

*Falkirk in the Later Nineteenth Century:  
Churchgoing, Work and Status in an Industrial Town*

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## **Declaration**

I declare that this thesis has been composed by me alone and that the work it embodies has been undertaken solely by myself. I confirm that the work has not been included in any other thesis.

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Date: 20/12/2012

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## ABSTRACT

In the years following the Religious Worship Census of 1851, there was a general increase in anxiety about the state of working-class churchgoing. Many prominent church leaders and social commentators believed that rapid industrialisation and urbanisation had led to the ‘alienation’ of the working classes from the practice of religious worship. The working classes were largely seen as ‘irreligious’ and not interested in aligning themselves to the customs of the rising middle classes who were seen as the stalwarts of the churches. The later nineteenth century was a time of anxiety for many clergy, and prominent social investigators, such as Charles Booth, carried out studies into the extent of poverty amongst various sections of society. A growing recognition of the problem of poverty led to some considering that financial disadvantage was a barrier to the churchgoing habits of the working classes. However, these ‘pessimistic’ perceptions of working-class churchgoing could originate from very different interpretations of the new industrial world, and from different conceptions of human nature. A large part of Karl Marx’s legacy has been his linking of ‘irreligion’ to the oppression of the ‘proletariat’ under industrial capitalism and Frederick Engels legitimised Marx’s theories with his 1845 book on the *Condition of the Working Classes in England*.<sup>1</sup> However, part of the problem of interpreting Victorian affiliation to the churches is that so much effort has gone into either supporting or refuting the Marxist view amongst historians that the actual purpose of the enquiry has been somewhat lost.

There has developed in recent years a rather disconnected debate with the ‘revisionist’ case the strongest and the belief that churches were middle-class institutions overturned by a recourse to ‘social composition analysis’. In effect, the revisionists have employed the use of the occupational analysis of churchgoers from which to discern the social ‘class’ make up of individual churches, which has provided

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<sup>1</sup> Engels, F. *The Condition of the Working Classes in England* (Germany, 1845; London, 2009).

evidence for widespread and significant working-class churchgoing. However, when this methodology is investigated, it is not hard to find critics of the use of occupational titles as a guide to nineteenth-century social ‘class’. This study is an attempt to look at churchgoing from a point of view that does not rely on occupational labels as the indicator of the social make-up of churches. Rather, it employs the use of the Scottish valuation rolls, which provided the official rented value of all properties, as a tool from which to develop a wide-ranging analysis of churchgoing, work and status in a nineteenth-century industrial town. It is, in large part, a study of housing and employment structures as gauged from a systematic analysis of the valuation rolls, the results of which are then measured against the four main Presbyterian churches of the town.

The subject of the research is Falkirk because it experienced the transition from a traditional to industrial economy needed to evaluate the impact of industrialisation on working-class churchgoing. The study spans 1860 to 1890 and evaluates both points in time. It is effectively a historical investigation into the social and occupational structure of Falkirk town householders and how the main Presbyterian churches of the area reflected this societal formation. It naturally includes a large component of how social ‘status’ was ordered amongst the core householder population in terms of work, social relations, property and churchgoing. In addition, the methodology employed in the form of property valuations has produced a critique of the traditional system of classification by occupation and somewhat challenged its reliability.



This work is dedicated to the memory of my father, Jean-Claude, my paternal grandmother, Jacqueline, and paternal grandfather, Damien, who all passed away unexpectedly during the course of this research.



*Seigneur, Dieu éternel,  
Lumière sans commencement ni fin,  
Artisan de toute la création,  
Source de pitié,  
Océan de bonté,  
Abîme insondable d'amour pour les hommes,  
Fais briller sur nous la lumière de ton visage.  
Luis dans nos cœurs soleil de justice  
et remplis nos âmes de ta joie.*

*(Saint Basile le Grand. IV<sup>e</sup> s.)*

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*Finally, but by no means least, my loving thanks go to my friends and Christian family – Betty, Douglas and Edith. Without your help in the last write-up year I could not have finished it. I am eternally in your debt.*

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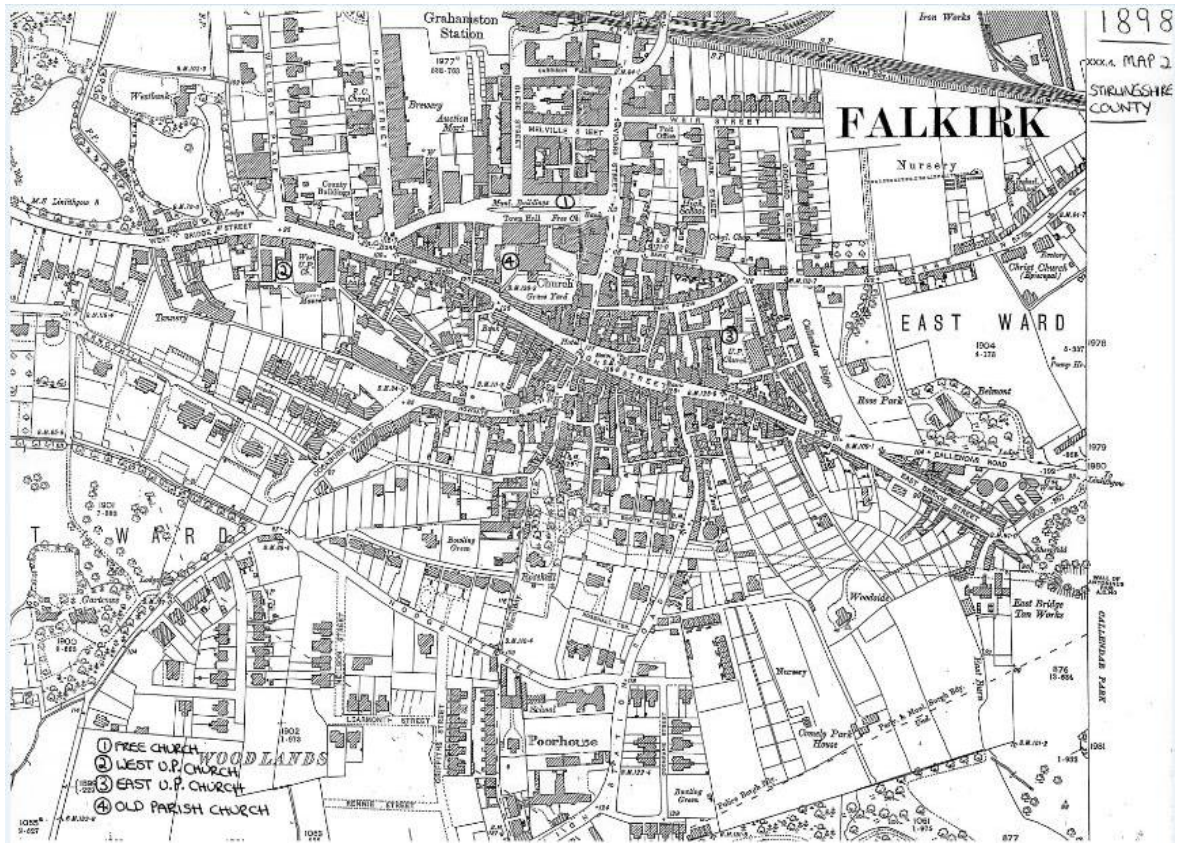


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MAPS OF FALKIRK  
(with indication of churches)

1860 AND 1890





## CHAPTER 1

### **Introduction: The Historiography of Nineteenth-Century Working-Class Churchgoing and the Problem of Classification by Occupation**

There are two main purposes of this thesis: 1) to carry out a comparative study of social status, work and churchgoing that considers the period 1860 to 1890; 2) to carry out this study using a different *modus operandi* from what is normally employed when analysing the social status of churchgoers in the nineteenth century. The point of the comparative nature of the study is to look at the effects that the development of heavy industry had on the population and churches of a small town that was subject to major nineteenth-century industrial change. Part of the motivation for this research is to address the historiography surrounding the topic of working-class churchgoing which has evolved in more recent years to reflect a much polarised debate. In general, the historiography ranges from the works of those on the ‘orthodox’ side to those considered ‘revisionist’ in their conclusions. The former tend to stress working-class alienation from the churches and the latter the opposite. For example, two writers who represent this polarity would be K.S. Inglis and C.G. Brown. Inglis believed that the effects of urbanisation and industrialisation had caused the workers to become estranged from the churches during the nineteenth century as people eventually lost connection to churches in the great towns.<sup>1</sup> Brown, on the other hand, asserted that the working classes dominated in many churches across all denominations until well into the twentieth century.<sup>2</sup> These two authors will be discussed in further detail later in the chapter in the context of the broader development of the historiography.

A problem with the traditionalist stance is that it has become tainted with the legacy of the extreme Marxist-like interpretations of working-class religion. When Karl Marx wrote in 1844: ‘Religion is the sigh of the oppressed creature, the heart of a

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<sup>1</sup> K.S. Inglis, *Churches and the Working Classes in Victorian England* (London, 1963), pp.1-4.

<sup>2</sup> C.G. Brown, *The Death of Christian Britain* (London, 2001), p.155

heartless world and the soul of soulless conditions. It is the *opium* of the people<sup>3</sup>, he linked ‘religion’ to the oppression of the ‘proletariat’ under industrial capitalism. In his view, the more a worker was able to produce, the more estranged from his work he became; the more he put into the product of his labour, the more detached he became from the process because the fruits of his labour did not belong to him. Religion created the same kind of psychological condition because: ‘The more man puts into God, the less he keeps in himself’.<sup>4</sup> This view was diffused by Engels in the British context when he wrote about his observations on the lives of the English working classes in 1844. In Engels’ view, the colossal enemy of the working classes was the employing manufacturers, the bourgeoisie of the factory system that held the proletariat ‘in chains’ and destroyed their freedom.<sup>5</sup> Furthermore, the workers in general were far too practical to partake of the ‘fanaticism’ that drove the bourgeoisie when it came to religion, and although the mass of workers were ‘irreligious’, the remnant of belief would eventually clear to enable them to see how religion ‘serves only to make them weak and resigned to their fate, obedient and faithful to the vampire property-holding class’.<sup>6</sup> The Marxist view, then, was a deeply pessimistic and, perhaps, condescending view of working-class churchgoing. That is not to say, however, that Marxist theory has no merit whatsoever in how it conceptualises the relationship between capitalism, churchgoing and the working classes, just that its determinism and scornful tone serve only to reduce the working classes to unthinking entities. This point is rather ironic given that the Marxist interpretation would charge the capitalist class with creating the same kind of effect on working-class consciousness, as religion made them ‘obedient and faithful’ rather than revolutionary.<sup>7</sup> However, in reality, many people would have

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<sup>3</sup> K. Marx, ‘A Contribution to the Critique of Hegel’s Philosophy of Right’ (1844), quoted in J. O’Malley (ed.) *Marx: Early Political Writings* (Cambridge, 1994), p.57.

<sup>4</sup> Marx, ‘From the Paris Notebooks’ (1844), quoted in O’Malley (ed.) *Political Writings*, p.72.

<sup>5</sup> F. Engels *The Condition of the Working Classes in England* (Germany, 1845; London, 2009), p.193.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, p.151, 243.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, p.151, 243.

gone to church through a simple desire to do so because of genuine religious conviction. All the same, as industrialisation took more hold on communities, and as societies and mind-sets adapted to suit the impact factory work was having on work and social environments, there may well have been a genuine loosening of connexion between those who worked in the factories and the churches, either for political or economic reasons. Therefore, this study is trying to look at the incidence of churchgoing amongst the factory class apart from any Marxist *or* anti-Marxist presuppositions.

A pessimistic view of working-class churchgoing was largely borne out of the Victorian era itself. But, the negativity attributed to working-class churchgoing was not confined to the Marxist commentators. In the opening page of the aforementioned work by Inglis on churchgoing and the working classes, he quotes Engels when he said in 1845: ‘All the writers of the bourgeoisie are unanimous on this point, that the workers are not religious, and do not attend church’.<sup>8</sup> Inglis himself said that ‘Engels was not exaggerating much.’<sup>9</sup> However, this did not necessarily mean that Inglis and those with similar views held to Marx’s theories, but that they recognised an element of common ground between aspects of Engels’ observations and the views of Victorian contemporaries. Some of those contemporaries saw working-class churchgoing in a very negative light. For example, in 1854, Horace Mann wrote his report on the 1851 Census of Religious Worship and came to the conclusion that the working classes were ‘unconscious secularists’ who were estranged from the churches.<sup>10</sup> Mann had been a 28-year-old barrister who was later to become the secretary to the Civil Service Commission, and so was hardly a Marxist.<sup>11</sup> Some church ministers were also genuinely worried by the situation. For example, the Rev John Livesey of St Philip’s,

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<sup>8</sup> F. Engels, *Condition of the Working Class in England in 1844* (1892), p.125, quoted in Inglis, *Churches and the Working Classes*, p.1.

<sup>9</sup> Inglis, *Churches and the Working Classes*, p.1.

<sup>10</sup> E.R. Wickham, *Church and People in an Industrial City* (London, 1957), pp.110-111.

<sup>11</sup> E. Higgs, ‘The Religious Worship Census of 1851’, Essay available at: [http://www.histpop.org/ohpr/servlet/View?path=Browse/Essays%20\(by%20kind\)/General&active=yes&mno=2062](http://www.histpop.org/ohpr/servlet/View?path=Browse/Essays%20(by%20kind)/General&active=yes&mno=2062) (Accessed, 23/11/2012).

Sheffield, wrote an open letter to Sir Robert Peel in 1840 about the poor church attendance of his parish where:

The wealthier classes, in tolerable numbers, are found occupying the pews; but the free seats are too often thinly tenanted. To what shall we attribute this indifference to Divine ordinances?...The prevailing reason, I am assured, is the *force of inveterate habit*...they tread in the steps of their fathers, and are neither impressed with the obligation, nor feel the desire, of obtaining religious instruction....<sup>12</sup>

In Scotland, Thomas Chalmers, the pioneer of the Free Church at the Disruption of 1843, spoke of ‘the deep and dense irreligion which, like the apathy of a mortification or paralysis, has stolen imperceptibly on the great bulk of our plebeian families’.<sup>13</sup> A very gloomy outlook on the working-class relationship to the nineteenth-century churches was a contemporary narrative that was very real for many prominent social commentators and church leaders.

When it came to the subject being written about from a historical perspective in the 1950s and 1960s, the main orthodoxy to be established was that of the pessimists such as Inglis. Partly because the traditional view was in some ways linked to the Marxist interpretations, there seems to have been a reaction to the orthodox writing which, to a degree, manifested itself in the ‘revisionist’ school of thought. The revisionist interpretation of C.G. Brown is the furthest away from the Marxist views of Engels that it is possible to find and amongst the most up-to-date work. Apart from the studies that fall somewhere in the middle, these two positions represent the opposite

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<sup>12</sup> J. Livesey, *Thirteen Letters Addressed to the Editor of the Sheffield Courant on our Social Conditions* (1832), quoted in Wickham, *Church and People*, p.87.

<sup>13</sup> T. Chalmers, *The Right Ecclesiastical Economy of a Large Town* (Edinburgh, 1835), p.21, quoted in C.G. Brown, *Religion and Society in Scotland since 1707* (Edinburgh, 1997), p.5.



ends of the debate. The revisionists, however, have added extra weight to the strength of their arguments by employing the use of, what has been termed, 'social composition analysis'. This methodology effectively analyses individual congregations on the basis of the occupations of their members. Brown goes as far as to claim: 'Every major study based on social composition analysis of churchgoers or members shows for every part of Britain from the late eighteenth to the late twentieth centuries, for every denomination, that the working classes were in the majority'.<sup>14</sup> According to Brown, social composition analysis, whereby churchgoers are classified according to their occupation, provides 'direct evidence' of working-class churchgoing.<sup>15</sup> However, there is still work from recent scholarship that serves to dampen the enthusiasm of the revisionist claim. For example, S. Gunn found in his study of Manchester that manual workers formed just a 'tiny' proportion of seatholders in most suburban churches. At the Congregational Chorlton Road Church in 1876, just 6% of seatholders had manual occupations out of a total of 462 seatholders. Gunn did allow for the point that seatholding was not particularly representative of the congregation, however, the finding led him to conclude that 'the relative absence of manual workers was suggestive of their marginal position in the hierarchy of suburban worship'.<sup>16</sup> Gunn's research and interpretation, then, seems to contradict Brown's claim about the working-class 'majority' in every church studied using social composition analysis.

It would seem, therefore, that there is still room for manoeuvre within the core debate around whether or not working people actually attended nineteenth-century churches, although the revisionist interpretation has certainly taken precedence during recent years; nevertheless, it would still be almost impossible to argue perceptively for

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<sup>14</sup> Brown, *Death of Christian Britain*, p.155.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, p.153.

<sup>16</sup> S. Gunn, 'The Manchester Middle Class, 1850-1880', Ph.D. thesis (University of Manchester, 1992), p.263 quoted in S. Gunn, 'The Ministry, the Middle Class and the "Civilising Mission" in Manchester, 1850-80', *Social History*, Vol. 21 no. 1 (January, 1996), p.24.

the extreme stance evoked by Friedrich Engels and those who support his staunch views. Revisionist historians like P.L.M. Hillis and C.G. Brown have argued that most of the people who *were* in the churches were working-class. There is still an argument to be had in relation to the variations in working-class churchgoing in different locational, social and industrial contexts; but the general, traditional view that working-class people were generally ‘irreligious’ and not a core part of nineteenth-century ecclesiastical life is now seen as essentially fruitless. Therefore, because it is generally accepted, due to the new scholarship using social composition analysis, that working-class people were in the churches, the point of this study is not to look primarily at this question; the premise is that working-class people were, in some degree or another, in the churches (although the extent of it remains entirely debateable). Rather, in this study, the focus is on the *form* of analysis and the *relational* context between wider society, the churches and different social and occupational groups.

That being said, in most of the work to date so far, a missing element seems to be a general recognition of the importance of focusing on those who were the actual subjects of the industrialising process *within individual churches*. In other words, it is crucial to do more than just look at ‘working-class’ churchgoing, but instead to examine the comparative nature of churchgoing amongst different working-class groups. Not all ‘working-class’ people were subjected to the effects of the development of large-scale industrial production. Of those that were, it seems odd that heavy-industrial, factory workers, in particular, have not been targeted as sources of study within individual churches. If the revisionists argue against the impact of industrialisation on churchgoing, then why have individual churches not been examined in a way that separates the factory ‘proletariat’ from the other workers? The answer could be either a wish to avoid anything that would reify the Marxist link between ‘alienation’ and the factory system or a consequence of the results not sitting well with the overall outcome

of revisionist literature and the prescribed methodological approach of social composition analysis.

Unwittingly, a subtle outcome of the revisionist work has been to intensify the erroneous concept of the ‘working class’ as a homogeneous whole, ignoring any differences in churchgoing habits that may have existed *between* working-class groups. In the methodology used in social composition analysis, anybody with a ‘working-class’ occupation is seen as distinct from the ‘middle classes’ or the ‘upper classes’ in the church, rather than from other people with manual occupations (although general distinctions are sometimes now made between the ‘skilled’ and the ‘unskilled’ working classes). What this thesis will try to illustrate is the importance of taking much more seriously the distinctions between the working classes in terms of the type of industry they belonged to: for example, analysing separately those from factory employments and those from non-factory manual jobs. This difference seems to apply, in particular, to the variations between the ‘traditional’ trades and the much newer, heavy-industrial occupations that arose with the iron factories. In Falkirk, the place that will be analysed here, the iron factories did not impact profoundly on the town until the mid-nineteenth century, but the traditional trades connected to Falkirk’s origins as a small, market town had long-established roots. Most of the high-status burgesses of pre-industrial Falkirk were craftsmen involved in the running and administration of the town’s affairs.<sup>17</sup> This historical dissimilarity between the ironworks and the traditional trades would seem to be an obvious source of potential disparity in the churchgoing habits of the people of Falkirk. This study, therefore, will set out to show that there were some illuminating variations in patterns of churchgoing according to the *type* of working-class occupation that is being represented. The difference did not just revolve around the idea of ‘skilled’ or ‘unskilled’ manual work, regardless of industry.

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<sup>17</sup> This subject is dealt with fully in Chapter 3.

The revisionist scholarship that has provided, in any case, convincing evidence of widespread working-class churchgoing has, by its nature, relied on the study of the occupational descriptions of nineteenth-century churchgoers. The largely unquestioned use of this method has taken the revisionist case to as extreme a point on the opposing side as Engels occupied amongst the traditionalists. In other words, the reliance on *occupational* data to reach the conclusion that most churches were full of working-class people has potentially over-egged the pudding. Occupational descriptions recorded in censuses and church records are very limited in what they provide in the way of information (even when used in conjunction with other sources like trades directories). More crucially, in their nineteenth-century context, they were ‘labels’ of a kind designed to sum up a person’s social status in the rigid class system that existed. They were not a neutral measurement, and so could vary depending on the interpretation of whoever recorded or provided the occupational information. In this sense, occupations were used to determine if someone was ‘working’, ‘middle’ or ‘upper’ class in an era when social investigation was becoming a serious business. More ‘labels’ were then applied to sub-sections within each class, for example, the ‘unskilled’ versus the ‘skilled’ working classes. This categorisation has largely been transferred uncritically from its basis in Victorian society to the analysis by historians of individual churchgoers. This methodological approach appears logical on the surface, but what is rarely discussed is the nature of the Victorian construction of ‘occupation’ that was used to categorise people according to these labels. In other words, the subjective and class-based nature of nineteenth-century occupational labelling is rarely scrutinised in connection with church analyses.<sup>18</sup> Part of the purpose of this thesis, then, is to analyse social status and churchgoing using a different process that reveals the discrepancies of the original methodology. It does this by carrying out research into church social

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<sup>18</sup> This topic is dealt with specifically in Chapter 10, in relation to the research findings of Chapters 4-9.

composition that is not reliant on occupational pigeon-holing to determine the social make up of churches.<sup>19</sup>

### **I) Historiography of Working-Class Churchgoing: An Overview**

The literature about whether or not the working classes were missing from the nineteenth-century Christian churches did not develop until the late 1950s and 1960s. Writers such as E.R. Wickham and K.S. Inglis held to a pessimistic view and believed that the working classes *in general* had been estranged from the churches. This belief had largely been born out of contemporary sources. For example, Horace Mann's 1854 report on the religious census of 1851 was an illustration of how some people had become very concerned about a lack of churchgoing amongst the working classes. Industrialisation and urbanisation were the main causes of the perceived irreligiosity of the working people. The city environment was seen as corrupting of religious sensibilities, as evidenced by this quote from a London clergyman in 1844: 'The life of cities is essentially a worldly life', but, 'the country with its pure serenity – oh, how unlike the hot thick breath of the towns, of itself inspires some feeling of religion.'<sup>20</sup> The churchgoing figures revealed by the census caused great concern at a national level and it was believed that the working classes were responsible for the gap in attendance highlighted by the report. The missing churchgoers were assumed by Mann and others of his contemporaries to have been the working classes even although there was no full-proof evidence of the social class of those missing from the figures.<sup>21</sup> It was this depressing picture of the non-existent relationship between the working classes and the churches that influenced writers like Wickham and Inglis.

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<sup>19</sup> A full explanation of the approach taken in this thesis is provided in Chapter 2.

<sup>20</sup> Unidentified London clergyman's sermon of 1844, quoted in H. McLeod (ed.) *European Religion in the Age of Great Cities, 1830-1930* (London, 1995), p.8.

<sup>21</sup> Brown, *Death of Christian Britain*, p.149.

In Wickham's study of pre-1850 Sheffield, most of the poor did not go to church and did not feel as if they 'belonged'. Pew rents had kept the masses out of church and the middling ranks had formed dissenting churches. In this context, the poor included artisans and labourers. The only people who could afford seats at church or chapel were the highest-level artisans: men in the exclusive cutlery trade and silver and plated manufacture. These workers had high wages, secure jobs and usually belonged to a trade union.<sup>22</sup> At the time of the religious census of 1851, Wickham claims that the working classes had already been alienated from the churches for some time. From the 1850s to the 1900s, this process was perpetuated as the increasing prosperity of the lower middle classes led to the building of many new churches. Even the Primitive Methodists, Wickham found, were dominated by the 'respectable' working classes, the lower middle class and some wealthy.<sup>23</sup> The only exception in Sheffield came from two independent, Nonconformist chapels in poor, working-class areas. In these churches, there was a higher proportion of artisans, but still of the highest level.<sup>24</sup> In addition, some Wesleyan Methodist chapels built in working-class areas had a majority of working-class adherents. However, generally, between 1851 and 1881, only the Church of England had any increase in the attendance of the 'indiscriminate poor' and congregations were still dominated by the middle classes.<sup>25</sup> In the early 1880s, the Salvation Army and the Workmen's Mission managed to attract mainly working-class congregations - but these were exceptions to the general rule.<sup>26</sup> Wickham supported his belief in the general alienation of the working classes with the views of contemporaries, census results, reports of Poor Law Commissioners and Home Office Statistics of

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<sup>22</sup> Wickham, *Church and People*, pp.48-103.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, p.134.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, p.136.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.138-144.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, p.157.

drunkenness and crime which portrayed a bleak picture of the state of working-class churchgoing.<sup>27</sup>

K.S. Inglis held to the same type of view and believed that the ‘masses’ were hardly ever in church and attendances were lowest in London and the large manufacturing towns such as Bradford and Sheffield. As the population of Britain almost doubled between 1801 and 1851, those born in industrial areas had no connection to a church.<sup>28</sup> It was the poorest industrial workers who were neglected as opposed to the skilled miners, for example, amongst whom Methodism flourished.<sup>29</sup> This perspective was reinforced by writers such as Currie, Gilbert and Horsley in the late 1970s: after 1840, the decline of the skilled worker, due to the growth of large factories, created a new class of manual worker who was alienated from the churches.<sup>30</sup> A.A. MacLaren, in his study of Aberdeen, portrayed a similar view of Scotland.<sup>31</sup> In his study of Aberdeen Free and Church of Scotland congregations, MacLaren concluded that the working classes had been lost to the churches in the mid nineteenth century. This had to do with factors such as middle-class dominance of Free and Church of Scotland kirk sessions, financial barriers, moral discipline and the process of ‘embourgeoisement’. MacLaren followed writers such as Wickham in assuming that the percentage of people on the census who did not attend church represented the working class and he believed that the working class, as a whole, was discriminated against.<sup>32</sup> The results of studies such as these formed the orthodox way to think about working-class churchgoing in the later nineteenth century.

Jeffrey Cox argued the case for more working-class participation in churches in a study of late nineteenth-century Lambeth. The working class was still under-

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<sup>27</sup> Ibid., pp.87-107.

<sup>28</sup> Inglis, *Churches and the Working Classes*, pp.1-3.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid., pp.9-10.

<sup>30</sup> R. Currie, A. Gilbert and L. Horsley *Churches and Church-Goers: Patterns of Church Growth in the British Isles since 1700* (Oxford, 1977), p.56.

<sup>31</sup> A.A. MacLaren, *Religion and Social Class: The Disruption Years in Aberdeen* (London, 1974).

<sup>32</sup> Ibid., p.126.

represented and the church was still a middle-class phenomenon, but there were some 'plebeian' Nonconformist congregations in the late 1880s. These churches represented a larger proportion of skilled worker and some even had unskilled participants.<sup>33</sup>

However, there was no statistically based and rigorous social composition analysis to support these claims. Nevertheless, what Cox did was to highlight the role of personal belief, rather than institutionalised religion, in the lives of working people, which paved the way for other revisionist historians to challenge working-class 'irreligion' from a different perspective.<sup>34</sup> However, in following the traditional line that church attendance equated to religious affiliation, Green argued, in his study on churches in West Yorkshire, that church-going was not a mainly middle-class activity; too much credence had been given to Mann's 1854 report on the 1851 religious census.

According to Green, most working-class people did not attend church, but most worshippers were working-class. However, as in Cox's study, this was not based on social composition analysis because in the churches studied no records had been kept of numbers of attendants or their occupations.<sup>35</sup> Studies such as those by Cox and Green widened the debate but did not provide conclusive evidence of significant levels of working-class churchgoing.

It is the revisionist studies that have incorporated social composition analysis that have had the most impact on the traditional orthodoxy. This relatively new method has strongly challenged and cast serious doubt on the validity of the traditionalist interpretation. According to Brown, it was not until the 1960s that social composition analysis was applied to the study of church affiliation and social class. Brown provides examples such as Gilbert and C.D. Field.<sup>36</sup> The former analysed occupations of over

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<sup>33</sup> J. Cox *The English Churches in a Secular Society* (Oxford, 1982).

<sup>34</sup> For example, see S.C. Williams, *Religious Belief and Popular Culture in Southwark: 1880-1939* (Oxford, 1999). J. Obelkevich, *Religion and Rural Society: South Lindsey, 1825-1875* (Oxford, 1976).

<sup>35</sup> S.J.D. Green *Religion in the Age of Decline* (Cambridge, 1996), pp. 201-202.

<sup>36</sup> A.D. Gilbert *Religion and Society in Industrial England* (London, 1976) and C.D. Field, 'The Social Structure of English Methodism', *British Journal of Sociology*, 28 (1977).



10,000 Nonconformists between 1800 and 1837. A total of nearly 77% were working-class, including 59% artisans and 17% other manual workers. The latter studied the Methodist movement and showed, overall, that 80% of Wesleyan Methodists and 76% of Primitive Methodists had been working-class.<sup>37</sup> Another writer who used social composition analysis was S. Yeo. The baptismal registers from three Primitive Methodist churches in Reading were looked at to calculate that, despite the failure of the other churches to reach the working class, within the Primitive Methodists they made up the majority of the congregation. Labourers accounted for around half of baptisms from 1850 to 1900, artisans following at 28%.<sup>38</sup> Results from studies such as these highlighted a major problem of the orthodox view, namely that tangible evidence was sparse and, by contrast, social composition analysis provided a more powerful tool for analysing churchgoing.

Another outcome of the move towards the occupational analysis of church congregations has been to highlight the difference in levels of 'skilled' and 'unskilled' working-class churchgoing. Other historians have also called the once dominant perspective into question by relying on studies of social composition and in doing so have moved the debate on even further. D.W. Bebbington, for example, has concluded that in the early nineteenth century, 'artisans were commonly to be found in church'. Evangelical churches in general, were dominated by skilled workers. However, even the Primitive Methodist church was more likely to be filled with semi-skilled or skilled workers than labourers. Although there was substantial working-class representation within evangelicalism, this did not include the labouring masses.<sup>39</sup> Nevertheless, studies such as that by Yeo and E. Hopkins have shown that, in a small minority of

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<sup>37</sup> Brown, *Death of Christian Britain*, p.154.

<sup>38</sup> S. Yeo *Religion and Voluntary Organisations in Crisis* (London, 1976), pp.120-121.

<sup>39</sup> D.W. Bebbington, *Evangelicalism in Modern Britain: A History from the 1730s to the 1980s* (London, 1989), p.111.

churches, the unskilled appear to have dominated.<sup>40</sup> Social composition analysis, then, has highlighted differences between the churchgoing of the skilled and unskilled working classes. The ratio of unskilled to skilled workers has now become an important part of the debate. Overall, a new orthodoxy seems to have been established: the working classes made up the majority of most churches, but the labouring class, or unskilled worker, was not as well represented. Only a few churches were full of the unskilled, usually in specifically working-class districts. According to this new orthodoxy, the unskilled workers and the middle classes are now secondary to the skilled workers as far as their representation in most churches is concerned.

The literature pertaining to the situation in Scotland nicely demonstrates the evolution of the debate. MacLaren supported the traditional view (from an overtly Marxist stance) that the working class as a whole had been alienated from the churches and that this included most 'artisans'. However, by employing social composition analysis, Hillis has refuted this view. In analysing the baptismal records of four non-established churches and three established churches in Glasgow in the mid nineteenth century, Hillis concluded that in every church there was a higher proportion of the working classes than of any other class. Within this study, the proportion of skilled to unskilled was also calculated. The results showed that the skilled heavily outnumbered the unskilled in all churches.<sup>41</sup> Some of the most recent work on Scottish churches, then, underlines the new interpretation of focusing on the skilled and unskilled elements of church composition.

There is a final aspect to the topic that should be discussed with relation to the church and social composition that is crucial to Scottish church history in particular: the effect of the Disruption of 1843. This affair was one of the most important events in

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<sup>40</sup> E. Hopkins, 'Religious Dissent in Black Country Industrial Villages in the first half of the Nineteenth Century', *Journal Ecclesiastical History*, 34 (1983).

<sup>41</sup> P. Hillis, 'Presbyterianism and Social Class in Mid Nineteenth-Century Glasgow: A Study of Nine Churches', *Journal of Ecclesiastical History*, 32/1 (1981), p.55.

nineteenth-century Scottish history and was extremely important in terms of how social class relations developed within (and beyond) the Scottish churches. By the time Horace Mann was writing his report on the census, over half the evangelicals in the Church of Scotland had left to create their own church. The Free Church was this creation and, if Thomas Chalmers is to be believed, it took ‘the great bulk and body of the common people’ and ‘a goodly proportion of the middle classes’ with it.<sup>42</sup> All the same, according to Drummond and Bulloch, this only happened in the Highlands because of the connection between the conservative landlords and the church and the animosity that was created between the elite and the ordinary people. However, in the towns, the labouring poor failed to enter the Free Church as it was a mainly middle-class venture.<sup>43</sup> According to S.J. Brown, the Free Church lost whatever support it did have from labourers by demanding too much of them financially and many eventually returned to the Church of Scotland. Nevertheless, some skilled workers did find a home in the Free Church.<sup>44</sup> No overview of Scottish church history can fail to mention the significance of the Disruption to social relations within the churches. These issues will be referred to later when considering the disposition of the churches examined in this study.<sup>45</sup>

## **II) The Problem of Nineteenth-Century Occupational Classification**

This overview of the main scholarship in the field has highlighted the evolution of the debate. Yet the crux of it still relies on occupational analyses and representations of the ‘skilled’ and ‘unskilled’. As mentioned earlier, this study will measure churchgoing using a different form of analysis, but it will by no means disregard the

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<sup>42</sup> T. Chalmers, quoted in A.L. Drummond and J. Bulloch, *The Church in Victorian Scotland: 1843-1874* (Edinburgh, 1975), p.6.

<sup>43</sup> Drummond and Bulloch, *Victorian Scotland 1843-1874*, p.7.

<sup>44</sup> S.J. Brown, ‘The Ten Years Conflict and the Disruption of 1843’, in S.J. Brown and M. Fry (eds) *Scotland in the Age of the Disruption* (Edinburgh, 1993), p.23.

<sup>45</sup> In addition, a fuller account of the denominational differences and class relations concerning the main Scottish churches considered in this thesis is included in Chapter 3: Section IV.

usefulness of occupational data. In fact, an occupational analysis is a major part of the thesis. However, the occupational aspect of the study is not a social *class* analysis based on occupation, which is the usual outcome of studies of social composition, but is, rather, an evaluation of occupations in relation to *property*. The main tool of the research is the Scottish valuation rolls (VRs) which are discussed in detail in Chapter 2, but, briefly, these were Scottish legal documents that listed the official rental valuations attributed to all properties. Therefore, the main analysis does not take occupation as its foundation. The use of occupational data in this study is to evaluate churchgoing in terms of the different industrial or work sectors that existed in a small town society. In this way, the heavy, industrial component can be separated out from the other non-industrial elements of the workforce to look for disparities in churchgoing amongst those belonging to the various employment sectors.

The principle of the occupational analysis adopted here is to measure the churches *in relation* to the occupational structure of the surrounding society. By doing this, the problem of the abstraction of historical data out of any meaningful context is avoided. What happens in many other studies of church social composition is that the members of a particular church and their occupations are analysed on their own terms, generally in isolation from any detailed structural background context of the surrounding society. If a historian makes a claim about the social composition of a church and draws conclusions about that church and its relationship to society, is it valid to do so if the surrounding society is not similarly analysed? In many other studies, general context is provided, such as a broad discussion of the immediate social/occupational *nature* of the locality, but this is never dissected in a meaningful and statistical format that, it is argued here, is necessary to evaluate churchgoing in its fullest context. For example, C.D. Field analysed the social structure of English Methodism from the late eighteenth century to around 1830. In his introduction he

explains that he used 108 ‘membership lists’ which represented a ‘probable majority’ of all the circuit membership lists available. He used these lists as the basis of analysing the sex, marital status and occupations of the members. However, Field appears to have assumed that the lists were representative of the wider society based on some rather hazy evidence:

Because of the Methodist pattern of linking a large number of urban and rural societies within the same circuit (with a major town chapel at the head), the lists are also likely to be broadly representative of the principal community types. To an extent, therefore, they approximate, however unscientifically, to a national sample.<sup>46</sup>

Field acknowledges the principle of having to make his findings relevant to the social composition of the wider population, but seems satisfied with generalisations rather than specifics. He goes on to say, after giving some of his findings:

Only detailed comparisons between each set of Methodist circuit data and a control group of the surrounding population would confirm the hypothesis...that the occupational structure of Methodism displayed a marked tendency to mirror the composition of its host workforce.<sup>47</sup>

He then goes on to say that the undertaking of such an endeavour was beyond the span of that study and was satisfied to accept the conclusions about the relationship of Methodism to its ‘host workforce’ from other historians. For example, he supported his

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<sup>46</sup> C.D. Field, ‘The Social Composition of English Methodism to 1830: A Membership Analysis’, University Library and School of History (University of Birmingham, n.d.), p.155. Online at: <https://www.escholar.manchester.ac.uk/api/datastream?publicationPid=uk-ac-man-scw:1m2333&datastreamId=POST-PEER-REVIEW-PUBLISHERS-DOCUMENT.PDF> (Accessed, 25/11/12).

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*, p.166.

opinion that his findings were relevant to the surrounding population by stating: 'Broad coincidences between the occupations of Methodist members and of the male population of four Craven parishes in the 1800s have also been reported by Rycroft'.<sup>48</sup> However, the acknowledgement of the importance of findings about the social composition of Methodism being related to the wider surrounding society is not extended to first-hand analysis. Field is by no means the only historian who does not appear to believe that a direct structural analysis of a surrounding society is a vital addition to a study of church social composition. Social composition of the churches, however, is a statistical measure and needs a statistical equivalent or otherwise it is potentially abstracted too far from local reality.

### **III) Objectives of the Thesis in Light of the Issues**

Overall, the purpose of this thesis is to employ a form of analysis of churchgoing that does not rely on occupational labels as the foundation of an understanding of social 'class' and, by implication, social status. It will meet this goal by assessing churchgoers on the basis of property valuations. An occupational analysis, however, is part and parcel of the research, but this is again related to property and is not an analysis of occupations *per se*. The study will also aim to assess the churchgoing of heavy, industrial workers separately from those in other trades associated with pre-industrial society. Furthermore, the stress on extricating industrial factory workers from others is an attempt to look at a potentially critical variable in churchgoing habits *amongst* the working classes, as opposed to *between* them and the upper and middle classes. Moreover, it is believed that this is an area of church analysis that has been neglected partly due to the revisionist reaction against Marxist interpretations of working-class churchgoing. The investigation of churchgoing is also set against a first-hand structural

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<sup>48</sup> Ibid., p.166.

analysis of the surrounding society in which the churches existed. The reason is because it is believed that the social composition of a church cannot be precisely depicted unless the church is measured against the specific and localised context of its environs.

## CHAPTER 2

### **Methodology: The Creation of the Valuation Hierarchy and its Use as a Tool of Social Status Analysis**

For this research, the Scottish valuation rolls (VRs) have been used to carry out a thorough study into work, status and churchgoing in later nineteenth-century Falkirk. The VRs were legal documents that were first compiled in 1854 under the Act for the Valuation of Lands and Heritages in Scotland, and they provided the yearly rental value of all property in each burgh. They were compiled around August each year and constituted the ‘final and conclusive’ authority of the valuations attributed to land and property.<sup>1</sup> The VRs led to the regularisation of assessment which had become necessary due to the introduction of a series of acts, including the police acts, the first of which was established in 1833. According to D. Moody, the 1854 Valuation Act was an ‘important landmark for the study of property’, as it allowed for consistent valuation throughout the country.<sup>2</sup>

The VRs have been used in this thesis to form the basis of a comparative study that considers the timeframe between the years 1860 to 1890. The first function they served was to analyse the general social status of Falkirk householders. The VRs have been used before to study social status in Scottish society. George Gordon analysed social segregation in Edinburgh from 1855 to 1962 by using the VRs to investigate different districts. He reached conclusions about the social status of the inhabitants based on occupations and the extent of property and land values.<sup>3</sup> Gordon claimed to find evidence for an ‘aristocracy of labour’ based around the formation of different residential areas, which came to be inhabited by either skilled or unskilled workers, with

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<sup>1</sup> N. Morgan ‘The Glasgow Valuation Rolls Database: Sources and Strategies’, in E. Mawdsley et al (eds.) *History and Computing, Vol. III: Historians, Computers and Data* (Manchester, 1990). P.175

<sup>2</sup> D. Moody, *Scottish Towns: Sources for Local Historians* (London, 1992), p.46.

<sup>3</sup> G. Gordon, ‘Rateable Assessment as a Data Source for Status Area Analysis: The Example of Edinburgh, 1855-1962’, *Urban History Yearbook* (Cambridge, 1979).



the latter mainly to be found in the Old Town.<sup>4</sup> N. Morgan also highlights the authority of the Scottish VRs as a reliable source from which to study property ownership as they reflected the system of local rating whereby each landlord and tenant was made liable for assessments dependent on the valuations conferred on them by the roll.<sup>5</sup> The VRs, then, can be used to form a reliable foundation for an evaluation of social status.

In this study, the VRs have allowed for a wide-ranging analysis into the social and occupational structure of Falkirk town and churches between 1860 and 1890. Firstly, the rolls were used to assess the social structure of Falkirk householders when measured in terms of the rental valuations of the residential properties. The VRs for 1860 and 1890 were entered into databases and then a 'VR hierarchy' was devised for each year from which to grade the properties in terms of social status (the formation of these 'hierarchies' is discussed later in the chapter). In this way, all of the householders contained on the rolls for 1860 and 1890 could be systematically analysed. These findings could then be applied to the composition of the churches, which was the second major function of the VRs. Thirdly, the VRs were used to carry out an occupational analysis of householders. The purpose of this assessment was, again, to apply the results of the occupational structure of the town to an analysis of the churches. Fourthly, the overall conclusions gained from the VR analyses have led to a critique of the traditional methodology of classification by occupation.<sup>6</sup> All in all, the VRs have been used as the basis of a wide-ranging study of different, but related themes.

The VRs were not used in isolation because the purpose of the study was not a purely social assessment of nineteenth-century Falkirk. The broader aim was an analysis of Falkirk churchgoers *in relation* to the wider occupational and social nature of the town; therefore, the official censuses had to be used to provide the occupational information that was not recorded on the VR. Unfortunately, the VRs did not list

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<sup>4</sup> Ibid, pp.96-97.

<sup>5</sup> Morgan, 'Sources and Strategies', pp.174-175.

<sup>6</sup> This subject is dealt with specifically in Chapter 10.

occupations for each householder consistently, as that was not their primary function. The first census to be taken from Scotland was the 1861 Census after the introduction of the Births, Deaths and Marriages (Scotland) Act of 1854. A General Register Office was established and the first Registrar-General, William Pitt Dundas, was appointed in that same year. Before that date the censuses had been overseen by London.<sup>7</sup> All the same, the 1861 Census for Scotland largely kept to the English form which resulted in a large degree of regularity between the Scottish administration of the census and that of England.<sup>8</sup> The official censuses, then, constituted another important source of information.

The VR of 1860 rather than that of 1861 was used to compare with the Census of 1861 because of the timing of the data collection. In Scotland, each new VR was compiled after the annual moving day or ‘flitting term’ of 28 May of each year. This date was when the annual leases of many households ended. As soon as this ‘annual upheaval’ was over, the new VR would start. The roll was then printed in the late autumn of that same year.<sup>9</sup> Because of this annual ‘flitting’ day it was the 1860 VR that was most likely to have matched best to the 1861 Census because, in Scotland, the latter was collected on the night of 7 and 8 April 1861.<sup>10</sup> This point means that the people who had moved into their houses in May 1860 and appeared in the new VR of that year were likely to have been still resident at that same address in the April of 1861 as it was just before the next ‘annual upheaval’. That is the reason why the 1860 VR, rather than that of 1861 was used. The same reasoning lay behind the use of the 1890 VR rather than that of 1891. Again, the 1891 Census was taken on 5 April, 1891<sup>11</sup>,

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<sup>7</sup> M. Woollard, ‘Occupational Classification in the Nineteenth-Century Census of Scotland’, Unpublished thesis, Glasgow University. [http://www.gla.ac.uk/media/media\\_147205\\_en.pdf](http://www.gla.ac.uk/media/media_147205_en.pdf) (Accessed, 30/10/12). (no page numbers provided).

<sup>8</sup> Ibid., no page.

<sup>9</sup> Andrew Jackson, ‘Valuation Rolls: 1913-14’, online at The Glasgow Story, <http://www.theglasgowstory.com/valintro.php> (Accessed 12/10/11).

<sup>10</sup> Scotland’s People Website (official Scottish Genealogy Resource): <http://www.scotlandspeople.gov.uk/Content/Help/index.aspx?r=554&1257> (Accessed, 14/6/10).

<sup>11</sup> Ibid., <http://www.scotlandspeople.gov.uk/content/help/index.aspx?400>

before the ‘annual upheaval’, and so will have matched better with the 1890 VR rather than the 1891 VR.

The VRs, then, have been used to design a form of social analysis from which to gauge the relative social status positions of Falkirk householders and churchgoers based on property valuations. In addition, by incorporating the census to fill in for the missing occupations of VR householders, an evaluation of employment structure could also be carried out.

### **I) Defining the Geographical Boundary of the Study**

When engaged in the measurement of any town population, it is necessary to define the geographical scope of the study. The topographical boundary was set by the VRs themselves, which also happened to be very similar to the boundary covered by the census enumerators. As well as the immediate Falkirk burgh area, both sources also included (what were then) the ‘villages’ of Grahamston and Bainsford (they are now just part and parcel of Falkirk town). The latter was the furthest north and marked the northern boundary of Falkirk where the town met the village of Carron.<sup>12</sup> The area covered by the census enumerators started from, roughly, just west of the far end of West Bridge Street and carried on eastwards, through the High Street of the town centre to the Callander Road area at the east end of the town. To the south, the boundary stretched as far south as the modern day Comely Place, but northwards the burgh included Grahamston and Bainsford, ending northwards at David’s Loan and Mungalhead Road.<sup>13</sup> The geographical boundaries of Falkirk burgh covered rather a small territory in 1860 and 1890.

Although an evaluation of those working in the heavy industries is integral to the study, the aim is not to focus on industrial workers *per se*, but rather the inclusion of

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<sup>12</sup> P. Sissons *The Social Significance of Church Membership in the Burgh of Falkirk* (Edinburgh, 1973), p.23.

<sup>13</sup> Maps are situated before the introduction and show Falkirk town centre in 1860 and 1890.

those who existed within the framework of the VRs and censuses. There were many industrialised pockets close to, but beyond the boundary of Falkirk town itself; for example, the mining villages of Slamannan, Shieldhill and California.<sup>14</sup> Slamannan developed as a village that attracted miners when work extracting coal became available with the development of the iron factories. By 1860 the miners in the village even had their own Co-op store.<sup>15</sup> It is important to acknowledge, then, that this study cannot account for all industrial activity within the wider area of Falkirk – its concern is only with the area covered by the town boundary and the impact of the iron factories on that particular population over time. One of Falkirk’s local historians has explained the boundary issue in terms of what ‘Falkirk’ actually means:

There is of course the problem, “Which Falkirk?” The name, “Falkirk” is not exclusively reserved for the town...Certain properties and industrial concerns vital to the history of the area such as Callandar House, the Canals, the Carron Iron Works, are described as being “at Falkirk” though these too have not always been encompassed by the burgh boundaries.<sup>16</sup>

P. Sissons also had to set out this boundary problem when explaining his own methodological approach to his 1973 study of church membership in Falkirk and emphasised the importance of Falkirk town’s surrounding environs: ‘Falkirk does not stand in splendid isolation in this part of central Scotland, but...it is in fact the focal point for a number of communities which are historically, geographically, economically and socially linked with the burgh’.<sup>17</sup> The scope of the study, then, is not wide-ranging enough to claim to account for the *entire* industrialised picture of the Falkirk area as

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<sup>14</sup> Sissons, *Social Significance*, p.24.

<sup>15</sup> Falkirk Local History Society Online: <http://www.falkirklocalhistorysociety.co.uk/home/index.php?id=130>, (Accessed, 12/07/12).

<sup>16</sup> L. Lawson, *A History of Falkirk* (Falkirk, 1984), p.9.

<sup>17</sup> Sissons, *Social Significance*, p.24.

some understand that area to encompass much larger geographical bounds than the official borders of the town. It is a study only of Falkirk town and the industrialised elements contained within that specific, but limited, boundary area as contained within the VRs and censuses themselves.

## **II) Collection, Storage and Rationalisation of Data**

When describing the actual methodological process, the discussion will focus on 1860 as a matter of convenience because the 1890 methodology was essentially the same, apart from the creation of the 1890 VR hierarchy, which is discussed on its own terms. However, in the general methodology, any matters specific to the 1890 source material (such as difference in volume of VR and census material) will be referred to as and when it becomes necessary. Otherwise, it should be assumed that the discussion regarding 1860 also applies to the collection and use of data for 1890.

The first stage in forming an analytical framework was the creation of workable databases that could organise and filter the information about householders from the VRs. The original form of the VR recorded, as well as property valuations: the names and sometimes the occupations of owners and tenants; or the occupiers if the property was sub-let, and where it was not a straightforward ownership, the name of the factor, accountant or lawyer acting as property manager.<sup>18</sup> The information copied from the VR to the database was: the names of householders; addresses; occupations (if recorded); and, of course, property valuation. A brief but important point should be made about inputting the valuation data: each valuation had to be changed from the old money form (pounds, shilling, pence) it was recorded in on the VR into the current decimalised format so it could be entered into the database. The manuscript form of the VRs is set out as an extended list of each householder and their property valuation, running over many pages, and so the actual process of transcribing each entry on to the

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<sup>18</sup> Morgan, 'Sources and Strategies', p.176.

database was fairly straightforward. The programme used was Access as, among other things, it had a very useful search facility which was crucial when it came to linking the VR with the census material. All in all, the 1860 VR contained 2,524 entries and there were 4,166 for 1890.

The 1861 Census and the 1891 Census were both separately inputted into Access databases. The information taken from the census was the name of householder; occupation; age; address; position in the household (head, daughter, etc.); and the number of windowed rooms in the house. Every individual in the household was recorded and not just the household head (for reasons that will be explained later). The aim of joining the VR information with the census data was not solely to augment occupational data but was also to gain a much better impression of each VR household in general. The recording of the number of windowed rooms and if householders kept servants on the census was a good test of the VR valuations, and helped to build up a sense of what each valuation represented, in general terms. The 1891 Census was markedly larger than the 1861 Census. The former comprised 17,186 separate entries and the latter just 8,811 entries. The sum of database entries does not refer to householders but to *everyone* on the censuses. The increase in census entries at the later period reflects the general increase in population that had occurred during the later nineteenth century. In Falkirk, the population of the town almost doubled from around 9,000 in 1851<sup>19</sup> to around 17,312 in 1891.<sup>20</sup> These figures of population accord quite closely with the numbers just mentioned for census database entries. If these numbers seem at odds with those provided above for the number of VR entries, it is because the VRs listed only head householders and did not account for other occupants. The creation of the census databases was in itself a hugely time-consuming exercise.

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<sup>19</sup> I. Scott, *The Life and Times of Falkirk* (Edinburgh, 1994), pp.117-118.

<sup>20</sup> W.S. Leslie, 'Burgh and Parish of Falkirk' in R.C. Rennie and T.C. Gordon (eds) *The Third Statistical Account of Scotland, County of Stirling; County of Clackmannan*, Vol. 18 (Glasgow, 1966), p.318.

Once the censuses were entered as databases, the process of linking the VR householders to their entries on the census was undertaken. However, before this step could be undertaken, the VR databases had to be made workable. The aim of the research was to study VR householders, but not all of the VR entries were households. There were many other listings of non-residential holdings including sheds, gardens, shops and individual pieces of land. These entries were of no use to categorising householders; however, a problem was that some of these dispersed non-residential holdings belonged to individuals on the VR with residential properties. Some people had holdings other than houses (for example, shops, garden or land) which had been listed separately from entries for the houses, whereas the listings of other people were combined, a house and shop being valued together. The reason for this arrangement was probably entirely practical and reflected the physical placement of property, but it created a problem for the study. If some householders had valuations attributed to them which were the *sum* of their property holdings, but others had their houses and shops listed separately, then this would affect the data. It would mean that the total holdings of those with shops and so on listed separately would be under-estimated if they were not attributed to their owner's residential property. What had to be done, then, was to add together the values of the various properties of those people with divided holdings and enter them in the database as one single valuation for that householder. For example, on the 1860 VR, John Kirkwood was a baker and had one entry for a house, garden and granary, valued at £29 p.a. This constituted one simple entry on the VR. William Hodge, on the other hand, was a baker with a house and land valued at £26 p.a. but he also had a shop and bakehouse listed separately with a valuation of £15 p.a. In addition, he had a separately listed piece of land and stable. It was necessary, therefore, to combine all of Hodge's property together to make his total holding into one valuation, as was the case for those entries where property was already combined on the VR. Otherwise, if only the entry for Hodge's house had been listed in the residential

database, along with the one entry for Kirkwood's house, garden *and* granary, then the former's property would have been under-estimated in terms of its total value. The process of joining up the dispersed properties of individuals was necessary to the overall reliability of the methodology and to rationalise what was being measured.

When it came to accounting for separately listed property belonging to the same householder the censuses were essential. There was not much of a problem in joining up an individual's total property if the detached shop and house, for example, were listed consecutively on the roll; however, they often were dispersed throughout the VR and it was only because the information was entered into a database that it was able to be resolved. However, the process of combining an individual's properties was not too straightforward. To keep William Hodge as an example: in combining Hodge's property there was the potential of wrongly attributing the different holdings to him. What if there had been more than one William Hodge on the VR and they were both bakers? This was when the 1861 Census provided an excellent check on the problem. The entire census could be searched (when in database format) for people called William Hodge who were bakers. It was not often the case, even by 1890, that there was more than one person on the census that matched a VR description. However, if there was, and if it was impossible to verify who the correct 'William Hodge' was, the property was not combined. With the aid of the census database as a background check, then, combining the properties listed separately, even if dispersed in different places on the VR, was a fairly secure exercise.

When the database had been made workable by deducting the non-relevant listings and joining up separate entries for the property of the same individual the actual number of entries in the usable 1860 database was 1,963 households. This functional database was essentially a *residential* VR and it is this, rather than the original VR, that will be referred to henceforth, unless the original version needs to be mentioned. As for the 1890 VR, the same process of making it usable for householder analysis reduced the



entire VR from its initial number of 4,166 entries to 3,307 entries. These residential databases formed the foundation of analysis of this study.

### **III) Linking the Valuation Roll and Census Data**

Once the VR residential database was workable in the sense described above, it could then function as an index to VR householders. Each VR entry was then sought for in the census database. When the VR householder was found, the information from the census was added to the VR database. All in all, connecting the VR entries to the census was straightforward in that Falkirk was not too large in terms of population so there were not many instances of entries that could not be connected. Most of the problems that did arise were due to names/locations/occupations not matching exactly. But, overall, it was a fairly straightforward, if lengthy, process.

An unexpected aid to the complications that did arise during the linking process was that the VR and census were similar in arrangement. Those people grouped together on the VR were more often than not also grouped very closely together on the census. House numbers in the VRs and censuses did not always match, but this was not an unfamiliar peculiarity. M. Drake pointed out that the lack of planning in the development of most towns during the nineteenth century caused numbering systems to be rather disorganised.<sup>21</sup> All the same, the fact that householders were generally found in the same 'cluster' in the two sources overcame even the problem of unreliable numbering because the residents of surrounding households or 'neighbours' could be used as a check that the correct person was being linked to the VR. For example, if searching the census for a Mrs Smith from the VR, without an occupation and who lived in Bainsford, it is possible that two Mrs Smiths appeared in the census living in Bainsford, especially with such a common surname. In relation to a problem of this

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<sup>21</sup> M. Drake, 'The Census, 1801-1891', in E.A. Wrigley (ed.), *Nineteenth-century Society: Essays in the Use of Quantitative Methods for the Study of Social Data* (Cambridge, 1972), p.23.

type, the VR entry for Mrs Smith could be further scrutinised to determine who her neighbours were. If the next householder to Mrs Smith on the VR was a Mr Gardner, carpenter, then it was highly probable that a Mr Gardner, carpenter, would be listed near to the correct Mrs Smith on the census. This unexpected check that existed as an outcome of the format of the original sources was an indispensable aid to the joining process. Indeed, if the VRs and censuses had not been so similar in the paths they followed, the linking process would not have been as successful. The parallel layout of the VRs and census householders was not 100% consistent as sometimes the neighbours were listed in different orders in the two sources. For example, Mr Gardner could be directly next to Mrs Smith on the VR, but a few doors away from her on the census. Nevertheless, there was almost always regularity in their being listed closely together and sharing the same neighbours, if not directly next to each other, on both sources. This observation about the layout greatly aided the connecting process and helped to ensure its accuracy.

A significant problem that was revealed when joining the VR and census entries was that of occupations not matching, in particular, in relation to trying to identify 'labourers'. This problem became evident when VR households were matched to their census counterparts. Some of those described solely as a 'labourer' on either source could have had a more specific occupation on the other. For example, Alex Liddel was a VR householder described on the 1860 VR as a 'labourer', but on the 1861 Census he was identified as a 'moulder'. The two entries were identified as the same household because they formed part of the same 'cluster' of houses on both sources. The rule that was applied to deal with this problem was: where someone appeared as a labourer in one source and a distinctive occupation in another, when it came to occupational classification, he was attributed to the group of the defined occupation.<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> See Chapter 10: Section III for an example of this in practice.

Some other problems also existed that made the process of joining the VR and census householders more intricate. For example, the case of householders not matching, in particular, where widows were concerned or where the head householder had not been present when the census had been taken. The 1860 VR was compiled some months before the 1861 Census, so if a head householder had died or gone away to work this change would not have appeared in the VR. For example, on the 1860 VR, Peter Rankine from the Howgate area was a shoemaker with a house valued at £5 p.a., but he did not exist on the census. However, there was an Agnes Rankine living in the Howgate who was recorded as a 'shoemaker's wife' and a widow on the census. The connection is verified further when it is considered that in both sources an innkeeper called Margaret Roberts appeared as the immediate neighbour. Once again, then, this example highlights the value of the VRs and censuses being laid out in a similar geographic route.

Another problematical element of linking the sources was the names of householders not matching. These instances were partly the result of mistakes in spelling and suchlike in the original sources. For example, on the 1860 VR, Margaret Dalley from Eastport had a house valued at £1 10s. p.a. But, on the census she was found as an outdoor worker living in East Bridge Street called Margaret 'Daily'. They could be verified as the same person because location and neighbouring properties matched: Eastport indicates the East Bridge Street area and Thomas Jeffrey, dyer, and Sarah MacGregor, seamstress (amongst others) were neighbours in both sources. There were other instances of spelling differences in names but, once again, where other identifiers were lacking, the proximity of neighbouring households was a great check of accuracy in linking households.

Another reason that caused names not to match between the sources was that on the VR women were quite often recorded under their husband's names. For example, a retired domestic servant from West Bridge Street called Elizabeth Waddell on the

census was found as Mrs George Waddell (no recorded occupation) on the VR. They could both be confirmed as the same person, primarily because of matching neighbouring households. Although Mrs George Waddell and Elizabeth were from the same street, because there was no occupational or other information to link them as the same person, matching the neighbours was essential. On the VR, Mrs George Waddell was listed beside: James Fraser, printer; Mary Boyd, retired sewer; William Findlay, gardener, and Agnes Waldie, dressmaker. Elizabeth Waddell from the census shared the same neighbouring households. Therefore, the two entries were considered as referring to the same person and linked together. Generally, the different problems to do with the connections of the VR and census households could all be resolved by the verification of nearby properties.

When all individuals on the residential VR had been checked against the census and either found or not found the result was essentially a core of VR householders with the addition of census data for most entries. Of the 1,963 entries in the 1860 residential VR, 1,623 were tracked to the 1861 census, which amounts to 83% of the residential VR successfully linked to the census. The comparable figures for the 1890 VR were: of the 3,307 residential VR entries, 2,815 were linked to the 1891 Census, making 85% of the residential VR effectively matched to the census. It was not possible for the process to have been 100% successful because even the census did not record an occupation for every single individual. This applied, in particular, to widows or other non-working women householders. The end result was, in effect, a database of combined VR/census information, but the addition of the census material did not alter the primary function of the log as a residential VR. The census material merely complemented the property valuation information. The final versions of the 1860 and 1890 VRs, then, symbolised the core householders of Falkirk town at both points in time.

#### **IV) Linking the Valuation Roll Databases to the Church Records**

The next main stage in the method was to use the VR residential database to search for the people on the church baptismal registers (BRs) and communion rolls (CRs). The church rolls themselves had to be entered into database format to be workable with the VR residential database. Once each church roll was entered, each person could then be looked for in the VR database. However, the collection of the church roll data was not entirely straightforward. Despite the uncomplicated sounding nature of such a task, every CR for the non-established churches was organised differently and had to be handled in slightly different ways in terms of data extraction. The most straight-forward of the church sources were the Church of Scotland Old Parish BRs. Unfortunately, CRs were not available for the required point in time; for that reason, the BRs had to be used. However, these were very well-preserved, easy to read and well set out in the original manuscripts. The Old Parish Church registers were able to be simply entered into database format. The CRs of the other churches, on the other hand, were slightly more involved.

The data gathered from the Old Parish Church BRs was the name, occupation, address and wife's name of each person. The reason the BRs were the simplest of the church sources to deal with is because, by their nature, they are effectively lists of male head householders. The VR database also listed, primarily, male head householders (although there were women head householders, the vast majority were men). This fact meant that, most of the time, it was just a straight search of the householder's name on the church record to find an entry that would correlate with the VR residential database. This ease of use was further helped by the point that the BRs were made up for every year, so the register for 1860 alone could be searched directly against the 1860 VR. Moreover, the inclusion of the wife's name in the BRs was an added benefit when it came to searching the VR database because it could be used to verify the correct household had been found by looking at the census. For example, if the church entry

was for a John Rennie, joiner, and there were two people of that description found in the VR, living in the same area, then the corresponding census entries could be checked to find which John Rennie was married to the woman on the church record. If John Rennie from the BR was married to Margaret and one of the Rennies on the census was married to Elizabeth, then it was obvious which the correct household was. The use and connecting of the Old Parish Church records, then, was the most un-demanding aspect to working with the church records.

By contrast to the availability of yearly BRs, the CRs were a bit more haphazard. The Free Church CRs started at 1861 and listed all members of the church who communicated at some point between 1861 and 1870. However, not everyone who had been listed in the CR took communion in 1861, but had simply been copied over from an older roll book. The earlier CR had run from 1844 to 1859 and some names appear to have been automatically entered from the old to the new roll book even if the people concerned were not active members at the later point. For example, Mrs Nicol, a widow from Beancross, had an entry in the 1861 CR, but had not communicated at any point, and beside her entry was a line with the word 'deceased'. Therefore, not everybody from the Free Church CRs were traceable to the 1860 VR database. When an entry such as that of Mrs Nicol's above was found, it was disregarded from the Free Church CR of Falkirk town householders because she could not be verified as having been a householder at that point in time. The point of this manipulation of the CR data was to dispense with the CR entries for people who did not actually constitute Falkirk residents at the time the VRs were taken because the aim was to match head householders from the churches to the 1860 or 1890 VRs.

Another problem with the CRs in general was that, depending on the churches and how they kept their rolls, it was sometimes difficult to pinpoint when somebody had actually been in or joined the church. In the case of the West United Presbyterian Church, for example, occasionally the exact date that the individual joined was

recorded, but at other times no date had been noted. In the case of no joining date, the person may have been copied in from a previous CR (as had been the case in the Free Church) or just entered at some later point with no date. For the non-established churches, then, a wider range of dates had to be used because they were not as well laid out as the Old Parish Church BRs. However, even if somebody had joined the West or East U.P. churches quite a bit later than 1860, say in 1867, if they had been Falkirk residents in 1860 they could still be found in the 1860 VR or 1861 Census. The reason is because they had always been in the town but had just changed church. For example, James Halley, a bricklayer, and his wife, Elizabeth, joined the East U.P. Church in 1868. There is only one entry of this name and occupation in the VR and census. They were indeed found in an earlier Old Parish Church BR. Furthermore, the point that they had come from the Old Parish Church had been written beside their entry in the East U.P. Church roll. In these cases, the people were linked to the church they were in closest to 1860.

Determining the location of individuals from the CRs was also not as clear-cut as on the BRs. The West U.P. Church was quite problematic in this sense. The issue was that this roll was not as specific as in the other church records, even the other CRs. Many of the West Church entries just had 'Falkirk' as the address, which made it much more difficult to link accurately people to the VR and census database. However, it became evident from working through the CR that 'Falkirk' was used to indicate that somebody lived directly in the town centre, rather than in Grahamston or Bainsford. This quirk of the West Church CR did make the linking process slightly less efficient. The other church rolls were not as vague as this about their members' addresses and at least gave a general area as to the location they were connected with. Even if it was just to mention the 'High Street', it was still a clue that helped to track someone down. It is possible that a result of this imprecision in location on the West Church CR may have meant that slightly fewer people on the CR were positively joined to the VR database.

All the same, in general, most people from the West Church were found because names, occupations and verifying other household members were the over-riding identifiers.

A further problem related to identifying location that applied to all the churches was the people recorded in the rolls or registers who were not from Falkirk town itself, but from surrounding areas such as Camelon and Carronshore, or as far away as Laurieston and Grangemouth. As mentioned previously, these areas were not encompassed within the range of the VR and census boundaries for Falkirk town and so were not, for the purposes of this study, representative of the population of the town. In 1860 and 1890, people came from all over the wider Falkirk area and beyond to attend church services in the town, but most of these people could not be traced in the VR or census and so were disregarded from the usable database of that particular CR or BR. The reason they were excluded was due to the need to make the CRs and BRs as comparable with the boundary of the VR as possible (to facilitate directly equivalent exercises later on in the research). This issue underlines why, earlier in this chapter, the limited boundary of Falkirk contained within the VR and census was stressed. As a result of these exclusions of non-burgh communicants in churches, the raw numbers to be used in the analyses of the churches were reduced. The advantage of this process, however, was to streamline the CRs and BRs to be much more consistent with the VR. All the same, most people who worshipped in the Falkirk churches were from the immediate area.

Another important element to streamlining the CRs with the VRs was to use the CRs in a way that would measure only head householders because that was what the VR evaluated. By contrast, the BRs did not need to be handled in this way because they already, by virtue of what they were, measured head householders. Admittedly, the BRs measured only male head householders and so were not unequivocally comparable with the VRs, but they were already largely comparable because most VR householders were male. When it came to the CRs, identifying only head householders was



unproblematic when the head householders themselves were found in the church and linked to the VR or census databases. However, for various reasons the head householder was not always at church and so not recorded in the CR. For this reason it was important to check the census database to find out if someone listed on a CR was connected to or *representative* of a household on the VR. For example, Marion Glegg from the Grahamston area was listed on the East U.P. Church CR, but the only Glegg on the VR was Alex Glegg, an ironturner from Grahamston. A look at the census showed that he was indeed married to somebody called Marion. Therefore, the VR household of Alex Glegg was linked to the East Church because his wife was a member. The aim was to have one count for each household in the church as this provided reliability with the VR. In the cases where the head householder was absent from the CR, the household was attributed with the occupation of the family representative *if one existed* or with that of the head householder if no occupation could be attributed to the family representative in the church. The same principle of having a non-head householder representing the household of an absent or non-attending head householder applied to all family members in churches, but did not apply to servants or apprentices, who were categorised according to their own occupation. The principle also did not extend to lodgers found in the CRs who were recognised by their own occupational description because they were not directly representative of the social status of the head householder. Some family members also may not have been representative of the head householder, especially in the case of younger sons or daughters, but the occupation of a family member in a church was broadly representative of the head householder in the sense that they were connected to the same socio-economic group, which may or may not have been the case with a lodger, for example. The aim of this part of the methodology was to have databases of church CRs that only indexed head householders *or their representatives* from Falkirk and which could be linked to the VR head householders.

A disadvantageous point that applies, in particular, to the Free Church and West Church CRs when linking them to the VR database was that they mostly did not record a married woman's Christian name. If a woman was married, she was likely to have been recorded as, for example, 'Mrs John Smith', rather than, say, 'Christine Smith'. This lack of information about women's names upset the ability to verify households by the wife's name on the census (as had been possible for the Old Parish Church and East U.P. Church records). By contrast, the East U.P. Church roll tended to list women under their own name and made the linking process easier. For example, Hugh Crawford, a labourer from the High Street, was listed on the East Church CR, along with his wife, Liliias. The VR database did indeed contain a Hugh Crawford, labourer, from the High Street. But, in order to verify it was the same individual from the church, the corresponding census entry for that VR householder was looked at to determine whether the Hugh Crawford, labourer, on the VR was married to somebody called Liliias. In finding that this was the case, (in fact it was Lily Ann on the census) he was noted on the VR database as having been a member of the East U.P. Church. In this way, the CRs that did not individualise women on the rolls were inconvenient for the linking process.

Some other problems that arose when linking the church entries to those on the residential VR will now be mentioned: for example, having to account for people who were absent from the family home or who had died. For example, on the East U.P. CR for 1858 to 1869, there was a Jane and William Douguid or 'Duguid' listed. He had been a gardener and they both lived in the town centre area. The surname was not common at all and the sole Jane Douguid listed on the VR was a widow who lived alone in the correct area. On the East U.P. roll it was recorded that her husband, William, had died in 1859, and so would not have appeared on the 1860 VR or 1861 census. Another problem was that some people from the CRs appeared on the census, but not on the VR. For example, on the East U.P. Church CR, Thomas Duncan, a tailor from the High

Street and his wife, Mary Duncan, were listed. But they could not be found on the VR database. A search of the census, however, showed a Thomas Duncan, tailor, living on the High Street, and Mary was the name of his wife. Because they were not found in the VR, they could not be evaluated in terms of their property ownership when it came to later analyses of church householders, but they could at least be included in the study of occupations. What these two points made above indicate, in conjunction with all the other matters raised in this chapter, is that linking three historical sources with each other was not exactly a straightforward exercise. On the contrary, there were various pathways of difficulty that had to be negotiated in order to make the three sources as harmonious with each other as possible, and in the end the goal was achieved, despite the intricacies of the problems.

#### **V) The Comparability of the Valuation Rolls and Church Records**

Another issue that is related to the use of the church records, but is of a different nature, is the matter of the incongruity between what the baptismal registers (BRs), communion rolls (CRs) and valuation rolls (VRs) determine. The process of making the CRs and BRs as efficient with the VRs has already been gone through in terms of the linking process. But, they should be discussed in terms of how directly comparable they are when it comes to later parallel analyses. It has already been stated that no manipulation of the BRs was necessary as they already measured male head householders (although it was necessary to dispense with non-burgh members/adherents as mentioned above so they would be comparable to the geographical boundaries of the VR). All the same, the BRs do not account for female head householders. In that sense, they are not directly comparable with the VR householders, but are *broadly* comparable because most VR householders were male (almost 75% of the residential entries in the 1860 VR were men) and the BRs recorded male head householders. The BRs and VRs are, to a large degree, compatible with each other.

The CRs on the other hand were a bit trickier to negotiate because they did not consist solely of head householders. It was explained above how they were used so that only head householders or their family representatives were considered in the final analysis, precisely to make them compatible with the VRs. What the outcome of how the CRs were used means is that they should be directly comparable with the VR residential database because in their final form, the CRs comprised of male and female head householders (from Falkirk burgh only) which is what the VR measured. The CRs were also made compatible with the VRs to aid later statistical analyses.

The question now turns to the juxtaposition of the church records themselves, in other words, the balance of the BRs with the CRs. Earlier in this section it was pointed out that the data drawn from the churches using CRs as sources comprised only head householders from the area covered by the VR boundary and so could be directly compared with the VR itself. An added benefit of using only data pertaining to head householders from the CRs was that the same process made them more comparable with the BRs than they would have been without this particular application applied, as both eventually measured head householders. A persistent difference, however, was that the BRs showed only male heads of households but the CRs indicated male and female householders; so once again absolute comparability cannot be claimed. Therefore, no direct comparison between the BRs and CRs can be made, again because the CRs included women head householders. However, because only head householders were extracted from the CRs they are *broadly* comparable with the BRs.

Another important methodological issue to discuss at this point is the matter of the qualitative difference between what the CRs and BRs actually measured if results are compared. The Church of Scotland had only BRs available to use for social composition analysis and it could be argued that they cannot be used for this purpose because they did not record members, but rather are a record of anybody who was merely loosely connected to the church. However, P.L.M. Hillis points out that, in

Scotland, this applies only to the years before 1855. After that date, Scotland introduced the civil registration of births, deaths and marriages.<sup>23</sup> In 1854, Parliament passed an Act ‘to provide for the better registration of births, deaths and marriages in Scotland’. Effectively, the responsibility for recording all baptisms passed from the Church of Scotland to the General Register Office of Scotland which was set up in 1855.<sup>24</sup> This removed the legal obligation to register with the Church of Scotland and parish churches then started to record their own separate baptismal registers for their members.<sup>25</sup> In this sense, Hillis argues that the BRs after 1855 are a guide to church social composition, although they still under-account for women.<sup>26</sup>

From the stance provided by Hillis, then, the BR results are broadly comparable with the CR results. Furthermore, if those parishioners who were not committed to the Established Church continued to have their children baptised there out of custom then it would be expected that some of those members of the non-established churches would have appeared on the BRs of the Old Parish Church in Falkirk, but that was not the case. The only occasions where the same people appeared in both the Church of Scotland BRs and the CRs of the other churches was when the people involved had actually moved churches altogether and this was normally recorded in the CR of the non-established church. For example, James Halley, a bricklayer, was the only person of such a description on the entire 1860 VR and he appeared in the 1861 BR for Falkirk Old Parish; however, he also appeared on the East U.P. Church CR but not until 1868 and it was clearly marked that he had come from the Parish Church. It would seem, then, that in Falkirk, Hillis’ later understanding of the BRs post-1855 being a guide to church social composition is justified. However, there is also the belief amongst some historians that many people, particularly working-class people, may have had their

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<sup>23</sup> P.L.M. Hillis, *The Barony of Glasgow: Window on to Church and People in Nineteenth-Century Scotland* (Edinburgh, 2007), p.7.

<sup>24</sup> General Register Office for Scotland, online: <http://www.gro-scotland.gov.uk/aboutgros/histgros/index.html> (Accessed, 25/11/12).

<sup>25</sup> Hillis, *Barony*, p.7.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, p.7.

children baptised purely out of custom. This notion is, all the same, rather speculative and is normally linked to the idea that the working classes were not interested in institutional religion, but expressed more of a 'folk' religion, using the church for important ceremonies. But, broad generalisations like this about the working classes attitude towards religion are part of a much bigger historical and theological narrative that there is not space here to deal with in full. It is suffice to say, for the purposes of this thesis, rather than assume working-class people only took their children to be baptised out of custom (thereby artificially enhancing numbers on baptismal registers) that it is more reasonable to agree with Hillis' more tangible take on the issue: that post-1855 baptismal registers were a reasonable guide to church composition because of the changes to the registration procedures discussed above.

There are, nevertheless, some other points that should be mentioned in relation to the comparability of BRs and CRs. Despite them being broadly comparable as per Hillis' deduction above, there are more subtle reasons as to why they are not entirely comparable. The main point is it can be argued that working-class church members were less likely than middle-class members to have taken part in a communion service. This situation arose essentially from the strict criterion that was applied to those admitted to communion. In his study of Aberdeen churches, A.A. MacLaren drew attention to what he interpreted as the churches unfair emphasis upon the behaviours of the working classes when compared to middle-class members. MacLaren claims that there was a 'marked reluctance' to take disciplinary action against people with higher social status living in respectable areas; however, middle-class members were dealt with severely for matters related to financial impropriety. For these reasons, MacLaren claims that church membership for the Victorian businessman was a mark of respectability in relation to financial competency, whereas membership for a working man more likely meant fear of having himself exposed as morally corrupt, leading to

humiliation before the church session.<sup>27</sup> In this sense, then, it is viable to suggest that the communion system may have favoured those of higher socio-economic status resulting in fewer working-class people admitted or actively pursuing admission to the rolls. Nevertheless, C.G. Brown stated that individual Presbyterian churches could differ in who they actually included on the CRs as eligible communicants because of differences in the strictness of criteria used to record people on the rolls between denominations.<sup>28</sup> Therefore, even when people were recorded in a CR it is possible that this did not automatically indicate those of unblemished moral records in the church concerned. The evidence, then, seems rather contradictory and the specific criterion for inclusion on a CR was dependent on the procedures followed within individual church congregations. Despite these issues, the core of CRs and BRs (post-1855) measured church members, but there are some obvious qualifications to be borne in mind when considering the statistics. Unfortunately, these qualifications cannot be identified within individual CRs and BRs without painstaking work which is beyond the scope of this essay.

## **VI) Creating the 1860 Valuation Roll Hierarchy**

When the collection, input and rationalisation of data had been completed and the workable databases had all been linked to each other, before the actual analysis of the data could start, the foundations of the enquiry had firstly to be set. A framework of 'benchmarks' had to be devised on which to base the analysis. This framework came down to constructing a scheme whereby the VR rental valuations attributed to each householder on the database could be categorised in a meaningful way. The general interest of the research was to devise a way of measuring relative poverty and wealth which could then be applied to the churches. Measures of the relative social position of

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<sup>27</sup> A.A. Maclaren, *Religion and Social Class: the Disruption Years in Aberdeen* (London, 1974), pp.130-131.

<sup>28</sup> Brown, *Religion and Society*, p.43.

one person over another invariably call for some kind of hierarchical system which of itself involves defining divisions within the hierarchy. But how were the divisions to be made that would indicate relative social position when it came to rental valuations? It became necessary, therefore, at a basic level, to define at what rental valuation a householder would have been considered poor and what would have been considered rich. In effect, what had to be looked for were the markers from the nineteenth century that could be used to assign a social status quality to rental valuations.

What the VR hierarchy is *not* is a tool to measure social ‘class’ when understood in the three conventional categories of ‘working’, ‘middle’ and ‘upper’ class. That was not the aim of the design. However, it is inevitable that, due to the construction of society and the inherent inequalities of wealth, most manual, working-class people fell into the lower levels and non-manual professionals, merchants and the like fell into the higher levels. Part of the aim of this study is to contradict neat assumptions that have previously been accepted about nineteenth-century people and social groups when occupation is relied upon as an indicator of social position. In later chapters the discussion will turn to the lack of complete dependability when it comes to pre-judging the social status of nineteenth-century people on the basis of their occupation alone. In this sense, the VR hierarchy measures the relative status of each individual in relation to others in the town without deliberately attempting to correlate the ‘levels’ with traditional, nineteenth-century social class distinctions. However, it is true to say that as a very general rule, the lower levels of property valuations would have contained a majority of working-class householders whereas the upper levels would have depicted non-manual, therefore, middle or upper class individuals. Nevertheless, it should be stressed that the formation of the analysis was not to categorise according to pre-defined assumptions about social ‘class’, but rather to reveal the contradictions in attempting such a categorisation based on occupation.



There were two aspects to discovering the markers of social status necessary to devise the VR hierarchical divisions: already existing legal/political indicators *and* what the VRs themselves revealed when they began to be arranged in ranked form.

Eventually these two aspects would merge to form the structure of the VR hierarchy.

Before the aids to constructing the levels are mentioned, the VR hierarchy for 1860 is presented below in Table 2:1 to aid the discussion.

**Table 2:1 Valuation Hierarchy, 1860 (simple form)**

VALUATION HIERARCHY	FALKIRK 1860
LEVEL	RENTAL VALUE P.A.
1 - Very well-off	£18 and above
2 - Well-off	£9 to under £18
3 - Comfortable	£5 to under £9
4 - Poor	£2 to under £5
5 - Very poor	Under £2

As can be seen from Table 2:1, a hierarchy comprising 5 ‘levels’ of property valuation bands was devised. Beginning with the lowest, Level 5, this was set at properties valued at under £2 p.a. and represented those considered as ‘very poor’. Level 4 ranged from £2 p.a. and above to under £5 p.a. and symbolised those who were just ‘poor’. It is a feature even of modern society that official exemptions are granted to certain social groups who are considered as being unable to afford properly, for legitimate reasons, certain official payments, for example, students exempted from council tax. Therefore, when it was discovered from the sources that exemptions existed for people living in properties under a certain valuation in 1860 Falkirk this seemed like a logical point at which to base a division on the grading of property valuations. The cut off of £5 p.a. was decided on because of the contents of the 1862 Police and Improvement (Scotland) Act. This bill made provision for those renting properties at ‘under three or five pounds respectively’, to be exempted from paying necessary rates to the burgh police commissioners. No explanation was given in the

source as to the reason for the distinction between three and five pounds, but both were merely exempt.<sup>29</sup> The idea, then, that those in properties valued at less than £5 p.a. were in some respects poorer than others in the burgh was implied by the provisions of this Act of Parliament. Therefore, this sum was decided on for the limit of those who were considered as relatively poor. However, because the distinction between £3 p.a. and £5 p.a. mentioned in the act suggested the possibility of a further distinction below £3 p.a. there seemed to be a need to define who constituted the ‘very poor’ within the range of properties up to £5 p.a. This further distinction in relative poverty was hinted at by the VRs themselves – the existence of ‘official’ paupers. In the 1860 VR there were 4 women all described as ‘paupers’ and 3 of them lived in houses at less than £2 p.a. The fourth’s property was valued precisely at £2 p.a. For this reason, then, it was decided to set a rank for the ‘very poor’, as opposed to the poor, in a bid to measure the severest level of poverty. Moreover, another marker of a distinction between the poor and very poor bands was that no small-time employers existed at under £2 p.a. Although any employers at all existing at the ‘poor’ level may be surprising, in the overall context of the Falkirk traditional trades it was not.<sup>30</sup> But it is notable that no employers existed at all under £2 p.a., therefore, this observation was taken as another indicator that Level 5 marked out the ‘very poor’ from the poor. An advantage of using the VR itself to discover the measures of poverty was that it ensured that the assessment was as reflective as possible of Falkirk’s own local situation. The measurement of the poor and very poor of Falkirk VR householders was decided on through a mixture of official legislation determining exemptions for a certain section of the population and what the VR itself seemed to indicate about Falkirk’s own local condition.

The same use of official and local markers was extended to identifying and separating out those householders who were not poor but who also were not prosperous,

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<sup>29</sup> Police and Improvement Scotland Act (1862), Online Parliamentary Papers: <http://parlipapers.chadwyck.co.uk/> (Accessed 15/08/11)

<sup>30</sup> See Chapter 6: Section III, Table 6.5 for an explanation of this point in context.

in other words, ‘comfortable’ householders. The valuation level of these householders was set from £5 p.a. to under £9 p.a. In order to discern the cut-off point between these householders and the more prosperous above them, another official marker was used as a guide in the form of the legislation relating to the 1832 Reform Act. The passing of this act had meant that by 1860, the franchise had been extended to all £10 householders in Scottish burghs. This act of Parliament enfranchised many of the new, urban middle classes in Scotland.<sup>31</sup> Furthermore, the £10 benchmark was also the qualification needed to vote as a ‘householder’ for those in a given town when it came to electing commissioners if intending to adopt the Police and Improvement Scotland Act of 1862 within a burgh.<sup>32</sup> Therefore, the sum of £10 was a very strong benchmark from which to establish a financially secure body of people. However, a top valuation of just under £9 p.a. was eventually decided on (rather than under £10) to reflect those in a relatively ‘comfortable’ grade because of what the VRs indicated. This indicator was that the band of properties contained from £9 p.a. and above to under £10 p.a. seemed to contain a very high proportion of employers when compared with lower bands. Between £9 p.a. to under £10 p.a., 60.5% of householders were employers compared with just 29% employers of households between £8 p.a. to under £9 p.a. and 16% of employer households between £7 p.a. to under £8 p.a. A valuation of £9 p.a. and above, then, appeared to have been a marker of very notable small employer representation. For this reason the ‘comfortable’ level was set from £5 p.a. to under £9 p.a. The ‘well-off’ category of Level 2 was settled on from £9 p.a. to represent this more prominent proportion of employers, and would have included all the enfranchised members of the burgh population. The sum of £18 p.a., and above was decided on as the start of Level 1 because it was at this valuation that the occupations of the householders became decidedly more mercantile and professional (in the sense of the professions: doctors,

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<sup>31</sup> G.S. Pryde, *Central and Local Government in Scotland since 1707* (Historical Association, 1960), p.13.

<sup>32</sup> Police and Improvement Scotland Act (1862), Online Parliamentary Papers: <http://parlipapers.chadwyck.co.uk/>

solicitors and so on). Therefore, Level 1 was set at the point where the shift in balance of the occupations appears to have moved towards those who were not reliant on manual work of any sort. Although this does not mean that no manual tradesmen or craftsmen existed at Level 1, it is merely an indication of the main transitional point towards non-manual professions and larger-scale commercial activities. The higher levels of 1, 2 and 3, then, were set, like the poorer levels, because of the nature of the relevant legislative markers and localised findings from what the VR itself implied about property valuations.

## **VII) The 1890 Valuation Roll Hierarchy**

In deciding what the levels should have been in the 1890 VR hierarchy, the same notion of using legislative markers and the VRs themselves was applied. The hierarchy itself is presented below in Table 2:2 and its formation will be discussed.

**Table 2:2 Valuation Hierarchy, 1890 (simple form)**

<b>VALUATION HIERARCHY</b>	
<b>FALKIRK 1890</b>	
<b>LEVEL</b>	<b>RENTAL VALUE P.A.</b>
<b>1 Very Well-off</b>	£30 and above
<b>2 Well-off</b>	£16 to under £30
<b>3 Comfortable</b>	£8 to under £16
<b>4 Poor</b>	£4 to under £8
<b>5 Very poor</b>	Under £4

The first issue that had to be considered when it came to devising the 1890 VR divisions was the matter of needing to create as much comparability as possible between the levels of 1860 and 1890 so that they could subsequently be compared. However, it became clear when working with the 1890 VR that property values had generally increased. This observation was in fact a feature of these later nineteenth-century years at a national level. For example, in a detailed study of the standard of living of skilled craftsmen in Stourbridge, Eric Hopkins indicates that house rentals increased during the period from the late 1840s to the late 1870s. In 1848, the lowest level housing in the

worst streets was 2s. 6d. per week, but by 1877 rents had increased by 25% and most people were paying 4s. a week. This increase was not surprising because of the prosperity boom of the mid-1870s. Furthermore, by as late as 1901 the average rent was still 4s. per week, although there was a lot of variation.<sup>33</sup> The base level of rents, then, had by the late nineteenth century increased in some other places and this was also the situation in Falkirk. Accounting for this jump in essential rental values was key to creating comparability between the hierarchies of 1860 and 1890.

In terms of establishing the levels themselves, as for the 1860 era, exemptions were also applied to poorer households in the 1890s. In the 1892 Burgh Police and Health (Scotland) bill, occupiers of properties valued at less than £4 p.a. were exempted from paying the required burgh assessments when calculated from the VRs.<sup>34</sup> In this sense, the exemption was clearer than that for 1860 as it involved just one marker of less than £4 p.a.; therefore, all properties valued at under £4 p.a. were considered as 'very poor'. Furthermore, 'paupers' had all but disappeared by 1890 (at least on the VR) and only one existed; therefore, the valuations of paupers could not be used to discern 'very poor'. Nevertheless, a consistency with the very poor grade of 1860 was in the complete absence of small employers at under £4 p.a. Although only two employers existed between the values of £4 to £5 p.a., it was still an indication of an element of improved social status above £4 p.a. Therefore, the exemption and the absence of employers signified 'very poor', as had applied to the 1860 hierarchy. In terms of Level 4, it was set, as for 1860, to define those who fell between the very poor and the more comfortable members of the burgh. It became evident from the 1890 VR database that a valuation from £8 p.a. and above marked out a distinctive hike in the proportion of employers than had existed from £4 p.a. and above to under £8 p.a. Just 1% of householders were employers within the entire range of households from £4 p.a.

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<sup>33</sup> E. Hopkins, 'Small Town Aristocrats of Labour and Their Standard of Living, 1840-1914', *Economic History Review*, New Series, Vol. 28, 2 (May 1975), pp.224-225.

<sup>34</sup> Burgh Police and Health (Scotland) Act (1892), Online House of Commons Parliamentary Papers: <http://parlipapers.chadwyck.co.uk/> (Accessed, 13/12/11).

to under £8 p.a; however, of households contained only within the range of £8 p.a., 6% were employers. A property valuation of £8 p.a. and above, then, appeared to mark out an element of society that was starting to encompass a larger number and proportion of employer. For this reason, the 'poor' level was set from £4 p.a. and above to under £8 p.a. The 'comfortable' Level 3 was set from £8 p.a. to under £16 p.a. because from £16 and above, an even higher proportion of employers were included. In terms of the 1890 Level 2 grade, it followed the same principle for 1860 in that the split between it and Level 1 signified the point where most householders were from the professions or large-scale merchants, which occurred at the value of £30 p.a. and above. Level 2, then, indicated a much higher proportion of employer householders than Level 3, but was still largely characterised by mainly manual trades and crafts, unlike the majority of Level 1. By apportioning, as much as possible, the same discriminatory factors to both VR hierarchies when judging what each 'level' should be the aim was to enable as much comparability as possible between the two points in time.

Comparability and reliability have been two major concerns of the methodology used in the related elements of this study. It is believed that by applying the same principles and legislative markers to both the 1860 and 1890 valuation hierarchies a high level of association was achieved in the representation of each 'level'. Although these two separate tools of analysis are formed of the same methodologies and rules, the two cannot be said to be 100% comparable with each other because, whatever the case, they are essentially social constructions, like many other tools of social research. Nevertheless, it can be claimed that, in general, they are broadly equivalent to each other and can, therefore, be compared.

## **VIII) Conclusion**

This chapter has set out the methodological approach to forming the foundation of a wide-ranging and comparative analysis of Falkirk society and churchgoing between

the years of 1860 and 1890. The main crux of the systematic basis of the research is an amalgamation of three main sources of historical data: the VRs, the censuses and church registers and rolls. The VRs remained the fundamental analytical tool and could, ultimately, have been used alone as a way of measuring social status in the nineteenth century, but the scope of this study was to extend a general social analysis into the churches; therefore, connecting the VRs to the church records was essential. However, for the church records to have been linked successfully to the VR, the census was crucial in providing a good check of locational and other household data, as well as filling in occupational information when it had been missing from the VRs. The end result was the creation of rationalised databases that essentially functioned as indexes to Falkirk burgh and church head householders, and that represented the vast bulk of the immediate town population. The databases themselves, in conjunction with legislative ‘markers’ of the era, were then used to complete the essential tools of analysis by devising the measure of categorising the householders according to social status when associated with property valuations. This assessment was carried out in the form of the creation of VR ‘hierarchies’ of property values. These were designed to be as comparable with each other as possible and this equivalency was achieved by ensuring as much consistency as possible in how each ‘level’ was determined between the hierarchies. The methodological approach tried to maintain reliability throughout and the discussion of the outcomes of the results of the analyses will highlight the overall success of the investigative scheme.

## CHAPTER 3

### Late Nineteenth-Century Falkirk: Industry and Churches

This chapter will consider the social, industrial and ecclesiastical background of Falkirk in the later nineteenth century. One major reason for choosing Falkirk for this study was the practicalities of needing an area that had a heavy-industrial heritage and that was not too extensive in terms of population. Falkirk provided for both requirements. Despite its relative small size in relation to major cities like Glasgow, the town of Falkirk did experience the transition from a traditional market town to a heavy industrialised economy which was a feature of most large cities in the nineteenth century and which was necessary for a full study of working-class churchgoing. Falkirk was the ‘cradle’ of the industrial revolution in Scotland by way of a royal charter that was bestowed on the first ironworks at Carron in 1760.<sup>1</sup> However, this heavy industry was not initially established in the town itself, and Falkirk remained in essence a small market economy and society until the later nineteenth century. However, when the transition did occur, it was profound. The historian W.W. Knox referred to the move from agriculture and traditional working-class employments to heavy industrial production as a ‘revolution’ in employment structure.<sup>2</sup> Falkirk’s transformation into an industrial economy is central to this study because the main body of primary research (chapters 4 to 9) is concerned with linking this wider history to the composition of the churches.

Another advantage to using Falkirk as a case study was that the town had a manageable population in terms of the source material that was needed. The major primary sources used were the valuation rolls (VRs) for Falkirk. For the years 1860 and

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<sup>1</sup> P. Sissons, *The Social Significance of Church Membership in the Burgh of Falkirk* (Edinburgh, 1973), p.5.

<sup>2</sup> W.W. Knox *A History of the Scottish People* (Chapter 2) ‘Patterns of Employment in Scotland:1840-1940’, SCRAN online at: [http://www.scran.ac.uk/scotland/pdf/SP2\\_2Employment.pdf](http://www.scran.ac.uk/scotland/pdf/SP2_2Employment.pdf). (Accessed: 5/08/11), pp.1-2.



1890 the VRs were manageable in size for an independent, small-scale study such as this. For Glasgow, by contrast, in 1900 there were 900 survey books each year from which the VRs were then compiled.<sup>3</sup> Glasgow's 1861 VR alone was made up of 12 volumes; for 1881 there were 14 volumes; and for 1911, 45 volumes.<sup>4</sup> Falkirk had just the one volume each for 1860 and 1890, and so was an ideal focus for a study that had to be manageable and contained the relevant constituent elements of industrial and ecclesiastical history.

The major purpose of this chapter is to put the industrial expansion of Falkirk in the context of its history as a small market town. Falkirk's development and essential nature as a market town will be discussed to underline the prominence of the old crafts and trades of the burgh despite the rapid rise of the iron factories in the mid nineteenth century. In this sense, Falkirk was similar to Sheffield, the object of study used by Wickham in his study of churchgoing in an industrialised context. Despite the progression of large-scale industry, Wickham recognised how the early nineteenth-century 'character' of Sheffield had been shaped by its 'typical trades' of artisan cutler work, established centuries before.<sup>5</sup> The emphasis on Falkirk being a former market town is fundamental because the distinction between those in the population who worked in trades related to pre-heavy industrialised Falkirk and those who worked in the much newer iron foundries is a central point of this thesis. It is important to the purpose because a major question is to enquire if there was a difference in how those from the 'traditional' trades and those working in the iron factories were represented in the churches. In this sense, the term 'traditional' is used to symbolise all those trades not related to large-scale iron foundry work but which had roots in older trades and occupations. The main reason for quite an involved sketch of how Falkirk had

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<sup>3</sup> N. Morgan, 'The Glasgow Valuation Rolls Database: Sources and Strategies', in E.Mawdsley et al (eds.) *History and Computing, Vol. III: Historians, Computers and Data* (Manchester, 1990), p.176.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid*, p.176.

<sup>5</sup> E.R. Wickham *Church and People in an Industrial City* (London, 1957), p.23.

developed until the nineteenth century is to underline a simple but crucial point about the place – that it was not always an industrialised town. This point is essential to appreciating the distinction between the pre-industrialised and the industrialised Falkirk that is central to interpreting later chapters.

Finally, this chapter includes a brief background to the churches that form the basis of the subsequent analyses and will be discussed as an initial step to put the later studies into some perspective. The late nineteenth-century Presbyterian churches all had distinctive histories and affiliations to certain social ‘classes’ and types of people. Therefore, the general ‘character’ of the churches studied will be examined.

#### **D) Falkirk: Social and Civil Development**

In the *Statistical Account* of 1797, James Wilson described Falkirk as situated halfway between Edinburgh and Glasgow. To the east lay the Firth of Forth and the Parish of Polmont. To the south were situated Polmont and Slamannan. Cumbernauld and Denny were on its west side and the River Carron separated it from Larbert and Dunipace to the north. The population of the entire Falkirk parish was around 8,020 and in the town it was 3,892. The adjacent newly developing villages of Camelon and Bainsford had populations of 568 and 758 respectively.<sup>6</sup> The town itself had originated from an old Roman fort which, in the eleventh century, was colonised by Celts who had adopted the Christian religion brought into the region by St Modan in the sixth century. These Christians built a church called ‘Eglais Breac’ which became anglicised to ‘Faw Kirk’ in the thirteenth century and became the name of the town.<sup>7</sup> From the twelfth to the mid eighteenth century, the ‘Faw Kirk’ was owned by the Levings (later to become Livingstones), an old Saxon family who had become the Lords of Kalynter (Callander) district and resided in the Castle of Kalynter, which was about a mile from the church.

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<sup>6</sup> J. Wilson, ‘The Old Statistical Account: the Parish of Falkirk’, reproduced in *Calatria*, 4 (1993), pp.97,99.

<sup>7</sup> L. Lawson, *A History of Falkirk* (Falkirk, 1975) p.15.

The 'Faw Kirk' was at this time included in the diocese of St Andrews. During the Reformation in the sixteenth century, the 'Faw Kirk' and surrounding area became a Barony and was separated from the See of St Andrews. In the very early seventeenth century, Falkirk was a head Burgh of Barony with trading rights, a High Street and a market cross where farmers and crofters sold their produce.<sup>8</sup> In 1646, Falkirk was made a Burgh of Regality with its own Tolbooth and rights to imprison criminals.<sup>9</sup> In 1715, the Earl of Callander lost his estates because he supported the Jacobite Rebellion. The York Building Company then bought Callander and its lands, however, the company ran into debt and the estates passed into the hands of a rich merchant, William Forbes, in 1783. Forbes was apparently more interested in the new techniques of agricultural improvement than dealing with the affairs of the town, which at that time was governed by a body of Stentmasters and Feuars.<sup>10</sup>

The Stentmasters dealt with the accounts of the town and were responsible for overseeing the water supply. The Feuars were landowners who collected customs, market dues and rents. In 1777, there were twenty-eight Stentmasters who were elected by local craftsmen including fleshers, bakers, wrights, whipmen, tailors, shoemakers, hammermen, weavers, maltmen, brewers and local merchants. Craftsmen were of a high status at this time as only burgesses could become craft members and produce and sell goods at market. Each craft was strictly regulated and vetted to ensure that work remained of the highest standard.<sup>11</sup> In a recent exhibition at Callander House in Falkirk, a wall plaque listed the trades of the mid-eighteenth-century Stentmasters, showing the strength of the various trades which comprised four merchants, two weavers, two tailors, two hammermen, two shoemakers, two bakers, two wrights, two masons, two brewers, two whipmen and two fleshers. In the mid eighteenth century, then, high

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<sup>8</sup> J. Stewart, *Falkirk: Its Origin and Growth* (Falkirk, 1940) pp.17-31, 38-43.

<sup>9</sup> Lawson, *History of Falkirk*, p.50.

<sup>10</sup> Stewart, *Origin and Growth*, pp.74, 100-102.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.49-51, 103.

status craftsmen and tradesmen, who in turn had been elected by those of a similar social status and occupational group, governed Falkirk at the local level. This brings to mind Wickham's Sheffield where the leading townsmen had been craftsmen. In 1624, an Act of Incorporation was passed by Parliament to protect the Sheffield cutlers from disreputable iron sellers or employers who exploited the apprenticeship system, leading to an excess of under-skilled journeymen.<sup>12</sup> As in Sheffield, Falkirk had a history of local government overseen by the foremost craftsmen and merchants of the day.

The dominant forces in eighteenth-century Falkirk were the Kirk, the local gentry at Callander House and the Feuars and Stentmasters. However, under the 1832 Reform Act, Falkirk became a parliamentary burgh then, under the 1833 Burgh Reform Act, Falkirk was given a municipal constitution. Under this new constitution, a provost, three bailies, a treasurer and seven councillors were elected by £10 householders. These new forms of government had little authority until the Police and Improvement Act was passed in 1859, which eliminated the power of the Stentmasters and Feuars and transferred power to the magistrates and councillors.<sup>13</sup> In the election of the Town Council in 1838, the successful candidates comprised a brewer, farmer, banker, two merchants, a portioner, draper, wood merchant, grain merchant, mason, foundry foreman and watchmaker.<sup>14</sup> The Town Council in 1838 still seemed to comprise mainly trades and craftsmen with the exceptions of the foundry foreman and the banker (the two latter inclusions being a sign of the change in the economy that was to come). Even with the coming of the Town Council and structural change, the most superior trades and craftsmen continued to play prominent roles within Falkirk society well into the nineteenth century at least.

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<sup>12</sup> Wickham, *Church and People*, p.24.

<sup>13</sup> W.S. Leslie, 'Burgh and Parish of Falkirk', in Rennie, R.C. and Gordon, T.C.(eds.) *The Third Statistical Account of Scotland*, County of Stirling; County of Clackmannan, Vol. 18 (Glasgow, 1966), p.318.

<sup>14</sup> Stewart, *Origin and Growth*, p.125.

In the earlier part of the nineteenth century, Falkirk town was in need of structural repair. Basic services like street lighting and sewage were in a bad state.<sup>15</sup> The *Falkirk Herald*, established in 1845, began to campaign for reform. The water supply was said to be contaminated by coal from a leaking iron pipe, the sewers were blocked and there was a danger of cholera spreading. There was a mortality rate of 87 per 1000.<sup>16</sup> A prominent campaigner for reform was Lewis Hay Irving, the minister of the Free Church. As one of Falkirk's most influential citizens, he criticised the town managers and the unhealthy conditions. As chairman of the Sanitary Committee of the Parochial Board, he helped to pass the 1859 improvement bill.<sup>17</sup> By the 1890s, the Feuars had also lost power and their land and town hall were transferred to the council. A new water supply was obtained from Denny in 1891, sewage was piped underground and the roads were cleaned and surfaced.<sup>18</sup> New public buildings were also erected, such as the Sheriff Court House, which highlighted the increasing prosperity of the town.<sup>19</sup> In common with many other Scottish towns, Falkirk saw significant civil and structural improvements during the later nineteenth century.

Falkirk also changed socially at this point in time. In the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, the merchant classes or 'nouveaux riches' started to build villas on the fringes of the town.<sup>20</sup> As the population grew, others such as lawyers, bankers, brewers and ironmasters moved out of the centre to new villas in places like Arnothill and Meeks Road.<sup>21</sup> In addition, the rising wealth of some had necessitated the development of a service sector alongside the burgeoning industrial economy. Falkirk became a service centre providing banking, carriage repairs and insurance broking services, among others. There was an increase in more specialist shops and a decrease

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<sup>15</sup> I. Scott *The Life and Times of Falkirk* (Edinburgh, 1994), p.92.

<sup>16</sup> D. Elliot, *Falkirk: A History and Celebration*, (Salisbury, 2005), p58.

<sup>17</sup> Scott, *Life and Times*, pp.98-100.

<sup>18</sup> Elliot, *Celebration*, p.59.

<sup>19</sup> Scott, *Life and Times*, p.120.

<sup>20</sup> M. Barke 'Some Processes and Patterns of Urban Change: the Case of Falkirk, 1800-1961', Vol. 1, Unpublished PhD thesis, University of Glasgow (1973), p.34.

<sup>21</sup> Scott, *Life and Times*, p.120.

in those selling foodstuffs.<sup>22</sup> The on-going process of enclosure that Forbes had begun in the 1830s added to the population of the town, as did the importation of cheap American grain via the railway, which reduced the price of native corn, creating numerous landless labourers and many had to turn to the poorhouse.<sup>23</sup> Other social structural changes occurred. For example, M. Barke found that, in 1851, a part of the north side of the High Street included both working-class families in single rooms and middle-class tradesmen in larger properties. On the other hand, the Back Row (later re-named Manor Street), was ‘full of lodging houses kept by Irishmen, many of whom were employed as scavengers’.<sup>24</sup> In 1851, 31% of the residents in the Back Row were Irish-born. As time progressed, the High Street was to see a lowering of socio-economic status as de-population occurred due to commercial demands for business sites. The Back Row was eventually re-developed but not until the early twentieth century. Falkirk, then, by the later nineteenth century had seen mixed blessings of increased prosperity for some but hard times for others.

## **II) The Character of Falkirk and the Traditional Trades of the Town**

In identifying ‘pre-industrial’ Falkirk, the situation is complicated by the fact that as nearby areas were significantly affected by industry the town itself took on a completely different form of growth. In many of the local histories and popular perceptions of Falkirk’s industrial evolution the foundation of Carron Ironworks in 1759 is given as the beginning of Falkirk’s transformation into an industrial economy, as well as the start of the industrial revolution in Scotland. The subsequent building of the Forth and Clyde canal in 1768 led to an influx of workers, mainly ‘navvies’ from the Highlands and Ireland, with the implication that Falkirk had been profoundly affected by the Carron Ironworks. Statements from local history books such as, ‘In 1759 the

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<sup>22</sup> Barke, *Processes*, p.170.

<sup>23</sup> Lawson, *History of Falkirk*, pp.97-98, 101.

<sup>24</sup> Memoirs of David Ronald, Falkirk’s first Burgh Engineer, quoted in Barke, *Processes*, p.249.

establishment of Carron Company was to cause a chain reaction which resulted in Falkirk becoming “The iron town of Scotland”, have only served to portray urban Falkirk as heavily industrialised shortly after the Carron Ironworks were established.<sup>25</sup> This process, however, has to be considered a little more carefully. The above scenario may well be true for mid to late nineteenth-century Falkirk town, but did not apply to the centre before that, which saw only very slow growth until the early years of the nineteenth century.<sup>26</sup> As Carron developed its industry, Falkirk remained in essence a small town, which worked to supply its agricultural surroundings.<sup>27</sup> In 1832, a report by the Commissioners appointed to settle and describe the boundaries of Scottish towns described Falkirk in the following way:

Falkirk consists of one long street, extending above half a mile...Narrow and confined streets branch off on each side, and one, about a mile in length, stretches towards Carron. The suburbs of Grahamston and Bainsford form portions of this Street. These suburbs owe their rise in the canal passing through them, and their being on the road to the great iron works of Carron...The only manufacture in Falkirk appears to be leather, and that of no considerable extent. The prosperity of the town depends chiefly on its being the market for supplying a considerable and very populous district, and on the Trysts or Cattle Fairs, the greatest in Scotland.<sup>28</sup>

This quotation illuminates two other factors that were creating growth and prosperity for the wider Falkirk area alongside the ironworks – the Forth and Clyde Canal and the Falkirk Trysts. Falkirk parish as a whole was an important agricultural centre and the

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<sup>25</sup> M. Scott and T. Astbury, *Falkirk's Yesterdays* (Falkirk, 1986), p.4.

<sup>26</sup> M. Barke, ‘The Changing Urban Fringe of Falkirk’, *Scottish Geographical Magazine*, 90:2 (no place, 2008), p.87. <http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/pdf/10.1080/00369227408736277> (Accessed, 17/11/12).

<sup>27</sup> See Introduction to Chapter 2 for discussion of Falkirk and its boundaries in relation to this study.

<sup>28</sup> Report of Commissioners (1832), quoted in Scott and Astbury, *Yesterdays*, p.4.

trysts were crucial to this role as they sold ‘black cattle, principally for the English markets to a very great amount, and also sheep and horses...’<sup>29</sup> In terms of the canal, when work began on it in 1768, about 1,000 men were employed including both skilled masons and unskilled or Irish ‘navvies’. Small workshops, timber yards, warehouses and coal stores were erected from the new village of Grangemouth in the east to Camelon and Bonnybridge in the west.<sup>30</sup> From 1822 until the railway came in the 1840s, the canal was at its peak. Not only were goods and raw materials transported back and forth but also fastboats pulled by horses took passengers on comfortable rides to Glasgow. By 1866, steam-driven craft were a regular sight. The prosperity of the canal was linked to the Carron Ironworks, which had its own wharf. Iron ore came from the West and finished goods were taken away. Other foundries and factories dependent on waterpower were drawn to the canal.<sup>31</sup> By the 1880s, the canal was eclipsed by the railway and very few industries remained on the canal side.<sup>32</sup> Not only were the ironworks slow to have an impact on Falkirk town itself but agriculture was crucial to its surrounding localities, as was the rise of the transport and communication industries.

Falkirk town was traditionally a retail and manufacturing centre with most manufacturers making and selling goods on the same premises. In mid eighteenth-century Falkirk, the only industries that existed were in cottage spinning, weaving and bleaching and some trades like small-scale tanneries and smithies. There were also many other occupations, for example tinsmiths, saddlers, tailors, masons, shoemakers, hatters and carpenters, but none of these made for a significant labour force.<sup>33</sup> The occupations of the Stentmasters listed above indicated the types of traditional employments that were carried on in the burgh: shoemaking, independent

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<sup>29</sup> Scott and Astbury, *Yesterdays*, p.4.

<sup>30</sup> Scott, *Life and Times*, pp.80-82

<sup>31</sup> Stewart, *Origin and Growth*, pp.130-133.

<sup>32</sup> Lawson, *History of Falkirk*, p.102.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.92-93.



blacksmithing, and so on. Outside the burgh, people were engaged in agriculture or 'coal-hawking'. Coal was taken from the coal heughs to wharves on the River Carron where it then went on to be used in saltmaking.<sup>34</sup> At the end of the 1820s, there were three saddlers; seven boot and shoemakers; six watch and clockmakers; two brushmakers; four tanneries; a cart and plough manufactory and a soapworks. Only one iron foundry, the Falkirk Iron Company, had been established in the town itself and that not until 1819. The interior structure of Falkirk in 1819 was in 'striking contrast' to that of Carron, which was, in addition, over a mile away and in a completely different parish.<sup>35</sup> According to M. Barke, when large-scale industrialisation did come along, the people of Falkirk viewed the Carron Ironworks as an 'alien intruder' for a long time.<sup>36</sup> Even by 1850, there was no fundamental change to Falkirk's structure and no more than one iron foundry existed.<sup>37</sup> It is important to establish an accurate picture of Falkirk's internal structure at this time, as it is easy to imagine, from some of the secondary literature, that a town glowing with the fires of heavy industrial production had existed for many years before the mid nineteenth century.

### **III) The Development of the Iron Industry**

The development of heavy industry in Scotland was rapid and intensive. From 1760 (the time when the Carron Ironworks was established near Falkirk) until 1788 the amount of iron made in Scotland was less than 1,500 tons per annum. By the year 1796 there were 17 furnaces and 18,640 tons of iron made. By 1836, due to the creation of the hot-blast furnace, 75,000 tons of iron was produced in that year. Railway construction also increased the demand for iron and new iron stone pits and furnaces were created. From 1835 to 1845, iron production increased by 700 per cent, and by

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<sup>34</sup> Stewart, *Origin and Growth*, p.52.

<sup>35</sup> Barke, 'Processes', pp.96-102.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, p.96.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, p.102.

1865 over a million tons were produced in that year.<sup>38</sup> There was a financial crisis in 1866 which affected the iron trade in Scotland, reducing the yearly tonnage to 994,000. However, the situation did improve again in 1867.<sup>39</sup> In 1869, Scotland had 164 blast furnaces, with each producing around 9,500 tons per year. According to D. Bremner each furnace employed around 200 men and boys who were involved in the production of pig-iron and earned from 2s. to 6s. per day and, wherever they existed, the furnaces provided an important source of income for many families.<sup>40</sup>

In Falkirk, it was not until the mid-1850s that more ironworks were established in the town itself: for example, Abbot's Foundry in 1856. All the same, industrialisation was very rapid, in keeping with the rest of Scotland and, by the 1880s, it can be said with confidence that Falkirk had made the transition from a small, traditional manufacturing town to a heavy-industrialised economy. The economic base of the town was transformed between 1854 to 1877 as thirteen new iron foundries, employing 1,730 people, were established. According to Barke, there were around 3,000 people employed at Carron and if added to the 900 working in the Falkirk Iron Company altogether, in 1877, there would have been over 5,500 people in Falkirk town and surrounding areas involved in the iron industry.<sup>41</sup> At the end of the nineteenth century, four out of every ten men were in the iron industry. In addition, the population of the town almost doubled from around 9,000 in 1851<sup>42</sup> to around 17,312 in 1891.<sup>43</sup> When the iron foundries did multiply and expand, then, they had a profound impact on Falkirk society.

The Carron Ironworks near Falkirk was built on the banks of the River Carron, about a mile from Falkirk town itself, and could easily be reached from Grahamston

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<sup>38</sup> D. Bremner, *The Industries of Scotland: Their Rise, Progress, and Present Condition* (Edinburgh, 1869), p.33.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid*, p.33.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid*, p.34.

<sup>41</sup> Barke, *Processes*, pp.103-4.

<sup>42</sup> Scott, *Life and Times of Falkirk*, pp.117-118.

<sup>43</sup> Leslie, *The Third Statistical Account of Scotland: Burgh and Parish of Falkirk*, p.318.

railway station. The Carron Works had a considerable number of coal, iron and lime mines, some of which were very close to the ironworks. The raw materials were delivered by the railway and the three mile-long canal from the works to Grangemouth. Sixteen canal boats were in use at this time. There were five villages and a 400-acre farm located close to the works, housing many people who relied on the works for their livelihoods. According to Bremner, many of the houses had been built for the workers by the company. By his estimate, in 1869, the Carron Works employed roughly 2,000 men and boys who had secure jobs even in times when there was less demand for the products they made because there was always an accessible store of raw material on hand to fuel the factory. Bremner also claimed that this advantage in secure employment meant that ‘very few’ men left the company and most of the workers were ‘natives of the locality, whose forefathers for three or four generations had worked in the place’. There were also ‘no Irish among them’ and the workers made up ‘an exemplary body of workmen’.<sup>44</sup> In addition, the men were members of ‘benefit societies’ and one of the societies had acquired enough capital to buy a stake in the company and had 700 members, most of whom were ‘heads of families’. Furthermore, Bremner claimed that there was a co-operative shop connected to the works that had existed for forty years before he wrote his piece in 1869. He said it was only ‘recently’ that the company had made any provision for the workmen’s children, by erecting a schoolroom for their education.<sup>45</sup> Bremner seemed to have quite a favourable view of the foundry and the situation of the ironworkers.

At the time Bremner wrote his book, the works were famous for manufacturing domestic items such as stoves, grates, boilers and pots. It had originally been known for the development of the ‘carronade’ gun, but production of this weapon had ceased in

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<sup>44</sup> Bremner, *Industries*, p.47.

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid*, p.47.

1852.<sup>46</sup> According to Bremner, in the late 1860s, despite the ‘great extension’ of the iron trade that had taken place, the Carron Ironworks had not increased to any significant extent. He also said that although ‘improved appliances’ had been introduced, ‘the buildings maintain pretty much their original appearance, allowance being made for the effects produced by the smoke and dust which have swept around them for a century’.<sup>47</sup> The site had been chosen because of the availability of water from the river to drive the machinery. At the time of writing in 1869, Bremner observed that the ‘engine-room is crumbling into ruins, and the iron-work is black and furrowed by oxidation’.<sup>48</sup> However, he painted an almost Romantic picture of the works, saying: ‘But within those ragged-looking and smoke-begrimed structures, processes go on which illustrate some of the grandest developments of human ingenuity.’ And, that ‘as one passes through the place, the roar of furnaces, the clash of machinery, and the clatter of anvils, fall upon the ear from all sides, and...produce a most bewildering effect on persons unaccustomed to such sounds and scenes.’<sup>49</sup> The foundry also had an earlier ‘Romantic’ association connected to the Scottish poet, Robert Burns. In 1787, Burns had rolled up to the Carron works on a Sunday to look around. But, he was refused entry and was so unimpressed with his treatment that he wrote a poem comparing the foundry to Hell:

We cam’ na here to view your warks,  
In hopes to be mair wise,  
But only, lest we gang to hell,  
It may be nae surprise;  
But when we tirl’d at your door,  
Your porter dought na hear us;  
Sae may, should we to hell’s yetts come,  
Your billy Satan sair us!<sup>50</sup>

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<sup>46</sup> Ibid, p.46.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid., p.42.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid, p.43.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid., pp.43-44.

<sup>50</sup> R. Burns, quoted in Ibid., p.42.

The iron foundries, then, could evoke quite dreamy visions and tales for writers of the iron trade as well as famous poets.

Bremner described the processes which were at work in the factory and said that visitors first saw the smelting of iron and then came upon the pattern-shop, which was a large building on three floors. Most of the patterns were made of wood and ‘considerable skill’ was needed to make them. Once made, moulders took an impression of them in sand. The moulding of different objects required varying amounts of skill, for example, the simplicity of an iron heater compared to the complexity of a kettle.<sup>51</sup> When the moulds were ready, molten metal was poured into them and, when cool, the objects passed to the dressing shops where they were smoothed down by the irondressers. If they were in separate pieces, they were taken to the fitting shops where they were assembled. Turners then put a ‘smooth and bright’ surface on the inside of certain objects such as kettles. They were finally tinned and finished with additions, such as handles. Many smiths were involved in making these objects, such as kettle and pot handles from malleable iron.<sup>52</sup> All of these occupations, which represented different processes within the ironworks, required skill, but within each occupation varying levels of skill were needed.

Bremner also provided a helpful description of the career path of an iron moulder, from his start as an apprentice to eventually becoming an experienced iron worker. An apprentice would be taken in as one of the occupational groups just described. If he were, for example, a pot-moulder, he would begin making very small pots and as he grew older, the size of his pots would increase and, as his skill levels improved, the bigger and more complicated his pots would become. This process was one of ‘promotion by seniority’. The wages for moulders were apparently higher than in other departments of the ironworks. For example, Bremner claims that a moulder

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<sup>51</sup> Ibid., p.44.

<sup>52</sup> Ibid, p.45.

could make as much as £3 per week, but the ‘general wage of the class’ was about 25s. per week.<sup>53</sup> In Bremner’s opinion, the moulders were an important and well-paid element in the foundry process.<sup>54</sup> It did appear, though, that moulders could vary quite considerably in terms of skill and wages.

One other important foundry was the Falkirk Ironworks, established in 1819 near to the Carron factory. The company was mainly composed of workers from Carron. In 1848, the company was taken over by the Kennard family and became the second largest foundry in Scotland, next to Carron. This factory employed around 900 men and boys. At the time of writing in 1869, Bremner recorded that the buildings were being extended and at that time took up eight acres of land. The type of products this foundry made included parts of bridges, fountains and inkstands, as well as domestic items such as pots and grates. It also produced items needing very intricate and ‘artistic’ patterns.<sup>55</sup> In addition to the Falkirk Iron Company, in the mid-nineteenth century there were another six foundries, employing in total around 600 men.<sup>56</sup> Moreover, the iron trade generated employment in different ways as there were so many processes involved. Carriers, miners, blast-furnacemen, forgemen, puddlers, rollers, moulders, smiths, enginemen, general labourers and manufacturing craftsmen were all needed as part of the process of making iron goods.<sup>57</sup> The iron trade, then, was extremely important to the economy and lives of ordinary people in Falkirk in the later nineteenth century.

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<sup>53</sup> Ibid., p.46.

<sup>54</sup> Although the findings of this thesis contradict Bremner’s conclusion about the superiority of the moulders: see Chapter 10: Section III, Table 10:7 (although the issue is set in a different context).

<sup>55</sup> Bremner, *Industries*, pp.47-48.

<sup>56</sup> Ibid, p.49.

<sup>57</sup> T.S. Ashton, *Iron and Steel in the Industrial Revolution* (Manchester, 1924), p.186.

#### **IV) The Religious Context of Nineteenth-Century Falkirk**

In the *Statistical Account* of 1797, the minister of Falkirk Parish Church, James Wilson, wrote that in addition to the Parish Church there was ‘one chapel for the Burghers, two for the Antiburghers and one belonging to the Relief interest’. In addition, the parish housed ‘a few of the Episcopal persuasion who have the opportunity of attending divine service every fortnight in Carron. The Roman Catholics are very few in number here and have no place of worship in the neighbourhood.’<sup>58</sup> By the later nineteenth century the situation had changed dramatically with a range of different denominations including Baptist congregations; an Episcopal Church built in 1863; an Evangelical Union Church established in 1845 and a Roman Catholic chapel eventually constructed in 1843. The 1851 Religious Census notes that the three most significantly attended denominations were the established Church of Scotland, the Free Church and the United Presbyterian Church, with attendance rates for the morning of the census of 1081, 915 and 701 respectively.<sup>59</sup> These three Presbyterian churches will be discussed in terms of their development as they form the subject of study in chapters 4 to 9.

At the end of the eighteenth century, Falkirk Old Parish Church was the only established church in the whole parish. The aforementioned minister who contributed to the *Statistical Account*, James Wilson, was said by some writers to have characterised the typical Moderate who dominated the Church of Scotland at the end of the eighteenth century. Wilson was said to have been a rationalist and a scholar influenced by the Enlightenment and against religious ‘enthusiasm’.<sup>60</sup> It does certainly seem from the titles of his published works that spiritual fervour was, perhaps, not his strong point. His works included: *A Sermon for the Benefit of the Public Kitchen* (1800) and *The History of Egypt* (1805) in three volumes. However, he did also publish *Prayers for the*

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<sup>58</sup> Wilson, ‘Old Statistical Account’, p.99.

<sup>59</sup> Census of Religious Worship, 1851, *British Parliamentary Papers*, 11 (London, 1970), p.534.

<sup>60</sup> ‘Old Statistical Account’, p.95.

*Use of Families and Individuals* in 1818.<sup>61</sup> Wilson began restoration of the church in 1810. When completed, the heritors divided the seating in proportion to the value of property-holding. The seating plan was dominated by the Forbes family and Lord Dundas' interests.<sup>62</sup> By the mid nineteenth century, new churches had been built in surrounding areas such as Camelon in 1838 and Grangemouth in 1837 due to an Evangelical campaign to have chapels-of-ease erected in these growing villages.<sup>63</sup> Wilson had tried to oppose the Evangelical campaign to establish chapels-of-ease whilst he was parish minister because he believed they would lead to a dilution of the authority of the church. The Evangelical party in the Church of Scotland, however, were concerned about places like Camelon, Laurieston and Grangemouth being without church and minister. For example, John Brown Patterson, who became minister of Falkirk Old Parish Church in 1830, after Wilson's death in 1829, argued the case in the General Assembly and Melville, Patterson's successor, continued the campaign.<sup>64</sup> The territory of the Old Parish Church was gradually eroded with the building of the new churches; nevertheless, the census figures show that Wilson's fears were unfounded as the Parish Church was still the most populous church in Falkirk in 1851, as people continued to show their loyalty in the years following the Disruption of 1843.<sup>65</sup> All the same, most of those in the Free Church probably did not regret leaving too much. A member of the Established Church who later became a Free Church member wrote that Wilson had been 'a cold, hard preacher – not one who sought to bring sinners to Christ'.<sup>66</sup>

Nevertheless, during the 1850s, the Church of Scotland, in the nation at large, recovered with new leaders like Norman Macleod and John Tulloch reviving home

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<sup>61</sup> H. Scott (ed.) *Fasti Ecclesiae Scoticae*, Synod of Lothian and Tweeddale, Vol. I (Edinburgh, 1915), P.207. Online at: <http://www.dwalker.pwp.blueyonder.co.uk/Map.htm> (Accessed, 30/11/12).

<sup>62</sup> Scott, *Life and Times of Falkirk*, pp.102-104.

<sup>63</sup> I. Scott, 'The Disruption of the Church in 1843 and the Parishes of East Stirlingshire', *Calatria*, 5 (1993), pp.88.

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.83-86.

<sup>65</sup> See Census of Religious Worship figures, Chapter 3, p.67.

<sup>66</sup> J. Roberts, *Short Sketch of the Falkirk Parish Church before and the Falkirk Free Church after the Disruption* (Edinburgh, 1901), p.5.



mission and taking a liberal approach to doctrine rather than the Calvinist approach of many Free Churches.<sup>67</sup> By 1897, church attendance in the Old Parish Church had seemingly improved so much that, ‘Greater difficulty than ever is being experienced in giving accommodation to members of the church. This is not to be wondered at as the communicants number over 1,500 and there are only 1,250 sittings.’<sup>68</sup> The Church of Scotland in Falkirk, then, began only to try actively to provide for the growing population of the nineteenth century after the death of Wilson in 1829. It went from strength to strength thereafter and was still the dominant church of the parish by the end of the century, despite the arrival of the Free Church in 1843 and the diminution of the parish borders.

The Evangelicals and the Moderates in the Church of Scotland clashed in their religious and political opinions. The patronage issue, whereby a heritor selected his own choice of minister, was a major reason for conflict. Patronage had been abolished in 1690 and had been associated with the episcopal system but the British parliament re-introduced it in 1712.<sup>69</sup> The patronage issue resulted in secessions from the Established Church not long after it was re-established. For example, in 1733, four ministers left to form the Secession Church because the church courts had become increasingly supportive of patrons since 1712.<sup>70</sup> When the Evangelicals became the majority party in the General Assembly in 1833, they passed the Veto Act in 1834 which led to the ‘Ten Years’ Conflict’, culminating eventually in the Disruption of 1843. The Veto Act allowed a congregation to oppose the selection of a minister by a patron. The House of Lords at Westminster, however, ruled against the Veto Act which led to the issue of the Claim of Right by the Evangelical party in 1842. This attempt at asserting their

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<sup>67</sup> S.J. Brown, ‘The Ten Years Conflict and the Disruption of 1843’, in S.J. Brown and M. Fry (eds.) *Scotland in the Age of the Disruption* (Edinburgh, 1993), p.24.

<sup>68</sup> ‘Extract’ of Falkirk Parish Church, quoted in L. Lawson *The Church at Falkirk* (Falkirk, 1973), p.91.

<sup>69</sup> C.G. Brown, *Religion and Society in Scotland since 1707* (Edinburgh, 1997), p.18.

<sup>70</sup> *Ibid.*, p.19.

independence from the state was rebuffed by the government and in May 1843, around one third of the ministers in the Church of Scotland and around half the lay people walked out to create the Free Church of Scotland.<sup>71</sup> However, this did not apply to Falkirk Parish Church whose minister, William Begg, stayed in the Established Church.<sup>72</sup> The effect of the Disruption in Falkirk, then, was not as extreme as it had been in other places in Scotland. In Aberdeen, all fifteen establishment ministers left in favour of the Free Church.<sup>73</sup>

From 1829, after the death of James Wilson, Falkirk Church of Scotland had a succession of evangelical ministers, the first being John Brown Patterson in 1830. Patterson's approach to ministry was different from that of Wilson, starting monthly prayer meetings and evening lectures, as well as working to have chapels-of-ease established. Apparently, he was a 'saintly' individual whose only motive was to lead sinners to Christ and he brought new life to the church.<sup>74</sup> Patterson's successor, another evangelical named Melville, died in 1840 and William Begg began his ministry.<sup>75</sup> The fact that Begg was not a Moderate may have had something to do with why only a few left the Old Parish Church in Falkirk, as it has been claimed that the evangelicals made more of an effort to reach the increasing population of working people. An elder who remained in the Old Parish Church said of the Free Church, 'your numbers are not great, but you have the cream of the congregation with you'.<sup>76</sup> The effect of the Disruption in Falkirk, therefore, was not as profound as in some other places, but if 'the cream of the congregation' is interpreted as the wealthiest then most of the poor remained behind in the Church of Scotland. Of course, this statement could also have had a spiritual meaning and is not easy to interpret for that reason.

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<sup>71</sup> A.A. MacLaren *Religion and Social Class: the Disruption Years in Aberdeen* (London, 1974), pp.27-29.

<sup>72</sup> Roberts, *Short Sketch*, p.9.

<sup>73</sup> MacLaren, *Disruption Years*, p.54.

<sup>74</sup> Roberts, *Short Sketch*, pp.6-9.

<sup>75</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.6-9.

<sup>76</sup> An elder quoted in Scott, 'The Disruption', p.94.

After the ministry of Begg, the Old Parish Church fell into the hands of George Carruthers as minister in 1888, who served for just 10 years until 1898.<sup>77</sup> There was nothing of note recorded about him in the *Fasti Ecclesiae Scoticae*. His manse, however, was listed in the 1890 VR, situated in the exclusive Arnothill area and valued at £60 p.a. His household was also located on the 1891 Census which showed it was an extensive property with 11 windowed rooms. Carruthers must have been absent on the day the census was taken as his wife, Mary, was the head householder. She was aged 43 years old and had three very young children, a servant, a cook and a visiting minister as a guest. The late nineteenth-century Old Parish Church manse, then, was amongst the most highly graded property of Falkirk at this point in time.

In 1843, Thomas Chalmers said of the Free Church at the Disruption, ‘I am glad to say that the great bulk and body of the common people, with a goodly proportion of the middle classes, are upon our side, though it bodes ill for the country that the higher classes are almost universally against us.’<sup>78</sup> The Free Church under Chalmers started a home mission campaign to ‘reclaim’ the churchless masses in deprived areas by building churches and schools. Chalmers was concerned with eliminating poor relief (which he saw as undermining ‘natural’ charity) in favour of establishing communities built on communal values.<sup>79</sup> In 1819, Chalmers pioneered what could be described as a social experiment in St. John’s in Glasgow. He organised his mainly middle-class congregation to carry out home visits, supervising the moral and spiritual issues affecting the poor of the parish. Poor relief was to be eliminated by relying instead on each person’s ability for self-help and the philanthropy of the community. His work was lauded by some and criticised by others, but Chalmers himself was convinced of the

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<sup>77</sup> H. Scott, *Fasti Ecclesiae Scoticae*, Vol. VIII (Edinburgh, 1950), p.42. Online at: <http://www.dwalker.pwp.blueyonder.co.uk/Map.htm>

<sup>78</sup> T. Chalmers, quoted in A.L. Drummond and J. Bulloch *The Church in Victorian Scotland: 1843-1874* (Edinburgh, 1975), pp.6-7.

<sup>79</sup> S.J. Brown, ‘Thomas Chalmers and the Communal Ideal’, in T.C. Smout *Victorian Values* (Oxford, 1992), p.64.

success of his project.<sup>80</sup> It is undoubtedly the case that other Free Church ministers were highly influenced by Chalmers' work and this is reflected in the Falkirk Free Church, the first meetings of which were held in Cistern Lane. Not long after these initial meetings, a church was built in Garrison Place and opened in November, 1844, with Lewis Hay Irving as the first minister.<sup>81</sup> Irving saw the need for out-reach work in Camelon as well as in Falkirk and he held prayer meetings there and in places like Laurieston and Carronshore. He established a Sabbath School in Camelon and the Irving Memorial Church was opened there in 1890 in his memory after his death. Irving also worked to establish a savings bank, a ragged school and a poorhouse in Falkirk.<sup>82</sup> J. Roberts, a member of the Free Church congregation, recalls how the church worried for Irving's health because of the condition of the places he visited where 'many of the abodes of disease were pitiable hovels, yet nothing deterred him from visiting everywhere he felt he was required'.<sup>83</sup> On this basis, Irving appears to have been a far cry from the typical Free Church minister described by Drummond and Bulloch, who was apparently more interested in the respectable working class than the poorest and took a more 'limited approach' to out-reach than the typical parish minister. However, Roberts was a Free Church member and it would be fair to say that she may have had a particularly zealous view of the minister's approach to visiting 'pitiable hovels'. Nevertheless, Drummond and Bulloch claimed that the perceptions amongst some that Free Church ministers were neglecting parts of their perceived duties led to a 'measure of resentment' amongst the people.<sup>84</sup> All the same, Irving did accomplish a lot in Falkirk, guided by the motivation of outreach work amongst the less fortunate members of society. On this basis, it seems possible that the Falkirk Free Church had a

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<sup>80</sup> Ibid., p.65.

<sup>81</sup> Scott, 'The Disruption', p.94.

<sup>82</sup> Roberts, *Short Sketch*, pp.21-22, 25.

<sup>83</sup> Ibid., p.21.

<sup>84</sup> Drummond and Bulloch, *Victorian Scotland: 1843-74*, p.32.

reasonable proportion of poorer members or attendants. Nevertheless, whether or not his work on behalf of the poor translated into his congregation is a different matter and will be considered later.

According to some historians, such as Drummond and Bulloch, the Free Church was funded by the new commercial and manufacturing middle and upper classes and the success of the church reflected the prosperity of these classes. Expanding commerce, industry and technology were creating new middle classes and a skilled working class.<sup>85</sup> The Free Church represented this new development and the desire of the lower middle class to break away from the Church of Scotland in order to prosper.<sup>86</sup> Dissenters were associated with the upwardly mobile skilled farm workers, the prosperous tradesmen of the early nineteenth century, the 'respectable' labour aristocracy of 1850s to 1880s and the suburbanising petite bourgeoisie of the later nineteenth century.<sup>87</sup> However, according to A.A. MacLaren, Chalmers wanted the Free Church to run like a business and very few seats were free which led to different grades of social status and the exclusion of the poor.<sup>88</sup> Financial contribution was a criterion of membership for all.<sup>89</sup> As well as this, evangelical fervour is supposed by some to have declined in the Free Church by the 1850s.<sup>90</sup> It seems, from the secondary literature, then, that there are differences in interpretation about how the Free Church operated, some more negative than others.

The emergence of the East United Presbyterian Church will now be discussed. The problem of patronage has already been mentioned as the main point of dispute between the Evangelicals and Moderates and as a fundamental reason for the first secession from the established church in the eighteenth century. In 1733, the General

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<sup>85</sup> Ibid., p.2.

<sup>86</sup> P.L.M. Hillis, 'Presbyterianism and Social Class in Mid-Nineteenth Century Glasgow: a Study of Nine Churches', *Journal Ecclesiastical History*, 32/1 (1981), p.55.

<sup>87</sup> C.G. Brown, *The People in the Pews: Religion and Society in Scotland since 1780* (Dundee, 1993), p.16.

<sup>88</sup> MacLaren, *Aberdeen*, pp.108-109.

<sup>89</sup> Ibid., p.109.

<sup>90</sup> Ibid., p.115.

Assembly of the Established Church expelled four ministers who had very strongly opposed the Patronage Act of 1712 and were concerned by what they perceived to be growing theological laxity in the Established Church.<sup>91</sup> Ebenezer Erskine from Stirling, along with some others, went on to form an Associated Presbytery. An Associate Congregation developed in Falkirk in 1739 and, in 1742, a church was built in Falkirk on the corner of Silver Row and Horsemarket Lane. The first minister was Henry Erskine.<sup>92</sup> This church split again in 1747 over the Burgess Oath. This development was an oath of loyalty brought in after the Jacobite Rebellion and demanded that every burgess living in Scottish towns pledged to uphold the Established Church as the ‘true religion’.<sup>93</sup> Henry Erskine believed that the church could accept this oath without accepting lay patronage, but many in the church disagreed and broke away to form the Antiburgher Church.<sup>94</sup> In Falkirk, the Antiburghers built and moved into the Tattie Kirk on Cow Wynd in 1806.<sup>95</sup> The Burghers of the Erskine Church remained in Silver Row. In 1820 the Erskine and Antiburgher churches re-united to form the United Associate Congregation. The Relief churches then joined this body in 1847 to form the United Presbyterian Church.<sup>96</sup> The original Erskine Church in Silver Row became the East United Presbyterian Church.<sup>97</sup>

The minister of the East U.P. Church in 1860 was William Miller who had arrived from Crieff to take up the position in November of that same year. He left in 1874 to accept a call to Lenzie.<sup>98</sup> R. Small’s *History of the Congregations of the U.P. Church: 1733-1900* gives an account of each minister across two volumes. However, nothing much is said of Miller apart from that under his ministry the ‘funds’ improved

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<sup>91</sup> A.A. MacLaren, *Religion and Social Class: the Disruption Years in Aberdeen* (London, 1974), p.26.

<sup>92</sup> Lawson, *History of Falkirk*, p.61.

<sup>93</sup> *Ibid.*, p.62.

<sup>94</sup> *Ibid.*, p.62.

<sup>95</sup> *Ibid.*, p.62.

<sup>96</sup> *Ibid.*, p.63.

<sup>97</sup> I.Scott, ‘The Erskine Church, Falkirk’, Falkirk Local History Society Online: <http://www.falkirklocalhistorysociety.co.uk/home/index.php?id=139> (Accessed, 24/11/12).

<sup>98</sup> R. Small, *History of the Congregations of the U.P. Church: 1733-1900*, Vol. I, (Edinburgh, 1904), p.660. Reproduced online at: <http://www.dwalker.pwp.blueyonder.co.uk/Map.htm>

until eventually providing ‘a stipend of £210, with manse and garden’.<sup>99</sup> Because he was just newly arrived in Falkirk in 1860, he does not appear on the VR, but he is listed in the 1861 Census. He was noted as the minister of the East U.P. Church and was 27-years old and unmarried. He lodged with Elizabeth King, a 60-year-old widowed ‘housekeeper’ with four, unmarried daughters who were all teachers. It is known that he eventually acquired a ‘manse and garden’, but not if he married one of Mrs King’s daughters.

James Aitchison then took on the role from 1875 and was still at Falkirk in 1890 when he published his *Signa Christi*, a work concerned with the person and work of Jesus Christ. According to R. Small, the membership of the East U.P. church increased by about 100 people in the first 10 years of Aitchison’s ministry.<sup>100</sup> In the 1891 Census, Aitchison was 44-years old and living in what must have been a busy church manse with his wife, four young children, two sisters-in-law and two servants. The manse had 12 windowed rooms and was valued at £30 p.a. on the 1890 VR. Both East U.P. Church ministers, then, represented a way of life far removed from the vast majority of poor Falkirk town society.<sup>101</sup>

The West U.P. Church evolved from the original Relief Church founded by Thomas Gillespie in 1761. Gillespie had opposed the Moderates stance on patronage within the Established Church, which led to him being removed from his parish ministry in 1752.<sup>102</sup> Relief churches sprang up all over Scotland and the Falkirk Relief Church was the 12th congregation. The Relief Society of Falkirk began as a meeting of likeminded men in Mumrills near Laurieston. Michael Boston was the first minister in

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<sup>99</sup> Ibid., p.661.

<sup>100</sup> Ibid., p.661.

<sup>101</sup> This assertion is based on research findings from Chapter 4.

<sup>102</sup> K.B.E. Roxburgh, *Thomas Gillespie and the Origins of the Relief Church in 18<sup>th</sup> Century Scotland* (Berne, 1999), pp.ix-x.

1770.<sup>103</sup> Thirty years later, the congregation had its own permanent church in West Bridge Street called the West Church. In 1847, when the Relief and United Secession Churches joined together the church was renamed the Falkirk West United Presbyterian Church.

In 1860, George Wade was the West U.P. Church minister and stayed until his death in 1892. According to Small, he was an ‘exceptionally popular’ preacher and the congregation kept ‘large and flourishing’ throughout his time there.<sup>104</sup> The 1861 Census recorded Wade as a 39-year old married man, living with just his wife, servant and a young visitor. He lived in Bank Street in the town centre area and had a substantial property with 7 windowed rooms, valued at £20 p.a. on the 1860 VR. By 1890, however, the Wades appear to have moved to a much larger property called ‘West Manse’ on the 1891 Census, located near Chapel Lane. They obviously needed it because by 1891 he was 58-years-old and had six children, the oldest of whom was his 28-year old daughter. His three younger sons were all law clerks. The Wades had also acquired an extra servant. The minister of the West U.P. Church, then, was a very prosperous individual who was part of the minority of very well-to-do Falkirk residents.

The U.P. Church is said to have been a denomination that was becoming increasingly prosperous during the late nineteenth century. They often had fine buildings and could employ distinguished architects to design them.<sup>105</sup> This church held to voluntary principles, meaning they were completely opposed to the concept of a national church and each congregation was self-supporting.<sup>106</sup> MacLaren claimed that all the dissenting churches appealed to and were supported by the lower middle class of shopkeepers, tradesmen, artisans and agricultural workers.<sup>107</sup> According to Drummond and Bulloch, these churches flourished in towns and cities because they depended on

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<sup>103</sup> T.C. Wade, *The Story of the Falkirk West United Free Church* (Falkirk, 1926), pp.3-8.

<sup>104</sup> Small, *U.P. Church*, p.666

<sup>105</sup> J.M. Reid, *Kirk and Nation: The Story of the Reformed Church of Scotland* (London, 1960), p.142.

<sup>106</sup> *Ibid.*, p.140.

<sup>107</sup> MacLaren, *Aberdeen*, pp.26-27.



craftsmen and small tradesmen. The U.P. Church represented an ethos of individualism and counted many wealthy industrialists amongst its number. They were also, supposedly, becoming wealthier as the century progressed, in common with the Free Church. Drummond and Bulloch claim that as city centres declined, churches were sold and the congregation moved to wherever the rich members lived.<sup>108</sup> They apparently did little to attract the unconverted as they had not much sense of parochial responsibility.<sup>109</sup> The United Presbyterian Church, then, shared the independence of the Free Church and its appeal to people who were socially aspirant, as well as some of the more negative characteristics projected at both churches by some historians, such as lack of interest in reaching beyond the church gates.

There were other churches in Falkirk. There was a Baptist presence, the first congregation meeting in 1808 in Kirk Wynd. From the 1860s they declined and fractured into small groups until the Union of Baptists in 1880. At the turn of the century, membership and attendance were increasing and a church was built at the corner of Orchard Street and Weir Street in 1897.<sup>110</sup> There was also an Episcopal Church built in 1863 which served the needs of the English workers. Before that, from 1790, fortnightly meetings had been held in Carron.<sup>111</sup> There was an Evangelical Union Church that met in Bank Street in 1845. This had formed from a schism in the Original Erskine Church. A dispute between the two ministers in the new church caused another split in 1852 with the majority joining the Congregational Church. The other half of the Evangelical Union Church joined the United Presbyterian Church in 1898.<sup>112</sup> Unfortunately, no relevant sources exist to determine the social structure of these churches. A point can be made, however, about the Roman Catholic Church, established in 1843, and that was that it was said to have attracted mainly Irish

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<sup>108</sup> Drummond and Bulloch, *Victorian Scotland: 1843-74*, p.45.

<sup>109</sup> *Ibid.*, p.50.

<sup>110</sup> R. Pollard, *A History of Falkirk Baptist Church* (Falkirk, 1999), pp.5,12,15.

<sup>111</sup> Scott, *Life and Times*, p.107.

<sup>112</sup> Walker, *St. James's*, pp.7,10.

labourers. The Catholic population had steadily increased from the late eighteenth century and the Glasgow to Edinburgh railway in the 1830s brought thousands of Irish labourers. Paul Maclachlan was the priest who was responsible for the whole county of Stirlingshire and raised enough money to start work on a church which opened in 1843. In 1840, John Burns, a solicitor, noted that, 'At present, while the railway is forming in the neighbourhood, a meeting of Papists is held monthly in the town, where service is conducted by a priest from Stirling. The audience is chiefly composed of Irish labourers.'<sup>113</sup> Given the high rate of Irish immigration to Falkirk throughout the nineteenth century and the disproportionate numbers of the Irish who were labourers or 'navvies', it may well be the case that the Catholic Church in Falkirk had a very different compositional make up from the Presbyterian churches. Unfortunately, no sources exist to include St Xavier's Chapel, Falkirk, in this study.

## **V) Conclusion**

This introduction to Falkirk town and churches has revealed how heavy industry took a long time to impact fully on the economic composition of the town. Despite the establishment of the Carron Ironworks in 1759, the town itself was not dominated by the iron foundries until the later nineteenth century. Falkirk had a strong legacy of traditional trades related to its past as a market town and, even as late as the 1830s (at least) and the coming of the Town Council, the local, well-to-do trades and craftsmen formed the bulk of local government, as they had done before under the Stentmasters and Feuars. In terms of social and civil development, the nineteenth century was an age of structural improvement for the town, but along with that came increased segregation between the poor and the richer members of the burgh as the latter moved to the outskirts of the immediate town area. However, when the ironworks did become more

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<sup>113</sup> I. Scott, *St. Francis Xavier's Parish, Falkirk: 1843-1993* (Falkirk, 1993), pp.5-6,10-11.

numerous during the latter part of the nineteenth century, they became a very important source of employment for the people.

The main Presbyterian churches were discussed and it was found that certain characteristics and, possibly, assumptions about their social composition and personalities have already been made by some historians, and that does not necessarily shine a good light. Some writers have attributed the Free and U.P. churches as having appealed to the 'up-and-coming' middle classes who were aspiring and socially ambitious. The Church of Scotland, on the other hand, was left poorer after the desertion of the 'cream' of the congregation at the Disruption in 1843. However, unlike, perhaps, many other small Scottish towns, the Falkirk Old Parish Church had a run of evangelically-minded clergymen from the 1830s, and the minister did not move over to the Free Church at the Disruption. The Free Church minister, Lewis Hay Irving, was found to have been very active in social endeavours to help the Falkirk population and established, amongst other things, a poorhouse and ragged school. All the same, it was clear from the picture gained from the ministers who were traced to the VRs or censuses that they were all, whether Church of Scotland, Free or U.P., very well-off individuals and for that reason may have been very far removed in social terms from the vast majority of poor parishioners. However, the general impression from some of the foremost secondary literature would suggest that the U.P. churches, in particular, were not overly concerned with reaching the masses, and the Free Church ministers had somewhat of a reputation for not being too forthcoming in ministering to the most deprived. These notions would suggest that it would not be expected to find many poor amongst the rolls of the Free or U.P. churches, whereas, possibly because most of the affluent members of the Church of Scotland left at the Disruption, the social structure of the Old Parish Church should have been rather different. Despite what some historians have claimed about the passivity of the Free Church in administering to the most

deprived, some of these conclusions are based on negative assumptions and it is clear that the Free Church was very active in home mission work, not just in Falkirk but also in other industrialising areas such as Glasgow. All the same, there can be a gulf between a church's 'mission' and the social composition of its regular congregation. It is the social and occupational composition of individual churches that is the major concern of this thesis and occupies the next chapter.

## CHAPTER 4

### 1860 Falkirk: The Social Structure of the Town and Churches

This chapter will study the social composition of Falkirk town and churches in 1860. Firstly, the social structure of the town will be evaluated and this will be followed by a parallel study of the churches. The composition of the town will be assessed in terms of how it was reflected by the rental values of properties as listed in the Scottish valuation rolls (VRs). The use of the VRs in this way hierarchically illustrates social position because the valuation of a property is seen as indicative of a person's social status. The VRs were used as a legal document from which payments of rates and eligibility for the franchise were calculated and so when used in a systematically graded way, reflect social status. This claim is supported by the fact that VRs have been used before by researchers in order to gauge social status variations within geographical areas.<sup>1</sup> A general analysis of Falkirk town, then, will provide the background context and conceptual framework to which the subsequent investigations of the churches will be related.

The reason the study is concerned with an analysis of Falkirk town structure as well as church composition is to argue for a historical understanding of the social structure of churches that is rooted, as much as possible, in the realities of the local situation. In the current and accepted methodology an understanding of the social composition of churches is reliant on the classification of occupation measured against standard systems of categorisation. One problem with these common schemes is that they are used to evaluate occupations in different geographical locations. For example, in a study of Glasgow churches, P.L.M. Hillis<sup>2</sup> uses a classification system almost

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<sup>1</sup> See Chapter 2: Introduction, for a fuller discussion of the valuation rolls.

<sup>2</sup> P.L.M. Hillis, *The Barony of Glasgow: Window on to Church and People in Nineteenth-Century Scotland* (Edinburgh, 2007).pp. 12-13, 111.

identical to and based on that applied by MacLaren<sup>3</sup> in his study of Aberdeen churches. The presumption is, of course, that the ‘scientific’ measurement of nineteenth-century occupations is something that can be applied across the board and that this method brings consistency to each study. However, the belief that the same systems of classifying occupations can be used to study different towns and cities largely without question is, nevertheless, an assumption which can result (as with any form of generalisation) in obscuring differences that existed between towns and cities. The approach taken in this study, on the other hand, is to assess the social nature of Falkirk churches when measured directly against the structure of Falkirk town. It is believed that this approach will create a framework for analysis that is rooted in the essential nature of Falkirk itself and the churches can be evaluated against this in a direct way.

Another reason for carrying out a study based on property valuations is related to the reliance of the traditional methodology on *occupation* as a measure of social status. A problem occurs when, in the traditional method of ascribing social status to occupation, individuals are evaluated in terms of their employment and allocated to a particular social ‘class’ based on this occupational description. However, these judgements about status and occupation have their roots in Victorian beliefs linking the *nature* of occupation to the moral nature of the individual.<sup>4</sup> In this sense, classification by occupation is not an entirely objective or ‘scientific’ measurement or exercise. Therefore, another aspect of this chapter is to devise a method of assessing social status in churches that does not presume *occupation* to be the determining factor of social status. Instead, the basis of the social and church analysis rests on classification by property valuation which is deemed to be a far less partial tool of measurement.

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<sup>3</sup> A.A. MacLaren, *Religion and Social Class: the Disruption Years in Aberdeen* (London, 1974), p.218.

<sup>4</sup> This issue forms the subject of Chapter 10.

## **I) Social Structure and Property in Falkirk, 1860**

The grading of social status in Falkirk was approached through the formation of a hierarchy of rental values (also referred to as the ‘VR hierarchy’) created from the 1860 VR. This residential VR<sup>5</sup> represents the householders of Falkirk town in 1860 and as such provides a reliable indication of the social status structure of the town. Further information about the creation of the VR hierarchy and the justification behind each ‘level’ is contained in the chapter on methodology.<sup>6</sup>

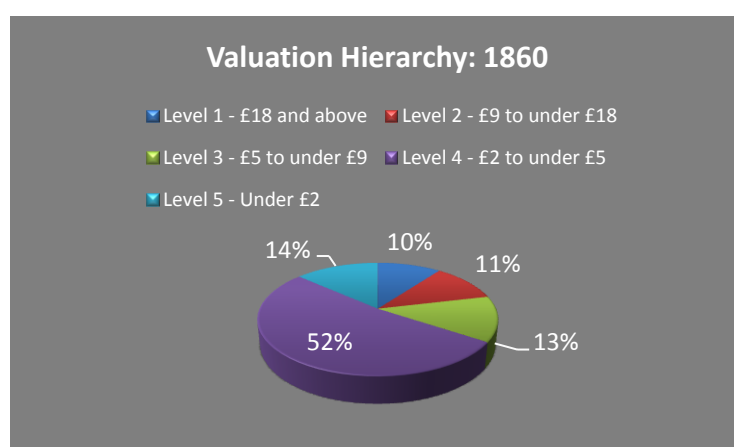
The findings are presented below in Table 4:1 and are also shown in pie-chart form in Table 4:2.

**Table 4:1 Valuation Hierarchy, Falkirk 1860**

<b>VALUATION HIERARCHY</b>			
<b>FALKIRK 1860</b>			
<b>LEVEL</b>	<b>RENTAL VALUE P.A.</b>	<b>RN</b>	<b>VR HOUSEHOLDERS %</b>
<b>1 Very Well-off</b>	£18 and above	201	10.2
<b>2 Well-off</b>	£9 to under £18	218	11.1
<b>3 Comfortable</b>	£5 to under £9	255	13.0
<b>4 Poor</b>	£2 to under £5	1,024	52.2
<b>5 Very poor</b>	Under £2	265	13.5
<b>Total</b>		1,963	100

Original Source: Falkirk 1860 Valuation Roll. Reworked to measure only total property holdings of individual householders, comprising 1,963 entries. RN = real numbers

**Piechart 4:2 Valuation Hierarchy, Falkirk 1860**



Original Source: Falkirk 1860 Valuation Roll. Results based on 1,963 householders, as Table 4:1

<sup>5</sup> See Chapter 2: Section II for an explanation of the residential VR.

<sup>6</sup> See Chapter 2: Section VI for a fuller explanation and justification of the ‘levels’.

The first point to note about the social structure of 1860 Falkirk is that most households – just over half the residential VR – fell into Level 4, the rank of the poor. Households in this category unequivocally dominated the social housing structure of Falkirk at this point in time. The next largest category was that of the very poor at under £2 p.a. which made up a sizeable 14% of households. Taken together, those in poor and very poorly valued properties made up two thirds of the burgh householders. Levels 1, 2 and 3 of the more prosperous members of the population were all remarkably similar in proportional terms: the ‘comfortable’ of Level 3 comprised 13% of householders; Level 2 of the ‘well-off’ made up 11%; and Level 1 of the ‘very well-off’ contained 10% of householders. The three higher levels of comfortable and well-off together comprised a third of town householders. This analysis shows that the poorer households very much dominated the social scene of Falkirk in 1860 but the town was not without its comfortable and wealthier residents.

The social structure represented by Falkirk in 1860 was not unusual for a town in Victorian Scotland. For example, a study carried out in the country as a whole showed that in 1867, less than 1% of the population held a quarter of Scotland’s national income, and that 1% of Scottish society had a personal annual income two hundred times that of the lowest 30%.<sup>7</sup> Similarly, C.H. Lee claims that in 1865 only 10% of Glaswegians had income enough to be completely financially secure.<sup>8</sup> Extreme income inequality, then, was not at all unusual in Scotland in the mid-nineteenth century and the Falkirk VRs reflect this social pattern.

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<sup>7</sup> W.W. Knox, ‘Poverty, Income and Wealth in Scotland: 1840-1940.’ [http://www.scran.ac.uk/scotland/pdf/SP2\\_5Income.pdf](http://www.scran.ac.uk/scotland/pdf/SP2_5Income.pdf). (Accessed, 28/11/12).

<sup>8</sup> C.H. Lee, ‘Economic Progress: Wealth and Poverty’ in T.M. Devine and C.H. Lee and G.C. Peden (eds) *The Transformation of Scotland: The Economy Since 1700* (Edinburgh, 2005), p.138.



## **II) The Social Structure of the Churches in 1860**

Now that the social structure of Falkirk town has been illuminated by a study of the VRs, this same measure will be applied to the churches. The churches looked at constituted the main Presbyterian churches of the town in 1860: St. Andrew's Free Church; the West United Presbyterian Church; the East United Presbyterian Church; and the Old Parish Church of Scotland.<sup>9</sup> This part of the discussion will consider how representative each individual church was of Falkirk society to discover and account for any major differences between the churches and the wider social structure. The motivation for this analysis is to show that although the revisionist claim that churches full of working-class people may be true, this view of nineteenth-century churchgoing tends to mask the differences in churchgoing between poor and non-poor people, whether working-class or not. The focus on occupation and, by implication, social class, as a way of estimating social status in the historiography has helped to conceal the differences in churchgoing due to economic divisions, which cut across and between social 'class' or occupational boundaries.

The churches and their social composition will now be discussed. Each table shows the composition of the church set against that of the town. In addition, a column showing the percentage difference of the town and church proportions of each level is included. The first church looked at is St Andrew's Free Church (Table 4:3).

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<sup>9</sup> See Chapter 3: Section IV for more information about these denominations.

**Table 4:3 Valuation Hierarchy and St Andrew's Free Church, 1860**

ST ANDREW'S FREE CHURCH 1860	VALUATION HIERARCHY	CHURCH HOUSEHOLDERS*		VR HOUSEHOLDERS	% CHURCH REPRESENTATION
		RN	% CR	% VR	
<b>LEVEL</b>	<b>RENTAL VALUE P.A.</b>				
<b>1 Very well-off</b>	£18 and above	41	30.1	10.2	+ 19.9
<b>2 Well-off</b>	£9 to under £18	22	16.2	11.1	+ 5.1
<b>3 Comfortable</b>	£5 to under £9	23	16.9	13.0	+ 3.9
<b>4 Poor</b>	£2 to under £5	48	35.3	52.2	- 16.9
<b>5 Very poor</b>	Under £2	2	1.5	13.5	- 12.0

\*See Chapter 2: Section V for the reason for counting only head householders. The same applies to subsequent church analyses. Church householders = 148 head householders from CR who were traced to VR and/or 1861 Census, minus 12 entries not traced to VR, leaving 136 head householders for valuation analysis above. CR = communion roll. RN = real numbers

The results of the Free Church social analysis reveal that there was a very obvious difference between the representation of the different VR levels in society and those of the church. Firstly, the valuation range with the highest proportion in the church was that of the poor from Level 4 at 35% of householders. If these figures were looked at in isolation it would appear as though the Free Church had a congregation composed of a high proportion of poor householders. However, this figure has to be measured against the surrounding population to be evaluated in its true context. When the proportion of poorer households in the church is considered alongside the town structure it is clear that there was a stark under-representation of poor householders. In the wider society, 52% of householders were poor, compared to just 35% in the Free Church. Furthermore, the number of *very* poor householders is almost negligible, making up just 1.5% of communicants, when in the wider society the very poor comprised 13.5% of households. The poor and very poor, then, were unmistakably under-represented in the Free Church.

This observation is further compounded by the proportions of the three higher levels. The most notable point is that Level 1 was the most significantly over-represented of the higher groups. 30% of the communion roll (CR) was made-up of very well-off households when in the town they constituted just 10%. In a similar way,

those of Level 2 were over-represented, forming 16% of the church CR but just 11% of the town. Level 3 was also over-accounted for at 17% on the CR, but just 13% of town households. Apart from the over-representation of the comfortable and wealthy, another observation would be that the poor and very poor were the *only* groups to be under-represented in the church. Furthermore, when the numbers of those in levels 1 to 3 are considered, they far outweigh the actual numbers of the poor. When taken together, there were 50 poor and very poor householders, but 86 individuals were from levels 1 to 3, showing that the comfortable and prosperous section of society dominated the congregation. Overall, then, the Free Church did not represent the poor and very poor of Falkirk town well at all, but did seem to attract many of the better-off manual workers, lower level professionals, as well as wealthy merchants, professionals, trades and craftsmen. In 1860, then, the Free Church was definitely weighted against the poor and leaned heavily towards the more affluent householders of the town.

The West U.P. Church will now be discussed in the same way. The results are shown in Table 4:4 below.

**Table 4:4 Valuation Hierarchy and West U. P. Church, 1860**

WEST U.P. CHURCH 1860	VALUATION HIERARCHY	CHURCH HOUSEHOLDERS*		VR HOUSEHOLDERS	% CHURCH REPRESENTATION
LEVEL	RENTAL VALUE P.A.	RN	% CR	% VR	
<b>1 Very well-off</b>	£18 and above	31	28.7	10.2	+ 18.5
<b>2 Well-off</b>	£9 to under £18	15	13.9	11.1	+ 2.8
<b>3 Comfortable</b>	£5 to under £9	23	21.3	13.0	+ 8.3
<b>4 Poor</b>	£2 to under £5	35	32.4	52.2	- 19.8
<b>5 Very poor</b>	Under £2	4	3.7	13.5	- 9.8

\*Church householders = 118 head householders from CR who were traced to VR and/or 1861 Census, minus 10 entries not traced to VR, leaving 108 head householders for valuation analysis above. CR = communion roll. RN = real numbers

Looking at the results of the West Church, it would appear, once again, as though there was a majority of poorer churchgoers: 32% of communicant householders were from the poor level. However, when measured against the town structure, this proportion indicates another stark under-representation of the poor who made up 52%

of Falkirk's householders. In addition, the *very* poor were again almost negligible in their presence, although at 4% of communicants, this was a slight improvement on the Free Church. However, similarly to the Free Church, there were almost as many rich from Level 1 as there were poor from Level 4. Moreover, and strikingly, the *only* VR ranges under-represented in any way were the poor and very poor householders. The West U.P. Church did not represent the poor well at all relative to their presence in the burgh.

As in the Free Church, the West U.P. Church had a distinct over-abundance of those in the top level of the hierarchy and Level 1 was the most significantly over-represented. 29% of communicant householders were from the wealthiest grade of property valuations when these households comprised just 10% of the wider society. Level 2 was also over-accounted for at the West Church with this grade forming 14% of communicant households but just 11% of town households; however, this over-representation was not as stark as it was in the Free Church. Similarly, Level 3 was more prevalent in the West Church than in the town with 21% of communicant households making up this grade, but just 13% in the town. Moreover, as in the Free Church, the actual numbers of comfortable and wealthy individuals exceeded that of the poor and very poor. Altogether, there were 69 households from levels 1 to 3 but only 39 from the two poorest levels. The West U.P. Church, like the Free Church, was also heavily weighted towards the wealthier members of its congregation. However, the West Church had more of a leaning towards the better-off manual and lower professionals of Level 3 than had the Free Church.

The findings for the East U.P. Church will now be considered and are shown in Table 4:5 below.

**Table 4:5 Valuation Hierarchy and East U. P. Church, 1860**

EAST U.P. CHURCH 1860	VALUATION HIERARCHY	CHURCH HOUSEHOLDERS*		VR HOUSEHOLDERS	% CHURCH REPRESENTATION
		RN	% CR	% VR	
<b>LEVEL</b>	<b>RENTAL VALUE P.A.</b>				
<b>1 Very well-off</b>	£18 and above	25	19.2	10.2	+ 9.0
<b>2 Well-off</b>	£9 to under £18	22	16.9	11.1	+ 5.8
<b>3 Comfortable</b>	£5 to under £9	20	15.4	13.0	+ 2.4
<b>4 Poor</b>	£2 to under £5	57	43.8	52.2	- 8.4
<b>5 Very poor</b>	Under £2	6	4.6	13.5	- 8.9

\*Church householders = 143 head householders from CR who were traced to VR and/or 1861 Census, minus 13 entries not traced to VR, leaving 130 head householders for valuation analysis above. CR = communion roll. RN = real numbers

The findings for the composition of the East U.P. Church produce a paradox of at once revealing a difference and a similarity to the other two churches. The difference is that it obviously had a higher number and proportion of poor churchgoer on its roll at 44% of communicant households. When set against the town structure, this was still a fairly significant under-representation, but was distinctly better than in the Free or West churches. In a similar way, the East Church also had the highest proportion of very poor householders at 5%, yet this was still a stark under-representation; and yet again, the two poorest groups were the *only* two to have been under-represented. Furthermore, the East Church had more of those from levels 1,2 and 3 on its roll than numbers of poor: 67 households were of the comfortable to very-well off grade, whereas 63 were from the two lower levels. As was the case for the other two churches, the East Church had a higher number of better-off churchgoer as well as an under-representation of the poor and very poor. Despite the East Church representing the poor of the town better than the other two churches, the results, on balance, still reflect the same pattern of a very distinct bias towards the comfortable and wealthier households of the town. An outcome parallel to all three non-established churches, then, has been a marked under-representation of the poor and very poor.

The last church to be discussed is the Old Parish Church of Scotland. The findings are set out below in Table 4:6.

**Table 4:6 Valuation Hierarchy and Old Parish Church, 1860**

OLD PARISH CHURCH 1860	VALUATION HIERARCHY	CHURCH HOUSEHOLDERS*		VR HOUSEHOLDERS	% CHURCH REPRESENTATION
		RN	% **BR	% VR	
<b>1 Very well</b>	£18 and above	13	8.0	10.2	- 2.2
<b>2 Well-off</b>	£9 to under £18	12	7.4	11.1	- 3.7
<b>3 Comfortable</b>	£5 to under £9	24	14.8	13.0	+ 1.8
<b>4 Poor</b>	£2 to under £5	110	67.9	52.2	+ 15.7
<b>5 Very poor</b>	Under £2	3	1.8	13.5	- 11.7

\*Church householders = 190 head householders from BR who were traced to VR and/or 1861 Census, minus 28 entries not traced to VR, leaving 162 head householders for valuation analysis above. \*\*BR = baptismal register. See Chapter 2: Section V for an explanation of the comparability between the BRs and CRs of the other churches. RN = real numbers

The Old Parish Church of Scotland presents an entirely different picture of social composition from that of the non-established churches. In terms of the results, the most noticeable observation is the overwhelming number of poor householders. Of the 162 householders, 110 were from the poor category of the VR hierarchy. In proportional terms, this sum equates to almost 70% of churchgoers being poor and indicated that the poor were very strongly over-represented in the Church of Scotland. Despite this marked over-representation of the poor, the presence of the *very* poor was as deficient as it was in the non-established churches, with just 3 households from the most deprived category. The other most notable point is that the Old Parish Church did not significantly over-account for those from the higher levels of 1 and 2, as was the case in the Free and U.P. churches. In fact, there was an under-representation of the wealthiest groups of householders in the Old Parish Church. Only 8% of households were from Level 1, compared to 10% in the wider town structure. Level 2 was also under-accounted for at 7% of householders in the church compared to 11% in the town. Level 3 was slightly over-represented at 15% of church householders compared to 13% in the town; however, the higher proportion of Level 3 in the Old Parish Church was not as marked as in the non-established churches. Moreover, the actual numbers of poor and very poor far outweighed the higher levels: 113 households were from the two lowest categories, whereas just 49 were from the higher levels. The social structure of

the Church of Scotland, then, breaks with the pattern of the non-established churches.

The poor were not under-represented and the wealthy did not predominate.

These results show that the Old Parish Church was far more biased in favour of the poorer households in Falkirk than the non-established churches. Nevertheless, the *very* poorest households remained conspicuous by their virtual absence. The very poor of Level 5, then, were as under-represented in the Church of Scotland as they were in the other churches, although the poor in general did have a home there. Despite the fact that those from the comfortable householder level were in no way under-represented in the Old Parish Church, all the same, it would appear that the wealthier residents of 1860 Falkirk preferred the non-established institutions.

It is true to say, however, that the effect of poor housing in general on the church-going habits of the poor was an issue identified by some church ministers, such as the Free Church minister James Begg (1808-1883). In 1849, Begg led a movement in Edinburgh for social reform concerned with investigating the position of the Free Church in poor districts in order to improve congregational representation. In the Free Church newspaper, *The Witness*, Begg brought to attention appalling conditions in Edinburgh and advocated providing the working classes with better housing.<sup>10</sup> Begg himself said: ‘...whilst the grand cure for the woes of society is only to be found in the gospel of the grace of God...the most important physical remedy for the woes of man is a comfortable and wholesome dwelling.’<sup>11</sup> In 1858, Begg started an intensive campaign to bring the housing issue to the attention of the Free Church and the country in general. His efforts to awaken the church, however, were not entirely easy: ‘a spiritual canker has invaded many in all parts of the Protestant Church – not only the idea that the ministers of Christ have nothing to do with such so-called secular matters as the houses of the people, but that to manifest an utter indifference upon the whole subject is a mark

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<sup>10</sup> S. Mechie, *The Church and Scottish Social Development, 1780-1870* (Oxford, 1960), pp.119-120.

<sup>11</sup> J. Begg, *Happy Homes for Working Men*, p.9, quoted in *Ibid.*, p.121.

of superior sanctity.<sup>12</sup> In this sense, Begg was a man ahead of his time in relation to recognising the detrimental impact of a degraded environment on moral well-being.<sup>13</sup> But his example does at least show that some influential people within the churches were aware of the link between lack of churchgoing and poor housing, even if their efforts to motivate others to action often fell on deaf ears.

### **III) Some Reasons for the Absence of the Poor**

The reason that the *very* poor were largely absent from all the churches could be due to a financially-related ‘cause and effect’ explanation. The most obvious factor to consider would be the charging of seat rents. C.G. Brown said the letting of pews was ‘virtually a universal practice in the churches of nineteenth-century Britain’.<sup>14</sup> Even some clergy were opposed to the practice, believing it contributed to the exclusion of the working classes. For example, James Begg campaigned against seat rents being introduced into the Free Church formed from the Disruption of 1843 for that reason.<sup>15</sup> Moreover, Brown concluded that the payment of seat rents had become a ‘device for creating and sustaining social exclusivity’ in an era where the values of *laissez-faire* – self-help and thrift – marked out the successful from the not so successful.<sup>16</sup> J.C. Bennett explains the financial impact paying pew rents would have had on ‘the very poor and unskilled workers’, for whom paying seat rents would have been ‘unthinkable’.<sup>17</sup> Renting a pew at even 5s. per year per sitting would have been beyond the reach of many people. They might have been able to afford around 2d. per year, but, according to Bennett, examples of rents as low as this have not been discovered.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> J. Begg, Report of Committee on Housing of the Working Classes, 1862, p.8, quoted in *Ibid.*, p.128.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, p.134.

<sup>14</sup> C.G. Brown, ‘The Costs of Pew-renting: Church Management, Churchgoing and Social Class in Nineteenth-Century Glasgow’, *Journal Ecclesiastical History*, Vol. 38, No. 3 (1987), p.347.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, p.347.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, p.361.

<sup>17</sup> J.C. Bennett, ‘The English Anglican Practice of Pew-Renting, 1800-1960’, Unpublished PhD thesis, University of Birmingham (n.d.), p.158.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, p.158.



Brown highlights that in the Scottish context pew rents were a ‘major obligation’ and charged in nearly all denominations, including the established, dissenting and Catholic churches.<sup>19</sup> In addition, in a study of Glasgow churches, Hillis concluded that pew rents were a ‘disincentive’ to churchgoing for the unskilled working classes. There was a stigma attached to sitting in the free seats and it was seen as degrading, even more so for those who were obviously poor by the state of their dress.<sup>20</sup> According to Brown, churchgoers could have paid anything from 1s. to 30s. per year to rent a seat and so it would have been expensive for a large family to do so. Pew rents, then, were a major disincentive to churchgoing for poor people.

In Falkirk, the *Statistical Account* of 1834 to 1845 says of the Parish Church: ‘The greater part of the pews were apportioned amongst the heritors; and one of them was set apart as free sittings for twelve poor persons’.<sup>21</sup> At that time the actual population of Falkirk (for the entire parish) was around 13,000<sup>22</sup> and so 12 free sittings for the poor was lamentable. This evidence from Falkirk does relate to a point in time before 1860, but nevertheless it does indicate how inadequate seating for poor parishioners could be. Pew rents, then, were a wide spread and normalised part of nineteenth-century church life which would have excluded many people who were unable to afford them. Seat rents were charged in all denominations and this would seem a likely explanation as to why the *very* poor, in particular, were so badly represented in all churches.

Apart from seat rents, there is a less tangible reason that may have affected the numbers of poor and very poor attending the non-established churches and relates to the new administration of the Poor Law Amendment Act (Scotland) enacted in 1845. The Free Church in Falkirk, in particular, seems to have been quite strongly involved in the

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<sup>19</sup> Brown, ‘Pew-renting’, p.348.

<sup>20</sup> P.L.M. Hillis, ‘Presbyterianism and Social Class in Mid Nineteenth-Century Glasgow: A Study of Nine Churches’, *Journal Ecclesiastical History*, 32/1 (1981), p.56.

<sup>21</sup> *Statistical Account of Falkirk: 1834-1845*, Vol. 8, p.33 <http://stat-acc-scot.edina.ac.uk/> (Accessed, 19/11/2012).

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*

governance of the poor people of the town after this act was put into place. Its minister (from 1843 to his death in 1877), Lewis Hay Irving, helped to establish a poorhouse<sup>23</sup> in Falkirk and the sources have shown that the local Inspector of the Poor, John Beeby, (a new position brought in under the act) was part of Irving's Free Church congregation. Poorhouses were designed for the 'aged and friendless impotent poor' and those who from 'weakness or facility of mind' or 'dissipated and improvident habits' were unable to 'take care of their own affairs'.<sup>24</sup> The new law effectively resulted in the care of the poor passing out of the hands of the Church of Scotland.<sup>25</sup> The central authority was a new Board of Supervision established in Edinburgh, but Parochial Boards of 'managers of the poor' were set up at the local level.<sup>26</sup> These new associations were to oversee 'the whole administration of the laws for the relief of the poor' but were to comprise only 5 members of the Kirk Session of the parish.<sup>27</sup> The other members were to be the magistrates and elected 'heritors' of the burgh. In the context of this new legislation a 'heritor' was someone whose property valuation did not fall below £5 p.a.<sup>28</sup> Furthermore, no 'manager' could be appointed unless the individual met certain property qualifications which were to be set by the Board of Supervision in Edinburgh according to the 'population and circumstances of each parish'.<sup>29</sup> The members of the Parochial Board, then, had to be people of certain social standing, as inevitably, did the Inspector of the Poor.

In the new administrative system, the Inspector of the Poor was one of the most significant people. He was, in effect, the intermediary between the Parochial Board and

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<sup>23</sup> See Chapter 3: Section IV.

<sup>24</sup> 1845 Poor Law Amendment (Scotland) Act, House of Commons Parliamentary Papers (H.C.P.P), online at: <http://parlipapers.chadwyck.co.uk> (Accessed, 30/11/12).

<sup>25</sup> A.C. Cheyne, *The Transforming of the Kirk: Victorian Scotland's Religious Revolution* (Edinburgh, 1983), p.129.

<sup>26</sup> 1845 Poor Law Amendment (Scotland) Act, H.C.P.P.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid.

the Board of Supervision, communicating decisions and compiling reports.<sup>30</sup> His role was one designed to professionalise the poor relief system. He not only made personal visits to poor people but also dealt with all the administration, attended all Parochial Board meetings, investigated entitlement to relief, dealt with disputed settlements in relation to other parishes and kept an account of recipients of relief and amounts paid.<sup>31</sup> In his role of Inspector of the Poor in Falkirk, then, John Beeby of the Free Church had an especial and authoritative role over the lives of Falkirk's poor. When the point of the Free Church minister also being one of the most significant people in originally founding the poorhouse is considered it does appear that the Free Church, in particular, held a 'patriarchal' interest over the poor of the town.

The reason Beeby's affiliation to the Free Church is relevant to the lack of poor churchgoers is because of the authoritarian and patriarchal ethos his social position represented within and without the church. As mentioned, Beeby was deeply involved in the lives of the Falkirk poor. The Poor Law Amendment Act set out the duties of the Poor Law Inspector<sup>32</sup> and how these were put into action by John Beeby is revealed by some of the records that have been left at Falkirk Council Archives.<sup>33</sup> He could (and did) declare people to be 'pauper lunatics' and sent some to Stirling District Asylum. Between 1873 and 1876 he sent 8 people away. There may have been more but those are the ones with records of his 'intimations' left at Falkirk archives. Furthermore, he was also involved in calling people to account for what was criminal behaviour at that point in time. For example, in 1854 he sent a letter to a lawyer to petition the sheriff due to one John Robertson of Falkirk who had deserted his wife and six children. Robertson had tried to abscond with Grace Smith but was apprehended in Glasgow as

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<sup>30</sup> D.E. Gladstone, 'The Administration and Reform of Poor Relief in Scotland, 1790-1850 with especial Reference to Stirlingshire' Unpublished MLitt Thesis, Stirling University (1973), p.196.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid., pp.233-236.

<sup>32</sup> 1845 Poor Law Amendment (Scotland) Act, H.C.P.P.

<sup>33</sup> Falkirk Archive Finding Aids, Parochial Boards and Parish Councils, online at: [http://www.falkirkcommunitytrust.org/heritage/archives/finding-aids/docs/Parochial\\_boards.pdf](http://www.falkirkcommunitytrust.org/heritage/archives/finding-aids/docs/Parochial_boards.pdf) (Accessed, 20/11/12).

he tried to board a ship for America.<sup>34</sup> Furthermore, people had to answer to Beeby in respect of their applications for Poor Relief. In 1852, a woman called Margaret Miller had to ‘declare’ officially to Beeby that she had ‘answered all the questions in the Poor Relief application schedule truthfully’ and also ‘disponed’ all her ‘belongings, debts and heritages’ to Beeby.<sup>35</sup> In addition, he was responsible for locating people who had failed to meet financial commitments to wives, children or other family members. In 1852, Beeby sent out a petition in relation to James Boyd, journeyman baker of Whitburn, who had failed to pay his ‘aliment’ towards the upkeep of his illegitimate child with Agnes Young of Falkirk.<sup>36</sup> Given the nature of Beeby’s work as an Inspector of the Poor, and the powerful position that he held in society, it is not beyond the realms of possibility that those who *were* poor and caught up on the opposite side of the official and authoritarian world he represented would not have felt any sense of belonging to his preferred place of worship.

The sources can be used to present a picture of Beeby’s economic position in relation to the poor of the town. On the 1860 VR, Beeby was listed as the householder of a property valued at £20 p .a. The 1861 Census recorded him as 34-years-old, married, with three very young children and a servant. His house and garden must have been substantial with 9 windowed rooms. Beeby’s career as a Poor Law Inspector seems to have been successful because he was found thirty years later, in the 1891 Census, with the same position. On the later 1890 VR he was also the named holder of the poorhouse and an office on the High Street. To put the properties in context, his 1890 VR house and garden entry was £30 p.a.; the office was £18 p.a.; and the entire poorhouse was £50 p.a. The sole ‘pauper’ listed on the 1890 VR lived in a property valued at £1 13s. p.a. Unfortunately, records do not exist to trace Beeby to the 1890 Free Church, but it can perhaps be assumed that he remained a member because his

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<sup>34</sup> Ibid.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid.

work was so strongly connected to the church and minister. On the 1891 Census, John Beeby was found as a widower, aged 64, living with just one of his adult sons and two servants. His house appears to have been the same one he inhabited in 1860. It is impossible to say that Beeby's presence kept poor people away from the church, however, it does seem valid to suggest that Beeby's position in society was so prominent (especially in a small town environment) and he had such direct and authoritarian dealings with poor members of Falkirk society, that some people may not even have considered entering the door of the Free Church.

It was not just John Beeby and the minister who were involved in the management of the poor. Evidence from the sources points to other people with connections to the Free Church who were involved in the Parochial Board. For example, the archives contain the record of a mandate given by a George Lightbody in February 1850 to his son, James, authorising him to attend and vote on his behalf at a meeting of Falkirk Parochial Board to elect the governor of the poorhouse.<sup>37</sup> Lightbody was recorded in the 1860 VR as a 'florist' (a gardener on the census) with a house and garden valued at £12 p.a. He was a 65-year-old widower, had 6 windowed rooms and lived with his adult daughter and younger servant. Lightbody, then, was a rather prosperous individual. George himself was not found on the Free Church CR, but his daughter, Elizabeth, was (for the record, she was an excellent communicant and had an unblemished record in the roll book, with not one communion missed). It is not quite clear why George did not appear in the Free Church CR, although the consistent presence of his daughter signifies at least a strong family connection to the church. This example indicates another person with at least a connection to the Free Church who was involved in matters related to the interests of the local poorhouse.

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<sup>37</sup> Falkirk Archive Finding Aids, Parochial Boards and Parish Councils, online at: [http://www.falkirkcommunitytrust.org/heritage/archives/finding-aids/docs/Parochial\\_boards.pdf](http://www.falkirkcommunitytrust.org/heritage/archives/finding-aids/docs/Parochial_boards.pdf) (Accessed, 20/11/12).

Undoubtedly, the original Kirk Session would have been represented on the new Parochial Board, however, in Falkirk, the amendments to the poor law brought about by the 1845 legislation enabled the Free Church to acquire a strong interest in dealing with the poor of the town. Before the 1845 amendments, the system had been overseen by the Established Church and the members of the Kirk Session from each locality. However, Falkirk was an ‘assessed’ parish before the changes came into force (one of only 5 in Stirlingshire).<sup>38</sup> In these assessed parishes the changes brought into effect with the new legislation led to the introduction of parochial boards which comprised only 5 members of the Kirk Session. However, where no assessment had been levied prior to the 1845 poor law amendments, the administration of the poor law effectively remained with those who had originally managed it.<sup>39</sup> Indeed, in Stirlingshire as a whole, by 1850, only one third of parishes continued to be controlled by the Established Church when it came to poor relief as these had previously been unassessed parishes.<sup>40</sup> For example, in Polmont, poor funds continued to be raised by the Kirk Session from permission to erect headstones, fees for marriage proclamations, private baptisms, seat rents and church door collections.<sup>41</sup> But where the situation differed, as in Falkirk, there was the possibility of tension between the new parochial boards and the traditional Kirk Session. Under the new system, the Parochial Board was technically responsible for scrutinising any levies that the Kirk Sessions continued to make for the poor.<sup>42</sup> However, in Stirlingshire there was only one recorded instance of a Parochial Board requesting information about monies raised by a Kirk Session and that was in Falkirk. In 1849, the convenor of a sub-committee of the Falkirk Parochial Board enquired of the Kirk Session clerk what had been done with some money that had been raised. The

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<sup>38</sup> D.E. Gladstone, ‘The Administration and Reform of Poor Relief in Scotland, 1790-1850 with especial Reference to Stirlingshire’ Unpublished MLitt Thesis, Stirling University (1973), p.20.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid., p.209.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid., p.242.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid., p.127.

<sup>42</sup> 1845 Poor Law Amendment (Scotland) Act, H.C.P.P.

reply was that the Kirk Session ‘respectually (sic) decline giving the Parochial Board...information as to the other points referred to...as they are matters which it is humbly thought by the members of the Session are beyond the province of the said Parochial Board.’<sup>43</sup> What this evidence shows is that there was tension at some level between the new formation of the Parochial Board and the original Kirk Session’s interest in the lives of the poor. It is possible, given the significant presence of Free Church members on the Parochial Board that this tension was a result of some denominational rivalry.

Another member of the Free Church involved in civil matters *and* another paternalistic initiative - the local savings bank established by Irving, the Free Church minister - was 37-year-old Thomas Gentles of West Bridge Street, a registrar of births, deaths and marriages. On the 1860 VR, Gentles’ house was valued at a rental of £6 p.a., which seems quite modest (although it had 4 windowed rooms), but he was also the named holder of the savings bank, valued at £5 10s. p.a. He appeared on the Free Church roll as an ‘actuary and registrar’ and lived with his wife and two younger cousins: one a teacher and the other a clerk at the chemical works. Gentles was still around at the end of the century, aged 67 years and acting as a registrar for Falkirk Landward District. There are records in the Falkirk archives of receipts he issued between 1899 and 1901 for payments due from Falkirk Parish Council in relation to ‘registrations, vaccinations, *searches for paupers* (my italics) and posting vaccination letters...’<sup>44</sup> Gentles seems to have moved up in the world, appearing as an accountant in *Slater’s Royal National Commercial Dictionary of Scotland* of late nineteenth-century Falkirk.<sup>45</sup> However, unlike John Beeby, Gentles had started from humbler

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<sup>43</sup> Scottish Records Office CH2/400/14 Minutes of the Acts and Proceedings of the Session of Falkirk, 16 July 1849, quoted in Gladstone, ‘Administration of Poor Relief’, p.243.

<sup>44</sup> Falkirk Archive Finding Aids, Parochial Boards and Parish Councils, online at: [http://www.falkirkcommunitytrust.org/heritage/archives/finding-aids/docs/Parochial\\_boards.pdf](http://www.falkirkcommunitytrust.org/heritage/archives/finding-aids/docs/Parochial_boards.pdf) (Accessed, 20/11/12).

<sup>45</sup> Slater’s *Royal National Commercial Dictionary of Scotland (1882-1915)*, Digitised online by the National Library of Scotland at: <http://digital.nls.uk/directories/browse/pageturner.cfm?id=90687169> (Accessed, 29/11/12).

circumstances and so by 1890 had upgraded his home to an 8-windowed house with garden called Park Villa, valued at £45 p.a. In 1890 he was still in possession of the savings bank, valued at £19 p.a. In his later years Gentles lived with just his wife and a servant. Again, it is not possible to verify his continued commitment to the Free Church because of the absence of sources, although it would not be too controversial to suggest he was still a member by 1890, again because his personal work and interests in the savings bank were so closely connected to the church. The point that a local registrar (also involved in dealing with paupers from a slightly different angle from John Beeby) and overseer of the savings bank was a member of the Free Church is yet another example of how the civil affairs of Falkirk were so closely entwined with the Free Church.

The reason the savings bank can be called a paternalistic initiative is because such institutions were set up by socially powerful people on behalf of the poor. In Falkirk, the minister of the Free Church had himself initiated the savings bank scheme, but these initiatives, in general, have been criticised to a certain degree by some historians.<sup>46</sup> I. Levitt and C. Smout, for example, have brought attention to the point that savings banks were not always of interest to the urban poor. From their work on the 1844 Poor Law Commissioner's report they concluded that only about 6% or so of depositors in Glasgow and Paisley were factory workers. On the other hand, savings banks attracted large numbers of women and 'non-factory artisans and mechanics' – very few unskilled urban labourers in Scotland were interested in them.<sup>47</sup> The problem was that, for the typical male worker, savings banks were very paternalistic in nature and so differed from friendly societies. Levitt and Smout highlight that the latter were normally managed by other workers, whereas the former were instituted by the 'upper

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<sup>46</sup> See Chapter 3: Section IV.

<sup>47</sup> I. Levitt and C. Smout, *The State of the Scottish Working Class in 1843* (Edinburgh, 1979), p.133.



classes'.<sup>48</sup> Furthermore, it seems that there were religious and moral values attached to the use of savings banks. For example, the Commissioners' report of the minister of Rothes reveals the virtuous idea behind the savings bank:

A great part of the working population of his parish consists of mechanics, carpenters and masons,...it used to be their custom to meet each other in the ale-house very frequently, till their savings were consumed; but now their savings are put into the savings bank...Their habits have thus been very much improved.<sup>49</sup>

The administration of these banks could also be rather intrusive. At Bonhill in Dunbartonshire, some workers took their money out of the bank after discovering a master manufacturer had become interested in it, believing he would discover their savings and so reduce their wages. Levitt and Smout suggest that the type of insular operation of the savings bank schemes may have suited a small country town but was 'unlikely to succeed' with factory workers.<sup>50</sup> It seems, therefore, that there was a particular value-system attached to the operation of savings banks that sat easily with the principles and cultural ideals of the evangelical Christianity of church ministers such as Irving, but these ideals may not have appealed to some of the poor. The savings bank instituted and managed by the Free Church in Falkirk is another example of the patriarchal ethos of the Free Church that predominated in the late nineteenth century.

In addition to the poorhouse, savings bank and other similar initiatives in Camelon (an essentially poor Falkirk suburb), the Free Church under Irving also set up a ragged school in the town. In Scotland, the ragged school movement was started by Sheriff Watson in the early 1840s. He was an evangelical from Aberdeen and was

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<sup>48</sup> Ibid., p.133.

<sup>49</sup> Report of the Royal Commission on the Poor Law P.P. 1844, Vol.21, p.547, quoted in Ibid., p.133.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid., p.133.

concerned about the number of children appearing before him for minor offences. Watson was reluctant to send them to prison and decided that something had to be done. He went about setting up some schools to provide training in a trade such as shoemaking or gardening, as well as providing for basic needs. Watson's Industrial Schools in Aberdeen encountered problems after the Disruption of 1843 and at least one had to be re-organised to satisfy the new Free Church.<sup>51</sup> However, it is the name of the Free Church leader, Thomas Guthrie from Edinburgh that is associated with the ragged school movement. He formed the Ragged or Industrial School Association in 1847 and within the first year, three schools were opened in Edinburgh. The schools provided food, education, training and sometimes accommodation.<sup>52</sup> In Falkirk, the principal teacher of the ragged school was James Brown and he was a member of the Free Church. Unfortunately, Brown's property could not be traced to the VRs, but he was found in the 1861 Census. It shows that Brown lived in Kerse Lane with his wife, young son and the matron of the ragged school, Margaret Anderson (also a Free Church member). The house had 9 windowed rooms which signified it was a very substantial property relative to others in Falkirk. This school, then, was another pro-active concern of the Free Church and, in Falkirk, overseen by at least two well-to-do members of that church. The ragged school was another area of town life where the Free Church in Falkirk held a direct influence over the lives of the poor.

No mention of the Free Church and its interventionist endeavours can avoid the inclusion of Thomas Chalmers, its over-arching leader. The picture painted of the Free Church in Falkirk thus far illustrates well the values of Chalmers. He had a particular belief system relating to the poor that infused his entire ministry. He wanted an end to the system of state intervention in relation to poor relief, preferring instead a scheme that was entirely voluntary and based on his presumption of the good nature of people:

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<sup>51</sup> O. Checkland *Philanthropy in Victorian Scotland: Social Welfare and the Voluntary Principle* (Edinburgh, 1980), p.247.

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.247-248.

‘Nature...when simply left to the development of her own spontaneous and inborn principles, will render a better service to humanity than can be done by the legal charity of England.’<sup>53</sup> Chalmers, however, was really interested in the elimination of *pauperism* rather than the elimination of *poverty*. The former signified legal support out of a Poor Fund, the latter was an inability to provide for dependants.<sup>54</sup> Chalmers accepted some measure of poverty was inevitable in a society, but pauperism was a ‘moral nuisance’ which led to all manner of problems, including a decline in the values related to the idea of family and hard work.<sup>55</sup> His view of pauperism was direct: ‘Pauperism, in so far as sustained on the principle that each man, simply because he exists, holds a right on other men or on society for existence, is a thing not to be regulated but destroyed.’<sup>56</sup> Chalmers, in general, held to the ideals of *laissez-faire* and believed it was the responsibility of the Church and not the State to tackle the problem of poverty.<sup>57</sup> However, S.J. Brown wrote that Chalmers recognised the ‘darker aspects of unrestricted economic competition and economic individualism’.<sup>58</sup> In any case, Chalmers’ ideological principles led to him having very specific ideas about how paupers should be managed and his principles undoubtedly had an impact on the wider ethos of the church.

Chalmers carried out ‘social experiments’ in St John’s Parish in Glasgow and in West Port, Edinburgh. These consisted of trying to build communities where the church took on the burden of dealing with poverty (or, rather, *pauperism*). D. Macleod claims, however, that because Chalmers’ emphasis was on these residential communities, he missed the most deprived and unsavoury people – the homeless, criminal and most

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<sup>53</sup> T. Chalmers, *Christian and Civic Polity of a Nation* (Edinburgh, 1856), p.255, quoted in D. Macleod, ‘Thomas Chalmers and Pauperism’, in Brown, S.J. and Fry, M. (eds) *Scotland in the Age of the Disruption* (Edinburgh, 1993), p.67.

<sup>54</sup> Macleod, ‘Chalmers’, pp.64-65.

<sup>55</sup> Chalmers, *Civic Polity*, p.264, quoted in Macleod, ‘Chalmers’, p.65.

<sup>56</sup> T. Chalmers, *Select Works*, IX, p.459 quoted in S. Mechie, *Church and Social Development, 1780-1870* (Oxford, 1960), p.50.

<sup>57</sup> Macleod, ‘Chalmers’, p.74.

<sup>58</sup> S.J. Brown, ‘Thomas Chalmers and the Communal Ideal’, quoted in T.C. Smout, *Victorian Values* (Oxford, 1992), p.62.

morally misguided.<sup>59</sup> Furthermore, Macleod believes that the ‘measures’ used by Chalmers would never have reached those most in need. His employment of busy deacons, schools, prayer-meetings and savings banks would not have touched those depths.<sup>60</sup> Despite Chalmers’ value-laden motivations in tackling poverty from the side of the church, he did have some successes in managing to bring the levels of pauperism down in St John’s, and the poor seemed not to want to move elsewhere.<sup>61</sup> He was also a key figure in relation to dealing with specific crises. For example, in 1846 the Highland potato crop was ruined by blight and around three quarters of the crofters were without food. Chalmers was one of the first people to intervene and the Free Church set up a Committee of Relief and took in a special collection for the crofters.<sup>62</sup> The expression of Chalmers’ legacy, therefore, was a combination of the working out of a concept of humanitarianism alongside a morally motivated desire to dispense with the principle of poor relief by the State; the two, however, did not always meet in the middle and were sometimes contradictory.

As the most prominent person in the Free Church, Chalmers undoubtedly set the tone for what occurred beyond St John’s. Indeed, S.J. Brown claims that Chalmers, as a prominent ‘social thinker’ and churchman, ‘exercised a pervasive influence on Scottish social thought and philanthropic activity throughout the nineteenth century’.<sup>63</sup> The efforts of Lewis Hay Irving in Falkirk seemed very much in line with the wider ethos of the Free Church. However, no matter how well-meaning the motivation behind these undertakings were, the establishment of initiatives such as the poorhouse and savings bank reflected a particular attitude towards the poor that was very patriarchal in nature. When this value-system is linked to the presence of the Inspector of the Poor and other foremost church members who were connected to the management of the poor populace

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<sup>59</sup> Macleod, ‘Chalmers’, pp.65-66.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid., p.67.

<sup>61</sup> Ibid., p.71.

<sup>62</sup> Ibid., p.72.

<sup>63</sup> Brown, ‘Communal Ideal’, in Smout, *Victorian Values*, p.62.

at the social level, then it seems valid to suggest that the Free Church was primarily an instrument to deal with the *problems* caused by the poor, rather than *for* the poor as a place of worship.

This reflection links in to some historical scholarship that stresses the ‘civilising mission’ undertaken by some churches in the nineteenth century. S. Gunn, for example, has written about this ‘mission’ as ‘the means by which the working class were to be rescued from an alleged state of moral and spiritual destitution’.<sup>64</sup> In his opinion, the ‘philanthropic offensive’ of the mid nineteenth century held to a view of social relations where the propertied middle class was a ‘collective social actor’ and the working class or ‘poor’ the ‘objective social problem’.<sup>65</sup> In addition, Gunn highlights how a series of studies showed how ‘Victorian philanthropy was deployed as an instrument of authority, categorizing and cajoling the massed ranks of the urban poor’.<sup>66</sup> Furthermore, Gunn claims that the ‘civilising mission’ increased in intensity by 1860 and that ‘it became impossible to extricate religion from social action’.<sup>67</sup> In effect, this ‘mission’ was a way of consolidating middle-class culture in some churches, which became ‘key institutions in the social organisation of urban property-holders and a natural focus for collective action’.<sup>68</sup> Although Gunn’s interpretation could be said to be largely infused with the Marxist paradigm of the role of religion and the working classes, and perhaps too cynical for that reason, the Free Church in Falkirk did appear, somewhat, to fit Gunn’s characterisation of some churches. The point at which this writer departs from Gunn’s position is in considering how much of what Gunn calls the ‘other side of the paternalist coin’ or the ‘ill-concealed contempt with which so many ministers and clergymen regarded the objects of their concern’<sup>69</sup> is true and how much

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<sup>64</sup> S. Gunn, ‘The Ministry, the Middle Class and the “Civilising Mission” in Manchester, 1850-80’, *Social History*, Vol. 21 no. 1 (January, 1996), p.33.

<sup>65</sup> *Ibid.*, p.33.

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid.*, p.33.

<sup>67</sup> *Ibid.*, p.33.

<sup>68</sup> *Ibid.*, p.36.

<sup>69</sup> *Ibid.*, p.34.

of this 'dark' side of paternalism does not itself come from the personal cynicism of, in particular, Marxist historians; and, whether it is not better to attempt an analysis disconnected from interpretations that presume 'contempt' from clergy towards the poor existed by default.

In terms of why the poor were so under-represented in the two United Presbyterian congregations, it seems that, as in the Free Church, the general ethos of the U.P. churches may not have aligned with the needs of a poor population. The social composition of the churches set out in this chapter revealed that, like the Free Church, the majority of the U.P. congregations were prosperous individuals. Furthermore, the West and East Church ministers were amongst some of the most prosperous people in the town.<sup>70</sup> Moreover, the voluntary principles held by the U.P. churches left them open to accusations of being unconcerned with the wider society. It does appear that the U.P. Church in Falkirk did not share the concern of the Free Church with involving themselves directly in the management of the poor. Nevertheless, and again like the Free Church, the U.P. congregations contained people who had social and/or financial power, such as teachers, doctors, solicitors, bankers and landowners. The U.P. churches also had some socially significant people whose presence may have erected a barrier between some of the poor and those churches, especially in a small town environment. For example, the local jailor, William Watson, was a member of the East U.P. Church, as was a very prominent banker and landed proprietor called Alex McFarlane. The latter lived in 'Thornhill Mansion', had 20 windowed rooms in his very substantial property and kept three servants. In the West U.P. Church, the professionals were composed of engineers, chemists and teachers; therefore, there does not seem to have been a specific connection to direct intervention in the lives of the poor as there was in the Free Church and which could explain their absence. However, it seems possible,

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<sup>70</sup> See Chapter 3: Section IV.

given the small-town nature of Falkirk and the social function and significance of some of those who were in the U.P. churches, that invisible barriers of social segregation existed in those churches as well as in the Free Church.

#### **IV) Some Reasons for the Presence of the Poor in the Old Parish Church**

The Church of Scotland is marked out in the results tables above as having had a very strong presence of those from the poor category that did not apply to the non-established churches. A.L. Drummond and J. Bulloch claim that the Free Church failed to attract the masses, whilst the Church of Scotland, after the Disruption of 1843, had grown steadily in numbers. In their opinion, even the U. P. Church did not make the same kind of progress the Church of Scotland seemed to make, despite attempts to discredit the significance of the Established Church after the Disruption.<sup>71</sup> By 1885, the Church of Scotland was still the dominant church with 1,400 churches and 565,000 members compared to the Free Church with 1,067 churches and 330,000 members and the U.P. Church with 543 churches and 177,000 members.<sup>72</sup> In Falkirk, too, the Old Parish Church was said to have been the most populous even after the Disruption.<sup>73</sup> It is claimed by Drummond and Bulloch that the Church of Scotland remained the national church, while the Free Church stopped being so (despite its assertions to the contrary) and that the Seceders remained rather 'sectarian'.<sup>74</sup> In spite of some areas, such as parts of industrialised Edinburgh and Glasgow, Drummond and Bulloch claim that the Church of Scotland continued to operate an effective parochial system outside the industrial areas, and maintained its responsibility to the 'un-churched' who continued to think of themselves as 'attached' to the Church of Scotland when they were in need.<sup>75</sup>

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<sup>71</sup> A.L. Drummond and J. Bulloch. *The Church in Victorian Scotland: 1843-1874* (Edinburgh, 1975), p.33.

<sup>72</sup> J.M. Reid, *Kirk and Nation: The Story of the Reformed Church of Scotland* (London, 1960), p.146.

<sup>73</sup> See Chapter 3: Section IV.

<sup>74</sup> Drummond and Bulloch, *Victorian Scotland: 1843-1874*, p.35.

<sup>75</sup> *Ibid.*, p.38.

The Poor Law Amendment Act of 1845 took the duty of care of the poor out of the hands of the Church of Scotland which they had been responsible for since the Reformation.<sup>76</sup> However, the Act did allow for the Kirk Session to retain its ordinary church collections as a levy for the relief of the poor as long as these accounts could be scrutinised by the Parochial Board and the Board of Supervision.<sup>77</sup> It was due to this legislative change that the duty of care of the poor was able to pass to the minister and some members of the Free Church in Falkirk. It is clear, however, that the Church of Scotland still had provision (although limited) to raise funds for the poor which, at the time, may have lessened the severity of the withdrawal of the authority of the Church of Scotland to provide directly; and may have kept the Church of Scotland's link to the poor at the local level in those parishes where the established churches continued to raise separate funds.

There are also financial reasons for the poor being more likely to attend the parish church. Hillis has pointed out that, despite seat charges applying in the Old Parish Church as much as the non-established churches, the latter stressed that all members had a duty to donate money (in addition to the payment of seat rents), whereas this point was not emphasised as much in the Church of Scotland. The Established Church had access to state funding for some missionary work, but the voluntary principles of the non-established churches meant that they rejected the possibility of this financial assistance. In addition, the non-established churches had debts to meet in relation to the churches they had to erect for their worshippers, meaning they were obliged to exact rents from their members. Moreover, before joining the U. P. Church, each person was obliged to commit to 'contribute liberally'.<sup>78</sup> Furthermore, it cost nothing to worship in the Established Church in terms of church collections as these were apparently more discreet in the Church of Scotland and it was assumed that only

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<sup>76</sup> A.C. Cheyne, *The Transforming of the Kirk: Victorian Scotland's Religious Revolution* (Edinburgh, 1983), p.129.

<sup>77</sup> 1845 Poor Law Amendment (Scotland) Act, H.C.P.P.

<sup>78</sup> Hillis, 'Nine Churches', pp.56-57.



the well-heeled would donate.<sup>79</sup> It does seem that there was less of a financial obligation put on worshippers in the Church of Scotland, which meant that poor people were less likely to have been excluded through inability to pay.

## **V) Conclusion**

This chapter has unveiled the social structure of Falkirk town's householder population in 1860 and shown that the urban area was composed, primarily, of poor households. An initial foray into the social structure of four of Falkirk's main Presbyterian churches, when set against the structure of the town, has shown that all three non-established churches significantly under-represented these poor households, especially the *very* poor whose presence was negligible. On the other hand, the comfortable and relatively wealthy individuals were greatly over-represented and comprised a majority of churchgoers in all non-established churches. All the same, the East U.P. Church did stand out as being somewhat more representative of the poor than the other two non-established churches, although the poor were still markedly under-represented and the better-off were still a majority. In the Church of Scotland, however, the social structure was very different. The wealthy did not predominate, but rather there was an over-abundance of poor householders. The very poorest, however, were still largely invisible, as was the case in all of the non-established churches.

Some potential reasons as to why the poor and, in particular, the very poor had been so marginalised from the churches were explored. The issue of seat rents was discussed as having been a real encumbrance to the attendance of poorer people. Seat rents were charged in all denominations which, therefore, would explain the almost complete absence of the very poor from *all* churches. In terms of accounting for the under-representation of the poor from the non-established churches, it was found that

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<sup>79</sup> Drummond and Bulloch, *Victorian Scotland: 1843-1874*, p.38.

the Free Church, in particular, may have been a church that poor people and paupers did not consider attending due to the prominent presence of the Inspector of the Poor and some other members closely involved in overseeing the social and moral management of the poor populace. If the poorest people felt understandably self-conscious at taking up a free pew, it is perhaps not too severe to suggest that they also would have felt rather unsettled by the presence of well-to-do officials, such as John Beeby and the Ragged School master and his matron in the Free Church on a Sunday morning. An ethos of individualism and prosperity is said by historians such as Drummond and Bulloch to have characterised the U.P. churches, and the presence of wealthy and socially prominent individuals in the Falkirk churches bears this out. There was a huge disparity between the wealth and social position of some members of the U.P. churches and the large majority of poor in the town which was not nearly as evident in the Old Parish Church.

These results suggest that when it came to churchgoing in the mid nineteenth century, it was poverty *per se* that kept people away. Poverty determined a person's place in the social hierarchy and this meant that some of the poor were subject to patriarchal and authoritarian interventions into their lives by some of the more socially powerful members of the non-established churches - the Free Church, in particular. However, the very poorest Falkirk householders were largely absent from all churches which indicates that the charging of seat rents really did have a significant effect in determining the social composition of churches by effectively preventing the most deprived from attending even the Old Parish Church of Scotland.

## CHAPTER 5

### 1860 Falkirk: The Occupations of the People and their Representation in the Churches

A study concerned with the social factors affecting churchgoing must include a substantial element of an investigation into the occupations of the people. In some of the secondary literature the development of heavy industry during the nineteenth century was seen as a contributory cause to the lack of working-class churchgoers. For example, Inglis claimed that, in England, the ‘masses’ were hardly ever in church and attendances were lowest in London and the large manufacturing towns such as Bradford and Sheffield. As the population of Britain almost doubled between 1801 and 1851, those born in industrial areas had no connection to a church.<sup>1</sup> The rise of the factory system went hand in hand with industrialisation and because this economic change in the basis of society is seen by some historians such as Inglis as having had a negative effect on working-class churchgoing, it seems logical to try to evaluate factory workers in isolation from other working-class groups. The formation of occupational categories in this study, therefore, is designed to measure the proportion of those in each occupational *sector* in order to isolate the heavy industrial element of the working population. W.A. Armstrong refers to this type of filtering in occupational structure as deducing ‘economic variables’.<sup>2</sup> The point of this chapter, then, is to analyse the occupational divisions of Falkirk town and then apply these findings to the composition of the churches.

It seems odd that the differentiation between factory workers and those in industries that were not dependent on mechanisation are not singled out and applied to an analysis of churchgoing rates in most other studies of this nature. By contrast,

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<sup>1</sup> K.S. Inglis, *Churches and the Working Classes in Victorian England* (London, 1963), pp.1-3.

<sup>2</sup> W.A. Armstrong, ‘The Use of Information About Occupation’, in Wrigley, E.A. (ed.), *Nineteenth-century Society: Essays in the Use of Quantitative Methods for the Study of Social Data* (Cambridge, 1972), p.192.

because of the form of the traditional methodology, the focus seems always to be on the division between the working, middle and upper classes, which has the effect of treating the working classes as a generic whole. Even in most of those studies that do differentiate between the skilled and the unskilled working classes, they do not look for variations in churchgoing between heavy industrial workers and those in other working-class employments. In standard systems of classification, such as those used by A. A. MacLaren and P.L.M. Hillis, the heavy-industrial factory workers are classified along with all other semi-skilled, skilled and unskilled workers, regardless of the particular industry to which they belonged.<sup>3</sup> However, this method serves only to disguise the differences in churchgoing between the working classes and, therefore, the point of this alternative method is to *differentiate* between the working classes.

The most obvious point of difference in working-class life in nineteenth-century Falkirk is that between the iron factories and the traditional trades. The latter had long-established roots in the burgh well before the iron factories had an impact on the town.<sup>4</sup> Many of the older occupations had been a part of the fabric of Falkirk well before the first ironworks at Carron was established in 1759. It has already been mentioned that some of the older occupations were associated with the high-status craftsmen and ruling members of the town in pre-industrial Falkirk. In addition, the esteemed social position of some craftsmen and tradesmen was still in evidence when the new Town Council was formed and elected in 1832, largely composed of craftsmen and a few merchants.<sup>5</sup> It is difficult to imagine that the superior social status attributed to some of those in the older occupations had been completely obliterated by 1860, given that the iron industry had not impacted fully on the economy of the town until the 1880s.<sup>6</sup> Therefore, it is argued here that the trades of some of the traditional workers carried a measure of

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<sup>3</sup> For example, see A.A. MacLaren, *Religion and Social Class: the Disruption Years in Aberdeen*, p.218 and P.L.M. Hillis, *The Barony of Glasgow: a Window on to Church and People in Nineteenth-Century Scotland*, p.111.

<sup>4</sup> The development of the iron factories and traditional trades has been set out in context in Chapter 3.

<sup>5</sup> See Chapter 3: Section I.

<sup>6</sup> See Chapter 3: Section III

prestige that will have separated them from the iron factory workforce in terms of social status, and that in turn will have been reflected in the composition of the churches.

### **I) Methodology: A Sector-by-Sector Approach to Occupational Analysis**

The occupations of Falkirk have been analysed from the same 1860 VR used to create the valuation hierarchy in the previous chapter. However, the census of 1861 also had to be used to discover the employments of those people where the VR had omitted to record an occupation.<sup>7</sup> Fewer households could be analysed than composed the foundation of the valuation analysis of properties in Chapter 4 because even when checked against the census, it was not always possible to discover a householder's occupation. This applied, in particular, to households headed by women who were not often recorded in the sources with a specific employment. Where this was the case, the household was categorised under the occupation of the eldest child or relative if one was available. Nevertheless, 1,671 of the 1,963 householders used in the valuation study could be classified according to their occupation, equating to about 85% of the entire residential VR<sup>8</sup>, which makes for a reliable proportion of householders from which to draw conclusions about the occupations of the townsfolk.

The occupations listed on the VR and/or census were grouped according to the categories that emerged from their description. Nine main categories were identified which seemed to encompass best all of the individual occupations. The nature of this approach means that within each sector, a varying range of status positions is reflected as, for example, iron moulders and iron masters will fall into the same category. Further analyses can then be carried out to determine the gradations of occupational roles that existed *within* each sector to measure employment position and status. However, a consideration of the different status positions within each category is

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<sup>7</sup> See Chapter 2: Section II for why this was necessary.

<sup>8</sup> See Chapter 4: Table 4:1

reserved for a later chapter.<sup>9</sup> The main point to stress here is the formation of a study of the general occupational make-up of Falkirk town in order to gain an impression of how well the churches reflected this broad structure.

As mentioned, nine essential categories of occupations were identified: 1) the ironworks; 2) the traditional and other urban trades; 3) transport and communication; 4) commercial activities; 5) agriculture; 6) professional and/or specialised roles; 7) women-only occupations; 8) non-working households and lodging housekeepers; 9) general labourers. Each category will be discussed in terms of how it was composed. They are illustrated below in Table 5:1.

**Table 5:1 Occupational Categories, Falkirk 1860 (simple form)**

TABLE 5:1	OCCUPATIONAL CATEGORIES
CATEGORY	SECTOR
1	IRONWORKS
2	TRADITIONAL AND OTHER TRADES
3	POST, TRANSPORT, SHIPPING, SERVICE
4	COMMERCIAL
5	AGRICULTURAL
6	PROFESSIONAL/SPECIALISED
7	WOMEN-ONLY
8	NON-WORKING/LODGING HOUSE
9	GENERAL LABOURING

### **Category 1: Ironworks**

The first occupational category that was identified was that of the ironworks. The classification of this group involved the challenge of identifying the householders from the VR residential database who worked in the iron factories. For the most part, an ironfoundry household was evident from the occupational description. There were a lot of different production roles incorporated into making iron goods at the shop-floor level including moulders, patternmakers, irondressers and foundry labourers.<sup>10</sup> Furthermore, most clerks and labourers were evidently employed at an iron factory because they were recorded as ‘foundry labourers’ or ‘foundry clerks’ on the 1860 VR

<sup>9</sup> This issue is dealt with separately in Chapter 6.

<sup>10</sup> See Chapter 3: Section III.

or 1861 Census. Most foundry householders, then, were straightforwardly placed in the ironworks category. The 1860 VR and 1861 Census were generally good (in Falkirk anyway) at indicating if people did belong to particular industries. This may not have been the case throughout the country, but specifying the nature of trade was done by officials (to varying extents) because it was an explicit direction of the Census Office; although P.M. Tillott points out that there were still many unspecified occupations listed, for example, clerks and labourers.<sup>11</sup> In addition, because this analysis is concerned with occupational *sector*, the very few iron masters who lived in the burgh were included in this category, as were the small number of foundry warehousemen and timekeepers. Category 1, then, will account for all households involved directly at the ironworks, regardless of role, rank or status.

Unlike the obvious foundry roles mentioned above, other occupations, in particular, engineers and blacksmiths, were more difficult to place in the foundry context. It was only very rarely that a blacksmith or engineer was recorded in the sources as having worked in a foundry. Some engineers and smiths could have been independent craftsmen rather than foundry workers, but it was crucial for the reliability of the methodology to separate these autonomous individuals from those employed at the factories. Therefore, a way had to be devised of separating out the independent engineers and smiths from those employed at the factories when it was not evident from the sources.

By 1860, most smiths and engineers would have worked under factory conditions. Roger Penn highlights, in a general sense, how the need for machines and steam engines increased the need for engineering skills during the expansion of the industrial revolution. Before 1820, most machines were constructed by itinerant millwrights who were highly skilled and few in number and entry to the trade was limited

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<sup>11</sup> P.M. Tillott, 'Sources of Inaccuracy in the 1851 and 1861 Censuses', in Wrigley (ed.), *Nineteenth-century Society*, p.116.

by apprenticeships.<sup>12</sup> After 1820, the engineering trade expanded into the factories with a huge increase in demand for steam engines, but this development threatened the craft status of millwrights.<sup>13</sup> Furthermore, the tools required for engineering production became tied to the factories.<sup>14</sup> The Amalgamated Society of Engineers (A.S.E.) was established in 1851 to tackle the flood of labour that threatened their position.<sup>15</sup> By 1860, then, engineering had become an essential part of iron factory life. The problem became how to identify the remnant of engineers that were still independent of the foundries. The same issue applied also to blacksmiths. Although many smiths were needed in the iron factories, there were still some independent blacksmiths in Falkirk. Engineers and smiths, then, had to be treated a bit more intricately than the irondressers and moulders during classification.

One way of recognising an autonomous engineer or smith on the VR was by the holding of a shop or workshop alongside a residential property. If an engineer or smith did have his own separate work premises recorded on the VR it was highly likely that he was not employed at a factory. In these cases, the householder concerned was allocated to the traditional trades of Category 2 in the scheme above. Another useful source in identifying the independent craftsmen was *Slater's (1861) Royal National Commercial Dictionary and Topography of Scotland* that includes lists of Falkirk businesses and employers.<sup>16</sup> Employers are listed there by types and two of the categories are 'engineers and millwrights' and 'smiths'.<sup>17</sup> Slater's source highlights how few the autonomous engineers were in 1860, although there were more smiths than engineers listed in the directory: just 3 entries were listed under 'engineers and

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<sup>12</sup> Roger Penn, 'Skilled Manual Workers in the Labour Process, 1856-1964', in Wood, Stephen (ed.) *The Degradation of Work: Skill, Deskillling and the Labour Process* (London, 1982), p.91.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid., p.91.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid., p.91.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid., p.91.

<sup>16</sup> Slater's (Later Pigot and Co's) *Royal National Commercial Dictionary and Topography of Scotland* (1861), Digitised online by the National Library of Scotland at <http://archive.org/details/slaterslaterpigo1861unse> and <http://www.archive.org/stream/slaterslaterpigo1861unse#page/1232/mode/2up> (Accessed 31/03/2012).

<sup>17</sup> Slater, *Commercial Dictionary*.



millwrights' but there were 23 smiths. Those individuals who were found in the directory as smiths or engineers and who were traced to the VR and/or census were classified under Category 2. For example, one VR entry was for Peter Taylor from the High Street with a house valued at £7 p.a. and a shop valued at £8 p.a. He had no recorded occupation on the VR, but the 1861 Census recorded him as an enginemaker employing 4 men and 2 boys. He was also listed under the engineer category in Slater's directory. Householders such as Taylor, then, were placed in the category of the traditional trades because they were independent, small employers with roots in the traditional economy and did not represent heavy industry.

There were also other descriptions of engineers that were not included in Category 1 for the ironworks and these were ships' engineers and the less blue-collar 'civil' and other specialist engineers. In the case of the latter, these were allocated to the professional grouping of Category 6. Engineers who worked on ships or the railway were included in Category 3 for 'Post, Transport, Shipping and Service'. These were not put in Category 1 so that these non-factory positions would be separate from the ironwork householders.

## **Category 2: Traditional and Other Trades**

The second category, of 'Traditional and Other Trades', was formed for those in occupations grounded in pre-industrial Falkirk.<sup>18</sup> However, it also includes a small minority of some other employments that were not traditional but connected to other urban development: for example, a 'sodawater maker' and an 'acid manufacturer'. These miscellaneous occupations were not traditional in type but are included here because they do not represent large-scale, heavy industrial production, but are more in line with a small-town, market economy. However, the vast majority of occupations in

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<sup>18</sup> The nature of these trades is explained in Chapter 3: Section II.

this category represent those trades which characterised pre-industrial Falkirk and include shoemakers, printers, masons, brewers, watchmakers, fleshers, cabinetmakers, coopers, painters, joiners, slaters, tailors, tanners and bakers. This sector includes small employers as well as those employed or carrying out apprenticeships in the trades concerned. Not all of these householders would have been involved in manual work, especially the larger employers within these trades; however, the majority would have been involved in general manual work of some description. As was the case for the ironworks, then, all ranks of 'traditional' sector householders are included in the formation of this category.

### **Category 3: Post, Transport, Shipping and Service**

Category 3 represents the third predominantly manual category that was identified and applies to those working in 'Post, Transport, Shipping and Service'. This section has been designed as a way of classifying those other manual workers not involved in the manufacturing processes of the iron or traditional trades. This sector includes those in a service-orientated role or who worked on the railway, ships/canals, or carting goods and/or people. It contains occupations such as boatmen, carters, coachmen, railway porters and letter carriers. It also includes those involved in other outdoor manual work, for example road workers, gardeners or tollkeepers; and those in service to private houses or other businesses, such as chimney sweeps and grooms. In similar terms to the previous categories, it does not comprise solely manual workers but also has a minority of railway clerks and the few small employers/masters of these sub-sections. Along with categories 1 and 2, this grouping is the third mainly manual category and exists as a way of identifying those parts of the economy not reliant on the largely manufacturing functions of the ironworks or traditional trades in order to distinguish as much as possible between all three types of predominantly manual sector.

#### **Category 4: Commercial**

The fourth category contains all of those involved in ‘commerce’ of some sort. The selling of goods or services was an integral part of the Falkirk economy due to its history as a small market town. In the same way as for the other sections, this group includes all levels of commercial enterprise from prosperous merchants to small-time dealers or ‘hawkers’. Moreover, this section contains all those who sold a commercial service of some sort, such as ‘haircutters’ and ‘eating-house keepers’. Drapers are included here because the act of selling was probably more significant than any manual aspect of the work, unlike, for example, working at a tailor’s shop. In addition, all grocers, publicans, innkeepers and spirit sellers are quantified in this section. This category represents a largely non-manual sector and so will contain a majority of middle-class individuals. In relation to the secondary literature, the merchant classes are important because it is claimed by historians such as Hillis that many of the aspiring lower middle classes left the Church of Scotland at the Disruption to go over to the Free Church. They did this in order to separate themselves from the perceived obstruction to their social advancement by the upper classes in the Church of Scotland.<sup>19</sup> It was partly for this reason that the Free Church was seen to contain more middle-class people than the Church of Scotland. The measurement of this section will shed some light on this issue in relation to the Falkirk churches.

#### **Category 5: Agricultural**

Category five relates to animal husbandry and farming. This category was identified because the parish of Falkirk had traditionally been connected to agriculture and so the presence of agricultural workers was not surprising. There were a few farmers listed on the VR, and they had the highest valued properties because the value

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<sup>19</sup> P.L.M. Hillis, ‘Presbyterianism and Social Class in Mid Nineteenth-Century Glasgow: A Study of Nine Churches’, *Journal Ecclesiastical History*, 32/1 (1981), p.55.

of the land was included in the final sum recorded on the VR. As well as the farmers, there were cowfeeders and other dairy workers who lived in the burgh. Also included in this section are the agricultural labourers who worked on the farms. The existence of an agricultural sector serves to underline Falkirk's link to a non-mechanised past and emphasises its *evolution* into an industrial town.

### **Category 6: Professional/Specialised**

The sixth category pertains to all those who were professionals or whose occupations were specialised. This sector will naturally contain non-manual and, therefore, more middle-class people. Within this sector, the sub-categories that were identified were doctors, teachers, ministers of religion, solicitors (writers) and bankers, police, public officials, and all those clerks who were not specifically noted as having been 'foundry' clerks. Nevertheless, it is true to say that not all of the people were clearly delineated as 'middle-class' as opposed to 'working-class', especially in the case of police and teachers in this era; however, the majority would have been middle-class. This section also covers those who had a particular duty to perform on behalf of the State, such as the Inspector of the Poor, John Beeby, and the Inland Revenue supervisor, John Beatson. Another sub-category was created for more miscellaneous but professional occupations such as artists and newspaper reporters. As in the other categories, then, this sector includes a wide range of occupational ranks, but here they are all linked in being non-manufacturing and non-commercial, but in some way specialised and/or professional. In common with the commercial category, an evaluation of the professionals is important to determining the depth of middle-class affiliation to the churches.

### **Category 7: Women-only Occupations**

Category 7 is a separate section to quantify all of the female head householders who were employed in occupations that were identified as having been exclusive to women. In 1860 Falkirk the occupations of most poor single women and widowed householders was largely domestic-based: cleaning or dealing with laundry, sewing and dressmaking. Women also seemed to dominate millinery and bootbinding. Some occupational titles that only women had were knitters, charwomen, midwives and paupers! Although it is unlikely that the only paupers in Falkirk at this time were women, the VR lists just four head householders who were 'paupers' and they were all women. There were also a lot of women involved in domestic service at private houses, but these tended to be, mainly, much younger women and were not head householders. This section, then, is interested in grouping together all female head householders who dealt with the 'women's work' of the town.

Women, however, also worked in employments other than those of the largely domestic economy. These areas of employment included teaching, shop-work and some 'light' manufacturing industries, such as brush and cork-making. In addition, women made up many 'householders', 'lodging-house keepers', and a few 'landed proprietors' of the wealthier sort, but these were classified in Category 8 as they were not particular to women. There were also quite a few female spirit-sellers and innkeepers of different ranks. Some of the women in commercial enterprises were independent and well-off, such as the wool merchant, Lilius Foord, and her sisters, Agnes and Susan Warden. According to the census, Lilius was a widow and they all lived together with her son, James, who was 30-years-old and employed as a cabinetmaker. The VR records the names of both Lilius and her middle-aged unmarried sisters as being the owners of the shop they ran, and it appears in Slater's directory as a

‘fancy repository’.<sup>20</sup> The 1860 VR recorded their house with a substantial value of £21 p.a. In cases such as this, then, where the occupations did not typify ‘women’s work’, female householders were ranked according to whichever of the other occupational categories they fell into. This section, however, was concerned only with classifying those occupations that were particular to the women householders of 1860 Falkirk.

### **Category 8: Non-working/Lodging Houses**

The eighth category that was identified from the VR is that of those without conventional employment in the sense that they were not recorded with any kind of occupation, but made their living from keeping lodgers or were, more ambiguously, ‘householders’ or ‘annuitants’ of some sort. As a result, this category includes many of the women referred to in the previous section. Keeping lodgers was a way that many families, especially the poorer ones and widows, brought extra money into the household and some were entirely dependent on keeping lodgers. In a run-down area previously known as the Back Row (now Manor Street), there were many of these types of lodging houses. Although the lodgers were by no means always Irish, the owners often were, having come from Ireland in previous years. For example, there was a Winifred Harris who kept a lodging house on the Back Row. She was 60- years-old, a widow from Ireland and housed four adult lodgers and a child along with her own daughter and grandson. The house could not have been particularly large as it had just 3 windowed rooms. Then there was Betty Slaven, nearby on Bank Street, who ran a ‘licensed’ lodging house. She was also a widow from Ireland, and kept four adult male lodgers, all of whom were Irish labourers. The house had 2 windowed rooms and was valued at a low annual rental of £2 10s. p.a. However, this group does not just comprise lodging-house keepers. There was also the well-to-do, widowed Mrs Belfrage of

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<sup>20</sup> Slater, *Commercial Dictionary (1861)*, Digitised online at NLS.

Rosepark House, near the Callander Riggs area of the town who also appeared in Slater's directory under the listing of Falkirk's 'gentry'. She lived with her slightly older sister, who was also a widow. They lived in a substantial property, valued at £35 p.a. on the 1860 VR, which had 12 windowed rooms, and they kept two domestic servants. Also included in this category are the many women who were described in the sources as just 'widows', and the few male, ex-army 'Chelsea' pensioners that existed. In effect, then, this category includes mainly widows, lodging-house keepers and others whose main source of property and income came from inherited property or is largely undefined.

### **Category 9: General Labourers**

The final category applies to those described in the sources specifically as general labourers and is the fourth primarily manual category. These are the labourers who could not be connected to any particular industry. Foundry labourers were usually denoted as such in the sources, as were other labourers who worked in a particular sector, such as timber or farm labourers. Because this part of the study is concerned with sector rather than rank, those labourers who were not 'general' have been assigned to the relevant category; whereas the general labourers have been quantified separately. A large part of the more recent argument in the historical literature about the churchgoing of the working classes centres on the difference in churchgoing between the skilled and the unskilled working classes, with labourers perceived as the latter. It has been found in studies such as Hillis' that the unskilled labourers were outnumbered by the skilled working classes in the churches studied.<sup>21</sup> Findings such as these have underlined the strength of skilled working-class church membership as opposed to a poor representation of the unskilled. The issue of the absence of the unskilled labourers

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<sup>21</sup> Hillis, 'Nine Churches', p.39

from the churches, rather than the skilled workers, is now one of the important elements of the debate and is why ‘general’ labourers have been quantified separately. The other categories where labourers feature, such as the ironwork sector, can also be considered separately for a look at their relative position to the sector as a whole. This section, however, is concerned just with evaluating ‘general’ labourers.

There is another observation that should be made in regard to the labourer households in this study and that is that they were mostly Scottish-born, not Irish. The word ‘labourer’ and its association with ‘unskilled’ work is often linked to the Irish ‘navvies’ that came to Scotland during the industrial revolution and helped to build roads and canals. But an analysis of all Falkirk labourer households, regardless of industrial sector, shows that of the 202 labourer-headed households, just 40 were born outside Scotland (of these 39 were Irish and 1 English). On the contrary, 87 were Falkirk-born or came from nearby villages, such as Dunipace. The other 75 were from other parts of Scotland, as close as Stirling and as far away as Aberdeen. The vast majority of all labourers, then (80%), were Scots-born. This point is made because if it is assumed that the vast majority of labourers were Irish then it would not be legitimate to consider their presence in the Scottish Presbyterian churches because most Irish labourers probably would have been Catholic, and more likely found in St Xavier’s Chapel in Falkirk, for which no relevant sources exist.<sup>22</sup> However, the fact that most labourers were Scottish makes it legitimate to consider their general representation in the churches.

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<sup>22</sup> See Chapter 3: Section IV.



## **II) Falkirk Occupations in the Mid-Nineteenth Century: Results of Sector Analysis**

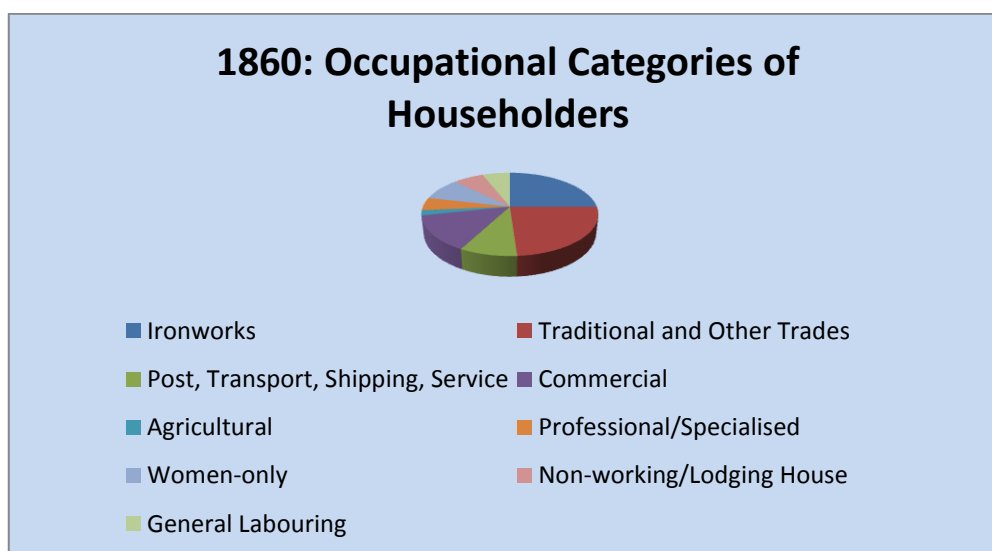
The findings from the occupational breakdown of Falkirk householders will now be discussed. Table 5:2 shows the proportion of each category in real and proportional terms and Figure 5:3 depicts the same data in pie-chart form.

**Table 5:2 Valuation Roll Householders and Occupational Categories, Falkirk 1860**

TABLE 5:2 OCCUPATIONAL CATEGORIES		FALKIRK 1860	
CATEGORY	SECTOR	RN	% VR
1	IRONWORKS	418	25.0
2	TRADITIONAL AND OTHER TRADES	399	23.9
3	POST, TRANSPORT, SHIPPING, SERVICE	149	8.9
4	COMMERCIAL	230	13.8
5	AGRICULTURAL	34	2.0
6	PROFESSIONAL/SPECIALISED	83	5.0
7	WOMEN-ONLY	147	8.8
8	NON-WORKING/LODGING HOUSE	110	6.6
9	GENERAL LABOURING	101	6.0
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>1,671</b>	<b>100</b>

Original Source: Falkirk 1860 Valuation Roll. Results based on 1,963 householders in Chapter 4: Section I, Table 4:1, minus households with no recorded occupation (292 entries) = 1,671 for occupational analysis above. RN = real numbers

**Piechart 5:3 Valuation Roll Householders and Occupational Categories, Falkirk 1860**



Original Source: Falkirk 1860 Valuation Roll. Results based on 1,671 householders, as Table 5:2.

The first point to note is that households from Category 1, the ironwork sector, made up the largest of all the occupational groups identified and comprised 25% of VR households. However, the traditional trades were virtually parallel to the ironworks in

terms of proportion, comprising 24% of households. Technically, it would appear as though the ironwork households did just, ever so slightly, dominate over the traditional trades as represented by the town's social structure. However, it is overwhelmingly clear that in 1860 Falkirk town there was still a very strong presence of non-iron factory manual trades and occupations. Therefore, despite the advancement of the iron factories, the traditional employments still accounted for a very significant part of the economy. This finding would correlate with M. Barke's when he stressed that even by 1850 there had been no significant change to Falkirk's economy.<sup>23</sup>

In contrast to the traditional trades and iron sector, the non-manufacturing sectors did not have as central a role in the economy of the town. The commercial category was the third most prominent sector and made up 14% of households, indicating the continued importance of trading in goods and services to Falkirk's population. But of course these results show that commerce was not a predominant part of the economy, which fell to the iron and traditional trades. The third, mainly manual, sector of 'Post, Transport, Shipping and Service' was the next largest category after commerce but comprised just 9% of householders, which again reinforces how strongly the manufacturing-related categories of 1 and 2 dominated the Falkirk economy in 1860. The agricultural element of Falkirk householders in Category 5 comprised just 2% of the VR householders which is not surprising given that most of the farmers and farm workers would have lived outside the immediate burgh area. Agriculture made up just a tiny part of the town's economy as opposed to those in manufacturing or even commerce and the service and transport sector. Surprisingly, perhaps, the 'Professional/Specialised' group of Category 6 formed just 5% of the VR residential households. Teachers, police, officials and suchlike were necessary to any town, but in

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<sup>23</sup> M. Barke, 'Some Processes and Patterns of Urban Change: the Case of Falkirk, 1800-1961', Vol. 1, Unpublished PhD thesis, University of Glasgow (1973), pp.96-102.

Falkirk they were certainly a small minority of the population. Again, this result serves to reinforce the manual nature of the Falkirk economy.

In terms of the remaining categories, the women-only occupations of Category 7 comprised 9% of the VR residential properties, which was a fairly large part of the town population when considered relative to others: the proportion of working, women-headed households equated almost to the entire 'Post, Transport, Shipping and Service' sector, highlighting that women-headed households contributed significantly in their own right to the Falkirk economy. The 'Non-working and Lodging House' element of Category 8 comprised 7% of residential properties, which was another fairly sizeable element of households headed by those not in conventional working situations. And finally, the 'General Labouring' group of Category 9 made up 6% of households. But when it is considered that the varied professions and specialisms of Category 6 made up 5% of households, it puts the proportion of general labourers into context as a fairly small though significant part of the 1860 workforce.

Overall, it is clear from this initial occupational analysis that Falkirk was dominated almost equally between the primarily manual/manufacturing iron factory and traditional trades sectors. The commercial category was much less notable than the other two large, predominantly manual groups, but still comprised a sizeable part of households. The other, largely non-manual categories, such as the professionals, formed small but significant parts of the householder population; as did labourers, women in specific female-orientated occupations, non-working households and the post, transport and communications element. The agricultural sector was, unsurprisingly, very small. However, the overwhelming characterisation gained of 1860 Falkirk from this illustration of occupations is one of an essentially manual and so 'working-class' economy.

### **III) The Churches and Occupations in Mid Nineteenth-Century Falkirk**

The next stage in this analysis is to look at how well represented were the different occupational sectors in the churches, to discover if any biases towards certain occupational groups existed. The churches that are discussed are the same ones represented previously: St Andrew's Free; the West United Presbyterian; the East United Presbyterian and the Old Parish Church of Scotland. The results are shown below, beginning with the Free Church shown in Table 5:4. Each set of results contains the occupational structure of the town householders alongside that of the church householders that were traced to the VR or census. The end column depicts the difference in proportion in the church compared with that of the town.

**Table 5:4 St Andrew's Free Church Householders and Occupations, 1860**

OCCUPATIONAL CATEGORY	ST ANDREW'S FREE CHURCH HOUSEHOLDERS* 1860	RN	% CR	% VR	% CHURCH REPRESENTATION
1	IRONWORKS	18	12.5	25.0	- 12.5
2	TRADITIONAL AND OTHER TRADES	35	24.3	23.9	+ 0.4
3	POST, TRANSPORT, SHIPPING, SERVICE	12	8.3	8.9	- 0.6
4	COMMERCIAL	38	26.4	13.8	+ 12.6
5	AGRICULTURAL	6	4.2	2.0	+ 2.2
6	SPECIALISED/PROFESSIONAL	14	9.7	5.0	+ 4.7
7	WOMEN-ONLY	12	8.3	8.8	- 0.5
8	NON-WORKING/LODGING HOUSE	6	4.2	6.6	- 2.4
9	GENERAL LABOURING	3	2.1	6.0	- 3.9

\*See Chapter 2: Section V for the reason for counting only head householders. The same applies to subsequent church analyses. Church householders = 148 head householders from CR who were traced to VR and/or 1861 Census, minus the minister and 3 householders with no occupation, leaving 144 head householders for valuation analysis above. CR = communion roll. RN = real numbers

The first point to note about St Andrew's Free Church is that those working in the iron industry were under-represented in the congregation by 12.5% – the most significant under-representation of any group in the church. By contrast, those from the traditional and other trades were represented proportionally. On the other hand, the two sectors over-represented by the biggest proportions were those from the commercial and professional/specialist group. The commercial sector was over-represented by nearly 13% and the professional/specialised by nearly 5%. This result would appear to lend

support to the arguments of Drummond and Bulloch - that the Free Church was dominated by the middle class. In the towns, according to these historians, the labouring poor failed to enter the Free Church as it was a mainly middle-class venture.<sup>24</sup> General labourers were under-represented in the Free Church which further supports the point just made. But, strikingly, it is the ironworkers who were distinctly lacking in the Free Church when compared to their presence in the burgh. Conversely, it was the commercial group and professionals that stood out of the congregation, making up 36% of head householders (when combined) but comprised only 19% of town householders. The Free Church, then, attracted those from the commercial and professional sector whilst under-appealing to the iron workers of the town. The traditional trades, on the other hand, were represented fairly. The results from the Free Church underline its function as a haven for the 'up-and-coming' middle classes, with a predominance of merchants and professionals.

The discussion will now turn to the findings for the West U.P. Church and are shown below in Table 5:5.

**Table 5:5 West U.P. Church Householders and Occupations, 1860**

OCCUPATIONAL CATEGORY	WEST U.P. CHURCH HOUSEHOLDERS* 1860	RN	% CR	% VR	% CHURCH REPRESENTATION
1	IRONWORKS	32	28.1	25.0	+ 3.1
2	TRADITIONAL AND OTHER TRADES	30	26.3	23.9	+ 2.4
3	POST, TRANSPORT, SHIPPING, SERVICE	7	6.1	8.9	- 2.8
4	COMMERCIAL	23	20.2	13.8	+ 6.4
5	AGRICULTURAL	2	1.7	2.0	- 0.3
6	PROFESSIONAL/SPECIALISED	8	7.0	5.0	+ 2.0
7	WOMEN-ONLY	7	6.1	8.8	- 2.7
8	NON-WORKING/LODGING HOUSE	4	3.5	6.6	- 3.1
9	GENERAL LABOURING	1	0.9	6.0	- 5.1

\*Church householders = 118 head householders from CR who were traced to VR and/or 1861 Census, minus the minister and 3 householders with no occupation, leaving 114 head householders for valuation analysis above. CR = communion roll. RN = real numbers

The occupational composition of the West U.P. Church is rather different from that of the Free Church. Firstly, there are slightly too many ironworkers compared to

<sup>24</sup> A.L Drummond and J.Bulloch, *The Church in Victorian Scotland: 1843-1874* (Edinburgh, 1975), p.7.

the town's population, with the former over-represented by 3%. Similarly the traditional workforce is marginally over-represented by about 2%. However, as in the Free Church, there is an over-abundance of those involved in commerce; but in the West Church it is not quite as out of proportion at 6% as in the Free Church at 13%. The professional and specialised sector, however, is only slightly over-represented at 7% of households, unlike in the Free Church. These findings suggest that for some reason, the West U.P. Church appealed more to those working in the iron industry than the Free Church. Nevertheless, general labourers were under-represented, as in the Free Church. The West U.P. Church, then, did appear to attract iron workers as much as those in other working-class occupations, whilst still having an over-representation of commercial interests. On further analysis of the database, it can be ascertained that the reason for the over-representation of iron worker could have been due to the presence of one significant iron factory employer and another manager in the West Church, as opposed to the Free or East U.P. churches. At the top end of the property valuations for the church members was a Mrs Graham Hardie, residing at Mayfield. There was only one Graham Hardie on the VR for 1860 Falkirk and he was an ironmaster and owner of various properties, such as an iron foundry, warehouses and land. Their house and garden were valued at £35 p.a., classifying him at Level 1 of the VR hierarchy. Secondly, there was George Binnie, described as an ironfoundry 'manager' on the census of 1861, whose house and garden was valued at £15 p.a., putting him at Level 2 of the VR hierarchy. By contrast, there was no ironmaster or manager on the rolls for the Free or East U.P. churches (at least at the point of this study). It would appear, therefore, that the West U.P. Church was the place of worship of at least two significant iron factory employers/managers, whereas this was not the case in the Free or East U.P. churches in 1860 and which could account for the over-representation of iron sector households in the West Church.

The results for the East U.P. Church are now discussed. The table of results is shown in figure 5:6 below.

**Table 5:6 East U.P. Church Householders and Occupations, 1860**

OCCUPATIONAL CATEGORY	EAST U.P. CHURCH HOUSEHOLDERS* 1860	RN	% CR	% VR	% CHURCH REPRESENTATION
1	IRONWORKS	24	17.1	25.0	- 7.9
2	TRADITIONAL AND OTHER TRADES	42	30.0	23.9	+ 6.1
3	POST, TRANSPORT, SHIPPING, SERVICE	13	9.3	8.9	+ 0.4
4	COMMERCIAL	21	15.0	13.8	+ 1.2
5	AGRICULTURAL	3	2.1	2.0	+ 0.1
6	PROFESSIONAL/SPECIALISED	8	5.7	5.0	+ 0.7
7	WOMEN-ONLY	15	10.7	8.8	+ 1.9
8	NON-WORKING/LODGING HOUSE	8	5.7	6.6	- 0.9
9	GENERAL LABOURING	6	4.3	6.0	- 1.7

\*Church householders = 143 head householders from CR who were traced to VR and/or 1861 Census, minus 3 householders with no occupation, leaving 140 head householders for valuation analysis above. CR = communion roll. RN = real numbers

The occupational composition of the East U.P. Church is, like the West Church, much more balanced. However, the main point of note is in the under-representation of the iron sector but a good representation of the traditional category, mirroring the pattern of the Free Church's composition. The former were found at 8% less than was proportional and the latter at 6% more than their relative town presence. But, where the Free Church was most obviously biased towards commercial interests, the East U.P. Church seemed weighted towards the traditional trades and occupations of Category 2. In fact, it was only categories 1 and 2 that were not represented more or less in proportional terms in the East Church. In addition, the obvious lack of ironworkers in the East Church reflected the composition of the Free Church, and like the former, the East Church had no major iron employer or manager in its ranks. The East Church, then, was more or less balanced in how it reflected the different occupations, apart from its representation of the ironworkers who were under-accounted for, and those from the traditional trades who were over-accounted for.

The results of three principal non-established churches in Falkirk in 1860 highlight two major themes: the over-representation of those involved in commercial

activities and professionals, and the lack of representation of ironworker compared to a satisfactory representation of traditional workers. The industrial workforce was greatly under-represented in all but the West U.P. Church, where there was a slight over-abundance of industrial worker, probably due to the presence of two iron foundry employers/managers. In the Free Church there was a strong bias towards commercial and professional interests. All the same, it may not be too much of a surprise to some that the Free Church was weighted towards those with commercial interests, as this is widely claimed in the secondary literature. But what may be more of interest is that it would appear there was something about the circumstances of those in the iron sector that made them either less welcome or less likely to go to at least two of Falkirk's main Presbyterian churches than those in other occupational groups.

The Old Parish Church will now be considered and the results are shown in Table 5:7 below.

**Table 5:7 Old Parish Church Householdors and Occupations, 1860**

OCCUPATIONAL CATEGORY	OLD PARISH CHURCH HOUSEHOLDERS* 1860	RN	% BR**	% VR	% CHURCH REPRESENTATION
1	IRONWORKS	75	39.5	25.0	+ 14.5
2	TRADITIONAL AND OTHER TRADES	54	28.4	23.9	+ 4.5
3	POST, TRANSPORT, SHIPPING, SERVICE	36	18.9	8.9	+ 10.0
4	COMMERCIAL	8	4.2	13.8	- 9.6
5	AGRICULTURAL	5	2.6	2.0	+ 0.6
6	PROFESSIONAL/SPECIALISED	7	3.7	5.0	- 1.3
7	WOMEN-ONLY	0	0.0	8.8	n/a
8	NON-WORKING/LODGING HOUSE	0	0.0	6.6	n/a
9	GENERAL LABOURING	5	2.6	6.0	- 3.4

\*Church householders = 190 head householders from CR who were traced to VR and/or 1861 Census for occupational analysis above. BR = baptismal register. RN = real numbers. \*\*See Chapter 2: Section V for an explanation of why the BRs are broadly comparable with the CRs.

The results for the Old Parish Church of Scotland provide a very interesting contrast to those of the non-established churches. The first major point of difference is that in the Church of Scotland the heavy industrial workforce accounted for 39.5% of householders, which was 14.5% more than that sector's presence in the town. The traditional workforce was also over-represented, but not by as large a margin as the



ironworkers, at just 4.5% above its town representation. One other notable feature is that the third mainly manual sector, Category 3 representing male servants and others such as carters, boatmen and porters, was significantly over-represented by 10% in the Old Parish Church, whereas in the non-established churches there was nothing remarkable about the proportions of this sector. This analysis of the Old Parish Church, then, would suggest that there was a very strong manual component to the composition of the parish church. This point is underlined by probably the most striking aspect of the data - the dearth of those involved in commerce when compared to the non-established churches, all of which had an over-abundance of those in commercial occupations, most especially in the West and Free churches. The Old Parish Church, then, attracted a much higher proportion of those in manual occupations, particularly those from the ironworks.

#### **IV) Conclusion**

The impression gained of nineteenth-century Falkirk town from reading, in particular, some of the popular, local history books can often be that it was a town smouldering under the fires of heavy, industrial production but this was far from the case. On the contrary, the traditional core of the economy was still very prevalent. Falkirk in 1860 was a town divided almost in half by the new work roles brought by the foundries and the older crafts and trades of pre-industrialisation. In addition, there was a fairly strong commercial core to Falkirk, as well as lesser elements of other manual trades in transport, service and general labouring. Women-headed households in the domestic economy made a rather significant contribution to the working environment, and lodging houses played an important role in providing accommodation to Irish people coming to Scotland. Amongst the non-working sector in general there were some very well-to-do women householders; however, there were also far poorer widows in

very different circumstances, indicating that 1860 Falkirk was characterised by quite extreme disparities of wealth. Unsurprisingly, the agricultural sector was tiny in the town centre, although the existence of those involved with farming stresses how close Falkirk was to its agricultural surroundings. It was also found that the professional sector was rather small in comparison with the manual components of the workforce. Nevertheless, the overwhelming observation about the structure of the town was its predominance of manufacturing, whether iron or non-iron related. The traditional trades that existed long before the iron industry had developed were still very strong in 1860, and those crafts and trades, along with the ironworks, engaged the majority of Falkirk householders.

The observation just made about the occupational nature of Falkirk was not mirrored by the churches. In two non-established churches the ironworkers were clearly disadvantaged in representation when this was not the case for those working in the older trades. It was only the West U.P. Church that had a slight over-representation of those from the iron sector and this could have been due to the presence of an iron master and a foundry manager within the congregation. All the same, one church - The Church of Scotland - did seem to have provided a place of worship for the ironworkers; but *not* at the expense of the traditional workers who were well catered for in all churches. Moreover, the third mainly manual category of transport, service and communications had good representation in but one of the non-established churches, and was over-accounted for in the Church of Scotland, which again highlights the feebleness of ironworker churchgoing in some churches. The fourth primarily manual sector of general labourers was under-accounted for in *all* churches, which would tend to draw attention to the disconnectedness of the general labouring 'class' as a whole from the churches. However, because of the relative insignificance of the general labourers in terms of size when compared to the iron sector, it is the ironworkers who stand out as

having been particularly under-accounted for in two of the main churches. The results show that it was the Old Parish Church that seemed to appeal far more to those in manual occupations, with the exception of general labourers.

Those with commercial interests were very prevalent and overly-represented in all three non-established churches, but in particular in the West and Free churches. Most strikingly, this situation was reversed in the Old Parish Church which had a distinct lack of those in commerce. In a similar way, professionals were accurately represented in the non-established churches and were particularly partial to the Free Church; they were, however, slightly under-represented in the Church of Scotland, underlining its manual, compositional nature. Those not in conventional work and lodging houses were not well accounted for in the non-established churches. In addition, women working in female-orientated employments were only represented well in the East U.P. Church. The agricultural sector was fairly or slightly over-represented in all churches. However, there was nothing of particular note in the representation of these smaller sections of the working households, other than the slight variations that existed between the churches. The overwhelming conclusion is that the non-established churches were evidently skewed towards the non-manual and, therefore, more middle-class householders, whereas the Church of Scotland was far more weighted towards the manual workers, and so could broadly be said to have been much more 'working-class' in its 1860 composition than the other churches.

## CHAPTER 6

### **1860 Falkirk: A Comparison of the Traditional Trades and Ironworks**

The purpose of this chapter is to account for the stark under-representation of the iron sector shown in two of the churches compared to the traditional trade householders, who were overly or proportionally represented in all churches. One of the hypotheses of this dissertation has already been expressed - the traditional trades and crafts formed a more socially esteemed section of workmen than the ironworkers. The iron factories, on the other hand, were a new phenomenon to come to the town in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries and brought a different work environment from what had been known before. Furthermore, it is the purpose of this chapter to show that a link existed between the iron factory workers and poverty that did not apply in as large a measure to those from traditional sector households, and which would explain the lack of ironworker churchgoing. Chapter 4 established a link between poverty in general and lack of churchgoing because of the costs associated with going to church in the nineteenth century: seat rents and being expected or even *required* to contribute to collections, especially in the non-established churches. Nevertheless, seat rents were charged in all denominations but financial responsibility was more intense in the non-established churches because of the need of those congregations to acquire money from their worshippers for the upkeep of buildings and to pay the minister's stipend. If a link can be found specifically between ironworkers and poverty then that would explain their disadvantage in church representation when compared to the traditional workers.

The Marxist interpretation of working-class churchgoing has already been discussed in a previous chapter.<sup>1</sup> Frederick Engels, writing in 1845, claimed that mechanisation created unemployment and the further it progressed, the more unemployment worsened with every improvement, producing 'want, wretchedness and

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<sup>1</sup> See Chapter 1: Introduction.

crime'.<sup>2</sup> The factory system was 'ruinous' and had devastating effects on the health and morality of the workers.<sup>3</sup> In this study, the method of isolating the factory workers is not to support a Marxist analysis, but is to look at what could have been a genuine variable affecting churchgoing disconnected from its Marxist sub-text and the over-enthusiasm of the revisionist interpretation. What will be examined, then, is the valuation and occupational structure of the iron factories and other trades for evidence of variations between the two sectors that would support the notion of a disadvantaged factory labour force.

### **I) The Valuation Roll Hierarchy, 1860: Comparison of Traditional Trades and Ironworks**

The purpose of this part of the study is to look specifically at the iron factory and traditional households to determine how they were structured in terms of the VR hierarchy. The results are shown in Table 6:1 below. Categories 1 and 2<sup>4</sup> are shown in terms of how the two sectors were arranged across the VR levels.

**Table 6:1 Valuation Hierarchy Comparison: Ironworks and Traditional Trades Householders, 1860**

1860 OCCUPATIONAL CATEGORIES 1 AND 2 *	VALUATION HIERARCHY	IRONWORK HOUSEHOLDERS		TRADITIONAL AND OTHER TRADES HOUSEHOLDERS	
		RN	%	RN	%
LEVEL	RENTAL VALUE P.A.				
1 Very well-off	£18 and above	4	1.0	56	14.0
2 Well-off	£9 to Under £18	8	1.9	62	15.5
3 Comfortable	£5 to under £9	44	10.5	54	13.5
4 Poor	£2 to under £5	332	79.4	203	50.9
5 Very Poor	Under £2	30	7.2	24	6.0
<b>Total</b>		418	100	399	99.9**

\*Original Source: Falkirk 1860 Valuation Roll. Results based on Categories 1 and 2 as defined in Chapter 5: Section II, Table 5:2. \*\* Numbers do not add up to 100 due to rounding. RN = real numbers

When the valuations of the traditional and iron factory householders are considered side by side, they are found to be organised in strikingly different terms.

<sup>2</sup> F. Engels, *The Condition of the Working Classes in England* (Germany, 1845; London, 2009), p.159.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.167-186.

<sup>4</sup> The occupational categories as set out in Chapter 5: Section I, Table 5:2.

Beginning with the ironworks, it is clear that the vast majority (79%) of those employed at the iron factories fell into Level 4, the poor grade, of the hierarchy. All the same, a fairly significant 10.5% of ironworkers appeared at Level 3 of the better-off manual and lower professional groupings; however, 7% of ironworkers fell into the rank of *very* poor individuals. Finally, the top two levels comprised a tiny proportion of those involved at the iron factories at just 3%. The great majority of people associated with the ironworks, then, occupied poor households and just a tiny proportion were well-off in relative terms. There was also a reasonable section of comfortable workers; however, there was a fairly significant presence of very poor householder, but the overwhelming majority were poor. The fact that the lion's share of the foundry workforce was made up of poor householders accords in some measure with the general structure of Falkirk town, where just over 50% of the Falkirk population was made up of poor households.<sup>5</sup> However, with 79% of poor households, the iron factory workers evidently represented a section of occupational life where poverty was far more prevalent than it was in the wider social structure.

The traditional and other urban trades represented a completely different span on the VR hierarchy. As can be seen, the body of occupations that made up this sector was more evenly distributed across the levels. Like the ironworkers, however, the majority of workers (51%) in the traditional trades fell into Level 4 of the poor, but not by anywhere near as large a margin as the ironworkers, 79% of whom were poor. However, the proportion of *very* poor traditional householder was just marginally lower than the ironworkers at (6% against 7%). Moreover, traditional households comprised more comfortably off households at 13.5% in Level 3 than comprised the iron foundries with 10.5% at this grade. In addition, the top two, most prosperous, levels were considerably more prominent within the traditional occupations than the ironworks. A very substantial 29.5% of people in the long-established trades and crafts made up the

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<sup>5</sup> See Chapter 4: Section I.

top two well-off levels. The proportion of iron sector households at this level, in comparison, was miniscule. The traditional trade households, then, made up a much more prosperous element of the population than did the iron sector households. Furthermore, the breakdown of the traditional sector against the VR is much more representative of the structure of wider society where 52% of all VR households were in properties at the poor level<sup>6</sup>; this observation is in complete contrast to the ironworks which reflected a far more deprived occupational category.

## **II) Functional Organisation of Traditional Trades and Ironworks**

Now that it has been ascertained that the iron sector did comprise a far more impoverished group than the traditional body of trades, the next question is to consider how the two sectors were structured. The traditional trades will now be set against the ironworks to look at their internal composition to explain the marked differences in variations of poverty and prosperity just described. Each sector will be examined to consider how they were broken down in terms of occupational roles: for example, how many managers or labourers existed in each sector. This analysis is effectively looking at the distribution of status in terms of employment position. The point is to separate out the non-manual and senior elements from the lower grade of workers to look for structural answers to the wide variations in property values between the two sectors. The tables of results are presented below in Table 6:2 and Table 6:3.

**Table 6:2 Occupational Roles: Ironworks Householders, 1860**

<b>IRONWORKS: HOUSEHOLDERS, 1860</b>		
<b>BREAKDOWN OF CATEGORY</b>	<b>RN</b>	<b>% CATEGORY</b>
<b>IRONMASTERS/EMPLOYERS</b>	4	1.0
<b>INSPECTORS/MANAGERS</b>	3	0.7
<b>CLERKS, AGENTS</b>	3	0.7
<b>GENERAL WORKERS: MOULDERS, PATTERNMAKERS, ETC.</b>	337	80.6
<b>LABOURERS/UNDEFINED: 'FOUNDRY WORKMAN', ETC.</b>	71	17.0
<b>Total</b>	418	100

RN = real numbers

<sup>6</sup> See Chapter 4: Section I.

**Table 6:3 Occupational Roles: Traditional and Other Trades Householders, 1860**

TRADITIONAL AND OTHER TRADES: HOUSEHOLDERS, 1860		
BREAKDOWN OF CATEGORY	RN	% CATEGORY
MASTERS/EMPLOYERS	129	32.3
GENERAL WORKERS: JOINERS, BAKERS, SHOEMAKERS, ETC.	259	64.9
LABOURERS	11	2.8
<b>Total</b>	399	100

RN = real numbers

Before the results themselves are discussed, it should be explained that the tables differ slightly from each other. The ironworks sector contains an extra category for ‘inspectors/managers’. This group contains those people in the ironworks who were described as an inspector or manager but who also were not noted as an employer in the sources. It became apparent that in the ironworks there were a few individuals (albeit a very tiny number) who had a title that implied manager status but who were not employers. It was decided that somebody was an employer if he, quite simply, were described as such on the 1860 VR or 1861 census, and/or if he was listed in Slater’s *Royal National Commercial Dictionary and Topography of Scotland* (1861).<sup>7</sup> Therefore, those who were not employers were put in their own category if they had a title like manager or inspector. There were just three householders of this type from the 1860 VR ironworks section.

The reason the ‘inspectors-managers’ group does not exist in the traditional trades is because there simply were no people who fitted the criteria. There was only one ‘manager’, but he was also an employer. There were no ‘foremen’ or ‘inspectors’ or any other title that would suggest this status of employment in the traditional sector in 1860. People in the traditional trades were primarily called ‘masters’ of their trade,

<sup>7</sup> Slater’s (Later Pigot and Co’s) *Royal National Commercial Dictionary and Topography of Scotland* (1861), Digitised online by the National Library of Scotland at <http://archive.org/details/slaterslaterpigo1861unse> and <http://www.archive.org/stream/slaterslaterpigo1861unse#page/1232/mode/2up> (Accessed 31/03/2012).



but masters were usually employers. E.J. Hobsbawm has highlighted how the term ‘master’ became indistinguishable from ‘employer’ during the nineteenth century.<sup>8</sup> This link of the term ‘master’ with employer was true of 1860 Falkirk. Of the 399 individuals in the long-established trades, 40 were ‘masters’ and all were noted as having been employers on the census. Therefore, no section for managers was necessary as they did not exist as a non-employer grade in the traditional trades. Similarly, there was no need to incorporate a section for clerks in the long-established trades as none existed, at least not amongst the VR or census householders.

Now that the points above have been explained, the discussion can turn to the results shown in Table 6:2 and Table 6:3 above. Beginning with the ironworks, it is notable that just a very tiny proportion of those in this sector were of the employer grade, which comprised a miniscule 1% of iron sector households. Similarly, inspectors and managers accounted for just less than 1% of workers, as did the section of clerks and agents. It is obvious that the vast majority (81%) of ironworker households were general workers and comprised the ordinary moulders, patternmakers and other foundry operatives. In addition, the other fairly substantial group was the foundry labourers, who made up 17% of iron sector households. It would seem, then, that the ironworks were very hierarchical in nature in that the employer, supervisory and clerical classes formed an exceptionally small section of the organisation at 2% when taken together; whereas the ordinary workers and labourers filled the vast majority of foundry roles, comprising a massive 98% of the workforce. The iron factories were strictly tiered in nature and just a miniscule proportion of the iron factory households had employer, non-manual or senior status in 1860.

The traditional and other urban trades represented a completely different form of organisation from the ironworks. 32% of householders in these trades were masters

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<sup>8</sup> E. Hobsbawm, ‘Artisan or Labour Aristocrat?’, *Economic History Review*, New Series, Vol. 37, no. 3 (August 1984), p.357.

of their own trades, massively different from the ironworks. As in the ironworks, however, the biggest section of the workforce formed the general section of joiners, bakers and other tradesmen. But at 65% of this sector, the ordinary workers did not form as high a proportion as they did in the ironworks. Another striking difference from the ironworks is that the proportion of those defined specifically as labourers in the various trades comprised an insignificant section at just 3% of workers. The traditional trades, then, reflected a very different occupational ladder from the ironworks. Many more of those in the traditional trades were of the employer class and far fewer were ordinary grade workers or labourers. In their study of the 'dominant classes' in Scotland, N. Morgan and R. Trainor told how the construction trade, in particular, was composed of a 'large base of employers and aspiring self-employed tradesmen' who were associated with manual labour as well as 'high finance'.<sup>9</sup> These employers, then, differed from those employed at the iron factories in that they were essentially still connected to manual labour, but were also more prosperous financially. Overall, the traditional trades had larger scope to incorporate a more socially mobile employer class than the iron factories, and less room for wage-labour general workers and labourers.

The traditional sector was much more inclusive of masters/employers. That a high proportion of the traditional sector was comprised of employers also signifies a high degree of independence and potential upward occupational mobility within the sector as a whole. Neither independence nor occupational climbing were features of the iron foundries, where a tiny elite ruled the vast majority from the top. The occupational structure of the iron factories was much more sharply divided in nature than that of the traditional trades and crafts. On the other hand, the increased social status that

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<sup>9</sup> N. Morgan and R. Trainor, 'The Dominant Classes', in W.H. Fraser and R.J. Morris (eds) *People and Society in Scotland, Vol. II, 1830-1914* (Edinburgh, 1990), p.107.

accompanied an employer was much more widely diffused in the traditional body of trades.

In his work on occupations and social status, Max Weber recognised a distinction that helps to explain the difference in balance of employers and general structure between the traditional trades and the iron factories. Weber differentiated between two types of occupational systems: autocephalous and heterocephalous. The former meant a degree of independence from hierarchical control and applied to artisans, lawyers and artists. The latter implied an occupation that was ordered from above and applied to factory workers and government employees.<sup>10</sup> The implication from Weber and the evidence from the historical sources show that the ironworks reflected a highly regulated form of work environment, whereas the traditional trades were much more 'open' in terms of the scope for occupational mobility. The iron industry was restrictive and inegalitarian in terms of how it was structured when compared to the body of longer-established trades, at least in 1860. Self-determination was a characteristic of the long-established trades which did not apply to the iron factories. On the other hand, the iron factories appeared to have been work environments where social mobility leading to independence and higher social status was not on the agenda.

### **III) Ironworks and Traditional Trades: Occupational Roles and Valuations**

The next part of the research is to study each of the occupational roles reflected above in terms of property valuations to find out where poverty and wealth was concentrated. In addition, this analysis will consider the disparities that existed within each sector to gain a better impression of the relative positions of these occupational roles. The ironworks is first to be considered and the findings are shown in Table 6:4.

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<sup>10</sup> M. Weber *The Theory of Social and Economic Organisation* (edited with intro by Talcott Parsons) (London, 1964), p.251.

**Table 6:4 Occupational Roles, Valuations and Ironworks Householders, 1860**

ROLES OF IRONWORK HOUSEHOLDERS, 1860	VALUATION HIERARCHY	EMPLOYERS		INSPECTORS/ MANAGERS		CLERKS		GENERAL WORKERS		LABOURERS	
LEVEL	RENTAL VALUE P.A.										
		RN	%	RN	%	RN	%	RN	%	RN	%
<b>1 Very well-off</b>	£18 and above	4	100	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
<b>2 Well-off</b>	£9 to under £18	0	0.0	2	66.7	2	66.7	4	1.2	0	0.0
<b>3 Comfortable</b>	£5 to under £9	0	0.0	1	33.3	1	33.3	41	12.2	1	1.4
<b>4 Poor</b>	£2 to under £5	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	274	81.3	58	81.7
<b>5 Very Poor</b>	Under £2	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	18	5.3	12	16.9
<b>Total</b>		4	100	3	100	3	100	337	100	71	100

RN = real numbers

The employer element of the iron factories will be examined first. When looking at this group it is obvious that they occupied only the most expensive properties. What this result shows is that the iron employers were a highly exclusive and prosperous group which serves to reinforce the sense of their separateness from the body of other workers. This observation can be emphasised by looking at what is known about one of these employers - William Dawson from the Carron Company works. Dawson had been a company partner and manager of the foundry from 1850 to 1873. His family had long-established roots in shareholding in the works as he was from a branch of cousins related to Joseph Stainton.<sup>11</sup> Stainton had been one of the most prominent influences at Carron Company in its earlier years and had been manager from as early as 1780 until he died in 1825.<sup>12</sup> Dawson's family links, then, helped to ensure his position further down the line. During his time there, William Dawson was a major figure at Carron Company and appeared on the 1860 VR with property totalling £97 p.a; however, on the 1861 Census he was recorded as an 'innkeeper and coal merchant', which says nothing of his prominent foundry role (although the 'coal merchant' would indicate a connection). It was only when Slater's directory was examined that he was found described as a foundry manager. Slater's work also noted Dawson under a listing

<sup>11</sup> R.H. Campbell, *Carron Company* (Edinburgh, 1961), p.162.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.161-162.

indicating who made up Falkirk's local 'gentry' class.<sup>13</sup> Apart from his non-residential property, Dawson's inn (where he presumably lived with his family because no other residential property could be found for him) was valued at £17 p.a. and had 8 windowed rooms. He was aged 49 and lived with his wife, eight children and one servant. He was also a member of the West U. P. Church. This picture of William Dawson gives an impression of the social status position of a prominent foundry employer who also had links to one of 1860 Falkirk's foremost churches. Although very few in number, the iron masters like Dawson were not short on very secure social and financial resources.

In terms of the other non-manual foundry staff, although as insignificant in number as the employers, all of the inspectors/managers were either comfortably or well-off individuals, falling into Level 2 or Level 3 of the hierarchy. Oddly, the foundry clerks also numbered just 3 in 1860 and they were distributed exactly as the foremen: all comfortable or well-to-do. Nevertheless, the employer class neatly occupied the top VR level, above the managers and clerks, which would indicate there was a definite divide between these factory employees and the ironmasters in terms of property wealth and, by implication, social status. The clerks and inspector/managers, however, appeared to have shared the same degree of social status with each other in terms of how their property valuations were reflected on the VR hierarchy. In the iron foundries it was only the ironmasters who were wealthy enough to fall into the top levels of property holding and retained most social status, but the clerks and supervisory workers shared a lesser, but the same, social status with each other.

The great mass of the 337 householders who made up the general ironworkers fell into Level 4, the poor grade, of the VR hierarchy. 81% fell into this level with an additional 5% constituting the very poor at Level 5. By contrast, just 12% of regular foundry workers emerged at Level 3 of the more prosperous working classes, and only a

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<sup>13</sup> Slaters, *Commercial Dictionary*.

tiny 1% was prosperous enough to fall into Level 2. Furthermore, none of the general workers fell into Level 1. The foundry labourers showed an even different spread on the VR hierarchy to that of the general workers: although concentrated mainly at the poor level (82%), a fairly substantial 17% of foundry labourers were *very* poor. Unlike the other work roles, just one single labourer appears at Level 3 of the comfortable range of households. This householder was John Graham, a 49-year-old ‘ironfounder’ from Grahamston whose property had 3 windowed rooms and was valued at £5 p.a. He was married with a daughter in service and a son who also worked in a foundry. By contrast, the labourer household with the lowest value was that of 18-year-old James Grant, a labourer at the Carron works who lived in the Bainsford area of the town. James lived with just his wife in a 1-windowed room property which was valued at a mere £1 p.a. This look at the opposite ends of the labouring section in the ironworks reveals that there was not too much of a sharp distinction between those at the top and those at the bottom of the foundry labourers; however, it also highlights that economic position was linked to personal life circumstances at any one time: a young male labourer and his wife would inhabit a lower-grade property than an older married man with two working children. Nevertheless, the foundry labourers were the worst off group in terms of relative poverty and social status.

That any of the general workers appeared at Level 2 is, perhaps, surprising. The general section contains all those householders who could not be identified as employers or higher graded workmen from the sources. The 1861 Census did not, unlike the 1891 Census, have a particular checkbox to indicate specifically if somebody had been an employer. Rather, it was left to the discretion of the individual enumerators to record if somebody had been an employer, and this was written in the same box as the occupational title. All the same, it is not beyond the realms of possibility that on a few occasions it was not noted as expected. In this sense, a few households classified as ‘general workers’ may not have been attributed with their proper work status on the

original sources. The four individuals who fell into Level 2 were composed of two irondressers (one was retired), an engineer and a patternfiler. These are all foundry roles and if they had been independent from the foundries the sources gave no indication that was the case; none had shops, for example, which would imply they were autonomous of the foundries. In addition, none of these occupations constituted a particularly prosperous group: engineers, irondressers and patternfilers were all found at the low levels of 4 or 5 on the VR hierarchy. It does seem likely, then, that they did constitute the most skilled at their work but there was no established way of recognising that distinction in iron factory occupations when it came to recording the VR or census work-related titles in 1860. Another explanation as to why some general workers fell into the higher levels could have been because they had inherited money from a relative. Nevertheless, these are, for the most part, aberrations; however, that is not to detract from the point that the original sources did not always represent people's true occupational status, and this aspect of unreliability should be considered carefully when classifying people according to occupation.<sup>14</sup> Overall, however, the general workers in the foundries did represent an overwhelmingly poor section of Falkirk householders.

The focus of the study will now turn to the traditional trades, shown in Table 6:5 below.

**Table 6:5 Occupational Roles, Valuations and Traditional and Other Trades Householders, 1860**

ROLES OF TRADITIONAL TRADES HOUSEHOLDERS, 1860	VALUATION HIERARCHY	EMPLOYERS		GENERAL WORKERS		LABOURERS	
		RN	%	RN	%	RN	%
<b>LEVEL</b>	<b>RENTAL VALUE P.A.</b>						
<b>1 Very well-off</b>	£18 and above	51	39.5	5	1.9	0	0.0
<b>2 Well-off</b>	£9 to under £18	51	39.5	11	4.2	0	0.0
<b>3 Comfortable</b>	£5 to under £9	16	12.4	38	14.7	0	0.0
<b>4 Poor</b>	£2 to under £5	11	8.5	182	70.3	10	90.9
<b>5 Very Poor</b>	Under £2	0	0.0	23	8.9	1	9.1
<b>Total</b>		129	99.9*	259	100	11	100

RN = real numbers. \* Numbers do not add to 100 due to rounding.

<sup>14</sup> This subject is dealt with in much more depth in Chapter 10.

In evident contrast to the ironworks, employers in the traditional trades emerged at *all* levels of the VR hierarchy apart from that of the very poor, Level 5. It is apparent that most employers were concentrated at levels 1 and 2 in equal proportions, at 39.5% in each level. A fairly substantial section (12%) of traditional employers fell into Level 3 of the better-off manual workers and lower level professionals. However, even in the rank of poor householder, employers from the traditional trades were evident and composed 8.5% of that grouping. These findings suggest that in the traditional trades, employers were not exclusively the wealthiest people in terms of property, but were to be found amongst all sections of society, apart from amongst the *very* poorest. It was possible, therefore, to have been an employer in the trades and, by implication, to have had superior social status in this regard without having had property at the high valuation levels. This finding is in contrast to the employers from the ironworks who composed a tiny band of elite individuals at the top of the VR hierarchy and whose status was directly related to affluence.

In terms of the general worker section of the traditional trades, as for the ironworks, this sector consisted of all those who could not be identified as employers from any of the sources. The vast majority of general traditional workmen (70%) fell into the poor VR level and a further 9% were very poor. A fair proportion of workers in trades (15%) were of the comfortable category of householders. Like the results for the ironworks, however, the figures indicate a slight anomaly in that 6% of the general section featured at levels 1 or 2 of the VR hierarchy. However, a curious point is brought to light by these results, which is that, although the traditional sector *as a whole* was much more prosperous than the iron sector, this did not apply in great part to the general workers. Rather, just as applied to the average sector of the ironworks, the normal grade workers in the other trades constituted an element of the occupational



structure where poverty was more concentrated than it was in the wider society.<sup>15</sup>

Moreover, the traditional general workers were made up of a higher proportion of *very* poor householder at 9% in Level 5, compared to 5% of ironworkers at that level.

However, the ironworkers comprised more poor general workers than those in other trades at 81% compared to 70%, indicating, overall, that the normal ironworkers had a higher proportion of those in the poorer levels than the traditional trades. Nevertheless, there was not too much difference in the levels of poverty evidenced by the general workers of the iron foundries and those of the other trades and occupations.

In terms of the general workers in the higher VR levels: there is a way of explaining these variations. The highest property value of a traditional worker in the undefined sector was £61 12s. p.a , and was that of a tanner and his tanworks - the addition of the tanworks explaining the high valuation attributed to this individual.<sup>16</sup> The remaining traditional workers from the general rank who fell into Level 1 of the hierarchy were two bakers, one being retired. One of the bakers also had a shop, which would have increased the overall valuation. The ownership of non-residential property, then, as well as residential accommodation, resulted in higher valuations and partly explains why some non-employer, traditional workers fell into the upper echelons of the VR hierarchy.

The observation just made reveals a stark difference between the traditional trades and craftsmen on the one hand and the ironworkers on the other: the ownership of non-residential property in the traditional sector. The possession of non-domestic property, such as shops and workshops, was very prominent in these trades, but hardly existed at all beyond the ironmasters in the foundry workforce. For example, in the entire sample of the 337 ironworkers who fell into the general group, just 1 householder had work-related property in addition to a house and was not an employer. The 1860

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<sup>15</sup> See Chapter 4: Section I for the rate of poor householder in the entire householder population.

<sup>16</sup> See Chapter 2: Section II for an explanation as to why the addition of the non-residential property is a valid inclusion in the final valuations.

VR showed that John Thompson was a moulder who had a house and shop valued at £4 p.a. He was not an employer and so it is doubtful if he was independent of the foundries. But this VR entry was an incongruity as no other non-employer iron worker had additional property (besides insignificantly valued gardens or the odd byre). More of those in the non-employer part of the traditional trades, on the other hand, did have additional property. Of the 259 householders that made up the general grade in the traditional sector, 14 people had further, non-residential property related to work such as shops or bakehouses. The point is that non-residential property of a work-related kind, such as a shop, caused an increase to the final valuation given on the roll, because the house and shop were counted together as one valuation.<sup>17</sup> By virtue of the fact that property holding beyond residential capital amongst the *general* ranks (to say nothing of employers) was a feature almost exclusively confined to the traditional trades, then some of those in the traditional sector are more likely to have had higher valued property. This finding helps to explain why more of those in the general worker part appeared at the top two VR levels than those from the same normal grade in the ironworks. The general traditional workers, then, were more likely to have had more *capital* than the body of normal ironworkers.

In the traditional trades, labourers did not make up a significant part of the workforce, unlike in the iron factories. Labourers made up just 3% of the traditional sector, but 17% of the foundry labour force. The labourers that did exist were mainly timber or mason's labourers. Furthermore, the ironworker households had a higher proportion of labourers who fell into Level 5, the very poorest grade, at 17% compared to the traditional trade very poorest labourer at 9%. Labourers in the traditional trades, then, as a group, were not quite as poor as those working in the traditional sector. However, trade labourers rose no higher than Level 4, which shows in general they shared the same constriction of property valuations than the foundry labourers and in

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<sup>17</sup> See Chapter 2: Section II for why this was the case.

that sense were of a very similar social position to the foundry labourers. Furthermore, the traditional labourers formed the most deprived group from that sector as a whole, which was also true of the foundry labourers.

From this study, some generalisations can be made about the social status of each occupational position as it relates to the VR hierarchy. In both sectors, employers were concentrated at the top VR levels; however, ironmasters constituted an elite group of wealthy individuals, whereas traditional employers ranged from poor to wealthy. In relation to the general workmen and labourers, there is more consistency in that the majority of these workers in both the traditional trades and iron factories were poor. All the same, regular traditional workers were better-off as a whole partly because they were more likely to hold other, non-residential property. Labourers, on the other hand, were restricted to the poor or very poor levels in both occupational sectors (apart from a single individual from the ironworks). It was found that, overall, labourers did represent the most deprived occupational role and were much more likely to be working in an iron foundry than in another trade; and that the ironworks had the highest proportion of *very* poor labourers.

#### **IV) Conclusion**

It was revealed by the outcomes of these analyses that when measured as a whole, the foundry sector was clearly far more impoverished than the traditional category. It was further shown that both sectors were arranged in strikingly different forms. The ironworks were very hierarchical with a tiny few at the top compared to the mass in the middle, but including a significant number of labourers. The other trade householders, however, were far more concentrated at the higher property levels than the iron householders; and this type of occupational environment had virtually no room for poorer labourers, unlike the ironworks. In relation to the structure of each sector, it was found, by virtue of the fact that more of those in the traditional trades were

employers, that social status was dispersed more widely within that sector. On the other hand, high social status in the iron foundries was confined to the tiny minority of employers, and to a lesser degree amongst the clerks and supervisors. In this regard, the status of employer would have brought with it improved conditions of self-determination and autonomy for a much wider section of traditional householders. It was also found that the nature of the traditional sector was more likely to produce individuals, even amongst the general workers, who had more than just residential capital, so making some of them more prosperous in relative terms to the vast bulk of ironworkers. However, it was discovered that amongst general workers and labourers in *both* sectors poverty was prevalent, but it was even more predominant amongst ironworkers and foundry labourers. The iron factory labour force as a whole was disadvantaged in comprising a largely poor section of society in a much larger measure than those in other trades. This conclusion, then, explains, at least in part, the relative absence of the ironworkers from two of the non-established churches compared to traditional trade householders. If the poor householders were under-represented from all non-established churches, as was found in Chapter 4, then it goes without saying that ironworker representation would be affected because they represented a far more impoverished workforce than those in traditional trades.

## CHAPTER 7

### **1890 Falkirk: The Social Structure of the Town and Churches**

This chapter will begin a comparative study which seeks to compare the findings about work, status and churchgoing in 1860 Falkirk with the situation thirty years later. The central issues are whether or not the social structure of Falkirk town had changed in any significant way, and if the poor and very poor householders were any better represented in the non-established churches than they had been in 1860. Furthermore, it will explore if the Church of Scotland had retained its distinctive affiliation to the poor of the town after thirty years. By 1890, the matter of the 'social question' had become integral to the churches.<sup>1</sup> C.G. Brown sets out this issue as revolving around the contribution of new thinkers in the churches, especially in the Church of Scotland, but also in collaboration with some of those in the Free, U.P. and Congregational churches. The concern was that the economic situation was adversely affecting the relationship between the working classes and religion. A form of Christian socialism developed that was troubled by the effects free-market capitalism was having on working-class housing, unemployment and health. These Christians believed that the churches had become too associated with the capitalist, propertied classes so that the role of religion in the lives of the working classes was reducing in significance. The latter were believed to have been focusing more and more on politics – trades unions and the new Labour movement.<sup>2</sup> The question is, in effect, whether or not the churches had become more 'middle-class' by 1890. The aim here, therefore, is to look firstly at how the churches represented the social structure of 1890 Falkirk to discover any evidence for increasing alienation of the poor from the churches.

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<sup>1</sup> C.G. Brown, 'The People in the Pews: Religion and Society in Scotland since 1780', *Studies in Scottish Economic and Social History*, No.3 (1993), p.42.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p.42.

This chapter follows the outline of the approach to 1860 as set out in Chapter 4 and so will begin by analysing the general social structure of society when set against the VR hierarchy of 1890. Unfortunately, no relevant church records for the Free Church in 1890 were available; therefore, the study looks at the development of the two U.P. churches and the Church of Scotland in Falkirk.

### **I) Social Structure and Property in Falkirk, 1890**

The social structure of the town in 1890 was deduced according to the same methodological principles that were applied to the situation in 1860. The main difference was that real valuations had changed due to an increase in rents.<sup>3</sup> The 1890 VR hierarchy is set out below in Table 7:1, but the parallel figures for 1860 are replicated as a visual aid to the comparative aspect of the discussion.

**Table 7:1 Valuation Hierarchy, Falkirk 1890**

<b>VALUATION HIERARCHY</b>			
<b>FALKIRK 1890</b>			
<b>LEVEL</b>	<b>RENTAL VALUE P.A.</b>	<b>RN</b>	<b>VR HOUSEHOLDERS %</b>
<b>1 Very Well-off</b>	£30 and above	261	7.9
<b>2 Well-off</b>	£16 to under £30	257	7.8
<b>3 Comfortable</b>	£8 to under £16	868	26.3
<b>4 Poor</b>	£4 to under £8	1,525	46.2
<b>5 Very poor</b>	Under £4	389	11.8

Original Source: Falkirk 1890 Valuation Roll. Reworked to measure only total property holdings of individual householders, comprising 3,307 entries minus 7 with no valuation, leaving 3,300 for valuation analysis above. RN = real numbers

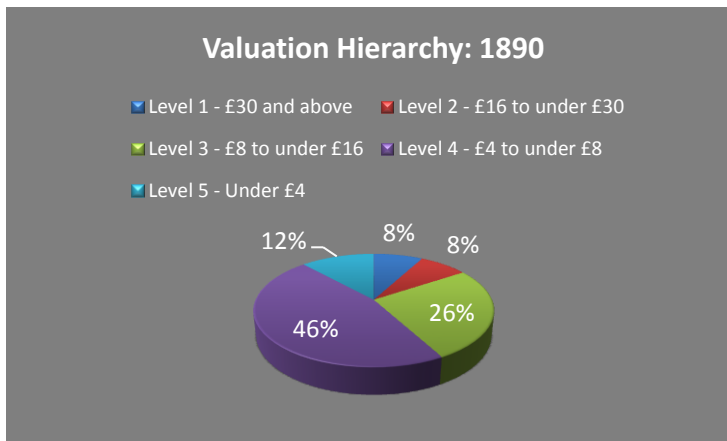
**Table 4:1 Valuation Hierarchy, Falkirk 1860**

<b>VALUATION HIERARCHY</b>			
<b>FALKIRK 1860</b>			
<b>LEVEL</b>	<b>RENTAL VALUE P.A.</b>	<b>RN</b>	<b>VR HOUSEHOLDERS %</b>
<b>1 Very Well-off</b>	£18 and above	201	10.2
<b>2 Well-off</b>	£9 to under £18	218	11.1
<b>3 Comfortable</b>	£5 to under £9	255	13.0
<b>4 Poor</b>	£2 to under £5	1,024	52.2
<b>5 Very poor</b>	Under £2	265	13.5

Original Source: Falkirk 1860 Valuation Roll. Reworked to measure only total property holdings of individual householders, comprising 1,963 entries for valuation analysis above. RN = real numbers

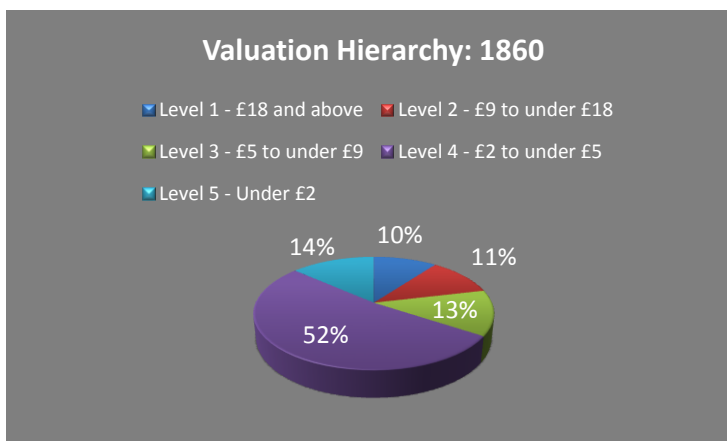
<sup>3</sup> See Chapter 2: Section VII on the development of the 1890 VR hierarchy.

### **Piechart 7:2 Valuation Hierarchy, Falkirk 1890**



Original Source: Falkirk 1890 Valuation Roll. Results based on 3,300 householders, as Table 7:1.

### **Piechart 4:2 Valuation Hierarchy, Falkirk 1860**



Original Source: Falkirk 1860 Valuation Roll. Results based on 1,963 householders, as Table 4:1.

The first point to note about the results of social structure in 1890 is that the proportions of each level in relation to each other on the scale are in some ways similar to those of the 1860 VR hierarchy. The most obvious point to note is that the poor of Level 4 comprised by far the largest proportion of households, as was the case in 1860: 46% of households were in the poor grade in 1890. However, although poor households made up the largest proportion in both years, there had been a slight decline in proportion of poor households by 1890, from 52% in 1860 to 46% by 1890. However, overall, and in terms of real numbers, poor households had increased from 1,024 in 1860 to 1,525 by 1890. But this increase in actual numbers of poor households had not been rapid enough to translate into an overall proportional increase. The

numbers of poor, therefore, had not fallen, but neither had they grown or expanded enough to cause a proportional increase of poor households. In a similar way, the very poor of Level 5 had increased in real terms from 265 households in 1860 to 389 in 1890. But, again, this growth was not significant enough to cause an increase to the overall proportion of very poor householders: in 1860 very poor households comprised 13.5% but in 1890 this had dropped very slightly to 12%. However, despite this slight proportional decline, in general, the poor and very poor householders comprised almost an equivalent section of the population in 1890 as they had in 1860.

It is when considering the comfortably off households of Level 3 that the point of most proportional change had taken place. The better-off elements of the working people and lower ranking professionals had greatly increased to rise in proportion from 13% in 1860 to 26% by 1890. Nevertheless, alongside this growth came a much more stilted increase in the numbers of well-off and very well-off householders. Both Level 1 and Level 2 had only slightly expanded in terms of real numbers and this resulted in a moderate dip in the proportion of richer households: by 1890, Level 2 had fallen from 11% to 8%; and Level 1 had similarly reduced from 10% to 8%. What the pattern shows is that by the late nineteenth century, definitive expansion had occurred to the better-off working and lower middle sections of Falkirk society. On the whole, despite real growth in each level of the VR hierarchy, only the middling section of the comfortably off householders experienced a drastic enough increase to result in a positive proportional change.

John F. McCaffrey summarises the Scottish situation thus: between 1870 and 1900 those who had work saw real gains because of a general fall in prices. And generally, despite downturns in particular branches of industry such as the shipyards, incomes had improved from what they had been in the 1850s and 1860s.<sup>4</sup> There had

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<sup>4</sup> J. F. McCaffrey, *Scotland in the Nineteenth Century* (London, 1998), p.85.



also been some qualitative improvements in a reduction, overall, in the weekly working hours of Lowland Scots from 60 hours in the 1850s to around 54 by the 1880s. This fall in time spent working led to an increase in leisure activities such as music and sport. All the major towns, for example, saw an increase in the number of music halls and concerts for entertainment.<sup>5</sup> Nevertheless, for the period 1886 to 1900, despite a general improvement of living conditions for most working people, about a quarter of the overall workforce remained in casual labour conditions and ‘in a constant battle with poverty’.<sup>6</sup> The continued existence of poverty in the late nineteenth century, despite economic and industrial advances, was discussed by Henry George, an American land reformer who greatly influenced his Scottish audiences. George highlighted the stark contrast between the affluence of the few set against the deprivation still affecting the many, and that it was in those societies that had become most advanced where ‘widespread destitution was found in the midst of the greatest abundance’.<sup>7</sup> Despite the amelioration of absolute poverty, relative poverty was increasing as people became more aware of the differences between wealth and poverty.<sup>8</sup> The VR hierarchy, then, appears to reflect the perceptions of writers such as George – the continuous presence of poverty affecting the many while the few prospered; although in Falkirk that ‘few’ had grown to represent a higher proportion of households from the middle strata of society, rather than at the very top levels of capital wealth.

## **II) Comparison of Church and Town Social Structure, 1890**

The chapter will now turn to the question of applying the above social structure to the churches. As mentioned, the Free Church is not included due to an absence of the relevant sources. In addition to the table of results for each church in 1890, an

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<sup>5</sup> Ibid., p.86.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid., p.88.

<sup>7</sup> H. George, *Progress and Poverty* (1880; Everyman edn, 1911), pp.9-10, quoted in Ibid., pp.89-90.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid., p.90.

additional table of the 1860 data is included. As in the 1860 figures, each table shows the church head householders when measured against the social structure of the town just defined. There is also a column for each church depicting the proportional difference in the representation of each level between the church and the town's social structure.

The first church to be discussed is the West U. P. Church and results are presented below in Table 7:3. The 1860 comparison is shown in Table 4:4.

**Table 7:3 Valuation Hierarchy and West U.P. Church, 1890**

WEST U. P. CHURCH 1890	VALUATION HIERARCHY	CHURCH HOUSEHOLDERS*		VR HOUSEHOLDERS	% CHURCH REPRESENTATION
LEVEL	RENTAL VALUE P.A.	RN	% CR	% VR	
<b>1 Very Well-off</b>	£30 and above	35	23.3	7.9	+ 15.4
<b>2 Well-off</b>	£16 to under £30	30	20.0	7.8	+ 12.2
<b>3 Comfortable</b>	£8 to under £16	49	32.7	26.3	+ 6.4
<b>4 Poor</b>	£4 to under £8	30	20.0	46.2	- 26.2
<b>5 Very poor</b>	Under £4	6	4.0	11.8	- 7.8

\*See Chapter 2: Section V for the reason for counting only head householders. The same applies to subsequent church analyses. Church householders = 160 head householders from CR who were traced to VR and/or 1891 Census, minus 10 entries not traced to VR, leaving 150 head householders for valuation analysis above. CR = communion roll. RN = real numbers

**Table 4:4 Valuation Hierarchy and West U.P. Church, 1860**

WEST U.P. CHURCH 1860	VALUATION HIERARCHY	CHURCH HOUSEHOLDERS*		VR HOUSEHOLDERS	% CHURCH REPRESENTATION
LEVEL	RENTAL VALUE P.A.	RN	% CR	% VR	
<b>1 Very well-off</b>	£18 and above	31	28.7	10.2	+ 18.5
<b>2 Well-off</b>	£9 to under £18	15	13.9	11.1	+ 2.8
<b>3 Comfortable</b>	£5 to under £9	23	21.3	13.0	+ 8.3
<b>4 Poor</b>	£2 to under £5	35	32.4	52.2	- 19.8
<b>5 Very poor</b>	Under £2	4	3.7	13.5	- 9.8

\*Church householders = 118 head householders from CR who were traced to VR and/or 1861 Census, minus 10 entries not traced to VR, leaving 108 head householders for valuation analysis above. CR = communion roll. RN = real numbers

The results for the West U.P. Church in 1890 show a remarkably similar pattern to the 1860 data for non-established churches which was a very substantial over-representation of those in levels 1, 2 and 3, alongside a distinct under-representation of those in levels 4 and 5. In the 1890 West Church, there was a predominance of those in

the upper valuation ranges when measured against their presence in the wider householder population. In terms of real numbers, householders from the three higher levels in the West Church had grown. However, in terms of proportions, Level 1 had actually decreased from 29% of householders in 1860 to 23% in 1890, despite this very moderate increase in real numbers; Level 2, on the other hand, had grown in proportion from 14% in 1860 to 20% in 1890; and Level 3 had increased similarly from 21% in 1860 to 33% by 1890. By contrast, the poor and very poor were grossly under-represented in proportion to society. The real numbers of poor householders had slightly declined and this registered as a fall in proportion from 32% of householders in 1860 to just 20% in the 1890 West Church. The number of very poor householders, on the other hand, had seen a tiny increase which, overall, meant no change in proportion, at just 4% of householders. Overall, the general pattern tallies with the 1860 results in that the poor and very poor were the *only* householders to have been very much under-represented. Furthermore, when the 1860 and 1890 data is compared, it can be seen that the inferior representation of the poor was even more pronounced by 1890. The last column of each table shows that in 1860 the poor householders had been under-represented by 20%, but that had increased to an under-representation of 26% by 1890. In addition, when the real numbers of householders are considered, the disparity becomes even more apparent: 114 householders were from the comfortable to prosperous grades, whereas just 36 were from the poorer levels. The West Church, then, had become far less representative of the poor and clearly more biased towards the better-off and richer members of the burgh householders by 1890.

The results of the East U.P. Church will now be discussed and are presented below in Table 7:4 and the 1860 data is shown in Table 4:5.

**Table 7:4 Valuation Hierarchy and East U.P. Church, 1890**

EAST U. P. CHURCH 1890	VALUATION HIERARCHY	CHURCH HOUSEHOLDERS*		VR HOUSEHOLDERS	% CHURCH REPRESENTATION
LEVEL	RENTAL VALUE P.A.	RN	% CR	% VR	
<b>1 Very well-off</b>	£30 and above	20	12.2	7.9	+ 4.3
<b>2 Well-Off</b>	£16 to under £30	25	15.2	7.8	+ 7.4
<b>3 Comfortable</b>	£8 to under £16	59	36.0	26.3	+ 9.7
<b>4 Poor</b>	£4 to under £8	52	31.7	46.2	- 14.5
<b>5 Very poor</b>	Under £4	8	4.9	11.8	- 6.9

\*Church householders = 168 head householders from CR who were traced to VR and/or 1861 Census, minus 4 entries not traced to VR, leaving 164 head householders for valuation analysis above. CR = communion roll. RN = real numbers

**Table 4:5 Valuation Hierarchy and East U.P. Church, 1860**

EAST U.P. CHURCH 1860	VALUATION HIERARCHY	CHURCH HOUSEHOLDERS*		VR HOUSEHOLDERS	% CHURCH REPRESENTATION
LEVEL	RENTAL VALUE P.A.	RN	% CR	% VR	
<b>1 Very well-off</b>	£18 and above	25	19.2	10.2	+ 9.0
<b>2 Well-off</b>	£9 to under £18	22	16.9	11.1	+ 5.8
<b>3 Comfortable</b>	£5 to under £9	20	15.4	13.0	+ 2.4
<b>4 Poor</b>	£2 to under £5	57	43.8	52.2	- 8.4
<b>5 Very poor</b>	Under £2	6	4.6	13.5	- 8.9

\*Church householders = 143 head householders from CR who were traced to VR and/or 1861 Census, minus 13 entries not traced to VR, leaving 130 head householders for valuation analysis above.

The results for the East U. P. Church mirror the now familiar pattern whereby the upper levels are over-represented but the lower are substantially under-represented. Once again, and as in the 1860 data, it was *only* levels 4 and 5 that were deficient in representation. In terms of real numbers, it was levels 2 and 3 that had increased; however, overall, only Level 3 had grown in proportional terms. Level 1 had decreased in proportion from 19% of householders in 1860 to 12% by 1890; Level 2 had similarly decreased from 17% in 1860 to 15% by 1890; Level 3, on the other hand, had grown from 15% in 1860 to a much larger proportion of 36% in 1890. Furthermore, it can clearly be seen that the 1890 East Church, like the West Church, had become even more weighted towards the wealthier members at the expense of the poorer. The real numbers of poor householders had, as in the West Church, declined and this resulted in a stark reduction in proportion of the poor from 44% in 1860 to 32% in 1890. However,

in common with the West Church, the numbers of very poor householder had very marginally increased and no change in proportional terms was registered, staying static at 5% of town householders. Furthermore, it can be seen, again as for the West Church, that the poor householders were even less well represented nearer the end of the nineteenth century as they had been in 1860: poor householders were under-represented by 8% in 1860 but this marginalisation had increased to an under-representation of 14.5% by 1890. Furthermore, the real numbers of householders reveal that 104 households were of the comfortable to prosperous grades, but only 60 were from the poorer levels. All the same, it should be observed that, as in 1860, the figures for the East Church were not as out of proportion as they were in the West Church, but the pattern remains the same. It would appear, then, that the East Church was slightly more balanced in its social composition when compared to the West Church but still leaned heavily towards the richer members of the burgh population, and this pattern had become even more pronounced by the late nineteenth century.

The Old Parish Church is next to be discussed and the tables are presented below in Table 7:5 and the comparison of 1860 is shown in Table 4:6.

**Table 7:5 Valuation Hierarchy and Old Parish Church, 1890**

OLD PARISH CHURCH 1890	VALUATION HIERARCHY	CHURCH HOUSEHOLDERS*		VR HOUSEHOLDERS	% CHURCH REPRESENTATION
LEVEL	RENTAL VALUE P.A.	RN	% BR**	% VR	
<b>1 Very well-off</b>	£30 and above	25	13.5	7.9	+ 5.6
<b>2 Well-off</b>	£16 to under £30	20	10.8	7.8	+ 3.0
<b>3 Comfortable</b>	£8 to under £16	39	21.1	26.3	- 5.2
<b>4 Poor</b>	£4 to under £8	95	51.3	46.2	+ 5.1
<b>5 Very poor</b>	Under £4	6	3.2	11.8	- 8.6

\*Church householders = 189 head householders from BR who were traced to VR and/or 1861 Census, minus 4 entries not traced to VR, leaving 185 head householders for valuation analysis above. \*\*BR = baptismal register. See Chapter 2: Section V for an explanation of the comparability between the BRs and CRs of the other churches. RN = real numbers

**Table 4:6 Valuation Hierarchy and Old Parish Church, 1860**

OLD PARISH CHURCH 1860	VALUATION HIERARCHY	CHURCH HOUSEHOLDERS*		VR HOUSEHOLDERS	% CHURCH REPRESENTATION
		RN	% BR**	% VR	
<b>LEVEL</b>	<b>RENTAL VALUE P.A.</b>				
<b>1 Very well</b>	£18 and above	13	8.0	10.2	- 2.2
<b>2 Well-off</b>	£9 to under £18	12	7.4	11.1	- 3.7
<b>3 Comfortable</b>	£5 to under £9	24	14.8	13.0	+1.8
<b>4 Poor</b>	£2 to under £5	110	67.9	52.2	+15.7
<b>5 Very poor</b>	Under £2	3	1.8	13.5	-11.7

\*Church householders = 190 head householders from BR who were traced to VR and/or 1861 Census, minus 28 entries not traced to VR, leaving 162 head householders for valuation analysis above. \*\*BR = baptismal register. See Chapter 2: Section V for an explanation of the comparability between the BRs and CRs of the other churches. RN = real numbers

When it comes to the 1890 Old Parish Church findings, once again, as for 1860, a different pattern emerges when compared to the non-established churches in that the poor householders were not under-represented and those from the comfortable level were not over-represented; however, the Old Parish Church figures differ markedly between 1860 and 1890 and show the same tendencies in the later figures as were evident in the results of the U.P. churches: the 1890 Old Parish Church has similarly moved its balance of householders to favour the more prosperous. In 1860, the Church of Scotland did not over-represent levels 1 and 2, but by 1890 this had changed. Furthermore, the real numbers of levels 1, 2 and 3 had all increased: Level 1 had grown in proportion from 8% of householders in 1860 to 13.5% in 1890; Level 2 had increased from 7% in 1860 to 11% in 1890; and Level 3 had grown from 15% to 21%. On the other hand, the proportion of poor householders had reduced significantly from 68% in 1860 to just 51% in 1890. Furthermore, there was less of a difference in real numbers between the poorer and better-off householders in 1890: 84 were of the top three levels and 101 were of the two lower. Although the poorer householders were still in the majority in the 1890 Old Parish Church, the gap had narrowed. In 1860, just 49 households had been from the higher levels, compared with 113 from the lower grades. It is clear from these figures that even the Old Parish Church had become far more skewed towards the wealthier households by 1890. The more affluent individuals were

now over-represented and the poor, although still over-accounted for by 5% overall, had obviously seen a general decline in representation, having been over-represented by 16% in 1860. Although the representation of the very poor had just slightly improved, with a tiny increase from 2% in 1860 to 3% by 1890, that of the poor had worsened quite considerably.

The Parish church data for 1890 would indicate that the Church of Scotland in Falkirk had changed its social composition quite significantly by 1890 and had clearly gravitated towards the prosperous members of society. By the late nineteenth century, the Church of Scotland had become more like its non-established counterparts by having many more well-heeled people in the congregation. However, despite this evident move towards the prosperous householders, the Old Parish Church continued to over-represent the poor, and as a result remained far more representative of the poor when compared to the U.P. churches. However, the increasing marginalisation of the poor householders in all churches by 1890 is the factor common to all late-nineteenth century churches.

All the same, an important caveat should be introduced at this point – the establishment of *quoad sacra* parish churches which *may* have contributed to the changing social composition of Falkirk Old Parish Church. For example, in 1875, Falkirk Grahamston Parish Church was disjoined from Falkirk Parish and erected a *quoad sacra* parish.<sup>9</sup> This change to the ecclesiastical/administrative structure of Falkirk could have meant that fewer working people from Grahamston then attended Falkirk Old Parish Church. Camelon had also been formally erected a *quoad sacra* parish in 1853, but Camelon Parish Church had been set up as a chapel-of-ease as early as 1839.<sup>10</sup> This change, therefore, was unlikely to have affected the social composition

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<sup>9</sup> [http://www.falkirkcommunitytrust.org/heritage/archives/finding-aids/docs/churches/Falkirk\\_Grahamston\\_Parish\\_Church.pdf](http://www.falkirkcommunitytrust.org/heritage/archives/finding-aids/docs/churches/Falkirk_Grahamston_Parish_Church.pdf)

<sup>10</sup> [http://www.falkirkcommunitytrust.org/heritage/archives/finding-aids/docs/churches/Falkirk\\_Camelon\\_St\\_John%27s\\_Church.pdf](http://www.falkirkcommunitytrust.org/heritage/archives/finding-aids/docs/churches/Falkirk_Camelon_St_John%27s_Church.pdf)

of Falkirk Old Parish Church from 1860 onwards.<sup>11</sup> Similarly, Grangemouth had been declared a *quoad sacra* parish in 1837 but was not formally disjoined from Falkirk Parish until 1880.<sup>12</sup> The administrative change, therefore, was unlikely to have had any impact on the actual composition of Falkirk Old Parish Church. It does seem, however, that the establishment of Grahamston Parish Church in 1875 could have drawn some of the industrial workers away from the Old Parish Church in Falkirk. Nevertheless, if this had been the case, it does not account for the obvious increase to the numbers of better-off people of Falkirk town in the later Old Parish Church.

### **III) Reasons for the Increasing Marginalisation of the Poor from the Churches**

In writing about ‘poverty and social theory’ in England, E.P. Hennock said that contemporaries and historians defined the 1880s as being ‘preoccupied’ with ‘the meaning of poverty in the midst of plenty’.<sup>13</sup> Although focused on England, Hennock highlights some of the major, national issues that were affecting the poorest classes at the social level; and it was mentioned in the introduction to this chapter that some Scottish clergy across all denominations shared concerns about the adverse effects of capitalism on the relationship between the working classes and the churches. Hennock sets out how, in the early 1880s, a Royal Commission on the Housing of the Working Classes was instituted and there was a ‘winter of distress and unemployment’ in 1885. The latter led to demonstrations in London involving Marxist socialists from the Social Democratic Federation who believed that the flaws in the capitalist system led to mass poverty. There were also some riots in early 1886 which made the poor look like a

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<sup>11</sup> [http://www.falkirkcommunitytrust.org/heritage/archives/finding-aids/docs/churches/Falkirk\\_Camelon\\_St\\_John%27s\\_Church.pdf](http://www.falkirkcommunitytrust.org/heritage/archives/finding-aids/docs/churches/Falkirk_Camelon_St_John%27s_Church.pdf)

<sup>12</sup> [http://www.falkirkcommunitytrust.org/heritage/archives/finding-aids/docs/churches/Grangemouth\\_Old\\_Parish\\_Church.pdf](http://www.falkirkcommunitytrust.org/heritage/archives/finding-aids/docs/churches/Grangemouth_Old_Parish_Church.pdf)

<sup>13</sup> Hennock, E.P. ‘Poverty and Social Theory in England: the Experience of the Eighteen-eighties’, *Social History*, no.1 (January, 1976), p.68.



‘social menace’.<sup>14</sup> The condition of poor working environments that were endured by some was highlighted increasingly in the public arena. For example, there were strikes by London match-girls and dockers over wages and conditions in the late 1880s.<sup>15</sup> The very end of the century was also when the work of the renowned social investigator, Charles Booth, was published into the *Life and Labour of the People of London*, an investigation over two volumes into the extent of poverty in the city.<sup>16</sup> However, E.R. Wickham claims that rather than engage with the issues to do with social deprivation and the new working-class political organisations that had arisen at this time, the churches made a ‘theological error’ by reducing these social problems to ones of personal morality.<sup>17</sup> Wickham quoted Charles Hobson, the President of the Federated Trades’ Council when he said in 1898:

Christianity is a great social system, designed to redress the wrongs of society, as well as to save men’s souls. No system, social, political or religious will find favour with the masses which countenances the inequalities which exist among men. The Church of the future is that which identifies itself with the cause of the masses...<sup>18</sup>

In a similar vein, P.T. Forsyth, a theologian writing in 1905, elucidated the perceived contradiction between the role of Christians as the bearers of the Good News and their apparent passivity in dealing with social problems because they were aligned to the interests of capitalism:

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<sup>14</sup> Ibid., p.67.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid., p.67.

<sup>16</sup> C. Booth, ‘The Inhabitants of Tower Hamlets (School Board Division), their Condition and Occupations’, *Journal of the Royal Statistical Society*, 50 (1887), pp.326-401; C. Booth, ‘Condition and Occupations of the People of East London and Hackney, 1887’, *Journal of the Royal Statistical Society*, 51 (1888), pp.276-339 cited in Ibid., p.69.

<sup>17</sup> E.R. Wickham, *Church and People in an Industrial City* (London, 1957).p.198.

<sup>18</sup> C. Hobson, *The Hammer*, Dec.9, 1893: “How to reach the masses”, quoted in Wickham, *Church and People*, p.199.

...it is not enough to say that the love and faith of Christ will keep a man right....As a matter of fact such faith has had more effect on the disposal of wealth than on the moral making of it. Some of the truest believers are harassed by the way they are involved in an egoist system of accumulation. And how many more are mammonised by it!<sup>19</sup>

From this point of view, then, the churches were seen as having neglected to deal with the increasing economic inequalities between rich and poor brought about by the continued expansion of industrial production. It was believed by some historians and contemporaries that the churches had failed the poor by ignoring their plight because they were too aligned to the capitalist cause.

It could be argued that, overall, a similar mindset occurred in the Falkirk churches considered in this study – that as the century progressed and affluence increased for some, it did not for others, and that the churches did not address the specific needs of those still caught up in a world of poverty. But it is clear that within each of the major denominations, there were people who did want to address the needs of the poor. It seems that the later nineteenth-century Presbyterian churches were hampered to change by a stronger element of those who just did not want to adapt to these perceived needs. But certain elements within all of the Presbyterian churches *were* concerned. For example, in 1890, the Presbytery of the U. P. Church in Falkirk proposed to the U.P. Synod that a committee be set up to consider social issues, which was supplemented by similar approaches to the Synod from other Presbyteries, including Edinburgh and Greenock. Sadly, none were accepted by the 1891 Synod and

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<sup>19</sup> P.T. Forsyth, *The Examiner*, May 11, 1905, quoted in Wickham, *Church and People*, p.202.

no action was taken to institute committees concerned with social issues before the U.P. Church merged with the Free Church in 1900.<sup>20</sup>

But the voices in favour remained loud and strong, such as that of John D. Sinclair, the minister of Midmar U.P. Church who believed it was the role of the church to criticise and not defend the status quo: the church was ‘*not* to keep the peace by glossing over social wrongs...as if such social wrongs did not concern it or were to be accepted simply as a part of the providential order’.<sup>21</sup> In the *United Presbyterian Magazine* he questioned ‘whether the Church is really helping society to reach a better condition’ when the Church itself was responsible for ‘the employer who pays many of his servants a wage that will barely serve to keep a wife and family with the strictest thrift...’.<sup>22</sup> Similarly, in the Established Church, although the General Assembly did not act upon any major social issues, there were certain ministers who did want to address social matters.<sup>23</sup> For example, in 1895, Donald MacLeod, minister of the Park Church in Glasgow, highlighted the alienation of the working classes from the Church because it had promoted an individualistic religion unconcerned with the abysmal conditions of the poor.<sup>24</sup> And in 1885 he made an address where he urged that Christianity ‘be in sympathy with that State compulsion whose object is the prevention of what is cruel and demoralising’ and advocated measures such as limiting working hours, supporting the poor and improving housing standards.<sup>25</sup> Therefore, despite the apparent increasing marginalisation of the poor from the churches examined in this study, at the time this apathy towards the less fortunate did not go unnoticed or unchallenged by some ministers troubled by the situation.

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<sup>20</sup> D.C. Smith, *Passive Obedience and Prophetic Protest: Social Criticism in the Scottish Church, 1830-1945* (New York, 1987), pp.257-258.

<sup>21</sup> J. D. Sinclair, *The United Presbyterian Magazine*, Dec. 1898, pp.545, quoted in *Ibid.*, p.265.

<sup>22</sup> Sinclair, *U.P. Mag.*, pp.544-545, quoted in *Ibid.*, p.265.

<sup>23</sup> Smith, *Prophetic Protest*, p.276.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, p.283.

<sup>25</sup> D. MacLeod, *Good Words*, Dec. 1885, p.775, quoted in *Ibid.*, p.301.

#### **IV) Conclusion**

What this chapter has shown is that there was some consistency in the patterns of churchgoing in Falkirk between 1860 and 1890. Each of the non-established churches in 1890 (as in 1860) over-represented the richer members of the burgh and greatly under-represented the poor and very poor. In all non-established churches, whether in 1860 or 1890, the poor and very poor householders were the only sections of society not to be present in the churches in proportional terms to their presence in the burgh. The one exception (again in both years) was the Old Parish Church where the poor were over-represented; however, by comparing the proportions of representation between 1860 and 1890 it is clear that in *all* churches, the representation of the wealthier members of the town had increased whilst that of the poor had decreased. What the results for both 1860 and 1890 show is that the non-established churches were very much weighted in favour of the richer members of Falkirk society, and that even the Parish church had lost much of its grip on the poor of the town by 1890 and had become far more dominated by the wealthier townsfolk; however, despite this, the Parish Church was still, largely, favourable to the poor of 1890. But, overall it is clear that during those thirty years between 1860 and 1890, a gradual marginalisation of the poor from all churches had increased in intensity as the century drew towards its close.

## CHAPTER 8

### **1890 Falkirk: Occupational Change and the Churches**

This chapter will set out to discuss the occupational composition of Falkirk town and churches in the later nineteenth century to look for any changes that had occurred since 1860. It will consider if the ironworkers were still under-accounted for in the East Church, as had been the case in 1860, and if they were still over-represented as drastically as they had been in the Old Parish Church. It will also consider the traditional trades and if those householders were still as well represented as they had been in 1860. Wickham believed, from his study on Sheffield, that the ‘industrial working class culture pattern’ had ‘evolved lacking a tradition of practice of religion’.<sup>1</sup> S.J.D. Green explained the changing social processes related to industrialisation that caused this falling away of religion when he explained the root of secularisation theory. Green set out how, at its core, the sociological interpretation of secularisation theory is based on the belief that the transition from human to machine-based skills, in other words, the development of the factory system, brought changes to the economic basis of society by bringing in different forms of social relationships or ‘social differentiation’. The change in relations came about because the wider effect of the division of labour had been to stress individual achievement. This structural differentiation was, in effect, the process of modernisation. It applied to religion in the sense that the compartmentalisation of labour and the emphasis on individual achievement was extended to other aspects of society, such as family, religion and education, which became disconnected from the idea of community.<sup>2</sup> This sociological interpretation translates into the historical as a decline in affiliation between those involved in heavy

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<sup>1</sup> E.R. Wickham, *Church and People in an Industrial City* (London, 1957).p.14.

<sup>2</sup> S.J.D. Green *Religion in the Age of Decline* (Cambridge, 1996), p.6.

industry and the churches. Therefore, this chapter will look for signs that the ironworkers in particular had become more marginalised from the churches by 1890.

### **I) Falkirk Occupations in the Later Nineteenth Century: Results of Sector Analysis**

The results of the occupational analysis for 1890 will now be discussed with some reference to the 1860 data. Table 8:1 indicates the proportions of each occupational sector for 1890, but with an additional column showing the rates compared to 1860. Figure 8:2 shows the 1890 data in pie-chart form and Table 5:3 is a copy of the 1860 pie-chart for illustrative purposes.

**Table 8:1 Valuation Roll Householders and Occupational Categories, Falkirk 1890 (with 1860 Comparison)**

TABLE 8:1	OCCUPATIONAL CATEGORIES	FALKIRK 1890		FALKIRK 1860	
		RN	% VR	RN	% VR
	SECTOR				
CATEGORY					
1	IRONWORKS	1,241	38.3	418	25.0
2	TRADITIONAL AND OTHER TRADES	605	18.7	399	23.9
3	POST, TRANSPORT, SHIPPING, SERVICE	338	10.4	149	8.9
4	COMMERCIAL	334	10.3	230	13.8
5	AGRICULTURAL	45	1.4	34	2.0
6	PROFESSIONAL/SPECIALISED	205	6.3	83	5.0
7	WOMEN-ONLY	138	4.3	147	8.8
8	NON-WORKING/LODGING HOUSE	163	5.0	110	6.6
9	GENERAL LABOURING	169	5.2	101	6.0
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>3,238</b>	<b>99.9*</b>	<b>1,671</b>	<b>100</b>

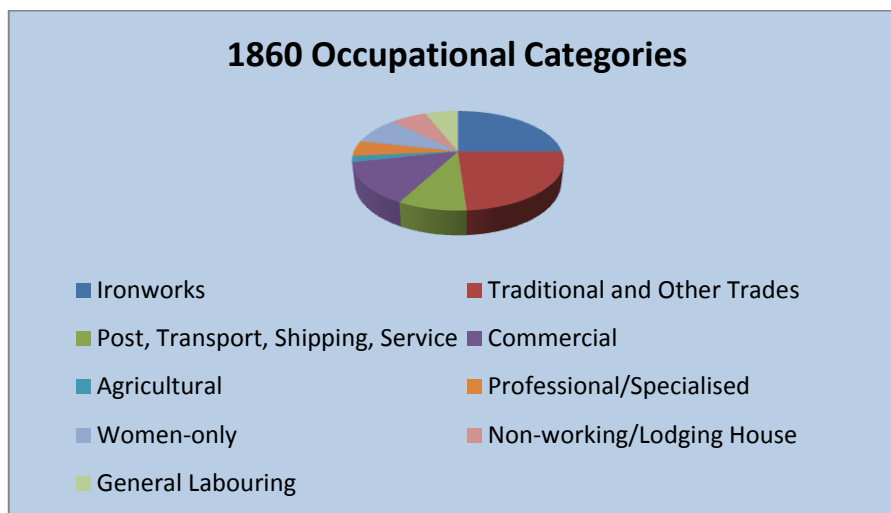
Original Source: Falkirk 1890 Valuation Roll. Results based on 3,307 householders in Chapter 7: Section I, Table 7:1, minus households with no recorded occupation (69 entries) = 3,238 for occupational analysis above. RN = real numbers. \*Numbers do not add to 100 due to rounding.

**Piechart 8:2 Valuation Roll Householders and Occupational Categories, Falkirk 1890 (with 1860 Comparison)**



Original Source: Falkirk 1890 Valuation Roll. Results based on 3,238 householders, as Table 8:1.

**Piechart 5:3 Valuation Roll Householders and Occupational Categories, Falkirk 1860**



Original Source: Falkirk 1860 Valuation Roll. Results based on 1,671 householders, as Table 5:2.

Table 8:1 shows that by the late nineteenth century, the proportion of householders in Falkirk town working in the iron factories had quite dramatically increased from 25% in 1860 to 38% by 1890. Real numbers of households had risen from 418 to 1,241, thus the actual number of foundry worker households had about tripled. In 1860, the traditional trades and ironworks had been almost parallel in terms of householders, but by 1890 the traditional householders had decreased in proportion from 24% in 1860 to just 19%. This change did not signal a real decline in traditional households. On the contrary, the number of households increased from 399 in 1860 to

605 by 1890, but this growth was very stilted compared to that of the ironworks. By 1890 the iron factory occupations had grown much more extensively than longer-established trades and crafts. What can be concluded is that unlike in 1860, the iron factories unquestionably dominated the 1890 Falkirk householder population. On the other hand, the traditional and other urban trades had seen very restrained growth in comparison, although they still formed a significant part of the economy.

For all the urgency projected on to its supposed industrial development from the establishment of the Carron Ironworks in 1759, the core of Falkirk town's structure seems to have been rather slow to change over to a heavy-industrial economy. Changes to the fundamental structure of Scottish society seemed dependent on localised conditions. Key changes had occurred in other locations long before significant change came to Falkirk. For example, the area of Anderston in Glasgow had experienced significant transformation from a large village of handloom weavers as early as 1802 to a fast-growing, industrialised suburb by 1831.<sup>3</sup> For the later period, J. McCaffrey points out that in the late 1880s, new technologies and working practices in various industries, including bootmaking and riveting, were starting to erode traditional craft skills. General economic downturns, as occurred in the mid-1880s, meant skilled men could experience short bursts of unemployment.<sup>4</sup> Although traditional trades were not fading away in outright terms by 1890, Falkirk did seem to be following a model of change in industrialising economies as the old crafts and trades were slowly superseded by large-scale industry. Despite the fact that the economic base of the town had moved to being dominated by the iron foundries from 1854 onwards<sup>5</sup>, the pace of change had, nevertheless, been rather more evolutionary than revolutionary during those thirty years

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<sup>3</sup> R. Strong, 'A Church for the Poor: High-Church Slum Ministry in Anderston, Glasgow, 1845-1851', *Journal Ecclesiastical History*, Vol.50, No. 2 (1999), p.283.

<sup>4</sup> J. McCaffrey *Scotland in the Nineteenth Century* (London, 1998), p.89.

<sup>5</sup> See Chapter 3, Section III.



from 1860 to 1890; and as Wickham found for Sheffield<sup>6</sup>, the essential ‘character’ of the town had retained its original nature, which was rooted in the traditional trades.

The remaining, general occupational categories in Table 8:1 will now be considered in terms of how they had changed by 1890. The first to be discussed is Category 3, the third mainly manual category of transport, communication and service. These households saw a definite increase altogether by 1890. The proportion of households in this group had risen in real terms as well as in proportion from 9% in 1860 to 10% by 1890. The communications and transport category had increased quite significantly when compared with slower growing sectors such as the traditional trades, showing another area of manual work that had expanded in Falkirk as the traditional sector had slowed. Another area where overall growth had occurred was in the professional category. The proportion had grown from 5% in 1860 to just over 6% in 1890. The real numbers had actually increased from 83 households in 1860 to 205 by 1890. Like the communication, service and transport workers, the professionals had increased in presence in Falkirk town by the late nineteenth century. Apart from the iron workers, the professionals and transport/communication categories were the only groups wherein absolute growth had occurred by 1890.

Households involved in commercial activities saw some decline from 14% in 1860 to just 10% by 1890. Despite this proportional decline, actual numbers of commercial householders had risen from 230 in 1860 to 334 in 1890. Like the traditional trades, merchant households had grown only very slowly in terms of what else was happening in the other sectors. However, despite this small diminution in commercial households, by 1890 those who were involved in selling goods or services were on an upward path. J. G. Lumsden, writing in 1901, said that ‘The large increase of public works in Camelon and Falkirk in recent years has given rise to a very healthy

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<sup>6</sup> See Chapter 3, Introduction for Wickham’s conclusions about Sheffield.

condition of rivalry among the local merchants, who are doing all in their power to keep pace with the growing prosperity of the district.’<sup>7</sup> The commercial group, in general, was on the road to increased prosperity.

The agricultural workers saw a tiny growth in real numbers of households from 34 in 1860 to just 45 by 1890 which, unsurprisingly, was a decline in proportion from 2% in 1860 to a mere 1% by 1890. This observation about the more agricultural aspect of Falkirk society is perhaps not unexpected in a small town whose economy was expanding in very specific directions related to communications, professions and heavy industry. The category of those not in conventional work and lodging houses also saw moderate growth in real numbers manifested as proportional decline: category 8 householders increased from 110 in 1860 to 163 by 1890 - a decline from almost 7% in 1860 to just 5% in 1890. In addition, the general labouring category saw similar moderate and proportional change: in 1860 there were 101 households headed by general labourers which had risen to 169 by 1890, but the proportion of labourers had fallen from 6% in 1860 to just 5% by 1890. Lastly, the only category to have seen absolute decline was households headed by women in specific female-orientated occupations. The real numbers of these households had reduced only minimally from 147 in 1860 to 138 by 1890; but this became a rather significant proportional decrease from 9% in 1860 to just 4% by 1890. It is possible that the extent of the ‘women’s work’ identified in Chapter 5 for 1860 was not as prevalent by 1890 as opportunities connected to the new industries opened up towards the end of the century. For example, it was found that the occupation of ‘enameller’ had become the employment of quite a few women on the 1891 Census; however, they were primarily younger family members, rather than head householders. On the 1891 Census there were 44 non-head householder enamellers - all women or girls (mainly daughters or other family

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<sup>7</sup> J.G. Lumsden *Camelon: Ancient and Modern* (official guide to the Irving Memorial Free Church Bazaar (Falkirk, 1901), p.41.

members). In addition, there were also six women living in lodging houses working as enamellers. Therefore, some new occupations were becoming available to younger women which may have reduced the numbers of those dependent on the female head-householder working in the traditional ‘women’s work’ of the 1860 era. Apart from the women-specific occupations, no other occupational sector had seen *absolute* decline within Falkirk society. But of those few sectors that had seen absolute growth, the ironworks undoubtedly surpassed them all in terms of significance.

## **II) The Churches and Occupations in Late Nineteenth-Century Falkirk**

The discussion will now move on to consider the churches in 1890 and how they related to the occupational structure of the town. The first church to be considered is the West U.P. Church and the results are presented below in Table 8:3. As well as having individual tables for the 1890 data, an additional comparative table of 1860 findings is included.

**Table 8:3 West U.P. Church Householders and Occupations, 1890**

OCCUPATIONAL CATEGORY	WEST U.P. CHURCH HOUSEHOLDERS* 1890	RN	%CR	% VR	% CHURCH REPRESENTATION
1	IRONWORKS	52	32.7	38.3	- 5.6
2	OTHER TRADES AND OCCUPATIONS	29	18.2	18.7	- 0.5
3	POST, TRANSPORT, SHIPPING , SERVICE	10	6.3	10.4	- 4.1
4	COMMERCIAL	30	18.9	10.3	+ 8.6
5	AGRICULTURAL	1	0.6	1.4	- 0.8
6	PROFESSIONAL/SPECIALISED	24	15.1	6.3	+ 8.8
7	WOMEN-ONLY	6	3.8	4.3	- 0.5
8	NON-WORKING/LODGING HOUSE	5	3.1	5.0	- 1.9
9	GENERAL LABOURING	2	1.3	5.2	- 3.9

\*See Chapter 2: Section V for the reason for counting only head householders. The same applies to subsequent church analyses. Church householders = 160 head householders from CR who were traced to VR and/or 1891 Census, minus the minister, leaving 159 head householders for valuation analysis above. CR = communion roll. RN = real numbers

**Table 5:5 West U.P. Church Householders and Occupations, 1860**

OCCUPATIONAL CATEGORY	WEST U.P. CHURCH HOUSEHOLDERS* 1860	RN	% CR	% VR	% CHURCH REPRESENTATION
1	IRONWORKS	32	28.1	25.0	+ 3.1
2	OTHER TRADES AND OCCUPATIONS	30	26.3	23.9	+ 2.4
3	POST, TRANSPORT, SHIPPING , SERVICE	7	6.1	8.9	- 2.8
4	COMMERCIAL	23	20.2	13.8	+ 6.4
5	AGRICULTURAL	2	1.7	2.0	- 0.3
6	PROFESSIONAL/SPECIALISED	8	7.0	5.0	+ 2.0
7	WOMEN-ONLY	7	6.1	8.8	- 2.7
8	NON-WORKING/LODGING HOUSE	4	3.5	6.6	- 3.1
9	GENERAL LABOURING	1	0.9	6.0	- 5.1

\*Church householders = 118 head householders from CR who were traced to VR and/or 1861 Census, minus the minister and 3 householders with no occupation, leaving 114 head householders for valuation analysis above. CR = communion roll  
RN = real numbers

The results of the West U.P. Church in 1890 reveal that, of the four primarily manual categories, the ironworkers were the most under-represented group: 38% of households were connected to the ironworks in the town, but just 33% in the church were. In terms of real numbers, ironwork households had actually increased from 32 in 1860 to 52 by 1890, however, it was not enough of an increase to register as an overall proportional change when the significant expansion of the iron sector is considered. Furthermore, iron sector representation in the West Church had declined from 1860, when these householders had been slightly over-represented. This finding is in contrast to the stability of representation of the traditional sector households, which had experienced much more moderate growth in the wider society than the ironworks. But by 1890, the other trades were represented in the West Church almost in proportion to the town at 18%. There was very nearly no change at all in real numbers of trade householders by 1890. Traditional trade representation had not improved in the 1890 West Church, but neither had it worsened to the degree of the ironworks.

The other two key manual categories of communications/transport and labourers were under-represented in the congregation, each by about 4%. There had been a tiny increase in actual numbers to Category 3 in the church by 1890 and, in common with the ironworks, the increase to this sector in society had not been reflected in the churches. This group, therefore, showed a decline in church representation. As for the

labourers, there was not much change at all, as their presence in the 1860 church had been negligible and it remained so in 1890. There was the remotest increase from one to two householders by 1890, which signified a very small improvement in representation because general labouring households had reduced in the town overall; however, this change was trivial. Of the four primary manual sectors, the West Church was obviously skewed towards the traditional trade householders.

The representation of women-only occupations in the church had slightly improved. In real numbers the figures had hardly changed, and due to the decline in these householders in the wider society their proportional representation in the church had reduced from 6% in 1860 to 4% by 1890; however, they were not as under-accounted for in 1890 as they had been in 1860. The non-working and lodging house category had seen a similar small improvement in representation, although they made up the same proportion of the congregation as they had in 1860 - about 3%. Households involved in farming-type occupations had barely altered in representation, although their presence had worsened slightly because they had declined in the town. But these households remained a miniscule sector in church and town, comprising not even 1% in 1890, compared to 2% in 1860. There had been no major variation to the representation of these other occupational sectors in the later West Church.

It is clear from the results that the professional and commercial categories were the only two groups to have been well over-represented in the congregation by around 9% each; and this increase in representation had been an improvement on 1860. The commercial category, however, had actually declined slightly in proportional terms from 20% in 1860 to 19% by 1890, as the growth to the numbers in the church had not been quite enough to register a proportional increase. The professionals, on the other hand, had increased from 7% in 1860 to 15% by 1890, and the increase in real numbers had been very notable: rising from 8 to 24 householders. But, largely, both the

commercial and professional householders had experienced improved representation in the church from their position in 1860, and in terms of their representation on the VRs, there does appear to have been a bias in the congregation towards the professionals and merchants of the town.

The next church to be looked at is the East United Presbyterian Church. The results are provided below in Table 8:4 and the comparison with 1860 is shown in Table 5:6.

**Table 8:4 East U.P. Church Householders and Occupations, 1890**

OCCUPATIONAL CATEGORY	EAST U.P. CHURCH HOUSEHOLDERS* 1890	RN	%CR	%VR	% CHURCH REPRESENTATION
1	IRONWORKS	56	33.5	38.3	- 4.8
2	OTHER TRADES AND OCCUPATIONS	42	25.1	18.7	+ 6.4
3	POST, TRANSPORT, SHIPPING, SERVICE	17	10.2	10.4	- 0.2
4	COMMERCIAL	25	15.0	10.3	+ 4.7
5	AGRICULTURAL	4	2.4	1.4	+ 1.0
6	PROFESSIONAL/SPECIALISED	14	8.4	6.3	+ 2.1
7	WOMEN-ONLY	5	3.0	4.3	- 1.3
8	NON-WORKING/LODGING HOUSE	4	2.4	5.0	- 2.6
9	GENERAL LABOURING	0	0	5.2	- 5.2
Total					

\*Church householders = 168 head householders from CR who were traced to VR and/or 1891 Census, minus the minister, leaving 167 head householders for valuation analysis above. CR = communion roll. RN = real numbers

**Table 5:6 East U.P. Church Householders and Occupations, 1860**

OCCUPATIONAL CATEGORY	EAST U.P. CHURCH HOUSEHOLDERS* 1860	RN	% CR	% VR	% CHURCH REPRESENTATION
1	IRONWORKS	24	17.1	25.0	- 7.9
2	OTHER TRADES AND OCCUPATIONS	42	30.0	23.9	+ 6.1
3	POST, TRANSPORT, SHIPPING SERVICE	13	9.3	8.9	+ 0.4
4	COMMERCIAL	21	15.0	13.8	+ 1.2
5	AGRICULTURAL	3	2.1	2.0	+ 0.1
6	PROFESSIONAL/SPECIALISED	8	5.7	5.0	+ 0.7
7	WOMEN-ONLY	15	10.7	8.8	+ 1.9
8	NON-WORKING/LODGING HOUSE	8	5.7	6.6	- 0.9
9	GENERAL LABOURING	6	4.3	6.0	- 1.7

\*Church householders = 143 head householders from CR who were traced to VR and/or 1861 Census, minus 3 householders with no occupation, leaving 140 head householders for valuation analysis above. CR = communion roll. RN = real numbers

In considering the four principal manual categories in the East Church: firstly, it is clear that there had actually been an increase to the number of households in the iron sector. In proportional terms, this rise was from 17% of church households in 1860 to

33.5% by 1890. However, because of the rate of expansion of the iron households in the wider population, this increase did not lead to a proportional representation. The ironwork households were still under-represented by 1890, but to a lesser degree than had been the case in 1860. The other trade households, on the other hand, had remained static in real numbers (as in the West Church); and although they comprised a slightly lower proportion of the 1890 CR (25% in 1890 compared to 30% in 1860), general growth in these trades had been much restrained, therefore, their overall representation in the church had not changed by 1890: they were still over-represented when measured against the wider society. The other mainly manual category of transport and service had, to some extent, increased in real numbers and proportion: in 1860 this group made up 9% of householders, which had grown slightly to 10% by 1890; and overall, these occupations were fairly represented in the church. The fourth largely manual category of general labourers, on the other hand, did not even figure in 1890, which was quite a stark observation as the East Church had represented the labourers best of the non-established churches in 1860. Of all the primarily manual categories, the East Church was clearly partial to the traditional trade householders in 1890.

Householders in women-only occupations had decreased quite dramatically in real terms, from 15 households in 1860 to just 5 in 1890. This decline greatly reduced their proportion in the church from 11% of households in 1860 to just 3% in 1890. Those householders from Category 8 had, in similar terms, seen absolute decline by 1890. They had reduced in proportion from 6% in 1860 to just 2% by 1890. Farming households, on the other hand, had seen a very small improvement in representation by 1890. The commercial householders of the later East Church had seen an improvement in representation: they had increased very moderately in real numbers from 21 in 1860 to 25 in 1890 and this caused no change to their proportion in the church. Overall, they were better represented in 1890 than they had been in 1860. Professionals, on the other

hand, had seen a small but absolute rise in number and proportion, so that by 1890 they comprised 8% of householders in the church compared to 6% in 1860. The East Church, then, mirrored the West Church, in that it had become more favourable to those in commercial enterprises and professionals by 1890.

The results for the Old Parish Church of Scotland are set out below in Table 8:5 and are next to be discussed. The 1860 data is illustrated in Table 5:7.

**Table 8:5 Old Parish Church Householders and Occupations, 1890**

OCCUPATIONAL CATEGORY	OLD PARISH CHURCH HOUSEHOLDERS* 1890	RN	%BR**	%VR	% CHURCH REPRESENTATION
1	IRONWORKS	71	37.6	38.3	- 0.7
2	OTHER TRADES AND OCCUPATIONS	52	27.5	18.7	+ 8.8
3	POST, TRANSPORT, SHIPPING AND SERVICE	32	16.9	10.4	+ 6.5
4	COMMERCIAL	18	9.5	10.3	- 0.8
5	AGRICULTURAL	6	3.2	1.4	+ 1.8
6	PROFESSIONAL/SPECIALISED	8	4.2	6.3	- 2.1
7	WOMEN-ONLY	0	0.0	4.3	n/a
8	NON-WORKING/LODGING HOUSE	0	0.0	5.0	n/a
9	GENERAL LABOURING	2	1.1	5.2	- 4.1

\*Church householders = 189 head householders from CR who were traced to VR and/or 1891 Census for occupational analysis above. BR = baptismal register. RN = real numbers. \*\*See Chapter 2: Section V for an explanation of why the BRs are broadly comparable with the CRs.

**Table 5:7 Old Parish Church Householders and Occupations, 1860**

OCCUPATIONAL CATEGORY	OLD PARISH CHURCH HOUSEHOLDERS* 1860	RN	% BR**	% VR	% CHURCH REPRESENTATION
1	IRONWORKS	75	39.5	25.0	+ 14.5
2	OTHER TRADES AND OCCUPATIONS	54	28.4	23.9	+ 4.5
3	POST, TRANSPORT, SHIPPING, SERVICE	36	18.9	8.9	+ 10.0
4	COMMERCIAL	8	4.2	13.8	- 9.6
5	AGRICULTURAL	5	2.6	2.0	+ 0.6
6	PROFESSIONAL/SPECIALISED	7	3.7	5.0	- 1.3
7	WOMEN-ONLY	0	0.0	8.8	n/a
8	NON-WORKING/LODGING HOUSE	0	0.0	6.6	n/a
9	GENERAL LABOURING	5	2.6	6.0	- 3.4

\*Church householders = 190 head householders from CR who were traced to VR and/or 1861 Census for occupational analysis above. BR = baptismal register. RN = real numbers. \*\*See Chapter 2: Section V for an explanation of why the BRs are broadly comparable with the CRs.

Beginning with the four main manual categories: firstly, the ironworkers have actually declined in overall terms. However, the decline was slight: from 75 households in 1860 to 71 by 1890, and a small reduction in proportion; however, the iron factory households had greatly expanded in the town and this was not reflected in the



composition of the church. Traditional trade householders had, similarly, seen a tiny decline from 54 households in 1860 to 52 by 1890 and miniscule proportional decline; however, because the growth of traditional trades householders had been subdued within the wider society, by 1890 the traditional trades were even better-represented in relative terms than they had been in 1860. In relation to the other two key manual sectors: post, transport, shipping and service had seen small, absolute changes in a downward fashion. The proportion of these households reduced from 19% in 1860 to 17% by 1890, and their representation in the church had reduced; nevertheless, this group was still over-accounted for in the Old Parish Church because there had been such an over-representation of them in the first place. On the other hand, general labourers experienced overall decline. Despite them having had a miniscule presence in 1860, this had become even worse by 1890, reducing from 3% of householders to just 1%. Householders connected to agriculture had seen just very slight improvement all round, with no change in proportion, but somewhat better representation. In general, these findings show that the Old Parish Church had lost its grip on the ironworkers of Falkirk town by the late nineteenth century whereas the traditional householders retained a strong position in the church.

The commercial category in the Old Parish Church had increased in real numbers quite notably from 8 households in 1860 to 18 by 1890; furthermore, this increase caused a rise in proportion of commercial householders from 4% to 9.5%. This finding is particularly marked because these householders had been so obviously lacking in the 1860 Church of Scotland. Professionals, on the other hand, had not increased in the same way at all. There had been an increase of just one extra householder by 1890 which barely affected the proportion, staying at about 4%. In relative terms, the professionals had slightly worse representation by 1890. The Church

of Scotland had become much more accommodating of those in commercial enterprises towards the end of the nineteenth century.

What the results from two of the churches studied have shown is that the connection between the churches and the ironworkers had loosened, whereas the representation of the traditional workers had remained fair or had improved (in all churches), despite the major growth of the ironworks in the town. Commercial and professional householders had also become more prominent in the U.P. churches, and the former had also increased notably in the Church of Scotland. The point that commercial householders were much more prevalent in representation in all churches accords with the sense earlier in the chapter that J.G. Lumsden portrayed about the increasing prosperity of the district.<sup>8</sup>

### **III) Reasons for the Detachment of the Ironworkers from the Churches**

The idea that the effect of the new forms of large-scale mechanised production caused a change to the nature of society that facilitated a process of secularisation has already been mentioned. However, this theoretical basis has a more tangible expression in the rise of the New Unionism of the late 1880s. This was a working-class movement that was strongest in 1889 and signalled a far more militant phase of trade unionism than before.<sup>9</sup> The historian T.C. Smout expressed it in this way: ‘By 1890, industrialisation and migration had weakened the old idea of community but strengthened that of class’.<sup>10</sup> Moreover, socialism itself had become conceptualised as a ‘religion’ by some within the various movements. For example, William Morris, founder of the Socialist League in 1884, referred to the ‘religion of Socialism’, which

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<sup>8</sup> Lumsden, *Camelton: Ancient and Modern*, p.41.

<sup>9</sup> W. Kenefick *Red Scotland: The Rise and Fall of the Radical Left, c.1872 to 1932* (Edinburgh, 2007), p.10.

<sup>10</sup> T.C. Smout *A Century of the Scottish People: 1830-1950* (London, 1987), p.204.

was ‘the only religion which the Socialist League professes’.<sup>11</sup> Furthermore, the development of the later trade unions were, largely, organisations of the ‘unskilled’, rather than the older, traditional unions of the ‘skilled’. In 1895, an Edinburgh socialist newspaper said:

When we speak of a trade we mean not only those workers who have served an apprenticeship to any given occupation to the exclusion of those whose occupations require comparatively little skill, but rather the word in its broader sense, by which...we mean all the workers who earn their bread by the exercise of one particular calling.<sup>12</sup>

When considering the effect of the new ‘religion’ of socialism, the historian Hugh McLeod concluded that it was ‘not surprising that some socialists and trade unionists moved out of the churches’.<sup>13</sup> However, this statement did not seem to be supported by material evidence. Nevertheless, it does seem that an investigation of turning to socialism as a new ‘religion’ is a valid point to consider in explaining later nineteenth century religious change.

In this manner, there is some evidence from Falkirk that would point to the increasing ‘militancy’ of a particular section of the ironworkers – the moulders. There is proof from the very early twentieth century that moulders in Falkirk were engaged in a serious employment dispute. *The Glasgow Herald* (1907) reported on a ‘serious iron trade dispute’ and the ‘threatened lock-out of Falkirk moulders’.<sup>14</sup> The newspaper reported how the Falkirk iron trade was ‘threatened by a serious crisis’. The issue

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<sup>11</sup> S. Yeo ‘The Religion of Socialism in Britain, 1883-96’, *History Workshop Journal*, 4 (1977), p.6 (Accessed online at: <http://hwj.oxfordjournals.org/content/4/1/5> 08/12/12).

<sup>12</sup> An Edinburgh socialist newspaper (unnamed), quoted in R. Gray *The Aristocracy of Labour in Nineteenth-century Britain c. 1850-1914* (London, 1981), p.46.

<sup>13</sup> H. McLeod *Religion and Society in England, 1850-1914* (London, 1996), p.208.

<sup>14</sup> *Glasgow Herald* (14 Sep., 1907), Accessed online at: <http://news.google.com/newspapers?nid=2507&dat=19070914&id=BndDAAAIBAJ&sjid=V6YMAAAAIBAJ&pg=4207,1389990> (Accessed, 09/12/12).

seems to have concerned a dispute between the members of two different trade unions. The newspaper report stated that some of the moulders in Falkirk Foundry who were members of the Central Ironmoulders' Association of Scotland had gone on strike because 'the masters had refused to dismiss two members of the Associated Ironmoulders of Scotland'.<sup>15</sup> The former organisation seems to have been part of the 'New Unionism' and was set up in 1889. Despite some name changes, its headquarters remained in Falkirk until 1939.<sup>16</sup> The latter organisation was established much earlier and had its roots as far back as 1831. In 1869, the group's name changed to the Associated Ironmoulders of Scotland.<sup>17</sup> The paper records how a third organisation, the Ironfounders' Association (representing the employers) held a meeting and decided to support the Falkirk Iron Company and demanded that the striking moulders return to work or 'notices will be posted in all the foundries in the district that the moulding shops will be closed to members of the Central Ironmoulders Association.' Furthermore, if the strike was prolonged it was to render 3,500 moulders idle and affect 'many other workers' such as fitters and patternmakers. However, the paper reported that the 'men were determined to keep up their petition, and they were prepared for a long fight'.<sup>18</sup> Although this incident took place in 1907, and not in the 1890s, what it does indicate is that moulders had become split amongst themselves between those who belonged to the older union and those who were part of the newer and much later association, aimed at the lesser-skilled moulders. This assertion is supported when Lenard (sic) Berlanstein's work on moulders is considered. In looking at English moulders, he states that machine-moulding was introduced in the 1850s, but only for low-end products; however, there was also a Friendly Society of Ironmoulders

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<sup>15</sup> *Glasgow Herald* (14 Sep., 1907)

<sup>16</sup> Falkirk Community Trust, Museum and Archive Collections. Online at: <http://collections.falkirk.gov.uk/search.do;jsessionid=A55013F19E14D790762011F079BE4793?id=104963&db=obj&view=detail>

<sup>17</sup> University of Warwick, Modern Records Centre, online at: [http://dscalm.warwick.ac.uk/DServe/dserve.exe?dsqIni=Dserve.ini&dsqApp=Archive&dsqDb=Catalog&dsqCmd=Ddocument.tcl&dsqItem=Open%20a%20printable%20version%20of%20the%20full%20catalogue%20\(AIM\).pdf](http://dscalm.warwick.ac.uk/DServe/dserve.exe?dsqIni=Dserve.ini&dsqApp=Archive&dsqDb=Catalog&dsqCmd=Ddocument.tcl&dsqItem=Open%20a%20printable%20version%20of%20the%20full%20catalogue%20(AIM).pdf)

<sup>18</sup> *Glasgow Herald* (14 Sep., 1907).

consisting of handicraft workers which was still in operation in the 1900s. The latter moulders kept up the pressure for high wages and showed animosity to the machine-based moulders.<sup>19</sup> It would seem, then, that a similar type of ‘animosity’ amongst moulders existed in the Falkirk foundries.

This issue can further be analysed by looking at the development of the moulder section in the ironworks. Table 8:6 and Table 8:7 show the proportions of householders in the different shop-floor roles in the foundries.

**Table 8:6 Ironworks and Composition of Shop-floor, 1860**

COMPOSITION OF IRONWORKS, 1860

SECTION	BRANCH OF PRODUCTION/ROLE	RN	%
1	Moulders	176	43.0
2	Patternmakers/drawers/filers	23	5.6
3	Irondressers	32	7.8
4	Engineers	12	2.9
5	Furnacemen	9	2.2
6	Smiths/tinsmiths	70	17.1
7	Warehousemen, timekeepers, etc.	3	0.7
8	Others – gratemounter, nailers, miners, ironturners, etc.	13	3.2
9	Labourers/Undefined - ‘foundry worker’, etc.	71	17.4
	Total	409	99.9*

Original Source: Falkirk 1860 Valuation Roll. Results based on Category 1 defined in Table 8:1 above.

\*Numbers do not add up to 100 due to rounding. RN = real numbers

**Table 8:7 Ironworks and Composition of Shop-floor, 1890**

COMPOSITION OF IRONWORKS, 1890

SECTION	BRANCH OF PRODUCTION/ROLE	RN	%
1	Moulders	698	58.3
2	Patternmakers/drawers/filers	71	5.9
3	Irondressers	45	3.8
4	Engineers	51	4.3
5	Furnacemen	29	2.4
6	Smiths/tinsmiths	106	8.8
7	Warehousemen, timekeepers, etc.	31	2.6
8	Others –gratemounter, nailers, miners, ironturners, etc.	18	1.5
9	Labourers/Undefined - ‘foundry worker’, etc.	62	5.2
10	New roles –enamellers, boilermakers, etc.	25	2.1
11	Gratefitters, grinders	62	5.2
	Total	1,198	100.1*

Original Source: Falkirk 1890 Valuation Roll. Results based on Category 1 defined in Table 8:1 above.

\*Numbers do not add up to 100 due to rounding. RN = real numbers

In 1860, of the 409 households connected to work on the foundry shop-floor, 176 were moulders, equating to 43% of shop-floor roles. But by 1890, moulder

<sup>19</sup> L. Berlanstein (ed.) *The Industrial Revolution and Work in Nineteenth-Century Europe* (London, 1992), p.33.

households made up a huge 58% of these roles, comprising almost 700 individuals. Furthermore, the moulder section had grown much more markedly than any other: every other group saw either *moderate* increase, change or decline. For example, the irondressers had actually reduced in proportion from 8% in 1860 to 4% by 1890, which reflected a tiny real increase from 32 to 45 households. The moulders, then, were the most significant part of shop-floor foundry work and it is not surprising that this large group of workers became unionised, but also divided within that unionisation between the old and new factions, or the less and more skilled.

The following analysis will now look for tangible evidence that the lesser skilled element of moulders had become more disconnected from the churches towards the end of the nineteenth century. This point can be analysed by assuming that lesser skilled meant less well-off in financial, and so property, terms. Table 8:8 below shows the percentages of poorer moulder households in the U.P. and Old Parish churches in 1860 and 1890. By ‘poorer’ is meant moulders who fell into levels 4 and 5 (poor/very poor) of the VR hierarchy.

**Table 8:8 Comparison of Poorer Moulder Householders in the Churches, 1860 to 1890**

Comparison of moulder households	1860			1890		
	RN moulder households	RN poorer moulder households (under £5 p.a.**)	% poorer household	RN moulder households	RN poorer moulder households (under £8 p.a.***)	% poorer household
West U.P. Church	7	6	85.7	19	12	63.1
East U.P. Church	5	5	100	20	14	70.0
Old Parish Church	32*	31	96.9	46	35	76.1

\* 36 minus 4 households with no valuation. RN = real numbers.

\*\* See Chapter 4: Section I.

\*\*\* See Chapter 7: Section I.

The results above indicate that there was a falling away of poor and very poor moulder householders by 1890 from all of the churches. In 1860, poorer moulders accounted for

a minimum of 86% of moulder householders in all churches, but by 1890 this had reduced to between a minimum of 63% and a maximum of 76%. If this finding is considered in conjunction with the evidence of moulders having become divided, and the lesser skilled formed into a union of their own by 1889, it seems a compelling coincidence at the very least. It seems that the poorer moulders, who were also probably far more likely to have belonged to the unskilled, newly-unionised faction, had fallen away to some degree from the churches in 1890. Furthermore, this seems to explain, at least in part, why the iron sector as a whole had much looser ties to the churches in 1890.

#### **IV) Conclusion**

The occupational structure of 1890 Falkirk was most obviously affected by the strong rise in the ironworks and a curb in the traditional trades and occupations. By 1890, Falkirk was undeniably a town dominated by heavy industry. Nevertheless, it is true that even by 1890, and after 30 years of iron factory development, the town still retained its essential core as a traditional market town economy. No area of occupational life, apart from the domestic world of 'women's work', had declined in absolute terms when measured by numbers of householders. Every occupational sector, besides those trades only women engaged in, had increased in real terms. The slight decline that did occur in householders engaged in women-only occupations was possibly due to the opening up of other employment opportunities, in particular for younger women, such as enamelling. This change may have lessened the need for poorer older widows and single women to work in traditionally female roles. Every other sector, however, increased in real terms. It was just that their proportional representation was dependent on the rate of growth in comparison to the very marked increase in iron factory households. Nevertheless, three sectors - iron,

transport/communications and the professions had seen absolute growth and outstripped the other branches of occupational development; but the most growth had occurred in the iron sector.

The church analyses revealed, quite bluntly, that even in an age when traditional town trades had slowed in preference of the ironworks, the householders of the former retained a significant presence in all churches. The affiliation of the iron householders to the West Church had loosened, and it had been the only non-established church to have a good representation of them in 1860. Those in traditional trades, on the other hand, had not fallen away from the West Church to the same degree. Similarly, even though real numbers of ironworkers had increased in the East Church, this had not been significant enough in terms of the wider, social growth of the iron sector. On the other hand, the traditional trades had retained a much more stable and improved presence. But, most starkly, the ironworkers had melted away from the Old Parish Church so much so that the traditional householders had taken precedence. All the same, the ironworkers had not completely deserted the Church of Scotland, but had just much reduced in significance. For fear of overstating the issue, it is important to stress that the ironworkers were still present in all churches; it is just that the ties had loosened quite considerably. Unfortunately, the general labourers continued to lack fair representation in any of the churches. By contrast, in all the churches studied, the commercial class had increased its attendance. The Old Parish Church, which had so under-represented the commercial group in 1860, had moved towards a much larger proportion of merchants within its walls. Those from the professions had also expanded their influence in the East and West U.P. churches, if not in the Church of Scotland. Overall, then, at first glance, the churches seemed to have had substantial working-class participation; however, when a comparative study is undertaken and set against the



wider society, the alienation between the churches and certain elements of Falkirk's society is laid bare.

The point just made was emphasised by looking, in particular, at the moulder section of the ironworks. It was found that moulders had greatly increased, far and above all other foundry occupations by 1890, and that the lesser skilled elements had become unionised by 1889. There were also serious divisions amongst moulders within the foundries which culminated in a major crisis in 1907. An analysis of moulder householders in the churches showed that the proportions of poorer moulders had clearly reduced by 1890 compared to 1860, indicating that poorer moulder households had become less connected to the later churches. This was found to explain, in part, why the iron sector as a whole had loosened its ties to two of the churches by 1890. It can be concluded, then, that the outcome of increasing division within the moulder section of the workforce and the development of unskilled moulder unionisation did lead to fewer poorer moulders in the churches.

## CHAPTER 9

### **1890 Falkirk: The Traditional and Iron Sectors after Thirty Years**

This chapter will consider the ironworks and traditional sectors in further detail to discover any reasons that would account for why the traditional workers kept a strong church presence despite the far slower growth of those households when compared with the rapid rise of the ironworks. Even the Church of Scotland had lost its hold over the ironworkers by 1890 as they had declined in real numbers at a time when the amount of ironworkers in the town had burgeoned. A previous chapter found that in 1860, the ironworkers had made up a much poorer body of householders than had those from the traditional trades; and this was found to have accounted for their relative under-representation from two of the non-established churches. Furthermore, the rise of the newly unionised moulders in the late 1880s and the tensions that existed between them and the older, trades-union affiliated moulders would suggest increasing disparities between workers in the iron factories. This chapter will examine the structure of the ironworks and traditional body of trades to account for these differences, as was carried out for the 1860 era in Chapter 5.

#### **I) The Valuation Roll Hierarchy of 1890: Comparison of Traditional Trades and Ironworks**

The results of the 1890 data are presented below. In addition, a copy of the 1860 table is included to provide a point of reference. The analysis will begin with a look at Table 9:1 and the differences in the placement of ironworkers and those in other trades across the VR levels.

**Table 9:1 Valuation Hierarchy Comparison: Ironworks and Traditional Trades Householders, 1890**

1890 OCCUPATIONAL CATEGORIES 1 AND 2*	VALUATION HIERARCHY	IRONWORK HOUSEHOLDERS		TRADITIONAL AND OTHER TRADES HOUSEHOLDERS	
		RN	%	RN	%
LEVEL	RENTAL VALUE P.A.				
1 Very well-off	£30 and above	10	0.8	59	9.8
2 Well-off	£16 to under £30	16	1.3	56	9.3
3 Comfortable	£8 to under £16	296	23.9	201	33.3
4 Poor	£4 to under £8	794	64.0	251	41.6
5 Very Poor	Under £4	124	10.0	37	6.1
<b>Total</b>		1,240***	100	604***	100.1**

\*Original Source: Falkirk 1890 Valuation Roll. Results based on Categories 1 and 2 as defined in Chapter 8: Section I, Table 8:1. \*\* Numbers do not add up to 100 due to rounding. RN = real numbers. \*\*\*Ironworks: 1 without valuation leaving 1,240 of 1,241 for analysis; Traditional: 1 without valuation leaving 604 of 605 for analysis.

**Table 6:1 Valuation Hierarchy Comparison: Ironworks and Traditional Trades Householders, 1860**

1860 OCCUPATIONAL CATEGORIES 1 AND 2*	VALUATION HIERARCHY	IRONWORK HOUSEHOLDERS		TRADITIONAL AND OTHER TRADES HOUSEHOLDERS	
		RN	%	RN	%
LEVEL	RENTAL VALUE P.A.				
1 Very Well-off	£18 and above	4	1.0	56	14.0
2 Well-off	£9 to under £18	8	1.9	62	15.5
3 Comfortable	£5 to under £9	44	10.5	54	13.5
4 Poor	£2 to under £5	332	79.4	203	50.9
5 Very Poor	Under £2	30	7.2	24	6.0
<b>Total</b>		418	100	399	99.9**

\*Original Source: Falkirk 1860 Valuation Roll. Results based on Categories 1 and 2 as defined in Chapter 5: Section II, Table 5:2. \*\* Numbers do not add up to 100 due to rounding. RN = real numbers

Table 9:1 above shows that the great majority of ironworkers (64%) were concentrated at Level 4, the poor rank of the hierarchy. This proportion signalled a decline in percentage terms when balanced against the other levels, but real numbers of poor households had actually risen from 332 in 1860 to a much higher 794 by 1890. In addition, *very poor* householders had seen *absolute* growth, rising in proportion from 7% in 1860 to 10% by 1890, with real numbers rising from 30 to 124. However, the comfortable grade of ironworker householders had seen rather extensive growth, increasing from 10.5% in 1860 to 24% by 1890. The numbers of these better-off households had risen from 44 to 296. Tellingly, a mere 2% of those involved at the

ironworks were found at the two highest levels of the hierarchy. What the figures indicate is that, by 1890, the ironworkers still comprised a considerable majority of poor householders. However, there had been quite remarkable growth in the comfortable grade, which offset the real growth at the poor level, and resulted in an overall proportional decline of poor householders. However, there had also been a general increase in very poor ironwork householders by 1890, which would indicate a growing gulf between those who were benefiting from the economic circumstances of work in the foundries at the time and those who were not. Furthermore, the increase in the very poorest ironworker households was more severe than the development of these households in the wider society, where there had actually been a slight proportional *decline* of very poorest householders overall.<sup>1</sup> By 1890, then, iron foundry households had at once seen very marked growth in the comfortable grade, alongside a more muted increase of poor householders; however, this development for the better off was dampened by a notable expansion of the poorest householders.

By contrast, the traditional and other urban trades were divided very differently across the VR levels. The largest section (42%) of traditional worker households was found at Level 4 of the poor, but that proportion was nowhere near as high as in the ironworks where 64% were poor householders. Moreover, just 6% of traditional workers were found in the very poor grade of Level 5, compared to 10% of very poor ironworkers. Furthermore, there had been no proportional increase in the very poor section of the traditional trades, as had occurred in the ironworks. There had, however, been a very small rise in Level 5 households from 24 in 1860 to 37 in 1890, but this was marginal change and did not cause proportional increase. Furthermore, a larger segment of traditional workers (33%) fell into Level 3 of the more comfortable workers, compared to 24% of ironworkers at this rank. Most significant, however, was the much

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<sup>1</sup> See Chapter 7: Section I.

larger share of people in traditional trades who fell into the higher levels of 1 and 2, comprising 19% of those crafts and trades, compared with just 2% of iron sector households.

The traditional sector had, nevertheless, seen some reduction in Levels 1 and 2. Level 2 had declined from 15.5% in 1860 to just 9% by 1890, and Level 1 from 14% to 10%. Even though there had been no significant change to the real numbers contained in the higher levels, it would appear that the long-established trades and crafts of the town had been ‘pushed’ down the prosperity ladder in the intervening 30 years from 1860; although this downward trend seemed to culminate only in a growth of the comfortable class, rather than any move towards increased poverty. The traditional trades, then, had become less ‘top-heavy’, so comprising a smaller proportion of *very* affluent tradesmen and craftsmen by 1890. However, the other trades still composed a much more prosperous part of occupational life in the town than the bulk of ironworkers, and had seen no distinctive increase in very poor householders, unlike amongst the ironworkers.

## **II) Functional Organisation of Traditional Trades and Ironworks**

The purpose of this enquiry is to consider the structural nature of each occupational group to look for reasons as to why the ironworks and other trades had developed in such opposing ways. The layout of the functional roles is shown below in Table 9:2 and Table 9:3. In addition, extra columns are included in each table to provide a comparison with the 1860 data.

**Table 9:2 Occupational Roles: Ironworks Householders, 1890 (with 1860 comparison)**

IRONWORKS : HOUSEHOLDERS, 1890	1890		1860	
	RN	% CATEGORY	RN	% CATEGORY
BREAKDOWN OF CATEGORY				
IRONMASTERS/EMPLOYERS	10	0.8	4	1.0
FOREMEN/MANAGERS	31	2.5	3	0.7
CLERKS, AGENTS	23	1.8	3	0.7
GENERAL WORKERS: MOULDERS, PATTERNAKERS, ETC.	1,113	89.7	337	80.6
LABOURERS/UNDEFINED, 'FOUNDRY WORKMEN', ETC.	64	5.2	71	17.0
<b>Total</b>	1,241*	100	418	100

\*1 extra in total number than Table 9:1 above because the count is of occupations.

**Table 9:3 Occupational Roles: Traditional and Other Trades Householders, 1890 (with 1860 comparison)**

OTHER TRADES AND OCCUPATIONS: HOUSEHOLDERS, 1890	1890		1860	
	RN	% CATEGORY	RN	% CATEGORY
BREAKDOWN OF CATEGORY				
MASTERS/EMPLOYERS	155	25.6	129	32.3
FOREMEN/MANAGERS	9	1.5	n/a	n/a
CLERKS	3	0.5	n/a	n/a
GENERAL WORKERS: JOINERS, BAKERS, SHOEMAKERS, ETC.	409	67.6	259	64.9
LABOURERS	29	4.8	11	2.8
<b>Total</b>	605*	100	399	100

\*1 extra in total number than Table 9:1 above because the count is of occupations

Before the results are examined, there were some necessary but minor changes to the 1890 tables that should be explained. Firstly, the appearance of the word 'foreman' in both the traditional sector and iron foundries to describe an occupational position was needed for the traditional trades. The term 'foreman' was not used in the 1860 VR or the 1861 Census but was a feature in the 1890 VR and 1891 Census. Craig Littler set out how the emergence of a new supervisory element had arisen in many industries from the 1890s, meaning the previous roles of internal contractor and piece-master had been replaced by a directly employed foreman.<sup>2</sup> Edward Higgs reveals that

<sup>2</sup> C. Littler, 'Deskilling and Changing Structures of Control', in S. Wood (ed.) *The Degradation of Work: Skill, Deskilling and the Labour Process* (London, 1982), p.133.

by 1891, the ‘growing complexity’ of the relations between employers and workers had led to the GRO (General Register Office) issuing instructions when it came to recording information about managers, *foremen* (my italics) and superintendents.<sup>3</sup> This ‘growing complexity’ was linked to a transition from an economy resting on the traditional distinctions between ‘master’ ‘journeyman’ and ‘apprentice’ to one defined by ‘employer’ and ‘worker’.<sup>4</sup> It would seem that the title of ‘foreman’ was necessitated by changing employment relations and this was not just limited to the factory system but included the whole economy more generally.

In the traditional sector, by 1890, not only had ‘foremen’ appeared in common with the ironworks, but clerks had also. A cursory glance at the table shows that both roles made up a minute section of the traditional trades, but they had come into existence and so two additional categories were required. Interestingly, the term ‘master’ in the traditional trades seems to have almost completely died out by 1890. Of the 605 traditional workers, just 2 were given the title ‘master’: a master tailor and a master bricklayer. The term just seems to have been dropped and not replaced by anything else. Some ‘foremen’ existed, but they were not employers and there were only 3 ‘managers’, just one of whom was an employer. This situation is completely different from that in the 1860 data, where out of the 399 traditional workers, 40 were termed ‘masters’ and all were employers; however, this could be because in the 1891 Census, there was a specific check-box included to indicate if someone was an employer. The 1861 Census enumerators, on the other hand, were required to write by hand if somebody had been a ‘master’ of their trade. Therefore, the disappearance of the ‘master’ description of employment status in the 1891 Census may just have been a matter of convenience and replaced by a quick ‘tick’ on the box instead. In this sense, it

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<sup>3</sup> E. Higgs, *A Clearer Sense of the Census* (London, 1996), p.109.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p.107.

does not affect the attribution of employment status to the traditional trades because the enumerators still indicated it in another way.

In terms of the results, the 1890 findings in Table 9:2 above show that the employers in the iron factories still made up a tiny element of the whole at just 1%. Although their numbers had increased, they comprised the same proportion of the iron factories as they had in 1860. By contrast, the supervisory stratum of foremen and managers had increased to compose a slightly larger element of the workforce in 1890. The actual numbers of foremen/managers had increased from just 3 in 1860 to 31 by 1890, which is an evident augmentation of this element of factory workers that is perhaps disguised by the proportional figures. Similarly, the number of clerks and agents had increased from just 3 in 1860 to 23 by 1890, translating again as a very moderate increase in proportional terms; however, despite the expansion of these roles, overall they continued to comprise a very small sector of the factory householders. Foundry labourers had not much changed at all in terms of real numbers, but when interpreted in proportional terms there had actually been a significant reduction in the labouring element from 17% in 1860 to 5% by 1890. The vast majority of factory workers remained the general section of workmen. Their numbers had grown radically from 337 in 1860 to 1,113 by 1890, although the rise in proportional terms was fairly modest, from 81% to 90%. These discoveries indicate that some changes to the internal structure of the iron factories had occurred between 1860 and 1890 as a result of rapid factory growth. There were more employers, supervisors, clerks and normal workers living in Falkirk town, but the presence of foundry labourers had stayed almost static.

This growth in numbers of iron employers and managers detected by the VR analysis is reflected in a study of Carron Company, the first foundry to be established in the Falkirk area in 1759. R.H. Campbell told how after 1874 there were marked changes to the employer element at the foundry after the death of William Dawson, a



major partner and representative of the ‘old order’ of men.<sup>5</sup> However, his death in 1874 was to break with the orthodoxy of managers coming from families connected with the firm. Instead, a new type of management was established in the form of full-time, professional employees from beyond the prominent families.<sup>6</sup> One of these new managers was David Cowan, a civil engineer from Glasgow. He received a salary of £800 with the added bonus of a free house and coal.<sup>7</sup> The 1891 census showed that Cowan was an employer and ‘civil engineer’. He was 50 years old and lived at Kersehill House with his wife and 6 children. He also kept three servants: a cook, a housemaid and a nurse. The house had 12 windowed rooms and the 1890 VR indicates it came with land and a garden, valued at £65 p.a. The point that Cowan had this house free of charge shows that he was of an extraordinarily privileged position in terms of the great majority of Falkirk society in 1890, underlining how high in status were the iron factory employers. According to R.H. Campbell, Cowan, who was at Carron Company from 1879 to 1891, was good for the company, and with his engineering skills oversaw what was its period of greatest construction.<sup>8</sup> Unfortunately, Cowan was not traced to any of the three main churches considered in this chapter. Nevertheless, his profile reveals just how set apart were even the new wave of senior managers and employers in the foundries towards the end of the century, as they had been in 1860.

When considering the traditional sector in 1890 (Table 9:3), it is clear how differently it was organised from the iron factories. The largest share of traditional sector households formed the general group of workmen. The majority of workers were of the ordinary rank and comprised 68% of these trades and crafts. The real numbers of households in this normal rank had increased from 259 in 1860 to 409 in 1890, which signified a marginal increase in proportional terms, rising from 65% to 68%.

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<sup>5</sup> See Chapter 6: Section III.

<sup>6</sup> R.H. Campbell *Carron Company* (Edinburgh, 1961), p.240.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, p.241.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, p.241, 327.

Employers comprised a significant element of this occupational group at 26% and, although the real numbers had increased from 1860, this translated as a decline in proportional terms from 32% to 26%. Conversely, the actual number of labourers had increased which also meant a growth in proportional terms. But, labourers continued to make up just a small section of the longer-established trades at 5%. The new categories of clerks and foremen/managers were composed of just 12 householders and constituted a tiny proportion of the whole sector. There were more foremen/managers than clerks, showing that a supervisory element to the traditional trades had become more important by 1890. Like the ironworks, then, the traditional trades had also changed in terms of occupational structure by 1890. Most of the change was due to the increase in the general grade of ordinary workers. These findings imply that although the distinctive form of the traditional trades incorporating a substantial employer section was still evident in 1890, the proportion had declined due to the faster rise in the number of average workers, labourers and foremen. This rise seems to have been due to the need for managerial/supervisory and clerical roles by 1890. Nevertheless, employers had not declined in absolute terms, but had been checked by the increase to the other roles in that sector.

A review of the changes to these occupations suggests that in both traditional trades and ironworks there had been most growth in the ordinary band of workers, although this was more marked in the iron foundries. As the requirement in the foundries for labourers (often considered the 'unskilled') had lessened, it had increased in the traditional trades. Supervisory roles were more prominent in both categories, but indicated newly expanding positions in the traditional trades. Employer growth in the iron factories was in line with factory advancement, but seemed to have become restrained in the traditional trades. Overall, it would seem that by 1890 the traditional trades were becoming more reflective of the hierarchical structure of employment

within the factories, incorporating a lesser element of employers, a stronger core of general workers and more of those ‘in between’. The iron factories, conversely, were employing a fuller, general workforce, managed by more overseers, but with the same elite band of employers. However, overall, the traditional trades were still characterised by a high proportion of employers and far fewer general workers; although the proportion of labourers in each section had equalised.

### **III) Ironworks and Traditional Trades: Occupational Position and Valuations**

The study will now consider how both occupational groups were divided in terms of valuations. Each section of Table 9:2 and Table 9:3 above will be separated into an analysis of valuations. This exercise will consider the measurement of social status when compared to each functional role when set against the VR hierarchy. Table 9:4 shows the results for the ironworks in 1890 and Table 6:4 is a copy of the 1860 data.

**Table 9:4 Occupational Roles, Valuations and Ironworks Householders, 1890**

ROLES OF IRONWORK HOUSEHOLDERS 1890	VALUATION HIERARCHY	EMPLOYERS		FOREMEN/ MANAGERS		CLERKS		GENERAL WORKERS		LABOURERS	
		RN	%	RN	%	RN	%	RN	%	RN	%
<b>LEVEL</b>	<b>RENTAL VALUE P.A.</b>										
<b>1 Very Well-off</b>	£30 and above	8	80.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	2	0.2	0	0.0
<b>2 Well-off</b>	£16 to under £30	1	10.0	7	22.6	3	13.0	5	0.5	0	0.0
<b>3 Comfortable</b>	£8 to under £16	1	10.0	20	64.5	16	69.6	255	22.9	4	6.25
<b>4 Poor</b>	£4 to under £8	0	0.0	4	12.9	4	17.4	739	66.5	47	73.4
<b>5 Very Poor</b>	Under £4	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	111	10.0	13	20.3
<b>Total</b>		10	100	31	100	23	100	1,112*	100.1**	64	99.95**

\* 1 less in undefined than Table 9:2 as no valuation. \*\* numbers do not add up to 100 due to rounding.

**Table 6:4 Occupational Roles, Valuations and Ironworks Householders, 1860**

ROLES OF IRONWORK HOUSEHOLDERS 1860	VALUATION HIERARCHY	EMPLOYERS		INSPECTORS/ MANAGERS		CLERKS		GENERAL WORKERS		LABOURERS	
		RN	%	RN	%	RN	%	RN	%	RN	%
<b>LEVEL</b>	<b>RENTAL VALUE P.A.</b>										
<b>1 Very well-off</b>	£18 and above	4	100	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
<b>2 Well-off</b>	£9 to under £18	0	0.0	2	66.7	2	66.7	4	1.2	0	0.0
<b>3 Comfortable</b>	£5 to under £9	0	0.0	1	33.3	1	33.3	41	12.2	1	1.4
<b>4 Poor</b>	£2 to under £5	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	274	81.3	58	81.7
<b>5 Very Poor</b>	Under £2	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	18	5.3	12	16.9
<b>Total</b>		4	100	3	100	3	100	337	100	71	100

In the 1890 ironworks, the vast majority of employers (80%) fell into the top, most prosperous level of the VR hierarchy; however, 10% of employers comprised Level 2, and 10% fell into Level 3 of the comfortably off householders, unlike in 1860. It is clear that the householders that held the most property at the highest and most prosperous VR level were the ironmasters. The individual who was the employer at Level 3 was not an ironmaster but a 'clerk' on the VR, and an 'ironfounder' on the census. He was also called a 'clerk' on the West U.P. Church roll where he was a member. He was noted as an employer on the census and his house was worth £13 p.a. It would seem, then, that he had possibly been the head clerk or in a similar role which included employer-like status to justify him having been recorded as such on the census. This person is indicative of the changing nature of occupational relations that had affected at least one major iron foundry. The others in levels 1 and 2 were all 'ironfounders' or 'managers' who were employers on the census and one appeared in *Slater's Royal National Commercial Dictionary of Scotland* (1882-1915).<sup>9</sup> The iron employers, then, made up the most prosperous people of the foundries and were more than likely to appear at the very top of the VR hierarchy; however, in 1860, there were only 4 iron factory employers making up that section of the population and they *all* appeared at Level 1 of the hierarchy. Before it can be concluded that the ironworks had become more socially mobile in that less well-off individuals could access the employer category, it should be considered that the real numbers are very sparse. The best that could be claimed is that the overwhelming majority of iron factory employers were, as in 1860, in the category of the most prosperous householders. It does appear, nevertheless, that the growth in the factories and the opening up of management positions to outside professionals resulted in there being those of employer status who were possibly of slightly less select means in terms of social standing and wealth. The

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<sup>9</sup> Slater's *Royal National Commercial Dictionary of Scotland* (1882-1915), Digitised online by the National Library of Scotland at: <http://digital.nls.uk/directories/browse/pageturner.cfm?id=90687169>. (Accessed 30/9/12).

ironworks, then, had become *somewhat* less rigid at the top; however, the majority of iron factory employers still comprised a very wealthy, exclusive class.

The iron factory foremen and managers were split differently between the VR levels. None were in the top level but most (64.5%) were concentrated at the comfortable grade of householders. However, 23% were found at Level 2 of the well-off residents and another 13% were in the poor category. This finding is very different from that of 1860 when the very limited number of inspectors/managers had not fallen below the comfortable grade of householders. Some historical research has been carried out into the role of the nineteenth-century foreman that could account for the seeming aberration of *poor* foreman. According to Sidney Pollard, the foreman's pay was sometimes lower than others, but his *status* was higher.<sup>10</sup> In this sense it was social respectability rather than financial position that was the most important characteristic of the foreman's role. This point may help in explaining why the foremen's property valuations spread so widely on the hierarchy. A foreman, then, was not necessarily better-off financially than his supervisees, a situation that had changed from 1860 with the development of the 'foreman' role; however, most foremen and non-employer managers in the foundries remained of the comfortable or more prosperous people in Falkirk town.

When considering the general section, it looks as though this group had become more prosperous: the proportion of those in the poor level had reduced from 81% in 1860 to 66.5% by 1890; and more were in the comfortable level which had risen from 12% in 1860 to 23% by 1890. It is clear, then, that the general working category had prospered; however, alongside that there were increasing levels of poverty experienced by some householders. In 1860, just 5% of these householders had been *very* poor, but this proportion had risen to 10% by 1890, increasing in real numbers from just 18 to

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<sup>10</sup> C. Hemming 'The Strengths and Weaknesses of First Line Management of British Industry before 1939' (n.d.), p.1. Online at: [http://www.labour-history.org.uk/support\\_files/British%20industry%20before%201939.pdf](http://www.labour-history.org.uk/support_files/British%20industry%20before%201939.pdf). (Accessed 1/10/12).

111. In addition, there were also some irregularities in that, by 1890, a tiny number of general iron workers fell into the very top level of the VR hierarchy. This seeming anomaly highlights the unreliability of occupational titles *per se* as a way of neatly categorising people in a hierarchical format. The two people in Level 1 included a moulder and a retired engineer. Neither were employers nor appeared in Slater's directory<sup>11</sup>, which would have indicated independence from the foundries. They also did not have separate shops along with their houses, another indicator of separateness from the foundries. Both had houses and gardens valued at £30 p.a., which, for a moulder especially, was particularly high. It is likely that the moulder was in fact an overseer or a very specialised moulder, but no indication of this is given in any of the sources – church records, census, VR or Slater's directory. The five people who fell into Level 2 from the general section comprised two foundry warehousemen, two gratefitters (one specifically referred to as working in the foundry) and another retired engineer. Again, there was no evidence of employer/overseer status from the sources. Furthermore, it cannot be claimed that any of these specific trades represented a more prosperous branch of foundry workers. For example, moulders, gratefitters, engineers and warehousemen were all found at the very lowest VR level. Therefore, it can only be presumed that either the occupational title does not reflect the actual status of the person involved or that they had income from other sources contributing to their capital. The issue of how VR anomalies like this contradict the assumptions of the traditional historical methodology of categorising by occupational title is dealt with specifically in the next chapter. Nevertheless, what can be said from the consistencies in the results is that the majority of general ironworkers were poor or very poor, but a significant number were comfortably off. However, this section of foundry workers had also experienced increased levels of poverty alongside improved prosperity.

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<sup>11</sup> Slater's *Commercial Dictionary of Scotland (1882-1915)*, online at NLS.

When it comes to the foundry clerks, they are much more reflective of the foreman category in that most of them (70%) were in the better-off grade of Level 3. 13% of clerks also fell into Level 2 of the prosperous section; however, 17% were found at Level 4 of the poor. Like the foremen, then, the clerks appear to have become much more diversified in terms of property valuations, as they had grown in significance as a part of foundry life. For example, no clerks were of the poor grade in 1860, but by 1890 17% were of that level. All the same, most foundry clerks remained of the better-off grade of property holding and social status, along with the foremen.

The ranking of foundry labourers provides a completely different image of social position. There had been not too much change to how the foundry labourers spanned the VR hierarchy, although there had been a slight improvement in their position. In 1860, 82% had been poor, which had reduced to 73% by 1890. Nevertheless, the proportion of *very* poor labourers had increased from 17% in 1860 to 20% by 1890; and labourers remained the section where the severest level of poverty was concentrated. However, in 1890, 6% of labourers fell into the comfortable level, which was an improvement on 1860 where just a marginal 1% had fallen into the comfortable grade. The point that *any* labourer would be secure in property terms completely contradicts the accepted historical method of categorising solely by occupation where labourers are always allocated to the very lowest rung of a system of occupational classification<sup>12</sup>. However, once again, this will be dealt with fully in the next chapter. For the purposes of this analysis, it is suffice to conclude that the great majority of foundry labourers were indeed poor or very poor, but with the caveats just mentioned.

Overall, in terms of social ranking and the various elements of the ironworks, it has been shown that the employers were almost alone at the top, although changes to

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<sup>12</sup> This subject is examined in Chapter 10.

the management structure of the foundry had opened employer roles up to a tiny number of those of lesser means. Most foremen and clerks seemed to have become concentrated at the comfortable grade; and some were poorer, indicating that the growth of these sectors had resulted in a diminution of status and prosperity for some. All the same, the majority of clerks and foremen were in the middling and comfortable grade. General workers had, on the other hand, seen improved prosperity as more were found in the comfortable level, but this was accompanied by increased levels of the very poor. Foundry labourers remained the most poverty-stricken band of workers with the largest majority of poor and very poor, however, more labourers appeared in the comfortable level than in 1860. Overall, some quite subtle changes had occurred within the employment structure of the late nineteenth-century foundries as depicted by the town householders. The main conclusion to be made, however, is that increasing prosperity for some had accompanied increased poverty for others.

The traditional trades will now be discussed in the same way as for the iron factories, beginning with Table 9:5 below and compared with 1860 in Table 6:5.

**Table 9:5 Occupational Roles, Valuations and Traditional and Other Trades Householders, 1890**

ROLES OF TRADITIONAL TRADES HOUSEHOLDERS 1890	VALUATION HIERARCHY	EMPLOYERS		FOREMEN		CLERKS		GENERAL WORKERS		LABOURERS	
		RN	%	RN	%	RN	%	RN	%	RN	%
<b>LEVEL</b>	<b>RENTAL VALUE P.A.</b>										
<b>1 Very well-off</b>	£30 and above	55	35.7	0	0.0	0	0.0	4	1.0	0	0.0
<b>2 Well-off</b>	£16 to under £30	44	28.6	1	11.1	0	0.0	11	2.7	0	0.0
<b>3 Comfortable</b>	£8 to under £16	45	29.2	6	66.7	3	100	143	35.0	4	13.8
<b>4 Poor</b>	£4 to under £8	10	6.5	2	22.2	0	0.0	218	53.3	21	72.4
<b>5 Very Poor</b>	Under £4	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	33	8.1	4	13.8
<b>Total</b>		154*	100	9	100	3	100	409	100.1**	29	100

\*1 less than employers in Table 9:3 above as no valuation. \*\* numbers do not add up to 100 due to rounding.



**Table 6:5 Occupational Roles, Valuations and Traditional and Other Trades Householders, 1860**

ROLES OF TRADITIONAL TRADES HOUSEHOLDERS 1860	VALUATION HIERARCHY	EMPLOYERS		GENERAL WORKERS		LABOURERS	
		RN	%	RN	%	RN	%
<b>VALUATION LEVEL</b>	<b>RENTAL VALUE P.A.</b>						
<b>1 Very well-off</b>	£18 and above	51	39.5	5	1.9	0	0.0
<b>2 Well-off</b>	£9 to under £18	51	39.5	11	4.2	0	0.0
<b>3 Comfortable</b>	£5 to under £9	16	12.4	38	14.7	0	0.0
<b>4 Poor</b>	£2 to under £5	11	8.5	182	70.3	10	90.9
<b>5 Very Poor</b>	Under £2	0	0.0	23	8.9	1	9.1
<b>Total</b>		129	99.9*	259	100	11	100

RN = real numbers. \* Numbers do not add to 100 due to rounding.

Table 9:5 above shows a rather different form of role division across the VR hierarchy as evidenced at the ironworks. The employer category was most markedly different because it spanned all but the very poor level, which showed consistency with the 1860 data. In addition, most growth had occurred to the comfortable grade of employer as opposed to those at the very top of the VR hierarchy. In 1860 just 12% of traditional employers were at the middle grade, whereas this had increased to 29% by 1890. Those in levels 1 and 2 had actually seen some decline by 1890. Level 2 had fallen from 39.5% in 1860 to 29% by 1890; Level 1 had decreased from 39.5% to 36%. But, the vast majority of traditional employers remained concentrated at the three highest VR levels in almost equal proportions - just under or over 30% in each grade. There had been a tiny decrease to the proportion of poor employer, falling from 8.5% in 1860 to 6.5% by 1890. Overall, the figures show that traditional employers had increased at the middle grade of property valuations and had seen some reduction at the higher levels. In this sense, the traditional sector can be said to have become more equitable in how employer status was diffused to encompass more of those from the comfortable level rather than the top grades of property.

The poor employers represented a wide range of longer-established trades: for example, there was a tanner; a glazier; a millwright; a cabinetmaker and a pottery worker. They were all, either, in Slater's directory or designated as employers on the

1891 census. Therefore, the poor traditional employer cannot be linked to any one particular industry. It should be remembered that the 1860 study found a similar distribution of traditional employers across the VR hierarchy. The 1890 data, then, reinforces the point that the traditional and other urban trade sector composed a body of workmen where the higher social status of employer was not necessarily dependent on prosperity in terms of capital, as was the case in the ironworks. Despite that assertion, the majority of traditional employers were comfortable or prosperous.

When considering the foremen in the traditional sector, Table 9:5 shows that most of them were comfortable and just a few were poor or well-off. They constituted a very small group of workers. As a matter of interest, the two poor workers were a saw-mill foreman and a joiner foreman. And they were the only two of the category whose households contained quite a few children but, apart from wives, there was no other resident adult who could have contributed income. This observation introduces a possible explanation for anomalies of this type – they really were dependent on the sort of household concerned. Nevertheless, most of the foremen were comfortably off, which follows the pattern of the ironworks, and which really does set the social status of foremen in general as being distinctive from that of the top-level employers and poor workers.

For the general section of workers in the old crafts and trades, 53% fell into the poor VR level. Another substantial section of 35% was concentrated at the better-off grade of Level 3. A small proportion of 8% constituted very poor householders and an even smaller portion constituted very prosperous householders. The situation of the general workers in the traditional trades had improved, then, in common with the normal ironworkers. The poor grade of these households reduced from 70% in 1860 to 53% by 1890. Furthermore, the comfortable workers increased from 15% in 1860 to 35% by 1890. Moreover, unlike in the ironworks, there had been no increase to very

poor householder amongst the trade general workers whose proportion had marginally declined in 1890, from 9% to 8%. Although there had been a small increase in real numbers of the very poor from 23 in 1860 to 33 by 1890, this change was so slight in terms of the dynamics of the other sections that it indicated an overall decrease in proportion. This finding was in stark contrast to the very poor general workers in the iron factories who had seen real increase in number of households from just 18 in 1860 to 111 by 1890, and a proportional increase from 5% to 10%. The traditional sector, then, saw improved prosperity but no increase to relative poverty, unlike the ironworks.

The point that some in this section were prosperous again brings to light the issue mentioned above in relation to the ironworks, where a tiny number of the average sector fell into the top level of the VR hierarchy but who were not employers. The same inconsistency affects the traditional trade results. Of the 15 individuals who comprised levels 1 and 2, there was no indication from any source that they were employers. Even the 1891 Census which had a specific check box to indicate if someone was an employer was not marked in the affirmative. It would seem, then, that either it was an inaccurate/incomplete recording and/or description of occupational title or these people were not employers, but had just built up capital over the years. A few of them (5 out of 15) did have shops attached to their properties, which would increase the final estimate recorded on the VR, but this did not apply to those who just had houses, with or without gardens. In addition, they did not represent just one or two industries but included a plumber; a baker; a joiner; a confectioner and a flesher. Nevertheless, it was found in Chapter 6 that more of those from the general traditional sector were more likely to have had higher valuations because they owned or were able to rent property beyond that of their residential premises and so in that sense were more prosperous than the general body of ironworkers.

The clerks and labourers were another two small sections of the traditional trades. The number of clerks amounted to a miniscule group and comprised only 3 householders out of 605 in the traditional trades. They were all in Level 3 of the VR hierarchy. This finding accords with the ironworks where the majority of clerks were also found at Level 3 of the better-off working and lower middle-classes. Labourers, also had seen small real increases to their actual numbers: in 1860 only 11 households were labourers, which had risen to 29 by 1890; and the labourers of the later period were distributed as high as Level 3, unlike in 1860. However, at the later point in time, foundry labourers had also risen up to Level 3. All the same, there were more foundry labourers who were very poor than there were traditional labourers, at 14% for the latter and 20% for the former. The assertion that there were any comfortably off labourers at all brings up the same point of a contradiction between the actual social status of some labourers and the assumptions inherent within the established methodology of occupational analysis. But, again, this will be covered in the next chapter. Nevertheless, traditional sector labourers underlined the consistency of finding the labouring section with the highest levels of very poor households, which matches with the general pattern of the ironworks.

Overall, this later analysis of the traditional trades and iron factories has shown that the iron factory labour force was still a poorer occupational body than the traditional sector by 1890. However, both factions had seen a burgeoning of householders who fell into the comfortable grade of valuations; nevertheless, the iron factories had seen a growing disparity between the growth of a better-off grade of worker and an increase to those at the very bottom of property valuations. This development did not occur within the traditional trades, which showed no absolute growth of poorest householders.

#### **IV) Conclusion**

The development of the traditional and iron sectors during the thirty years from 1860 to 1890 showed both general similarities and more subtle differences. The overall pattern of structural distinction between both occupational sectors remained in place: the much higher proportion of employers in the other trades compared with the much more hierarchical nature of the ironworks, where power and wealth were concentrated in a few hands; and the increased levels of poverty in the ironworks, overall, compared with the traditional trades. However, quite a significant difference by 1890 was that the numbers of labourers in the foundries had fallen and the need for labourers in the other trades had increased. Furthermore, the traditional sector had become more necessitous of clerks and foremen by the 1890s which, coupled with the increase to labourers, appeared to show the traditional sector was becoming more hierarchical in nature than it had been in 1860. A very marked similarity, however, was that the comfortable grade of households had risen substantially in both sectors. But, beyond this likeness, there were more subtle, distinctive differences in development. These variations were that the ironworks had seen an absolute growth of very poor householder along with the increased prosperity of some, but this increase to the very poorest had not occurred in the traditional sector. The traditional trades had seen a reduction to the proportion of its employers at the very top VR levels, but rather than signalling a downward spiral of the traditional sector, this change seemed to indicate a more balanced spread of its employers into the comfortable grade, rather than any increase to poor or very poor households. On the other hand, the exclusivity of the very few iron employers at the top remained in place, however, there had been some minimal downward movement into the lower property levels as the management structures changed and a larger administration and supervisory element was incorporated into the ironworks. In the same way, the foremen and clerks of the ironworks had become a lot more significant in

terms of numbers, but also of a reduced and particular status concentrated at the comfortable level, but that also reached into the poor category. Nevertheless, despite the intricacies of development, the main conclusion to be reached is that by 1890, the ironworks still composed a much poorer body of workmen than the other trades and that, despite increased prosperity to a good number in both sectors, only in the iron foundries was this combined with increased poverty.

The findings for 1890, overall, clearly indicate that the increasing marginalisation of the poor and ironworkers from the churches discovered in Chapter 7 and Chapter 8 were linked in that the iron foundries continued to produce a far more impoverished labour force than those in the traditional sector. This conclusion is also why the traditional households remained strongly represented in all churches: the divisions between poverty and prosperity had increased amongst the foundry workers, whereas this had not occurred within the traditional body of trades. This increasing disparity between foundry workers in general explains the overt antagonism that existed amongst the moulders in the late nineteenth to early twentieth centuries.<sup>13</sup> The increasing marginalisation of the ironworkers from the churches was due, at least in part, to their increasing impoverishment.

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<sup>13</sup> See Chapter 8: Section III.

## CHAPTER 10

### Traditional Methodology and the Contradictions Revealed by the Valuation Rolls

The results of the analyses of work, status and churchgoing in Falkirk from 1860 to 1890 have challenged the generally accepted adequacy of drawing conclusions about social composition based on occupational analysis. The findings of this research, determined by employing a measure of social status centred on property rather than occupation, has somewhat contradicted the accepted methodology of social composition analysis favoured by the revisionists. It has been found that all the non-established churches looked at were dominated by the comfortable and wealthier members of Falkirk society, which sits opposed to the over-arching conclusion from recent revisionist scholarship that: 'Every major study based on social composition analysis of churchgoers or members shows for every part of Britain from the late eighteenth to the late twentieth centuries, for every denomination, that the working classes were in the majority'.<sup>1</sup> This study has challenged such an assertion by focusing on property, which is a much more neutral measure because it does not rely on a constructed understanding of the social grading of Victorian occupations. Classification by property valuations disguise no class prejudices, unlike classification by occupation, which is fundamentally infused with subjective notions about the 'working', 'middle' and 'upper' classes. These preconceptions are not often deconstructed by historians before they are used to interpret social class structure. Furthermore, this reliance on pre-conceived, hierarchical systems of social class, built on occupational evaluations, masks the real divergence that existed between *people* rather than 'classes' - working, middle, upper, skilled or unskilled. However, this study does not pretend to have undoubtedly reversed the traditional orthodoxy as it is obviously limited by the small size of the samples drawn

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<sup>1</sup> C.G. Brown, *The Death of Christian Britain* (London, 2001), p.155.

from the churches used to come to these conclusions. In addition, the local focus of the study does not allow for generalisation; however, it has revealed that there is much potential for further research into church social composition that is not reliant on traditional methodology. Some of the problems of using occupation to determine social class will be discussed in this chapter.

The link between occupations and social class that characterise the traditional methodology has come about due to the widespread assumption that occupation is a 'key variable' in determining social class.<sup>2</sup> The Registrar-General's social classification scheme is largely responsible for these assumptions and is still the dominant system used in Britain, even today, by empirical sociologists and social historians.<sup>3</sup> Yet, its basis as a methodological tool is hardly ever questioned. It is not, however, without its critics. Edward Higgs has cautioned against the use of this type of classification system because of the inbuilt value-judgments and suggested that 'such schema' be used with 'some caution'. Higgs also advises that this method be used alongside other measures of wealth, such as income or rent levels.<sup>4</sup> An analysis based on rental valuations and what they reveal about the traditional methodology is the concern of this chapter.

S.R.S. Szreter is another scholar who has revealed the presumptions implicit in the Registrar-General's scheme since its arrival. These suppositions will be discussed in relation to how they have affected and still affect the process of social classification because, despite the caveats, the methodology is still used to draw conclusions about the social composition of churches. Hence the reason labourers, for example, are automatically assigned to the lowest class in a scheme built on occupational classification. In other words, because the description 'labourer' is synonymous with 'unskilled worker', they are allocated to the lowest class because the unskilled are seen

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<sup>2</sup> W.A. Armstrong, 'The Use of Information About Occupation', in Wrigley, E.A. (ed.), *Nineteenth-century Society: Essays in the Use of Quantitative Methods for the Study of Social Data* (Cambridge, 1972), p.192.

<sup>3</sup> S.R.S. Szreter, 'The Genesis of the Registrar-General's Social Classification of Occupations', *British Journal of Sociology*, 35/4 (1984), p.523.

<sup>4</sup> E. Higgs *A Clearer Sense of the Census* (London, 1996), p.136.



as lower than the skilled worker, or ‘artisan’. The term ‘artisan’ meant a skilled worker engaged in a trade that normally required an apprenticeship, although it was recognised at the time that this was not always the case as some apprenticeship systems had died out.<sup>5</sup> In particular, labourers will be discussed in this chapter and the results of the property valuation analysis will be mentioned in terms of how labourers were depicted by the valuation rolls (VRs) and how they came to contradict the certainty of the theoretical foundations of the traditional methodological system.

The chapter begins with a look at how the original idea of the validity of classifying people by occupation became established in the context of nineteenth and twentieth century social analyses; and how it gradually evolved to be so deep-rooted in the accepted methodology for representing ‘class’ that it is still used, largely unquestioningly, by historians and others concerned with social questions in the present day. The chapter then moves on to consider the problem of applying the methodology to actual studies of church social composition.

#### **I) The Reliance on Occupation as an Indicator of Social Class**

In his article on the origins of the Registrar-General’s system of social classification, Szreter unveils the assumptions inherent within it from the beginning. The final method was not fully developed until 1913 and was very much influenced by a medical statistician called T.H.C. Stevenson who was interested in explaining fertility decline.<sup>6</sup> In the late 1880s, the Assistant Registrar-General, N.A. Humphreys, said that ‘it is absolutely necessary to obtain information on the mortality in childhood among the working classes’.<sup>7</sup> A social classification system was then created, but abandoned in 1900. The challenge of classifying the population was then passed to William Ogle, another medical statistician interested in explaining infant mortality. Ogle believed that working mothers and the level of urbanism in an area were important factors when

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<sup>5</sup> I. Levitt and C. Smout. *The State of the Scottish Working Class in 1843* (Edinburgh, 1979), p.102.

<sup>6</sup> Szreter, *Genesis*, p.522, 524.

<sup>7</sup> N.A. Humphreys, quoted in *Ibid*, p.524.

analysing infant death rates. Local ‘blackspots’ were identified by Ogle in the General Registry Office reports and this information was used by Medical Officers of Health to persuade local authorities to address the problem of bad sanitation. The ideology behind these reports was that an unhealthy environment contributed to the problem of poverty.<sup>8</sup> These investigations signalled the age of social investigation.

As the environmentalist understanding of poverty was influencing the General Registry Office’s policies, the Victorians were being influenced, more generally, by Darwinian theories of natural selection. From 1879 to 1885, Francis Galton worked for the Anthropometric Committee of the British Association and developed the idea that people in different occupations had varying levels of naturally-inherited ability and physical characteristics.<sup>9</sup> In his pioneering work, *Hereditary Genius*, originally published in 1869, Galton devised a classification system to rank prominent men, such as statesmen and judges, according to their levels of intelligence and created separate classes on a hierarchical scale.<sup>10</sup> Galton distinguished between the mental capacities of ‘the greatest and least of English intellects’. He also distinguished between mental and physical capabilities: ‘I acknowledge freely the great power of education and social influences in developing the active powers of the mind, just as I acknowledge the effect of use in developing the muscles of a blacksmith’s arm, and no further’.<sup>11</sup> In consequence, the professional class was portrayed as the ideal moral and intellectual standard and this ideology influenced prominent social investigators, such as Charles Booth.<sup>12</sup> Galton’s ideas had far-reaching effects in Victorian society and influenced the development of subsequent schemes of social classification.

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<sup>8</sup> Ibid, p.525.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid., p.525.

<sup>10</sup> F. Galton, *Hereditary Genius*, (<http://galton.org>), (1869;2000), p. 26. (Accessed 23/5/12).

<sup>11</sup> Ibid, p.14.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid, p.526.

In his study of Tower Hamlets, published in 1887<sup>13</sup>, Booth revealed the moral and hereditary connotations that some social investigators applied to occupational labels. For his research, he divided the 450,000 people of Tower Hamlets into eight basic sections (or classes) which were: A) lowest class; B) casual and very poor; C) irregular poor; D) regular minimum; E) regular ordinary; F) highly-paid labour; G) lower middle; H) upper middle. Concerning the lowest class he said:

The life of these people is really a savage life...These are the battered figures who slouch through the streets, and play the beggar or the bully...the worst class of corner men who hang around the doors of public houses. They render no useful service and create no wealth; they oftener destroy it. They degrade whatever they touch, and as individuals are almost incapable of improvement.

He went on to say that: 'It is much to be desired that this class may become less hereditary in its character' and to describe the children of this class as 'street Arabs'.<sup>14</sup> Booth did distinguish between different types of labourer, such as the regularly paid labourer and the very poor or casual labourer, but labourers in general were not present in section six, Booth's 'highly-paid' labour, reserved for foremen, the 'better class' of city warehousemen and 'first-hand' lightermen. These workers were 'of very good character and much intelligence' earning anything between 30 to 50s., as opposed to the worst-off labourers who were of 'low character'. Of the regularly-paid labourers, Booth said that they were 'decent' and 'steady' men who tried to bring their children up 'respectably'. In this instance he was talking about factory, dock and warehouse labourers earning not more than 21s. per week; nevertheless, Booth also believed that the work these men were engaged in did not require much 'skill or intelligence'. In the

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<sup>13</sup> C. Booth, 'The Inhabitants of Tower Hamlets (School Board Division), Their Condition and Occupations', *Journal of Royal Statistical Society*, 50/2 (1887).

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.334-335.

next class up were permanent dock labourers, stevedores, porters and messengers who led 'independent manly lives', and had 'fairly comfortable homes'.<sup>15</sup> In Booth's estimation, then, labourers as a class were varied, but ultimately he did not believe that they had much intelligence, and the further down the scale they were the worse the character of the individual was. Booth's social classification reflected Galton's ideology of attributing *moral and intellectual* characteristics to people on the basis of their occupation.

The ultimate form of the GRO's scheme, which had been developed with the goal of measuring the nation's class structure, was formed around five basic grades of 'social position' or status. It was intended to measure male head householders (or female if the other was not present). This scheme continues to be the basis of the methodology of most historians who use systems of classification to analyse churchgoers. The arrangement of the original method is set out below:

- I Professional
- II Intermediate
- III Skilled Manual
- IV Intermediate
- V Unskilled Manual<sup>16</sup>

Szreter reveals the three 'essential characteristics' of the scheme which were: 1) the occupation of the (male) head householder as the most reliable variable on which to base a system of social classification of householders; 2) a major division between the high-status, non-manual occupations and the lower-status, manual employments which were measured by *skill*; 3) classification in this way would provide a hierarchical social grading according to occupation that could be applied to the entire nation.<sup>17</sup> In fact, Szreter goes as far as to say that the establishment of the principle that male head householder occupations could be used to define essential social groups and determine

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<sup>15</sup> Ibid., pp.334-341

<sup>16</sup> S. Szreter, *Fertility, Class and Gender in Britain: 1860-1940* (Cambridge, 1996), p.74.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid., p.75.

social 'identity' was 'the single most important of the nineteenth-century methodological precedents'.<sup>18</sup> The precepts contained within this methodological approach, then, have been laid bare and characterise the ideological alignment of historians investigating social 'class' in churches with the belief that occupations can be categorised to measure the relative social status of churchgoers.

Szreter signifies that the most significant person in leading the structure of the occupational analysis to measure levels of skill in manual occupations was Alfred Marshall, a foremost, liberal economist whose work complemented that of Charles Booth.<sup>19</sup> This formation of the system was deliberate and part of a specific agenda by some of those involved in advancing the work of a national classification scheme. In 1884, Marshall had called for the poorest 'residuum' amongst the working classes to be actually taken out of the slums where they lived because these people were the main cause of the imperfections in the economic market and impeded progress. They were to be moved out to rural areas and provided with regular employment.<sup>20</sup> Marshall was asserting these ideas at a point in time when some orthodox liberal economists were advocating interventionist policies to combat the increasing awareness of market limitations related to income distribution, low wages and unemployment.<sup>21</sup> His overriding reason for wishing to see the 'skilled' separated from the 'unskilled' was because of an essentially value-laden concern about the functional benefits of the skilled working classes to social progress. Marshall came to dispense with the classical economist belief in higher wages ultimately leading to a *decrease* in profits and investment. Instead, he took on the view that higher real wages advanced economic activity by *increasing* labour productivity. This objective was achieved because improving material standards for skilled workers enriched their moral character. Skilled

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<sup>18</sup> Ibid., p.121.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid., pp.111-112, 124.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid., pp.110-111.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid., pp.110-111.

worker organisation in the form of trade unions, for example, was a sign of positive self-regulation and of respectability and intellectual superiority over the ‘residuum’. Overall, the benefits of this skilled worker improvement led to increased productivity and, therefore, profit. Official recognition and definition of this superior element of the working class was essential to economic and social progress.<sup>22</sup> In his desire to separate the ‘residuum’ from the skilled workers, Marshall echoed Booth’s attempts to imbue the various strata of skilled and unskilled workers with moral characteristics from which to form subjective value-judgements about the nature of occupation.

A tangible example of how historians have since gone on to use the GRO’s basic methodological approach to analyse churchgoing can be given by considering the work used by P.L.M Hillis in his work on Scottish churches. Despite the brief developmental history just given of the ‘traditional’ method (which is essentially nothing more than a theory), it is still used largely uncritically by some social historians today to form conclusions about the social composition of churches. For example, the system used by Hillis was only slightly modified from MacLaren’s original system for classifying church members.<sup>23</sup> Hillis added to MacLaren’s system by splitting the ‘working class’ into two sub-sections – the skilled and unskilled - because MacLaren had just one main ‘working class’ category where were lumped all the ‘artisans and others’ – skilled and unskilled together.<sup>24</sup> Hillis’ scheme is presented below and will be used to illustrate the accepted methodology because it represents some of the most recent work on the topic. Although Hillis’ system differed from the GRO’s final scheme in the number of categories and some of the allocations, the same, basic presumptions contained within the hierarchical nature of these classifications are evident from the layout. The form of the occupational grading is shown below in Figure 10:1.

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<sup>22</sup>Ibid., pp.125-126.

<sup>23</sup> P.L.M. Hillis, *The Barony of Glasgow: A Window on to Church and People in Nineteenth-Century Scotland* (Edinburgh, 2007), pp.12-13.

<sup>24</sup> A.A. MacLaren, *Religion and Social Class: the Disruption Years in Aberdeen* (London, 1974), p218.

**Figure 10:1 Representation of Traditional Methodology**

**A = Professional group: lawyers, surgeons etc.**  
**B = Commercial group: bankers, accountants, etc.**  
**C = Large merchant-manufacturing-retail group: vintners, suppliers of timber, ironfounders, etc.**  
**D = Retired-rentier group: farmers, shipowners, etc.**  
**E = Public servants (I): architects, civil engineers, custom officers, etc.**  
**F = Public servants (II): teachers, clerks, etc.**  
**G = Small manufacturing merchant-tradesmen group: foremen, salesmen, shopkeepers, etc.**  
**H = Skilled and semi-skilled: engineers, smiths, cooks, milliners, shop assistants, tailors, bakers, printers, etc.**  
**I = Unskilled: labourers, carters, sawyers, housemaids, cutters, sewers, etc.**

**A, B, C, D = high status/upper middle class .**

**E, F, G = low status/lower middle class.**

**H, I = working class.<sup>25</sup>**

In his study into churchgoing in the Barony of Glasgow, Hillis states that ‘working-class groups made up the largest section of the congregation comprising almost half the total membership’.<sup>26</sup> This working-class element of the congregation was split between 59% ‘skilled and semi-skilled’ and 41% ‘unskilled’, (when measured on the above scale) which meant a ‘significant lower working class presence’ existed in the church.<sup>27</sup> But, this form of classification creates a very wide pool for who constituted the skilled, semi-skilled and unskilled working classes in any given church to fall into. Indeed, Hillis states that: ‘The skilled and semi-skilled worked in a myriad of occupations closely allied to Glasgow’s industrialised economy’, then goes onto list these occupations, which include blacksmiths, painters, joiners, engineers, dyers, weavers and potters, amongst others. In the skilled group he also included those ‘working in shops and consumer trades’, for example, he lists dressmakers, bakers, tailors and shop assistants.<sup>28</sup> Within the ‘unskilled’ category he incorporates a whole host of other occupations, including carters, labourers, sewers, packers and seamstresses. In addition, he counted all those working in domestic service as cooks, housemaids and rural workers, such as ploughmen and dairymaids, in the working-

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<sup>25</sup> Hillis, *Barony*, pp. 12-13, p.111.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, p.114.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, p.114.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, p.114.

class category.<sup>29</sup> Is it any wonder, then, that the type of methodology used by some revisionists results in analyses that conclude churches were full of working-class people? As can be seen, the working-class categories merely discriminate between the ‘skilled’ and ‘unskilled’, yet within those broad groups are an enormous range of occupations, covering employments across *all* industrial sectors *and* of both sexes. Moreover, some historians have already pointed out (in general and not related specifically to church analyses) that using this type of system produces an ‘over-large’ element of those in skilled occupations, and that studies showing over 40% of household heads in that class were ‘not hard to find’.<sup>30</sup> The likely outcome of this lack of contrast within the working classes and between the sexes is that differences are disguised, and the figures are inadvertently but artificially enhanced.

The failure to distinguish between the sexes when evaluating church social composition is a potentially distorting factor due, in part, to the strong presence of women in churches. Some studies, such as that by L. Jeffrey, have shown that women were crucial to church membership in the nineteenth century and formed the backbone of some churches.<sup>31</sup> But if the occupations of the women church members engaged in sewing and domestic work, for example, are combined with that of male workers of all types, then this approach just adds to the lack of discrimination between ‘working-class’ employments and augments the numbers of ‘unskilled’ in any given church. Moreover, if women are added to the pool of skilled or unskilled (although, according to the traditional methodology, ‘women’s work’ is generally considered as having been ‘unskilled’), in what way is that significant if it cannot be measured against the surrounding ‘host’ population? It was shown earlier in this study that the vast majority of head householders were men, therefore, calculating proportions of skilled and un-

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<sup>29</sup> Ibid., pp.114-115.

<sup>30</sup> D. Mills and J. Mills, ‘Occupation and Social Stratification Revisited: The Census Enumerators’ Books of Victorian Britain’, *Urban History*, Vol.16, (May 1989), pp.63-64.

<sup>31</sup> L. Jeffrey, ‘Women in the Churches of Nineteenth Century Stirling’, (MLitt Thesis, Stirling University, 1996).



skilled people in churches that likely includes a significant number of women is valid only for the particular composition of the church in question and no more. Findings such as these cannot be used to generalise that high levels of ‘working-class’ churchgoing existed if they do not represent the working-class population in the surrounding society.

Similarly, if no discrimination is made between industrial sectors, in general, then the same ‘working-class’ status is attributed to any and all who fall under the umbrella of the working classes. However, this study has shown that major differences in terms of employment structure, social status and property valuations existed between those in the iron factories and those in the older trades. Moreover, different patterns of churchgoing were found between these two industrial groups. A great part of householders were employed in the iron factories by 1890; however, despite the fact that the ironwork householders did outnumber those from the other trades in the 1890 churches, this was still not reflective of the significant and increased social presence to the ironwork sector that had taken place in the town. If the churches had operated entirely as neutral institutions, unconcerned with the social make up of their congregations, and if all people in the surrounding population felt or experienced no barriers to churchgoing, then it would be expected that the churches would have become far more representative of the ironworkers by 1890; however, that was not the case. Therefore, in ignoring industrial distinctions when evaluating social composition analysis in churches, the traditional methodology is likely to generalise and over-account for the significance of ‘working-class’ churchgoing.

Most historians who employ this type of methodology do not appear to take these potentially distorting factors into account. Hillis, for example, offers no substantial analysis of the composition of the church based on relativity to the surrounding population apart from to say that the large proportion of working-class

people in the church ‘is only partly explained by their numerical superiority in the city’s population’<sup>32</sup>. The use of this type of classification will invariably produce ‘evidence’ of high levels of working-class churchgoing because the methodological approach encompasses such an extensive approximation of what constituted ‘working-class’ occupations. This criticism is not aimed at the work of Hillis, in particular (indeed his research is amongst some of the most enlightening and enjoyable), but is aimed at the largely unquestioned use of this type of methodology to categorise ‘working-class’ people in church congregations; and which typically produces the same result – churches ‘full’ of working-class people.

A concrete example can be made that illustrates well the incongruity between the traditional approach using occupational classification and the approach put forward in this study. The Free Church in 1860 will be considered as an example. When the same householders of the valuation analysis shown in Table 4:3 of Chapter 4 are considered in terms of the occupational classification system presented above in Figure 10:1, it produces a result of: 49.3% working-class; 36% lower middle class (low status); and 14.7% upper middle class (high status). According to this practice, the Free Church had a majority of working-class churchgoer. However, when the results of the property analysis are considered, the impression gained about the social structure of the church is strikingly different. The Table is reproduced from Chapter 4 below.

**Table 4:3 Valuation Hierarchy and St. Andrew’s Free Church, 1860**

ST. ANDREW’S FREE CHURCH 1860	VALUATION HIERARCHY	CHURCH HOUSEHOLDERS		VR HOUSEHOLDERS	% CHURCH REPRESENTATION
LEVEL	RENTAL VALUE P.A.	RN	% CR	% VR	
<b>1 Very well-off</b>	£18 and above	41	30.1	10.2	+ 19.9
<b>2 Well-off</b>	£9 to under £18	22	16.2	11.1	+ 5.1
<b>3 Comfortable</b>	£5 to under £9	23	16.9	13.0	+ 3.9
<b>4 Poor</b>	£2 to under £5	48	35.3	52.2	- 16.9
<b>5 Very poor</b>	Under £2	2	1.5	13.5	- 12.0

<sup>32</sup> Hillis, *Barony*, pp.114.

In terms of the property analysis, the results indicate (as set out in Chapter 4) that although there was a strong presence of the poor on the surface, in relation to the wider society and the other groups in the church, they were starkly under-represented. Furthermore, when taken together, those from the comfortable to very well-off grades clearly dominated in terms of numbers, which does not tend to sit well with the image of a church with a majority of ‘working-class’ member of the lowliest social status.

The same type of result is found for the East U.P. Church (which was found to be the most representative of the poor from all the non-established churches) when the householders from Table 4:5 of Chapter 4 are treated in the same way: 64.4% were working class; 27.3% were lower middle class (low status); and 8.3% were upper middle class (high status). Of course, there are interesting distinctions between these two sets of results which could be discussed further if this were the methodology employed to conceptualise social status in this study; however, the point made here is to illustrate the case that whenever this usual methodology is employed, the findings will invariably show high levels of ‘working-class’ churchgoing. The East Church Table of valuation results is copied below from Chapter 4. As can be seen, the conception of the social composition of the East Church when based on property valuation paints a different picture, where it is clear that the poor and very poor householders were under-represented and the better-off householders surpassed the poor, although not as starkly in the East Church as was the case for the Free and West U.P. churches. Once again, the two methodologies seem at odds with each other in their interpretations.

**Table 4:5 Valuation Hierarchy and East U. P. Church, 1860**

EAST U.P. CHURCH 1860	VALUATION HIERARCHY	CHURCH HOUSEHOLDERS		VR HOUSEHOLDERS	% CHURCH REPRESENTATION
		RN	% CR	% VR	
<b>LEVEL</b>	<b>RENTAL VALUE P.A.</b>				
<b>1 Very well-off</b>	£18 and above	25	19.2	10.2	+ 9.0
<b>2 Well-off</b>	£9 to under £18	22	16.9	11.1	+ 5.8
<b>3 Comfortable</b>	£5 to under £9	20	15.4	13.0	+ 2.4
<b>4 Poor</b>	£2 to under £5	57	43.8	52.2	- 8.4
<b>5 Very poor</b>	Under £2	6	4.6	13.5	- 8.9

The reason the usual methodology consistently produces results that indicate high levels of working-class churchgoing is because of the assumption inherent within these types of system that ‘working-class’ equated to ‘poor’. In this sense, occupational labels are seen as indicators, not just of social status, but of levels of material prosperity; and the ‘working-class’ are, of course, presumed to have been of lowly status, therefore, this is taken to equate to deprived capital resources. However, this was not true of the entire ‘working class’; similarly, not all those who were considered ‘middle-class’ had higher property valuations than the working classes. In Falkirk, for example, some of those who would be considered as ‘middle-class’ and rated as such in the scheme illustrated in Figure 10:1, were of very low property valuations on the VR. In 1860, for example, some of the teachers were found in properties at the lowest levels; for example, Christina Adam, an English teacher, had a ‘house’ valued at just £1 15 p.a., meaning she was of the very poor grade of the VR hierarchy. Similarly, Helen Rodgers, a ‘school mistress’ from Kerse Lane lived in a property valued at £2 p.a., falling into Level 4 of the poor grade. These two women did not have families and lived alone which could be partly why they were in such low-valued housing; however, these examples still serve to show the disparity of ranking them in an occupational classification scheme with higher social status above the many working-class individuals who lived in much more highly-valued property. In addition, there were also two clerks who fell into the poor grade of the VR hierarchy. John Mitchell, and

Hugh McWhirter were both clerks living in properties valued at less than £5 p.a. Mitchell was single, a shipping clerk, and lived with just his young niece, while McWhirter, a foundry clerk, was married with four children. Like some teachers, then, a number of clerks also did not fit the rigid schema of occupational classification. Although the numbers are small, more examples of low property valuations attributed to people whose occupations supposedly indicated superior levels of social status could be provided from the ‘merchants’ of the town and some other groups, however there is not space to deconstruct the matter in full. Suffice to say that occupational descriptions are not always a reliable guide to examining relative social position.

## **II) The Classification of ‘Skilled’ Workers**

The study will now turn to investigating the particular issue of the classification of skilled workers in the traditional methodology compared to how the ‘skilled’ trades would relate to the VR hierarchy. The methodology employed by Hillis has already been set out above in Figure 10:1, therefore, it will be used as the basis of this discussion for the sake of convenience. Due to the connection in the accepted methodology with the vertical form of the occupational categories, and the escalation or reduction in social status depending on whether the group is at the top or the bottom, this study will try to show the unreliability of this, rather rigid, vertical construction. And, although for most occupational groups, the real numbers being considered will be very small, the proportional figures are given only as an illustration of relative position on the VR hierarchy. Moreover, parallel figures for 1860 and 1890 will be included, not for the sake of comparing 1860 with 1890 in themselves, but as a test of consistency in the results. The profession of bakers will firstly be considered.

**Table 10:1 Valuation Hierarchy and Bakers, 1860**

BAKERS 1860	VALUATION HIERARCHY	ALL BAKERS		BAKER EMPLOYERS		BAKER NON-EMPLOYERS	
LEVEL	RENTAL VALUE P.A.	RN	%	RN	%	RN	%
<b>1 Very Well-off</b>	£18 and above	12	36.4	10	58.8	2	12.5
<b>2 Well-off</b>	£9 to Under £18	7	21.2	4	23.5	3	18.7
<b>3 Comfortable</b>	£5 to under £9	5	15.1	2	11.8	3	18.7
<b>4 Poor</b>	£2 to under £5	8	24.2	1	5.9	7	43.7
<b>5 Very Poor</b>	Under £2	1	3.0	0	0.0	1	6.2
<b>Total</b>		33	99.9*	17	100	16	99.8*

\* Numbers do not add up to 100 because of the rounding up of numbers.

**Table 10:2 Valuation Hierarchy and Bakers, 1890**

BAKERS 1890	VALUATION HIERARCHY	ALL BAKERS		BAKER EMPLOYERS		BAKER NON-EMPLOYERS	
LEVEL	RENTAL VALUE P.A.	RN	%	RN	%	RN	%
<b>1 Very well-off</b>	£30 and above	8	17.4	7	50.0	1	3.1
<b>2 Well-off</b>	£16 to Under £30	3	6.5	3	21.4	0	0.0
<b>3 Comfortable</b>	£8 to under £16	20	43.5	4	28.6	16	50.0
<b>4 Poor</b>	£4 to under £8	14	30.4	0	0.0	14	43.7
<b>5 Very Poor</b>	Under £4	1	2.2	0	0.0	1	3.1
<b>Total</b>		46	100	14	100	32	99.9*

\* Numbers do not add up to 100 because of the rounding up of numbers.

The first point to make is that bakers, in general, appeared at all levels of the VR hierarchy in both years. This translates as the baking profession comprising people who were considered wealthy *and* people considered poor, even very poor to a limited extent. Bearing in mind that systems such as Hillis' above consign bakers to the second lowest rung in terms of social class and status, this finding seems at odds with what the traditional method implies about bakers. However, in the usual scheme, those who are considered employers are normally put into a category above that of the 'skilled' section, so they would be allocated to the 'G' grade in Figure 10:1. This would categorise baker employers as lower-middle class, rather than working-class. A problem with this, however, is that assigning a baker to the small merchant/shopkeeper category to indicate lower-middle class status is dependent on the historical sources pointing out, either in the censuses or local trade directories, that the individual was an

employer. This process, therefore, has been realised in the analysis above: those bakers who were found as employers were measured separately against the VR hierarchy.

What the findings show is that all bakers, but one, who were recorded as employers were found from Level 3 of the hierarchy and above, which would accord, generally, with the point of baker employers having more social status than non-employers. When it comes to analysing those who could not be attributed with employer status from the census or trade directories, however, in both years there are non-employers who fall into the top grades of the VR hierarchy. This point again contradicts the implication of ‘skilled working-class’ status and its particular sense of being the second poorest rank in the traditional methodology. The reason it opposes the usual system is because those non-employers would normally be allocated to section ‘H’ of Figure 10:1 above which indicates working-class status, but on the VR hierarchy some of them have high social status according to the relative valuations of their properties. While it is true that almost half of the non-employer bakers fell into Level 4 of the poor in 1860, the other half did not. The main point being that following the traditional method, they would *all* be attributed with very low, working-class status. On the other hand, the VR hierarchy would suggest that they may well have had high social status relative to others in the town.

R.J. Morris has worked on occupational classification and explains that a ‘baker’ could have been either self-employed, an employer or a wage-labourer. Furthermore, bakers could have been involved in production *and/or* distribution. He advises that other indicators, such as having servants or a ‘high rateable value’ of a property could be used to determine employers from non-employers. However, Morris stresses that ‘Such judgements are quite separate from occupational coding. Although it is clear that the “baker” is engaged in food production, such a title can only be coded in a very

general way in terms of status.’<sup>33</sup> He also says that a ‘distortion’ can arise by assuming that an occupational title provides ‘accurate information about occupation’.<sup>34</sup> The evidence from this valuation study of bakers would tend to support the idea of ‘distortion’ from Morris in that the social status position of a non-employer baker assumed by the traditional methodology does not relate well to how those non-employers fared in terms of social status when measured in terms of property.

The discussion will now move on to consider another section of those considered as skilled working classes in the traditional methodology – tailors. Table 10:3 and Table 10:4 show the relative position of tailors – employers, non-employers and both – when set against the VR hierarchy.

**Table 10:3 Valuation Hierarchy and Tailors, 1860**

TAILORS 1860 LEVEL	VALUATION HIERARCHY RENTAL VALUE P.A.	ALL TAILORS		TAILOR EMPLOYERS		TAILORS NON-EMPLOYERS	
		RN	%	RN	%	RN	%
1 Very well-off	£18 and above	3	6.8	3	21.4	0	0.0
2 Well-off	£9 to Under £18	4	9.1	4	28.6	0	0.0
3 Comfortable	£5 to under £9	9	20.4	4	28.6	5	16.7
4 Poor	£2 to under £5	26	59.1	3	21.4	23	76.7
5 Very Poor	Under £2	2	4.5	0	0.0	2	6.7
<b>Total</b>		44	99.9*	14	100	30	100.1*

\* Numbers do not add up to 100 because of the rounding up of numbers.

**Table 10:4 Valuation Hierarchy and Tailors, 1890**

TAILORS 1890 LEVEL	VALUATION HIERARCHY RENTAL VALUE P.A.	ALL TAILORS		TAILOR EMPLOYERS		TAILOR NON-EMPLOYERS	
		RN	%	RN	%	RN	%
1 Very well-off	£30 and above	1	2.8	1	9.1	0	0.0
2 Well-off	£16 to Under £30	4	11.1	4	36.4	0	0.0
3 Comfortable	£8 to under £16	10	27.8	6	54.5	4	16.0
4 Poor	£4 to under £8	17	47.2	0	0.0	17	68.0
5 Very Poor	Under £4	4	11.1	0	0.0	4	16.0
<b>Total</b>		36	100	11	100	25	100

<sup>33</sup> R.J. Morris, ‘Occupational Coding: Principles and Examples’, *Historical Social Research*, Vol.15 (1990), p.5. Online at: [http://hsr-trans.zhsf.uni-koeln.de/hsrretro/docs/artikel/hsr/hsr1990\\_220.pdf](http://hsr-trans.zhsf.uni-koeln.de/hsrretro/docs/artikel/hsr/hsr1990_220.pdf) (Accessed, 4/12/12).

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, p.5.



The results pertaining to all tailors (column 1 of both tables) show that, like the bakers, they were distributed throughout all levels of the VR hierarchy. However, when they are split into just the employers, some of them in 1860 (3 out of 14) were in the poor category of Level 4 which would again contradict the idea that tailor employers *per se* were of a higher social status than non-employers. However, all employers in 1890 did appear in the higher status grades of Level 3 and upwards, which perhaps speaks of wider social changes from 1860 to 1890, but which is not really the subject of this chapter and would take the discussion in a completely different direction. When the non-employers are considered, in both years they do not reach higher than Level 3. These results do indicate that tailor employers were all of a higher social status than normal tailors: however, some of those (5 out of 30 in 1860; 4 out of 25 in 1890) who could not be identified as employers also fell into ‘comfortable’ Level 3. Referring back to the chapter on methodology, this *tends* to reflect the better-off manual workers, tradespeople and lower level professionals. The argument being put forward is this: (assuming a historian categorising tailors uses the same method as Figure 10:1 and has found the same ratio of non-employers to employers) the non-employers would be allocated to grade ‘H’ and the employers to grade ‘G’. This would result in (using the 1860 figures of Table 10:3, columns 2 and 3) the 14 tailors who were employers being allocated to the lower middle class/low social status group ‘G’ and the 30 non-employers being allocated to the skilled, working-class category. The VR hierarchy, however, suggests that some of the tailors categorised as having low or working-class status based on their occupational title did not reflect the same lowly status in terms of property valuations. As was the situation for the bakers, then, the tailors also did not form an ordered pattern in terms of how non-employers and employers measured against the VR hierarchy.

What these outcomes suggest is that relying on an occupational label in conjunction with a pre-determined scale of neatly ordered conceptions of social ‘status’ is a potentially unreliable system of social classification. The reason is twofold: firstly, this method relies on accurate and exhaustive identification of employers from non-employers in any given occupational group. This procedure in turn relies on the dependability of the original census material and the ability to trace those potentially not marked in the census as employers in other sources, such as trade directories. Secondly, it relies on constructed and confined ideas about how ‘status’ was ordered in society when linked to occupational labels. But, what this section has shown is that the VR placement of bakers and tailors, two traditionally ‘skilled’ working-class groups, was not neatly confined in nature. Although, in very broad terms, it was found that the majority of non-employers were poor, others were not, and some were of the top VR levels. Therefore, these results question the reliability of the traditional methodology. The main potential discrepancy is that the traditional methodology may over-estimate the number of ‘skilled’ working classes and under-account for those of higher social status in any given church. The numbers of ‘working class’, then, may be over-estimated in a church whose composition is judged by the traditional methodology and its dependency on occupational labels.

### **III) The Classification of ‘Unskilled’ Workers and Labourers**

The study will now turn to consider how labourers and other ‘unskilled’ workers fared when set against the VRs and the traditional methodology. It has already been explained in the introduction how the categorisation of labourers in churches is now an important factor to consider as some of the recent work has highlighted the disparities

between the ‘skilled’ and ‘unskilled’ members of churches.<sup>35</sup> The unskilled were sometimes less prevalent in congregations than the skilled. And, it was set out earlier in this chapter how the measurement of the skilled and unskilled in wider, social terms was a crucial element of the GRO’s scheme to classify the nation. The first section to be looked at will be labourers. Because the traditional methodology depicted by Figure 10:1 above would not discriminate between *industries* when categorising labourers, this analysis ignores the distinction between labourers from the iron foundries and traditional trades that has been made in this thesis. In other words, the tables below refer to all those specifically described as labourers, regardless of industry.

**Table 10:5 Valuation Hierarchy and Labourers, 1860**

LABOURERS 1860	VALUATION HIERARCHY	ALL LABOURERS	
		RN	%
LEVEL	RENTAL VALUE P.A.		
1 Very well-off	£18 and above	1	0.5
2 Well-off	£9 to Under £18	2	1.0
3 Comfortable	£5 to under £9	5	2.5
4 Poor	£2 to under £5	138	68.3
5 Very Poor	Under £2	56	27.7
<b>Total</b>		202	100

**Table 10:6 Valuation Hierarchy and Labourers, 1890**

LABOURERS 1890	VALUATION HIERARCHY	ALL LABOURERS	
		RN	%
LEVEL	RENTAL VALUE P.A.		
1 Very well-off	£30 and above	0	0.0
2 Well-off	£16 to Under £30	0	0.0
3 Comfortable	£8 to under £16	24	8.6
4 Poor	£4 to under £8	183	65.6
5 Very Poor	Under £4	72	25.8
<b>Total</b>		279	100

The results drawn from an analysis of those described specifically as labourers indicates that in both years, the vast majority fell into the poor grade of Level 4 on the VR hierarchy. In addition, around a quarter of labourers in both years comprised the

<sup>35</sup> P.L.M. Hillis ‘Presbyterianism and Social Class in Mid Nineteenth-Century Glasgow: A Study of Nine Churches’, *Journal Ecclesiastical History*, 32/1 (1981), p.39.

very poor sector. What can be seen, however, is that some labourers fell into the higher VR levels. In 1890, almost 9% of labourers comprised Level 3 of the VR hierarchy, although no labourers appeared higher than Level 3. In the 1860 data, however, 4% of labourers fell into the three highest levels. The best example of how a 'labourer' was not necessarily indicative of the lowest of the working classes is the example of Hugh Monteith, recorded as a labourer on the 1861 census *and* the East U.P. Church roll. The situation is slightly complicated by the fact that Monteith did not appear in the VR as a householder, but a house and shop was recorded under the name of his daughter, Isabelle Monteith. His daughter was a milliner on the census and it appears that the business side of the family was her affair (she was aged 32). However, Hugh Monteith was the head householder on the census and Isabelle lived with him and his wife. As mentioned, Monteith also appeared as a communicant on the East U.P. Church roll, recorded as a 'general labourer'. The census entry shows that the Monteith's property had 5 windowed rooms and the house and shop was valued at £25 p.a. on the 1860 VR. The significant issue is that if Monteith was found by a historian in the census and church roll as a general labourer, then he would probably have been classified in the lowest grading of a system using the traditional form of analysis. The VR hierarchy, on the other hand, would suggest that this allocation would not be justified.

It is accepted, all the same, that the situation of the Monteiths was not typical, but other 'labourers' also did not fit the image of the very poorest classes. For example, William Gilchrist was the 33-year old son of Elizabeth Gilchrist who appeared on the VR as the householder, but without a recorded occupation. Because Mrs Gilchrist had no occupation on the VR, her household was recorded under the occupation of the eldest child, William, who was a 'labourer' on the census, despite the house having 4 windowed rooms and valued at a very respectable £11 p.a. on the VR. Unfortunately, the Gilchrists were not traced to a church, but if William had been found on a church

register and traced to the census as a labourer, he would have been allocated to the lowest rung, indicating the lowliest status of the traditional system. Once again, then, the accuracy of the rigid form of the traditional methodology is called into question.

What this analysis has highlighted is the implausibility of all those denoted as ‘labourers’ in historical sources being of the lowliest type of working-class individual. The problem occurs because the term ‘labourer’ itself is not usually dissected: as the example of Figure 10:1 indicates, all those termed labourers are assumed to have been at the bottom of the pile. However, I. Levitt and C. Smout bring to light the issue of categories of labourers that differed so much in terms of wages the variance equated to that between skilled and unskilled workers.<sup>36</sup> In their work on the Poor Law Commission Report of 1844, they reveal the distinctions made by contemporaries in trying to measure the wages of ‘the lowest class’ of labourer. There were ‘average’ labourers, including industrial and agricultural labourers, and there were the ‘lowest’ of labourers. Some of the evidence put before the commissioners defined the wages of industrial labourers from those of the ‘lowest class’. For example, in Kirkcaldy, foundry labourers earned 12s. a week which compared to a district average of 6.5s. for the ‘lowest class’ of labourer.<sup>37</sup> Furthermore, Levitt and Smout state from their research into the 1844 report that: ‘There was a sense in which the “lowest class of labourer” was regarded as the bottom of the social pile, perhaps already old, or broken by sickness or bad habits of drink’.<sup>38</sup> There is, then, evidence from that period relating to a distinction *between* labourers as a socially defined group. Despite the overall figures from this research on Falkirk showing that most labourers did fit the description of being of the poorer classes, this relationship did not apply to all labourers and all labourers certainly were not of the *lowliest* or most deprived class.

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<sup>36</sup> Levitt and Smout, *Scottish Working Class*, p.102.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, p.102.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, p.102.

This issue can be examined further by considering how the property valuations of the foundry labourers in Falkirk compared to those in other manual foundry positions. Table 10:7 below shows the ironwork shop-floor and manual roles broken down into their component parts and set against the range of property valuations encompassed by each section.

**Table 10:7 Breakdown of Manual/Shop-floor Foundry Occupations, Falkirk 1860**

1860	Manual Organisation: Ironworks		
SECTION	TYPE OF MANUAL/SHOPFLOOR ROLE	RN	VALUATION RANGE P.A.
1	Moulders	176	£1 4s. → £7 15s.
2	Patternmakers/drawers/filers	23	£3 3s. → £16
3	Irondressers	32	£1 5s. → £9 10s.
4	Engineers	12	£2 → £10
5	Furnacemen	9	£1 8s. → £4 4s.
6	Smiths/tinsmiths	70	£1 → £7
7	Warehousemen/timekeepers	3	£2 10s. → £6
8	Others – irongrinder, gratemounter, nailers, miners, ironturners	13	£1 15s. → £6
9	Labourers/Undefined - ‘foundry worker’, etc.	71	£1 → £5
	Total	409	

The table above indicates that the range of property valuations for foundry labourers in 1860 started at £1 p.a. and rose no higher than £5 p.a. But, the property valuation range of smiths also started at £1 p.a., rising just a bit higher to £7 p.a. Furthermore, other occupational sections encompassed some very low rentals, including moulders, irondressers, furnacemen and some of those in the ‘other’ category. These other occupational groups would be considered as at least semi-skilled, if not skilled, in the traditional method of occupational classification, which would put them above the ‘unskilled’ labourers. It can be seen, however, that this neat hierarchical structure did not apply when it came to property valuations. All the same, it is evident that the top end of labourers’ property valuations was fairly low at £5 p.a. compared with the scope of some of the other categories, for example, the top range of the irondressers at £9 10s p.a. The point still stands, however, that labourers cannot be defined easily from other ‘skilled’ and ‘semi-skilled’ workers by even a cursory comparison of property valuations. Looked at in this way, alongside other specific groupings of factory

workers, the foundry labourers did not comprise a distinctively impoverished section. Although it was shown previously that when measured against other foundry workers, *as a whole*, the labourers were more impoverished; however, this point just made was deduced from analysing the housing valuation ranges of labourers in much more detail than that revealed by Table 10:7 above, and so further stresses the need for research that delves much deeper into occupational structure in similar studies, rather than basing conceptions of labourers on generalised assumptions that do not always apply.<sup>39</sup> As a result, classification based on occupation in the way of the traditional methodology can be somewhat unreliable in terms of categorising individuals to social status groupings and disguises the not insignificant number of people who did not fit the mould.

The last case to be made in arguing against the merits of the usual way of classification in determining church composition is the position of carters. Carters comprise another ‘unskilled’ group in terms of how they are judged by the traditional methodology. In order to avoid any confusion, only those described specifically as carters have been used in the subsequent figures. There were other occupations that probably referred to the same work, such as carriers and possibly even some coachmen, but these were not included to avoid potential clouding of the issue.

**Table 10:8 Valuation Hierarchy and Carters, 1860**

CARTERS 1860	VALUATION HIERARCHY	ALL CARTERS		CARTER EMPLOYERS		CARTER NON- EMPLOYERS	
		RN	%	RN	%	RN	%
<b>LEVEL</b>	<b>RENTAL VALUE P.A.</b>						
<b>1 Very well-off</b>	£18 and above	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
<b>2 Well-off</b>	£9 to Under £18	5	12.5	1	50.0	4	10.5
<b>3 Comfortable</b>	£5 to under £9	10	25.0	1	50.0	9	23.7
<b>4 Poor</b>	£2 to under £5	22	55.0	0	0.0	22	57.9
<b>5 Very Poor</b>	Under £2	3	7.5	0	0.0	3	7.9
<b>Total</b>		40	100	2	100	38	100

<sup>39</sup> See Chapter 6: Section III and Chapter 9: Section III.

**Table 10:9 Valuation Hierarchy and Carters, 1890**

CARTERS 1890	VALUATION HIERARCHY	ALL CARTERS		CARTER EMPLOYERS		CARTER NON- EMPLOYERS	
		RN	%	RN	%	RN	%
<b>1 Very well-off</b>	£30 and above	1	1.1	1	25.0	0	0.0
<b>2 Well-off</b>	£16 to Under £30	2	2.1	1	25.0	1	1.1
<b>3 Comfortable</b>	£8 to under £16	17	18.3	2	50.0	15	16.8
<b>4 Poor</b>	£4 to under £8	62	66.7	0	0.0	62	69.7
<b>5 Very Poor</b>	Under £4	11	11.8	0	0.0	11	12.4
<b>Total</b>		93	100	4	100	89	100

The tables pertaining to carters show that, overall, carters spanned Level 5 to Level 1 of the VR hierarchy, showing that, as a group, people labelled as carters could not be wholly and efficiently considered as of the lowliest class. All the same, most carters in both years (62.5% in 1860; 78.5% in 1890) were poor or very poor which does accord, very broadly, with that particular occupation comprising of low status individuals, but not of the *lowliest* status. In terms of the employers, these were very few amongst the carter profession in 1860 and 1890; just 2 employers existed at the earlier point in time and just 4 existed at the later date. Furthermore, the carter employers covered only the top three levels of the VR hierarchy. When those who were not employers (or who could not be defined as employers from the sources) were considered, most of them did fall into the poor or very poor levels. However, 15 of the 89 carters in 1890 fell into Level 3 (the better-off grade of manual and lower professional level). One non-employer even made Level 2 of the VR hierarchy. It would seem, then, that assuming all non-employer carters to have been of the most deprived of workers is erroneous.

A good example of how the VRs and censuses illustrate the unreliability of pigeon-holing nineteenth-century carters is found in that of Richard Lloyd from the 1890 VR. He lived near Kerse Lane and had a house and lodge valued at £14 p.a. Lloyd was one of those complicated entries who was a carter in one source but a general labourer in another (but as such would still be classed, according to both occupations, as



the lowliest unskilled in the usual method). All the same, Lloyd was categorised as a carter due to the rule employed in this thesis.<sup>40</sup> However, a look at his corresponding census entry shows him living with his wife and two adult sons, who were ‘cab drivers’ and along with his teenage daughter, he also kept a 14-year old servant called Jessie. Lloyd’s property also had 6 windowed rooms and he kept 8 lodgers. Although Richard Lloyd was, apparently, merely an unskilled ‘carter’ and ‘general labourer’ on the sources, his actual living arrangements and property valuation would suggest he was in no way of the lowliest social category in society. On the contrary, he had two working sons and eight lodgers contributing, along with his own, to the income of his somewhat considerable property. Although it is impossible to gauge the material standard and quality of Lloyd’s property and way of life, in relative terms he was a ‘comfortable’ individual, not a lowly and deprived one.

What this study of carters has shown is that although most carters did slightly fit the categorisation from the usual method in that most of them were poor and quite a few were *very* poor, there were more comfortably off carters than there were very poor carters. Not all carters were of the most deprived of the working classes, either in terms of social status or property valuation. Once again, these findings contradict the traditional methodology with its roots in ascribing value-judgements to occupational roles and then generalising to everyone with that occupational identity.

#### **IV) Conclusion**

Systems of categorising nineteenth-century individuals based on occupations are infused by very subjective interpretations of what an occupational description signified. These ideological principles originated in the late nineteenth century from the objectives of those concerned with social advancement and the amelioration of negative market forces, and what were deemed to be the unhealthy moral characteristics of the poor

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<sup>40</sup> See Chapter 2: Section III on Methodology for an explanation of this rule in context.

populace. What the above studies have shown is that when research into social status is taken out of its value-laden fetters, the original methodologies based on these subjective assumptions do not appear to represent wholly the authentic constitution of many occupational groups.

The unquestioned assumption that ‘labourers’ formed the lowest of the low is still accepted today largely without question. However, the findings from this research showed that not all labourers were of the poorest class in the nineteenth century and should not be assumed as having been so. Furthermore, it is not the case that only one or two aberrations have led to this conclusion – every occupational group studied above did not fit the assumptions of the original methodology in quite significant ways. It seems that when it comes to traditional social classification theory, wide-ranging differences amongst individual occupational groups are not revealed. Rather, the reliance on occupational labels tends to brand all of those with a particular identity as of the same social status, which was far from the case when status was measured on the VR hierarchy.

Separating the study of social status from its antecedents and devising another measure of it is a very revealing historical exercise. However, the most significant outcome of the findings illustrated in this chapter that relate directly to the analysis of church social composition is that usage of the traditional methodology may result in over-accounting for the ‘skilled’ and ‘unskilled’ element in any given church. This potential source of inaccuracy is revealed because of the discrepancies in how social status is conceptualised by the original methodology compared to how it is measured against a much less subjective method using rental valuations. However, it should be re-stated that this study is limited in the range of churches analysed and the small size of the samples. But it does highlight the potential for the development of a systematic methodology based on the excellent resources available in the Scottish valuation rolls.

## CHAPTER 11

### Conclusion

The motivation behind this research was to carry out a wide-ranging study into churchgoing and occupations in later nineteenth-century Falkirk that looked at social status through a different lens to that normally used. For that goal to be realised, a methodology had to be created that was reliable and consistent through time. For that reason, the Scottish valuation rolls were used in conjunction with census material and church records to build up databases of Falkirk householders in 1860 and 1890. Analytical frameworks were then drawn up from these databases to examine church and occupational composition in relation to the wider society. The study spanned a thirty year period to take advantage of the possibility of a comparative analysis that would shed light on the impact heavy industrialisation had on society and churchgoing.

The main aim of using a methodological system that did not take occupational information as its foundation was an attempt to carry out an enquiry distanced from the moralistically-infused occupational labelling of the late nineteenth century. The hidden meaning of occupational categorisation, based on evolving, Victorian ideals of an ordered, industrialised world, had for too long been suppressed. Modern-day studies still used these systems of classification, largely, without question. The revisionist narrative had become too comfortable in its certainty of fool-proof evidence of widespread, working-class churchgoing justified by these occupational labels. In addition, it was felt there was a need for a study into churchgoing that focused specifically on the prevalence of industrialised, factory workers as opposed to just the 'working class' in general. This interest was borne from a rejection of the generalised assumptions that resulted from the traditional methodological approach to categorising churchgoers, whereby evidence of 'working-class' churchgoing as a whole was

considered efficient, without the need to clarify specifically the distinctions between the working classes.

The first analysis into the social structure of 1860 Falkirk showed that the town was composed of a majority of poor householders. Despite this point, it was discovered that the poor had been grossly under-represented in all the non-established churches, although conversely, they had been very prevalent in the Church of Scotland. On the other hand, when it came to the *very* poor, they were virtually absent from *all* churches. It was concluded that, overall, the issue of pew rents was largely responsible for the lack of very poor churchgoers. Pew rents were chargeable in all denominations and in all denominations the presence of the very poor was miniscule. However, despite the absence of the very poor from all churches, the Old Parish Church of Scotland did accommodate the poor of 1860 Falkirk more generally, whereas the non-established churches had a predominance of the comfortably off and wealthy members of society. The reason that the Old Parish Church had more poor was possibly because there was not the same financial burden laid on churchgoers in the Church of Scotland as there had been in the non-established churches. This point brings up the concept of the differences in ethos between the Church of Scotland and the non-established churches. The former was still the most popular church even after the Disruption because it had long-established links to the people and a history of providing poor relief. The latter, on the other hand, did not have these roots amongst the people, but appealed far more to the better-off employers, merchants and professionals of Falkirk who had more personal autonomy and aspirations of increased personal prosperity.

When it came to the stark under-representation of the poor and very poor from the non-established churches, another factor was introduced that was likely to have had an effect on the much lower proportional representation of the poor. This issue was the holding of, not just financial capital by the richer members, but the holding of *social*

power by them. The Free Church and the United Presbyterian Churches had a predominance of professionals and employers, in other words, people with significant social capital. In this regard, it was found that the general character of the Free Church, in particular, encompassed an ideology that concerned itself with the management, or more brusquely, the control of the poor within society at the *secular* level. Some of the members of the 1860 and 1890 congregations were closely involved in behavioural and social control of paupers and the poor as the overseer of the Poorhouse and others involved in the governance of the population on behalf of the State. This added element to the congregational make-up of the Free Church possibly made it seem less like a church and more like an extension of the State to those poor people who were themselves caught up in the system; a situation that was, perhaps, rather ironic for a 'Free' Church. Overall, there was an explicitly wide, social division in the non-established churches, manifested particularly in the Free Church that was not apparent in the Old Parish Church. However, this serves only to explain the lack of poor and very poor householder representation at the congregational level and does not mean that the poor of Falkirk society were neglected by the non-established churches. The minister of the Free Church, Lewis Hay Irving, was much lauded by his parishioners and is widely respected in the history books for his efforts on behalf of the poor in Falkirk. I. Scott wrote how, in 1851, Irving employed a missionary, Aeneas Rate, to work amongst the most destitute people of Falkirk. Rate went to work in one of the most deprived parts of Bainsford and eventually established a school there.<sup>1</sup> It does seem, then, that genuine efforts to reach the poor were made by Irving and the Free Church; nevertheless, the poor themselves chose to worship in the Old Parish Church.

The study into occupations and churchgoing in 1860 Falkirk revealed that despite the traditional trades and iron foundries employing roughly the same number of

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<sup>1</sup> I. Scott, 'The Disruption of the Church in 1843 and the Parishes of East Stirlingshire', *Calatria*, 5 (1993), p.100.

households in the wider economy, the ironworkers had been starkly under-represented from two non-established churches; whereas the traditional trades had been well accounted for. In addition, the West U.P. Church probably had slightly more than a fair share of iron sector households only because of the presence of a foundry manager and employer in the congregation. By contrast, the Old Parish Church was seen as having been distinctively favoured by the ironworkers and the other primarily manual sector households, apart from general labourers. The non-established churches, on the other hand, were found to have been much preferred by those who were involved in commercial activities, in particular. This finding came about despite the commercial category making up a relatively small section of the householder economy. The observation did not apply, however, to the Church of Scotland that very notably was the only church not to seem overtly biased towards the commercial householders in 1860. It was found, overall, that the Old Parish Church had embodied a much more 'working-class' social nature than had the non-established churches, at least in 1860.

The study then considered why the ironworkers had been so under-represented compared with those from the older trades. Two main conclusions were drawn by way of explanation: 1) the ironworks were found to have comprised a much poorer body of working people than did the other trades sector; 2) it was discovered that the iron and traditional sectors portrayed two very different forms of working environment. In terms of the first point, a far higher proportion of ironwork rather than traditional sector householders were poor. This was a significant discovery that provided a link to the lack of ironworker representation in two of the non-established churches because the poor, in general, were found to have been very much under-represented in all but the parish church. In terms of the second point above, the iron industry was found to have been extremely hierarchical in nature, and the higher property valuations could be clearly attributed to those of senior and employer status, whereas the latter was

characterised by much more variation in employer property holding. In the traditional trades, employers were found at all but the most deprived level of housing valuations. What these results suggested was that in the traditional sector, social status was not directly connected to financial prosperity; whereas in the ironworks, employer status was directly related to affluence, therefore, inaccessible to the vast majority of ordinary ironworker. These two different forms of occupational structure affected the average workers opportunities for occupational advancement as it was found to have been highly restricted in the context of a foundry compared to the more socially accessible acquisition of small employer status in the other trades. Overall, however, it was concluded that the reason the ironworkers were so much more prevalent in the Church of Scotland was connected to poverty. The Free and U. P. churches were dominated by the comfortable and more prosperous people of the town, but the vast body of ironworkers were poor.

When it came to considering the 1890 findings, it was found that most change to the town's social structure had occurred with a very notable expansion of the comfortable grade of householders. There had been a slight proportional decline in poor and very poor householders in the wider society, as well as a small reduction in well-off and very well-off householders. However, despite this and in common with 1860, it was shown that the poor and very poor householders continued to be the only two social groups that were under-represented in the non-established churches (although due to lack of source material the Free Church could not be considered for the later period). Furthermore, it was evident that the poor had become increasingly marginalised, in terms relative to the wider population, from the U.P. churches *and* the Church of Scotland. The Church of Scotland, however, had not neglected the poor, but their proportional representation had much weakened, and the Old Parish Church counted a lot more wealthy individuals amongst the later nineteenth-century

congregation. It was considered, from some of the secondary literature, that towards the end of the nineteenth century there was a strong sense amongst some contemporaries and historians that most churches had ‘failed’ the poor because they had not been willing or able to consider the problems in society as essentially *social*; rather, many of the churches themselves were aligned to the interests of capitalism and becoming more wealthy and prosperous. As well as this lack of understanding of social problems, many churches still considered that individual *morality* was the cause of social ills. Nevertheless, some prominent church leaders across all denominations did attempt to bring social issues to the fore, including highlighting the problem of poor housing; however, these efforts did not result in the churches, in general, making any significant changes at a higher level to their policies or taking any significant action, despite the consciences and voices of some church leaders.

In terms of how the churches reflected the later occupational structure of the town, it was found that the representation of the ironworkers in the Church of Scotland had declined markedly since 1860, although they were still represented more or less fairly in relation to the wider society. However, the Old Parish Church had had a very distinctive over-abundance of ironworker in the earlier period of the analysis; therefore, the decline in ironworker representation seemed particularly marked in the Church of Scotland. The pattern of a decline in ironworker representation was also mirrored in the West U.P. church, which also had had a fair presence of ironworkers in 1860; however, by 1890, both U.P. churches under-represented the ironworkers. This decline in ironworker representation was in stark contrast to the presence of the traditional workers who continued to be fairly or overly-represented in all churches.

The most striking thing about these findings was that they did not accord with the structural changes that had taken place in the wider economy. By 1890, the iron factories had come to unequivocally dominate the town and the number of ironworker



households had very markedly increased, whereas the traditional sector households had seen muted growth in comparison. On this basis, then, it would have been expected that the overall proportion of ironworkers in all churches would have increased. But, this had not happened. On the contrary, the ironworkers had become more marginalised from two of the churches, whereas the traditional trades had kept a strong or proportional presence. Moreover, it was found that *all* churches had become more biased towards those householders involved in commercial activities. Even the Church of Scotland had seen a marked increase to commercial householders. The Falkirk churches considered, then, did appear to have become more associated with commercial activities and the more prosperous members of the town than had been the case in 1860.

Part of the explanation for the increasing marginalisation of the ironworkers from the churches by 1890 was put down to the mounting tension and inequalities that came to exist amongst the ironworkers by the later point in time. This occurrence had been manifested in the growth of new union affiliation amongst the lesser-skilled sector of moulders, in particular. The occurrence of moulders in the factories had grown markedly compared to other shop-floor sections of the ironworks. Furthermore, there was at least one serious and documented dispute in the very early twentieth century between the skilled moulders associated to the older form of trade unionism and those affiliated to the newer and more militant unionism of the late nineteenth century. An analysis of poorer moulders indicated that a distinctly lesser proportion of them existed in all of the churches of the later period than had been present in the 1860 churches.

In relation to the increasing impoverishment of some moulders, it was discovered that, even by 1890, the ironworkers, as a whole, still constituted a much poorer body of workmen than the traditional trades in 1890. This finding seemed to correlate with the discovery that by 1890 the iron factories had seen a growth to the very poor householders that was not apparent within those connected to the traditional

trades of the town. It was concluded, therefore, that the rise of increasing inequalities within the foundries and the growth in disparities of property valuations between the lesser and more skilled moulders had negatively impacted on the representation of poorer moulders in *all* churches by 1890. All the same, both the traditional and ironworks sectors had seen a growth in those who were more comfortably off in relative terms, but the ironworks had seen an increase in proportion of *very* poor householders, that had not occurred in the other trades. The ironworkers, then, were still a socially disadvantaged body of workers compared to the other trades.

It appears that all the churches looked at for Falkirk in 1890 had become far more weighted towards the wealthier members of society, although this was a process of degree. The change was most evident in the Parish Church because it had been so overly-representative of the poor in 1860. In this sense, it did not under-represent them in the later years, but the church had moved to contain a much stronger presence of wealthier individual and employer than the 1860 congregation. However, overall, the Church of Scotland still fairly represented the poor and ironworkers, but there had been an evident transition in the balance of the representation towards the wealthier householders. The West U.P. church, on the other hand, showed a weakening of links to the ironworkers and they were still under-represented in the East U.P. Church.

All being considered this study has to some extent contradicted the enthusiasm of the revisionist interpretation of working-class churchgoing in the nineteenth century. It has done this by showing that when churches are analysed in terms of an economic measure, in this case property valuations, the impression gained about social status can be very different. Studies of occupational groups traditionally thought of as 'skilled' or 'unskilled' were shown to have corresponded not well at all when measured in terms of property valuations. The accepted scheme employed to analyse churchgoers in terms of occupation is too rigid and is based on very generalised and value-laden assumptions

about people and how they were defined by occupation. G. Kearns and C.W.J. Withers have pointed out that social ‘classes’ cannot be deduced from occupational labels; and ‘at the very least, static classifications need to be supplemented by detailed studies of local work practices and local cultural and political relations.’<sup>2</sup> To ascribe social status to people from the Victorian Age based on the loose criteria of occupational labels alone is largely untrustworthy as a method.

Another outcome of the accepted methodology is to over-account for the ‘working classes’ in any given church. The proportions of working classes becomes over-stated because the traditional methodology has a tendency to minimise the social status of ‘working-class’ people precisely because they are judged solely in terms of the occupational label. However, these findings based on apportioning status according to property values are at odds with the outcome of revisionist studies that claim all churches studied using social composition analysis comprised a majority of ‘working-class’ individuals. What these findings have shown, is that a study concerned with property valuation reveals a different impression of social composition, which suggests that social ‘class’ analysis based on occupation is naturally inclined to conclude high levels of ‘working-class’ churchgoing existed. If social composition analysis is disconnected from its reliance on occupation as a guide to social status, the more prosperous people of the town were found to have dominated the non-established churches, whether working-class or not. Both forms of analysis conceptualised status differently, producing different results.

A good illustration of how easily social status can be shaped by perception and social attitude is provided by some of the early nineteenth-century followers of the utopian socialist, Robert Owen:<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> G. Kearns and C.W.J. Withers, ‘Introduction: Class and Community and the Processes of Urbanisation’, in G. Kearns and C.W.J. Withers, (eds) *Urbanising Britain: Essays on Class and Community in the Nineteenth Century* (Cambridge, 1991), p.7.

<sup>3</sup> R.J. Morris, ‘Occupational Coding: Principles and Examples’, *Historical Social Research*, Vol.15 (1990). p.15.

FIRST CLASS - the labouring population, the producers of all wealth

SECOND CLASS - distributors, superintendents and manufacturers; necessary but too numerous - included farmers, capitalists, merchants, bankers, shopkeepers, clerks, hawkers and physicians.

THIRD CLASS - government. Much too numerous and expensive - included the royal family, judges, the military services, paupers, lunatics and those imprisoned for debt

FOURTH CLASS - instruction and amusement, indispensable and eminently useful - included clergymen, education as well as theatres and concerts

FIFTH CLASS - the most wealthy and least useful - included nobility, bishops, landowners and fundholders<sup>4</sup>

The social categorisation of occupation in nineteenth-century Britain was, therefore, a social exercise that relied too heavily on biased and subjective assumptions of the economic and social circumstances of the 'lower classes'. This study, based on an evaluation by property, suggests that a more neutral measurement than nineteenth-century occupational categorisation of occupations is possible to employ for social interpretation. Contemporary understandings of Victorian life and the modern-day analyses based unquestioningly on them are not set in stone and should be challenged.

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<sup>4</sup> *The Crisis*, 17 May 1834, quoted in P. Hollis, *Class and Class Conflict in 19th century England* (London, 1973), p.6 and Morris, 'Occupational Coding', p.15.

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