

CIRENCESTER UNITARIAN CHAPEL  
AND GRAVEYARD  
GOSDITCH STREET

1991

Formerly Presbyterian  
Founded 1648/1672

surveyed by  
Julian Rawes, Richard Harris and George Cryer

A small, very overgrown burial ground lying behind the disused chapel. Access is via entry to the left of 'Hare's Antiques'. Because of the condition of the graveyard, there might well be memorials that have not been recorded. The survey has been supplemented by a transcription of the memorials by Savory, extracted from his History of Cirencester published in 1858 (Copy in Glos. City Library).

I am also deeply indebted to Rev. Ralph Goddard who was Pastor of the Chapel 1943-1950. He has recently written his memoirs 'Fifty Eventful Years with the Unitarians', in which he writes about his years at the Chapel. He also recorded some of the memorials and also kindly loaned to me a history, plus notes on the Chapel published in the transactions of the Unitarian Historical Society in 1933. Copies are held by the Society. The original registers are deposited in Dr Williams's library.

Extract from 'Our communion plate & other treasures' by George Eyre Evans & appearing in Transactions of the Unitarian Historical Society - Volume V, part 3, November 1933 page 329:-

Cirencester, Gosditch Street Chapel: here is a two-handled silver chalice, 5½ inches in height, the bell carrying within a floral design the inscription - B. Gurnee.

The initials -B.G- also appears on the shoulders of each handle. The London assay letter is 1732-3. The vessel was given to the congregation, about the year 1750, by Benjamin Gurnee. The patens are of modern base metal.

Jerom Murch in his 'History of the Presbyterian & General Baptist Churches in the West of England' 1835 (page 24) says:- "Tradition informs us that the Presbyterians were in possession of a house of prayer in 1688, when most of the inhabitants were partizans of the Stuarts. We are further told that, during a conflict which took place at this period, several persons with drawn swords were stationed near the meeting-house, & that two of the swords are now in the possession of a member of the Society."

The meeting-house clock was made by John Cannon, & is dated 1648.  
(The clock is on loan to the Museum.)

I get the impression that the memorials from Savory's survey have been listed incorrectly in that several inscriptions in his list appear to be from separate memorials, whereas they are almost certainly from different sides of a memorial such as a chest tomb. Therefore his separation of the inscriptions into different memorials should be treated with caution.

Julian Rawes

CIRENCESTER UNITARIAN CHAPEL

GRAVEYARD

1 Chest tomb. (see no.44a).

west: In memory of Henry W-n-----/ who departed this life July -- / - - - - -  
=====

2 Raised ledger, at one time had an inscription plaque.

=====

3 Possible 17<sup>th</sup> century headstone with two winged cherubs.

totally defaced

=====

4 Possible 17<sup>th</sup> century headstone with winged cherub.

totally illegible

=====

5 Possible 17<sup>th</sup> century headstone with winged cherub.

- - - - - / who died - - - - - 1664?/ aged 78 years  
=====

6 Chest tomb.

no inscription - possibly had a plaque.

=====

7 Chest tomb. (see no.38a).

south: To the memory of Thomas Dawson/ who died the 21<sup>st</sup> Febr 1786 aged 66 years./ Also of Ann his wife/  
died the 14 Sep<sup>r</sup> 1790 aged 74 years.

north: To the memory of Mary Lewis/ who died the 15<sup>th</sup> July 1787./ aged 38 years.  
=====

8 Chest tomb.

totally illegible

=====

9 Ledger.

Sacred/ to the memory of/ John Gardner/ who departed this life/ October 1<sup>st</sup> 1848/ aged 68 years/ And of/  
Hester Gardner/ relict of the above/ died Feb 12<sup>th</sup> 1862/ in the 70<sup>th</sup> year of her life./ Also of/ Timothy ✓  
Stevens/ died March 21<sup>st</sup> 1839/ in the 69<sup>th</sup> year of his life./ And of John Gardner jnr/ died Febr 21<sup>st</sup>  
1868/ aged 35 years.  
=====

CIRENCESTER UNITARIAN CHAPEL

10 Chest tomb.

Under this tomb supported by the ashes of many of his ancestors and / relatives are deposited the mortal remains of Charles Smith/ late of Down Ampney/ in this County/ Gloucester, Esquire/ who departed this life on the 28 day/ of August 1846 in the 66 year of his age.

=====

11 Headstone.

In memory of/ George & Sarah/ - - - - son and daughter of/ Job and Hannah Wilks/ Sarah died M---- 1824/ aged - - - - / George died - - - - - / aged - - - - /- four lines of illegible epitaph - - - -

=====

12 Partly defaced headstone.

In/ memory of/ James Avens/ who died November 6/ 18-- - - - -

=====

13 Large raised ledger surrounded by high railings.

To the memory of/ William Search/ (of this place) Ironmonger,/ who departed this life Feb: 10<sup>th</sup> 1832/ aged 66 years./ Also of Charlotte his wife/ who died 27<sup>th</sup> September 1849,/ aged 67 years./ Also of Sophia daughter of/ William and Charlotte Search/ who departed this life / Dec 15<sup>th</sup> 1818/ aged 11 years/ Also Elizabeth their daughter/ who departed this life Dec 6<sup>th</sup> 1842/ aged 21 years./ Also Mary Anne Nicholas,/ daughter, who departed this life / Jan 20<sup>th</sup> 1882./ aged 71 years./ Also William Tippet Nicholas/ husband of the above/ who died/ September 26<sup>th</sup> 1882./ aged 94 years.

=====

14 Chest tomb.

totally illegible

=====

15 Sunken chest tomb.

totally illegible

=====

16 Raised ledger.

no inscription

=====

17 Apexed ledger.

In affectionate remembrance of/ Thomas Clark, who met with a fatal accident at Stratford, Essex, March 20<sup>th</sup> 1871,/ aged 47 years./ In the midst of life we are in death.

=====

CIRENCESTER UNITARIAN CHAPEL

18 Misplaced headstone leaning against east wall.

Sacred/ to the memory of Thomas Stevens,/ and Mary his wife/ whose remains are deposited in - - - - -/  
ground adjoining this Ch- - - - / he died March 8<sup>th</sup> 1810 aged - - - - / she died Nov<sup>r</sup> 30<sup>th</sup> 18-- aged - - -  
- -

=====  
CHAPEL

19 Marble wall memorial.

In loving memory/ of/ John Worsley Austin./ eleven years Minister of the Church of the Messiah/  
Birmingham,/ and son of the Pastor of/ this church./ Born Nov. 9<sup>th</sup> 1872,/ died March 19<sup>th</sup> 1914./ Interred  
at Quinton/ "To live in Hearts we love/ is not to die."  
=====

20 Marble wall memorial.

In sacred and loving/ memory/ of the/ Rev. Henry Austin/ for 62 years Pastor of this Congregation./ died  
7. Feb. 1929/ aged 88 years./ And of Emma, his wife,/ died 1. June 1926,/ aged 83 years./ Beloved and  
esteemed,/ "Nothing but goodness/ conquers death."/ God is love.  
=====

SAVORY'S SURVEY OF THE CHAPEL

21 Memorial.

Under this monument are deposited the remains of Elizabeth Gurnee, who lived a pious and useful Life, and  
spar'd at her Death a generous concern for the support of religion. She died Dec. 9<sup>th</sup>, 1750, in the 58  
year of her age, and was the first person inter'd in this Burying Ground.

Rev. Goddard had transcribed an epitaph from this memorial: "Here lies the body of Elizabeth Gurney, who  
fell out of her cart and thus ended her life's journey."  
=====

22 Memorial.

In Memory of Ann Gurnee, widow, who died April 7<sup>th</sup>, 1751, in the Hundreth year of her age.  
=====

23 Memorial.

In Memory of Benjamin Gurnee, Yarnmaker, a liberal Benefactor to the Society with which he stately joined  
in Religious Worship. He died February 13<sup>th</sup>, 1768, aged 76.  
=====

24 Memorial.

Underneath this Monument are deposited the remains of Mary the Wife of Benjamin Gurnee, who exchanged this  
Life for a better September 8, 1763, aged 80.  
=====

CIRENCESTER UNITARIAN CHAPEL

25 Memorial.

In this place are interred the remains of Caleb Hillier, whose excellent Character will long be remembered, without the help of an Inscription. He exchanged this Life for a better Sep. 27, 1753, in the 68th year of his age.

=====

26 Memorial.

Beneath this stone lieth the Body of Thomas Hillier, the Son of William and Elizabeth Hillier, whose Bodys lie interred in the Parish Church here. He departed this Life the 29 of April, 1755.

=====

27 Memorial.

Underneath lieth the Body of Elizabeth Hillier, Spinster, the Daughter of Richard & Mary Hillier the Elder. She died the 22 of May, 1756, aged 60.

=====

28 Memorial.

Here rest the remains of Susanna the Wife of John Roberts, and third Daughter of Thomas Dix, Gentleman, formerly of this place, who died October the 3rd, 1778, aged 72.

=====

29 Memorial.

Underneath this Stone are inter'd the remains of John Roberts, (of this place,) Ironmonger, who died January the 8th, 1795, aged 82.

=====

30 Memorial.

Here also are inter'd the remains of John Roberts, Gentleman, the only Son of John and Susanna Roberts, of this place. He died July 20th, 1802, aged 57.

=====

31 Memorial.

Here also are inter'd the remains of Abigail the Widow of the Rev. Skinner Smith, formerly of Abingdon, in the County of Berks, and fifth Daughter of Thomas Dix. She died Nov. the 1st, 1783, aged 77.

=====

32 Memorial.

Saml. Worthington, M. D., died April ye 27, 1777, aged 61.

Rev. Goddard had copied the following from the Registers: Samuel Worthington, M.D. who died by a fall from his horse on Sunday evening April 27th 1777.

=====

CIRENCESTER UNITARIAN CHAPEL

33 Memorial.

In Memory of Elizabeth Paine, Widow of Joseph Paine, who dyed October the 2, 1755, aged 83.  
=====

34 Memorial.

Sacred to the Memory of Thomas Smith, of Easton Grey, in the County of Wilts, Esq., who died on the 31st May, 1822, aged 52.  
=====

35 Memorial.

Here rest the remains of John Smith, formerly of Ailesbury (sic) in the County of Bucks, Esq., but many years Resident in this place and one of His Majesty's Justices of this Peace for the County of Gloucester. He died the third day of August, 1795, aged 65.  
=====

36 Memorial.

Underneath the adjoining Stone are placed the Remains of Sarah only daughter of John & Sarah Smith. She died May the 11th 1807, aged 32.  
=====

37 Memorial.

Sarah Smith, widow of John Smith Esq., Ob. 21st April, A.D. 1805, Ad. 67.  
=====

38 Memorial.

In Memory of James Blout, late of this Town, who departed this life, September 18th, 1790, aged 79 years.  
=====

38a Chest tomb. (see no.7).

To the Memory of Mary Lewis, who died the 15th of July, 1787, aged 35 years.

To the Memory of Thomas Dawson, who died the 21st of February, 1786, aged 60 years. Also of Ann his Wife, who died the 14th of September, 1790, aged 74 years.  
=====

39 Memorial.

In Memory of John Berninan, late Clerk to this Meeting, who died Jany. 29th, 1795, aged 67 years. Also of five Children.  
=====

40 Memorial.

In Memory of Mary Self, widow of Caleb Self, Clothier, who died 23rd April, 1765, aged 80.  
=====

CIRENCESTER UNITARIAN CHAPEL

41 Memorial.

Also of Mary Roberts, Spinster, daughter of the above Mary Self, ho died June the 17th, 1781, aged 64.  
=====

42 Memorial.

In Memory of Martha the wife of Francis Turner. She died Oct. the 1, 1761, aged - - years.  
=====

43 Memorial.

In Memory of Mary, the, the Wife of Henry Wavel, who died January ye 31st, 1750, aged 58 years.  
=====

44 Memorial.

In Memory of Elizabeth the Daur. of Henry & Ann Wavell, who departed this Life Septr. ye 28, 1773, aged 4 years and 4 months.  
=====

44a Chest tomb. (see no.1).

In Memory of Henry Wavell, Senr., who departed this Life July ye 20th, 1771, aged 70 years.  
=====

45 Memorial.

In Memory of Ann the Wife of Henry Wavell, Jun., who departed this Life August the 25th, 1771, aged 34 years.  
=====

46 Memorial.

In Memory of Robert Boyd, who died Oct. 10th, 1798, aged 63 years. Also of Esther his Wife who who died June 9th, --23, aged 78.  
=====

47 Memorial.

Here lieth the Body of John Boyd, late of the County of Antrim, in the Kingdom of Ireland, who died April 16, 1789, aged 55 years.  
=====

48 Memorial.

In Memory of John Godwin, who died Dec. 19, 1802, aged 84 years. Also Martha his Wife, who died Novr. 22nd, --00 aged 81 years.  
=====

49 Memorial.

In Memory of Richard Hulbert, who died March 22nd, 1784, aged 68 years. Also of Ann his Wife who died Junay. 29, 1787, aged 73 years.  
=====

CIRENCESTER UNITARIAN CHAPEL

50 Memorial.

In Memory of Mary Alley Widow, who departed this Life the 22 of September, 1752, aged 85. Also in Memory of Mary her Daughter, the Wife of John Bridges, who departed this Life, November the 2- 1759, aged 6 - - .  
=====

51 Memorial.

In Memory of Mary Winter, Widow, who died Nov. 9th, 1771, aged 64 years.  
=====

52 Memorial.

Mary Stephens Richardson died 21st June, --14, aged 16 years.  
=====

53 Memorial.

In Memory of Sarah the Wife of Joseph Brewer. She died Decr. the ---, 1767, aged 76 years.  
=====

54 Memorial.

To the Memory of Mary the Wife of James Franklin, who departed this Life July 23rd, 1791, aged 42 years.  
=====

55 memorial.

In Memory of John Pearce, he died October the 3, 1761, aged 51 years.  
=====

56 Memorial.

Here resteth the Body of William Pearce, who departed this Life, Nov. ye 28, 1756, in the 75 year of his age.  
=====

57 Memorial.

Dennis Burrows, departed this Life August the 17th, 1806, aged 79.  
=====

58 Memorial.

Here lieth the Body of Hannah the Wife of Thomas Redhood, who died Jany. 14, 1---.  
=====

59 Memorial.

Here resteth ye Body of Benjamin Whiteing, who departed this Life January ye 5th, 1750, aged 73 years. Also of Elizabeth his Wife, who died April ye 4th, 1778, aged 91 years.  
=====

## INDEX

Alley	Mary 50.	Paine	Elizabeth 33. Joseph 33.
Austin	Emma 20. Henry 20. John 19.	Pearce	John 55. William 56.
Avens	James 12.		
Berninan	John 39.	Redhood	Hannah 58. Thomas 58.
Blout	James 38.	Richardson	Mary 52.
Boyd	Esther 46. John 47. Robert 46.	Roberts	John 28.29.30. Mary 41. Susanna 28.30.
Brewer	Joseph 53. Sarah 53.		
Bridges	John 50. Mary 50.	Search	Charlotte 13. Elizabeth 13. Sophia 13. William 13.
Burrows	Dennis 57.	Self	Caleb 40. Mary 40.41.
		Smith	Abigail 31. Charles 10. John 35.36.37. Sarah 36.37. Skinner 31. Thomas 34.
Clark	Thomas 17.		
		Stephens	see 52.
Dawson	Ann 7.38.a. Thomas 7.38.a.	Stevens	Mary 18. Timothy 9. Thomas 18.
Dix	Thomas 28.31.		
		Tippet	see 43.
Evans	see 12.	Turner	Francis 42. Martha 42.
Franklin	James 54. Mary 54.		
		Wavell	Ann 44.45. Elizabeth 44. Henry 1.43.44.44.a.45. Mary 43.
Gardner	Hester 9. John 9.	Whiteing	Benjamin 59. Elizabeth 59.
Godwin	John 48. Martha 48.	Wilks	George 11. Hannah 11. Job 11. Sara 11.
Gurnee	Ann 22. Benjamin 23.24. Elizabeth 21. Mary 24.		
Gurney	Elizabeth 21.	Winter	Mary 51.
		Worsley	see 19.
Hillier	Caleb 25. Elizabeth 26.27. Mary 27. Richard 27. Thomas 26. William 26.	Worthington	Samuel 32.
Hulbert	Ann 49. Richard 49.		
Lewis	Mary 7.38.a.		
Nicholas	Mary 13. William 13.		

UN-INDEXIBLE INSCRIPTIONS: 5.

Plan - not to scale.

