

Protestant Nonconformity in Queniborough

The main form of early dissent from the Church was Roman Catholicism, and Francis Smith and his descendants, owners of Queniborough Hall from 1587 to 1765, were prominent local Catholics.

The 1603 Archbishop's return of 1603,¹ and the 1676 Compton Census,² both recorded no nonconformists in Queniborough, and in 1669 it was reported that there was 'no conventicle with in this parish'.³

In 1709 the vicar recorded 70 families and 300 souls in the parish, of which 12 were Papists and six or seven 'occasional dissenters' (it is not clear if these numbers relate to families or people). There was no dissenting meeting in the parish.⁴

Methodism

The Meeting House return of 1829 recorded 50 Wesleyan Methodists meeting in the village.⁵ No return was completed by Wesleyan Methodists to the Religious Census of 1851.

In the 1851 religious census returns Queniborough Primitive Methodists estimated their numbers for Sunday worship at 60, with the only service that day being in the afternoon. The chapel, in Bennetts Lane, could accommodate about 160 worshippers.⁶ In 1881 services were being held twice on a Sunday and also on alternate Mondays.⁷ In 1886 the vicar of the parish church reported a Baptist chapel and Primitive Methodist group in the village. He estimated that the congregations numbered fewer than 30 people, a few more Primitive Methodist than Baptist⁸. The Methodist Church is still in use today.

General Baptists

No Baptists were recorded meeting in Queniborough in 1828.⁹ A General Baptist chapel was built in 1838 and in 1851, numbers attending for Sunday worship on 30 March were 40 at the afternoon service and 76 at the evening service. There were 90 free seats, 46 others and room for 25 people to stand. There was also an afternoon Sunday School, attended by 42 people that day.¹⁰ They were still holding two services every Sunday in 1881, at 2:30 pm and 6 pm.¹¹ By 1948 the Baptist church only had 17 members and had to close because the chapel "life had become so weak".¹²

¹ A. Dyer & D.M. Palliser (ed.) *Diocesan Population Returns for 1563 and 1603* (Oxford, 2005), 375-85

² VCH Leics. III, 173-4

³ R.H. Evans 'Non-Conformists in Leicestershire in 1669', *Trans. Leics. Arch. & Hist. Soc.* 25 (1949) 138

⁴ J. Broad, *Bishop Wake's Summary of Visitation Returns from the Diocese of Lincoln, 1706-1715* (Oxford, 2012), II, 821.

⁵ ROLLR, QS 95/2/1/50

⁶ TNA, HO 129/416/77

⁷ *Wright's Dir. Leics.* (1881) 298

⁸ Northants. RO, Box X922

⁹ ROLLR, QS 95/2/1/50

¹⁰ TNA, HO 129/416/76

¹¹ *Wright's Dir. Leics.* (1881) 298

¹² ROLLR, DE 629, N/B/257/1 (Baptist chapel minute book 1901-1949)