EVANGELICALISM AND THE SOCIALIST REVIVAL:
A STUDY OF RELIGION, COMMUNITY AND CULTURE
IN NINETEENTH CENTURY AIRDRIE

Volume II

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AS SURE AS STEEPLES POINT TO HEAVEN: A CHRONICLE
OF THE CHURCHES IN AIRDRIE, 1820-c1875

Bricks and Mortar

"This is the stone which was set at naught of you
builders, which is become the head of the corner."
(Acts 3:11)

In the predominantly Presbyterian Evangelical religious
culture of nineteenth century Scotland, the business of
church-going lay at the heart of the "religion... and
what?" questions that Stephen Yeo argues should form the
basis of any reasonable study of religion in nineteenth
century Britain.¹

For the Presbyterian denominations with their strong
emphasis on Calvinist ecclesiology and the minutiae of
church government, church-going and the arguments about it
were fundamental to an understanding of religion and of
society. Discussion of religion was nearly always
discussion of religion in society² because there was never
a clear-cut distinction between "the Church" and "society".
Views of society, and attitudes and responses to it, were
inextricably bound-up with views of the Church - this is why the Voluntary Controversy and the Ten Years’ Conflict were so important in Scottish local and national life (see next chapter).

From the 1820s through to the later nineteenth century, the ecclesiastical state of Airdrie underwent a series of dramatic changes not the least of which was an expansion in the number of churches, especially in the decade or so after 1830. It cemented the new sense of community at Airdrie and marked a further diminution of the older New Monkland identity.

Of course, the rise in the number of churches in Airdrie was in some respects a function of the wider demographic and socio-economic changes in the burgh. In particular, increase in the number of churches was related to the sharp increase in the town’s population. But there was no inevitability about the rise in the number of churches. In Airdrie, as elsewhere in Scotland, churchmen certainly wanted to meet both claimed and potential increases in demand for more religion with an increased supply of churches. But the efforts of churchmen were not geared solely to supplying demand. There was also a generally held view that demand could be created by the simple device of providing more churches.
The story of the churches in Airdrie down to the later nineteenth century is a complicated one. (Chart 1) From 1820 Airdrie, under the impact of industrialisation and population expansion, produced a dense religious undergrowth. To beat a path through this tangle the easiest way to proceed is with a simplified chronicle of events as a preamble to further, deeper analysis, interpretation and comment on Airdrie's religious space and bases. In the decades after 1820 the Evangelical and dissenting character of the town's culture was not only confirmed but also reinforced. Between 1830 and 1843 in particular, when the burgh population all but doubled, eleven of the eighteen regularly constituted churches extant by the time of the burgh Centenary in 1921 were formed.

The Established Church to 1843

Between 1790 and 1830 the interests of the Church of Scotland in Airdrie were served by New Monkland parish kirk and, more directly, by the chapel of ease in East High Street. The decade after 1830, however, was a period of intensive activity in local Established Church circles so that by 1843 there were four churches of Scotland operating within Airdrie burgh boundaries.
In 1843, under the terms of the Chapel Act, the East High Street chapel of ease became the East Church quoad sacra and was disjoined from New Monkland parish. Locally the East Church designation for the old chapel never caught on and it was usually referred to as the Auld or simply Airdrie Chapel.

As was noted in Chapter Four, the Airdrie Chapel had received its constitution in 1798. Under the Chapel Act (1834) legislation, Hamilton Presbytery allocated a district for the Airdrie Chapel and supervised arrangements for the formation of a kirk session.

At the meeting of Presbytery in late July 1834 Joseph Finlayson’s name was added to the Roll.³ The next meeting of Presbytery was set for August 6 to be held in Finlayson’s newly named East Church for the purpose of assigning parish bounds and electing elders for the new quoad sacra parish kirk session. At this meeting the Presbytery, having walked the streets and territory in the vicinity of the Auld Chapel, and having inspected a plan of Airdrie burgh, unanimously agreed boundaries for a district containing 2,700 souls, to be designated the East parish of Airdrie.⁴ In recognition of his new status as Airdrie’s first full quoad sacra parish minister, Finlayson was chosen to be Moderator of Presbytery for the half-year following 29 November 1834.⁵
In short, under the ministry of Joseph Finlayson, son of a Glasgow schoolmaster and minister at Airdrie from 1802–1838, the Airdrie Chapel had worked within the jurisdiction of New Monkland kirk session until the Chapel Act of May 1834. The disjunction of the Chapel from New Monkland following the Chapel Act now freed Finlayson and the Chapel from any restraints that the New Monkland session had had power to impose. The "Auld" Chapel was now officially an Airdrie church.

Yet in many respects the Chapel Act, in so far as it was applied to the Airdrie Chapel, was no more than confirmation in ecclesiastical law of what had in reality been the case since the Airdrie Chapel had received its constitution back in 1798 and especially since Finlayson’s arrival in 1802. The only real change after May 1834 was that Finlayson could now take his place as a full member of Church courts. Allocation of a definite district for Finlayson was far less important than the Church authorities – wedded to the principle of a territorial ministry – may have wished to make it seem for the Chapel had always operated within New Monkland parish bounds but with specific regard for Airdrie. It drew its membership and support from across the whole Airdrie settlement and continued to do so even after having been assigned a more limited territory.
Two of Finlayson's assistants in the early 1830s were driving forces behind the extension of the Church of Scotland in Airdrie. The first was William Jackson born in 1805, the son of a Renfrewshire schoolmaster. Jackson took up his assistantship at the Airdrie Chapel in 1833 and almost immediately set about campaigning for a second chapel for the town. His exertions were supported by the rich and powerful Airdrie landowner-mineowner, George More Nisbettof Cairnhill. By the beginning of 1834 Jackson and his supporters were sufficiently well-organised and confident to be able to petition Hamilton Presbytery for fuller recognition for the new chapel scheme. The petition, signed by John Hamilton Mack (writer), Aitchison Mack (writer) and William Fleming (merchant) all heritors in Airdrie, was received by Presbytery on 29 April.

As the petition and its proposals show, the new chapel scheme was an example of a powerful, middle class pressure-group of exactly the kind envisaged by Thomas Chalmers as forming the vanguard in the church extension campaign in the towns and cities. Indeed, the Airdrie petition of April amounted to a declaration rather than a series of proposals. It was presented to Presbytery in the sure knowledge that for Presbytery to oppose or ignore the "requests" would result in its being portrayed as short-selling the Gospel. The petitioners "humbly" asked Presbytery to support their proposals for a new chapel. But they also urged haste in order that the new project
might be granted a constitution and a disjunction from New Monkland parish by the forthcoming diet of the General Assembly (May 1834). 12

Three considerations governed the petitioners' motives for requesting full status for the new chapel.

First, they argued, the original Airdrie Chapel had accommodation for only 650 whereas the population of the town had risen to nearly 7,000. 13 Second, from the limited accommodation provided by the existing chapel "great evils" 14 followed. The town's population "however well affected towards the Church" were under "the necessity of becoming dissenters". Moreover, the seat-rents of the existing chapel were "too high for the poor". 15 Third, large numbers of the poor who were either unwilling or unable to take up seats could not be attended to by the Airdrie Chapel minister alone. 16

As a solution a new church of 1,000 sittings was proposed, its chief aim being to serve "the poor, distressed and ignorant". 17

Subscriptions (amounting to £600) had already been raised, a piece of ground was on the point of being secured, building plans had been drawn-up and the work contracted out. 18 In addition, and in anticipation of the Assembly's
granting the constitution, a bond guaranteeing the stipend of future ministers had been prepared.\textsuperscript{19}

Presbytery approved the petition but asked for some clarification on constitutional matters.\textsuperscript{20} The petitioners' response consisted of a draft constitution\textsuperscript{21} similar to the regulations drawn-up for the first Airdrie chapel in 1798. Together with plans for dealing with debt on the new chapel, and the collection and disbursement of collections, the constitution was passed by Presbytery, recommended to the General Assembly and given full backing.\textsuperscript{22} On 4 July 1834 the foundation stone of the new chapel was laid.\textsuperscript{23} At a meeting of the subscribers in February 1835, William Jackson was chosen as candidate for the chapel.\textsuperscript{24} He was taken on trials by Presbytery, passed and finally ordained to the charge in May.\textsuperscript{25}

At this point, Hamilton Presbytery moved to finalise the implementation of the Chapel Act with respect to the first chapel of ease, and it was not until September 1835 that they returned to complete arrangements for the disjunction of the new chapel from New Monkland. Jackson was allocated a district "containing 3,000 souls,"\textsuperscript{26} a kirk session was formed, and the new chapel became the West Parish Church \textit{quoad sacra}. Jackson stayed as minister in this charge until 1843.
By the early 'forties the second Auld Chapel assistant who concerns us, Thomas Burns, had successfully supervised and helped in the negotiations for a third chapel of ease for Airdrie. Burns had gathered together a group of friends and supporters, and launched a mission station, housed in the Mason's Lodge, High Street, early in 1837. Twelve months later, the "High Mission" group was ready to petition Hamilton Presbytery asking for quoad sacra status for the new chapel. As with Jackson's West Chapel scheme Presbytery found itself dealing with a highly organised, determined and vocal Established Church pressure-group. And, as with the West Chapel, the High was led by men of the middle and lower-middle class and by skilled artisans, most notably by John Davidson (coalmaster), Robert Miller (shoemaker) and James Wilson (iron-contractor). These three were responsible for negotiating the purchase of a piece of ground for a new High Chapel building in December 1837. This and other arrangements were set out in a petition presented to Presbytery in February, 1838. Presbytery and then General Assembly approved the plans and later, in June, also gave their assent to a draft constitution written by Burns, Davidson and other leading lights of the High Mission. The new building, costing £2,000, was opened in early August 1839 and Burns was ordained to the charge later in that month. In November, Burns was allocated bounds for his High quoad sacra parish and a kirk session was formed.
1839 seemed to be an auspicious year for the Established Church in Airdrie. In September, James Findlay, minister of the Broomknoll seceders, led his congregation back into the Establishment. Findlay, born in 1809, the son of a Kirkintilloch brewer, had been inducted as Broomknoll's second minister, and successor to Robert Torrance, in August 1835. The Presbytery committee that had been appointed to oversee the allocation of bounds for the High Chapel also supervised the assignation of a proper parish to Findlay and Broomknoll. Bounds were duly allocated and Broomknoll became the church for Airdrie South parish quoad sacra. In January 1840 Broomknoll received approval of a constitution bringing it into line with the three other quoad sacra churches.

By the close of the 1830s the bridgehead which the Established Church had secured in Airdrie with the opening of the first chapel in 1790 appeared to have been a strong one from which to launch the West and High Chapel ventures. The erection of the three chapels of ease into quoad sacra parishes, freeing the ministers from the jurisdiction of New Monkland and enabling them to take their place in the courts of the Church, was a notable success for the Evangelical Party's policy of church extension. Moreover, the new quoad sacra churches reinforced the separateness of Airdrie as distinct from New Monkland while the recovery of Broomknoll seemed to confirm Church of Scotland success in the burgh. However, with the onset of the Disruption in
1843 the Established Church in Airdrie suffered a setback from which it never fully recovered.

The Established Church, the Disruption and After

Following the Disruption, of the congregations of the Church of Scotland we have been considering, only New Monkland Kirk and the Auld Chapel remained fully committed to the Establishment.

The West Church divided, William Jackson leading the majority of his kirk session and congregation out of the Established Church to form the Free West Church. Of the Airdrie quoad sacra ministers, Jackson was the most virulently non-intrusionist. He was a member of the Hamilton Presbytery Non-Intrusion Committee set-up in December 1839 and he was in no doubt as to which side he would be on in the event of a secession from the Establishment. During 1842 he had made careful preparations for a new church should the need for one arise. Consequently, when matters came to a head in 1843, Jackson had no hesitation in signing the Deed of Demission and Act of Separation. On leaving the Establishment Jackson and his supporters had to give up the West Church properties and for a time church services were accommodated in Broomknoll Church. A site for the new Free West Church was found in Buchanan Street, close to new town cross, and
in 1844 a building was completed.\textsuperscript{46} Jackson continued as minister of the Free West until his dramatic death in the pulpit on Sunday, 8 August 1869.\textsuperscript{47} He was succeeded by James Alexander George who held the charge until 1878.\textsuperscript{48}

Although the High Church was without a minister during the first half of 1843 there can be no doubt that the sympathies of the kirk session, managers and congregation lay with the non-intrusion cause. Thomas Burns had been granted permission by Presbytery to transfer to Lesmahagow in September 1842.\textsuperscript{49} The following January one Robert Stirrat, a licenciate of Irvine Presbytery and an ardent non-intrusionist, was admitted to Hamilton Presbytery as a preacher within its bounds.\textsuperscript{50} Robert Miller, at this time the High Kirk’s elder in Hamilton Presbytery, requested on behalf of the High session and congregation that Stirrat be added to the list of candidates for the vacant charge at the High.\textsuperscript{51} Presbytery granted this request and in February, High Church representatives notified Presbytery that the congregation favoured the election of Stirrat.\textsuperscript{52} Stirrat was duly given a call but at this stage in proceedings matters became confused and the chaos was not sorted out before the Disruption Assembly in May.\textsuperscript{53}

All except one of the High Church elders\textsuperscript{54} and the majority of the congregation separated from the Established Church\textsuperscript{55} and continued their pursuit of Stirrat who had also opted to leave the Establishment.\textsuperscript{56} Stirrat’s call was now laid
before the new Hamilton Free Church Presbytery and this
time proceeded smoothly. Stirrat was ordained and inducted
as first minister of the Free High Church in June 1843.\textsuperscript{57}
He transferred to Edinburgh in September 1845 and was
succeeded by Robert Lawson, minister from December 1845 for
the next fifty years.\textsuperscript{58}

Broomknoll Church also "went out" at the Disruption to
become Free Broomknoll led still by the protean James
Findlay.\textsuperscript{59} The deed conveying the Broomknoll building to
the Established Church as part of the union negotiations of
1839 was on the point of completion when the Disruption
took place. The transaction did not go ahead and the
Broomknoll congregation retained the building.\textsuperscript{60} Findlay
remained as minister of Free Broomknoll until 1844, when he
translated to Glasgow.\textsuperscript{61} He was succeeded by James McGowan
in 1846, who died in 1864.\textsuperscript{62} William Reid became the third
minister of Free Broomknoll in 1867 and stayed until his
retirement in 1914.\textsuperscript{63}

The effect of the Disruption on the Established Church's
operations in the burgh was disastrous (see Chapter Ten). New
Monkland Kirk, the Auld Chapel (East Church) and the
remnant West Church represented the Established Church's
interests in a burgh population of 12,500. Of these three
churches, the West was almost completely paralysed for the
exit of Jackson and the majority left those remaining loyal
to the Establishment with a large building and debt, and
without a minister. The West was vacant until the ordination of John Stewart in February 1845.54 Five years later, Stewart’s health broke down and he demitted, to be succeeded by Benjamin Cornwell Brown, born in 1826, the son of a dyer.65 Brown came to a church still hampered by debt and low in membership66 and was faced with the unenviable task of building almost from scratch. Nevertheless, during his twenty-one years of ministry at the West Church he succeeded in clearing the debts, raising membership and securing an endowment fund of £3,000. Brown died in October 1874.67

Although the Auld Chapel remained in the Established Church the general impact of the Disruption in the burgh had weakened its position. Joseph Finlayson had been succeeded on his death in October 1838 by Robert Stevenson. Stevenson transferred to Forfar in September 1843 and the charge was then taken up by William Freeland.68 There appears to have been a considerable division over the settlement of Freeland and he transferred to Dumfries in July 1845.69 Archibald Milligan, a minister of the Relief Church who had been admitted to the Church of Scotland in 1845, became the new minister of the Auld Chapel in February 1846.70 He soldiered on at Airdrie for the next five years by which time the chapel building and graveyard had become unsafe as a consequence of coal-workings underneath.71 It was decided that rather than relocating and rebuilding the chapel, the congregation should unite
with the West Church. Milligan resigned in July 1851 and went to Canada. The Auld Chapel building was demolished.\textsuperscript{72}

From 1851 to 1873, apart from the enlarged West parish congregation, given a new constitution and restyled Airdrie Parish Church \textit{quoad sacra} in 1867,\textsuperscript{73} there was no other Church of Scotland operating within the Airdrie burgh boundaries.

Furthermore, the events of 1843 ensured that New Monkland Kirk would never again represent or direct the interests of community at Airdrie. More than any other single event, political or economic, it was the Disruption that galvanised the sense of community which had been developing at Airdrie since the later eighteenth century.

The Churches Outside the Establishment

An essential characteristic of the religious situation in Airdrie during the 1830s and '40s was its fluidity. This was exemplified not only in the operations of the Established Church in the burgh but also in those of the churches outside the Establishment.

We have already noted that the Broomknoll Auld Licht seceders re-entered the Church of Scotland in 1839. Wellwynd also participated in union. In 1820, led by
William Nicol, Andrew Duncanson's successor and Wellwynd's second minister, the church joined the United Associate Synod. Nicol held the Wellwynd charge until his death in 1823 when he was succeeded by George Sommerville, minister from December 1824. Sommerville had a troubled ministry and resigned in February 1840 over a dispute with the congregation concerning his domestic arrangements. He left for America but later returned to Airdrie where in 1846 he built a small meeting-house, "the Little Sanctuary", at his own expense. For some years he preached outside of any denominational connection. Although Sommerville's application for re-admission to the United Associate Church was refused he must have enjoyed at least a small measure of support in Airdrie for he laboured on at the Little Sanctuary until 1860, when he retired to Ayrshire. He died in November 1861 and the Little Sanctuary became Airdrie Mission Hall, base for the Airdrie Town Mission begun in 1852.

Sommerville's place at Wellwynd had been taken by Matthew McGavin, who was inducted in March 1841. During his ministry a new building was put up costing £1,200, containing 750 sittings and completed in 1847. In the same year at national level negotiations were completed for the union of the United Associate Church with the Relief Church to form the United Presbyterian Church. At Airdrie, Wellwynd and a Relief Church in South Bridge Street (see below) moved into the new UP denomination together.
McGavin stayed at Wellwynd UP Church until February 1863 when he resigned because of ill-health and emigrated to Australia. Walter Roberts succeeded to the charge in October 1863 but transferred to Glasgow sixty years later. The next minister of Wellwynd was not appointed until September of 1871 but this man, John Paterson, was to hold office for the next forty-four years.

The re-entry of Broomknoll Church to the Establishment did not mean that Wellwynd was left alone to fight for the cause of dissent in Airdrie. On the contrary, an important feature of the religious situation in the burgh from 1830 was an increase in the number of dissenting churches ranging across the whole spectrum of nonconformity.

Of these new churches the first was set up by Andrew Ferrier, the minister of a United Associate congregation at Newarthill some six miles from Airdrie. A dispute had arisen in the Newarthill church over the management of secular affairs. The majority of the congregation were not being given access to the church’s accounts and although members had complained about this the kirk session was unwilling to rectify the situation. Ferrier sided with the complainants against the session. The dispute culminated in January 1833 with a petition to the Secession Presbytery of Glasgow, from seventy-five members and twenty-nine adherents, asking permission to disjoin from Newarthill and to form a new congregation at Airdrie. Presbytery was
reluctant to agree to the petitioners' request partly because Newarthill session resisted and partly because there was a concern that Airdrie's existing United Associate church, Wellwynd, would be disadvantaged. Ferrier and his supporters, however, were determined on a separation from Newarthill and in March 1833 Presbytery gave way.  

The first priority of the new United Associate congregation at Airdrie was to build a new church - there does not seem to have been any suggestion that they should simply join with their brethren in Wellwynd. Planning of a new church went ahead for a site in Airdrie's Graham Street with most of the funds coming from Ferrier's personal wealth. The final cost for site and erecting of the building, providing 672 sittings, was around £1,200. As Ferrier had contributed the bulk of the money, the property was rented by the congregation from him at £52 per annum.

A rapid rise in membership of the new Graham Street Church placed the minister and kirk session under great pressure, so much so that in October 1834 the session resolved in future to exercise greater caution when "admitting to sealing ordinances persons of whom they knew nothing." Indeed, by May 1837 there had been so many comings and goings in the church that rather than purging the communion rolls it was decided that foundation should begin anew. Two lists were now to be kept: one of reliable members and
another of attenders at public worship "whose consistency of behaviour and attendance required to be tested."89

As we shall see, with the arrival of Andrew Ferrier in 1833 Airdrie acquired one of its most outspoken and controversial ministers of the nineteenth century and his vigourous attacks on the Establishment principle were to provoke outrage among local Established churchmen.

By the summer of 1841 Ferrier had decided that his fortunes and his Voluntaryism would be better served in America. In August he left for New York.90

The church he left behind was clearly in some disarray and an attempt was made to secure the interests of the congregation by transferring to the Synod of Relief. In November of 1841, following a unanimous vote, the Graham Street Church petitioned the Glasgow Synod of Relief and was duly granted admission. A call was then issued to one Alexander Barr of Beith in late 1843. However, while this call was pending trouble erupted over the Graham Street property that had been built largely with Ferrier's money and was rented from him.91

Ferrier's trustees decided to put the church up for public auction. The congregation came forward with an offer of £700 which,92 they were given to understand, was accepted. However, a further dispute arose between the congregation
and the trustees over rights of access to the building.\textsuperscript{93} This was too much for the majority of the congregation. Negotiations were terminated and the majority withdrew from the Graham Street premises altogether, opting to build a new church for themselves. A minority thought that this alternative plan was too expensive. They left the now vagrant Relief congregation and dispersed to other seceding denominations.\textsuperscript{94} The Graham Street premises were closed and the Relief congregation set about erecting a new building in Airdrie's South Bridge Street on a site which placed it almost back to back with Wellwynd Church. The South Bridge Street Relief Church was completed in August 1846, at a cost of some £900, and provided 650 sittings.\textsuperscript{95}

By this date Alexander Barr, the son of an Ayrshire shoemaker,\textsuperscript{96} had accepted a call to the new church and he remained at South Bridge Street - Airdrie's first and only Relief church - for the next forty years. Under his leadership South Bridge Street became United Presbyterian in 1847.\textsuperscript{97}

Expansion in the operations of New Dissent in Airdrie was not limited to churches rallying under a Presbyterian banner. The Wesleyan Methodists had been active in the burgh since at least the early 'twenties,\textsuperscript{98} meeting, to begin with, in a small house in Wellwynd Street, and later in the house of one Matthew Gilmour of the High Street.\textsuperscript{99} Throughout the 1830s the Wesleyans in and around Airdrie
were under the direction of the superintendent minister of the Glasgow circuit. By the early 'forties this circuit had expanded to embrace Kirkintilloch, Campsie, Kilsyth, Wallacestone, Falkirk, Stirling, Doune, Paisley and Renton, and it was beginning to be unmanageable. Peter Duncan, chairman of the Edinburgh District (1841-44) then of the Edinburgh and Aberdeen District (1844-47),\textsuperscript{100} reported to Jabez Bunting in November 1844 that the Glasgow circuit was not only riven by "discontent and disaffection" but was also far too big.\textsuperscript{101} He recommended dividing the Glasgow circuit

"by separating the greater part of those country places from the city which lie between it and Edinburgh. There is in that district a field of usefulness which Scotland has never presented to us before. We have already 500 members there, and the division I contemplate would bring us two additional ministers... on the ground."\textsuperscript{102}

Duncan drew attention to financial weakness of the overburdened Glasgow circuit and argued that this and its size had resulted in a loss of connexional feeling. A division of the circuit, while it would have to be done "without any help from the Contingent Fund", would nevertheless "save Methodism in this part of the country".\textsuperscript{103} His suggestions were not acted on immediately and in July 1845 he wrote to Bunting again. Glasgow circuit, he argued, was still in difficulties and the area between that city and Edinburgh required urgent and special attention. At Airdrie, for example, "where we have a chapel and 139
members", Duncan suggested that a minister ought to be appointed or the chapel given up. At the 1845 Conference some of Duncan's concerns were at last met. Airdrie, Kilsyth, Kirkintilloch, Stirling, Doune and Wallacetone were separated from Glasgow circuit and formed into a new circuit with its superintendent minister based in Airdrie. The Airdrie Wesleyan Chapel, to which Duncan referred, had in fact been built between 1840 and 1842 in Bell Street, back-to-back with the West Church of Scotland.

At least in terms of the number of churches built in Airdrie between 1830 and 1850 the achievements of New Dissent were matched by those of Independency. In the mid-1830s a group of men and women from the Airdrie Secessionist churches who had been influenced by the Haldane Revival and others from John Calder's little Baptist church formed themselves into a new congregation in accordance with Congregationalist principles. For a time this new church was ministered to by students from the Glasgow Theological Academy. After a number of years moving between the Painters' Hall in Baillie's Lane and the Mason's Lodge in High Street, the Airdrie Congregationalists built for themselves more permanent premises in Broomknoll Street, almost directly opposite the older Broomknoll Secession Church. This, the Ebenezer Congregational Church, was opened in 1839, and Alexander Cuthbert was its first ordained minister. Cuthbert left
Ebenezer to become a United Presbyterian minister after only a short time and was succeeded by James Taylor, minister from 1840 to 1842.\textsuperscript{111}

Under Taylor's direction there was something of a revivalist atmosphere in Airdrie Congregationalism. Cottage meetings and street preaching were conducted with great enthusiasm, attracting people from well outside the burgh.\textsuperscript{112} However, any high hopes among dedicated Congregationalists for a glorious future for their denomination in Airdrie were dashed in 1842 when, through a mission held in the town by Rev Francis Johnstone of Cupar, "a considerable number of Congregationalists adopted Baptist views".\textsuperscript{113} Taylor attempted to check the movement and preached in defence of infant baptism.

"But instead of frustrating the movement it rather helped it, for more [people] were baptized; and in the end Mr Taylor himself became a Baptist."\textsuperscript{114}

He resigned the Ebenezer pastorate and took with him the larger part of the congregation to form, with members of the older Airdrie Baptist Church, a new Baptist congregation.\textsuperscript{115}

Taylor was succeeded at the now depleted Ebenezer by James Sime of Glasgow who presided over another schism in the church.\textsuperscript{116} This time the Ebenezer congregation was divided by the Morisonian movement of 1845. Another contingent of
members departed to form the Airdrie Evangelical Union led, initially, by Robert Morison of Bathgate, father of James Morison the "founder" of the EU denomination.\textsuperscript{117}

Sime transferred from Airdrie Ebenezer to Wick in 1846. There then followed a string of ministers and supplies until more stability and continuity was brought to Ebenezer with the appointment of Thomas Atkinson of the Lancashire Congregational College in 1863-4. The seventh pastor of Airdrie Ebenezer, Atkinson remained until 1874 leaving the church free from debt and self-supporting for the first time in its history.\textsuperscript{118}

Meanwhile, the new Baptist congregation, founded in 1842, built themselves a chapel at New Town Cross, opened in July 1843.\textsuperscript{119} Shortly thereafter James Taylor left to take up work in Glasgow. From then until 1869 there was a spate of ministers at the Graham Street Baptist Chapel. William Fulton, however, stemmed the flow beginning his ministry in 1869 and staying at Airdrie for the next twenty years.\textsuperscript{120} The Morisonians or Evangelical Union also acquired a site in Graham Street where from 1846 they too were ministered to by a series of pastors following one another in rapid succession until 1851 when Alexander Wilson took over for a period of eighteen years.\textsuperscript{121}

If the Morisonians represented one end of the Calvinist theological spectrum then the Reformed Presbyterians
represented the other. We last looked at the Airdrie North Bridge Street RPs during the ministry of John Carslaw who had taken up the charge in 1829. Carslaw died in 1846 after a highly successful ministry in the burgh.\textsuperscript{122} His successor, John Kay, arrived to take office in April 1850. Kay was a scholarly man who earned distinction in Classics and Moral Philosophy at St Andrews University and had been a Classics master before entering the RP ministry. He held the Airdrie charge until 1859, when he transferred to Castle-Douglas, and was succeeded by David Henderson of Chirnside, in June 1860.\textsuperscript{123}

During Henderson’s ministry the Airdrie RPs split over the franchise and Oath of Allegiance question, an issue that preoccupied the RP church throughout the late ‘fifties and early ‘sixties.\textsuperscript{124} In May 1863, the Synod, the supreme court of the RP church, enacted that

"while recommending the members of the Church to abstain from the use of the franchise and from taking the Oath of Allegiance, discipline to the effect of suspension and expulsion shall cease."\textsuperscript{125}

At Airdrie, Henderson and a substantial proportion of the North Bridge Street congregation refused the jurisdiction of the Synod and helped constitute a new minority Synod of "Old Light" RPs.\textsuperscript{126} As Old Lights, Henderson and his supporters claimed the North Bridge Street meeting-house and refused admission to those who had supported the RP Synod decision of 1863.\textsuperscript{127} Henderson stayed on at Airdrie
until forced to retire because of ill-health in June 1871. Peter Carmichael became the new minister. Inducted in September 1872 he ministered at Airdrie until transferring to London in March 1884.\textsuperscript{128} Those members from North Bridge Street who had been in favour of liberalising the approach to voting and taking of the Oath of Allegiance were now part of the majority or "Advanced" RP Synod. In June 1863, twenty male members representing the congregation petitioned Presbytery asking that the Airdrie Advanced RPs "deserted" condition be taken into consideration.\textsuperscript{129} No aid was immediately forthcoming for in 1864 the congregation requested that a student probationer be assigned to them and that help be given for the building of a new Church.\textsuperscript{130} At this time they were meeting in the Airdrie Music Hall\textsuperscript{131} - which was none other than Andrew Ferrier’s one-time Graham Street Church. However, it so happened that the owners of the Music Hall were willing to sell the property to the Advanced RPs. The new Graham Street RP Church cost £400 and was opened in April 1866.\textsuperscript{132} By this date the congregation was being led by James Paton, who had been appointed in June 1865. For the next few years Paton laboured for the Advanced RPs. But he was increasingly dissatisfied with his doctrinal position and eventually his "progressive" views, especially in the matter of praise, brought him into conflict with a hard core of members who demanded that he adhere more
closely to the RP Testimony. In 1873 Paton decided he had had enough. He made application for admission to the Church of Scotland without giving prior notice of his intentions to the requisite RP Presbytery. In March 1873, he resigned.

Two-thirds of Paton’s congregation supported his decision to leave the Advanced RPs and petitioned him to remain in Airdrie as their minister. Paton agreed and his supporters moved with him into the Established Church. This new Church of Scotland congregation sought to retain the Graham Street building. An offer was made to the remnant RPs proposing to relieve them from all responsibility for debts outstanding since the purchase of the property in 1865-6 if the remnant agreed to Graham Street bearing the Church of Scotland label. This offer was refused. Paton and his congregation then abandoned negotiations and separated, leaving the remnant RPs in possession of Graham Street.

A site for a new Church of Scotland was purchased a short distance behind and to the North of Graham Street Church, on Flowerhill.

The Graham Street remnant RPs continued without a minister, their needs being attended to by Free Church students. In 1876, in accordance with the decision of their Synod, the Graham Street RPs entered the Free Church camp. A new minister, David Berry was ordained to the now Graham Street Free Church in January 1877.
North Bridge Street [Old Light] RPs refused to participate in any union between the RPs [Advanced] and the Free Church. They had asserted their independence and Old Light principles back in 1863 and saw no reason why the union between the Advanced RPs and the Free Church should embrace them. Thus from 1876-7 the North Bridge Street Reformed Presbyterians were the only congregation of that denomination left in Airdrie. Quite legitimately, they could claim to be the lineal descendants and living remnant of the New Monkland Covenanters of the 1680s.

If the North Bridge Street RPs were indicative of continuity between Airdrie’s past and present then the appearance from the early 1830s of Roman Catholicism marked the burgh’s transition to New World town. As was noted earlier, industrialisation at Airdrie gave rise to a significant number of Irish people moving into the town. Many of these were Ulster Protestants but many were Roman Catholic. It was the presence of this latter group of Irish men and women which produced a resurgence of Catholicism in an area which, since the later seventeenth century, had been staunchly Protestant. In short, Roman Catholicism was a potent symbol of discontinuity in the transformation of Airdrie from pre-industrial to industrial town.
Local Roman Catholics were aware of their stranger status and adopted a number of strategies to foster a sense of belonging and legitimacy. Thus, for example, Airdrie’s first Roman Catholic chapel, St Margaret’s, built on the Flowerhill in 1839, was unassuming and unostentatious. Its plainness made it almost indistinguishable from the other churches in the town.

Nevertheless, the emergence of Roman Catholicism threw the dominant Protestant religious culture of Airdrie into relief and gave confrontational religion yet another dimension. In doing so, however, Catholicism not only strengthened its identity but also, and paradoxically, facilitated its own entry into community at Airdrie.

With the erection of Flowerhill Church of Scotland from 1873, on the opposite side of the road from St Margaret’s Chapel and immediately behind Graham Street Baptist Church, the story of the churches in Airdrie down to the late nineteenth century comes full-circle. Following their departure from Graham Street RP Church, Paton and his supporters set-about raising funds for a new building and an endowment. From January 1874, the initial steering committee was replaced by a Committee of Management. As in the Church of Scotland ventures begun in Airdrie between 1790 and 1840, this Committee had a majority of Airdrie men of either artisan, lower-middle class or middle class status. To begin with Flowerhill operated as a chapel
of ease but in autumn 1875 the Management Committee petitioned Hamilton Presbytery for full quoad sacra parish status. The final figure for the erection and endowment of the new church was £10,700, and it could accommodate 964 people.\textsuperscript{142} However, at the time of its completion and for many years to come Flowerhill was still one of only two Churches of Scotland actually within the burgh bounds.\textsuperscript{143} And ironically its origins lay in, and its character had been shaped by "Old Dissent".

Religion and Space in Airdrie 1820s - 1870s

The story of the churches in Airdrie after 1820 indicates not only the fluidity but also the vitality of religion in the burgh. Regardless of who or how many did or did not go to church, the expansion in the number of denominations alone suggests that industrialisation did not hamper religious enthusiasm or interest. On the contrary, industrialisation created an environment in which religion could grow and flourish.

It would be wrong to deny that the increase in Church of Scotland chapels of ease or in dissenting churches in New Monkland parish was in some respects an expression of the fragmentation of older rural society. But it is equally true that the growth in and variety of denominations in the old parish after 1790 was a crucial factor in forging the
new sense of community at Airdrie as separate and distinct from New Monkland. Moreover, the number and variety of churches that were set up in Airdrie during the 1830s and '40s was never simply a function of demographic change or merely a reflection of changing socio-economic relations. Nor can the growth of churches in Airdrie be explained as a by-product of the rise of the middle class. Social class was not the determining factor in either the setting up of new churches or in their subsequent operations and it does not make sense to go to extreme lengths to anatomize the respective churches in terms of occupational distribution, especially when categories like "merchant" covered such huge differences in fortune and status within Airdrie.

Each and every congregation in Airdrie was a cultural community in its own right, and each congregation saw itself as an Airdrie church. Community, not class, governed the churches approach to Airdrie society. There can be no doubt that individually and together the churches provided a training ground and institutional structures whereby members of different social groups could challenge one another. But at the same time churchmen and women could all claim to belong to Airdrie and to Christianity. Indeed, the broader Christian cultural community which, by definition, included all the Airdrie churches, permitted them to be outward as well as inward looking. It did not preclude hostility between denominations or between churches of the same denomination but in any case, as we
shall see, conflict was an integral part of the attempt to localise the Gospel and to come to grips with what it meant to be a Christian. Parochialism was a common-sense attitude of mind which provided a framework and a language, rich in local references, which people could use to express their relationships with one another, with the world at large and with the universal questions of existence and death. And it was religion, just as much as politics or economics, which fostered and nourished people’s sense of locality and of community. There is no convincing evidence that the criteria by which Airdrie merchants, coalmasters, lawyers, shoemakers or weavers made up their minds to set up a new church were socially determined. Even where, as in the Church of Scotland chapels of ease, churches were dominated by a middle class management committee, kirk session and minister this did not mean that class determined belief and practice. Certainly the principle lying behind chapels of ease was to gain middle class support and then to encourage the working classes to join too. But this is far from saying that religious consciousness was a false consciousness produced by one’s social origins. Besides, the middle class advocates of church extension schemes genuinely thought that without new churches the working classes would be deprived of their birthright; that is denied access to God in Christ. The desire to exert social control did not necessarily outweigh this religious motivation.
The chronicle of the churches in Airdrie provides important pointers towards an understanding of the space that religion occupied in the changing and expanding town. In this respect, the number of church buildings and their location and geographical spread were of crucial significance. They symbolised the Church and Christianity, and served to mark out the physical town as a theatre of the religious battle for people’s salvation. Moreover, the churches were important components in Airdrie’s geography for they stood as landmarks of different neighbourhoods. They allowed people to orientate themselves in the town by giving the surrounding territory a highly visible focal point. Churches were at the heart of densely populated neighbourhoods, close to the people.

Furthermore, the number of churches rose at the same time as population increased and, along with industrialisation, transformed the burgh. For older Airdrie residents born before the turbulent decades 1830 to 1850 new churches signified change. But for a younger generation, and for incomers, the multitude of churches in Airdrie was an integral part of their town. For them churches were not outside agencies moving in but were local institutions governed and paid for by local, identifiable people. As in the 1790s, Airdrieonians in mid-nineteenth century grew up with churches as part of their physical and mental landscape.
At a more concrete level, churches formed an inescapable part of the Airdrieonians’ view of their town. All the local church buildings were located in or near the historic centres of the burgh. Each church was situated in an area of settlement, on or near a main street and beside shops and other facilities. No church was more than twenty minutes walk from any other. And, since each of the churches drew members from all parts of the burgh, people going to one church on Sundays were bound to pass friends, neighbours, enemies and strangers going to another. People walking through the town on the way to work or while out shopping, or surveying Airdrie outstretched from atop one of the many hills in the surrounding countryside simply could not fail to notice that church steeples, towers or roof-lines dominated the skyline. Churches occupied a lot of space. They were the most common and visible of public buildings in Airdrie and they stood out among the cottages and two-storeyed buildings which characterised the bulk of the burgh’s domestic architecture. Even the Town Chambers (1825) looked like a church.

As late as 1942, A G Williamson, writing of a journey through West-Central Scotland, recalled

"What interested me most about Coatbridge was the number of church spires pointing the way to Heaven; but in Airdrie the majority of them appeared to be short and blunt and not unlike Eastern mosques, as if the men who had built them had felt that the way to Heaven from Airdrie was too well known to need pointing out."144
Notes


3. RPH, 29 July 1834, p 51.

4. Ibid, 6 August 1834, pp 59-60.

The East Parish boundaries were set as follows:

running from the centre of North Bridge Street, the centre of South Bridge Street and the centre of Broomknoll Street, to include the East side of all these streets and the remainder of the Parliamentary Burgh to the East of these streets, and to the North and South, including the lands and streets, lanes and buildings in the said district.

RPH, 6 August 1834, p 60.

5. RPH, 25 November 1834, p 63.


7. Ibid, p 221.

8. Ibid, p 221.


10. RPH, 29 April 1834, p 42.

11. RPH, 29 April 1834, p 42.

12. RPH, 29 April 1834, p 44.

13. RPH, 29 April 1834, p 42.

14. RPH, 29 April 1834, p 43.

15. RPH, 29 April 1834, p 43.

RPH, 29 April 1834, p 43.
16. RPH, 29 April 1834, p 43.
17. RPH, 29 April 1834, pp 43-44.
18. RPH, 29 April 1834, p 44.
19. RPH, 29 April 1834, p 44.
20. RPH, 29 April 1834, p 44.
21. Ibid, 29 April 1834, p 44. For full details of the constitution and arrangements for clearing debt on the new building.
22. Ibid, 14 May 1834, p 47.
24. An account of this February meeting in:
   RPH, 31 March 1835, pp 76-77. The meeting was chaired by George More Nisbet with Aitchison Mack as clerk. Also in attendance were Rev James Begg, John Hamilton Mack, William Fleming and John King (another Airdrie merchant).
25. RPH, 28 April 1835.
   The district assigned to Jackson was as follows:
   The west side of South Bridge Street, West side of Broomknoll Street, South side of Aitchison Street including all the Burgh to the south and west of these streets.
27. Joseph Finlayson had a third assistant, John Robert Stevenson who was called to the East Church in March/April 1837 and was ordained as Assistant and Successor in June of that year. Stevenson’s appointment had occurred not only because Burns was tied-up with the High Mission scheme but also because Joseph Finlayson was in failing health.
   See: RPH, 12 April 1837, p 234-5.
   Ibid, 28 May 1837, p 284.
   Ibid, 2 June 1837, p 304.
28. For the early part of the High Mission story:
   The High Church, Airdrie, Centenary, 1938, pp 5-6.
29. The High Church, Airdrie, Centenary, 1838, pp 5-6.


32. The High Chapel constitution, approved by the General Assembly on May 28, 1838, was very similar to those granted to the West Chapel and to the East Chapel. For a full text of the High Constitution:

RPH, 12 June 1839, p 196.

33. The High Church, Airdrie, Centenary, 1938, pp 7-8.


Burns was "preached in" by James Begg who spoke on Mark 16 vs 19:

"So then after the Lord had spoken unto them, he was received up into Heaven, and sat on the right hand of God."

34. Boundaries for the High Church were set as follows:

Running from the boundary at Airdrie House Gate along the North side of Aitchison Street and High Street to the [Old Town’s] Cross; from the Cross along North Bridge Street including both sides of this street and all the road leading to New Monkland kirk, on both sides, to the Northern boundary of the Parliamentary Burgh, including all the houses and lands of Commonhead within the Burgh. Thereafter, along the Northern and Western boundary of the Parliamentary Burgh and to the bridge at Airdrie House Gate, including all the streets, lanes and lands within these said boundaries except the Mason’s Lodge of Airdrie. The east side of North Bridge Street and East of the road to New Monkland kirk were separated from the East Parish and annexed to the new High Parish. In addition, the north side of High Street and the North side of Aitchison Street were detached (quoad sacra) from New Monkland parish and annexed to the High.

RPH, 26 November 1839, p 226.

35. RPH, 24 September 1839, p 213.

36. FES, Volume 3, p 222.

37. FES, Volume 3, p 222.

38. RPH, 24 September 1839, p 215.
39. RPH, 26 November 1839, p 225.

40. The bounds for a parish for Broomknoll were set as follows:

From the bridge at Airdrie House Gate along the south side of Alexander Street and the south side of Stirling Street to the South Burn; along the South Burn eastward to the Biggar Road and thence by Biggar Road to the Edinburgh Road. Along the Edinburgh road to the Eastern boundary of the Parliamentary Burgh. Thereafter by the eastern and southern boundaries of the Burgh to the bridge at Airdrie House Gate including all the streets and lanes within the said boundary, excepting the houses that have their ordinary entrance from South Bridge Street. The whole of Graham Street and Hallcraig Street were separated from East Parish and attached to Broomknoll. In addition, the sought side of Alexander Street and the south side of Stirling street were separated from the West Parish and Kirk and attached to Broomknoll. The new parish was called the South Parish of Airdrie.

RPH, 26 November 1839, p 225.

RPH, 26 November 1839, p 227.

and for text of Broomknoll’s constitution:

RPH, 28 January 1840, p 238-239.


W Ewing, Annals of the Free Church of Scotland, 1843-1900, Volume II, T & T Clark, Edinburgh, 1914, p 76.

42. RPH, 31 December 1839, p 234.


Airdrie West 1834-1984, 150th Anniversary Booklet, p 3.

44. A Century of Christian Service

Airdrie West

see also: Act of Separation and Deed of Demission by Ministers (1843) reprinted in

425
The Subordinate Standards and Other Authoritative Documents of the Free Church of Scotland, Free Church of Scotland/William Blackwood, Edinburgh, 1973 Edn, p 270.


46. Ibid, pp 6-8.


48. W Ewing, Annals of the Free Church of Scotland, 1843-1900, p 76.


49. Burns’ transfer to Lesmahagow was not a smooth one. Some members of Hamilton Presbytery thought that he should not be allowed to leave the High Church in Airdrie during a time when the Non-Intrusion controversy threatened to split the Established Church. However, at a meeting of Presbytery in early September 1842, objections to Burns’ transfer were finally overridden and measures taken for the proper forwarding of his translation to Lesmahagow, where he remained until his death in November 1868.

The High Church, Airdrie: Centenary 1938, p 8.

FES, Volume 3, p 222.

RPH, 9 September 1842, p 407.

50. RPH, 19 January 1843, p 432.

51. RPH, 19 January 1843, pp 432-3.

52. RPH, 9 February 1843, p 434.

53. Confusion and delay over Stirrat’s appointment to the High Church was the result of a dispute in Presbytery concerning the legality of the Roll of Communicants which was laid on the table at Presbytery in March 1843. William Jackson, acting as interim-moderator at the High, had supervised the drawing up of the Roll. But instead of a Roll of Communicant male heads of families, the usual form of procedure, Jackson allowed the High Kirk session to present a roll of communicant male members of twenty-one years and up. This more democratic roll was almost certainly encouraged by Jackson. However, some members of Presbytery immediately objected to the High Church Roll of Communicant males as an improper document. A proposal was then put to refer the matter to the next ordinary
meeting of Presbytery. This suggestion was generally agreed but without a vote. Jackson dissented.

At the next ordinary meeting of Presbytery it was decided that the High Church must indeed draw up a Roll of Communicant male heads of families, and Jackson was instructed to see that this procedure was carried out. The Disruption then broke over the bows of the Established Church and Stirrat’s call to the High Church of Scotland was never completed.

RPH, 28 march, 1843, p 441.

RPH, 25 April 1843, p 44.

The High Church, Airdrie: Centenary, 1938, p 9.

54. The one elder who did not join his fellows in quitting the Established Church was Mr Thomas Tweedale. Tweedale explained in his letter of resignation that he was not vigorously opposed to the new Free High Church but rather that he had not made up his mind:

"To the Minister and Elders of the High Church Congregation, Airdrie.

Gentlemen,

Understanding that you have seceded from the Established Church of Scotland and being AS YET [sic] unprepared to approve of such a step, I have resolved to withdraw my name from the list of elders in your congregation and which I now do in the most respectful manner. Trusting that you will be eminently useful in the position you now occupy,

I remain,

Your Obedient Servant

(signed) Thomas Tweedale"

Kirk Session Minutes of the Free High Church, 11 July 1843 - 24 March 1879, Scottish Record Office.

- letter of resignation of 29 May 1843 handed in to the new Free High Church session and recorded in the Minutes of the meeting of 11 July 1843.

55. See especially:

Kirk Session Minutes of the Free High Church, 11 July 1843.
56. Stirrat also signed the Act of Separation and Deed of Demission with no hesitation.

See: Act of Separation and Deed of Demission (1843) in:

The Subordinate Standards and Other Authoritative Documents of the Free Church of Scotland, p 267.

57. The High Church, Airdrie: Centenary, 1938, p 9.


59. Findlay also signed the Act of Separation and Deed of Demission.

See: Act of Separation and Deed of Demission (1843) in:

The Subordinate Standards and Other Authoritative Documents of the Free Church of Scotland, p 267.

In June 1843, William Jackson and James Findlay were declared no longer ministers of the Church of Scotland.

RPH, 14 and 27 June 1843, p 451.

Robert Stirrat was declared no longer a minister of the Church of Scotland in July.

RPH, 11 July 1843, p 456.

60. W Ewing, op cit, p 76.

61. Ibid, p 76.

62. Ibid, p 76.

63. Ibid, p 76.

64. FES, Volume 3, p 221.

The Airdrie West, 1834-1984, p 3-4.

65. FES, Volume 3, p 221.

The Airdrie West, 1834-1984, p 4-9.


67. FES, Volume 3, p 221.

68. FES, Volume 3, pp 220-221.
   FES, Volume 3, p 221.
70. FES, Volume 3, p 221.
   MacArthur, *op cit*, p 278.
73. FES, Volume 3, p 220.
74. The United Associate Synod was formed as a result of the union of New Licht Burghers and the New Licht Anti-Burghers. Otherwise known as the United Secession Church.

76. It was said that Sommerville lifted
   "his servant or housekeeper... out of her place. there had also been a written promise of marriage which he [Sommerville] never fulfilled...."
   Small, *op cit*, p 125.
78. The Airdrie Town Mission was instituted in 1852 and was intended to build on the work of missionaries which a number of the churches had jointly maintained during the 1830s and ’40s (see Chapter Nine). In 1872 the Little Sanctuary in High Street was bought to provide the Mission with better premises.

93. *Ibid*, p 128. £300 was given as the figure for a downpayment, £200 of which was to be raised by subscription and £100 guaranteed by Presbytery.


*Centenary Souvenir of South Bridge Street Church of Scotland, 1833-1933*, pp 9-11.


also: MacArthur, *op cit*, p 306.
106. MacArthur, _op cit_, p 305.

*Methodist Church Airdrie, Centenary Souvenir 1841-1941*, pp 6-7.


110. _Ibid_, p 314.

111. _Ibid_, p 314.

112. _Ibid_, p 314.


George Yuille, _History of the Baptists in Scotland from Pre-Reformation Times_, Baptist Union, Glasgow, 1926, p 215.


Yuille, _op cit_, p 215.


And: MacArthur, _op cit_, p 304.


118. Escott, _op cit_, p 339.


120. _Ibid_, p 215.

121. MacArthur, _op cit_, p 304.

122. _Ibid_, p 302.


124. For the long-running controversy over the franchise and oath of allegiance see:

Matthew Hutchison, _The Reformed Presbyterian Church in Scotland: Its Origin and History_, 1680-1876, J & R

128. Ibid, p 304.
129. Couper, op cit, p 41.
130. Ibid, p 41.
131. Ibid, p 41.
132. Ibid, p 42.
133. Ibid, p 42.

MacArthur, op cit, pp 290-291.

134. Couper, op cit, p 42.
137. Couper, op cit, p 42.
138. Ibid, p 42.
141. The New Committee of Management consisted of:

James Blyth, Pitheadman
Andrew Paxton, Watchmaker
William Cullen, Proprietor
Thomas Carrick, Contractor
William Watson, Merchant
Robert Shanks, Baker

Book of Flowerhill, p 7.
143. The three chapels of ease, subsequently quoad sacra parish churches of Airdrie burgh, East, West and High,
were not the sum of new Established Church operations in the district during the 1830s.

To the east of Airdrie in the village of Clarkston the Church of Scotland began another chapel of ease scheme in the early 1830s. Clarkston chapel was erected into a quoad sacra parish church in April 1838 and a plain building was put up on lands belonging to Dr William Clark of the Wester Moffat estate. (Wester Moffat had reputedly been in the Clark family since the sixteenth century and the village of Clarkston took its name from them).

Dr William Clark was a key figure in the Clarkston chapel project. Although trained as a medical doctor, he had practised for only a few years before retiring to his Wester Moffat house and estate to manage the coal and iron fields on his lands, from which he amassed a substantial fortune.

Clark was an Evangelical and in the early part of the century sympathised with the plight of the Airdrie weavers. (It was this same Dr Clark who had become surety to secure to the release of William Miller during the 1819-20 "Radical War"). Clark spent much of his time and wealth on religious, charitable and business activities in and around Airdrie. He was a founder and first President of Airdrie Savings Bank and a President of the Airdrie Town Mission. In addition he was instrumental in setting up the Airdrie Gaslight Company (1830) and the Airdrie and Coatbridge Water Company (1846). He became a JP and Commissioner of Supply for Lanark County.

By 1843, Clark was a thorough going non-intrusionist and subsequently was one of the leading laymen in the Disruption. He donated £20,000 towards the building of the new Free Church College in Glasgow.

The close proximity of Clarkston to Airdrie and the long involvement of Dr Clark in Airdrie affairs might suggest that Clarkston Church should have been included in any survey of religion, culture and society in Airdrie.

However, until its incorporation into Airdrie burgh in boundary extensions in 1885, Clarkston was a distinctive community in its own right. Indeed, Clarkston resisted its inclusion in Airdrie burgh in 1885. To this day, Clarkston retains its own identity. Residents there, especially those who have lived in the area all their lives, talk about "going to Airdrie" to go shopping and so on.

MacArthur, op cit, p 292.

Clarkston Church Centenary Handbook, 1937.


Confrontational Religion

For the Presbyterian churches in Scotland the years between 1820 and 1850 were marked by urgency and conflict about non-churchgoing, church accommodation and the right relations between Church and State. In particular, arguments among rival churches about the relations between Church and State became increasingly heated precisely because of the growth in plurality of churches and the demands of dissenting denominations for equal recognition and status beside the Established Church.

Changing social and economic circumstances opened up new opportunities for religion while Evangelicalism generated a rejuvenation of Calvinism which in turn initiated much discussion about the nature of the nation’s Reformation inheritance.

The single most important aspect of Calvin’s thought which had shaped and governed popular religious consciousness,
and indeed Scottish culture, was his ecclesiology. At a popular level theology and history converged and were made accessible to people through disputation on the forms, functions and meanings of church government. Such disputations enabled people to articulate their faith and gave them access to theological complexity because church government related faith to living in the World.

The immediate context of the Royal Commission on Religious Instruction (1836) was the question whether or not the Church of Scotland needed and should therefore be granted extra State funds for the erection and endowment of new churches. This question had been brought to the forefront of Scottish ecclesiastical affairs because of the bitter conflict that broke out among the Scottish churches in the early 1830s, a conflict known as the Voluntary Controversy.¹

In the course of the 1830s the Voluntary Controversy acted as a spur to the efforts of the Church of Scotland Evangelicals working to strengthen and extend the influence of the Established Church in the burgeoning industrial towns and cities. It formed the backdrop to the campaigns in the Church of Scotland for the reform of patronage, the freeing of chapels of ease, and for more State funds.
Chalmers and his supporters were anxious to match the advances of the Voluntaries and to tackle the problem of the "lapsed masses" in the towns and cities. Here, especially among the middle class, the Voluntaries appeared to be successful because their more open structure was in tune with the aspirations of a rising bourgeoisie. In Chalmers' view it was essential to win the loyalty and support of the middle class for the Established Church. Middle class support would secure the political and social order against the more dangerous kinds of radicalism and scepticism from below. Moreover, middle class wealth and paternalism were necessary for the provision of more churches with cheaper sittings for the labouring classes and the poor. However, church extension and middle class recruitment would only be successful if the State provided further help.

A three pronged strategy was developed to meet the challenge of the Voluntaries, to win middle class support for the Established Church and to deal with the problem of non-churchgoing among the labouring classes and the poor. First, in order to open up the structure of the Church a reform of patronage was sought. This would allow congregations to choose their own minister and so get the kind of man who they thought best suited them. Patronage, however, was an extremely contentious issue for it was a property right recognised in civil law and one which the
landed interest within the Establishment were not likely to give up without a fight. Nevertheless, the Evangelicals had the tide of events in their favour because the Voluntary Controversy stimulated a widespread anti-patronage movement, within and outside the Established Church, expressed in a flood of petitions to Parliament from all parts of the country. At the General Assembly of May 1834 the Evangelical majority pushed through a Veto Act the essence of which was that no minister could be intruded upon any congregation contrary to the will of the people.² This Veto Act was a compromise between the new spirit of democracy and older, aristocratic paternalism. It was an attempt to circumvent the worst effects of patronage rather than to dispose of it altogether.

Second, and of equal importance, the 1834 Assembly passed the Chapel Act. The purpose of this Evangelical initiative was to open yet further the structure of the Church by freeing chapels of ease from the jurisdiction of the parish church to which they had been bound. They could now be erected into parishes quoad sacra in their own right with their ministers able to act as full members of church courts and entitled to a share of any State grants.

The third prong of the Evangelicals’ extension strategy was the campaign for increased State funding for the Church of Scotland. The General Assembly of 1834 recommended the collection of funds for the erection and endowment of new
churches that were without State help. On becoming convener of the Church Accommodation Committee in June 1834 Chalmers immediately set about implementing this policy of "internal voluntaryism" but at the same time pressed even harder for renewal of and increase in the Parliamentary grant to the Established Church. As S J Brown has pointed out, the Parliamentary grant was the key to Chalmers' Church extension campaigns. Internal Voluntaryism had to be matched by State assistance:

"Only a Parliamentary grant [argued Chalmers] providing an endowment for paying part of the minister's stipend, would allow the new quoad sacra parishes churches to set their seat-rents low enough to enable the lower social orders to attend church regularly as families. Without such an endowment, the labouring poor would continue to be excluded from the national Establishment."

Veto Act, Chapel Act and the drive for more State funds contributed to the furthering of Chalmers' vision of the Godly Commonwealth. And it was this social ideal which was at the centre of his arguments for more State money when in July 1835, as convener of a new and powerful Church Extension Committee, he led a deputation to London to put his case to Melbourne and the Whig government.

By this date, however, Melbourne and the Whigs had become ever more dependent on the support of dissenters and the dissenters were arguing against parliamentary grants for Established churches. In Scotland, the dissenters claimed that the Church of Scotland was no longer the national
church except in name. It could not fill the churches it had, let alone new ones. Taking all the churches together, the dissenters argued, there was plenty of room for all people who wanted to go to church and no need to favour the Established Church over any other denomination.

"In the face of contradictory Church and Voluntary claims... the situation had become... unclear in London. The government... announced that it would appoint a Royal Commission of Inquiry to investigate the extent of religious destitution in Scotland."

This was to be an impartial investigation and if it was found that there was a need for additional churches the Government gave undertakings that it would "perform its duty to ensure an efficient Establishment."

Chalmers at first welcomed the Commission of Inquiry for he was confident that his claims would be substantiated. However, when he later learned that the dissenters were to be represented on the Commission he was dismayed. He registered his complaints but on reflection decided that although he thought he had been duped by the Government, the Commissioners should be given full co-operation - he was not about to let Voluntaries and dissenters gain any propaganda value from the Inquiry. On the political front, Scottish Tories were angered by the Whig complexion of the Commission. The Tories believed that the Whigs could not and did not intend to alienate dissenters by awarding a grant to the Church of Scotland and
"that if the Commission recommended anything for the Church, it would be the expropriation of unclaimed teinds... thus obliging the landed interest to bear the full burden of endowing the new churches." 8

For their part, the Voluntaries were hardly more satisfied with the Government plan for a Commission of Inquiry because they believed it would not deal fairly with objections to the Parliamentary grant. 9 Each of the contending parties was suspicious of the Government's motives and design fearing that the Commission was a compromise that would let Melbourne off the hook by enabling him to avoid backing either the Voluntaries and dissenters or the Established Church. The Government itself acted in confusion and uncertainty, though by the close of 1835 it had become clear that the Whigs viewed the Commission as parliamentary mud in which the religious war would get bogged down and eventually grind to a halt. This proved to be a vain hope. By the time the Commissioners began their first visitations and investigations, in Edinburgh in January 1836, it was apparent that neither the Voluntaries nor the Established Church would accept the outcome of the Commission. Indeed, the confrontational atmosphere in which the Commissioners gathered their evidences meant that the stated terms of the Inquiry were often obscured or forgotten by everyone except the Commissioners.

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Specific episodes such as the Voluntary Controversy or the Disruption were distinctively Scottish responses in the search for meaningful religion. Moreover, as, for example, the deluge of petitions for and against patronage in the Church of Scotland suggests, controversy was part of the life-blood of Scottish popular religious consciousness.

Evangelicalism fostered the growth of local particularism. It breathed life into, and energised the developing communities of an industrialising nation. And just as among national church leaders Evangelicalism could be linked with social and political conservatism or with a more radical outlook, so too within any particular region or locality it could be attached to conservatism or to radicalism. Interdenominational rivalry and the factional-schismatic tendencies of, in particular, Presbyterianism were of crucial importance in taking Evangelicalism to a wide audience. Religious internecine warfare, especially at local level, was at the centre of popular religion. As with living theology in Asia today,\textsuperscript{10} nineteenth century Scottish confrontational religion arose in the dynamic interaction of gospel, church and culture. It grew out of and served national, regional and local Christian traditions, and retained the marks of specific cultural experiences. Popular religion was rooted in the
localities. Superficially, towns like Airdrie acquired the hallmarks of respectable society and civilisation but such apparent uniformity and conformity masked a continuing sense of separateness and distinctiveness. Local churches clearly saw themselves as part of national organisations but they nevertheless defended their local autonomy and identity. Defence of autonomy and identity was at work in Airdrie when, for example, Andrew Ferrier and his supporters determined to have their own United Associate church in the town in spite of the existence there already of the Wellwynd congregation.

National ecclesiastical matters such as the Voluntary Controversy, the anti-Patronage movement or the Royal Commission on Religious Instruction emerged in and impacted upon specific local communities, were filtered through the muslin of local sentiments and concerns, and were made intelligible by local experiences. The Voluntary Controversy and the closely related questions of patronage reform and endowments for the Established Church which form the context of the Royal Commission on Religious Instruction did not go quietly past Airdrie. In the years immediately before and after the Commission, down to the Disruption, Airdrie’s religio-political culture was filled with tension, debate and excitement over ecclesiological issues.
Differences of principle, rather than of practice, kept Airdrie dissenters and Established churchmen in opposing camps over the question of church government. The privileges of the Church of Scotland as a whole were frequently attacked. William Miller condemned patronage in his *Literary Album* venture of the late 'twenties. In the December 1828 issue he included an article entitled 'Patronage or the Lonely Church' in which popular feelings of "high contempt and detestation" against the intrusion of ministers on disapproving congregations were cited as a reason for "desertions" from the Established Church.\(^1\) While Airdrie correspondent of the *Glasgow Free Press* in the early 1830s, Miller never lost an opportunity to criticise the Church of Scotland and was unstinting in his support for the local radical MP William Gillon.

For his part, Gillon was a thoroughgoing dissenter and Voluntaryist. He condemned the "corruption" of the Established Church and called for the abolition of any link between Church and State. At an election meeting during the campaign of winter 1832-3 Gillon outlined his position on the "Church Question" in a speech attacking his Tory opponent, Charles A Murray, who was "decidedly opposed to the disjunction of Church and State and the abolition of establishments".\(^1\) Reporting Gillon's speech, the *Glasgow Free Press* noted that he considered all ecclesiastical reforms as illusory and insufficient which stopped short of a total abolition of establishments:
"He considered the latter as conducive neither to the Glory of God - to the interests of religion, or the State in general, or morality of ministers themselves."\(^{13}\)

Where, he asked, was the scriptural warrant for the institution of establishments and with whom lay the particular creed which was to be favoured? If the choice lay with the majority of people then in Ireland the established religion ought to have been Roman Catholicism. If with a nation's rulers

"then it followed that a king would be entitled, and bound by his conscience to establish the Mohametan religion if he himself was of that faith."\(^{14}\)

In reply to the argument that without establishment ministers would be inadequately provided for Gillon was prepared to admit that there was some truth here but only in the sense that a disestablished Church of Scotland

"would not be so prolific a milch cow for the relations and dependents of the aristocracy; nor would the clergy be enabled to spend their time in fox-hunting, in London or in some other place of fashionable resort while their flocks were neglected."\(^{15}\)

Men did their duty best, he continued, when they depended on their own exertions for support. The Church of Scotland was given government support more from party political than religious motives, and where the Church had the role of
assisting government then government could control it. To prevent such a situation from ever arising all churches should stand on their own intrinsic worth. In concluding his speech, Gillon acknowledged that "a hue and cry had been raised against all those who entertained these opinions" as if to be opposed to establishments was to be opposed to religion itself. But the numerous Voluntary Associations, set up by men "most distinguished for their piety, their industry and their perspective in the teaching of the Word", would serve to refute all charges of irreligion. He pledged to continue in his endeavours

"to effect the abolition of establishments and to see that every man should pay the pastor in whom he had most confidence".

Gillon's influence on the ecclesiastical affairs of his constituency was clearly important for in April 1834 the Church of Scotland Magazine tried to compromise his position by quoting from a speech which could have been interpreted as signalling a weakening of his commitment to Voluntaryism. The Magazine claimed to have it "on good authority" that Gillon had said

"that a certain amount [of money] should be voted for religious purposes, in remote and thinly populated districts; but if so, it should be apportioned to no dominant creed, but to that professed by the majority of the people..."

In other words, concluded the Magazine,
"he is a friend to the Established Church of Scotland, whose creed is that of the majority - though we should like it were he its friend from a higher principle."21

This feeble attempt to damage Gillon’s credibility was to no avail and his reputation for sincere and wholehearted support of Voluntaryism remained untarnished.

Although the Airdrie radicalism of the 1820s and '30s drew support from across a wide range of the social spectrum, the influence of weavers, those with weaving connections, and the weaving tradition was paramount. Religious dissent was an important component of this radicalism but the religion of radicals was by no means confined to nonconformity. In Joseph Finlayson’s Established chapel of ease there were a number of radical weavers. Their presence facilitated, on occasions, a broad but loose alliance between Airdrie’s rival churches, particularly on the question of the need for patronage reform. By contrast, on patronage and other issues conservatism in local Established Church circles was championed by James Begg and his supporters at New Monkland Kirk.

Furthermore, Finlayson himself sided with local radicals and made no secret of his support for William Gillon. Here, then, was irony not only because Gillon was a Voluntaryist but also because Finlayson was lukewarm in his attitude to Evangelicalism. He found the strident and
abrasive style of Evangelicals unattractive believing that the religion of the

"votaries of Enthusiasm... appears to consist in disturbing the peace of others by indirect comparisons and clamorous professions. Theirs is a zeal not according to godliness, being without knowledge and unproductive of the works of righteousness."\textsuperscript{22}

Indeed, when considering the reasons why so many people failed to keep God's Law, Finlayson placed the excesses of Evangelicalism in the same list as blind and bigoted superstition, "infidelism" and profligacy, and indifference to religion.\textsuperscript{23}

Such views, combined with overt support for Gillon, the weavers, and radical politics did nothing to endear Finlayson to James Begg. In the course of the early 1830s, prior to the passing of the Chapel Act, Begg and the New Monkland session attempted not only to assert their jurisdiction over the renegade chapel of ease but also to undermine Finlayson's position as minister.

Towards the close of 1832 Begg, backed up by the burgh authorities, came up with a plan to transform the town hall into a place of worship for the Established Church.\textsuperscript{24} Needless to say this scheme did not please local dissenters but neither did it gain universal support from Established churchmen. According to the Airdrie column of
the Glasgow Free Press Begg and his supporters had cooked up this extension project expressly for the purpose

"it is generally believed, of annoying and perplexing the worthy and eloquent minister of the chapel of ease [Finlayson] because he had the courage and honesty to declare himself for Mr Gillon [during the General Election campaign of winter 1832-3]."

Begg's scheme encountered stiff and inter-denominational opposition. A petition was circulated drawing people's attention to the machinations of New Monkland Kirk and calling for an end to any action to convert the town hall. The opposition argued that the town hall belonged to the burgesses of Airdrie, held on behalf of all the burgh's citizens and not of the minister of New Monkland. Begg backed down in the face of Airdrie opposition and Glasgow Free Press reported the success of the campaign against

"the parish minister and the clique who were wont to rule the parish and burgh for the last twenty years in order to harass the minister of the chapel of ease for his exertions in the people's cause."

The paper praised the "timely exposé" of Begg's plan and congratulated the burgh inhabitants of every denomination who had by "a joint petition" delivered a "signal defeat" on "the old Junto". Airdrieonians had again "ascertained their strength" and should continue to
"use it discreetly on all such occasions where innovation on their rights or encroachments on their liberties is attempted, to gratify either clerical pique or political spleen."29

The message to Begg was clear: neither dissenters nor chapel of ease radicals were prepared to accept the authority of New Monkland parish church. The town would not bow to the commands of the country.

Later, in January 1833, Finlayson endorsed Gillon at a dinner given in the MP’s honour. Finlayson delivered an address as did Robert Torrance, minister of the Broomknoll Seceders.30 However, moves to curb Finlayson’s influence and to undermine his position were not over. In the spring of 1833 he was once again subjected to criticism because of his allegiance to Gillon. On this occasion the chapel congregation appears to have been divided, but at a meeting in the first week of May a new and thoroughly radical committee of management was elected and thereafter gave full backing to Finlayson.31 This new committee included Alexander Paterson, active in both the Brotherly and Honourable Weavers’ friendly societies, and Malcolm McCallum, the radical bookseller and local agent for the Glasgow Free Press.32 Indeed, that newspaper was pleased again to inform its readers that further attempts to humiliate Finlayson had been defeated.

"The new committee and people now have a task to perform... and though emissaries are wandering about sounding falsehood in every ear that will listen, the
dreaded danger is past the moment that unshaken confidence is manifested between the pastor, the committee and the people... "33

Joseph Finlayson’s position was consolidated against further interferences from Begg and New Monkland Kirk when in August 1834, as a consequence of the Chapel Act, he was appointed to full membership of the Presbytery of Hamilton. True to his Evangelical stance, but no doubt still irked by Finlayson’s radicalism, James Begg proposed the motion for Finlayson’s inclusion in Presbytery. The Glasgow Free Press commended the "honourable" Presbytery of Hamilton for acting in a more civilised and reasonable way

"than those captious divines in other quarters, who have so imprudently though ineffectually attempted to thwart this most wholesome, just and judicious enactment of the late General Assembly." 34

The Finlayson Affair is illuminating in a number of respects. On the one hand it illustrates earlier Moderate complaints that chapels of ease could become too independent of parish kirks and hotbeds of political radicalism - though in the case of Airdrie Chapel, radicalism was not strongly bound up with the minister’s thrusting Evangelicalism. On the other hand, Finlayson at Airdrie Chapel showed that Evangelicals within the Established Church were right to press for the freeing of chapels of ease in order that the chapels might take on the complexion of the town environments in which they were placed. It is clear that by the 1830s the Airdrie Chapel
under Finlayson was more committed to, and in tune with Airdrie than was New Monkland kirk. The Chapel was, in fact, being strongly influenced by dissent and by radical weavers. This did not mean that Finlayson was weak in his commitment to the Establishment principle; his support for Gillon did not include agreement with Gillon’s Voluntaryism.

Furthermore, while he was critical of the tenor of Evangelical zeal Finlayson was by no means unsympathetic to the anxieties which motivated it. Rather, he tended to emphasise Christ’s love and compassion above the doctrine of man’s total depravity. He believed that depravity necessitated compassion.

"The maniac chained down in his dungeon is not the less an object of compassion, though in the frenzy of his imagination he may suppose his couch to be a throne and whole kingdoms subject to his control." \(^{35}\)

Charity was the essential rule and principle of the Christian religion and the Christian’s badge of distinction.\(^{36}\) In spite of his alleged lukewarmness, Finlayson was well aware that the successful campaign to free chapels of ease was a direct result of Evangelicalism. Indeed, he seems to have had few qualms when it came to appointing the decidedly Evangelical William Jackson as his assistant at the Airdrie Chapel.
Most significantly of all, Finlayson's case highlights the growth of Airdrie's aggressive sense of place. It shows that the burgh's radically inclined Established churchmen and dissenters could present a united front when faced with the encroachments of the Establishment conservatism of James Begg of New Monkland. Such unity was forged by a common sense of belonging to a town and burgh with its own way of doing things. Begg and Finlayson, although contemporaries, occupied different worlds. Begg embodied rural rather than industrialising Scotland. Socially conservative, and inclined to blame the impoverishment of weavers and colliers on their own moral weakness, Begg stood in contrast to Finlayson the town minister who was less indebted to patrons, more dependent on "internal voluntaryism" and a committee of management, and who sided with radicals - even when they espoused the causes of religious dissent.

We should not, however, exaggerate the strength of any unity between Airdrie Established churchmen and dissenters for it was precisely on matters of religious principle that such alliances broke up. Thus the announcement and speedy erection of the new West Chapel between early spring 1834 and autumn 1835 provoked outrage from Airdrie dissenters. Many agreed with the Glasgow Free Press report on the matter which argued that the town's school ought to be given priority over extra provision for the Established Church which in any case at Airdrie would only ever produce
"a street full of chapels with empty benches."

All objections to the new chapel, however, were either ignored or overruled by Hamilton Presbytery.

During the period in which the new West Chapel was set up the Voluntary Controversy exploded on to Airdrie's religious scene. This outbreak of full-scale inter-church warfare was stimulated by the passing of the Veto and Chapel Acts of 1834 and, at a more immediately local level, by the erection of the East and West Chapels into quoad sacra churches. In addition, Airdrie dissenters were dismayed by the opening of negotiations for the reunion of the Broomknoll Seceders with the Church of Scotland following the death of Broomknoll's minister, Robert Torrance, in 1834. (As things turned out, these negotiations were unsuccessful and the Broomknoll congregation appointed a new minister; but at the time the prospect of union seemed likely). Moreover, although in the autumn 1834 municipal elections neither the Tories nor the Liberals gained a decided advantage, "the Church Question seemed to be the war-cry of both... "

Indeed, by the spring of 1835 the Voluntary Controversy in the burgh had clearly become an all-consuming passion in local politics and religion.

"... meetings, discourses, and addresses are all go at present amongst these noisy belligerents for might and right in the Church. The Churchmen have despatched their petition to parliament for protection and the Voluntaries meet to-night for the purpose of
resolving and petitioning against any Church endowments being granted.\textsuperscript{42}

This little commentary, from the Glasgow Free Press Airdrie column, neatly encapsulates the excitement and fervour which the Voluntary Controversy provoked in the town. On both sides there was an acute sense of Airdrie's participation in a great nationwide struggle. As the correspondent of the Glasgow Free Press put it,

"one thing we know, it [the Voluntary Controversy] has already engendered more dissensions in private and social circles, and more rancorous burnings throughout Scotland than all political doings of the last twenty years - and those have been keen, severe, and bloody enough...\textsuperscript{43}

Although the date of its foundation is not known, an Airdrie Voluntary Church Association was certainly in full swing by 1835,\textsuperscript{44} while public petitions\textsuperscript{45} on the Church Question had in fact begun early in 1834. From 1833 to 1842 eleven public petitions were sent out from parties in Airdrie to Parliament, dealing specifically with ecclesiastical matters. These petitions were of two main kinds: those relating to the reform of patronage and those relating to the endowments issue and the extension of the Established Church in the burgh.

On 27 February 1834 a petition from the Provost and Magistrates of Airdrie, signed by 579 other persons, was
presented by Gillon to the House of Commons. It was one of many from all parts of the country

"Praying the House to abolish Church Patronage in Scotland and to recommend to the General Assembly of the Church forthwith to pass laws regulating the choice of minister by members of the Church." 

These petitions came at an important time for Evangelicals within the Established Church who were at this point pressing for the reform of patronage. Although there is no available evidence to indicate whether the Airdrie petition was a Church of Scotland initiative, a dissenter inspired effort or the outcome of a local alliance between rival churches, we may assume that, since Gillon agreed to present it on behalf of the Provost and Magistrates, it reflected the reforming complexion of the town's council, where liberals and radicals had achieved "a most decided triumph" in the municipal elections of November 1833. Abolition of patronage was consistently supported by Airdrie Voluntaries and it is likely that abolition was also supported by radical members of Finlayson's chapel of ease.

By early 1835, however, the town council decided that its civic duty lay in seeking to calm the extremes of passion that local interdenominational hostilities were letting loose. They feared that the Church Question might irreversibly divide the town and so decided to inject a
sense of proportion into the quarrel and to create a more harmonious religious atmosphere.

"... the Airdrie authorities, disdaining alike the desecration of the Sabbath, and the fastidiousness of that sectarian spirit which denounces every plan or principle wrong but its own have, in the most liberal manner, resolved to walk in a body every Sabbath, and to attend in regular rotation every place of worship in the burgh."50

The Council's strategy was not, however, successful in its aim. In any case the plan was a naive one for there had never been deep harmony between Airdrie's different churches. Moreover, the Chief Magistrate and others appear to have lost patience with the Church of Scotland. In May a petition on behalf of the inhabitants of the parliamentary burgh of Airdrie and its vicinity was drawn up by order of the Chief Magistrate and publicly intimated.51 This petition

"against any grant from the public funds for the building and endowing of churches connected with the Established Church."52

was signed by some 1,992 persons and was presented by Gillon to the Commons on May 20.53 The petition condemned other petitions in favour of endowments as not expressing

"the voice of the people, being not only in opposition to the sentiments of the dissenters but also those of a great proportion of the members of the Established Church."54
Any grant to the Church of Scotland, it continued, was

"utterly unnecessary... as it can be demonstrated from accurate statistical documents that there is no want whatever of Church accommodation, it being almost everywhere undeniable - and in this place particularly so - that the accommodation in the Establishment is not nearly occupied." 55

And anyway,

"the numerous and influential bodies of dissenters throughout the country dissent from principle and not from any want of accommodation in the national churches..." 56

Thus, the petition concluded, the proposition for more Established churches and for endowments to them originated in jealousy of "the strength and increase of the dissenters", 57 was intended "to promote the views of a party [ie the Tories], not religion", 58 and was "morally, religiously and politically unjust" 59 especially to the self-supporting dissenting churches. There could be no clearer exposition of the Airdrie Voluntaries' general position.

The Airdrie anti-endowment petition of May 1835 appeared a few weeks before Melbourne's announcement of a Royal Commission to inquire into religious destitution in Scotland. In August of the following year the Commissioners paid a visit to Airdrie. Although we do not know exactly the reaction of the town's Established
churchmen to the plan for a Royal Commission, in cooperating with it they had made it clear that they thought Airdrie lacked sufficient provision for religious instruction. (Hence the Commissioners visitation to check the Established churches claims). The Airdrie Voluntaries, on the other hand, were furious. Before cooperating with the Commissioners Airdrie’s Arch-Voluntaryist, Andrew Ferrier, issued a public statement declaring that he gave his evidence under protest.

Ferrier objected on three counts. First,

"whilst I acknowledge my loyal subjection to the King of these realms and to all who, under him, are invested with civil authority in everything which belongs to their prerogative as civil rulers, I disclaim all right to their interference with my Christian profession, and with the religious concerns of my congregation, as in these matters I 'call no man master on earth for one is my Master, even Christ.'”

Second, with reference to the state of religious provision in Airdrie specifically,

"the religious position of this increasingly populous town... is such, in my opinion, as it ought to continue, its churches being all Voluntary, and, as far as I have the opportunity of knowing... all presenting respectable specimens of the efficiency of what is known as the Voluntary principle; on which account for fear of injury to religion, I would deprecate any change by additional endowments [to the Established churches] as a serious calamity.”

Third, with reference to the whole question of endowments
"should this proposed measure be carried into effect, it is my conviction that it will alarmingly increase the spirit of Christian animosity which now prevails; and because it appears to me that the only way of restoring peace to the religious public of all denominations is not only to give up the question of additional endowments altogether, but to abolish forever, as a snare to the conscience and curse to religion, all ecclesiastical establishments throughout the empire, and thus leave the Gospel to spread and triumph, as it could not fail to do, by its own divine energies." 64

Ferrier's protest was widely reported. One newspaper described the expressions he employed as having an effect on friends of civil establishments of religion like that of a "galvanic battery". 65 Another noted that his statement called forth "one united burst of virtuous and indignant horror" 66 from supporters of the Established Church. But Ferrier was unrepentant. Indeed, such was the public excitement produced in Airdrie by his protest that it suggested to him

"the propriety of improving an opportunity he had before him of preaching both to the congregation of his brother the Rev Mr Sommerville [Wellwynd] and to his own, by turning his hearers' attention, with some minuteness, to the subject at large." 67

Accordingly on 28 August Ferrier duly pressed home his attack by preaching a sermon on civil establishments of religion to the assembled congregations of Wellwynd and Graham Street. 68 When published as a discourse in the following month - at the request of the Airdrie Voluntary Committee, all proceeds from sales of the pamphlet to go to Airdrie Voluntary Church Society 69 - the sermon, entitled
Nebuchadnezzar’s Golden Image, ran to some forty pages of close print. A veritable tour de force, this document is a classic exposition of the Voluntary position.

During the period when the Royal Commissioners made parish visitations, conducted their inquiries and presented their reports (1836-1839) another four petitions on topics related to the Voluntary Controversy went out from Airdrie to parliament.

The first of these was a petition "against further endowments"70 from the burgh of Airdrie, signed by 1,689 people, and presented to parliament by Gillon on 30 March 1838.71 Airdrie's Established Church lobby was not slow to respond. On 11 April a petition

"of the inhabitants of Airdrie praying the House to grant such provision for the ministers of the newly erected churches and parishes of Scotland as may bring the ministrations of the Gospel within reach of all ranks of her Majesty's subjects... "72

was signed by 1,008 people and presented to parliament by Lord John Russell.73

In this document the petitioners declared themselves "sincerely solicitous"74 for the exercise and extension of the means of religious instruction and claimed that the civil magistrates
"owe it to God by whom kings reign, and to the subject, for the promotion of whose interests the ordinance of government has been instituted, to provide for the Christian education of the entire community."75

Having thus set out the Establishment principle, the petition then explained why a social compact between Church and State was necessary. It expressed disquiet about the apparent growth of irreligion and vice in Airdrie and vicinity

"there being within the Burgh a population of about 9,000, nearly a third of whom habitually absent themselves from public ordinances and are grossly ignorant and profligate."76

Such non-churchgoing, ignorance and profligacy was attributed to the deficiency of pastoral superintendence and to the "total want" of "sufficiently cheap" church accommodation in the town.77 Ironically, the pro-Establishment petition then made exactly the point that Ferrier had in his protest against the Royal Commission. "Every one of the ministers" the argument ran, was "solely dependent" upon the voluntary contributions of their congregations.78 However most of the churches were "burdened with an enormous debt"79 and as a consequence of this financial hardship seat-rents had to be high to meet expenses. In turn, this proved to be

"an insurmountable barrier reared in the way of the pastor who would go forth to the streets and lanes and
invite all, in however indigent circumstances, to repair to the house of God."80

Meanwhile the Airdrie Voluntaries kept up their campaign against further endowments for the Established Church. In July 1839 Gillon presented another petition, signed by 1,573 of the town's citizens.81 Once again the Voluntaries called upon the Commons not to sanction any additional grants to the Established Church.82 This petition had been drawn up and publicly intimated at a meeting convened in Graham Street (United Associate) Church, with Andrew Ferrier as secretary, on 28 February.83 Opened with prayer by Rev George Sommerville (of Wellwynd), the meeting heard "appropriate, convincing and eloquent speeches" from, among others, Rev Andrew Marshall of Kirkintilloch and Rev Alexander Cuthbert of Airdrie's Ebenezer Congregational Church.84 Next, four resolutions were passed relating to the question of further endowments for the Church of Scotland. These resolutions were then embodied in a petition, were again read, submitted to the meeting and carried without opposition.85 The Church of Scotland's demand for fresh funds was, the petition stated, made under the "pretence" of providing more efficiently for the religious instruction of the poor but was in fact a "sectarian scheme" arising from jealousy and spite not from want of accommodation in the Airdrie Established churches.86 Accusations of "deceiving the Government" about the real state of religious provision were levelled against the Church of Scotland and the petition was even more scathing
about the undemocratic manner in which the Established churches in Airdrie got up their petitions. Pro-Establishment petitions were not

"submitted to public meetings, but concocted in private circles, and then most sedulously and secretly carried from house to house for signatures." 87

Such behaviour deprived Airdrie Church of Scotland petitions of "all respect and confidence" and implied that

"well supported petitions for additional endowments to the Church of Scotland cannot be obtained here, more than in many other parts of the country in an open and creditable manner." 88

In short, the Voluntaries' 1839 petition claimed to be more genuinely representative of Airdrie people than local Established Church petitions. Indeed,

"there is no place in Scotland where a petition for additional endowments comes with a worse grace, and is more grossly deceptive than this." 89

Airdrie's friends of the Establishment were charged with having built churches that were quite unnecessary

"it being notorious that one of the three places of worship in connexion with the Establishment here, is more than sufficient to contain all who attend the three". 90

The West and the High churches were
"presumptively opened on the principle that as endowments would assuredly be granted, it was the best policy to have new buildings erected and new congregations found to receive them."91

It was sufficiently apparent

"that any endowment given to this place... in present circumstances would generate strife, jealousy and heart-burning... "92

This impassioned plea was signed by the then Airdrie provost David Chapman, next by George Sommerville of Wellwynd Church and then by John Calder, the weaver-pastor of the (Haldane) Baptists. Other signatories followed.93

It represents the high point of the Voluntary Controversy in Airdrie. After 1839, the Voluntary question was overtaken by events within the Established Church and its confrontations with the State.

Between 1840 and the Disruption at least five more petitions went out from Airdrie to parliament. All were specifically concerned with either the reform of patronage or its abolition. Three came from the burgh's Established churches - West, East and High - and two came from the town's council and inhabitants more generally. We will return to these in Chapter Ten.
Religion, Politics and Culture

It would be wrong to imagine that the churches in Airdrie were concerned purely with ecclesiastical affairs, or indeed that "ecclesiastical politics" constituted a separate sphere from "secular politics". Politics and religion were so closely inter-connected that it is not only more accurate but also more helpful to speak of religio-political culture.

During the parliamentary reform movement, which culminated in the crisis of 1831-2, public meetings were invariably held in one or other of the town's churches. This was an indication not just that church buildings were suitable premises to accommodate large gatherings of people but also that churchmen were at the centre of the Airdrie reform movement. Church buildings could not be turned over to public meetings without the express approval of minister, kirk session and management committee, and the granting of such permission was usually directly related to the sympathies of minister, elders and managers. Indeed, a minister or leading churchman often chaired reform meetings.

Moreover, while there can be no doubt about the important role taken by Airdrie's dissenting weavers in the radical politics of the 1830s, Airdrie radicalism was not confined to dissenters. In May 1832 a parliamentary reform meeting
was held in the Wellwynd Church to condemn the stalling tactics of the Tory dominated House of Lords. June saw another meeting of Airdrie reformers held to express similar sentiments but this time Finlayson’s chapel of ease was the venue. Radical Established churchmen and radical dissenters were united in the campaign for parliamentary reform and after the successful election of Gillon in 1832-3 a deputation, including Joseph Finlayson and Robert Torrance of Broomknoll, presented a snuff box to local lawyer, Hugh McCulloch, in appreciation for his efforts as Gillon’s Airdrie election agent. As keen supporters of Gillon and of the weavers’ cause both Finlayson and Torrance were happy to speak publicly on Gillon’s behalf and to allow the weavers to hold meetings in their churches. Of course, any decision to allow churches to be used for radical meetings was made easier precisely because of the active participation of weavers in Airdrie’s religious life – and especially in Wellwynd, Broomknoll and the East Chapel.

Furthermore, leading Airdrie radicals positively encouraged the participation of churches and churchmen in politics. William Miller was always quick to point out that James Begg and the New Monkland session had no hesitation in fighting for the interests of country heritors even when these interests were damaging to those of Airdrie’s inhabitants. For Miller, New Monkland’s Tory gentry opposition to the reform of Parliament or of municipal
government expressed the same selfish mentality as their lack of aid for Airdrie’s poor during the cholera epidemics of 1832. In February of that year he poured scorn on the New Monkland heritors and session for refusing to take any preventative measures until cholera had actually appeared in the town. By August, when the town had suffered upwards of forty deaths, mainly among the poor, Miller voiced his "burning indignation" at the failures of New Monkland heritors — and of the provost and magistrates of Airdrie — to do anything to relieve the suffering poor. He condemned the continual "prating" in New Monkland kirk and accused the heritors and session of pretending to be imbued with the spirit of Christianity.

"we had as lief be called Hindoos and renounce at once all connection with a church and people possessed of such callous and calculating principles."

New Monkland heritors were, he believed, the principal villains, and against Airdrie.

"the landward gentry of New Monkland would rather throw their alms to the dogs before they would contribute one mite to the poor in Airdrie."

In accordance with his attacks on New Monkland Toryism, Miller urged the newly elected and radically inclined town council of 1833 to take full advantage of the privilege
"bestowed on lately enfranchised burghs, enabling them, like Royal Burghs, to send an elder to the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland."\(^{102}\)

It was, he argued, of the utmost importance that this privilege be exercised, given the contemplated changes in the Established Church.\(^{103}\)

As in the parliamentary reform campaign, churches - mainly Wellwynd and Broomknoll - were the most frequently used venues for Chartist gatherings organised by the Airdrie Working Men’s Association. Indeed, when at the annual meeting of the Wellwynd congregation of June 1840 it was resolved to withdraw permission from the Chartists and the Total Abstinence Society, the WMA was shocked and appalled. In an open letter to the members of Wellwynd Church, sent to the Chartist newspaper, *Scottish Patriot*, the Airdrie WMA deplored the decision and expressed dismay at the actions of their fellow Christians.\(^{104}\) Incredulity was all the more acute because Wellwynd, like Airdrie Chartism, was avowedly Voluntaryist and Non-Intrusionist.

Wellwynd’s exclusion of total abstinence lecturers from use of the church premises was doubly ironic in that the origins of Airdrie’s temperance movement were rooted in the actions of ministers and churchmen, particularly dissenters. Temperance organisation in the town, begun in the early decades of the nineteenth century, was prompted by a high level of drunkenness among itinerant and resident
colliers and iron-miners. By the mid-1830s a local Temperance Society of total abstainers was actively engaged in efforts to clean up the image of Airdrie as a place of inns, alehouses, spirit-shops and excessive liquor consumption. Although official records of this society have been lost, it seems that one of the main planks in local temperance campaigns was the formation of various counter-attractions requiring a sober character and the exercise of thrift in money matters. One of the more famous and successful of such temperance schemes was a savings bank, instituted on 1 January 1835.

A Committee of leaders of the Airdrie Temperance Society was formed in 1834 to prepare a constitution, rules and regulations for a bank along lines similar to other savings banks already established on the model of Rev Dr Duncan of Ruthwell's schemes. It was decided that the management was to be confined to members of the Temperance Society. The effect of this decision as regards the directorate was to exclude several important supporters of the scheme. However,

"Their withdrawal... was temporary. A split in the Society itself, over the form of the membership pledge, hastened the abolition of the obnoxious rule. The seceders, who included some of the... directors of the bank, formed an auxiliary of the British and Foreign Temperance Society. The rival sect... met and agreed that the Bank should be placed in an independent position, free from any connection with any society."
Airdrie’s Temperance Savings Bank was a direct product of Evangelical mission-culture. The leading pioneer was none other than Rev John Carslaw of the North Bridge Street RP Church. He had been a founder member of the Temperance Society and became the new bank’s second president, a post which he held for a total of ten years.110 Carslaw was supported by Andrew Ferrier of Graham Street — who became the third president of the bank — and by Dr William Clark of Wester Moffat — first president.111 As we have already noted, Clark was one of the most important and wealthy Evangelical Established churchmen in the immediate vicinity of Airdrie. He was a keen supporter of Chalmers’ Church Extension campaign and while it may seem strange that he cooperated with Airdrie’s leading Voluntaryist, Andrew Ferrier, as things turned out, Clark was to become a staunch Free Churchman.

On the first of the new bank’s board of directors professional and commercial middle-class men, and skilled artisans predominated, and it was largely to these social groups that the venture owed much of its early success.112 All in all, the Temperance Savings Bank was not only a remarkable example of the possibilities for interdenominational co-operation in the midst of religious confrontation but also an attempt to put community before sectarianism. In this respect the bank’s first loan transaction was "peculiarly interesting".113
In January 1836 the managers of the West Church applied to the bank directors for a loan of £200 and the loan was sanctioned.

"The whole transaction may seem simple and trivial, but it has significance which does not appear in the surface. For... the bank directors... were all, save one,... ardent seceders."¹¹⁴

Their decision in favour of the application for a loan from Established churchmen not only ensured that the interests of the bank and banking would be paramount in the directors minds but also that the bank would be recognised as a town institution.¹¹⁵

Fighting the Good Fight: Religious Conflict and Community

The combination of Evangelicalism and dissent in Airdrie, evident in the period from the late eighteenth to early nineteenth centuries, remained crucial in the construction of community there during the years of rapid population expansion and industrialisation. There can be no doubt that religion occupied a prominent position in public affairs of all kinds. As part of people’s mental furniture, religion took up a lot of room.

Religious competition and conflict were partly a reflection of new socio-economic tensions arising in the burgh consequent upon, for example, the rise of the town over the
country, or the proletarianisation of weavers and colliers alongside the growth of an Airdrie bourgeoisie. But religious competition and conflict were more than a reflection of socio-economic tensions. Religion per se commanded attention across the social spectrum, and religious conflict cut across boundaries of social class. Without the deep sense of commitment to Christianity as religion there would have been no expansion in the number and variety of churches and no real motivation for fighting one’s corner. Religious competition and conflict had an internal dynamic based on belief and practice, not on social determinants. This was especially the case in the Voluntary Controversy, and then in the Disruption, because church government was hierophanic. Social and economic change facilitated the growth of religion but it did not necessarily produce that growth.

Furthermore, inter-denominational rivalry and confrontation helped to anchor Airdrie’s identity in the midst of social and economic change. Community was based on dialectical relationships which were not necessarily or even mainly class based. The churches were key contributors in the construction of community at Airdrie in exactly this way. Each church and its particular community (congregation) existed within the greater community of the burgh as a constituent segment co-existing in dialectical relationship. Each church enriched and informed the ideas of the others, and this happened both within each
denomination and between denominations. The East Church of Scotland, for example, was powerfully affected by dissenting-weaving Airdrie yet remained loyal to the Establishment. In short, religion, and more particularly Evangelicalism, as much as social class, gave rise to a host of dynamic tensions through and upon which community as culture in Airdrie was forged anew, strengthened, and invigorated. Evangelicalism was both a direct cause of religious competition and conflict, and benefited immensely from them. At local level Evangelicalism and industrialisation worked in symbiotic relationship and together shaped the larger whole that was Airdrie. Evangelicalism harnessed and encouraged local patriotism and particularism, giving these expression, while at the same time maintaining and drawing new energy from the tensions within Airdrie by helping people to define themselves against each other and with the greater whole. Battle was not only the spice but also the meat of popular religious life in the years after 1820.

The expansion of both dissenting and Established churches in Airdrie after 1820 took place along with, and as part of population expansion and industrialisation so that even if the churches together seemed - relatively- to be failing to attract the "lapsed masses", they were not marginalised. Indeed, they remained at the centre of community precisely because they were cross-class. Community was central to each of the churches perception of itself and of Airdrie.
Voluntaries, dissenters or Established churchmen argued their respective cases on the basis of high theological-ecclesiological principle, and in line with their view of what was going on at national level in the corridors of power within Church and State. But the arguments were nearly always refracted through the prism of the locality. "Voluntaryism" or the "Establishment Principle" were not abstract theoretical positions; they were articulated in ways which depicted what people saw to be happening in their own town. Ideology was worked out in terms of local social experience. It was important for individual congregations and members to feel part of great nationwide movements such as Voluntaryism or the Established Church anti-Voluntary, extension and endowments campaign. But what really counted was Voluntaryism as expressed through and represented by Wellwynd Church or Graham Street Church; Establishment as expressed through and represented by the East, West or High churches. Yet although each church developed its own special identity within the denominational camp that embraced it, and within Airdrie, Airdrie as the greater community was never lost sight of. People still looked out on the World from Airdrie and this had little to do with negative and narrow parochialism or inward-looking local vanity. A much deeper process was at work, a process which we can see if we look again at the attempt to undermine Joseph Finlayson.
Finlayson was supported by radically inclined Established churchmen and by radical dissenters against James Begg of New Monkland parish kirk. Opposition to Begg was united not just because New Monkland was Established or Begg conservative. Rather it was so because Begg had tried to exert his dwindling authority in and over Airdrie. The Finlayson affair was indicative first, of the importance of the churches in community at Airdrie; and second, of the fact that just as Christ could be "translated" from culture to culture, so within a culture He could be translated from one locality to another. Opposition to Begg was an example and expression of this process; of Christ in our world, Christ in the locality.

Although religious competition and conflict helped to anchor Airdrie's identity in the midst of social and economic changes this is not to say that religion was therefore a form of false-consciousness and consolation, diverting people's attention from the harsh realities of an emerging capitalist society. Of course, no-one should minimise the extremes of wealth and poverty that existed in Airdrie. Nevertheless, religion was no chiliasm of despair, or the tool of the bourgeoisie. On the contrary, it provided local radical and working class movements and organisations with a cutting edge.
Notes

1. The Church of Scotland had long benefited from the privileges and status that the State connection afforded. Other churches that had seceded from the Established Church or that had begun apart from it had no legal entitlement to State financial aid or protection. Seceders and dissenters had to erect and endow their own churches using monies raised entirely by their supporters’ voluntary subscription. Dissenting congregations, especially those of Presbyterian persuasion, were free to choose their own ministers and usually exercised some form of congregational control over management of their churches secular affairs. This combination of spiritual and financial independence, freedom from patronage, and from State interference – the "Voluntary Principle" – proved to be attractive to skilled artisans and upwardly mobile members of the middle class in the towns and cities of Scotland. Indeed, the success of dissent in the towns and cities became a cause for concern among Evangelicals within the Established Church who had in the past maintained strong links with Evangelicals outside the Church of Scotland. The loose Evangelical alliance which from the 1760s and '90s had enabled Established Church Evangelicals to borrow techniques from the dissenters and apply them in the Church of Scotland, against opposition from Moderate opinion, was by the third decade of the nineteenth century beginning to come under strain. Rivalry and competition turned to outright hostility when in April 1829 Andrew Marshall, a United Secession minister, delivered a widely publicised sermon advocating the voluntary principle and calling for the complete abolition of all ecclesiastical establishments. Marshall’s case attracted a great deal of support from dissenters and seceders. In the Church of Scotland, however, it provoked anger and resentment. Evangelicals and Moderates within the Established Church were pushed into an alliance in defence of the Establishment Principle.

The years immediately following Marshall’s sermon saw dissenters organising themselves into Voluntary Church Associations in localities up and down the country following the lead given by their fellows in Glasgow and in Edinburgh. The magazine of the Glasgow Voluntary Church Association quickly became the mouthpiece for the new movement as a whole. In its pages the "Voluntaries" mounted a sustained attack on the Establishment Principle in general and on the Church of Scotland in particular.
At first slow to respond, the Established Church took up the Voluntaries' gauntlet from 1833. Through the Society for Promoting the Interest of the Church of Scotland, and a specially formed Church of Scotland Magazine, a ferocious counter-attack was launched. Moreover, from 1834 the Evangelical Party within the Established Church, led by the most able and vigorous advocate of the Establishment principle, Thomas Chalmers, had gained control of the General Assembly. Evangelicals now became leading voices in the prosecution of the campaign against Voluntaryism. Thus, the Voluntary Controversy rapidly became a conflict not just between rival churches but between two Evangelical groups; the Established Church’s Evangelical Party and the Presbyterian dissenters/seceders. And, most importantly, each Evangelical bloc was competing for ground in the new population centres of Scotland.

Voluntaries rested their case on the argument that there was no scriptural warrant for ecclesiastical Establishments. Establishments were therefore wrong in principle while in practice they were unjust and a cause of the secularisation of Christianity. Marshall’s sermon of April 1829 had sought to preempt any demand by Irish Roman Catholics for the State endowment of the Roman Catholic Church in Ireland. This demand, argued Marshall, would be an inevitable consequence of the Catholic Emancipation Bill - at this time passing through Parliament - and it would be hard to resist for Roman Catholics were vastly superior in numbers to any other Church in Ireland. The only effective barrier to the establishment of Catholicism was for the State to repudiate all establishments of religion. All churches should be made to compete in a religious free-market and all ought to be self-supporting, free from any State control and debarred from any privileges, such as Parliamentary grants, bestowed by the State. Thus Voluntaryism, argued Marshall, would not only maximise Evangelical efforts but would also lead to the disappearance of those churches that were not guided by the Holy Spirit and true organs of salvation.

For supporters of the Established Church the Voluntaries, by calling into question the principle of ecclesiastical establishment, were striking at the heart of Scotland’s Reformed and Calvinist inheritance. The Church of Scotland rested its case on the argument that the basis of the Scottish Reformation was that every district should have its church, minister, manse and glebe, school and schoolmaster provided by a combination of voluntary giving and government funding. This principle was defended from scripture, expressed most purely in Calvinist ecclesiology and guaranteed in law by the
Revolution Settlement. It was the essence of the Godly Commonwealth ideal now invested with new energy by Thomas Chalmers. Chalmers envisaged a social compact between Church and State modelled on the Covenant relationship between God and the Scottish people. As the Established Church, the Church of Scotland had a legal and moral duty to provide territorially for the needs of the whole country and all its inhabitants (whether they wished provision or not). The Church supplied religious and moral education and poor relief thereby producing good citizens. In return, the State had a duty to provide financial support and legal protection for the Church of Scotland, so fulfilling its role as co-partner in the business of advancing Christ's kingdom on earth.

The Voluntary Controversy was not a narrow debate about Church and State or principles of Church government. It was a debate about the role of the Church in the World and Christian civilisation. The arguments and counter-arguments focused attention on what it meant to be Christian and indeed to be Christian and Scottish. In theology and in action, the Voluntaries and their Established Church opponents' mode of response was one of contestation in an environment of rapid and unprecedented socio-economic change. But each of the warring parties was striving for an authentic expression of the faith.

For general accounts of the Voluntary Controversy see:


2. Where the "will of the people" was defined as a majority of male heads of families.

3. So-called to distinguish it from the "external" voluntaryism of the dissenters.

"'Internal Voluntaryism'... was private effort dedicated to the communal purpose of the godly
commonwealth, and was opposed to any concept of 'free trade' in religion."

[see: S J Brown, op cit, p 238]


5. On the importance of the Church Extension Committee as Chalmers' power base - see: S J Brown, op cit, p 249-256.


9. In September 1835 the Voluntary Church Magazine condemned the idea of a Commission on two counts:

First, it was wrong in principle and therefore little could be expected to come out of it but wrong. Any inquiry into whether or not the Established Church required Government assistance implied that if it was discovered that funds were needed, then these would be granted (as, indeed, the Government was suggesting). Such an outcome would indicate

"entire approval of the principle of Church establishments and consequently the entire condemnation of the principle of dissent..."

[The Voluntary Church Magazine, Volume III, No XXXI, September, 1835, p 386]

It was, the Magazine continued, an insult on the part of the Established Church to apply for an endowment, and an insult on the part of the Government to entertain such applications.

Second, the Commission might lull the Voluntaries into a false view of their position and goals. The Voluntary Magazine recommended that full co-operation should be given to the Commission and returns to the Commissioners inquiries made accurately, especially since many Established churchmen were appalled by the Commissioners’ remit. Nevertheless, Voluntaries were urged not to forget

"that the result of the Commission is nothing – absolutely nothing – except as it bears on the great question of separation [of Church and State]."

[The Voluntary Church Magazine, Volume III, No XXXI, September, 1835, p 386]
However advantageous the returns might be for the Established Church's case this should not sway Voluntaries from their real mission nor lead them to abandon the struggle for their rights.

"You are to persevere in your purpose... urging your way, per tela, per hostes, in the face of discouragements, through the ranks of the opposition, till all your rights are vindicated, till all your injuries are redressed, and that Upas tree, which claims to be planted by your Heavenly Father, is effectively rooted-up."

[The Voluntary Church Magazine, Volume III, No XXXI, September, 1835, pp 387-388]

For an outline of criticisms of the Royal Commission from the Established Church and from the dissenters see:

Letter of Lord John Russell to the Earl of Minto (Minto headed the Commission) August 31, 1835, reproduced in, The Voluntary Church Magazine, Volume III, No XXXIII, November, 1835.

Russell defended the Government position that the Commission would be impartial. He advised Minto that the Commissioners should be particularly cautious when conducting local inquiries and that strict attention should be given to the stated terms of the Commission with respect to alleged deficiencies in the provision of public worship and pastoral superintendence.


11. The Airdrie Literary Album or Weekly Repository of Original and Select Literature. Editor, G N Bell, Airdrie, 1829, No, 3 Saturday, December 20, 1828.

12. Glasgow Free Press, December 12, 1832.

13. Ibid.

14. Ibid.

15. Ibid.

16. Ibid.

17. Ibid.

18. Ibid.

19. Ibid.

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25. Ibid.

26. Ibid.

27. Ibid.

28. Ibid.

29. Ibid.


32. Ibid, pp 44-45. As Mitchell also points out, such a chapel could be warmly supported by radicals precisely because it was not a full parish church, did not levy tithes and was supported financially only by its members.


34. *Glasgow Free Press*, Saturday, August 2, 1834.

*Records of the Presbytery of Hamilton*, 29 July 1834, p 51.

35. Joseph Finlayson, Two Sermons: One Preached for the Benefit of the East Monkland Orphan Society, the Other before Eight Lodges of Freemasons, Glasgow, 1810.


37. See Chapter 9 following.

38. *Glasgow Free Press*, 22 April, 1834.
45. The Records of the [Parliamentary] Committees on Public Petitions are a rich source for gauging the thoughts and feelings of a remarkable variety of groups of people on a vast array of topics in the political, economic, social and religious life of Britain in the nineteenth century.

In modern history, public petitioning to the Westminster Parliament came into its own from the mid to late eighteenth century with the Wilkes and liberty campaign for parliamentary and economic reform. From the close of the eighteenth century public petitions came to the House of Commons in huge numbers. The annual number of petitions after 1833 varied between 10,000 and 34,000, and those signing between half and six millions. From 1833 a Select Committee has been appointed to investigate the regularity of the form of petitions, to classify them, to scrutinise their arguments and to print representative texts.

Since 1833 petitions, having been presented to the House, are ordered to lie on the table then referred to the Committee on Public Petitions under whose direction they are classified, analyzed and, when necessary, printed at length. Three series of volumes concerning Public Petitions since 1833 have been bound and placed with bound sets of votes:

(1) Reports of the Committee
(2) Appendices to the Reports
(3) Indices

These volumes are usually shelved alongside other bound volumes of Parliamentary Papers (for example, in Edinburgh University Library) but have recently been put on microfiche (available at the National Library of Scotland) as follows:

Great Britain: House of Commons, Appendices to the Votes and Proceedings, 1817-1890

The Reports of the Committee indicate the place of origin of each petition, the number of signatures, its general object and the total number of petitions and signatures referring to each subject. The name of the MP presenting is also given.

In the Appendices the full texts of certain petitions are printed whenever the peculiar arguments and facts, or general importance of a petition are thought to merit it. (Though from 1834-39 the texts printed are, in fact summaries).

From 1834 to 1950 the originals of public petitions were destroyed after the Committee had reported.

Longer extracts from petitions from Airdrie used in this chapter are taken from texts preserved in the Appendices.

Above information on Public Petitions from:


The *House of Commons Journals* also make note of Public Petitions.


and: Commons Journal, Volume 89, 1834, p 70.


This petition was one of 52 on this subject containing 48,693 signatures, presented during the same period.

47. Ibid.


49. Ibid, Wednesday, May 6, 1835.

50. Ibid, Wednesday, May 6, 1835
By the time this report appeared the Provost and Magistrates had already visited the East Church and two of the Secession churches.

Glasgow Free Press, Wednesday, May 6, 1835, p 363.


52. Commons Journals, Volume 90, 1835, p 270.


Also: General Index, p 101.

One of 158 petitions on this subject included in the report, totalling 79,052 signatures.


55. Ibid, p 363.

56. Ibid, p 363.

57. Ibid, p 363.

58 Ibid, p 363.


60. See Chapter 9 following.


62. Ibid, p iii.

63. Ibid, p iii.

64. Ibid, p iii-iv.

65. Ibid, p iii.

66. Ibid, p iii.


68. Ibid, p i and p iv.

69. Ibid, p ii.
70. Commons Journals, Volume 93, 1837-8, p 415.

71. Petition No. 4092, Twenty-Second Report... on Public Petitions, 30 March - 3 April 1838, p 228.

General Index, p 102.

One of 187 petitions, totalling 108,577 signatures.

72. Commons Journals, Volume 93, 1837-38, p 453.

73. Petition No. 4577, Twenty-Fourth Report... on Public Petitions, p 321.

General Index, p 103.

74. Appendix [No. 378] to the Twenty-Fourth Report... on Public Petitions, 9-11 April 1838, p 204.

75. Ibid, p 204.

76. Ibid, p 204.

77. Ibid, p 204.

78. Ibid, p 204.

79. Ibid, p 204.

80. Ibid, p 204.


General Index, p 105.

Three months prior to this Voluntary move, the congregation of the East Chapel had petitioned the House

"to adopt measures for relieving the religious destitution which prevails in Scotland (sic) by extending the efficiency of the Established Church..."


See also: Petition No. 4473, [Presented on 27 March 1839 by Mr Lockhart, MP, and signed by 135 persons], Fourteenth Report on Public Petitions, p 236.

General Index, p 103.

83. An account of this meeting and of the proposed text of the resulting anti-endowment petition was given in

The Voluntary Church Magazine, Volume VII, No. 74, April, 1839, pp 179-181.

84. The Voluntary Church Magazine, Volume VII, No. 74, April, 1839, pp 179-180.

85. Ibid, p 180.

86. Ibid, p 180.

Also: Another text with slight variations in Appendix [No. 960] to the Thirty-Fourth Report... on Public Petitions, 1-2 July 1839, p 473.

87. Ibid, p 180.

88. Ibid, p 180.

89. Ibid, p 181.

90. Ibid, p 181.

91. Ibid, p 181.

92. Ibid, p 181.

93. Appendix No. 960 to the Thirty-Fourth Report... on Public Petitions, 1-2 July 1839, p 473.

An indication of the strength of feeling nationally among those opposed to further endowments can be gained from the summary tables at the end of each report of the Select Committee on Public Petitions. Thus, for example, the summary of public petitions from 21 November 1837 to 4 August 1838 recorded 387 petitions against further endowments amounting to 153,142 signatures. Petitions in favour of additional endowments, 12; amounting to 2,579 signatures.

94. Glasgow Free Press, Wednesday, May 16, 1832.

95. Ibid, Saturday, June 23, 1832.

96. Ibid, Wednesday, January 30, 1833.

97. For example, to discuss the formation of the revived weavers' trade union in early 1833.

See: Glasgow Free Press, February 20, 1833.

98. Glasgow Free Press, Wednesday, February 22, 1832.

99. Glasgow Free Press, Saturday, August 11, 1832.
"Had such a resolution emanated from any other congregation in Airdrie it is more than probable we would not have noticed it; because, with the exception of the Independents and Graham Street [United Associate] congregation, none of them are in the least degree favourable to the great principles of civil and religious liberty, which we profess.... With you the case is different; many of you have declared your attachment to the very principles from which we are struggling, and some of you have even from the platform affirmed your conviction that those principles were founded on truth, and like the great author immutable. Moreover, you declared that your determination then was not to slacken your exertions until your care worn and oppressed brethren in tribulations were released from the galling shackles of political bondage. How then can you reconcile such professions with the vote of exclusion which now stands upon your minute book.... You may tell us that civil and religious liberty are quite different in their nature, and that consequently you do not wish to hurt the prejudices of the superstitious portion of the congregation by having what they term the sacred edifice any longer polluted with the unhallowed tread of a Chartist or a Total Abstinence lecturer. But we may say nay, our opinion is that civil and religious freedom are so intimately connected that we cannot properly enjoy the one without the other; and besides, that no-one can be justly considered a consistent or right thinking Christian who stands aloof, an idle spectator of the doings of ambitious men who send 'woe, want and murder o'er the land' or who views his fellow-brother (sic) struggling under the iron grasp of oppression, without doing what he can in the first instance to retard its march, and in the second exerting every energy to burst the soul piercing chains that bind him. Neither is the church more holy or sacred, taken unoccupied, for religious purposes, than its neighbour the Tanwork; and if any of the congregation entertain the idea that it is so, the sooner such phantasies are dispelled from their minds the better. You may tell us... that the church is your own, and that you can do what you like with it; but that would be the weakest and most ungracious of all reasons to assign for your conduct because, though
a far as the law of the land is concerned, you have a
good to give or withhold the church as you please,
yet you have a law from your divine master which
enjoins you to feed the hungry, cloth the naked, to
visit the prisoner in his dungeon, and to administer
consolation to the broken hearted, and the majority
of you have held the opinion that this can never be
accomplished till the principles of the Charter be put
in operation. Why, then, try to stand in the way of
those who wish to raise, in the scale of society,
their long degraded countrymen and fellow slaves by
endeavouring to prevent them from wielding the most
powerful engine, the concentrated opinions of the
suffering masses.... A very large minority, if not a
majority of the congregation are Chartists and
teetotallers, and should you continue to throw
obstacles in their way it is not unlikely that they
may feel it to be their duty to adopt a course that
might be unpleasant to both parties..."

105. James Knox, *The Triumph of Thrift: The Story of the*
*Savings Bank of Airdrie*, Baird and Hamilton, Airdrie,
1927, p 49.

Glasgow Free Press, of 25 December 1833 noted that at
last a Temperance coffee house and reading room had
been opened in Airdrie.

106. Knox, op cit, p 49.

107. Ibid, p 49.


110. Ibid, Chapter VI, 'The Men who Formed the Bank',
pp 39-41.

111. Ibid, pp 42-45.

112. See Knox, op cit, Chapter VI.

113. Knox, op cit, p 54.

114. Ibid, p 55.

115. Ibid, p 55.
SNAPSHOT: AIRDRIE AND THE ROYAL COMMISSION ON RELIGIOUS INSTRUCTION

The Evidence of the Royal Commission: Uses and Abuses

Thomas Chalmers’ case for Church extension placed great emphasis on non-churchgoing among the working classes and the poor of Scotland’s industrial towns and cities. These people, he argued, possessed a nascent churchism but they were prevented from going to church because there was not enough church accommodation in the towns and cities. Many of the old parish churches were far removed from new centres of population growing up within existing parish bounds and even in those places where chapels of ease had been erected, dependence on internal voluntaryism meant high seat-rents which the poorer classes could not afford. At a practical level, then, the urgency of Chalmers’ demand for a renewed and increased parliamentary grant was based on an alleged need for money to build and endow new churches as well as to aid existing but financially insecure chapels of ease that were being erected into quoad sacra parish churches.
The Royal Commission set out to investigate the truth of Chalmers' claims, but its terms of reference were much wider. Chalmers and his supporters thought the Commission should inquire only into the provision for religious instruction in and by the Established Church. It and it alone, they argued, had the right and duty to provide, on a territorial basis, religious and moral instruction for the whole people of Scotland, and to be supported by the State in these efforts. However, from the outset the Commission, because of its dissenting complexion and Melbourne's need to placate his dissenter supporters, explicitly rejected the Established Church's definition of itself as the National Church. Instead, the Commissioners were directed to examine the provision of religious and moral instruction in and by the churches nationally. Their remit was broadly stated thus:

"... to inquire into the opportunities of public worship, and the means of religious instruction, and the pastoral superintendence of the people of Scotland, and how far these are of avail for the religious and moral improvement of the poor and of the working classes."

In any parish where a deficiency in any one of these areas was alleged to exist, a deputation from the Commission was to visit that parish and endeavour to ascertain on the spot the number of places of worship belonging to the Established Church, the means of accommodation which they afforded, and the situation of these places of worship with respect to the boundaries and to the population of the
If insufficiency or inadequacy was indeed discovered then the causes of this were to be explained. Moreover, in all such parishes the number of persons attending or connected with the Established Church was to be stated.

However - and this was gall to Chalmers and the Evangelical Party of the Church of Scotland - the Commissioners were also required to examine in these same allegedly deficient parishes

"the number of places of worship belonging to any other religious denomination, and the number of persons attending or belonging thereto; and generally to ascertain the numbers of the poor and working classes who attend or are connected with the Established Church or other places of public worship in connection with it, and the numbers of those who attend places... of worship belonging to other religious denominations, and the opportunities and the extent of accommodation for religious worship that is afforded to them."

Similar inquiries were to be carried out into the religious instruction and pastoral superintendence afforded by the Established Church and all other denominations to the poor and working classes. An account was to be made of how far and from what causes the poor and working classes were deprived of the means of attending church, and of receiving religious instruction and pastoral superintendence. Finally, the Commissioners were instructed to examine the financial position of the Established Church, taking into
consideration all sources and potential sources of income from teinds to collections. 8

In short, the Royal Commission on Religious Instruction was to be an investigation of the capability of all the churches to provide religious and moral instruction, particularly for the poor and working classes. It was to be an examination not just of church accommodation and stewardship but also of opportunities.

Questionnaires were despatched to Church of Scotland parishes throughout the country and on the basis of returns to these a deputation of Commissioners visited parishes where there was an alleged deficiency in the provision for religious instruction. On 25 August 1836 Airdrie received such a deputation, since the returns from Airdrie East and West parishes and from New Monkland parish all claimed a deficiency of one kind or another. The data on Airdrie appeared in the Eighth Report by the Commissioners of Religious Instruction. 9

To date, the evidence of the Royal Commission has not been viewed favourably by historians of Scottish religion. Drummond and Bulloch, for example, while acknowledging that the Commission "is a mine of information, as yet little explored, on the religious life of Scotland" 10 also argued that the intense inter-church rivalry of the period meant that competitive claims were made in the evidence, often
based only on guesswork. Voluntaries and Established churchmen were intent on proving the validity of their respective cases and consequently ministers exaggerated in their returns and tended to present a distorted picture.\textsuperscript{11} Callum Brown thinks that both the Commission and later the 1851 Census on religion were seriously flawed because the collection of statistics was left to churchmen "with the result that the first was haphazard in its coverage and the second incomplete."\textsuperscript{12}

Yet even if we accept that there are exaggerations and distortion in the Commission's data caused largely by inter-denominational rivalry and ministerial "guestimates", it is important not to over-stress the degree of hyperbole employed. Certainly, it was in the interests of the dissenters to see high returns for attendance in all churches since this would disprove the Established Church case for more Established churches and more State funds. But it was not in the interests of either Voluntaries and dissenters or Established churchmen to make wild claims.

Church of Scotland ministers who made too much of deficiencies in the provision of religious instruction, especially in areas where the dissenters were strong, ran the risk of playing into the Voluntaries' hands by showing that the Established Church was not the National Church in any meaningful way.
On the other hand, Voluntaries and dissenters could not afford to overestimate their strength, for this might produce a false sense of security leading to a slackening of effort and of fund raising.

No doubt some Established churchmen deliberately avoided claiming any deficiency so as to prevent the Voluntaries from putting themselves forward via the Royal Commission. But, all in all, neither the Established churches nor the Voluntaries and dissenters could gain much by deliberately "cooking the books". It seems reasonable to suggest that, with due caution, the Commissioners' evidence can be used most fruitfully in a description of the space that religion occupied in the life of the nation and of particular localities. The significance of the localities is important. Although the Commission was a government sponsored survey intended to produce a picture of the provision for religious instruction in the nation as a whole, it was compiled from the bottom up. The Commissioners' "national" picture was a composite; that is, made up of distinct local studies. It is appropriate to view the Commission in this way and to consider its evidence first in the context of the localities from whence it was gathered.

There are many other problems associated with the use of statistics on religion provided by government, Church or private surveys in the nineteenth century. These have been
discussed at length by Currie, Gilbert and Horsley. In particular, any attempt to quantify religion based on analyses of membership and attendance figures is hotly debated because of doubts about how one can relate such statistical data to religious belief and practice.

The Royal Commission certainly came up with a number of reasons why the poor and working classes could not afford to go to church, suggesting that there may have been a measure of truth in Chalmers' claim of a nascent churchism. But, membership and attendance figures tell us nothing of people's responses to worship, sermons, religious ceremonies, and celebrations (such as communion), or to rites of passage (marriage, baptism, funerals). They tell us little about religious consciousness per se, of the impact of religion on people's daily lives, or of the diffusion of religiosity in communities. In short, the church-going approach cannot fully measure the ways in which religion penetrated community and culture, nor can it uncover the nature of private, individual belief. Callum Brown has argued that attendance at church does not mean that someone is a devout Christian and non-attendance does not necessarily imply atheism or agnosticism.

"Non-church-going may well indicate exclusion or alienation from organised religion or a combination of both... but it does not reveal unbelief."
On the other hand, attendance at church does not mean that someone is not a devout Christian; it does not imply superficial commitment, nominal Christianity, hypocrisy, social pressure resulting from deference, the need to conform, or the power of hegemonic bourgeois ideology. In other words, if it is true that membership and attendance figures cannot be taken as an accurate measurement of the intensity or content of belief and commitment, or of religious motivation, it is equally true that they cannot be ignored as, at the very least, giving an indication of a willingness to believe and of the potential for belief, commitment and religious motivation.15

In considering the findings of the Royal Commissioners’ visit to Airdrie we will not be addressing specifically either the Voluntaries’ or the Established Church case with respect to the endowments or patronage questions except insofar as these touch on our discussion of space. Attention will be paid in the main to attendance and/or membership figures and to the social composition of the respective Airdrie churches, as far as this is possible on the evidence of the Commission, in order to present a snapshot of the religious state of the town in the midst of industrialisation and population expansion.

The deputation of Commissioners that visited Airdrie in August 1836 arrived to find eight churches operating from within the burgh bounds, and one, New Monkland Kirk,
located outside. New Monkland quoad sacra parish still, at this stage, included a large slice of the Eastern half of Airdrie burgh so the old parish church was investigated alongside the other Airdrie churches.

A visit from a deputation of Commissioners had been prompted by allegations of a deficiency in the provision of religious instruction from the East, West and New Monkland Established churches. In a table of eleven possible causes of deficiency the East Church was listed under heads ten (seat-rents) and eleven (want of endowments) and the West Church under eleven only. This compared dramatically with New Monkland Kirk which appeared under heads one (population), two (territorial extent of parish), six (inconvenient situation of parish church), seven (inadequate size of church), eight (unequal allotment of sittings) and eleven (want of endowments).

However, of the total of nine churches examined by the deputation, the East, West and New Monkland alone were in the Establishment. The remaining six, - North Bridge Street RPs, Haldane Baptists, Wellwynd, Broomknoll and Graham Street seceders, and one Independent congregation - not clearly identified but probably the beginnings of the Ebenezer Congregationalists - were outside.

Now taking the population of the burgh at this time to be approximately 9,000 it is clear that there were more non-
Established churches per head of population than Established churches:

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It remains to be seen whether this superficial measure of the Established Church under pressure is borne out by the Commissioners’ evidence.

The East Parish QS – East Church of Scotland, North Bridge Street RPs, Haldane Baptists

The East parish quoad sacra was of a relatively small area. Its greatest length was about one mile and its greatest breadth about half a mile. Located entirely within Airdrie burgh it embraced much of the residential and commercial heart of the town. No dwelling place in the parish was more than a mile from the parish church18 and the population of the parish was composed “chiefly of merchants miners, weavers, labourers and other artisans.”19

The minister, Joseph Finlayson, and his assistant, Thomas Burns, were supported by income generated from seat-rents
and other forms of "internal voluntaryism". From out of the revenue raised by seat-rents a number of expenses had to be paid, the principal one being the minister's stipend. This hovered around £120 per annum but varied according to the yield from seat-rents. In an effort to protect the minister from the vagaries of income from seat-rents the feuars of the East Church guaranteed a stipend of £63. Both Finlayson and Burns were unhappy with this system of payment, believing it to be "greatly inefficient." Indeed, the minister had to pay his assistant out of his own pocket and in addition did not, as yet, have a manse or glebe, or any provision in lieu of these. Finlayson and Burns complained that their ability to provide adequate provision for religious instruction and pastoral superintendence was hampered by the carelessness, bad habits "and consequent poverty" of parishioners as well as by lack of an endowment to the church from state funds.

In 1836 the East Church does indeed appear to have been running on a tight budget. Seat-rents for 1835 had raised £123 14 10d, ten pounds less than in 1834. Out of this sum the minister had to get his stipend. In addition a feu-duty of £2, a precentor's salary of £4, and a church officer and clerk's salary of £5 all had to be paid. Other income was raised from ordinary, that is weekly Sunday collections averaging £20 per year. Much of this was used to help provide for the poor throughout Airdrie and New Monkland district. Extraordinary collections,
usually taken up twice yearly, were directed towards sacramental expenses and repairs to the church.28

As well as being self-financing, the East Church, as was noted in Chapter Four, exhibited a high degree of congregational democracy. Seat-rents were fixed by a committee of feuars and sitters. Although it is not clear from the Commissioners report, this feuars' and sitters' committee appears to be another name for the management committee which supervised secular affairs such as poor relief.29 That the East Church was favourable ground for open forms of church government is the more easily understandable when we consider the social composition of the parish population and of the church congregation.

Thomas Burns had conducted a rough census of the East parish in anticipation of the Royal Commission.30 He estimated the total parish population to be 3,389 of whom 3,298, or 97% were "poor and working classes". Of this total population 1,496 persons claimed allegiance to the Established Church of whom 1,450 (97%) were of the poor and working classes. Other denominations accounted for 1,190 people of whom 1,145 (96%) were poor and working class. 703 persons were returned as "not known to belong to any denomination" and all of these (100%) were poor and working class. However, the above figures must be viewed alongside others given for membership and attendance at the East Church.31
Regular attenders were numbered at more than 600 while average attendance throughout the year was also about 600. Of the 600 in both cases, only 200, or 33%, were actually parishioners. The remaining 400 were non-parishioners (ie people not resident in the East parish) coming mainly from New Monkland parish quoad sacra and some from as far away as Bothwell parish. Attendances had not varied greatly in the five years prior to 1836 nor had the number of communicants, which Finlayson and Burns reckoned at 450. Of these 450 communicants only 130, or 29%, were parishioners. Airdrie East Church's dependence on non-parishioners was confirmed in the crucial matter of seat-rents. Of 588 sittings available in August 1836, "including 57 allocated and occupied by feuars...", 540, or 92% were actually let. And of these 540, 389, sittings or 72%, were held by people not living in the parish.

In short, the East Church was not a parish church in the old sense of that term. Rather, it depended on, and served the whole of Airdrie town. Indeed, there seems to have been little attempt either in recruiting members or in pastoral superintendence to adhere to the territorial system.

Furthermore, according to Finlayson and Burns, almost all East Church attenders and communicants belonged to the working classes and the poor. However, this assertion
must be qualified. For the year 1835, of the 588 seats available for letting, only 26, or 4.4% were let at the lowest rate of more than two shillings but not more than three shillings.\textsuperscript{35} 30 seats, or 5.1% were let at the highest rate of more than ten shillings but not more than fifteen.\textsuperscript{36} The bulk of seats let went at the two middle rates: 274, or 46.6% of the seats available were let at more than three shillings but not more than five; and 146, or 24.8% were let at more than five shillings but not more than seven.\textsuperscript{37} So more than 71% of seats let went at rates of more than three shillings but not more than seven. This suggests that while the majority of attenders and communicants may well have been of the working classes and the poor, it was the better-off working class people who actually rented seats.

Many of the features of the East Church were characteristic of the older North Bridge Street Reformed Presbyterian Church, at the time of the Commissioners' visit under John Carslaw. The Reformed Presbyterian Church had always served the whole of Airdrie town, and, indeed, an area far bigger than that. In 1836, forty-six members' houses were more than two miles from North Bridge Street, twelve more than four miles, six more than six miles and the most distant house, seven miles.\textsuperscript{38}

Church and minister were supported from revenues raised mainly by seat-rents. The minister's stipend was set at
£80, with six guineas annually for sacramental expenses and a manse and garden.  

39 Stipend was guaranteed by "the promise of the people and has never varied."  

40 Income from seat-rents had risen slowly but steadily from £54 10 0 in 1833 to £57 6 6 in 1835.  

41 Out of this, part-payment had to be made on the stipend and for a feu-duty, plus £3 per year on the manse and £2 2s to the Church Officer.  

42 The RPs appear to have been more generous towards church collections than their neighbours at the East Church. A total of £70 in 1834 had risen to £74 17 10 in 1835.  

43 This money was divided between stipend, poor relief and contributions to "Bible and missionary purposes and ... poor congregations."  

44 Indeed, as the Royal Commission clearly shows, the RPs played a full part in inter-denominational Evangelical initiatives in Airdrie, cooperating in particular with other dissenting churches. Thus in 1835 £8 8s was donated for Bible and missionary projects on top of £7 18 5 in the form of subscriptions to Airdrie's Tract and Christian Instruction Societies.  

45 Moreover, in conjunction with two other dissenting congregations in Airdrie the RPs employed a missionary in summer 1835 "to visit among the destitute poor, to whom they paid £80..."  

46 This kind of co-operation was not unusual. Along with other dissenting ministers Carslaw regularly preached to the poor on Sunday evenings in the town school room at services especially for the benefit "of those who for want of clothes will not attend a regular
church" In addition, Carslaw taught "a senior and junior class for all who choose to attend." Congregational participation in the affairs of the church was also a feature of Airdrie Reformed Presbyterianism. The civil affairs of the congregation were under a committee of management appointed by the members, a committee that among other things provided sittings for the poor.

In his evidence to the Commissioners Carslaw noted that the average attendance at North Bridge Street in June, July and August was 400 dropping in the winter months to 300. During the three years prior to 1836 attendances had gone up by between 70 and 80. Communicants numbered 161 in 1836. Of these 161, 44, or 27.3% came from Airdrie West parish; 37, or 23% from Airdrie East parish; 34, or 21% from New Monkland parish quoad sacra, and the remaining 46, or 28.6% from the parishes of Old Monkland, Shotts, Cumbernauld, Bothwell and Blantyre. As with Airdrie East Church, the North Bridge Street RP Church was predominantly an Airdrie town church with 50.3% of communicants drawn from Airdrie East and West parishes alone. And again, as with Airdrie East, attenders were reputed to belong mostly to the working classes, though Carslaw specifically included "farmers" in this category.
However, even more than in the East Church of Scotland it was the better-off working people who supported North Bridge Street Church. Of a total number of sittings\textsuperscript{52} available in 1836 of 450, 67 were set apart for the poor and provided by the managers. The remaining 383 or 85\% of all seats were set apart for letting. 235, or 61\% of the 383 were actually being rented in March 1836. Unfortunately, Carslaw could not or did not want to provide figures for a break-down on the proportion of the 235 being rented at specific rates. However, he did give statistics for let and unlet seats at each rate for 1833, and claimed that other years were similar.

On the information for 1833 the first point of note is that the middle rate of more than five shillings but not more than seven accounted for the vast majority of let (and unlet) seats.\textsuperscript{53} 161 seats were rented at this rate (125 unlet) as contrasted with only 12 seats rented at the lower rate of two shillings but not more than three; and 29 seats rented at more than seven shillings but not more than ten.

Of the three churches located within the East parish bounds and surveyed by the deputation of Commissioners, John Calder's Baptist congregation was by far the smallest though by no means the least enthusiastic. Income and expenditure were both minimal. There was no system of seat-renting and no sittings were appropriated "except the communion seats".\textsuperscript{54} In 1836 the congregation held its
meetings in a hall solely for their use rented from a private individual at £4 per annum.\(^{55}\) Calder cost the church nothing for, as was noted earlier, he received no stipend. Any other necessary expenses were supplied by the church’s own efforts. No public collections were taken but private collections “confined exclusively to communicants”.\(^{56}\) were made every Sunday. Anyone admitted to the church fellowship joined in the understanding that “he will contribute according to his ability to defraying of the necessary expenses [of the church].”\(^ {57}\) However, for the most part the congregation was in “easy circumstances as to pecuniary matters”\(^ {58}\) for the liberality of a wealthy family at one time in connection with the congregation—probably the Haldanes of Auchingray—often paid the rent on the meeting house and enabled the church to send “upwards of £50 to the Baptist mission in India for translating the Scriptures.”\(^ {59}\) Contributions from another, again unnamed, wealthy family allowed the congregation to assist their poor.\(^ {60}\)

Although there were only 16 communicants in 1836, a decrease of 7 or 8 in the preceding five years, average attendances ran at between 30 and 35, with about 45 persons “in the habit of attending.”\(^ {61}\) These attendance figures had altered but little in the previous five years and attenders were evenly split between parishioners and non-parishioners.\(^ {62}\) However, Calder’s Baptist Church was dominated by Airdrie people, for non-parishioners were
drawn from Airdrie West, New Monkland, Bothwell and Cambusnethan parishes. 

Attenders, submitted Calder, were "all of the poor and working classes".

The West parish OS - West Church, Wellwynd Seceders (United Associate), Broomknoll Seceders (Auld Licht Burghers)

The West parish quoad sacra was of an even smaller area than neighbouring East parish. At its greatest length it was only half a mile and at its greatest breadth a quarter of a mile. Like the East, the West parish was wholly within Airdrie burgh and embraced much of the commercial and residential part of the town not included in East parish. The West parish population was made up of persons "chiefly engaged in mining, weaving, labouring or handicraft..." No part of the parish, and no inhabited dwelling place was more than quarter of a mile from the West Church.

Although it had received some £300 from the Church Extension Fund to help towards the costs of erecting the building the West Church was otherwise entirely self-supporting. Income was generated principally by renting seats. As with the East Church, the West was run on a tight budget, a restriction which the minister, William Jackson, complained was making it difficult for him to provide an efficient pastoral superintendence. The debt on
the church property was particularly burdensome and would be considerable lightened, argued Jackson, if the West Church were to receive an adequate endowment.  

Although Jackson received a stipend of £105 from income of £166 generated by renting seats in 1835, he was guaranteed £70 a year secured, as was noted in Chapter Seven, by a bond of the feuars. Anything over and above the minimum of £70 depended on the prosperity of the congregation and on supplements from the ordinary Sunday collections. Nor did Jackson have, as yet, manse and glebe or provision in lieu of these. Out of the £166 raised in 1835 there also came the interest on a £1,000 church debt, a feu-duty of £18, insurance of £3 7 6, precentor’s salary of £5, beadle’s salary of £4 and the clerk’s of £3 3s.

Other revenue was raised from ordinary and extra-ordinary collections. That from ordinary collections was at this time, and by order of the General Assembly, paid into the West Church’s general funds to clear debt. Thereafter one third of ordinary collections was to go to the poor’s fund of the original New Monkland parish. Ordinary collections in 1835 had amounted to £82 2 3, and extraordinary collections - used to defray expenses for communion and for bringing gas into the church - totalled £25 2 9½.
Financial stringency was to be expected in a church which at the time of the Commissioners' visit had been operational for only sixteen months. But this was not the only difficulty that Jackson claimed hampered his efforts. Another barrier was the dispersed nature of his congregation. In January 1836 the kirk session carried out a census of the West parish population in order to discover people's church loyalties. Of a total population of 3,685, 1,479, or 40.1% claimed to belong to the Established Church, 1,359, or 36.9% claimed to belong to other denominations and 847, or 23% were not known to belong to any denomination. Moreover, of the total 3,685, 2570, or 70% were returned as poor and working classes, a proportion far less than Burns' findings in his census of the East parish where 97% of the total population were returned as poor and working classes. Indeed, in each category of claimed church loyalty the proportion of poor and working classes was lower in the West parish than in the East. In the East, of 1,479 claiming to belong to the Established Church, 950 (64.2%) were poor and working classes; of 1,359 other denominations, 800 (59%), and of 847 not knowns, 820 (97%). Given that the total population of Burns' East parish was 3,389, and in a larger area, it is possible to conclude that the West parish in general contained more of the better-off section of the working classes in the Airdrie burgh generally.
However, we need to bear in mind that a large proportion of attenders and communicants at the West church came from outside the West parish bounds. Jackson told the Commissioners’ that while about 1,000 people were in the habit of attending, 80 average attendances were about 800 of whom only 350, or 43.7%, were actually parishioners. Attendances were rising but, Jackson argued, “with a congregation of 800 paying seat-rents, and scattered over several parishes…” it was impossible to give sufficient pastoral care to the poor and unchurched of his own parish, let alone those outside of it, precisely because he had to attend first to the needs of the congregation — parishioners and non-parishioners alike. Although the number of communicants had risen from 300 to 440 during 1835, with the bulk of new communicants coming from within the West parish, there were still 227 non-parishioners to 213 parishioners.

Furthermore, both attenders and communicants were “mostly of the working classes” and on the issue of poverty in particular Jackson clearly felt that the tide was against him. In Chapter Six we referred to Jackson’s comment on the “hundreds of poor” within Airdrie. Jackson thought this pressure could only be dealt with if the West Church received an endowment. Of the 100 seats that the managers of the church provided (free) for the use of the poor nearly all were occupied "and should a demand increase at
the rate it has done, the congregation will not be able to supply it."86

To the 100 sittings for the poor have to be added 1,100 sittings set apart for letting, a total of 1,200 sittings available.87 No precise information was given to the Commissioners on seat-rents except that in August 1836, 845, or 76% were actually let88 - a far smaller proportion of total sittings available for letting than the East Church's 92%. While the high priced (highest rate was seven shillings and sixpence) and the low priced (lowest, three shillings) were let, there was "less demand for those at intermediate rates... "89 Demand for the cheap seats was partly occasioned by the fact that the grant from the Church Extension Fund had been made on the condition - in line with Chalmers' general objectives - that fully one half of the sittings should be let at an average not exceeding three shillings.90 If this condition was being met at the West Church then there would have been about 550 of the 1,100 sittings set apart for letting priced at the lower rate with the remaining 550 divided between the higher and intermediate rates. In other words, without more evidence on seat-rents it is almost impossible to tell if the lack of demand for intermediate rates betokened a poorer congregation than that of the East parish. Ironically, the unlet seats in the West were not generally occupied by anyone.91
Nevertheless, in spite of the difficulties with the seat-rents and sittings figures for the West Church there are other indications that it was indeed a wealthier congregation all round. First, it could afford to provide 100 sittings for the poor. This may not have been nearly enough, but the East Church provided none at all. Second, the West Church ordinary collections, at least for 1835, were four times the annual average for the East Church even although the West's average attendances were only double the East's. The difference could be due to a variety of different circumstances; but it could simply mean that at the West Church more people were giving more because they could afford to give more.

If poverty was likely to prevent attendance at public worship then another cause of this deficiency, argued Jackson, was "the neglect of early moral and religious education." In this area too, Jackson worked. He stated that since the erection of the West Church

"there have been two Sabbath schools connected with the Establishment - one in the Church attended by upwards of 200 children; the other in Motherwell's Lane, attended by 80." 94

Moreover, there was a weekly meeting for prayer and Bible reading attended by 20 persons and a school "recently opened" for the education of the poor of the parish where during the day 50 children received gratuitous instruction, and in the evening 20 were taught at a reduced rate of two
shillings per quarter. These efforts among the young and the poor were backed up by more general evangelisation led by "eighteen young men connected with the [West] congregation..." who distributed monthly some 700 religious tracts.

The West Church, then, was lively and active, its minister an aggressive and enthusiastic Evangelical. In his evidence to the Commissioners Jackson was less reticent about the problems of poverty and education in Airdrie than his colleagues at the East Church had been. Nevertheless, it is clear that both the West and East churches were of and for the whole of Airdrie. The West, like the East, had a predominantly working class congregation and it was as a church covering the whole town, rather than a parish church, that the West made its most important contribution to the construction of community in Airdrie. This was just as true for the two seceder churches within the West parish bounds, Wellwynd United Associate and Broomknoll Original Burgher.

Financially, Wellwynd Church was in a comfortable position in 1836. Revenues, raised from seat-rents and collections, were steady throughout the early 1830s and all expenditures were being met with relative ease. In 1835 £130 19 11½ in seat-rents and £70 3 9 in collections covered all the congregation's expenses with plenty to spare. The minister's stipend, guaranteed by the congregation and not
varying was £120 plus £4 at each sacrament. Other expenses were £22 interest on a debt of £500 on the church properties, including a manse - a debt which the session clerk claimed the congregation "could easily liquidate if disposed to... ", the manse and garden alone being "equivalent to the whole debt" - precentor's salary of £4 4s, seat-letter's of £2 2s, church officer's £3 12s, gas, sacramental and other incidentals totalling £5, and a £3 contribution to the United Associate Synod's fund for poor churches.

Congregational control and participation had, as was noted in Chapter Four, been part of the Wellwynd story since the beginning in 1789. The minister at the time of the Commissioners' visit, George Sommerville, was assiduous in attending to his pastoral duties. Although a keen Voluntaryist this did not prevent him from extending his services to the sick of other denominations, "particularly those belonging to the Establishment." Sommerville cooperated alongside Carslaw of North Bridge Street RPs, Ferrier of Graham Street United Associate Church and James Findlay of Broomknoll Seceders in the Sunday evening services for the poor held in the town's school, in the distribution of religious tracts, and in supporting a town's missionary in the summer months. Moreover, Wellwynd itself ran a Missionary Society and a Benevolent Institution to give pecuniary assistance to the poor.
Sabbath school instituted in 1822 and attended by "above 200" completed the main activities of Wellwynd.\textsuperscript{107}

By the 1830s attenders at Wellwynd were "with few exceptions, all of the working classes."\textsuperscript{108} Communicants too were "nearly all of the working classes."\textsuperscript{109} Average attendances in the spring and summer months were about 640, forty more than in winter months. This figure had not increased for some time.\textsuperscript{110} However, communicants numbered 550 and this was an increase of 280 in the years since Sommerville took office.\textsuperscript{111} According to a survey carried out by the church elders the total number of people actually "connected" with the church and under the supervision of the minister was some 1,413.\textsuperscript{112} Of these, 1,080, or 76.4\% were parishioners, although only 687 of the 1,080 were persons above twelve years of age. The remaining 333 non-parishioners connected with Wellwynd were spread between Old Monkland, Bothwell and Shotts.\textsuperscript{113} Sommerville did not think that the circumstances of his congregation prevented him from extending his week day superintendence to the whole of them.\textsuperscript{114}

Information on seat-rents and sittings at Wellwynd, which would help to clarify a little the social composition of the church, is almost non-existent, Sommerville claiming that the number of seats let and unlet at different rates could not be stated.\textsuperscript{115} Nevertheless, he was prepared to disclose that Wellwynd's total available sittings was 650
and all of these were set apart for letting. No seats were provided by the managers for the poor but the poor were accommodated "in sittings round the pulpit, and a few in table seats"  and they were permitted to occupy unlet sittings. As the lowest rate for rented seats was three shillings and the highest ten, it is perhaps fair to say that Wellwynd catered largely for the better-off working classes. Certainly of the 650 sittings available for let 550, or 84.6%, were let in January 1836. All in all, Sommerville gave the impression of having little to complain of, as did James Findlay of Broomknoll.

Sommerville’s pastoral superintendence was made easier because a large proportion of his congregation were actually parishioners; James Findlay was not so lucky. Broomknoll Church drew heavily on the area outside the West parish. Some 130 families connected with it lived at a distance of more than two miles from the church and 17 families more than four miles. However, this did not mean that Broomknoll was any less an Airdrie church than others. Indeed, of 239 families connected with the church but not parishioners, 46 were from New Monkland quoad sacra, and 58 from Airdrie East with the remaining 135 from Old Monkland, Baillieston and Bothwell.

As with the other churches mentioned so far, Broomknoll was entirely self-supporting and depended for its income on seat-rents, ordinary and extraordinary collections. In
1835 seat-rents had yielded £74 12 5d, ordinary collections £54 1 5d and extraordinary collections £30 19 4½. A small amount—between £3 and £4—was also obtained from the sale of lairs in the burying ground attached to the church. From these monies congregational expenses were £80 minister's stipend—not a legally secured sum and varying with the prosperity of the congregation—interest on a debt of £870 on the church, manse and garden in two payments (one at 4% and one at 5%), feu-duty of £3 3s, a precentor's salary of £2 2s, and sacramental expenses (not stated).

Broomknoll's pattern of attendances was similar to that of Wellwynd. In the summer months average attendances were 500 but in the winter this dropped to 450. Findlay claimed that attendances had increased considerably over the years and, furthermore, that "nine-tenths" of attenders were "of the poor and working classes". Communicants numbered 400 and here too, Findlay stated, this represented a considerable increase in recent times. As with attenders "about nine-tenths" of communicants were of the poor and working classes.

However, from the information on seat-rents given to the Commissioners it is clear that Broomknoll was not peopled by the very poor. Rates were set by the management committee. The lowest was two shillings but not more than three, the highest seven shillings but not more than ten.
As in Wellwynd no seats were set aside for the poor.\textsuperscript{133} Of a total of 504 seats available for letting 424, or 84.1\%, were actually let in November 1835.\textsuperscript{134} Of these 424, 280, or 66\%, were let by non-parishioners. The bulk of seats let went at the middle rate of three shillings but nor more than five. In 1835 this rate accounted for 276, or 65\% of the 424 let sittings. 73 seats (17.2\%) went at five shillings but not more than seven. Only 27 of a possible 60 seats were let at the lowest rate, while 38 of a possible 40 went at the highest rate.

Although Findlay complained to the Commissioners that the widespread locations of members of the church made effective pastoral superintendence difficult\textsuperscript{135} he expressed dissatisfaction with little else. Broomknoll, like Wellwynd, was, given the changing circumstances of Airdrie town, a relatively sound operation. Indeed, minister and members of the congregation were more than happy to cooperate alongside others in the interdenominational evangelisation projects in Airdrie.\textsuperscript{136}

By contrast, at New Monkland Kirk, James Begg thought he had causes for grievance.
James Begg's evidence to the deputation of Commissioners in August 1836 testified to the growing isolation of New Monkland from the life and culture of Airdrie town and burgh. In some respects Begg's allegations of deficiency in the opportunities of public worship and the means of religious instruction and pastoral superintendence represented nostalgia for a lost world when Airdrie had been a village of no consequence and the body of New Monkland parish had been whole and undivided. Begg made more complaints than either Finlayson or Jackson in Airdrie and this alone was indicative of just how far removed the kirk had become from its one-time daughter chapels of ease. Not only the circumstances, but also the character of the old parish church and the newer extension charges were quite different.

Although he did not officiate at any other church Begg claimed that it was difficult for him to render effective pastoral superintendence in the now diminished New Monkland parish quoad sacra because of its territorial extent and large numbers of people. Certainly, New Monkland quoad sacra was larger than Airdrie East or West parishes. Even though it now only included that part of Airdrie outwith the East and West parishes, an area mainly to the east of
the town centre out along the furthest reaches of Graham Street towards Edinburgh, it still embraced large tracts of rural hinterland. Moreover, although less densely populated than Airdrie East or West parishes, New Monkland quoad sacra contained many more people.

The Census of 1831 had put the population of New Monkland parish quoad civilia at 9,867. According to a survey carried out by Begg and others\textsuperscript{138} this figure had risen to 12,375 by 1836, of whom 5,500 were contained in New Monkland parish quoad sacra. For this number of people, Begg stated, New Monkland Kirk was far too small while in relation to parishioners resident in Airdrie burgh it was inconveniently situated.\textsuperscript{139}

Furthermore, if parishioners in Airdrie were not put off by the distance to New Monkland Kirk, then they were certainly discouraged by the unequal allotment of sittings in the church. In this respect, the situation remained as it had been organised in the 1776–7 extension of the building, with only a quarter of the 1,200 sittings reserved for Airdrie people and the remainder divided among New Monkland heritors according to their valued rent and occupied by them and their tenants.\textsuperscript{140} The consequence of this way of dividing the seats was that the poor had no provision as of right in, or regular access to the church.\textsuperscript{141} Even when in an attempt to remedy this situation some of the communion seats were set apart for the poor these were
not filled and instead were let "for the behoof of the poor". In fact, at New Monkland in the mid-eighteen thirties landowners values predominated and this in spite of the fact that most parishioners were certainly not landowners. Indeed, the rise of Airdrie with its own increasingly powerful middle classes in some senses allowed the continuation of landed values in New Monkland Kirk simply because middle-class interests now lay elsewhere.

Nothing highlights more clearly the growing division between old New Monkland and Airdrie, or illustrates better the town's New World status, than the differing methods of paying - or at least recording - minister's stipend. Of the nine churches examined in the Royal Commission's digest of evidence for Airdrie and New Monkland, James Begg was the only minister who did not receive his stipend in cash raised from seat-rents and augmented from collections. Begg's stipend was registered as still paid from tithes supplemented by consumption or sale of produce from his glebe.

"The minister's stipend is 17 chalders, half meal, half barley, payable from the teinds and fluctuating with the fairs, with £10 for communion elements. The minister has a manse, and a glebe of 10 acres which may be worth about 21s or 25s per acre".

What this meant was that Begg was firmly associated with an older rural New Monkland community and culture where landed wealth conferred status and where rural values held
sway. In spite of his sincere efforts to come to terms with Airdrie town Begg was trapped between two worlds. At Airdrie every minister was paid a cash stipend, reflecting the town’s new wealth won through industry, commerce and the exploitation of manual labour.

The image of Begg as a man out of step with the times was reinforced by his marked reluctance to discuss any of New Monkland’s financial matters. He supplied no figures on revenues raised through endowments or seat-rents.¹⁴⁴ No prices of seats let were given because he considered this "a private matter".¹⁴⁵ The only sums of money that Begg disclosed were those for ordinary and extraordinary collections. Ordinary collections in 1835 amounted to £47 17 8½—the lowest amount since 1831—and monies from this were added to the assessment for the poor’s fund.¹⁴⁶ Two figures were given for extraordinary collections though no year was stated. The first sum was £5 13s given to the Airdrie Orphan Society,¹⁴⁷ the second, of £7 2s, was for the Airdrie Bible Society.¹⁴⁸

Begg’s evidence on the social composition of the parish population and on attenders and communicants at the kirk was equally limited. He noted that the parish population included farmers but that most people were

"labourers, weavers, colliers, miners, etc [sic], partly residing in Airdrie and several villages, the rest dispersed over the country."¹⁴⁹
Unlike other ministers and their sessions, Begg and his session had made no attempt to classify individual parishioners who claimed church allegiance. Instead, Begg opted for a broader classification of families. This information is too vague to be of any real value.\textsuperscript{150}

Begg put average attendance in summer from 1,000 to 1,200 and in winter from 800 to 1,000.\textsuperscript{151} Nearly all attenders, he claimed, were of the poor and working classes.\textsuperscript{152} Communicants were reckoned at 800 and both these and attendance figures had varied little in the last five years.\textsuperscript{153}

Unfortunately for Begg, the only other church in New Monkland parish quoad sacra that could pose any threat to the parish kirk’s theoretical domination was Andrew Ferrier’s Graham Street United Associate Church. Thus, Begg found himself confronted with Airdrie’s leading and most fervent Voluntaryist.

Graham Street, although a going concern only since 1833, was keen to put its best face to the Commissioners. As we have seen, Ferrier made no secret of his objections to the whole idea of a Royal Commission, but he had no intention of giving any sign that Graham Street was not a successful venture. As with all the other dissenting churches in Airdrie, and the East and West churches of Scotland, Graham
Street United Associate was entirely self-supporting depending on income from seat rents and from ordinary and extraordinary collections. Since the church building costs had been borne largely by Ferrier himself the congregation had no responsibility for any debts incurred on it but rented the property (at £52 a year) from Ferrier. This rent and all other congregational expenses were met in 1835 from seat rents of between £60 and £70, ordinary collections of between £40 and £50, and extraordinary collections totalling £10. In addition a fund of £500 was

"vested in the minister, the interest of which is to be applied in supporting the poor of the congregation, under the restriction that those receiving relief from it must have all the advantage of parochial provision before anything is paid to them from this fund."

(Ferrier would stop at nothing to irritate the heritors and session of New Monkland Established Church). Any surplus from this investment not applied to the poor was placed at Ferrier’s disposal

"for purposes connected with the congregation, to which purposes also, under certain qualifications, the whole sum is to be available at his death."

Besides rent for the church, liabilities to be set off against income included Ferrier’s stipend of £100, a sum not secured by any legal obligation and varying according to the size and prosperity of the congregation, a precentor’s salary of £4, smaller amounts for the clerk and
door-keeper (not stated) and £3 sacramental expenses.\textsuperscript{57} Although Ferrier did not as yet have a manse, there were plans to provide him with some money in lieu of a house.\textsuperscript{158} The extraordinary collection of 1835 had been applied

"to missionary and other benevolent institutions, part being given to the Airdrie Tract and Bible Societies."\textsuperscript{159}

Ferrier’s personal wealth and generosity ensured that Graham Street was in the meantime on an even keel financially. This in turn meant that Ferrier’s pastoral efforts were not diverted into finding money and trying to make ends meet. He was thus able to devote most of his week day superintendence to all of his widely scattered congregation and – so he claimed – "to respond to those beyond it who gave notice of a wish for visitation or advice."\textsuperscript{160} Given his active enthusiasm in the Airdrie Voluntary Society there is no reason to doubt this last claim. Moreover, along with "a few active and intelligent" members of the congregation Ferrier ran

"week day classes for the young at particular seasons, and a Sabbath School attended by 50 or 60 children."\textsuperscript{161}

Personal financial security allowed Ferrier to flaunt his independence and to spend much time and energy attacking the Establishment. But this did not mean that he was all powerful at Graham Street; he positively encouraged
congregational participation in, and control of the church’s life and it was the Committee of Management which set the seat-rents and had sole charge of the civil affairs of the congregation.  

After only three years of existence in Airdrie, Ferrier claimed that average attendances at Graham Street were between 400 and 500 people while 700 to 800 were in the habit of attending. Communicants numbered about 350. The total number of the congregation in New Monkland parish quoad civilia he put at 600 with a further 470 “connected” non-parishioners coming from Old Monkland (300), Bothwell (160), and Shotts (10). Moreover, of the congregation all “with the exception of two or three families are of the working classes...” but he also included under “working classes” grocers, bakers, “etc”. This last comment on the social composition of his congregation illustrates Ferrier’s own perception of his middle class status — indeed, it was shared by the other Airdrie ministers — and also suggests that Graham Street, as with other churches, was dominated by the better-off working classes and the lower-middle class tradesmen and shopkeepers. This conclusion is borne out by the evidence on seat-renting and rates at Graham Street.

Sittings set apart for letting totalled 657. None were provided free for the poor. In August 1836 378, or 57.5% of available seats were actually let. Of these one went at
the lowest rate of more than two shillings but not more than three, and 38 at the highest rate of more than seven shillings but not more than ten. Of the remaining let seats, 155, or 41% of seats let went at more than three but not more than five, and 90, or 23.8% of seats let, at more than five shillings but not more than seven.¹⁷⁰

The evidence on Graham Street Church, at least in so far as it was presented to the Commissioners by Ferrier, suggests not only the strength of dissent in Airdrie town but also that there was plenty of space for yet another dissenting congregation. By contrast, there is little that can be said of the third congregation in New Monkland quoad sacra for it was only just beginning. Not clearly identified in the Commissioners’ digest of evidence, but probably the forerunner of the Ebenezer Congregational Church, this little independent church had been set up only in July 1836.¹⁷¹ One Reverend Massey¹⁷² was supervising this new adventure in independency. Revenues were as yet derived solely from regular collections and applied to defray the general expenses of the new congregation.¹⁷³ Massey received no stipend "beyond the payment of his personal expenses".¹⁷⁴ The existing place of worship was situated outside Airdrie, in the village of New Monkland, but a house in the burgh had been rented with the intention of fitting it out with sittings.¹⁷⁵ This new place of worship was projected to accommodate 300 and to be run on a seat letting basis.¹⁷⁶ Average attendances in July 1836 were given as "upwards of
and communicants put at 24. Most attenders and communicants came from "the parishes of Airdrie", the rest from Old Monkland.

Religion And the Impact of Industrialisation in Airdrie

The conclusions to be drawn from a consideration of the Royal Commissioners' findings in Airdrie must of necessity be tentative and must be set alongside what we know of the Airdrie churches and the Voluntary Controversy, and of the churches' wider involvement in community and culture.

(i) Town Vs. Country

With the exception of New Monkland Kirk, all the churches in New Monkland parish (quoad civilia) were town churches not only because they were located in or near the centre of the Airdrie settlement but also because they drew their congregations from all parts of the burgh regardless of parish boundaries. The Seceding and Independent churches from the beginning behaved as churches of the whole town, and the churches of Scotland quoad sacra followed suit for the most part ignoring their designated parish bounds. Airdrie was small and densely packed near the town centre and it was this that enabled all the churches to contribute and measure their contribution with respect to the whole
town. In spite of the continuing influence of New Monkland Kirk, and of James Begg's attempts to control events at Airdrie, there can be no doubt that by the mid-1830s New Monkland heritors, minister and session could not dominate the burgh. The disjunction of the East and West parishes - and later of the High - reinforced the split between town and country; between old landed wealth, interests and paternalism, and the new wealth, values and interest of developing industrial culture. Begg's Evangelicalism was linked to social conservatism and this tended to leave him outside the impatient radical tide of Airdrie Evangelicalism and dissent. His reluctance to provide financial information for the Commissioners, and the method by which he received his stipend, along with complaints that Airdrie was beyond the comprehension of his pastoral superintendence all indicated his Old World status and outlook. It was difficult for him to be paid "in kind" and occupy a country manse well outside of Airdrie and yet still identify - or be identified with - those paid in salaries or money wages living in busy Airdrie town. His social conservatism not only placed him at odds with Airdrie's radical dissenters, but also with colleagues of his own denomination who could understand and support weavers' unionism or radical initiatives. For radicals, both within and outside the Established Church, New Monkland Kirk was a symbol of landed wealth, power and selfishness. They were appalled by the manoeuvres of some of the New Monkland heritors to avoid the application of
the parish poor’s fund to residents of Airdrie because this would mean a progressive increase in the legal assessment. This was one reason why dissenters supported Finlayson against the efforts of New Monkland minister and session to weaken his position in the town.

During the Voluntary Controversy Airdrie dissenters and Voluntaryists attacked patronage as the mark of a corrupt Established Church and in concrete, local terms this meant opposing New Monkland Kirk yet again for it was the only church with involvement in Airdrie where patronage still counted for anything. Indeed, the Airdrie quoad sacra churches of Scotland appealed for the alteration of patronage. The East and West churches petitioned Parliament to this end in March 1840, followed shortly thereafter by the High Church, and by the Provost, Magistrates and Council of Airdrie.179 In an important sense, New Monkland Kirk was excluded from the main Voluntary Controversy battles as they unfolded in Airdrie precisely because it was the target of the town’s Voluntary and Established churches.

Patronage, however, was not the burning issue in Airdrie that it was in other parts of the country for the simple reason that the East and West churches of Scotland, and later the High, were outwith that tradition. By contrast, the endowments question was an area of great contention. For New Monkland Kirk the matter of state funding was less
important - even although Begg emphasised the need for more endowments - than it was for the new East and West churches, and from the Commissioners' evidence it is easy to see why. The East and West churches did not have the luxury of teinds or of endowment at all. They were completely dependent on seat-rents and the vagaries of congregational giving. From the Airdrie Voluntaries' point of view any endowments from the State to the Established churches of the town would not only have been abhorrent in principle but also - as Ferrier had claimed - revolutionary in practice. All the churches in Airdrie were self-supporting and embraced some form of direct congregational democracy usually through an elected committee of management with control of financial and other civil matters. For all practical purposes, the Airdrie churches of Scotland were already effectively "free" churches in spite of their attachment to the Established principle. This did not, as we shall see, determine the pattern of the Disruption in Airdrie but it meant that Airdrie was already a religious free-market by the mid-1830s. It was James Begg and New Monkland Kirk that sought to interfere with the laws of supply and demand by continual attempts to influence events in Airdrie to the advantage of New Monkland Kirk. For their part, the Airdrie Voluntaries, Evangelical and liberal, often radical in political complexion, were avowedly protectionist in their ecclesiastical aims. They did not want to see any alteration of the religious status quo in Airdrie which
award of endowments to the East and West churches would bring about. The Voluntaries were not fighting for the extension of religious free trade in Airdrie but for its preservation.

Given that there was undoubtedly a number of wealthy families among the burgh’s commercial, industrial and professional middle class, and a smaller number of extraordinarily wealthy families, it is ironic that the churches scraped by on such modest amounts of money. This may well have been indicative of the niggardliness of Airdrie’s nouveaux riches and certainly as early as 1810 Joseph Finlayson, in a sermon to the Airdrie Freemasons, had warned against withholding of money in the vain belief that Providence would provide.

"Away with such miserable subterfuges - Is it not by the instruments of others [people] that Providence provides for the wants of her children? For no man is absolutely independent. You are connected in society, and a certain portion of good things are bestowed upon you, not to lavish away in thoughtless prodigality, not to bury in the earth with despicable parsimony, but to minister to your own, and to other's necessities. What therefore is the duty of one, is the duty of all, to be performed according to ability." 180

But any apparent meanness of middle class support for the churches more likely highlights the values of self-help and thrift that were especially strong among the lower-middle and better-off working classes, precisely the groupings that dominated the Airdrie churches. The concern to secure
a property and to exercise sound financial management of the churches is a further indication of the importance of these values. This did not preclude churchmen from outright criticism of the disruptive and socially damaging effects of industrialisation and the profit motive. All the Airdrie churches were deeply concerned about the plight of the town’s poor and each in their own way sought to deal with poverty.

Both the Airdrie Voluntaries and dissenters and their Established Church opponents were conscious of taking part in great national changes and movements that had implications for the whole country, the Reformation Inheritance and the future shape of Christianity in Scotland. They petitioned parliament, just as the weavers and Chartists did, and this showed an awareness of where political and economic power lay. Yet they were not deluded by a belief that the power of central government either in the State or their respective churches was the only thing that mattered. People’s most important religious links were with the churches in the locality and not with a Presbytery, Synod or General Assembly, or with an elite grouping of ecclesiastical "leaders" operating from power bases in Edinburgh or Glasgow. Airdrie’s ministers understood and exploited this, aided by their elders and sessions. From the Airdrie viewpoint, the Parliamentary campaign was an extension of local concerns, not vice-versa, and it was only one aspect of
confrontational religion. Gillon or Lord John Russell might present petitions to the Commons but they were not the inspiration behind the petitions. And though the majority of Airdrie people might not attend church regularly, nevertheless through members, attenders and those connected with the churches, the churches were closer to the people and their problems and concerns than any other institution or agency.

(ii) Airdrie
Among the eight churches located within Airdrie burgh bounds and examined by the Royal Commissioners there can be no doubt about the fierce competition between rival denominations. At the same time, however, as the evidence of the Commission shows, there was a growing sense of common purpose centred on community in Airdrie. Evangelicalism fuelled competition but it could also foster a broad alliance between competing churches and denominations, serving as common ground upon which rivals came together to cooperate in ventures designed to benefit people throughout the town. By the mid 1830s Airdrie could boast of a network of Evangelical initiatives ranging from town missionaries, Tract and Bible Societies to Sunday Schools and services for the benefit of the poor. These projects were indicative of a practical ecumenism that did not demand of any denomination or individual church that it shed its distinct identity or abandon cherished principles.
And, as Wellwynd and Calder’s Baptist Church efforts for foreign mission suggest, Evangelicalism in Airdrie was by no means narrow and inward-looking.

It is difficult to be specific about the relative strength of the Established Church, dissent and independency in Airdrie during the 'thirties, but the Commissioners’ data can be of some help. On the problem of finance and fund-raising the dissenters were marginally better-off than either the East or West churches if only because dissenters were psychologically better equipped. Their churches had been built and funded with no expectation that some day they would be recipients of a State endowment. Every penny raised was counted as success and committees of management made sure that there was no extravagant disbursement of funds. The fact that Airdrie’s dissenters could support ministers on a level almost equal to the Established churches was a source of great pride and of congregational participation in the ministry. It also ensured that the minister knew to whom he owed his living.

By contrast, the East and West churches of Scotland - and later the High - though they were Voluntary for all practical purposes complained to the Commissioners that they needed an endowment in order to be effective. It is not surprising that the Airdrie Voluntaries and dissenters thought such complaints were lame. The Voluntaries were right to point out - as they had in the petition, in July
1839 — that Airdrie’s churches of Scotland had been built in the expectation that an endowment would be forthcoming, although they exaggerated when they argued that this was the only reason for new churches of Scotland. Nevertheless, in view of the greater number of dissenting churches in Airdrie — a number which increased after the Commissioners’ visitation — the claims of the Established churches in the town are indeed hard to accept.

At first glance Table 8 appears to show that there was accommodation for more than half of Airdrie’s total population, taking that to be over 9,000 people. At most, however, total average attendances numbered 4,735. So taking all the Airdrie churches together (including New Monkland Kirk) there was accommodation enough for all those attending church. The same was true even when looking at the Established churches as a bloc and the other denominations as a bloc. Moreover, more people apparently attended the Church of Scotland than the other denominations.

However, to use the figures in this way is misleading. New Monkland parish quoad sacra included a large proportion of people who did not live in Airdrie burgh.181 If we are to get closer to the actual Airdrie attenders we must subtract from the average attendance figure for New Monkland and thus from the total Established Church figure.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of Church</th>
<th>No of Sittings Available for let</th>
<th>No/% of Seats Actually let</th>
<th>Highest Average Attendances</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>East Church QS</td>
<td>588</td>
<td>540 or 91.8%</td>
<td>600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West Church QS</td>
<td>1,100</td>
<td>845 or 76.8%</td>
<td>800</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Monkland QS</td>
<td>1,200</td>
<td>Not known</td>
<td>1,200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals for Church of Scotland</td>
<td>2,888</td>
<td></td>
<td>2,600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Bridge Street RPs</td>
<td>383</td>
<td>235 or 61.3%</td>
<td>400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baptists</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wellwynd United Associate</td>
<td>650</td>
<td>550 or 84.6%</td>
<td>640</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Broomknoll Original Secession</td>
<td>504</td>
<td>424 or 84.1%</td>
<td>500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graham St United Associate</td>
<td>657</td>
<td>378 or 57.5%</td>
<td>500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Independents (Congregationalists?)</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals for Other denominations</td>
<td>2,194</td>
<td></td>
<td>2,135</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All churches</td>
<td>5,082</td>
<td></td>
<td>4,735</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Supposing we take off two-fifths of New Monkland’s 1,200 highest average attendance as not belonging to Airdrie burgh, the picture of churchgoing in the town changes:

\[
\frac{2}{5} \text{ of New Monkland } 1,200 = 480
\]

Revised total for Church of Scotland attendances in Airdrie
\[
2,600 - 480 = 2,120
\]

Revised figure for all Church of Scotland attendances,
\[
4,735 - 480 = 4,255
\]

This revision would place the Airdrie Established churches and the other denominations almost on a par in terms of attendances. In short, the Church of Scotland — supposedly the National Church — was doing badly in Airdrie.

Furthermore, when we bear in mind that the burgh’s Established churches were *quoad sacra* charges and had tended to take on the practices and characteristics of the dissenting and radical tradition, it seems fair to conclude that the Established Church in Airdrie was in a far weaker position than even membership or attendance figures suggested. Of course, the religious situation in Airdrie was not static. Thus, for instance, the Church of Scotland may be said to have gained in strength during the three years immediately following the Commissioners’ visit.
because of the addition to its ranks of the High Church and the "returning" Broomknoll. On the other hand the ranks of nonconformity were swelled during the same period by the completion of the Ebenezer Congregationalists' Church and by the rise of Methodism and Roman Catholicism. We would really need a run of more accurate statistics over a longer period of time in order to be able to take proper account of the fluidity of the religious environment in Airdrie.

Nevertheless, the primitive calculations and tentative conclusions drawn from the evidence provided in the Royal Commission on Religious Instruction reinforce the impression that Airdrie's religious culture was dissenting, non-conformist and distinctively Evangelical.

(iii) Religion and the Working Classes

Although it is difficult to draw detailed conclusions about the social composition of the Airdrie churches in 1836 one thing is beyond question: most people who went to church in the town were from the "working classes and the poor". On this point the local ministers were completely unanimous and there are a number of indications from the Commission's evidence, and from other sources, that the ministers were not exaggerating the extent of working class attendance or membership.
First, when ministers, using the language of class, described the bulk of their congregations as working class they were able to do so partly because they themselves were not of the working class. With the notable exception of John Calder, a working weaver, the Airdrie ministers, economically and socially, belonged to the middle, or at least lower middle class. Each was in receipt of a stipend which was admittedly fairly modest but which nevertheless placed him outside of the irregular economic spiral that was the lot of most of the town’s working class citizens. (Indeed, the fact that the "working classes and the poor" were usually referred to collectively was in itself a recognition of the economic realities of working class life). None of the Airdrie stipends was so high that it separated its recipient economically from the local skilled craftsmen and larger shopkeepers. In a good year even some miners might earn as much as any of the Airdrie ministers. However, the provision of a manse - or the expectation that one would, in time, be provided - ensured that the ministers were numbered among the propertied and servant-keeping class. Moreover, from what little information we have on their social origins it is clear that the Airdrie ministers were by and large drawn from upwardly mobile social groups (Table 9).
Second, in each church where seats were available for letting most went at the two middling rates spanning the "above three shillings but not more that seven shillings" range. Indeed, this was precisely because in each church most of the seats were available at these charges. Such rates were not beyond the means of better-off working people but they certainly excluded the very poor. The very poor had then to be provided with special services, often in the town’s school, because their ragged appearance put them beyond the pale of respectable seat renters.

Third, the Airdrie churches’ Baptismal rolls for the period around the 1830s and ’40s suggest that rites of passage were an important expression of working class religion and that the working classes were likely potential recruits to the churches. Again, however, the tendency was for economically secure working class - a section that shaded into the lower middle classes - to participate in rites of passage administered by the churches. Thus, for example, the Baptismal Roll of Wellwynd Church for March 1841 to March 1843 shows a wide range of fathers’ occupations but most could be assigned status in the working class-lower middle class continuum (Table 10). And perhaps most remarkable of all, at least in Wellwynd, baptism of the offspring of the new industrial working class was commonplace. Those engaged in coal, iron and the supply of or spin-offs from these key local industries were as likely
to be keen churchmen and women — if they could afford it — as their weaver predecessors had been. The evidence of the Royal Commission on working class religion appears to back up what we have already noted on the crucial importance of religion in the radical and working class political tradition of industrialising Airdrie. Religion was as important in the construction of community at Airdrie in the 1830s and '40s as it had been in pre-industrial New Monkland parish not least because new industrial workers were embraced by church extension and expansion.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Minister + Church</th>
<th>Stipend in 1836 Royal Commission</th>
<th>Social Origins (where known)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>J Finlayson, East Church</td>
<td>£120</td>
<td>Son of a schoolmaster</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J Carslaw</td>
<td>£80 + manse</td>
<td>Descendant of John Howie, author of <em>Scots Worthies</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J Calder, Baptist</td>
<td>Nil (working weaver)</td>
<td>Weaver</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>W Jackson, West Church</td>
<td>£105</td>
<td>Son of a schoolmaster</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G Sommerville, Wellwynd</td>
<td>£120 + manse</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J Findlay, Broomknoll</td>
<td>£80 + manse</td>
<td>Son of a brewer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J Begg, New Monkland</td>
<td>17 chalders (½ meal, ½ barley) + manse and glebe (10 acres)</td>
<td>Son of portioner/weaver</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A Ferrier, Graham Street</td>
<td>£100</td>
<td>Son of Rev Dr Ferrier of Paisley</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr Massey, Independents</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 10
Baptisms in Wellwynd Church, March 1841-March 1843

90 Baptisms; 78 Different Sets of Parents; 37 Different (Father’s) Occupations.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Father’s Occupation</th>
<th>No of</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Boatman</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carter</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clerk</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clothier</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cloth-Merchant</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Distiller</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Draper</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drawer</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engineer</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engineman</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Farmer</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Furnace-Keeper</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grocer</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hammerman</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Labourer</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mason</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mercer</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miller</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miner</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minister</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Painter</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pit Drawer</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pitheadman</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plasterer</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plumber</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quarrier</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Road Contractor</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shoemaker</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Smith</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spade-forger</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spirit dealer</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Surgeon</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Van driver</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Waggon mercer</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weaver</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weigher</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wright</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total number of Occupations - 37
Total number of sets of parents - 78

545
Notes


   First Report of the Commissioners, Parliamentary Papers, 1837, Volume XXI, p iii.

2. Ibid, p iii.
3. Ibid, p iii.
4. Ibid, p iii.
5. Ibid, p iii.
6. Ibid, p iii.
7. Ibid, p iii.
9. The Commissioners drew up only one full report. This, the First, was on Edinburgh, and published in April 1837. The results were thought to be so conclusive that there was no need to present full reports for other areas. [In their survey of Edinburgh the Commissioners discovered that in all the churches taken together there was plenty of accommodation for all those wishing to go to church, while in the Established Church by itself there was by no means a shortage of accommodation]. Consequently for Airdrie and other areas investigated by the Commissioners the evidence was presented first in tabular form and then in digests of evidence printed as appendices to the tabulated data. The structure of the presentation of the evidence was outlined in the Fourth Report of the Commissioners [PP Volume 33, 1837-38]. The Eighth Report, containing the evidence on Airdrie, was published in 1839 [PP XXVI, 1839].


15. J F C Harrison’s comments with regard to statistics on religion and late Victorian belief apply equally to the earlier nineteenth century religion.

"It is unlikely that the vast amount of religious observance - publicly in church attendance and mission work, and privately in prayer and Bible reading at home - was entirely social and outward and quite unconnected with personal beliefs and hopes. People do not, as a rule, regularly and voluntarily attend institutions, religious or otherwise, without at least absorbing or approving at least some of the ideas and values associated with those institutions, particularly when, as in the case of the churches, the promulgation of certain doctrines was their primary objective. We do not have to disregard the social and respectable aspect of religion to appreciate its spiritual and moral content and its likely impact on the way people thought of themselves and their world. Much of this thinking was no doubt vague and inconsistent... it nevertheless provided a religious form for some of the certainties of life."


16. Eighth Report by the Commissioners of Religious Instruction, Scotland, PP 1839, Volume XXVI.

Table I, Alleged Deficiencies in parish, pp iv-vi.

See also:

Fourth Report by the Commissioners of Religious Instruction, Scotland, PP 1837-38, Volume 33, pp 11-viii.

17. Appendix to the Eighth Report By the Commissioners of Religious Instruction, Scotland, Parliamentary Papers, Volume XXVI, 1839, p 140.

18. Ibid, p 141.

19. Ibid, p 140.
20. Ibid, p 143.
22. Ibid, p 143.
23. Ibid, p 143.
24. Ibid, p 143.
27. Ibid, p 143.
29. Ibid, p 142.
30. All figures for Burns' Census, Ibid, p 140.
32. All figures for sittings and seat rents, Ibid, p 141 and 142.
33. Ibid, p 141.
34. Ibid, p 141.
35. Ibid, p 142.
36. Ibid, p 142.
37. Ibid, p 142.
38. Ibid, p 141.
40. Ibid, p 143.
41. Ibid, p 142.
42. Ibid, p 142.
43. Ibid, p 142.
44. Ibid, p 143.
45. Ibid, p 143.
46. Ibid, p 143.
47. Ibid, p 143.
48. Ibid, p 143.
49. Ibid, p 142.
50. Attendance/Communicant figures, Ibid, p 140.
51. Ibid, p 140.
52. Figures for sittings, Ibid, p 141.
54. Ibid, pp 144-145.
55. Ibid, p 145.
56. Ibid, p 144.
57. Ibid, p 144.
58. Ibid, p 145.
60. Ibid, p 145.
61. Ibid, p 144.
62. Ibid, p 144.
63. Ibid, p 144.
64. Ibid, p 144.
65. Appendix to the Eighth Report by the Commissioners of Religious Instruction, Scotland, p 146.
66. Ibid, p 146.
67. Ibid, p 147.
68. Ibid, p 147.
70. Ibid, p 149.
71. Ibid, pp 148 and 149.
72. Ibid, p 149.
73. Ibid, p 149.
74. Ibid, p 148.
75. Ibid, p 149.
76. Ibid, p 149.
77. Ibid, pp 148 and 149.
78. Census figures, Ibid, p 146.
79. Ibid, p 146.
81. Ibid, p 149.
82. Communicants figures, Ibid, p 146.
83. Ibid, p 146.
84. Ibid, p 149.
85. Ibid, p 147.
86. Ibid, p 147.
87. Ibid, p 147.
89. Ibid, p 148.
93. Ibid, p 149.
94. Ibid, p 149.
95. Ibid, p 149.
96. Ibid, p 149.
97. Ibid, p 149.
125. Ibid, p 150.
126. Ibid, p 151.
127. Ibid, p 150.
129. Ibid, p 150.
131. Ibid, p 150.
133. Ibid, p 151.
134. Ibid, p 150.
135. Ibid, p 151.
137. Appendix to the Eighth Report By the Commissioners of Religious Instruction, Scotland, p 155.
139. Ibid, p 155.
140. Ibid, p 153.
141. Ibid, pp 153 and 155.
143. Ibid, p 155.
144. Ibid, pp 154 and 155.
146. Ibid, pp 154 and 155.
147. Ibid, pp 154 and 155.
149. Ibid, pp 152 and 155.
150. Ibid, p 152.
151. Ibid, p 152.
152. Ibid, p 152.
153. Ibid, p 152.
156. Ibid, p 154.
159. Ibid, p 155.
162. Ibid, p 154.
163. Ibid, p 152.
164. Ibid, p 152.
165. Ibid, p 152.
166. Ibid, p 152.
167. Ibid, p 152.
171. Ibid, p 152.
172. Ibid, p 152.
175. Ibid, p 153.
177. Ibid, p 152.
177. Ibid, p 152.
178. Ibid, p 152.

179. March 3, 1840. Two petitions presented to the Commons by Mr Lockhart, MP.

(A) Petition No: 2276. 'For the Alteration of the Present System of Church Patronage' from the Members of the Congregation and Inhabitants of the West parish, Airdrie. Signed by 311? persons (figure not clear in records).

(B) Petition No: 2277. Same request as above. From the Congregation of the East Church and parish of Airdrie, and others. A number of signatures are illegible in records.

Commons Journals, Volume 95, 1840, p 135.

March 25, 1840

Petition No: 4771. 'For the Alteration of Patronage, etc' Presented by Mr Lockhart. From the Inhabitants of the Parish and Members of the Congregation of the High Church of Airdrie. Signed by 405 persons.

Source: Nineteenth Report of the Select Committee on Public Petitions, p 262
Commons Journals, Volume 95, 1840, p 210.

Petition No: 8910. April 3, 1840. Petition for the Alteration of Patronage. Presented by Mr Lockhart. From the Provost, Magistrates and Council. Signed by Provost George M Nisbett in the name of, and by the authority of the petitioners.

Source: Twenty-First Report of the Select Committee on Public Petitions, 1-3 April, 1840, p 397
June 2, 1841. Petition for the Abolition of Patronage.

Petition No: 11286. Presented by Mr Fox-Maule, MP. From the Inhabitants of Airdrie and Neighbourhood, 1,425 signatories.


181. Although New Monkland kirk has been included in our survey of the churches in Airdrie, it is important to remember that local Voluntaries and dissenters did not want to include New Monkland kirk. Hence their claim that all the Airdrie attenders of the Established Church could fit into one of the burgh’s chapels.

182. Data from: Baptismal Register For The United Associate Congregation, Airdrie (Wellwynd), March 1841-March 1843, SRO, Edinburgh, CH3/992/12.
CHAPTER TEN

THE CONSOLIDATION OF EVANGELICALISM AND DISSENT IN AIRDRIE IN THE MID-NINETEENTH CENTURY

Symbolic Boundaries in Action: The Pattern of the Disruption in Airdrie

By the time the Royal Commission on Religious Instruction data on Airdrie was published, the Voluntary Controversy had reached a peak and was beginning to be overshadowed by the confrontation between the Established Church and the British State.

In a series of legal battles between 1839 and 1843 both the Veto Act and the Chapel Act were challenged in the civil courts and were finally declared on House of Lords rulings to have been ultra vires of the Established Church. The Lords ruled in favour of the principle that ultimate authority in all civil and ecclesiastical matters was vested in the State, and therefore the Church of Scotland was limited in its powers by the statute law of the realm.

Within the Established Church a majority of the Evangelical Party refused to accept this Erastian position and opted to secede from the Church of Scotland to form the Free Church
in May 1843. The Seceders argued that they had been forced to leave a now corrupt Establishment.

Patronage disputes had been a focus of popular unrest in Scotland since the 1730s.¹ The anti-patronage movement developed as

"the centre of a Scottish notion of the 'common man', of individual and 'commonwealth' liberty, and, after the 1790s, of 'democracy' itself. For patronage conflicted with the 'democratic' role of the kirk session, with its supposedly popularly elected elders and with the hierarchy of popularly responsive courts which stretched above it."

When the Evangelicals of the Established Church "went out" in 1843 they were acutely conscious that opposition to patronage was a symbol of civil rights. But more importantly, they believed that the State was interfering in spiritual matters that were the sole prerogative of the Church. The Evangelicals' invoking of the Crown Rights of the Redeemer was more than an astute political manoeuvre. It touched on a sensitive nerve buried deep in popular religious consciousness. Fundamentally, the Disruption was a sacred action, another assertion of the belief, long held among Presbyterians, that church government was hierophanic.

For these reasons, argues Francis Lyall, the Veto Act cases 1839-1843 had a greater and more immediate effect on popular opinion than did the legal tussle over the Chapel
However, as Lyall points out, although the Evangelicals of 1843 were protesting against patronage they also knew that because the Chapel Act dealt with the composition of church courts the implications of its being declared *ultra vires* of the Church were far more serious than the government rejection of the Veto Act. For the final ruling on the Chapel Act meant, in effect, that all ministers of *quoad sacra* charges who had been admitted to full membership of church courts under the terms of the Act were not properly so admitted. Consequently, all church courts containing such ministers were not properly constituted. In theory, therefore, all Acts of the General Assembly since the Chapel Act could be treated as illegal and void.

For the Evangelicals this was a devastating blow. It was they who had pressed for chapel ministers to be given full status so that Church government would be opened up— and also because many chapel ministers were Evangelicals. With the Lords' decision on the Chapel Act, however, one of the mainstays of support for the Evangelical Party and the Non-Intrusion cause, and one of the key instruments of Evangelical initiative in the towns and cities, was undermined.

As has been noted, at Airdrie by the late 1830s anti-patronage was, as a matter of principle, crucial to the self-understanding and esteem both of dissenters and of
Established Church radicals. But locally, patronage was not an immediate issue. Although the town Established Churches petitioned for the alteration of patronage they did so not in order to outflank attacks from local dissenting opinion but rather because they had never been and did not want to be brought into the patronage system. Unlike New Monkland Kirk, Airdrie Established churches had been nourished in a religious environment where dissent was marked and influential. They had adopted dissenting practices in finance and administration and could sympathise with the dissenters' principled stand against patronage. For their part, the dissenters were not as hostile to the town Established churches as they were to New Monkland Kirk, and this gave them at least some common ground with Airdrie Established Church radicals.

The fiercest popular discontent in the burgh was not aroused by patronage but by the endowments question for the dissenters thought that in a town where religious free trade was already in operation it would be quite wrong for the Established churches to be given any unfair advantage from State funds.

It might be tempting to think, then, that the Lords' ruling on the Chapel Act did indeed have more serious implications for the pattern of Disruption in Airdrie than did the government rejection of the Veto Act, for the simple reason that all four of the town's Established churches were quoad
sacra charges. In fact, however, there was no necessary correlation between quoad sacra churches and secession to the Free Church. Only three of the four quoad sacra churches left the Establishment. More importantly, the Lords’ dismissal of the Chapel Act did not significantly alter the direction to which the seceding congregations were already committed by 1843.

Broomknoll’s departure was no surprise. It had rejoined the Established Church only in 1839 and as a former Original Burgher church it was not given to acceptance of State superiority in ecclesiastical matters.

The youngest of the former chapels, the High Church, also joined the Free Church but without its founding minister, Thomas Burns, who had translated to Lesmahagow in September 1842 and remained in the Establishment at the Disruption. Burns’ translation was a contentious one. The High Kirk session and Hamilton Presbytery were unhappy about his moving in the midst of the Church-State crisis. But, though the evidence is scanty, Burns’ insistence on the move to Lesmahagow suggests that he had already decided to remain with the Established Church whatever the outcome of the crisis and he knew that he could not carry the High Kirk session with him. As has been noted, when Burns was finally allowed to go, the High Kirk session promptly moved to call Robert Stirrat whose staunch non-intrusionist principles were not in doubt. In short, the final ruling
on the Chapel Act in January 1843 reinforced the High Kirk decision to leave the Establishment; it did not provoke that choice.

The High Church had been open for only five years before the Disruption and it had never been strongly committed to the Establishment principle. From the beginning it was closer in spirit to the stance of the new Free Church. Much the same could be said of the West Church. It too was "free" to all intents and purposes well before the departure of Jackson and the majority of the congregation made it officially so in 1843. Jackson, the first and only minister of West Church by the time of the Disruption, was Evangelical and consistently non-intrusionist. Indeed, as has been noted, he had tried to have Robert Stirrat's call to the High Church rushed through presbytery in order to ensure that the non-intrusionist stance of that congregation would be strengthened and sustained. Jackson's own West Kirk session and congregation had been well schooled in what were to become Free Church principles, long before 1843.

Ironically, the East Church, which had encouraged both the West and High Chapel schemes, did not leave the Establishment. The long ministry of Joseph Finlayson, political radical but more Moderate than Evangelical had clearly left its mark. Stevenson, his successor, did not significantly alter the tone of the church. Besides, the
East Kirk was the oldest of the former chapels and had originated in the late eighteenth century Established Church campaigns to combat the spread of dissent. Its connection with the Establishment was deeper than that of the West, High or Broomknoll churches.

For the Airdrie churches that "went out" in 1843 the choice was made on principle but it was also realistic and pragmatic. The West and High churches in particular had been built with the expectation that they would receive State endowment at some point. Since by 1840-41 endowment was no longer a prospect, to remain in or to leave the Established Church made little difference in practical terms. Why, then, stay in and be forced to accept patronage and, after the ruling on the Chapel Act, loss of status?

Impact of the Disruption in Airdrie

The consequences of the Disruption for the Established Church in Airdrie can be illustrated first by comparing some rough ratios of churches per head of population for 1841 and 1851; and second, by looking briefly at the returns for sittings and attendances provided in the 1851 Census on Religious Worship and Education.
In 1841 the total population of Airdrie and New Monkland landward was 12,418. This population was served by five Churches of Scotland (East Church, West Church, High Church, Broomknoll Church and New Monkland) so there was one Church of Scotland to every 2,483 people. By contrast, there was a total of six Protestant nonconformist churches (Wellwynd Seceders, Graham Street Seceders, North Bridge Street RP, Ebenezer Congregational, the Baptist Chapel and South Bridge Street Relief). So there was one Protestant nonconformist church to every 2,069 people.

Ten years later the population of Airdrie and New Monkland landward had risen to 14,435 but this population was now served by only two Churches of Scotland (the united East and remnant West Church, and New Monkland Kirk), so there was now only one Church of Scotland to every 7,217 people. By contrast, there was now a total of ten Protestant nonconformist churches; that is, one to every 1,443 people. Moreover, of these ten Protestant nonconformist churches three (West, High and Broomknoll) were new Free Churches, so there was one Free Church to every 4,812 people.

In terms of the number of churches with respect to the total population of Airdrie, the Church of Scotland was in a much worse position after 1843 than it had been before. And this is true whether or not one chooses to include New Monkland Kirk as an Airdrie church. With the defection of the majority of the West Church congregation - who very quickly erected their own new building in Buchanan Street -
the High and Broomknoll, accommodation in the dissenting churches as a whole increased considerably and at the expense of the Established Church. If lack of accommodation had indeed been a measure and a root cause of the Established Church's weakness in the 1830s, as the Melbourne government had been told, then after 1843 the Auld Kirk in Airdrie looked in danger of fading altogether. The last time it had been in a similar position as regards the number of churches serving Airdrie's population was in the 1790s; and even then, New Monkland kirk and the new (later East) chapel of ease had served around 1,762 townspeople; that is, one Established Church to every 881 people. If the potential strength of the churches after 1843 can be gauged roughly from available accommodation then it is clear that the Established Church in Airdrie was in a worse position than it had been in in the 1790s. By contrast, nonconformity, and especially Presbyterian dissent, received an enormous boost from the Disruption.

The general impression drawn from the preceding ratios is confirmed by the evidence on accommodation and attendances in Airdrie provided by the 1851 Census on Religious Worship and Education. Although the Census data is imperfect there is little reason to doubt the broad trends which it suggests; namely, that both in terms of available sittings and average attendances at morning worship the Established Church had indeed been weakened and dissent strengthened because of the Disruption.
According to the Census report for Airdrie, the churches outwith the Establishment (including Episcopalians and Roman Catholic) together provided more sittings and accounted for more morning attendances than did the Church of Scotland. Of a total number of sittings for Airdrie (including New Monkland) of 7,597, only 1,900, or 25\% belonged to the Established Church.\textsuperscript{10} The Free Church and United Presbyterians together accounted for 2,060, or 27\% of all available sittings, and 36\% of non-Established Church sittings.\textsuperscript{11}

The total number of morning attendances was given as 3,875\textsuperscript{12} of which only 800, or 20.6\% were in the Church of Scotland.\textsuperscript{13} Together, the Free Church and the UPs accounted for 1,650, or 42.6\% of morning attendances, and 53.7\% of non-Established Church morning attendances.\textsuperscript{14} In short, the denominational balance in Airdrie was weighted in favour of nonconformity in general and of Presbyterian dissent in particular.

From 1843 down to the First World War the dominance of Evangelicalism and dissent in Airdrie was never seriously challenged. However, it would be wrong to think that the surge towards dissent consequent upon the Disruption heralded a new era of continuous interdenominational harmony. Competition between and within denominations did not suddenly evaporate. On the contrary, the triumph of
dissent reinforced the identities of individual churches. Allegiance to a particular congregation continued to be an important feature of local religious life. Thus, for example, the new Free Churches did not attempt to amalgamate into one or two churches instead of three. Indeed in 1876 when the remnant Graham Street (Advanced) RPs joined the Free Church they too retained their building and minister, preferring to continue as Graham Street Free Church rather than unite with one of the larger existing Free Church congregations.

Nevertheless, although there was still competition after 1843 there was also more space within the broad framework of Evangelical-dissenting culture for rival churches to cooperate more easily than in the past on projects directed towards commonly accepted goals.

Cooperation, Community and Culture – Airdrie and the 1859 Revival

"For these are not drunken, as ye suppose..."

(Acts 2:15)

A dramatic display of interchurch cooperation occurred in Airdrie in the summer of 1859 when revivalism made a sudden and brief appearance. This revivalism was part of what J Edwin Orr called the Second Evangelical Awakening in Britain. Largely as a result of Orr’s study, the Second
Evangelical Awakening has been portrayed as a movement that swept like a tidal wave through Britain from America via Ulster during 1859-60.

However, David Bebbington thinks that Orr's portrayal of the 1859-60 revival needs to be modified. Without disputing that the revival had a powerful impact in Britain bringing about mass conversions and physical prostrations of a kind that would have been familiar to Wesley or to the early Primitives, he argues that Orr failed to discriminate between spontaneous popular revival, deeply rooted in communities, such as characterised eighteenth century revivalism, and the carefully organised revivalism which began to take over from the mid-nineteenth century. There was a gradual transition

"from folksy outbursts of anguished guilt to professionally planned occasions for much more conventional 'decisions for Christ'".16

Bebbington argues that the 1859 revival in Britain stands at the threshold of a fresh phase in organised Evangelicalism. Although there were a number of community revivals these were usually confined to the periphery and to a single occupation.17 For the most part the 1859 revival quickly became highly organised. In the Highlands of Scotland, for example, as Allan MacInnes has pointed out, strict ministerial control of events
"ensured that the spiritual restlessness and excessive enthusiasm that had characterised religious revivals prior to the Disruption were not replicated."18

In short, by the mid-nineteenth century there was a growing tendency, even at community level, to institutionalise revivalism so as to make it respectable and to channel it in the direction, and for the inspiration of regular churches and regular methods of mission.19

There can be no doubt that the 1859 revival caused tremendous excitement in Airdrie and that it found an echo in the popular religious mind. Although we do not know the number of people who became involved in revivalist activities, which reached a peak in August 1859, the Airdrie Advertiser gave enough coverage of the goings-on for us to be able to gain at least a measure of the origin, organisation and spirit of revivalism in the town. Indeed, the Advertiser editors gave positive support and encouragement to the movement to the extent of censuring or rebuking local critics and sceptics foolish enough to make their views public.

The revival first made its appearance in the town in the spring of 1859 but

"through the undue prominence of certain questions pertaining to ecclesiastical forms, a spirit of sectarian division arose which duly suppressed the spirit of religious inquiry and retarded the revival work which had happily begun."20
In spite of this initial setback, the movement gained ground and support. At its centre was Rev James Innes of the Ebenezer Congregational Church who had been preaching regularly in the open-air for over four years in Johnston Street, a working class area a little to the east of the town centre. Innes's work suddenly began to pay dividends in July when at one of his meetings two Irish converts present were introduced and addressed the audience "in a strain of simple but devout and impassioned earnestness." From now until early September the revival developed a feverish pace and atmosphere. Several meetings followed that addressed by the Irishmen and "through the operation of the Divine Spirit... a great awakening has occurred." Innes organised a series of Sabbath meetings for August inviting other clergymen to assist. By the last fortnight of the month nearly all the Airdrie ministers were fully occupied with revivalist work and it is clear that the movement had been brought under ministerial control so as to channel the enthusiasm and the "unabated interest in Divine things" towards recruitment to their several churches. Efforts were made to ensure that wherever possible ministers or prominent laymen should preside at meetings, whether open-air or in houses. During the last two weeks of August meetings were held each evening conducted by Innes and there were also daily afternoon prayer meetings between two and three o’clock in Rev James
McGowan's Broomknoll session house. The afternoon gatherings were strictly prayer meetings presided over by the Airdrie ministers in rotation and compressed within the fixed hour. It was also a minister, Mr Lawson of the Free High, who presided at one of the largest open-air meetings ever in Airdrie to that date, held at his church on Sunday, August 21.

The Advertiser reports on the revival give a clear indication of the tenor of the movement. Three features stand out. First, there was a great spirit of religious inquiry, and interest in Divine things. Second, and closely connected, there was throughout the town a very deep and widespread anxiety shown by the people at revivalist gatherings "the burden of whose cry continues to be: 'What must I do to be saved?'" Audiences were usually addressed as "Christian backsliders and anxious sinners, and were directed to the blood of Christ which cleanseth from all sin." Third, this kind of language provoked a variety of responses of which the most dramatic was the occurrence of strikings-down. After public meetings people flocked to houses to continue prayer. The Advertiser reported one such scene which is worth quoting at length because it conveys the atmosphere of intensity and excitement that dominated the town's religious life in the summer of 1859.

"If a stranger would know how matters are proceeding let him visit the corner of Johnston Street on any
evening at about half past seven o’clock and he will find a great crowd of people hanging on the lips of the speaker who may have been called to address the meeting. Then let him wait till the meeting has dispersed, and in a few minutes thereafter he will hear the voice of praise and prayer proceeding from several houses around him. Let him now try to obtain an entrance and he will find that he is too late. The houses are crammed almost to suffocation and around both doors and windows, crowds are gathered so great that the speaker himself is sometimes obliged to get in by the window as there is no possibility of accomplishing a passage by the doorway. We are also informed that anxiety is often... so intense that meetings will not dismiss, and not infrequently they have been protracted... until midnight. At several of the meetings this week 'striking-down' has occurred.”

Furthermore, throughout the period late August to early September the Advertiser vigorously defended the integrity of the revival in Airdrie against attack from doubters or sceptics. On Saturday, August 27 the paper carried a scathing and stern rebuke to the Airdrie correspondent of the Glasgow Herald who had acknowledged the propriety, earnestness and sincerity of the revival but expressed doubt about the authenticity of the "melancholy and unearthly wailings" and "strange heaving" he had witnessed in the town. He wondered whether such extreme forms of behaviour might not be prompted by superstition rather than the real presence of the Divine Spirit. Moreover, having heard the Baptist minister holding forth on salvation through Christ, the Herald’s Airdrie correspondent suggested that there might not be any long-term results from this kind of revivalism. The Advertiser replied to these comments by almost accusing their author of insulting Airdrie, as well as religion. A long peroration concluded
by saying that the Airdrie correspondent to the Herald did not know what he was talking about: "Let the cobbler stick to his last." 35

Another victim of the Advertiser's acerbic defence of the revival in Airdrie was the Rev B C Brown of the West Church of Scotland. He was described as the

"one unhappy exception [of] all our clergymen [who] are actually cooperating in the revival and are labouring in season and out of season to further its progress." 36

August was the month for the annual collections for the Airdrie Town Mission, "one of the most important religious and benevolent institutions in the town." 37 It had been decided to use the West Church for the purposes of holding a meeting and then taking a collection on behalf of the Town Mission. But Brown objected when he discovered that addresses were to be given on the subject and in support of the revival. He refused to grant permission to use the West Church unless the addresses made no mention of the awakening for which refusal he was censured by the Advertiser. The revival, the paper's editors insisted, should be judged by its fruits and in Airdrie these showed that it was clearly the work of God. Although it is not clear what Brown's objections were we can get some idea of what they may have been, for alongside the attack on him the Advertiser carried a condemnation of the Lancet and other publications which had given voice to doubts about
the more extreme responses to the revivalist message, especially the strikings down.\textsuperscript{38} The \textit{Lancet} was subjected to a barrage of criticism and accused of "pharisaical contempt" for suggesting that awakened Christians might be fanatics, madmen, knaves, hysterical epileptics or comatose, and for prescribing cold water or solitary confinement as treatment for such ailments.\textsuperscript{39} It was obvious, the Advertiser concluded, that medical men could not be expected to rise above "mere medical prognosis."\textsuperscript{40}

Yet by mid-September revivalist fervour in Airdrie had dissipated and the churches turned their attention once more to calmer forms of mission.

\textbf{The Consolidation of Evangelicalism and Dissent}

At the opening of the last quarter of the nineteenth century the denominational balance in favour of Presbyterian nonconformity in Airdrie remained intact. In 1876 the popular newspaper \textit{North British Daily Mail} launched a census of church attendances in Glasgow and the principal towns and populous places of the West of Scotland with a view to measuring changes in churchgoing patterns since 1851. The census was limited to the Protestant churches. It extended over a period from Sunday 5 March to Sunday 7 May. A series of reports detailing the census enumerators' findings was published weekly - every
Wednesday – beginning 8 March with a conclusion and summary tables of the whole census appearing in a final report on May 17.

In each of the selected towns and populous districts the census of attendance was taken on one Sunday only. Neither the first nor the final reports gave any information on the backgrounds or qualifications of the enumerators other than that those employed were "thoroughly trustworthy and intelligent" and that every precaution had been taken to ensure accuracy and impartiality.

The enumerators were instructed to carry out a simple head count of those persons entering each particular church for Sunday worship and to enter the figure for the most largely attended service – morning, afternoon or evening – on a prepared certificate. The census dealt only with regular churches and did not include "the innumerable mission halls and Sunday schools" as the 1851 government Census had. Nor did the Mail Census cover the rural districts of West Central Scotland. It was initially the intention of the Mail reports to supplement the statistics with extracts from the 1851 Religious Census in an attempt to "contrast the relative progress of the various churches during the last twenty-five years." However, it was then decided that any comparison with 1851 would be misleading because the Mail Census was limited to attendances for a single diet of worship and to regular churches. In any case, the
Mail editors claimed that their census was of more value than both the 1851 Census and a Parliamentary Census conducted through the Established Church in 1874 because the latter two were carried out using ministers or church office-bearers as enumerators whereas the Mail enumerators were "neutral parties". Moreover, the editors argued that the Mail Census returns were a more accurate estimate of the relative strength of the various Protestant churches and of the numbers on non-churchgoing people because the 1851 Census had only given average attendances whereas the Mail gave actual attendances.

In the Mail Census report number ten, Wednesday 10 May we find the results of the enumerators work in Airdrie where census Sunday had been April 16. The data was presented in tabular form as follows:

Table 11

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Airdrie Protestant Church Where &quot;Mail&quot; Census Was Carried Out</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Established</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Monkland</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flowerhill</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clarkston</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Free</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Broomknoll</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

575
3. **United Presbyterian**

| South Bridge Street | 309 | 289 |
| Wellwynd            | 430 | 395 |

4. **Other**

| Ebenezer Congregational | -   | 200 |
| Bell Street Wesleyan    | -   | 43  |
| Evangelical Union       | -   | 228 |
| Baptist                 | -   | 75  |
| North Bridge St RPs     | -   | 125 |
| Graham St (Adv) RPs     | -   | 93  |

5. **Summary of Attendance**

| Established Church     | 1,741 |
| Dissenting churches    | 2,672 |
| **Total**              | 4,413 |

Population of Airdrie at Decennial Census, 1871

| 13,488 |

Proportion of Protestant churches to Population

| 1 : 899 |

A glance at the *Mail* Census data on Airdrie shows that the general picture of the town’s religious environment conveyed by the 1851 Census had not markedly changed. The dissenting churches combined still outnumbered the Established Church in terms of buildings, membership (based on the 1874 parliamentary figures), and attendances. Indeed, the *Mail* had included New Monkland and Clarkston Established churches neither of which was in the Airdrie burgh bounds. The *Mail* reporters were aware of this but
opted to abide by an "in or near" principle since some people who attended New Monkland or Clarkston lived in or close to Airdrie proper and contributed much to the town. According to the Mail statistics, total attendances on Census Sunday amounted to 32.7% of Airdrie total population (using the 1871 population figure). This was a slightly higher percentage than in 1851 but by 1876 the burgh population had fallen so it is perhaps safest to conclude that in the decades after 1851 attendances were more or less stable.

Of course, there are many questions about the usefulness of the Mail Census data and it certainly cannot be taken as a scientific proof of anything. Attendance compared to membership, for example, is suspiciously high in the West Church of Scotland and in the Free High Church. There could be any number of explanations why this was so and to be sure that good turnouts of this kind were not flukes we would need a run of attendances figures over a longer period of time.

Nevertheless, using the 1876 Mail Census, for all its flaws, we can make a spot comparison between Airdrie and Coatbridge which serves to highlight the particular denominational character of Airdrie.
Table 12

Coatbridge Protestant churches Where Mail Census Was Carried Out

1. Established

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Church</th>
<th>Members 1874</th>
<th>Attendance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gartsherrie</td>
<td>668</td>
<td>740</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Garturk</td>
<td>442</td>
<td>328</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Old Monkland</td>
<td>998</td>
<td>421</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coats</td>
<td>142</td>
<td>435</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2. Free

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Church</th>
<th>Members 1874</th>
<th>Attendance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Coatbridge Free</td>
<td>478</td>
<td>285</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3. United Presbyterian

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Church</th>
<th>Members 1874</th>
<th>Attendance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Coatbridge UP</td>
<td>570</td>
<td>500</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4. Other

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Church</th>
<th>Members 1874</th>
<th>Attendance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Evangelical Union</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>212</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reformed Presbyterian</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>446</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baptists</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Episcopalian</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wesleyan</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>123</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5. Summary of Attendance

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Church</th>
<th>Members 1874</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Established Church</td>
<td>1,924</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dissenting</td>
<td>1,759</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>3,683</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Population of Coatbridge at Decennial Census, 1871

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>16,461</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Proportion of Protestant churches to Population

1 : 1,371
6. **Airdrie and Coatbridge Compared**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Membership of Established Church at 1874</th>
<th>Airdrie</th>
<th>Coatbridge</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Membership of Free Church at 1874</td>
<td>1,653</td>
<td>2,250</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Membership of UP Church at 1874</td>
<td>1,071</td>
<td>478</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Attendance at Established Church, 1876 Census</th>
<th>Airdrie</th>
<th>Coatbridge</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Attendance at Free Church, 1876 Census</td>
<td>1,741</td>
<td>1,924</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attendance at UP Church, 1876 Census</td>
<td>1,225</td>
<td>285</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

According to the *Mail* Census returns the Presbyterian churches in Coatbridge together had a lower attendance from a greater population than in Airdrie, a situation partly explained by Coatbridge’s sizeable Roman Catholic population (as the *Mail* noted).

More interestingly, however, combined membership of the Established Church in Coatbridge (on a basis of the 1874 figures) was put at double that of the Free and UP churches combined. By contrast, Free and UP membership combined in Airdrie was almost double Free and UP membership in Coatbridge.

The 1876 *Mail* Census reinforced the message that support for the Free, UP and other non-established Protestant churches in Airdrie was contiguous with a general and historic tradition of dissent in the town. The Disruption
of 1843 had exposed the weakness of the Established Church. It showed that Establishment principles and practices had only ever secured a relatively tenuous foothold. From 1843 the Church of Scotland was reduced to the remnant West Church and the East Church in the town, and New Monkland Kirk outside. Both town Established churches were left isolated, weak and surrounded by non-conformity. Hence their de facto union in 1851 (Airdrie parish – de jure union – 1867). It was thirty years after 1843 before another Established Church appeared in Airdrie and even then the "new" church was formed by the re-entry of the majority Graham Street (Advanced) RPs.

Allan MacLaren has argued that the Disruption in Aberdeen marked the arrival of the new urban-based bourgeoisie. This was only partly true of the Disruption in Airdrie. Since most people who went to church in the town were from the better off working class – as the Royal Commission on Religious Instruction suggests – the Disruption can in some respects be viewed as an expression of working class ideals and aspirations. Along with weavers' radicalism, Chartism and Trades Unionism it was a genuinely grass-roots movement.

Furthermore, 1843 was a key point in the consolidation of Evangelical-dissenting culture. The Disruption had called the town's symbolic boundaries into action. Moreover, it testified to the triumph of Airdrie town over the country
and to the end of the parochial system and the older community identity which had been centred on New Monkland Kirk and parish. The Disruption was indicative of the fact that religion was crucial in shaping, sustaining and strengthening Airdrie’s distinctiveness and identity in the midst of social and economic upheaval and in this respect 1843 was not merely a reflection or symptom of social fragmentation, it was also the symbol of Airdrie’s entry into the modern world.

Until more research has been carried out on the 1859 revival in Airdrie, and on revivalism in Airdrie generally, it is difficult to come to firm conclusions about its significance. But from the evidence that we have considered it is clear that the 1859 revival in Airdrie was an important demonstration of the churches’ ability to cooperate.

Perhaps the most curious aspect of the story was the churches initial reluctance to get involved with the revival during the spring of 1859 because of disputes over ecclesiastical forms, and then the sudden volte face in summer. Given that religious life in Airdrie during the 1830s and ’40s had been dominated by the Presbyterian churches internecine warfare over forms and endowments it is possible that initial lack of enthusiasm for revival was based on objections to the lead which Innes, the Congregational minister, was taking. However, during the
summer, largely at Innes’s instigation, the Airdrie Presbyterian ministers took control of revivalism and quickly brought it into an institutional framework. Control by ministers and prominent elders gave the revivalist movement a breadth of support which it had clearly lacked in the spring though it may also have involved an assertion of middle class influence. However, there can be doubt about the central importance of Innes’s work in Johnston Street where miners – and formerly weavers – lived. This gave the revival a working class character which ministers did not want to get out of hand but at the same time wanted to encourage. As in the Highlands, ministerial control in Airdrie ensured that the revival would be respectable and directed towards the regular churches rather than undermining them. Strikings-down and other extremely demonstrative behaviour was acceptable so long as it was contained within the framework of ecclesiastical or institutional religion.

Theologically, the revivalist message was simple and acceptable to all the Airdrie ministers with the exception of Benjamin C Brown of the West Church of Scotland. Brown’s opposition to the revival may have been based on the ecclesiastical form rather than theology but in any case as the town’s only Established Church minister he was already something of an outsider. His objections to the revival served only to reinforce his outsider status and to highlight consensus among Airdrie’s dissenting churches.
The 1859 revival showed that the churches could collaborate when it suited them to do so because the framework of Evangelical-dissenting culture gave them sufficient common ground. Like the Disruption, the 1859 revival in Airdrie not only illustrated the underlying strength of Evangelicalism and dissent but also the popularity of this variety of Protestant Christianity. It does not appear that the enthusiasm with which nearly all the town’s ministers took up revivalist activities aroused congregational hostility. Although more information is needed on the impact of the 1859 revival on church membership, and on the long-term effects, the fact that it was greeted with intense interest and excitement, and its credibility defended in the local press, is an indication that by the 1860s Evangelicalism was diffused throughout local culture.
Notes

1. For the Disruption cases:
   
   
   


3. For the context of patronage disputes:
   


8. General Introduction to the 1851 Census on Religious Worship and Education:
   

9. The Religious Census (1851) data on Airdrie is contained in:
   
   Religious Worship and Education (Scotland) - Reports and Tables, London, 1854, pp 23, Scottish Records Office.

   Although the Census on Airdrie details sittings and attendances for 13 churches (including Episcopalians,
Mormons and Roman Catholics) it gives details of only one UP church when there were in fact two; two Free churches when there were three.

   For Scotland see: Chapter VI, 'The Awakening in Scotland', pp 41-49.
17. Ibid, p 117.
22. Ibid, p 2.
27. Airdrie Advertiser, August 20 1859, p 2.
32. Ibid, p 2.
33. Ibid, p 2.
34. Airdrie Advertiser, August 27 1859, p 2.
35. Ibid, p 2.
37. Ibid, p 2.
38. Ibid, p 2.
40. Ibid, p 2.
41. The existence of such a Census carried out by a popular newspaper and therefore unofficial confirms D J Withrington’s suggestion that the great debates on the religious condition of the people during the 1880s and '90s were underway by the 1870s.


42. With the exception of Glasgow which was divided into four districts with the Census taken on four successive Sundays.
43. North British Daily Mail (NBDM) - Census of Religious Attendance in Glasgow and the Principal towns and Populous districts in the West of Scotland, Glasgow, 1876.
43. Final Report, Wednesday 17 May 1876.
44. Ibid.
45. NBDM Census, First Report, 8 March 1876.

The format of the certificate was quite straightforward:

"I hereby certify that the number of men, women and children who entered _______ Church at _____ service on _______ was _____."
46. NBDM Census, Final Report, 17 May 1876.
47. Ibid.
48. The Airdrie results were presented in the same report as those of Coatbridge (Census Sunday, 16 April); Bothwell and Blantyre (Census Sunday 7 May); Motherwell (16 April); Wishaw (30 April); Lesmahagow (7 May); Strathaven (7 May); Kirkintilloch (7 May); Campsie (30 April); Kilsyth (30 April); Falkirk (30 April); Stirling (30 April).

49. NBDM Census Report 10, 10 May 1876.

50. From 14,435 (1851 Decennial Census) to 13,488 (1871 Census). See Chapter Eleven following.
Strange But Familiar

In 1861, John Liddell Kelly, aged eleven, a blacksmith's son, joined the staff of the Airdrie Advertiser and in time worked his way to becoming chief reporter for the paper. Ill-health forced him to quit Scotland for New Zealand in 1881. He settled in Auckland where he continued his journalistic career and, except for a short return visit to Airdrie in summer 1907, spent the rest of his life in New Zealand. But he was a highly self-conscious exile. He always thought of himself as a Scot and, above all, an Airdrieonian. Indeed, among numerous verses which he penned in his spare time three on Airdrie were included in an anthology, Airdrie Bards Past and Present, compiled by James Knox in the late 1920s. In the first of these Airdrie poems, written before his return visit of 1907, Kelly spoke with longing for the place of his boyhood and youth. He noted that reports had reached him in New Zealand that Airdrie had been much changed and spoiled by continuing industrial development, and by a widening gap
between rich and poor. He bemoaned these developments and the destruction of what he remembered "in the light of golden dreams" as an Airdrie of verdant braes, harmonious social relations and cheery folk; "a fairest of fairylands". In anticipation of his return visit, Kelly wrote a second poem, 'Dreams of Airdrie', in the course of which he expressed fears that his memories of the place would conflict with present realities:

"Are things still clad in a roseate hue
In the dear old town of Airdrie?
When I see the haunts where once I roved
Shall I see their charms have fled?

Shall I see like a ghost from the shadowy land
An alien cast on an alien land
When I tread the streets of Airdrie?"  

Having spent summer 1907 in the town Kelly set off for New Zealand and while on the long trip back recorded impressions of the visit in 'Airdrie Revisited'. As he had feared, the dream vision of his memory fled when confronted with "reality's thick cloud". He acknowledged sadly that youth cannot be relived and that perhaps he should not have come back to Airdrie. Kelly was disappointed and somewhat disillusioned and the sense of loss he experienced was compounded by the fact that in 1907 he felt himself to be moving through an Airdrie that was strange and yet familiar.

Nostalgia for a bygone Airdrie provided material for a number of Knox's bards. However, this did not mean that
the town had become unrecognisable to them. Rather, for them, as for Kelly, Airdrie though changed and changing was strangely familiar. Nostalgia and unabashed sentimentalism were styles of expression which local poets from different periods of the nineteenth century used as a way of throwing a protective cloak about their town. They looked for changelessness, an Airdrie essence, in times of constant change. They appealed to the past in order to embellish the identity of the town present and to guard against the threatening unpredictableness of the future. The emotional impact of their poems lay in the strange familiarity of the town about which they reflected.

Not all of Knox’s bards while glorifying the past and disavowing the present Airdrie, worried about its future. Indeed, the burgh centenary of 1921 provided an opportunity for praising Airdrie’s past and present and for prophesying a bright future. "Here’s tae Airdrie", toasted Archibald Rose,

"We lo’e her, and sma’ wunner!
May she be hale, and fair and soun’,
When she’s anither ‘Hunner’.
"

In some respects, however, the First World War clouded the celebrations of 1921. The burgh centenary served as a point of renewal but it also provided an occasion for reflection. It was as much an end point as a new beginning.

590
Associational Life, Communal Ethic - The Late Victorian-Edwardian Burgh

The late Victorian British town was, as James Walvin has noted, "more varied in its facilities and functions than most British towns had ever been." It contained a number of institutions which by 1900 had firmly established themselves in the Victorian landscape. By the close of the century Airdrie had acquired many of those features and institutions commonly regarded by people of all classes as the hallmarks of civilisation, good government and democracy.

In the realm of law and order there was a permanent burgh police force, a prison, a sheriff substitute and County Court buildings. A registrar had been based in the town since 1854. Airdrie could also boast a range of collective public works and services administered by the town council, elected albeit on a limited franchise. There was a gasworks, a waterworks (run jointly with Coatbridge), public drinking fountains and parks, fully paved streets and much improved drainage. Other institutions included a Free Public Library (which also housed the local museum and an observatory), a Mechanics Institute, a Working Men's Association, a locally based savings bank (the origins of which are referred to in Chapter Eight), and a small fever hospital. A poorhouse, located at Commonhead on the road
to New Monkland kirk, outside and to the north of the burgh bounds, was as yet under the care of parish rather than burgh authorities. There were in all eight schools under the burgh school board.

Civic culture was enriched by a variety of voluntary organisations based around leisure, educational and philanthropic activities. The local branch of the Independent Order of Good Templars in the early 1900s claimed to be the largest temperance lodge in the world. The IOGT was aided in its efforts to counter Airdrie’s extensive public house and spirit shop network by a branch of the British Women’s Temperance Association and the temperance groups of a number of the local churches. A host of small clubs catered for respectable leisure or educational pursuits. These clubs included a photographic society, a musical club, an amateur operatic society (with Coatbridge), a male voice choir, an orchestra, two bands, a literary society, a sketching group, a chess club and a Burns club (almost obligatory in every Scottish town). Sporting clubs and associations abounded. Working class passion for football was by no means restricted to support for Rangers or Celtic. Airdrie Football Club fielded a team which was followed by hundreds of working class townsmen with, as today, varying degrees of enthusiasm and derision bordering on self-mockery. Two local bowling clubs and a Homing Pigeons Society were for the most part monopolised by skilled artisans, while two tennis clubs and
a golf club tended to be the preserve of aspiring middle class residents. There was also an angling club, an athletic club, a cricket club, a curling club, a cycling club and a ramblers' association. And all this is to say nothing of the various works' clubs and associations, and the coteries of dedicated gamblers and drinkers.

The rights and interests of working people were represented in the tough, competitive environment of Airdrie's industry and commerce by branches of various trades unions, of which the most important was the local branch of the Lanarkshire Miners' Federation. Young people were catered for by Sunday schools, troops of Boy Scouts, Girl Guides, Boys' Brigade, Church Lads and Junior groups of the temperance associations. On top of these organisations and associations there was continuing input into associational life from the Masonic Lodges, the Friendly Societies and, above all, the churches. The latter were directly and indirectly responsible for an array of benevolent, educational and leisure organisations ranging from Sunday schools, temperance groups and Benevolent Ladies associations to two Pleasant Sunday Afternoon organisations. Moreover, the churches through ministers, kirk sessions, management committees, and members were an active, prominent and still highly visible influence in nearly every aspects of civil society and culture. Together the churches constituted the largest voluntary organisation in Airdrie and although they were not attended
by the poor or the less well-off working class they were the only associations which could be described as in any sense genuinely cross-class. From the 1790s down to 1914 churches presided over a remarkable diffusion of Evangelical values (and ambiguities) and kept the flame of Evangelicalism and dissent burning at the heart of local civic culture.

Late Victorian–Edwardian Airdrie, then, was saturated with institutions and organisations that embodied not so much a ruggedly individualist ethic as a communal one. Churches, town council, football club and the other religious and voluntary organisations expressed in different ways and to different degrees a collective morality of some kind. And it was a collective morality that had been decisively shaped by Evangelical Protestantism. In the first year of World War One this collective morality and the communal ethic were brought dramatically into focus. A local solicitor, James Allan Reid, supervised the publication of a book, Airdrie and the Great War (1915), which not only outlined the war efforts of the community (almost as if the war was an Evangelical crusade) but also recorded in a remarkable selection of photographs the local killed and wounded servicemen of all classes during the first year of the war, and many of the municipal, religious, commercial and voluntary organisations contributing to the war effort. However, the damaging effect of the war on the confidence and self-esteem of local community and culture is indicated
by the fact that Reid's volume was not, as planned, repeated for later years of the war. As James Knox put it, somewhat cryptically,

"as the war developed and lengthened... the early contributions recorded by Mr Reid became insignificant in comparison to those that followed."\(^\text{12}\)

Although Airdrie and Airdrieonians participated in events of national importance, local government and the range of public services and voluntary organisations gave people the impression that their town was a self-sufficient unit. Moreover, this view had been made easier to sustain in the second half of the nineteenth century because after 1851 Airdrie never again experienced the dislocations caused by startling demographic and economic changes that had characterised the period from 1831 to 1841.\(^\text{13}\)

Between 1851 and 1861 the population actually fell, from 14,435 to 12,922,\(^\text{14}\) as industrial development slowed and the labouring population became more settled. During the two decades after 1861 the burgh population remained at a more or less constant level rising to only 13,488 in 1871 and then falling slightly to 13,363 in 1881.\(^\text{15}\) (This steadying of the population was partly the result of the migration of coal and ironstone miners consequent upon the gradual exhaustion of coal and ironstone seams in or near the burgh bounds).\(^\text{16}\) By contrast, the population of New Monkland landward parish leapt from 9,264 in 1871 to 14,453
in 1881 following a boom in the coal trade in the early 1870s and the exploitation of seams outwith Airdrie and its immediate vicinity.\textsuperscript{17}

In 1885 the Airdrie municipal burgh bounds, which since the 1830s had been coextensive with the parliamentary boundaries, were extended to take in Clarkston to the east and Coatdyke to the west. Extension of the municipal burgh added 3,126 people to the population and accounted for the increased total population to 19,135 in 1891.\textsuperscript{18} From 1891 until the First World War the population of the now extended municipal burgh rose slowly but steadily, reaching 24,388 by 1911. During the same period the population of New Monkland landward fell and by 1911 stood at half that of Airdrie burgh.\textsuperscript{19}

The more settled pace of demographic change in Airdrie during the second half of the nineteenth century was linked to the decline of coal and ironstone mining. There were forty-four collieries and six ironstone mines at work in New Monkland parish in 1879.\textsuperscript{20} But in the fifty years to 1911 124 mines in the parish had been abandoned.\textsuperscript{21}

The same fifty year period also saw the rise and gradual decline of engineering in Airdrie. In the last quarter of the nineteenth century five large heavy engineering works, specialising in steam engines, steam hammers, boilers, colliery equipment and plant for the oil and gas
industries, were located in or near the town. By 1914 only one of these five works was left.\textsuperscript{22} However, the disappearance of big engineering works did not mark the end of local heavy industry. Small scale engineering shops, brass and iron foundries, continued to thrive providing an important source of employment for local skilled and unskilled labour.\textsuperscript{23} Moreover, in or near the town there were brickworks, quarries, paperworks, printing works and a cotton factory.\textsuperscript{24} Airdrie workers also travelled to Coatbridge's many iron and steel works, and to Calderbank and Chapelhall (just outside the burgh bounds to the southwest) where in 1879 the New Monkland Iron Company ran eight blast furnaces.\textsuperscript{25} Perhaps the biggest single contribution to employment of Airdrie men in heavy industry came with the building of Stewart and Lloyds Imperial Tubeworks (1898-1900).\textsuperscript{26}

Although industry still dominated the Airdrie economy at the turn of the century, the merchant and commercial sectors had expanded and developed since the 1830s and '40s. The decennial censuses and less detailed smaller scale publications, such as Clarke's Airdrie Directory (1896), indicate the vitality, variety and increased quantity of local merchant, commercial and professional services.\textsuperscript{27} Clarke's Directory not only provides professional, commercial and civic information but also the names, addresses and occupations of over two thousand townspeople. The sheer variety of occupations, especially
of what can loosely be categorised as working class occupations, stands out. Occupational data from the decennial census reports 1881 to 1911 reinforces the picture of a town increasingly dominated by engineering and iron manufacture, rather than by coalmining, and of a somewhat fragmented working class.²⁸

A number of important changes in the classification of occupations in the census enquiries, 1881 to 1911, make direct comparisons between one decade and the next difficult.²⁹ Nevertheless, the occupational data still allow us to gain an impression of economic change in Airdrie down to 1914.

According to the 1881 Census, most people in Airdrie were classified under Class V (Industrial) and Class VI (Unoccupied and Non-Productive). Together, these Classes accounted for 12,404 people, or 92.8% of the total population.³⁰ Of those people returned under Class VI most were women of "unspecified occupation" or children at school.³¹ In Class V, the largest Order was number 21, those employed "in Mineral Substances". This Order accounted for 1,813 men, 52% of all men in Order 21 and 13.6% of the total population.³² Within Order 21 the largest single male occupational group was that of Sub-order 1, Coal Miners. This, the largest male occupational group in the town, amounted to 1,182 men,³³ 34% of all men
returned under Class V, 17.7% of all Airdrie males and 8.8% of the total population.

Ten years later, in the enlarged municipal burgh, most people in the occupational report were still returned under Classes V and VI. Together, these Classes now covered 17,541 people, 92% of the total population of 1891. As in 1881 most of those people returned under Class VI were women of unspecified occupation or children at school. The largest single male occupational group remained that of coalminers (Order 21, Sub-order 1). These now totalled 1,885 men, 36.4% of all men in Class V, 19% of all Airdrie occupied males and 9.8% of the total population. However, although in both 1881 and 1891 coalminers were the largest single male occupational group they were a smaller percentage of the total population and of the total male population than they had been in the 1861 Census occupational enquiry. Furthermore, by 1901 the number of men employed in the coal industry had fallen behind that of those in the metal industry. Under a new occupational classification for 1901, 1,580 men were grouped under Order IX, "In and About, and Dealing in Products of Mines and Quarries". By contrast, Order X, "Metals, Machines, Implements and Conveyances" accounted for 2,179 men. These figures represented 7% and 9.8% of the total population respectively.
The declining importance of coal mining is confirmed by the occupational returns for the 1911 Census. Under revised occupational groupings a total of 1,241 men was recorded as "in the Coal Industry", 16% of Airdrie's 7,723 occupied males and 5% of the total population.39 This compared with a total of 3,262 men listed as employed "in Iron Manufacture" (including steel), 42.2% of occupied men and 13.4% of the total population.40

More significantly, the largest single male occupational group was that of Census occupation number 134, "puddling furnaces, rolling mills, tube manufacture". This group accounted for 1,773 men, 23% of all occupied males and 7.3% of the total population.41 By contrast there were now only 1,131 coal miners - 900 hewers, 190 other workers below ground, and 41 at pit heads42 - 14.6% of occupied men and only 4.6% of the burgh population, a percentage only slightly higher than the figures for men involved in the engineering trades (1,035 men, 13.4% of occupied men and 4.3% of the total population).43

Altogether those employed in iron, steel, coalmining and engineering accounted for at least 5,538 men, 71.7% of all occupied males and 22.7% of Airdrie's total population. It is clear then, that by 1911 Airdrie was dominated still by industry but coal mining was diminishing relative to engineering and particularly to the iron industry.
A glance through Clarke’s Directory reveals, as a detailed examination of Census Schedules would, that workers, both skilled and unskilled, tended to concentrate in certain areas of Airdrie. The bulk of inhabitants still lived crowded along and on either side of the two historic highways around and between which the town had grown up. Wide and open, New Town Cross was by the close of the nineteenth century the symbolic and commercial heart of the town. Overcrowding around the town centre and much poor housing were subjects of constant concern for local authorities, churches, doctors and benevolent societies. The Ordnance Gazetteer while completely avoiding descriptions of slums was not particularly flattering in its sketch of Airdrie: "it wears a straggling and somewhat unlovely aspect". More surprisingly, the Gazetteer suggested that the town was "airy", not an adjective that locals would have thought entirely appropriate considering the smoke and dirt produced by workshops and foundries. Although it is hard to imagine today, it is important to realise just how relatively small and cramped Airdrie was at the beginning of the twentieth century.

However, much of the land in the immediate vicinity of the town was green, hilly and indeed airy. The open countryside could provide local people with some relief from overcrowding and the grime of industrial activity. There were many well-used spots of outstanding natural beauty, the most famous being the Monkland Glen to the
south-east of the burgh bounds. For generations of Airdrieonians Monkland Glen, "Bonny" Gartlea and the land to the north of the Commonhead were synonymous with "the Countryside". These were places of magical or inspirational quality, favourite venues for long walks or meetings of, for example, the PSA groups.47 (Map 5)

Escape to the country, however, provided little consolation for the poorest of Airdrie’s people. They were condemned to a miserable existence in inadequate dwellings or unhealthy lodging houses or, worst of all, in the Airdrie (that is, New Monkland parish) poorhouse. As late as 1932 medical officials visiting the poorhouse, in the course of preparing a report on potential sites for hospitals for the poor in Lanarkshire, were horrified by what they discovered. They described it as one of the most appalling poorhouses they had ever seen, its sick poor being housed in an attic.48 The condition of such sick poor, in 1932 as in 1902, stood in stark contrast to that of the local middle classes.

Social segregation had been a feature in Airdrie since the 1820s. But it was in the 1860s and '70s that the professional and commercial middle class increasingly moved out of the town centre and into spacious stone-built detached or semi-detached villas away from the bustling cross, strung out along Stirling Street and Alexander Street to the west, Clark Street and Forrest Street to the
east, and the Biggar Road north and south. In addition, little groups of handsome residences grew up along Victoria Place, Albert Place, Springhill and Springwells, and Grahamshill. Set in large areas of private ground it was these middle class dwellings which gave Airdrie its "stragglng" aspect (Maps 4 and 5). In the middle of the nineteenth century Robert Tennant, "the postman poet", thought that his native Airdrie was an unromantic town comprising many "lowly homes" and untainted by "mansions vast with lofty domes" or by "princely palaces". However, by 1900 even though the grandest of the middle class houses were modest in comparison to those at the very top of the local social ladder, such as John Wilson's Airdrie House, they were princely when viewed alongside the dwellings of the town's working class. Airdrie House, and the stone villas of the middle class, reflected lifestyles wholly different from those of both skilled and unskilled workers. Private havens of peace and quiet, the homes and grounds of the local middle class were terra incognita to working class people with the exception of specific domestic servants, tradesmen or delivery people.

It is not easy, however, to assess precisely the impact of social segregation in a town like Airdrie. It could be argued that since the distance between the leafy middle class areas and the densely packed lower middle-working class areas was so small, the middle class had to assert their identity all the more forcefully. On the other hand,
in small towns such as Airdrie many of the indigenous middle class of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries were people whose parents or grandparents had "worked their way up". This closeness to social origins, while it could heighten middle class disdain for those who were not well-off, could also mean that the lower classes were treated with a great deal of respect. After all, it was not just in George Douglas's fictitious Barbie that it was easy to "redd-up" a man's pedigree. Furthermore, social segregation operated not only between classes but also within them. If census occupational data on Airdrie is taken as a crude indicator it is apparent that the one thing Airdrie did not have was a homogeneous working class. Rather, there were close and mutually exclusive groups within the working class. In addition, it is worth noting that while certain public institutions in the nation were the preserve of the middle class, in the small towns this was not so clearly the case. The respectable working and lower middle class of Airdrie had a relatively secure and long established foothold in, for example, the churches, the town council and temperance organisations. 

Religious affiliation in particular brought working class churchgoers into direct contact with the middle classes thereby encouraging a sense of shared values and rough egalitarianism. It is against this background that we must view the ILP's efforts to make an impact in Airdrie from the mid 1890s.
The ILP certainly looked upon Airdrie as one of its natural territories. However, local party politics were as much a part of associational culture as any other activity and political activity therefore tended to be limited to the kind of people who were able to participate in associational life. Consequently, as Ross McKibbin has pointed out more generally, any working class party had to contend with an existing working class associational culture which was stable and relatively sophisticated. This culture was not inert or apolitical but it was political in the broadest sense. The kind of people who were most likely to join the ILP were the same kind as kept pigeons, went to church or supported temperance.

Moreover, the ILP’s electoral task in Airdrie was made difficult because of the town’s status as only one of five burghs in the Falkirk District parliamentary constituency. From 1857 until the First World War the Falkirk Burghs’ constituency was represented either by a Liberal or a Liberal Unionist MP. Moreover, the MPs from 1892 until 1918, successively Harry Smith, John Wilson and J A M MacDonald, were known for their sympathy for the demands of labour, especially miners. There are no striking indications that Liberalism was on the point of collapse in Falkirk Burghs, while in Airdrie town council politics the strength of traditional loyalties was only too apparent. Between them the Liberals and Conservatives carved up the local working class vote, with the Conservatives frequently
getting the better share.\textsuperscript{56} Indeed, from 1868 until 1899 the Provostship was held by representative Conservatives.\textsuperscript{57}

Labour and North Lanarkshire, 1885–1914

"This is the land which I swear unto Abraham... I have caused thee to see it with thine eyes, but thou shalt not go over thither."

(Deuteronomy 34:4)

I G C Hutchinson has pointed out that given the rapidity and comprehensiveness with which Labour displaced the Liberals as the major electoral force on the left after the First World War there is "a natural inclination to discern evidence of this breakthrough in the period before 1914".\textsuperscript{58} He has argued that the Scottish Liberals and Conservatives were genuinely worried about the long-term threat presented by the ILP, its association with the trades unions and the impact of its propaganda.\textsuperscript{59}

In order to ascertain whether Liberal and Conservative fears and ILP optimism were accurate Hutchinson suggests four areas which need to be examined: the strength of the ILP; the organisational challenge of the ILP and then the Labour Party; the relationship between trades unions, the ILP and Socialism; and the electoral pattern and the impact of Labour on Liberal Party fortunes.\textsuperscript{60}
Using a framework similar to that recommended by Hutchison, though pre-dating him by almost a decade, Gordon Brown in a study of the development of Labour in North Lanarkshire has looked for clues to Labour’s success after 1918 in the period from 1885 to 1914. Brown has attempted to account for the gap, covering the years 1885 to 1914, between the establishment of a Socialist, pro-Independent Labour trade union leadership and the election of Labour MPs. He has examined in some detail the complex interplay between trades unions, the ILP, Socialism and the economic structures of North Lanarkshire. Two assumptions have governed his approach. First, he has accepted as axiomatic that the rise of Labour was a function of the decline of Liberalism. In no county, he argues, did the Liberal Party’s ascendancy seem more pronounced, yet after the First World War in none was Labour’s ultimate success more complete. To explain this change we need to examine the political space into which the ILP could move and grow. Second, he thinks that the rise of Labour was dependent on strong and stable trade union bases. In North Lanarkshire the key union was that of the miners and therefore we must look at the relationship between the miners union, the ILP and Socialism, and at the relationship between the regional economy and the miners’ union.

The first part of Brown’s dissertation details the Socialist industrial and political efforts from 1885 to
1895. It explains how Socialists involved themselves in the industrial struggles of the miners in an attempt to create a solid union base for an independent working class political movement. However, the attempt to build a union base and a strong leadership among the miners, down to 1895, failed. This failure did not lie in the weakness of Socialist leaders specifically, the unattractiveness of the Socialist message or divisions among the workers. It lay in the long-standing and successful repression of trades unionism by Lanarkshire employers and in the peculiar infrastructure of the regional economy, a structure which worked against the interests of the working class.64

The ten year period from 1885 was a special phase for the development of Independent Labour in Lanarkshire for four reasons. First, within the country as a whole 1885–6 marked the beginning and 1894–5 the end of two cycles of trade union development and activity. Second, the Liberal Party suffered a series of crises of which the most important was the split in the party over the question of Irish Home Rule. Third - and here Brown follows Stephen Yeo65 - within the Socialist Movement, Socialism had a uniquely anti-materialistic ethical character. Fourth, after 1896 and down to 1900 was the first sustained cycle of prosperity since the 1880s in which the conditions for stable union growth outreached employers' aggressive opposition to union activities. From 1900 to 1914 the miners' union in particular grew in strength and became the
single most important potential base for the establishment of the Independent Labour Party.

The second section of Brown's study concentrates on the ILP's organisational plans and difficulties after 1896. Brown explains how miners' unionism achieved a measure of stability but in the context of slow and spasmodic, often regressive, ILP growth. He argues that even with a strong union base there proved to be intractable problems for the ILP. There were technical, political and social barriers in the way of the party's political success, for example the nature of the electoral system with its still limited franchise; the difficulties of maintaining communications, contacts and party solidarity in a region covering 870 square miles, and the troubled relations between the industrial and political wings of the Labour movement. Moreover, Brown suggests that these technical problems were "no more important" than other "psychological" barriers, in particular the minimal importance conventionally placed on political activity in social behaviour among the working class, and the strength of traditional political loyalties.

Before moving to a critical assessment of Brown's approach to the question of the rise of Labour in North Lanarkshire it will be helpful to look at the outworking of some of his main lines of argument.
From the 1850s miners' unionism in the county had been spasmodic and was, cumulatively, ineffective. The defeat of major strikes in 1874 and again in 1879, divisions among miners' leaders, and the coalmasters' determined refusal to agree to a sliding scale for wages precipitated a collapse of the miners' County Federation organisation and of district unions. This collapse left a vacuum for new leadership to replace the then traditional Lib-Lab strategy represented chiefly in the person of Alexander McDonald. In the political arena, the early 1880s saw an upsurge of anti-Liberal ideas in the west of Scotland through the Irish Home Rule movement, Highland land agitation and the speaking tours of the proto-Socialist, Henry George. In Lanarkshire, however, there was no immediate or inevitable progression from discontent with Liberalism to Socialism and Independent Labour politics. Nor was there any inevitability about an alliance between miners' unionism and Socialism.

The development of Socialism in the county and in the Lanarkshire miners' union from 1885 to the early 1890s centred on William Small, who became secretary of the County Federation in 1882. Small was one of a group of emergent Socialists in Scotland who advocated an Independent Labour Party and who urged that such a party must be based on strong trades unions. This little group of men included many who were later to become famous Scottish and British Labour leaders, the most important
being James Keir Hardie.\textsuperscript{77} It is clear that, like Hardie, Small was in every respect a typical product of the Socialist Revival.\textsuperscript{78} He had progressed from disenchantment with radical Liberalism to faith in Socialism, defined in moral rather than economic terms, and to a belief in the necessity for Independent Labour representation. Small was firmly located within the milieu of the Religion of Socialism. He looked forward to the immediate, or at least not too distant, creation of a new moral order and viewed Labourism primarily as an instrument for achieving Socialism. Accordingly, he attempted to set the Socialist movement in Lanarkshire on a miners’ union base and in the direction of independent working class representation in Parliament. That Small, like Hardie, emphasised the parliamentary route indicated the non-revolutionary character of his Socialist credentials.

Although he had been influenced by Marxism,\textsuperscript{79} Small rejected materialism in favour of the ethical “almost millenarianistic Socialism”\textsuperscript{80} which, as was noted earlier, Brown thinks was unique to the decade from 1885. Although in contact with some of the most notable Socialist thinkers of the 1880s including William Morris, H M Hyndman, Edward Carpenter and Peter Kropotkin,\textsuperscript{81} Small had been influenced, above all, by John Glasse, minister of Greyfriars Kirk in Edinburgh (1877 to 1909).\textsuperscript{82}
Glasse has been numbered among the "social heretics" of the Scottish churches. Charismatic and outspoken, he was an unashamed Christian Socialist and staunch supporter of Keir Hardie and the ILP. Rejecting the claims of Marxist materialism, Glasse advocated that constitutional change should be brought about by propaganda and persuasion. Capitalism, he argued, had generated ruthless competition and an excess of selfish individualism. It allowed an élite and privileged group of greedy men to exercise irresponsible power and social tyranny over the workers. Glasse condemned the class system as unequal and repressive, and demanded a return to the social equality that had been a hallmark of Early Christianity. Christianity and Socialism were not antithetical because Socialists wanted what all true Christians should want; not so much the equal distribution of goods as such but rather equal opportunities for all men and women. Socialism, argued Glasse, was the attempt to apply Christian principles to practical life. The ethic of Christianity and Socialism was the same. In short, as Brown has pointed out, Glasse’s equation of Christianity and Socialism posited an anti-materialistic philosophy that was ethical, non-violent and utopian. It sought the creation of a collective cooperative society and a new, remoralised social order.

For his part, Small stressed the divinity in man "and not much more" but it would be difficult to classify him as
atheistical in any meaningful sense. He regarded the Sermon on the Mount as the essence of Christianity and, again like Hardie, was condemnatory of institutional religion, not of religion per se. His union policies reflected his non-violence and indeed he was less confrontational than the early Hardie. However, though Small preferred caution, in the Alexander McDonald tradition, this did not blunt the radical edge of his Socialist millenarianism, and it was Socialist Revivalism and his demand for independent workers' representation that distinguished him from the old style Lib-Labism of union leaders like McDonald.

From the mid-eighties Small set about rejuvenating the Lanarkshire Miners' Federation around a comprehensive and in some respects time-honoured programme of social reform and redress of industrial grievances. He called for the formation or re-formation of district unions and for committees at every pit. Success against employers could only be won, he argued, by careful organisation linking districts across the country and then by forming associations with other trades.

The details of union tactics over the next few years need not concern us here. The main point to note is that the Lanarkshire Miners' Federation and, individually, the district unions were effectively frustrated and hampered in their efforts to better the pay and conditions of miners.
by the determined, aggressive and well organised anti-union policies of employers’ associations. Events culminated in the defeat of a national coal strike in 1894, a union failure which, Brown argues, dealt a crushing blow to the cause of the Independent Labour movement in Lanarkshire for the next six years. Keir Hardie, by now a national political figure and principal founder of the ILP (1893), thought that the collapse of the 1894 miners’ strike illustrated the necessity for miners’ unions to throw in their lot with the ILP. He and other party leaders expected that substantial gains for the party in Lanarkshire would follow from the strike. In fact, the ILP was conspicuously unsuccessful over the next few years both at the polls and in the pursuit of union backing.

Furthermore, the miners’ leadership was divided over the 1894 strike. In Lanarkshire, Small was blamed for his advocacy of caution and settlement with the employers, and he was unceremoniously removed from the County Federation secretaryship. Brown thinks that the defeat of 1894 and Small’s fall implied not only a reverse for trade unionism but also a rejection of Socialism as represented by Small, and of the Independent Labour strategy of linking the industrial and political Labour movements.

Brown has also suggested that the removal of Small and the failure to build a strong union base among the Lanarkshire miners was not necessarily the result of the Socialist
leaders being out of touch with miners, but a consequence of the structure of the West of Scotland industrial economy. A flexible supply of labour and the interdependence of the coal, iron and steel, and shipbuilding industries favoured employers’ associations but disadvantaged the workers and unions.99 Employers’ anti-union campaigns derived great strength from the fact that, for example, the Lanarkshire coal industry was made up of a multitude of small pits. As late as 1901, of 238 pits in the county 108 employed less than one hundred men and seventy five more pits employed less than fifty.100 This situation favoured employers’ divide and rule tactics and made solidarity among the county workforce difficult to sustain. Coal owners were able to terrorize miners with threats of sacking for union involvement, confident that other workers could be found.101 Moreover, since most Lanarkshire coal was used to meet domestic demand, especially from the local iron industry, competition among pits in the county was intense because they depended on the same market. This enabled the employers to cut wages and to play pits off against one another. Furthermore, small independent coal-owners had to compete for the same market against the powerful iron companies which together controlled much of Lanarkshire’s coalfield. The iron companies thus not only led the campaign against unions but also pushed the small independent coal companies into pursuing similar anti-union policies.102
Politically, the decade from 1885 and then the years down to 1900 were not a complete disaster for the causes of Socialism and Independent Labour. The ILP was managing to achieve limited success in some localities; Brown cites Larkhall, a former weaving town but by the late nineteenth century a coal mining centre. However, Larkhall had a long tradition of working class independence centred on the Cooperative movement and Brown thinks this indicates that the "growth points for Independent Labour were those relatively secure areas with strong traditions of working class independence". From the mid 'nineties during a fading away of ILP activity in the county, Larkhall was almost alone in maintaining a prominent Independent Labour organisation.

Furthermore, Brown also argues that the overall failure of Socialism and Independent Labour in Lanarkshire down to 1895 can partly be explained by the continuing strength and vitality of local Liberalism in some areas and by enthusiasm for Irish Home Rule in others. Although the latter cause diverted attention, interest and votes away from Liberalism it was also disadvantageous for Labour for the same reasons. There was no direct line from Home Rule to Labour and certainly not to Socialism. Just as important, although dominated by a middle class leadership, Liberalism in Lanarkshire was nevertheless represented by men who were sympathetic to labour and who proved to be as radical as Labour candidates and could thus pose and act as
mediators in industrial disputes. Working class demands were being articulated via the Liberals. All in all, from 1885 to 1895

"the real possibility that a Socialist and industrial [labour] movement might grow in Lanarkshire simultaneously was wrecked... by the radicalism of local Liberal candidates but more basically by the employers' successful opposition to miners' unionism".107

In addition, tendencies making for Socialist influence in the county, such as class conflict in mining communities (which in some places was manifest in outbreaks of violence, as during the 1894 miners' dispute), proved to be no guarantee of political success. This remained so even when from 1895 onwards the miners' union began to improve its organisation and to increase its membership.108

The period of sustained prosperity in the Lanarkshire coal industry from 1896 down to 1900 enabled the County Union gradually to recoup its strength.109 In 1896 the branches in the county had only around 3,000 members. By 1900 there were over 20,000.110 1898 was a crucial year in the re-establishment of the County Union. Four wage advances, successful outlawing of non-union labour in many pits, and the formation of fifty-seven branches in one hundred pits gave the union stability that it had previously lacked.111 Moreover, with the setting up of conciliation machinery in 1899, employers' recognition of the union was achieved. By
the close of 1899 the union had ninety-two branches and was now organised on a County rather than a federation basis. The latter arrangement had always been a source of weakness for it tended to emphasise the autonomy of local unions and consequently allowed employers to divide and rule. The strength of the reorganised union was demonstrated in 1900 when industrial action won an eight hour day for miners (though at the expense of a five day week). In the same year the role of the County Union in the cause of Independent Labour acquired a new significance when it voted to join the Scottish TUC's Parliamentary Election Committee.

However, the advance of the Lanarkshire Miners' Union took place against a background of regression in the Socialist movement in the county and of widespread demoralisation in the ILP throughout Scotland, lasting from 1896 until the early 1900s. During this period ILP activities in Lanarkshire were sustained to any great extent only in Carluke, Larkhall and Motherwell.

Between 1900 and 1914 ILP organisation picked up but electoral success was not forthcoming. There was, in fact, argues Brown, a series of "false dawns" for the ILP. The party leadership was so intent on winning Lanarkshire for the cause - because they regarded Lanarkshire as the key to national success - that they constantly exaggerated the strength of the party and the appeal of the Socialist
message among the trades unions, trades councils, and the working class.\(^{117}\) Every small advance was interpreted as a sign of the imminent demise of Liberalism and the inevitable triumph of Labour and Socialism.\(^{118}\)

Much of the detail of the formation, disappearance and reformation of local ILPs throughout the county from 1900 to 1914, and the party leaders' repeated attempts to build a strong County Union, can be found in Brown's dissertation; and the atmosphere of excitement, enthusiasm and anticipation, followed by disillusion then renewal of propagandist efforts, can easily be traced in the pages of Labour Leader. We will return to some of these details and to the ethos of ILP Socialism down to 1914 when we come to consider Airdrie specifically. For the moment, we need only note that ILP efforts in the county after 1900 were to a large extent localised rather than county-wide in their impact and effect.\(^{119}\) Nevertheless, cumulatively these local initiatives did much to introduce the ideas of Socialism and of Independent Labour representation on a wider front than before 1900. This by itself could be counted as some sort of progress. But it did not mean that the ILP had overcome organisational and operational problems, or that electoral success, at the expense of the Liberals, was on the horizon. On the contrary, down to 1914 Brown thinks that the ILP was in danger of becoming rooted only in some localities. The cyclical, spasmodic development of the party failed to create a politically conscious and active
working class with Socialist ideals. Even when branch activity reached a high point in 1905 and miners' leaders were contesting parliamentary seats as Independent Labour candidates, the ILP still faced problems in its own organisation and in the radicalism of local Liberalism.

"A Most Likely District"? - Airdrie and the ILP

If the success of the ILP in industrial North Lanarkshire generally can be described, at best, as mixed, then in Airdrie it can be described as almost non-existent. The party's failure to put down deep and lasting roots in the town, particularly from 1894-1906, was a source of consternation for the Scottish and County leadership. From its early days, the ILP in Scotland assumed that since Airdrie was located at the heart of the Lanarkshire black country and had a long, proud tradition of radical weaving, Chartism, religious dissent and militant miners' unionism it would be fertile ground for an ILP triumph. In fact, this assessment of the Airdrie situation was mistaken and the story of the ILP efforts to make Airdrie a party centre proved to be one of seed cast on stony ground.

It would be possible to build up a fairly comprehensive picture of the activities of the Airdrie district miners' union from 1885 to 1914 by working from national, regional and local newspaper reports, and this in spite of the fact
that there are no existing records of the Airdrie district union for the period. However, such an exercise would require a dissertation on its own and in any case would be unlikely to alter the general conclusion that the Airdrie union was not as significant as it had been from 1830 to 1860. Certainly in the half year from June to December 1894, when the national coal strike was in full swing, the total union dues paid in the Airdrie district branch were higher than any other district union of the Lanarkshire Miners' Federation. But it is also the case that Airdrie and other of the best unionised districts were first to defect from the strike to settle individually with the coalmasters. Of course, Airdrie miners' capitulation in 1894 could have been the result of numerous factors ranging from plain starvation or concerted employer intimidation to discontent with the County Federation leaders. But whatever the causes, the defection of the Airdrie union testified to an inability to remain at the centre of large scale industrial disputes. Even when the revived miners' unionism began to gather strength after 1896 we know from the census returns that the importance of miners in the Airdrie economy specifically was steadily diminishing, and that by 1911 miners were no longer the largest single male occupational group in the burgh. This is not to say that the Airdrie miners could not remain a centre of union activity but rather that Airdrie could not be a key base for expansion of miners' unionism. In turn, this meant that the County ILP leaders' strategy of building on
miners’ unions was not necessarily the best strategy for Airdrie.

There are no records of the ILP branches which periodically operated in Airdrie during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. From reports in Labour Leader and from the specifically Scottish Labour newspaper, Forward, we know that the ILP tried to root itself in the town but with little permanent success. There were also attempts to form and maintain a Coatbridge branch and a joint Airdrie-Coatbridge branch. Indeed, an Airdrie-Coatbridge branch was formed as early as autumn 1893, under the direction of local miners’ leaders, but did not last. By the close of the century party activists nationally and regionally were once again trying to establish an Airdrie ILP. By the end of 1900 branches had been set up or resuscitated at Garrion Bridge, Wishaw and Blantyre, and ILP supporters were working hard to establish branches in Larkhall (where party fortunes had suffered a downturn) Holytown and Airdrie.

In the first months of 1901 the optimism of the Scottish party leadership was high and plans were put in motion for reviving a Lanarkshire County Federation. An open conference of Socialists from all parts of the county was held in early February, in the lesser Victoria Hall, Hamilton, Airdrie being among the districts represented by delegations. Work to organise the county continued
throughout the year but progress was slow. At the end of July an open-air demonstration in Motherwell attended by 1,500 people, again including a delegation from Airdrie, was still discussing the foundation of a County Federation.\textsuperscript{130} Motherwell was now a key operational centre. Indeed, the party there had acquired a suite of rooms and meetings were held in this Motherwell "ILP hall"\textsuperscript{131} throughout the summer in an attempt to organise party propagandists to canvass the districts of the county "with a view to ascertaining the probable strength of workable stuff in each locality...",\textsuperscript{132} (a comment which testifies to the continuing weakness and lack of communications among the ILP supporters across the county, and to the small numbers of individuals involved). Nevertheless, hopes were still running high. Airdrie was targeted as one of the districts ripe for conversion to Socialism and for a branch of the ILP. Following a by-election for the North East Lanark county seat in September - at which the Independent Labour candidate was roundly defeated but which Labour leaders thought had benefited their cause - W M Haddow,\textsuperscript{133} Willie Stewart and other members of the Glasgow party executive council met in impromptu conference in Airdrie with some local Socialists, and it was "particularly resolved that an [Airdrie] ILP branch should be formed without delay".\textsuperscript{134} Whether a branch was actually set up is not clear. Certainly in November, under the heading "A Resurrection", the \textit{Labour Leader} reported that Willie Stewart and one Patrick Agnew "of the Airdrie ILP"
addressed a meeting at Coatbridge and discussed arrangements for reconstituting the Coatbridge branch of the party "which was at one time one of the strongest in the West of Scotland". But it may be that this initiative in Coatbridge was actually an attempt to re-form an Airdrie-Coatbridge branch because the support in both towns was so slight. By the close of 1901 most energy was still being devoted to developing the County Federation and a full time county organiser, Willie Wright, was appointed.

Throughout 1902 the grandly titled Lanarkshire Socialist Federation tried to consolidate its grip on local activities and to co-ordinate the efforts of local propagandists, largely to no avail. Local party branches proved to be short-lived, lasting only months or even weeks. Once again, Motherwell was the outstanding and most consistent branch and it hosted some of the largest meetings for ILPers from all over the county, but its influence as a model branch seems to have been slight. Organisation across the county was weak and patchy, and the party leadership blamed the laxity of local comrades calling on them to "bestir themselves".

1903 was a bad year for the County Federation. The party was able to maintain only a skeleton organisation and the number of local branches which had lapsed was a matter of great concern to national leaders. By the spring of the year lack of support in the localities seems to have
reached crisis proportions. Willie Stewart called for a conference of all representative Lanarkshire Socialists, to be held in Motherwell on 7 May, to discuss ways of re-establishing lapsed branches.\(^{140}\) The conference was duly held and it was decided to concentrate on restoring and maintaining local branches rather than making any big attempt to organise a County Federation.\(^{141}\) This tactic seems to have paid off, for the number of branches began to increase again during the summer. Labour Leader anticipated much good work to come out of activities in Lanarkshire, optimism which was in part projected onto and generated by enthusiastic campaigning in yet another by-election for the North East County seat to be held in August. At the end of July Labour Leader praised developments in the county and predicted great gains for the ILP even should the Labour candidate be defeated in the election.\(^{143}\) By this date an Airdrie ILP branch had lapsed but the town and district was still considered to be one of the ILP's most natural constituencies. According to the Labour Leader, the prospects for further additions to the number of branches were good at Larkhall, Coatbridge, Partick, Cambuslang, Airdrie and other of "the most likely districts."\(^{144}\)

As things turned out, however, Labour was easily beaten at the North East by-election in August. Willie Stewart again blamed poor organisation and lack of propaganda. He argued that "if the ILP had twelve good strong branches in the
constituency they would have won." — a not very plausible claim given the ILP’s failure at the polls even when local organisation was relatively healthy. The leadership hoped to gain some long term benefits from the by-election campaigning and in September a circular was issued appealing for twenty branches to be formed in the county. Once again, however, optimism was based on an over-estimation of ILP strength and of the depth of its roots. By April of 1905 Stewart was despondent about the situation in Lanarkshire as a whole and expressed his frustration and perplexity. He firmly believed that Lanarkshire, especially the industrial north, ought by definition to be a stronghold of the ILP.

"I don’t know what to say about Lanarkshire. There are only five branches in all [the county] and there ought to be fifty-five. I very much believe that there are more Socialists in Lanarkshire than in the whole of the rest of Scotland but somehow they have never managed to get themselves thoroughly organised."  

On the run up to the 1906 General Election Stewart again predicted a great Socialist revival in the county but little ground was gained.  

From 1906 to 1914 ILP branches continued to come and go with alarming regularity. At Airdrie specifically there is little evidence of a branch being sustained for long enough to have any marked effect. In 1909, as the possibility of another General Election became apparent,
Labour began a reorganisation. New branches appeared at Coatbridge, among other places, while at Airdrie a Socialist Sunday School was set up.\textsuperscript{149} A full branch of the ILP was re-formed in Airdrie at some point after 1909 but was listed as lapsed in the party records for 1913.\textsuperscript{150} Although Labour gained seats at the Airdrie district school board elections of early 1914\textsuperscript{151} there is nothing to indicate that this was a decided triumph for the ILP and Socialism as such. Indeed, it is difficult to avoid the conclusion that in Lanarkshire generally and in Airdrie specifically the ILP was singularly unsuccessful despite the party leadership’s expectations and confidence, the influence of party organisation in Glasgow, the growing influence of the miners’ union and the numerical dominance of the working class in the population.

"Forward! Be Our Watchword..."
(Sacred Songs and Solos, No 837)

Both Gordon Brown and I G C Hutchison have treated the development of Labour in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries as if it were all a matter of party organisation, elections, trades unions and, in Brown’s case, economic conditions. This has led them to discuss the ILP on a narrow front, outwith the context of the Evangelical mission culture of which it was in fact a part. But the post 1896 Socialism as embodied in the ILP was not, as Brown thinks, radically different from the Socialist
Revivalism of the decade after 1885. As we saw in Chapter Two, Socialist Revivalism, with Labourism as the instrument for obtaining social transformation, was as important from 1896 to 1914 as it had been before this period. It is the continuing strength and vitality of Socialist Revivalism which explains why ILP leaders persistently predicted the imminent triumph of Labour from the smallest of signs, and the terms in which they foresaw and described the dawn of a new social order. Labour Leader reports on Scotland and on Lanarkshire provide ample illustration of these points. Thus, for example, a Labour Leader commentary on the enthusiasm of ILP activists during the North East Lanarkshire constituency election of autumn 1901 noted:

"It is not for nothing that the Division [N E Lanarkshire] has been stirred to its depths... the effect of all this [ILP] campaigning remains whatever the immediate election result.... The Independent Labour Party, which has already a grip, and which even before the election had been considering the question of organisation, can now, if it chooses, occupy the whole ground. The psychological moment is NOW - now when there is both faith and enthusiasm throughout the ranks." 52

Claims like this when viewed in a secular setting appear naive. There was no great army of Socialists that had a grip in Lanarkshire (or anywhere else in Scotland) and such claims turned out to be patent nonsense in electoral terms. Yet the ILP continued to make similar claims. Why?
If we treat the above commentary from 1901 as an example of Socialist Revivalist millenarian thinking it becomes apparent that the author was not working from purely secular, political assumptions. Rather, he was writing in an Evangelical revivalist spirit - "Behold now is the accepted time, now is the day of salvation". The military images which he chose to employ were close to those of other revivalist groups, such as the Salvation Army, and they carried the same other-worldly dimension. Labour's battle against Capitalism was portrayed not simply in moral terms but also as a cosmic struggle. The conflict was a war between Good and Evil. Indeed, although Socialists strove to concentrate people's minds on the creation of heaven on earth, at the same time, and often unconsciously, they constantly enjoined people to look up to the real War Beyond. Thus in 1904 one writer in Labour Leader visualised the activities of Socialists in "Smoketon - A Lanarkshire Town" as a recurrence of the age-old clash between the forces of Darkness and the forces of Light. In Smoketon, Darkness predominated. Drink, vice, poverty, toil, ignorance, mean housing and foul atmosphere were the chief features of the town. The presiding deity was Vulcan

"the laborious, the unfortunate, the despised among gods... Deformed, shaggy and black of brow, scant were the pleasures meted him in high Olympus."

The labourers of Smoketon were Vulcan's modern sons on earth. They were
"pale-faced, blackhanded, shoddily clad men, whose coarse labour has left its mark upon themselves. They have wrought hard and well, but little is theirs in return. Of all the treasures which this age has inherited from its predecessors, they have received nothing. Neither knowledge, nor culture, nor leisure are theirs; nothing but toil. They are the bondmen of the twentieth century."  

However, salvation was at hand for

"into this limbo has penetrated at times a fitful glimmer of light, which the wiser among them believe to be no illusive will-o-the-wisp. Amid the din of many voices proclaiming to tired ears gospels unavailing and sadly bankrupt, one with a new message strives to be heard.

It is the voice of the Socialist preaching the regeneration of all by mutual help and collective action."  

This revivalist dimension has been ignored by Brown even when he considers "psychological factors" which might have hindered the advance of the ILP. He has rightly pointed out that party leaders were puzzled by the lack of success in industrial Lanarkshire. He has accepted the leaders' own assessment that party weakness in the county was the result of poor organisation, slackness on the part of local activists and the burden of workers' social conditions. Undoubtedly these were elements of ILP weakness. Both in the county as a whole and in specific localities there were wider political and technical barriers to the party's success. In Airdrie, traditional political loyalties were entrenched. The local radical tradition had since the
1820s rested, for the most part, on strictly reformist principles: a positive view of parliament and the liberal state as instruments of democracy and social change. Furthermore, local associational life, as much a respectable working class as a middle class phenomenon, meant that a sense of shared values militated against ILP attempts to create a distinctively working class socialist culture. Party branches were formed but could not be sustained for long.

Nevertheless, Airdrie did have a political and industrial tradition which combined radicalism and militant miners' unionism. It did have an economic structure which favoured employers rather than workers. At least in terms of living space, working lives, and leisure pursuits the town's population was to a large extent socially segregated. There were disparities between rich and poor. Local government positions were monopolised by the upper working and middle class to the exclusion of the mass of the citizenry. Yet still the ILP failed to root itself in the town. And this failure in Airdrie down to the First World War cannot be properly explained by the conventional political, organisational and economic arguments.  

The rise of Labour and Socialism in Scotland needs to be approached as a cultural problem in which the dominant position of Evangelicalism in the nineteenth century was of key significance in national and local ideologies, and
consequently in perceptions of Socialist Revivalism as embodied in the ILP. Socialist Revivalism was recognisable to contemporaries as a point on the Evangelical continuum.

The dismissal of William Small following the collapse of the 1894 miners’ strike, and in the wake of complaints from some discontented younger miners that "they wanted a leader and not a preacher",\textsuperscript{157} must be seen in this broader cultural context. The younger miners were not necessarily displaying any preference for materialistic Socialism or an inherent hostility towards religion as such. The Church of Scotland’s survey of Hamilton Presbytery (1891) expressed concern about religious indifference and lack of Church attendance but not about militant atheism, agnosticism or workers’ enmity towards the churches’ work. The real point about miners’ criticisms of Small’s “preaching” is that its style and content were thoroughly familiar to them. Small’s Socialist Revivalism was not clearly distinguished from the Evangelical revivalism which they could get elsewhere almost any day of the week.

Brown has acknowledged that it is important to be aware that places such as Coatbridge, Motherwell, Larkhall and Airdrie had totally different traditions.\textsuperscript{158} Yet even though the ILP succeeded in some localities better than others this rarely caused the party leadership to emphasise the need for understanding local traditions and sentiments. Party leaders and the more fervent activists displayed a
tendency to dismiss or gloss over local differences. Underestimating the importance of local differences might not have mattered so much if such differences had been of degree rather than of substance.

It was precisely at local level that religious traditions and institutions had in some places exercised greatest power and had done much to shape industrial culture. In Airdrie the ILP was not simply up against traditional political loyalties, weak trades unionism, powerful employers, organisational problems, a fragmented working class, working class individualism, a vibrant associational life, mass forms of leisure and so on. More importantly, it was faced by a local history, a community, local traditions of working class independence, and a local associational culture that embodied a communal ethic and a collective morality - all of which had been decisively influenced and underpinned by Evangelicalism and dissent. The Socialist Revivalist ILP competed in Airdrie within the framework of Evangelicalism as yet another Evangelical organisation against others more powerful and with a longer historic presence in the town. It had to compete in a local environment where Evangelicalism and dissent had been driving forces in the construction of community and culture, especially from 1790 to 1850. Not only that, but the ILP struggled to gain a hearing in a locality where by the close of the nineteenth century Evangelicalism was diffused throughout culture.
Socialist Revivalists were mistaken in their belief that it was only necessary to attack institutional religion in order to show the superiority of their own gospel. Indeed, precisely because churchmen themselves failed to realise the extent to which Evangelicalism had penetrated and transformed society and culture they were wont to exaggerate the threat of Socialist Revivalism almost as much as Socialist Revivalists exaggerated the imminent collapse of "traditional" religion and the Old Order, the victory of the New Religion, and the arrival of heaven on earth.

However, in late nineteenth-early twentieth century Airdrie, the churches - though still quite strong, certainly lively and active, and still the principal religious institutions - were by no means the sole generators of the Evangelical-mission spirit.
Notes

1. J L Kelly (1850-1925), biographical notes:
James Knox, Airdrie Bards Past and Present, Baird and Hamilton, Airdrie, 1930, pp 144 and 149.

2. Entitled simply, "Airdrie". Knox, Airdrie Bards, pp 149-152.

3. Ibid, p 149.


9. The details of the development of policing in Airdrie and of other public organisations and institutions (Water Company and so on) can be had from:
John MacArthur, New Monkland Parish, C C Wright, Glasgow, 1890.

10. Again, there is a wealth of detail and anecdote on the history and founders of many of Airdrie's clubs, societies, associations, sporting associations scattered throughout MacArthur. Contemporary Gazetteers and Directories are also useful.

Francis H Groome, Ordnance Gazetteer of Scotland, Volume 1 (Aan-Cor), Thomas Jack, Edinburgh, 1882, pp 36-37.

Clarke's Airdrie Directory for 1896, C C Clarke, Glasgow, 1896.


Among other things, this volume illustrates the widespread support for the war (at least to begin with).


13. According to the 1911 Census, of Airdrie's 24,388 inhabitants 22,192 (91%) had been born in Scotland,
17,055 (71%) in Lanark County and 13,127 (54%) in Airdrie.

Report on the Twelfth Decennial Census of Scotland, Volume 1, Part 24, Table XXVII, p 1533.

14. 1851 Census (Scotland), Volume 86, 1852-53.

1861 Census (Scotland).


15. 1871 Census (Scotland).

1881 Census (Scotland).

Thomson, op cit, p 158.


17. Ibid, p 158.

18. 1891 Census (Scotland).

Thomson, op cit, p 158.

In late summer 1884 Airdrie Town Council was swift to take action against an application from Coatbridge for burgh status which proposed that Coatbridge should extend as far east as the gateway to Airdrie House. The Coatbridge promoters had not consulted the Airdrie authorities. A burgh Extension Committee was immediately set up by the Airdrie council to arrange for an Act of Parliament to extend Airdrie boundaries to include those parts of Coatdyke situated in New Monkland parish, Victoria Place, Rochsolloch and Garden Square on one side; Rawyards, Drumgelloch and Clarkston on the other. The council's Extension Committee's application was successful and the necessary Act obtained in June 1885 (after a hard fight). Clarkston, Drumgelloch and Garden Square raised objections to their incorporation into Airdrie.

MacArthur, op cit, pp 266-267.


By the same Airdrie Burgh Extension Act, the burgh was divided into five Wards with three Councillors to be elected for each Ward. The Council was now to consist of a Provost, four Bailies, a Treasurer and nine Councillors.
19. 1911 Census (Scotland).
Thomson op cit, p 158.

20. Groome, op cit, pp 36-37.


Further details on engineering in Airdrie:
MacArthur, op cit, pp 342-346.

MacArthur, op cit, pp 342-346.

MacArthur, op cit, pp 246-347.

25. Groome, op cit, pp 36-37.


28. According to the 1911 Census Airdrie had people in almost 400 different occupations. 1911 Census (Scotland), Volume I, pp 1453-1461.

29. In 1881 the Census authorities drew up a new dictionary of occupations to replace the one which had been devised for and used since the 1861 Census. Between eleven and twelve thousand different names of occupations were now collected and indexed as compared with seven thousand in 1861 and 1871.

The new list of occupations was classified under 400 headings which were grouped into Classes, Orders and Sub-orders as in previous Censuses. The Classes remained as before 1881 except for the substitution of "Unoccupied" for "Indefinite and Non-Productive" in Class VI. The number of Orders was increased to twenty-four.

For the 1891 Census there was no major revision of the 1881 classifications. However, during preparations for the 1901 Census, the Home Office and the Board of Trade asked for further changes to be made so as to help the work of their respective departments and to
bring their statistics more into line with those used by other departments. Adjustments to the classification of occupations were duly made resulting in a revised number of headings of 382.

More importantly, for the first time, key groups of occupations were sub-divided in some detail. Thus, for example, coal and shale miners were now classified as "Hewers", "Other Workers Below Ground"; persons engaged in iron manufacture were differentiated as employed in "Blast Furnaces", "Puddling Furnaces and Rolling Mills", "Steel Smelting and Founding", Iron Founding" and in the manufacture of certain other iron articles.

Furthermore, the 1901 Census used a radically revised dictionary of occupations containing fifteen thousand job designations, classified and indexed. The grouping of occupations by Class was abandoned and the number of Orders reduced to twenty-three.

Another important change was made for the 1911 Census occupational enquiry. There was an increasing interest in the difference between an industrial and an occupational classification so it was decided to classify people grouped under headings relating to personal occupations according to the industry or service with which they were connected. The idea was to try and ascertain the total numbers employed in various industries or groups of industries and services. [See Guide to Census Reports Great Britain 1801–1966, HMSO, 1977, Part 4, 'Selected Subjects of Census Enquiry', pp 50–53].

32. Ibid, p 622.
33. Ibid, p 626.
34. Tenth Decennial Census... with Report, Volumes I and II, HMSO, Edinburgh, 1892, 1893, p 251.
35. Ibid, p 251.

40. PP 1362-3 and PP 1526-27.

41. Ibid, pp 1361 and 1456.

42. Ibid, p 1456.

43. Ibid, p 1456.


45. Groome, op cit, pp 36-37.

46. And this in spite of the fact that land in the immediate vicinity of the town had been mined for ironstone and coal.

For geology, geography and exploitation of New Monkland and Airdrie mineral seams:


47. See, for example, Robert Tennant (1829-1879), "Bonnie Green Gartlea", "Monkland Glen", Knox, Airdrie Bards, pp 77-80.


John Wilson, see ff 55 below.

50. Domestic servants, usually women, are a good indicator of social segregation since it was usually middle class families who had servants. The 1911 Census recorded that Airdrie had 374 female domestic servants, 15.3 per thousand of the burgh population (a greater proportion than in Coatbridge which had 10 per thousand). This figure illustrates how few families there were who could afford domestic servants.

51. For example, of the 105 town councillors who held office during the period from June 1849 to November 1914, most were merchants, industrialists, shopkeepers professionals or skilled artisans who had built up their own business (that is, who employed other people and often ran a shop too, eg wrights, painters, plumbers, joiners, bakers and so on).


53. Ibid, Chapter 1, p 15.


55. Harry Smith (1829?-1910) was the son of Alexander Smith of Glenmillan, Aberdeenshire, and Elizabeth Lamond. He was educated at Aberdeen University and in time became an advocate and Sheriff-substitute for Renfrewshire. He resigned the latter position on becoming a parliamentary candidate in 1885.

Smith was an "advanced" Liberal and Home Ruler whose support for the demands of Labour, and especially for the miners’ call for an inquiry into the question of mining royalties (in the early 1890s), was well known. He unsuccessfully contested West Renfrewshire (1885) and Falkirk Burghs (1886). First returned for Falkirk Burghs in 1892 and sat until defeated by John Wilson in 1895.


Brown, op cit, p 21].

John Wilson was a classic example of a second generation industrialist who consolidated and extended his father's business enterprises.

His father, James Wilson (1809-1887), amassed a fortune during the 1830s and '40s as an employer of labour in raising ironstone in and about Airdrie. James negotiated lucrative contracts for his ironstone with the Bairds of Gartsherrie, Dunlops of Clyde and Wilsons of Dundyvan (all ironmasters in the Coatbridge area). Moreover, from about 1850 Wilson leased the mineral deposits of the Rochsoloch Estate and (along with his brother) opened up extensive coalfields in the Wishaw district, at Law, Bothwell and in Renfrewshire. He became a JP for Lanarkshire, a director of the Airdrie and Coatbridge Water Company, convener of finance for the New Monkland Parochial Board, and was returned at the head of the poll in the
first election of an Airdrie School Board (April 1873). He was a Liberal and an elder of the Established Church before leaving to join the Free Church following the Disruption.

John Wilson was educated at Airdrie and Glasgow, succeeded to his father's business and in time became a JP and Deputy Lieutenant for Lanark County and the City of Glasgow. He began his political life as a Liberal but joined the Liberal Unionists on the introduction of the Home Rule Bill (1886). Eight years later he withdrew his support from the then Unionist government in protest over its introduction of a Fiscal Policy.

Elected to the Falkirk Burghs in 1895, Wilson sat until his retirement in 1906. In that year he was created a baronet (Sir John Wilson of Airdrie).

Wilson was identified with many local causes and philanthropic public ventures. Indeed, his local origins may have contributed as much to his success in the 1895 election as his Liberal Unionism. The Unionist election Committee which adopted him as candidate certainly thought so. The Committee desired,

"to have a local man identified with the industries of the [Falkirk] burghs. In Mr Wilson they had secured such a candidate. He was a very large employer of labour, with thousands of workmen engaged in the important industry of coal." [Airdrie Advertiser, 13 January, 1894.]

Moreover, after his election to the Falkirk Burghs seat he attempted to identify himself with his native town even more by purchasing the Airdrie Estate from the absentee Mr Alexander of Woodburn Kentucky (USA) in 1896. Thereafter Wilson spent much of his time at Airdrie House, and in and about Airdrie.

By any standards Wilson was a rich man. He is perhaps best remembered for his gifts "to the community": Land and money for laying out a Public park between Bore Road on the east, Flowerhill on the south, Mill Street on the west and Chapel Street on the north (1896), another, West End (Public) Park laid out at his own expense (1908), and £10,000 for the erection of a Town Hall, (opened, 1912).

In many respects Wilson was an archetypal paternalist. He was no political radical and, for obvious reasons, did not support the miners during the bitter strike of 1894. However, he recognised that many of the miners demands were legitimate and that unless something was done to improve their and other workers' conditions
then the trade unions and the ILP could take root in
the locality and threaten to upset the status quo.
With a view to keeping Labour on his side he actually
offered financial and physical support to Robert
Smillie during the latter's 1894 election campaign for
the Mid Lanark county seat. Smillie was sent £5, was
offered more and Wilson said he would even chair
Smillie's meetings in Overtown and Newmains (where
Wilson had coal mines...)

This incident may have been an instance of Tory gold.
Nevertheless, it does indicate a broad support for
Labour on Wilson's part which, even if it was only
politically expediency, seems to have paid off at the
polls.

[Stenton, Who's Who of British Members of Parliament,


Knox, Airdrie: A Historical Sketch, pp 152-154,
pp 163-165].

J A M MacDonald (1859-1939), son of the Rev H F
MacDonald and Christina MacIver, was born at Strachur,
Argyllshire and educated at Glasgow and Edinburgh
Universities.

He too was acquainted with the demands of Labour and
had experienced the living conditions of the urban
working classes first hand as Liberal MP for the Bow
and Bromley division of Tower Hamlets (1892-1895).

MacDonald contested Falkirk Burghs unsuccessfully in
1900 but then succeeded to John Wilson and sat from
1906-1918. From December 1918 to November 1922 he was
MP for the newly constituted Stirling and Falkirk
Burghs constituency which no longer included Airdrie
(See ff below).

[Stenton, op cit, Volume II, p 230 and Volume III,
1919-1945, p 224].

Gordon Brown [see below] has described the late
Victorian Liberal organisation in Lanarkshire as
controlled by shopkeepers, industrialists and lawyers.
However, he has also suggested that Liberalism was
responsive to pressure from the working classes and
that party organisers and candidates in the county
made a particular effort to win over the miners.
These conclusions are to some extent borne out by the
attitudes of the MPs for Falkirk Burghs, 1890-1914.

57. Ibid, p 146.

Potted biographies of Airdrie Provosts 1821-1890 in:

MacArthur, op cit, pp 278-283.

These confirm the picture of local government controlled by the new "self-made" men of the nineteenth century.


60. Ibid, p 246.


63. Ibid, pp 4, 27, 40.

From 1889 until the early 1900s the Miners Union was the key union because during 1889-92 New Unionism had been a relative failure in Lanarkshire. Even the higher status manual workers had not been organised. Groups such as the railwaymen and the ironworkers had not secured union recognition in the county. For many years after 1892, the miners remained the most important single union base for the Independent Labour cause.

64. Ibid, pp 3-4 and 7-43.

65. Ibid, pp 4 and 36.

66. Ibid, pp 4-5.


68. Ibid, p 5.

69. Ibid, p 5.

70. Ibid, p 7.

71. Ibid, p 7.

73. For Alexander McDonald – Lanarkshire miner, leader of the Scottish Miners’ National Association (from 1863), Chairman of the TUC Parliamentary Committee (1872, 1873), first Scottish working man to sit in Parliament [although for an English constituency (1874-1881) – see:


also:


74. Brown, op cit, p 7.

For the Home Rule crisis in Scotland and its political repercussions:


For the impact of the Irish Question on Scottish Radicalism:


Introductions to the complex interplay between Irish Home Rule politics, Highland land agitation, the impact of Henry George (especially after the 1884 four) and the rise of Labour:


For the electoral impact of the Irish Question in the North (industrial) Lanarkshire County Constituencies [Mid, North-East and North-West]:

Brown, op cit, pp 17-20, 28-30, 48-49 and 76.
Brown has argued that in Lanarkshire the Irish vote was neither sufficient nor organised enough to imply by itself the defeat of Independent labour at elections.

"In the first place, the potential Irish vote never exceeded 17% in any one of the three constituencies [named above] while the working class vote was at least 66% of the electorate."

(Brown, op cit, p 76)

In short, Labour's real difficulty lay in capturing the working class vote as a whole.

76. Ibid, p 8.

Smout, op cit, Chapters X and XI.
82. Ibid, p 9.

86. Ibid, p 9.
87. See, for example, Morgan, op cit, p 10 and p 20.
88. This was not a programme specific to Small but was one held in common by miners' leaders of the period, including Hardie. It centred on the traditional policy of reducing output (by working eight hours per day, five days per week) and restricting production as a response to employers reducing wages. Although an
immediate response, it was also part of the long term aim of improved wages and shorter working hours for miners.

[See Brown, pp 10-17 for the programme and its effectiveness].

89. Ibid, p 10.

90. Details of union activities and strike actions during the hectic mid-late '80s:

Brown, op. cit, pp 10-17.

91. The 1894 miners' strike was the first ever national coal strike in Scotland. It was a key episode in the history of miners' unionism and also in the life and work of another leading figure in the Lanarkshire and Scottish miners' unions, Robert Smillie.

A good introductory source for following the events of 1894 and, indeed, other strikes in other industries and places is the Labour Gazette, journal of the Labour Department of the Board of Trade. The first volume of the Gazette, covering May to December 1893 declared among its objectives a determination to provide workmen with prompt and accurate information on matters specially affecting labour. With "mere questions of opinion" the Gazette professed itself not concerned,

"The aim of the Department in the publication is to provide a sound basis for the formation of opinions and not to supply them."

[Labour Gazette, Volume I, No 1, p 1]

Given this objective, it sought to provide accounts of the chief labour disputes and of changes in rates of wages and hours of labour, information drawn up with the help of Trades Unions, employers and Employers Associations. Arrangements were also made,

"for special short articles on important trade disputes, and such subjects as arbitration, conciliation various methods of industrial remuneration, and the working of various laws bearing specially on Labour."

[Labour Gazette, Volume I, No 1, p 1]

The Gazette is an excellent starting point for anyone interested in coming to grips with the importance of and complexities which the "Labour Question" had assumed by the late nineteenth, early twentieth centuries. It is indicative not only of the increased role of government but also of the high degree of sophistication which Labour disputes now involved.
Details and analysis of the development of the post-1896 County Union in Brown’s Appendix One, pp 85-91.

For the Scottish Workers Parliamentary Committee and its daughter Scottish Workers Representation Committee, both initiated by the Scottish TUC with the object of securing independent labour representation in Parliament:

Hutchison, op cit, pp 250, 255.
114. Brown, op cit, p 44.

also: Hutchison, op cit, pp 179-185

Harvie, 'Before the Breakthrough', Donnachie, Harvie and Wood, op cit, pp 6-29.

115. Brown, op cit, p 44.


117. In Scotland the stress on local autonomy and the federal structure of trades unions contributed to the relative weakness of unionism. Trades Councils, which came into existence from the late 1850s, were local associations of unions/societies of different trades which served as a forum and focus for the general demands of labour. In this respect, Trades Councils were more important in Scottish trades unionism than in English. They sought to organise new unions, to agitate on specific labour issues and to mount political campaigns for legislation to protect and enhance the condition and status of workers. During the late nineteenth century, Scottish Socialists held out great hopes of obtaining the support of Trades Councils. As things turned out, however, the Councils displayed considerable resistance to Socialism.

For context and description of Trade Councils:


118. It is worth recalling that no Scottish seat was won by Labour before 1906. Furthermore, the number of ILP branches is a misleading index of party strength and vitality because turnover was rapid and branch membership was often centred on groups of perhaps just six to twenty people. Of the 98 branches listed in the 1907 ILP Annual Report, 17 (one fifth) did not exist three years later. Between 1910 and 1914 the party was losing more branches than it was gaining, often in key industrial areas such as Lanarkshire. Total party membership in Scotland was always small. In 1908, for example, Scotland had nearly 15% of the total UK branches but only 10.6% of members. In 1914 membership stood at around 3,000 (and certainly not more than 5,000). As with branches, membership movements were irregular. Moreover, members were rarely of the unskilled. Most were from the clerical/skilled bracket and most were trades unionists.
For discussion on branch numbers and membership figures:

Hutchison, *op cit*, pp 179-184 and 245-249.

Harvie, 'Before the Breakthrough' in Donnachie, Harvie and Wood, *op cit*, pp 7-29.


120. Ibid, pp 72-73.

121. Ibid, pp 72-73 and 78-84.


122. Brown, *op cit*, Appendix One, p 86.

123. Ibid, Appendix One, p 85.

124. *Forward* was launched as a Socialist weekly newspaper in October 1906. It was set up by Thomas Johnston (1881-1965) and some Fabian friends (backed by Roland Muirhead a wealthy tanner, Scottish Home Ruler and Fabian Socialist). Johnston, the paper's first editor, ensured that while *Forward* became closely associated with the ILP it was an independent venture and not merely a party mouthpiece. From the start the paper bore his style and imprint. In some respects it reflected his puritanical outlook. He was a teetotaller and thought that drink was the curse of the working classes. He resolved that *Forward* would carry no alcohol advertisements or gambling news.

Although Johnston believed in the eventual and inevitable triumph of Socialism, he was not a Marxist revolutionary. Rather, he was committed to the gradualism of the British Labour Party. His own religious views were not overtly strong. But though his Presbyterian background left him with no particular love for Calvinism he had a close affinity with the radical spirit of Scottish Presbyterianism. Johnston detested religious sectarianism arguing that it was, like drink, a serious hindrance to the advance of the labour cause. The key to such problems lay in educating the workers as to their class interests. This task, propaganda, was the principal aim of *Forward*, and under Johnston's editorship the paper became a famous and formidable instrument for the Scottish Labour Movement. Johnston was an aggressive, forthright and skilful editor and journalist. He became an MP in Labour's *annus mirabilis*, 1922, and later served as Scottish Secretary in Churchill's coalition government.


125. Biographical details from:


For further comment on this study see ff 135 below.

126. With or without Coatbridge is not clear.


129. Ibid, p 46.

130. Ibid, p 46

Labour Leader, 3 August 1901, p 242.


133. William Martin Haddow (1865-1945) Church of Scotland/Sunday School upbringing. Devotee of Keir Hardie, founder member of the Scottish Labour Party (1888) and of the ILP. Haddow was closely associated with the Glasgow Socialist Sunday School movement and an ardent follower of and advocate for its principles.


134. Labour Leader, 5 October 1901, p 319.

135. Ibid, 30 November 1901, p 383.

In a short undergraduate dissertation Ann McDonagh has looked at the Irish immigrant populations of Coatbridge and Airdrie and the emerging labour movement, 1891-1931. She has emphasised that although the two burghs were amalgamated into one parliamentary constituency by the Representation of the People Act 1918, they had separate identities. The distinctiveness of Coatbridge and of Airdrie was to some extent reflected in the religious composition of the Irish immigrants who came into them in the course of the nineteenth century.
Together, the Irish populations of Coatbridge and Airdrie amounted to the largest concentration of Irish people in Lanarkshire outside Glasgow. However, the Irish were divided religiously, socially and politically.

Coatbridge attracted large numbers of Irish Catholics (from rural south Ireland) who came over to work in the iron industry (which was controlled by Protestant employers). By the 1890s the Coatbridge Irish Catholic population was numerous enough to be able to elect two Catholics to the parish councils. There was also a fair number of Protestant "Orange" Irish in Coatbridge, mainly from the Belfast area of north Ireland, but these were easily outnumbered by their Catholic countrymen.

By contrast, Airdrie had comparatively fewer Irish Catholics than Coatbridge, most of whom were second generation. Moreover, with its higher proportion of Orange Irish, Airdrie became an organisational centre for the Orange Lodges of the Airdrie-Coatbridge district. However, Irish people played little part in Airdrie municipal affairs, which were dominated by indigenous Scots Protestants. Protestant Irish were more acceptable in Airdrie than Catholic Irish but even Irish Protestants were distrusted in the local establishment simply by virtue of their being Irish.

Until the early 1900s the Catholic Irish of Coatbridge and Airdrie were preoccupied with the Home Rule movement and thus with the activities of the United Irish League (UIL) which was closely tied to the Gladstonian Liberal Party. Indeed, in the 1890s there were more members of the UIL in Coatbridge and Airdrie (and mainly from the former) than in any other comparable region in Britain. Furthermore, the Papal Encyclical 'Rerum Novarum' (1891) with its robust condemnation of Socialism was fairly successful in dissuading Catholic Irishmen from associating with the ILP or SDF. While Coatbridge Irish Catholics were for the most part concerned with the UIL, local Orange Irish were Unionist and through the Orange Order, with its power base in Airdrie, were allied with the Conservative Party.

The ILP, then, made little impact on either the Catholic or the Protestant Irish immigrants of Coatbridge and Airdrie down to the early 1900s. However, from 1906 the position of the ILP, and subsequently of the Labour Party, in the burghs began to change, especially among second generation Catholics who were becoming distanced from and disillusioned with Irish Home Rule and were turning their attention to local conditions of life and
living. This new mood among Catholics was in part derived from John Wheatley’s battles to reconcile Roman Catholicism with Socialism. In 1906 Wheatley chaired the inaugural meeting in Glasgow of the Catholic Socialist Society. He argued that it was only after a Catholic understood and believed in Socialism that the real meaning and beauty of Catholic doctrines could be seen. The Catholic Socialist Society, he argued, would provide a forum for preaching Socialism free from any irreligious taint. The Society remained marginal to the mainstream Socialist movement in Glasgow and the West of Scotland but it nevertheless made its mark. Indeed, McDonagh has pointed out that during the later 1900s Labour candidates and supporters of all religious backgrounds in Coatbridge and Airdrie went to enormous lengths to deny any suggestion of Godlessness in the ILP. In a Catholic district in 1906, a Labour candidate, John Robertson, spent the greater proportion of his speeches listing Labour colleagues who were God-fearing, regular church-goers.

However, McDonagh argues that it was not until after 1918 and the partial settlement of the Irish Question that Labour and Socialism made any real headway in Coatbridge and Airdrie, even although in the years immediately prior to World War One the Coatbridge Catholic Irish had made a significant contribution to Labour support.

McDonagh has also shown that the distinctiveness of Coatbridge and of Airdrie, and the divisions between "Roman Catholic Coatbridge" and "Protestant Airdrie" ensured that trades unionism was organised along burgh loyalties. Attempts at coordinated union activity between the two towns were not notably successful. A Coatbridge-Airdrie Trades Council (1890) lacked support because it was dominated by the cautious, Scots-Protestant Amalgamated Society of Engineers, which was not noted for its sympathy for the unskilled/semi-skilled Irish Catholic workers who predominated in the Coatbridge labour force.

In Airdrie, then, Roman Catholicism did not constitute either a significant religious base or a space in dominant Evangelical Presbyterianism culture for the Socialist Revivalism of the ILP.

See also:


For the ILP the summer season was the high point of the missionary year. As compared with the churches or the temperance movement, the ILP did not have a network of its own buildings, halls and so on which could serve its social, political and leisure activities all year round. During winter the need for indoor meeting places increased the organisational burdens on local activists and leaders. By contrast, summer with its promise of warmer, though not necessarily drier weather tended to mean that outdoor meetings would be attended by activists and by the half-committed or just plain curious. Party organisers placed much store on the outdoor summer campaigns believing that these attracted a wider hearing and audience for Socialism than winter efforts could. Consequently, summer was a time of intense missionary work, renewed enthusiasm and wildly optimistic predictions of future party advances and successes. Summer optimism was often backed up by a flurry of branch activity and the establishment of new branches where none had been before.

However, the zeal of summer usually dissipated with the onset of winter with its promise of wet, cold weather and long dark nights. Morale, communications and branch life was most difficult to sustain from October to March. Members' commitment was put to the test because, apart from anything else, the exigencies of work (or lack of it) were at there most acute. For local and national activists and leaders summer's optimism often became despair.

Nevertheless, the advent of spring brought stirrings of renewed revivalism and much planning for the forthcoming summer season. Even in areas where branch
life was relatively strong and sustained throughout the period 1893 to 1914, and where there was a developing ILP culture all year round, fund raising and propagandist efforts were nearly always geared to summer missions.

The ILP summer season, then, was important psychologically. Its shortness generated a sense of urgency among party members, activists and leaders which was in turn transmitted to the whole movement and contributed to the annual renewal of the millenarian outlook.

143. John Robertson (from Holytown), Vice-President of the County Miners' Union. Robert Smillie, President, had refused the nomination.

Details of this: Brown, op cit, p 53.

144. Labour Leader, 29 July 1904, p 199.

145. Ibid, 19 August, 1904, p 54.

Brown, op cit, p 54.

146. Labour Leader, 16 September 1904, p 283.

147. Ibid, 7 April 1905.

Brown, op cit, p 55.

Such claims were continually being made by Stewart. For instance, on the run-up to the North East Lanarkshire constituency by-election of late summer 1904 he claimed that,

"There were hundreds, nay thousands of convinced, intelligent Socialists all over the constituency."

Labour Leader, 19 August 1904, p 240.


149. Ibid, p 62.

150. Hutchison, op cit, p 247.


152. Labour Leader, 28 September 1901, p 309.


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It has been suggested that the most important reason for the failure of the ILP, and subsequently the Labour Party before 1914 was simply the limited nature of the franchise. The voting system was class exclusive (and intended to be so). Its effect was to disenfranchise half of the working class.

However, the 1918 Representation of the People Act gave the vote to the bulk of those previously excluded working class (men). The Labour Party was better organised than the Liberals and was best placed to gain and duly did so, especially after 1922.

But as an explanation for the failure of the ILP in Airdrie before 1914 the franchise argument is inadequate. In order to make a sensible judgement about the impact of limited franchise before 1914 and then after the 1918 Act, it is necessary to compare like with like. For Airdrie, this is an impossible task quite simply because by the 1918 Act Airdrie was removed from the Falkirk Burghs constituency and joined with Coatbridge burgh to form the Coatbridge Division (of Lanark County).

For a summary of the main arguments about the importance or unimportance of the franchise system in the rise and development of Labour before and after the 1918 Representation Act:


For post-1918 election results in the new Coatbridge Constituency:


For the new Divisions of Lanark County, etc:

Representation of the People Act, 1918, Ninth Schedule, Part II, in:

The Public General Acts passed in the Seventh and Eighth Years of the Reign of King George the Fifth, Eyre and Spottiswood, London, 1918, pp 158-159.

Brown, op cit, p 36.

Ibid, p 84.
CHAPTER TWELVE

THE WIND BLOWETH WHERE IT LISTETH: THE DIFFUSION OF EVANGELICALISM IN LATE NINETEENTH-EARLY TWENTIETH CENTURY AIRDRIE

The Social Expression of Christianity

It has been suggested that by 1914 Evangelicalism had failed in its declared aims because it had shackled Christianity to individualism with the result that the Gospel had been stripped of its social implications. Recognition of this failure led to demands from increasing numbers of churchmen, such as David Watson of the Church of Scotland,¹ for a restoration of Christian social prophecy and for renewed efforts by the churches to realise the Kingdom of God on earth. The Church had now to take a boldly political rôle in transforming society. This renewed emphasis on the social expression of Christianity was a response to new doctrines of collectivism which had arisen outside of the Church, especially those of Socialism.

However, as we have seen, Socialist Revivalism was neither wholly secular nor radically new, and was in fact located firmly within the Evangelical framework. The interaction

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between Evangelicalism and society was much more complex than the simple equation of Evangelicalism with individualism suggests. Evangelicalism stressed individual conversion, individual effort and the need to work out one's own salvation, but it did so with a vision of community in mind. It could hardly have been otherwise because the churches, however divided they may have been, all stood by the conviction that the Church, as a universal institution or a local congregation, was the body of Christ. In Scotland, the Evangelical vision of corporate society as expressed in the Calvinist ideal of the Godly Commonwealth did not disappear with the death of Thomas Chalmers in 1847. It remained one of the yardsticks against which the dominant Presbyterian denominations continued to measure their success or failure. Evangelicalism had tended to be socially conservative in some respects but one of the long term consequences of Evangelicalism, especially in Scotland, was to point society in a collectivist direction. Evangelicalism nourished and depended for its success on the kind of associational life and the corporate, communal ethic which some of its late twentieth century critics have claimed it ignored. Moreover, the late nineteenth-early twentieth century expansion in churches' social, educational and leisure sub-organisations was not simply a response to trends in secular society and to the changing organisation of capitalism. It was a logical consequence of the Evangelical desire to penetrate, Christianise and thus to
transform all aspects of life. It was the result of almost a century of experiment, organisation and effort by the churches.

The division of the churches within the framework of Evangelicalism was crucial in the diffusion of Evangelical values throughout society. Religious schism and diversity had enabled the churches to respond to the busy, increasingly complicated life of a developing urban and industrial society and to represent the diversity of experience which this society produced. The process of transition from an agricultural to an industrial and urban society did not occur instantaneously or at a uniform rate. Moreover, it did not give rise to a uniform pattern of human experience or to a monolithic culture. Big cities, mass communications, mass leisure and the growth of class consciousness, particularly in the last decades of the nineteenth century, disguised a rich diversity of social experience and masked the continuing distinctiveness of regions and localities. And the churches, however small their membership, continued to express and give expression to local community consciousness and culture for the simple reason that they saw themselves duty bound to do so.

Although the First World War assaulted the Evangelical conscience and dented Evangelical confidence it is difficult to see any great discontinuity between the social expression of Christianity in the century before and the
years immediately after 1914. The balance in Evangelicalism had, by 1914, tilted in favour of more collectivism and this was certainly in part a response to the Socialist critique of institutional religion. But the balance in Evangelicalism could move towards collectivism only because of the ambivalence which had always characterised the Evangelical approach to individualism.

Furthermore, those who called for a renewal of the Christian social gospel were adamant that any new social order had to be based on Christian principles and could only be brought about by redoubling efforts to convert individuals to Christianity. Their prescription for modern society, the clearer confession of Christ, was a restatement of the familiar Evangelical imperative.

"When the Roll is Called Up Yonder"

In Airdrie the war of 1914 had widespread official support from local institutions and associations - at least to begin with. Local associational life and the communal ethic were powerful forces behind pro-war sentiment. Enthusiasm for prosecuting the war to a swift and successful conclusion extended across the entire community with even the Airdrie branch of the Lanarkshire Miners' Union keen to do its bit. The Airdrie churches all seem to
have come out in support of the war. Church female work parties sprang up and into action providing socks and other "comforts" for soldiers. 4 According to J A Reid in 1915 the churches were extremely patriotic.

"Since the war began, all the clergy in the town have preached war sermons of one kind or another from time to time, with beneficial effect in stimulating and aiding true patriotism in their congregations." 5

There are no indications that the Airdrie churches had speedily abandoned individualism in favour of a new collectivism, inspired by nationalism, in an ideological U-turn to accommodate a capitalist bourgeois war. On the contrary, the churches were responding in a way which was shaped by their involvement with a local associational life which they had done so much to create. No doubt vulgar patriotism and nationalist prejudice played a part in local pro-war sentiment, and the churches were in part carried along with the current, but nationalism was not necessarily any more important than local patriotism.

This is not to suggest that the churches were involved with Airdrie life and society in quite the same way as they had been in the 1830s and '40s. Since the 1870s, and certainly by 1914, their strength in terms of membership relative to the total population had declined, though membership seems to have held up remarkably well between 1900 and 1914.
Table 13 shows the communicant membership of the eight main Presbyterian churches. These figures indicate that although the total population between 1881 and 1911 had risen by 82.5% the membership of the main Presbyterian churches had gone up by only 34.3%. Even when the membership of the smaller Protestant denominations is added in, it is apparent that the churches’ membership was not keeping pace with population expansion.

Nevertheless, in a variety of ways and at various points, the churches continued to touch local secular society and to exert an influence out of all proportion to their size. This was in part because those who were church members or adherents continued to be drawn chiefly from the town’s influential middle and working classes.

Data on the social composition of church membership is not readily available but from crude indicators such as baptismal registers it is clear that the middle, lower-middle and better-off working class continued to be the most likely groups for church membership, adherence or occasional attendance, and the most likely to be attracted by the spiritual and social functions of rites of passage.

Table 14 shows data from one of the best preserved baptismal records from an Airdrie church for the period from December 1900 to mid July 1917, that of South Bridge Street United Free.6
### Table 13

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>AIRDRIE UF CHURCHES</th>
<th>Communicant Members Reported to Supreme Courts 1881</th>
<th>% of Total Population 1881 (13,363)</th>
<th>Communicant Members at 31/12/1901</th>
<th>% of Total Communicant Members at 1901 (22,288)</th>
<th>Communicant Members at 31/12/1911</th>
<th>% of Total Population 1911 (24,388)</th>
<th>% Rise on 1881 Membership</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>BROOMKNOLL</td>
<td>400</td>
<td>508</td>
<td>515</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GRAHAM STREET</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>182</td>
<td>267</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HIGH</td>
<td>318</td>
<td>441</td>
<td>413</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SOUTH BRIDGE ST</td>
<td>314</td>
<td>201</td>
<td>310</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WELLYNDE</td>
<td>320</td>
<td>437</td>
<td>426</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WEST (BUCHANAN ST)</td>
<td>352</td>
<td>374</td>
<td>380</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL UF MEMBERSHIP</td>
<td>1,780</td>
<td>2,143</td>
<td>2,311</td>
<td></td>
<td>9.5</td>
<td>29.8 UP</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>AIRDRIE ESTABLISHED CHURCHES (a)</th>
<th>Communicant Members Reported to Supreme Courts in 1884 (b)</th>
<th>AIRDRIE PARISH</th>
<th>642</th>
<th>930</th>
<th>977</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>FLOWERHILL</td>
<td></td>
<td>TOTAL C of S MEMBERSHIP</td>
<td>1,107</td>
<td>1,577</td>
<td>1,566</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL PRESbyterian CHURCHES MEMBERSHIP</td>
<td>2,587</td>
<td>3,270</td>
<td>3,877</td>
<td>34.3 UP</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**NOTE:** (a) NOT including Clarkston or Coatsdyke - But burgh bounds extended in 1885 to include both places so total population figure given is that for the extended municipal burgh.  
(b) Nearest reliable figure to 1881.

Figures for the UF Churches from "Reports on Persons and Agencies of the United Free Church of Scotland", in Acts of the General Assembly of the United Free Church of Scotland, 1902 and 1912.

Figures for the Churches of Scotland: for 1884 see "The Ecclesiastical Lists", in the Church of Scotland Year Book, 1886, (the first of the modern Year Books), pp 46 and 54.

For 1901: "Ecclesiastical Lists", Church of Scotland Year Book, 1903, pp 125 and 141-142.

Cross class membership and attendance continued to be a feature of church life in Airdrie because although the middle class had, by and large, moved out of the town centre they had not opted to build new churches in the new areas of settlement. Airdrie was too small for this to be worthwhile. Consequently, nearly all the churches remained in or near their historic sites forming a cluster at the heart of the town (Maps 4 and 5). The Episcopalians were exceptional in that from 1896 they worshipped in a small new church (with rectory attached) built in Springwells Avenue - a thoroughly middle class street suitable for a thoroughly middle class denomination. For the most part, however, the churches stayed, literally and symbolically, near the centre of Airdrie.

Even though church membership was in relative decline, the churches and their members continued to display enthusiasm and commitment. Inter-church cooperation was evident in home and overseas mission work. Foreign missions received strong support from most local ministers. When Dr J G Paton of the New Hebrides, "a venerable and heroic missionary", visited the town in January 1894, a meeting in the Airdrie Parish Church was attended by Revs D H Paterson (Airdrie Parish), R Henderson (Flowerhill Parish), William Reid (Broomknoll Free), William Gillespie (Free West), C Campbell (Free Graham Street), John Paterson (Wellwynd UP), R Sinclair (South Bridge Street UP), James Bayne (Ebenezer
Congregational), Oliver Dyer (Evangelical Union), John Moffat (Bell Street Methodist), William Mackintosh (Baptist). The meeting was held under the auspices of the local United Evangelistic Committee and a sum of £17 4 shillings was collected. The United Evangelistic Committee was mainly composed of ministers and elders, unlike the Airdrie Evangelistic Association which was run by laymen and concerned mainly to provide the revivalist type of religion popular among sections of the working class. The Association ran gospel meetings on Saturday evenings and Sunday mornings, a Monday Fellowship, a Tuesday Womens’ Group and a Friday Mens’ Group. Full accounts of the Association soirées and other social events were generally given in the Airdrie Advertiser. Indeed, from its beginning in 1855 the Advertiser gave full coverage to all the churches many activities and organisations. Furthermore, the paper continually and unashamedly kept alive the "memory" of the Monkland parishes' covenanting legacy by periodically relating the story of the "Monkland Martyrs" and this served to remind Advertiser readers that they had a lot to live up to.
Table 14

**Baptisms - South Bridge Street United Free Church, 23 December 1900-19 April 1917**

**List of Fathers' Occupations**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th>Father's Occupation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Architect</td>
<td>Miner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baker</td>
<td>Minister</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blacksmith</td>
<td>Painter</td>
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Total: 53 different occupations

**Total number of Baptisms 202**

Baptisms "at home" 107

Baptisms "in Church" 95
Although the churches had lost control of poor relief and education, much of the work of the New Monkland and Airdrie parish councils was undertaken by churchmen. More generally, philanthropy and a myriad charitable works continued to be a major church activity. These responsibilities were taken very seriously. Though they may have been socially conservative, churchmen nevertheless gave a lead in providing donations, for example, for soup kitchens set up throughout the Airdrie wards during the 1894 miners strike.¹²

However, each church continued to defend its particular origins and identity. For every co-operative venture there were several others which served to reinforce the associational life of each individual congregation. The battles for influence and one-up-manship, mundane terms in which Evangelical commitment had long been expressed, continued. Moreover, this competitiveness was stimulated particularly after 1900 by the publication, by central ecclesiastical authorities, of tables of statistics detailing the membership, finances and contributions of each of the churches. Now it was possible to know about neighbouring congregations and what they were achieving, and to gauge progress by measuring one’s position relative to others. The Airdrie churches were keen to match or outdo each other in modernising and upgrading church properties, in taking on new styles of worship (hymn
singing and organ music) and in provision of religious, educational, philanthropic or leisure organisations.

From 1880 to 1914, for example, there was a burst of copycat renovations of church buildings. Churches involved included Airdrie Parish, Ebenezer, Free High, Bell Street Methodists, the Baptists, South Bridge Street, Wellwynd and Broomknoll. The Evangelical Union Congregation relocated altogether, building for itself a small new church in Parkhead Street, just off the Public Park. Buildings thus retained their crucial importance as symbols of congregational effort and identity, as they do today.

In short, the churches were mindful of the fact that prayers without effort would not achieve anything; just as the Trobriand islanders knew that to employ magic in the cultivation of their gardens was futile unless one also fenced and hoed the ground. The broad religious structure of ecclesiastical life was supported not only by the Golden Hope of God's Kingdom but also by organisation and dedicated bodies of believing churchmen and women who fully recognised the need for cash as well as communion.

It is impossible to do justice and give full treatment to the greatly expanded church activities and sub-organisations or to the work of individual ministers, members and congregations in late nineteenth-early twentieth century Airdrie. In any case, the principal aim
of this final chapter is to highlight the diffusion of Evangelicalism in Airdrie's community and culture because this diffusion had important repercussions for the fate of Socialist Revivalism in the town. We will concentrate our attention on two related organisations: the Airdrie Savings Bank (ASB), and the Airdrie branch of the Independent Order of Good Templars (IOGT). These two were not under the direct supervision or administration of the Church and thus illustrate well the diffusion of Evangelical values, and the Evangelical ambivalence towards individualism; the tension, between individualism and collectivism, and individual and social salvation, which had been a defining characteristic of Evangelicalism since the eighteenth century.

The Triumph of Thrift

"For where your treasure is there will your heart be also."

(Matthew 7: 19-21)

Writing in the late 1920s as manager and official historian of the Airdrie Savings Bank, and as one whose outlook had been shaped in the nineteenth century, James Knox criticised those people who imagined that the ASB was
established and existed solely as a convenient receptacle for the safe custody of money. Savings banks, he argued, had a much wider scope for their true end was to inculcate the spirit of thrift and self-help amongst the people:

"thrift is the right usage of all wealth - money included. A fetish devotion to mere money hoarding kills thrift and withers the very soul of any individual who is deceived thereby."\(^{14}\)

For Knox, thrift was "a most potent moral educator" which promoted other virtues and built up character. Above all, thrift was the enemy of selfishness and led "directly and inevitably to a genuine altruism".\(^{15}\)

Knox - middle class, Liberal, and Presbyterian dissenter - certainly believed in the voluntary, ameliorative approach to social problems. However, he did not view individualism as operating outwith society. The ASB functioned to encourage thrift and self-help in order to give independence to individuals but the cumulative effect would be a nourishing of the community spirit. Society and its members were bound together by duties and mutual obligations.

As was noted in Chapter Eight, the ASB was originally set up by the Airdrie Temperance Society in the 1830s and was
a product of and outlet for Evangelical values. Not surprisingly, then, it reflected the Evangelical ambivalence towards individualism. On the one hand, the bank was explicitly designed to promote thrift and independence among the respectable hard working poor and working classes. On the other, it attempted to temper the harshness of laissez-faire individualism and to encourage communal ethic: an Airdrie bank for Airdrie people.

Throughout the nineteenth century the ASB was given strong support from local ministers. From 1835 to 1914 one third of the bank’s Presidents were ministers, as were a quarter of Vice-Presidents and a thirteenth of Ordinary Directors. During the same period the management of the bank was under the control of a Board of Directors comprised of one President, two Vice Presidents and ten Ordinary Directors. The Board supervised the work of the bank’s two unpaid chief officials, the Secretary and the Treasurer. In the early years, the Directors themselves took a share in the day to day running of the bank during business hours. Auditing and accounts were also undertaken by the Directors. As the bank developed, however, day to day business was increasingly left to the Secretary and Treasurer. Equal in status, the Secretary and Treasurer usually received an equal share of any small surplus remaining at the end of each year after interest on deposits and money for other outlays had been paid out. In 1879 both the Secretary and Treasurer were granted a
minimum annual allowance of £15 in recognition of their services. But it was not until 1896 that it was decided to create the office of full-time salaried bank manager to take overall charge of the ASB's affairs. The first to fill this new post was James Knox, who had been appointed Secretary in 1876.

In many ways the Knox family was the epitome of Victorian Liberalism and Evangelical Presbyterian dissent; the embodiment of the values of free enterprise, individualism, self-help, thrift and independence. James Knox was the grandson of James Knox, hat and cap manufacturer, who had been involved with the ASB since its foundation and became its treasurer in 1861.

The elder James belonged to a weaving family from Kirkintilloch district. As that trade declined, he went to stay with an uncle who manufactured silk hats in Kirkintilloch. Having acquired the skills of hat making and of good business practice, James left his uncle and moved to Airdrie to set up shop in Stirling Street. His business flourished in part because he had moved to Airdrie during the period when the town was rapidly expanding. In time James became a well-respected figure, so much so that the ASB came to be referred to as "Knox's bank", and he was elected to the town council in 1862.
Throughout his life, James was a staunch supporter of Broomknoll Church where he was elected elder from 1838. He was especially impressed by the life and ministry of James McGowan. (McGowan became fifth President of the ASB in 1861). In a tribute, James wrote that McGowan was not one of those who in the performance of his duty was like to consult with "Dukes or Lords or Priests or Bishops" for he knew that "the greatest authority" had commanded him to preach the Gospel to every creature, and he performed this command fearlessly. Moreover, Knox declared himself at one with McGowan in refusing to be circumscribed by "the narrow limits of sectarianism". Such characters were rare "in this age of exclusiveness when, instead of all sects and parties agreeing to differ, and working hard for the common good and universal redemption of mankind ... we have the narrowness of sectarianism, the feeling of our church, our chapel, our schemes, swaying the decisions and actions of a large proportion of our fellow Christians...."

He agreed with McGowan’s view that good work could be done by churches in united efforts and that it was necessary to work together regardless of sectarian differences.

Old James Knox’s son, Walter, succeeded to the hat business and also became treasurer of the ASB. Though somewhat quieter than his father, Walter was a loyal churchman. He was also heavily involved with the Airdrie Town Mission and was active in many charitable societies.
Walter’s son, James (ASB manager, 1896), held to the values which his father and grandfather represented. He too divided his time between the family business, the ASB and Broomknoll Church, where he became session clerk. In addition, he became chairman of the Airdrie Liberal Association, Chief Templar in the Airdrie Independent Order of Good Templars, a Grand Master in the Freemasons, a town councillor (1887), Provost (1905), honorary Sheriff Substitute (1920) and was eventually knighted. Furthermore, he was actively involved in a host of philanthropic and charitable organisations. He was proud of Airdrie and was one of those responsible for sanitising the town’s radical weavers’ tradition and making it respectable.

There can be no doubt that the values and outlook of Knox and his immediate forebears were those of a comfortably-off social elite. The people who ran and supervised the ASB were, like Knox himself, from an economically secure middle class whose money gave them power and influence, and freed them from the debilitating effects of poverty and want. They had succeeded and they saw no good reason why others could not follow the same route. However, it could be argued, and with a certain justification, that Knox and those ministers who served as office bearers at the bank were being hypocritical and that their paternalism and Evangelicalism ignored the social and economic realities of working class life. The bank offered no way out for people.
who were at the mercy of the economic cycle and who could not look after themselves. As late as 1895 the ASB had 4,600 depositors\(^\text{24}\) but these were by no means only of the respectable poor and working classes. Indeed, early on in its history the ASB had found it essential to admit all classes as depositors.\(^\text{25}\) Yet Knox and the ministers were doing what they considered to be their best work in and through the world, as both the Reformation and Evangelicalism demanded that they should. Moreover, their values were shared by many in all social classes and this had little to do with the percolation downwards of bourgeois ideology. Neither James Knox nor the ministers asserted individualism \textit{apart} from society or as the enemy of community. On the contrary, it was a sense of community and of working for the common good which motivated ministers to sit on the ASB Board. Such activities were regarded by ministers and members as the duty of clergy as citizens, a religious duty underpinned by deeply held theological principles. It was the responsibility of the Church to Christianise institutions, but no-one was naive enough to imagine that a Christian civilisation could be brought about except through Christian individuals. No doubt in some cases praise of civic life and virtues, and the cult of respectability, resulted in some ministerial subjection to secular society but it is not accurate to assume that all ministers, elders or church members were motivated only or even mainly by material desires. James Knox was adamant that the ASB was an instrument for the
public good. Indeed, for one who stood by individualism he was extraordinarily fond of participating in and actively promoting local associational culture.

Outside of the churches one of Airdrie’s largest associations by the middle 1900s was that of the Good Templars. Crucially, the Airdrie lodge of the IOGT, established in 1901, was the product of a temperance revival in the town that was directed by Rev Alexander Mann of the Ebenezer Congregationalists (Broomknoll Street) and by the doughty James Knox. According to these men, the IOGT was dedicated not merely to the eradication of intemperance in a drink-soaked Airdrie but also to the advancement of Christ’s Kingdom on earth.

The Triumph of Enthusiasm

Lilian Shiman has argued that the English temperance movement became an important vehicle for fulfilling the social and religious needs of its members. From the 1830s, the shift from moderate abstention to teetotalism "signalled more than a change in degree of abstention; it was the start of a new religion". Teetotallers deliberately "adopted" the style, language and methods of some of the nonconformist denominations. Taking the Pledge was "akin to being baptised; it completely changed a man spiritually." Conversion to total abstention involved a
complete change of heart and of lifestyle, and teetotallers separated themselves off from those who were not total abstainers. Until the 1860s and ‘70s the mainstream churches treated the temperance movement with hostility and contempt. Support for temperance was strongest among the better-off working class and its links with non-conformity and political radicalism meant that the Establishment treated it with suspicion. The rigidity of temperance dogma and the zealouslyness of temperance propagandists were viewed by some of the clergy as uncouth.

In Scotland too, the temperance movement was dominated from the 1830s and ’40s by lower middle class and upper working class leaders. The mainstream Presbyterian churches were initially hostile to the movement but by the 1870s, as in England, temperance was coming to be accepted as an essential component of Evangelical commitment to reform and the clergy were gradually swinging in favour of teetotalism. By the end of the century the Scottish churches “were contributing to Scotland’s much vaunted lead in temperance as much as they could.”

The popularity of temperance in late nineteenth century Scotland and England, especially among the better-off working class, was in no small part due to the development of Gospel Temperance, especially from the 1880s. Although Gospel Temperance had many different meanings, in its broadest usage “it meant temperance infected to any degree
with religion, and this came to mean practically any segment of the moral suasion of the temperance cause.\textsuperscript{33} Gospel Temperance was unashamedly revivalist in tone and content, and differed hardly at all from the revivalist missions that flourished in towns and cities in the closing decades of the nineteenth century.

The close links between temperance and the Labour movement have long been recognised by historians. As Shiman has pointed out, for decades the teetotal dominated temperance movement

"had served as a means of helping individual workers up the economic and social ladder; it was an important part of the self-help movement of the mid-nineteenth century. In the latter part of the century this role was being assumed by the socialists and other parts of the labour movement.\textsuperscript{34}

The type of worker attracted to temperance was the same as that attracted to the Labour and Socialist movement.

Particularly in Scotland, temperance was one of the hallmark's of the nineteenth century Labour movement.\textsuperscript{35} Temperance societies were extremely popular among the lower middle class and upper working class who were actively involved in associational culture, and the Scottish ILP was closely allied with temperance reform. William Knox has argued that politically motivated people were attracted to temperance because it provided an ideological critique of industrial capitalism.
"which linked poverty and alcohol abuse to exploitation, and gave experience to working men in the mechanics of administration. The idea of raising workers, both morally and socially, as well as criticism of the social effects of industrial capitalism, made temperance equally appealing to the emerging Labour Party."35

Temperance was part of a strategy of moral improvement so that workers would be made into the kind of people that Socialism was thought to require; sober, respectable and clear thinking.37 A temperance sub-culture developed as a counter to public house culture and the temperance organisations "were consistent with the ideological and emotional nature of the nineteenth century Labour movement."38 The IOGT, for example, was Evangelical, uncompromising, nationalistic and internationalistic and it provided Socialists with a source of conviction.39

However, neither Shiman for England nor William Knox for Scotland emphasise that temperance, especially by the late nineteenth century was, like Socialist Revivalism, a product of Evangelical-Mission culture. Temperance and Socialist Revivalism were contained within the broad framework of Evangelicalism and the close links between temperance and Socialist Revivalism were made possible precisely because both movements flourished in Evangelicalism’s fertile soil. Indeed, though the mainstream churches were initially hostile to temperance, from its beginnings temperance had been supported and led by Evangelicals. By the close of the century the
integration of temperance into the Evangelical reform mentality was part of the same process by which popular revivalism had become organised and institutionalised. More importantly, temperance reflected the Evangelical ambivalence towards individualism for while it stressed the importance of individual conversion to teetotalism it depended for its survival on highly organised associational structures, just as the churches did. In this sense, temperance, salvationism and Socialist Revivalism were certainly sub-cultural for the dominant culture under which they existed and off which they fed was Evangelical Protestantism. Whatever else it was, temperance was not, as Shiman thinks, a new religion; it bore all the hallmarks of Evangelicalism and of popular revivalism. Mission and good organisation went hand in hand as the keys to its success.

We noted in Chapter Six that temperance in Airdrie during the 1830s and '40s was associated with Protestant dissent and Chartism. For the remainder of the nineteenth century the local movement continued to be linked to nonconformity and in particular to Ebenezer Congregationalist Church, Graham Street Baptist Chapel and Broomknoll Church. It was not until towards the end of the century that the majority of the local churches gave general support to the temperance cause. By the early 1900s all the nonconformist and dissenting churches used unfermented wine at communion.
In spite of the increasing interest in temperance among the churches, local branches of temperance fraternities had become rather inert by the last decades of the nineteenth century. Then during 1900 and 1901 the temperance movement in Airdrie was transformed by a revival and thorough reorganisation which centred on the setting-up of a new lodge of the IOGT.

At the turn of the century, according to Knox, Airdrie presented "a lamentable spectacle" from the temperance standpoint. This state, he argued, was a direct result of the town's being grossly over licensed. Statistics showed that of the ten burghs having the largest ratio of public houses per 10,000 population Airdrie came out on top with 42.5. Consequently, one of the first tasks of any local temperance movement had to be to fight for a reduction in the number of licences. However, a licence reduction would be meaningless unless the general population could be persuaded to adopt teetotalism.

On 4 June 1901, James Knox hosted a meeting of temperance friends at his home, "Myrtlebank", Springhill Avenue. Those attending included Alexander Mann of Ebenezer Church, the Chairman of the Airdrie School Board and a number of councillors and ex-councillors. From the outset, then, the temperance revival was highly organised and had
powerful political support. Indeed, in councillor John Orr, a member of Ebenezer, the local movement had one of its most influential supporters. At the meeting of 4 June a steering committee was set-up, with Knox as convener, to reorganise the temperance movement in Airdrie and establish a lodge of the IOGT. The aim was to concentrate the disparate activities of existing temperance groups by building up one large and powerful organisation. The new lodge of Good Templars was to embrace all social classes, to belong to no sect and to assume the character of a town's institution. It was to be "Airdrie's grand, united contingent to the army of Temperance Reformation".

The Committee proceeded to launch a propaganda and recruiting campaign. A Pledge Card was introduced for people to sign setting out the basis, aims and methods of the proposed new lodge. Personal canvassing, newspaper advertisements and mass rallies were all used to spread the temperance message and the plans for a new lodge. By September 1901 several hundred persons had signed the Pledge Card and following a mass meeting in the town hall in the same month, the Airdrie Lodge IOGT No 1070 was instituted.

For the next few years the IOGT embarked on numerous campaigns to develop a powerful organisation that would, it was hoped, serves as "a thorough and successful counter attraction to the public house". The declared long-term
goal was to supplant local public house culture altogether by convincing people that a good and happy life could be had without drink.\textsuperscript{52}

During the first five years of its existence the Airdrie IOGT was, by the standards of the day, and compared to the ILP, highly successful. By 1905 the lodge had a membership of 2,725 people of whom 400 were office-bearers of one kind or another.\textsuperscript{53} The Airdrie Lodge, Knox bragged, had gained "the premier position of being the largest lodge in the world".\textsuperscript{54} Moreover, as a result of hard campaigning and the actions of influential lodge members - in 1905 seven out of the fifteen town councillors were members\textsuperscript{55} - thirty licences in the town had been cancelled by 1902 (about a quarter of the total).\textsuperscript{56}

According to the IOGT leaders the success of the lodge was based on zealous missionary work, good organisation and attractive social activities. The crucial activity was the regular weekly meeting around which further campaigns were planned and social activities based. Weekly meetings combined the seriousness and secrecy of ceremonies and ritual with an address - which had to be short, stimulating and informative - and a varied programme of entertainment.\textsuperscript{57} Moreover, as the lodge developed, a number of auxiliary organisations were set up to broaden the base of the temperance movement. By September 1905 there was a male voice choir, an orchestra, a sketch party, a ramblers'
club, a children's kinderspiel and a boys' physical training corps. At regular intervals the lodge also held "socials" designed to allow members to mix, and to cement the "bonds of brotherhood". National festivals and occasions, from Burns' Night to Hogmanay, were given special attention the aim being to demonstrate to non-members "how much better these auspicious events could be celebrated under a teetotal regime". This kind of demonstration was backed up by more overtly propagandist missions carried on in the press and, especially during the summer, in the open-air meetings in Airdrie Football park or in the Public Park. Just as important, the lodge became tightly organised for its promoters were determined that it should be a self-supporting institution.

In the second year of existence, the lodge leadership, concerned that the membership might dwindle following an initial period of enthusiasm, decided to expand the structures of organisation. They aimed to spread both labour and responsibility in order to avoid excessive control by a small, exclusivistic leadership core. Schemes were set up to involve as many people as possible in active employment in propaganda and leisure work.

At the top of the organisational structure was the Executive. This - like any kirk session - was the central and supreme authority. It comprised the lodge's principal
officers including the Chief Templar, the Secretary, the Treasurer, Chaplain, Marshall, Principal Guard and Sentinel. At the other end of the organisational ladder, but no less important than the Executive, came the District Officers, men and women. These officers, "Captains and Sisters of District", had to ensure that individual members were not forgotten or lost sight of and that each member kept in touch with the lodge. District visitation was paramount in sustaining the lodge. "We must", argued Knox, "get in touch with the members in their own homes, and every well organised lodge must... of necessity have a thorough system of regular home visitation."

Nothing new or original in that - as any Home Missionary from the 1830s, '50s or '80s would have been able to testify.

For Knox, Chief Templar, the IOGT in Airdrie marked a progress from Darkness to Light. Its real success lay in men and women "throbbing with intense and holy enthusiasm." Every grade of employer, merchant, working and industrial classes was well represented. The lodge stood as an example of shared values, as one of "the most brilliant examples of the triumph of enthusiasm", as "a stepping stone to Man's best and eternal welfare", and for "the progress of Christ's Kingdom on earth". Indeed, Knox saw the lodge as an instrument for introducing members who had no church connection directly to the Church.
The Triumph of Evangelicalism

The temperance revival in Airdrie was most definitely not a new religion. In terms of culture, values, organisation, propaganda, message and mission the religious system to which temperance was attached was Christianity, especially as expressed by Evangelical Protestantism. Temperance referred to Evangelicalism and in late nineteenth-early twentieth century Airdrie temperance revivalism was a manifestation of the deep-seatedness of Evangelicalism, and of the diffusion of Evangelical and dissenting values throughout local culture and tradition. Moreover, the person of James Knox, the early twentieth century temperance movement locally, and the Airdrie Savings Bank, whether viewed separately or together, reflected the deeply ambivalent approach to individualism which Evangelicalism had always displayed; an anxiety to change individuals through collective association.

Neither temperance, Socialist Revivalism nor Salvationism was actively supported by the majority of the middle class, or by the mass of the working classes and the poor. The poor in particular remained outside of the churches, temperance movement and the ILP just as they remained outside of organised associational culture generally. Temperance or Socialist Revivalism might be expressions of independent working class culture and religion but the same
kind of people were attracted to temperance as were attracted to the ILP. Moreover, both organisations relied on the same religious bases and spaces in religious culture.

Because of the close links between temperance and the ILP in Scotland we might be tempted to expect that where there was a revival of one a revival for the other should have been simultaneous or not far behind. In fact, however, the links between temperance and Socialist Revivalism did not mean that in all places where one was strong the other was also. For in some localities temperance and Socialist Revivalism were not allies but competitors. They competed in the same limited space for the same limited custom. In short, the success of temperance could be at the expense of progress for Socialist Revivalism not only because they were in direct competition but also because, as products of Evangelicalism, they both demanded the same individual conversion and commitment while offering the same associational culture. Close links between temperance and the ILP made no difference if in a particular local setting one was better organised and perceived to be of more relevance than the other.

This was the case in Airdrie, where temperance was not an evasion of Socialist Revivalism but in competition with it. Here, the explosion of temperance revivalism during the early 1900s illustrated not only the deep-rootedness of
Evangelicalism and the diffusion of Evangelical-dissenting values, but also that there were religious bases and spaces in local religious culture into which the ILP could have moved had the success of temperance revival not blocked it out.

However, it would be a mistake to think that the failure of the ILP in Airdrie was a consequence of the majority of local people’s commitment to churches. On the contrary, the party’s conspicuous lack of success was the result of its inability to provide a social gospel that was relevant and markedly different from what was familiar and already on offer. The bulk of Airdrie’s citizens were indifferent to the churches and remained largely unimpressed by temperance revivalism. They were equally unmoved by Socialist Revivalism with its social prophecy and its promise of a kingdom of heaven on earth – because they had heard it all before.
Notes


6. Birth and Baptismal Register for South Bridge Street UF Church 1900-1917, SRO, CH3/793/1.


John G Paton, an RP missionary famous for his exploits in the South Seas islands group, the New Hebrides, where he was sent in 1859, was an elder brother of James Paton, minister at Airdrie's Graham Street RP Church (1865-1873) and then of Flowerhill Church of Scotland.

For a brief outline of the RP New Hebrides mission:


10. The *Airdrie Advertiser* was diligent in reporting church and church directed activities in the later nineteenth century in part because one of the joint-proprietors (from 1869) was James Hamilton, an enthusiastic member of Wellwynd UP church. Hamilton was a Sunday School Superintendent for twenty years, a founder and vice-president of the Airdrie YMCA (founded in 1872) and a director of the Airdrie Auxiliary of the Bible Society of Scotland.

11. The story of the "Monkland Martyrs" for instance also appeared in the 20 January 1894 edition of the paper.


15. Ibid, p 3.


17. This and other details of the ASB management structure:
   Ibid, p 134.


20. This and other biographical details on Grandfather James: Knox, *The Triumph of Thrift*, pp 45-47.


23. This and other biographical details on Walter Knox:


27. Ibid, p 19.


32. For background to and details of Gospel Temperance:
33. Shiman, op cit, p 96.
34. Ibid, p 207.
42. General Introduction to the IOGT:
   Shiman, op cit, p 178-182.
44. Ibid, p 6.
46. Ibid, pp 7-10.
47. Ibid, pp 7-10 and
Orr became Provost in 1911.
1. Ibid, p 14.
2. Ibid, pp 36 and 49.
4. Ibid, p 49.

Principally because at the Annual Licensing Court of (April) 1902, of the five magistrates on the bench, three were members of the lodge.


As for the ILP, summer for the IOGT was the season of missions. Thus, for example, in summer 1902 the Airdrie Lodge decided upon a special campaign and engaged one Rev Dr Henry of New York to conduct a week's mission. Henry addressed twelve meetings, some open, some closed, the results of which were deemed "satisfactory".

[Knox, The Triumph of Enthusiasm, p 24].

Henry was invited back to Airdrie in summer 1904 to conduct a second great mission.


Beneath the Executive there was an Advisory Committee made up of thirty leading lodge members, nominated each quarter by the Chief Templar. Next, there was a large staff of subordinate officers including eight assistant Guards, ten Roll Secretaries, twenty-five Captains of District, ten Sisters of District, and the leaders and secretaries of the various auxiliary groups. These subordinate officers along with the Executive formed the Lodge Grand Committee.

Airdrie was divided into twenty-five districts each with a Captain and a number of Roll Assistants who
kept the names and addresses of all members located within the district. The Captain's job was to visit members of the roll and to supply tracts and literature. Once an year each Captain was accompanied on his visits by one of the Executive Officers.

The Sisters of District, numbering about 120, were responsible primarily for the collection of members quarterly dues. For the Sisters, Airdrie was divided into ten districts with a Sister Convener supervising in each.

68. Ibid, p 50.
69. Ibid, p 50.
70. Ibid, pp 44-45.
The Weight of the Past

Stanley Pierson has argued that recruits to Socialism in late nineteenth century Britain were attempting to overcome a painful social and psychological condition. Traditional institutions and value systems had ceased to provide any satisfactory orientation to life. In efforts to overcome a sense of estrangement and social homelessness converts to Socialism often resorted to flights of fantasy. Now, while fantasy is usually associated with a turning away from reality it can also be preparation for reality and lead to a better mastery of it. For those who became Socialists the path to a better mastery of reality led through fantasy to ideology which gave rise to a new outlook that made common action possible. However, the development of a Socialist ideology and the rise of the Labour Party absorbed or displaced the utopian fantasies of individual Socialists. Socialists were forced to choose between their social visions and the necessity for party political action. Party politics triumphed and social vision disappeared. Nevertheless, the journey into the reality of politics had been prepared for by an initial emphasis on making Socialists (conversion), and Socialist millenarianism. Both of these were utopian and fantastical but no less important for that. The Socialist movement had
drawn much of its initial vitality from an acute sense of "divided consciousness" and the rise of Socialist ideology and the eventual dominance of the Labour Party were themselves partial remedies for this state of mind.⁶ Pierson is not suggesting that the Socialist Revival can be explained only or even mainly as the outcome of social and psychological stress among those who became Socialists. He emphasises that Socialists drew on the dominant Romantic, Utilitarian and, above all, Evangelical modes of nineteenth century British thought.⁷ Indeed, for Pierson the Socialist Revival was a cultural struggle in which a foreign body of Socialist ideas, Marxism, had to come to terms with indigenous culture and values. In this sense, British Socialists exaggerated the extent to which they had broken with tradition. In fact, they displayed attitudes central to Victorian sensibility - a strong belief in progress and an extravagant confidence in the transforming power of ideas and moral sentiments.⁸ Above all, Socialist Revivalism reinstated the "millennial impulse which, in attenuated form, underlay these attitudes".⁹ This last conclusion from Pierson is important, and offsets the questionable social and psychological analyses he has employed as explanations for the Socialist Revival, and the undue emphasis which he has attached to the role of Marxism in British Socialism.

Pierson’s view of the late nineteenth century as a time of social and moral doubt and crisis is difficult to
substantiate in any but a limited sense. Evidence linking Socialist Revivalism and millenarianism with social crisis or anxiety is notoriously difficult to interpret for two reasons: first, because the notion of crisis can be variously defined (and tends to be subjective); second, because stresses and strains (individual and social) are present in all societies at all times. It is hard to know if, or indeed how, one period can be considered more or less stressful than another. In short, social/ psychological themes have a tendency to be "catch all" explanations and in this sense they obscure more than they reveal.

By emphasising cultural continuities Pierson is on much stronger ground. This is not to say that Socialist Revivalism and millenarianism were conservative, backward looking responses to the acute social problems of late nineteenth-early twentieth century Britain. Socialist Revivalism was a recognisable product of the age in which it lived, an age when religion still played an extraordinary part in shaping culture and values. As Jeffrey Cox has pointed out,

"Religion was more important in late Victorian Society than many contemporary observers would allow, and the unrealistic hopes and expectations, and inaccurate visions of a religious past, have obscured that importance."10
The impact of Evangelicalism in late nineteenth century culture and society, diffused, even diluted as it was did not suddenly vanish after 1880. On the contrary, the churches continued to touch a circle of people much wider than those actually attending worship regularly. Directly and indirectly the churches continued to reach into all aspects of British life. Christianity remained the yardstick against which many political and social reformers, including Socialists, measured their motives and formulated their questions and solutions. Late nineteenth century Britain was far from being a secular culture. The past weighed heavily on the late nineteenth century present. A century of Evangelical domination could not be shrugged off easily.

Furthermore, more than any other group outside the middle class it was the respectable working class — precisely the people most likely to join the ILP — who best represented Evangelical values and outlook. For some, perhaps especially those who were politically active and radical, Socialist Revivalism and the ILP was an hospitable because familiar environment. More commonly, however, the ILP was simply one option among a range of other and older Evangelical agencies.

Socialist Revivalists themselves inherited not just the traditions of Evangelicalism but also its ambiguities. In particular, Socialists betrayed an ambivalence towards
individualism which reflected their debt not just to radical liberalism but also to Evangelicalism. Indeed, Socialist Revivalism combined political radicalism and millenarianism and this combination was possible precisely because the setting of Socialist Revivalism was Evangelical Protestantism. Familiarity with revivalist concepts, doctrines, vocabulary and imagery was part of everyday Evangelical religion. The matrix of Evangelicalism made Socialist Revivalist claims seem formidable to some yet uninspiring, because unoriginal, to others.

"A Sort of Banquo's Ghost"

To understand Socialist Revivalism is, first of all, to understand Evangelicalism in all its complexities and ambiguities. The Socialist Revival was a quintessentially Victorian revival. Indeed, it could be argued that Socialist Revivalism pushed the Evangelical revolution to its logical conclusion: not merely individuals, but the whole of society had to be transformed. Certainly ILPers' demand for social salvation struck a familiar chord in Scotland, so much so that the churches were genuinely concerned that they might be displaced by Socialist Evangelicalism. The claim by Keir Hardie or Willie Stewart that the ILP would succeed where institutional religion had failed, because the new Religion of Socialism would harness the innate religious consciousness of the Scottish people,
may have been exaggerated, but the churches took it seriously because it was nothing less than an attempt to commandeer the Godly Commonwealth ideal.

Evangelicalism in Scotland had developed around a renewed interest in the peculiarities of Scotland’s Reformation inheritance and the rejection of a distinctively Scottish, élitist, and allegedly increasingly Erastian, Moderatism. Scottish Evangelicalism - for it was different from England’s in spite of common characteristics - was dominated by Calvinism and Presbyterianism. It remained deeply attached to Calvinist polity and to the Godly Commonwealth ideal well beyond Chalmers’ death in the mid-nineteenth century. To see that ideal emerging with renewed clarity and vigour in the Scottish (Calvinist) ILP was deeply unsettling to many Presbyterian churchmen not least because it implied, as the Socialist Revivalists intended it should, that cure of souls was not the exclusive preserve of the Church. Consequently, the mainstream Scottish churches tended to oppose Socialism just as in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries the Established Church had sought to curb Evangelical revival. Eminent, enlightened and scholarly churchmen, such as Professor Robert Flint, admitted of some common ground between Socialism and Christianity but on the whole viewed the two as locked in opposition. Flint went to extraordinary lengths to label Socialism as essentially foreign, materialistic, tending towards atheism and
potentially destructive of human individuality. Such accusations infuriated Keir Hardie who in reply wondered whence Flint had obtained his supply of Christianity and concluded, "Certainly not from the New Testament".11

Keir Hardie was, as Hugh McLeod has said,

"representative of a good many working class Christians of the later Victorian period, who adopted a highly practical form of religion that gave high priority to the achievement of a just and equal society, and who came to believe that the Labour and Socialist organisations were doing more than the churches to bring about the kind of world they wanted."12

Indeed, Hardie was much more representative than Secular or Marxist Socialists and in his person illustrated the complex relationship between Evangelical Protestantism and Socialist Revivalism.

The Labourism of the ILP, which Hardie had championed, had from the outset been underpinned by the millennial hope; and millenarianism, whether expressed in salvationism, temperance or Socialist Revivalism was part and parcel of Evangelicalism. Salvationists, temperance enthusiasts and Socialist Revivalists shared a common set of symbols and assumptions. When Labourism became an end in itself in the Labour Party this was a consequence of the decline of Socialist millenarianism and the non-appearance of the New Jerusalem. Labourism became an ideological attempt to cope with unfulfilled millenarian hopes, and the Labourist
Labour Party became, as it has remained to some extent, the party of disappointed millenarianism. However, this had little to do with a transfer of social energy from religion to politics. It simply meant that Socialist Revivalism was directly linked to declining Evangelicalism. The ILP and the churches were subject to, and affected by the same forces making for the secularisation of society. Even after the First World War there was no mass working class turning to Socialism away from religion; first, because most of the working class did not go to church; and second, because those who were Socialist only ever constituted a small minority of the working class.

The death of Keir Hardie in September 1915 was a symbolic end. Ramsay MacDonald had described Hardie as a latter day Moses who had "led the Children of Labour in this country out of bondage". But out of bondage, "not into Canaan, for that is to be a longer job". Bernard Shaw thought that the onset of war had not only dashed Hardie’s hopes for international Socialism but had also broken his spirit. "I really could not see", Shaw wrote, "what Hardie could do but die". The New Age had not dawned, the workers had not been converted, history had not produced inevitable victory over capitalism, the millennium was not forthcoming. Yet for Bernard Shaw, Hardie would remain "a sort of Banquo’s ghost on the Labour benches until his spiritual posterity comes into its own."
Religion, Community and Culture

The rootedness of Socialist Revivalism in Evangelicalism meant that the success of Socialist Revivalist groups, in Scotland the ILP in particular, was in part dependent on the religious contexts of the localities into which Socialism moved and sought to grow and develop. At local level Socialist Revivalism needed both religious bases and spaces in religious culture if it was to advance. However, it was at local level that Socialist views of purposive history and of the weight of historical inevitability were most rigorously put to the test - and often found wanting. Too often ILPers relied on generalisation with the result that they mistakenly assumed that the working class in one place was much like that in another when in reality Scotland was far from being a uniform society.

Hugh McLeod has pointed out that in some of the new industrial communities of the later eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, patterns of life were developing in which the Church had little part. Yet equally in some places religion played a crucial part in influencing the patterns of life, character and culture of new industrial communities. Indeed - and again, as McLeod has noted - the attractions of Evangelicalism varied over time but also between different kinds of community.
In Airdrie, emerging as a new industrial community between 1780 and 1850, religion was critically important in the literal and symbolic construction of community and culture. Although never attended by the majority of Airdrie inhabitants, the churches were not driven to the margins of local society either by population expansion or by industrialisation. On the contrary, religious enthusiasm and activism was stimulated to ever greater heights by these developments. The churches’ investment in the town during the decades after 1780 paid dividends right down to 1914 and beyond. Even today, the religious life of Airdrie is strongly imprinted by the patterns and traditions laid down by developments in the early nineteenth century. Throughout the nineteenth century the churches were at the centre of community life and of local associational culture.

The process of Airdrie’s transformation from rural weaving village to industrial commercial town, and the rise of a distinctive Airdrie identity separate from New Monkland parish, was relatively long and drawn out in spite of the rapidity with which change occurred between 1790 and 1850. Even with population expansion and industrialisation, and the consequent problems of local government, health, sanitation, poor relief, education, and law and order, local social forces and traditions were powerful enough to smooth the impact of new working and living conditions. These social forces eased the transition towards a modest-
sized town culture, without cataclysmic social dislocation. Of course, there were periods of acute and potentially explosive social tension - between middle class and working class, weavers and miners, miners and mine owners, radicals and conservatives - as we have seen. But across the period 1780 to 1850 as a whole, conflict was never general and social tension was as much constructive as destructive partly because it produced accommodation between continuity and conservatism, and change and discontinuity. Tension actually forged community as it had done so in the past and continues to do. Community was not a consensus concept, an integrating mechanism. It was an aggregating device.

Crucially, Christianity and the churches in Airdrie, or more specifically Evangelicalism and dissent, had a pervasive influence on community and culture, an influence which Socialists never fully understood or appreciated and which churchmen themselves often failed to see. This was not because religion merely reflected socio-economic changes and contradictions. Rather, religion itself created, encouraged and thrived upon tension. The confrontational religion which dominated Airdrie’s ecclesiastical life virtually for the half century after 1790 was ideally suited to these times of change. Confrontation ensured that religion commanded attention not, as is so often said, on a narrow sectarian front but across a broad and richly diverse front. It was not just a question of competition, choice and bourgeois religious
free enterprise. Confrontational religion was a genuine expression of people's faith and the different denominations and churches had special significance both to those who were inside and to those outside. "Confrontationalism" was part of the devaluing and revaluing of hierophany which made up people's expression of the sacred. Even in the late nineteenth century, when Airdrie ecclesiastical life seemed to display a new consensus, dynamic tension and particularist loyalties remained at the heart of religious culture.

It is quite justifiable to speak of Airdrie in the nineteenth century as a community: an entity that had character imputed to it. People themselves referred to their town in precisely this way. However, as Antony Cohen has shown for late twentieth century Whalsay, a Shetland island community, to speak of community as if it has some kind of independent existence is to give objectivity and authority to a partial idea. For in fact,

"people's ideas of community are actually generated through their experiences of sectional interest and segmentary membership." 18

So "the Community" may be a generalisation from these partial views or a way of emphasising their discreteness. "In either case, 'the Community' is seen through the medium of its parts". 19
In nineteenth century Airdrie, as in present-day Whalsay, people constructed "the Community" from their idiosyncratic experiences as members of particular groups: class structures, trades unions, occupations, associations, churches and so on. And many of these structures overlapped. In this respect community had the character of a symbol: its form was shared among the members but its meaning was constructed differently by them. However, the commonality of form was important because without it the sense of community would have lacked authenticity. Although they expressed variation in their construction of it, Airdrie people attributed integrity to their invocations of community. It distilled for them their sense of similarity to each other or their mutual belonging, and also their sense of the ways in which they differed from non-Airdrie people. The terms "the Community" or "Airdrie" may have been imperfectly formulated condensations of history, convention, personalities and life, but they were frequently invoked especially as expressions of boundary. So there were complementary themes in the relation of the parts to the whole in Airdrie. Airdrie people recognised their likeness to one another in contrast to people from elsewhere. At the same time they were deeply committed to those factors that distinguished them from each other both as individuals, and as members of segmentary factions. The commonality of "Airdrie" was perceived through and enriched by its competitive particularities which in turn were
rendered intelligible by their assimilation to the shared vocabulary of form and theme.

Scottish ILP leaders could not understand why the party found Airdrie such difficult terrain to occupy and the leadership blamed poor organisation, the laxity of Lanarkshire propagandists and the strength of traditional political loyalties. However, what they failed to recognise was that Airdrie was a distinctive community and one where the weight of local history, especially the impact of Evangelicalism and dissent from 1780 to 1850, worked against Socialist Revivalism. Religion was crucial in the construction of Airdrie’s symbolic boundaries. Evangelicalism and dissent marked limits within which community as culture operated. Moreover, by the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries the diffusion of Evangelicalism and dissent, and the continuing input from the local churches to many aspects of secular society, was manifest in the astonishing success of temperance revival during the early 1900s. Yet in spite of the strong links between temperance and Socialist Revivalism in Scotland the ILP did not benefit from the success of temperance in Airdrie. Socialist Revivalism was competing against temperance revivalism. And the ILP lost out. The religious bases on which the ILP could build were present in Airdrie, as the success of temperance revival indicated, but there was no space for Socialist Revivalism in local religious culture.
From the case I have made for viewing Socialist Revivalism in the context of Evangelicalism, and from the example of Airdrie it is clear that some of the oft-repeated claims about the decline of Evangelicalism and the pace of secularisation must be called into question.

Jeffrey Cox has criticised those historians of Victorian religion who have become addicted to the language of inevitable, irreversible decline, decay and failure, and who explain these changes with reference to an underlying "process" of secularisation. Such historians, Cox thinks, have a tendency to judge Victorian religious movements only by the standards of the movements themselves and since the ultimate goals, whether conversion of an entire city, social class or nation, were not met the movements can be deemed to have failed. And once a movement actually had begun to decline instead of growing "no explanation whatsoever is needed because of the convenience of the theory of secularisation". Cox is not suggesting that the impact of science, biblical criticism, the advent of heavy industry, the division of society along class lines, growth of cities, or geographical and social mobility did not cause new problems for the churches. His objection is to the air of inevitability

"which results from wrapping all of these changes up into a package called 'the process of secularisation',
and using that package as an explanation of social change in the modern world."\textsuperscript{22}

In fact, he argues, the social changes involved in secularisation did not, and do not, invariably and inevitably lead to the decay of religious ideas and institutions. An appeal to an underlying process of secularisation obscures ongoing adaptation of religious forms to the modern world.\textsuperscript{23}

Cox has made an important point here for while it would be unwise to judge any Victorian religious movement only by standards other than those of the movement itself, it is also the case that Victorian religious movements had success where churchmen themselves least expected or simply did not recognise. As we have seen, both with regard to Socialist Revivalism and to the rise of Airdrie, Evangelicalism was remarkably successful in determining limits and laying down boundaries. Just as important, churchmen, perhaps especially in Scotland, often failed to realise that Evangelicalism, for all its stress on the individual, actually pushed society in a more collectivist direction. The Scottish ILP tried to use the radical Presbyterian impulse in exactly this way and it could only do so because Evangelical Presbyterianism contained within it the seeds of a form of society quite different from that envisioned by anarchic individualists.
Thomas Chalmers would have been horrified by the increasing secularisation of many aspects of society as the nineteenth century wore on. He was unhappy about the State takeover of poor relief in the 1845 Poor Law Amendment Act, and he would have been thoroughly depressed by the State’s eventual takeover of education. Furthermore, Chalmers would have been driven to distraction by the demands placed upon the State by the Socialist Revivalists, and by the obligations which they argued the State should have. Yet it was not such a great step from Chalmers’ Godly Commonwealth, where Church and State had mutual obligations, to plain State interventionism for the public (and political) good, with the Church becoming a pressure group campaigning for State social legislation.

The study of Airdrie and of Social Revivalism as presented in this thesis also suggests that there is a need for historians of religion to re-examine exactly what was happening in the secularisation process; the way that secularisation occurred and the culture that has resulted from it. The course of secularisation whether in Scotland’s or Airdrie’s culture, or in Socialist Revivalism, has to a large extent been dictated by the peculiarities of the religious culture which has been secularised. The scale and pace of secularisation in Scotland has not been the same as in England and secular Scottish culture is not the same as England’s either. Indeed, at a cultural level, the modern crisis in the
relationship between "the Church" and "the world" has developed less acutely in Scottish Presbyterianism. To describe Scotland today as "post-Christian" is vague and unhelpful not least because it suggests a previous Christian unity which has never in fact existed. With no disrespect to the importance and contributions of other denominations, it would be more appropriate to describe contemporary Scotland as residually Presbyterian rather than post-Christian. In short, secularisation has had limits imposed upon it by the dominant religious culture it has apparently displaced.
Notes

2. Ibid, p 1.
5. Ibid, p 345.
8. Ibid, pp 26, 349.
11. In October 1894, Professor Flint (Divinity, Edinburgh University) lectured to Divinity students on the relation of Christianity to Socialism. His conclusions were reported in the Press and it was to these reports that Hardie made his response. An account of this exchange and more details of Hardie's refutation of Flint's main points can be found in David Lowe, From Pit to Parliament: The Story of the Early Life of James Keir Hardie, Labour Publishing Co, London, 1923, Chapter VIII, "Christianity and Socialism", especially pp 70-73.

Flint's approach to, and views on Socialism were developed more fully in his, Socialism, Isbister and Co, London, 1895.

See also:


15. Ibid, p 240.


19. Ibid, p 60.

20. Cox, op cit, p 265.


22. Ibid, p 266.

23. Ibid, p 266.

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