyond the 'eaves-drop' of her house until she had been churched and that on her way to the ceremony she should avoid crossing a highway unless compelled to do so. She should not go into a neighbour's house, since the first dwelling she entered while unchurched would have a child born to it before the year was over. An unchurched woman should not cook puddings or bread.² Overton imposed his own ideas about the proper conduct of church services and the church's attitude to traditional usages:

At Legbourne ... and I think at other Lincolnshire villages, women look upon their churching with an almost superstitious regard. I had a curious instance when I first came here, in 1860. I at once tried to knock on the head the custom of having baptisms after the service, and on one occasion when I told a woman who came to be churched and to have her child baptised that the baptism would take place after the second lesson, she replied, 'That is impossible, for I cannot walk down the church until I am churched.' The

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1. L.R.S.M., 16th October 1874.
 2. Gutch and Peacock, Printed Folk-Lore, p.228; M.G.W. Peacock, 'Folklore and Legends', pp.64-65.

churching service used to be read just before the general thanksgiving, so I overcame the scruple by having the churching service before the general service began.¹

The way in which folk beliefs had become isolated and confined to the private lives of individuals rather than a matter of public concern, is illustrated by the objections which women in the Spalding area were said to have to being publicly set on one side when they went to be churched:

Some of our correspondents complain of the system pursued when their wives go to church on those interesting occasions when Her Majesty's subjects are increased. The ladies do not like to be placed in a pew apart from the rest of the congregation and subjected to the scrutiny of all present. We can easily imagine the shrinking a delicate female would experience at being made a mark for all observers on such an occasion; and we see no good reason why her thanksgiving would not be just as acceptable if offered from her own pew as coming from one in which she must attract attention. Our own impression is that the better plan in most cases would be for the minister to attend at the house of those who wish to tender thanks for the mercies vouchsafed them.²

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The increasingly professional temper of nineteenth century clergymen meant that a division also opened up between them and the laity on the ways in which church ceremonies were understood. The rites of passage associated with birth, marriage and death, as well as the rite of confirmation, which had come to mark the transition from childhood to adolescence, had developed strong secular associations and meanings. The reforming clergymen of the nineteenth century sought to reassert

1. Gutch and Peacock, Printed Folk-Lore Concerning Lincolnshire, p.228

2. S.F.P., 15th February 1848.

the spiritual importance of these rites at the expense of their secular aspects.

The low esteem in which the spiritual side of baptism was held was illustrated by the way the font was treated. It had in many places been moved and left in a neglected state, filled with the leaves of books, bits of maps and torn up prayer books. In some cases it had been replaced by what Archdeacon Bonney described as a 'small, mean and filthy basin.' He was surprised 'that the people were not scandalised at such neglect and desecration.'¹ When parents had brought a child for baptism they had done it on their own terms. The Revd. Richard Fenton of Waltham, Lindsey, said in 1828 that the ceremony had little religious significance but was 'merely for the sake of having a feast which too commonly leads to excess and gambling ...'² Parents also managed to extract from the church a truncated ceremony based on the prayer book rite for the private baptism of infants while avoiding the full ceremony of a public baptism which involved godparents making promises on the child's behalf, and its reception into the church. The Revd. T.P. Lancaster of St. Michael's church, Stamford, writing in 1830, said that he found it hard to break past custom and practice:

It has been the custom here, as I learn, for many years to use the office of private baptism on all occasions, without any regard to the restrictions of the Rubric. This I resisted for some time till I found myself at last compelled to fall in with the old practice, or to submit to the alternative of some parents having their children baptized by dissenters. I now almost always baptize

1. L.R.S.M., 19th April 1850.

2. L.A.O., Cor B5/4/61/8.

at home, on the promise that the children shall be brought to church as soon as it may be possible. Few object to this but I have met with some who wish their children, (tho' perfectly well at the time) to be privately baptized and yet tell me candidly that they have no intention of ever bringing them to Church, to have the full ceremony performed. ¹ This is a case in which I hardly know how to act ...

In the large fen and marshland parishes, the problems of bringing a child to the parish church for baptism on a Sunday, meant that private baptism was widely practised. Infants were brought to the clergyman's house 'generally on or about the third day' after birth according to the Revd. J. Tunstall Smith of Whaplode in 1845. He described the problems he faced:

The length of the parish, which is twelve miles, would provide a serious inconvenience to the distant residents when many of the appointed Sundays proved successively inclement. They would be compelled to defer baptism month after month. ²

Private baptism provided a way for nonconformists to have their children's baptism entered in the parish registers without the necessity of submitting them to a full church ceremony. This was particularly useful before the civil registration of births came into effect. At Ranby, Lindsey, the spirit of the church's teachings on baptism had been reversed so that private baptism was being practised in the church. When the local clergyman refused to continue to do this he was backed by the Bishop of Lincoln who saw the practice as utterly pe^rverting the meaning of the service. The situation was described in a letter to the bishop in 1832:

A practice has arisen, from the general nonresidence of the clergy, of bringing the children to Church for private Baptism, with the understanding that sponsors should be

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1. L.A.O., Cor B5/4/97/6.
 2. Ibid., 4/5/54/1.

brought, at a convenient opportunity. Finding that many dissenters have taken advantage of this irregularity to get their children entered in the register without bringing them to be received into the church, I have occasionally remonstrated with the parents and have hitherto succeeded. Yesterday, however, a woman brought her child to the church of Biscathorpe (of which I am curate) and insisted on private baptism without any pledge whatever that the sponsors should be brought forward at a more convenient season.¹

The willingness of an unprofessional clerical order, whose position was weakened by pluralism and non-residence, to acquiesce in a situation in which the laity were able to extract from the church the type of ministrations which they required and not which the church's teachings presented, was seen as being the cause of these problems. In 1849 the Revd. W. H. Apthorpe of Bicker, referred to the 'neglect and disuse in this important part of the admission of the child into the Church of Christ' which had arisen on private baptism.² The situation by which pluralism and non-residence had led to attenuated ministration by the church was illustrated as late as 1855 in the village of Stroxton. Here the whole family of Mr. Edward Voce were publicly admitted to the church together with the child of another parishioner. Voce's four children, of whom the oldest was eight, had been privately baptised previously.³

In the eighteenth century the rite of confirmation was seen as much as a means of marking in secular terms the passage between the childhood home and going out into the world to work as having spiritual significance. As such it became a great social occasion which brought large numbers of young people into the

1. L.A.O., Cor B5/4/89/3.

2. Ibid., 4/64/1.

3. G.J., 25th September 1858.

town where it was being performed. This not only suited the tastes of the participants, but also the bishops who were to perform the rite. They resided in London usually from October to the end of the parliamentary session in May or June and then went to their sees during the summer parliamentary recess. This limited to the summer months the time that they were able to perform confirmations in their diocese. The rite was traditionally administered at the bishop's triennial visitation, which meant that its availability was still further limited, although bishops might break this pattern by making shorter circuits during the parliamentary recess. As well as these factors there were also the problems involved in fixing the bishop's itinerary, bearing in mind the need to visit the centres of the visitation, the condition of the roads, the problems created by seasonal work on the land and the incidence of market days when people in a neighbourhood came together.¹ Thus the timing of confirmation was based on a compromise between the secular interests of the parties involved rather than seen as a matter of over-riding spiritual importance. The Book of Common Prayer laid down that as soon as children were 'come to a competent age, and can say, in their Mother Tongue, the Creed, the Lord's Prayer, and the Ten Commandments; and also can answer to the other Questions of this short Catechism' they were to be brought to the bishop for confirmation, but secular considerations made its timing less dependent on the child's readiness for the rite and more on the bishop's pattern of duties. These attitudes continued into the nineteenth century and when triennial

1. Sykes, Church and State, pp.93-94, 116.

confirmations were being abandoned the change was discussed as much in terms of its secular convenience as its spiritual implications. The change was said to be more convenient for both 'members of the Church, who are desirous of being admitted to full Communion, or who are about to leave their parents' homes.'¹

The limited availability of confirmation under the traditional pattern meant that large numbers attended the ceremony when it was held. When Bishop Wake entered Lincolnshire in June 1709 he confirmed a total of 5,200 people during the month, beginning with 1,200 at Grantham, followed by 800 at Lincoln, 600 at Caistor, Lindsey, 500 at Louth, Lindsey, 600 at Horncastle, Lindsey, 1,000 at Boston and 500 at Stamford. In July 1712, when he visited eleven centres and had four days confirming at Lincoln and two at Louth, the total number of confirmations he performed was 11,207, including 2,000 at Spalding on 24th July.² This tradition was still to be found, although numbers might be somewhat moderated, in the reports of confirmations held in 1837 and in the July of that year the bishop confirmed 380 at Sleaford.³ At Stamford in September 1837 the exigencies of his itinerary clearly pressed on him. He confirmed about 500 young people in St. Mary's church and,

After a brief exhortation to his congregation, his Lordship proceeded to Corby, where he also confirmed a number of persons. The Bishop, it was remarked, seemed in a hurry to leave Stamford.⁴

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1. G.J., 24th October 1857.
 2. Sykes, Church and State, p.430.
 3. L.R.S.M., 14th July, 1837.
 4. Ibid., 1st September 1837.

These large numbers enhanced the festive element of the confirmation day and as late as 1858 the confirmation held at Sleaford was marked as much by its carnival atmosphere as for any spiritual edification it imparted. Some 'roughs' from the village of Ruskington were turned out of the church on the bishop's orders and

this was not the only circumstance which occurred to render memorable the day's proceedings, for a correspondent ... says; 'The females were taken in a waggon (sic) the driver of which got drunk, galloped the horses, lost part of the tackling; frightened the passengers, abused the clergyman, and nearly lost his life by trying to get down from the shafts, and was only saved by throwing himself at full-length nearly into the ditch. On their way home the clergyman came up with the delinquents who had been turned out of church, when a very discreditable charr took place.' We are afraid this is not a solitary case; surely the persons in authority ought to take proper caution to ensure good conduct for one day, or else not to allow those who cannot behave themselves even in church to take part in such solemn ceremonies.

The changing role of the bishops of the Church of England, as well as improved communications, brought about by the coming of the railways, meant that they were able to spend more time in their dioceses. Confirmation was no longer bound to a rhythm which reflected the secular interests of the episcopate and far less of a grand occasion. The laity also were no longer able to exact their price, an occasion of carnival, for acquiescence in this pattern. This decline of the bishop's progress with its attendant celebrations at all levels of society, was well documented in an account of a confirmation at Boston in 1843.

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1. S.G., 13th March 1858; Joseph Wright's English Dialect Dictionary gives 'char', to chide, to use querulous language, to grumble, to mumble; The Oxford English Dictionary has 'charr' an obsolete and rare word meaning to murmur or complain.

Never within memory has a 'confirmation' created so little bustle. Time was when the 'progress' of the Bishop from the Vicarage to the Peacock Inn to eat his dinner with his reverend brethren would have been sufficient to call together a crowd; but, save the paid Apparitor, his Chancellor, and the Vicar, his Lordship had not a single attendant. That this is proof of the decline of the public feeling towards the Hierarchy is certain, for Dr. Kaye is one of the best on the episcopal bench, and his unassuming and amiable manners can offend no one: many regret that such a prelate has not the power of extending the mild influence of his department over the sacerdotal haughtiness and inconsistency of some in his diocese. Another proof of decline in the influence of the Church is afforded in the fact that only about half the usual number were 'confirmed', notwithstanding there were some up-grown babies who thus publicly testified their adhesion to a popish ceremony; and in at least one parish a-shilling a-head and a holiday was the lure held out to tempt the lads and lassies to kneel reverently before the Bishop, for a purpose which they neither understood nor cared about. In nine cases out of ten, the holiday was the only thing regarded.¹

As the number of confirmations increased the service became a more intimate occasion and greater control began to be exercised over who was admitted to the rite. The church began to administer it on its own terms and the professionalised clergymen insisted on proper preparation by the candidates. By 1874 the vicar of Grantham was giving a weeknight lecture course to confirmation candidates and also holding classes for females.² Some years earlier, in 1843, the Revd. John Mackinnon of Bloxholm described the way in which attitudes to confirmation were being changed. In a letter to the bishop he said that at the Sleaford confirmation he had been approached by one of his parishioners as he entered the church and asked for a ticket to admit the man's daughter to confirmation.

1. L.R.S.M., 8th September 1843.

2. G.J., 22nd August 1874.

I told him I could not comply with the request, as she had neither been examined or instructed previously by myself for confirmation. The day following I was told that she was confirmed. I waited upon the Father to know whether it was the fact, and he acknowledged that it was, and though I would not grant his Daughter a ticket, yet he had procured one from a Clergyman, who at the same time charged him not to divulge his name ... Since I received your circular in the Spring I have used my best endeavour to prepare and instruct my young people for confirmation, and I feel that I should have acted contrary to your lordship's instructions, had I given a ticket to any one in my parish, without having previously explained to them the nature of confirmation.¹

The great emphasis which was placed in popular beliefs on a properly conducted funeral came up against changing clerical ideas about the church's role on these occasions. As clergymen began to attach more exacting conditions to the performance of the church's rites their attitude was characterised by the local press as 'Puseyite'.² Such theological issues as the validity of the baptism of a person whose funeral was to be conducted might have seemed of little relevance to the mourners who wished to ensure that a seemly funeral took place. To many clergymen they were more than a technicality and were of fundamental importance to the way they perceived the place of the church in society. The problems and confusions which these clergymen faced was demonstrated by what seemed to be a fairly widespread belief that civil registration of a birth conferred the same benefits as baptism. The incumbent of Sutton St. Edmund was reported as refusing to read the burial service over a dead child because 'although the child had been registered it had not been baptised in one form.'³ A few years earlier it had been reported that

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1. L.A.O., Cor B5/4/7.
 2. L.R.S.M., 9th July 1841.
 3. Ibid., 12th May 1843.

The Lincoln clergy, it seems, are about to make a dead set against the Registration Act, for last Monday Mr. Kent refused to read the burial service over the child of Elias Morgan, who had been duly registered but not baptised, the parents being told by the late Registrar that registration alone was sufficient. Not so think the Priests; for though registration is sufficient for the civil law, the canon law proclaims that persons who have not been made members of the church by baptism in infancy must, when they die, have their dead bodies thrown into the earth like other animals ... The father refused to have his offspring cast into the earth like a dead dog, and ultimately obtained Mr. Wright, the Baptist minister, to officiate at the interment, in the Baptist chapel-yard.¹

As Anglican clergymen became less willing to compromise their position and beliefs to the demands of the laity, a gap was left which was at least in part filled by other bodies. Some traditional funeral customs, as well as the more general desire to provide a seemly funeral ceremony, were taken up by the friendly societies. The custom of throwing thyme on the coffins of former members 'to show that time has no longer any meaning for the dead; they have done with it for ever' was an adoption of the traditional practice of throwing the evergreen shrub box into the grave as a symbol of eternal life.² Any attempt to curtail the orations which were made at the graveside of former members could be seen as showing lack of due deference to the departed, while some Anglican clergymen saw these uncontrolled speeches by laymen in the churchyard as a threat to their position. It was not the theological content of a proposed friendly society funeral oration which caused the Revd. W. Wayet of Pinchbeck to write to the bishop in 1839,

1. L.R.S.M., 22nd May 1840.

2. F. Peacock, 'Traditions and Customs relating to Death ...', loc cit., p.331.

since he said that he could find little to object to in it, but he did not wish to create a precedent by allowing it to be given. The bishop avoided a direct confrontation by saying that he did not object to the oration provided it was done after the funeral service had finished and the clergyman had left the churchyard.¹ However, a decade later the vicar of Weston proved less conciliatory in a similar case and was backed by the bishop who said that there could be no question of an additional burial service being read in the churchyard. The vicar had

made a resolute attempt to prevent Mr. S. Griggs from reading the customary address at the grave-side of a departed brother Forester. The priest called upon the churchwarden, who was present, to aid him in stopping the ceremony, on the ground that to read an address at the grave-side was illegal. Griggs, the Forester, persisted in reading on to the end, in which course he was backed by the churchwarden.²

The stricter conditions demanded before a full church burial service could be conducted meant that the Church of England lost its position as the universal provider of rites of passage and the schism between the church and nonconformists was deepened. The curate of Sutton St. Edmund was reported in 1843 as going direct to the graveside and not into the church at the funeral of the infant son of a Methodist. He read the burial service at the graveside with his hat on and did not include the part of the service which was normally read in church. The effect of his conduct on popular sensibilities in the village can be gauged by the fact that on the following Sunday a group of people assembled 'close to the wall of the consecrated ground, and sang a requiem

1. L.A.O., Cor B5/4/17/3.

2. L.R.S.M., 16th November 1849.

to the departed ... ¹ When the child of a member of Crowland's Independent congregation died, the local clergyman refused to bury it so that a short service had to be taken by a nonconformist minister at the churchyard gate and then the body was buried silently.² The vicar of Whaplode refused to allow the body of a child of Baptist parents to be taken into the church or to read the burial service, although the parents would have been allowed to bury the child themselves without a service. Eventually a Baptist minister from Holbeach conducted a service at the home of the parents, accompanied the funeral procession to the churchyard, where he stood outside the boundary, and after the coffin had been lowered into the grave, concluded with a short prayer.³

These cases all involved children whose baptism might be considered in some way invalid by an Anglican clergyman adopting a rigid interpretation of the church's position. However, when the Revd. F. Swan, perpetual curate of St. Benedict's church, Lincoln, objected to Primitive Methodists singing hymns as they followed the body of one of their members to the church for the burial service, he was striking a blow against popular customs as well as asserting his rights as a clergyman of the established church. His objection was based on the argument that the singing could not take place on the burial ground which was freehold, but by doing this he also denied the funeral party the opportunity to sing the corpse to the grave in the traditional manner and to give a public demonstration of their

1. L.R.S.M., 20th January 1843.

2. Ibid., 10th September 1852.

3. Ibid., 11th September 1863.

Primitive Methodism.¹ Similarly, the Revd. H. Wood of Beckingham wrote to the Bishop of Lincoln in 1842 about his difficulties when Methodists in the parish wished not only to 'sing the corpse' to the churchyard gate, but also to continue this in the churchyard by singing a hymn over the grave. The bishop advised him to remonstrate courteously with them and if they persisted to tell them that proceedings would be instituted against them in the ecclesiastical court.²

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The attitudes adopted by Anglican clergymen illustrate the changes in social relationships which were taking place in south Lincolnshire in the nineteenth century. Their new 'professional' position meant that the nature of their relationship with the people they served changed, a similar process to that taking place in the relationship of masters and men, especially in the open villages, where customary considerations had little place in the new economy of the area.³ In this situation the communal aspects of popular beliefs and practices withered and were left as the private concern of individuals. Their fragmented nature meant that they could not provide a coherent theological or philosophical basis for people whose mental horizons were being altered as a result of social change. Indeed, their lack of coherence paralleled the wider experiences of the people among whom they had greatest credence. Like their

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1. L.R.S.M., 21st August 1840; for singing corpses to the grave see above p. 225.
 2. L.A.O., Cor B5/4/8/1.
 3. See above pp. 99-108.

adherents these beliefs and customs had become socially isolated. It was among these people that Primitive Methodism gained its converts and it was its ability to build on the beliefs and customs which were increasingly under attack from other quarters which contributed to Primitive Methodism's strength and credibility among them.

The Norfolk clergyman, Augustus Jessopp, considered that the Primitive Methodists' great importance to the labouring classes of East Anglia was based on the continuing appeal which they offered to the spiritual experience of their members. This included belief in direct personal revelations, the interference of angels in the affairs of men, and an emphasis on the importance of dreams and visions. Primitive Methodism worked against a background in which Manichaeian attitudes were prevalent and in which there was little faith in God and the existence of blessed spirits who could help people on earth, but a strong belief in the devil and his angels.¹ The chapel was

the only place where for many a long day the very existence of religious emotions has been recognised ... the only place where the peasantry have enjoyed the free expression of their opinions, and where, under an organisation elaborated with extraordinary sagacity, they have kept up a school of music, literature, and politics, self supporting and unaided by dole or subsidy ...²

These attitudes were part of the spiritual fabric of Primitive Methodism from its beginning. Early Primitive Methodist preachers

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1. Augustus Jessopp, Arcady: for better for worse, 1887, pp.72-82.
 2. Ibid., pp.75, 77-78.

lived amid the marvellous and the supernatural. Wesley chronicles dreams, practised sortilege, and believed in ghosts. Ghosts, indeed, do not figure much, if at all, in these pages, but there are dreams in plenty.' They all dreamed, and told their dreams, and sought the interpretation thereof; for the dreams were regarded as full of religious significance, and as having a close bearing on the day's work and duty. Faith-healing and exorcism were also articles of belief, as was telepathy - to use the modern term. Now and again they are convinced that someone is just ^{then} in need of them, or is praying for them. They believe in the power of the evil one as working in the children of disobedience, and often it is felt to be a serious struggle between the malign power and the power they can exercise through faith. All alike unfeignedly believe in impressions - suggestive impulses like that which said to Philip: 'Go and join thyself to this chariot'. Often Hugh Bourne's itinerary is modified by its being borne in upon him that he must go yonder and not there. He has wonderful openings into the meaning of Scripture. Occasionally when the testimony of the Lord as borne through human lips is rejected, especially by one who is a professing Christian, the power he had or might have had, is forfeit, and comes upon him who faithfully testified, leaving the other stripped and bare as a blasted oak on the heath. So we might go on accumulating evidence to show that to these fervid Christians the very atmosphere they breathed seemed surcharged with the supernatural.

The connexion's other founding father, William Clowes, was also susceptible to traditional ghost lore. On his way to lead a class at Kidsgrove in 1806 he used Christian theology to counteract his fear of the Kidsgrove boggard and

endeavoured to pray away those fears, and to entrench myself within the power and protection of the Almighty Redeemer to whom all spirits are subject; and on many a dark and dreary night did I tranquilly pass along, when those who had obtained² reputation for courage and bravery would have trembled.

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1. Kendall, Origin and History, vol.I, p.147.
 2. Quoted in Garner, William Clowes, pp.110-111; the Oxford English Dictionary defines a boggard as a spectre, goblin or bogey, especially a local goblin or sprite supposed to 'haunt' a particular gloomy spot or scene of violence.

Both Bourne and Clowes shared popular beliefs in the power of witches. In June 1810, Bourne wrote in his journal

visited Clowes. He has been terribly troubled with the woman we saw at Ramsor. I believe she will prove to be a witch. These are the head labourers under Satan, like as the fathers are the head-labourers under Jesus Christ. So we are fully engaged in the battle. These, I believe, cannot hurt Christ's little ones till they have first combated the fathers. It appears they have been engaged against James Crawfoot ever since he had a terrible time of praying with and for a woman who was in witchcraft. For the witches throughout the world all meet and have connection with the power of the Devil ... The Lord is strong, and we shall soon have to cope with the chief powers of hell. I am certain the Lord will give us the victory.¹

Dreams and visions also played an important part in the lives of the early Primitives. Their attitude towards these phenomena was strongly traditional in its desire to seek validation for decisions among the dead as well as looking for divine sanction for new and radical policies.² Hugh Bourne recorded what he regarded as a highly significant dream of his brother in August 1807 which resolved his doubts about camp meetings

This morning my brother James related the following:- In the course of the night I dreamed that I was praying to God to give me a token if Norton meeting was agreeable to his will. It seemed that I was near Norton, and a large company was present, and there I saw old John Sergeant, of Woodhouse-lane. He looked the same as when alive, only more young, fresh, and blooming. (He, when alive, had a great fondness for me.) I put out my hand as usual to shake hands and he came up to me and shook hands, I said, 'you look very fresh and healthy; I am glad that you are got about. You are now got pretty well again.' He then spoke earnestly and said, 'do not you know that I have been dead a good while?' This struck me; and after recollecting, I said, 'I do not know.' I then asked some questions, and he answered them. I then said, 'do you know that we are to

1. Quoted in Wilkinson, Hugh Bourne, p.80.

2. Thomas, Religion and the Decline of Magic, pp.176 and 719.

have a large meeting at Norton?' He said, 'I do know of it'. I said, 'there is much opposition against it; do you not think that it would be the best way to give it up, and have no meeting?' He very earnestly replied, 'No; you must not give it up, nor any part of it. You must carry it on, whatever will be.'¹

The traditional element in the beliefs of Hugh Bourne and William Clowes was nurtured by their contact with James Crawfoot and the so-called Magic Methodists of Delamere Forest.² Crawfoot was illiterate and lacked any formal theological training.³ His visionary insights and practice of faith healing drew on traditional beliefs and practices for their inspiration.⁴

Lorenzo Dow, the American revivalist, was similarly responsive to traditional beliefs. He had helped to give cohesion to the revivalist groups among whom Primitive Methodism originated on his visit to England between 1805 and 1807.⁵ His third and final visit to Britain in 1818-19 coincided with part of the great Midland revival which brought the spread of Primitive Methodism from Derbyshire and Nottinghamshire into Lincolnshire.⁶ In references to the Cheshire prophet, Nixon,

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1. Walford, Hugh Bourne, vol.I, p.158.
 2. Herod, Biographical Sketches, p.270; Kendall, Origin and History, vol.I, pp.149-150.
 3. Wilkinson, Hugh Bourne, p.72.
 4. Ibid., p.79; John Kent, Holding the Fort: studies in Victorian revivalism, 1978, pp.51-52; Herod, Biographical Sketches, p.265; Thomas, Religion and the Decline of Magic, pp.51 and 139.
 5. Richard Carwardine, Transatlantic Revivalism: popular evangelicalism in Britain and America 1790-1865, 1978, p.106.
 6. Ibid., p.107; H. B. Kendall, 'The Primitive Methodist Church and the Independent Methodist Churches 1796-1808' in W. J. Townsend, H. B. Workman and George Eayrs (ed.), A New History of Methodism, vol. I, 1909, p.577.

Dow showed that he was in touch with a tradition, which although it entered a long period of decline after the conclusion of the Napoleonic Wars, had great local strength:¹

As I was passing the Moor, I could not but reflect on Nixon's prophecy of a battle to be fought in this place, in which England should be won and lost three times in one day, whilst a miller with three thumbs should hold three kings' horses: which I remarked in my discourse at Newpale at two o'clock; and was afterwards informed that a miller of the above description now resided at the mill mentioned in the prophecy; and moreover, that 'in the neighbourhood where Nixon (called the Cheshire fool) lived, it was received as a truth, that many things which he prophesied, did really come to pass, and that he died of hunger in the palace of James I according to his own prediction in his native place.'²

The analysis of the state of religious belief which was given in 1865 by the writer on 'The Church in Lincolnshire', clearly linked the effectiveness of Methodist preachers with their ability to build their message on the folk beliefs of the poor:

the discourses of the local preachers abound in relations of dreams and visions, and supposed supernatural or semi-supernatural, (if we may use the word), events, which the poor, we may say with truth, universally accept and believe. It is a fact well worthy of being noticed, that there is probably no single thing in which divergence between the highly-educated classes and the agricultural poor in this present age is so great as in this respect of belief, or non-belief, in supernatural or semi-supernatural events, as happening now in every-day life in the world round about us. We do not think we shall be charged with misstating the fact, if we say that it is very exceptional to find any one of the upper or highly-educated classes avowing belief in the existence of ghosts, witches, or warning dreams, much less in

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1. Thomas, Religion and the Decline of Magic, p.465; Ian Sellers, 'Nixon, the Cheshire Prophet and his Interpreters', Folklore 92, no.1, 1981, pp.30-42.
 2. [Lorenzo Dow], The Dealings of God, Man and the Devil, as Exemplified in the Life, Experience and Travels of Lorenzo Dow, New York, 1850, p.132.

miracles, or quasi-miraculous events, that is, as taking place in our own day and generation. But with the poor, on the other hand, the belief in such things is all but universal. Scarcely will you find one who cannot relate something of the kind which he is firmly persuaded has occurred to himself or within his own knowledge and experience.

This being the case, it is easy to see, with how much greater power and life-like vividness, the narratives of the Holy Scripture, which are all, it is to be remembered, more or less of a supernatural character, must come home to the poor. The scepticism of 'Essays and Reviews' or of Dr. Colenso, will never make way amongst the agricultural poor, or weaken their belief in the wonders and mysteries of the Faith, so long as the events of their own life are regarded by them as not infrequently influenced in their varied aspects by unseen agencies - so long as the place of the departed is often-times, to use a remarkable expression of their own, but as another chamber of the dwelling they inhabit - a dark and somewhat mysterious chamber it may be - yet one with which they are at least, as they deem, by no means unfamiliar.¹

The ability of early Primitive Methodist preachers to speak plainly and in a language and idiom which could be understood by the people among whom they were working was seen as a vital asset. In 1848 the Primitive Methodist minister, John Dickenson, argued that the sort of education which made a man unfit to speak to the most illiterate congregation, was not suitable for a Primitive Methodist.² When John Oxtoby began to preach full time for the Primitives at Scotter, Lindsey, in 1821 'the work to which the early Primitive Methodist preachers were called in the order of Providence was mostly of a kind which did not require much learning, and little or no polish or refinement.'³ John Benton, a preacher who had taken part in

1. 'The Church in Lincolnshire', loc.cit., p.269.

2. John Gair, 'Rev. John Dickenson', in W. J. Brownson, J. Gair, T. Mitchell and D. S. Prosser (ed.), Heroic Men: the death roll of the Primitive Methodist ministry, being sketches of those ministers who have died between the conferences of 1888-9 ... , [1889], pp.133-135.

3. Shaw, John Oxtoby, pp.41, 43 and 49.

the early expansion of the connexion was said to have an uncouth manner of address which excited 'strong opposition against him among the more refined professors; hence the Wesleyan authorities considered him unsuitable for a local preacher ...' Working miners, however, were prepared to listen to him and when a local preacher reprimanded Benton for his lack of learning and grammar this produced sympathy for him among the colliers.¹

Folk beliefs, although having much that was parasitic on orthodox Christian theology, ultimately left God or Christ as remote figures. God spoke, for example, through thunder, so that, when it thundered no one must presume to speak.² Christ was a sort of talismatic figure able to bring good fortune like any other powerful charm, as in a remedy for ague dated 1772 which read,

When Jeesus saw the Cross whereon His Body was to be Crusified His Body shoke and the jewes said unto Him hast thou got the Ague. Jeesus said unto them whosoever shall keep this in mind or writing shall never be troubled with the ague or tearors. So the Lord help thy servant ... who putteth his trust in thee.³

He also might appear in visions or dreams. A drunken man was converted to Methodism as a result of one of these appearances but later lapsed. However, he received a further warning when he saw in a dream his cart overtuned in a ditch full of fire and brimstone. He was reported as eventually having died by falling into a ditch and drowning.⁴

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1. Wilkinson, Hugh Bourne; pp.99-100; Kendall, Origin and History, vol. I, pp.190-192; Herod, Biographical Sketches, pp.273-275.
 2. M. G. W. Peacock, 'Folklore and Legends', p.286.
 3. Ibid., p.212.

On the other hand, Primitive Methodist preachers, struggling for the salvation of individual souls, met and overcame what they saw as personal manifestations of the devil. A preacher at a service at the Primitive Methodist chapel, Kirton-in-Lindsey, Lindsey, was said to have described one of these encounters:

Yes, I was at the Ranters' Chapel - the old one down the hill that's now turned into cottages - when J.C. who was a joiner, was the preacher, and said that once he went into the house of a wicked man who was ill, to pray with him.

'As I came to the door', he told us, 'I smelt a strong smell of brimstone, and could hardly get it open; and inside there was the devil sitting on the man's breast. Then I fell to praying and the devil flew up and sat on the winbeams, and squealed like a pig.'

The people in the chapel all seemed to believe it and they groaned. I really don't think that C. was exactly lying. Both he and his son often talked of meetings they had with the devil.¹

This atmosphere, with its dramatic clash between the forces of good and evil, provided the scenario for the salvation of individuals. They attained supreme importance as souls to be saved, gaining status and esteem within a framework in which the language and imagery used were meaningful to them. Grace Meadows of Rippingale, who died in January 1828, had been depressed by Satan at the loss of her only son two years previously. However, when she was confined to her bed during her final illness her 'faith was brought into vigorous exercise. Hope at once gained an ascendancy over unbelief ... Satan stood aloof in the hour of triumph!'² After what was described

1. M.G.W. Peacock, 'Folklore and Legends', pp.121-122.

2. P.M.Mag. 9, August 1828, pp.258-259.

as a severe conflict with the devil

she again caught hold of her Redeemer and patiently waited the hour of her removal to a better world. Methinks I see throngs of vanquished infernals rushing back to the dark territories of hell in the greatest confusion and disorder! while bending angels are hovering over the death bed of an expiring sister, anxiously waiting for the last gasp, and to bear ¹ the triumphant conqueror to her native heaven ...

Satan was said to have been bruised under the feet of Sarah Meadows, also of Rippingale, during her illness, so that she triumphed over 'the world, the flesh and the devil.'² When William Dale of Ashby lay dying 'Satan did not give up the contest as the dying Christian approached the grave, still the Captain of our salvation gave support in battle, and finally enabled the worn out warrior to tread on the heel of his adversary.'³ Similarly, during the last illness of Pidd White of Fulbeck,

the powers of darkness assailed him keenly, but he conquered through faith in the blood of the Lamb. A short period before his death, Satan made his final attack; but through prayer and faith in the merits of the Redeemer our brother gained the victory ...

After the individual had triumphed over Satan and the powers of darkness, Primitive Methodism gave him a more comprehensive view of life and the hereafter than the traditional folk beliefs on which the conversion experience was built. The ultimate goal of the convert was the bliss of heaven which was seen as an apotheosis of the life the convert sought to live on earth, made comprehensible by literal descriptions of its qualities. A

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1. P.M. Mag. 9 August 1828, p.260.
 2. Ibid. V, n.s., October 1835, p.390.
 3. Ibid. I, third series, August 1843, p.320.
 4. Ibid. VII, third series, October 1849, p.579.

poem on 'The Christian's Triumph Over Death', published in an early Primitive Methodist Magazine showed, using images of treasure, trade and commerce, how the dead person made gains which were not possible to him or her in the earthly life:

Why mourn, my friends, a spirit's happy flight,
By Heav'n Remanded to the Plains of Light?
Be put aside, the sable weeds of woe,
And swell the song of triumph here below.
Escap'd from life, its ling'ring evils o'er,
Through fire and water doom'd to pass no more,
Thy soul, converging in the wealthy place,
Enraptur'd flies to God's divine embrace ...

My soul, emerging from the mists of night,
Exchanges darkness for refulgent light:
For riches, poverty; for conquest, strife;
For pleasure, pain; and wins immortal life ...
How advantageous when a Christian lies
In death! Death is a gainful merchandise.
Shall gold, shall silver, jewels, gems be named
When happiness, when heav'n when God is claim'd?

Life's many ills thy winning smiles assuage
The wound's keen anguish, and the fever's rage.
By thy approach are thirst and famine driv'n,
And life immortal by thy smile is giv'n.¹

The Primitive Methodist minister, J. R. Parkinson of Scotter, Lindsey, in a sermon on 'The Church Above', described heaven as a place where

There will be the traveller from his sandy shroud, the soldier from his gory grave, the sea-boy from his ocean tomb, and in that multitude what saint has not a friend or relative, a brother or sister, a father or mother, a partner or child, waiting to hail him welcome to the better land - to show him where the living fountains play, and the trees of life do bloom.²

The family, divided by death and calamity in the earthly life, was re-united in heaven. In a death bed exhortation to her friends Martha Knott of Branston 'said she had no doubt

1. P.M. Mag. 1, July 1819, pp.191-192.
2. J.R. Parkinson, 'The Church Below, and the Church Above', in The Primitive Pulpit, being Original Sermons and Sketches by Various Ministers of the Primitive Methodist Connexion, vol I, 1857, p.187.

of meeting them in heaven. When her dissolution drew nigh, she said to her mother: "I am going to meet my friends that are gone before, and you will soon follow me".¹ Similarly, Mary Robinson of Claypole hoped eventually to meet her husband and nine children in heaven and on her death bed she exhorted them 'not to seek for happiness in this world; but to prepare to meet her in heaven.'² On her death bed Elizabeth Prestwood of Potterhanworth, spoke of 'the approaching period when she should unite with many who had already gone to the better land, and others who would soon follow, and whom she had esteemed on earth ...'³ As well as being a place where family ties were reconstituted heaven was also seen in images which reflected the ideal earthly life. When William White died at Lincoln on a Sunday morning, although he left behind the Primitive Methodist chapel's Sunday services, he joined a higher and idealised form of this for 'his happy soul escaped from its emaciated tabernacle, and went to spend an eternal Sabbath with the heavenly worshippers in the temple on high ...'⁴

The link between heaven and earth was not necessarily bridged only at the moment of death. Foretastes of heaven were vouchsafed to the dying. William Brown was a local preacher from Ewerby and

On his first day of being confined to his bed he had a remarkable vision. He saw the glory of the New Jerusalem, and his daughter, who died about eight months before, surrounded with a blaze of dazzling light. 'Bless the Lord,' said he afterwards to a friend, 'my daughter is now in glory, and I shall soon be with her'.⁵

1. P.M. Mag. 2, February 1821, p.32.

2. Ibid. 9, April 1828, p.142.

3. Ibid. V, n.s., January 1867, p.48.

4. Ibid. XVIII, third series, September 1859, pp.516-517.

This experience was summed up in a general account of the righteous published in 1857.

Being as yet inhabitants of the earth, we are strangers to the laws of the spirit world, but what we have heard and seen in the chamber of the dying saints, has led us to this conclusion : - That heaven waits not the last moment, but recognises its friends on this side death; that the power of the soul's vision becomes stronger as the objects of its hope are brought nearer; and, that the inhabitants of the sunny land are sometimes allowed to meet the approaching pilgrim on this side the pearly gates.¹

Yet, if these descriptions made heaven comprehensible and desirable to the people who were converted by the Primitive Methodists, it was only attainable through conversion. The unconverted were warned that in the afterlife

Your employment, instead of singing salvation with the white-robed multitude in heaven, will be to gaze on terrific forms, to listen to frightful sounds, to breathe sulphurous air, and to roll in liquid fire, where the prospect of eternal woe fills the mind with constant horror. Would you escape this agony? repent of sin, pray for pardon, believe in Christ, 'wash and be clean'.²

The same imagery was used to describe the separation of the converted from the unconverted as was used in the description of heaven, but the message it sought to convey to sinners was uncompromising. Domestic and social ties would be disrupted in a horrible manner

friend will witness against friend. Pious parents will witness against ungodly children. There stands the ungodly son, that wicked daughter, trembling before the Judge, confounded by the testimony of mother and father.

...
The minister will witness against those who reject his words.

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1. R. Parks, 'The Death of the Righteous' in The Primitive Pulpit, vol.I, 1857, pp.322-323.
 2. J. R. Parkinson, 'The Church Below and the Church Above ...', The Primitive Pulpit, vol.I, p.188.

Pious children will witness against their parents.
 Ungodly children will witness against their parents.
 My father never taught me the fear of the Lord.
 My father taught me to swear and to get drunk, my
 mother to lie and break the Sabbath. The husband
 will witness against the wife and the wife against
 the husband, the sister against the brother, the
 brother against the sister, the mother against the
 daughter, the daughter against the mother, ministers
 against their people and the people against their
 ministers.

Let not the ungodly husband think that he can cling to
 the garments of his pious wife, and thus be introduced
 to the favour of the Judge. Those pious members of
 your family on earth, that now pray and weep before
 God for your salvation, cannot help you then.

...

See children separated from their parents. Families
 interred in one tomb, see how they are separated,
 sundered for ever. Oh! how they shriek as they sink
 into the eternal gulf. What dreadful cries of despair!¹

Individual conversion was the only way to find salvation
 and escape from hell

Holiness is not our natural condition: we are made holy
 by the regeneration of the Holy Spirit - that is, by
 his renewing or creating anew, whereby we are born again ...

Man is naturally in darkness - he cannot see God; he has
 not a natural disposition or desire to love him, and is
 not prepared to be with him. On the contrary, he is
 morally prepared for the dreary abode of demons. Every
 man is naturally so far from holiness, that unless he be
 'born again' he must perish. On this subject, Christ's
 words are conclusive: 'Except a man be born again, he
 cannot see the kingdom of God.'

To be more particular, I remark that a man may not be
 a drunkard, a liar, or an adulterer, yet he may be as
 void of holiness, and in some cases as far from it, as
 any one of these. God looketh at the heart; and how
 much fostered iniquity does he witness in many persons
 who are outwardly moral, and in many modern pharisees
 who 'make clean the outside of the cup'. A man may be
 a good husband or neighbour, in the sense in which such
 expressions are often used; he may possess amiable
 instincts and affections, and do many praiseworthy deeds,

1. Thomas Lowe (ed.), Burning Words; or, Choice Remains of the late Rev. Robert Key, of Norfolk, Barnsley, 1882, pp.13-15.

and yet be as void of holiness as the openly profane: we would not rank him with such persons in the extent of the moral injury that he inflicts on society, nor in the degrees of his guilt; but we do so as regards his destitution of holiness. Those persons of correct moral actions, and yet unregenerate, have hearts morally corrupt; but the corruption is not generally seen; - the heart, in its unrenewed state, 'is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked'.¹

The need for the salvation of the individual, with the hope that eventually family ties and relationships would be reconstructed in heaven for those who were saved, provided the basis of a coherent theology for people whose lives had seemed to lose shape and direction as a result of social and economic change. The situation in nineteenth century Lincolnshire in many ways paralleled that in the United States of America after the Civil War. There expansion and commercial specialisation had brought individual anonymity, which was counteracted by a return to a lost sense of community in the graveyard and heavenly world of the dead.²

Early Primitive Methodist preachers were responsive to these needs because of the connexion's origins in an area of mixed industrial development which still had strong connections with the countryside and which was also vulnerable to the economic and social strains of the early nineteenth century.³

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1. Parkinson Milson, 'Holiness Essential to Seeing the Lord', The Primitive Pulpit, vol. I, pp.342-343.
 2. David E. Stannard, The Puritan Way of Death: a study in religion, culture and social change, paperback edit., Oxford, 1979, pp.171. and 185.
 3. Kendall, Origin and History, vol.1, p.17; E. J. Hobsbawm, Primitive Rebels: studies in archaic forms of social movements in the 19th and 20th centuries, repr. Manchester, 1971, p.129.

Some of its leaders had achieved a degree of financial independence, but their position was never strong enough to put a great distance between them and the people they served. Hugh Bourne had become an independent dealer and worker in timber by 1800. He also had a background of moderate wealth which put his family on a level with the respectable yeomanry of the area, but his position was not immune from economic fluctuations which could erode whatever surplus income he had been able to put aside for the work of evangelisation.¹ His work for the connexion was interspersed with periods of carpentering, building, gardening, haymaking and harvesting. In doing this, Bourne experienced the difficulties and problems of combining manual labour with his spiritual life. After putting on a barn roof he was so tired that he could hardly keep awake at family prayers and later fell asleep at his bedside.² James Nixon and Thomas Woodnorth, who supported William Clowes's work as a full-time missionary, were able to do this when their work as potters produced enough surplus income. Yet when trade fluctuated, they were unable to continue and had to put the financing of the missionary work on a broader connexional base.³

No matter in how favourable a milieu Primitive Methodism operated, the ultimate measure of the connexion's success was the number of converts it gained. Conversion was an intensely personal experience which touched the core of an individual's

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1. Kendall, Origin and History, vol.I, pp.16-17; Walford, Hugh Bourne, vol.I, p.1.
 2. Wilkinson, Hugh Bourne, p.69.
 3. Ibid., p.89; Kendall, Origin and History, vol.I, p.130

emotional and spiritual life leading to a change, often fundamental, in his or her outward social conduct as well as their inner spiritual state. It had implications not only for the life of the connexion but also for the role its members played in society and was the stepping stone for a new way of life for the individual involved. The Primitive Methodist conversion experience, because of the background of its preachers and the framework within which they worked, was particularly appropriate for the needs of the people it sought to reach. It used the fragmented folk beliefs of the working people of south Lincolnshire and gave these people a new view of life.

V

PRIMITIVE METHODISM AND RURAL DISCONTENT

The new way of life which followed conversion was based on a set of values and attitudes relevant to the social order developing in south Lincolnshire at the beginning of the nineteenth century. Primitive Methodist preachers challenged many older attitudes and assumptions and were themselves agents of social change. They had no doubt that their message meant that an individual had to put aside old habits. The fear of the Lord, according to a sermon printed in 1822, brought a life centred on hearth, home and the connexion's chapel life. Those who feared the Lord did not

expose themselves to many dangers from drinking, wrestling, fighting, bull baiting, cock fighting, horse racing and many similar evils; all which are calculated to injure the health and sink the soul into an everlasting hell, which burneth with fire and brimstone.¹

A man who followed the way offered by the Primitive Methodists, ^{it was said,} brought positive benefits on himself and his family. He was able to provide them with the necessaries and conveniences of life and in doing it was 'not injured with excesses nor distressed with more want than is good for his soul ...'² Until their conversion many Primitive Methodists were said to have followed their 'wild courses'. They attended 'places of public amusements', were 'fond of the fashions and amusements

1. P.M. Mag. 3, January 1822, pp.17-18.

2. Ibid.

of this present evil world', delighted in 'the abominations which are in the world' and added 'fresh vices to their former ones; and in the latter, rioting with increased ardour'.¹

The old habits of converts were not always 'the grosser immoralities, such as drunkenness (sic) &c.'² James Burwell of Little London, lived, 'according to the course of this world' yet 'did not relish gross scenes of vice, but was of a steady and thoughtful turn.'³ It was said of William Barley of Norton Disney that he was

of a gay turn of mind, and fond of the pleasures of this life. He was likewise particularly fond of music; which I conceive in minds like his, has a peculiar tendency to drown every serious thought, as it brings them into a company with such as are trifling with their precious souls; and who, whilst they are pursuing after vain objects, are making light of everything which is calculated to inspire the mind with seriousness.

The sins of which some converts repented might in fact be relatively minor, but the process of conversion and the opposition the Primitive Methodists faced, became enshrined in a tradition which developed into part of the staple of connexional hagiography. There was a continuing tradition, still alive at the time of Methodist union in 1932, that the 'soul winning passion' of the early Primitives had led them to the 'endurance of violent persecution' and 'happiness in suffering imprisonment'⁵ A typology was established of the kind of

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1. P.M. Mag. 1, November 1820, p.257; II, n.s., July 1831, p.248; I, third series, June 1843, p.205.
 2. Ibid. 9, September 1828, pp.314-315.
 3. Ibid. IX, n.s., April 1839, p.131.
 4. Ibid. 9, September 1828, pp.314-315.
 5. Joseph Pearce, Dinna Forget: a souvenir of Primitive Methodist soul-winning personalities, Leominster, 1932, p.12.

persecution which the early preachers faced. This resulted in a generalised description of the early phases of Primitive Methodist activity in a place.

Following a preliminary visit to a village a preacher would announce that his colleague would visit there the next week.

The day arrived, and the missionary appeared ... every arrangement had been made for his reception ... the eggs are thrown at the missionary, while he proceeds with his service ... The eggs being exhausted, the 'rough music' is brought to play upon him, and the throng now gather round him. Some blow the wind instruments, and others beat with sticks those of a drum kind. ... Those who had no instruments, united as they could in adding to the tumult and uproar... But other, and much more injurious, weapons than those have often been employed. Blood from the slaughter house, thrown over the missionary by a syringe, made of a gun barrel; eggs charged with vitriol, and other injurious ingredients, to burn his clothes and person also. Ropes, and even chains, to run round the missionary and his friends, and thereby drag them into some contiguous water or slough. The excrement of cattle, and other things, have not been found too loathsome for these poor misguided creatures to employ on these occasions. These humiliating scenes usually closed by the greater part of the mob following the missionary out of the place, and pelting him with stones, or flints for the road.¹

In 1818 Fulbeck's church bells were rung to disturb John Hallsworth while he preached from the village cross. A gun was brought and fired close to the window while he was preaching at Screddington in October 1820.² Hackarby (Hacconby) was said by Francis Birch to be 'a dark place'. While he was singing and praying there with some friends from Aslackby and Ripplingale

1. Thomas Church, Gospel Victories: or missionary anecdotes of imprisonments, labours and persecutions endured by Primitive Methodist preachers between the years 1812 and 1842, 1851, pp.16-17.

2. P.M.Mag. 2, February 1821, pp.45-46.

Satan's servants began to shout and hollo. And while I was speaking they endeavoured several times to throw us down. But the Lord wonderfully interposed, and they had not the power to hurt us. In the evening, though stones came like hail, none of us received any material hurt.¹

William Clowes's description of the visit he and John Wedgwood made to Lincoln in 1818 was written later in life and was therefore reminiscence rather than a contemporary journal entry.² Its highly stylised form and strong military imagery expresses the sense of a pitched battle or confrontation between the Primitive Methodists and the 'powers of darkness' whom they were seeking to overcome. It had been announced 'a fortnight that we should, in the name of the Lord, in that city lift up our banners.'³ The preaching took place between the minster and the new goal, two symbols of the authority of church and state.

We began the labours of the day about nine in the morning and terminated them about nine at night. About eleven o'clock in the forenoon, the conflict with the powers of darkness was very hot; a goat, which some sons of Belial procured, was run in among the congregation with a shout of three times three, and throwing dust in the air; but we remained in firm phalanx amid this storm, and returned upon the legions of the devil a powerful discharge from the big guns of Sinai, whilst at the same time we unfurled the ensigns of the cross of Jesus, inviting the enemy to ground his arms, and surrender upon the terms of peace and reconciliation offered in the gospel. Many that day did accept of offered pardon; the solemn stillness, and the tears which stood in the eyes⁴ of numbers, were evidently indicative of this ...

Similar opposition had been faced by Wesleyan Methodist preachers in the eighteenth century. Thomas Cocking, the

1. P.M.Mag. 2, March 1821, p.58.

2. Kendall, Origin and History, vol.I, p.136.

3. Clowes, Journals, p.142.

historian of Wesleyan Methodism in Grantham, described these crowds:

Rusticity and ruthlessness where (sic) combined in their character. The Methodist Parson, as he was called, on his regular or occasional visits, evidently afforded them delightful sport. He was not of their way. Hence he came among them as one of a strange tongue, and from a strange country. He wished to teach them a better way than the one they were pursuing, - the way of truth and holiness, and which leads to heaven. But looking upon him as an enemy to their pursuits of pleasure, in carnal and sinful indulgences; - which, as a minister of righteousness, it was his duty to depict, and then to denounce, as exposing them to the vengeance of God; expostulating with them, and exhorting them 'to flee from the wrath to come'; - they would treat him as one guilty of the vilest atrocity, and as 'a fellow' not worthy to live. The hostility which was shown to the ambassadors of peace who entered their territories, exemplified the malignant nature of human depravity in a very high degree; the mind being deprived in many instances of the menacing aspect of wholesome laws, and of the example of persons of respectability, guided by correct views of the claims of justice and the right of conscience. Under the influence of such depraved passions, these 'christian savages' convened in large numbers, when they assumed all the fierceness of a lawless mob. And these assemblies were headed for the most part by some person whose imprecations were most vociferous, and which secured him the spontaneous consent of the party that he should act as their chieftain. Thus marshalled, they sallied forth in the inglorious enterprise of defending the dominions and usurpation of Apollyon, against the legitimate rights of the Prince of Peace. Sometimes these frays were led on by a blustering influential farmer, who cared about as much for religion and the world to come; as the swine in his sty; or it might be the squire of the parish, who was a sort of feudal lord in the country village; and not unfrequently ^(sic) the clergyman himself, either openly or covertly, was the abettor of these outrages on civil order and decorum. Instigated as they were, and the attack being commenced, the poor preacher was most roughly handled:- sludge and filth of various descriptions were heaped upon him in abundance; sticks, stones, brick-bats, rotten eggs, and every kind of missile were fearlessly hurled at him. On some occasions (sic), to escape without being maimed, or even with life, might be considered as next to miraculous. Indeed, the providence¹ of God was strikingly manifested in their preservation.

1. Thomas Cocking, The History of Wesleyan Methodism in Grantham and its Vicinity: with preliminary observations on the rise, progress, and utility, the discipline and doctrines of the connexion; the life of its founder, etc., 1836, pp.132-133.

The stylised accounts of preachers tended to obscure the range and type of the opposition they faced. However, the crowd was, in this context, almost always conservative in both its goals and its actions.¹ It aimed to preserve the status quo in terms of the way it was thought people should behave and was therefore resistant to new patterns of behaviour which the Methodist preachers offered. It was said of the treatment meted out to Primitive Methodist preachers that

the benighted villagers cursed the heralds of the coming day and bid them begone. They pelted them with mud, stones and rotten eggs; sometimes threw ropes over them to drag them to the river; often sought to drown their praying and preaching with fire-shovels and tin kettles. In these persecutions they were sometimes led on by the authorities; and constables wishing to ingratiate themselves with the upper classes, laid information against these poor preachers as disturbers of the peace.²

The crowd's conservative goals helped to legitimise any backing which it had from squire, parson or influential farmer and also emphasised its deference to traditional patterns of behaviour. These crowds were informed by the belief that they were supported by the wider consensus of the community.³ The opposition which the Primitive Methodist preacher John Hallsworth faced in the Lincoln area in about 1818, assumed the form of traditional communal pastimes. It was these that the Primitives opposed in the interests of the individual spiritual development of their converts. This development was vulnerable in the crowds which supported traditional recreations.⁴

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1. John Walsh, 'Methodism and the mob in the eighteenth century' in G. J. Cuming and Derek Baker (ed.), Popular Belief and Practice: papers read at the ninth summer meeting and tenth winter meeting of the Ecclesiastical History Society, Cambridge, 1972, p.213.
 2. Richard Heath, The English Via Dolorosa or Glimpses of the History of the Agricultural Labourer, 1884, p.63.
 3. E. P. Thompson, 'The Moral Economy of the English Crowd in the Eighteenth Century', Past and Present 50, February 1971, p.78
 4. Malcolmson, Popular Recreations, p.103.

Hallsworth described his experiences:

at that time, when preaching, I was almost continually in danger of my life. Mobs were raised up at almost every place. Eggs were flying, together with stones and dirt! Cocks were fighting; - bells were ringing; - men were drinking and smoking, and holding up their hats and hallooing.¹

Primitive Methodism's role as an agent of social change was seen in its relationship to this type of opposition, although by the early nineteenth century the crowd was becoming less and less a legitimate means of expressing ideas and opinions. This was part of a broader movement in society in which the withdrawal of upper and middle class supporters from communal recreations left lower social groups isolated and vulnerable.² An article in the south Lincolnshire press noted that it was

impossible not to remark in this country a strong and increasing disposition to check and diminish the amusements of what are impudently called the lower orders of society, but which are in fact the component parts, the sole strength and basis of the entire fabric and without which the whole superstructure of nobility and gentry, church and king, and all the lazy luxuries of what are presumptuously called the upper classes, would tumble into their original nothingness. This ungrateful and inhuman propensity in those who happen to have the upper hand in the present state of society, is partly produced by the puritanical spirit, now unhappily revived, which views the recreations of the poor from labour, as so many acts of sinfulness and improvidence, and partly that spirit of avarice, that inordinate desire of wealth, so conspicuous in our various manufactories, (in which many of our leading magistrates are notoriously concerned,) and in a most especial degree by the weight experienced from taxation, and the excessive dearness of the necessaries of life, which oblige every master, proprietor, or farmer, to extract as much labour as they possibly can from the blood and sweat of their respective labourers, without regarding the sufferings to which they are

1. P.M.Mag. 2, February 1821, p.45.

2. Alun Howkins, 'The Taming of Whitsun: the changing face of a nineteenth century rural holiday' in Eileen and Stephen Yeo (ed.), Popular Culture and Class Conflict 1590-1914: explorations in the history of labour and leisure, Brighton, 1981, pp.191, 193.

exposed, and to consider every hour the poor creatures enjoy from their task-works as so much deducted from their rightful profit and advantage. All these are the true causes why in every department of the state which has authority, we see perpetual attempts to curb and curtail, nay to harass and even annihilate those festive amusements which our ancestors used to enjoy when England was as yet unbowed down by the weight of debt ... But alas, how is the scene now changed! Even if they had the inclination and the ability to attend these joyous meetings, the opportunity is now denied them. The higher authorities have pronounced these assemblies of the lower orders to tend to a demoralization of the people as well as to a disturbance of the public peace; that the time which these frequenters of fairs waste in idleness or dissipation, as they call it, might be more beneficially employed to themselves and to society in actual labour, or reading good books - probably the tracts of some religious association - and that the young people of each sex are often ruined by these scenes of dissipation, whilst the only parties who profit by them are the exhibitors of the shows, the providers of the entertainment in question... Such is the state to which the narrow-minded and over-religious part of the magistracy of the kingdom are endeavouring to reduce the kingdom of England.¹

* * *

The demise of the traditional crowd closed one of the accepted means of self expression open to the lower classes so that only individual and clandestine acts of protest were left to them. Primitive Methodism also provided an alternative for what it had helped to replace. However, the evidence for south Lincolnshire suggests that, despite the claims of some connexional writers, the Primitives were not successful among the people who resorted to clandestine social protest. The connexion's institutions were part of the new social order and not an alternative means of expressing the discontents of the rural working classes. There is also little evidence that the Primitive Methodists of south Lincolnshire helped to sublimate

1. D.S.N., 9th September 1825.

these discontents by channelling them into religious modes of expression. Rather, as the connexion's institutional life became more highly developed its leaders tended to sanction the status quo and distance themselves from anything that was likely to disturb it in order to protect their own religious establishment.

The type of crowd action which sought to impede change and defend traditional customs and practices was becoming less common after 1750.¹ For example, the bread riot, a means of regulating bread or flour prices through collective action, had lost a good deal of its importance by this time.² It was, however, still to be found in the town of Grantham in September 1812 when

The millers and flour-sellers ... not showing great alacrity in lowering the price of flour, although a considerable fall had taken place in the price of grain, the old women and others on whom the burthen bore heavily, on Monday night last rose en masse, and visited the flour trade in general; merely to know their determination. They were civil in the extreme to those from whom they received civility, and in general they obtained promises that a proportionate and fair reduction should immediately take place, and which was complied with the following day. Those who hesitated in making the promise requested were soon forced to comply, as the breaking of their windows was the immediate consequence of their hesitation. One miller had windows &c. broken to the amount of £20.³

In the Kesteven village of Heckington there is evidence of a tradition of communal disturbances continuing until the 1830s. There had been an attack on the houses of millers and

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1. John Stevenson, Popular Disturbances in England 1700-1870, 1979, pp.31-32.
 2. R. B. Rose, 'Eighteenth Century Price Riots and Public Policy in England', International Review of Social History VI, 1961, pp.281-282.
 3. D.S.N., 25th September 1812.

other tradesmen in October 1816¹ and in 1831 Lucy Trollope

being an evil-disposed person and of a turbulent and riotous disposition, and maliciously intending to disturb the tranquility and good order of the town of Heckington, did on the 11th December last excite a riot by giving a written paper to the crier, the purport of which was to assemble the women at Mr. Almond's shop, who is a baker at Heckington, to compel him to lower the price of flour,² in consequence of which a riotous meeting took place.

At the same sessions at which Lucy Trollope was indicted three men, also from Heckington, were sentenced to three months imprisonment for assembling to demand an increase in wages. The doggerel verses which they circulated implied that there were traditional norms of behaviour on which they could base their case and from which the crowd took its authority for collective action: "Notice is hereby given to all labourers, to meet upon the Green at the hour of seven, for to state the wages here, or else at Sleaford they must appear; and if no justice there be done, elsewhere then they must run."³ However, just as there was no hint that the bakers of Heckington responded to Lucy Trollope's assembly which was deemed 'unlawful', so the chairman of Sleaford Sessions recognised no obligations to those who sought an increase in wages. Their conduct was merely 'riots' and he drew a clear line between those who took part in them and those whose duty it was to suppress such events when he 'observed that it was very praiseworthy in the respectable inhabitants of Heckington to take the steps they had done to suppress these riots.'⁴

1. D.S.N., 25th October 1816.

2. L.R.S.M., 14th January 1831.

3. Ibid., 14th January 1831.

4. Ibid.

The end of the tradition of using collective action, as a means of redressing grievances meant that protest was driven underground into clandestine acts. Thus Mersa Lunn from Great Hale, a village half a mile south of Heckington, sent an anonymous letter in pursuit of a campaign to ensure an equitable distribution of coal to the poor, which might in the past have led to communal action. She wrote to the village overseer

Mr. Green, so sure as you are a bad man, you may expect a visit some night before Christmas; if you do not let the poor have the coals altogether this year, you will have a bullet. Bill Everitt last year let them have one strike a week, but he will be paid for all his tricks soon, and all of you, depend upon it; you will dance without a fiddle before long. I heard Mr. Wm. Dawson's men give him a good word, but Mr. Edw. Dawson's men gave a bad word indeed, so he must mind and sleep with one eye open. Bread or blood, my boys, or fire and smoke.¹

There are, however, considerable difficulties in interpreting the evidence on this type of rural discontent in nineteenth century Lincolnshire. In common with other areas of the country there are problems in assessing its actual nature and extent with variable source material and the need to classify a wide range and varied incidence of happenings. These make it difficult to establish an exact chronology or to discern patterns of behaviour.²

1. L.R.S.M., 14th January 1831.

2. J. G. Rule, 'Social Crime in the Rural South in the Eighteenth and Early Nineteenth Centuries', Southern History I, 1979, p.140; David Jones, 'Rural Crime and Protest' in G. E. Mingay (ed.), The Victorian Countryside, vol. Two, 1981, p.567; J. P. D. Dunbabin, Rural Discontent in Nineteenth-Century Britain, 1974, pp.62-63; David Jones, 'Thomas Campbell Foster and the Rural Labourer: incendiaryism in East Anglia in the 1840s', Social History 1, January 1976, pp.5-6.

In this context the concept of social crime as a means of distinguishing acts which were in some ways legitimised by popular opinion, although illegal, from those which were neither legitimised in this way nor acceptable to the community, provides a means of understanding the nature of rural protest.¹ Even when this distinction is made much depends on the precise nature of an act and where, how and against whom it was committed. Although social crime could include such activities as incendiarism, poaching, cattle maiming and machine breaking, it was the context as much as the content of the act which defined its precise nature.²

For example, in the case of sheep stealing acts might range from those committed by gangs who operated on a fairly large scale and on a commercial basis to incidents where a labourer stole a sheep to feed his family. The latter might be legitimised by popular opinion so that it could be said to be a social crime. It was not, however, a direct act of protest, although a more discriminating attack on an animal which involved killing and skinning it, then taking only the best cuts of meat and leaving the head, skin, fat and entrails was a powerful reminder of the ability of the labourers to commit highly selective acts. The careful way in which these were executed

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1. Douglas Hay, Peter Linebaugh, John G. Rule, E. P. Thompson and Cal Winslow, Albion's Fatal Tree: crime and society in eighteenth-century England, Penguin edit., Harmondsworth, 1977, pp.13-15; J. G. Rule, 'Social Crime in the Rural South', loc.cit. pp.138-139; E. J. Hobsbawm, 'Social Criminality', Bulletin of the Society for the Study of Labour History 25, Autumn 1972, pp.5-6.
 2. George Rudé, Protest and Punishment: the story of the social and political protesters transported to Australia 1788-1868, Oxford, 1978, p.4; J. G. Rule, 'Social Crime in the Rural South', loc.cit., p.139.

could be seen in its own right as a piece of propaganda on behalf of the perpetrators of the attack.¹

The maiming of cattle and sheep with no intention to take meat represented more clearly a direct act of protest or revenge. When Mr. Edward Clarke of Canwick led a move by the farmers in his area to reduce wages, three of his rams, each worth £25, were attacked. Two of them had their throats cut in the fields, while a third, in a sheep house, was wounded.

They were left in the field and sheep-house, so that the cause of the crimes was not pressing and immediate want; and the distance at which the outrages were committed betokens confederacy. The cause is to be sought, then, in malicious revenge; and here is the solution. For some time the farmers have been asking Mr. Clarke to reduce wages; as, being the principal proprietor, they look upon him to lead in all such matters. Mr. Clarke intimated his intention on Saturday to reduce men's wages from 12s. to 10s., and boys' wages correspondingly; but the rest of the farmers will not follow till next Saturday (tomorrow), so that in the labourers' mind Mr. Clarke was made to take the odium of setting the example of a reduction, and upon him has fallen the revenge it excited. Yet, at the present rate of farm-produce, some reduction seems to be a necessity, unless the farmer is to pay his labourers out of capital instead of profit. Cruel and diabolical beyond all measure is the wanton destruction of the property of a man who has managed for years a large undertaking, not so much for his own benefit as for the benefit of those around him; for Mr. Clarke, though well off in the world, is by no means the rich man he might have been, had he thought only of self, and not of those who tilled his soil.²

Poaching was another activity which in many of its manifestations could be seen as a social crime, part of a general struggle over custom, rights, and law in the countryside, and yet could also be a commercial operation.³ The ballad

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1. A. J. Peacock, 'Village Radicalism in East Anglia, 1800-50', in Dunbabin (ed.), Rural Discontent, pp.43-44.
 2. L.R.S.M., 9th November 1849.
 3. David Jones, Crime, Protest, Community and Police in Nineteenth-Century Britain, 1982, pp.63, 69.

'The Lincolnshire Poacher' which has been traced back to 1776 and may well belong to an earlier date, is a celebration of the freedom of the woods and countryside.¹ The evidence gathered by the Select Committee on Criminal Commitments and Convictions in 1826 to the effect that labourers did not consider poaching to be a moral offence was supported by the chaplain to Lincoln Prison in 1849.² He said that 'the notion, which is very prevalent, that game was intended for all, and that there is no harm in taking a hare or a bird, especially when one's children are wanting food, quiets their conscience.'³ The morning traffic in game to the dealers of the city of Lincoln showed the commercial aspect of poaching.⁴ It was reported in 1856 that

Vast quantities of game are brought into Lincoln every morning by the poachers, particularly from the south, so that the well-stocked preserves of Mr. Chaplin and others must repeatedly be laid under contribution. The poachers by a half a dozen together walk into the city between seven and eight, with their bags and pockets well stuffed out, and seem to care not who sees them.⁵

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1. Sir Francis Hill, Georgian Lincoln, Cambridge, 1966, pp.152-153.
 2. P.P. 1826-7 VI (534) Report from the Select Committee on Criminal Commitments and Convictions: together with the minutes of evidence taken before the committee, pp.5-7; Ibid., 1850 XXVIII (291) Fifteenth Report of the Inspectors Appointed under the Provisions of the Act of 5 and 6 Will.IV c.38 to visit the different Prisons of Great Britain. Northern and Eastern District p.108.
 3. P.P. 1850 XXVIII (291) Fifteenth Report of the Inspectors of Prisons, p.109.
 4. Hill, Victorian Lincoln, p.79.
 5. L.R.S.M., 21st November 1856.

National criminal statistics began in the first decade of the nineteenth century. They were extended in 1833-34 and greatly improved in 1856-57 when the government began to document offences known to the police.¹ There are difficulties in interpreting these because, as in the case of the number of people imprisoned for offences against the game laws which rose from 868 in 1816 to 1,467 by 1820, statistics may in fact be measuring changes in the administration and interpretation of the law, rather than an actual rise in the number of offences committed.² Moreover, these statistics only represent a fraction of unrecorded and undetected crime in the nineteenth century countryside.³

This means that local evidence is an important element in building up a picture of the nature and extent of rural crime and protest in the nineteenth century.⁴ Local studies have shown that there were periods that were remarkable because of the amount of unrest in them. For example, there were major outbreaks of incendiarism in East Anglia in 1815-17, 1822, 1825, 1829-33 and 1835-37, as well as 1842-51, with peaks of riotous activity in 1816, the early 1830s and in 1835 and 1836.⁵

The relationship between economic conditions and crime rates is complex. For example, distress can be seen as a major cause of the increase in poaching offences after 1815,

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1. Jones, Crime, Protest, Community and Police, p.3.
 2. R. B. Munsche, Gentlemen and Poachers: the English game laws 1671-1831, Cambridge, 1981, pp.138-139.
 3. Jones, 'Rural Crime and Protest', loc.cit., p.567.
 4. Jones, Crime, Protest, Community and Police, p.3.
 5. Jones, 'Thomas Campbell Foster and the Rural Labourer ...', loc.cit., pp.5-6; A.J. Peacock, 'Village Radicalism ...', loc.cit., p.39.

but the incidence of poaching was not tied exclusively to increases in the cost of living, and poaching was also an assertion of independence and self-respect. However, during periods of depression such as 1815-17 and 1842-43 the level of crimes and protest was sufficiently high to produce a feeling of general crisis among informed observers.¹

An anonymous Long Sutton correspondent in a letter on 'The Unemployed Industrious Poor' linked low prices for farm produce, reductions in wages and criminal activity:

The Farmers of this country have had, for six, seven, say eight years, very adequate returns for their outlay of capital, and their appliance of skill and labour; and now, although the by-gone harvest was richly luxuriant, because prices have (from causes to which I will not now allude) assumed a downward tendency, they have become paralysed and panic-struck, and many of them, too many, have either 'pulled down' the wages of their farm-servants and labourers, or, conjoined with the reduction of the wages of the former, have thrown the latter idle on society, dependent wholly for subsistence on the charity and benevolent contributions of the other sections of the community ...

In conclusion, I would ask the farmers of this country, what they have done to arrest the career of the cowardly midnight assassin, and the equally infamous incendiary? To institute societies for the prosecution of felony is vindictive: it punishes the criminal without producing reformation, and is therefore directly opposed, to sound principles of philosophy and of justice.²

Incendiarism was one aspect of nineteenth century rural crime which was clearly linked to economic distress. By the third decade of the nineteenth century the frequency of

1. Jones, Crime, Protest, Community and Police, p.5.; Munsche, Gentlemen and Poachers, p.149; for poaching as an assertion of independence see above p.271-272.

2. L.R.S.M., 27th January 1843.

incendiary incidents had come to be recognised as a measure of discontent in East Anglia and to a lesser degree in the home and southern counties.¹ In common with other types of rural unrest there are problems in interpreting the precise nature of some incendiary incidents, so that not all fires should be seen as acts of protest and revenge. It can be assumed that the fire which destroyed a threshing machine and straw in North Fen, near Deeping, was aimed at the machine, but it needed careful deduction and observation to draw the conclusion that the fire which destroyed four wheat, three barley, an oat and a hay stack at Nocton Grange, had not resulted from over-heating in the hay stack in which it originated. Since the wind blew in the opposite direction from the haystack, it was deduced that the fire had been caused 'either by some accident or maliciously.'² There was also the possibility that a farmer might use the cover of general unrest to set his own stacks on fire to make a quick gain from his insurance.³

It has been suggested that an articulate tradition of village and small town radicalism lay behind the incendiary incidents in some parts of the country.⁴ This argument has also been justified by a study of the pattern of diffusion of the Swing disturbances in the 1830s which indicates that planning and discussion lay behind their spread. Sometimes

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1. Jones, Crime, Protest, Community and Police, p.15.
 2. L.R.S.M., 3rd September 1830.
 3. D.S.N., 29th October 1822.
 4. E. J. Hobsbawm and George Rudé, Captain Swing, Introduction to Penguin edit., Harmondsworth, 1973, pp.xii-xiii.

clusters of disturbances had a rhythm of their own, which can be seen in the Vale of Pewsey in Wiltshire, the Vale of Blackmore in Dorset, the Meon Valley in Hampshire and the area between Midhurst and Farnham. The timing of riots seems to point to their planned nature. Sundays were often free of incidents and riots broke out on Mondays. In East Anglia there were no riots on Sunday 28th November during the disturbances which took place between Saturday 27th November and Tuesday 30th November 1830. Sunday had been a day of rest in earlier periods of protest in East Anglia. It provided an opportunity for discussion and preparation; journeys to nearby villages could also take place. On Mondays the planned action would begin.¹

The conspiracy theory was prevalent among Lincolnshire landowners and farmers in the 1830s. W. Beauclerk of Redbourne Hall, Lindsey, reported, in December 1830, that there were many loose characters travelling in the villages who were the principal participants in the outrages. The local labourers were not, in general, badly disposed and there was no open rebellion, but there was no safety while outsiders lurked about the villages ready to join in any disorder that might arise.² In a letter written on 12th December 1830, Robert Cracroft of Hackthorn, near Lincoln, Lindsey, also put forward the idea that rural discontent was being centrally organised. He

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1. Andrew Charlesworth, Social Protest in a Rural Society: the spatial diffusion of the Captain Swing disturbances of 1830-31, 1979, pp.49-50.
 2. P.R.O., H.O. 52/8, Home Office Correspondence and Papers - Municipal and Provincial: counties ...1830.

suggested that a committee of men in London lay behind it and reported that

There are men apparently not belonging to the county of respectable appearance and some in disguise, traversing the county in every direction, on horseback, foot and in gigs making inquiries into the character etc., of every gentleman and respectable farmer in the county - This does not appear to arise from accidental or merely inquisitive motives but is evidently a system, memorandums are taken of the information so obtained, and the person questioned is generally a labourer on the roads or the keeper of a small public house, who has no interest in the matter, the enquirer is allowed to depart without any notice taken, until it is too late for his apprehension. Whence these men come, who pays their expenses, what interest they can have in these enquiries, I cannot understand otherwise by supposing there is a dangerous, and well organised association somewhere, having some aim which the wants, and disaffection of the lower classes, are to be made the tools.¹

Commentators invested attacks on unpopular figures with a wider significance than their purely local importance justified. Edward Gibbon Wakefield had detected a degree of discrimination in the incendiary attacks of the 1830s:

bearing in mind the small quantity of land from which tithes are taken in kind, and that tithes are but a tenth of the gross product, it will appear that a very large proportion of Swing incendiarism has been directed against the property of beneficed clergymen. What the proportion may be I do not pretend to define; but everyone, who reads the newspapers, will have remarked that tithe stacks have not been spared. The destruction of the uninsured tithe-stack produces immediate injury to the parson; and it should be remembered both of the farmers' stacks and of the parson's stacks, that the men whose labour produces them, have little means of knowing, until the stacks be destroyed, whether or not an insurance has been effected.²

When a haystack belonging to the Revd. Maurice Johnson of Spalding was attacked in late November 1830, it was seen as a part of a wider conspiracy because

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1. P.R.O., H.O. 52/8.
 2. Edward Gibbon Wakefield, *Swing Unmasked; or, the Causes of Rural Incendiarism*, [1831], pp.29-30.

The very great skill and secrecy with which these diabolical acts are perpetrated, is a convincing proof that they are not managed, or at least contrived, by the peasantry of this country, but must certainly originate with those who have a more chemical knowledge of combustion than ¹people of their grade can be supposed to possess.

The grievances of farm labourers could be deployed by small farmers, who were squeezed between rent and tithe demands from landlords, lay and clerical impropiators and demands for higher wages, in an attempt to ease their own problems.²

This might seem to give the labourers' demands a greater coherence than they possessed in reality. It was reported from Holbeach in December 1830 that the labourers of the area were hostile to threshing machines and their effect on the level of earnings but deprecated the burning of stacks

and say that they are determined that the present amount of tithes shall not be collected! They argue that the farmer cannot give them better wages if he has to pay so much to the parson, &c. The owner of the rectorial tithes (W. E. Tomline, esq., the late Bishop of Winchester's son) was scarcely ever in the parish and the Vicar (Dr. Maltby) comes about once in three years: the former received annually from 5 to £6,000 and the latter upwards of £1,000, and in return they have the generosity to treat the tithe-payers with a glass of grog each. !!³

The idea that the rural labourers were only stirred into committing incendiary acts by outsiders fitted a paternalistic view of society in which landlords, farmers and workers recognised a set of mutual obligations in which all parties had rights as well as responsibilities. This was expressed in a report in January 1831 which said that although there were instances of incendiary fires in different parts of

1. D.S.N., 3rd December 1830.

2. Rudé and Hobsbawm, Captain Swing, pp.195-197.

3. D.S.N., 17th December 1830.

Lincolnshire

there are no appearances of any disposition to acts of tumult or riot amongst the labourers, nor any organised system of outrage. Some landlords are setting a laudable example of encouraging their tenantry to employ the labouring classes at fair wages, by substituting, in lieu of returns, permanent abatement of rent; Christopher Turnor, Esq., Sir Gilbert Heathcote, and the Duke of St. Albans, have abated₁ from 15 to 25 per cent on their respective estates ...

The true situation, which had developed as a result of agrarian change was recognised by other commentators. In a letter which was annotated 'Nil' by the Whitehall authorities, H. A. Johnson of the Corn Market, Louth, Lindsey, wrote to offer a diagnosis of the social background to unrest. Johnson was a surgeon and druggist who said he had been a farmer as well as a doctor for more than twenty years. He argued that paternalistic measures were not enough to deal with the problems of the countryside. The poor man was driven on to the roads and the rates from his common rights by enclosure, from his cottage by the indolence of the land agent or the parsimony of the large neighbouring farmer as well as from the barn by the threshing machine.² Similarly, the Revd. T. H. Rawnsley, who wrote to Whitehall from Halton Holegate, near Spilsby, Lindsey, in March 1831, and who a few months earlier had rejected the conspiracy theory as a plausible explanation for a fire at Stickford, saw a series of incendiary incidents at Friskney, Lindsey, Leake and Butterwick Fens as resulting from the new type of society which had developedⁱⁿ the fens. He described the old East and Wildmore Fens: 'all the land is arable,

1. L.R.S.M., 7th January 1831.

2. P.R.O., H.O. 52/8.

it is a lawless country, and having no settled paupers, the laborers (sic) contiguous to it are so few, that foreigners, from Norfolk, Yorkshire, Cambridgeshire, etc., fly to it, whenever they want work or to flee justice.' New Leake, Lindsey, had become 'a sort of place of refuge for all profligate vagabonds, and frequenters of those sad "new Tom and Jerry" shops as they are now called ...'¹

The authorities in south Lincolnshire were not dealing with collective acts of protest such as the Swing riots in counties to the south. Attacks by crowds on threshing machines and other property such as those proposed by Thomas Stapleton, a Sawtrey, Huntingdonshire, labourer, did not take place in Lincolnshire. Stapleton described how a crowd would

go to Haddon and break a machine - also to Yaxley and break another and then proceed to Norman Cross to refresh themselves. After which, they shd break another at Holme, and that wd finish the week's work; should rest on the Sunday. On the following Monday there wd be another party, who wd knock down butchers' and bakers' shops.²

Armed and mounted troops were organised in south Lincolnshire to face this type of activity, but they were not needed.³ The machine-breaking riots did not spread into Lincolnshire, but moved into Northamptonshire. The inappropriateness of

1. P.R.O., H.O. 52/14, 1831.

2. Quoted in Rudé and Hobsbawm, Captain Swing, p.117.

3. For the formation of volunteer troops and the swearing in of special constables see P.R.O. H.O. 41/8 Home Office - Disturbances. Entry Books 9th September 1830 - 13th December 1830; 41/9, 13th December 1830 - 9th April 1831; 41/10, 11th April - 19th December 1831; 41/11, 19th December 1831 - 14th February 1832; 52/8; L.R.S.M., 3rd December 1830; 10th December 1830; 24th December 1830; D.S.N., 3rd December 1830.

the Lincolnshire authorities' response was discussed in a letter to the Stamford Mercury in April 1831 by John Tallant in which he also pointed to the link between incendiarism and economic conditions. Tallant had probably farmed near Rauceby until March 1831 and when he left to go to Houghton, near Northampton, he was presented by fifty labourers with a piece of plate valued at £10. This was seen as a gratifying instance of good feeling in a period of incendiary activity and it was noted that Tallant had never thought it necessary to have a watch kept on his premises when conditions were unsettled.¹ In his letter Tallant addressed himself to the Lincoln Heath Troop of Yeomanry Cavalry:

Great Sirs,

I perceive ... that your Officers are appointed and that you are actually determined to disturb by the splendour of your appearance, your hitherto peaceable neighbourhood, in which I have spent the best 21 years of my life. If you are not ashamed of converting your plough-shares into swords for the purpose of destroying your fellow-creatures instead of supporting them, I hope and trust the fair sex of Lincoln Heath will have more fortitude than you appear to have, and will reason you out of your absurd and disgraceful measure ... I will forever maintain, that fill an Englishman's belly, and he is contented and happy ... but on the contrary, pine him, and it is not your flaming swords can prevent him from becoming a poacher, a midnight plunderer, or an incendiary. Before you organise your Troop, just take a friendly hint, and exchange places with your labourers for six months: then you will know how to treat them. ... You ... seem determined ... to drive your labourers to acts of violence and insubordination - I have fourteen Lincoln Heath men here and they are peaceable and quiet: so will your's be only treat them like Christians.²

It is difficult to measure the incidence or frequency of clandestine rural protest. Some acts might pass unnoticed

1. L.R.S.M., 4th March 1831.

2. Ibid., 22nd April 1831.

such as the theft or maiming of animals. A poaching incident might remain known only to the poacher himself. In this context incendiary incidents can provide a useful indicator of levels of unrest. It did not need the arrest and possible trial of an incendiary for his action to be noticed, since the local press provides a fairly accurate measure of the fires which took place in the area and often discussed the causes which lay behind them. Local correspondents were well aware of the link between incendiarism and social protest so that when a fire which had been 'undoubtedly occasioned wilfully' took place at Hubbard's Bridge, near Swineshead, in 1831, it was noted that the labourers at Swineshead were 'very dissatisfied with the wages offered by the farmers.'¹ An investigation into the relationship between incendiarism and the development of Primitive Methodism in the first half of the nineteenth century is a means of assessing the role of the connexion during periods of social tension and at the time when it was becoming established in local society.

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At times of unrest roving Primitive Methodist preachers with their contacts among the working classes were even greater objects of suspicion than in more settled conditions.² William Dawkins of Barnard Castle, County Durham, had written to Robert Peel in 1822 to warn of

1. L.R.S.M., 11th November 1831.

2. See above pp.208-209 for the suspicion engendered by preachers..

the dangerous consequences likely to ensue of suffering the Toleration of body of Creatures calling themselves Ranters to scour the Country in the way they are doing (at least in this Quarter) and using every art and means to draw the well disposed as well as the Ignorant from their just allegiance.¹

Edward Gibbon Wakefield, although dismissing such people as a 'rare exception' referred to the possibility that an incendiary might be a pedlar or weaver 'of morbid imagination, who fancies himself inspired.'² This fear was, however, totally unjustified. The official records and publications of the Primitive Methodist connexion are either silent about rural protest or as in a note in the Primitive Methodist Magazine in 1835, they are concerned not to jeopardize the connexion's position by becoming involved in controversial issues. The note which appeared in July 1835 was addressed 'To the Members in general of the Primitive Methodist Connexion to avoid Controversies' and 'affectionately' requested 'all our Trustees and members, by no means to lend any of our chapels or rooms for political or religious controversy; it being our duty to attend to the spiritual welfare of mankind.'³

It has been argued that the Primitive Methodists and other nonconformist denominations grew in numbers as people turned to religious outlets following the suppression of the Swing movement in the 1830s. A revival of religion was reported in Fakenham, Norfolk, Primitive Methodist circuit in late 1830 and there were also revivals up to 1835 in the rest of East Anglia.

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1. P.R.O., H.O. 40/17, Home Office, Activities in distressed areas. Civil and military reports 1822. Midland, Northern and Western Counties, Kent, Norfolk, Glasgow.
 2. Wakefield, Swing Unmasked, pp.36-37.
 3. P.M.Mag. V, n.s., July 1835, p.280.

The connexion spread rapidly in this area following the defeat of the Swing rioters.¹ In the area where Hampshire, Berkshire and Wiltshire meet there were 300 Primitive Methodist members in December 1830 and the connexion met with bitter resistance. After the Swing riots had subsided persecution was said to have ceased, new societies were formed and congregations increased. In the Brinkworth district of the Primitive Methodist connexion which covered an area of south Wiltshire, Oxfordshire, Berkshire, Somerset, Gloucester, Dorset, and Hampshire where there had been Swing activity the total number of members rose from about 1,800 in 1830 to just over 6,000 in 1837.² This rapid growth in membership was reflected in the national membership figures for the connexion which grew from 35,535 in 1830 to 56,649 in 1835.

Writers like Joseph Ritson perpetuated the idea that the Primitive Methodists had achieved successes among the incendiaries of East Anglia and 'transformed a county seething with sedition and terrorised by incendiarism and violence, into a peaceful, well-ordered community ...'³ Robert Key, on whose book Ritson based some of his comments and who had been active in the period of Primitive Methodist expansion in Norfolk which followed the Swing disturbances, described his work on the Cambridge circuit in the period 1846-47 in a speech he made at the Metropolitan Tabernacle in 1866:

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1. Rudé and Hobsbawm, Captain Swing, pp.248-249.
 2. Ibid., pp. 249-250.
 3. Joseph Ritson, The Romance of Primitive Methodism, 1909, p.125.

When I missioned Cambridgeshire some years ago, that county had been long notorious throughout the length and breadth of our land for its numerous and destructive fires. You could scarcely go out on a winter's evening without beholding burning stacks and tumbling houses. While sitting by the fireside one evening with an old gentleman, the old gentleman suddenly looked up, and looked me full in the face, and said, 'Bless the Lord, we can go to bed tonight without any danger of being burned out of our houses before morning. Ah,' he added, 'It was not always so, for we had a gang of varmints here that had plotted a scheme to burn down the whole parish, and they succeeded in burning seventeen families out of house and home. You might put these varmints,' said the old man, 'into jail and upon the treadmill, but they would come out the same devils they went in; but if the grace of God gets into the heart that will cure them.' ('Glory!') The old man said, 'It cost me two shillings a-night for a man to watch my premises in winter, and then we went to bed full of fear and anxiety and dread lest we should be burned out before the morning. But', said he, and his face brightened up, 'you came here and sang, and prayed and preached about the streets; for you can never get these varmints into a church or chapel, or bring them under the red-hot truth and tongues of fire' ... Said the old man, 'Your people brought the Gospel to bear upon them in the street, and it laid hold of their guilty hearts, and now these men are good members of your Church.' And then he gave me a list of names that filled me with astonishment ... There are no more fires now in Cambridgeshire than there are in any other shire. How is it to be accounted for? I will tell you. Primitive Methodism has extinguished them ... It has done what police and jails have tried to do and never could do ... I have got a book in the press that is full of nothing else than these marvellous triumphs and glorious achievements over thieves, harlots, house-breakers, stack-burners, and drunkards ... These men are now good men in the Primitive Methodist Connexion.¹

This speech is, however, remarkable for being one of the few explicit references to the actual conversion of incendiaries in Primitive Methodist literature. Key's autobiography lacks

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1. Lowe (ed.), Burning Words, p.29-31; Key's work in Norfolk in the 1830s is described in Robert Key, The Gospel among the Masses; or a Selection of Remarkable Scenes, Incidents, and Facts, connected with the Missionary Village Work and Experience of the Rev. Robert Key ..., second edit., 1872.

any documentation of conversions of this kind, although it is rich in details of the conversion of such people as village fiddlers, drummers, unmarried couples, beerhouse keepers, Sabbath breakers, drunkards and participants in traditional rural sports.¹ The way of life which was offered by Key was based on domesticity and the 'reformation of manners and habits.'² In a sermon preached as a farewell to the Mattishall, Norfolk, Primitive Methodist circuit in April 1834 Key summed up his work there which had begun in 1830 and therefore covered a period of considerable social unrest:

In many families, when ignorance and discord once reigned triumphant where the sweet incense of morning and evening devotion never ascended, where vice, profaneness, Sabbath-desecration, blasphemy, drunkenness, thieving, and poaching prevailed to an alarming extent the voice of prayer is now heard, the Bible read, and children are trained the way they should go. The ale-house is deserted for the house of God, the song of the drunkard for the hymn of praise, wretched hovels for comfortable dwellings, rags for decent apparel, disorder and confusion for peace and happiness, the enjoyments of home are relished, and the comforts of religion realized.³ To God be all the praise and glory both now and for ever!

There is no comparable evidence from south Lincolnshire.

Contemporary commentators, both in the local press and in connexional literature, did not point to any links between the Primitives and rural protesters. Moreover, it is not possible, because of the clandestine nature of rural protest in south Lincolnshire in the 1830s, to make direct comparisons between the situation there and counties such as Norfolk and Hampshire, Berkshire and Wiltshire, where the failure of what were

1. Robert Key, The Gospel among the Masses, pp.33, 42-43, 45-47, 69, 72, 81.

2. Ibid., p.101.

3. Ibid., p.139.

frequently collective acts of protest seems to have resulted in a period of religious revivalism.¹

There were two periods in south Lincolnshire, between 1815 and 1875, when there was a relatively high incidence of incendiarism, excluding fires which were clearly accidental. From 1830 to 1835 and between 1842 and 1855 the number of incidents rose to an extent which created an atmosphere of fear and some degree of panic. These periods stand out from the general continuum of rural crime in the period because of the frequency of incidents. Up to 1830 the largest number of acts of incendiarism in any year was 3 in 1829 and in many years only one or none were reported. However, in 1830 there were 19 incidents, 36 in 1831, 10 in 1832, 8 in 1833, 21 in 1834, and 7 in 1835. The number then dropped to 2 in 1836 and remained at the level of 1 or 2 incidents until 1842 when there were 8. There were 10 in 1843, 10 in 1844, 6 in 1845, 9 in 1846, 12 in 1847, 8 in 1848, 9 in 1849, followed by a sharp rise to 21 in 1850, 15 in 1851 and 13 in 1852. There was then a gradual decrease, with 11 incendiary incidents in 1853, 8 in 1854 and 8 in 1855. In 1856 there were 2 incidents in south Lincolnshire followed by 8 in 1857, after which the highest number in any year was 12 in 1868 and the next highest 7 in 1861, 1865 and 1867. By the 1860s there is little evidence that the rise in incendiary incidents created any general alarm.² The incendiary

1. For an indication of the type of protest in the period 1830-32 see the summary table of disturbances in Rudé and Hobsbawm, Captain Swing, pp.261-263.

2. L.R.S.M. and D.S.N., passim.

incidents of the 1840s and 1850s differed very little in type from those of the 1830s, although there were some changes in the circumstances surrounding them. The availability of lucifer matches made it easier to start a fire on impulse, while the use of steam engines to drive threshing machines brought an extra risk of fire into stack yards.¹

Wandering vagrants who slept in stacks or farm buildings are mentioned in reports as a cause of fires. Their numbers increased or declined with fluctuations in the economy, so that a generalised fear of social unrest during periods of economic depression might be projected on to this vulnerable section of the population.² Some of the fires for which vagrants were responsible might be started from motives of protest or revenge. Thomas Greenfield and John Sedon set fire to a stack at Sutterton in September 1851 after being refused bread by the farmer's wife.³

The idea that a general conspiracy lay behind incendiary activity had little general currency by the 1840s and 1850s. Incendiarism was seen as a social crime which drew support from the labouring population as in the case of a fire on the premises of Mr. Thomas Barber 'an opulent agriculturalist' at Sudbrook. Eight corn, two fodder and two large straw stacks were burnt and a barn damaged. It was reported that there was:

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1. See for examples, L.R.S.M., 10th March 1843; 30th August 1844.
 2. Raphael Samuel, 'Comers and Goers' in H. J. Dyos and Michael Wolff (ed.), The Victorian City: images and reality, vol. I: past and present and numbers of people, paperback edit., [1977] pp.123-153; for examples of fires started by vagrants and discussion of the question see L.R.S.M., 15th March 1850, 15th September, 1850.
 3. L.R.S.M., 5th March 1852.

not any doubt that the fire was caused by an incendiary; and it is rumoured that Mr. Barber has recently caused some dissatisfaction in the neighbourhood by the part he took at a meeting of farmers at Ancaster to regulate the rate of wages ... We regret to say that a considerable degree of apathy was manifested among some of the labourers; but the utmost exertions were used by many who move in a higher sphere.¹

Threatening letters, also a feature of some of the incendiary attacks of the 1830s, provided clear evidence of the link between discontent over working conditions and incendiarism in the 1840s and 1850s. After a series of fires in Gosberton it was reported that

Several letters have been found in farmers' yards in the Risegate, threatening that if wages were not promptly raised, their yards should be fired, and that if that would not do, the writers would take to shooting them. The answer to this is, the work is plentiful, and the wages from 13s. 6d. to 15s. a week, with in some cases ale besides. The writing of the letters is disguised, and the words purposely mis-spelled.²

In the period of high incendiary activity of the 1830s impressionistic reports give an optimistic picture of the state of Primitive Methodism in south Lincolnshire. In late 1832 the Wisbech, Cambridgeshire, branch was formed from Upwell, Norfolk, circuit. It covered parts of the fens of south Lincolnshire and at the time it was created it was said that 'Souls are converting to God every week.'³ In 1833 the Boston circuit reported 'an increase of preachers, places and piety this year; and this last quarter the power of God has come down amongst us in a powerful manner.'⁴ Revivals were said to have

1. L.R.S.M., 8th November 1844.

2. Ibid., 20th November 1846.

3. Kendall, Origin and History, vol.II, p.224; P.M.Mag., III, n.s., February 1833, p.74.

4. Ibid., September 1833, p.340.

occurred at some places in the Wisbech circuit in 1835 and 'an out-pouring of the Holy Spirit and many conversions...'¹ It was said of Fulbeck circuit in 1836 that it had enjoyed both 'temporal and spiritual prosperity':

The past two years, God has condescended to visit us with showers of heavenly grace; scores of sinners have been converted, and God's people built up their most holy faith.

We attribute our prosperity, as usual, to the constant enforcing of a present, free, and full salvation to the regular and unwearied attention paid to the missioning and re-missioning departments; to the indefatigable zeal and perseverance of travelling and local preachers, in attending their appointments; to the united prayers and increasing faith of our leaders and members; and² finally to the free and unmerited blessings of Almighty God.

This buoyant picture can be studied in greater detail in the connexional membership statistics, although there are difficulties in interpreting these because of circuit boundary changes.³ Boston circuit had 212 members in 1830 and 360 by 1837. There were years of particularly high growth in 1833-34, with an increase of over 16%; in 1834-35, with a 20% increase; and nearly 17% in 1835-36. In 1836-37 the circuit's growth slowed down to just under 3%. The 1830s were not, however, a period of uninterrupted growth and there had been a loss of nearly 5% in 1831-32. Lincoln circuit grew more rapidly than Boston between 1830 and 1836. It had 237 members in 1830 and 438 in 1836. Like Boston, two of its most rapid periods of growth were in 1833-34 and 1834-35, when its members increased by over 26% and over 13% respectively. Whereas Boston experienced a loss

1. P.M.Mag. V, n.s. June 1835, p.233.

2. Ibid. VI, n.s., July 1836, p.282.

3. For the problems caused by the effect of circuit boundary changes on membership figures see above pp.206-207 also.

of members in 1831-32, Lincoln increased by over 10%, but reported a static membership a year earlier. Boston circuit continued to grow until 1837-38, when its membership dropped from 360 to 261. Lincoln had a substantial decrease in membership a year earlier when it declined from 438 to 202 members by 1837, but after this it began to grow rapidly again.

These decreases were probably, at least to some extent, related to circuit boundary changes which were taking place in south Lincolnshire at this period. A new circuit based on Fulbeck, for which membership figures are first available in 1833, replaced the one centred on Balderton, Nottinghamshire. Fulbeck had 168 members in 1833 and had grown to 310 by 1837. In 1837-38 it suffered a decline of nearly 10%. The Grantham area was covered by the Bottesford, Nottinghamshire, circuit which was created from Nottingham in 1835.¹ Bottesford had 284 members in 1835 and had increased to 300 by 1836, but by 1837 its membership had decreased by nearly 9% and by over 25% in 1838.

The Upwell, Norfolk, circuit, which included the fens of south Lincolnshire, had 343 members in 1830 and increased to 420 in 1832. At its formation from Upwell, Wisbech, Cambridgeshire, had 302 members in 1833, while, despite the division, Upwell still had 442. Wisbech had 415 members by 1836. The Donington circuit was created in 1837 from a branch of Nottingham district and had 180 members by 1838.² Donington branch and circuit

1. P.M. Mag. VI, n.s., July 1836, pp.283-284; November 1836, p.429.

2. J. R. L., MAW MS 730 Primitive Methodist Conference Journal 1, 1827-1847, pp.55, 78, 91, 142, 161.

records from 1834 survive to give a more detailed picture of this phase of Primitive Methodist development. In 1834, Donington had 8 local societies at Donington, Little London, Pinchbeck Fen, Wigtoft Bank, Rippingale, Bicker, Gosberton Clough and Helpringham. By September 1835 there was also a society at Burton and the total membership of the branch was 116. Branch membership had risen to 137 by December 1835. This was due to geographical expansion and the creation of new societies. Spalding was newly established with 6 members, Bourne with 8, Little Hale with 4, and Aslackby with 4. Bicker had become a society of 10 members, whereas in the past it had had 9 members who were said to be 'doubtful', although Burton, which had previously had 2 members had disappeared. By March 1836 the branch's membership had increased by a further 20. Sixteen of these came from new societies at Algarkirk Fen, Swineshead and Edenham. The branch's geographical position then stabilised until December 1836, when Spalding Fen disappeared from the list of societies. As the branch ceased to expand geographically its rate of growth slowed down and its membership eventually began to drop. There was an increase of 11 members in the quarter ending June 1836, an increase of 2 to September 1836. Membership then dropped from 187 to 162 by December 1836.¹

The growth and expansion of Primitive Methodism in south Lincolnshire in the 1830s should be seen as part of the phase of institutional development and consolidation which was taking place at this period.² It was reported from the Lincoln circuit in

1. S.G.S., Methodist Archives, Primitive Methodist Church, Donington Branch Minute Book 1834-55.

2. See above pp. 189-196.

1835 that the converts which were being made at this period were having societies formed for them to join and places of worship were being opened:

The circuit is prosperous. We have opened several new places, and raised societies; and several of the old places that have been low for years, are rising fast. Last year at this time we had not a chapel (belonging to the connexion), in the circuit; but now we have three opened, well-attended and doing well: and there is a prospect of another very soon. The circuit is united and industrious ...

The importance of what Primitive Methodist literature termed 'remissioning', that is, attempting to establish a presence where earlier activity had died out, also shows that the growth of the 1830s was at least in part based on a consolidation of the connexion's activities. Aslackby, a 'new' society on the Donington branch in December 1835, was mentioned as a place in which there were Primitive Methodists in the 1820s, while Edenham, where there was a 'new' society in March 1836 had a Primitive Methodist place of worship in the 1829 returns.² An article published in the Primitive Methodist Magazine in 1837, 'On Arranging Plans for Re-Missioning', showed the importance with which this work of consolidation was regarded and the care that was taken to contain it within connexional structures. It was suggested that 'a plan might be drawn up for the whole circuit; or for a part of it. And it would be an improvement to print it.' The actual process of re-missioning was to be carefully programmed:

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1. P.M.Mag. V, n.s., July 1835, p.269.
 2. S.G.S., Methodist Archives, Primitive Methodist Church, Donington Branch Minute Book, 1834-55; P.M.Mag. 2, March 1821, p.58; see also above p.261; L.A.O., Kesteven, Return of Places of Worship 1829.

At starting it is usual to sing and pray; and if suitable deliver a two minutes sermon. Proceed with singing. At the next suitable place pray about one minute, deliver a two minutes sermon, and so on. At very populous places there may be two courses of praying, and two sermons of about two minutes each. The conductor or conductors must guard every one against long prayings or long speechings; as such things are injurious. Also the people must have the prudence to avoid all long speechings either in prayer or otherwise. Through all the course every one must wait on the Lord, look to the great Atonement, and through that for the more full descending of the grace of God, the outpouring of the Holy Spirit; yea, all must get as much faith as possible.¹

In the period of increased unrest between 1842 and 1855, there is no evidence of any connection between rural discontent and the growth of Primitive Methodism. The leaders of the connexion were concerned to protect it from the effects of social unrest which they saw as impeding its development. 'The agitated state of the country' was said to have hindered the production of material for the Primitive Methodist Magazine in January 1843. It was hoped that the restoration of contentment would bring a revival of religious interests.² In an address to the connexion's annual conference in 1846, when an increase of the total membership of half a per cent had followed a decrease of nearly one per cent the previous year, Henry Pope spoke of the way decreases in the membership of some circuits resulted from 'the sudden removals of members, strikes of workmen, and other events ...' These had 'operated unfavourably despite the best efforts of the preachers and official brethren ...'³

1. P.M. Mag. V, n.s., April 1835, pp.146-147.

2. Ibid. I, third series, January 1843, p.1.

3. Ibid. IV, third series, August 1846, p.489.

An established institution like the Primitive Methodist connexion needed the unimpeded flow of its members' contributions to retain its financial stability. The connexion was therefore pushed towards an essentially conservative stance on many social issues, which gave greater priority to its uninterrupted functioning than to any moves to rectify the problems which individual members faced. In 'An Address Occasioned by the Poverty of the Times', which was first delivered in the Leeds circuit and later printed in the Primitive Methodist Magazine, members were advised to be quiescent in the face of difficulties:

My christian brethren, these times are exceedingly trying; nor can we tell when they will be otherwise. Long continued depression in our trade, the lack of employment, the low rate of wages, and the comparatively high prices of provision, indicate that poverty will not soon leave our land. Already your little stores are diminished. Of some of you, it may be said, your pounds have been reduced to shillings, your shillings to pence, and your pence to fractions - your apparel is decayed, and your wan countenances proclaim your scarcity of bread. As there is reason to fear that you will have to drink at the fount of future sorrow, you should prepare for the draught, be it ever so bitter. Piety does not exempt its friends from suffering. Indeed, they sometimes suffer in consequence of their piety. If events arise by which all your grace will be put to the severest test, be prepared to meet them with fortitude and pleasure. Happy, thrice happy shall he be, who having patiently endured sufferings, and firmly resisted temptations to evil, shall finally overcome by the blood of the Lamb. ... Called to endure poverty and hunger, you may be tempted to obtain relief by committing unchristian acts, and submitting to mean artifices; or you may be tempted to doubt the religion of your neighbours and of yourselves; to doubt the goodness and fidelity of God, and even his existence; or you may be tempted to relinquish your christian profession; to leave your Christian brethren, and forsake your usual places of worship, in the vain hope of improving your condition; and it is not impossible that your own household will tempt you to 'curse God and die'.

An account of the Donington circuit published in 1852 described the problems faced by a south Lincolnshire circuit at this period:

'We are troubled on every side, but not distressed; we are perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down but not destroyed.' Such is the experience of the church of God in this part of the country at the present time, - a state of things caused by agricultural distress, and the frequent removals occasioned thereby. The sudden fall in the value of all agricultural products is severely felt by all, causing a rapid transition from competent to indigent circumstances. But, while we believe that the patient exercise of skill, industry and economy, will enable us to brave the storm, its present effects are distressing, as is proved by very frequent failures and removals. This state of things affects the cause of God both financially and numerically. Some of our ablest office-bearers and most liberal supporters have emigrated to distant lands, leaving chapel debts and the like to press heavily on the brethren left behind. But we would not murmur, believing that such things shall work for the ultimate good of the church, and praying that our now distant brethren may be extremely useful in their adopted countries, and that others may rise up to supply their places.¹

Membership figures for the 1840s and 1850s are complicated by circuit boundary changes, but even after allowing for fluctuations which might be caused by these, the divergence between the rates of increase or decrease in circuit membership are so great that they cannot be related to the level of rural unrest as measured by the number of incendiary incidents. For example in 1841-42 the membership of Lincoln circuit fell by 30%, while Fulbeck had an increase of over 14%. Any growth which took place was to a large extent within existing societies, although three new societies were opened in the Boston circuit between December 1844 and April 1845.² An account of the 'Work of God'

1. P.M.Mag. X, third series, May 1852, pp.304-305.

2. Ibid. III, third series, June 1845, p.277.

in Grantham described the extension of 'The Redeemer's Kingdom' largely in terms of maintaining and improving existing institutions. Conversions seemed to take second place or to follow on from this. Paul Daykin described how, on his arrival in the circuit in July 1851 he

found the chapel finances in a somewhat embarrassed condition. Half a year's interest due in April was still unpaid, and there were only a few shillings in hand towards it. I called a trustee meeting, and laid the case before it. Our friends then made a strenuous effort, obtained the sum requisite, and paid it on the 3rd of August. Since then the chapel has been cleaned, the singing-pew and other parts of the chapel have been painted, the school-room has been repaired, and other needful improvements have been made, and all demands met without a single public collection. An unknown friend has also given an excellent pulpit Bible. The quarterage of the society in the town has advanced encouragingly, several wanderers have been brought to the fold, and restored to the favour of God, and several others have found the Lord. The scholars in our Sabbath-school have been rewarded, and the kind teachers and friends are making an effort to enlarge the school-room, to twice its present size, this being greatly needed.¹

Holbeach branch membership had risen by 20% when its membership figures were reported in 1852. This was a result of increases in the membership of its 10 existing societies. Fourteen members were added to Holbeach Bank society in the quarter ending September 1851, 8 at Long Sutton by December 1851, and 9 extra were reported at Gedney Drove End in March 1852 when there were also gains of 5 at Whaplode and 5 at Long Sutton.² W. H. Meadows in an account published in 1853 described the situation in the area:

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1. P.M.Mag. X, third series, December 1852, p.739.
 2. S.G.S., Methodist Archives, Primitive Methodist Church, Wisbech Circuit, Accounts 1845-49, Holbeach Branch, Accounts and Membership List 1849-54.

the blessed God has again favoured some parts of this station with the visits of his saving power. Through the past connexional year we have lost many of our best friends, by removals and the emigration movement. . . Nearly half of our local preachers, and some of our most valuable leaders, have thus been taken away from us; and three or four societies have sustained the loss of almost all their leading friends, which has reduced them to child-like weakness. The result of such painful occurrences we feared would be a considerable decrease for the year. But we betook ourselves in earnestness and faith to the only source of help in the day of perplexity and trouble. . . Our prayer was 'unto the God of heaven' for the prosperity of our Zion. We were heard and answered. A succession of revival services were held during the winter, which were crowned with the conversion of many souls. The word preached was not in 'word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance.' During the year, above sixty souls have been added to the different societies, by which we have been enabled to fill up all the vacancies occasioned by death, cases of backsliding, and the causes above-named, and also to report a small increase for the year.

At Holbeach where the cause had been very low for sixteen or seventeen years, a good work broke out just before the March quarter-day, and is still in progress. Old and young have bowed together at the footstool of divine mercy, have penitentially confessed their sins, believed on Christ, and found salvation. Some of the baser sort have been saved; the society is now doubled in number, and now assumes a healthy aspect. Several additional sittings have also been ~~to~~ let in the chapel, and the congregations have become excellent both on the Sabbath and week-day evenings. The old members say they never saw such a prospect at Holbeach before.

At Gedney Drove End also, we are doing well. Of late, several brands have been plucked from the burning. The society has become so large that we have been obliged to divide it. . . .¹

Detailed membership figures for the Donington circuit show that there were 316 members in September 1853. The number dropped to 314 in December and then increased by 66 in the first quarter of 1854. The majority of this increase, 56, came from existing societies. All the 20 societies in the circuit had

1. P.M. Mag. XI, third series, July 1853, pp. 429-430.

new members, but there were 10 from new societies at Screddington, Osbournby and Northorpe.¹

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It will be appreciated that the situation in south Lincolnshire is not strictly comparable to that in other areas of the country such as the Norwich or Brinkworth districts of the Primitive Methodist connexion where there appears to be a clear link between the failure of collective action in the 1830s and a subsequent period of religious revival. In south Lincolnshire collective action seems largely to have ceased to be a vehicle for protest during the first three decades of the nineteenth century. From the 1830s the only means of expressing discontent left to the working classes of the area were individual and clandestine acts of protest. When Primitive Methodist preachers first arrived in south Lincolnshire some of the overt hostility which they faced manifested itself in forms similar to the opposition faced by Wesleyan Methodists in the eighteenth century. This was part of the older tradition of communal action in defence of what were perceived to be traditional norms and values. The tendency of Primitive Methodist writers to create a stereotyped view of the opposition which their early preachers faced might have exaggerated the extent to which this type of hostility survived into the nineteenth century. Their reports are, however, some of the last accounts of this type of collective action.

1. S.G.S., Primitive Methodist Church, Donington Circuit Account Book 1853-78.

The arrival of the Primitive Methodists in south Lincolnshire seems, therefore, to have taken place at a turning point in the social development of the area where communal action to redress grievances or to maintain what were perceived as rights had been discredited. By the 1830s the social tensions which produced the collective actions of the Swing rioters in other parts of the country led to only individual and clandestine protest in south Lincolnshire. The ultimate failure of the Swing rioters in those areas where the discontent of the 1830s took on a collective manifestation led to a divergence between those who turned to religious revival and those who took to individual and clandestine protest.¹ This divergence had already taken place in south Lincolnshire before the 1830s and two distinct strands had emerged as part of the rural life of the area. On the one hand there were those who continued their attempts to redress grievances through such acts of social crime as poaching, animal maiming, animal stealing and incendiarism. Their actions became a constant undercurrent in the life of the area but, in so far as their frequency can be measured, they tended to increase at times of social and economic tension. On the other hand, there were those who turned to the Primitive Methodists and developed an alternative way of life in the connexion's chapels and associated institutions. There is no evidence of any direct relationship between the growth of Primitive Methodism and the level of rural discontent in south Lincolnshire. Both groups continued on the separate courses they had taken, so that, while discontent

1. Hobsbawm and Rudé, Captain Swing, p.251.

manifested itself in an increase in incendiary incidents in the 1830s, the Primitive Methodists channelled their energies into consolidating their position and building a well-developed institutional life on the basis of their earlier revivalistic efforts. The division between the two groups was such that the Primitives did not attract a large influx of new converts when the level of protest decreased, as happened in other parts of the country, and covert acts of protest, which could not be broken up in the same way as collective action, remained as a means of protest to be used again in the future.

These two strands of rural life were based on the open villages of the area which provided the free social climate within which both could operate. As well as being strong centres for the Primitive Methodists and other nonconformist bodies, these villages also had a reputation as centres of unrest and criminal activity.¹ By the 1840s and 1850s, when rural discontent as measured by the frequency of incendiary incidents increased again, the gap between the Primitives and the protesters had grown so wide that the Primitive Methodist connexion regarded any disturbance to the status quo as an impediment to its work. While the outbreaks of incendiarism in this later period continued to be based on the open villages and scattered fenland communities of south Lincolnshire, the Primitive Methodists also continued to develop in these places. Despite their common social background each group had, in the face of social change, adopted a distinctive set of attitudes and pattern of behaviour.

1. Jones, Crime, Protest, Community and Police, pp.71-72.

VI

ATTENDANCE AND MEMBERSHIP

The returns of the 1851 Census of Religious Worship, as well as providing a basis for understanding the place which the chapels and meetings of the Primitive Methodist connexion had come to occupy in south Lincolnshire by 1851, also enable an assessment to be made of the connexion's relative strength in terms of attendance and the pattern of Sunday services which it offered. Since the report on the Census appeared in 1854, the interpretation of these returns has been the subject of a good deal of discussion.¹ One of the chief difficulties is in using the Census for the comparative study of the various religious denominations. Attendance by the same person at more than one service or at the services of more than one denomination, particularly attendance at both the Anglican church and a nonconformist chapel on the same Sunday, was to be found in many areas.² The Rector of Swaby, Lindsey, wrote of the

one circumstance in particular, which will affect all calculations of this nature, and what is all but universal

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1. The report was published as P.P. 1852-53 LXXXIX (1690) Population of Great Britain, 1851, Religious Worship (England and Wales); for the interpretation of the returns see K. S. Inglis, 'Patterns of Religious Worship in 1851', Journal of Ecclesiastical History XI, 1960, pp.75-76; W. S. F. Pickering, 'The 1851 Religious Census - a Useless Experiment?', British Journal of Sociology XVIII, 1967, pp.389-94; David M. Thompson, 'The 1851 Religious Census: problems and possibilities' Victorian Studies XI, no. 1, September 1967, pp.88-94.
 2. Henry Pelling, Politics and Society in Late Victorian Britain, 1968, pp.22-25.

in this part of Lincolnshire at least, the attendance of members both at church and the (Wesleyan) chapels. In most churches the practice has been to have the one service in the church alternately morning and afternoon and the service (or preaching as it is at the chapels) is regulated accordingly, so that but few attend the church or chapel exclusively.¹

Horace Mann, the author of the Census Report, assumed that there were certain fixed proportions of the population who attended morning, afternoon and evening services. It was suggested that by applying these to the attendance figures it was possible to eliminate double attenders and reach a conclusion about the number of individuals who were at Sunday worship. However, his formula was never tested against the data in an empirical way and it was much criticised for its inaccuracy and tendency to favour the Church of England at the expense of the nonconformists.² An index of attendance based on the total attendance at all services held during the day in any place except separate Sunday school meetings and expressed as a percentage of the population can also be used. This is, however, only of value for comparative purposes and as an indication of the extent to which the churches were in touch with the population. Its great weakness is that it makes no allowance for double attendance.³

The method which has been used to compare attendance levels for the purpose of this study is one which uses the best-attended service, including Sunday scholars, at one time in one place and expresses this as a percentage of the total population to create an index of attendance. Its value, among a set of methods, all

1. P.R.O., H.O. 129/431/1/2/2.

2. Pickering, 'The 1851 Religious Census', loc.cit., p.390.

3. Inglis, 'Patterns of Religious Worship...', loc.cit.pp.79-80.

of which have some weaknesses, is that it eliminates double attenders without using unrefined formulae, which are based largely on guesswork, about those who attended worship twice. It under, rather than over-estimates attendance and may exclude from the calculations a church or chapel which did not have a service at the same time that the bulk of the attendances were being made. It does, however, follow the main trend in attendance patterns in a town or village, giving an indication of the religious affiliations of the majority of the church or chapel-attending inhabitants.¹ In cases where no figures exist for Census Sunday, 30th March 1851, and where figures for average attendances are given on the census returns, these have been used.

Primitive Methodist places of worship were returned in the census in 54 places in south Lincolnshire, excluding the city of Lincoln. The highest index of attendance in these places was 66.0 at Navenby on the afternoon of Census Sunday, while the lowest was 7.4 in the morning at Freiston.² If average attendances had been used in Freiston the index would have been higher. It also seems that the return for a Wesleyan Methodist chapel in the parish is missing.³ Forty-eight of the settlements which had Primitive Methodist places of worship were open villages or towns in category IV of the classification of towns

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1. Pickering, 'The 1851 Religious Census', loc.cit., p.393; Thompson, 'The 1851 Religious Census', loc.cit., p.97.
 2. P.R.O., H.O. 129/428/1/2/2, 3 and 4; Ibid., 129/425/2/2/3 and 4.
 3. J.R.L., Methodist Archives, Circuit Plan Collection, Wesleyan Methodist Plan of the Boston Circuit: 1850; White, Directory of Lincolnshire, 1856, p.323.

and villages which has been used for this study. Six were in places in category II, where the land was in the hands of a relatively few owners, and could therefore be considered closed, but which were not as tightly controlled as villages in category I.¹ The indices of attendance ranged from 21.5 to 57.5 within the villages in category II and between 7.4 and 66.0 for those in category IV. In all except 12 places Primitive Methodist figures helped to make up the best-attended service and were therefore included in the index of attendance. These can be compared with the indices of attendance for all settlements in Kesteven and Holland in these categories, whether they had Primitive Methodist places of worship or not, which were between 7.1 and 110.3 for those in category II and 4.4 and 124.4 in category IV. The position of villages with Primitive Methodist places of worship within the central range of attendance figures for similar places, indicates that their presence led to neither an outstanding increase in religious adherence nor any significant decrease in it.

The religious census returns showed that Primitive Methodism provided the only alternative place of worship to the Church of England in 7 places.² In the 6 places where it is possible to make a direct comparison between Anglican and Primitive Methodist levels of attendance the Primitive Methodist attendances only

1. See above pp.49-50.

2. These were Benington, Cranwell, Freiston, Rauceby, Sedgebrook, Spittlegate, Tallington. The position at Spittlegate is somewhat ambiguous since the settlement had developed into 'a populous suburb of Grantham', and its patterns of worship cannot be easily disentangled from those of its neighbours. (White, Directory of Lincolnshire, 1856, p.407.)

exceeded the level of those of the Church of England in Tallington.¹ Here 22.5% of the population attended a Primitive Methodist evening service compared with 18.7% at the morning service in the parish church. The lack of a resident clergyman may have accounted partly for this relatively low Anglican turn out. At the time the census was taken, the rector of nearby Braceborough was acting as curate during a vacancy in the living.² All the settlements in this group of villages had a ^{relatively} small population and Freiston, with 1,080, was the largest.³

Table XI - Villages with Returns in 1851 Religious Census for only Anglican and Primitive Methodist Places of Worship Arranged in Rank Order of Size with Percentage Attendances and Times of Best-Attended Services for Each Denomination.

<u>Village</u>	<u>Population</u>	<u>Category</u>	<u>% P.M.</u>	<u>Time</u>	<u>% C.ofE.</u>	<u>Time</u>
Freiston	1080	IV	4.6	E	7.4	A
Rauceby	644	IV	15.5	E	a 31.1	A
Benington	603	IV	a 5.8	A	17.9	A
Sedgebrook	279	II	21.5	E	a 28.7	A
Tallington	267	II	22.5	E	18.7	M
Cranwell	240	II	16.7	E	46.7	A

Notes M = morning: A = Afternoon: E = Evening: a = based on average attendances.

In villages belonging to category II where the Primitive Methodists had been able to establish themselves and where they were the only other religious body apart from the Church of England, the percentage of the population attending their services was

1. See Table XI.

2. P.R.O., H.O. 129/421/2/12 and 13.

3. Its position was exceptional because of what seems to be a lack of full returns for the village. See above p.304.

comparable with the best attendances at their services in the rest of south Lincolnshire as well as being higher than in villages in category IV where there were only Anglican and Primitive Methodist places of worship.¹ Where the Church of England and the Primitive Methodists were the only religious bodies in a village they achieved their best attendances at different times of the day except at Benington. This might suggest that either a group of people in these places attended both church and chapel or, since the majority of the best-attended Primitive Methodist services were in the evening when there were no Anglican services, the Primitives were successful in attracting people to their evening services who were unable to attend at any other time of the day. However, since neither possibility is mutually exclusive it is possible that in this situation the Primitive Methodists both attracted a number of people who attended the Church of England and also had a following among people who were only able or willing to attend religious worship in the evening.²

In other places in south Lincolnshire Primitive Methodist places of worship existed alongside at least one, and sometimes more, nonconformist chapels or meetings. The majority of these included at least one Wesleyan Methodist, but in 3 places, Sutton St. Edmund, Lutton and Threckingham, the only nonconformist alternative to the Primitives was a Baptist church, while at Helpringham both a Baptist and an Independent congregation made returns in 1851. There were only 5 places where there

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1. See below pp.308-9 for Primitive Methodist attendance in the rest of south Lincolnshire.
 2. For the factors which influenced evening attendance see below pp.313-14.

was a time when the Primitive Methodist services were not rivalled by those of another denomination: in the evenings at Lutton, Fosdyke, Great Hale, Threckingham and Dry Doddington. Except in Great Hale, they achieved their best attendances in these places at this time.

There were 42 places in south Lincolnshire where Primitive Methodist attendances in 1851 can be compared with those of other denominations as well as the Church of England. In 18 of these, the best attended Primitive Methodist service coincided with the best attended services of the other denominations. Primitive Methodism's position in the majority of places in terms of its best attended services therefore complemented that of the other religious bodies in the area by providing for more people at a time when other services were less well attended.

This position was not based on a great numerical strength in terms of attendance. The highest percentage of attendance in terms of population was 22.2 at the village of Threckingham where the Primitive Methodists held a house meeting in the hamlet of Stow.¹ The lowest level of attendance was in Boston, where 1.0% of the population were at the best attended Primitive Methodist service. The Primitives achieved a higher attendance than any other religious body including the Church of England in only one place, Tydd St. Mary. Here 13.6% of a total population of 1,107 attended their chapel.² They had higher attendances than the other nonconformist churches in another 4 places, although there were no Wesleyan Methodist places of worship in 2 of these, while they had higher attendances than

1. P.R.O., H.O. 129/426/5/5/13.

2. Ibid., 129/424/2/1/1,2,3,4, and 5.

the Wesleyan Methodists in a further 4. This meant that they only exceeded the Wesleyan Methodists in terms of their percentage attendance, at their best attended service in 7 places in south Lincolnshire.

The majority, 30, of the best attended of all the Primitive Methodist services, were held in the evening, while there were 19 in the afternoon and 3 in the morning.¹ This contrasted with the pattern of attendance for all other denominations in the places where Primitive Methodism was established. The highest index of attendance was recorded at 29 places in the afternoon, 13 in the morning and 11 in the evening.² Whereas the Wesleyan Methodists also held a large number of their services in the evening, they held nearly as many in the afternoon. Of 103 services which they held in places where there was also a Primitive Methodist place of worship, 41 were held in the afternoon, 45 in the evening and 17 in the morning. More of their best attended services were in the afternoon; 26 were then, 20 in the evening and 5 in the morning.

The pattern of services in the Anglican churches in the area was the opposite of this. Evening services were held at only 9 of the churches in places where there were also Primitive Methodist places of worship at the time of the Census of Religious Worship, although there was some variation according to the season of the year. Churches such as St. Bartholomew's

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1. These include 2 Primitive Methodist places of worship in each of the parishes of Spalding and Holbeach. Three places where the same attendance was recorded at different times of the day, and one for which there is no information, are not included.
 2. For a discussion of index of attendance see above p. 303-304.

Pinchbeck West, had an evening service in the summer, as did St. Matthew's, Sutton Bridge.¹ A pamphlet by Robert Gregory, curate of Panton, Lindsey, noted that in 1849, 372 of the 588 benefices in the county of Lincoln had only one Sunday service, 204 had 2 and there were 12 where their timing was irregular.² In 1852, Bishop Kaye claimed that he had made some progress in increasing the frequency of Sunday services.³ His successor as bishop of Lincoln, John Jackson, said that he had been 'painfully struck' with the large number of parishes in which there was still only one service each Sunday.⁴ However, in his farewell sermon in 1869, Jackson could say that single Sunday services had become 'almost confined to certain benefices having two churches - the very few exceptions having the excuse, if not the justification of very small population, of illness or old age.'⁵

Infrequent Sunday services were said to drive people from the ministrations of the Church of England to the nonconformist chapels and meetings. In his 1840 visitation charge, Bishop Kaye said he was satisfied

that no single cause has contributed more to the prevalence of dissent in this diocese than the too frequent practice of omitting a second service. When the parishioners see that a resident clergyman, having

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1. P.R.O., H.O. 129/423/1/1/2; Ibid., 424/2/2/6.
 2. Robert Gregory, A Plea in Behalf of Small Parishes with Particular Reference to the County of Lincoln, 1849, p.36.
 3. John Kaye, 'A Charge Delivered at the Triennial Visitation in 1852', in Works of John Kaye, Bishop of Lincoln, vol.VII: charges, speeches and letters, 1888, pp.417-418.
 4. L.R.S.M., 11th August 1854.
 5. G.J., 20th February 1869.

the care of a single church, opens that church only once on the Lord's Day, the impression naturally made on their minds is that he is more desirous of consulting his own ease than of promoting their spiritual welfare; and if they are seriously disposed, they turn to any teacher who professes to supply them with the spiritual food for which they hunger.¹

The implications of this had been described a few years earlier by the clergyman at Lutton. In 1832 he was also curate of Sutton St. James, and gave morning and afternoon services alternately on Sundays at each church. He felt that it was impossible for him to give the pastoral care which was not only necessary for the good of his parishioners, but which was also required 'to make him respected by his parishioners and cause them to feel that affection and regard which ought to be felt by the people for their minister.' The result was that a great proportion of 'the lower orders' were supporting the Ranters and attending their meeting 'as the only resource for religious instruction'. This might be

expected on a long summer day with the public services of the church taking up about 2 hours of that day and the remainder without restraint and open to all the evils attendant upon unrestrained ignorance and the want of an example by which to be guided in the person of a resident minister, who ought to be looked up to as a father as well as the preceptor of his people.²

It is, however, difficult to separate the precise position of the different branches of Methodism in relation to the Church of England's provision of services. The timing of the best attended Wesleyan and Primitive Methodist services seems to fit the analysis offered by Anglican commentators that the absence of services at the parish church left a gap which was filled by

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1. John Kaye, 'A Charge Delivered at the Triennial Visitation in 1840', in Works ..., vol.VII, p.225.
 2. L.A.O., Cor B 5/4/75/5.

the nonconformists. It enabled many people to make attendance at both church and chapel on a Sunday and gave rise to a situation in places such as Kelstern, Lindsey, where the steward of the Wesleyan Methodist chapel commented that the service there alternated with that in the church. There was no service in church hours, 'the congregation attends the church also.'¹

On the other hand, this analysis takes little account of any possible differences between the Wesleyans and the Primitive Methodists. It could be argued that the social isolation of many Primitive Methodists was being overcome by the time the religious census was taken. Their assimilation into a more central position in the religious life of south Lincolnshire meant that they were more inclined to attend the services of the Church of England as well as their own meetings. The evidence from villages where Primitive Methodists and Anglicans were in direct competition, to some extent supports this analysis to the extent that Primitive Methodist attendances were best when they did not clash directly with the church services.² However, these are exceptional cases and it has been suggested that in the Lindsey village of Springthorpe, where a similar situation existed, different social groups behaved in different ways. While farmers and craftsmen made a more definite and exclusive commitment to one church or the other, the labourers' commitment was weaker or perhaps guided by convenience.³

The argument that Primitive Methodist worship accommodated itself to the pattern of Anglican services rather than simply

1. P.R.O., H.O. 129/431/3/13/19.

2. See above pp. 305-307.

3. Obelkevich, Religion and Rural Society, pp.240-241.

considered the convenience of its own adherents is not supported by the distribution of the times of its best attended services. Unlike the Wesleyans, who achieved a higher proportion of good attendances in the afternoon, alternating with Anglican provision and achieving higher attendances by doing this, the Primitives' highest attendances were achieved to a much greater extent in the evening.¹

There is, however, little direct documentary evidence on the actual composition of Primitive Methodist congregations. The 1829 return of dissenting congregations by the curate of Rowston refers to the movement of Primitive Methodists out of the parish to join other congregations on Sundays, suggesting that they sought the ministrations of their co-religionists, rather than attend the services at the parish church. On the other hand, the returns for Fulbeck, while referring to the people who came to the village's Primitive Methodist chapel from other places, said that the respondent was

not aware of any person living in this parish (excepting three families of Quakers) who considers himself as separated from the Church of England. Those who congregate at the above (Primitive Methodist) chapel, attend at the service of the parish church with the same regularity as other persons.²

The desire to rest after the week's work may have meant that people involved in hard manual labour stayed away from any place of worship until at least the afternoon, so that a denomination supported by rural workers would have its attendances affected by this. The Vicar of Wrangle said that below average attendances on Sunday, 30th March 1851, were due to 'several

1. See above p. 309.

2. L.A.O. Kesteven Return of Places of Worship, 1829.

persons having been engaged in looking after sheep, in this, the lambing season.'¹ Among the factors which diminished church attendance according to the Rector of Swaby, Lindsey, were the lambing season 'when the sheep require attendance day and night, and excessive fatigue of harvest to men, women and children.'² Work among livestock needed to continue on a Sunday, leaving only the end of the day free for religious worship. It was said at Thorpe on the Hill in 1851, that small farmers and labourers were obliged 'to be in the fields attending their lambs ...'³ In 1862 a local preacher on the Spalding and Holbeach mission was allowed to take only three appointments on the preaching plan for the spring 'in consequence of him having to attend to his master's cattle.'⁴ Similarly, three local preachers were 'accommodated on the ground of shepherding', by the Donington circuit preachers' meeting in December 1864.⁵

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Any discussion of the strength of the various branches of Methodism, which uses attendance levels, also needs to take account of those people who were not committed to the connexion through full membership. They were the people who would perhaps be most inclined to drift between church and chapel as well as

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1. P.R.O., H.O. 129/425/2/6/11.
 2. Ibid., H.O. 129/431/1/2/2.
 3. Ibid., 129/428/1/17/32.
 4. S.G.S., Methodist Archives, Primitive Methodist Church, Spalding and Holbeach Mission, Quarterly Meeting Minute Book 1862-83, 8th December 1862.
 5. Ibid., Donington Quarterly Minute Book 1856-73, December 1864.

between the various nonconformist denominations. In the industrial society of the South Wales valleys in the middle of the nineteenth century the adherents who attended chapel but were not full members constituted an outer shell to nonconformity which made its statistics far more imposing than its membership alone. Yet, despite their ultimate lack of commitment, these adherents gave Welsh nonconformity its strength through its ability to influence people who were in varying degrees sympathetic to it.¹

The Vicar of Heckington referred to these peripheral attenders in his return for the 1851 Census of Religious Worship. There was 'a preacher of unusual attraction at the Wesleyan chapel', who caused the church congregation to be lower than average.² The effect of his presence was also felt at nearby Burton Pewardine where,

The attendance on Sunday the 30th inst. both of Sunday scholars and of the general congregation, was rather thinner than usual, owing to the circumstances that a celebrated itinerant preacher preached on that day at the Wesleyan Chapel in the adjoining parish of Heckington.³

The return for the Wesleyan Methodist chapel at Whaplode St. Catherine's stated that the number of members in the society there was 30.⁴ At the best attended service on Sunday 30th March there was a congregation of 115. On the assumption that every member was present, then the percentage of attenders who were members was 26%. It is also possible to compare the attendance

1. E.T. Davies, Religion in the Industrial Revolution in South Wales, Cardiff, 1965, pp.49, 151.

2. P.R.O., H.O. 129/426/4/7/9.

3. Ibid., 129/426/4/10/17.

4. Ibid., 129/424/3/3/18.

figures from the census with the membership lists in 9 Wesleyan Methodist circuits in the whole county. The average percentage of members in the best congregations in the 21 chapels of the Barton upon Humber, Lindsey, circuit, was 43%; 45% in those 12 in the Coningsby, Lindsey, circuit for which it is possible to compare figures; 37% in Epworth, Lindsey, circuit in 19 chapels within the county of Lincolnshire; 47% in 25 chapels in the Grimsby, Lindsey, circuit; 41% in 22 chapels in Market Rasen, Lindsey, circuit; 41% in 25 chapels in Spilsby, Lindsey, circuit; and 32% in 15 chapels in Wainfleet, Lindsey, circuit.¹

The percentage of members to attenders can be calculated for 26 south Lincolnshire Wesleyan Methodist chapels in the Sleaford circuit and 2 from the Stamford circuit which were within the Lincolnshire county boundary. An average of 35% of the attenders at the best attended service on Census Sunday were members in the Sleaford area and 25% in the Stamford circuit.²

In the case of the Primitive Methodists it is possible to compare membership with attendance in 3 circuits. There were 7 chapels in Lincolnshire on the Gainsborough, Lindsey, circuit and the average percentage of members in relation to attenders was 33%.³ The average percentage in the Boston circuit was 30%.

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1. L.A.O., Meth B Barton on Humber Circuit/4/3/Circuit Schedules 1845-60; Meth B Coningsby Circuit/4/1/ Circuit Schedules 1847-65; Meth/Epworth Wesleyan Circuit/Schedule Book of Members 1838-54; Meth/Grimsby/3rd Deposit 7th Box/Wesleyan Circuit Schedules 1848-56; Meth/Market Rasen Wesleyan Circuit/Schedule Books 1844-74; Meth B/Spilsby Circuit/4/2/ Circuit Schedule Books 1847-57; Meth B/Skegness and Wainfleet Circuit 4/2/ Schedule Circuit Books 1847-62.
 2. L.A.O. Meth B/Sleaford Circuit/13/2/Circuit Stewards Account Book 1849-75; Meth B/Stamford Circuit/4/2/Circuit Schedule Book 1837-52.
 3. L.A.O. Meth/Gainsborough Primitive Methodist Circuit Records/ 1 Quarterday Accounts 1851-73.

This figure is based on the membership figures of 12 out of 23 places on the circuit for which it is possible to compare attendances with membership. The remaining 11 were probably places which did not have a service on Census Sunday. Many were small societies which did not meet in a purpose built chapel building. The two largest societies were at Boston and Leake and had memberships of 87 and 40 respectively. The percentage of members to attenders at Boston was 58%, while it was 56% at Leake. The other societies where membership can be compared with the religious census returns all had memberships below 20. The highest percentage of members to attenders among these was at Stickney, Lindsey, which had 10 members and an average attendance of 20 at its evening service. Wainfleet Bank, Lindsey, had 12 members and an attendance of 30 at the evening service, giving a percentage of members to attenders of 40%. Of the other societies only Stickford, Lindsey, had a percentage of members to attenders above the average for the circuit. 31% of the total of 32 people who attended evening service at the Primitive Methodist chapel were society members. The lowest percentage of members to attenders was at Kirton Skeldyke Primitive Methodist chapel. Here 7% of the 83 people who attended the afternoon service were members, although this percentage would be increased by the elimination of 48 Sunday scholars who were included in the total congregation.¹

The situation in that part of the Wisbech Primitive Methodist circuit which extended into south Lincolnshire was different,

1. L.A.O., Meth B/Boston Primitive Methodist Circuit Quarter Day Accounts 1851-75; P.R.O., H.O. 129/425/4/3/15; Ibid., 129/425/2/7/16; Ibid., 129/430/1/4/10; Ibid., 129/430/1/3/5; Ibid., 129/425/1/4/9.

with a much lower average percentage. Membership figures are available for March 1851 for 10 societies.¹ The average percentage attendance for these meetings was 18%, with a range of percentages from 34% in Holbeach down to 5% at Tydd Gote chapel.²

The figures for the ratio of Wesleyan Methodist members to attenders based on predominantly north Lincolnshire circuits, where this analysis can be made, show that the Wesleyans had a higher ratio of members to attenders than the Primitive Methodists. Similarly, a comparison of 62 Wesleyan with 6 Primitive Methodist societies in south Lindsey, shows the ratio of Wesleyan members to attenders to have been nearly 43%, while that for the Primitives was 31%.³ One reason for this may be the greater stability of the Wesleyans, who were more successful in turning their adherents into fully committed members.

The differences within Lincolnshire Primitive Methodism are less easily accounted for. The Wisbech circuit took in a part of the county which was newly drained and settled. Its

1. The situation is complicated by the fact that there were 3 Primitive Methodist meetings in the parish of Holbeach but only one set of membership figures. (P.R.O., H.O. 129/424/3/2/6; Ibid., 129/424/3/2/8; Ibid., 129/424/3/2/11.) However, two small societies at Holbeach Bank and Holbeach Marsh which appear in the 1851 circuit accounts may be tentatively matched to the religious census figures for the two societies for which membership figures are not available. (S.G.S., Methodist Archives, Primitive Methodist Church, Wisbech Circuit Accounts 1845-49; Holbeach Branch, Accounts and Membership List 1849-54).
2. P.R.O., H.O. 129/424/2/3/17; Ibid., 424/2/45/21; Ibid., 425/5/2/5; Ibid., 424/3/3/17; Ibid., 424/2/2/12; Ibid., 424/2/1/3.
3. Obelkevich, Religion and Rural Society, pp.197 and 241.

scattered population was often difficult to reach. The hamlet of Dowsdale, which lay some three miles away from Whaplode Drove Parsonage, was said by the Revd. J. C. Lowe, to have a 'considerable population' but, during nearly nine months of the year the roads were almost impassable with the consequence that 'the people must be almost totally neglected.'¹ In these circumstances the nonconformist chapels often took the place of the Church of England, which was slow to provide for the population. There was church accommodation for only 29.6% of the total population in the Holbeach registration district in 1851. This was the lowest in Lincolnshire, followed by Spalding with 32.2% and Boston with 34.0%.²

The Revd. W. Wayet, patron and incumbent of Pinchbeck, began to plan a more convenient church building for part of his parish in 1845. He described the parish as

nine miles in length, by four in breadth, and the church being nearly at one end of it, renders it a matter of great difficulty for the inhabitants of the distant parts to attend it, particularly as those inhabitants are generally speaking of the poorer class, who have no means of conveyance. The most populous district too lies at the distance of between two and three miles from the church so that dissent has obtained a footing there, for which state of things we can hardly blame the people.

To provide in an adequate way for the spiritual instruction of this widely scattered population, it seems necessary to have an additional church and a resident clergyman.³

In remote settlements such as Gedney Drove End, the nonconformist churches created a religious establishment of their own which would attract a greater proportion of attenders in the

1. L.A.O., Cor B5/4/3/13.

2. P.P.1852-53; LXXXIX (1690) Religious Worship 1851, p.cclxxxix.

3. L.A.O., Cor. B5/4/77/4.

absence of any alternative provision. When the first attempts were being made to establish an Anglican presence in the newly-established ecclesiastical district, its first minister found leading nonconformists in the local community, including Primitive Methodists, supporting his work. Three Primitive Methodist trustees signed petitions in order to have the new church for the area established in Gedney Drove End as well as promising subscriptions towards building it. W. G. Patchell, the Anglican minister, noted in his journal that the local blacksmith was

a Churchman - his wife and family Methodists - but the people here have no alternative - Methodism or nothing has been the order of things ... so that I rather like to meet with people calling themselves Wesleyans or Ranters - It is some slight proof that they have the fear of God before their eyes.¹

The figures for the ratio of members to attenders in 1851 can be compared with a similar set of figures for the 1860s and two returns for the early 1870s in the Spalding and Holbeach branch and for the Boston circuit in the late 1860s and early 1870s. The Holbeach and Spalding accounts have details, apart from the June 1866 quarter, of the number of hearers or attenders as well as members in the societies in the area on a quarterly basis from September 1862 to June 1867, March and September 1869, June 1871 and September 1873.² In September 1862 the average percentage of members to attenders in the 10 societies in the area was at its highest point at 34%. The lowest levels were nearly 23% in March 1869 and June 1871.

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1. Kenneth Healey, "Methodism or Nothing ...", loc.cit, pp. 120-122.
 2. S.G.S., Methodist Archives, Primitive Methodist Church, An Account of the Moneys and Members in the Spalding and Holbeach Branch of the Donington Circuit 1857-62, and the Spalding and Holbeach Mission 1862-78.

In the Boston circuit the ratio of members to attenders was 26% in 1866, a decrease on the position in 1851, but had reached 36% by 1875. These changes were not due to any dramatic increases in the number of members, but to drops in attendance figures. Attendances in the Boston circuit decreased from the early 1870s, but there was no corresponding decline in membership so that its strength lay more and more with its committed members.¹

In so far as any general conclusions can be reached from these figures, they seem to represent various phases in the development of the Primitive Methodist connexion's activity in south Lincolnshire. Low membership to attendance ratios in the 1850s represent a missionary phase in the connexion's development as it attracted hearers who did not become fully integrated into it as members. The newly drained fenlands of the Spalding and Holbeach area seem to have provided the Primitive Methodists and other nonconformist denominations with the opportunity to work in an area where they were far less impeded by the structure and organisations of areas of older settlement. This meant that they attracted a larger proportion of attenders who used the Primitives as a convenient religious agency without necessarily becoming fully attached to them. By the 1860s the connexion had reached a more settled phase of its development in the area, and the ratio of members to attenders had consolidated at about the 30% level, comparable to its position in other parts of the county. The figures for the

1. L.A.O., Meth B/Boston Circuit/55/1/6 Chapel Schedules and Synoptical Accounts of Chapels, 1866-98.

late 1860s and 1870s in the Boston area reflect a situation in which the decline in the rate of population growth in this period began to affect levels of attendance. This would ultimately affect the composition of the connexion's membership as the pool of potential converts was reduced.

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Some evidence for the social composition of the members and attenders at the Primitive Methodist chapels of south Lincolnshire is provided by the lists of occupations of trustees in the title deeds of connexional chapels and the occupations of parents in circuit baptismal registers. Seventeen deeds for eleven chapels in the area in the period from 1826 to 1875, contain details of 154 trustees' occupations.¹ Baptismal registers survive for the Lincoln, Boston, Spalding and Sleaford circuits from various dates from 1823.² After

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1. Boston Centenary Methodist Church, Circuit Chapel Deeds, Packet Nos. 3, 31, and 33, Fosdyke (1826 and 1874); Hubberts Bridge (1871); Spalding Methodist Church, Circuit Chapel Deeds, Moulton Seas End (1835 and 1854), Little London (1842 and 1866), Pinchbeck West (1842 and 1873), Weston Hills (1853), Bicker (1834), Spalding (1870); Messrs. Godsons, Solicitors, Sleaford, Sleaford Methodist Circuit, Circuit Chapel Deeds, Little Hale (1836 and 1875), Helpringham (1840 and 1848), Ancaster (1843). For a detailed analysis of the trust deeds see Appendix C.
 2. P.R.O., R.G.4/1645, Non-Parochial Registers, Lincoln Primitive Methodist Baptismal Register 1823-37; L.A.O., Meth B/ Lincoln North Circuit /33/ Registers of Baptisms 1/ Lincoln Primitive Methodist Circuit 1842-73; Ibid., 2/ Lincoln 2nd Primitive Methodist Circuit, 1870-1904, 1873-1911; P.R.O., R.G.4/1930 Boston Primitive Methodist Baptismal Register, 1823-37; L.A.O., Meth B/ Boston Circuit /33/1 Register of Baptisms 1844-89; S.G.S., Methodist Archives, Primitive Methodist Church, Baptismal Register for Spalding, Little London, and other chapels 9th May 1844 - 26th June 1881; Baptismal Register Donington Circuit 24th December 1843 - 10th December 1893; L.A.O., Meth B / Sleaford Circuit / 45 Register of Baptisms 1850-65; Ibid., 33/1 Register of Baptisms 1865-94.

eliminating the baptisms of more than one child belonging to the same parents, these registers contain information on 1,992 children brought for baptism by Primitive Methodist ministers. In 104 cases no information on occupations is given.¹

There was a marked contrast between the social composition of the trustees and the people who had children baptised. Whereas 48 (31%) of the 154 trustees were farmers and 41 (27%) labourers, 901 (45%) of the baptisms were labourers' children compared with 141 (7%) farmers. The percentages of craftsmen and tradesmen who acted as trustees and those who had children baptised were much closer. While 20% of the trustees were craftsmen, 452 (23%) appear in the registers. 10% of the trustees were tradesmen, while 152 (8%) had children baptised. Compared with the population as a whole, farmers were over-represented on chapel trusts, whereas the proportion of labourers tended to be in line with that for the area as a whole.² There was probably a slightly higher proportion of craftsmen acting as trustees and in the baptismal registers than in the total population of south Lincolnshire, while the proportion of tradesmen involved in Primitive Methodism in terms of both trustees and baptisms was also higher.³ These figures

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1. For a detailed analysis of the register see Appendix C.
 2. For the composition of the population of south Lincolnshire as a whole see pp.8-10.
 3. Exact calculation of the number of men who can be described in general terms as either crafts or tradesmen is complicated by the different descriptions of occupations employed in the census reports and in chapel records. In the case of these two classes any comparisons can only be approximate.

are to some extent skewed by the inclusion of 508 baptisms from the city of Lincoln, which included 253 craftsmen employed in the city. The fact that nearly 50% of baptisms in Lincoln came from among the artisans of the city, is an indication of the Primitive Methodists' level of success among this group of workers, many of whom were recent migrants from the countryside.¹

Circuit boundary changes and the differing number of baptisms involved make it difficult to draw valid conclusions about any changes in the social composition of parents who brought children for baptism at different periods. The early registers for Boston and Lincoln cover a wider area than those for the later period and some areas covered by the Spalding register in the later period were included in the early Lincoln register. Part of the explanation for a large drop in the percentage of labourers' children in the later Boston baptismal registers as well as that in the Lincoln circuit can be found in the changing areas covered by the registers. As the Primitives moved into the town of Boston and city of Lincoln, their registers reflected the more varied composition of the working classes of these places.

A more detailed breakdown of the places from which the parents of children came provides some information on the place of Primitive Methodism in the local community. In the Spalding registers, the children baptised came from 95 places. A considerable proportion of these were single baptisms from scattered fenland communities such as Swineshead Marsh and

1. See above pp.124-125.

Holbeach Common, but even the places with the largest number of baptisms show that Primitive Methodism's strength in the area lay largely in areas remote from the main centres of settlement. The largest number of baptisms, 49, were from Sutterton Fen, while other important centres were Little London, with 36, and Gedney Drove End with 34. Spalding, which had 41 baptisms and Donington with 37 are exceptional as town or village centres with large numbers of baptisms, otherwise the larger communities of the area, such as Gosberton or Pinchbeck, are represented by a very few baptisms, while the outlying Gosberton Fen had 21 and Gosberton Clough 22. Similarly, Pinchbeck Fen had 21 and Pinchbeck West 25. In the Boston circuit the fenland settlements are also important centres for baptisms, although by far the largest number, 104, were from the town of Boston itself. The next largest number was from Leake, which had 36. Together with Sibsey and Wrangle its parish included the type of outlying community from which large numbers of baptisms were also drawn in the Spalding circuit.

Lincoln and Sleaford circuits covered areas where the nucleated village was a more significant part of the landscape and this is reflected in the smaller number of centres from which the children were baptised by the Primitives. However, even though the town of Sleaford has the largest number of baptisms in its circuit, with 49, Great Hale, Little Hale, Heckington and Helpringham, all of which have fenland areas from which substantial numbers of children were baptised, were the next most significant places with 38, 22, 29 and 18 baptisms respectively. In the Lincoln circuit, the city of Lincoln had 508 baptisms out of a total of 636. The remaining 128 from that part of the register

covering south Lincolnshire were from 16 parishes. The largest groups were 37 from the village of Potterhanworth and 36 from Metheringham. These were large open villages which, with their loose social structures, provided the type of environment in which Primitive Methodism could develop.

The relative success of the Primitives in terms of the number of baptisms performed among the workers who were living in newly developed areas of south Lincolnshire, may indicate that the connexion was being used to perform what was regarded as a necessary rite of passage for groups of people whose allegiance to the connexion was slight in other respects. There is no evidence that the Primitives at this period, in common with Methodism as a whole, held the rite of baptism in such high regard that it might be confined only to the children of fully committed members. There was no consistent or uniform doctrine of baptism in Methodism and the Primitive Methodists first drew up a service book in 1861. This contained a form for the administration of baptisms which was for the permissive and not obligatory use of members.¹ However, even in those areas where it was most difficult to obtain Anglican baptism the pull of the Church of England still seems to have been strong.² A Weston labourer who was, according to the local clergyman, writing in 1846, 'captivated by the mode of worship

1. Norman P. Goldhawk, 'The Methodist People in the Early Victorian Age: spirituality and worship', in Rupert Davies, A. Raymond George and Gordon Rupp (ed.), A History of the Methodist Church in Great Britain, vol.II, 1978, pp.138-9; Horton Davies, Worship and Theology in England, vol.IV: from Newman to Martineau 1850-1900, 1962, pp.141 and 143.

2. See above p .232.

among the Ranters'

had two or three children baptized by the superintendent of that sect, in his neighbourhood. Now, however, without any change in his general religious views, he wishes, as he says, to have these children christened ... Thus he wishes to fulfil all righteousness, taking the conventicle as his guide, as far as it goes and superadding, from the church, what he fancies, without understanding its nature.

As the connexion developed it reached a stage when it needed to find a place within the Primitive Methodist fold for the children of the first generation of converts. This might have given baptism greater importance. In its early charismatic phase the connexion might have placed little value on set rites and forms and emphasised the conscious conversion experience, but by the time the 1861 form of services was produced, the needs of these children had to be met within the settled structures of the denomination. Since the bulk of the entries in the baptism registers belong to the second half of the nineteenth century, they would tend to belong to this more structured phase of the connexion's development and reflect the real composition of the people from among whom Primitive Methodism drew its following. The differences between their occupations and those of the trustees may be attributed, at least in part, to the fact that trustees are not necessarily a fair sample of a congregation. The trustees of Cornish Methodist chapels were largely lower middle class, although the working classes are better represented in Primitive Methodist chapel deeds. When attempts were made to form a trust for Redruth Primitive Methodist chapel, 35% of the trustees were miners.

They were, however, under-represented compared with the baptism registers where they constituted 75% of the parents in the period 1843-69.¹ The overall bias towards farmers on the south Lincolnshire trusts is strengthened by the larger numbers of them who appear on the deeds of such lowland chapels as Moulton Seas End, Little London, Pinchbeck West and Weston Hills. The relatively small number of deeds involved must make any conclusions somewhat tentative but these chapel trusts contrast with those at Little Hale, Helpringham, Ancaster and Bicker, where there was a strong representation of labourers on the trustees. This might suggest that the leadership of chapels was polarised in different directions in some places. Such polarisation would not, however, be as strong as it might first appear in the lowland areas where the gap between farmers and labourers was not wide. Here the farmers included men described as 'yeomen' who farmed the land they owned, often in small units, as well as cottagers.² The reversal of the situation at Little London, where the 1842 deed has 6 farmers and no labourers acting as trustees, while in 1866 there were 6 labourers and no farmers, seems to indicate a fairly fluid social structure in this particular context.

The information on occupations of Primitive Methodist supporters from the trust deeds and the baptism registers does not enable a clear distinction to be drawn between the social composition of the committed membership of the connexion and the larger body of attendants, but both sets of evidence show that

1. John C.C. Probert, The Sociology of Cornish Methodism to the Present Day, Redruth, 1971, pp.23-25.

2. See above, pp. 32-33, 43.

the Primitives drew a high proportion of their support from among the rural working classes and especially labourers. With the development of the towns of the area and especially the city of Lincoln, they seemed to have consolidated their position among the craftsmen who had moved to work in manufacturing industry.

VII

CHAPEL LIFE

The life of the Primitive Methodist community in the towns and villages of south Lincolnshire was a regular cycle of Sunday and weeknight services interspersed with an annual round of special events such as Sunday school and chapel anniversaries. There were also the occasional extraordinary events in the life of the local chapel community, such as the opening of a new building, which were marked by special services and meetings. This regular pattern of worship and associated social activity not only provided a framework within which chapel members and adherents lived out their individual spiritual lives, but became part of the social calendar of the local community. Primitive Methodist activities differed little in form and content from those of other nonconformist and village organisations so that the connexion and its members became a recognised part of the community life of the area.

The life of the local Primitive Methodist community at Great Gonerby, near Grantham, is described in the local press in some detail from 1856, following a revival in the village. It provides an example of the place chapels came to occupy in the communities where they were established. The foundation stone of the village's new chapel was laid in 1857 by the Mayor of Nottingham. Twenty-one other stones were laid at the same time and a tea for 170 people was held at the Wesleyan chapel which

was attended by 'the principal inhabitants, with their labourers.' In the evening there was a public meeting with six speakers and 'a larger congregation than has been seen at Gonerby for some years past.'¹ Special meetings and services were held in February of the next year to raise money for the new chapel. They were said to have attracted large numbers, with 160 present at a public tea. Speakers included Wesleyan and Methodist New Connexion ministers. The presence of clergymen from other denominations was a sign that the Primitives had moved into a more central position in nonconformist life. This was commented on from another point of view by the local newspaper reporter who noted that, 'However the Primitive Methodists might have been despised, it is evident there is a progression in intellect on the part of many of their ministers.'² The actual opening of the new chapel was marked by special services and meetings which also had a strong social element. There were two public teas and a lecture on 'the idolatrous worship, customs and ceremonies prevalent in the East Indies, illustrated by numerous diagrams ...'³ As well as serving to raise money, these events emphasised Primitive Methodism's place in village life. The new chapel building had attracted the support of 'the farmers and inhabitants of the place generally, as well as several gentlemen in the neighbourhood ...'⁴ The connexion's activities were now not only the concern of the group of converts who made up the Primitive Methodist society in the village, but

1. G.J., 17th October 1857.

2. Ibid., 27th February 1858.

3. Ibid., 6th March 1858.

4. Ibid.

had a wider role which was validated by the support of outsiders. This support was renewed and sustained through the annual round of special services and meetings for which the new chapel provided a base. These events showed the rest of the village community what the Primitives had already achieved and raised further funds for their work. In addition they provided entertainment and recreation for a wider audience than regular chapel attenders.

Sunday school and chapel anniversaries were an important part of these activities. By 1860 the Great Gonerby Primitive Methodists had established a Sunday school. The type of celebrations which marked its first anniversary became an annual pattern.

The Sunday-school anniversary sermons were preached on Sunday last, by Mr. White of Bingham. The children recited some very nice pieces to a large congregation. The collections were good. On the following Monday the children had tea and afterwards the friends. The chapel was nicely decorated with flowers and suitable mottoes. The meeting in the evening was addressed by Messrs. White, Betts, and Brodhead ...¹

Similarly, the anniversary of the opening of the chapel was celebrated each year by special sermons and a tea meeting.² These events entertained as well as edified and in 1865 many were unable to get into the building for an evening lecture on Martin Luther.³ In 1866 between three and four hundred people attended the chapel anniversary tea, which was followed by a

1. G.J., 7th July 1860; for subsequent annual services see *Ibid.*, 6th July 1861, 5th July 1862, 2nd July 1864, 7th July 1866.

2. *Ibid.*, 11th May 1861.

3. *Ibid.*, 29th April 1865.

lecture on 'The Young Man's hindrances to true greatness.'¹

Increased numbers were attracted by what the Primitive Methodist chapel offered, and extra accommodation was needed. In 1863 Great Gonerby's chapel was 'enlarged and improved, and a new schoolroom added.' More money was needed to pay off the building debt and this in turn meant that special services and events assumed a greater importance as a means of raising funds. The opening of the 1863 chapel improvements at Gonerby was marked by special services, a tea and a lecture on 'True Heroes'.² The 1864 chapel anniversary produced an income of £15. 10s. 7d. from donations, together with collections of £17. 0s. 5d. at sermons and public meetings. It was reported that over the past year the village's Primitive Methodists had raised £78. 17s. 10d. which they had used to clean the chapel and build the new schoolroom. £20 of this had also been used to pay off a £120 debt which remained on the chapel premises.³ In October 1865 two sermons were preached in aid of the trust fund of the chapel and tea and public meetings were held on the following day. There was said to be a large attendance at these and a total collection of £7. 0s. 6d. One of the speakers, a Wisbech architect, emphasised the chapel's neatness and appearance.⁴ His remarks showed the emphasis that was being placed on maintaining the public face of Primitive Methodism in the village.

1. G.J., 7th April 1866.

2. Ibid., 30th May 1863.

3. Ibid., 2nd April 1864.

4. Ibid., 7th October 1865.

By 1873 there was said to be insufficient sittings for those who wished to worship in the Gonerby chapel.¹ A new chapel was opened in October 1873 and the need to raise a further £330 in addition to the £220 which had already been found towards its cost brought a further cycle of fund raising activities.² At the 1874 chapel anniversary the need to meet the financial challenge which the new chapel brought was an important consideration during the celebrations.³

As well as providing a centre for Primitive Methodist activities Great Gonerby's chapel was also a meeting place for the village temperance society. The form of its meetings and public gathering was very similar to those the Primitives arranged. The temperance society's second anniversary had tea and public meetings, together with recitations by children from the Band of Hope.⁴ The role of the temperance movement in the village was emphasised in a report of a meeting held at Gonerby chapel in March 1870. This was interspersed with temperance melodies and seventeen people were reported to have signed the pledge. There was said to be 'great room for reformation in this respect' in the village.⁵ The similar form and common meeting place helped to blur the distinction between Primitive Methodism and other morally uplifting and improving activities, so that at least outwardly, the

1. G.J., 19th April 1873.

2. Ibid., 18th October 1873; 8th November 1873; 22nd November 1873.

3. Ibid., 31st October 1874.

4. Ibid., 31st December 1870.

5. Ibid., 12th March 1870.

distinctive religious qualities which had first enabled the Primitives to develop and grow, became less clear.

The same pattern of events as that at Great Gonerby was repeated in other towns and villages. The erection of a new chapel at Boston in 1839 meant that the Primitive Methodist community in the town became involved at a fairly early date in an annual cycle of money raising anniversaries. By 1842 sermons and public tea meetings were an established feature of their life and the co-operation of the ministers of other nonconformist denominations in these efforts was an indication that the Primitives had become part of the common pattern of nonconformist activity in the town.¹

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The need to raise money to support the connexion was an important element in shaping its public activities. The Primitives had to represent themselves as worthy of support, which in turn involved the expenditure of more time and money. It was argued, for example, that better chapel accommodation was needed. The connexion's work was being 'counteracted or neutralised' because it was carried on 'in sanctuaries ill adapted for the end for which they are used' or because they were located in 'unfavourable neighbourhoods.' The aim should be to erect buildings which repelled no-one and were in prominent positions on good sites.² The connexion needed

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1. L.R.S.M., 13th September 1839; 25th October 1839; 16th September 1842.
 2. P.M.Mag. XI, n.s., October 1873, pp.589, 591.

to keep pace with the advancement of the times in this particular, if we would advantageously take hold of the public mind. I see no reason why Primitive Methodist chapels should not be as well known, and occupying as conspicuous a position as those of other names, or any other community in our kingdom.¹

Building new chapels placed a heavy burden on local societies which was often made worse by rebuilding before the debt on the older building had been fully discharged. After the trustees of Little Hale chapel had bought the land on which to build it in 1836, at a cost of £10, they raised a mortgage of £60 on the land and the chapel in April 1837. This money seems to have been used to build the chapel and it was eventually discharged on 17th December 1860.² The Moulton Seas End chapel trustees do not appear to have mortgaged any property until 1854, when they borrowed £100, although they had opened a chapel in June 1835 on land which was conveyed to them a month later. The £100 mortgage may have been for a replacement building or additions to the old chapel. It had not been repaid by 1870.³ There had been a chapel at Little London from the 1830s, but there is no evidence for any earlier transactions, since the land bought for the chapel in 1834 had not been properly conveyed until 1843, when £200 was borrowed for what seems to have been a rebuilding, since a newly built chapel was the security for the loan. Land on which to build a chapel at Pinchbeck Northgate was purchased in September 1842 and the chapel and two houses on it were mortgaged for £150.⁴

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1. P.M.Mag. XI, n.s., February 1873, p.95.
 2. Messrs. Godsons, Solicitors, Sleaford, Sleaford Methodist Circuit Chapel Deeds, Little Hale.
 3. Spalding Methodist Church, Circuit Chapel Deeds, Moulton Seas End; P.M.Mag. VI, n.s., September 1836, p.346.
 4. Spalding Methodist Church, Circuit Chapel Deeds, Little London and Pinchbeck West.

A site on which to build a chapel in Helpringham was acquired in 1840 and the chapel which had been built on it, together with the land, was mortgaged in June 1848 for £80 to meet ' ... a debt incurred ... by the expenses of and attending the erection and building of the said Chapel ... ' This mortgage was discharged in 1864. Similarly, at Ancaster, the Primitive Methodist trustees purchased land in February 1843 for £30. This was to be used for ' ... a Chapel or Meeting House and School ... ' The land and the chapel were mortgaged in April 1853 and the loan eventually paid off in December 1858 after being twice transferred to other mortgagees.¹ After the trustees at Bicker had bought some land with a cottage and buildings on it on 7th April 1854 they mortgaged it, together with the chapel which they said they intended to build, for £100. St. Thomas's Road Spalding Primitive Methodist chapel was financed in a similar way. The trustees bought land for £100 in April 1870 and then mortgaged the land and the chapel which they built on it for £500.²

Chapel debts in the Donington circuit in June 1868, included £220 at Donington itself, Sutterton Fen £175, Quadring £110, Helpringham £62, Little Hale £55, Bicker £117, Wigtoft Bank £30, Great Hale £60, Billinghamay £70, South Kyme £100, Gosberton Clough £290, and the newly built chapel at Rippingale £70. There was no apparent relationship between the size of the debt and the membership of the local Primitive Methodist society.

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1. Messrs. Godsons, Solicitors, Sleaford, Sleaford Methodist Circuit Chapel Deeds, Helpringham and Ancaster.
 2. Spalding Methodist Church, Circuit Chapel Deeds, Spalding.

South Kyme only had 5 members to support a debt of £100 and Gosberton Clough 8 members and the largest debt in the circuit. On the other hand, Donington had 57 members and a debt of £220.¹ Nor did these chapel debts necessarily decrease in proportion to the age of the chapel. The maintenance of what was deemed an acceptable public face by the connexion, placed a heavy burden on local societies.

Some chapel mortgages were repaid as a lump sum, but the money to do this does not seem to have been raised by a single effort. The mortgage of £200 to build a new chapel at Little London in 1843 was partly paid off in sums of £5 and £10 in eleven payments between February 1846 and January 1866.² In 1866 the society at Leake on the Boston circuit paid £10. 10s. Od. off a debt of £140 still outstanding on a total mortgage of £217. The chapel had been built in 1839 but £65 of the mortgage was on an earlier chapel building. Similarly, a £25 debt from an old chapel building had been carried over to a total mortgage of £90 at Fosdyke, where in 1866 the trustees hoped to pay off £5 of the £80 still outstanding. By 1869 this mortgage had been reduced to £60, but it remained at this level until 1875. The new chapel which had been built at Boston carried a mortgage of £1,200 in 1869, which had been reduced to £1,025 by 1875.³

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1. S.G.S., Methodist Archives, Primitive Methodist Church, Donington Circuit Account Book 1853-78.
 2. Spalding Methodist Church, Circuit Chapel Deeds, Little London.
 3. L.A.O., Meth B/ Boston Circuit/55/1 Correspondence File 1861-1894.

Indebtedness for chapel buildings was a constant feature of the finances of the Boston circuit. After the Primitive Methodists at Wrangle Bank had reduced their chapel debt from £45 in 1869 to £5 in 1874 they entered into a new commitment of £100 to build a replacement. Money might also be laid out on alterations and enlargements to chapel premises. In 1867 the trustees at Kirton Skeldyke spent £25. 5s. 10½d. on their building.¹

Chapel debts were financed from a variety of sources. Individuals, friendly societies and other chapels appear in south Lincolnshire records. The money for Little Hale chapel was lent in 1837 by Ann Foster, a spinster from Bingham in Nottinghamshire, on 5% interest. Bingham was one of the centres from which the Primitives moved into south Lincolnshire, so the money may have been raised through contacts within the connexion.² However, since the solicitor involved in the transaction was also called Foster, he may have been acting as a mortgage broker and put a relative in contact with the chapel trustees. The mortgage on Ancaster chapel, which the trustees took out in 1843 at 5% interest, was with Rowland Williams. He was described as a gentleman living at Sleaford and had no obvious connections with the Primitives except as a source of finance. The debt was transferred in 1851 by Williams to C. E. Bissell, a Sleaford solicitor. When he called the mortgage in, it passed into the hands of Francis Elliott, an Ancaster carpenter. Helpringham chapel's mortgage of 1848, was raised

1. L.A.O., Meth B/Boston Circuit/55/1/Correspondence File 1861-1894.

2. L.R.S.M., 25th September 1818.

from the beginning among local tradesmen and artisans who may have themselves been supporters of the connexion. Three Rippingale men, Robert Younger, a carpenter, Francis Walton, a tailor, and Abel Smith lent the Helpringham trustees £80. One of the trustees was John Richards, a jobber from Rippingale, so that it is likely he acted as a broker in this transaction.¹

A later development seems to have been raising money to meet chapel building debts by borrowing from friendly societies. When Boston's new chapel was being built in 1866, the trustees made approaches to a Sleaford friendly society to borrow up to £500. Brothers Nash and Holmes were also requested by the trustees 'to inquire at their respective clubs to see if we can take some money up of them.' Later it was agreed to borrow £300 'from the club at the Red Cow if we can have it on note.'² The initial finance for Little London's new chapel had come from private mortgagees but in 1877 the debt of £100 was taken over by the Royal Welland Lodge of the Independent Order of Oddfellows. Similarly, both the Sutterton and Amber Hill lodges of the Ancient Order of Foresters were involved with Bicker Primitive Methodist chapel in the 1870s.³ There also seems to have been some money lending between chapels, when any surpluses were available. In June 1853, the Boston trustees lent £20 to East Fen, Lindsey, and £10 to Langrick Ville, Lindsey, chapels.⁴ However, since most chapels were usually in debt

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1. Messrs. Godsons, Solicitors, Sleaford, Sleaford Methodist Circuit Chapel Deeds, Little Hale, Ancaster and Helpringham.
 2. L.A.O., Meth C/Boston, West Street P.M. (Boston Circuit)/24/1/Trust Minutes 1866-1874, 31st January 1866.
 3. Spalding Methodist Church, Circuit Chapel Deeds, Little London and Bicker.
 4. L.A.O., Meth C/Boston West Street P.M. (Boston Circuit)/25/1/Trust Minutes 1839-62, note in front of minute book.

rather than in a position to lend money, this hardly seems to have been a significant element in their financial transactions. The involvement of the Primitives with self help groups such as the friendly societies, both collectively through the negotiations of trust bodies for loans, and at the individual level in the 1866 Boston negotiations, was more important both financially and as an indication of the involvement of the Primitive Methodists with a wider network of organisations in the local community.

The financial burden which chapel building imposed on local Primitive Methodist societies was in addition to the need to support the day to day work of the local circuit and the connexion as a whole. By the middle of the nineteenth century the main framework of Primitive Methodist organisation in south Lincoln^{shire} was in shape. Adjustments would be made to circuit boundaries and small village meetings would either be added to the number of preaching places or disappear from the circuit plans, but in general terms the main centres of activity had been established. The maintenance of these structures did, however, seem to impose greater burdens on some circuits than on others. The quarterly accounts of the Boston circuit for the period December 1851 to December 1875 show that it incurred a deficit on its activities 25 times out of 97.¹ On the other hand, the Donington circuit failed to raise enough money to finance its activities 68 out of a possible 89 times between 1858 and 1875. From 1860 onwards the circuit's finances were

1. L.A.O., Meth B/Boston Circuit/42/1 and 2/Quarter Day Accounts 1851-1874, and 1874-1892.

usually in a state of deficit. In the 1850s these deficits were made up by borrowing money, while another device to save money was not to pay the travelling preachers' salary in full.¹ From the end of 1854 the Spalding and Holbeach branch was transferred from the Wisbech circuit to Donington. Its accounts for the period September 1849 to December 1857 are less easy to interpret than those for the Boston and Donington circuits, but it seems that the branch only produced a balanced set of accounts or showed a small surplus on 9 occasions. Between June 1853 and December 1857 it was continuously in deficit.² From 1862 Spalding and Holbeach branch became the financial responsibility of the central General Missionary Committee of the connexion.³ It continued to show a deficit down to the end of the period of this study, 1875.⁴ However, the ending of Donington's financial responsibility for Spalding and Holbeach did little to ease its financial burdens.

The financial stability of individual circuits was not related to their total membership but rather to the way membership was distributed among the individual societies within them. In the Boston circuit a higher proportion of its total membership

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1. S.G.S., Methodist Archives, Primitive Methodist Church, Donington Circuit Account Book 1853-1878.
 2. Ibid., Wisbech Circuit, Holbeach Branch Accounts and Membership List 1849-1854; Donington Circuit, Spalding and Holbeach Branch Accounts and Membership List 1855-1857.
 3. J. R. L., MAW MS 734, Primitive Methodist Conference Journal, 4th June 1862 - 12th June 1869, p.86.
 4. S.G.S., Methodist Archives, Primitive Methodist Church, Account of the Moneys and Members in the Spalding and Holbeach Branch of the Donington Circuit 1857-1862, and the Spalding and Holbeach Mission 1862-1878.

belonged to the society based on the town of Boston, whereas in Donington and Spalding and Holbeach, the village societies, and not the towns or heads of the circuits, were relatively more important. The Boston society had 87 members in 1851 and although there were fluctuations it reached a high point in 1870 with a membership of 153. By 1875 there were 142 members.¹ This represented between nearly 25% and just over 33% of total membership of the circuit. In Donington membership was far less concentrated, with between just over 17% and nearly 18% of the total membership of the circuit in the town's society in 1853, 1875, and at the high point of its membership in 1858.² The lack of a strong centre was even more marked on the Spalding and Holbeach branch. Places like Holbeach Bank and Little London were more significant in terms of membership than Spalding and Holbeach, the principal towns of the area. By the late 1860s Whaplode Drove had become the most important place in the circuit, with a membership which had reached over 70.³

A predominantly rural base was not strong enough to support the increasingly complex structures of the connexion so that the towns became a more significant element in the connexion's life. Donington circuit, where the congregations were generally

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1. L.A.O., Meth B/Boston Circuit/42/1/and 2/Quarter Day Accounts 1851-1874 and 1874-1892.
 2. S.G.S., Primitive Methodist Church, Donington Circuit Account Book 1853-1878.
 3. S.G.S., Methodist Archives, An Account of the Moneys and Members in the Spalding and Holbeach Branch of the Donington Circuit 1857-1862, and the Spalding and Holbeach Mission 1862-1878.

made up of agricultural labourers and their families, had a constant struggle with chapel debts from the mid 1840s to the mid 1870s. Its problems were compounded by removals from the area. Despite an increase in the recruitment of members, the circuit was not able to show significant gains.¹ The financial pressure to uphold the connexion's structures brought strains within local organisations. While Donington circuit found itself trying, in 1857, 'to carry out the wish of the District Meeting relative to the reduction of Quadring chapel debt' in its turn it needed to put pressure on its Spalding and Holbeach branch.² An 'expression of dissatisfaction as to its financial state' was sent to Spalding and Holbeach in June 1858, 'especially as an extra effort was to have been made - by a special collection to meet deficiencies - according to the decision of Branch Quarterly Meeting.'³ The resulting friction was reflected in the minutes of meetings and Donington's circuit's quarterly meeting expressed surprise that the Spalding and Holbeach branch

should ask for the labours of one of the circuit's travelling preacher(s) three Sundays in the quarter when the branch falls so much short of paying its way and we think it would be more honest for the branch to give the circuit three or four Sundays in the quarter of Mr. Sapeant's labourers.⁴

H. B. Kendall argued that the period from 1843 to 1876 was marked by the transition of the connexion and its institutions

1. P.M. Mag. X, n.s., May 1872, p.312.
2. S.G.S., Methodist Archives, Primitive Methodist Church, Donington, Quarterly Meeting Minute Book 1856-1873, 11th May 1857.
3. S.G.S., Methodist Archives, Primitive Methodist Church Donington Quarterly Meeting Minute Book 1856-1873, 21st June 1858.
4. Ibid.

from being locally centred to a wider view of its work. He described this view as 'the full consciousness of Church-life', which brought with it all the apparatus which a fully fledged religious organisation operating in the second half of the nineteenth century might be expected to have, such as foreign missions, a connexional orphanage, the establishment of social work in London and other large cities, and a better educated ministry.¹ These changes meant that the significance of the connexion's rural base was diminished at a period when the demographic and economic balance of the country was also tilting towards the towns and exacerbating the pressures to which village chapel communities were subjected. The period from 1843, Kendall said, as he surveyed the connexion's institutional development, had been one of strenuous endeavour to conserve the gains of the past, and to acquire the framework for future work, to get rid of particularism and local prejudices at both circuit and district level, and to develop a connexional spirit.²

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These developments in the connexion meant that there was a danger that as the maintenance of the administrative machinery and institutions of the connexion came to be seen as a prerequisite for spiritual progress it stifled other kinds of spiritual activity. A critic commented that the rules of Primitive Methodism had become so complex that there were quarrels and

1. Kendall, Origin and History, vol.II, pp.357-358.

2. Ibid., p.357.

unpleasantness at committee and quarterly meetings while 'officialism' was said to be damaging people's spiritual lives.¹ Preoccupation with the internal functioning of the connexion hindered, it was argued, its approach to 'the outcasts of society'. In a lecture to the nonconformist churches of Nottingham, which was reprinted in the Primitive Methodist Magazine, J. Brownson cited an essay on means of promoting salvation:

The Christian community has sunk into a dull round of duties and ordinances. The ordinary provisions of God's house have, to many, become tasteless and void of nutrition. We have lost the life of religious services, in their regularity. Their monotony from week to week, and year to year, has lulled us well nigh into a fatal and universal slumber. It is unnatural to expect that all the freshness of spiritual vigour should be preserved under a system where all is accurate, and regular and mechanical.²

The need to provide social activities which were attractive enough to bring in money, stifled the purely religious life of chapels. In 1864 the trustees of Spalding and Little London chapels were recommended to reduce their debts by holding a bazaar.³ Entertainment became an important element in the life of the chapels. In 1866 the trustees of Boston West Street chapel arranged a trip to the sea and a tea meeting at the shore for the benefit of their chapel. A similar event was planned in 1871 provided the tides were suitable and wagons could be obtained.⁴ In 1873 Boston circuit committee gave permission

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1. An Old Fashioned Methodist [George Walker], Methodist Ritualism, or a Few Thoughts on the Methodism of To-day, [1885], pp.39-40.
 2. P.M.Mag. IX, third series, May 1851, p.271.
 3. S.G.S., Methodist Archives, Primitive Methodist Church, Spalding and Holbeach Mission Quarterly Meeting Minute Book 1862-1883, 6th December 1864.
 4. L.A.O., Meth C/Boston, West Street (Boston Circuit)/24/1/Trust Minutes 1866-1874, June 1866; 14th July 1871.

for a 'Service of song', to be held two or three times in the winter for a chapel renovation fund.¹ Harvest home celebrations and meetings seem to have been held on the Boston circuit since 1865. By 1867 they were being used to raise money for the circuit furniture fund.²

Some chapel events had no obvious religious content beyond their endorsement, through speeches and recitations, of morally uplifting sentiments, while their form, with its emphasis on rational recreation uncontaminated by rough behaviour and alcohol, was one which was common to many other organisations in the period. Boston circuit committee arranged a trip to Barr Sands in August 1865. It was accompanied by bands and refreshments were provided, but no intoxicating drinks were allowed.³ An excursion was arranged by boat from Boston to Woodhall Spa in August 1869. A harmonium was taken and suitable readings and recitations were given en route.⁴

A contributor to the Primitive Methodist Magazine commented in 1857 on the increasing tendency for the connexion's Sunday schools to become identified with 'pleasure excursions and pic-nic parties, treats for children, and treats for teachers in the summer, and social tea parties and other gatherings in the winter ...'⁵ Three years later another correspondent

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1. L.A.O., Meth B/Boston Circuit/49/2/ Circuit Committee Minutes 1869-1887, 17th September 1873.
 2. Ibid., Meth B/Boston Circuit/41/1/Quarterly Meeting Minutes 1855-1867, 12th June 1865; 26th August 1867.
 3. Ibid., 2nd August 1865.
 4. Ibid., Meth B/Boston Circuit/49/2/Circuit Committee Minutes 1869-1887, 30th July 1869.
 5. P.M.Mag. XV, third series, September 1857, p.536.

condemned the 'frivolity and desire for the gratification of the carnal appetite, in pleasure parties, feasts and trips' which was said to be 'robbing some of our professedly religious people of their religious character.'¹ Chapel events were in danger of being completely absorbed into the social calendar of the local community in ways which might be the antithesis of the values the chapel represented. In 1863 a special committee of Donington circuit decided

That the price of tickets for the school tea be 9 pence as per request.

That the teachers and friends of the Sunday school are recommended in future to have their tea tickets the same price as the chapel.

Our reasons for the above minute is because it is injurious to the chapel tea meeting to have a difference in the price of tickets. Several persons who are decidedly not the friends of either the chapel or school, and ought not to be encouraged, have declined to buy tickets for the chapel tea, making it a boast that they could have a 'Blow out' at the school for less money. We are expecting to lose the custom of these gormandisers but we shall try to do without them.²

Boston circuit quarterly meeting found it necessary in 1865 to pass a resolution disapproving of 'the system of drinking ale and certain games practised' during the time of Sunday school anniversary services. They also asked that the 'bands of music' should cease to play then. In 1873 the same meeting passed a resolution regretting

that proceedings of a questionable character are indulged in at our various school feasts, and hopes that steps will be taken by the various school authorities to prevent any irregularities by clearing the fields not later than 7.30 and holding a special religious service.³

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1. P.M. Mag. XVIII, third series, September 1860, p.536.
 2. S.G.S., Methodist Archives, Primitive Methodist Church, Donington Quarterly Meeting Minute Book 1856-1873, 23rd June 1863.
 3. L.A.O., Meth B/Boston Circuit/41/1/Quarterly Meeting Minutes 1855-1867, 12th June 1865; 41/3/Quarterly Meeting Minutes 1869-1883, 10th March 1873.

The drift by Primitive Methodism into a position where its public face began to lose the distinctive characteristics which had marked its earlier development was, to some extent, counteracted by the connexion's internal discipline and by attempts to renew the spiritual experience of its members and adherents by revivalism. The connexion's discipline, which can be studied in the circuit records in south Lincolnshire from the late 1840s, helped to shape the lives of its individual members. It laid down standards of conduct which defined the boundary between those who were inside the connexion and those outside it. This not only involved adherence to rules of personal conduct but also a commitment to regular worship. The connexion's discipline was voluntary and upheld by no other sanctions than those which it was able to impose itself, so that the ability to maintain it is an indication of the strength of members' adherence. By defining areas in which the behaviour of individuals within the connexion was the concern of the whole Primitive Methodist community, it reinforced the community's solidarity. This role was strengthened by the fact that certain kinds of behaviour, which were condemned by the Primitives, were not always regarded as being worthy of condemnation by those outside the connexion's discipline. It provided security for the individuals who accepted it, by giving them firm guidelines for person^{al} conduct, while at the same time providing a community which supported these. If any general trend can be discerned in the circuit minute books, it was a tendency for the ultimate sanction of expulsion to become less central in the various committees' deliberations. However, in September 1873, it was noted in the Spalding and Holbeach accounts

that a decrease of 21 in the membership of the society at Holbeach Bank had been due to 8 being taken off the books for immorality, one for drunkenness and one for having 'fallen' in a way which is not defined.¹

Some of the cases which came before Primitive Methodist disciplinary meetings were serious enough to occupy their attention, but at the same time did not necessarily lead to the condemnation of the people involved. These show the connexion at work defining the parameters of acceptable conduct. The Grantham quarterly meeting in 1857 examined the case of Bro. Hand who, it was agreed, was free from condemnation for keeping a public house for his parents.² In September 1861 Bro. Richardson was recommended to be restored to the office of local preacher in the Spalding and Holbeach branch because his insolvency was occasioned by misfortune and other factors rather than personal failures.³

Such cases clearly lay in the grey area of activity which, although not illegal, could affect an individual's personal standing, and it seems that the ultimate test which Primitive Methodist discipline imposed was the way a person's conduct reflected on the connexion. A Bro. Hall, who was insolvent

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1. S.G.S., Methodist Archives, Primitive Methodist Church, Account of the Moneys and Members in the Spalding and Holbeach Branch of the Donington Circuit 1857-1862, and the Spalding and Holbeach Mission 1862-1878.
 2. L.A.O., Meth B/Grantham/41/1/Grantham Primitive Methodist Quarterly Meeting Minutes 1855-1866, 14th September 1857.
 3. S.G.S., Methodist Archives, Primitive Methodist Church, Donington Circuit, Spalding and Holbeach Branch Quarterly Meeting 1860-1862, 9th September 1861.

in 1849, was not allowed to preach on the Donington branch until he had given proof of his disposition to pay his debts.¹

A Bro. West, who belonged to the Boston circuit, was to be spoken to about reports in September 1857 that he had worked in his garden on Sunday.² In 1859 John Holmes was taken off the Donington circuit preaching plan 'for an awful case of lying' while J. Shepherd was disciplined by the same circuit by being suspended from all his offices from April to September 1862 for going to the circus and staying at a public house.³ Some of the young preachers on the Boston circuit who smoked on their way to appointments, were to be spoken to in March 1873 'with a view to a discontinuance of such practice.'⁴

Transgressions associated with drink appear frequently in circuit records. In 1848 the Donington branch suspended a Mr. Hearson from membership for getting too much to drink and striking John Tebb. George Child, also a member of the Donington branch, was 'read out of society' in 1852 for threatening the life of a Christian brother, swearing and drunkenness. Reports of drunkenness were investigated and in 1853 the Donington authorities asked a Bro. Tebb to look into a report that another member had been intoxicated.⁵ A delegation of two people

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1. S.G.S., Methodist Archives, Primitive Methodist Church, Donington Branch Minute Book 1834-1855, 2nd March 1849.
 2. L.A.O., Meth B/Boston Circuit/41/1/ Quarterly Meeting Minutes 1855-1867, 14th September 1857.
 3. S.G.S., Methodist Archives, Primitive Methodist Church, Donington Quarterly Meeting Minute Book 1856-1873, 20th June 1859; 24th April 1862; 15th September 1862.
 4. L.A.O., Meth B/Boston Circuit/41/3/ Quarterly Meeting Minutes 1869-1883, 10th March 1873.
 5. S.G.S., Primitive Methodist Church, Methodist Archives, Donington Branch Minute Book 1834-1855, 25th February 1848; 15th August 1852; 27th January 1853.

from the Donington circuit was sent in 1862 to see Bro. Shepherd following charges that he had been at the Swan Inn playing at dominoes for money and for other unspecified offences. He was also said to have been at the Rose and Crown and intoxicated on other occasions. Shepherd admitted his guilt and was suspended from all offices in the connexion.¹

Not all offences seem to have led automatically to disciplinary action, although their repetition usually seems to have brought punishment on an escalating scale. In September 1858 Bro. Hodgson was forgiven by the Boston circuit authorities for being the worse for liquor, exhorted to be on his guard and to do better in the future. However, in March the next year he was taken off the preachers' plan and suspended from membership for three months for intoxication. In June 1859 he was expelled from the Primitive Methodist society for drunkenness and other immorality.² A local preacher in the Spalding and Holbeach mission was disciplined in 1873 for intoxication by having his name removed from the preaching plan for the next quarter, although he was allowed to continue to preach with his number only being used to indicate his place on the plan.³

Cases of fighting were also dealt with by the circuit authorities. John English lost his place as a local preacher on the Spalding and Holbeach plan in 1863 for fighting and swearing, while in August 1868, Bro. Betts, of Whaplode Drove

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1. S.G.S., Methodist Archives, Primitive Methodist Church, Donington Quarterly Meeting Minute Book 1856-1873, 27th November 1862; 19th December 1862.
 2. L.A.O., Meth B/Boston Circuit/41/1/Circuit Quarterly Meeting Minutes 1855-1867, 13th September 1858; 14th March 1859; 13th June 1859.
 3. S.G.S., Methodist Archives, Primitive Methodist Church, Spalding and Holbeach Mission Quarterly Meeting Minute Book 1862-1883, 1st December 1873.

was suspended for quarrelling. A Bro. Stennett not only lost his position as a local preacher, but the Spalding and Holbeach authorities in 1869 also expelled him from the Primitive Methodist society for fighting with his neighbour.¹

Sexual misconduct was another area of concern to the connexion's authorities. George Wilson and Esther Northern, who later married, were suspended from membership in the Donington branch for six months until January 1853 for what was described as 'criminal connexion'.² The Spalding and Holbeach authorities suspended the father of an illegitimate child from membership for three months in 1860. The next year Thomas Smith lost both his place as a local preacher in this branch and his membership because of immorality.³ Bro. Haynes was put off the Spalding and Holbeach plan because of adverse reports about his moral character in 1869, although Bro. Williamson, who lost his place on the same plan in 1871, was allowed to retain his society membership because he gave signs of repentance and wished to continue to be identified with the Primitive Methodists.⁴ In 1872 Bro. B. Zealand was suspended from the Boston circuit preaching plan and a note sent to him urging him to make reparation for his offence by marrying Ellen Page as soon as possible.⁵

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1. S.G.S., Methodist Archives, Primitive Methodist Church, Spalding and Holbeach Mission Quarterly Meeting Minute Book 1862-1883, 7th December 1863; 31st August 1868; 3rd June, 1869.
 2. Ibid., Donington Branch Minute Book 1834-1855, 30th July 1852.
 3. Ibid., Donington Circuit, Spalding and Holbeach Quarterly Meeting 1860-1862, 18th April 1860; 11th March 1861.
 4. Ibid., Spalding and Holbeach Mission Quarterly Meeting Minute Book 1862-1883, 1st March 1869; 6th March 1871.
 5. L.A.O., Meth B/Boston Circuit/41/3/ Quarterly Meeting Minutes 1869-1883, 17th June, 1872.

Conduct which might be deemed illegal, even if it did not necessarily find its way into a court of law, was also dealt with by the Primitive Methodist authorities. A Bro. Ashton was suspended from membership for a month in April 1860 by Spalding and Holbeach branch because he had been found with a piece of meat which did not belong to him.¹ In 1874 Bro. English was taken off the Spalding and Holbeach preachers' plan for theft.² If English was the same man who was disciplined in 1863 for fighting and swearing, his continued membership of the connexion to 1874 shows that disciplinary action did not necessarily alienate members who were subject to it. Similarly, George Wilson and Esther Northern seem to have returned to membership after their suspension.³

The Primitive Methodist disciplinary code was not entirely negative, but also seems to have attempted to reconcile differences and create harmony within the connexion. Bros. Barton and Child were 'affectionately urged to settle their quarrel according to the Gospel' by the officials of the Donington branch in 1852.⁴

Connexional discipline might also be used against people who failed to fulfil their spiritual obligations as Primitive Methodists through regular attendance at worship and associated

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1. S.G.S., Primitive Methodist Church, Donington Circuit, Spalding and Holbeach Branch Quarterly Meeting 1860-1862, 18th April 1860.
 2. Ibid., Spalding and Holbeach Mission Quarterly Meeting Minute Book 1862-1883, 7th December 1874.
 3. See above p.353.
 4. S.G.S., Methodist Archives, Primitive Methodist Church, Donington Branch Minute Book 1834-1855, 9th August 1852.

activities. The Boston circuit quarterly meeting agreed in 1859 that a Mrs. Rylott should be spoken to about her neglect of Sunday morning worship in the Primitive Methodist chapel and her attendance at the Wesleyan Sunday school. It was also decided to speak to Bro. Mableson about sending his children to the Wesleyan school.¹ In 1860 Bro. Everitt of the Donington circuit was reminded that if he continued as a Primitive Methodist he would be expected 'to meet in class &c. according to the discipline of the connexion and also to attend the private means of grace as he may have opportunity.'² When G. Hibberd of Benington failed to maintain his financial contributions to the connexion a note was sent to him by the Boston circuit in 1862 to inform him that 'as he has become too covetous to support Primitive Methodism either with money or effort, he had better go over to Mother Church where they are paid for saying Amen.'³

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While the individual way of life of a Primitive Methodist member was defined by connexional discipline, revivalism was an important means of reinforcing and renewing spiritual impetus. In the course of the nineteenth century revivalism changed its nature and became to some extent subordinated to the constraints which the institutional development of the connexion brought with

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1. L.A.O., Meth B/Boston Circuit 41/1/ Quarterly Meeting Minutes 1855-1867, 13th June, 1859.
 2. S.G.S., Methodist Archives, Primitive Methodist Church, Donington Quarterly Meeting Minute Book 1856-1873, 18th December 1860.
 3. L.A.O., Meth B/Boston Circuit 41/1/ Quarterly Meeting Minutes 1855-1867, 17th June 1862.

it, so that towards the end of the period under consideration it seemed to bolster existing patterns rather than sweep large numbers of new converts into Primitive Methodism. Older preoccupations with the devil and his works had not entirely disappeared by 1851 when an account of a revival which began in the Holbeach branch that year shows the effect this type of activity could have on local chapel communities. This had

been going on, more or less, in various parts of this branch since last July. Several courses of special services have been held which, under the blessing of Jehovah, have been ^{very} effective, and showers of saving grace have been vouchsafed. The consciences of the guilty have been grappled with; a free, full, and great salvation has been urged; and though we have had some dreadful conflicts with the powers of darkness, the hosts of Israel have been more than victorious. Satan's right to the souls of those whom he has long held as his slaves, has been courageously disputed by the servants of the living God; and the grand adversary has, in many cases, been defeated. Jesus has come to our help; the prey has been taken from the mighty; and upwards of 60 souls have professed to obtain the blessing of sin forgiven, and united into the Church of Christ. Persons from the age of fourteen to seventy years are among the saved. Good has been done in every place on the Plan; but Holbeach Bank, Whaplode, Long Sutton, and Gedney Drove End, have specially shared the effects of this glorious visitation of saving power.¹

The charismatic forces of religious revival on which the connexion had been built up in the 1820s and 1830s became channelled into existing institutions. Revival came to be planned for, and in 1844 the Donington quarterly meeting resolved to hold revival meetings at Little London, Gosberton Clough and Billingborough.² In 1855 Boston circuit authorities agreed to put prayer meetings on the plan 'at each place a half an hour previous to preaching evening sermon not exceed (sic) half an hour and conclude with a prayer meeting for a revival of the word of God ...'³ When the

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1. P.M.Mag. X, third series, April 1852, p.239.
 2. S.G.S., Methodist Archives, Primitive Methodist Church, Donington Branch Minute Book 1834-1855, 9th September 1844.
 3. L.A.O., Meth B/Boston Circuit 41/1/Minutes 1855-1867, 10th December 1855.

Donington circuit authorities resolved 'to employ all the special means we can to bring up the work of God in our circuit' in December 1856 these included the printing of special circulars.¹ Sometimes plans for revivals emanated from local societies, but even in these cases the arrangements were formalised at circuit level. Spalding and Holbeach quarterly meeting gave permission in September 1866 for revival services to be held at all the places where they had been requested, so publicising the need for these services.² In December 1867 Boston circuit quarterly meeting quantified its objectives precisely and the means that were to be employed to achieve them. It was agreed that there were to be fifteen minutes prayer each day, 'for a revival of God's work and we covenant with God and one another for an increase of 50 souls during the next quarter.'³ Efforts to promote revival could also be formalised by adding them to the regular round of services on the preaching plan. Spalding and Holbeach quarterly meeting in September 1869 resolved to have three weeks of revival services on the forthcoming plan.⁴

Protracted meetings and the employment of outside revivalists were adopted from American revivalism by the Primitive Methodists in the second half of the nineteenth

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1. S.G.S., Methodist Archives, Primitive Methodist Church, Donington Quarterly Meeting Minute Book 1856-1873, 29th December 1856..
 2. Ibid., Spalding and Holbeach Mission, Quarterly Meeting Minute Book 1862-1883, 3rd September 1866.
 3. L.A.O., Meth B/Boston Circuit/41/2/Quarterly Meeting Minutes 1867-1869, 9th December 1867.
 4. S.G.S., Methodist Archives, Primitive Methodist Church, Spalding and Holbeach Mission Quarterly Meeting Minute Book 1862-1883, 6th September 1869.

century. They were in part a result of Primitive Methodism's contacts with developments in America through its own missions, but they also linked the Primitives with other evangelical churches, who were employing the same measures for mainly urban missionary work. Religious revival was developing into a consciously planned operation of which the American methods were an instrument.¹ In 1855 protracted meetings were planned on the Boston circuit at Leake; Boston; Fosdyke; Stickford, Lindsey; Wainfleet and Wainfleet Bank, Lindsey; Irby, Lindsey; and Halton Fen Side, Lindsey, with travelling preachers at them as far as possible.² In December 1857 the Donington circuit authorities arranged for protracted and revival meetings to be held for up to a fortnight, as well as a Sunday of special prayer throughout the circuit on which all preaching was to be given up.³

There is no precise indication as to whether the revivalists employed on south Lincolnshire circuits were professionals. In December 1860 a Mrs. Sanderson was asked to come 'to assist in holding a few revival services' on the Spalding and Holbeach branch. She was to work 'where the friends may desire to have her.'⁴ Boston circuit planned to

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1. Carwardine, Transatlantic Revivalism, pp.107, 198; Obelkevich, Religion and Rural Society, p.226.
 2. L.A.O., Meth B/ Boston Circuit/41/1/ Quarterly Meeting Minutes 1855-1867, 10th December 1855.
 3. S.G.S., Methodist Archives, Primitive Methodist Church, Donington Quarterly Meeting Minute Book 1856-1873, 21st December 1857.
 4. Ibid., Donington Circuit, Spalding and Holbeach Branch Quarterly Meeting 1860-1862, 6th December 1860.

engage a Mr. Corbridge, who was described as 'the revivalist', for a month at the beginning of 1870.¹ The work of these revivalists was clearly designed to bolster existing institutions rather than transform them. If Mrs. Sanderson accepted the invitation of the Spalding and Holbeach branch in 1860, she was to be asked to preach at Holbeach on 16th December 'and make collections for lighting and cleaning.'² When, in June 1872, the members of the Spalding and Holbeach mission were asked to 'pray for an increase of piety', it was with the aim of bringing 'such an increase of members and money that the station may become self-supporting.'³

Just as a revival served to boost existing institutions and became more a consciously planned operation, it also could arise out of the regular round of services which were the staple of the connexion's religious life, giving them an extra piquancy as well as re-affirming their importance. The services and meetings to mark the laying of the foundation stone at Westborough chapel in 1852 were outwardly conventional in form, but they developed into emotionally moving events which brought conversions:

The chapel was crowded with attentive hearers, suitable addresses were delivered, after which several highly interesting and instructive pieces were recited by the children, and the collections were in advance of those

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1. L.A.O., Meth B/Boston Circuit/41/3/ Quarterly Meeting Minutes 1869-1883, 14th June 1869.
 2. S.G.S., Methodist Archives, Primitive Methodist Church, Donington Circuit, Spalding and Holbeach Branch Quarterly Meeting 1860-1862, 6th December 1860.
 3. Ibid., Donington Circuit, Spalding and Holbeach Mission Quarterly Meeting Minute Book 1862-1883, 3rd June 1872.

of last year. The meeting was signalized by a gracious influence, and the friends say that in all respects it was one of the best meetings of the kind they have yet had. Great praise was due to the female friends, who had limewashed and painted the interior and exterior of the chapel, &c. While brother Hurd was preaching the school sermons on the previous Sabbath, the Lord made bare his arm, and two persons professed to find the Lord.¹

Primitive Methodism in Great Gonerby as well as other places in the Bottesford circuit was revitalised as a result of the 1856 annual missionary services. Nearly fifty people were said to have been saved 'among them some of the most profligate' in the village.² Hitherto Primitive Methodism in Gonerby had been in a 'low state'. This had

led the few members ... to cry mightily to God for an outpouring of the Holy Spirit. In 1856, a considerable awakening took place, which kept gradually extending, so as to lead to a very powerful and glorious revival. Indeed, at one time, the whole place seemed to feel the influence. Some of the vilest sinners were rescued from the grasp of the enemy of souls, scoffers were silenced, and many who had previously been hostile to our cause became our friends, and candidly acknowledged that it was indeed the work of God. Meetings were held every night, the streets processioned, and very soon the small humble place of worship became excessively crowded, as to induce the members and friends to say with the poet. 'Give us room that we may dwell'.³

The special services and public meetings associated with fund raising for missionary work also provided the basis for a revival in the Donington circuit in the winter of 1857-58. It was reported that the members of the circuit were 'praying that the Lord would pour out his spirit abundantly upon us.'⁴ In the new year the revival which had been prayed for broke out:

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1. P.M.Mag. X, third series, December 1852, pp.739-740.
 2. Ibid. XIV, third series, May 1856, p.308.
 3. Ibid. XVI, third series, June 1858, pp.364-365.
 4. Ibid. February 1858, pp.107-108 and 112.

We are happy to inform you that the converting work has broken out in some places; at one, we have had seven members added within the last few week (sic); and on Sunday, January 31st, at Donnington (sic), two souls professed to find peace. We are now holding protracted services, and are looking and believing for the salvation of souls.¹

The contrast between the institutionalised revivalism of the second part of the nineteenth century and the earlier phase of Primitive Methodism is also apparent in the reports of camp meetings. In the 1820s and 1830s they were symbols of the connexion's commitment to vigorous open air evangelism among people who were not necessarily touched by the conventional ministrations of the other churches. The report of a camp meeting at Scamblesby, Lindsey, makes this clear.² Crowds of people were said to have flocked to a camp meeting held at Boston in 1829 'so as to make the vicinity resemble a fair or some other festival.' It was reported that 'the language used by the preachers was certainly energetic if not very select, and was plentifully larded with denunciations of eternal perdition', while some of the 'enthusiastic devotees ... by their vociferations and extraordinary gestures, appeared to be in convulsions.'³ By the second half of the century these had become much more decorous occasions and in many places a regular annual event.⁴ They were attended by many people already sympathetic to Primitive Methodism who came for uplift and to re-affirm their established religious position as well as to demonstrate the connexion's

1. P.M.Mag. XVI, third series, March 1858, p.177.

2. See above p.210.

3. L.R.S.M., 25th September 1829.

4. S.G., 12th June 1875.

strength and unity. When Donington circuit celebrated the jubilee of the connexion in 1860, they did it by holding 'a very large camp meeting' at Little Hale, at which 'Several heart-stirring appeals were made by a number of travelling and local preachers ... to nearly two thousand people ...'¹

The reports of the Great Gonerby revival indicate that in this case, converts were made from outside the ranks of people usually associated, even marginally, with chapel activities. However, it was the fringe attenders as well as the second and third generation Primitive Methodists associated with the connexion by at least baptism, who provided a substantial body of potential members. They were near enough to the chapel and its activities to be touched by them. The more marginal events of the chapel calendar such as anniversary teas and meetings, together with the formalised camp meetings, were likely to attract these people so that they were open to the more institutionalised type of revivalism which had developed by the second half of the nineteenth century. When this outer penumbra of the connexion was weakened, although membership figures might not be affected initially, both the potential strength of Primitive Methodism, as well as its standing in the community, as measured by attendances at its public events, was impaired. The increasing ratios of members to attenders, which became evident in some circuits in the 1860s and 1870s, were symptomatic of this process.²

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1. S.G., 2nd June 1860.
 2. See above pp. 320-322.

VIII

THE PLACE OF PRIMITIVE METHODISM IN RURAL SOCIETY
IN THE SECOND HALF OF THE 19TH CENTURY

By 1875 the Primitive Methodist connexion had become an accepted part of the local community life of south Lincolnshire. Its institutions, buildings and the part it played in the social calendar placed it on a par with other nonconformist churches and such bodies as temperance and friendly societies. From 1872 until 1882 the agricultural trade union movement was also part of this spectrum of activity.¹

The development of common interests which included both outward organisational forms as well as many inner attitudes and basic assumptions was particularly noticeable among the nonconformist churches of the market towns of south Lincolnshire.² During the second half of the nineteenth century the Primitives began to associate with the nonconformist bodies in promoting the work of Sunday schools, in missionary efforts and in prayer meetings. As early as 1840, several of Lincoln's dissenting ministers addressed a Primitive Methodist missionary meeting at which a Wesleyan Methodist local preacher took the chair. The report of this emphasises the way in which this co-operation was

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1. Rex C. Russell, The 'Revolt of the Field' in Lincolnshire. The Origins and Early History of Farm-Workers' Trade Unions, [Louth, 1956], passim.
 2. K. S. Inglis, Churches and the Working Classes in Victorian England, second impression 1964, pp.330-331.

a function of the growing respectability of the Primitives, 'this once lowly and despised people' who seemed likely 'in a very short time to rise to a permanent position amongst Christian establishments.'¹

This was not an ecumenical movement, but the sharing of what was perceived as a common spirituality and outlook on life which at the same time accepted distinctive denominations as the basis for religious activity and social life. In 1860 the Boston Primitive Methodists united with the General Baptists, Methodist New Connexion, Wesleyan Methodists and Congregationalists in the town for devotional exercises, the object of which seems to have been the promotion of a revival.² At Holbeach in the same year the Primitives and Baptists held prayer meetings at each others' chapels alternately, while a mid-day prayer meeting held at Grantham Philosophical Institution conducted by the town's mayor and the Independent and Primitive Methodist ministers was said to have been patronised by 'a great number, principally females.'³ Similar prayer meetings were held at Bourne in 1875.⁴

The addresses which were given by the Wesleyan, Independent, Baptist and Primitive Methodist ministers in support of the Grantham Religious Reading Room in 1856, while on the one hand emphasising their desire to promote the unity of the various religious bodies involved, also drew attention to their diversity.

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1. L.R.S.M., 10th April 1840.
 2. Boston Guardian and Lincolnshire Advertiser (subsequently B.G.), 21st January 1860.
 3. B.G., 17th March 1869; G.J., 28th June 1860.
 4. G.J., 13th February 1875.

All 'the recognised organs of the different religious bodies' were to be found there.¹ A Spalding town mission in 1857, which was said to have originated in the desire of members of the several denominations to better the spiritual condition of their fellow men in the poorer classes resulted in an increase in the number of children attending day and Sunday school, together with larger congregations at most of the public places of worship.² After several revival services held at Boston Free Methodist chapel and the town's Exchange Hall, the converts made as a result of the united efforts by the different religious denominations were said to have 'united themselves with the various sects of Christians in the town.'³

Primitive Methodists might support the activities of other denominations in areas where their own efforts were weak, such as the provision of day schools, while other religious bodies also began to work in ways which hitherto had been characteristic of Primitive Methodism. In 1859 a Boston Primitive Methodist minister was reported as speaking at a meeting at Tattershall, Lindsey, in support of the General Baptist day school.⁴ In the summer of 1858, the Grantham Wesleyans were holding open air services in the street following their usual Sunday evening worship in their chapel and the Wesleyan Reformers were also reported as being involved in this type of activity.⁵ In

1. G.J., 23rd February 1856.

2. S.F.P., 19th May 1857.

3. B.G., 12th April 1862.

4. Ibid., 14th December 1859.

5. G.J. 26th June 1858.

Boston in 1873 similar services had become co-operative efforts involving the town's nonconformist ministers. It was hoped that 'the novelty of the proceedings' would attract 'many to listen who seldom enter a place of worship.'¹

Co-operation between nonconformists began to extend outside purely religious concerns, although at an official level Primitive Methodist rules sought to keep the connexion in a neutral political position and its preachers were not allowed to make speeches at parliamentary elections or political meetings. They were employed exclusively for the salvation of souls, and interference in politics was beyond their province. As far as individual members were concerned, it was felt that 'a Christian ought not to be a turbulent, factious or noisy politician.' With politics, as with money, it was not 'the moderate use, but the immoderate love of it which is the root of all evil.'² In any case, their proportionately greater strength among labourers and other groups outside the parliamentary electorate meant that Primitive Methodists were relatively unimportant in this area until the county franchise was extended in 1884.³

The surviving local minute books in the period up to 1875 show that south Lincolnshire Primitive Methodists seem to have

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1. B.G., 28th June 1873.
 2. Thomas Church, Sketches of Primitive Methodism, 1847, p.53.
 3. Olney, Lincolnshire Politics, p.64; C. K. Ensor, England 1870-1914, repr. Oxford 1960, p.88; John Vincent, The Formation of the British Liberal Party 1857-1868, Penguin edit., Harmondsworth, 1972, p.22; for the size of the south Lincolnshire electorate see Olney, Lincolnshire Politics, pp.255-257.

generally kept this neutral political position, at an official level, as was the case in south Lindsey in the same period, but there are indications that ministers and members of the connexion were beginning to be involved in matters which had political implications.¹ After 1876 Lincolnshire nonconformists became increasingly active in politics.² Matters of general concern such as temperance and relations with the Church of England provided the basis for co-operation between members of the various denominations. In Boston this united front was represented by the town's Nonconformist Association, although the reports of its activities do not give a precise indication of its membership. It had links with the national anti-religious establishment Liberation Society and the Society's campaign in 1860 against church rates.³ If the pattern in Boston followed that in the rest of the country the Wesleyan Methodists were likely to be less strongly represented on this particular issue than the other branches of Methodism.⁴ The town continued to be a base for anti-establishment agitation and in 1868 was represented at the triennial conference of the Liberation Society in London.⁵ A provisional committee of all the nonconformist ministers in Grantham was formed in 1873 to support the Association for the Promotion of Religious Equality,

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1. For south Lindsey see Obelkevich, Religion and Rural Society, p.245.
 2. Olney, Lincolnshire Politics, p.184.
 3. B.G., 10th March 1860; G. I. T. Machin, Politics and the Churches in Great Britain 1832 to 1868, Oxford, 1977, pp.306-307.
 4. Vincent, Formation of the British Liberal Party, p.106.
 5. B.G., 2nd March 1867; 2nd May 1868.

which in its turn supported Edward Miall's parliamentary campaign for English disestablishment.¹ In 1875 Bourne's nonconformist ministers appeared together on the platform at a meeting and lecture by a Mr. Hastings, the agent of the Liberation Society, although attendance was said to be limited.²

In the mid 1870s the issue of education, and especially the election of school boards, brought nonconformists together against the Church of England in some parts of south Lincolnshire. In 1873 the Boston nonconformists were pressing for compulsory school boards as a means of preventing money raised by rates being used for denominational religious education.³ At the Spalding school board elections in 1875, the nonconformists were successful in having all their candidates and only one churchman elected to the school board, a result which was greeted with great excitement in the town.⁴ Attempts were made to organise the labourers' vote in support of the dissenting interest at Bourne school board elections, although the board which was elected by the beginning of 1875 was split between two churchmen and three nonconformists.⁵

The temperance question provided another platform on which nonconformists could begin to unite. By the late 1830s the northern-based teetotal movement, which had greater support among dissenters, was growing in importance in relation to the moderate British and Foreign Temperance Society. The latter had

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1. G.J., 22nd March 1873; Norman, Church and Society, p.191.
 2. G.J., 6th March 1875.
 3. B.G., 21st June 1873.
 4. S.F.P., 9th November 1875.
 5. G.J., 12th December 1874; 19th December 1874; 2nd January 1875.

only 153 out of a total of 25,119 members or 0.1% of its membership in Lincolnshire in 1834 but the county later featured more prominently in the teetotal movement.¹ A meeting held at Lincoln Guildhall in September 1833 was probably held under the aegis of the British and Foreign Temperance Society. It attracted the support of both Anglican clerics and landed gentlemen and its moderate character was demonstrated by the fact that Mr. F. Kent, a surgeon, led a move to extend the society's list of prohibited drinks to include wine.² In contrast the teetotal strand of the temperance movement saw themselves as part of a general attack on ignorance, feudalism and rusticity.³ Enthusiasm for industrial progress, science, education and humanitarian movements was implicit in the reports of teetotal meetings in Lincoln in 1839 together with the political implications of this. The advance of teetotalism would mean that 'a vast portion of the mind which has hitherto lain dormant has been developed.' The resulting spirit of enquiry would mean that

Man will throw off the yoke of subserviency to the enemies of their species who, under the guise of conservators of the public weal, wheedle their humbler fellow-men to join them in the futile attempt to stem the tide that will inevitably sweep Toryism from the face of the earth. The daylight of truth is dawning, and Mr. Holt and his fellow-labourers are entitled to the hearty congratulations of every liberal politician for their ceaseless endeavours to dispel the mists that becloud the mind; for after all, it is not in the senate, but in the silent homes, in the very bosoms of men, that the great battle for educational, political, and religious reforms will be fought and won.⁴

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1. Brian Harrison, Drink and the Victorians: the temperance question in England 1815-72, 1971, pp.108-109.
 2. L.R.S.M., 13th September 1833.
 3. Harrison, Drink and the Victorians, p.98.
 4. L.R.S.M., 1st November 1839.

It was suggested in 1839 that there was a connection between teetotalism and Chartism in the town of Boston since the Chartist petition was said to be circulating in the Temperance Hotel 'thus converting a moral into a political institution.' Nineteen out of twenty teetotal leaders were said to be 'rampant Radicals', and among the people who had introduced the petition a man called Mumford was particularly active as a temperance advocate. Active teetotal leaders and speakers had signed the petition and one of them was taking it round the town.¹ Similarly, when a Lincoln teetotal anniversary was addressed by a Mr. Vincent, probably the Chartist Henry Vincent, it was said that,

Unfortunately this body are fast losing all respect, by engaging a lot of revolutionary mountebanks who spout the most disgusting falsehoods of their opponents; abuse and insult the Aristocracy, the Church and all our National Institutions, and in fact, substitute political phrenzy for the gin bottle.²

Primitive Methodism had officially supported the temperance movement from a relatively early date. The 1831 conference had discussed the matter at some length and the editor of the magazine had been instructed to devote a portion of it to the temperance question. At the 1832 conference a minute was passed approving temperance societies and recommending them to the attention of Primitive Methodists. Hugh Bourne claimed that membership increases were a sign of God's approval of the connexion's adoption of the movement, while he attributed large increases in membership which were reported from one

1. B.L.L.H., 26th March 1839; 16th April 1839.

2. Harrison, Drink and the Victorians, p.387; Boston, Stamford and Lincolnshire Herald, 10th April 1849.

district to the prevalence of total abstinence among its preachers.¹ In 1841 the connexion's General Committee issued a statement to the effect that it approved of teetotalism and recommended its prudent advocacy.² Until about the middle of the nineteenth century Primitive Methodists were, however, enthusiastic consumers of the temperance cause rather than leaders who shaped its development. In lists of ministerial abstainers published in temperance periodicals in 1837, 4% of the 285 names listed were Primitive Methodists, by 1848 they constituted the second largest group, with 19% of 566 names.³ A temperance meeting for ministers held in Manchester in 1848 was attended by 28 Primitive Methodists, a number which was only exceeded by the Congregationalists, who had 47, and the Baptists with 29.⁴

The formation of the Grantham teetotal temperance society at a meeting held in the town's Wesleyan chapel in February 1837 is an indication that the temperance movement enjoyed support from Wesleyan Methodists at a relatively early date.⁵ Similarly, when teetotal meetings were reported in Lincoln in October 1837 a society was meeting in one of the city's Wesleyan school rooms.⁶ This support continued at a local level, although it was not until the 1870s that Wesleyan Methodism

1. Kendall, Origin and History, vol.I, pp.471-472; William Antliff, The Life of Hugh Bourne, revised by Colin C. McKechnie, 1892, pp.231-232.

2. Kendall, Origin and History, vol.I, p.472.

3. Harrison, Drink and the Victorians, p.179.

4. Kendall, Origin and History, vol.I, p.476.

5. L.R.S.M., 3rd February 1837.

6. Ibid., 13th October 1837.

began to give official support to the temperance movement.¹ The Wesleyan Methodists seem, therefore, to have become quickly caught up at a local level in a common nonconformist campaign on the drink question. This does not appear to have been affected by the schisms which occurred over teetotalism in other parts of the country although the differences between official attitudes and those of local Wesleyan temperance enthusiasts was seen in Grantham as late as 1870 when a minister declined to give out a notice about a teetotal lecture.²

When a Manchester prohibitionist visited Grantham in 1857 to give three lectures on the Maine Law, he first visited the Primitive Methodist chapel, then the Wesleyan Reform chapel and the Exchange Hall.³ In March the same lecturer, who was described as an agent of the United Kingdom Alliance, spoke five times at the Wesleyan and Primitive chapels in Donington.⁴ At the Grantham Temperance Society annual festival in 1857 there were sermons in the Wesleyan chapel, a public meeting in the Exchange Hall, sermons under the auspices of the Baptists and four weeknight lectures in the town's Primitive Methodist chapel.⁵

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1. R. Waddy Moss, 'Wesleyan Methodism - The Last Fifty Years' in Townsend, Workman and Eayrs (ed.), New History of Methodism, vol.I, p.465; Frank Baker, A Charge to Keep: an introduction to the people called Methodists, repr.1954, pp.160-161.
 2. Owen Chadwick, The Victorian Church, part I, 1966, p.378; G.J., 16th April 1870.
 3. G.J., 3rd January 1857.
 4. B.G., 18th March 1857.
 5. G.J., 18th April 1857.

The links which the Primitives developed with other nonconformist bodies softened the distinctive tone which had hitherto characterised their activities. As early as the 1830s the temperance movement, according to H. B. Kendall, had begun the process of binding men together in a community of interest.¹

By 1886 it was possible to say that compared with the earlier phases of their development the Primitive Methodists had modified their tone and methods and had among their membership an appreciable proportion of well-educated and not a few middle class people, together with many able ministers. They were said to be 'developing culture' in all directions and found it necessary to do this if they were not to decline.²

This change was not just the product of increasing contact with other religious bodies but was the result of the way in which Primitive Methodism ceased to draw its real strength and inspiration from the countryside and became increasingly dependent on town-based developments. The financial and organisational implications of this have already been discussed.³ Just as the market towns at the head of the south Lincolnshire circuits became their main financial support, so also they set the tone for the development of the connexion's activities. This increase in the relative importance of the market towns

1. Kendall, Origin and History, vol.I, p.474.

2. 'The Origin of the Primitive Methodist Connexion', London Quarterly Review LXVII, vol.III, n.s., October 1886, p.39.

3. See above pp.341-344.

was common to all Methodist bodies in the 1870s and 1880s.¹ It was also part of a wider movement whereby the countryside was increasingly permeated by urban values and attitudes. Moreover, the towns of south Lincolnshire were themselves intermediaries for organisations based in the larger towns and cities, a process which was helped by improved communications. The railways put many Lincolnshire towns within relatively easy reach of the cities so that meetings, lectures and similar events could be arranged at which speakers and representatives of national organisations could be present. At another level, those families in the villages whose relatives had migrated to the towns were brought into contact with urban developments through family relationships.

The main financial support for the Liberation Society came from a few individuals.² As it built up a national system of agents and branches this urban based movement began to develop its links with towns like Boston and Bourne and through them with the villages which were linked by nonconformist organisations.³ By 1875 lectures in favour of church disestablishment were reported from villages such as Billingham.⁴ In July of the same year the Revd. J. H. Lummis of Boston gave an open-air address on behalf of the Liberation Society on the village green at Thurlby.⁵

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1. Alan Rogers, 'When City speaks for County: the emergence of the town as a focus for religious activity in the nineteenth century,' in Derek Baker (ed.), The Church in Town and Countryside: papers read at the seventeenth summer meeting and eighteenth winter meeting of the Ecclesiastical History Society, Oxford, 1979, pp.336, 339-341.
 2. Vincent, Formation of the British Liberal Party, p.105.
 3. Ibid., p.107, see also above pp.367-368.
 4. G.J., 27th February 1875; 13th March 1875; 20th March 1875.
 5. Ibid., 31st July 1875.

The towns of Lincolnshire provided the bases from which the temperance movement expanded into the countryside. By the late 1830s Boston, Lincoln, Sleaford and Spalding were caught up in the northern based teetotal movement, while Grantham had links with Nottingham. Mr. Biscombe, a reformed drunkard from Halifax and an agent of the British Association for the Promotion of Temperance, lectured at Lincoln's Mechanics' Institute in October 1837.¹ A Mr. F. Crosswell, who was described as 'The Manchester carpenter', and a reformed drunkard, lectured at Boston theatre in December 1837 when the teetotal pledge was offered.² The Spalding Total Abstinence Society seems to have been linked with the teetotal movement in Boston.³ Similarly, when Sleaford Teetotal Society celebrated its first anniversary in June 1838, speakers from Boston and Grantham were present.⁴ Some of the speakers at Grantham's Teetotal Society annual meeting in December 1839 were, it seems, based at Nottingham.⁵ A deputation from the city had been present when the society had been formed in February 1837.⁶

In 1837 the Lincoln Temperance Society was reported as arranging meetings in the villages of Heighington and Skellingthorpe.⁷ Members of the Sleaford Teetotal Society held a meeting at Wellingore Wesleyan chapel early in 1838

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1. L.R.S.M., 20th October 1837; Brian Harrison, Dictionary of British Temperance Biography, Sheffield, 1973, p.11.
 2. L.R.S.M., 29th December 1837.
 3. Ibid., 8th June 1838.
 4. Ibid., 22nd June 1838.
 5. Ibid., 25th January 1839.
 6. Ibid., 3rd February 1837.
 7. Ibid., 21st December 1837.

which was attended by 500 people from the neighbourhood.

Another meeting at Welbourn attracted between two and three hundred and it was proposed to establish societies in all the villages on the cliff, which would be linked in a union.¹

A district association of teetotal societies based on Boston was planned to spread teetotal values. Delegates from Horncastle, Lindsey; Sleaford; Alford, Lindsey; Spalding; Donington; Gosberton; Sutterton; Kirton and other places attended the meeting at which it was set up. It was agreed that the association would aim to supply these and other places in the neighbourhood with teetotal lecturers.²

The movement by town-based societies into the countryside continued in the 1840s and 1850s. Boston's Total Abstinence Society committee engaged a lecturer in the winter of 1840-1841, who would not only cover the town, but also adjacent villages.³ In 1846 the temperance societies at Lincoln, Boston and other towns, formed a union to engage a travelling agent, while in 1849, a mission based on Sleaford, was carried out in the villages of the area.⁴ The Sleaford mission aimed to establish a village union in order to secure monthly visits by a lecturer to the villages.⁵ In 1851, plans were made to form a Lincolnshire Association for the Promotion of Temperance. Delegates agreed to engage an agent

1. L.R.S.M., 23rd February 1838.

2. Ibid., 7th September 1838.

3. Ibid., 13th November 1840.

4. Ibid., 2nd October 1846; 8th June 1849.

5. Ibid., 8th June 1849.

for three months and all societies in the area were urged to unite with the association, which sought to spread temperance values more effectively in the county.¹ A temperance mission society which was formed at Boston in 1857 aimed to hold regular weekly meetings in various parts of the town and in several surrounding villages. They were to be organised on a plan 'similar to those in use amongst the Wesleyan circuits.'² These links were also strengthened by the spread of such national temperance movements as the Rechabites, the Band of Hope and the Sons of Temperance.³

This growth in the relative importance of towns in the life of the countryside could also be observed in other areas. In 1893 Mr. Edward Wilkinson, the Assistant Commissioner on Labour, commented on the importance of friendly societies in the life of the area.⁴ A large percentage of labourers belonged to societies, of which the Manchester Unity of the Independent Order of Odd Fellows and the Ancient Order of Foresters attracted the largest number of members, but as well as these, and others, such as the Hearts of Oak, there were said to be many local clubs.⁵ It is difficult to quantify the precise extent of purely locally-based self-help clubs, since they had little contact with official bodies and statistics on their extent and membership are difficult to assemble.

1. L.R.S.M., 19th February 1851.

2. B.G., 25th November 1857.

3. Harrison, Drink and the Victorians, pp.193-194.

4. P.P. 1893-94 XXXV (C.6894-VI) Royal Commission on Labour. The Agricultural Labourer, vol.I, part VI, p.111.

5. Ibid., pp.95-96, 111.

However, although they continued to be important in the life of the area, there was a significant growth of the urban-based affiliated societies at their expense.¹ Less than half, 87 out of 187 friendly societies, enrolled or certified in south Lincolnshire in 1857 were affiliated to national bodies.² By 1876, 163 of the 244 registered societies were affiliated.³ The affiliated societies had grown outwards from the towns to the villages. As the Manchester Unity of the Order of Odd Fellows grew in the Boston district, it was hoped that the 'portion of the commonwealth residing in rural districts' would be able to benefit 'as well as those who reside in market towns.'⁴

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Many writers have tended to point to a direct link between Primitive Methodism and the agricultural trade union movement. In his memoirs, Josiah Sage noted that the 'one striking feature' about the leaders of Joseph Arch's union was that most of them were Primitive Methodist local preachers.⁵ Writing of the

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1. P.H.J.H. Gosden, The Friendly Societies in England 1815-75, Manchester, 1961, pp.17-18.
 2. John Tidd Pratt, A List of the Friendly Societies in the County of Lincoln, whose Rules have been Enrolled and Certified under the Friendly Society Acts, 1857, passim.
 3. P.P. 1877 LXXVII (429-I) Report of the Chief Registrar of Friendly Societies, for 1876, part II, Appendix P, Friendly Societies, pp.286-294.
 4. L.R.S.M., 22nd September 1843.
 5. Josiah Sage, The Memoirs of Josiah Sage: concerning Joseph Arch and the pioneering days of trade unionism among the agricultural workers, 1953 edit., p.48.

beginnings of agricultural trade unions in Suffolk in 1873, Frederick Clifford noted that

Wherever in my district there was the most Dissent, there also were the most Unionists and the greatest tenacity. The propagandists were itinerant preachers, mostly labourers, who on Sundays travel from village to village, and in fine weather address the people on village greens or other open spaces, and in bad weather preach in the Primitive Methodist chapel, or some hired room.¹

This theme has been taken up by later writers. Joseph Ritson said of the miners' and agricultural trade unions in particular that, although it would be folly to attribute any improvement in their conditions to one cause

there is abundant evidence that one of the most potent of these factors has been the influence of Primitive Methodism ... Who trained and inspired with the instinct of freedom the early leaders of Trade Unionism? Who fostered in the dark days of serfdom a healthy self-reliance and a manly independence? Who intervened in the days when rural England was seething with disaffection, and, securing the moral regeneration of the people, averted a bloody revolution and turned men's minds into the path of constitutional reform? The Primitive Methodists were largely instrumental in accomplishing all² these things, as there is abundant evidence to show.

Similarly, R. F. Wearmouth commented that,

Although the Agricultural Trade Unions were ostensibly seeking a material benediction, the religious element was not absent. In motive power and organization, in idea and enthusiasm it was constantly expressed. The influence of Methodism can be seen in these respects. It also provided a discipline and a dynamic.³

It has been shown that of 254 men who were active in the Lincolnshire agricultural trade union movement as speakers,

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1. Frederick Clifford, The Agricultural Lock-out of 1874, with Notes upon Farming and Farm Labour in the Eastern Counties, 1875, p.9.
 2. Ritson, The Romance of Primitive Methodism, pp.276-277.
 3. Robert F. Wearmouth, Methodism and the Working-Class Movements of England 1800-1850, 1937, p.270.

chairmen, or officials in the period 1872-92, 134 were Methodists. These constituted 99% of those whose religious affiliations were known.¹ 94 of the 254 were from south Lincolnshire and 46 of them had identifiable religious affiliations. All of them, except one Baptist, were Methodists, with 22 Primitives, 10 Free Methodists and 13 Wesleyans.²

Individual trade unionists like George Edwards of Norfolk saw their conversion to Primitive Methodism as the starting point for their later union activities. When he was converted in 1869, Edwards said that he

at once embraced the simple faith of Christ as the Great Saviour of man, although in a rather different light to what I do now. But I continued to maintain my faith in Christ as the Eternal Son of God, and as the Great Leader and Saviour of men, and in the principles of righteousness advocated by Him as the³ true solution for all the evils affecting humanity.

Edwards learned to read and write in order to fulfil his obligations as a Primitive local preacher. His studies led him to take a broader view of social issues:

With my study of theology, I soon began to realize that the social conditions of the people were not as God intended they should be. The gross injustices meted out to my parents and the terrible sufferings I had undergone in my boyhood burnt themselves into my soul like hot iron.

Many a time did I⁴ vow I would do something to better the conditions of my class.

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1. Nigel Scotland, Methodism and the Revolt of the Field: a study of the Methodist contribution to agricultural trade unionism in East Anglia 1872-96, Gloucester, 1981, p.58.
 2. Ibid., pp.188-193, 195-198, 200-201.
 3. George Edwards, From Crow-Scaring to Westminster: an autobiography, 2nd edit., 1957, p.29.
 4. Ibid., p.36.

Union activists who came from among the Primitives, like Edwards, employed the rhetorical devices and figures of speech which they had either used or heard in village chapel pulpits. As well as using biblical language, union speakers commonly deployed arguments which they based on biblical sources.¹ When George Morris spoke on a Sunday in April 1874 from the steps of the fountain in Bourne market place his subject was the 'Crucifixion of our Lord'. He was said to have preached for about an hour, taken a collection on behalf of the locked-out agricultural labourers, and announced that he would address them on Monday on the labour question.² A report of a meeting at Holbeach St. John's in May 1875 referred to 'the Union prophets'.³ Joseph Chapman of Alford, Lindsey, a Primitive Methodist preacher and union officer wrote in a political pamphlet published in 1899 of

the time..not far distant when God will send restored apostles and prophets to his Church who will visit the aged poor and investigate how they live on three shillings a week, the annuity allowed from the parish, when rent, coals and lighting is paid out of it, and enter a strong protest against such cruelty and preach with much force the gospel of God, that it will kill or cure barren and fruitless professors ...

There is signs of the grand union that is coming when prince and peer and peasant shall combine and co-operate for the good of one and all. As many as are led by the spirit of God and they only. Some day it is going to be as big as the whole world, the world in union.⁴

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1. Scotland, Methodism and the Revolt of the Field, pp.89 and 147.
 2. G.J., 18th April 1874.
 3. Labourers' Union Chronicle (subsequently L.U.C.), 12th June 1875.
 4. Quoted in Russell, The 'Revolt of the Field', pp.137-138.

In some cases unions adopted the forms of meetings which were used by the nonconformist bodies. The Morton branch of the National Agricultural Labourers' Union combined a celebratory harvest home tea and a public meeting in October 1873.¹ At an evening meeting preceded by tea in Whaplode Free Methodist chapel, the Revd. W. Neal, an active emigration propagandist, spoke on 'Light across the water.' Mrs. Neal played the harmonium and a collection totalling 14s. 6d. was taken.² A union meeting was held in Gosberton Clough Primitive Methodist chapel in November 1875 when

about ninety took tea, after which a public meeting was held; a very good and orderly meeting was opened by singing and prayer, and at the close a collection was made for the funds of the chapel, which reached 17s. which the members₃ mentioned their intention of making up to a pound.

Despite these links between the Primitives and the agricultural trade union movement at a local level, the official attitude of the connexion towards the unions was unencouraging. In the address of the 1873 annual conference it was noted that trade and agricultural agitations during the past year had led to decreases in some circuits:

No Church in Great Britain is proportionately so largely connected with the working classes as ours; and we are consequently liable to suffer more extensively from this cause than any other denomination, and hence the necessity for increased vigilance over our parts. We would, Dear Brethren, with all Christian solicitude, respectfully urge on

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1. L.U.C., 11th October 1873.
 2. *Ibid.*, 9th January 1875; for Neal's work in connection with emigration see, for example, S.F.P., 20th October and 27th October 1874.
 3. English Labourer (subsequently E.L.), 27th November 1875.

your attention the importance of maintaining in relation to these agitations your Christian Character and deportment, and devotedness to the cause of God. While the gospel does not require us to renounce the rights of citizenship, it directly indicates that we must keep ourselves unspotted from the world. There is great danger in social intercourse with men of an unrenewed mind, even in matters which are right in themselves, of losing the simplicity that is in Christ.¹

There was a fear that union agitation would disturb the smooth running of local chapel affairs.² In 1873 it was reported that the Horncastle, Lindsey, circuit had suffered seriously through removals mainly caused by the trade union movement. Sixty-nine members had moved since the previous March and in some cases attempts had been made to starve out families. Samuel Barton, a local preacher for thirty years, had been dismissed for holding his own view and expressing his own opinions on the labour question.³ In an area which was said to be 'the centre of the Labourers' Union' it was increasingly difficult to run the connexion's affairs smoothly

its present movement is putting the social foundations here quite out of course. Families preparing to emigrate are saving up every penny to pay for outfit, &c., and can scarcely turn their attention to anything else. I find this militates against obtaining magazine orders. 'No use to take magazines; we expect to be off either to Canada or New Zealand', is the answer I get.⁴

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1. 'Minutes made at the Fifty-Fourth Annual Conference of the Primitive Methodist Connexion ... London ... 1873', p.88 in J. Ayrton (ed.), Minutary Records VIII, 1871-75, Horbury, 1882.
 2. For similar fears expressed at an earlier period see also above p.294.
 3. P.M.Mag. XI, n.s., March 1873, pp.183-184.
 4. Ibid. XII, n.s., February 1874, p.123.

In December 1875, the Donington circuit authorities passed a resolution advising office holders not to allow 'political or other agitating meetings' to be held in chapels. They were concerned to avoid 'questions likely to irritate our societies.'¹ In some cases this official policy prevailed. A meeting had been arranged in the Primitive Methodist chapel at King's Head (King's House), in Long Sutton parish, 'but some christian brother prevented us from having it, and this is how they are now driving the poor from church and chapel by treating them so harshly.'²

However, union meetings were held on Primitive Methodist chapel premises. The schoolroom at Whaplode Drove, was used twice for meetings in 1872, at which several working men spoke and 'good feeling and moderation characterised the proceedings.'³ Little London's schoolroom was lent for a union meeting in September 1875, while a meeting at Gosberton Clough chapel later in the same year has already been described.⁴

Nor were the Primitives the only nonconformist body to provide the unions with meeting places. As well as the meeting at Whaplode Free Methodist chapel in January 1875, at which the Revd. W. Neal spoke, the Wesleyan Reform chapel at Wellingore was the venue for a large meeting held during a lock-out at which William Banks, the Labour League leader, was the speaker. It began 'with praise and prayer'.⁵

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1. S.G.S., Methodist Archives, Primitive Methodist Church, Donington Circuit Quarterly Meeting Minute Book 1873-97, 6th December 1875.
 2. Labourer (subsequently L), 27th March 1875.
 3. S.F.P., 12th March and 2nd April 1872.
 4. E.L., 25th September 1875; 27th November 1875 and above p.382.
 5. L.U.C., 9th January 1875; see also above p.382; L, 17th April 1875.

The Free Methodists at Sutterton provided accommodation for a union meeting in November 1875.¹

The Labour League Examiner and the Labourer give details of the venues of 58 meetings, other than those in the open air, held in south Lincolnshire by the Lincolnshire Labourers' League for the period from Saturday 9th May 1874 to Saturday 25th December 1875. One of these was held in a building used as a chapel and temperance hall, one in a Reform and the other in a Wesleyan chapel. The surviving issues of the Labourers' Union Chronicle, from Saturday 7th June 1873 to 24th December 1873 and the English Labourer, from Saturday 26th June to Saturday 25th December 1875, show that out of 30 named meeting places used by Arch's union in south Lincolnshire, one was the Free Methodist chapel at Whaplode, one the Free Methodist chapel at Sutterton, one an unspecified Sutterton chapel, one Gosberton Clough Primitive Methodist chapel and one the Primitive Methodist schoolroom at Little London.

The affinities between the agricultural trade union movement and Primitive Methodism did not, however, constitute a collective political or economic philosophy which provided a coherent driving force behind the union.² The Primitives were one of a variety of organisations from which the labourer might find ideological or organisational inspiration. The ideals of the various forms of self-help society were taken up by some union branches. The potential common membership of the

1. E.L., 27th November 1875.

2. Hobsbawm, Primitive Rebels, p.139.

Washingborough Foresters and the union is illustrated by the report of low attendance at a union meeting in September 1874 because of lodge activities.¹ A similar clash at Ancaster, as well as a wet night, was said to have brought a low turnout to a union meeting there in November 1875.² The union branch at Morton became involved in co-operation and in 1875 the co-operative stores in the village were reported as prospering.³ The labourers at Weston Hills discussed the formation of a sick and benefit club as well as a union branch, while sick benefit societies and coal clubs were started in conjunction with union activities at Great Ponton and Pinchbeck West.⁴ At Thurlby the existing friendly society provided a focus for the organisation of the union branch. Following a meeting on the village green, several promises were made to join the union on club night.⁵ The tea and anniversary organised by the Billingborough branch of the Labourers' League in 1875 closely resembled the annual feasts of village friendly societies. A tea for over a hundred was held at the New Inn, with a band in attendance, followed by a public meeting in the evening.⁶ Anti-Anglican sentiment among agricultural unionists was in some cases linked to the aims of the Liberation society, providing a further strand in the eclectic ideology of the union movement. After a meeting at Holbeach in December 1875, Liberation Society tracts were distributed among the audience.⁷

1. Labour League Examiner, 12th September 1874.

2. L., 6th November 1875.

3. L.U.C., 20th February 1875.

4. Ibid., 6th March 1875.

5. Ibid., 10th April 1875.

6. B.G., 13th November 1875.

7. Ibid., 11th December 1875.

This eclecticism was also illustrated by the way in which the ideology of the temperance movement was rejected by some union members. At a meeting held in Spalding in 1872, to form a branch of the Agricultural Working Men's Association and Protection League, George Ball of Little London, a Primitive Methodist and later an official of Arch's union, argued that temperance had failed to provide an answer to the labourers' problems. He had been a total abstainer for thirty-two years, but still did not have enough money to meet his needs.¹ In March 1872 one of the speakers at a union demonstration on Gosberton village green mentioned temperance. This was received 'with ominous silence' and his speech was said to have poured 'cold water upon whatever ardour might yet be raging in the agricultural breast', although the labourers did agree to meet later to form an association for mutual help.² When Ball spoke at a meeting to form a branch of the Agricultural Working Men's Association at Holbeach, he again referred to his inability to maintain his family as well as he should, although he was a total abstainer.³ However, later in the year at a large open air meeting in North Street, Crowland, Ball urged his audience 'to cultivate a spirit of self-respect' which involved taking advantage 'of the privileges of the "School Act"', and shunning 'the public house as the chief source of moral and physical evil.'⁴

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1. S.F.P., 5th March 1872; Scotland, Methodism and the Revolt of the Field, p.188.
 2. S.F.P., 19th March 1872.
 3. Ibid., 26th March 1872.
 4. Ibid., 22nd June 1872.

The agricultural trade unions were, like country nonconformist chapels, village friendly societies and similar organisations, strengthened by their relationship with the towns of the area.¹ Individual leaders from outside the ranks of the agricultural labourers, and whose town-based occupations gave them a degree of independence not possessed by the labourer, played a significant role in union activities. The example provided by urban unions was also important in providing encouragement to the agricultural workforce. William Banks, the secretary and leader of the Lincolnshire Labourers' League, was a stationer in Boston and a republican in politics. He seems to have begun his working life as an agricultural labourer and recent work has shown that he was at some stage a Primitive Methodist member.² George W. Bailey of Spalding, the president of the Spalding district of the National Agricultural Labourers' Union, traded at various times as a brickmaker, cooper and mushroom ketchup maker, as well as farming 2½ acres. His religious interests seem to have been limited to an early association with the United Methodist Free Church.³

Despite the fact that their approach was tempered by a degree of deference, the organisation of trade unions among the engineering workers of the Lincolnshire towns provided an example to the agricultural worker as well as some practical

1. See above pp.373-378.

2. Dunbabin (ed.), Rural Discontent, p.74; Olney, Rural Society and County Government, p.86; Scotland, Methodism and the Revolt of the Field, p.195.

3. Scotland, Methodism and the Revolt of the Field, pp.188 and 192.

support. Less skilled workers in the towns were also beginning to organise themselves.¹ The movement for shorter hours, which reached Lincolnshire by 1871, spread from the foundry members to other trades in the market towns.² In February 1872, Thomas Vincent of Harlaxton pointed to

a feeling amongst the agricultural labourer (raised up and influenced by the success of the manufacturing and mechanical workpeople) to succeed like them, in obtaining an advance of wages, and a shortening of the daily hours of labour; and also in associating themselves together to compel their employers to accede to the terms they may dictate.³

An organisation known as the Grantham District United Labourers' Society was active in the villages of the area in the spring of 1872. Meetings were held at Woolsthorpe by Belvoir, Oasby, and Pickworth, together with Bottesford, Leicestershire. A tradesman from Welby addressed the Oasby meeting, while it was reported that the speakers at Bottesford were labourers from Hornsby's Grantham foundries.⁴ In a hostile letter to the Times, which was reprinted in the Grantham Journal, in April 1872, William Earle Welby of Denton Hall, argued that the village labourers had been 'stirred up by a systemic visitation of the villages in the district ... carried on by Trades' union delegates ...' It was, he wrote,

no spontaneous movement on the part of the labourer seeking to raise himself in the social scale, but a fictitious agitation, promoted and organized by strangers for their own purposes, and likely for this reason to be productive of anything but good in the long run to the poor fellows who are their tools.⁵

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1. See above p. 127.
 2. Olney, Rural Society and County Government, pp. 88-89.
 3. G.J., 2nd March 1872.
 4. Ibid., 23rd March 1872; 30th March 1872.
 5. Ibid., 13th April 1873.

Support for the agricultural trade union movement in Lincolnshire was patchy, both in terms of where it was most successful and which branch of the national movement found adherents in any particular place. In general terms it was in the large open villages, where labourers had developed an independent way of life, that the unions took root most easily, and here local issues such as the distribution of parish charities, or the question of providing allotments for labourers could provide an important stimulus. However, the success of Banks's Labour League or Arch's National Union in any particular place, also seemed to depend on ideology as well as local leadership. Banks's League was the heir of the nine hours movement, and most of the village unions which demanded shorter hours as well as higher wages, tended to join it. Analysis of union meeting places in the League and Union's papers, shows that a greater proportion of League meetings were held in public houses and club rooms than those of the Union, an indication that Banks's organisation might have appealed more to this side of village life than that of the Primitive Methodist, Joseph Arch.¹

The varied response to agricultural trade unionism also reflected the way the quality of the relationship between farmers and labourers differed from area to area and even from place to place in south Lincolnshire. It was not something which affected the unions alone. The trust deeds of Primitive Methodist chapels indicate that, where small farmers were an important element in the local economy, they played a

1. Olney, Rural Society and County Government, pp.89-90; see also above p.385.

significant role as leaders of local chapel life.¹ The small farmer was often closer to the labourer in terms of his economic position and general attitudes than he was to the large farmer or some of the master trades and craftsmen of the open villages and market towns of south Lincolnshire. He was therefore more likely to be sympathetic to the labourers' aspirations.² This may help to account for those situations in which the local leadership seems to have been sympathetic enough to allow chapels to be used for union meetings despite official rulings to the contrary.³

* * *

Primitive Methodism did not, however, as its response to agricultural trade unionism indicates, give its followers in south Lincolnshire a distinctive and identifiable collective ideology. By the 1870s the Primitives were one element in the pluralistic society which had developed in the relative social freedom of the open villages and market towns of south Lincolnshire. In these places there was a wide range of organisations with which an individual might identify. Affiliation to one did not necessarily exclude membership of another, although the ideals of some, such as the temperance movement, prohibited the participation of their fully committed members in other activities, such as the public house based friendly society. There were, however, significant groups of people, including the 'attenders' at chapel services, whose

1. See Appendix B.

2. See above p. 96.

3. See above pp. 382-385.

loose attachment to a variety of organisations enabled them to use elements of each to build up a satisfactory way of life for themselves.

As the Primitive Methodists ceased to be a group of charismatic revivalists they lost some of their distinctive qualities. In many of its characteristics this early period can be seen as the sectarian stage of the connexion's development, which lasted until the 1830s. Primitive Methodism was a voluntary association; full membership was through a conversion experience; its exclusiveness was emphasised by its disciplinary procedures; its converts aspired to a degree of personal perfection in their everyday lives through the patterns of behaviour which distinguished them from the unconverted; there was a high level of lay participation and a corresponding lack of emphasis on the importance of full time ministers; members had the opportunity to express their commitment in spontaneous worship and even if they were not hostile to the secular state, Primitive Methodists emphasised the importance of other-worldly considerations as a compensation for the shortcomings of the present.¹ A further sectarian characteristic was the relative poverty of early Primitive Methodist members.² The emphasis the Primitives placed on evangelism and personal conversion distinguished them as a conversionist sect and they were able to provide the rural workers of south Lincolnshire with a

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1. Bryan R. Wilson, 'An Analysis of Sect Development', American Sociological Review 24, no.1, February 1959, p.4.
 2. Earl D. C. Brewer, 'Sect and Church in Methodism', Social Forces 30, no.4, May 1952, p.402.

means of finding a sense of identity and a degree of emotional security in a period of social change. The way of life which the Primitives offered, based on hearth and home, had at its centre the experience of personal regeneration supported by the institutional life of the connexion. As the connexion developed, its institutional life became increasingly complex and it began to move away from its sectarian position.¹ The Primitives moved into the mainstream of community life and fresh horizons were opened up as the Ranter past was left behind and maintenance of the connexion's institutions became increasingly important. Steady and orderly denominational development as part of the pluralistic society which had developed in south Lincolnshire became the prevailing characteristic of the connexion's life.² The sectarian characteristics which had made Primitive Methodism particularly successful among the rural workers of south Lincolnshire were not suddenly jettisoned. Many of them continued to be accepted, if only at a superficial level, as part of the connexion's life and heritage, so that still, at the end of the period under discussion, the Primitive Methodist chapel continued to be seen as the place of worship which rural workers could feel was particularly their own.

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1. Bryan R. Wilson, 'An Analysis of Sect Development', loc. cit., pp.5-6, 8-10, 14; Earl D. C. Brewer, 'Sect and Church ...', loc. cit., pp.405-406; B. R. Wilson, 'An Analysis of Sect Development', in Bryan R. Wilson (ed.), Patterns of Sectarianism: organisation and ideology in social and religious movements, 1967, pp.31, 44; Robert Moore, Pit-Men, Preachers and Politics: the effects of Methodism in a Durham mining community, Cambridge, 1974, pp.114-119.
 2. D. A. Martin, 'The Denomination', British Journal of Sociology XIII, no.1, March 1962, p.13.

APPENDIX A

PRIMITIVE METHODIST MEMBERSHIP - NATIONAL AND SOUTH LINCOLNSHIRE BY BRANCH AND CIRCUIT

	1820	1821	1822	1823	1824	1825	1826	1827	1828	1829	1830
TOTAL NATIONAL MEMBERSHIP	7842	16394	25066	29472	33507	33562			31610	33720	35535
Lincoln			655	664	338			234	221	221	237
Boston								153	143	197	212
Fulbeck											
	1831	1832	1833	1834	1835	1836	1837	1838	1839	1840	
TOTAL NATIONAL MEMBERSHIP	37216	41301	48240	51837	56649	62306	65277	67666	70396	73990	
Lincoln	237	262	282	357	406	438	202	252	302	302	
Boston	215	205	215	250	300	350	360	261	270	295	
Fulbeck			168	177	220	280	310	280	284	302	
Donington								180	180	200	

APPENDIX A (contd.)

PRIMITIVE METHODIST MEMBERSHIP - NATIONAL AND SOUTH LINCOLNSHIRE BY BRANCH AND CIRCUIT

	1841	1842	1843	1844	1845	1846	1847	1848	1849	1850
TOTAL NATIONAL MEMBERSHIP	75967	79515	85565	88405	87585	87986	86795	89401	95557	104762
Lincoln	303	212	225	178	200	222	252	292	382	252
Boston	312	335	349	352	330	280	300	330	350	352
Fulbeck/Sleaford from 1843	312	357	325	295	204	208	208	216	203	221
Donington	250	280	280	236	250	256	256	256	267	286
Holbeach								116	120	123
Grantham										154

APPENDIX A (contd.)

PRIMITIVE METHODIST MEMBERSHIP - NATIONAL AND SOUTH LINCOLNSHIRE BY BRANCH AND CIRCUIT

	1851	1852	1853	1854	1855	1856	1857	1858	1859	1860
TOTAL NATIONAL MEMBERSHIP	108781	109984	108933	107813	105858	108577	110683	116216	123863	132114
Lincoln	312	603	703	640	660	690	700	706	710	625
Boston	352	352	357	367	381	391	421	352	366	380
Sleaford	209	200	180	176	142	156	180	192	204	210
Donington	281	254	254	380	277	304	307	311	311	311
Holbeach/Spalding and Holbeach from 1855	125	150	154	163	228	188	176	162	152	152
Grantham	159	150	150	134	154	174	184	153	163	155
Spalding	111	115	120							

APPENDIX A (contd.)

PRIMITIVE METHODIST MEMBERSHIP - NATIONAL AND SOUTH LINCOLNSHIRE BY BRANCH AND CIRCUIT

	1861	1862	1863	1864	1865	1866	1867	1868	1869	1870
TOTAL NATIONAL MEMBERSHIP	135392	141183	146581	148690	149300	151438	154950	159178	161229	162157
Lincoln/ Lincoln 1st from 1870	643	343	356	323	327	334	340	360	370	370
Boston	324	334	344	382	382	392	452	472	382	496
Sleaford	213	315	296	297	305	315	320	333	333	345
Donington	262	130	140	152	262	262	207	232	242	242
Spalding and Holbeach	157	159	159	156	163	162	164	207	222	242
Grantham	160	181	181	239	306	252	272	272	283	263
Newport, Lincoln/ Lincoln 2nd from 1870	262	321	331	344	310	315	307	260	240	266

APPENDIX A (contd.)

PRIMITIVE METHODIST MEMBERSHIP - NATIONAL AND SOUTH LINCOLNSHIRE BY BRANCH AND CIRCUIT

	1871	1872	1873	1874	1875
TOTAL NATIONAL MEMBERSHIP	161343	161464	160658	164660	169720
Lincoln/ Lincoln 1st from 1870	363	373	388	404	409
Boston	455	455	436	441	427
Sleaford	370	371	383	433	439
Donington	245	245	236	236	271
Spalding and Holbeach	245	266	298	297	298
Grantham	271	281	291	300	300
Lincoln 2nd.	309	330	308	308	310

Sources: Robert Smith (ed.), Minutary Records; being Rules, Regulations and Reports, made and published by the Primitive Methodist Connexion, vol. I, 1814-1830, Leeds, 1854; vol. II, 1831-1840, Leeds, 1852; vol. III, 1841-1850, Leeds, 1852; vol. IV, 1851-1855, Burnley, 1855; vol. V, 1856-1860, Leeds, 1863; vol. VI, 1861-1865, Bradford, 1866; vol. VII, 1866-1870, London, 1871; J. Ayrton (ed.), vol. VIII, 1871-1875, Horbury, 1882; supplemented by material from the Journal of Conference; the Primitive Methodist Magazine.

APPENDIX B - THE OCCUPATIONS OF TRUSTEES OF SOME SOUTH LINCOLNSHIRE
PRIMITIVE METHODIST CHAPELS

	Date and Place of Trust Deed																	
	1826 Fosdyke	1835 Moulton Seas End	1836 Little Hale	1840 Helpringham	1842 Little London	1842 Pinchbeck West	1843 Ancaster	1848 Helpringham	1853 Weston Hills	1854 Moulton Seas End	1854 Bicker	1866 Little London	1870 Spalding	1871 Hubberts Bridge	1873 Pinchbeck West	1874 Fosdyke	1875 Little Hale	TOTAL
Farmers including Yeomen and Cottagers	4	6			6	5	1	1	8	3	1		1	1	6	3	2	48
Labourers including Horsemen & Shepherds		4	4	4			5	3	2	1	7	6			1		4	41
Carpenters, Joiners, Cabinet Makers				1			1				1			3		2		8
Groundkeepers including Farm Foremen and Bailiffs			1								1		1		3	2		8
Millers, Bakers, Millers and Bakers			1	1				1					2				1	6
Primitive Methodist Ministers	1					1						1	1			1		5
Boot and Shoemakers											1			1			2	4
Wheelwrights				1	1			1									1	4
Blacksmiths						1	1								1			3
Builders					1						1							2
Coal Salesmen														2				2
Harness Makers				1				1										2
Jobbers				1				1										2
Painters														1		1		2
Tailors/Outfitters						1								1				2
Accountant														1				1
Auctioneer													1					1
Butcher													1					1
Brazier					1													1
Carrier											1							1
Engineer									1									1
Gardener													1					1
Grocer		1																1
Machine Owner														1				1
Merchant																1		1
Millwright													1					1
Shipwright													1					1
Surveyor																1		1
Tinman														1				1
Woodman																1		1
TOTAL	5	11	6	9	9	8	8	8	11	4	13	7	10	12	11	12	10	154

Sources: For details see p.322 footnote 2

APPENDIX C

THE OCCUPATIONS OF PARENTS IN SOUTH LINCOLNSHIRE PRIMITIVE METHODIST BAPTISMAL REGISTERS WITH
PERCENTAGE OF EACH OCCUPATIONAL GROUP IN EACH REGISTER

	1823-37 Lincoln	1823-37 Boston	1836-74 Spalding	1842-74 Lincoln	1844-74 Boston	1850-74 Sleaford	TOTAL	1842-74 Lincoln excluding city of Lincoln
Farmers incl. cottagers	3	6	64	6	44	18	141	5
% Farmers	9.4	8.0	9.7	0.9	12.4	7.6	7.1	3.9
Labourers	15	48	398	196	133	111	901	88
% Labourers	46.9	64.0	60.6	30.8	37.5	46.8	45.2	68.7
Craftsmen	6	12	53	264	75	42	452	11
% Craftsmen	18.7	16.0	8.1	41.5	21.1	17.7	22.7	8.6
Tradesmen	-	2	34	60	30	26	152	9
% Tradesmen		2.7	5.2	9.4	8.4	11.0	7.6	7.0
Others	5	4	61	82	61	29	242	9
% Others	15.6	5.3	9.3	12.9	17.2	12.2	12.1	7.0
No Occupation	3	3	47	28	12	11	104	6
% No Occupation	9.4	4.0	7.2	4.4	3.4	4.6	5.2	4.7
TOTAL	32	75	657	636	355	237	1992	128

Sources: For details see p. 322 footnote 2.

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NOTES

The dates shown on the manuscript sources relate to the period for which the collection was consulted for this thesis. This also applies to the dates given with newspapers and periodicals. Details of changes of titles of newspapers are given in the bibliography but are not referred to in the text.

Parliamentary Papers used have been listed in date order with a preliminary note indicating their main contents and use for this study.

The place of publication of all books is London, except where otherwise stated. Where there is more than one place of publication but including London, details of other places are not given. Wherever possible the date of the first edition of a publication is given as well as the date and place, if not London, of the edition which has been used. However, where there has been a substantial revision of the original text, such as William Antliffe's Life of Hugh Bourne revised by Colin C. McKechnie in 1892, the date of the original edition is not given.

Where chapters from books by a number of contributors or collections of essays or articles have been cited the bibliography gives details of the publication in which the chapters, essays or articles appear while full details of the relevant piece of work are given in the footnotes.

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* These theses have been published subsequently. For details see under the authors in section C5(a) of this bibliography.

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3rd May 1854 - 25th December 1875.

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7th February 1832 - 26th September 1843.

Boston, Stamford and Lincolnshire Herald,
3rd October 1843 - 20th December 1853.

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6th October 1809 - 23rd December 1834.

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6. 1836 VIII part I (79) First Report from the Select Committee appointed to Inquire into the State of Agriculture.
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CLOSED VILLAGES

- Village in category I
- Village in category II

OPEN VILLAGES

- Village in category III
- Village in category IV

NOTTINGHAMSHIRE

LEICESTERSHIRE

RUTLAND

NORTHANTS

STAMFORD

HUNTINGDON

HOLLAND

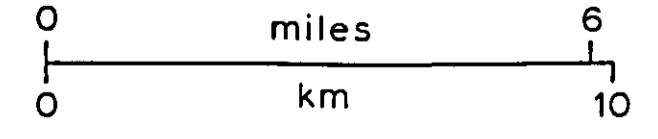
SPALDING

BOSTON

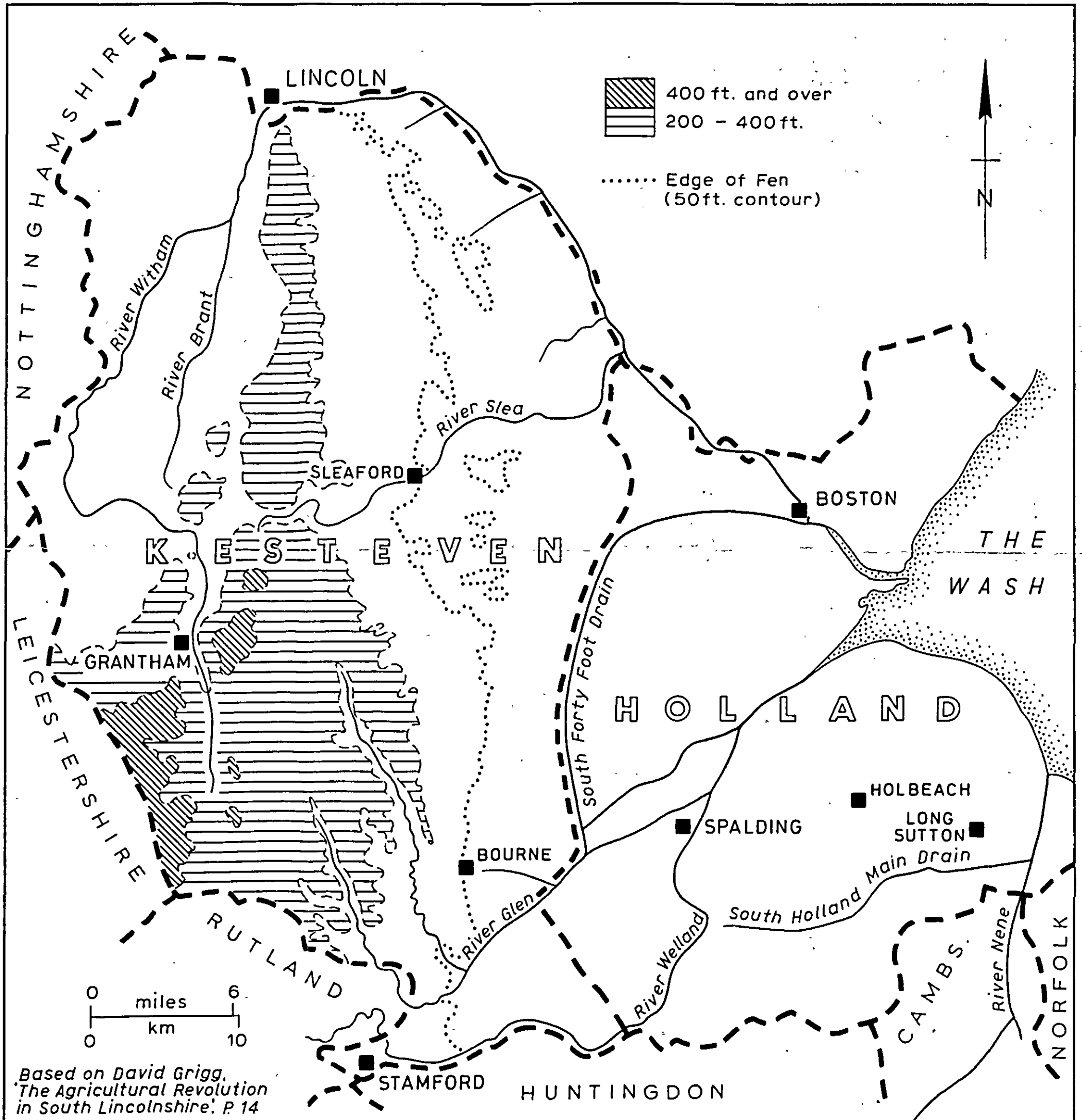
THE WASH

CAMBRIDGESHIRE

NORFOLK



3. South Lincolnshire - Main Topographical Features



Based on David Grigg,
 'The Agricultural Revolution
 in South Lincolnshire', p. 14