

# The Virger

Winter 2014  
Issue 285



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*~CEGV~*  
*The Canterbury Province Festival Group Photo*  
*Tuesday the 23<sup>rd</sup> of September 2014*



[www.cofegv.org.uk](http://www.cofegv.org.uk)

The Official Magazine of the Church of England Guild of Vergers







Welcome to the Winter 2014 edition of *The Virger*. If you would like to include Branch news, articles, adverts, photos, book reviews or any other information you feel our readers would find of interest please send to the Communications Officer by the Deadline Date below.

**PLEASE NOTE THAT ANY ARTICLES ETC... SUBMITTED AFTER THE DEADLINE MAY BE HELD OVER UNTIL THE NEXT EDITION TO AVOID DELAYS IN PRODUCTION!**

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of February 2015**

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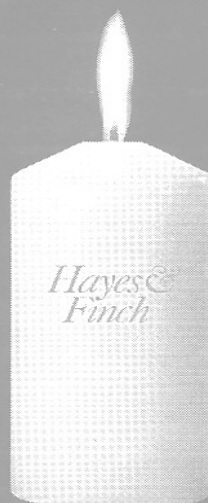


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**FRONT COVER: Canterbury Province Festival Group Photograph, Hereford Cathedral, Tuesday the 23<sup>rd</sup> of September.  
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## NATIONAL CHAIRMAN'S LETTER



Advent arrives.

The Church looks forward to Christmas, as vergers we have had to look forward to Advent, never mind Christmas, with preparations such as digging out and dusting down the structure to support the Advent crown or wreath, ordering candles to last the duration, making sure that they are long enough as to not set fire to the greenery when they burn down and so on. Here in Carlisle we have a large round wooden disk which is bolted on top of one of our flower stands, the candles and greenery are then arranged onto this, as we light the candles at every service they are quite chunky and therefore heavy. It takes two of us to move the wreath which is always in the wrong place (you know the feeling) A few years ago one of my mature vergers must have got a little sick of moving this with me and declared "Have we to move that flaming ring?" It took me a little while to cotton on to the fact that he was not just referring to there just being flames on it. One tradition which began a few years ago by one of our congregation was to deliver our usual box of Christmas biscuits at the start Advent. I was laughing and thinking to myself that they will not last until Christmas with a vestry full of Vergers. She must have read my mind as she then said that she had noticed that we worked so hard during Advent and we need to keep our energy levels up, so this was to help keep us going. It did stop me in my tracks and I was touched that someone had noticed the efforts that we were putting in. Well I can tell you we enjoyed them all the more and yes they were chocolate coated.

Whichever way you tackle the season of Advent try not to get bogged down in the chores that we as vergers have to do, moving flaming rings, scraping wax from the floor, straightening chairs, washing and ironing the altar cloths etc... I know I am a fine one to tell anyone that! But give yourself enough space to enjoy the anticipation of the coming celebration. May I on behalf of the Central Council of the Guild wish you all a Blessed and Holy Christmas and a very happy New Year.

**James Armstrong**



## THE MINIMUM WAGE & TIED ACCOMMODATION



**What does the minimum wage mean to those who are in tied accommodation?** This is a question I have often heard in my conversations with members of the Guild, I am often then informed that they have been told that the rent would normally be £XXXX per month, and can be deducted from the salary. So with this information in hand I set out to look into this and I was surprised to find that it is covered on the Government's website.

**What is the minimum wage?** The National Minimum Act of 1998 came into force on the 1<sup>st</sup> of April 1999 to ensure there was a fair minimum wage across the country, back then the minimum wage was £3.60 (adult (21+)) and £3.00 (Development Rate (now classed as 18 – 20 year olds)), today this has risen so that from 1<sup>st</sup> of October 2014 the minimum wage is £6.50 (Adult), £5.13 (18 – 20), £3.79 (16 & 17), and £2.73 (Apprentice).

**How does this relate to us, as Vergers, who are housed?** The Government has set a figure for accommodation charges that should be taken into account when working out your minimum wage. This amount is £5.08 per day or £35.56 per week. The £35.56 offset is also inclusive of any bills or charges that your Church may also be paying, so they cannot make further deductions from your wage. It is worth noting that if you are paid above the minimum wage then your employer may charge what they wish for accommodation offset providing that it does not take you below the minimum wage.

**So how do we work it out?** Let us take Mr Simpson, who is a Verger and is housed (Council Tax paid by the Church, utility bills not included) he is paid £10,400.00 per annum, and is contracted for 36 hours per week.

**Divide the annual wage by 52 (weeks of the year to get the weekly wage):**  $£10,400.00 \div 52 = £200.00$

**Now add the Accommodation offset of £35.56:**  $£200.00 + £35.56 = £235.56$

**Now divide by the number of contracted hours, in this case 36:**  $£235.56 \div 36 = £6.54$

Therefore Mr Simpson's hourly rate, taking accommodation into account, is £6.54 this is £0.04 above the national minimum wage. Using the table below (based on contracted hours) you can determine your minimum wage.

$[(£6.50 \times \text{hours}) - £35.56] \times 52 = \text{Annual Salary. You will note each contracted hour is equivalent to £338.00 salary}$

**36 = £10,318.88 ~ 37 = £10,656.88 ~ 38 = £10,994.88 ~ 39 = £11,332.88 ~ 40 = £11,670.88 ~ 41 = £12,008.88**

No matter the amount your employer wishes to deduct from you salary for accommodation, your annual salary must not fall below the figures above (based on your contracted hours).

**So what do you do if you are paid below the National Minimum Wage?** The first thing you should do is have a chat with your line manager, or your Vicar to see if this can be resolved amicably, ask for your pay records.

If this still does not resolve anything you can contact the Pay and Rights Helpline for advice on 0800 917 2368 (Monday to Friday 8 a.m. – 8 p.m. & Saturday 9 a.m. – 1 p.m.) And if all else fails your employer can be taken to court by HMRC.

**FOR MORE INFORMATION**

**Pay and Rights Helpline on 0800 917 2368 (Monday to Friday 8 a.m. – 8 p.m. & Saturday 9 a.m. – 1 p.m.)**  
**[www.gov.uk/national-minimum-wage-rates](http://www.gov.uk/national-minimum-wage-rates) & [www.gov.uk/national-minimum-wage-accommodation](http://www.gov.uk/national-minimum-wage-accommodation)**

**Stephen Stokes**  
**General Secretary**





Dear Friends, greetings. I hope you are all well and gearing up for the very busy period in the season of Advent. The Christmas celebrations seem to begin earlier and earlier each year and we have so little time to reflect on the meaning of Advent and the Coming of the Light.

We had a very successful and enjoyable Festival at Hereford – the first time I haven't had to travel! I preached at the Eucharist and so many people asked for a copy of the Sermon I have put it [slightly edited so that I don't have to ask permissions] within my letter.

### THE CANTERBURY PROVINCE VERGER'S FESTIVAL 2014

We have recently been inundated with images and comment upon the First World War, as this year we mark the centenary of its beginning. Indeed, I guess some of us have suffered from World War I fatigue as the endless TV programmes, articles and exhibitions continue. It was the theme at the Three Choirs Festival and at the Southern Cathedrals Festival and we have heard the War poetry, Britten's War Requiem and have seen numerous images of poppies – some of us wonder whether this will continue until 2018? Of course it was momentous and the loss of life was terrible but what does such a commemoration teach us? It may have been 'the war to end all wars' and yet as I reflected I realized that since that time there has been scarcely a place not affected by war, violence and fear. Peace is elusive and so is justice, so while we all pray constantly for peace, for reconciliation; we protest against war; we crave for justice, nothing much seems to happen and the turmoil continues. There has been a cease fire in Gaza and yet very little attempt to heal the real tension between Israeli and Arab; between Jew, Christian and Muslim. The same could be said for the situation in Northern Iraq where Kurdish people continue to flee their homes in the wake of the Islamist State soldiers or in Southern Sudan, where not only is there civil strife but now the additional fear of starvation. So how can we bring peace to a world in turmoil – I guess you, like me, feel impotent. Perhaps one of the biggest problems is that we don't understand the word 'peace' and once that is understood there is a real possibility of justice.

The secular meaning of the word 'peace' is essentially negative – it denotes the absence or the end of hostility. In general the biblical word 'peace' has a more embracing meaning and is positive as indicated by the word 'shalom'. Shalom covers manifold relationships of daily life – the ideal state of life at least for Israel at the time of the prophetic activity. The root of the word 'shalom' is wholeness, totality, well-being and harmony – a life untouched by violence in which every member of society can grow and thrive. Shalom brings happiness, strengthening of bonds and security. In the Scriptures the prophets suggest that peace is the normal condition in which human beings should live. Peace leads to justice and this is the central message of the prophets. The political and social turmoil as described in so much of the Scripture is interpreted as the necessary judgement of God. The Suffering Servant of Second Isaiah shall bring peace to the nations and the final peace is a gift of God, bestowed in the coming age when the kingdom is established: such that at the Eucharist we proclaim 'Christ is our peace'. All this suggests that the Christian Church should be the reconciling force within the world and the words of Jesus 'Blessed are the peacemakers' the norm for us all.

What is at the root of injustice and hostility? It is surely fear. Fear brings hatred and it is dangerous, not only because it causes hostility and injustice to others and between others but it also destroys us. We have seen in the aftermath of the Scottish referendum the opposition and innuendoes between the various factions and it is noteworthy that the Church held on Sunday a Service of Reconciliation during which a single candle was lit to express unity. But the only antidote to fear is love for 'perfect love casts out fear'. Merton, the Trappist contemplative wrote:

'So instead of loving what you think is peace, love other men and love God above all. Instead of hating the people you think are war-makers, hate the appetites and the disorder in your own soul, which are the causes of war. If you love peace, then hate injustice, hate tyranny, hate greed – but hate those things in yourself, not in another.'

And if we think there is no hope, let me relate a story told by a journalist.

He was working as a journalist on the West Bank in Israel just after the wall was erected. On the Palestinian side he met a small boy shepherding his sheep and while the sheep were feeding the boy was making a kite. It was a very superior kite with a wooden frame; on one side the words 'Saleem' and 'Shalom' and on the other a careful drawing of a dove. The journalist went home with the boy in the evening and his uncle told him that Said, the small boy, had seen his brother shot dead by Israeli troops, and since then he had not spoken, nor grown. All he did was shepherd the sheep and make kites. His uncle said that the kites had become very important to the boy and he made them to fly away rather than to keep. A couple of afternoons following this, the journalist was with the lad and a little breeze from the east blew up. Said took his kite and ran with it to the highest point and then let it go. In the distance he saw the children of the Israeli settlement playing football. As the kite came across they stopped and watched. Said waved and one little girl waved back. The boys took the kite and disappeared. The next kite was started that evening – apparently Said had made one each week since his brother died. The next day, the sheep were unsettled and Said was looking out towards the settlement when a remarkable thing happened. Kite after kite came across the valley on the westerly breeze – the crowd of children from the settlement flying them and the settlers poured out of their houses to watch. On both sides of the wall children were laughing and cheering and the little girl who had so bravely waved was dancing and clapping, the adults on both sides of the wall joining in. Said was laughing and cheering with them having at last found his voice. The journalist said it sounded like a symphony of hope.

We need that message of hope so urgently and so I wish you all a good Advent and a very Happy Christmas with all the blessings of the Christ Child.

**Canon Maureen**



## PRAYER REQUESTS



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

*Blackburn, Chester & Manchester: Margaret Scott*

*Chichester, Guildford & Portsmouth: Sue Ansell*

*Gloucester, Hereford & Worcester: Michael Bayliss, Joy Birkin, Louis Hubard & Graham Williams*

*Oxford: Anita (Annie) Bayliss, Ernestine Denham, David Dutson & Jeanne Scott*

*Rochester & East Chichester: Tina Lawrence*

*Saint Albans: Peter Hudson*

*Salisbury: Jean Jackson*

*Somerset & Avon: Lionel & Mary Holway, Roger Lawrence & Joy Stevens*

*York: George & Doreen Cook*

**R.I.P**

**Ann Jennings, Ralph Smith & Jim Wooldridge**

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



## FROM ALAN TAYLOR



### THE GREAT WAR

On the 4<sup>th</sup> of November 1914, a large country estate in Hornchurch, Essex called Grey Towers was taken over by The Sportsman's Battalion for training. The Battalion consisted of the top cricketers, athletes and rugby players, but no footballers, in the country. They marched off on the 26<sup>th</sup> of June 1915 for the Western Front at which 686 of them were killed.

In January 1916, Grey Towers became a convalescent home and hospital for the New Zealand Forces. When they left in 1919, they had treated over 22,000 casualties and at one time there had been 2,500 in the hospital. At the hospital 4 of the patients died from pneumonia. They came from a small island in the Pacific called Nieu which was some 1500 miles from New Zealand. They all died within two weeks of each other. One of them was His Highness Prince Rangitira, who was the son of the ruling chief of the Island of Nieu. The funeral held on the 3<sup>rd</sup> of July 1916 was attended by most of the people of Hornchurch to see the Maoris laid to rest in Saint Andrew's Churchyard. On ANZAC Day 2006, the 90<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Battle of Gallipoli the New Zealand High Commissioner came to Saint Andrew's to lay wreaths on the graves of the islanders.

On the 4<sup>th</sup> of August 2014, the 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the commencement of The Great War, a service was held at the War Memorial outside Saint Andrew's Church. It was attended by about 200 people. During the service our three Clergy and David King, the President of the Royal British Legion, read out in turn the names of the 261 men who are commemorated on the memorial. We then processed to our churchyard to lay wreaths at the graves of the four Niue soldiers. Our Vicar, Barry Hobson, had obtained facsimiles of The Gospel according to Saint John. These small booklets had been given to every soldier going off to the war. Every person present at our service was handed a copy. It is small enough to fit in a tunic pocket. I do have a very few left if anybody would like one. Our church was decorated with artefacts from the Great War as well as original letters and diaries. I also flew our flag at half-mast for the whole of August.

Today, the 14<sup>th</sup> of November, I gave a lecture about the association between Hornchurch and The New Zealand Forces. I had an audience of 70 who queued up afterwards to ask me questions.

### THE NORMANDY VETERANS ASSOCIATION

One of the parishioners at my Church, John Jeffrey, was born on the 27<sup>th</sup> of November 1921. On the 6<sup>th</sup> of June 1944 John was one of the many thousands of men who took part in the D-day Landings. He landed on Juno Beach at Ver-sur-Mer on D-Day and finished fighting through France, Belgium and Holland where he was wounded. I have taken John back to Normandy on two occasions, as a member of the Normandy Veterans Association, to attend commemoration services there.

On Thursday the 16<sup>th</sup> of October 2014 I took John to Saint Margaret's Church, Westminster Abbey, for a service to commemorate the 70<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of D-Day and the Normandy Campaign. It was also a service for the Laying Up of the National Standard of the Normandy Veterans Association. The Standard was placed upon the altar and it will remain in Saint Margaret's for all time.

The service was conducted by the Venerable Canon Andrew Tremlett, Sub-Dean and Rector of Saint Margaret's Church. The first Reading was Ecclesiasticus, chapter 44, verses 1-15. The Duke of Gloucester who is the Patron of the Normandy Veterans Association read from Saint Matthew, chapter 5, verses 1-12. There were three hymns: 'O God our Help in Ages Past', 'I vow to thee my country' and 'Eternal Father, strong to save'. After the Blessing and the National Anthem, the many hundreds of Normandy Veterans who were present made their way to their coaches for their long journey home, some of which had come from Scotland for the service.

**Alan Taylor**

**Branch Correspondent, London, Southwark and Chelmsford Branch**



## CANTERBURY & EAST KENT BRANCH NEWS



Tuesday the 30<sup>th</sup> of September saw nine members of the Canterbury & East Kent Branch gathering outside the West Door of Rochester Cathedral awaiting our guide, Colin Thompson. When he came we found that Colin Tolhurst and Joe Miller had also come. This was a nice surprise for me as I had been in the Cathedral on Tuesday the 14<sup>th</sup> of May 2002 when they had both been admitted to the Guild by the Dean.

Mr Thompson told us about the first building on the site and the fire that destroyed it. We were then guided round the present Nave, there are some lovely bits of hidden graffiti on a pillar and one really has to look very carefully to see it, it is believed to be Christ on the road to Emmaus. Colin had bobbed and dodged about seeing things as we went because a very big restoration and repair is underway in the Crypt with a building site outside as a result, so the Crypt was closed and we went straight into the Choir. We were told about the beautiful paving put in in Victorian times and Mr Thompson pointed out three upside down and one back to front tiles, nothing is perfect. We were taken to several monuments. The monument to Dean Hole, who loved roses and planted them in the Cloisters, has a small bunch of roses resting on his foot to remind us of them. The tomb of Walter de Merton, who was Bishop of Rochester in 1274 and founded Merton College, Oxford, is cared for by the Fellows of the College. Unfortunately it has had its original metal-work and coloured enamel stolen in past times. He had also been Chancellor of England from 1261 to 1263. When Cottingham carried out some restoration in 1825, Bishop John of Sheppy's tomb was discovered behind a wall put there to protect it, and I am not sure, but I think the canopy above was made at this time, after the tomb had been cleaned. Near John of Sheppy was the original site of Saint William's tomb. A baker, he gave every fifth loaf to the poor. Whilst on a pilgrimage to the Holy Land, he was murdered by his servant. His shrine was destroyed at the time of the Reformation.

As we stood in the Choir, our eyes could not help seeing a dust sheet hung between pillars in the Clerestory, we were told that this was because bits of the ceiling had fallen and to protect choirboys and visitors it had been rather quickly put up. When we went outside we saw that whole Choir roof had been covered. Word has it that plans are afoot to rebuild the roof back to its original height and some very necessary repairs would be carried out while this reordering is undertaken. I wonder what the builders will find when this massive task is done, maybe more of William of Hoos work will be revealed. Mr Thompson left us here and several of us walked around the outside of the building. I had a splendid peep into the Crypt in all its gloriously messy restoration and rebuilding chaos. It needs more time than I had to really see the hefty work going on.

Thank you to Julian, our Chairman, and Janet, our Secretary, for a wonderful day, also to our guide and colleagues. Thank you all.

**Cherry Johnstone**  
**Branch Correspondent**



## CHICHESTER, GUILDFORD & PORTSMOUTH BRANCH NEWS



In the late afternoon of Wednesday the 27<sup>th</sup> of August, fourteen of us met at the Church of Saint Nicolas, Cranleigh, for what became our Annual Admission Service, in the form of Choral Evensong, taken by the Rector, Reverend Roy Woodhams, assisted by the Reverend Canon Christopher Vallins, our Branch Chaplain. We had expected to admit two new members, but at the last minute it became just one, Jane Gorrie from Saint Mary the Virgin, Horsham.

We then adjourned to the parish hall for refreshments, provided by our Area Leader, Sue Ansell, helped by some friends. This was followed by an entertaining talk by the comparatively new incumbent, with his hilarious stories of Priests and Organists, he is a very accomplished musician.

On Monday the 15<sup>th</sup> of September, about the same sized group met at The Vine, a National Trust property, which is near Basingstoke. Some arrived via a circuitous route - not from choice, as it is rather off the "beaten track". The Vine was once a Tudor Palace, with serious connections with King Henry VIII, Jane Austen and J R R Tolkien. There are some rare 16<sup>th</sup> century interiors and elaborate 18<sup>th</sup> century architecture, which we found very interesting. As the day was fine, we later enjoyed our tea in the garden.

**Sheila J. Ford**  
**Branch Chairman**

On Thursday the 13<sup>th</sup> of November, we gathered at the Church of Saint John the Baptist, Womersley, Surrey, by kind permission of the Vicar, the Reverend Debbie Sellin. Canon Maureen presided over a service of Evening Prayer for the commemoration of Charles Simeon who was a Vicar at Holy Trinity, Cambridge, for many years until his death in 1836.

During this service Canon Maureen presented to Sheila Ford a certificate celebrating her 30 years as a Verger. The look of surprise on Sheila's face was brilliant and I wish that a photo could have been taken at that precise moment.

After the service, we adjourned to The Grantley Arms pub for a lovely meal and good company. My son, Richard, was able to join us there too, after he had finished work.

**Sue Ansell, Dip GV**  
**Area Leader**



Monday the 9<sup>th</sup> - Thursday the 13<sup>th</sup> of August 2015

Elim International Centre  
De Walden Road, West Malvern,  
Worcestershire. WR14 4DF

# Booking Form

Please detach these pages and  
use as your booking form.

Either send it by post  
or scan it and email in PDF format to:

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**Please submit your booking form by  
Friday the 17<sup>th</sup> of July 2015**

Name: Mr/Mrs/Miss/Reverend.....

Address: .....

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Parish Church etc:.....

**Attendance** Full Time or Part-Time (Tick the boxes you will be attending)

Sunday			Dinner
Monday	Breakfast	Lunch	Dinner
Tuesday	Breakfast	Lunch	Dinner
Wednesday	Breakfast	Lunch	Dinner
Thursday	Breakfast	Lunch	

### **Cost for the Week**

#### **Single Occupancy Room**

Sunday – Thursday inclusive £316.00

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#### **Shared Double Room**

Sunday – Thursday inclusive £280.00 pp

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The cost of one overnight delegate is £79.00 in a single room, this also includes all meals.  
(Breakfast, Lunch & Dinner)

**Day Rate** no accommodation is £28.00 plus £8 evening meal

Deposit of £35.00 or payment in full to be sent with the Booking Form

Cheques to be made payable to “**CEGV Conference Account**”



Medical Information

Do you suffer from anything we need to be aware of: Yes/No

If Yes, please list below:

.....

.....

Do you suffer from any allergies? YES/NO If Yes, please list below:

.....

.....

Are you on any Medication? YES/NO If Yes, please list below:

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.....

Do you have any special dietary requirements? YES/NO

If Yes, please list below

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How do I get there

While the Elim Conference Centre is nestled in the heart of the Malvern Hills, the M5 provides quick and easy road access when travelling south from Birmingham or North from Cardiff and Bristol.

Elim Conference Centre is just two and a quarter hours from London by car, and linked to Birmingham and London Paddington stations by a frequent and fast rail service. The nearest airport is Birmingham International, just one hour away.

**By road:** The main entrance to Elim Conference Centre is located on Croft Bank. There is a car park outside the main entrance. Croft Bank is accessed from West Malvern Road (B4232). Further parking is available - follow the signs for Elim International Centre when you arrive at Croft Bank.

**For Sat Nav: WR14 4DF**

**By rail:** The nearest stations are Great Malvern and Malvern Link. Taxi services from either to the Conference Centre will cost from £11, or let Conference Secretary know if you require a lift.

## Draft Outline Programme for the week

### ‘Handling History’

<b>Sunday 9<sup>th</sup> August</b>	
18:30	Dinner
19:15	Central Council Meeting
<b>Monday 10<sup>th</sup> August</b>	
07:45	Morning Prayer – Church
08:30	Breakfast
09:30	Registration
11:00	The Annual General Meeting
12:30	Lunch
13:30 -14:30	
16:00	Service rehearsal
17:00	Opening Conference Eucharist and Guild Congregation – Church
20:00	Dinner followed by Social Evening “The Wizard of Oz”
<b>Tuesday 11<sup>th</sup> August</b>	
07:00	Morning Prayer – Church
07:30	The Eucharist – Church
08:30	Breakfast
10:00 - 11:45	
12:00	Angelus & Midday Prayers followed by Lunch
14:00 -16.00	Talk to be arranged Guest Preacher???
17.15	Choral Evensong and Sermon – Guest Preacher
18:00	Dinner
19:00	Free Time, Swimming and/or Prayer Walk
21.00	Compline
<b>Wednesday 12<sup>th</sup> August</b>	
0700	Morning Prayer – Church
07:30	The Guild Requiem – Church
08:30	Breakfast
10:00 - 12:00	Talk to be arranged
12:00	Angelus & Midday Prayers followed by Lunch
14:00 -16:00	
17:00	Committee Meetings followed by Dinner
18:30	Dinner
20:45	Compline
<b>Thursday 13<sup>th</sup> August</b>	
08:00	Morning Prayer – Church
08:30	Breakfast
09.30	Final get together –
11.00	Solemn Eucharist – Church followed by
12.45	Lunch and Departure

We encourage all delegates to attend the services to experience new traditions and customs and participate fully.

Towels are provided in your rooms, but should you wish to use the heated outdoor pool, please bring your costume and your own towel.

No Alcohol is permitted on the Elim International Centre.



## DURHAM, NEWCASTLE & CARLISLE BRANCH NEWS



On a bright September morning thirteen members of the Branch gathered in Hexham Abbey for a service of Holy Communion presided over by Bishop Stephen Pedley, the former Suffragan Bishop of Lancaster, now retired and living in the vicinity of Hexham Town, which lies some twenty miles west of Newcastle upon Tyne, the junction of the North and South Tyne Rivers.

During the service a new Member, Karin Graydon, was admitted into the Branch thus bringing the Cramlington (Newcastle) Membership up to three people. Afterwards the Church Historian, Tom Kelsey, gave an insight into the origins of the Abbey which is now the Parish Church of Hexham Town. Founded by Wilfred, Bishop of York, in A.D. 674 at the request of Northumbrian Queen, Eltheldreda, and dedicated to Saint Andrew, it suffered from the ravages of the Danes and later the Scots, so that the present building has very little of its original structure left, except the Crypt.

Afterwards our host, Derek Iles, full-time Verger at the Abbey, allowed us a peep into the newly constructed Visitor Centre which is expected to be fully open in the next month. Lunch in town - Italian style - sent us all homewards rejoicing in our fellowship as "Virgers in the House of the Lord."

**Peter Welby**  
**Branch Chaplain**



## GLOUCESTER, HEREFORD & WORCESTER BRANCH NEWS



About eighty Vergers and partners gathered at Hereford Cathedral for the Canterbury Province Festival. Some of us met on Monday the 22<sup>nd</sup> of September for an early registration followed by Choral Evensong and an excellent meal at 'The Grapes'.

The evening continued with a Pilgrimage led by the Reverend Prebendary Kay Garlick, stopping at various points in the Cathedral and an opportunity to join in some singing whilst moving round the Cathedral.

Tuesday the 23<sup>rd</sup> started with registration and a welcome by the Reverend Canon Maureen Palmer. The day followed the usual pattern for Festivals with Eucharist, Lunch and Tours specific to the Cathedral. The day ended with the service of Choral Evensong and the group photograph.

A big thank you to all those who attended the Festival and to Hereford Cathedral for hosting it. The photograph is of Branch Members at the Festival.

On a sad note we remember the life of Jim Wooldridge who passed away on the 5<sup>th</sup> of October.



**Peter Young**  
**Branch Correspondent**



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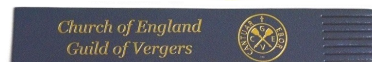
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My report for this quarter is in two parts, firstly reporting on the admittance of Kenneth Game at Saint Mary and Saint Botolph, Whitton Parish Church, Ipswich, as a Full Member of the Guild. On Sunday the 7<sup>th</sup> of September Ken was admitted into the Guild at his Church, in front of his Priest and Church family, the day was beautifully sunny and it was also the Patronal Festival of Saint Mary.

As well as the Guild's Order of Admittance the Reverend Andrew Dotchin also had a commissioning service for Ken (who was, understandably, slightly nervous, beforehand) but it all went off very well and made us realise how much Ken is valued as their Verger. Ken was also presented with the new Virge. Following the service we all retired to the community room for the Patronal Lunch, time for Ken to relax and enjoy the meal and company.



*\*The photographs attached are of Ken with Jean Cobb (Area Leader) and Ian Cobb (Chair) and also the Reverend Andrew Dotchin and Deacons, Ray Boggis and Eric Falla.*



Ken has written a little bit of his family history: 'My grandfather was a Churchwarden at Saint Nicholas Church. I was in the Church Choir at Saint Ethebeda's, daughter Church of Saint Mary at Stoke. Then in the Choir at Saint Mary at Stoke until I was 15 years of age. I was confirmed at Saint Nicholas Church at the age of 15. I married Shirley, my wife, here at Saint Mary and Saint Botolph's in 1963.'

I copied down from the pew leaflet the 'proper preface' for Saint Botolph, which reads as follows: ... 'and now we give you thanks for the work of your servant Botolph, who enlightened Eastern England by his Preaching and gave us courage to follow the pilgrim path of true discipleship.' Very apt for the service we had been present at.

The second part of the Branch report is on the Admittance of our Branch Chaplains, the Reverends Alan and Catherine Forsdike, by Canon Maureen, the service for this was on Thursday the 23<sup>rd</sup> of October at the Church of Saint Mary the Virgin, Linton, Cambridgeshire.

We were warmly welcomed to Saint Mary's by Nanette Blackmore, the Verger, and Laurence Kidman. A Eucharistic Service, (preceded the Branch meeting), where both Alan and Catherine were admitted by Canon Maureen, which was a very special occasion for both and also those members of the Ipswich Branch.

After the service it was time for everyone to relax and enjoy the buffet lunch, which was very substantial and also time for members to catch up and talk, very civilized. We were able on this occasion to welcome Canon Maureen to East Anglia on a nice day which was completely 'snow free', so much easier for travelling!

A brief history of the Church is that there was a small Church in the village of Linton before the Norman Conquest, it would have been a wooden building rather than the bricks and mortar of today. The present building was enlarged during the 14<sup>th</sup> century and then structural alterations were made during the Tudor and Victorian periods.

The area surrounding the church is very pretty with various walks taking in points of interest, definitely somewhere to revisit in the spring/summer and



take time to wander and as usual, take photographs.



*\*Photographs attached to this part of the report show the Reverend Alan and the Reverend Catherine Forsdike with Canon Maureen and a group photograph of Ipswich Branch members.*

Future dates for 2015 were decided upon at the Branch meeting and the now annual New Year's Lunch.

All that is left to do, on behalf off Ipswich Branch Members, is to extend our 'Warmest Greetings and Best Wishes' to all Guild Members for this coming Christmastime and Best Wishes for 2015.

**Jean Cobb**  
**Area Leader – East Anglia**



## AUTUMN MEETINGS

Our September meeting on Monday the 15<sup>th</sup> was brought back a week due to some of our members attending the Canterbury Province Festival in Hereford Cathedral the following week. Eleven members met at the Church of the Holy Apostles in Leicester for a service of Celtic Evening Worship led by the Reverend Pip Berry, Priest in Charge. This was a little different to what some of us are used to but we all joined in whilst enjoying the hymns that had been chosen for the evening: 'Breath on me, breath of God', 'Christ whose glory fills the skies' & 'Lord of all hopefulness'. The Bible readings were read by a member of the congregation and Branch Member Ann Anderson.

After the service we were served with some delicious refreshments. Our Branch Chairman, Jack Lippett, thanked everyone for coming including the Reverend Pip Berry for leading the service, Ann Anderson, the Verger of Holy Apostles, for hosting the evening and the ladies who prepared and served the refreshments. We also welcomed the Reverend Canon Richard John Tonkin, a retired Priest who has offered to serve as our Branch Chaplain, subject to the approval of the Branch Members and the Bishop. Jack Lippett has decided to step down as Branch Chairman after fourteen years. During his time in office he has attended meetings regularly until the last couple of years due to health problems. Our thanks go to him. A new Chairman will be formally elected at the AGM in January.

Eight Members of the Branch and one husband attended the Canterbury Province Festival held in Hereford Cathedral on Tuesday the 23<sup>rd</sup> of September.

One of our members, Matthew Mawson, from Derby Cathedral, was presented with his Guild Diploma Course Foundation Certificate and we send him our congratulations. The day, including the lovely weather, was enjoyed by all.

On Monday the 27<sup>th</sup> of October, the Eve of Saint Simon and Saint Jude, seventeen members met at the Church of Saint Mary in Anstey, Leicestershire, for a service of Evensong with the hymns 'Be thou my vision', 'Tell out, my soul', 'Oh Jesus, I have promised' and 'The day thou gavest'.

During the service the Rector of Anstey, the Reverend David McDonough, admitted our new Branch Chaplain, Reverend Canon John Tonkin following the approval of the Bishop of Leicester. We welcomed him into the Guild, also his wife Margaret with whom we chatted after the service. We had a photo call of the robed Members along with Canon John and our Area Leader, Lance Bloom. We then enjoyed some lovely refreshments and a good chat.



During the service we prayed for Jack Lippett, our retiring Branch Chairman, who had had a fall and was not able to be with us that evening. Thanks were expressed to the Rector, the Organist, the Crucifer and the ladies who had prepared and served the refreshments. Also to Valerie the Verger, who had also read one of the readings during the service.

As our next meeting is not until the 26<sup>th</sup> of January 2015 at Barrow on Soar Church Hall at 2.30 p.m. when we shall also have a raffle for Branch funds, prizes welcome, I would like to wish everyone,

locally, nationally and internationally a very Happy Christmas and a healthy New Year.

**Marjorie Thomas, Dip GV**  
**Branch Correspondent**



## THE 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 of 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 of 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: Susan Ansell** or the **Training Officer: John Shearer**.





The purpose of our twice annual Quiet Days is to provide those attending with spiritual nourishment, encouragement and fellowship, and our gathering on Tuesday the 9<sup>th</sup> of September at what has become our selected venue, Douai Abbey, very much fulfilled this remit.

The 'consultant' on this occasion was the Reverend Rose Williams, who has been prescribing said 'medicines' to a number of those present, and to numerous others throughout the Oxford Diocese, for many years, and continues to do so in her retirement.

We live in times of constant noise, a hectic/rollercoaster – 'hamster on a wheel' – environment, but we need time to jump off, catch our breath, recharge our batteries and have some quality time with God. Rose's recommended 'tonic' (and the theme for this day), was **'Simply the Best'**.

Rose suggested we take the 'dosage' in two amounts and the first was labelled 'Who, me?' and was to 'cure' our doubts, lack of confidence in our own abilities, and negativity. To assist in making this effective, we were guided through various incidents from past 'case histories' recorded in the Bible, e.g. the calling of Moses, and then Joshua, both of whom went on to achieve great things in the name of the Lord.

**"Fear not, I have redeemed you, I have summoned you by name, you are mine"** (Isaiah: chapter 43, verse 1)

The second 'dosage' (required to be taken after food, which we did, in the Refectory), was labelled 'What can I do?' and it involved further instruction on how to utilise the encouragement we had now received, (having dispelled our previous 'ailments'), and to implement our individual talents and strengths to pronounce the Word and Works of God through our varied roles within our respective environments. As an example, again from the Bible, we related to the role of Gideon who suffered from disbelief and disobedience 'syndromes' but became a true advocate for God.

**"God does not call the qualified, He qualifies the called"** (Judges: chapter 6)

At the end of our 'appointment' there was a general feeling of calmness, satisfaction and refreshment, each relating the overall 'prognosis' to their own situation - to know that we are not alone with our doubts, lack of confidence, and, at times, disheartened and asking 'is it really worth it?' – of those present all would probably say 'yes' knowing that throughout history (as recorded in the Bible), many have felt the same but in God we have the 'cure' which is **'Simply the Best'**.

**"Go in the strength you have"** (Judges: chapter 6, verse 14)

### BISHOPS' MOVE

The Bishop of Oxford, The Right Reverend John L. Pritchard, President of the Oxford Branch, retired as Diocesan Bishop on the 31<sup>st</sup> of October 2014 and on the previous evening a farewell service of Eucharist and Celebration was held at Christ Church Cathedral, Oxford, to which Betty and I were invited to represent this Branch.

It was very nostalgic for me (after retiring some 10 years ago), to be back in surroundings within which I had served for twelve years as Verger and Sacristan and to meet with many of those people with whom I had then worked.

What a wonderful occasion, a 'send off' that truly represented the high esteem held for Bishop John, the heartfelt thanks and warmth that radiated from those present reflected (I felt), the feelings of those within the Oxford Diocese, (and beyond), for the seven years that Bishop John had served and ministered amongst us.

In an extract from a letter received from Bishop John to our Branch, he says 'I wanted to put into writing my deep appreciation for the work of all the Vergers of the Oxford Diocese. It's a wonderful fellowship of loyal servants of the Church. It really is a question of 'where would we be without you?'

The quiet dedication, wisdom and skill of this fellowship is little recognised publicly but deeply important. Thank you so much for all that everyone in the Branch does'.

All the members of this Branch join me in wishing Bishop John and Mrs Pritchard, happiness and fulfilment in their retirement and give thanks for his spiritual support and guidance during his time as our Branch President.

Our congratulations go to The Right Reverend Paul Bayes (previously Bishop of Hertford), on his appointment as the 8<sup>th</sup> Bishop of Liverpool and a small group from High Wycombe will have attended his installation on Saturday the 15<sup>th</sup> of November 2014 at Liverpool Cathedral.

Bishop Paul was a previous Priest at our local Church and Chaplain of the Oxford Branch of the Guild for a number of years.

**Michael Golby, FCEGV**  
**Branch Chairman**



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This has been a relatively quiet summer for the Branch this year with around twenty members visiting Scarborough on the 8<sup>th</sup> of September and a similar number at the annual training and business meeting at Beverley Minster on the 13<sup>th</sup> of October.

Scarborough was an eye-opener with a morning visit to one of the places Cromwell (and many others) 'knocked about a bit'.

Saint Mary's Parish Church is just below the massive cliff-top castle that dominates this seaside town – a strategic position that the Roundheads thoroughly appreciated during the Civil War. With the Royalists directly above them the Parliamentarians moved cannon into the nave and shot at their enemies through the east window.

Not surprisingly the Royalists responded and, by the end of the siege, the huge nave was in ruins, and was never rebuilt.



During World War I, the building was damaged again by a surprise bombardment of Scarborough by the German fleet, and another bomb caused some damage in World War II.

The surviving building is in good condition with a newly-created mezzanine level in the south transept providing a superb and very light facility for children both during and outside of the services. The pay car-park on the site of the redundant churchyard also appears to be a useful source of revenue, which cash-strapped PCC's might very well like to consider.



We then travelled a few miles south on the coastal road to the Stained Glass Centre at Cayton, where we had a light lunch. After lunch we were treated to a fascinating talk in a newly-built exhibition building where Valerie Green, the Lazenby family's fourth generation of glass and lead craftspeople, demonstrated the skills required to make and repair modern and ancient stained glass.

The company's stained glass windows are still in demand today and, from the informative and entertaining talk, it was easy to see exactly how much work goes into a typical commission (if there is such a thing). A wonderfully revealing introduction to the skills that we could easily take for granted.

The meeting at Beverley Minster was once again host to an informative and educational talk given by the Reverend Adrian Klos, the Senior Chaplain for the Hull and East Yorkshire Hospitals NHS Trust. He gave us a most fascinating insight into his own progression, from a non-Christian upbringing to his present role, and the specific demands that being a Hospital Chaplain makes on his ministry.

After a most acceptable lunch at the Minster, a business meeting was held and an invitation made for new officers to fill the posts currently occupied by Richard and Rosemary Babington, who are planning on moving out of the area in the next 12 months. Beverley Minster Virgers are willing to fill some of the roles but we're waiting for volunteers to be secretary and treasurer. Hopefully someone will come forward before our AGM on the 19<sup>th</sup> of January 2015 at York Minster.

**Neil Pickford**

**Area Leader, Yorkshire Branches**

The Christmas meeting of the York Branch was held again at Thirsk, North Yorkshire on the 24<sup>th</sup> of November, when twenty-three members attended. A service of Holy Communion was held at Saint Mary's Church where our National Chaplain, Canon Maureen Palmer, officiated assisted by our Branch Chaplain, Reverend Marian Gardner. Richard Babington, the Branch Chairman played the organ for the service. During the service William Hamilton from Saint Patrick's Church, Patrington, East Yorkshire, was admitted as an Associate Member. We then had a short walk to the Golden Fleece Hotel where we enjoyed an excellent meal and a chance to socialise.

Margaret Hunton, Churchwarden of Saint Mary's, also joined us for the meal. Unfortunately the Vicar, Reverend Canon Richard Rowling, was unable to be present due to other duties. Our Area Leader, Neil Pickford, was also not able to be present due to a big wedding and other commitments at Beverley Minster.

Our Annual Names Raffle was extremely well supported with members donating over 40 prizes, and raised £148.00 for Branch Funds. The weather was fine with clear skies, which helped those members who had quite a distance to travel.

Our Annual General Meeting will be held on the 19<sup>th</sup> of January 2015 at York Minster, when new officers will be elected to take the Branch forward, as Richard and Rosemary Babington hope to move to Devon during the year.

**Richard Babington**  
**Branch Chairman**

‘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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