

£10,000 scheme to restore Baptist church

The 17th century Baptist church at Gosberton is in need of urgent preservation and restoration work that is expected to cost between £8,000 and £10,000.

And although some money has been raised, there is still much to do

before the total sum has been collected.

A restoration fund has been set up to pay for repairs to the roof, woodwork, floors, door and window frames.

The Rev Tom Gillies, Baptist minister of Pinchbeck, Sutterton and Gosberton, said that

famous Lincolnshire man Thomas Grantham was almost certainly involved in founding the first building in 1666.

It was then extended south-eastward to accommodate a vestry when the church appointed a minister of its own in 1762.

A new church was built on in 1866 and until recently the old part was used as a Sunday school room.

Restoration work has already started but the complete project is expected to take about a year.

"The present members of this church, though now small in number, are keen to preserve this grand old building and indeed would like to restore it and make it their church once more," said Mr Gillies.

"Not many Non-Conformist churches can boast an original building of such antiquity and the members of Gosberton are keen to preserve this part of their heritage."

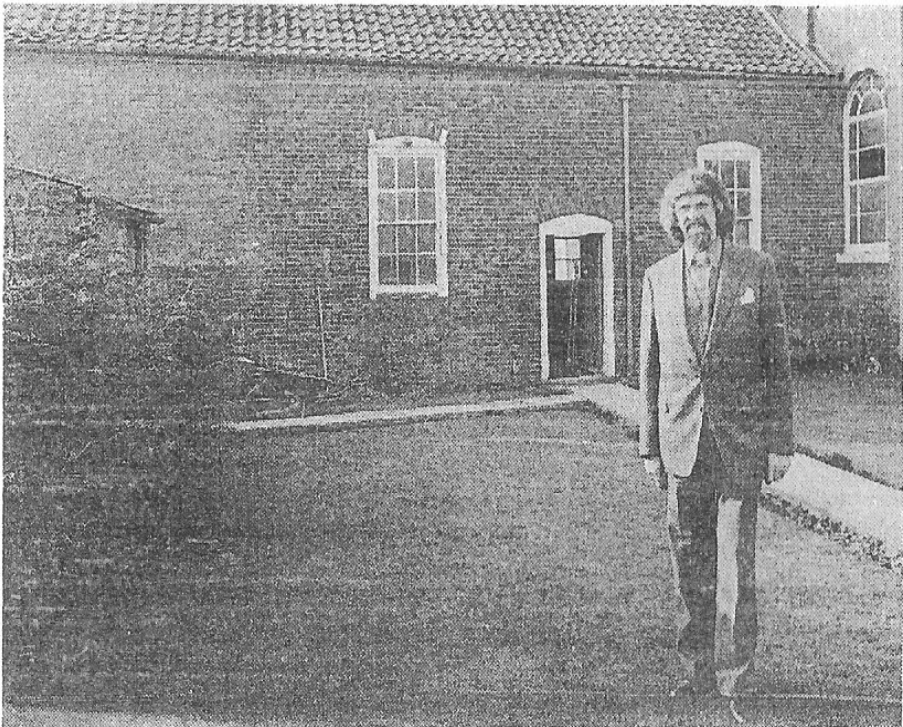
Consultant architect Mr Robert Freakley, who has been helping the district council with its riverside improvement scheme in Spalding, is overseeing the work being carried out by Manpower Services Commission workers.

Mr Gillies said fundraising events so far had included coffee evenings and a concert and there

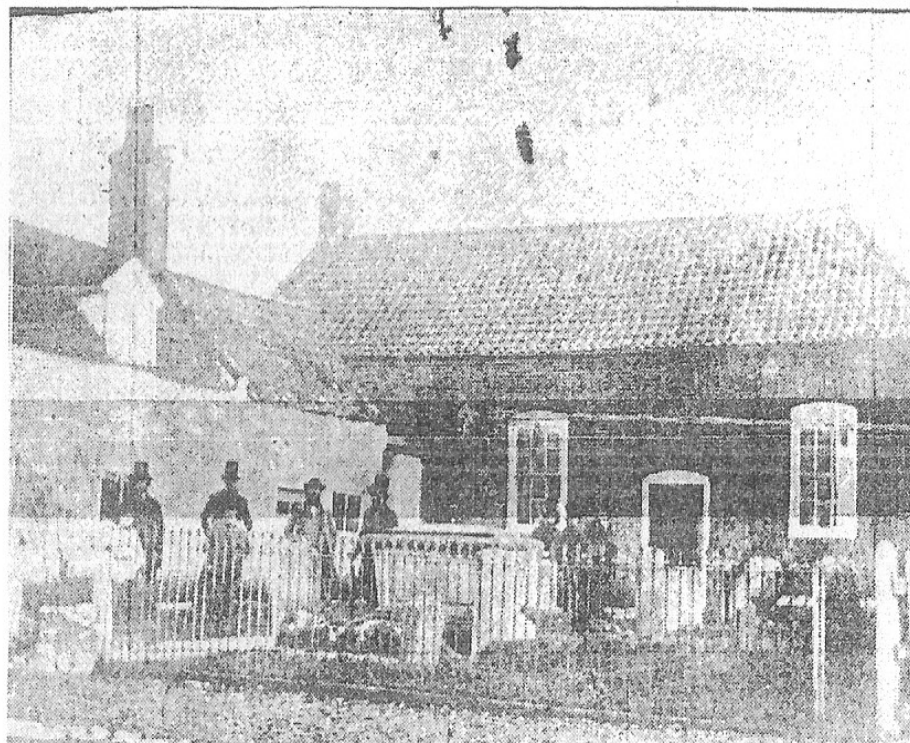
all this work we have opened a restoration fund appeal so that any who wish to support this exciting project may have the opportunity to do so." Mr Gillies can be contacted at The Manse, Knight Street, Pinchbeck.

REPORT: TRACEY GRAY

had been some donations. He appealed for the fund-raising work to go on. "It is really thrilling to see a part of the country's rich, though at times violent, history of the 17th century being brought back into use and being preserved for future generations. "In order to complete



The Rev Tom Gillies outside Gosberton Baptist Church.



Top-hatted figures next to the original Gosberton Baptist Church. The picture was probably taken about 125 years ago.