

Story 3

Enjoy the latest *Stories from St. Mary's* – telling the tale of why our parish church is no ordinary village church...

Dissent in Bloxham!



The religious turmoil that followed the break with Rome in Henry VIII's reign and successive monarchs having differing beliefs was brought to a head by the English Civil War. The years following were dominated by Puritans, one branch of Protestants wanting to follow a much stricter European style worship.

The return of the monarchy meant a move back to Anglicanism and the more radical Puritans, disagreeing with this direction, became Dissenters under names such as Congregationalists, Presbyterians, and Baptists. The Act of Uniformity in 1662 removed clergy that would not conform and this included Bloxham's vicar, Christopher Newell.

In 1669 the Anabaptists met in Bloxham as did the Bloxham Quakers but the vicar, Nicholas Page, was very prejudiced against dissenters. In spite of this, non-conformism flourished and the Baptists and Presbyterians continued to meet in Bloxham, the former building a chapel and the latter meeting in the Court House. These were joined by Methodists in 1820 with their chapel being built in 1868.

It was not unusual for Bloxham folk to attend Baptist or Methodist meetings in the evening, having been to the parish church in the morning.



This series is brought to you by the BOF Heritage Group. Throughout its history, St. Mary's Church, Bloxham, has adapted to the needs of the time. The **Building Our Future (BOF)** project is dedicated to enhancing our magnificent church with up to date facilities, to make it more welcoming and more practical for all - whilst maintaining the beauty of this historic building. Subject to current Covid restrictions, please feel free to explore our parish church for yourself.

Please contact us via bofcomms@gmail.com to join the mailing list for future updates, to find out more or to share your own *Stories from St. Mary's*!