

# Non-Conformist Church Records

## Background

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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?

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<b>Baptism, marriage and burial registers</b>	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.
<b>Birth registers</b>	Dates of birth of children of members of the congregation. Commonly found in denominations which practised adult baptism.
<b>Memorial inscriptions</b>	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.
<b>Church or Communion roll</b>	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.
<b>Subscriptions/offerings</b>	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.
<b>Minutes</b>	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.
<b>Sunday school records</b>	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.
<b>Church magazines</b>	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:

The diagram shows a sample entry for 'Coney Hill (Wesleyan Methodist)'. It includes a 'Name of Chapel' box pointing to the title, a 'Denomination' box pointing to '(Wesleyan Methodist)', and a 'Short History of the Chapel' box pointing to the paragraph of text. A 'Name of a related Chapel' box points to the name 'The Daniel Sterry Memorial Church' within the history text. Below the history is a table of references with columns: Baptisms, Marriages, Burials, Church Roll, Microfilm Reference, and Original Register. Annotations include: 'Look down the relevant column' pointing to the 'Baptisms' column; 'Then look across to find the reference' pointing to the '1937-1955' row; 'If there is no table here, this means we hold no registers or rolls for this chapel.' pointing to the 'Original Register' column; and 'This table contains references to other items which may be of interest to you.' pointing to the 'Other Records' section below the main table.

**Name of Chapel**

**Denomination**

**Short History of the Chapel**

**Name of a related Chapel**

**Look down the relevant column**

**Then look across to find the reference**

**If there is no table here, this means we hold no registers or rolls for this chapel.**

**This table contains references to other items which may be of interest to you.**

**Coney Hill (Wesleyan Methodist)**

Services began in a small wooden hut on Newton Avenue. The hut was used by many groups, but ownership was claimed by the Primitive Methodists first. Money from the sale of Churchdown Primitive Methodist Church was used to buy land on Coney Hill Road. The trust for this land was made up of both Primitive and Wesleyan Methodists. A new church was built using money donated by the Wheeler family, and was to be named "The Daniel Sterry Memorial Church". The church opened in 1934. The local people did not seem to engage with the new church, and by the early 1950s, there were a few people attending services. The last service was held on 2<sup>nd</sup> July 1955. The building was let and later sold to the Salvation Army. The registers of the Methodist Church were also used by the Salvation Army, until they left in 1961 upon the moving to Eastgate Street.

The following pages contain the references to registers of Coney Hill.  
There is also a list of other major sources relating to the church, which may be of interest.

Baptisms	Marriages	Burials	Church Roll	Microfilm Reference	Original Register
1937-1955					D2689/2/3/1
	1938-1957				D3569/1/1

**Other Records**

Minutes	D2689/2/3/2	Trustees meetings 1933-1953
History	D2689/1/6/6	History of the Methodist churches and chapels in the Gloucester circuit from the time of John Wesley to 1970, compiled by G.R.Hine

**Other Sources to try**

Related Collections	See also D2689
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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 17<sup>th</sup> century to 1837

See their website for more details [www.gfhs.org.uk](http://www.gfhs.org.uk)