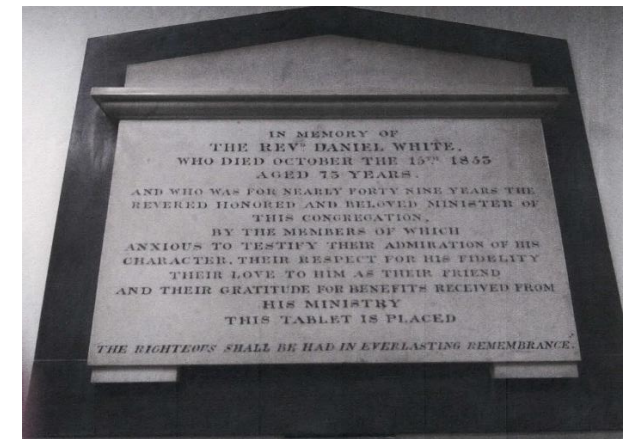
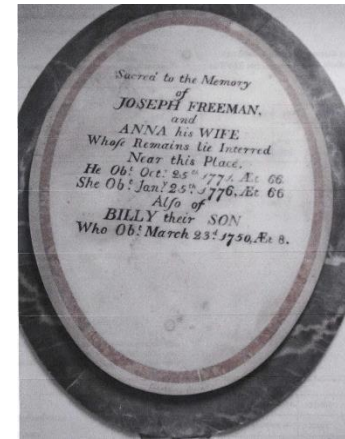


Baptist Church.
37 Coxwell Street, Cirencester. GL7 2BQ

Cirencester Baptist Church is one of the oldest Baptist Churches in England, tracing its origins back to the English Civil War. It is stated that the church as a group of people met in Joan Peltraces' house around 1651. The assumption is that this house was on the same site as the old Baptist church. The road was called Abbot Street then, later being renamed Coxwell Street some time before 1737. The property consisted of a piece of land, with a room called the Meeting House and wherein a congregation of people called from time to time for many years past, had met to celebrate divine service and exercise their religious worship. William asked his son and heirs to allow the Baptists to continue worshipping on the site. There was also a piece of land on the west side of the meeting house, extending from the brew house down to the brook. William Freeman intended this to be the Baptist Burial ground. By the 1850s it was clear that the buildings were in no fit state to use, being in such a state of dilapidation it became very dangerous to worship therein. The church decided after repeated meetings to build a new chapel. An architect, Mr Dangerfield of Cheltenham, was commissioned to design the building, and adverts were put in the local newspapers inviting tenders for the work and the job was given to Thomas Bridges. Finally it was agreed to change the whole scheme and turn the old Chapel into schoolrooms and put up a new building over the back burying ground, from the north side of the present Chapel to the street. This is the current building with the foundation stone being laid in July 1856. Charles H Savory wrote in 1858 that 'this Chapel was built in 1854, for the use of, and purchased by a Church of the Particular Baptist persuasion, who had for some years previously met for worship in a Room in Dyer Street'. This Chapel was opened on the 31st May, 1854.

There is also a non-conformist burial ground down Watermoor Road, almost opposite The Avenue. This was used in the 19th Century.

The town cemetery at Chesterton opened in 1872 and since then Baptists have opted to be buried there or in Stratton cemetery.



Plaques moved from the old Chapel to the Coxwell room at the new Baptist Church.

This formed the basis of the database we have created. These have a prefix of 'B'. There were quite a few graves unreconciled as can be seen from the database. The main source is 'Cirencester Coxwell Street Baptist Chapel, index to burials, 1735-1839' from the Gloucester Records Office. The records actually start from 1652. Ann-Rachel Harwood is the historian/archivist with Cirencester Baptist Church.

As far as I am aware that is complete a list of those buried in the graveyard as I can find. I am sure there are still gaps but I have endeavoured to reconcile all the entries and also resolve any duplicate and mis-represented entries as far as I can.

I am quite willing to amend the records or plan if there are any points that I might of missed.

Mike Timbrell

07889 181187

timbrellmichael@gmail.com

To access the complete database of graveyards in Cirencester the QR code will enable you to view all the records as best as can be reconciled as of early 2024. <https://www.sitechsurveying.co.uk/graveyards/index.html>



In the early days, Baptists would have been buried in the same graveyard as other Cirencester people. The Cirencester Parish Records vol 2 refer to Anabaptists, a common term for Baptists in the 17th Century. The Baptist church records hardly refer to death, unless in a members list, until 21 December 1737, when William Freeman, a minister died. He had been in the ministry at Cirencester for 30 years, and was aged 74. His wife died on 25 December 1736, and both were buried in the meeting yard of the chapel. *William Freeman left this land to his son, providing that the Baptists might make use of the said piece ... Of ground with a convenient passage to and from the same, for the burial of their dead in a decent manner.* A new burial ground was begun in October 1752. This was located to the west of the Meeting House, where the current office/flowerbed is. Elizabeth Blackwell was the first recorded burial in the new yard and she died on 10 April 1754.

Some burials have taken place in the chapel itself, for example the remains of Mary, the wife of Solomon Ivin were interred in a stone grave in the Baptist meeting house, March 11th 1808. There also appear to be several vaults used in the 1820s, variously described as brick or stone lined. Mary Pauline Morier, and Ann Viner were buried in vaults in 1826, and Harriet Morrier in 1832. Altogether 60 names are recorded as buried in the floor.