

Non-Conformist Church Records

Background

Gloucestershire Archives holds the records of lots of different non-conformist churches. Non-conformist churches are those which are not part of the Church of England. This includes:

Baptist	Church of Christ	Congregational
Jewish	Methodist	Moravian
Presbyterian	Roman Catholic	Society of Friends (Quakers)
Unitarian	Countess of Huntingdon's Connexion	

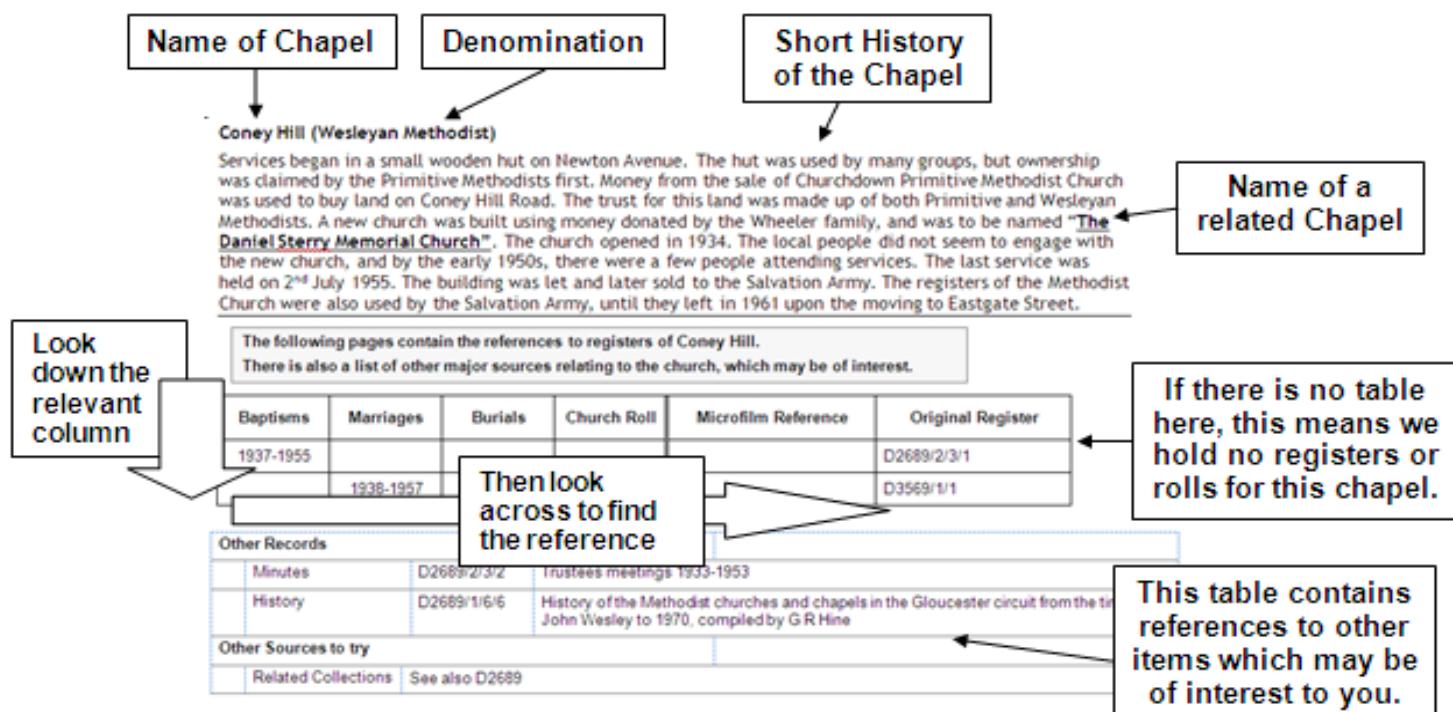
What records are there and what information will they contain?

Baptism, marriage and burial registers	These record the baptisms, marriages or burials that took place at the church. The amount of information recorded will depend on the date and what the minister chose to record. Dates of birth may be recorded beside baptisms.
Birth registers	Dates of birth of children of members of the congregation. Commonly found in denominations which practised adult baptism.
Memorial inscriptions	Transcripts of the inscriptions on headstones in the chapel graveyard. This may be useful if a burial register has not survived or the graveyard has closed.
Church or Communion roll	Church rolls were kept to record people who regularly attended the church and became members. These may include dates of baptism/joining, death or if a member moved away.
Subscriptions/offerings	To help fund the church, members were obliged to pay a monthly fee or offering. Pews in the chapel could also be rented. Other donations may be recorded in these records.
Minutes	As the community of a Non-Conformist church was often small and close knit, many members served on committees and attended meetings. The minutes can confirm their attendance at the church, but are unlikely to give you much personal information about individuals.
Sunday school records	Children of church members are likely to have attended the chapel's Sunday school. Adult members may also have been involved with running the school, so they may appear in minutes.
Church magazines	These documents will contain information about what was going on in the church community and local area. They may include news about individuals or significant events.

How to Find the Records

If you are looking for the records of an individual church, the best place to start is the *Non-Conformist Guide*. The guide is designed to help you find the records which will help you to discover more about these churches and chapels and the people who attended them. It does not include references to every item. They are arranged by place name and then denomination. References to related collections are given, which you can look up to find out more. We also recommend that you should do a keyword search on the online catalogue to find other related items.

Each chapel entry should look something like this:



Three volumes of the guide have been compiled so far:

Volume 1: Gloucester

Volume 2: Cheltenham

Volume 3: Stroud Valley

More volumes are planned; we aim to cover the whole of the historic county of Gloucestershire.

Other sources

- The genealogical database on our website contains non conformist baptisms for some chapels in Gloucestershire.
- The Gloucestershire Family History Society has transcribed
 - many non conformist registers of birth/baptism and burial
 - Quaker registers for meeting houses in Gloucestershire and Wiltshire from the mid 17th century to 1837

See their website for more details www.gfhs.org.uk