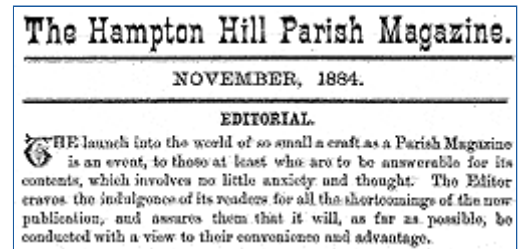


The parish magazine through the years

The magazine from 1884 until 2000

The Hampton Hill Parish Magazine was launched in November 1884. Its first edition stated: *"Its design is to place on record the various little events of parochial life, which are especially interesting to those who have taken part in them, or have been otherwise connected with them; to give statistics and financial statements of the various institutions of the parish; to give notice of the services of the Church, and of any parochial events which are to take place; and to give the Vicar an opportunity of communicating with his parishioners as occasion may require"*. The original aims were set out clearly in the first editorial and they have not changed very much over the years. However, the way in which they are achieved has changed a great deal with the times and will of course continue to do so. [See the first magazine.](#)



The first edition of the Hampton Hill Parish Magazine

During the first year or so of its publication, the magazine registered complaints about the unfair Parish Assessment and included appeals for more generous giving by the congregation. There were repeated references to the scarcity of work and to the hardship experienced by some in the excessive cold of January 1886. One article discussed the correctness of the name 'Hampton Hill' and another the problems arising from Sunday Trading in the village.

From 1884 the magazines were small with people having to buy their copy and with the costs steadily increasing. However, one of the achievements of the Christian Stewardship Campaign was that plans were made in 1962 for the free distribution of the Spire magazine *"to all who are sufficiently interested to ask for it"*.

Until January 1931 the magazines were and still are preserved bound together as hard-backed books, one or two years in a book. Initially the parish material was published in association with a nationally produced inset, 'The Church Monthly', *"an illustrated magazine for home reading"*, with the inset being described as *"valuable in many ways, and particularly in taking our thoughts further afield than our own doorsteps, alerting us to wider issues and concerns, and making us more fully aware of what the Holy Spirit is doing in the church and the world today."* It included articles about Christianity, "short" sermons (several pages long), much poetry, many illustrations and a long-running serial. All the early magazines, from November 1884, contained the offertories, extracts from parish registers, church accounts, individually titled articles and the Church Calendar showing the services, meetings and activities for that month. Most of them also contained school reports and church accounts. Hymns for the month were added later and lists of subscriptions and the number of District Nurse visits were included periodically.



Parish magazine cover January 1902

In June 1885 the magazine reported: *"The cost of publication is considerable, one penny and two fifths per copy, exclusive of the trouble of delivery. As nearly 100 copies are supplied to the members of the Provident Club at 1d. per copy, we are anxious to obtain as many subscribers at 11/2d as possible, and so decrease the amount of loss."* By 1892 the magazine had a circulation of two hundred and the committee wanted to increase this, as reported in the October edition: *"The price is 2d. per number, reduced to 1s. 6d. per annum if paid beforehand, and 1s. per annum to all members of the Provident Club. Intending subscribers are requested to make application at the Vicarage, or at the Post Office."*

The magazine underwent a change in January 1894, becoming larger and with most of it being a letter from the vicar to his parishioners, always beginning with *"My Dear Friends"* and ending with *"I am, my*

dear friends, Yours very sincerely, CHARLES R JOB". Included in these letters was information on all the meetings, activities, etc. that were happening that month. In the January edition Revd Job commented that he was "anxious to make the magazine a means of friendly communication between myself and, if possible, all the parishioners and members of the congregation" and went on to ask people to "promote its circulation". In the next edition he reported that he was "glad to know that the new magazine has met with so kindly a welcome as it has".

These early magazines were still bound into hard-backed books with their covers removed, one or two years in a book. Consequently, there is no record of the covers of these particular magazines, which also means not many records of services and staff at this time, as they were mostly printed on the covers. However, one cover, shown right, was discovered in the archives. Every magazine initially included the offertories, parish registers, school reports and church accounts. Hymns for the month were added later and lists of subscriptions and the number of District Nurse visits were included periodically.

Revd Coad Pryor continued the vicar's letter in the parish magazine but addressed it to "My Dear People". This was followed by different "Parish Notices", offertories, church accounts and parish registers, with intercessions and parish news being added later. Advertisements appeared from time to time during 1917 and 1918 and became a regular feature during 1919. In 1920 the price was increased from 1d. to 2d. All this was due to the rise in printing costs.

The inset was changed to 'Home Words for Heart and Hearth' in January 1916 and then back to 'The Church Monthly' in 1921. Intercessions and more "local matter" started to appear in the magazine to increase its "general interest". Then in the March edition of the magazine Revd. Coad-Pryor started a Children's Column, which consisted of a monthly letter starting "DEAR CHILDREN, Each month something of special interest to you will appear in this column, so please read it very carefully....." and ending "Don't forget to say your prayers in the morning as well as at night. Your affectionate friend, THE VICAR."

From the early 1920s there were certain regular items included in every magazine: a letter from the vicar, the intercessions, parish news including details of services and preachers, accounts, donations, subscription lists, church music and the following sections: "IMPORTANT - Will all those who are responsible for Church Work please send in a full report by the 20th of each month, by so doing it will not only be of great use to our readers, but greatly forward the work of the Church"; "PARISH WANTS - a Parish Hall, a Litany Desk, a Bier for use in Church at Funerals, approximate cost about £30, a Piano for the Infants' School' a Bath Chair"; "CHURCHYARD - Contributions towards keeping the Churchyard and the graves tidy will be welcomed"; "THE VICAR may be seen at the Vicarage on Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays, between the hours of 8.45 and 10 a.m. And on any day, except Mondays, between the hours of 6 and 7 p.m."



Parish Magazine cover
March 1930



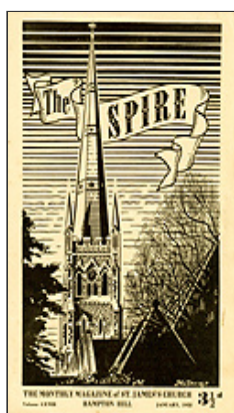
Parish Magazine cover
January 1943

In the January 1931 magazine Revd Harvey reported: "In order to make the magazine more interesting I have rearranged it and I hope to receive each month matter of general interest from those concerned." In each magazine there were parochial notes at the top with times and venues of all the activities taking place, then the vicar's letter, Special Days to Remember, Services and Preachers, Missionary Association and then other items of news, finishing with baptisms, marriage and burials. The first magazines to have their own covers showing service details are from 1933.

The January 1943 edition of the magazine changed the design of its front cover. In November the printer reported that there must be a drastic cut in the size of the magazine from January 1944 as a "war-time necessity". The 1943 November magazine reported: "This will mean a

considerable condensation of matter. For the time being the cover will disappear. The inset, the 'Church Monthly, will appear as usual, as well as the Diocesan Leaflet. This will of course upset the present system of advertising and will mean a small reduction in the cost. It is a war-time necessity and we shall return to the normal issue at the earliest opportunity." There are no magazines in the archives between January 1937 and March 1950, apart from all the 1943 magazines and January 1948. It is not known whether this is because they were not produced or were not saved.

The July 1950 magazine reported: "We are most anxious that the parish should think of this magazine as their own. We want to include articles of interest, help and encouragement, and we want the members of our Church to come forward themselves with contributions and ideas. We want to include a news column: to have for example, knowledge of special birthdays, of Wedding anniversaries, of examinations passed; the names of young people about to do their National Service, and of people who are going away on interesting holidays; we want to know of local festivities, events; we would like to know of people who have recovered from long illness. In short we want to be told of everything which is going on in the parish, and of events outside it of which Christians should take note, so that the Church may add its interest, prayer and good wishes."



Parish Magazine cover of 1952

January 1952 saw the introduction of '[The Spire](#)', replacing the old Hampton Hill Parish Magazine. Rising printing costs during the past few years had nearly prevented the magazine from continuing even after raising the price from 3d. to 4d. a copy. So the committee decided to reduce production costs to the minimum, altering the size and form of the magazine, making it a little smaller, but attractive and easy to handle and read. They asked the advertisers for all advertisements to run for a yearly period beginning in January, instead of from several different months, which further reduced printing charges. The printer, the manager of the Hampton Press, managed to keep these at an affordable level and the first copy was sold at the reduced price of 3½d.

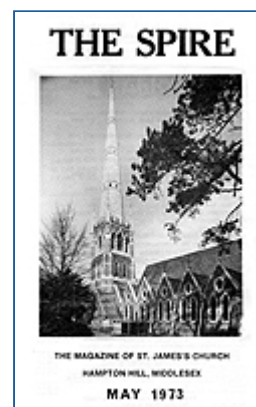
From the first issue of the new Spire, every magazine from 1952 to 1963 included the inset, 'The Window', described as "the layman's church newspaper". 'Outlook' replaced it in 1963 and this was followed by 'The Church News' in 1969. From May 1973 the Spire was printed locally by a

printer who could not handle the inset, so it had to be dropped.

The first cover of the Spire was light yellow with a print of the church spire on the front and advertisements on the back and also in the body of the magazine. After four years the yellow cover paper was changed to light pink and then in May 1962 there was a newly designed pink cover. The following May the pink was changed to white with a new layout of material. Whereas the previous Spires had the text in two columns, from May 1963 there was just a single column. Ten years later, in May 1973, there was a new cover picture of St James's with a new view of the building, "showing its long aisle and very fine spire, set among well grown trees". Then in 1976 the date was omitted from the front cover to save money in the set-up costs.



Spire cover May 1962



Spire cover May 1973

From the first issue, the whole of the front inside cover became an information page with lists and details of church officers, services, Sunday Schools, clubs, groups and societies, confirmation classes, hiring the parish hall and club rooms, and seeing the vicar. The information was changed from time to time to reflect changes in staff, services, groups, etc. Sunday School information was dropped in 1955 and in the following year the section for the individual contacts for clubs, groups and societies was dropped with a collective paragraph taking its place. From 1958 there was an explanation about why no collection was taken during services. Four years later there was an explanation about how the church was being maintained

through direct Christian giving. The May 1964 issue was given a new information page which was updated with the new pattern of services in July 1965.

Also from the first issue, nearly every magazine until 1967 started with 'Vicar's Notes', where Revd Brunt wrote on a wide variety of topics. A special section called 'Around the Spire' was introduced in the first issue which reported *"notes and news about people, activities and organisations"*. The section called 'Some Dates to Note', introduced in May 1951, continued and every magazine ended with lists and details of that month's baptisms, marriages, burials and cremations. Another new section was added in July 1952 called 'Beyond the Spire' which was left out periodically when there were too many other items. The sections 'Around the Spire' and 'Beyond the Spire' were dropped in 1963 and each separate article in the magazine had its own title. A section called 'Personalia' existed for a while in the sixties. This was replaced by a *"chat column"* in 1976, again called 'Around the Spire', as it was felt that it would be good to know what was going on in and around the parish at a more personal level. Various new sections, like the 'Children's Corner' and 'View From The Pew', came and went during this period but did not last for very long. The chemists' additional duty rotas appeared now and again as did the intercessions rota.

The price of the Spire had to be raised *"reluctantly"* from 3½d to 4d in January 1956 due to further rises in printing costs. However, one of the achievements of the Christian Stewardship Campaign was that plans were made in 1962 for the free distribution of the Spire magazine *"to all who are sufficiently interested to ask for it"*. It was decided to have an editorial team to produce the magazine instead of the vicar producing it more or less on his own. The distribution was also tackled. A suggestion in 1965 that the Spire should be replaced by a news-sheet brought forth parish protests and so the magazine subsidy continued, as the Council considered the Spire to be of benefit and interest to the church community. Although it continued to be free of charge *"voluntary contributions would be welcomed"*. In 1978 a special edition, with many extra pages, was sent to every house in the parish, about three thousand copies at that time.



The new 1995 cover

During Revd Leathard's incumbency the inside of the front cover continued showing the 'Church Officers' and 'Sunday Arrangements', with all the other services and activities being shown at the end of each magazine. The leading article was still written by the vicar most of the time and other articles given their own titles but there were no regular features other than 'Around the Spire'. Every magazine continued to finish with 'From the Registers', 'Regular Weekly Services' and 'Other Services and 'Dates to Note'. More black and white images, including specially drawn cartoons but still no photographs, were added during these years.

A new cover was introduced in June 1995 with that issue reporting: *"One of the most important aspects of the Church's ministry is to be part of the community. This is something which we hope the new cover of 'The Spire' will illustrate, the Church at the centre of the community."* Also, starting in that magazine, the committee introduced an article series, each to run for a year, beginning with 'Interesting Jobs' and continuing with such titles as 'Saints', 'That made a difference' 'My Work', 'Exploring Hampton Hill High Street', etc. During this time gold paper was normally used at Easter and red at Christmas with appropriate designs. A children's item was also introduced, which came and went during the following years.

In 1995 and 1998 many children entered a competition to design a front cover for the Easter edition of the Spire with some adventurous, sensitive, funny and carefully prepared entries. For several years in the early millennium there was a series of 'Chronicles', later called 'From the Archives', taken from the archived magazines. These either reported on what was happening at St James's one hundred years ago, or they were articles which linked with the theme of the current magazine.

The magazine from 2000

April 2006 saw the first Spire produced 'in house', A4 rather than A5 in size, with no adverts at all and being copied in black and white on the copier in the new church office. Photographs were added for the first time, including one of a watercolour of the church, painted by a member of the congregation. When this new style Spire started the leading article was actually named the Leader, there was a new 'What's On', 'Welcome' and crossword. The old favourite, 'Around the Spire', continued as did the contacts and 'From the Registers'. Every magazine continued to finish with 'Services', 'Dates to Note' and a new 'Events'. In June 2007 several new items were introduced, including a permanent designated children's page and a permanent 'Special Feature' in the centre spread.

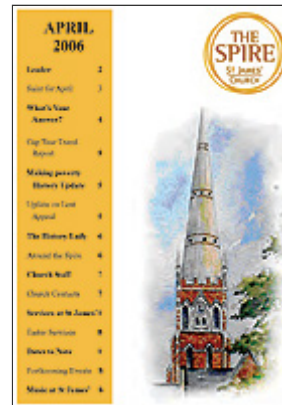
A Spire survey was held in April 2007, resulting in many positive comments with the feedback being used to plan content for future issues. Photocopying the Spire to make 600-700 copies per month proved to be too much for the office photocopier. It frequently gave up the ghost or just churned up the paper, clogging the machine. The quality of the print was also poor and financially it became a burden, so the committee decided to continue producing it 'in-house' as before but have it professionally printed.

When the first of these magazines, with full colour on both the front and back pages, was published in October 2008 a number of other changes occurred at the same time. All the information about the church, the services, clergy, churchwardens, dates, contacts, credits, printing, and the 'Welcome' were collected together on the second page, after the cover. A new 'In Thought and Prayer' ran alongside the Leader on page three. The 'News Bulletin' together with the registers and 'Around the Spire' were located either side of the centre article, 'Cover Story', on pages four and five. A large full-page image to go with this was featured on the front cover. The 'Young Spire', as the children's page had already been named, was on page six and there were various changing themed articles on the other pages. Every year, three issues each contained two months: December/January, the two months at Lent/Easter and August/September. These issues were produced in full colour throughout.

Soon after 2000 the Spire had been regularly uploaded onto the church's new website and between 2010 and 2013 every single issue of the magazine was scanned and uploaded so that by the anniversary year these were available to anybody at any time. The link to every new edition was also emailed to the mailing list of people who wanted to know when it was uploaded each month.



2013 Anniversary Edition



Parish magazine cover January 2006



Parish magazine cover 2008

The magazine continued steadily changing and evolving into something new and with even greater appeal to the parish as a whole. "We want anyone, of any belief, who respects our church, to feel welcome within it and to understand what we are trying to do. Beyond the facts about groups and people, we hope our articles and features say something about how our faith influences our lives. We hope that they show also that we are a broad church with room for everyone who is seeking new or further understanding of themselves and the world around us." It continued to inform anyone who read it about the church services and activities linked to the church, and also the clergy and parishioners who held positions of responsibility within it. It was hoped that a newcomer to the parish could get an immediate idea of the many groups and activities, and how to access them, from the magazine.

The distribution of the Spire was reviewed in 2010 and as a result more copies were placed in the High Street, at the Post Office, library, Medical Centre and dentist with the response being "*outreach at its best*". The Spire Committee received some good news from the printer, Justin Hollingsworth, in March 2011 that a new copier meant he could produce all nine yearly issues of the Spire in full colour at no extra cost. It had long been the ambition of St James's to produce all copies in full colour, but previously it had not been affordable. The full colour copies were, and still are, very popular, as they continue to the present day.



2013 Spire Committee

The 150th anniversary year in 2013, and the previous year, were extremely busy times for the Spire Committee. In addition to the regular monthly issues they produced a packed [Anniversary Edition](#) which included pages on Vicars, Baptisms and Weddings, History, The Churchyard, Supporting Charities, Inside the Church, Sunday School, Young People, Music, Churchwardens and Curates, Past Events, Memories and The Magazine and Website.

From then on the Magazine Committee, meeting every month, continued its hard work in making sure the magazine developed further with interesting topical articles and photographs, and continuing with the practice of matching the cover picture to the church seasonal calendar or the centre article each month.

As can be seen from this article, the magazine covers have been changed from time to time. Have a look at a number of [examples](#).

The above information covers the period from when any records could be found until November 2016. This was when Revd Derek Winterburn became St James's tenth vicar and from this time onwards any new information can be found on the main site.