

## **The Church in Benwick**

**Benwick once had a Church and two chapels, unfortunately these have been lost, and now all there is; is a disused chapel on the High Street, which stopped hosting the Sunday Service in 2006 due to damage.**

### ***St Mary's Church***

In 1637/1638 Benwick had a chapel on the site where in 1854 St. Mary's Church was built. It cost £2,500 being made of Carr Stone. The money was raised under "Gilberts Act". The church was built including a Chancel, Nave, Aisles, South Porch and Western tower with spire and had a clock & bell. In 1902 the spire was rebuilt, which cost £300. The architect whom designed the church was Samuel Teulon. The church was demolished around 1985. The spire and tower having been demolished several years before, the village clock was donated to March Museum.

### ***Benwick Wesleyan Methodist Chapel***

The Wesleyan Methodist Chapel was built in 1833, and was used up until 2006.

### ***Benwick Calvinistic Strict Baptist Chapel***

Benwick had a Strict Baptist Chapel which was originally built in 1818, the date of the first trust deed, however the Church wasn't formed until 1858 so it is assumed it was merely a preaching place in its earliest years.

From the church records, on 14th April 1873 it was decided that a new chapel needed to be built as the old one was *"now in such a dilapidated state"* the money to built a new one was raised by donations, the highest of which was £20, given by three people, Mr W Chamber, Mr Morton, Mr William Shepperson, most people gave around £1. The total raised was £150 16s 6d, they then needed to borrow a further £100, the new chapel cost £250 to build. It is noted in the school records that the opening of the new Baptist Chapel caused absence of a few, this was February 3rd 1874.

The Chapel Gardens were sold in 1955 for £700 to the North Witchford Rural District Council to build a new housing estate, the land which was nearly two acres, the transaction was completed ay Michaelmas 1956.

The Chapel was demolished in May 1963, after the services had been held in the Village Hall since 6th October 1961. Once it had been demolished it was decided to hold a Sunday service every 1st and 3rd Sunday commencing 5th January at 2:30pm, at the home of Mr and Mrs G Fredric Bedford of Hope Cottage, 1 Lilyholt Road until further notice, the pastor for the first service was Pastor Taylor of Whittlesey.

*"Our prayer is that the lord will be pleased with our efforts and in his appointed time once again our cause at Benwick be received to his Honour and Glory"*

### ***Friends of Benwick Church***

Currently Benwick has no church; but the friends of Benwick Church have been fundraising for many years in order to establish a new place of worship. Currently they have raised over **£132,000** but more is needed.

Each year they hold many fundraising events; to see the upcoming events already planned visit the events page by [clicking here](#). The committee which runs the Friends of Benwick Church meet monthly on the third Thursday of the month.

They are currently looking at constructing a building on the side of the Village Hall; which would benefit from its own entrance but use the toilets and kitchen of the Village Hall. They are also still looking at using the site of the old Baptist church; however there are substantial costs involved with clearing the site. The Methodist Chapel was auctioned in October and all profits from this excluding the selling fees will be going to the funds.

To contact the Friends of Benwick Church:

***John Hoffman***

***01354 677878***

***Lilyholt Lodge, Lilyholt Road, Benwick, March, Cambs, PE15 0XQ***

### ***Church Services***

Benwick Church Services are currently held:

1st, 2nd & 3rd Sunday of Month: Benwick Village Hall

4th Sunday of Month: Doddington Church of St. Mary

5th Sunday: To be advised nearer the time

### **How Times have changed...**

The £132,000 we have for a new church today won't buy us one yet. But back in the day we could have had 528 of the Baptist Chapel or 52 of the Church of St. Mary!