

PIT-MEN, PREACHERS AND POLITICS



PIT-MEN, PREACHERS & POLITICS

The effects of Methodism in a Durham mining community

ROBERT MOORE

Senior Lecturer in Sociology, University of Aberdeen

CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS



CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS

Cambridge, New York, Melbourne, Madrid, Cape Town, Singapore, São Paulo

Cambridge University Press
The Edinburgh Building, Cambridge CB2 8RU, UK

Published in the United States of America by Cambridge University Press, New York

www.cambridge.org
Information on this title: www.cambridge.org/9780521203562

© Cambridge University Press 1974

This publication is in copyright. Subject to statutory exception and to the provisions of relevant collective licensing agreements, no reproduction of any part may take place without the written permission of Cambridge University Press.

First published 1974
Re-issued in this digitally printed version 2008

A catalogue record for this publication is available from the British Library

Library of Congress Catalogue Card Number: 73–88307

ISBN 978-0-521-20356-2 hardback ISBN 978-0-521-29752-3 paperback



CONTENTS

Acknowledgements ix List of abbreviations xi Introduction 1

- 1 Historical background 28
- 2 The Deerness Valley 64
- 3 The social and economic basis of paternalism: the colliery-owners in the Deerness Valley 78
- 4 Village Methodism I 93
- 5 Village Methodism II: the structure of the Methodist societies in the Deerness Valley 120
- 6 The respectable Methodists and the old Liberalism 140
- 7 The radicals and the Labour Movement, 1900–1926 169
- 8 Methodists in action: three political case studies 191
- 9 1970 a postscript 214

Conclusions 222

Appendix I: research strategy and techniques 230

Appendix II: the Methodist community and objections to

Anglican union 237

Appendix III: the religious statistics 240

Appendix IV: occupational status, social mobility and the

structure of Methodist leadership 243

Notes 254

Bibliography 273

Glossary 279

Index 281



For my mother and father Kathleen and Douglas Moore



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

An adequate list of all those who helped with the research that has provided the basis for this work would substantially lengthen the work itself, therefore I can only thank a few individuals and organisations who gave me the most assistance.

The University of Durham provided a grant from the research fund which paid research expenses for the first two years. The Social Science Research Council made a grant which enabled a full-scale project to be mounted for one year. Without help from these two sources there would have been no research.

The Methodist archivist, Dr J. C. Bowmer, helped me throughout and gave me access to both the Methodist Archives and the Library of the Wesley Historical Society. Dr Bowmer also appears anonymously in the text; he is a Cornsay Colliery man. Dr Seaman, the Durham County archivist, and his assistant, Miss Smith, not only helped me with sources but took a great interest in my work. The chairman of the Darlington district of the Methodist Church and the superintendents in the Deerness Valley, Crook and Durham gave me free access to all the records in their possession. The one exception to this Methodist helpfulness caused me to travel many hundreds of miles in search of alternative sources and delayed one part of the work for three years. Records were also consulted with the kind permission of the Durham Miners' Association, Oxfordshire County Record Office, the director of education for County Durham, the city librarians in Durham and Darlington. The National Coal Board, South Durham area, and especially Mr Graham, the last manager at Esh Winning, and his staff, gave me much help, and access to their records.

Parts of Chapter 7 draw on the very extensive collection of letters, essays, speeches and notes left by John George Harrison when he died in 1921 at the age of thirty-one. I am most grateful to his daughter, Mary Willan, for allowing me access to all these papers. I hope she will one day write her father's biography.

A major source of data was provided by the local newspapers; my thanks are due to the management and staff of the *Durham County*



Acknowledgements

Advertizer. Without the use of their invaluable records little could have been achieved.

It would be quite invidious to attempt to thank the men and women of the villages individually. Some helped me in a series of long conversations, others with a single piece of information or a comment. Many searched their houses and produced vital documents. All showed unfailing friendship and hospitality. It was good to be among the people of the Deerness Valley and I would like to thank them all for their contributions to this work, and for much else besides. This work is about them and their fathers, and I hope that in some way they will feel that I have written it for them.

At the University of Durham I was especially grateful to John Rex for constant intellectual stimulation and encouragement. Colleagues and post-graduates, especially in our Thursday evening seminar, gave me more help than they realised and made me rethink much of my work. John Peel of the London School of Economics gave me much help and encouragement during the later stages, and made many valuable suggestions. None of these bear responsibility for the inadequacies of the work, which they made me see. Anne Williams and Linda Garbutt did most of the typing for the research; this was a major contribution to the total enterprise, for which I would like to thank them. Hazel King typed this book, for which I am very grateful.

John Grant, my research assistant from 1968 to 1969, did much of the work on Pease and Partners and in investigating the life histories and contemporary activities of the non-Methodists in the villages. My research methods class in Durham (1969–70) helped in collecting survey and other data, and Ian Procter helped with the tabulations.

I would like to thank the ministers in Esh Winning and their wives, who have given me unfailing support and assistance, as well as their friendship and pastoral concern from 1965 to 1970. Throughout the work Tom Greener, a valley Methodist and a distinguished schoolteacher, has been my constant critic; for his constancy and his criticism I am deeply indebted to him. Neither he nor anyone else mentioned is responsible for opinions expressed or errors of fact or judgement; these will be among my unique contributions to this enterprise.

ROBERT MOORE

Aberdeen, 1972

NOTE. The people and events described in this book are real persons and real events, except where tact has dictated that names of people or places should be concealed.

X



ABBREVIATIONS

C.S.U. C.W.S.	Christian Social Union Co-operative Wholesale Society
D.C.	Durham Chronicle
D.C.A.	Durham County Advertizer
D.M.A.	Durham Miners' Association
D.M.R.A.	Durham Miners' Reform Association
E.P.C.	Employers' Parliamentary Council
I.L.P.	Independent Labour Party
L.R.C.	Labour Representation Committee
M.F.G.B.	Miners' Federation of Great Britain
M.N.C.	Methodist New Connexion
NP.U.	Non-Political Union
P.M.	Primitive Methodist
S.D.F.	Socialist Democratic Federation
S.S.J.	Sunday School Journal
T.U.C.	Trades Union Congress
W.M.	Wesleyan Methodist