

POSTSCRIPT.

The organ continued to give good service, maintained by Messrs. Starmer Shaw of Northampton, until it was destroyed by the disastrous fire on Boxing Day 1964.

The Church Choir of some 30 strong male voices was directed by George Webb Snr. and the standard was renowned for being up to small cathedral quality. George Webb Jnr. was the organist after the retirement of William Toms. Due to his blindness, father George was unable to continue his duties and retired in circa 1953 and son George did likewise. By then the vicar, Rev. Cecil Hutchings assumed direction of the choir and Derek Savage was appointed organist on Advent Sunday 1955, until his death in 2003. A truly long record of devoted service!

Following the fire, the Church was cleaned up for services, but we had no organ. James Odell had an American styled harmonium which he donated on extended loan, which was placed in front of the burnt choir stalls. Derek valiantly pedalled away at this for the next four years!

The Vicar and the PCC began looking for a replacement organ and Dr. Ingram of Starmer Shaw recommended a father Willis organ that they had bought on spec. from a redundant church in Edinburgh, which had been stored in a barn at Little Horwood for two years. There was quite a lot of controversy on the cost involved and the size compared to the old organ, but the Vicar finally persuaded the go ahead at a cost of £6000.

The new organ was finally used for the Palm Sunday service in 1964, together with a new priest Fr. Cavell-Northam, the amalgamation of the former St. Mary's congregation, choir and servers, which had been declared redundant by the hierarchy. At first, the console was placed on the North wall about a third of the way along the gallery, Dr. Ingram's idea being that the organist would better hear the sound of the organ from that position. A new gallery was constructed in the West end to blend with the side galleries for the Choir. Under the remodelling of the interior, the architect had decided to remove the choir stalls from the Chancel to restore the Church to its original form. This resulted in emulating the old West End Musicians Gallery!

This date is incorrect. The amalgamation was held on Palm Sunday 1968 but the Willis organ was not yet playing at that stage.

After a few years, due to cold and damp, in spite of electric heaters in the works, the notes and action of the console were regularly playing up, so it was decided to remove it to its present position in the West gallery, but it still plays up!

Now in 2006, we are once more looking to raise around £120,000 to restore this magnificent historical instrument; a far cry from the £300 the parishioners raised in 1902!