

Mary Barritt Taft: A successful female revivalist? What were the reasons for her success and what obstacles did she overcome?

Introduction. David Hempton drew attention to the prominence of women in early Methodism.

In the context of undeniable female successes, Wesley adopted an increasingly pragmatic view of women's public role, culminating in his characteristic invention of the ... "extraordinary call" ... By the 1770s there was a critical mass of female preachers in Wesleyanism.¹

In the early 1790s Wesleyan Methodism had become free from the control of John Wesley, but his preachers, whose assembled Conference had succeeded to his authority in Britain, were unsure about what course they should steer in an age of Revolution.

Mary Barritt was born in August 1772 at Hey,² a hamlet north of Colne in Lancashire. Her mother became a Methodist when Mary was six months old, but her father John Barritt, a middling farmer, remained hostile to Methodism almost until his death. At 12 and a half, with her oldest brother John gone to be an itinerant preacher, she had an experience which made her seek the Lord, and 6 months later after hearing Samuel Bardsley³ she found that her sins were forgiven.⁴ She began to pray with her neighbours and eventually prayed publicly and was told to exhort in a prayer meeting by a class leader.⁵ Mary Barritt was to be the leading female Methodist evangelist in the 1790s, a period of massive growth and change for Methodism. In 1802 she married Zechariah Taft, one of the itinerant preachers. Together for the next 26 years they followed an itinerant's progress, moving every two years or so to a new circuit. Mary Taft continued to preach both inside and outside her husband's circuits. This preaching was despite the official Conference prohibition of

¹ D. Hempton *Methodism Empire of the Spirit* (London: Yale University Press, 2005) p 138. The Wesleyan women preachers of this period were Local not itinerant and therefore not paid by or under the direction of the Conference which was composed of male itinerants.

² Spelt as "HAY" in her Memoir and by Chilcote and Mack following its lead, but appears on all modern Ordnance Survey maps as "Hey."

³ Her fellow Lancastrian Samuel Bardsley entered ministry (e.m.) 1768 was Preacher in her Colne circuit from 1786 to 1787.

⁴ For the three states of progress through conversion for the early Methodists see D.B. Hindmarsh *The Evangelical Conversion Narrative* (Oxford: OUP, 2005) especially pp 135-142.

⁵ *Memoirs of the Life of Mrs Mary Taft; formerly Miss Barritt written by herself* ([Ripon: the author], 1827) 1-20. She was encouraged to preach by another fellow Lancastrian, the revivalist Ann (Nanny) Cutler.

women's preaching in 1803, except they were allowed to "address their own sex, and those only."⁶ This paper intends to look at her success and evaluate reasons for it and obstacles to it.

There is no modern biography of Mary Barritt Taft, nor have many historians written about her. Paul Chilcote and Phyllis Mack are the two chief honourable exceptions.⁷ However, the main sources for this paper are not the Fletcher Tooth materials in the Rylands, nor the Taft Correspondence there, both of which have been much used, but her MSS Diary and the rare printed Memoirs written up from Mary's diary by Zechariah Taft.⁸ Both of these sources should be questioned as to their accuracy. With regard to the MSS Diary, the existing version in Birmingham Library was clearly written up by her from previously made notes in April 1823 for her two surviving daughters.⁹ Though her earlier notes were certainly substantial, we cannot prove that all of the 1823 document had been copied word for word from whatever notes she had made previously, nor can we tell how close to the actual time of the event those notes were made. Nor is it clear how precisely accurate her memory was of events much earlier. For example, when she writes about meeting in the East Riding in January 1808 "many of my children, (converts) of many years standing; -especially two, a man and his wife whom the Lord gave me, twenty years ago...", in fact twenty years was unlikely and must stand here for "a long time ago" since Mary Barritt was only 15 in January 1788 and had never gone outside her own circuit until 1792.¹⁰ However, this paper has used a number of other sources, some of them hostile to women preaching and some closer to the events than Mary's Diary in order to check Mary's own evidence and these confirm her account.

⁶ *Minutes of the Methodist Conference 1799-1807* (London: Cordeux, 1813) 188 - 9 (1803) Answer to Question 19.

⁷ Paul Chilcote *John Wesley and the Women Preachers of Early Methodism* (London: Scarecrow Press, 1991) remains the vital text after nearly 30 years. His Appendices are where the rest of us begin. Phyllis Mack *Heart Religion in the British Enlightenment Gender and Emotion in Early Methodism* (Cambridge: CUP, 2008). See also Deborah Valenze *Prophetic Sons and Daughters Female Preaching and Popular Religion in 18th Century Britain* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1985), who, writing in 1985, though wanting to find out more, was only able to find one copy of Taft's *Memoirs*, the one still in the WHS library with parts 1 and 2 only.

⁸ The text of the MSS Diary has every so often (eg P101) "transcribed this far ZT" and then a date. There are also requests by Zechariah for more dates in the original, partly to help him to know when to insert letters, which is one of the ways he wanted to improve it for publication.

⁹ P1 of the MSS Diary in Birmingham Central Library on microfilm. The Tafts had four children. The first two (Mary Anne and Henry) died young. Two later daughters (Jane and Eliza) were alive in 1823.

¹⁰ *Memoirs of the Life of Mrs Mary Taft* part III (Shebbear: Samuel Thorne, 1831) pp 24 - 5.

Success from 1793. How should success in revival be defined? Certainly the contemporary judgement of most Methodists was that she was successful. Sigston, William Bramwell's¹¹ friend and first biographer, describes Bramwell's views on her

"He considered that she had an extraordinary call.... her labours in public were very successful."

Bramwell encouraged her to come to all his circuits. In a letter, printed by Sigston, Bramwell said to Mary Barritt

"I thank the Lord, He is with you.... Your work is great and the Lord can work with you."¹²

Bramwell was not alone in inviting her to his circuits. Many Superintendents of northern circuits invited her to come. They did it with conversions in mind. So William Blackburne,¹³ Superintendent of the York circuit, wrote to Mary in 1798

"I beg and intreat you for Christ's sake, to fix when you will be back in the York circuit. You will not, I hope and trust, take more than three weeks or a month; especially when you consider there is no spot on earth to which you are likely to be so useful as in our circuit; and I therefore beg of you, for the Lord's sake, and *for the sake of never-dying souls*, to come over and help us soon. I wait for an answer by the bearer."¹⁴

We can also judge success by the numbers of people attending meetings where Mary Barritt was speaking, though these varied, partly because of the different size of premises. The barns or small chapels available in Nidderdale or Wensleydale were smaller than the chapels in towns like York, Whitby or Nottingham. However, it was generally reported that more sought to attend if Barritt were known to be speaking.

Should we judge success by the numbers of converts reported? Or by the increase in the number of members in circuits where she preached? The Whitby circuit is an interesting example of both of these in 1797-98. Robert

¹¹ William Bramwell e.m. 1785 died 1818, another Lancastrian.

¹² James Sigston *Memoir of Mr W Bramwell* (London: Nichols, 1820) 2nd edition pp 158 - 9. Bramwell was the chief ministerial revivalist of this period. The letter was addressed from Sheffield and was undated, but is probably early 1798. Sigston, a close friend of Bramwell, later seceded from Wesleyanism and was President of the WMA in 1839.

¹³ William Blagborne or Blackburne em 1785. He became Superintendent of the York circuit in 1795 and moved on in 1798.

¹⁴ *Memoirs* pt 1 1827 pp 66 - 7. The italics are my emphasis.

Richardson (a layman) writing from Whitby, in a letter dated 26 December 1797, to his friends the Holders¹⁵ in the Isle of Man

The stewards and preachers sent for Miss Barritt. She came last Thursday and preached in the evening to a full house. The power of God was present to wound many souls. Miss B<arritt> came down among them and exhorted the penitents to believe. Several were soon enabled to praise God for pardon.- Friday evening she preached again: many were struck with powerful convictions and several were saved.- Saturday evening prayer-meeting, the work went on rapidly: the power of God descended, and many found peace. Many young boys were struck with deep convictions: young Skelton is one of them.¹⁶ Sunday evening, the chapel was crowded, and numbers could not get in. The work went on gloriously, and many found liberty. Christmas-day Miss Barritt held a love-feast at Lofthouse,¹⁷ where seven were set at liberty. This day we had a love-feast: many spoke,- but we soon began to pour out our souls in prayer, when numbers began to cry aloud for mercy.¹⁸

Next Thomas Vasey,¹⁹ the second preacher, reporting to Mary after she had left that the revival she had kindled was no flash in the pan.

The fire has caught and runs from one dale to another. I dined at the farmer's last week who had six children converted in four hours. The first week after I left you at Whitby, and went into my circuit, I found the new converts standing their ground well: thanks be to God! I know not what to wonder at most, the good done, or the continued good deepening and widening. Thank the Lord for both. There are fourteen families in one dale, all now in society, except the little children. We have added one hundred and forty-five in Whitby alone, since Christmas; and more than one hundred of these are converted to God. There are nearly three hundred added since then in the circuit. O praise the Lord!-²⁰

This quotation is important because it shows the success of Mary's revival which had produced not only converts who "stood their ground" afterwards, and did not lose their faith, but that the revival continued with good deepening and widening, what we would today call spiritual growth. To confirm this

¹⁵ George and Polly Holder came from the Whitby area. He e.m. 1762 and died 1836. She (born Mary Woodhouse) was a friend of Sarah Crosby and a woman preacher, marrying in 1788. See John Lenton *John Wesley's Preachers* (Milton Keynes: Paternoster, 2009) 106 - 7 and 187 - 8 and Taft *Holy Women*.

¹⁶ This was probably the future minister Thomas Skelton, (e.m. 1806 d 1846) a "native of Whitby" who "through the blessing of God on the Saturday afternoon meetings for children was convinced of sin and joined the Methodist society." *Wesleyan Methodist Magazine* 1846; 915 - 6. As a minister in 1828, Zechariah names him here, the only one named.

¹⁷ Loftus, 15 miles west of Whitby in the circuit.

¹⁸ Robert Richardson 26 Dec 1797 Whitby to George and Polly Holder¹⁸ Isle of Man, printed Taft *Memoirs* (1828) 1 80.

¹⁹ Thomas Vasey e.m. 1773, sent by Wesley to America in 1784, but returned. Preacher in Whitby from 1797 to 1799, died 1826.

²⁰ Letter of Thomas Vasey Whitby 12/4/1798 to Mary Barritt, printed *Memoirs* (1827) 1 65 - 6 or (1828) 82.

testimony, the number of members reported by the Whitby Circuit at Conference 1798 was 846, compared to the 513 reported the previous year, an increase of 333 on the year.²¹ A similar example can be given of the Otley Circuit where she spent much time in the Pateley Bridge area in 1794. The 690 members reported in 1793 had become 1200 by 1794. Table 1 shows numbers of members in the circuits and the annual increase after she married where Zechariah and Mary Taft travelled. It would be wrong to apportion all the credit for these changes to Mary, but it is obvious that in the circuits the couple travelled for over 25 years, membership increased each year by an average of 13%, and sometimes dramatically more.

The 19th century Nottingham Methodist historian Harwood was a hostile witness, being against women's preaching, but declared

Mary Barritt was a divinely chosen instrument. The facts are indisputable and must break down any opposing theory. "In following Sister Barritt this week" says Bramwell "I found 10 saved at one place, 20 at another, 5 at another, etc. I never knew one man so blessed as this young woman is in the salvation of souls."²²

Her preaching was deemed much more successful than any "one man" in a period of successful revivalists.

It is not only by the view of her contemporaries, but also by the statistics of conversion and change that we can judge her success. There were those authentic marks of revival, personal holiness and social transformation, and names and numerical evidence to show that the contemporary view was solidly based. Though many converts were reported, not very large numbers of these are given names either by her or by others. Table 2 which lists these has 47 named individual converts from a wide spread area across the North of England. Of these at least seven entered the itinerant ministry, three were Local Preachers and three were women preachers. Though a majority came from rural areas, there were those from industrial towns such as Manchester, Salford, Leeds and Nottingham. They came from all classes, including a servant, a soldier, a butcher, a doctor and later probably provided three Presidents of Conference. One of these, Thomas Jackson (another strongly opposed to

²¹ *Minutes of the Methodist Conference 1744-1798*, pp 389, 424

²² George H Harwood *History of Wesleyan Methodism in Nottingham and its vicinity* (Nottingham: Ellis, 1872) 99 -100.

women preaching) wrote of her sermon “it impressed me far less than many sermons I had heard” but went on to describe the prayer meeting which followed in which he “was deeply affected”, leading directly to his conversion.²³ Mary Barritt Taft convinced many to accept the gospel she preached. As a revivalist she was outstandingly successful in a period and area suited to her gifts and abilities.

Reasons for success.

There were many reasons for her success. Mary Barritt had important support from within her family. This came from her mother, e.g. when she supported Mary after the Assistant Lancelot Harrison questioned her praying and preaching in her own circuit in 1792, and also from her itinerant brother John, who consistently invited her to his circuits from the Isle of Man onwards.²⁴ This led to her first successes on her journey northward to John Barritt’s circuit at Hexham and to consequent invitations by, and support from, many other itinerants and leading layfolk such as Thomas Wade of Sturton.

Her marriage to Zechariah Taft in 1802 gave her a new family and renewed support. From this date she always travelled with Taft to his circuits and was given appointments by him on the plan. For example, there is the *Memoirs* entry by Mary in May 1825 (when she was ill and doing less). “I have been to all my appointments on the plan, during this and the last month..”²⁵ Mary made a policy of refusing all invitations from other circuits for the first few months until she had established herself in their new circuit. She saw her marriage as a partnership of preachers. Frequently Zechariah preached and Mary “made the application.”²⁶ Zechariah’s brother Henry Taft was another minister and Zechariah’s parents were elderly, but Mary and Zechariah were always welcome at Sandiacre where the older Tafts lived and where they eventually retired, or in Henry Taft’s circuits or later his children’s circuits, as instanced in some of the Taft Correspondence. It was a large family that she

²³ Thomas Jackson *Recollections of My Own Life and Times* (London: WCO, 1873) 42 - 51 quotation from p 48.

²⁴ *Memoirs* passim. John Barritt’s various wives were also supportive.

²⁵ *Memoirs* (1828) 3 143.

²⁶ This phrase occurs several times. We do not know precisely what it means but I assume Zechariah preached about the Biblical background of the text and Mary then applied this to the lives of their hearers.

had gained by the marriage.²⁷ Zechariah became the foremost defender of women's right to preach in Wesleyanism.²⁸

In late 1792 the Great Yorkshire Revival was already breaking out. It began in Dewsbury Circuit led by William Bramwell and Ann Cutler and spread to neighbouring circuits and then through the whole county.²⁹ Though it began in the industrialising heart of the West Riding, it spread to the semi rural Pennine communities of the West and the North Ridings through Mary's preaching. The Lancashire of her youth was very similar, another reason for her success.³⁰ Mary Taft was able to use the existing Yorkshire revival and reached large crowds. She tended to preach in the 1790s more in Yorkshire than in any other county. It was mostly Yorkshiremen and women who invited her and provided her greatest friends. 25 of her 50 named converts (Table 2) were from Yorkshire. Mack suggests that "women dominated the revival of the early 1790s." Baxter's maps in his article on the Great Yorkshire Revival show that in the area covered by the 4 most northerly counties (Northumberland, Durham, Westmorland and Cumberland) there were only three circuits which increased membership dramatically, Hexham, Whitehaven and Barnard Castle. They were all rural and all circuits in which Mary had spent much time.³¹

It was important that many, though not all, of the itinerant preachers supported her. Presidents of Conference such as Pawson, Mather and James Wood wrote to encourage her.

Many of the methods used by Mary are worth emphasising. Undoubtedly the most significant was her practice of prayer, which is mentioned frequently in

²⁷ Letters to Mary and Zechariah, for example, come from the Melsons, one of whom married Henry Taft's daughter and entered the ministry see the letter from Mary Taft to Dr Melson paying tribute to the help received from Melson's mother MSS Taft Papers at JRULM 104.4.2. The support for her from the couple's children, particularly the older daughter Mary Ann (though she died young) should not be underestimated.

²⁸ Paul W Chilcote *The Methodist Defense of Women in Ministry A Documentary History* (Eugene OR: Cascade Books, 2017) Chapter 2.

²⁹ D Colin Dews *Ranters, Revivalists, Radicals, Reformers and Revolutionaries A Celebration of Methodist Local Preaching in Yorkshire* (Leeds: Leeds Methodist District, 1996) pp 44 - 45. John Baxter "The Great Yorkshire Revival 1792-6. A study of mass revival among the Methodists" in *A Sociological Yearbook of Religion No 7* (1974) pp 46 - 76.

³⁰ Mary Barritt was a northerner. She was not invited to circuits outside the North Midlands and the North. The Tafts' year in Dover, though not unsuccessful, was one of particular psychological stress for her (see below under obstacles). Her Colne circuit, though based in Lancashire included Yorkshire societies and was surrounded by Yorkshire circuits on three sides

³¹ P Mack *Heart Religion* 290. Baxter *ibid.*

her Diary. There is an interesting example in the story of John Dungett where, when he was worried about being asked to preach in place of Zechariah Taft in the main circuit church where Local Preachers hardly ever preached, he “joined in prayer with Mary Taft and felt the fear depart.³²” A more usual example was her use of prayer meetings, for example at the conversion of Mary Burdsall (later Mary Lyth) at a social party at Harewood.

“After tea followed a prayer-meeting in which petitions were particularly offered on her [Mary Burdsall’s] behalf. Her pride was wounded...but the impression made by this wasindelible.. She felt and wept much and from this time gave herself more diligently to the study of the word of God and prayer.”³³

Secondly, there was her use of love-feasts and other testimony meetings. These confirmed those who were newly converted and encouraged many. Often adherents and members went to love-feasts across the circuit and even further afield on occasion. As Mary Taft wrote in 1811

I spent the Sabbath at Fulletby: we had a love-feast: many spoke boldly, and much good was done”³⁴

Mary Barritt also preached frequently in the open-air. It used to be suggested that that had become unusual by the 1790s³⁵. Most Methodist preachers in fact used it regularly in the first half of the 19th century when beginning in new areas and often elsewhere, whenever numbers were greater than the existing accommodation. So, near the city of York, “Miss Barrett spoke at Clifton... As it was a very wet night we went into a barn, but it filled so fast, we returned into the open air.”³⁶

Mary would also visit house to house, especially before a meeting. She also is reported as healing. On one occasion in Epworth, as a newish mother visiting in the town, she breast-fed a sick and hungry baby each day for a fortnight. The baby was cured and both parents were converted.³⁷

³² Heaton *Memoirs of Mr John Dungett* (London: John Mason, 1833) p 59.

³³ John Lyth *The Blessedness of Religion in Earnest; Memorial of Mary Lyth of York* (London: Book Society, 1861) p 21 - 2.

³⁴ Fulletby was in the Horncastle Circuit. Taft *Memoirs* 2 81.

³⁵ John Vickers in *Dictionary of Methodism in Great Britain and Ireland* (London: Epworth, 2000).

³⁶ Lyth *ibid* 25

³⁷ *Memoirs* (1827) 2 122.

It has been documented by many historians that women preachers encouraged and supported each other. At Madeley, in Leeds and elsewhere, early Methodist women preachers lived together and gave each other mutual support. This happened with Mary Barritt before her marriage. She was encouraged to begin and then persevere by Ann Cutler and later worked with other women preachers e.g. Mrs Wiltshaw and Mrs Evans.³⁸

Mary found that buildings in which she could speak were provided for her. In addition to large chapels like Halifax Lane in Nottingham,³⁹ private houses, barns, etc were made available e.g. Mary Burdsall's recollection "last day of 1797...went with Miss Barrett(sic) to the Poorhouse. She exhorted from "I believe in the Communion of saints and the Forgiveness of sins."⁴⁰

There are various occasions when individuals travelled sometimes long distances to hear her and then carried the story back to their own homes and circuits, who later invited her. Her reputation made it easy for her to be invited in and the Revival to spread. A good example of this is in 1795 when two young men from Thornaby near Easingwold went to hear Mary preach at Ripon. They both became converted and the mother of one then invited Mary to preach in her house.⁴¹ Valenze points out that Barritt's travels mirrored poor people's migration.⁴²

After her marriage it was usual for Mary Taft immediately on entering a new circuit with her husband to start a new class. They were small to begin with, typically her servant and her mother being the first two members, and then other converts were added. It was usually a class on a different footing, with many new converts all at a similar stage, wanting to move forward with her in discipleship.

³⁸ For Mrs Wiltshaw see *Memoirs* (1827) 1 88-89. For Mrs Elizabeth Evans of Derby, the origin of the woman preacher Dinah Morris in George Eliot's *Adam Bede* see MSS Diary p 206. Mrs Taft and Mrs Evans preached after each other at Castle Donnington on 12th October 1809. See also the reference to Mrs James Ridall *Memoirs* (1827) 1 48 and John H. Lenton "Support Groups for Methodist Women Preachers 1803-1851" in G. Hammond and Peter S. Forsaith eds *Religion, Gender and Identity Exploring Church and Methodism in a Local Setting* (Eugene: Pickwick Publications, 2011).

³⁹ 1799.

⁴⁰ Lyth 24 "She went on "The Lord blessed my soul in her company....""

⁴¹ *Memoirs* (1827) 1 46 - 7.

⁴² Valenze 63 quoting Mary Anderson to Mary Taft 13/10/1811.

Another reason for Mary's success was her preaching ability, for example her "preaching with manly eloquence and womanly tenderness."⁴³ Mary's friend, Mr Wade from Sturton, said he had heard her preach 27 or 28 times and she had yet to use the same passage again.⁴⁴ This ability was based on Mary's knowledge of the Bible, which enabled her to choose texts apposite to the occasion. As Lloyd and Chilcote both point out, when she preached first in Kent, she chose the somewhat provocative text of Job chapter 21 verse 3, tackling those who opposed women preaching head on.⁴⁵ She had the ability, when she forgot her text in the pulpit in 1812, to preach from a completely different text extempore.⁴⁶ An examination of her known sermon texts (see Table 3) shows that we know of 96 sermons between 1797 and 1828, a period of over 30 years.⁴⁷ In that period there were 68 specific texts, 29 of these were from the Old Testament, and 39 from the New Testament of which 19 were from the Gospels. The texts she used most commonly were each used 5 times, Jonah 1;6,⁴⁸ 1 John 1;9 and Luke 19;10. The two New Testament texts, "if we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins" and "the Son of Man is come to seek & save what was lost" can both be seen as ones which characterised her ministry as concentrating on salvation and forgiveness, rather than the hell and damnation which are sometimes thought of as typical of revivalists.

Mary Barritt ignored social norms. There was a challenge to authority in what she did, treating those with status the same as those without. One member of a Birmingham congregation testified in 1841 that "I lived as a servant with Mr James Robinson of Selston Wood Nook... when 40 years ago that woman

⁴³ Quoted by Vicki Tolar Collins in "Sin and Salvation Men Women and Faith" in *the Struggle over Gender Division* pp 92-119. Contrast also Braithwaite's description of her "strong rough voice, brawny arms and masculine appearance" as well as her "singular piety" Dickinson Braithwaite 242-3. with Pilkington *The Makers of WM in Preston* (London: Kelly. 1890) MB preaching "with wonderful eloquence and womanly tenderness." P25. Braithwaite actually heard her and should be given more credence.

⁴⁴ *Memoirs* (1828) I 86 - 87.

⁴⁵ Gareth Lloyd "Repression and Resistance Wesleyan Female Public Ministry in the Generation after 1791" in ed N Virgoe *Angels and Impudent Women Women in Methodism Papers given at the 2005 Conference of the WHS* (Loughborough: WHS, 2007) .p 124 The text in question was "Suffer me that I may speak, and after that I have spoken, mock on."

⁴⁶ This was at Low Tointon in the Horncastle circuit. Ms Diary 253, *Memoirs* (1828) 3 87.

⁴⁷ See Chilcote Appendix H and my Table 4.

⁴⁸ "What meanest thou O sleeper." Charles Wesley had a famous somewhat similar sermon "Awake, thou who sleepest" (Eph 5;14) and this picture of waking up the unconverted was popular with other Methodist preachers.

came riding by and spoke to my master on the cornstack.”⁴⁹ Equally she was prepared to ignore the handicaps of Joseph Bakewell, the self-described cripple at Mansfield in 1800.⁵⁰

Both Mary’s older brother John Barritt, who launched her on her preaching career, and her husband Zechariah Taft, whom she assisted in her later years, were noted for the dividing of circuits into two, a process which encouraged growth in this early period. The smaller circuit looked for ways to reach villages previously neglected. One factor behind the need for division was the preaching of Mary Barritt Taft in all their circuits.

Obstacles

There was some opposition even from within her own family. Mary Barritt preached despite persecution from her own father.

I met with much opposition and many trials from my dear father, who at that time was very averse to true religion” who “made my way very rough.⁵¹

He would send her out to work in the fields in bad weather as a form of punishment for her preaching.

Opposition also came from many itinerant preachers. They resented a woman being more attractive and successful as a preacher than they were. The Superintendent William Collins told the 18 year old Mary Barritt that she would be expelled if she did not stop exhorting and praying in meetings. However, he was ordered from the circuit before he could meet her class, and so she saw it as God standing by her doing this.⁵² Later other preachers opposed her.⁵³ The most famous occasion was in 1802 when the newly married Tafts, in Dover, received a letter from Joseph Benson⁵⁴ as Chairman of the London District

⁴⁹ Mary Taft Nottingham to Mary Tooth Madeley 8/11/1841 Fletcher/Tooth Letters JRULM (quoted Valenze 63).

⁵⁰ Joseph Bakewell to Mary Taft 14/5/1841 JRULM MSS 104.1.4.

⁵¹ *Memoirs* (1827) 1 20.

⁵² *Memoirs* (1827) 1 20 - 21. dates this as 1791. Collins was the Assistant in Colne only from December 1789, as a result of a complaint at the 1789 Conference by Pawson. From 1790 Collins served elsewhere.

⁵³ One who did in the Leeds Circuit was the third preacher, Alexander Suter, who at a Leeds quarterly meeting had described Mary Barritt as a “raw girl” “who had picked up a text or two that she had talked from.”

Memoirs (1828) 1 86 - 87 (1828).

⁵⁴ Benson (President 1798 and 1810) is best known to historians of women preaching as the Editor of the *Magazine* 1804-21 who ensured that no mention would ever occur in it of women preaching. See Margaret

saying he had heard there was a division in the society at Dover on account of her preaching and both must stop. They were allowed to continue to preach for the rest of the year in the Dover circuit.⁵⁵

Many were opposed to the principle of women preaching,⁵⁶ usually basing this on the Pauline prohibition in 1 Corinthians 14 and 1 Timothy, but also on Biblical precedents such as the 12 male Apostles. When this was formalised in the Minutes in 1803 the reasons given were that the Methodist people opposed women preaching (untrue- no-one had consulted them) and that women were not needed because the growth of the connexion meant there was less of a shortfall of preachers or, as the Minute put it in 1803, there was a “Sufficiency of [male] Preachers, whom God has accredited, to supply all the places in our connexion with regular preaching.”⁵⁷ “Aren’t there enough men?” was a cruder way of putting it. This may well have been true by the early nineteenth century in larger towns and cities, but it was never true in most rural circuits where local preachers found themselves with two or three appointments most Sundays.

Mary faced travelling problems, such as with the swollen river with large sheets of ice across which her horse successfully swam in the Alnwick circuit in 1794,⁵⁸ or the post chaise which overturned in 1803 in Kent.⁵⁹ In 1811 Mary Taft and her daughter were thrown out of a “light cart” onto the high road near Bardney in Lincolnshire, but without damage to either.⁶⁰ A more serious incident occurred when a horse threw her near Eyam in 1798.⁶¹

The first period of Mary’s preaching coincided with a period of revolution, with a recurrent theme being the danger of a French invasion to attempt to spread it to Britain. The existence of notorious revolutionary female writers (like Mary

Jones “Her Claim to Public Notice Reflections on the Historiography of Women in British Methodism” in Sykes ed *Gods Own Story* Oxford Applied Theology Press 2003.

⁵⁵ *Memoirs* II 1827 59. Zechariah Taft’s reply explaining there was no division in the society resulted in what the Tafts described as a very affectionate reply. This letter has not survived.

⁵⁶ Eg Lancelot Harrison when he came to the Colne circuit in 1792, opposed the preaching of women, but he changed his mind and invited her frequently to his later circuits. *Memoirs* 1 1827 25 - 26.

⁵⁷ Chilcote *The Methodist Defense of Women in Ministry* pp 37 - 40 quoting from the Conference resolution of 1803.

⁵⁸ *Memoirs* 1 37.

⁵⁹ *Memoirs* 2 72 - 73.

⁶⁰ Diary 241.

⁶¹ *Memoirs* 1 73,

Wollstonecraft and others) made attempts by other women to preach publicly seem revolutionary and therefore wrong. Similarly, it made conservatives among Methodist preachers want to stop Methodist women preaching, lest the women tar the whole of Methodism with a similar revolutionary brush.⁶²

Many Methodists, especially those who were better off, were opposed to the noise and disorder of revivalism. William Dawson, for example, who became a great preacher himself, heard Mary a number of times in 1798, but on at least one occasion at Barwick

he lost what he had gained at the beginning... A confused meeting commenced at the conclusion of the sermon, which rather pained my mind.⁶³

Bebbington points out that the noise, tears, shouting, excitability, etc were typical of Methodist revivals.⁶⁴ However, as Wesleyanism became more of an institutionalised church and further from its revivalistic roots, so the forces within it opposing women's ministry became stronger.⁶⁵

There was violent opposition to her preaching from mobs, such as the one at Tadcaster outside Mary Barritt's service 1797.⁶⁶ She suffered also from scepticism, from ridicule or scoffing, such as that of the young man who "came to laugh at me" at Redcar or the "mere triflers, especially those towards the door" in the very large congregation at Harrogate in 1799.⁶⁷ In Carlisle in 1795 she suffered "floods of reproach and opprobrious epithets." The comment was "she suffers with magnanimity and seeming indifference."⁶⁸ Or again at Worsthorne near Burnley 1805 she "was even pelted with sods and stones when going to speak to the people."⁶⁹

Mary was a country girl with little education. She did not know much of towns or of society. Her MSS Diary entries show her dialect was strong. Some hearers

⁶² Susan Kingsley Kent *Gender and Power in Britain 1640-1990* (London: Psychology Press, 1999). Chapter 6.

⁶³ Everett *Memoirs of William Dawson* (London: Hamilton Adams, 1842) p 116.

⁶⁴ Bebbington *Victorian Religious Revivals* (Oxford: OUP, 2012) p 9.

⁶⁵ Gareth Lloyd "Repression and Resistance Wesleyan Female Public Ministry in the Generation after 1791" in ed N Virgoe *Angels and Impudent Women Women in Methodism Papers given at the 2005 Conference of the WHS* (Loughborough: WHS, 2007).

⁶⁶ *Memoirs* 1 61.

⁶⁷ *Memoirs* 1 90 - 91.

⁶⁸ Robert Dickinson *The Life of the Rev John Braithwaite....* (London: Broadbent, 1825) 242.

⁶⁹ *Memoirs* (1828) 3 6. Text says "Worstown" but means Worsthorne.

were put off by this. In 1795 the somewhat sceptical young Methodist preacher John Braithwaite heard Mary in Carlisle.

Though much improved since she began to travel, she retains much of her rusticity both in language and behaviour.⁷⁰

Mary suffered from ill-health. This included lameness in spring 1798⁷¹, pain in the head, “which some call cold chronic rheumatism,”⁷² persistent in later years and the frequent headaches.⁷³ After her marriage a new problem for her was childbirth. Certainly Mary Taft preached in fewer circuits in each of the (Methodist) years in which she gave birth.⁷⁴

Over time many of the leading preachers who had supported her in the 1790s and first decade of the 19th century died. Pawson died in 1806, Mather in 1800. Blagborne died in 1816 and Bramwell in 1818. There were fewer who had known her and those who had were less influential or retired.

Women were denied access to the connexional Magazine to print stories about women preaching. As Margaret Jones showed long ago, access to the Arminian Magazine for women’s voices, so noticeable under Wesley, gradually ceased after his death with various Conference decisions in the 1790s. The arrival of Joseph Benson as editor in 1804 (until 1821) and the increase of stock phrases for biography meant there would be hardly any mention of women preaching.⁷⁵ Mary Barritt Taft and Mary Fletcher, the most famous women preachers of the day, were both denied publicity.

There were times when Mary was expected to succeed in women’s roles, which could be difficult for her. In April 1807 she reported trouble from the

⁷⁰ Dickinson Braithwaite 242.

⁷¹ *Memoirs* 1 65. Other illnesses noted include the severe fever in 1812 (*Memoirs* (1828) 3 83), the pain in her side and breast in 1809 aggravated by riding 30 miles, which resulted in a visit to her Doctor brother in law in Sunderland. (*Memoirs* (1828) 3 45 - 51).

⁷² *Memoirs* (1828) 3 142 - 3.

⁷³ *Memoirs* passim eg 1 87 “It always left me about 6 o’clock when I had to labour {preach} in the evening.”

⁷⁴ 2 circuits outside of her own each time in 1802-3, 1806-7, 1810-11. In other years she preached in an average of 5 or 6 outside her own. See Table 4.

⁷⁵ Margaret Jones “From “The State of My Soul” to “Exalted Piety: Women’s Voices in the Arminian Magazine 1778-1821” in Swanson RN ed *Gender and Church Religion Studies in Ecclesiastical History* 1998 (London: Ecclesiastical History Society, 1998) pp 273 - 286 . On p 285 Jones draws attention to the obituary of Mary Ann Taft in 1810, where the child’s father quotes her on her deathbed saying “Mother, when I am gone you must preach from “The Lord gave and the Lord taketh away. Blessed be the Lord’s name” the same as you did when little Henry died..” as the only known exception to the rule.

elderly Circuit Superintendent George Snowden “being very difficult to please with his food, &”. Mary Barritt was 6 months pregnant and suffering morning sickness and as she wrote “I was not very well.” But despite all these cares and concerns she was still trying to preach.⁷⁶

Conclusion Women preachers in Methodism and later links to revival.

In 2018 the Methodist church worldwide has many women in ministry and mission. Male presbyters have many role models, from Biblical times on to John Wesley and beyond. Women have relatively few. We should rescue Mary Barritt Taft and her sister preachers⁷⁷ from the obscurity to which our spiritual ancestors deliberately restricted them and give them the credit and praise they deserve. It is high time that the “comparative ignorance of the female contribution”⁷⁸ to Methodism is overcome.

Mary Barritt was a great force for revival in Northern England in the 1790s and early 19th century. Deborah Valenze describes her as having “played a leading part in expanding the scope of female preaching.”⁷⁹ Marriage and child-bearing may have restricted her efforts as Mary Taft after 1802, but she had her husband and children to support her, and they enabled her to continue preaching for more than another generation, at least until 1841 and probably beyond. Her methods, prayer, forming new classes, working with other preachers, using love-feasts and testimony, concern for individuals, open-air preaching and the like were described by Valenze as seeking “to free female preaching from the confinement of exceptional status.”⁸⁰ These methods need to be remembered and re-used, in new forms perhaps, but Taft’s combination of determination and tenderness makes her deserve to be a role model for those in ministry today, both men and women. Many men and women began to preach because of her example. She was a successful preacher who

⁷⁶ *Memoirs* (1828) 3 20 - 1 cf 13 when he was “odd and queer in the house.” Snowden, born 1737, was 70 in 1807 and was “too old for the itinerant life” according to the District Minutes early next year. It seems likely that his wife had died and the Tafts and Snowden lived in the preachers’ house in Colne and Mary Taft had to manage it and see that food was produced when the preachers needed it.

⁷⁷ As recently as 1995 a historian like David Hempton was still stating that women’s preaching was “exceptional and transitional” D. Hempton *Religion of the People*. (London: Routledge, 1996) 184. He states that women preachers who felt the call to preach in England “were able to shuffle over into Primitive Methodism...” Some did, but many remained and preached like Mary Fletcher or Mary Taft.

⁷⁸ Lloyd “Repression and Resistance” p 114.

⁷⁹ Valenze *Prophetic Sons and Daughters* 55

⁸⁰ Valenze *Prophetic Sons & Daughters* 55.

attracted crowds to hear her, converted considerable numbers, including some leading preachers of the next generation. Her converts stood firm after the revival closed. I conclude with the aged John Pawson's prophetic comments to Zechariah Taft on his wife's unlooked for success in the Kent area

Who can tell but he (God) may make your beloved wife the instrument for... this and so confound the wisdom of the wise, and lay the pride and haughtiness of man in the dust.⁸¹

⁸¹ John Pawson to Zechariah Taft 24 January 1803 printed *Memoirs of Mrs Taft* 1827 pt II p 79, italicised in the original. Pawson was a senior preacher who had been close to Wesley and had acted as President. As a Yorkshireman from Thorner he was well aware of Mary's success in his native area.

Table 1 Average membership increase in Mary Taft's Circuits 1802-1828

Year	Circuit	% inc/dec	National % inc/dec
1802-03	Canterbury	59.00*	2.5
1803-05	Epworth	21.2	4.2
1805-07	Colne	33.2	3.7
1807-09	Birstall	19.8	9.9
1809-11	Castle Donington	-0.4	9.6
1811-13	Horncastle	47.6	10.6
1813-15	Driffield	32.4	11.2
1815-17	North Shields	12.2	6.5
1817-19	Alnwick	-0.4	1.0
1819-21	Whitby	3.8	2.0
1821-23	Pickering	26.4	8.7
1823-25	Malton	74.0	4.0
1825-28	Ripon	30.0	6.6
Average for Taft's circuits		27.6	
National average for a 2 year period			7.5
NB all figures are taken from the Minutes which report the membership as of the June Quarterly meeting each year as reported to Conference. National figures are based on Table A3 in Currie, Gilbert and Horsley Churches and Churchgoers Patterns of Church Growth Oxford Clarendon 1977 p 140.			
* Canterbury had a low membership and was a single year.			

Start	end	Increase	
% 100 150 50 118.7367			
1500	1550	3.333333	140.9842
50000	54000	8	167.4
Average		20.44444	
Geo av		1.187367	

Table 2 Mary Barritt Taft's named converts

name	conversion date	place	circuit	later history	source
Anderson, Mary	6/6/1802	Tetford	Horncastle	Alford 1811	letter 13/10/1811 JRULM 104.1.3 "brought in under you"
Appleby, Mrs John				of Richmond 1822	Memoirs 31 3 123-4,127-8
Bakewell, Joseph	14/5/1800	Mansfield	Nottingham		letter to MT 1840 JRULM 104.1.4 quo Mack Giving Birth 23
Barritt, Betty (niece)	1801		Colne	m Wm Sagar	E Thompson
Boulton, Mrs	1790s	Tanfield	Ripon	1825 Tanfield	Memoirs 1831 3 145
Burdsall, Mary (Mrs Lyth)		Harewood		1782-1860-preacher m John Lyth	Memoirs 1831 3 49, Life of Mary Lyth
Bumby, John	1794	Thirsk	Thirsk	butcher, later LP	Memoirs 1831 3 45,46, Ward 29-31
C--, Mr		Killinghall	Otley	of Killinghall 1825	Memoirs 1831 3 146
Clapham, John		Birstall?		LP of Birstall, preaching at Ripon 1827	Memoirs 1831 3 165-6
Coulson , Mr			York?	of Haslewood nr Tadcaster 1809-23	Memoirs 1831 3 134-5
Daniel, Mr				of Tadcaster 1823	Memoirs 1831 3 138
Dall, Betsey & John	? 8/1811	Whitehaven/Leeds		children of Robert Dall	Memoirs 1831 3 89
Dawson, William			Leeds	1773-1841, famous LP	PWC not in biogs. cf Memoirs 1831 3 138 "My Billy Dawson"
Ellis, Thomas		Tadcaster	York		Memoirs 3 25
Garrett, Mrs P				wife of itinerant	Memoirs 1831 3 42
Garbutt, Thomas,	4/1799	Stockton	Stockton	em 1807 d 1851	PWC, 104.1.7, Memoirs 1827 1 89(Robt), 1831 3 50 +2 others
Gates, Mrs Samuel					56.57.1 T & A Hudson to MT 1848. He d 1821
Grange, Ellen	18/9/1825	Ripon	Ripon	later servant of MT	Memoirs 1831 3 147-8
Jackson, Thomas	15/7/1801	Mkt Weighton	Pocklington	em 1804 later President, d 1873	Jackson Recollections 42-55
Jackson, William	1797	Harewood	?	of Harewood	letter Memoirs 1828 1 75-6
Kay, Mrs	early 1800s	Burnley	Colne	d 1807	Memoirs 31 3 73-5
Lee Mr & Mrs		Bradford?		dealer in wood, Bradford	Memoirs 1827 2 91, 92
Lees, George		York	York	soldier began M in Deal	letter 5/4/1803 preaching Memoirs 1827 2 82-3 JRULM 104.1.10
Lomas, John	14/11/1799	Macclesfield	Macclesfield	LP of Hollinsclough nr Leek	Memoirs 1831 3
Marsland, George	c 1815	Birstall	Birstall	em 1819 d 1849	HW 1 168. (pub obit says Bramwell)
Monkhouse, Joshua?			Barnard Castle	LP etc	Memoirs 1828 3 131-2
Morley, John J	1811?		Horncastle	doctor	letter to MT 21/3/1813 preaching Memoirs 1831 3 82
Newton, Robert	1798		Whitby	em 1799 later President, d 1854	PWC JMT "after hearing MB he was converted"

conversion					
name	date	place	circuit	later history	source
Parker Miss	1801	Driffield?	Pocklington	of Driffield 1813	Memoirs 1831 3 94, 105
Parnel, Ann	10/1802	Canterbury	Canterbury		Memoirs 1827 2 67
Pawson Mr & Mrs	14/1/1827	Ripon	Ripon	of Ripon	Memoirs 1831 3 163
Raywood, James				of Rudston, ERY, 1823	Memoirs 31 3 131-2
Scott, Thomas	8/8/1799	Shude Hill	Manchester		letter Nov 1801 Memoirs 1827 II 22-4
Sidgwick, Miss		Wensleydale		of Bradford	Memoirs 31 3 138-9
Skelton, Thomas	12/1797	Whitby	Whitby	em 1806 d 1846	Memoirs 1828 I 80
Slater, Barnard	1796	Cawood	Selby	em 1803 d 1851 ob 52	Memoirs 1831 3 34
Sunman Mrs	aut 1823	Malton	Malton	of Malton	Memoirs 1831 3 136-7
Swallow, Mrs	9/1815	North Shields	North Shields	of N Shields	Memoirs 1831 3 112-3
Taylor, Joseph jr		Brampton	Whitehaven	em 1803 later President, d 1845	Moore Burnley 70
Thompson, Ann	8/1795	Aysgarth	Middleham	preacher, Mrs Coates m LP in Reeth	life, HW 2 218-9
Thompson, George	spr 1799	Cockermouth	Whitehaven	em 1802 d 1839	life, letter 106-3-8 or 102
Thornhill Mrs T		Carlisle		class leader of Sunderland	Memoirs 1831 3 50-1
Waites, Mrs	31/1/1796	Thirsk	Thirsk	of Sowerby	Ward Thirsk 29-31
Walker, William	8/1821	Salford		of Leek 1823	Memoirs 1831 3 127
Ward, Mr			Nottingham	of Edenstow, raised a chapel	Memoirs 1827 2 135
Williams, Martha	early 1800	Nottingham	Nottingham	Female revivalist Leeds	HW 1 172-3, see also Colin Dews

Summary by date of conversion

Pre 1802	18
Post 1802	12
Date unknown	19
Total	49

Gender balance

Female	21
Male	28

Summary of the 13 who are known to have become preachers:

Male Local Preachers (LP)	3
Women Preachers	3
Entered the ministry (em)	7

Table 3 Mary Taft's sermon texts from 1804

2 from 1803, for earlier see Chilcote pp 319-20

Date	Place	Circuit	Text/title	Other	Source-ref
9/12/1804	Epworth	Epworth	2 Pet 2:9 The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly...		Memoirs 1827 2 130
3/2/1805	Epworth	Epworth	Mt 3:12 or Lk 3:17 Whose fan is in his hand...		ib 132
29/4/1805	Templehurst	Epworth	1 John 1:9 If we confess our sins...[3]		ib 136
4/9/1805	Barnoldswick	Colne	1 Cor 14:8 If the trumpet sound uncertain, who	at Sr Hudson's	ib 141
6/10/1805	Southfield	Colne	Lk 7:22 The blind see, the lame walk..poor receive [1]		Memoirs 1828 3 3
30/11/1806	Burnley	Colne	2 Ks 20.1 Set yr house in order, for u sh die		Diary 170, Memoirs 1828 3:17
2/3/1807	Sandy Gate	Colne	Lk 10 42 One thing is needful		Memoirs 1828 319-20
14/1/1808	Birstall Workhse	Birstall			
1808	Tadcaster	York			L 104.4.21
19?/11/1808	Huddersfield?	Huddersfield?	Job 1:21 Lord gives & takes. Blessed.. [1]	death of son	MM 1814 873
1809	Gildersome	Birstall	John 1:29 Behold the lamb of God	Good Friday	Diary 196, Memoirs 1828 3 44
14/6/1809	Carlisle	Carlisle	Jonah 1:6 [2]		L 104.4.16
17/12/1809	Kegworth	Cas Donington	1 Pet 4:7 The end of all things is at hand[2]		Memoirs 1828 3 60
6/1810	Loughborough	Cas Donington			L 104.5.7
13/8/1810	Leicester	Leicester	Rom 8:32 He that spared not his own Son[2]		L 104.5.4, Diary 222
19/8/1810	Ticknall	Ashby	Ps 51:10 Purity of heart[2]		Diary 222, Memoirs 1828 3 67
29/8/1810	Sandiacre	Nottingham	2 Cor 6:8-9 deceivers & yet true...		Diary 223, Memoirs 1828 3 68
21/10/1810	Willoughby	Cas Donington	Ps 51:10 Create in me a new heart, O God[3]		Diary 223? Memoirs 1828 3 69
2/12/1810	Cas Donington	Cas Donington	Death & Eternity		Diary 223?
1811	Nottingham	Nottingham	Jonah 1:6 [3]		L 104.5.4
21/3/1812	Horncastle	Horncastle	Jonah 1:6 [4]	? re date	L 104.1.12, Memoirs 1828 3 82
5/9/1812	Newcastle	Newcastle			Sigston WB 100
25/10/1812	Low Tointon	Horncastle	Ps 40:17 I am poor & yet the Lord thinks of me	forgot text	Diary 253, Memoirs 1828 3 87
29/8/1813	Nafferton	Driffield	Lk 19:10 The Son of Man came to seek & save..[3]		Diary 262 Memoirs 1828 3 92-3
3/10/1813	Tibthorp	Driffield	Heb 4:9 rest that remains for the people of God[2]		Memoirs 1828 3 93
3/10/1813	Wetwang	Driffield	confessing and forsaking sin		Memoirs 1828 3 93
21/2/1814	Driffield	Driffield	Job 1:21 Lord gives & takes Blessed..[2]	death of dau	Diary 270
21/10/1816	Shiney Row		Matt 20:6		Allen's Diaries
21/10/1816	Shiney Row		Rom 8:32[3]		PWHS:16:74
22/10/1816	Chatershaugh		2 Pet 2:9		ibid
17/12/1817	Alnwick	Alnwick			L 104.5.16
31/8/1823	Swinton	Malton	Mal 3:18 Then shall ye return & discern		Memoirs 1828 3 137
7/9/1823	Malton	Malton	Lk 19:10 The Son of Man is come to seek & save what was lost[4]		Memoirs 1828 3 137
14/9/1823	Hutton	Malton	1 Jn 1:9 If we confess our sins, he is faithful & just...[4]		Memoirs 1828 3 137
19/10/1823	Bradford	Bradford	2 Cor 5:11 Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord,[2]		Memoirs 1828 3 139
20/10/1823	Bradford	Bradford	Ps 40:2 Thou hast brought me up out of a horrible pit		Memoirs 1828 3 140
21/10/1823	Shipley	Shipley	Lk 19:10 The son of Man is come[5]		Memoirs 1828 3 140
22/10/1823	Horton	Bradford	Lk 7:22 The blind see the lame walk[2]		Memoirs 1828 3 140
23/10/1823	Dudley Hill	Bradford	1 Jn 1:9 If we confess our sins..[5].		Memoirs 1828 3 140
21/2/1824	Weston	Malton	Heb 2:2-3		Diary 305
11/9/1825	Ripon	Ripon	2 Ks 4:26 Is it well with thee?		Diary 309, Memoirs 1828 3 144
18/9/1825	Tanfield	Ripon	Is 48:18 That thou hadst hearken'd to my voice		Diary 309, Memoirs 1828 3 145
?10/10/1825	Ripon	Ripon	Eccles 11 or 4:6		Diary 311
22/10/1826	Ripon	Ripon	Isa 20:1 and 2 Ks 20:1		Diary 322, Memoirs 1828 3 160-1
14/1/1827	Ripon	Ripon	Jonah 1:6 What meanest thou O Sleeper &[5]	storm	Diary 323 Memoirs 2 163
15/4/1827	Hampsthwaite	Knaresborough	Lk 24 resurrection appearances		Diary 325 Memoirs 2 166
1828	Keighley Green	Burnley	Job 17:9		Moore Burnley 71
29/10/1833		Newark			L 104.4.10
26/3/1835	Sheffield	Sheffield			L 104.4.20
2/7/1836		Newark			L 104.5.14
7/1836	Madeley	Madeley			ibid
3/5/1837	Madeley	Madeley			L 104.5.11
21/2/1841	Carlton			School sermon	L 104.4.11
13/6/1841	Heanor?			bro's funeral	L 104.5.12

Most popular (5 times noted) Jonah 1:6, 1 John 1:9 and Luke 19:10.

Table 4 Mary Taft's circuits and where she was invited to preach 1802-1828

Year	Circuit	Other circuits to which she was invited in that year	Family events
1802	Canterbury	Rye, Rochester	Mary Ann b 6/03
1803	Epworth	Doncaster, Retford, Gainsborough, York, Nottingham, Ripon	
1804	Epworth	Nottingham, Gainsborough, Doncaster, Retford, Derby	
1805	Colne	Haslingden, Blackburn, Preston, Keighley, Epworth	
1806	Colne	Halifax, Birstall	Henry b 6/1807 (d 11/1808)
1807	Birstall	Huddersfield, York, Wakefield, Leeds, Wetherby	
1808	Birstall	Epworth, Nottingham, Leeds, Wetherby, Barnsley, Ripon, Huddersfield, Sunderland, Bradford	
1809	Cas Donington	Nottingham, Leicester, Madeley	
1810	Cas Donington	Ashby, Nottingham	Jane b 3/1811
1811	Horncastle	Spilsby, Lincoln, Louth, Gainsborough, Epworth, York, Leeds	
1812	Horncastle	Boston, Gainsborough, Lincoln, Spilsby	
1813	Driffield	Pocklington, Bridlington, Hull	Mary Ann d 2/1814, Eliza b 6/1814
1814	Driffield	Scarborough, Hull, York, Pickering	
1815	North Shields	Newcastle, Hexham, S Shields, Alnwick, Durham, Morpeth, Sunderland	
1816	North Shields	Stockton, Newcastle	

Shorter accounts from here, so possibly some visits are not listed.

1817	Alnwick	
1818	Alnwick	
1819	Whitby	Yarm
1820	Whitby	Stockton, Sunderland, Manchester
1821	Pickering	Colne, Thirsk, Easingwold, Scarborough
1822	Pickering	Wetherby, Scarborough, Richmond, Thirsk, Easingwold, Bridlington, Buxton, Barnard Castle
1823	Malton	Sheffield, Colne, Otley, York, Ripon, Bramley, Bradford
1824	Malton	Knaresboro, Wetherby, York, Grimsby
1825	Ripon	Knaresboro, Thirsk, Pateley Br, Bedale, Guisborough
1826	Ripon	Knaresboro, Bedale
1827	Ripon	

NB Year is the Methodist year from Conference at the end of July to Conference in July next year.