

The Virger

Winter 2016

Issue 293



*~CEGV~
Canterbury Province Festival Group Photo
Salisbury Cathedral
Tuesday 13th of September 2016*



www.cofegv.org.uk

The Official Magazine of the Church of England Guild of Vergers





Welcome to the Autumn 2016 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 them 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! E-MAILED ARTICLES SHOULD BE SENT AS MICROSOFT WORD FILES ONLY & ANY PHOTOGRAPHS IN JPEG FORMAT, TEXT & IMAGE FILES SHOULD BE ATTACHED TO E-MAILS SEPARATELY!

Marek J Barden, OJLJ

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**PLEASE NOTE THE DEADLINE FOR THE NEXT EDITION IS:
Saturday the 11th February 2017**

THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND GUILD OF VERGERS
YORK PROVINCE FESTIVAL 2017

BLACKPOOL

Tuesday 30th May 2017

JOIN US FOR A DAY AT THE SEA SIDE

PROGRAMME

10:00 a.m. Coffee and Welcome

Holy Trinity Church, Dean Street, South Shore

by Kind permission of the Reverend Tracy Charnock

11:00 a.m. Eucharist (No Robes) followed by photo

12:00 noon Free afternoon to enjoy the sights and eat

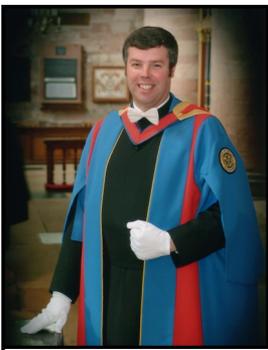
For more Information contact: James Armstrong on 01228 535169

or Tony Hales 01253 314235

FRONT COVER: The Canterbury Province Festival Group Photograph, Salisbury Cathedral, Tuesday 13th September 2016. Image Copyright to Gerry Lynch. PLEASE DO NOT REPRODUCE WITHOUT PERMISSION.



*On behalf of the National Officers
& the Members of the Central Council
may we wish all our Members & Friends,
at home and abroad,
a very Joyful and Blessed Christmas
and a Prosperous & Happy New Year*



NATIONAL CHAIRMAN'S LETTER



It's that time of the year for holly berries squashed into you church floor, pine tree needles that you will be vacuuming up until summer, candle wax that needs scraping off everything and do not get me started on tinsel. These are a few of my favourite things....Not.

For us vergers this can be a major trial, we have spent hours making sure that our places of worship are looking their best for the upcoming festival, floors and furniture polished, albs and surplices all sparkling white, linen pressed etc...

In all this activity of getting ready can we really enjoy the celebration or are we too tired? For me that think of warmth and satisfaction that was a job well done comes later on Christmas day when the Cathedral is quiet and I am just about to turn the key in the lock. This is of course a materialistic and human response to my work, however as a Christian I pride myself that if all is in decent order and everything runs smoothly then I have paid my homage to Jesus our Saviour on the remembrance of his nativity. I then crawl home and fall into bed.

It is my hope that you are all able to enjoy this great feast with family and friends. However, please remember those of our membership who are unwell and suffering at the moment.

May I wish you all on behalf of the Central Council of the Guild a Merry Christmas and a Happy and peaceful New Year.

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 or shown improvement, please inform the National Chaplain or the National Welfare Officer

Blackburn, Chester & Manchester: Margaret Scott & Geoffrey Timms

Bournemouth & Channel Islands: Paula Lincoln

Chichester, Guildford & Portsmouth: Marilyn Lee

Gloucester, Hereford & Worcester: Joy Birkin & Stephen Guy

Ipswich: Val Pizzey

Leicester & Peterborough: Clifford Dunkley & Leslie Mitchelmore

London, Southwark & Chelmsford: Ken Allen

Oxford: Anita (Annie) Bayliss, Ernestine Denham, Jeanne Scott & Reverend Canon Roy Taylor

Saint Albans: Peter Hudson

Salisbury: Jean Jackson

Somerset & Avon: Pat Dawes, Lionel & Mary Holway, & SallyAnne Sommerfield

York: George & Doreen Cook

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



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**.



Dear Friends,

The year 2015 gave an opportunity to re-examine the tenets of law which issued from the original 1215 Magna Carta. At Hereford Cathedral we have a 1217 Magna Carta from which the law was formalized so we are all wondering whether there will be another jamboree of Magna Carta lectures, sermons and goods in the shop!

However, the celebration of Magna Carta gave us an opportunity for reflection on the role of the Monarch with the associated issues of justice, freedom, equality and peace which has not only a secular focus but also a religious one. As I write to you on the eve of the Feast of Christ the King the aspects of Monarchy which has been the focus of our reflection takes on a new perspective.

The kingdom of heaven or the kingdom of God is the core of the message Jesus came to bring. As he expresses it in Mark's Gospel 'The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand, repent and believe in the good news.' The 'kingdom' which Jesus proclaims is not so much a territory or a recognizable sphere of rule but rather a matter of the gift of power and authority. There was, however, even in early Judaism the tendency of this abstraction to become concrete, when Yahweh was traditionally seen as the 'King of Israel' and the temple at Jerusalem the place for his name.

In the Old Testament the most common title for God is King - think of the Psalms: 10 'The Lord is king for ever and ever', 24, 'Who is the King of glory? Even the Lord of hosts, he is the King of glory' 47 'Sing praises unto our King', - also, many passages in the writings of the Prophet Isaiah are 'Kingship Hymns' with the theme of re-establishing God's kingly rule. The picture painted in the Book of Daniel with the 'Ancient of Days' sitting in judgement and the book opened is a poignant reminder to the Jews that God is merciful, compassionate, but also judge. It is no surprise that Jesus takes the role of King throughout the gospel narratives: indeed Jesus is often described in terms of the three great offices - Prophet, Priest and King - offices for which the individual is anointed, the true meaning of the title Messiah/Christ but the title of King is the most prominent.

So wherein does Jesus' Kingship lie? Jesus is King at his birth, in his ministry to the crowds and supremely in his Passion.

There are three things to be said about Jesus and the whole concept of Kingship:

- There is a very real sense in which the idea of kingship was a temptation for Jesus. The common concept of Messiah at the time was of a warrior king who would rout out the foreign powers and enemies of Israel and promote peace from a position of power. In the synoptic gospels this is twice made explicit: when the Devil offers Jesus all the kingdoms of the world and their glory. 'All these kingdoms will I give you if you will bow down to me'. After the feeding of the 5000, John states that there were those who would have made him king by force, but Jesus slips away resisting the temptation. This is not the power that Jesus will wield: his power is the power of love, of the gift of life in all its fullness.
- In John's Gospel Jesus puts forward the 'otherness' of his rule and kingdom. He says 'My kingdom is not of this world ...' The kingdom Jesus presides over is one of self-sacrifice, service and love and the only throne that Jesus wants to occupy is the throne of the human heart.
- In the final analysis the only real King is God and it is to God that the kingdom belongs. Jesus taught us to pray 'Thy kingdom come ...' and 'Thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory for ever ...' Jesus was never a rival to God but always a loving and loyal servant. His true task was to announce the kingdom and the gospel story describes how Jesus teaches men and women how to respond to the love of God, incarnate in their hearts and lives until he is the universal king of the whole creation: the true King of kings and Lord of lords.

And as we think of Christ the King we look forward to the manifestation of that Kingship in the new Church year that follows.

I pray that you will all have a very blessed Advent and Christmas, even though I know you will all be very busy.

With every blessing and my love

Canon Maureen

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Ministry
of Defence



“From serving as a Wren to supporting the men and women of the Fleet Air Arm in my civilian role as Verger, working for the MOD has been such a joy and a privilege”.

Tina Cullen
Verger, Chaplaincy
Royal Naval Air Service, Yeovilton



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I joined the WRNS in 1978 as a Wren Air Engineering Mechanic (Mechanical) during which time I worked on the air frames and engines of the Wessex 5 and Sea King Mk IV helicopters on the Junglie circuit. (The 'Junglies' are the squadrons you see on TV in Afghanistan, rescuing people in areas where there has been some sort of huge natural disaster etc., which the media report as being soldiers!). I served during the Falklands and lost friends. This was a very sobering time, but also extremely rewarding at the same time. All in all I had an absolute ball and met some wonderful people, many of whom are still good friends today.

I left the WRNS in 1989 to have my children (that was how it was in those days). Later that year I asked the Chaplain at the Royal Naval Air Station, Yeovilton, where I had served to baptise my little girl. He said that because I wasn't a practising Christian he would not entertain it until I had got to know the congregation, and it was at this point that I reacquainted myself with my Heavenly Father, having dearly wanted to return to church for years but not having the courage to do so.

In 1996, still attending the same Church and now with two baptised daughters, I was asked by the then Chaplain to lend an administrative hand one morning a week. One morning a week as a volunteer became five mornings as a Civil Servant later that year, and then full time from 2008.

The job has grown from doing a bit of typing and running errands to doing everything a verger does, acting as PA to two, soon to be three, Royal Naval Chaplains and one Army Chaplain, and fully involved as member of an amazing Pastoral Team. I've verged the Archbishop of Canterbury and two Bishops of Bath and Wells, and HRH the Duke of York twice (and on one occasion he came back to shake my hand and thank me! I wanted to tell him we had served on the same squadron once but I was so star struck I couldn't speak!).

I've been on TV a few times, like many of us have, and have been interviewed for TV, radio and newspapers, having organised our Falklands 30 service. A 'small, local' event was my brief, but it turned out to be huge, emotional and included a Royal guest.

It is a real privilege to be a part of people's most intimate and special times of their lives, whether that is when they are at their lowest ebb or celebrating the birth of their children, or their love for their new husband/wife. There's no other job like this and I thank God for leading me to this place.

I love my job and am so proud to serve my God, my Queen and my Country and hope to do so for a few more years to come.

Tina Cullen
Verger of Saint Bartholomew's, The Fleet Air Arm Memorial Church, Yeovilton & Area Leader - Salisbury



Autumnal Greetings from East Anglia.

What a super day – Monday 24th October – a lovely bright day showing all the beautiful colours of Autumn as we made our way to Ely Cathedral for our last meeting of the year. Thanks at this point must go to Martin Fleet (Head Verger) at the Cathedral (also our newest member of the Branch) who organised a room in the Educational Centre for our meeting followed by a tour of the Cathedral.

It was so lovely to see and welcome Canon Maureen and also Stephen (back in good health) at the meeting, before the meeting we took time to clear our minds and our Chaplain held a short service to celebrate the day and decisions to be made on the meeting ahead, the Agenda was discussed and dates fixed for the beginning of the next year.



Ely Cathedral, what a treat, such a lovely Cathedral with so much to see, photograph and take in. Our tour guide, Suzanna Bedford, was excellent pointing out all of the areas of interest and its history.

A piece of Brief History (taken from the Welcome Sheet) –

Etheldreda, a Saxon Princess from East Anglia, founded the double Monastery for men and women in 673. The site of her Shrine is in front of the High Altar. The Monastery was destroyed by the Danes in 870, it was re-founded as a Benedictine Community in 970.

Work on the present building was commenced in the early 1080's under Abbot Simeon. The monks knew that only the best can ever be good enough to offer to God. They built this massive church as an offering to him. It became a Cathedral – the seat of the Bishop – in 1109. Even though 'Henry VIII' closed the Monastery in 1539, it has continued to exist as a Cathedral. Ely suffered less than many other monasteries, but even so, statues were destroyed together with carvings and stained glass.

As previously stated a beautiful day full of fellowship, history and sheer joy.

Before I finish – “Pigs” – Ipswich held a Pig Trail back in August. Myself, Tom and Grandson Bailey (along with 100's of other people) had fun looking for them, sometimes extensive investigative methods were involved, hunting down the said animals hidden in churches, around corners and some in plain view. As promised just a couple of photo's – Ed Sherham! being just one of them. Great fun.



And finally, a prayer for Saint Etheldreda:

**Eternal God
Who bestowed such grace upon your servant Etheldreda
that she gave herself wholly to the life of prayer
and to the service of your true religion:
Grant that we, like her,
may so live our lives on earth seeking your Kingdom
that by your guiding
we may be joined to the glorious fellowship of your Saints;
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.**

Ipswich Branch wish you all a very Happy Christmas and New Year.
Until next time, God Bless.

**Jean Cobb
Branch Correspondent**





SUMMER & AUTUMN MEETINGS



On Monday 15th August, the Feast of the Blessed Virgin Mary, fourteen members and friends as well as our Branch Chaplain met at the Cathedral Church of Saint Martin, Leicester.

After robing in the old Choir School we gathered outside, (N.B. what a shame, someone with a camera could have taken a picture, and nearly 100% attendance! But alas, not to be.) We were led in procession by John Dilks, one of the Cathedral Vergers. The Reverend Canon Alison Adams, the Sub-Dean, led us in Compline (Entuned), which I thought enlightened the service because it normally sounds so very dull when it is just said.

During the service we admitted and welcomed David Edwards from Saint Kyneburgha, Castor in the Diocese of Peterborough, and Joanne Murgovin from Leicester Cathedral, both as full members.

The admission was conducted by Canon John Tonkin, Branch Chaplain and presented, for the first time, by our Branch Chairman, after which we said the Verger's Prayer. During the prayers we remembered Clifford Dunkley who was recovering after treatment with a mobility issue.

After the service we had light refreshments followed by an invitation to look round the Cathedral. The main reasons being the Tomb of King Richard III at the East End and the newly installed windows in Saint Katherine's Chapel. All of the materials and most of the processes employed in making them were either used at the time of Richard III or the 19th century, (N.B. these notes have been copied from one of my Church notice sheets). The windows are full of figures and the hints of a story which is common to us all. Other things to note are the new Bishop's Throne (Cathedra) which was used for the first time in March last year for the burial service for Richard III. The former one, which I loved, is in the North Aisle. I was very sad that the former Choir and Clergy Stalls had been removed, but that was done for the purpose of making room for Richard III's Tomb. Les Mitchelmore, one of our members, also one of the Assistant Vergers, gave a guided tour for some of us.



(PICTURES: LEICESTER CATHEDRAL - EXTERIOR; THE TOMB OF KING RICHARD III; THE WINDOW IN SAINT KATHERINE'S CHAPEL; THE NEW BISHOP'S THRONE; THE FORMER BISHOP'S THRONE)

I must apologise that I did not thank everyone for coming, and a very warm welcome to our new members, we hope that they will enjoy future meetings. Also, thank you to the Reverend Canon Alison Adams for taking the service, and Les and John for hosting us.

On Monday 26th September twelve members and our Branch Chaplain, the Reverend Canon John Tonkin, met at the Church of Saint Mary, Humberstone, Leicestershire. We had a service of Holy Communion with some nice hymns: "Be thou my vision", "We have a gospel to proclaim", and "Great is thy faithfulness". The service was celebrated by the Vicar, the Reverend Paul Savage, assisted by Les Mitchelmore, the Verger, who also led the Intercessions and administered the chalice. Among the Intercessions we continued to pray for Clifford Dunkley and for the soul of the Venerable Hughie Jones, former Archdeacon Emeritus of Loughborough. After the service we had some very nice refreshments prepared and served by the ladies of the Church. Our Chairman thanked everyone for coming, also the Vicar, the Reverend Paul Savage, and the excellent Organist, Mr Tim Lees, for accompanying us for the hymns. And a very big and caring thank you to Les for guiding myself and Jean Evans down the church path because it was very dark and the lights had been vandalised.



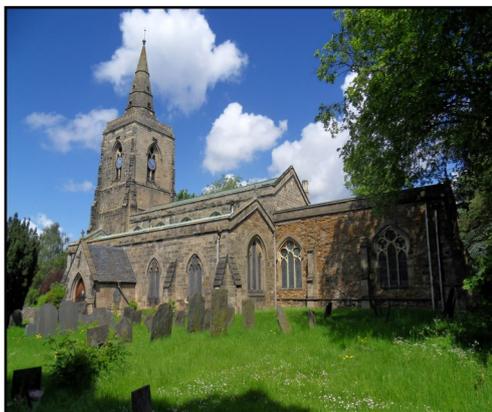
A BRIEF HISTORY: The first church was built on the site about 1160 with a Chancel and Nave. It was re-built about 1250 -1260 in the Early English style with Aisles. The Tower and Spire were added circa 1320 - 1330.

THE BELLS: There is a ring of six bells, one dated 1620 (N^o 4, Note: A) and one dated 1628 (N^o 3, Note: B flat) cast by Hugh Watts of Leicester; one dated 1673 (N^o 1, Note: D) cast by George Oldfield of Nottingham; one undated (N^o 5, Note: G) and one dated 1743 (N^o 2, Note: C) , both cast by John Eyre of Kettering, and the Tenor (N^o 6, Note: F) , weighing over 19cwt and dated 1876, cast by John Taylor. The total weight of the bells is 2 tons, 17cwt, 1qtr & 17 lbs (2927 kg).

THE FONT: Carved from alabaster by S Barfield, a Leicester man, replaced the large ancient stone Font which stood at the West End of the Nave.

THE ORGAN: This is a two manual instrument built by J W Walker & Sons in 1929 and placed under the Tower. The detached console stands at the East End of the Nave. The Organ was a gift from the Turner family.

THE TOWER & CHANCEL: The outer walls of the Chancel remain from the 13th and 14th centuries, but in 1857 - 1858 an extensive re-building of the Nave, Aisles and Porch was carried out. An English style was chosen and most of the interior fittings were removed. Parts of the Chancel were re-faced with local alabaster which was also used for the capitals of the columns and the Font. The Royal Arms, commemorating the Coronation of Queen Elizabeth II are placed over the South Door.



(PICTURES: SAINT MARY, HUMBERSTONE - EXTERIOR; THE CHANCEL; THE FONT)

On Monday 24th October twelve members and our Branch Chaplain, the Reverend Canon John Tonkin, met at the Church of Saint Mary, Anstey, Leicestershire for a service of Holy Communion which was celebrated by the Rector, the Reverend David McDonough. Valerie Clarke, the Verger, read the Epistle and Canon John led the Intercessions. We sang four hymns: "Tell out my soul", "Breathe on me, breath of God", "For the healing of the nations", and "The day thou gavest", and we were accompanied by a very fine Organ and Organist. After the service we had a very nice spread of refreshments prepared by Valerie and the ladies of the Church. The Chairman thanked the Rector and all those who took part in the service, Crucifer, Server, Organist, Verger and the ladies who prepared the refreshments.

I am afraid that I don't have much history of Saint Mary's, Anstey, apart from it being a 13th century building with some Mediæval architecture and several years ago the Chancel was re-ordered and new Choir Stalls and Pulpit were installed, also the ceiling was painted to make it look a lot brighter.



(PICTURES: SAINT MARY, ANSTEY - EXTERIOR; THE ORGAN; THE NAVE & CHANCEL)

Concern was raised regarding meetings during the darker nights, a suggestion was made that we only meet between May and September, but we will discuss this at our AGM in January 2017.

Clifford Dunkley from Saint Mary de Castro in Leicester has been in hospital again through ill health, depending on how he gets on he will be transferred to home. We will miss him and attending his lovely Church from time to time. We pray that he will soon settle, depending on his condition.

This leaves me to wish everyone, locally, nationally and internationally, a very Happy Christmas and a healthy 2017.

Marjorie Thomas, Dip GV - Branch Chairman & Correspondent



Our first meeting this Autumn was at the “easy to find” and memorable Douai Abbey – as mentioned before a wonderful venue: with a large car-park, excellent catering, and gentle atmosphere. We met on the Friday 16th September to enjoy our “Quiet Day”, and to admit Heather Ringrose as a member of the Guild.

After the Eucharist, we were led by an ex-children’s evangelist, the Reverend David Allsop. In my charismatic Church I am used to the children’s workers being youthful, guitar-strumming folk with a modern vocabulary. I was not disappointed to find that this man is of mature years and an excellent speaker.

Among other things, he told us that at least one of our members has been arrested by police! (But that is a story for another time.)

However, his main theme was “Bringers of Good News”. He drew upon the story of Caleb (Numbers chapter 13) and spoke of “the giants” that stop us achieving – largely in our own heads, and defeatable. We were asked to consider aspects of our individual relationship with God, were given the opportunity to make our own notes, work out our own thoughts, fears and responses – a useful and helpful time.

The afternoon session was about Jesus’ ministry – and that life in the Holy Spirit begins behind our own front door. Good advice was given – about praying individually when we enter our own churches – “reclaiming” the building for God, and praying as we make our “to-do” lists – God may inspire those too. Praying to know those who need “a touch today”. He also spoke about the authority we have as vergers. The story was told of a wedding photographer who drew a chair up beside the bride, stood on it, and took more photos: needless to say, the verger threw him out!

We arranged to meet again on Tuesday 11th of October, this time at Burnham Abbey, “The Society of the Precious Blood” and recently featured in “The Door”, the Oxford Diocesan Magazine*.

It was an instructive day: I had assumed that other people would know the location better than I did. This was a false assumption, and led to a certain Area Leader standing at the side of the road waving toward the (admittedly not obvious) entrance. Thankfully most motorists ignored me.

Parking was tight, and a shoe-horn would have been of value as cars squeezed in together, occupants taking turns to breath in. It also didn’t help that the M4 motorway was closed following a fatal accident. The resultant traffic chaos in the local towns meant that our speaker and celebrant (who was coming, predictably, from the opposite end of Berkshire) was delayed, then turned back after waiting in traffic jams for two hours.



But we’re vergers, and resourceful. We said our own short service, then invited the Reverend Mother to speak about the Abbey. She told us about the history of this Order and the present-day work of the Nuns. This was fascinating and time went quickly: we then moved into the Chapel for Midday Prayers. There we were welcomed in a beautiful and simple way – books thoughtfully pre-marked to help us follow the service.

For lunch we went to a local pub, “The Pineapple”, which is famous for its sandwiches. A normal sandwich is to these as a dreary stream is to the river Amazon. It’s well worth visiting if you are around the Dorney or Eton area. I had got the sandwich pre-order (almost!) correct and complete.

**I remember when I first attended Saint Michael’s, the first Anglican building that I had entered in a few years; the Welcomer showed me “The Door”.*

Dennis Wildman

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On Thursday 7th July, a good number of the Salisbury Branch gathered at Saint Nicolas Hospital, right on the perimeter of the Cathedral Close, for a social gathering and look around. What an informative and joyous occasion it turned out to be, and how could it not be in such a wonderful and romantic setting.

Our guide and mentor was the Reverend Canon Michael Goater, Master of the Hospital - he is a man with a vast knowledge of the building and its history, a wonderful orator and a man of great compassion for those enjoying their retirement there. Canon Michael gave his time to guide and entertain us throughout the afternoon, even though he was in the middle of packing and preparing to leave Saint Nicholas Hospital for his own well-earned retirement. We are so grateful to him and wish him a long and happy retirement.

Founded in the early 13th century for **“the reception, care and maintenance of Christian poor, sick and infirm”**, the Hospital continues that tradition of hospitality to this day, although it is doubtful whether today’s residents quite meet those austere levels of poverty and need?

It was this building and its gardens that inspired Anthony Trollop to write “The Warden”, the first of his six Barsetshire Chronicles.

The Hospital is now converted into a number of well-equipped self-contained apartments. Tenancies are open to any suitable Christian applicants over 60 years of age who are prepared to accept the ethos and standards prevailing. This does include attendance at a daily Service in the Mediæval Chapel beside the River Avon. No great hardship there I imagine.

Indeed, there is more than one retired Verger to be found among those living there, including our very own Branch Treasurer, Martin Taylor and his wife Cynthia. Martin must be well known to so many in the Guild. It was Martin and Cynthia who hosted us for the day and ensured we were well and truly fed. We thank them sincerely for that.

We were so lucky to have chosen a lovely sunny day for our visit. Our informative and entertaining walk through the Mediæval Chapel, then across the well managed gardens, along the tree lined bank of the river and our stroll over the adjacent pack-horse bridge to the very earliest parts of the City, left us all with such profound and cherished memories. We are grateful to all who made us so welcome.

For more information on Saint Nicolas Hospital visit their website: www.stnicolashospital.co.uk

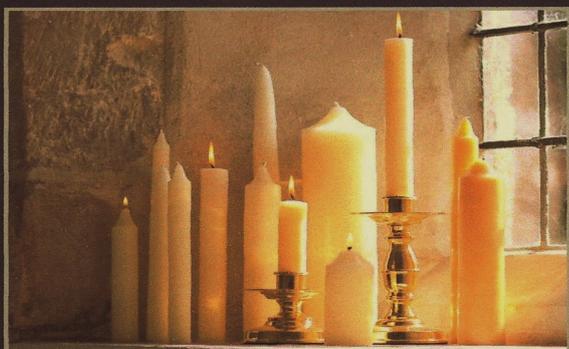
Susan Guy
Branch Correspondent



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