

CARLTON VILLAGE - A REVISIONIST HISTORY?

The Hinckley and Bosworth Local Plan Consultation Draft includes a short account of the history of each village in the plan area. Some of the statements made about the history of Carlton strike me as misleading or incorrect, but it may be that I am unaware of new information. I would be very glad to hear from anyone with reference to documented sources to the points raised below.

The Borough Council says that Carlton was mentioned in the Domesday survey and was known as Karlton. There is certainly no mention of Carlton in the Domesday Book for Leicestershire (Morgan 1979), but does anyone know of a reference to Carlton in the other county volumes? According to Nichols (1811) the earliest documentary record of Carleton is from 1270 when Roger de Quincy Earl of Winton died seised of four knight's fees. In the itinerary of 1280, Carleton, Bosworth, Coton and Shenkerton answered collectively as one village.

The Borough Council says that 13 families lived in Carlton in 1564. C T Smith (1955) records 13 households in the Diocesan Population Return of 1563, and 15 in the Hearth Tax of Michaelmas 1670. The Ecclesiastical Census of 1676 recorded a population of 48. The population of the village is recorded as:-

160 in 1801
219 in 1811
290 in 1851
170 in 1921
193 in 1951

The Borough Council says that stone quarrying was the industry which put Carlton on the map for many generations. I wonder whether there is any evidence for this assertion - the site of the former stone pits to the N.W. of the village is well known but hardly extensive. It would be very interesting if someone who remembers the old pits could draw a map and estimate the depth of the quarries. In the past, most farms would have had their own quarries for stone, and there are still extensive deposits of Carlton stone at shallow depth round about. By the 19th century I would have thought that Clementson's Brickworks, down alongside the canal, would have been a major employer.

The Borough Council says that the original Bosworth Hall was built entirely of Carlton stone, yet Foss (1983. p20) speculates that the original manor house built by the Harcourts was a relatively modest timbered building. The survey of Bosworth Manor carried out by Toby Mathews in 1592 for the first Sir Wolstan Dixie, records that the Manor House and Hall were mostly of timber with a stable newly built of stone, and two large strong barns (Foss, 1983, p.48-49). The present building was begun in the 1670's and is of brick with stone string courses between the first and second storeys (Foss,

1983, p. 73). The stone is not Carlton stone, but I cannot help wondering where the bricks came from.

The Borough Council says that the original village church was dedicated to St Michael, had a square tower with the ornamental pinnacles and was rebuilt in 1746 after being devastated by fire. This implies that the present building dedicated to St Andrew dates from 1746. I do not know what the original village church looked like, but it was destroyed by fire and in 1764 a brick and stone church with a tower topped by pinnacles was built on the site. This building was dedicated to St Michael and is illustrated in Nichols (1811, pl. LXXXII). This building was gothicised in 1867 when the door and windows were altered and the distinctive saddleback top was added to the tower (Pevsner, 1984). It is now a grade II listed building. I have always assumed that its dedication was changed from St Michael to St Andrew in 1867, but have no idea why. Perhaps there is another story behind this.

References:-

Foss, P J. 1983. The History of Market Bosworth.

ISBN 0-905837-19-3.

Morgan, P. 1979. Domesday Book, 22, Leicestershire.

ISBN 0-85033-332-6.

Nichols, J. 1811. The History and Antiquities of the County of Leicester. Vol. IV Part II. Reprint 1971.

ISBN 0-85409-693-0.

Pevsner, N. 1960. The buildings of England. Leicestershire and Rutland. 2nd Ed. 1984.

ISBN 0-14-071018-3.

Smith, C T. 1955. Appendix to 'Population' in vol. III of A History of the County of Leicester Ed. W N G Hoskins & R A McKinley, Oxford University Press. (The Victoria County History).

Chris Peat

Legend:-

St Michael's Church
Carlton

From:-

Nichols, 1811, pl LXXXII



CARLETON, N.W.