

Protestant Nonconformity in Buckminster and Sewstern

Buckminster and Sewstern are two villages in a single ancient parish in the extreme east of the county. They are 10 miles east-north-east of Melton Mowbray, and on the border with Lincolnshire.

In 1662 it was noted that the parish contained 'Many Puritans. They go from this parish to Strinsby' (probably Stainby, Lincs.).¹ No early conventicle was noted,² but there were three nonconformists in the parish in 1676: one man and two women.³ In 1709 there were no dissenters and no meeting, although there were also five residents who had never taken Holy Communion.⁴

There was a Wesleyan chapel in Sewstern, built in 1820 by subscription.⁵ No response was made to the Meeting House return of 1829, but this is probably the Wesleyan 'Preaching House' which made the only nonconformist return from the parish to the 1851 religious census. It was described as a building used exclusively for worship, and could accommodate 80 people. On 30 March 1851 there was just one service, in the evening, attended by 70 people.⁶

The Ordnance Survey map for 1904 shows a Wesleyan chapel in each village, as does the 1910 Duties on Land Values Book.⁷ In 1903-4 the Wesleyan congregation at Sewstern built a replacement chapel closer to the centre of the village (the date table on the chapel is 1903, but the 1904 OS map only shows the old chapel). It was said to have cost £600 and would seat 140.⁸ It was redecorated in 1954,⁹ but has since been converted into a private house. The Wesleyan chapel at Buckminster is no longer there.

¹ A.P. Moore, 'The Metropolitan visitation of Archbishop Laud', *Reports and Papers of the Associated Architectural Societies*, vol. 29 (1907-8), p. 516.

² R.H. Evans, 'Nonconformists in Leicestershire in 1669', *Trans LAHS* 25 (1949), 140

³ A. Whiteman, *The Compton Census of 1676: A Critical Edition* (London, 1986), p. 339

⁴ Broad (ed.), *Bishop Wake's summary of visitation returns from the diocese of Lincoln, 1706-1715. Part 2, Outside Lincolnshire (Huntingdonshire, Hertfordshire, Bedfordshire, Leicestershire, Buckinghamshire)* (Oxford, 2012), p. 755

⁵ W. White, *Hist. Dir. and Gaz. of Leics. and Rutland* (Sheffield, 1863), p. 343

⁶ TNA, HO 129/418/100

⁷ ROLLR, DE 2072/111

⁸ *Kelly's Dir. of Leics.* (1908), p. 51

⁹ *Grantham Journal*, 22 October 1954, p. 7