

Religious Worship in Washington in 1851

In addition to the population census that took place throughout the UK in 1851 there was also a census of **places of worship**, taken on the same date. It attempted to list attendance in every church, chapel, synagogue and religious space for every denomination. The actual returns for the parishes of England and Wales can now be downloaded from the National Archives Office, and I have done this for **Chester le Street**; the Superintendent Registration District that included **Washington, Usworth and Harraton**.

There were different forms for the Church of England and for other denominations. Both asked for addresses, the dates when the buildings were erected, available space for worship, congregation and Sunday School attendees in the mornings, afternoons and evenings on 30 March 1851, and average weekly attendances in the previous 12 months. The Church of England returns asked for details of the churches' construction, how they were paid for and how they were endowed.

Census of Great Britain, 1851.
(18 and 19 Victoria, Cap. 51.)

A RETURN

Of the several Particulars to be inquired into respecting the aforementioned CHURCH or CHAPEL in England, belonging to the United Church of England and Ireland.

[A simpler Return (manuscript exclusively) will be obtained with respect to Churches belonging to the Established Church in Scotland, and the Episcopal Church in Wales, and also from Roman Catholic Priests, and from the Ministers of every other Religion: Information throughout Great Britain, will respect the First Census of 1851 only.]

I.	NAME AND DESCRIPTION OF CHURCH or CHAPEL.			
II.	WHERE SITUATED.	Parish, Rectorial, Vicarial, or Parsonal, Rectory or Vicarage	Dependence on Bishop's or District	County and Diocese
III.	WHEN CONSECRATED OR LICENSED	Under what Circumstances CONSECRATED or LICENSED		
In the case of a CHURCH or CHAPEL CONSECRATED or LICENSED since the 1st January, 1800, state				
IV.	HOW OR BY WHOM DEDICATED.		TOUSE, AND Dedication	
			By Parliamentary Grant Special Rate Private Donation, or Subscription, or from other Sources, ... Total Cost ... £	
V.			VI.	
HOW ENDOWED			SPACE AVAILABLE FOR PUBLIC WORSHIP	
Land	Tithes	Free Rectors'	Free Sittings	
Tithes	Tithes	Free Rectors'	Other Sittings	
Grants	Grants	Grants	Total Sittings...	
Other Permanent Payments	Other Permanent Payments	Other Permanent Payments		
Other Sources	Other Sources	Other Sources		
VII.		AVERAGE NUMBER OF ATTENDANTS		
Estimated Number of Persons attending Divine Service on Sunday, March 30, 1851.		(From last preceding Census in 1841.)		
General Congregation } Morning	Morning	Afternoon	Evening	Evening
Sunday School } Morning	Morning	Afternoon	Evening	Evening
Total	Total	Total	Total	Total
VIII.				
REMARKS				

I certify the foregoing to be a true and correct Return to the best of my belief.

Witness my hand this _____ Day of _____ 1851.

(Signature) _____
(Official Character) _____ of the above named _____
(Address by Post) _____

[illegible]

In the Washington area of today Church of England returns were made for Holy Trinity Washington and for Holy Trinity Usworth, and Methodist returns for Washington Row, Usworth, Usworth Colliery, Washington Staithes and Chartershaugh. It is interesting that there were no Roman Catholic, Baptist or Jewish establishments.

Holy Trinity Washington

As is known, the Norman Church in Washington Village was demolished in 1832 and the current building erected the following year, reusing much of the stone. The return was completed by the Rev. Lewis William Denman, Rector from 1848 to 1861.

The return shows it cost £1,096 6s 5d, funded by a mortgage of £75 from the Diocesan church Building Society, £25 from Parish Rates and remainder from private subscriptions, of which no less than £468 5s 4d came from the Rector, Henry Perceval (son of the Prime Minister Henry Perceval, assassinated in 1812). Interestingly, the church's endowment was shown wholly as 'Coal under Glebe'; presumably from active mines in the parish.

Space for worshippers was 256 free sittings and 149 other sittings, with no reference to standing space. 'Other' sittings were those paid for by more prosperous families in the parish. For the morning service of 30 March 1851 there were 87 in the general congregation and 46 Sunday scholars (133 total), and in the afternoon 45 and 34 respectively (79), showing that those most attending were mostly under 21. The average totals during the previous 12 months were 115 in the mornings and 55 in the afternoons.

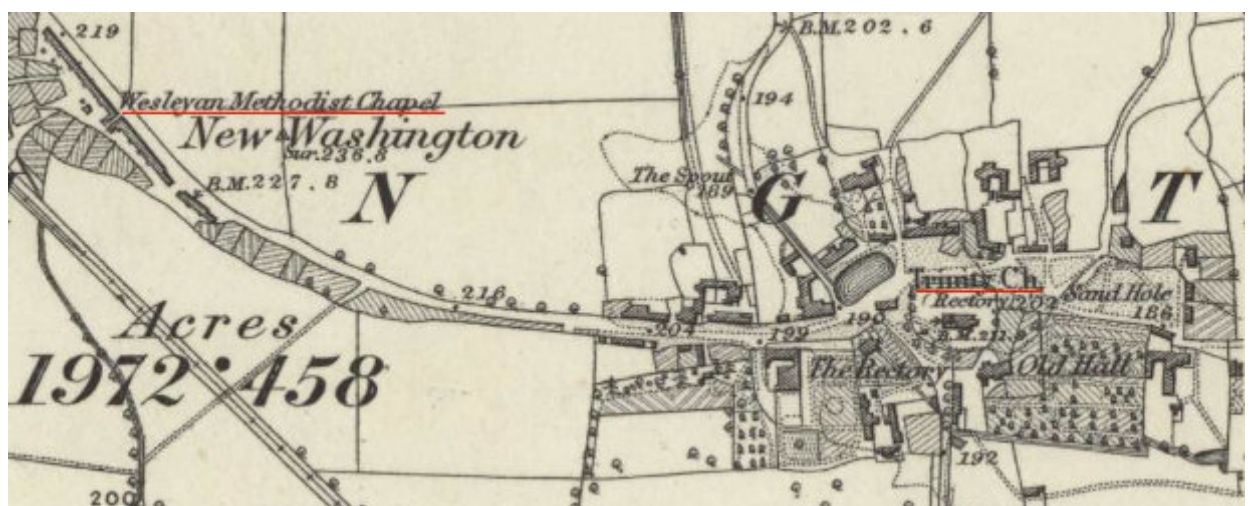
Holy Trinity Washington			Erected 1832*		
VII		VIII			
Space available for Public Worship		Estimated Number of Persons attending Divine Service on Sunday March 30 1851			
Number of Sittings already provided			Morning	Afternoon	Evening
Free Sitting	Other Sitting	General Congregation	87	45	
256	149	Sunday Scholars	46	34	
Total Sittings	405	TOTAL	133	79	
Free Space or Standing Room for		Average Number of Attendants during 12 months			
		General Congregation	70	25	
		Sunday Scholars	45	30	
		TOTAL	115	55	

*Should be 1833

Washington Row Chapel

The Washington Row Primitive Methodist Chapel on Village Lane was rebuilt in 1848 with 138 free sittings and 22 other sittings. It recorded just 56 attendees on the evening 30 March 1851; 36 in the general congregation and 20 in Sunday school, though the average through the year was listed as 80 and 40 respectively. Interestingly the steward, Peter Horn, remarked that the chapel was held jointly by Wesleyan Methodists and the Primitive Methodists.

Washington Row Primitive Chapel				Rebuilt 1848	
VII		VIII			
Space available for Public Worship		Estimated Number of Persons attending Divine Service on Sunday March 30 1851			
Number of Sittings already provided			Morning	Afternoon	Evening
Free Sitting	Other Sitting	General Congregation			36
138	22	Sunday Scholars		Sunday School	20
Total Sittings		TOTAL			56
Free Space or Standing Room for		Average Number of Attendants during 12 months			
		General Congregation	80		
		Sunday Scholars	40		
		TOTAL	120		



Holy Trinity Usworth

Usworth became a separate parish from Washington in 1832 and the church built in 1835 on high ground looking eastwards, again by Henry Perceval at a cost of £882, funded by private subscription and the Church Building Society, though no breakdown is shown. It's endowment was tithes of £145, glebe payments of £30, an annual endowment of £65 and fees of just £3. It was referred to as the Usworth Chapelry, Trinity Chapel and District Chapel, reflecting it's junior status to Holy Trinity, Washington.

It had free sitting space for 410 and other sittings for 23; very different figures of it's most older sister church in Washington. Attendances in March 1851 were 50 in the congregation in morning plus 39 Sunday scholars, followed by 45 and 22 in the afternoon. It's annual total averages were very similar; 95 in the mornings and 64 in the afternoons.

In the remarks box the incumbent (as he signs himself), Richard Collinson, referred to two Methodist Chapels in the parish, attracting worshippers and scholars of 140. Richard and his family were also the occupiers of North Biddick Hall, the ancient family seat later to be taken over by the Cook family, the founders of the Washington Iron Works. His position was Principal Curate from it's consecration in 1835 to 1861.

Usworth Chapelry, Trinity Chapel, District Chapel Erected 1835					
VII		VIII			
Space available for Public Worship		Estimated Number of Persons attending Divine Service on Sunday March 30 1851			
Number of Sittings already provided				Morning	Afternoon
Free Sitting	Other Sitting	General Congregation		50	45
410	23	Sunday Scholars		39	22
Total Sittings		433	TOTAL	89	67
Free Space or Standing Room for		Average Number of Attendants during 12 months			
		General Congregation		55	36
		Sunday Scholars		40	28
		TOTAL		95	64

Usworth Chapel

The Usworth Wesleyan Chapel, in the south of the village on today's Wellbank Road, opened on 24 July 1805, and by 1851 had capacity for 200 free sittings and 119 other sittings. 38 were in the congregation on the morning of 30 March 1851 and 70 in the afternoon, and there were 44 Sunday scholars in the morning. An average attendance of 150 was reported. The Chapel steward, Samuel Southern, remarked that they had recently changed the time of service from 2pm to 10am because of falling attendances.

Usworth Wesleyan Chapel Erected 24 July 1805					
VII		VIII			
Space available for Public Worship		Estimated Number of Persons attending Divine Service on Sunday March 30 1851			
Number of Sittings already provided				Morning	Afternoon
Free Sitting	Other Sitting	General Congregation		38	70
200	119	Sunday Scholars		44	
Total Sittings			TOTAL	82	70
Free Space or Standing Room for		Average Number of Attendants during 12 months			
		General Congregation			150
		Sunday Scholars			150
		TOTAL			



Usworth Colliery School Room

This facility was another shared one between the Wesleyans and Primitive Methodists, built in 1850. The 1857 Ordnance Survey map shows what later became a school as the Chapel, and is now in the modern Sulgrave Village. The steward (Joseph Cook- no relation to the iron manufacturers) listed suspiciously rounded figures of 100 free sittings, and 50 attendees in the morning and 50 in the afternoon on every Sunday in the previous 12 months, as well as on 30 March 1851.



Usworth Colliery Schoolroom - Wesleyan and Primitive Erected 1850					
VII		VIII			
Space available for Public Worship		Estimated Number of Persons attending Divine Service on Sunday March 30 1851			
Number of Sittings already provided			Morning	Afternoon	Evening
Free Sitting	Other Sitting	General Congregation	50	50	50
100		Sunday Scholars			
Total Sittings		TOTAL	50	50	60
Free Space or Standing Room for		Average Number of Attendants during 12 months			
		General Congregation	50	50	50
		Sunday Scholars	50	50	50
		TOTAL			

Washington Staithes

The Wesleyan Chapel at the Staithes, later Station Road, had 80 free sitting places, and on the morning of 30 March 1851 had 64 in Sunday school and in the afternoon and evening had 57 and 80 in the congregation respectively. The weekly averages through the year were just a little less at 60, 50 and 70 respectively. The steward was William Banks.



(Washington Staithes)					
VII		VIII			
Space available for Public Worship		Estimated Number of Persons attending Divine Service on Sunday March 30 1851			
Number of Sittings already provided			Morning	Afternoon	Evening
Free Sitting	Other Sitting	General Congregation		57	80
80		Sunday Scholars	64		
Total Sittings		TOTAL			
Free Space or Standing Room for		Average Number of Attendants during 12 months			
		General Congregation		50	70
		Sunday Scholars	60		
		TOTAL			

Chartershaugh Chapel

According to the return the Chartershaugh Wesleyan Chapel was first erected in 1793 and rebuilt in 1845. It has free sitting space for 72 and other sitting space for 104. The steward, Benjamin Robinson, reported 95 had attended in the congregation and Sunday school on the morning of 30 March 1851 and 100 in the afternoon, and showed just a single figure of 85 as the annual weekly attendance. Today the site of the village is a wooded area just south of the A182 highway.



Chartershaugh Wesleyan		Erected 1793		New 1845
VII		VIII		
Space available for Public Worship		Estimated Number of Persons attending Divine Service on Sunday March 30 1851		
Number of Sittings already provided			Morning	Afternoon
Free Sitting	Other Sitting	General Congregation	95	
72	104	Sunday Scholars		100
Total Sittings		TOTAL		
Free Space or Standing Room for		Average Number of Attendants during 12 months		
		General Congregation	65	
		Sunday Scholars		
		TOTAL		

Summary

In total 359 Washington residents attended the two Church of England establishments on Sunday 30 March 1851, slightly more than the weekly average of 349 they reported, but just under 43% of their sitting capacity of 838. More residents, 401, attended Methodist services in five places of worship; 48% of their capacity (835), but less than the weekly average of 455. In 1851 the population of Washington, Barmston and Harraton was 5,627 so the combined service attendance of 760 was just 13.5% of local residents.

The Government never repeated a 100% census; future estimates were made by newspapers, statisticians sample returns from household surveys and by church authorities. In the next decade Washington experienced 50% population growth, mainly by inward migration, including Irish Catholics. This was matched by the establishment of a Roman Catholic parish in 1862; initially in St Joseph's school, Washington and then in the new church, Our Blessed Lady Immaculate, in 1878, and the new Church of England's St George's at Fatfield in 1878. Further Methodist Chapels and halls opened in Fatfield, Harraton, New Washington (Concord) and Station Road.

Ged Parker 2021