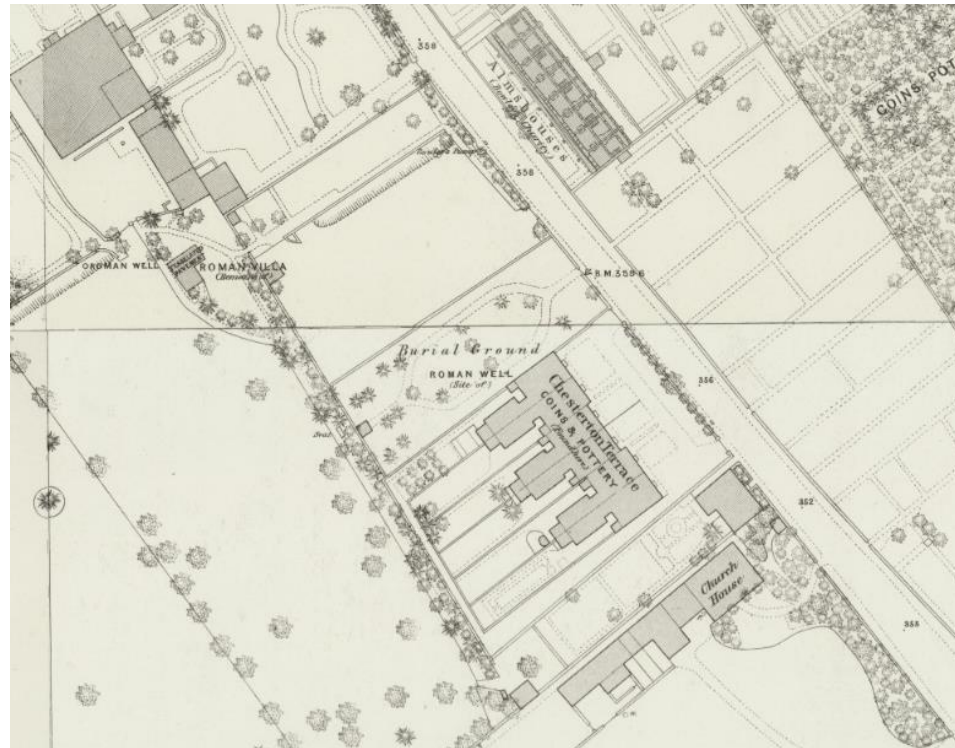


Non-Conformist's or Dissenters Graveyard.
Watermoor Road, Cirencester. GL7 1JW

Many nonconformist's had their own burial grounds, some wealthy families also had their own burial grounds, but the Registration of Burials Act, 1864 required that all burial grounds were required to keep a register of burials. Prior to 1864 there was no requirement for nonconformists and indeed individuals who had larger family burial grounds to keep a register of burials for their burial grounds, though it was recommended. Before 1880 nobody could be buried in consecrated ground (i.e. the parish graveyard) except with the service of the Church of England, which the incumbent of the parish or a person authorized by him was bound to perform. The prime motive of the Burial Laws Amendment Act 1880, was to remove a grievance felt by nonconformist's, especially in rural districts. The Act granted facilities to non-conformist ministers to carry out burials in the C of E churchyard, not using the rites of the Church of England, but those of the particular denomination involved. So before 1880 they simply had to choose to accept the Anglican burial service or get buried elsewhere.

The inseparability of the burial from the Anglican burial rite caused friction between the Established Church and other denominations, who wished to bury their departed adherents according to their own rites. Quakers and Baptists might be more likely to have their own burial grounds than Methodists - but presumably that also varied depending on how large or wealthy the specific local nonconformist communities were, as well as on more individual factors like how committed the deceased (or their family) were.

The appearance of nonconformist's or dissenting congregations in seventeenth and eighteenth century England should be viewed in the context of the history of division in the Christian tradition from the split between Roman and Orthodox churches in the first millennium; the rise of Protestantism in Europe; Henry VIII's establishment of the Anglican Church (arising from Papal hostility to the annulment of his earlier marriage but also a convenient opportunity to annexe much of the wealth of the many monastic orders); and later divergence from Anglicanism producing numerous dissenting churches. Dissenters were forbidden burial in Anglican churchyards.



The records of burials input to the database are from various sources. The Baptist Church supplied me with a list and have the prefix 'D' as the document refers to the Dissenters graveyard. This document is also held at the County Records Office as 'Register of Burials in the Dissenters' Burial Ground, 1849-1899', D7751/2/1/10. The second source was from David & Linda Viner who obtained a copy of a plan given to them by Joyce Barker, another local historian. She possibly came by it through her role as District Councillor. There is no date, 'Drg. No. 611/1 100/5', prepared for Cirencester Urban District Council (so pre 1974). The prefix for those records is 'NC'.

As far as I am aware that is complete a list of those buried within 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.

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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>

