

The Virger

Issue 276

2012 Conference Edition



“O happy band of Vergers”

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The Official Magazine of the Church of England Guild of Vergers





Welcome to the Autumn 2012 issue of the Guild of Vergers Magazine. If you would like to include Branch news, articles, book reviews or any other information you feel our readers would find of interest please send to the Communications Officer.

DEADLINE FOR THE WINTER ISSUE:
Friday 16th November 2012

Marek Barden
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FORTHCOMING EVENTS



2012

Tuesday 25th September

Canterbury Province Festival at Canterbury Cathedral
(80th Anniversary of the Guild)

2013

Tuesday 21st May

York Province Festival at Beverley Minster

Sunday 28th July — Thursday 1st August

Annual Training Conference
Elim Conference Centre, West Malvern

Thursday September 12th

Canterbury Province Festival at Saint Alban's Cathedral

2014

Canterbury Province Festival at Hereford Cathedral
(Details to be Confirmed)

MESSAGE FROM THE COMMUNICATIONS OFFICER

TO ALL BRANCHES & INDIVIDUAL MEMBERS

With the ever increasing cost of postage some Branches & Members have expressed an interest in the possibility of having The Virger sent as an electronic copy to members with E-mail instead of a hard copy.

The Virger would be sent in a PDF Format which you can either print off if you wish or read on screen.

If you would be interested in receiving The Virger in this way in the future and thus cutting your postage costs please contact the Communications Officer for further details.



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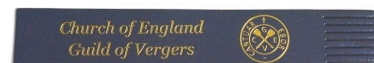
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FRONT COVER: The Official Conference Photograph ~ On the steps of the Elim Conference Centre, West Malvern after the Opening Eucharist in Saint James' Church ~ Photograph by Stephen Haude.



NATIONAL CHAIRMAN'S LETTER



Gold medals all round for the Training Team. As you will read in the next few pages of this issue, the Annual Training Conference has just taken place and the Training Team have really surpassed themselves.

The new venue greatly enhanced our experience, with views which were stunning, facilities which were top notch, food which was delicious and speakers which were spell binding. I will leave others to comment further.

New officers were elected at the Central Council meeting on the Sunday evening and presented at the AGM on the Monday.

Stephen Stokes takes over from Amanda Berry as the General Secretary. Denise Mead is our new Liaison Officer building on the foundations put in place by Dee Caulton Ball. We do not lose Dee altogether as she is representing the Canterbury Province together with Neil Pickford representing the York Province on Central Council for this next year.

Marek Barden takes over as Communications Officer as well as Editor of "The Virger" magazine.

John Shearer: Training Officer, Roger Lawrence: Training Registrar, Margaret Burston: Conference Secretary, and James Armstrong: Guild Chronicler were re-elected. Michael Golby and Matthew Kemsley were also re-elected as Welfare Officer and Assistant.

After the Conference I am sad to report that Michael stood down as Welfare Officer owing to family/personal reasons which were not fully apparent at the time of the Central Council meeting and his re-election. Thank you Michael for all your endeavours to look after our member's welfare. We wish you well in the next phase of your life. Matthew will take over as Welfare Officer.

Our thanks go to all those who have stood down from office. Amanda Berry, Roger Lawrence who filled the gap as acting General Secretary, Dee Caulton-Ball. Doreen Cook, who for many years was the Area Leader representing the York Province on Central Council and John Shearer representing the Canterbury Province.

Communication has become a bit of a major issue within the Guild so be warned the new General Secretary is on a mission to replace our membership data base with one which is not full of mistakes. In the coming months you will be asked to complete a simple form giving your details. We are starting the list from scratch so your help is required and will be appreciated.

Well enough of my ramblings why not pour yourself a nice cuppa, put your feet up and enjoy the next few pages of reports and photos.

James Armstrong



PRAYER REQUESTS



**If you know of someone for whom prayers would be of benefit
or someone who has been prayed for and has recovered/shown improvement,
please inform the National Chaplain or the National Welfare Officer**

*Chichester, Guildford & Portsmouth: **Graham Brindley***

*Gloucester, Hereford & Worcester: **Joy Birkin & Jim Wooldridge***

*Lincoln & Southwell: **Reverend Robert Whitehead***

*Oxford: **Anita (Annie) Bayliss, David Dutson, Jean Hedley & Margaret Morris***

*Rochester: **Victor Warren***

*Saint Albans: **Peter Hudson***

*Salisbury: **Barbara Carr & Babs Taylor***

*Somerset & Avon: **'Dick' Chenoweth, Lionel Holway, Peter Martin***

*York: **John Roycroft***

And everyone not specifically mentioned who need love, counsel and the grace of Our Lord

***Margaret Scott** of the Blackburn, Chester & Manchester Branch
and **Michael Greaves** of the Devon & Cornwall Branch
would like to thank everyone for their prayers*



NATIONAL CHAPLAIN'S LETTER



Dear Friends,

Greetings from a grey and chilly Hereford. I do hope that if you attended the Conference you enjoyed our new place and learned much from the three excellent speakers to assist you in the Training Course!!

Last Monday we celebrated the Feast of Bernard of Clairvaux. I have a slightly vested interest because I am just about to take the Friends of Hereford Cathedral to France on Pilgrimage 'In the steps of Bernard.'

Bernard was a 'giant' in the Church of his day and although he didn't found the Cistercian Order, it was largely due to his enthusiasm that it flourished in the eleventh century. Bernard was determined that his monks should return to the simple Rule of Benedict: simple liturgy, much silence, some study and hard manual work. Such movements, going back to the basics of the Gospel, have been tried many times during the life of the Church. It almost seems as if one generation cannot cope with what they see as the excesses of the past generation.

Bernard was a man of God; a deeply sensitive man who came close to God through contemplative prayer. Although the aim of Cistercian Order was to set men apart from the world so that their souls might be purified and led step by step towards union with God by a recovery of their lost likeness to him, what Bernard has to say about the active and contemplative life is relevant to all Christian people. Action and contemplation together are expressions of the life of the Church. They both flow from our life in Christ, completing and fulfilling one another.

While it is clear that Bernard sees the monastic life as the 'ideal' for a Christian, nevertheless he recognizes that it is a mirror for all Christian life and so it is not surprising that within the monastery there should be various ways to God. The monastery is a microcosm within the whole Church and therefore reproduces something of the Church itself. Hence, within the monastery we find the active life, the contemplative life and the mixed life being led side by side.

Bernard was a scholar and biblical exegete, though not an intellectual in the sense of striving after knowledge for the sake of knowledge. He believed that too wide a knowledge was corrupting on the mind and formed a temptation to the monastic simple life. His integrity and his search for truth led him to examine the scriptures in a way that was reminiscent of Jerome. This brought him into painful and prolonged arguments with some of the scholars of his day; most notably with Peter the Venerable, Abbot of Cluny and Peter Abelard.

Bernard lived at a time of great turmoil within the Church and one of the most difficult things to understand about him is how this monk and mystic could play such an important role in the politics of his time – how he, who believed in the stability of the monk within his own enclosure, could be so influential on Kings, Popes and Bishops, travelling to meet them and talk with them. His advice was sought on all manner of matters – he was the friend of many and the enemy of not a few!

Bernard's influence during his lifetime was immense – probably no other person during the early twelfth century was so active in political and religious life. Yet, Bernard remained a monk within a strictly enclosed Order, and longed for the peace and silence of the monastery at Clairvaux. Constantly drawn out of his enclosure, Bernard acted as peacemaker, reformer, judge and mediator. Yet, his inner life was far more important and real to him than the world around him. He was a wonderful preacher who could melt the heart and inspire the spirit of those who heard him. His whole message, as relevant now as then, was one of love, simplicity in love for God; simplicity in one's life so that God was Lord and King.

When we look back at the history of the Church, men and women of charisma have always arisen to move the Church back to fundamentals. In our own day we have seen some signs of movements towards simplicity – even if we don't much like what we see.

The disturbers of the status quo are important though in helping us to rethink the liturgy, the operation and relevance of the Church in our own day and age. I am fearful that so many people, and especially young people live in a virtual world where nothing is real or relevant: I think our task is as great as it was for Bernard in returning to simplicity, silence, study and hard work!

I wish you all a good summer and a joyous return to your duties in the Autumn. I do hope to see many of you in the coming months.

With all good wishes and my love,
Canon Maureen

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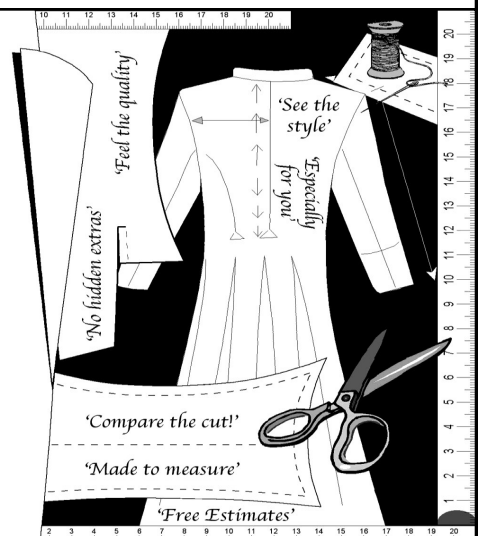
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INTRODUCING THE NEW GENERAL SECRETARY



Dear All

Please may I introduce myself to you. I have been a Verger for over ten years, first serving at Saint Marylebone Parish Church in London and then at Romsey Abbey. I am currently the Verger and Chapel Clerk at Saint John's College Chapel, Cambridge.

The role of the Verger is very dear to my heart and I would like to develop and evolve the work of guild so that it may be ready for the challenges in the years to come. To this end I would like to ask for your help, is there anything that we as a guild can do that we are not doing, or not doing to the best of our abilities?

Please let me know your thoughts on this or any other points you would like to raise, it is only with your comments and suggestions that the guild will grow and prosper.

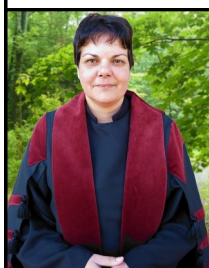
Also it is my desire to visit each local branch, to this end please feel free to invite me to your meetings, (it does not have to be just the outings it can be for the general meetings as well) if you feel that you could invite me please send me a few dates so that I can see what works with my diary.

My contact details can be found on the back page of the magazine. Please feel free to contact me at any time and I will endeavour to return phone calls within 24 hours.

I hope to see as many of you as possible at the Canterbury Province Festival on the 25th of this month.

Yours in Christ,

Stephen Stokes
General Secretary



INTRODUCING THE NEW LIAISON OFFICER



It is with much fear and trepidation that I now take on the role of Liaison Officer for the Guild of Vergers following in the very capable steps of Dee Caulton-Ball, so I would like to use this article to introduce myself to you as I shall probably be asking for your help to identify places which have a Verger but who are not members of the Guild and equally areas where people perform the role but have not been introduced to or thought about joining the Guild. I will be contacting all Area Leaders in the first instance to assist me with this.

Currently, I am Verger of Croydon Minster, formerly Croydon Parish Church which is a very large Minster/Parish Church in Croydon, Surrey. We are open daily between 9.30a.m. & 4p.m. We were made a Minster in May 2011 which was a great honour for us. I am not only the Verger, I am also the Parish Administrator, the Vicar's Secretary, the Sacristan & all round GDB but I am fortunate in that I really love my job.

I am also Secretary of the London, Southwark & Chelmsford Branch of the Guild of Vergers and Secretary of the Southwark Chapter of the Company of Servers. I am happily married to Melvyn who is very supportive of all I do. I have a grown up daughter, a step-son and step-daughter both of whom are married and have both made me a grandmother, so my life is fairly fulfilled.

I have been in the Guild for about sixteen years, active for about the last ten years – took me a while to realise that you get out of this what you are prepared to put in and thanks to some very good friends in the L, S & C Branch I now throw myself into it wholeheartedly. I do try to get to both festivals each year and to as much or as little of the conference as my job will allow. I have attended General Synod with Dee, both in London and York, and I think that I understand the set up and the need for us to be represented at both these occasions. This year in York we were able to assist with setting up and clearing away for the Eucharist services which, we hope, made the Chaplain to Synod's life a little easier.

I am really keen to promote the Guild. I have a good working relationship with my local Diocesan Office and my local Cathedral and understand the hierarchy and set up of both of these well. I am used to big occasions, confirmations, ordinations, welcoming & retiring as well as huge media-fuelled funerals and I have verged at Saint Paul's Cathedral, although I have not been asked since Father Tom left!

Through my own job I have worked with many organisations such as English Heritage etc...and am aware of the work and need for other lay organisations within the Church of England. I also have knowledge of the various grant making bodies and faculty applications.

I hope you feel I have enough experience to take on the role of Liaison Officer and I will certainly endeavour to give this the gravitas it deserves. Please feel free to contact me at any time if you feel I can be of help promoting the Guild to neighbouring parishes etc... or with anything else.

Denise Mead
Liaison Officer



CENTRAL COUNCIL & THE AGM 2012



ON GREAT LONE HILLS

BUSINESS MEETINGS HELD DURING THE TRAINING CONFERENCE AT WEST MALVERN, AUGUST 2012

Standing on a patio/balcony at the Elim International Centre, in the lee of the majestic Malvern Hills looking towards a panoramic view of Herefordshire, the words (slightly amended) usually set to the 'hymn' in Sibelius's 'Finlandia' sprang to mind: 'On great lone hills, where Vergers brood and gather, primeval earth against primeval sky'. I am not that sure about the 'brooding' but over fifty Vergers did 'gather' at the well-appointed Elim Conference Centre in West Malvern from 5th – 9th August to enjoy a few days of fellowship, to worship together, to be enlightened on matters of Christian history, and to attend meetings, not the least the Guild's Annual General Meeting.

The first of those meetings was that of the Central Council, the lengthy Agenda for which included the election and appointment of a number of National Officers and Officials in the stead of those whose terms of office had expired or who had stood down. The Chairman, James Armstrong, at the start of the meeting welcomed newly elected Area Leaders (the Council's decision-makers) to their first meeting: Marek Barden (Somerset and Avon); Malcolm Bates (Canterbury); Tina Cullen (Salisbury), and Neil Pickford (York). Sue Ansell (Chichester, Guildford, and Portsmouth) was deputizing at the meeting for Martin Taylor, who had decided to retire and move to Salisbury. Within a very few minutes those newly-acquired responsibilities were being put into practice during the election process.

The first post to be considered was that of the General Secretary, a post that was made vacant after the unexpected resignation in early 2012 of Amanda Berry. There was one candidate only for the post, (as was the case with all of the other vacancies), which was Stephen Stokes (Ipswich, & London, Southwark, and Chelmsford). Stephen was the first to be invited to make a statement to Central Council as to his suitability for the post and to answer questions, a process that was repeated, where appropriate, for the other vacancies.

The other post that Amanda had held was that of Communications Officer, a role that Council had decided should now be held discretely to avoid overloading one individual. Marek Barden had been Amanda's deputy in this role, which included the preparation and publication of 'The Virger', and it was he who was the nominee.

Dee Caulton-Ball had stood down after six years as Liaison Officer, one of whose main functions was to raise the profile of Vergers in general, and the Guild in particular, before the members of General Synod. The nominee for this post was a person who had helped Dee in the past, Denise Mead (London, Southwark, and Chelmsford). All of the nominees were elected. They were:

Stephen Stokes – General Secretary
Denise Mead – Liaison Officer
John Shearer – Training Officer
Roger Lawrence – Training Registrar

Marek Barden – Communications Officer
Michael Golby – Welfare Officer
James Armstrong – Guild Chronicler
Andrew Baker – Shop Manager (appointed post)

The other election that took place at the meeting was that of two Area Leaders to represent their colleagues on the Standing Committee, one per Province. The two chosen and elected by their peers were: Dee Caulton-Ball for the Canterbury Province, and Neil Pickford for the York Province.

The Guild's sovereign body, the Annual General Meeting, met on the Monday morning, to discuss in the main, the contents of the Annual Report and Accounts 2011 (known formerly as 'The Blue Book'). The 32 page book contained reports on activities in 2011 from all the National Officers, and Area Leaders, not least, the independently examined accounts for the year ending 31st December 2011. Although the accounts showed a small overall deficit, the National Treasurer, Andrew Page, was reasonably content with the outcome, close to a 'break even' point. Even so there were still areas of concern: Conference was still a loss-making event, and the price of 'The Virger' magazine did not cover the cost of publication during 2011 but signs were that the increase agreed from January 2012 was helping to reduce the call on the Guild's central finances.

The meeting ratified Central Council's choice of newly elected national officials, and then heard about other matters exercising the corporate minds of Council. In order to keep numbers in proportion (and thereby costs to the central finances), it had been decided that there should be a ceiling on the number of Fellows and Life Members at any one time: a maximum of 12 Fellows, and no more than 25 Life Members. The very future of the organization had been the clear concern of Council throughout the year, a situation that was sadly highlighted in a couple of the reports from Area Leaders, where even keen and active Branch officials were becoming disheartened and disillusioned with the malaise and general apathy that was the cause of members not attending Branch meetings or even social events. This was not confined to just the smaller Branches but is being widely experienced. Clearly, sooner rather than later, there had to be a serious examination of the Guild's existing organizational and administrative structure, before it became unfit for purpose. Central Council and the Standing Committee did not have a monopoly of wisdom, understanding, and vision, so members and their Branches were urged to consider seriously how to bring the Guild into the 21st century and to support Central Council in this endeavour by suggesting ideas of how to get there.

Roger Lawrence
Training Registrar & Acting General Secretary



TRAINING CONFERENCE 2012



CONFERENCE 2012 AT WEST MALVERN

One day, the phone went at home, it was Carl Burrows who said, I think I might have found us a new venue for the Annual Conference, did I want to come and see? I made arrangements to meet Margaret Burston and drove to West Malvern.

We met in the car park of this lovely building, which was bathed in glorious sunlight, showing the buildings off in all their magnificent splendour. An outdoor pool, fabulous views – looking good so far, I thought. We met with the Conference Manager, who showed us around the whole site. No bar, no chapel – oh dear, not looking quite so good now, but the bedrooms, meeting rooms and general facilities for the same price as London Colney, made this a tough decision. Now, how to get around the negative bits. There is a lovely church next to the car park, I am sure we could use that for services and as for a bar, there is a pub about five minutes along the road with real ales, which Nigel Kennedy used to frequent. So, after a few phone calls around the Guild, we booked it, as there simply was nowhere else that had really been a contender.



Now, how to get around the negative bits. There is a lovely church next to the car park, I am sure we could use that for services and as for a bar, there is a pub about five minutes along the road with real ales, which Nigel Kennedy used to frequent. So, after a few phone calls around the Guild, we booked it, as there simply was nowhere else that had really been a contender.

With local speakers lined up for 'The History of....' The 5th August drew near. As I made my way to the West Country from London I could hear the howls of protest in my ears as I drove along the M40. I nearly turned back and headed home. Could I bear all the hassle. When I arrived, there were quite a few folk already unpacked and wandering about. I was helped with my luggage to my room and was totally bowled over with the stunning views. Dinner was the first part of the evening and the food was excellent, so far so good. As the conference progressed, a few niggles emerged, but this is only to be expected with a new venue. It was really just a case of 'suck it and see'. The church was uphill, but being on the side of the Malvern Hills, so was everything. It really was idyllic. Gradually, the weather improved and the sun helped to lift everyone's spirits. At coffee breaks, just standing on the terrace looking at the views reminded us of the glory of God's Kingdom here on Earth.

Our speakers assisted with the conference. The Bishop of Gloucester, talked to us about the history of the Liturgy, reminding us why we have it in our worship today. The Dean of Hereford reminded us about the history of Hymnody, by making us sing for nearly two hours. It was really quite uplifting to hear everyone belting out such lusty tunes. Canon Paul Bradshaw gave us a day on the history of the Book of Common Prayer. This could have been long, dry and dull, but he made it quite uplifting and very interesting.

I am grateful to all those who helped behind the scenes in service preparation, singing and general organisation, to make the conference such a success. We have booked the venue for next year and hopefully, with good weather, we can explore more of the grounds for meditation and feel a little bit more at home. Dates for your diaries – Sunday 28th July until Thursday 1st August for next year, so spread the word and see if we can get a few more Vergers to join us for conference.

John Shearer
Training Officer



THE GUILD DIPLOMA COURSE



The Central Council of the Guild, at the recommendation of General Synod, formulated a course to cover the work and ministry of the Verger.

The course is formulated in four units set in two stages:

The first stage is the **Foundation** Unit, which comprises sixteen assignments, covering preparation for worship, care of the building, record-keeping, and archives, care of the churchyard, and caring for the people of God.

The second stage comprises the other three units:

The Verger as **Pastor** covers the individual's personal development, their relationship with the people and God, care for others, and for Church resources.

The Verger as **Historian** covers the history of church building, architecture, and the history of worship, including the Book of Common Prayer, and the Bible.

The Verger as **Administrator** covers communication, forms and registers, and the structures of the Church.

Students who complete the course successfully receive a diploma, an academic hood, and the right to use the post-nominal letters '**Dip.GV**'.

If you are interested in learning more about the Course, please contact the **Training Registrar: Roger Lawrence** or the **Training Officer: John Shearer**.



TRAINING CONFERENCE HIGHLIGHTS



THE KEYNOTE SESSION: THE HISTORY OF THE EUCHARIST

The keynote session of the Conference, on the history of the Eucharist, was led by the Bishop of Gloucester, the Right Reverend Michael Perham. Faced by the daunting task of covering 2000 years in two hours he treated us to an enthralling and entertaining account which began with the first developments of Jewish worship among the early Christians and then largely concentrated on developments in the Church in England.

He showed how even when the words used were the same everywhere (as for some 300 years of the Book of Common Prayer) differences in ritual, dress and physical layout enabled utterly different interpretations of the meaning of the rite to be conveyed and understood. The current words of institution are a typically Anglican fusion of the still Catholic 1549 Prayer Book and the very Protestant 1552 Prayer Book. Together each is subtly altered and they allow Anglicans a wide variety of understandings of the nature of the Sacrament.



We went from the session into the opening Eucharist where the familiar words suddenly carried richer, deeper and more complex resonances.

Dee Caulton-Ball
Caterbury Province Rep

TUESDAY'S SESSION: THE HISTORY OF HYMNS

On Tuesday of the Conference, the Very Reverend Michael Tavinor, Dean of Hereford (and a Director of the English Hymnal Company) led his session on the history of hymns from his keyboard. We sampled representative English-language hymns over the centuries from the timeless plainsong of *Before the ending of the day* to *Be still*, an enduring worship song which can be called a hymn.

If our doctrine is shaped as much by our hymns as our official liturgies, then we have a theologically rich and diverse inheritance of hymns, Catholic in every sense of the word; though some survive because the words can take second place to the emotion they create. Technological advances mean the age of the hymn book is probably drawing to an end, but he has no fears for the future of hymnody.



Robert Beattie
Worcester Cathedral ~ Gloucester, Hereford & Worcester Branch

WEDNESDAYS SESSION: THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE DAILY OFFICE & THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE BCP

Canon Paul Bradshaw gave two highly informative & interesting talks on the Development of the Daily Office and the BCP. We began by looking at two fourth century accounts of worship, one in Jerusalem and the other in Egypt and noted the differences between them, broadly a more ordered ceremonial form with intercessions and a more meditative form. He then led us through the centuries to the Reformation.

After lunch he considered the Book of Common Prayer beginning with developments in Sacramental theology which had led to the desire for reformation, especially the tendency of the laity not to receive the sacrament and then the history of the Reformation in England, particularly liturgical change which began under Edward VI (1547-1553) and the two Prayer Books of 1549 and 1552, then after a return to the Latin Mass under Mary I (1553-1558), Elizabeth's Prayer Book of 1559 used until the Civil War and Interregnum (1642-1660) and finally the 1662 book with which we are still familiar. He ended with a brief account of developments since then, e.g. in Scotland and America, and the failed attempt at revision through Parliament in 1927/8.



Carys Underdown
Saint Mary Redcliffe ~ Somerset & Avon Branch

Congratulations to.....

Dr Andrew Page MA, DPhil & now FCEGV

The Central Council of the Guild took great pleasure during Conference in conferring the honour of Fellowship of the Guild on our National Treasurer, Dr Andrew Page, for his services to the Guild over many years.





TRAINING CONFERENCE HIGHLIGHTS



CONFERENCE SERVICES



Most of our services were held in the lovely Parish Church of Saint James, West Malvern.

Morning Prayer was held each day followed by the Eucharist on Tuesday and the Guild Requiem Wednesday. Our Opening Eucharist on Monday had the usual smells but without the bells.

Evening Prayer was held on the Tuesday and Choral Evensong on the Wednesday, which included the Guild Choir. I was honoured to be part of the choir, especially when we sang 'Jesu Joy of Man's Desiring', which left me with goose bumps! Each day ended with Compline held in the Conference Centre.



Mid-Day Prayers on Tuesday and Wednesday were led by Irene Money from the London, Southwark & Chelmsford Branch and myself.

We finished on Thursday with the Solemn Eucharist and once again it was a very moving service.

I got a lot from all the services and hope that other members did too but it was strange having some services in the Conference Centre.



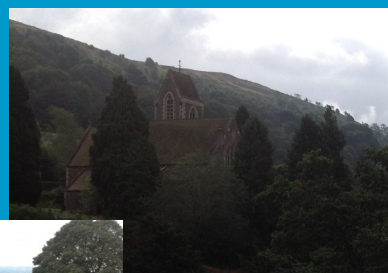
Sue Ansell, Dip GV
Chichester, Guildford & Portsmouth Branch

CONFERENCE ~ A NEWCOMERS VIEW

This was my first experience of Conference, having only begun to work as a Verger in March. I wasn't entirely sure what to expect, although my boss had made sure I knew to take my robes. I enjoyed the few days. The talks were full of good material and well delivered, although I would have enjoyed the one on hymns more if I'd had some voice to sing the examples. The swimming pool was a definite plus but I was less keen on the steep hill back up to my room. The session on walking in procession was fun too, especially the use of umbrellas as verges.

Carys Underdown
Saint Mary Redcliffe ~ Somerset & Avon Branch

CONFERENCE PICTURE ALBUM





CANTERBURY & EAST KENT BRANCH NEWS



VISIT TO QUEX PARK

On Thursday 14th June, a group of Vergers from the Canterbury & East Kent Branch visited Quex Park at Birchington in Kent.

We spent a very interesting day looking at the collection of African animals in the museum and wandering around various parts of the gardens. We saw some real live horses and enjoyed a good day out though the weather was dull.

VISIT TO BATEMANS



The beautiful early seventeenth century house at Burwash in Sussex, the home of Rudyard Kipling and his family, was the venue for 18 members of the Canterbury and East Kent Branch and some friends from the Rochester & East Chichester Branch to get together on Tuesday 17th July. We started with meeting in the cafe for coffee and a natter. As people arrived our Chairman, Julian Thorn, hopped up and greeted guests. After coffee we moved off, some to wander around the gardens and others to explore the house. Batemans is a beautiful place. By the time Kipling bought it he was a very famous man and because of this he and his family had to endure the loss of privacy which goes with being famous. Because of the lovely tall walls around the gardens at Batemans he and the family were once again able to

enjoy the house and gardens in peace, and he was able to sit down to write some of the now famous books.

My guide made me laugh when she told me he was a very untidy man. He would sit at his typewriter, his jacket slung over the back of a chair and paper all over the floor.

There was one time when he had been sent a manuscript to read and he lost it. They searched all over the room with no luck. Then about four weeks later he got up to get a book out of the library shelf and the lost manuscript fell out of the back of the book. He blamed his hardworking and very tolerant secretary for the loss.

I loved the gardens and took a delicious piece of date & walnut cake and a glass of orange juice and sat down at a lovely octagonal table to enjoy them. Almost immediately a blackbird, somewhat the worse for wear as she was moulting, hopped down and eyed me up before flying away and I was left to enjoy my refreshments in peace.

The vegetable garden at Batemans has some lovely herbs in it and as I wandered I saw several that I had heard of but never seen before. But my goodness, when I got to the cabbage patch, it was really quite obvious that the hated Cabbage White butterflies had been busy laying eggs and the caterpillars had enjoyed a good feast.

This lovely day out was organised by our Secretary and his wife. We would like give our collective thanks to Jim and Pat, and to Julian, who's idea it was to go to Batemans.

Thankfully we were spared the rain that has caused so many problems for farmers and growers. It was a sunny and warm day that made a nice change, though it had been cold to begin with. All in all it had been a very enjoyable day out for everyone.

Cherry Johnstone
Branch Correspondent



Congratulations to.....

Chris Crooks Dip GV (Hons) & now FCEGV

The Central Council of the Guild takes great pleasure in conferring the honour of Fellowship of the Guild on Chris Crooks, former National Chairman, for his services to the Guild over many years.

The formal presentation of the Fellows Gown and Hood will take place during the Festival in Canterbury.



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CHICHESTER, GUILDFORD & PORTSMOUTH BRANCH NEWS



Our AGM seems to come round sooner each year! Once again the Verger at Saint Bartholomew's Church, Haslemere, Carol Skeates, was kind enough to host our meeting and provided refreshments. At the moment we are without a Secretary, but Keith Masters, formerly of Chichester Cathedral kindly offered to send out the magazine, and the other tasks normally allotted to the Secretary have been shared out among other committee members, so at least for this year we are able to carry on. We are desperately in need of committee members, so perhaps our members could think seriously about stepping forward to keep the Branch afloat for next year. We had no offers for the post of correspondent either so it is basically up to the Chairman, Bill Groves, to keep our band of merry men and women together.

In March we held our Spring Lunch at a really lovely restaurant on the Hogs Back, just outside Guildford. It was a full house as usual, and this time we were very pleased to welcome our National Chaplain, Canon Maureen, to join us. She had travelled all the way down from Hereford to be with us, and presented Cyril Ward and Ted Sherwell with certificates to mark their long commitment to the Guild. The occasion tied in nicely with Cyril's 90th birthday, so a birthday cake and some bubbly were the order of the day, to help us celebrate his longevity. He was close to tears at one stage, and was totally taken aback to be the centre of so much attention. A huge vote of thanks goes to Canon Maureen for being with us on such a special day.

At the beginning of May we journeyed to Chichester Cathedral where Keith and Julie Masters had arranged a most interesting talk and tour of the hidden gems of this splendid ancient building. Evensong followed and we enjoyed a cup of tea and cake in the Cathedral's tearoom, before going our separate ways.

Then in June we were treated to lunch at the home of our Chaplain, Canon Chris Vallins. Many of us descended on him in Hook, East Surrey, especially as he was providing lovely fish and chip lunches along with desserts, wine, cheese and chocolates. We were thoroughly spoiled that day, everyone enjoyed the pleasant ambiance & convivial conversation. A huge thank you to Canon Chris for his hospitality.

Charles Richardson, our Treasurer, has had a Verge commissioned in loving memory of his wife Valerie, who for many years was the Verger at Saint Nicholas, Arundel. He has now taken over Valerie's role, but managed to have an argument with a car while crossing the road which resulted in a broken leg! Having made a good recovery he travelled to Australia to see close family members and then returned to go sports car racing at Goodwood, not bad for an Octogenarian! As I write this the Olympics are in full swing, I just wish I could say the same about our summer!

Elaine King
Vice Chairman

JULY MEETING

On Monday 23rd July we attended a Choral Evensong at Saint Nicolas, Cranleigh during which we admitted Ricky Richardson from Saint Nicholas, Arundel and Colin Tilbury from Saint Nicolas, Cranleigh as Full Members of the Guild. Around nine of us robed for the Service which was taken by Canon Nigel Nicholson and there were around twenty of us who attended. We were given a splendid spread of refreshments in the Church hall after the service. Sue Ansell organised this for which we are most grateful.

Martin and Cynthia Taylor

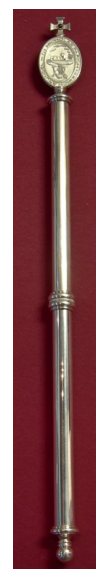


CREATION OF A VERGE

Having decided to donate to the Church something tangible as a memorial to Val, I picked on a Verge as being most suitable, but where to find one? They do not appear very often on supermarket shelves, and a trawl of websites offering church supplies drew a blank, so it became a matter of getting one made to order. That would need expert advice, so I dropped in to see Howard (Head Verger at Chichester Cathedral) and he suggested I should approach Timothy Roe, a jeweller from 12 South Street, Chichester. which I did. Mr Roe agreed at once to accept the challenge. Although he had not made one before, he was familiar with the Verges in use in the Cathedral, and sent me off to think about what might be depicted in the design.

At our next meeting we settled for a view of the church, Val's initials, a sailing ship (Saint Nicholas being Patron Saint of Sailors) a swallow from the Arundel Borough Coat of Arms, and the dates that she held the office of Verger. Drawings were made, and the layout of the design settled, at which stage I agreed that a Celtic Cross most suited the shape, then Tim suggested a Gemstone be mounted in it, that had to be a Garnet as Val was born in January. The highly skilled workshop staff then converted drawings into solid models, from which moulds for casting the silver could be made, and because they normally make smaller items of jewellery they sent the larger part away to be cast, but when it was returned Tim was not satisfied with the quality of the work and his staff set about modifying their equipment so that the casting could be done "in house", with superb results as you can see.

Charles Richardson
Treasurer of the Chichester, Guildford & Portsmouth Branch





IPSWICH BRANCH NEWS



AN EAST ANGLIAN REPORT WITH A SOMERSET TWIST!!

Sounds like a lovely cool drink on a hot summer day and that is exactly what we had for our Annual AGM and BBQ on Friday 20th July.

Members of the branch travelled to 'Aldeburgh' to the home of Dick & Val Jeffrey, 18 members plus 1 in bed poorly (Val) attended, no we were not gathered around her bed for the meeting, us downstairs – Val upstairs!!

As I said previously it was a beautiful sunny afternoon and evening but as with most AGM's the matter of business plus reports given by various officers were taken into hand by the Chair. Officers were duly elected for the coming year with no changes.

Chair: Ian Cobb - Secretary: Pamela Cobb - Treasurer: Richard Jeffrey - Area Leader: Matthew Kemsley

Our next meeting is to be held in the Cathedral at Bury-Saint-Edmonds on Monday 15th October.

Towards the end of the meeting, Ian Cobb was presented with his engraved glassware by the Area Leader, Matthew Kemsley.

This was supposed to be presented to Ian at the festival held at Newcastle as part of his being awarded a 'Life Membership' but unfortunately said glassware was not available, however, we did capture his appreciation on print.

We heard news from our neighbouring branch in Norwich that had been experiencing problems in the past, they now have officers in place and are very much looking to the future. We send them our thoughts and prayers at this time of change.



Our Secretary mentioned the passing of Rosemary 'Joan' Moore, Verger of Saint Peter's Church, Brandon. Rosemary was 89 years old when she died on 5th March 2012.



On Sunday 15th July Ian and Pam celebrated their 40th (Ruby Wedding) Anniversary. Actually family & friends helped them celebrate on the Saturday, so they were presented with a beautiful arrangement of flowers from the branch at the AGM.

On a personal note I would like to take this opportunity to send best wishes to my former friends and colleagues at the Somerset and Avon Branch (hence the Somerset twist).

I wish them all the best and that I still think of them – but need to ask: "Where has your Branch report got to? I do not seem to have read one in the last couple of issues of The Virger Magazine? Let us know what you are up to." Xx

The meeting finished with a prayer from Roy Tricker and then the serious fun could begin with the planned BBQ, plenty of good food and relaxing conversation continued.

Until next time,
God Bless

Jean Cobb
Branch Correspondent

Badges!

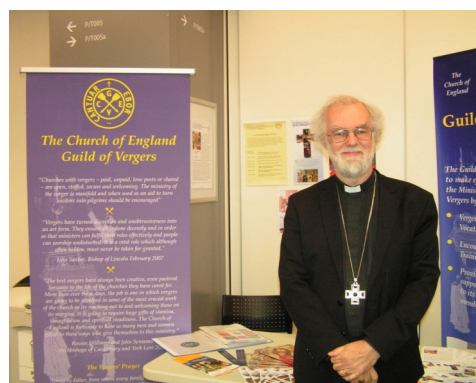
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LEICESTER & PETERBOROUGH BRANCH NEWS



SUMMER MEETINGS

On Tuesday 12th June 14 members of the Branch attended a service of Holy Communion with hymns at All Saints Church, Asfordby, Melton Mowbray, presided over by the Reverend Sue Patterson, Priest in Charge. Sadly this will be our last visit as the Verger, Mavis, has retired due to health problems. Following the service we enjoyed a drink and a good chinwag. A vote of thanks was given by our Area Leader, Lance Bloom.

On Monday 19th July 14 members set out into the lovely countryside to a Church in the Peterborough Area, Saint Paul's in New England. It is quite a large building adorned with many Anglo-Catholic symbols of devotion including a Madonna and Child. We had a service of Holy Communion with hymns presided over by the Reverend Ron Watkins, Priest in Charge. After the service we enjoyed light refreshments followed by a photo call. A vote of thanks was given by Lance Bloom and our Secretary, Kate Mobbs.

On Monday 13th August 19 members met our own Cathedral Church of Saint Martin, Leicester, where we attended a service of Compline led by the Cathedral Chaplain, the Reverend Julie Ann Heath. We processed from the Cathedral Song School to the Chancel, led by the Head Verger, Peter Collett. At the end of the service we admitted 2 new members, Beverly from Leicester Cathedral and Matthew from Derby Cathedral.

After the service we enjoyed some light refreshments followed by a tour of Saint Martin's House, the former Leicester Grammar School, next to the Cathedral. This has been converted into a resources centre which includes a bookshop and small conference rooms with self service refreshment facilities. In the rooms and corridors are photographs of the Cathedral, inside and out, as well as past and present Bishops.

There are also photographs from the visit, in March of this year, of Her Majesty the Queen, the Duke of Edinburgh and the Duchess of Cambridge. Her Majesty dedicated a plaque to mark the occasion. Our Chairman, Jack Lippett, thanked the Cathedral Vergers, Peter, John and Beverly, for being our hosts and the Reverend Julie Ann Heath for leading the service.

The meetings/services for the rest of the year will be held on: Monday 8th October at Saint Mary's Church, Anstey and Monday 12th November at Saint Bartholomew's Church, Kirby Muxloe. Robes to be worn on both occasions please.

Marjorie Thomas, Dip GV
Branch Correspondent

DEADLINE FOR THE WINTER ISSUE:

Friday 16th November 2012

OH TO BE A VERGER

Oh to be a Verger,
How privileged it can be,
To serve the Lord in His house,
And look after all of thee.

Oh to be a Verger,
To sing so merrily,
The hymns that praise,
Our Lord on high so meaningfully.

Oh to be a Verger,
And praise our wondrous Lord,
How awesome is His splendour,
And to hear His mighty word.

Oh to be a Verger,
To discover far and wide,
The love of other Christians,
As we travel side by side.

by Sue Ansell, Dip GV
Chichester, Guildford & Portsmouth Branch

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YORK BRANCH NEWS

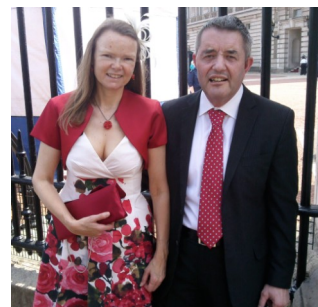


VISIT TO LONDON TO SEE THE QUEEN

My Wife Sally had a call to say would you like to go to the Queen's Garden Party. As she's worked for our local Council for the past 30 years she was invited and accepted the invite.

So on the 21st May after booking a mini break for two nights we set off on our journey to London on the train. On our arrival in the capital city we made our way over to the Royal National Hotel in Russell Square, where we were to stay for the duration. That night we had booked tickets for a West End, show so we made our way to the Palace Theatre. A new version of *Singing in the Rain* was being presented. Our seats were just four rows from the front near the stage where we were to get a soaking from the actors who kicked out the rain off the stage. This was a fantastic show and well worth seeing.

After a good night's sleep the big day arrived, our visit to see the Queen. In the morning we had some spare time so we decided to visit the world famous HARRODS just to get something small for our sons engagement. We searched around the shop to find a cake slice that would be a nice present. After shopping we then made our way back to the hotel and, donning our glad rags, we commenced to smarten ourselves up for the big occasion. My wife Sally had bought a lovely dress by "Debut", white with red flowers and a red cape to go over the shoulders with a white fascinator to go in her hair. I had a white shirt with a grey suit, black shoes and a red spotted tie. We were now ready to make our way to Buckingham Palace on the underground looking over dressed.



Arriving at the Palace we joined the queue and made our way through the gates where stringent checks were made. Around 2,000 people attended the garden party. On entering the magnificent gardens we were to find a tranquillity of peace from the busyness of the London streets outside. These gardens cover 40 acres including a 3 acre lake. In 1820 George IV commissioned William Townsend Aiton, chief gardener at Kew, to remodel the gardens. It was he who created the lake. King George VI and Queen Elizabeth created many of the dense shrubberies and planted a wide selection of decorative flowering trees and shrubs. The shrubberies have been continuously improved and in 1961 the Queen added a curved avenue of Indian chestnuts. There are more than 200 mature trees in the garden. Although very much a spring garden, recent additions have provided more plants for summer colour like *Hoheria*, *Agapanthus* and *Hydrangea*.

In the centre of the Rose Garden stands the imposing Waterloo vase, made from Carrara marble and positioned here in 1903. Originally made for Napoleon, it was given to King Edward VII. A small waterfall was installed in 1991 to circulate the lake water. The garden is a nesting site for many native birds and the Great Crested Grebe has nested on the island in the middle of the lake for a quite few years. The lake also provides a refuge for water birds including Coots, Moorhens, Shelduck, Mallards and Geese. There is a 'Long Grass' Policy in places to provide a range of habitats for wildlife.



At 4 o'clock the Queen arrived on the balcony overlooking the gardens. She was wearing a Peach coloured suit and hat, looking lovely as always with Prince Philip alongside her. As she walked down the steps into the garden we managed to get a glimpse, which was nice. The Queen and Prince Philip now mingled with the crowds before going off to her summer house for tea.

Guests were served tea consisting of cucumber or salmon sandwiches and a variety of cakes, tea and soft drinks, all 'very tasty', from marquees down the side of the lawn. We saw a variety of people who had been invited from Bishops and Clergy to

the Armed Forces, Scouts, Saint John's Ambulance to the ordinary folks like myself and Sally, my wife. I count it a privilege to have been invited and we had a wonderful afternoon. The band played and the sun shone.

At 6 o'clock the National Anthem was played to end a perfect day, a day never to forget. A lovely afternoon was had, when the temperature reached 27°C, one of the hottest days of the year. We were glad to retire back to our hotel for a well earned rest before the long journey home the next day.

Stephen Rutherford Dip GV
York Branch

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YORK BRANCH NEWS CONTINUED



TRIP TO RAWCLIFFE, AIRMYN & HOOK

The 9th July was a rare dry day when over a dozen members of the CEGV York and Leeds Branches met to visit three small churches near the recently-flooded town of Goole and the Rivers Aire and Ouse.

We were touring the Benefice of Airmyn, Hook & Rawcliffe in the Sheffield Diocese and Saint James, Rawcliffe was the first destination. The fourth church to be built on the site since 1078, the present building dates back to 1842 when a very simple non-conformist style of square, galleried hall was constructed.

The chancel was added in 1908 and followed a more traditionally Anglican style of arched decoration which was intended to extend through the nave, but the work was never completed. Following a tour of the church, we then celebrated a traditional Communion with the Reverend Philip Ball, and then a light lunch was provided by Linda Morris, one of our members and Verger at Saint James.



A short business meeting was held during which it was confirmed that our long-serving Area Leader, Doreen Cook, had tendered her resignation and that Neil Pickford, Virger at Beverley Minster, was elected to replace her. He will serve out the remaining months of the three year term of office due to finish in January 2014.



Then it was back in the cars for the short trip to Saint David's Church, Airmyn, where we were welcomed to the well polished interior of a building the nave of which dates from 1676 with brick built extensions from 1858.

There are very few Churches dedicated to Saint David in England. At the entrance to the churchyard, the former stables where the Wells family used to leave their horses during the services, were in the process of being turned into a cafe.

Thence a short trip, passing road works where emergency pipes needed to reduce flooding around Goole were being buried and into the oldest of the three Churches: Saint Mary the Virgin, Hook, which was consecrated in 1225 as Saint John's and restored with its present dedication in 1844.

Also an attractive and well maintained structure, it boasts wall paintings of an indeterminate date and a rare window from the final years of Queen Victoria's reign, depicting the monarch in a wheelchair visiting soldiers injured in the Boer War.

In the vestry we were shown a wooden grave tablet dated 1800 found in the churchyard. Our thanks to the Churchwardens who opened up and gave us an informative tour round each church in this little extrusion of the Sheffield Diocese within East Yorkshire.



Neil Pickford
Area Leader



OVERSEAS NEWS



Overseas interest in the Guild is as strong as ever, however Overseas Membership is at an all time low, this can be attributed to finances & not only the cost of membership but the increase in the cost of posting The Virger Magazine - the cost of each issue to the USA for example is £3.30. Adding about £13 to the cost of the magazine & membership subscription understandably has taken its toll.

I am working with the Communications Officer, Marek Barden, and Scott Smith of the VGEC to produce The Virger electronically in an attempt to regain a tangible membership.

Having said that, we look forward to an Overseas contingent joining the Canterbury Province Festival celebrations this autumn.

Margaret McClarty - President of the Vergers' Guild of the Episcopal Church, is planning making a visit to England in the run up to their 25th Conference in October 2013. I am delighted to have been invited to be the keynote speaker at that conference and am looking forward to meeting up, in Nashville, with Overseas members old and new!

Pax vobiscum

John G Campbell, FBGUC, FCEGV
Overseas Liaison Officer

'I would rather be a door keeper in the house of our Lord,
than to dwell in the tents of the
Ungodly'

Psalm 84

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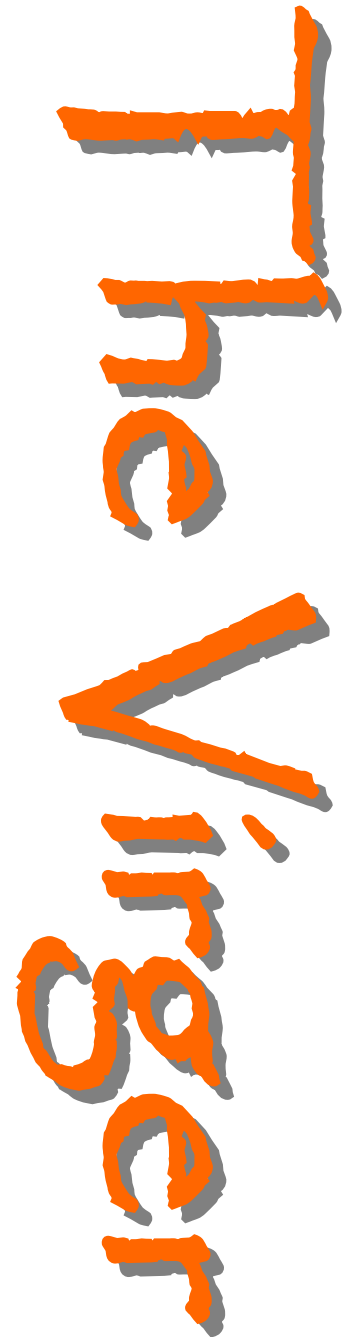
Promoting the spiritual nature of the **Vergers' Vocation** through Christian Fellowship and spiritual guidance for all its Members;

Encouraging the advancement of knowledge by education, through maintaining standards of good practice, and by equipping Members for Ministry as vergers in all its aspects, through the provision of advice, training, resources, and by organizing and promoting training courses and conferences; Providing the means and opportunity for **communication** and discussion of ideas and proposals of common interest to Members;

Providing **support** and encouragement to the Membership in all aspects of their duties whatever they may be and wherever performed;

Advising, upon request, and making recommendations as to terms of employment and welfare of any Member;

Recording the gamut of work undertaken by Vergers; in addition noting each Member's training, experience and qualifications.



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