

Year	Date (1st ref) in artefact	Date	References to organ and social history
1966	St Giles Newsletter	Jan-66	It is now a year since the disastrous fire in St Giles Church, and people continually ask me when the restoration work will start. I can only reply that Insurance Companies, Loss Adjusters, Quantity Surveyors, Architects and Contractors work very slowly, and that we are still waiting to hear the amount we shall receive from our Insurance Claim. Revd C Hutchings
1966	St Giles Newsletter	Mar-66	Finally, as you know, the Diocesan Authorities are examining the pastoral arrangements for Anglicans in Stony Stratford and Calverton. Without prejudging decisions about the future of Church buildings, I am sure that Unity starts at home in the sense that the congregations of St Giles' and St Mary's, who are so near to each other, should seek to become one congregation, worshipping in one building, and that we should expect this to happen before very long, and welcome it when it comes. C.L.G.H.
1966	St Giles Newsletter	May-66	The process of pastoral re-organisation in Stony Stratford is a long, wearying and anxious time for us all. I am sure it is right that eventually St Giles' and St Mary's should become one parish with one place of worship for the one family. I hope you all agree with me over this. It is how this should be implemented that causes the difficulties. All I would ask through the pages of the Magazine is that we have formed our opinions for the right reasons and that we have asked God the Holy Spirit to guide us as we were formulating those opinions. When we have done that it is right that we should express those opinions as forcibly as we can so as to influence those who have to make the final decisions. Revd Cecil Hutchings
1966	St Giles newsletter	Jun-66	On Saturday 14th May the choir took part in the annual Choir Festival at Stowe. Mr Robin Proctor, the Director of Music, rehearsed nearly 300 voices. Then followed tea and a stroll around the school and grounds on a lovely spring afternoon. Finally we sang what we had rehearsed at Festival Evensong in the Chapel. Members of the congregation and friends from St Mary's accompanied us and all had a most enjoyable afternoon. Rev Cecil Hutchings

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1966	St Giles newsletter	Nov-66	<p>My dear People, I expect some of you are still asking why it is felt necessary to unite the two parishes in Stony Stratford, so that before long we shall have one priest instead of two at work in the town. Perhaps, therefore, it will be a good thing to look again at the reasons which have prompted the proposal. The reasons are three. One reason is financial, the saving of a priest's stipend and the cost of upkeep of a Vicarage. Secondly the work and witness of the Church in Stony Stratford will be strengthened if we come together as one family. We shall find that we can do many things much more effectively united than we can in our separate parishes. Thirdly, the union of the two parishes is a recognition of the shortage of clergy. I would like to say more about this third reason. It would not be difficult at present to keep the two parishes separate each with its own priest. It is among the junior clergy that the shortage is most marked, among the men who should be working as assistants in our big parishes. In the last year or so the number of those offering themselves for ordination has declined considerably. The senior men are more plentiful, and with the union of parishes the number of incumbencies is declining. Moreover we must recognise that priests are but human, and so the Oxford Diocese, in common with the dioceses in the South near London attracts men from other parts of the country, with the result that priests in the North have a greater average population to care for than priests in the South. In fairness then to the North, and in anticipation of the years ahead when senior priests will be reduced in number, it is clearly right to proceed with the union of parishes such as those in Stony Stratford which are comparatively small and whose Churches are as close together. Revd C Hutchings.</p>
1966	St Giles newsletter	Dec-66	<p>My dear People, It is nearly two years since the first in St Giles' Church, on 26th December 1964, and at last the work of repair and restoration has started. Will you remember in your prayers those concerned with the work? Besides the various contractors actually doing the work, many are involved in making decisions, including architects, the Diocesan Advisory Committee, the Parochial Church Council, and the Chancellor of the Diocese who grants the necessary faculties for the work. Though we may be impatient at delays they are all doing their best to ensure that the Church will become a building more beautiful than it was before and more suited for its purpose. In the meantime the Church is shut and we are worshipping at St Mary's. We are very grateful to Fr Painter and his people who have welcomed us and done all they can to make us feel at home. I hope none of us will be found missing because we are too tied to one particular set of bricks and mortar, but we will all look at our sojourn at St Mary's as the beginning of our growing together into one family of God in Stony Stratford, in preparation for the time when the parishes are legally united. Revd C Hutchings</p>

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1967	St Giles Newsletter	Jan-67	The work on the Church proceeds satisfactorily but the task of cleaning the ceiling and walls and repairing plaster work is a big one and a dirty job too for all concerned. Some of the windows too have been removed for repair. In the meantime we continue to worship happily at St Mary's. The combined choirs at Evensong are good to hear and see and are a good augury for the uniting of the two parishes. Revd Cecil Hutchings
1967	St Giles Newsletter	Feb-67	The restoration of the church continues to make good progress. Redecoration has begun and we can now get some idea of what the colour scheme will look like. It has favourably impressed those who have seen it.
1967	St Giles Newsletter	Mar-67	My dear People, Music has always played a large part in the Worship of God. It is one of the manifestations of beauty which we offer to God who is the source of all beauty. It enhances the beauty of language and combines with the beauty of form and colour of our churches to enrich and inspire our worship. Very common, too, has been the choir, the body of singers with or without instrumental accompaniment, which has a special responsibility for the musical parts of worship. The function of the choir has been twofold, to lead the general congregation in singing and to make their own distinctive musical offering. The proportions of these two tasks have varied. The trained professional choir of a Cathedral quite rightly mostly sings music beyond the skill of the congregation who are content to join in an occasional hymn. The Cathedral Choir exists to render music of the highest possible standard both for its own sake and to encourage others to set their sights high even though they know they cannot reach that standard. The parish church choir exists to lead the congregation in its singing though it is right that it should be allowed to make a musical offering of its own according to its skill as in the anthem. One of the problems that is facing the choir of St Giles' and St Mary's is that of balance. With nearly a dozen men singing the lower parts of the harmony there are not nearly enough trebles to bring out the melody line. In other words, more boys are needed in the choir. I won't deny that to be a good member of a choir does mean hard work and self sacrifice. It means being regular at practice when music is learnt and skill developed. It means self sacrifice, too, for parents who are asked to do all they can to help and not hinder their sons in fulfilling the obligations of choir membership. But with the hard work and self sacrifice goes the satisfaction of knowing that the members of the choir are making their own distinctive and valuable contribution to the Worship of God. I hope some boys will be found who - with the support of their parents - are willing to make this contribution. Your sincere friend and Vicar, Cecil L. G. Hutchings

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1967	St Giles Newsletter	Apr-67	<p>Now that most of the scaffolding has been removed in the Church we can see how attractive the new colour scheme is. The work of restoration naturally seems too slow for most of us and, of course, much work remains to be done. Probably the next major piece of work will be the rebuilding of the south-west porch and the bulging wall above. This defect was not a result of the fire and we have known for a considerable time that it needed attention.</p>
1967	St Giles Newsletter	Jul-67	<p>My dear People, you will have seen that work on the Church has entered upon a new phase with the start of the rebuilding of the South-West corner. We have known for many years that these repairs needed to be done and they are in no way connected with the fire. Over the year the wall over the South-West porch has bulged outwards and Mr Rolls, our architect, has recommended a complete rebuilding. Towards the cost the Bucks Historic Churches Trust has made a grant of £200 for which we are most grateful. Elsewhere, the windows on the North side of the church are being replaced in clear glass, as recommended by Mr Foster, the consulting architect, and the parts of the organ have arrived and await installation.</p>

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1967	St Giles Newsletter	Oct-67	<p>My dear People, In his Parish Leaflet for September the Revd H. F. Painter referred to his impending resignation on Monday 2nd October. I am sure you will wish me, on your behalf, to express our hope that Fr Painter will have a long and happy retirement with Mrs Painter and their family in their home at Little Milton. I think too, that we should not forget to thank him for the many ways in which he has helped us at St Giles over the past ten years. We must remember with gratitude how he and his people placed St Mary's at our disposal when fire drove us out of St Giles nearly three years ago and again, nearly a year ago, when St Giles was closed again for repairs. I personally would like to put on record the kindness and consideration I have always received from Fr Painter. It is wonderful how often God can be seen bringing good out of evil. The fire at St Giles was a sad, tragic thing yet it has given us a wonderful opportunity of rearranging the furnishings in the Church in accordance with present day liturgical developments. The purpose behind these developments is to make clearer the meaning of what goes on in Church and to help the whole congregation to take a more intelligent and more active part in worship and particularly that of the Eucharist. Secondly, the closing of St Giles has meant that the integration with St Mary's has begun. The majority of services are attended by members of both parishes. Church repair is a slow process. Besides the dealing with architects and contractors, the legal requirements of PCC resolutions, Diocesan Advisory Committee Approval and the application to the Chancellor of the Diocese for a Faculty have all got to be satisfied. This has meant that to avoid unnecessary delay decisions have had sometimes to be made quickly by a few people. But we have tried to consult with our friends of St Mary's through the small Liaison or Integration Committee of Members of both PCCs as to the proposed changes so that St Mary's people can feel they have had a real share in planning the work. It is my hope and prayer that it will be a truly united congregation that will enter their new parish Church with joyful expectation when St Giles is re-opened. Your sincere friend and Vicar, Cecil L. G. Hutchings</p>

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1967	St Giles Newsletter	Nov-67	<p>My dear People, You will all know by now that I have accepted the Bishop of Oxford's offer of the parish of Brightwell-cum-Sotwell on the outskirts of Wallingford in Berkshire to which I hope to move sometime in December. I shall be leaving Buckinghamshire but remaining in the Diocese of Oxford. I look on my impending departure from Stony Stratford with mixed feelings. It will be a wrench to leave the many friends with whom I have lived and worked so happily during the last 16 years and it is a matter of regret that I shall not be able to worship with you in the restored St Giles. On the other hand, a smaller house and garden is most welcome. The way will now be open for the implementation of the recommendations of the Diocesan Pastoral Committee and it is expected that early in 1968 an Order in Council will be made uniting the two parishes of St Giles and St Mary the Virgin and designating St Giles as the Parish Church and St Mary's Vicarage as the Parsonage. The Bishop of Oxford as Patron has announced his intention of appointing as first Vicar of the united parish the Revd C.H.J. Cavell-Northam, Vicar of Lane End, High Wycombe. I am sure that you will give him and Mrs Cavell-Northam and their two small daughters a great welcome. In the meantime, will you pray for Fr Cavell-Northam as he prepares to take up his difficult and responsible task of guiding two hitherto separate parish families to become one? I am sure St Giles folk will do all they can to make his task easier. Your sincere friend and Vicar, Cecil L. G. Hutchings</p>

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1967	St Giles Newsletter	Dec-67	<p>My dear People, The Bishop of Oxford proposes to institute me as Rector of Brightwell-cum-Sotwell at 7.30 pm on Thursday 7th December. The Induction will follow immediately afterwards and I assume this will be performed by the Archdeacon of Berkshire unless he has to ask someone else to deputise for him. So I am the last of the line of Vicars of Stony Stratford whose pastoral responsibility consisted of St Giles Church and the people living in the High Street and in the part of Stony Stratford East and West of the High Street, Calverton Road, London road and Wolverton road were never under their care. Strictly speaking, for historical reasons the Parish is a Perpetual Curacy and the incumbent a Perpetual Curate though his entitled to be called Vicar. In old maps the Parish is described as the United Parishes or Parochial Chapelries of St Giles and St Mary Magdalen. This reminds us that St Giles Church and the former St Mary Magdalen Church, of which only the tower remains, were in origin Chapels of Ease in the ancient parishes of Calverton and Wolverton. It is interesting to note that Stony Stratford is the only town in Buckinghamshire that had two medieval Churches. This then, is the last Magazine letter I shall write to you and indeed the last issue of the Magazine in its present form. I shall have many memories of my time in Stony Stratford and most of them treasured and happy ones. Some of my experiences have been out of the ordinary. I have lived in two houses in the town, one of them not in the Parish and indeed opposite St Mary's Church. This was necessary because in the post-war years when I was appointed it was impossible to obtain a Building Licence to modernise the Vicarage. In 1955 the Church was closed on weekdays for complete redecoration and the old Parish Room was used for the Daily Services. For the past year the Church has been closed entirely for restoration after fire damage. Parish Priests come and go but the Church goes on. Just as we should believe that I was appointed Vicar 16 years ago under the guidance of the Holy Spirit so we must believe that the Holy Spirit has willed that I should move to another part of the Vineyard and another priest come here to meet the challenge and opportunities of the present. You are the Church of God in Stony Stratford. I pray that under Fr Cavell-Northam's leadership God may be glorified, His Church built up and His Kingdom enlarged. God bless you all, your sincere friend and Vicar, Cecil L. G. Hutchings. The Interregnum: At the time of going to press it is not possible to announce the arrangements for services after I have left the Parish. These will be the responsibility of the Sequestrators, ie. the Rev H. R. Meed, Rural Dean and the four Churchwardens. I know that they will do their best but modifications to the accustomed pattern are inevitable. I know that you will accept these willingly and recognise their necessity. C.L.G.H.</p>