

## **The pattern of land ownership in Buckminster in 1910**

The subject of this research is the pattern of land ownership in 1910 within the village of Buckminster, in north-west Leicestershire, within the area covered by Melton Mowbray borough council. The source used for this essay is the 1910 Duties on Land Values Book and two accompanying maps, all accessed at the Leicestershire County Record Office in Wigston, Leicestershire.<sup>1</sup>

The Finance Act of 1910 established a tax of 20 per cent on any increase in the value of land, to be paid on sale or transfer, with some exceptions for small farmers and owner occupiers of modest houses. To facilitate this, every piece of land in the UK needed to be valued.<sup>2</sup> Large books, headed Duties on Land Values, were sent to a Land Valuation Officer within each 'Income Tax Parish', who copied into this from local rating records details of all land and properties liable to the rates, followed at the end by vacant sites, waste land and properties which were not rated.<sup>3</sup> Each piece of land or property under separate occupation was given a number, which was recorded in the book and also on a copy of the most recent large-scale Ordnance Survey map for the parish, where the property boundaries were marked. In the case of Buckminster, the maps are from 1904.

The data for Buckminster in the Duties on Land Values book was compiled and entered in August 1910 and completed in November 1910 by Alfred Hill, employed by the Grantham office of the Inland Revenue. The village of Buckminster occupies first ten pages of the book, with the additional entries on page 43.

In 1910 the majority of the 1,929 acres in Buckminster village belonged to the 9<sup>th</sup> Earl of Dysart. This included his residence, set in 284 acres 3 roods and 36 perches of land,<sup>4</sup> comprising Buckminster Hall, with gardens and buildings, Buckminster Park, plantations, farm buildings, kitchen garden, shrubberies, stable and the coach house. All this land is situated to the north-west of the village centre, a short distance from where the other residents lived.

### ***Houses in Buckminster***

Aside from Buckminster Hall, there were 2 houses with shops, 3 properties are described as cottages, 48 described as 'house and garden', 9 houses (including farmhouses) with additional land, including some with outbuildings, and a vicarage. All but 8 of these 63 properties were owned by the Earl. Frederick Brown owned and occupied a house and shop,<sup>5</sup> Charlotte Adcock owned and occupied a house and garden, the size of 35 perches;<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Record Office for Leicestershire, Leicester and Rutland, DE 2072/111 (Duties on Land Values Book) and Inland Revenue Series Ordnance Survey maps, 1:2,500 (1904), Leicestershire XIV/14 & XIV/15.

<sup>2</sup> B. Short, *Land and Society in Edwardian Britain* (Cambridge, 1997), 27-8.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, 54-55.

<sup>4</sup> Plot 19, subsequently renumbered as plots 347-350.

<sup>5</sup> Plot 7.

she owned two more houses with gardens both the size of 9 perches, and both let out, one to William Musson<sup>7</sup> and one to Elijah King<sup>8</sup>, valued at £70 and £60 respectively. Another house and garden, size 15 perches, was owned and occupied by William Matthews.<sup>9</sup> The Misses Manners of 28 Kingsthorpe Grove in Northampton owned a house, garden and paddock of 3 roods 30 perches occupied by Albert Wright,<sup>10</sup> and 25 acres 9 roods 29 perches of agrarian land, also occupied by Albert Wright.<sup>11</sup> The vicar, Reverend Astley Cooper, is listed as an owner and occupier of the vicarage which had a large garden, total 1 acre 1 rood, 37 perches.<sup>12</sup> Reverend Cooper is also listed as the owner of glebe land of 14 acres 2 roods 16 perches, farmed by George King.<sup>13</sup>

The school is listed as the owner of the house and garden occupied by Alfred Hill.<sup>14</sup> He was the schoolmaster,<sup>15</sup> and the same name features on the first page of the Duties on Land Values book as its compiler. The Inland Revenue did not have the resources to complete all the work on its own, and a schoolmaster would have been a very suitable candidate to enter the basic information into the book from local rating records and local knowledge. Local people were paid a penny for every two lines they entered.<sup>16</sup>

The houses owned by the Earl included a terrace of 15 properties (Cow Row); in 1840 there was another terrace of 33 houses (Bull Row),<sup>17</sup> which was gradually demolished at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and replaced by 18 semi-detached houses with large gardens, improving the standard of accommodation in the village.

## **Farms**

There were four large farms of over 150 acres in the village, all of them owned by the Earl. Richard W. Knight occupied the largest farm in the village, of 363 acres 3 roods 32 perches, comprising a house and garden, agrarian land, and another house, premises and garden.<sup>18</sup> George Hawley occupied a farm of 298 acres 1 rood 10 perches, comprising a house, premises, garden, buildings and agrarian land.<sup>19</sup> Thomas Sharpe occupied a house, premises and land measuring 189 acres 1 rood 36 perches.<sup>20</sup> Henry Morris occupied a house, premises and agrarian land, total 164 acres 2 perches.<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Plot 1.

<sup>7</sup> Plot 34.

<sup>8</sup> Plot 35.

<sup>9</sup> Plot 14.

<sup>10</sup> Plot 41.

<sup>11</sup> Plot 58.

<sup>12</sup> Plot 13.

<sup>13</sup> Plot 47.

<sup>14</sup> Plot 71.

<sup>15</sup> *Kelly's Directory of Leicestershire and Rutland* (London, 1908), 51.

<sup>16</sup> Short, *Land and Society*, p. 54.

<sup>17</sup> Record Office for Leicestershire, Leicester and Rutland, Ti/53/1 (tithe apportionment and map)

<sup>18</sup> Plot 50.

<sup>19</sup> Plot 42

<sup>20</sup> Plot 72.

<sup>21</sup> Plot 54.

Other farmers include Frederick Newton, who occupied a house, garden and land owned by the Earl, totalling 79 acres 3 roods and 29 perches,<sup>22</sup> and who may be the same man as F.A. Newton, who farmed 7 acres 3 roods 30 perches of land owned by William Newton of Braybrook, near Market Harborough.<sup>23</sup> Thomas Laxton, who had no house in the village, owned and farmed 21 acres 11 perches of land,<sup>24</sup> and rented a further 68 acres and 7 perches from the Earl.<sup>25</sup> William Weston rented a house, garden and land from the Earl, total 54 acres 21 perches.<sup>26</sup>

There were also a number of smaller holdings of less than 50 acres, including four farmers or smallholders who occupied their own land: Thomas Christian of Skillington, who owned and occupied 27 acres 3 roods 6 perches,<sup>27</sup> Herbert Bartram, owner-occupier of 9 acres 9 perches,<sup>28</sup> Thomas Jackson of Welby, near Grantham, owner-occupier of 6 acres 3 roods 9 perches of land,<sup>29</sup> and Tom Lee of Saltby (near Melton Mowbray) and Daniel Lee of Ponton (near Grantham), joint owners of 16 acres 20 perches of land occupied by Tom Lee.<sup>30</sup>

### ***Commercial properties and public buildings***

There were a small number of commercial properties in the village, and the house and shop owned and occupied by Frederick Brown has already been mentioned.<sup>31</sup> The 9<sup>th</sup> Earl of Dysart owned a house and shop occupied by Mary Charlesworth,<sup>32</sup> a shop occupied by John Wright,<sup>33</sup> a blacksmith's shop occupied by Thompson Skins,<sup>34</sup> and the Dysart Arms Hotel, occupied by Clara Wells.<sup>35</sup> He also owned an estate office,<sup>36</sup> clerk of works' office and store yard.<sup>37</sup>

The Earl also owned the land occupied by the school,<sup>38</sup> between the villages of Buckminster and Sewstern (within Sewstern parish), and serving both villages. Immediately adjacent to the school and within Buckminster, he had set aside land to be used as

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<sup>22</sup> Plot 55.

<sup>23</sup> Plot 57.

<sup>24</sup> Plot 16.

<sup>25</sup> Plot 17.

<sup>26</sup> Plot 83.

<sup>27</sup> Plot 15.

<sup>28</sup> Plot 4.

<sup>29</sup> Plot 59.

<sup>30</sup> Plot 52.

<sup>31</sup> Plot 7.

<sup>32</sup> Plot 9.

<sup>33</sup> Plot 84.

<sup>34</sup> Plot 74.

<sup>35</sup> Plot 82.

<sup>36</sup> Plot 27.

<sup>37</sup> Plot 26.

<sup>38</sup> Plot 362.

allotments.<sup>39</sup> He had also provided a working men's institute and reading room on his land.<sup>40</sup> There was a Wesleyan chapel in the village, with no owner named.<sup>41</sup>

The sources used in this research are fascinating documents which can be used to understand the history of the village, its layout and social dynamic. If compared with earlier surveys, tithe records and censuses, it is possible to capture the dynamic of the changes which took place in this village. Some aspects may reflect earlier times, when Buckminster Hall was built on the edge of the village within substantial parkland for private recreation. By 1910, the core of the village contained shops and an inn, and the vast majority of houses had their own gardens. Land had been made available for a school, and the provision of allotments and a working men's institute with reading room suggests a philanthropic tendency, as does the gradual upgrade in the accommodation, where 18 larger houses with generous gardens had replaced a terrace of 33 properties. It is not clear from these records whether local families had been displaced when these new houses were erected, or whether the Earl had experienced difficulties in finding tenants for the terrace.

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<sup>39</sup> Plot 24.

<sup>40</sup> Plot 360.

<sup>41</sup> Plot 361.