

Explore what's inside St James' Church - The Old Font

The old font stands at the back of the church. It has an early 12th century round, slightly tapering bowl surrounded by an interlacing arcade pattern of Norman to early English design. The stem and base are more modern, sometime after 1733.

The inscription alongside reads:

This original font was removed when this church was enlarged in 1733. Restored in 1858 by Catherine, the wife of the Revd G W Sanford M. A. Rector of Weddington.

An interesting picture emerges of Weddington at that time. It was very tiny; the census of 1861 records a total of 74 people, (31 male, 43 female) and was made up of 6 farm houses, 2 Lodges, Weddington Hall, and the Rectory plus two unoccupied cottages.

The Rector, Reverend George W Sanford, was born in Benares, Bengal, East India. At the time of the 1861 census he was 57 and his wife Catherine, a Nuneaton girl, was 50. Three of their children were living at the Rectory, Henry (22), Julia (20) and George W (15), all born in Weddington and none of whom had an occupation. Also in the household was Elizabeth Raven the cook from Warwick, Elizabeth Barratt the house servant from Barby, Northamptonshire and Catherine Kennel the kitchen maid from Keresley, so eight in all, quite a large establishment by comparison with the Rectory of modern times!

Weddington then was well blessed with clergy for Weddington Hall was occupied by Reverend William Cooper (40) described as 'clerk without care of souls', his wife Joanna (41) a clergyman's wife, their 4 children and 11 servants. The lodges were occupied by the gardener and coachman to the Hall and their families.

Four of the farmers, Charles Sprigg, William Crofts, Robert Swinnerton and John Taylor had sizeable households with several servants and two of them had a governess for their children. Robert Swinnerton was timber merchant and miller occupying 500 acres and he employed 53 men so must have been drawing his workers from further afield.

How different it would all have been from the Weddington of today!