

The Virger

Autumn 2017

Issue 296



~CEGV~

The Conference Group Photo

Monday the 14th of August 2017



www.cofegv.org.uk

The Official Magazine of the Church of England Guild of Vergers





Welcome to the Autumn 2017 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!

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TO E-MAILS SEPARATELY!

Marek J Barden, OLJ

Saint Gregory's Vicarage, Filton Road, Horfield, Bristol BS7 0PD

PLEASE NOTE

THE DEADLINE FOR THE NEXT EDITION IS: Saturday the 11th November 2017



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: Robert Beattie**.

HOLY NAME EMBROIDERY

New Commissions, restoration,
conservation, repairs etc... undertaken

Welsh Marches Based

Dee Caulton-Ball

Ecclesiastical Embroiderer

01547 220000 or 07890514888

deecb@hotmail.com



FRONT COVER: *The Conference Group Photograph, Monday 14th August 2017*
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NATIONAL CHAIRMAN'S LETTER



This is my first letter to you since being elected as your National Chairman. I would like to thank all those who voted for me at the Central Council meeting during Conference. I was very humbled at being given the opportunity to lead the Guild for the next three years.

I must, at this point, pay tribute to James Armstrong who has completed his second term as Chairman. Under James' guidance the Guild has continued to change since its foundation whilst maintaining its values. We have Headquarter Members where Branches have sadly closed. James has ensured that there is a mechanism in place where we can embrace these displaced members and keep them within the Guild. The introduction of 'Festival Lites' have enabled the members to meet at least once a year where a full-blown Festival could not be organised.

So what of my tenure. Well, I am fortunate to have a strong team of National Officers who are rooted in the basic ethos of the Guild and by working together I hope and pray that we can continue to grow and develop as a creditable body within the Church. The Church of England is in a very interesting place at present and some find this a very unsettling time. We have seen posts disappear in our Churches and Cathedrals, yet the work of a Verger has not really disappeared. I pray that we can maintain our status within the Church and be a lasting presence within God's Church. As a Guild, it is incumbent of all members at all levels to ensure that we survive. Please remember, this is your Guild and it needs you and your input, however small. It is also important that we remain active and alive in Christ's Church.

John Shearer



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

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: Don Mitchener, Jeanne Scott, Reverend Canon Roy Taylor, Gill & Dennis Wildman

Saint Albans: Peter Hudson

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

York: George & Doreen Cook

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



THE GUILD SHOP



THE GUILD SHOP IS UNDER NEW MANAGEMENT.

Angela Hamilton was appointed during the Annual Training Conference. We welcome her to her new role and wish her every success in this post. For a Catalogue & Price List Please Contact:

The Shop Manager

Mrs Angela Hamilton

21 Saffron Garth

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CONGRATULATIONS



**CONGRATULATIONS TO JOHN SHEARER ON HIS ELECTION TO THE POST OF NATIONAL CHAIRMAN
ALSO TO ROBERT BEATTIE ON HIS ELECTION TO THE POST OF TRAINING OFFICER
AND JOHN CAMPBELL ON HE RE-ELECTION TO THE POST OF OVERSEAS LIAISON OFFICER**



ARCHBISHOP
OF CANTERBURY

**A message from the Archbishop of Canterbury to the Church of England
Guild of Vergers for their Annual Training Conference, August 2017**

I am writing with heartfelt gratitude to thank you all for the tremendous amount of work that you do in churches and cathedrals all over the country, day-by-day. Vergers are often the first to arrive and the last to leave, and give tirelessly of their time. They are crucial for the welcome of visitors, and are an invaluable support for all church and cathedral staff.

While your ministry may often be unseen, I want you to know that it is deeply valued and crucial in enabling worshippers and visitors to meet with God in places that have been cherished and prayed in for centuries.

I pray that the presence of God would be with you as you gather, that the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ would equip you and renew you in his service, and that the Spirit would guide you in your ministry in the years to come.

Justin Welby

The Most Reverend and Right Honourable Justin Welby
Archbishop of Canterbury



THE
ARCHBISHOP
OF YORK



25 July 2017

Dearby Beloved in Christ,

As Joint President of The Guild of Vergers I am delighted to send you this message of greeting as you gather for your Annual Training Conference. In reflecting on the ministry of the verger, I am reminded that your work takes place in many different holy places and settings. My prayer is that this Conference may be a time of renewal of that wider community of which you are all a part, a time for prayer, rejoicing and thankfulness.

Your care of the places in which we worship, in preparation for worship and your hospitality for all those who come to meet Christ are vital to the life of the Church. For all that you do, thank you. May you 'encourage one another and build up each other as indeed you are doing' (1 Thessalonians 5:11).

Where you give out so much to others, I do pray that each of you gathered here today will know the presence of God very close at hand refreshing and inspiring you.

With every blessing,

Henricus Eboracensis

NATIONAL CHAPLAIN'S LETTER



Dear Friends,

I hope if you attended the Annual Verger's Conference you enjoyed the time together and the learning slots that we included. I trust, too, that many of you are busy with the next Unit of your Diploma. We awarded four Diplomas this year and all the candidates agreed that the learning was a very enriching experience for them. I am aiming to have every Verger with a Diploma before I hang up my cassock!

One of our tasks is to pray for one another and I hope you all have the Prayer Cycle so that you remember colleagues day by day. If you have sick colleagues, please let me know. I cannot pray for them or include them on the list of the sick if I do not know the need. This is the responsibility of you all. Irene Money, our Welfare Officer, likes to be in touch with those who are sick or infirm – again we need to know if you would like this ministry of prayer.

Here in Hereford, we have just had a massive thunderstorm, with inky skies and heavy rain. As it began to pass over I was aware of the most beautiful double rainbow against the dark clouds, that in turn reminded me of the Covenant that God made with Noah. Many people in the world are concerned and frightened at the rate of climate change and global warming, heightened for us by the reports of serious flooding in Nepal, Bangladesh, North India and in Texas. The weather is becoming increasingly unpredictable and although we may shrug our shoulders and consider that there is little we as individuals can do, each of us must be transformed so that we change our attitude to resources, wealth and land. We use fossil fuels – our cars, aeroplane travel – without too much thought of the damage that we do to the environment: and I am as much to blame as anyone!

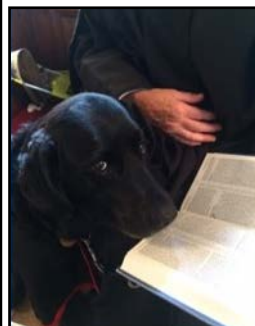
We look for progress and development of the economy, even though this may well change land use in developing countries which in turn will cause flooding and washing away topsoil thus making the land increasingly unproductive. We use products containing palm oil, knowing full well that hectares of forest habitat have been cut down, with loss of species, trees some of which may contain valuable medicines, in order to plant the palms.

As Christian people we have a duty to preserve life: to preserve the environment and even if we can only do a little – let us do what we can to preserve God's wonderful creation. Above all we should appreciate what we have: food on our tables, clean water, good medical care, and spare a thought for those who lack the basic necessities of life.

I expect that you are all involved in Harvest services of one kind and another and as a Guild it would be good if each of us were to pledge to make a difference to the environment during the coming year: whether it be by being more assiduous about recycling, walking instead of using the car, buying only products which do not contain palm oil – or at least contain only sustainably produced palm oil. In 1993 the Patriarch of the Greek Orthodox Church designated the 1st September – the first day of the Ecclesiastical Year, as Environment Day, so perhaps this would be a good day to begin our own transformation of life.

With every blessing in your work and my love,
Canon Maureen

GUIDE DOG FRAN 2006 – 2017 RIP



Fran, my 'Assistance Verger' and first canine member of the Guild, after six months retirement, sadly lost her life to cancer in July. Fran was an amazing dog with a beautiful nature and though not seen widely in public she owned a mischievous sense in life. Fran was a renowned carrot thief should they be at her level in the shops, the odd dog toy slipped in the basket too! A joy to work with, she had a zest for life, enjoying romps along the beach and free runs on the downs.

Fran helped in our work with traumatised children and the many 'characters' we met along the way amongst the homeless and sad. Yet, well versed in Church protocol, she 'verged' the choir with me in Epsom and assisted me in Church life. Fran was well travelled both here in the UK and abroad, finding the way in strange places and somehow finding the way home!

Thankyou Canon Maureen and Denise Mead during Conference 2017 for admitting my new companion and delightful delinquent - enter new Associate Guild Member Guide Dog Layla: Layla met Fran all too briefly so I am hoping Fran passed on some wise words.

Layla too is a 'tea leaf' but places them in the basket very quietly her preference is apples! A very different character she is learning the ropes and having fun in the Chapel where we worship and work, as well our local Church of Saint Andrew the Apostle here in Worthing. I am very proud of Layla, she is maturing beautifully as a friend and working companion. We look forward to meeting up with members of the Guild in the future. Brilliant conference – Thankyou.



Carole Sharpe
London, Southwark & Chelmsford Branch



THE CEGV TAKES THE STAGE WITH CITY LIVERY COMPANIES & CITY GUILDS

Lincoln Cathedral was the setting and stage for a unique event in late June. **The Heritage Skills Festival** witnessed over thirty London Livery Companies and City Guilds who along with Parish Clerks and the Freemen of the City of Lincoln gathered in the Nave of the Cathedral and Minster Yard to show off their skills and traditions.

The event began in true 'vergerial' tradition with a procession, proceeding from Lincoln Castle, through Castle Square to the Cathedral for Choral Evensong; twenty-eight livery masters, the Lincoln Civic Party, the High Sheriff and the Lord Lieutenant of Lincolnshire, together with the Lord Mayor of London was preceded by Colin Beevers carrying the Guild's Millennium Verge (this was the first time, in known history, that the City Livery Companies had gathered and processed outside of the City of London).



The exhibition with fifty stalls brought together expertise' ancient and modern. The CEGV joined the Parish Clerks at the heart of the Cathedral, the crossing, educating the 7,000 plus attendees in our aims and objectives. This was a great opportunity for the Guild to be showcased amongst worthy fellow exhibitors and we generated equal interest. Many people commented and enquired on the work and ministry of the Verger and the work of the Guild, whether or not this generates new membership remains to be seen but the opportunity to share our ministry and fellowship was a great privilege not to be missed. Thanks go to James Armstrong [National Chairman], Stephen Stokes [General Secretary], Irene Money and Denise Mead, who provided exhibits for our display; a collection of verges, including the Guild's Millennium and the Cathedral collection was joined by the Cathedral's newest acquisition - a verge, made of Green Ash, which was turned over the weekend by the Worshipful Company of Woodturners, a copy of a Cathedral verge dating from 1898.

John G Campbell, BEM, FBGU, FCEGV
Dean's Verger - Lincoln Cathedral

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CONFERENCE REPORT



The theme of this year's conference was 'Art in Churches'.

Once again it was a joy to be back at the Elim International Conference Centre in West Malvern, within one of the most beautiful parts of the British countryside. Set in-between the backdrop of the inviting Malvern Hills and the far-reaching undulating valleys which stretch out westwards towards the Welsh borders. Wow!

This year our excellent and friendly National Chairman, James Armstrong, retired from this role to be replaced by the equally excellent and friendly retiring Training Officer, John Shearer. However, John was unable to join us for a couple of days due to a hospital appointment and therefore was installed as Chairman at our Closing Eucharist on the

Thursday. Robert Beattie has now joined the super ranks as our National Training Officer and if first impressions are to go by he made a great start in this demanding role.

Once the AGM was dealt with and elections accepted the Conference was able to concentrate on its main theme throughout the rest of the week. Initial impressions of the title could have caused some to think that this subject, 'Art in Churches', was going to be slightly tiring, however, our hard-working organisers had put together a truly stunning programme which proved to encompass the subject magnificently. This was achieved theoretically and physically within the following areas of the agenda; three first class lectures, a number of sacred orders of service, the most devout outdoor pilgrimage entitled 'The Stations of the Resurrection', in which sacred art in all its formats was used to help us walk this journey with Christ through the beautiful and peaceful settings of the grounds of this former boarding school.

In addition, we experienced Art within the readings, psalms, hymns, sermons, plus the sincere worship by Priests and Servers, in such extra services as Morning Prayer, Compline and also within the humble Taizé gathering. We were also blessed this year with a full Choral Evensong with a guest Choir and a sermon from the Reverend Canon Andrew Piper, Precentor of Hereford Cathedral, followed by solemn Benediction.

Canon Maureen stated at the start of Conference that this week is a time for renewal for Vergers, to be quiet together and apart, to worship, to develop the feelings of a kind of retreat. A Pilgrimage away from the busy lives we all lead.

To expand further on the lectures/seminars I will begin with the first, entitled 'Theology, Worship & Architecture – a progression'. Given by our National Chaplain, Canon Maureen, we were led from the earliest days following Christ's Ascension, with its very informal gatherings using friends' homes right through the centuries to this present day. The progression of how Churches first came about, the manner in which services developed into more formal settings and the rise of the Priesthood to lead the people in worship from earth to heaven. Canon Maureen produced many wonderful slides with which she emphasised her points throughout, and this article is certainly not sufficient space for me to fully portray the vast amount of detail given, which was riveting. Hopefully this lecture will be published at some future date.

The second lecture entitled 'The Life of Christ in Art' sadly I was unable to attend but hopefully one of my colleagues is going to produce a precis for either this edition or the next. The third lecture, entitled, 'Stained-Glass Windows' was presented by Nicola Hopwood; a renowned local artist who has received many commissions to produce stunning modern stained-glass windows. Nicola had brought with her many differing samples of glass in all shapes and sizes which she passed around the audience to feel and hold up to the light. Light being one of the three most important ingredients necessary for a successful piece of art, the other two being coloured glass and lead. Accompanied by many enrapturing slides of stained glass throughout the centuries Nicola entranced her audience of Vergers, who most certainly do already work within the right type of buildings that hold such magnificent works of art, - all of its aims being to help glorify God through imagery.

There were a number of occasions when members were able to swim, walk the hills or just relax at Conference or at the nearby local. On a lighter note, I mustn't forget the annual fun evening, this year it was the showing of the film, 'Mary Poppins' at which members were encouraged to sing, laugh and dress up in appropriate costumes. Vergers love dressing up as long as the congregations don't object. Suitable attire always, of course.

To round off this year's Conference Canon Maureen returned to the theme of the Pilgrim at the Closing Eucharist and most generously produced for all of us a full-sized shell, similar to the famous Santiago de Compostela Pilgrim Shells. These all had strings attached by which Canon Maureen proceeded to place around all our necks at the altar steps. We were all instructed to go forward on our pilgrimage into our daily lives as we continue to follow Christ within our work, our friendships and our worship.

Thank you to everyone for helping to develop this into such a pleasant and happy Conference. This also has become the Great Networking of Vergers; essential for our survival as a Guild. Therefore book early and save money for next year's conference.

Phil A M Dunne
Conference Correspondent



CONFERENCE PHOTO ALBUM



VISIT THE GUILD FACEBOOK TO SEE MORE PICTURES

PICTURES COURTESY OF JAMES ARMSTRONG, PHILIP DUNNE & STEPHEN HAUDE



CONFERENCE PHOTO ALBUM CONTINUED



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PICTURES COURTESY OF JAMES ARMSTRONG, PHILIP DUNNE & STEPHEN HAUDE



On 22nd we met at Towneley Hall Park and Gardens near Birmingham. The weather was lovely all day. The Hall dates back over 500 years and was home to the Towneley family until it was sold to Burnley Corporation in 1901. Since then furniture and art has been collected in keeping with the time the family lived there. The house has two wings with buttresses and the entrance hall between has two staircase towers. The oldest surviving part dates from 1450. The towers and north wing date from 1620, the entrance hall dates from 1720, the porch being added in the 19th century.

The windows in the south wing have lovely old glass, some of which is by James Wyatt who also carried out work at Windsor Castle. The entrance hall was chosen by Richard Towneley in the 16th/17th century. In the north wing there is a window which allows you to see down into the kitchen which extends over two floors, the new wing was added in 1902. In 1903 the Burnley Town Council decided to keep the Hall and Grounds open as a permanent Art Gallery and Museum and temporary exhibitions continue to this day, much of the collection there now has been bought with a bequest by local brewer, Edward Stocks Massey and this is still used to conserve and add to these collections.

In 1726 the great hall and roundels the Baroque entrance hall and there are statues over the fireplace and a large table left behind in 1902. The south wing is part of the old building, it has thick walls. It was altered into three rooms in 1760. First is the dining room with underfloor heating and a marble fireplace. The second acts as an Art Gallery with furniture around the walls. The long gallery is panelled and has an old spiral staircase and four bedrooms for the servants. The family lived in the north wing. The gallery acted as a meeting place, with furniture made in Lancashire, Cheshire and the Calder Valley. The Art Galleries hold a collection of Victorian paintings in the north wing and were created out of bedrooms, a nursery and the library. The Art Room has ceramics, glass and art work of more recent age. The Whalley Abbey vestments are on display outside the Chapel and were brought here after the dissolution of Whalley Abbey. They consist of a chasuble, a maniple and a dalmatic dating from 1390 - 1420.

THE CHAPEL, dating from 1473 - 1540 was moved in the 18th century and used by Catholics from the area. Behind the font is a papier mâché head of Colonel Towneley, who was hanged, drawn and quartered as a Jacobite rebel leader. The altar was made in Antwerp in the 1520's, it was moved to Ashdown and only returned in 1968 and the Towneley family have a private Mass on All Hallows Eve every year. The Arms and Monogram of the family are on the chancel walls and panelling. The font cover dates from the 15th century and came from Scarisbrick Hall. There is also a 15th century chest said to come from Manchester Cathedral.

THE FAMILY DINING ROOM, dates from the 16th and 17th centuries. It now has a Caen stone fireplace dating from 1714 - 1742 with a still-life painting of similar date above it. THE EXHIBITION ROOM, with a fireplace dating from the 1720's, was originally two bedrooms, it is used for temporary exhibitions. THE OLD BURNLEY ROOM shows examples of Life in Burnley from 1906 to the 1960's. THE OLD TOWNELEY ROOM, part of a tower, tells the history of the family. THE MILITARY ROOM houses the History of the East Lancashire Regiment. THE SERVANTS HAL, consisting of the kitchen, scullery, cook's room, house-keeper's room, china closet and steward's room, with bells in the passageway to summon servants to various rooms. The kitchen has a stone floor and was modernised in 1820 when it had a coal-fired range put in and later a back-boiler and spits above. It has been unchanged since 1901. THE OLD BREWHOUSE AND LAUNDRY, dating from 1791, is now a Museum of Local History. There are also stables, cowsheds and dairies. The Museum was set up in the 1960's when local buildings and industries were disappearing. There is also a Natural History Centre in the walled garden.

We had lunch in the Café and explored the Shop and Garden Centre. There are also Woodland Walks and Picnic Areas. We enjoyed our day very much in lovely weather.

Anne Woodward
Branch Correspondent



BLACKPOOL FESTIVAL LITE GROUP PHOTO & THE CEGV ROCK





MARCH METING

On Saturday 18th March a service of Holy Communion attended by twenty members and guests followed by our AGM was held in Saint Mildred's Church, Canterbury. During the service two new members, Lorely Brimson of Saint Mary de Castro, Dover, in the Diocese of Canterbury and Kevin Webster of saint Stephens Church, Tonbridge, in the Diocese of Rochester, were admitted by our Chaplain, Canon Clare Edwards, Canon Pastor of the Cathedral. Our own retired Organist, Philip Cheetham, played for us and our Chairman read the Lesson. We all then joined in the Vergers' Prayer and the Eucharist continued after the admissions. We were given a delicious luncheon by Viv Woods, the Queen Bee of the social side of Saint Mildred's, aided by Vi Ford and Doris Davis. Our thanks go to the Churchwardens, Simon Woods and Margaret Northy for letting us all have the service and AGM there, also to all those who made it such an enjoyable day, with a cuppa and a nibble at the end and a good natter after all the official business was over.

Saint Mildred's Church dates back to Saxon times. A very bad rainwater leak through the roof caused us to replace the tiling outside and falling roof infill made it very necessary to replace it with new, in doing so we uncovered a beautiful mediæval roof of local Oak, with king posts and some beautiful carved octagon work in the trusses. It is wonderful to have such a find in Canterbury as so many ancient buildings were lost in 1940 and 1942 in the bombing and burning of the City in World War II. It turned out to be the second oldest roof in Canterbury after the two "Pepperpot" rooves of Saint Andrew and Saint Anselm in the Cathedral from the time of Archbishop Lanfranc. For many years it was a thatched roof and a couple of the stay nails were found that held the thatch in place.



MAY MEETING

On Wednesday 31st May members of the Branch and friends were invited to Saint Stephen's Church, Tonbridge, by the Verger, Kevin Webster, for a service of Holy Communion followed by a visit to All Saints Church, Tudeley-cum-Capel to see the many beautiful windows designed by Marc Chagall.

After arriving and being given a mug of tea by a member of the congregation, I turned round and was met by the sight of a light blue clerical shirt filled by a young man, hands in his pockets, a smile on his face, talking to a member of the congregation. He was Father Eric Hornbuckle from Woodbridge, Virginia, over here and at Saint Stephen's until the end of June. The service was a very happy one, though different and intriguing as no vestments were worn and a big bun was used for bread along with some very strong wine given to all those who received Communion. I just loved Father Eric, hands in pockets, stumping about as he talked to us, no pulpit, no incense, and the attentive service and Bible readings. Knowing it all so well, I had not used my order of service and got one or two surprised glances. Following the service we made our way to The Poacher and Partridge at Tudeley for an enjoyable lunch, before making our way to All Saints.

All Saints is a lovely little church which possesses a unique collection of windows by Marc Chagall, in memory of Sarah d'Avigdor-Goldsmid who was drowned in the Solent in 1963, her family and friends, who wished to have a tangible and lasting memorial to her, set in motion the reordering of the building in a lovely, simple design. Sir Henry d'Avigdor-Goldsmid commissioned Chagall to design and make the east window in Sarah's memory. Both Sir Henry and Chagall were both Jewish, but Lady d'Avigdor-Goldsmid and her two daughters were all Anglican, worshipping at All Saints. They had visited the Chagall Exhibition in the Louvre in 1961, and loved what they had seen there. The windows were made by Charles May of Reims, and the memory of the admiration that the girls had shown was the inspiration that led Sir Henry to commission the window that replaced the original plain three-light east window.





CANTERBURY BRANCH NEWS CONTINUED....



When Chagall saw the window in its true setting he exclaimed 'C'est magnifique, je le ferai tous! (*It's magnificent, I shall do them all!*) This he did, and they were the very first that he did in England, though Sir Henry was concerned as Chagall was then in his 80's and getting frail. He died in March 1985 aged ninety-eight.

There are some lovely memorial brasses to Thomas and Alice Stydol, and George Fane and his wife are buried in the chancel. The reordering in 1966, overseen by John Piper, brought forth a few interesting things including mediæval rafters near the east window.

I would like to thank Kevin for organising such a nice day for us all and Father Eric and the congregation of Saint Stephen's for their welcome.

Cherry Johnstone
Branch Correspondent



CHICHESTER, GUILDFORD & PORTSMOUTH BRANCH NEWS



On Thursday 11th May, a very select quintet met at the Amberley Chalk Pits Heritage Museum, near Arundel, West Sussex. Fortunately, the weather was kind so we were able to wander the length and breadth of the grounds, with the odd free bus trip in the kind of vehicle that all but one of us knew in our youth. Considerable work has been done in the last few years. A pleasant lunch was devoured in the (comparatively) new restaurant before looking in more workshops, smithies or yards. Being a week-day some of the bus and train services were limited but the train took us to the far end and a newer, larger exhibition of items used by our Grandmothers, which now look really archaic and plain dangerous! Again, being mid-week, only a few of the artisans were actually practising their skills but we had plenty of fresh air and mild exercise.

On Tuesday 21st June, a dozen of us met at "Look & Sea", a fish restaurant in Littlehampton. No fish could have been fresher than what we consumed that day! After some free time to enjoy the sea air, or visit the shops, we made our way to Saint. Mary's, Yapton, where we were greeted by the sound of bells - a lightweight ring of six bells. After a said Evensong, the bell ringers offered those of us who are campanologists the chance to ring. Two opted out due to the heat, which was in the top 20's! But three of us were glad to join them. (Two of us had been there many years ago on one of our Tower Ringers Outings.) Our number had increased to fourteen as two had missed the lunch due to Parish duties. A strawberry and cream tea was taken under the trees in the Churchyard, so it was pleasantly cool.

Tuesday 11th July, saw six of us robed at Saint Andrew's Church, Moulsecomb, just north-east of Brighton, for our Annual Admission Service where we welcomed their Verger, Leveson Kandi, into our Branch. The actual admission took place during the Parish weekly Evening Communion Service and Father Tom Cameron, for a number of years Canon's Verger at Saint Paul's Cathedral, stepped in as our Branch Chaplain had a prior engagement. Father Tom delivered the sermon and assisted at the service.

After disrobing, we were greeted by a wonderful spread, which gave those of us with 30 - 45 mile journey, strength to meet the traffic and the odd diversion due to accidents in the pouring rain, but in Britain we have weather rather than a climate!

Sheila J Ford - Branch Correspondent



DURHAM & NEWCASTLE WITH CARLISLE BRANCH NEWS



On Thursday 20th April, a select few met at Newcastle Cathedral at 11.00 a.m. when Gordon Scott, our Chairman, gave us a guided tour of the Cathedral. He gave us a look into the history of the building and how it had been used for many purposes, including housing Scottish prisoners during the 18th century.

On Tuesday 23rd May, we met at Saint Mary and Saint Cuthbert Church, Chester le-Street, for a tour of the church and Anker's House Museum, with Mike Rutter, a local historian, followed by lunch in the Community Centre.

On Wednesday 13th June, we met at Saint Paul's Church, Jarrow, for a history of the church by Jimmy Guy, and a Eucharist Service followed by tea and biscuits.

For our July meeting on Thursday 27th we gathered at Andrew's House Station on the Tanfield Railway for a coffee in the café followed by a train ride. We then proceeded to Sunnyside, where we enjoyed an Italian lunch at Sorella, Sorella (*Sister, Sister*).

On Tuesday 15th August, we attended Saint Ebba's Church, Beadnell, where we watched a video of a Time Team dig at the original site of the church, followed by a talk by the Churchwarden, Lynne Angus, which covered the life of Saint Ebba, as well as the church. This was followed by a celebration of the Eucharist led by the Area Dean, the Reverend Canon Judy Glover. After this we had an enjoyable lunch at the Craster Arms Hotel.

Patricia Foster
Branch Correspondent





We begin this article by recalling the Branch Quiet Day during April, at the House of the Open Door, Childswickham, within the Cotswolds. Led by the Reverend Mike Vockins, eleven members of the Branch once again took time out after the totally engaging efforts they had given to their Churches during Lent and Easter in order to receive a most welcome refreshment of the mind and soul. If ever there were a place to relax and reflect at then this Christian centre is certainly high on the list.

On 8th June many from the Branch made their way into beautiful rural Herefordshire to discover and enjoy three very different historical Churches situated between Ledbury and Ross-on-wye. All three Churches are part of the Cider Group of Parishes – and it won't be difficult to guess what abundance of tipples is available in this area. We were warmly welcomed by the Rector, the Reverend Howard Mayell and his associate, the Reverend John Watkins we were genuinely treated as honoured guests by these two excellent Priests. I cannot express enough the care and the hospitality shown towards us and feel that the parishioners of this Parish are most fortunate to be led and loved by these gentlemen. What could have been a slightly indifferent day was made into a most riveting afternoon concluding at the nearby new home of one of Worcester Cathedral's former Voluntary Vergers, Elaine Spalding, a past Pro-chancellor of the university of Worcester. Elaine had organised the day and if for no other reason it was a chance for her ex-colleagues from the Cathedral to greet their first-class friend and wish her well.

All three Churches visited are so very different from one another; (see photos). The first port of call being to Saint Bartholomew's Parish Church, Much Marcle, an immaculately preserved, supported, presented and loved example of a wealthy past which also boasts an ancient Yew within its grounds and reputed to be 1,500 years old.

Then on to Aylton Village Church, originally a Chapel of Ease, the nave and chancel in one, with its Norman origins; it has the appearance of a former barn converted into a needed village Church. In fact, Reverend Howard stated that of all his Churches this was his favourite and the one he felt closest to God, and we could feel what he meant being within its walls.

Finally, on to Putley Church, another absolute gem. It's described by other writers as the most delightfully situated country Church in England, and it is. Once inside the lights were turned on to slowly, but with awe inspiring delight, reveal many treasures; none more so than the most stunning reredos of mosaic and alabaster. A masterpiece you would expect in a Cathedral so all the more worth visiting. Thankyou to all who arranged this outing.



Also during June a lovely evening and further happy occasion for the Branch was being able to attend the annual BBQ held at Jean and Tony Day's home in Tewkesbury. This couple are truly special hosts and make a great effort to make it a delightful event. However, before us juniors arrive a committee meeting takes place with all its members behaving so very somberly, even if they were sat outside with cold drinks and nibbles pretending to be serious as they discussed affairs of the Branch.

It being the hottest day of the year nearly all were dressed down to relaxing garments as we enjoyed the delicious fruits of Jean and Tony's hard work. Although it has to be said most were trying to avoid standing anywhere near the outdoor grill so it was a case of 'quick they're ready - get the meat out of the fryer and move back ...' Funds were raised by the usual raffle which saw nearly all receive at least one prize, although in this it must have been anyone named Philip's unlucky day.

Conference will be the next big gathering.

Phil A M Dunne
Branch Correspondent



This will be a very short report as a time of quiet within the Branch is upon us. I must admit I do have to think back to June to let you know what we have been up to. We met on Monday 5th June at Bury Saint Edmunds Cathedral, in my last report we were greeted with "hailstones" after our last meeting, this time it was "wind and cold", anyone with a hairpiece - look out.

The Branch members met up in one of the side chapels where we had a short Act of Worship which was also the day for celebrating: Boniface (Wynfrith) of Crediton Bishop, Apostle of Germany, Martyred in 754. The service was conducted by our Chaplain, afterwards we held the Branch meeting to catch up with news within the Branch and also from Central Council. News from Norwich Branch is that they are still continuing for a further year, which is good news, hopefully they can attract new members to boost their membership. On June 18th, Winesham Church held a Dedication of the Church within their 11.00 a.m. Service, they have recently had interior work completed to improve conditions for the congregation, one of the Church's that our Chaplains Reverends Alan and Catherine Forsdike look after.

Whilst at Bury I thought that rather than have a photo of the Cathedral I would have a wander around and came across the following in the gardens: A Silver Cone with a plaque that reads - 'This garden is the venue for the Annual Holocaust Memorial Day Service held each year on 27th January for all victims of genocide. It also commemorates the massacre of 57 Jewish residents near to this place on Palm Sunday 19th March 1190'. Photos of: 'The Wicker Crown' and a 'Wolf and Crown'. Now there is a little bit of a story attached to both of the above as they are situated in the middle of busy road Islands, I had to risk life and limb dodging vehicles to gain access to both Islands but it was the only place to get a decent photo of both.



Well that's the end of my short report. Until next time God Bless.

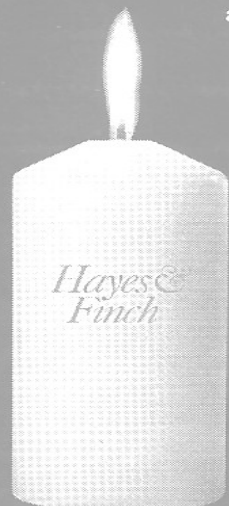
Jean Cobb
Branch Correspondent

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BRANCH QUIET DAY AT LAUNDE ABBEY



On Saturday 20th May I was picked up by Clive and Kate Mobbs to then journey to Launde Abbey for our Branch Quiet Day. When we got there I was aware of the gravel path and wondered how I would manage it, but, vergers caring for each other as always, as I had Kate's arm to hold on to and my stick, so I need not have worried. We were served with tea/ coffee and biscuits on our arrival. Sadly, there were only four members and our Branch Chaplain with his wife in attendance, but we made the best of it and proceeded to the Oak Room for our first talk given by our Branch Chaplain, Canon John Tonkin, entitled "Worship" (see below), followed by a meditation.



"WORSHIP"

***The word 'worship' occurs 67 times in our English New Testament.
In 58 of the 67 it is used to translate the Greek word 'PROSKUNEO' meaning to run towards with a kiss.***

MEDITATION

***In my daily life what encourages me to 'run towards God and kiss Him'?
Are there times in my daily life when I do not feel like 'running towards God to kiss Him'?***

After this I had a walk outside, avoiding the path where possible and sat looking at the sheep and taking pictures. At noon we proceeded to the Chapel. In recent years the Abbey have had a lift installed and I got on , after following the instructions, and made room for others. But being Chairman, I was treated like a VIP and allowed to have it all to myself, which was very nice. We held a service of Holy Communion in the Chapel and I lit a candle and prayed for myself, which was a change for me as I had always prayed for others before, (*I hope it works.*) Following the service we had lunch, then sat and talked for some time. Clive and Kate told us about their Ruby Wedding celebrations, which they held on board a Pullman train with carriages behind on Sunday 23rd April. We enjoyed listening to what they did, boarding the train at Loughborough and travelling to Leicester North with family and friends, with plenty of food and drink of course.

The afternoon was free for meditation or walking, or maybe even a nap. One of our members began to just stroll slowly whilst watching the sheep, but soon walked faster when some of the cattle began to follow her. At 3.15 p.m. we proceeded to the Chapel once more for our second talk entitled "Disciple, Apostle, Priest" (see below), followed by a meditation.

"DISCIPLE, APOSTLE, PRIEST"

Mark chapter 3, verses 13 - 15

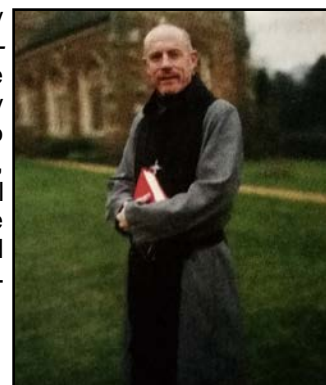
***'That they might be with Him - Disciples - MATHETES (Learners).
'That He might send them out - APOSTOLLOS (Someone who is sent).
Priest - (BRIDGE) - In touch with God and the People.***

Nowhere in the New Testament is the word Priest used in the singular when referring to Christians.

MEDITATION

***How do I keep in touch with God or allow Him to keep in touch with me?
How do I keep in touch with others in such a way that I can understand how they feel and pray for them?***

Following this we held a service of Evening Prayer for the day, taken from a book of Daily Prayers from Common Worship. I read the First Lesson, Isaiah chapter 52, verses 7 - 14 , and the Second Lesson from the Epistle of Peter was read by Margaret Tonkin, wife of our Chaplain. Canon John had organized the talks and meditations, which were very helpful and we gave them much thought throughout the day. We then made our way to the kitchen for afternoon tea and some very nice cake. We met the Deputy Warden, Chris Webb, during the day, he is a member of Saint Dunstan's Abbey, an Eccumenical Benedictine Community based in Colorado. He has been at Launde Abbey for three years. He wears a habit, which is traditional for monastics. I would liked to have asked him about his habit, especially what he wore around his belt, which represented something which I knew at one time.



CONTINUED ON PAGE 17



After tea, we thanked Canon John for leading us during the day with the gift of a bottle of wine. We then made our way home, arriving at approximately 4.30 p.m. tired, but relaxed and peaceful after a lovely day in the countryside. I would like to thank Clive and Kate Mobbs for ferrying me to and from the Abbey, also Canon John for informing me about the lift, which was very useful as well as the rest of our little group.

JUNE MEETING



SAINT PHILIP & SAINT JAMES' CHURCH, RATBY, THROUGH THE SEASONS

On Monday 19th June ten members attended Saint Philip and Saint James' Church, Ratby, for a service of Holy Communion led by the Reverend Cynthia Hebdon, a retired Priest from Leicester. As it was a very hot evening we decided not to robe. During the intercessions we remembered Ann Anderson and Sandra Bloom, both of whom were not well enough to come. We enjoyed refreshments after the service provided by Sandra Slater, the Verger. Our Chairman thanked everyone afterwards, especially Reverend Cynthia Hebdon for taking the service.



A bit of mediæval history. Ratby Church is set on high ground and stands as a landmark for the people living in the countryside round about. The oldest part of the building is the lowest section of the tower which dates from Early English period. The tower's height was raised in the fifteenth century and the top section houses the present ring of eight bells, the oldest and heaviest of which dates from 1367. The lancet windows below the clock faces and the plain pointed tower arch inside the building date from 1230 - 1250.

The greater part of the present building is in the Decorated style, and was constructed nearly 100 years after the tower, between 1300 - 1350. The church has some beautiful traceried windows in the nave, chancel and aisle. The east window of the aisle is known as the butterfly window and the central window of the nave contains fragments of ancient stained glass.

Hood moulds exist on the inside of the arches of the windows of the south wall, and there are some interesting mediæval carvings on the hood stops on the outside of the south doorway, which is beautifully decorated with squared flowers or fleurons.

There is an unfinished band of flowers carved on the capital of the pillar from which the timber War Memorial screen extends, indicating that what was intended was never finished. The reason for this is the Black Death which swept through England from 1349 - 1356, so reducing the population that labour could not be found for the work.

In 1815 a fire in the church destroyed all the Registers apart from one Burial Register which was badly damaged. A proposal in 1878 to replace the church with a new building because extensive repairs were required was met with great unwillingness on the part of the Parishioners. The Earl of Stamford started a subscription list and by 1881 the main repairs had been completed and so we still have the fine old church at Ratby, a place of Christian worship for over 715 years.

JULY MEETING

On Monday 24th July, the Eve of Saint James the Apostle, fourteen members turned out to a very welcome sound of pealing bells from the Church of Kyneburgha, Castor, near Peterborough, for a service of Holy Communion led by the Reverend David Ridgeway, the Rector. The Epistle was read by the Verger, David Edwards, who also led us in procession and acted as server and administered the chalice. Refreshments were served after the service.



Les Mitchelmore, our Area Leader, gave us an update from Central Council about the closure of some Branches. He also brought us a suggestion that we host a Festival next year, possibly in September, in Leicester to include the Cathedral and other Churches and the King Richard III Centre. Most were in favour. Afterwards our Chairman thanked everyone for coming, the Reverend David Ridgeway for taking the service, David Edwards for hosting us, and the Bell Ringers for heralding our service beforehand.

Marjorie Thomas, Dip GV
Brach Chairman & Correspondent



“OH! WE DO LIKE TO BE . . .”

What better outing than a trip to the seaside and a fish and chip supper? So it was that on a July evening seventeen members of the Branch visited Saint Matthew’s Church, Skegness.

After arriving and a catch-up chat, the Reverend Richard Holden led us in prayer. He then told us something of the history and development of the Town and Church.

The town owes its status as a seaside holiday resort to the 10th Earl of Scarborough who owned much of the land it



stands on. With the arrival of the railway in 1873 Scarborough along with his business agent planned to transform Skegness into a resort town. For three decades he helped to spur the town's growth with his plans, which included constructing a large pier. So Saint Matthew’s Church is set amid tree-lined promenades, parks, gardens, houses and hotels. A village of just 500 people in 1850, the town grew to 2,000 permanent residents by the turn of the century.



The Jolly Fisherman was created in 1908 by artist John Hassall to promote the resort. And ever since, the Jolly Fisherman has been doing a jolly good job too as Skegness is among the top five visited seaside resorts.

Designed by James Fowler in the 1880’s, the building is in the Early English style, with a polygonal apse and a bell turret with tubular bells. As the building stands on sand it could not take the weight of a traditional tower and bells.

To me the building has something of a pre-Raphaelite feel to it, and we enjoyed looking around especially studying the charming stained glass windows. The three bays at the west-end of the church have been glassed in to make a social area, with a west-end extension housing offices, kitchen and toilets. It has become a meeting place and an information hub both for holiday makers and for people to have retired to the town. There is much outreach work and the congregation is growing.

And so to supper. Orders had been taken when we arrived and thanks to Seaview Fisheries they arrived hot and delicious. A big ‘thank you’ to verger Angela Baxter and her team of helpers who looked after us so well.

Colin Beevers
Branch Correspondent

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SUMMER VISIT TO FLAMBOROUGH

On Monday 2nd July, the York Branch of the Guild went to Flamborough. The business meeting covered issues of raising awareness of vergers in community settings and child protection training in the different Dioceses. Also, more regular meetings in a central location with public transport links.

Welcomed at the Church of Saint Oswald by Christine, the Churchwarden and Pauline, the Virger, we shared Holy Communion led by the Branch Chaplain, Reverend Marian Gardiner. The sermon based on Ephesians chapter 2, verses 9 - 22 reminded us that a Vicar is transient and the Church is for the people.

The Clergy serve the people and the Virger serves the Clergy. We were encouraged to be the Virgers we are trained to be and to do the job we were called to do. As Guild members we should both encourage and support each other, sharing in worship and fellowship. Remembering that, the Virger is a vital cog and should, therefore, never be undervalued.

Saint Oswald's is a unique building and possesses some very interesting intricate wood carving which used to be in Bridlington Priory and beautiful stained-glass windows. The Soldier and Knight, Marmaduke Constable the Little is laid to rest in the sanctuary, he died in 1530, said to have choked on a frog. We then repaired to The Seabirds for lunch. Scrumptious!



The afternoon was spent visiting the Lifeboat Station on the South Standing. Like all RNLI it is run by volunteers dedicated to saving lives. The lifeboat has been out 20 times this year saved 25 lives and 2 dogs. It is an inshore lifeboat and it is manoeuvred by a newly refurbished big blue tractor from Hartlepool.

Towards the end of July there is an annual Songs of Praise Service in the Lifeboat Station with the blessing of the boat and the crew.

A late-afternoon visit to the Dog and Duck, a quaint little pub with a sunny beer garden and a good choice of beer. An excellent stay overnight at the North Star Hotel and a walk along the white chalk pebble beach to the light house finished of an outstanding visit.

Su Graves
Branch Correspondent



THE GUILD AT 85 YEARS



I am reminded of the words penned by the then Archbishop's of Canterbury and York in 2007 when the Church of England Guild of Vergers celebrated the Diamond Anniversary of its formation:

'Vergers are almost as much a part of the Great British Collective Unconscious as Vicars. From Charles Dickens' Edwin Drew through to Dad's Army, they are there, hovering (or hoovering) around the shrines of our imagination. Many of a certain generation in Church-life will have stories of the great and terrible Vergers of the past (stories of the punctuation of Evensong with the extremely audible reprimand to tourists 'You can't come in 'ere, there's a service going on').

But now the stereotypes belong to the distant past. The best Vergers have always been creative, and even pastoral servants of the life of the Churches they have cared for. More than ever these days, the job in which Vergers are going to be involved is in some of the most crucial work of the Church in its reaching out to and welcoming those on its margins. This is going to require huge gifts of stamina, imagination and spiritual steadiness. The Church of England's fortunate to have so many men and women gifted in these ways who give themselves to ministry'.

At the same time +John of Lincoln, one-time Chaplain of the Exeter Branch, whose father was a Verger and one-time Secretary of the Somerset & Avon Branch wrote:

Vergers have been described as the Church's Cinderella Service - presumably with the Clergy as the Ugly Sisters. To a certain extent this is true. Vergers have turned discretion and unobtrusiveness into an art form. They ensure all is done decently and in order so that Ministers can fulfil their roles effectively and people can worship undisturbed. it is a vital role which although often hidden, must not be taken for granted.

These statements were true ten years ago and are perhaps more so these days in our eighty-fifth year, when we see some deterioration in our traditional Diaconal role. Bishop John alludes to the sentiments expressed in Acts chapter 6 - individuals chosen to carry out essential supportive roles, whilst Their Graces paraphrase Ephesians chapter 4 - the essence and importance of using differing God-given talents to propel that which primarily is the engine, the power house which is the Church.

With changes within the leadership of our Guild: Chairman and Training Officer; we thank God for those who have served us in these roles in the past and pray that the new Officers will lead us so that we can develop and at last as Vergers **We shall go to the Ball.**

John G Campbell, BEM, FBGU, FCEGV
Overseas Liaison Officer

Central Council Contacts

NATIONAL CHAIRMAN

Mr John Shearer, MA, Dip GV (Honoris)
E-mail: CEGVNatChair@gmail.com

TRAINING OFFICER

Mr Robert Beattie, MA
E-mail: CEGVTrainOff@gmail.com

GENERAL SECRETARY

Mr Stephen Stokes, Dip GV Hons
E-mail: CEGVGenSec@gmail.com

TRAINING REGISTRAR

Mrs Susan Ansell, Dip GV
E-Mail: CEGVTrainReg@gmail.com

NATIONAL TREASURER

Dr Andrew Page, MA, DPhil, FCEGV
E-mail: CEGVNatTreas@gmail.com

COMMUNICATIONS OFFICER

Mr Marek J Barden, OLJ
E-mail: CEGVCommsOff@gmail.com

NATIONAL CHAPLAIN

Canon Maureen Palmer, BSc, PhD, Dip Theol (Oxon), FCEGV
E-mail: CEGVNatChap@gmail.com

WELFARE OFFICER

Mrs Irene Money, MBE, Dip GV
E-mail: CEGVWelfare@gmail.com

LIAISON OFFICER

Mrs Denise Mead
E-mail: CEGVLiaison@gmail.com

OVERSEAS LIAISON OFFICER

Mr John Campbell, BEM, FBGU, FCEGV
E-mail: CEGVOverseas@gmail.com

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