

The 1851 Religious Census was part of the general enumeration of the population. The early nineteenth century was a period of general anxiety over the state of religion in the country. Industrialisation and rapid urbanisation were raising fears that religious provision was failing to keep pace with the growth and changing distribution of population. In an age of political conflict and mass popular movements such as Chartism, there was alarm that the working population were losing touch with organised religion or swelling the ranks of anti-establishment denominations. There was a lack of information available on the provision for education and religious worship. Information was sought on the number of places of worship belonging to each denomination, and the number of sittings and the number of people present at services on census Day 30 March 1851.

Below is a copy of the return from Grove St Methodist Church.

6. EAST RETFORD PARISH, except Chapelgate, 435/2/12

Area: 130 acres

Population: 1,299 males, 1,476 females, total 2,775

(8) WESLEYAN METHODIST

Erected: 1822

Space: free 144, other 500, standing 'non except aisles'.

Present:	Morn	Aft	Eve
General Congregation	342	132	380
Sunday Scholars	102	-	-
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Total	444	132	280
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Average:

General Congregation	750 in the day
Sunday Scholars	120
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Total	870
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John Merryweather, Steward