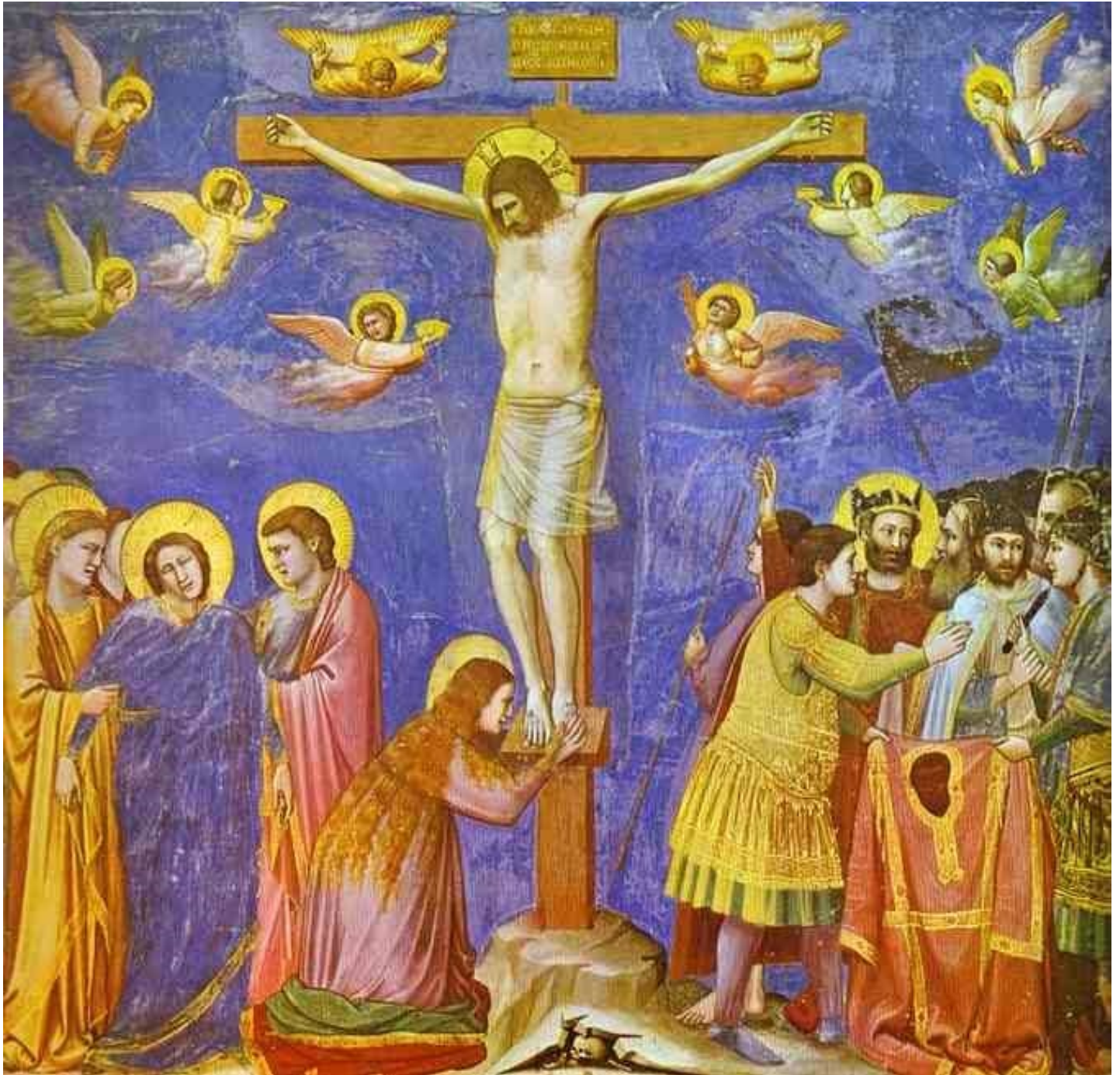


# The Virger

Spring 2018  
Issue 298



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

The Official Magazine of the Church of England Guild of Vergers





Welcome to the Spring 2018 edition of *The Verger*. Items for inclusion should be sent 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!**

**As you will read in our Chairman's letter, we are looking towards the future, this will include significant changes to the magazine. We will be writing to all Branches in due course to explain the proposed changes and the future style of the content.**

Marek J Barden, OLJ

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

## PLEASE NOTE

**THE DEADLINE FOR THE NEXT EDITION IS:  
SATURDAY 19<sup>th</sup> MAY 2018**



*THE GUILD SHOP*



The Guild Shop has Guild branded articles available to Fellows, Full and Associate Members. (Non-Members are invited to make contact with the General Secretary about joining the Guild: [CEGVGenSec@gmail.com](mailto:CEGVGenSec@gmail.com))

These will add a little something to every Verger's uniform, whether it's a Guild Fleece, designed to help the Verger battle with the Medieval heating on a cold morning or a Guild Gown Badge to spice up your official Vergers robes. The Shop has something for you, including wonderful Verger Cards in packs of 10 and pens to write in them.

For more information on the shops products, to order a catalogue or place an order contact:

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**FRONT COVER: The Crucifixion, by Giotto, circa 1300.**



## NATIONAL CHAIRMAN'S LETTER



As we head in to 2018, we are still in the depths of Winter. The snowdrops and crocuses are popping up out of the ground along with some early daffodils. All is pointing to Spring and new beginnings.

At the last Standing Committee, we carried out the usual business and then started to look towards new beginnings. This is important in all organisations that new ideas should spring up. If this does not happen, there is grave danger that we stagnate and die.

Having just recovered from one of our major Festivals, amid colds and flu, in no time at all, we enter into the forty days of Lent which helps to focus our minds in preparation for the joyful Festival of Easter.

As we head into Spring and our new beginnings, I hope that we all enjoy the Spring and the beauty that our Lord has provided. We must take time to reflect on new growth and life as we look towards the future.

**John Shearer**



## SAVE THE DATE ~ SOUTHERN PROVINCE FESTIVAL 2018



**CHICHESTER ~ 10<sup>th</sup> – 11<sup>th</sup> SEPTEMBER**

*Continuing our series of Festival Lite's. You have been to the North East, North west, now try the Best.*

### PROGRAMME

**MONDAY 10th:** Arrive in Chichester & check into hotels.

**17.30:** Attend Evensong at the Cathedral, *no reserved seats, no robes.*

**19.00:** Gather at a restaurant of your choice for dinner at your *own expense.*

**TUESDAY 11<sup>th</sup>:** 10.00 Board Coaches for our Journey to:

### BOXGROVE PRIORY

A thirteenth century gem. Parish Church and former Priory, beautifully reordered and restored.

### ARUNDEL

Where we visit both the Roman Catholic Cathedral and the nearby Saint Nicholas Church, a shared building housing both Anglican and Roman Catholic places of devotion, where we say Mid-day prayers before we stroll down to the town, with it's many opportunities for retail therapy, admire the Castle from the outside, home of the Duke of Norfolk and have lunch, at your *own expense.*

### LANCING COLLEGE

The largest school Chapel in the world, where we will be greeted by the Virger and say Evening Prayer.

### RETURN TO CHICHESTER

Arrive earlier or stay longer, there is lots to do and see in Sussex. Perhaps Bognor beckons or the bright lights of Brighton. For more information about Chichester, places to visit and stay, visit: [visitchichester.org](http://visitchichester.org). There will be a modest charge to cover the hire of the coach.

*While you are in the area why not visit Arundel Wetland Centre, Arundel Museum, Tangmere Military Museum, Tinwood Winery, Fishbourne Roman Palace, Ann of Cleves House & Museum, Lewes Castle, Weald & Downland Rural Museum & lots of other places of interest.*



## NATIONAL CHAPLAIN'S LETTER



Dear Friends,

Greetings! I wish you all a holy Lent and a joyous Easter!

As I reflect on the life of Christ in the New Testament I become increasingly aware of the juxtaposition of Christ Emmanuel 'God with us', the precious gift to us, and the possibility of Christ living within us, such that we are, what Saint Paul calls 'en Christo', in Christ as a new creation. The seasons of Christmas and Epiphany are thus linked to those of Passiontide and Easter.

The Gospels remind us of the unity between God the Father and Jesus, his beloved Son. Reading Mark this year and remembering that the stories are perhaps the reminiscences of Peter, the text of the story is cut back to basics and yet, although Mark never uses the term of Emmanuel for Jesus, the relationship is implicit in almost every story that he tells.

Jesus is 'God with us' and as such he shows us:

1. The perfect image of the Father.
2. The one who does the work of his Father.
3. The one who is at perfect unity with the Father.

All of these images are more explicit in John's Gospel, but as we read and digest the writing of Mark, we have glimpses that these images are real. Emmanuel is the greatest gift to us for 'God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life [John: chapter 3, verse 16] or in the words of Saint Augustine:

'You would have suffered eternal death, had he not been born in time. Never would you have been freed from sinful flesh, had he not taken on the likeness of sinful flesh. You would have suffered everlasting unhappiness, had it not been for this mercy. You would never have returned to life, had he not shared your death. You would have been lost if he had not hastened to your aid. You would have perished if he had not come.'

This is what Emmanuel really means!

During the Passion we see the implication for Jesus as Emmanuel, God with us: in the pilgrimage from Palm Sunday through Holy Week to the Cross and on to the glory of the Resurrection and beyond. It is in Matthew's Gospel that Jesus promises the Disciples, 'I will be with you to the end of the world.' Because of Jesus' promise, we too can claim the promise for our own, such that in joy and sorrow, in pain and in suffering, in hope and in despair, the desert places of testing and the cool meadows of peace, God is with us, Emmanuel.

With so much suffering in the world, whether we think of Rohingya Muslims, the people of Gaza, the Middle East or of those who we love who suffer, we pray that as we journey to the Cross, our prayers may be with them and that they may know the comfort and the glory of God with us.

Plans are going ahead for Conference and I do hope you will consider attending for at least part of the time. If you are studying for the Diploma, attendance at one Conference is a condition for awarding the Diploma. Don't delay – sign up today and enjoy the worship, the fellowship and the learning!

I wish you all a very blessed and glorious Easter. With my love.

**Canon Maureen**



## FORTHCOMING NATIONAL VACANCIES



At the National AGM the following positions will be up for election, those who are interested in the roles are asked to submit a nominations form to the General Secretary (correctly filled out) and submit a photo and short bio to the Communications Officer – it was requested that this be done so that members might be able to better advise their Area Leader as to how they wish to be represented at the vote.

Please note that this does not exclude any person prior to the meeting standing with the correctly filled in nomination form, but Area Leaders may have already received instructions on how to vote.

- General Secretary (5 years) – Stephen Stokes is willing to re-stand, if nominated**
- Welfare Officer (3 years) – Irene Money is willing to re-stand, if nominated**
- Training Officer (3 years) – Robert Beattie is willing to re-stand, if nominated**
- Liaison Officer (3 years) – Denise Mead is willing to re-stand, if nominated**
- Conference Secretary (3 years) – Margaret Burston is willing to re-stand, if nominated**
- Guild Chronicler (3 years) – James Armstrong is willing to re-stand, if nominated**

While each of the above current Officers are willing to re-stand, this does not in any way preclude any Full Member (save that as General Secretary & Guild Chronicler who may be Associate Members) standing for a role above.

Should you wish any further information please speak to the General Secretary: [CEGVGenSec@gmail.com](mailto:CEGVGenSec@gmail.com) about the role (if you wish to speak to someone other than the General Secretary about the General Secretaries role then please contact the National Chairman: [CEGVNatChair@gmail.com](mailto:CEGVNatChair@gmail.com))



## R.I.P DEREK CHARLES KYTE



7<sup>th</sup> MAY 1927—23<sup>rd</sup> JUNE 2017

On 1<sup>st</sup> July 2017, two services took place to say farewell to Derek Charles Kyte. The first was held at Semmington Crematorium at 9 a.m. and was conducted by Father Derek Frost, Salisbury Branch Chaplain.

The second was a memorial service in the Church of Saint Martin, Bremhill. There was standing room only and the church was decorated with Derek's prized vegetables, which he was well known for.

A poem, 'Do not ask me to remember', was read by his daughter-in-law, Carole, who also gave a short eulogy which was entitled 'Memories of Derek'. Pete Waterman read a passage from the Bible, and the main eulogy was given by the Reverend Jim Scott, a short extract of which is below. In both services the Vergers' Prayer was included. Derek leaves a wife, Nancy, a son Mark and daughter-in-law Carole.

If anyone would like copies of Jim Scotts and Carole's eulogies and the poem please contact me via e-mail: barbara554taylor@btinternet.com.

### A SHORT EXTRACT FROM THE EULOGY GIVEN BY THE REVEREND JIM SCOTT

"It's quite difficult to comprehend how the work of one man can make such an impression on a village Church such as this. Difficult, but if you had had the pleasure of working with Derek for over thirty years, as I did, you will know what I mean. Totally efficient, totally reliable and unlike many of us (particular men, I'm told) he was an expert multi-tasker!

As Verger, Sacristan, Sidesman, Sexton, and for many years, Gravedigger, he excelled. And all done with a smile, well mostly (he didn't suffer others inefficiency gladly - I know -I often was! Especially in my early days!) And there was always that warm greeting to congregation and visitors alike. People always remarked on it.

He spent a good part of his life in Bremhill, the result of meeting and paying court to a very attractive young lady hair dresser from Bremhill who worked in Chippenham. The courtship was successful as they married in this Church in 1954, she was 21 he was 27, thus beginning a marriage that was to last over 60 years, all of which have been spent in this lovely village. But I'm jumping a few years!

To begin with, Derek and his young wife lived in part of what was then the Vicarage at Bremhill. This was for five years, following which came their long stay at 8 Lodowicks, where they were very happy, with Derek tending both the garden attached to the house and a large patch of ground a little way off. Here he indulged his favourite pastime of growing vegetables, including the largest onions you have already seen, although it has to be said that Nancy is now producing some excellent examples of her favourite vegetables in the smaller garden near the house - fine stuff.

How did he fit it all in? I don't know! He was I think one of the last of a rare breed. A villager through and through, and a devout Churchman, Derek was always willing to help out when asked. Right up until his later years he always seemed to have more energy than was natural, try keeping up with him when he was walking. Well into his eighties he would hurtle past our house on his way to Church, would shin up great long ladders to change a light bulb, even when we told him he shouldn't, in fact especially if we told him he shouldn't.

We all miss him. I miss his tall, welcoming figure in Church, and the chats we had about village life, I miss his great knowledge of Church matters, and his memories of the many characters, both in and out of Church, that he could recall. Thank you Derek, you'll be a hard act to follow! You will all have so many memories of him.

*From Babs Taylor  
Vice-Chair of the Salisbury Branch*



## 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**.



1933 – 2017

Canon Roy was born in Cheadle Hulme, Cheshire, where he spent most of his formative years, attending the local school and progressing on to the Grammar School (having passed his 11+ exams at the age of 10) and eventually gaining a place at Birmingham University, where he became proficient in languages. He was also gifted with musical attributes and was a member of the local Church (Saint Andrews) choir, from an early age and eventually took on the role of organist. He served his National Service in the Army and because of his linguistic abilities, especially Russian, he was promoted to the rank of Sergeant after only 8 weeks from joining!

He loved to travel and in 1963, on a trip to Austria, he met Jenny, who in July of 1965, was to become his wife. By now Roy was teaching and eventually became the Deputy Headmaster at a school in Maidenhead.

Upon his retirement he felt drawn back to the Church and with local support he became a Lay Reader and was later Ordained (at Christ Church Cathedral, Oxford), as an NSM in 1998 and carried out his ministry in the Maidenhead area. He was able to maintain his great love of gardening, the study of insects, 'train spotting' and music (to name but a few of his many interests).

Because of his fluency in languages, on this occasion French, he was asked to act as an interpreter at the Lambeth Conference of 1999 which resulted in his (and Jenny's) association with the church in Kenya especially in and around the Diocese of Taita Taveta (between Nairobi and Mombasa). At one stage he became the Principal at the Mombasa Bible College for 6 months. In recognition of his work in that area he was made a Canon in the Kenyan Church, of whom a number of colleagues and friends were present at Roy's service of Thanksgiving (held at his own Church of Saint Mary, Maidenhead, on Friday 19<sup>th</sup> January). Jenny continues with this African connection.

In 2006, the Oxford Branch was seeking a replacement Chaplain and Roy's name was put forward for the role. He was subsequently appointed and admitted into the Guild (in a ceremony at the then Elmore Abbey, Speen, by Dom Kenneth, OSB). Roy was very supportive of this Branch, attending the majority of social events and meetings (as his other commitments permitted) and to individuals, in a welfare capacity becoming – to many – a personal friend. He also attended Guild national functions such as the Festivals and the Annual Training Conference (for a day); his presence, in the early days, causing one or two raised eyebrows and enquiries as to 'why is he here?' - not the norm in those days for a Branch Chaplain to be in attendance! Roy fulfilled this role until his retirement in 2014, due to ill health, but continued as a member in the role of Branch Chaplain Emeritus.

Roy remained within our fellowship until the last few months before his death, but he has left many lasting memories for which we give thanks. Our thoughts and prayers are with Jenny, their 4 children and families.

*For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord. (Romans: chapter 8, verses 38 & 39)*

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



## 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.

**Our prayers are asked for:**

*Blackburn, Chester & Manchester: **Margaret Scott***

*Chichester, Guildford & Portsmouth: **Marilyn Lee***

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

*Ipswich: **Val Pizzey***

*Leicester & Peterborough: **Clifford Dunkley, Christine Fagg & Marjorie Thomas***

*London, Southwark & Chelmsford: **Ken Allen***

*Oxford: **Jeanne Scott***

*Saint Albans: **Peter Hudson***

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

*York: **George & Doreen Cook***

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

**R.I.P**

**Tom Cobley, Liverpool Branch & National Life Member**

**Reverend Canon Roy Taylor, Chaplain Emeritus of the Oxford Branch**

**John Taylor, Somerset & Avon Branch**



After a relatively quiet period for our Branch that is since the Blackpool gathering we finally had an excuse to meet. This was on the occasion of the Christmas Dinner which gave our members a much needed chance to meet up and enjoy each other's company.

For this special occasion we returned again to Crothorne House, the Worcester Diocese Retreat Centre, an ancient Tudor building with beams galore and open fires to greet. The only down side being that unfortunately it turned out to be one of the foggiest evening of the year with many having travelled from far and wide. However, we did not let this put us off as we joined together to relax, chat, feast upon excellent food and truly enjoy a festive occasion.



For our AGM, held upon the evening of the 5<sup>th</sup> February, we had an excellent change of venue. In order to prepare our minds and allow reflection we gathered within the stunning historical Quire of Worcester Cathedral for Choral Evensong, a service which should be prescribed on the National Health as a form of devout therapy. King John's remains lay close to us before the High Altar, an interesting reminder, in case it was needed, of even the mightiest on earth are humbled before God.

Following Evensong our formal meeting was held in the Guesten Conference Building situated within the Cathedral grounds. Upon completion of the main agenda we turned our attention towards the discussion of future possible events, a large number of suggestions were raised with the idea that we used specific meets to focus on developing positive themes connected to our own personal development as a group and as individuals.

The next discussion centred upon interesting points raised on how we saw the future of our national magazine plus its distribution.

Our final discussion was led by Margaret Burston, Conference Secretary, who informed us that two family groups from the USA were coming to the UK around the time of the Conference and whose aim it is to join us at Malvern. Although details are still a rather slim regarding their itinerary the Branch felt that as we are the host area we should consider offering suggestions with regards to enhancing and entertaining these two families before and after the Training Conference. Various suggestions were made, and Margaret said she would pass these on once there is further communications.

Following the serious business and the prayers we strolled across to a nearby hostelry to relax, laugh, eat and drink together in what can only be described as a very delightful evening. What better way for vergers to end an AGM.

Hopefully upon the emergence of Spring and warmer weather once again the branch will hold its annual Quiet Day at the House of the Open Door, Childswickham within the glorious Cotswolds on Tuesday 10<sup>th</sup> April. Being that this is post Lent and Easter what could be more inviting for a verger than a quiet and thoughtful escape from Parish life, or Cathedral! As we so often read within the Gospels, our Lord himself chose to do this as regular as possible in order to pray, rest awhile and take time out with His Heavenly Father.

**Philip A M Dunne, Branch correspondent**

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## GIFT AID SMALL DONATION SCHEME



Does your Church/Cathedral/Chapel make use of the Gift Aid Scheme?

Are you getting its full potential?

Even if you answered yes to the first question, there may be more you can do. Since the start of this year's Tax Year (6 April 2017) the government has implemented the Gift Aid Small Donation Scheme (GASDS). What this means is that the cash in your collection plate and/or collection box may also be worth more for your Place of Worship.

Under the new rules, cash donations (not already subject to Gift Aid) up to the value of £20 can now be utilised to claim the 25% extra from the Government. There are, as always, certain steps that should be done to ensure that this is carried out in accordance with the rules, you should take reasonable steps to check that donations are eligible, these are:

- giving instructions to all collectors to record any donations greater than £20 so that they can be excluded from the GASDS claim
- not including £50 notes in a GASDS claim
- excluding cash donations known to be from non-individuals (for example, a company or trust)
- excluding any donations collected or banked outside of the UK
- claiming under Gift Aid rather than GASDS when it's known that a donor has completed a Gift Aid declaration for their donation
- claiming Gift Aid on donations received in Gift Aid envelopes
- excluding donations where the donor or someone connected to them has received a benefit from you as a result (gifts with negligible value such as a lapel sticker are allowed)
- excluding membership fees as they are not small donations for GASDS purposes

Each building can claim up to £2,000 Gift Aid (therefore on £8,000 donated as per above) per tax year. However, you are only entitled to claim up to 10 times the amount of Gift Aid you have claimed that year for other donations (for example if you have claimed £100 of Gift Aid donations you can only claim up to a maximum of £1,000 of GASDS donations.)

If you want to claim GASDS top-up payments you need to keep sufficient records in support of your claims. What records you need to keep is a matter for you, but you should be able to show that:

- your charity or Community Amateur Sports Club (CASC) collected the small donations in the UK and kept records to confirm this
- your charity or CASC banked any cash donations in a UK branch of a bank or other relevant institution, for example a building society
- cash was banked in an account held in the name of or on behalf of the charity or CASC
- contactless donations were credited into a UK bank account held in the name of or on behalf of the charity
- you kept any records of contactless donations produced by the contactless terminal so that you can monitor for any 'multiple donations' from the same person
- you can identify how much was collected on each contactless terminal so that you can work out how much was collected in a particular Local Authority area
- you've kept a record of the denomination of all notes received (£5, £10, £20) and have removed any £50 notes which are above the £20 limit

So even if you already make use of the Gift Aid Scheme, you may be entitled to more.

More information can be found at <http://bit.ly/CEGV-GASDS>

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



## NATIONAL TREASURER



After many years as our National Treasurer, Dr Andrew Page has notified us that he wishes to stand down in 2019, therefore we are looking for someone to complete his term of office (one year) and if they so wish to stand again for election in 2020.

The National Treasurer - who shall be nominated by the Branches, is elected after interview by the Central Council.

Such appointment shall be for a five year term which may be extended by the Central Council. There is no limit on the number of consecutive terms a person may serve as National Treasurer.

The National Treasurer shall be a non-voting member of the Central Council (unless an Area Leader) who shall carry out the decisions of the Central Council and submit a report thereon at the Annual General Meeting.

The National Treasurer may be either a Full or Associate member of the Guild.

For more information please contact the General Secretary: [CEGVGenSec@gmail.com](mailto:CEGVGenSec@gmail.com)





## NEW YEAR'S LUNCH

A belated Happy New Year to you all from Ipswich Branch. Our first meeting up/social get-together of the New Year was on Monday 15<sup>th</sup> January, one way to describe the day was: cold/wet/windy/grey, not a lot going for it! But with the promise of some brighter weather later and our New Year's Lunch to look forward to the day could only get better.

We all made our way to 'The Railway Inn' at Westerfield, the same venue as last year, it is the call of the 'Fish and Chips' which is too much for some of our members to resist. The food was super, lots of empty plates to clarify this and so generous with their helpings.



It was nice to see members that we have not seen for a while and remembered those who had not been able to make the lunch with us for various reasons. Needless to say, we were the last group to leave the venue and the sun shone (for all of 10 minutes!).

As this was our first meeting up of the year this report is very short, hopefully a longer report next time with some exciting news with regard to one of our members!

Until then God Bless.

**Jean Cobb, Branch Correspondent**



## AGM 2018

We began the year with our AGM held at the Church of Saint Bartholomew, Kirby Muxloe, on Monday 22<sup>nd</sup> January. Our Branch Chaplain, Canon John Tonkin, led us in prayer with the General Thanksgiving, and we then welcomed one additional member from Rempstone in Nottinghamshire.

In her report, our Chairman who was recovering from fractured pelvis as the result of a fall at home in November 2017 and had had to be hospitalised for a week, thanked Brian and Mary Mozley for transporting her to and from the meeting complete with wheelchair. She hopes to be fully mobile again after physiotherapy. She also thanked other members and our National Chaplain, Canon Maureen, for their cards, phone calls and prayers, and Canon Tonkin for visiting her.

She then thanked our Area Leader, Les Mitchelmore, for keeping us informed of about the Central Council meetings and the forthcoming Festivals; and Kate and Clive Mobbs, Secretary and Treasurer, for all their hard work. The Branch Officers were unanimously re-elected en bloc. Sadly, due to ill health, Clifford Dunkley and Christine Fagg have ceased their membership of the Guild.

Les Mitchelmore told us about the Mace now in use in the Cathedral, which was dedicated last year, and is now used by the Vergers in turn at all services. Hopefully Les will be able to give me more information on the Mace in time for the next edition of the magazine in June.

Ann Anderson, the Verger at the Church of the Holy Apostles, Leicester, informed us that the church was due to be demolished as it had fallen into disrepair, but a new one is going to be built in its place some time in the future.

There is going to be a meeting to discuss the arrangements for the Festival to be held in Leicester in September 2019, to include Leicester Cathedral, Saint Mary de Castro and Saint Nicholas. The meeting will be held at the home of our Chairman in Groby.

The next AGM will be held on Monday 23<sup>rd</sup> January 2019 in the Church Hall of Saint James the Great, Birstall.

The meeting closed with the Vergers' Prayer said by all. Many thanks to everyone for coming and to Mary and Brian Mozley and Jean Evans for hosting us and providing refreshments. Fifteen members were in attendance.

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



## PRE-CHRISTMAS CONVIVIALITY

Advent is a busy time for us vergers with many organisations holding their carol services and concerts in our Churches and Cathedrals - and not just the events themselves, but the innumerable meetings and rehearsals that happen before them. Not so much thought, organisation or time seems to be given to the clearing away afterwards, though!

So, it is that our Branch holds its Christmas celebrations at our November meeting, this time on the feast of Saint Andrew. We met for lunch at the Abbey Lodge, Kirkstead – at the approach to the ruins of the medieval Abbey, one of the many great Abbeys once dominating the Witham valley.

Seasonal weather it was as we assembled with the north-east winds whipping the snow across the flat Lincolnshire countryside. But good fellowship and a welcoming fire warmed us up as soon as we were inside.

The menu choices were good and the food well cooked and pleasantly and efficiently served. The conversation flowed as freely as the wine (for those of us who didn't have to drive) and we all were soon ready for our after-lunch speaker, that well-known raconteur, our Chairman, John Campbell.



John had brought with him a Gladstone Bag (the only thing his mother-in-law left him) which he passed around the table inviting people to select objects from it. John then told the tale about how he came by each one. There was the Bishop's thermos flask. Not knowing its function, the Bishop was told that the thermos would keep hot things hot, and cold things cold. He explained this to his equally unworldly Archdeacon, adding "Yes. I've got two ice lollies and a cup of coffee in there!"

The Winnie the Pooh tie which John is holding in the picture was given to him by an American Baptist Minister after he had admired it. He calls it his *Dean and Chapter Tie* as he relates the characters of past Chapter members to the characters on the tie.

Our thanks to our secretary Mike Haynes for making all the arrangements although sadly was not able to be with us.

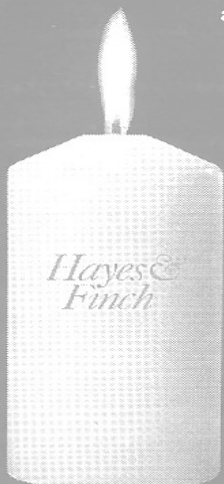
**Colin Beevers, Branch Correspondent**

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2017 was a good year for the Liverpool Branch. At our AGM in March we welcomed Richard Lavery to be our new Area Leader. Richard has been a very active member of the Guild, always at meetings, going to Conference and to the Festivals and has also completed the CEGV Diploma. So, when it came time for our Area Leader to retire her role, Richard seemed the most obvious option to us. He was voted in by the Branch unanimously, both at Liverpool and in Blackburn, Chester and Manchester.

Richard has taken to his role with pride and has strived to do the best possible job, keeping the Chairman, Treasurer and myself in the loop about what is happening at a National level, as well as helping us to keep the Branch ticking over.

May saw us heading to All Saints Church in Rainford to celebrate our Easter Eucharist and Lunch together. This is always a wonderful occasion after the very busy times during Holy Week and Easter when we as vergers can fully engage in a service, find some spiritual ease, and enjoy the fellowship of those who know just how busy we have been for the past few weeks. We always try to go to the Church of a different member each year, this lets us see each members' own Church in which they take so much pride.

2017 marked our member John Atherton's 25<sup>th</sup> year as Verger at All Saints, Rainford, and also the year that he would hang up his cassock and pass the baton on to somebody else. This was marked at our Christmas Eucharist in December, when John was presented with a long service certificate.

July saw an idea that Gratten (Chairman), Marion (Treasurer) and I had been batting around the meetings for some time actually come to life. We wrote to the PCC Secretaries in 20 Churches in the Diocese and asked them whether they had a Verger, or somebody who fulfilled the role of a Verger, in their Church. We sent information leaflets and asked whether they would like to join the Guild. I was personally very nervous when we heard nothing back, but we arranged an Open Day for the 25<sup>th</sup> July and invited those who wanted to know more to come.

We had our Branch meeting there so that members were around to chat to (and it wasn't a wasted day if nobody turned up!) and we had tea, coffee, cake and biscuits as well as stands with leaflets, posters and anything else we could think of. We held it at Saint Margaret of Antioch Church in Toxteth, the Church of one of our members, Chris Mason, and it was wonderful.

From the 20 letters we sent out we got 3 new members. You may think that isn't many, but the way we see it, that's 3 more than we had to begin with. It is definitely something we would do again, it gave us a lot to think about and maybe next time we will do things a little differently, but we will do it again.

December was our Christmas Eucharist and Lunch held at Liverpool Cathedral and, as is our tradition, we welcomed members from the Blackburn, Chester and Manchester Branch. Our Branch Chaplain being away on holiday, we welcomed the Reverend Stephen Gough to preside for us with Canon Myles Davies from the Cathedral as Deacon.

We also welcomed 3 new members into the Liverpool Branch (two from our Open Day and John's replacement from All Saints, Rainford) and a new member into the Manchester Branch. It was a lovely service, a great lunch and we enjoyed great company and fellowship together. The pictures were taken at the High Altar at the Cathedral.



December also had a sad note for the Liverpool Branch too. At the beginning of the month I received news that one of our longest standing members, Tom Cobley, had sadly passed away. Tom was a life member of the Guild and had been a member since 1957. He died following a fall on the 4<sup>th</sup> of December. Tom was not able to join us in the latter years due to his infirmities, but he was a very respected and cared for member of the Branch who was kept up to date with everything and was visited regularly by one of our members, Howard Llewellyn. We remember him in our prayers.

And so now 2018 is here. We hope that as a Branch we continue to grow, to be a source of fellowship and support for our members and to each other personally. And we pray for the Guild as a whole and the support and fellowship that it offers to each one of us.

**Tracey Rogers**  
**Secretary, Liverpool Branch**



## CONGRATULATIONS



### JOHN ATHERTON – RAINFORD PARISH CHURCH – DIOCESE OF LIVERPOOL



On 26<sup>th</sup> September, John Atherton completed 25 years a Verger of Rainford Parish Church. John along with Enid have always been the smiling faces welcoming worshipers into All Saints whatever the service.

In a recent Parish Magazine article, his Vicar, the Reverend Janet Heighton, offered him the grateful thanks of the congregation. She went on to say “The role of Verger is important. In all that time John has been ensuring that the church is set up for all sorts of services. He has been available at most services to ensure the smooth running and respond to any needs. He has also been the point of contact for funeral arrangements and ensures that everything is in place and organised. It is a big job but often goes unseen.”

John has now decided to retire from the role of Verger, but he and Enid will remain active within the Liverpool Branch of the Guild and Branch members presented him with a certificate for his 25 years’ service at the recent Christmas Eucharist held in the Lady Chapel of Liverpool Cathedral. We wish John well in his retirement and look forward to seeing both him a Enid at our Branch meetings for many years to come.

**Gratten Williams**  
**CEGV Chairman Liverpool Branch**



## OXFORD BRANCH NEWS



### CHRISTMAS LUNCH – TUESDAY 5<sup>th</sup> DECEMBER 2017

The Branch enjoyed our now traditional Christmas Lunch at the Wee Waif, Charvil. We had a very good attendance including again, to our delight, our National Chaplain, Canon Maureen Palmer.

The food was delicious as usual, we spent a very happy time just eating, talking and enjoying good company. Sadly, on this occasion we said ‘goodbye’ to Dennis Wildman, our former Branch Correspondent, and his wife, Gillian, who are leaving the area and going to live in Wales. We wish them good health and happiness in their new location.

After a happy time spent talking and remembering those who were unable to join us, we went our separate ways looking forward to more Christmas celebrations.

### A.G.M. TUESDAY 16<sup>th</sup> JANUARY 2018

The Oxford Branch A.G.M was held on Tuesday 16<sup>th</sup> January at the Church of Christ the Servant King, High Wycombe and commenced with a service of Holy Communion.

This was followed, as is our usual custom, by refreshments very kindly served by Mrs Betty Golby and Mrs Hazel Knight. What would we do without the lovely ladies who provide us with refreshments?

After lunch, our A.G.M was ably chaired by Michael Golby and included short reports and thanks for all the Officers carrying out their duties during the preceding year.

This was followed by the election of the Committee and, as there were no further proposals, all the officers were re-elected for 2018.

Our programme for 2018 was approved and we look forward to an interesting year.

The meeting closed with thanks to all and prayers led by our Chaplain, the Reverend Peter Viney.

**Heather Ringrose**  
**Branch Correspondent**

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