

The Church of St Giles, Great Stretton, Leicestershire

St Giles Church, Great Stretton
(Stretton Magna)



November 2006

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The monuments in the churchyard have been transcribed, and this booklet has been prepared by Toni Smith MBE and Jane Moelwyn-Hughes.

Photographs by Toni Smith MBE

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Great Stretton

In ancient writings Great Stretton was referred to as Strettone (the town on the street-way), and sometimes Bishops Stretton (from Robert Eyrick, bishop of Chester who was born here), is situated about 2 miles to the north-east of Great Glen, of which parish it is a hamlet, and is bounded by Glen, Stretton Parva (Little Stretton), Stoughton, Oadby and Houghton. The Roman road Via Devana, is very visible in part of this lordship, in a right direction through to Leicester to Markfield Mill.

Stretton is mentioned in Domesday as parcel of the royal manor of Bugehone; and contained nine ploughlands and ten acres of meadow; but this included both Glen and Little Stretton.

Great Stretton, Great in name, it is in itself remote and tiny, yet with a Norman doorway to a little church. By 1937, it had been restored for occasional service, and has kept the traceried font at which Robert de Stretton was baptised many years before he went from here to become chaplain to the Black Prince. He was not a great scholar, but the prince thought little of learning and much of his chaplain, whom he made Bishop of Lichfield. Nor did he forget his birthplace, for before he died he founded a chantry here. Perhaps we may think of him as the only really Great Stretton.

The disappearance of the village of Great Stretton happened long before 1798, when Nichols published his survey findings called 'The History and Antiquities of the County of Leicester'. It consisted of only two farmhouses, besides the hall and the church. The disappearance may be attributed to the early inclosure of its open fields and their conversion in large part to pastures for sheep and cattle.

There is a large moated area about 200 yds south of the parish church. This consists of an island about 44 yds in length from east to west and 35 yds in width from north to south, surrounded by a deep moat which is now dry. Between here and the church was a large pond which supplied the moat, and below the moat was a smaller pond which would drain it if required. Mr. Tailby, who visited the site in 1796 and reported on it to Nichols, surmised that this was where the chantry chapel founded by Robert de Stretton stood, but this is known to have been in the parish church. The site appears to be that of a small medieval hall-house, but there are no certain documentary references to it at any time, and no trace of any structural remains upon it. The house no longer existed in 1670.

References:

**Information taken from 'A History of the County of Leicestershire': Volume 5
The Kings England – Leicestershire and Rutland – 1939 by Arthur Mee**

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The church of St. Giles stands in a small churchyard in the fields to the south of the Gartree road. It consists of a low, battlemented western tower, a nave and chancel all of one piece, and a south porch. It is largely built of soft and badly weathered ironstone, with some limestone dressings in the tower and some old brickwork in the porch.

The body of the church was rebuilt in 1838 and there are now few traces of older work. The inner south doorway has a fragment of 12th-century work round the head, and another fragment with chevron ornament is built into the south wall of the nave immediately east of the porch. The tower is original 14th-century work, probably repaired in the 17th century. The body of the medieval church, like the present one, consisted of a nave and chancel all of one piece, having two early-14th-century windows on the south side. Parts of these window-heads have been built into the new south wall and some slightly earlier plate tracery is incorporated in the north wall. The original north doorway, now blocked, is in position. The present windows, which are pointed and have small leaded panes of clear glass, date from 1838. The south porch was partly rebuilt in 1958. The church contains a good early-14th-century octagonal font, the panels carved with decorated window tracery of various designs. The fittings, which include turned altar rails, a two-decker pulpit, and plain box pews, are of 1838. There are no monuments except a floor slab to George Hewett of Great Stretton, who died 30 August 1690. There is only one bell in the tower, cast in 1791 by Edward Arnold of Leicester and St. Neots.

The registers begin in 1585 and are largely complete. The church plate is Victorian and was given by Lt.-Col. King, who resided at Stretton Hall in the middle decades of the 19th century.

*Up until 2006, an annual service has been performed. Sadly, the church is now in a state of disrepair, and a recent decision has been made to close the church until such time that renovation work can be carried out to make safe the tower, which is in a state of collapse.

**Information taken from 'A History of the County of Leicestershire':
Volume 5**

* November 2006

**The Octagon Font
Where Robert de Stretton was baptised**



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Inside the church



Looking up inside the Bell Tower ↑

The doorway in the porch ←

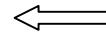
The Church of St Giles, Great Stretton, Leicestershire



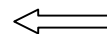
The porch



Showing the bricked-up door



The Bell Tower



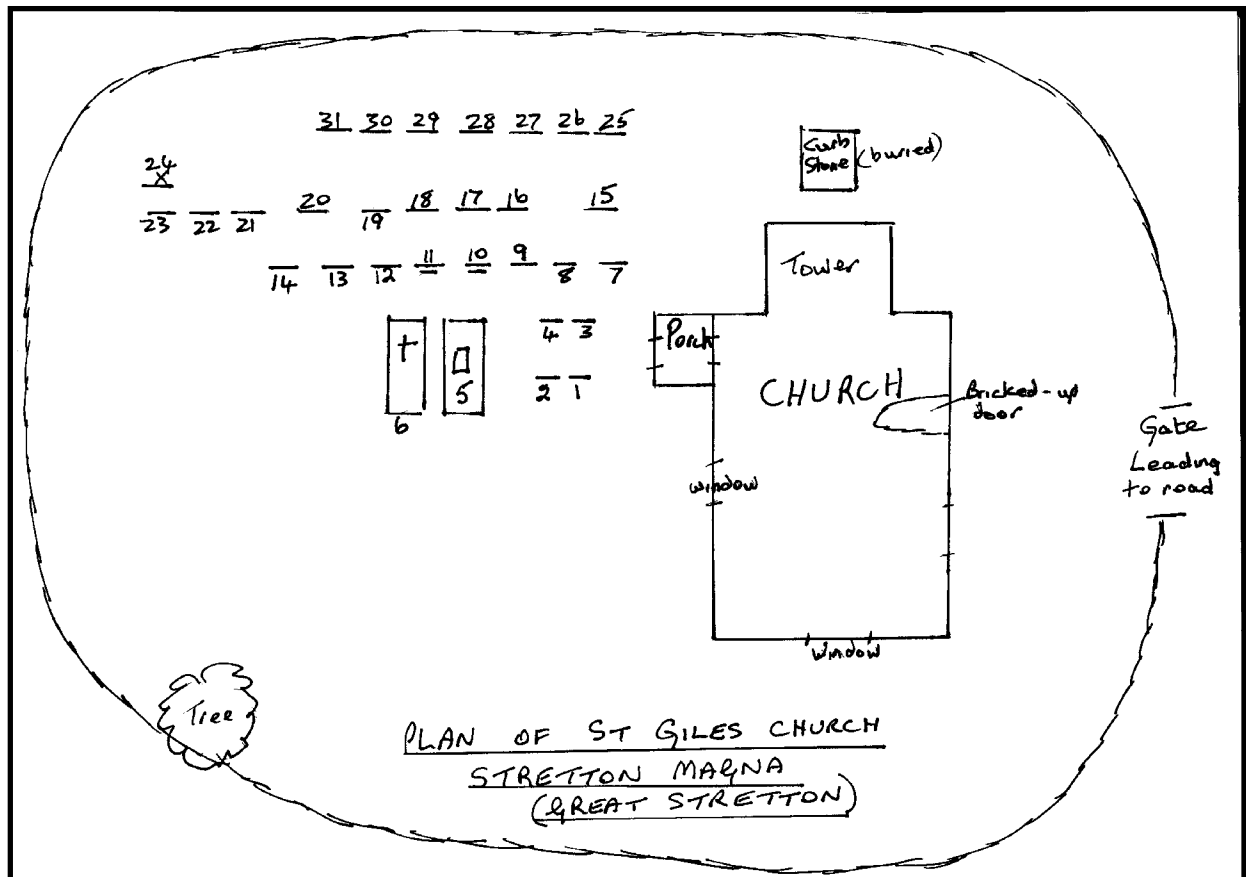
Key to Gravestone Type

Key	Description
MC	Marble cross
MHS	Marble headstone
MP	Metal plaque
SFS	Stone foot stone
SHS	Stone headstone
SLHS	Slate headstone
WC	Wooden cross
SC	Stone Cross headstone
STFV	Small stone flower vase
BMHS	Black marble headstone
GMHS	Green/grey marble headstone
WMHS	White marble headstone

We are not experts in geology, and so the type of stone described for the gravestones is our best guess, and not to be taken as definite.

Plan of the church and churchyard

(not to scale)



**Monumental Inscriptions from The Church of St
Giles, Great Stretton**

Grave No	Name	Type and Mason
1	In loving memory of WILLIAM HARRIS Died January 20 th 1954 aged 82 years “At Rest”	SHS
2	In loving memory of MARY ELIZABETH wife of WILLIAM HARRIS Died Feb 13 th 1935 aged 69 years “At Rest”	SHS
3	In loving memory of JOHN BUSWELL Died July 24 th 1932 aged 69 years “At Rest”	SHS
4	In loving memory of SARAH BUSWELL Died Sept 6 th 1925 aged 65 years Worthy of Remembrance	SHS
5	In memory of MATTHEW HACK of Leicester who died June 23 rd 1892 aged 56 years also of SUSANNA his wife who died March 10 th 1893 aged 56 years	S Tomb with kerb
6	WILLIAM JOHN REYNOLDS POCHIN of Wigston and Little Stretton, Barrister-at-Law 17 th May 1920, 80 years	Large S Cross with surround
7	In loving memory of JOSEF JAKOBI Born in Germany Died 11 th October 1998 aged 73 years “In Gott”	SLHS
8	In Memory of MARGARET HARRIS 1898-1981 also her sister SARAH MAY HARRIS 1905-1996	SHS
9	In affectionate remembrance of WILLIAM HOBSON of Great Stretton who died 18 th December 1879 aged 64 years “For our light affliction which is but for a moment worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory” 4 Chapter 2 Corinth 17 verse	GHS

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Grave No	Name	Type and Mason
10 Foot stone	In affectionate Remembrance of SUSANNAH wife of WILLIAM HOBSON of Great Stretton who died April 9 th 1869 in the 52 nd year of her age “Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was; and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it Ecclesiastes C 12th V7th S.H.1869	SHS E Ward Oadby
11 Foot stone	In affectionate Remembrance of WILLIAM FISHER HOBSON, son of WILLIAM & SUSANNAH HOBSON who died May 5 th 1869 in the 27 th year of his age We know that all things work to-gether good to them that Love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose: Romans C 8 th V28th W.F.H.1869	SLHS E Ward Oadby
12	Treasured memories BEATRICE NELLA CHAPMAN the beloved wife of STANLEY and a greatly cherished mother and grandmother 21.3.1906 - 8.2.1988	SLHS flat
13	In loving memory of CYRIL HADLEY J.P died June 21 st 1988 aged 84 years also his loving wife ETHEL GRACE HADLEY died July 2 nd 2000 aged 97 years	MHS
14	In memory of LEONARD REGINALD WHITEHEAD a loving husband and father died 18 th July 1991 aged 77 years and a dear wife and mother MAY WHITEHEAD died 17 th June 2004 aged 88 years United in God’s Love	SLHS
15	Sacred to the memory of Left side WILLIAM HOBSON who exchanged Time for Eternity September 19th 1819 in the 69 th year of his age Right side ANN, late wife of WILLIAM HOBSON who died Janry 24 th 1813 in the 60 th Year of her age O God eternal guide the mind, Of those dear friends I’ve left behind. Beset with snares on every hand, in life’s uncertain path they stand Saviour divine diffuse thy light. To keep their doubtful footsteps right	DLSLHS W Kirk

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Grave No	Name	Type and Mason
16	<p>Sacred to the memory of</p> <p>Left side WILLIAM HOBSON ...this parish who departed t... Life March 24th 1347 in the ...year of his ..e Tho't was ...death why should we mourn. His body rests within its peaceful urn. His soul we hope's bourne on seraphic wings From hence to dwell with Christ the king of kings</p> <p>Right side SARAH wife of WILLIAM HOBSON who died April 3rd 1854 aged 77 years Tis God that lifts our comforts high Or sinks them in the grave He gives & Blessed be his name He takes but what he gave</p>	DLSLHS (broken)
17	<p>Memento Mori</p> <p>In memory of ANN HOBSON daughter of WILLIAM and ANN HOBSON who died October 21st 1809 aged 17 years Just in the blooming vigorous morn of age, Whilst in the tropic of my youthful days, God gave command that I must quit the stage The messenger a short but sharp disease</p>	SLHS W Kirk
18	<p>Sacred to the memory of ELIZABETH KENNY late wife of THOMAS KENNY who died 24th July 1813 in the 91st year of her age</p>	SLHS W Kirk
19	<p>In loving remembrance of ALFRED HARRIS (of Diseworth) who was suddenly called home December 30th 1902 aged 83 years "Take ye heed, watch & pray, for ye know not when the hour is" also ELLEN the beloved wife of ALFRED HARRIS(of Diseworth, late of Stretton Lodge) who died December 15th 1896 aged 75 years "Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord"</p>	SLHS H Smith
20 Foot Stone	<p>In loving memory of CATHERINE ELIZABETH the beloved wife of FRANK SUTTON HODGKIN of South Kilworth, who fell asleep in Jesus January 24 1886 aged 27 years "He brought down my strength in my journey and shortened my days" Psalm CII v23</p> <p>C.E.H 1886</p>	SHS J Butterris Burton

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Grave No	Name	Type and Mason
21	In loving memory of ELEANOR JARROM the beloved wife of JOHN FIELDING born August 10 th 1861 died October 25 th 1890 also of JOHN ALFRED son of the above born September 26 1890 died March 18 1893 "He brought down my strength in my journey and shortened my days"	SHS with kerb H Smith Gt Glenn
22	In loving memory of JARROM HARRIS who departed this life December 19 th 1896 aged 48 years "Thy will be done" Not gone from memory, not gone from love But gone to his father's home above	SLHS with kerb H Smith Gt Glen
23	In loving memory of ANN the beloved wife of JARROM HARRIS who departed this life May 17 th 1918 aged 72 years "At Rest"	SLHS H Smith Burton
24	Here lyes the bodys of EDWARD BRADLEY and ANN his wife. He died Sep ye 26 1727 aged 61. She died March ye 25 1730 aged 63	Broken SLHS lying flat
25	Left side Here lies the Body of JOHN BELLOMY who departed this Life Octbr 16 1723 aged 58 years Right side Also the body of MARY the wife of JOHN BELLOMY she died Octbr 22 1752 in ye 82 nd year of her age Whilst here on earth we lived in love And now injoy the peace above We sleep to gather in the dust Waiting the resurrection of the just.	DLSLHS W Phipps
26year of his age	Broken slate
27	Here lieth the Body of JOSEPH son of RICHARD & ELIZABETH BELLAMY who departed this life December the 25 th 1768 aged XIII	SLHS
28	Here lie the remains of ELIZABETH second wife of RICHARD BELLAMY who departed this life August 3 rd 1773 aged 57 Lifes but a moment Death that moment ends Thrice happy she who well her moment spends	SLHS

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Grave No	Name	Type and Mason
29	Here lies the body of ELIZ the wife of RICHARD BELLAMY who departed this life Oct ye 17th 1745 in the 36 th year of her Age She who lies here interr'd in clay Until the resurrection day A virtuous wife a tender Mother's heart Farewell dear friend for we must part	SLHS
30	Here lieth the body of RICHARD BELLAMY who departed this Life June the 3 rd 1771 in the 68' year of his Age He was Churchwarden of Stretton magna 44 years Grieve not for me my wife so dear I am not dead but sleeping here My glass is run my grave you see Wait but a while you'l follow me	SLHS
31	Left side Here lieth the Body of MARY daughter of RICHD BELLAMY by ELIZABETH his wife. She died December the 5 th 1757 aged 25 Right side Here lieth the Body of RICHARD ye son of RICH BELLAMY by ELIZABETH his wife. He died December the 26 th 1757 aged 24 Their race was short like winter's sun And to our grief too soon was gone This toilsome world they left behind A crown of Glory for to find	DLSLHS
32	No inscription	Kerbstone



The flat stone in the chancel
(inscription taken from 'History and Antiquities of Leicestershire')

“Hic jacet corpus
Georgii Hewet
de Stretton Magna, armigeri,
qui obiit 30th Augusti, 1600
(looks like 1690)

Index to Names found on Monuments

Grave	First Name	Surname	Grave	First Name	Surname
27	Joseph	BELLAMY	2	William	HARRIS
27	Richard	BELLAMY	8	Margaret	HARRIS
27	Elizabeth	BELLAMY	8	Sarah May	HARRIS
28	Elizabeth	BELLAMY	19	Alfred	HARRIS
28	Richard	BELLAMY	19	Ellen	HARRIS
29	Eliz	BELLAMY	22	Jarrom	HARRIS
29	Richard	BELLAMY	23	Ann	HARRIS
30	Richard	BELLAMY	23	Jarrom	HARRIS
31	Mary	BELLAMY	9	William	HOBSON
31	Richd	BELLAMY	10	Susannah	HOBSON
31	Elizabeth	BELLAMY	10	William	HOBSON
31	Richard	BELLAMY	11	William Fisher	HOBSON
31	Rich	BELLAMY	11	William	HOBSON
31	Elizabeth	BELLAMY	11	Susannah	HOBSON
25	John	BELLOMY	15	William	HOBSON
25	Mary	BELLOMY	15	Ann	HOBSON
24	Edward	BRADLEY	16	William	HOBSON
24	Ann	BRADLEY	16	Sarah	HOBSON
3	John	BUSWELL	17	Ann	HOBSON
4	Sarah	BUSWELL	17	William	HOBSON
12	Beatrice Nella	CHAPMAN	17	Ann	HOBSON
12	Stanley	CHAPMAN	20	Catherine Elizabeth	HODGKIN
21	Eleanor Jarrom	FIELDING	20	Frank Sutton	HODGKIN
21	John	FIELDING	7	Josef	JAKOBI
21	John Alfred	FIELDING	18	Elizabeth	KENNY
5	Matthew	HACK	18	Thomas	KENNY
5	Susanna	HACK	6	William John Reynolds	POCHIN
13	Cyril	HADLEY	14	Leonard Reginald	WHITEHEAD
13	Ethel Grace	HADLEY	14	May	WHITEHEAD
1	William	HARRIS			
2	Mary Elizabeth	HARRIS			