

METHODISM IN NABURN

Methodism came, very briefly, to Naburn in 1770, when John Johnson, better known as "Drummer" Johnson visited Naburn and held an open-air meeting in front of the Glebe House, attracting a good crowd to whom he preached under what would then be considered favourable circumstances. After some time, however, after being constantly interrupted by a drunken man, the meeting was terminated and the crowd went home.

Nothing more was done in the village by the Methodists until 1796, when local preacher Richard Burdsall paid a visit and preached out of doors in front of a house next to the village pub, occupied by a Mr. Atlay, who had no connection in any way with Methodism, and probably had not heard much about it unless he had been one of Drummer's congregation. He showed great kindness to Mr. Burdsall and allowed him to use his door steps as a platform from which to address the people. There was no regular organization of services at this time, though 2 or 3 open-air services were held in the village in summer. The visits were kept up by any eager layman walking to the village and speaking to any little knot of people he could get together in the street, but, for some time, little more was done.

Towards the close of the last ^{18th} century, Thomas Jackson, a miller, who occupied a small house in the village, offered the use of his living room to the officials of the Methodist Society at York for preaching purposes. From this time, services became regular and popular, with large attendances, and the house offered by Thomas Jackson being too small, the services were moved to the larger house of Edward Hardy, a wheelwright.

In 1798, Rev. Joseph Entwistle was appointed as superintendent of the York Circuit of Methodists, and he formed a Society at Naburn, arranging for services once each Sunday, and once a fortnight during the week. Mr. Richard Leaf, who lived in the village was appointed the leader, with the spiritual oversight of its members, and for a while everything ran smoothly. However, after a short while, the inconvenience and annoyance of having to preach services in houses across Naburn led to division, which led to demise. After 3 or 4 years of devotion and labour, the services had to be abandoned and the Society wound up.

Nothing more was done in the village until 1807, when Mr. Leaf senior (father of the leader) opened his house for preaching and class meetings. Services were held on each alternate Sunday afternoon at 2 o'clock, and sometimes on week nights. The meetings were held in this house until 1808, when Mr. Leaf moved to larger premises close to the ferry, where meetings continued until the erection of the first chapel. Such were the numbers of the congregation, that it was not uncommon for people to fill both the kitchen and parlour, and occasionally to crowd on the stairs.

In 1818, Mr. George Palmes of Naburn Hall, granted a piece of land to the Society at the entrance to the village on a 30 year lease on which to build a chapel for the use of the Methodist Society. Very quickly, a severely plain brick building was erected at a cost of a little over £100, It was a square building 8 yards x 8 yards, situated on the south east side of the village. Internally, half of it was occupied by narrow pews rising in the form of a gallery. The other half contained benches, communion space and a pulpit. There was accommodation for 120 people and, though comfortable and neat, had not one single piece of ornamentation.