

Roman Catholicism in Queniborough

In 1561 Antony Newbie, Vicar of Queniborough was deprived of his office for being ‘certified amongst the recusants’.¹ There are records of a vicar of the same name serving in 1576 but it is unclear if he had been reinstated or if it was a relative.²

Francis Squire, Vicar of Queniborough was charged with baptising a Papist in 1646.³

Francis Smith and his descendants, owners of Queniborough Hall from 1587 to 1765, were prominent local Catholics. They provided three mass centres in the area, Queniborough Hall being one of them. Somewhat surprisingly given the Smith family’s presence in the village the 1603 Archbishop’s return records no Catholics.⁴

When Parliamentary forces held a recruitment meeting in Queniborough in 1642 they commented that the appearance was good ‘considering how many great papists and ill-affected people live there about’.⁵ The 1676 Compton Census recorded two Papists.⁶

Edmund Smith of Queniborough appears in a list of prominent Catholics from 1680,⁷ and in 1717 and 1721 Edmund, Francis and Catherine Smith all made applications to register their names and estates with the Clerk of the Peace, which Catholics were required to do from 1715.⁸ The vicar recorded seven papists in Queniborough in 1707 and 12 in 1709.⁹

By 1740 Queniborough was one of only 7 villages in Leicestershire where Roman Catholic Communion was still harbored in a home.¹⁰ In 1780 there were 5 Catholics living in the village.¹¹

¹ VCH Leics. II, 55

² C.W. Foster (ed.), *The State of the Church in the Reigns of Elizabeth and James I*, Vol 1 (1926, Lincoln record society Vol 23) 40

³ AG Matthews, *Walker Revised: being a revision of John Walker's Sufferings of the Clergy during the Grand rebellion, 1642-60* (Oxford, 1948), p. 245.

⁴ A. Dyer & D.M. Palliser (ed.) *Diocesan Population Returns for 1563 and 1603* (Oxford, 2005), 375-85

⁵ VCH Leics. II, 112

⁶ VCH Leics. III, 173-4

⁷ VCH Leics. II, 65-66

⁸ ROLLR, QS56/2/11, QS45/2/12 and QS45/2/35

⁹ J. Broad, *Bishop Wake's Summary of Visitation Returns from the Diocese of Lincoln, 1706-1715* (Oxford, 2012), II, 821.

¹⁰ VCH Leics. II, 69

¹¹ VCH Leics. II, 69