

The Virger

Winter 2017

Issue 297



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The Official Magazine of the Church of England Guild of Vergers





Welcome to the Winter 2017 edition of *The Verger*. If you would like to include Branch news, articles, adverts, photos, book reviews or any other information you feel our readers would find of interest please send them to the Communications Officer by the Deadline Date below.

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

E-MAILED ARTICLES SHOULD BE SENT AS MICROSOFT WORD FILES ONLY & ANY PHOTOGRAPHS IN JPEG FORMAT (MAXIMUM OF 4 PICTURES PLEASE), TEXT & IMAGE FILES SHOULD BE ATTACHED

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 10th February 2018



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

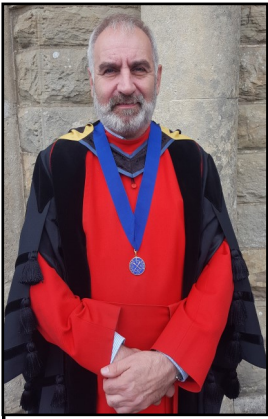
Ecclesiastical Embroiderer

01547 220000 or 07890514888

deecb@hotmail.com



FRONT COVER: THE NATIVITY by Master of Vyšší Brod of Bohemia, circa 1350.



NATIONAL CHAIRMAN'S LETTER



As we seem to head towards the season of trees, cards and presents, it is easy to lose track of the four weeks before Christmas and the birth of Jesus. The season of Advent seems to get lost all too easily. More and more Carol Services seem to creep into our diaries during those four weeks as schools and organisations want to celebrate the Birth of our Lord well before the actual day.

For Vergers up and down the country, either in our Cathedrals or Churches it is a busy time. So, when it comes, it feels like a bit of an anti-climax and both Clergy and Vergers alike are totally exhausted. I am reminded of a very good friend who would nurse a large Gin and Tonic before the family Christmas Dinner with his eyes closed. When a member of the family tried to retrieve it for safety, the words "Leave it!" emanated from the recumbent clergyman. Who can blame him for resting before starting again with the family celebrations after toiling over a hot

Altar for the previous few weeks and singing O Come, all ye faithful and Hark! the Herald-Angels Sing with much conviction for the nth time during December.

As we Vergers also carry out our labours within the Church this Advent, I hope that we can keep a proper sense of proportion as to exactly why we are there and what it is all about, that is the celebration of one of the greatest things to happen in the Christian calendar. I know this is difficult, especially when you are a lone verger in so many of our churches. If you are part of a team, support your colleagues during this busy time.

May I wish you all a blessed Advent and when it comes, a joyful and Merry Christmas.

John Shearer



THE BLACKPOOL "LITE" FESTIVAL



When I was approached by James Armstrong to enquire if Holy Trinity Church, here in Blackpool, would host a "Lite" Festival I thought, 'What a great idea.' After discussion with my Vicar, Reverend Tracy Charnock, we decided on a date of the 30th of May, a Tuesday, to go ahead. James mentioned having some Blackpool Rock made for the Guild, which would be given out to our guests, a fantastic idea. We had also had the idea of serving afternoon tea. The original idea was to go to the Blackpool Tower for tea in the magnificent ballroom, where the famous organ is played. However, due to the International Dance Festival being held, I thought, 'Let's serve tea at Holy Trinity.'

Well, what a great day was had by all who came, with vergers and guests from Cathedrals and Churches across the country. These included Hereford, Carlisle, Guildford and Sheffield Cathedrals, Croydon Minster, the Lord Mayor's Chapel, Bristol, Tewkesbury Abbey, London, Liverpool, Manchester and Scorton Churches.

The Bishop of Lancaster, the Right Reverend Geoff Pearson, called in to welcome our guests and he spoke of how vergers provide an excellent ministry in our Cathedrals and Parish Churches. Our National Chaplain, Canon Maureen conducted the Eucharist, assisted by Tracy, and I acted as Server and Chalice Assistant.

We served tea, coffee and biscuits throughout the day. Four of Holy Trinity's helpers worked hard to provide for our guests. I was also helped during the day by Pam Derbyshire and her daughter, Karen, who had baked cakes for us. Pam is the Verger at Saint Peter's Church, Scorton, near Garstang. After the Eucharist, we had our usual photo call and our guests then had some free time to "take the air" on Blackpool Promenade.

At 3.30 p.m. we served an afternoon tea of assorted sandwiches, cakes and biscuits and James distributed the "Blackpool Rock". I had obtained a CD of George Formby singing about his "little stick of Blackpool Rock", along with a CDS of the Tower's Wurlitzer organ, which I played during tea. Our day ended with a service of Evening Prayer, specially arranged by Canon Maureen. Our guests had also spent time looking around Holy Trinity Church, which has some listed stained glass, and is, at present, and has been, undergoing extensive restoration with more to come. "Doggy Bags" of cake and sandwiches were provided to those who had a long train journey home and I was so pleased, and indeed honoured, that people came "Up North" and it shows how the fellowship in the Guild continues and thrives.

Thanks to all who supported our Festival.

Tony Hales
Holy Trinity Church, Blackpool





NATIONAL CHAPLAIN'S LETTER



Dear Friends,

We are in the middle of that special time of the Autumn in which we remember: in some ways a very secular activity as we remember those whom we have loved and see no longer as well as the dead from two World Wars. But, in the midst of the secular we also celebrate the Feast of All Saints – those men and women who set us the example of sanctity, which we try to emulate in our daily lives. While we rejoice in the often heroic and courageous lives and deaths of the saints, we need to remember those quiet souls who did their best to lead good lives, people who we loved dearly and miss and who are mourned and still loved. We therefore hold together the Feast of All Saints and the Commemoration of All Souls, together with the gratitude for those who fought to bring us liberty on Remembrance Sunday.

We are all called to be saints – Paul writes in his letter to the Romans: 'To all God's beloved in Rome, who are called to be saints.' So, what exactly is a saint? I have several definitions to offer you and I hope that at least one may set you thinking about your own life and your call to be a saint, as well as helping you to discern sainthood in others. My first definition is that a saint is an ordinary person who does everything possible extraordinarily well. I think that this echoes Paul again: for if you teach, you should teach to the best of your ability; if you minister then your ministry should be wholehearted; if you are a verger, you should do your verging to the very best of your ability. There is something very infectious about a job well done and I believe that that is sainthood in the making.

My second definition, given me by a small child visiting Guildford Cathedral; a saint is a person through whom the light of Christ streams as if they are a stained-glass window. Jesus tells us that we should be 'lights of the world' and this definition seems to me very apt for the making of a saint.

I don't know whether any of you are enjoying Blue Planet II: a programme showing us an amazing array of strange and wonderful creatures. Each of the creatures is itself and does what it does as well as possible, whether this is finding prey or finding a mate! Looking round the animal kingdom, this is true of all God's creatures for they express their love of God by being totally themselves. This is also sainthood for us: being totally ourselves – not putting on a mask to cover what we conceive as our imperfections or anxieties but rather letting God shine out of the person that we truly are.

I pray that you all have a wonderful Advent and Christmas, in spite of all the busyness and chair shifting! I hope you will all take some time to reflect on your own sainthood as you prepare for the Feast of the Incarnation. I shall look forward to seeing some of you before Christmas but hopefully we shall meet up at some stage soon.

With every blessing, many prayers and much love,
Canon Maureen



VERGE-ING ON THE AMAZING!



On Sunday 1st October, the people of Saint Stephen's Church, Worcester, joined together to congratulate Margaret Burston, one of their Vergers, on two great achievements.

She has just celebrated 25 years since first being admitted to the Guild of Vergers, and has now been awarded the prestigious Diploma of the Guild of Vergers. The occasion was marked by The Venerable Robert Jones, Archdeacon of Worcester.

The Reverend Andy Todd, Curate-in-Charge of Saint Stephen's, said: "Vergers are among the unsung heroes of the Church, helping to welcome visitors and ordering worship, so it's great to take this opportunity to sing Margaret's praises!"

Photo (left to right): Reverend David Morphy, The Venerable Robert Jones, Margaret Burston, Reverend Andy Todd, Reverend Stephen Malkinson

Robert Beattie, MA
Training Officer & Gloucester, Hereford & Worcester Branch Treasurer



GUILD SHOP



The Guild shop has Guild branded articles to add a little something to every Vergers uniform, whether it's a Guild fleece, designed to help the Vergers as they 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. For more information on the shops products, to order a catalogue or place an order contact:

The Shop Manager - Mrs Angela Hamilton
21 Saffron Garth, Patrington, Hull, Yorkshire HU12 0RF
or E-mail direct: CEGVGuildShop@gmail.com



R.I.P ~ Donovan (Don) Frederick Mitchener



11th June 1923 to 28th May 2017

A member of the Oxford Branch soon after its formation back in the late 1980's, Don was a valued, supportive and much respected part of this Branch and his stories (many relating to his career on the railways where he was employed throughout his working life), related to an era that many of us would have only read about – he had a wicked sense of humour!

Don suffered an illness some 10 or so years ago, which resulted in the amputation of a leg below the knee thereby confining him to a wheelchair. Despite this disability he remained positive and, living on his own (he did not marry), he was determined to continue to be self-sufficient and independent; he was an inspiration to many and his carers found him a joy to attend.

Don had a strong faith and much of his life revolved around the Church. In addition to him being a member of the Guild of Vergers he also belonged to the Guild of Servants of the Sanctuary (GSS) and was an Oblate of the Order of Saint Benedict. He also had an active involvement in local Church activities and was not 'backward in coming forward' when entering into correspondence with 'authority' (especially within the Church), when he felt the need warranted his (helpful) views and suggestions on particular subjects.

It has been an honour and a privilege to have known Don and to thank him for having brought pleasure and hope to so many people during his lifetime. Our thoughts are with his adopted family at this time.

Michael Golby, FCEGV
Oxford Branch Chairman



R.I.P ~ NEIL PICKFORD



Neil, who died recently after a short illness aged 62, was a great character, full of fun and a hardworking Virger at Beverley Minster, Chairman of York Branch and Branch Publicity Officer, but above all, he possessed a great sense of humour, and he was a friend to every member. He could lift spirits with one of his "one liners".

A truly, warm, honest, and compassionate man. A man who lived out his Christian faith. We are blessed to have known him.

Please join me in prayers of thanksgiving for his life; also pray for his wife, family and all his colleagues.

"Lord now let your servant depart in peace your word has been fulfilled" and grant to those who mourn peace and comfort within your overwhelming love. God bless.

Marian Gardener,
York Branch Chaplain



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 & Geoffrey Timms

Chichester, Guildford & Portsmouth: Marilyn Lee

Gloucester, Hereford & Worcester: Joy Birkin

Ipswich: Val Pizzey

Leicester & Peterborough: Clifford Dunkley & Christine Fagg

London, Southwark & Chelmsford: Ken Allen

Oxford: Jeanne Scott, Reverend Canon Roy Taylor

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

Keith Nelson, a former Member of Leicester & Peterborough with Derby Branch

Don Mitchener, Oxford Branch

Sally-Anne Sommerfield, Somerset & Avon Branch

Neil Pickford, York Branch



On Monday 2nd October, a dozen of us, including two visitors met at the Greyfriars Pub car-park in Chawton, where we intended to dine before visiting Jane Austen's House just opposite, as this is the two hundredth anniversary of her death. Unfortunately, no booking had been made for us and a coach load was booked in – oh dear! A few knew the area, so five departed, leaving the seven of us, including our Branch Chaplain, whom we were delighted to have join us, to find a slightly separated area to enjoy a selection of tasty dishes according to our palates.

We then adjourned over the road and spent a fair time in the garden as it was a sunny day, then seeing and reading details of Jane's family and life. (I had to study "Pride and Prejudice" for my school certificate in 1950!) Her father was the Rector. Jane was the fifth of seven children, but had medical problems and really, quite a sad life. She began writing

as, probably what we now would call therapy and then with encouragement, her work developed and has stood the test of time, still being rated as one of Britain's venerated authors.

Sheila J Ford
Branch Correspondent

Chris Weymouth and David Donovan, Vergers of Yapton and Ford Churches respectively, hosted a day out for the hard-working members of the Guild from West Sussex and Surrey. It started with a fish and chip lunch at the Look and Sea at Littlehampton, where they kindly provided one large table for us all, it was a noisy affair. It was a lovely sunny day and the assembled vergers ambled around Littlehampton harbour and beach after lunch.

Our Rector, Richard, then led a traditional service at saint Mary's, Yapton, rung in and out by our own bell-ringers, who were ably joined by the Verger from Guildford Cathedral, who said that he liked the church and village, and may want to be a verger here when he retires in six years' time. The service was followed by a cream tea under the yew tree in churchyard, skilfully prepared and served by the bell-ringers, who joined in. Nobody wanted to go home, and cups of tea were replenished as the vergers swapped memories and gossip about themselves, the Clergy and their congregations, with all the banter and humour common to vergers. Some of them have known each other for over thirty years.

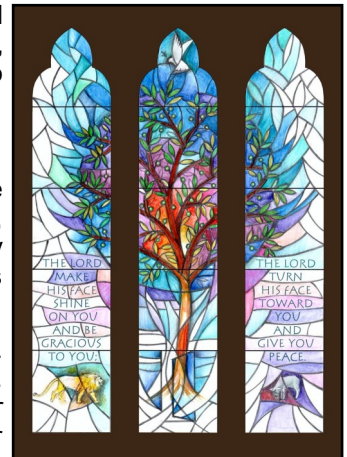
We meet like this about three times a year, the next meeting being in Brighton. We had a really good day. The vergers kindly left a donation of over £60 for the Saint Mary's, Yapton, Peace Window Appeal, and no doubt they will return for another cream tea to inspect it when it is installed.

So, what does a Verger do?

Vergers are involved in all of the setting up and other practical things required for the services; unlocking the church, putting out the cross and candlesticks, the altar cloths, and communion plate; and finally making time too for a few personal prayers, as they may not get a chance during a service. They also ensure that those involved in services are ready, including the Clergy.

Finally, everything is cleared up and put away, ending with a private prayer of thanks. They also tend to meet lots of the congregation and hope to make them feel at home. Weddings and funerals are also set up prior to the service and guests, often from afar or unused to entering a Church, are welcomed and supported, either in their happiness or grief.

Taken from "Triangle" August 2017
Submitted by Elaine King



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Monday 16th October – our final meeting of the year. Ipswich Branch members revisited the Church of Saint Mary, Witnesham. We were last there on Friday 2nd October 2015 - prior to discussions and permission to redesigning the interior of the church and what a wonderful transformation has taken place, the congregation must be thrilled. With a super kitchen, storage and toilets to suit everyone, installation of an audio/visual system and a glazed screen so that the south aisle can be once again used as a side chapel, crèche and meeting room making it completely soundproof, plus many other aspects of different work. We started off, as all good meetings start, with our bring-and-share lunch followed by our meeting and a short service (using the new visual system, which at the press of a button disappears up towards the heavens), very impressive. We were given a leaflet telling us all about the renovations, so I will just pick a few snippets to tell you some more: A Miss Caroline Meadows made a bequest in 1951 for the purpose of maintaining two graves in the churchyard, she stated that any surplus could be used for maintenance of the church, that got the ball rolling but a further £27,600 was also needed to be raised from various sources. The work began in September 2016 and was completed in April 2017. There has been a place of gathering and worship on the site for the best part of 750 years. On Sunday 18th June Archdeacon Ian Morgan preached at a service at Witnesham Church celebrating the alterations to the church. The attached photos show the glazed-in south aisle; a reclaimed brick set into the floor with a 'cross'; and our Chaplains, Reverends Alan and Catherine in the new kitchen: Titled "Domestic Bliss".



Ending on not such a positive point we have had a spate of "lead thefts" in the county. The latest being on a church, that actually had an alarm system fitted, the thieves managed to by-pass the system causing endless amounts of damage to both the roof and the interior of the church due to rain ingress. We all need to be extra vigilant regarding our own churches as the above proves.

Our New Year's Lunch is our next social gathering.

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

Jean Cobb
Branch correspondent



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



SUMMER & AUTUMN MEETINGS

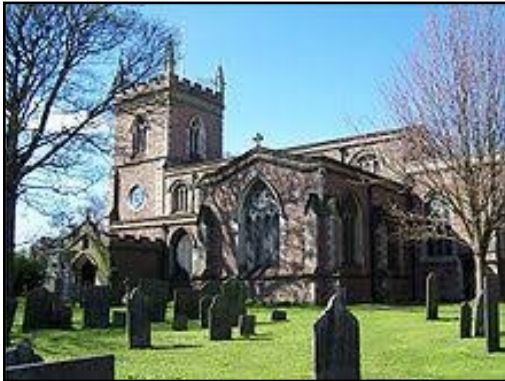
We began our Summer & Autumn Meetings on Monday 21st August with a service of Evening Prayer with Hymns at Saint Bartholomew's Church, Kirby Muxloe, Leicestershire. We sang some lovely hymns, "Trust and obey", which I remembered as a child at Sunday School, "Thy hand, O God, has guided", "The Servant King", and one other which I cannot recall. The service was led by the Curate, the Reverend Rob Marsh. The Lessons were read by Associate Members Jean Evans and Brian Mozley, who hosted us for that evening. We had a music group to accompany us, which sounded very nice. As usual, we had some lovely refreshments prepared by the ladies from the Church. The Chairman thanked everyone afterwards, including Mary and Brian Mozley, and Jean Evans. She also thanked them for transporting her to the different venues throughout the year. Our Area Leader, Les Mithchellmore, informed us that the Leicester & Peterborough Branch now includes Derby, so we hope those members will join us at our future gatherings, likewise, we hope to be able to go there. Ten members attended this meeting, as well as our Branch Chaplain, Canon John Tonkin, who informed us that he will be 90 next year and would therefore like to stand down as Branch Chaplain. So, we will have to look around for someone to take his place.

Our last meeting of the year was held at Holy Trinity Church, Barrow-upon-Soar, Leicestershire, on Monday 25th September. We commenced with a "Service of Light", starting with subdued lighting, except for the Paschal Candle and gradually building up with the lighting of the candles on the altar and other lights in the building. This was very atmospheric. The "Service of Light" has been a traditional way of beginning Evening Prayer. The service was taken from "The Promise of his Glory", from the season for All Saints to Candlemas. We sang two Hymns, "lift up your hearts", and "I heard the voice of Jesus say". The service was led by the Vicar, the Reverend Rob Padison, assisted by our Branch Chaplain. We said the Vergers' Prayer at the end of the service.

After the service we had refreshments which were served by Pauline, Margaret, and a possible new member, Sophia Stonycross. We hope that she will decide to join and be formally admitted during one of our future meetings. Our Chairman thanked everyone for coming, including visitors from some of our Branches that have sadly had to close. The Organist, Richard, was also thanked.

Our Area Leader informed us about a future Festival to be held at Leicester Cathedral and some of the neighbouring Churches in September 2019. Also about the blessing of a new Mace in Leicester Cathedral.

A BRIEF HISTORY OF HOLY TRINITY



Twelfth century documents from Leicester Abbey mention a Church in Barrow and a plan shows a church in the shape of a cross with a central tower. Side-aisles were added in the thirteenth century and the tower was at its present position. Today the church reflects the very thorough Victorian restoration. It was a calamitous procedure. The chancel was rebuilt in 1863 at a cost of £1,000. Further works caused the tower to collapse a week before Christmas 1868, destroying the nave. However, the tower was rebuilt, the exterior walls faced with granite, the interior walls were plastered, and the Church reopened on All Saints Day 1870 at a cost of £4,422.

The east window in the chancel was inserted in 1890. Beneath the four Evangelists are the Coats of Arms of three important figures in the history of Barrow – Theophilus Cave, Doctor Humprey Babington and Bishop

William Beveridge. The fourth Coat of Arms is that of the Patrons of Saint John's College, Cambridge. The fine carved reredos dates from the same time and depicts the Last Supper. The choir stalls were a gift in memory of Frank Cresswell, who was killed in the First World War. These, together with the panels in the south transept were carved by a local craftsman, J Hind. Also in the chancel are the monuments of the Cave family.

At the west end there was once a gallery under the tower, where, until the latter part of the nineteenth century, a string band provided music for the services. The musicians were indignant to be replaced by a harmonium and soon afterwards an organ was purchased and placed in the north transept. The present organ was acquired from a North Leicestershire Church, and was installed in 1907 when the vestries and organ chamber were constructed. Next to the west door is the door to the belfry. The Church has an active team of bell-ringers, and, as can be seen from the plaque above the door, the bells were recently restored, and the ring expanded to eight bells. Until 1972 there were five bells, three dating from the seventeenth century. The largest bell bears the melancholy inscription 'All they that hear my mournful sound repent before they're laid in ground.' In the nave there are four round pillars dating from the twelfth century and two quatrefoil piers were entirely rebuilt in 1969. Notice the angels and gold bosses.

Originally, Barrow Church was the Mother-Church of the three Chapels at Quorn, Woodhouse and Mountsorrel. These became Parish Churches in 1868. Today, Barrow forms one Parish with the village of Walton-le-Wolds and a service is held in Saint Mary's Church there each week.

The first recorded Vicar of Barrow was William de Hungarton, 1227, and the list of incumbents records the unbroken line up to the present Priest-in-Charge.

We will not be meeting during the winter months, our next meeting will be our AGM on Monday 24th January 2018 at Saint Bartholomew's Church Hall, Kirby Muxloe, Leicestershire. Until then I wish everyone, both locally, nationally and internationally a Happy Christmas and a healthy 2018.

Marjorie Thomas, Dip GV, Branch Chairman & Correspondent



TRIP TO ATLANTA, USA

Our Branch was proud to represent the CEGV at the Conference of the Vergers Guild of the Episcopal Church in Atlanta, Georgia, USA. The Conference logistically is a huge affair.

Denise Mead, Irene Money and Stephen Haude, flew together from Heathrow on 28th August for the nine-hour flight to Atlanta. Father Tom Cameron, who had flown out several days earlier, met up with us at the hotel. It was also wonderful to meet and greet five American Vergers, who are also members of our L, S & C branch.

Around 300 vergers of the VGEC attended from the length and breadth of the USA. The Marriott Marquis Hotel was huge, but we did feel let down, as our rooms were 32 floors apart (especially as Stephen booked the hotel in January with a request for adjoining rooms). This did put a bit of a damper on things!

The Conference itself was a very active affair. We kicked off with a superb 'cathedral quality' Choral Evensong with a very high standard of singing, followed by a BBQ. The differences in wording of the services (compared to ours) take a bit of getting used to. Of course, 'O Lord Save the Queen' was replaced with the Versicle: Lord, keep this nation under thy care. And the Reponse: And guide us in the way of justice and truth. The Presiding Bishop, Michael Curry (their equivalent of Justin Welby) preached a very lively and inspiring sermon with much praise for the ministry of the verger. He ended his sermon by singing 'This little light of mine' and we all joined in.

The Atlanta Episcopalians run a project for the homeless. We were all asked to bring anything useful from a list, which ranged from toothpaste to underwear. Half of us spent a morning sorting these gifts into small parcels to distribute to the homeless. The other half made hundreds of sandwiches for these poor folk. Our gifts were later blessed at the Cathedral.

On Saturday night it was the glittering Verger Banquet under the chandeliers! This started with a champagne reception complete with harpist. The meal in the ballroom was superb, the wine flowed, and speeches were made. The photo (*left*) shows Irene, myself, Denise and Father Tom all dressed in our finery for the occasion.

We're back home now after those four hectic days. It was fun, but we look forward to our 'quieter' conference at Malvern. We worked hard to promote our own conference to the American Vergers and much interest was expressed. We'd be in trouble if all 300 decided to come!

Stephen Haude
Branch Secretary



Irene Money Stephen Haude Denise Mead Fr. Tom Cameron

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VISIT TO DORCHESTER ABBEY ON THURSDAY 18TH MAY 2017



We arrived at Dorchester on a lovely bright and sunny morning and our first stop, naturally, was for coffee and very moreish home-made biscuits in the tea room next door to the Museum.

The Museum, where we had a very interesting guide, is a small room but packed with artefacts and history going back to the Neolithic period, through a Celtic market centre, a Roman town, a Victorian school right up to the present day. There is also a small gift shop (of course) with some interesting souvenirs.

After our visit to the Museum we walked across the road to the George Hotel, that dates back to the fifteenth century, where we had a very pleasant lunch before returning to the Abbey for a guided tour. Our guide

was Professor Greg Stores, a very knowledgeable volunteer, who showed us so many interesting items and places of interest within the Abbey that we could have spent much more time exploring. Unfortunately, all good things have to come to an end, but we retain memories of a very enjoyable visit.

VISIT TO ST MARY'S CHURCH, WENDOVER AND HALTON HOUSE, THURSDAY 17TH AUGUST 2017



We were invited to Saint Mary's Church at Wendover and spent a lovely morning there following a service of Holy Communion. Our host was one of our most recent new members - Jennifer Ballantine. The church is very old, thirteenth/fourteenth century, but so beautifully restored and refurbished. We spent some time looking around at all the old artefacts and stained glass, so nice to see such a sympathetic combination of ancient and modern.

Following our visit to Saint Mary's Church, we adjourned to a local hostelry for a substantial and very lively lunch, then on to RAF Halton where we had a tour of the Officers' Mess. The house was built for Alfred de Rothschild and is very splendid example of Victorian architecture and decor. We also heard about the films and television series that have used Halton House in their productions, so we shall watch out when these come on our screens to see if

we recognise any of the locations. Unfortunately, there was no afternoon tea in the Officers' Mess, what a pity!

QUIET DAY AT DOUAI ABBEY ON TUESDAY 26TH SEPTEMBER 2017



On a very bright and sunny day several members of the Oxford Branch met at Douai Abbey for our autumn Quiet Day, which was led by the Reverend Marie Jackson, Assistant Chaplain to the Branch. We have visited Douai many times before and it still holds its enchantment as a peaceful, quiet place. The theme for this day was 'Trading Up' – which is to obtain something that is of higher value than what you already have. (*Cambridge Dictionary definition*).

We commenced the day by celebrating the Eucharist and afterwards Reverend Marie led us through Isaiah, chapter 61, which sets out God's promises to His people. We then had a quiet time to walk around the lovely grounds of the Abbey contemplating all those promises.

After a very nice lunch, the afternoon session was based on the Beatitudes in Saint Matthew's Gospel and followed a similar pattern to the morning session.

Some of our group visited Saint Mary's, which is the Parish Church of Woolhampton, and stands in the grounds of the Abbey. It is a very small, old church that has been beautifully restored and modernised.

After a very welcome cup of tea, we all went our separate ways, uplifted by a very happy day with many thanks to Reverend Marie for leading us so well.

Heather Ringrose
Branch Correspondent

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SOMERSET & AVON BRANCH NEWS



Hello everyone,

Here is a brief run-down of what we have been getting up to in the Somerset and Avon branch. The first outing after ideas for visits were suggested at our AGM, was to Bath Abbey on Monday 15th May.

It was an afternoon visit and we were greeted by two new Vergers appointed at Bath Abbey - Emma Crocker and Adam King - who kindly served us with Afternoon Tea in the south transept. Emma and Adam had earlier expressed a desire to become members of the Guild. This was delightful news for us as new members are quite hard to come by - particularly younger people. After tea, we attended a Said Service of Evening Prayer, during which both myself and our Branch Chaplain, Colin Maggs, formally admitted Emma and Adam as members of the Guild. We hope we shall have a long and fruitful relationship with them and perhaps occasionally see them at our social events, if and when their busy duties at the Abbey permit.

During 2016 we tried out visits to different Inns for a Pub Lunch. These seemed to be popular with our members and so it was decided at the AGM to continue with the same during this year. Two Pub Lunches were held in July and September - the first at Redwood Farm Inn adjacent to Cribbs Causeway Shopping Centre, Bristol and the next one at The Star Inn, Congresbury, North Somerset.

It was at the last one that I heard the very sad news of the death of one of our most faithful and popular members - SallyAnne Sommerfield. SallyAnne had been suffering from Lung Cancer over the past three years but still joined in with Guild events. She was a Verger at Saint Peter & Saint Paul, Bleadon, North Somerset.

The last time I saw SallyAnne was at The Redwood Farm Inn, and I enquired how she was and she replied with a big smile on her face - "Oh, I'm fine just a bit breathless at times." Her bright smile and cheerful personality will live with me for ever!

SallyAnne's funeral took place on Friday 6th October at Bleadon Parish Church, and the service was conducted by the Reverend Tim Erridge. It was here that I learned of her other skills and talents. She had crammed a lot of living into her 63 years.

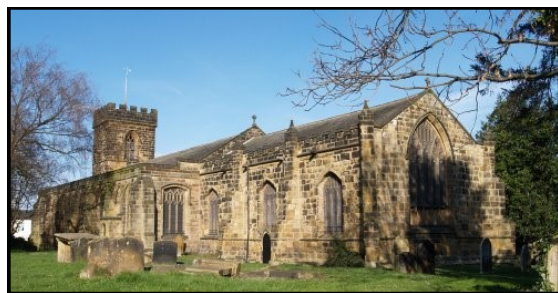
Bleadon Parish Church had seen her at various times serving as Treasurer, Chorister and Churchwarden. SallyAnne started work as a Bank Clerk with Lloyds Bank, but went on to become a Dental Nurse, Classroom Assistant and enjoyed doing voluntary work. She also enjoyed Craft Work and her "charity gnomes" were gazing down from the church window sills. A talented musician she played the violin in several different orchestras and singing in Folk Groups as well as Choral Music with the Church Choir. SallyAnne's Christian faith meant everything to her and her participation in Church life was not an optional extra, but a vital relationship with her Lord and Saviour. Rest in peace Sally, your journey in life was an example to us all!

Here, I must draw to a close, and wish all fellow members throughout the country a Happy Christmas and a Peaceful and Blessed New Year.

Christopher M Eynon
Branch Chairman



YORK BRANCH NEWS



In September; members of the York Branch met at Saint Nicholas' Church, Guisborough, North Yorkshire. A local historian gave us a tour, pointing out many special features.

Holy Communion was celebrated where Sam Fletcher, the newly appointed Verger at Bradford Cathedral was admitted into the Guild. It was a joy for us to spend time with her and her husband.

During coffee and fellowship, we had the opportunity to visit the Guild Shop, now run by our Branch Secretary, Angela Hamilton.

After an excellent lunch we visited the ruins of Gisborough Priory. A fourteenth century church in the Early Gothic Style, the building is now just a remnant of its former glory. It was one of the first Augustinian Priors to be built in England; its patrons were the Bruce family, ancestors of Robert the Bruce. One of the Trust Custodians gave us a very interesting and entertaining insight into the life and work of the Priory and the present-day plans that the Trust and English Heritage have for this wonderful site. Visit the English Heritage Website for more information about Gisborough Priory: <http://www.english-heritage.org.uk/visit/places/gisborough-priory>

A very pleasant day was enjoyed by 25 members, an excellent turn out yet again!

Finally, we remember Neil Pickford. 8th Sept 1955 – 8th Oct 2017.

Beverley Minster was full for the service. His long-time friend, John Dell, virged him in and out. His sons gave a eulogy and his wife, Gillian, read a Lesson. He entered the Minster to the Hymn "Now thank we all our God". After the service Neil went out to Led Zeppelin, wonderfully played on the organ. People repaired to the Monk's Walk Pub, a stone's throw from the Minster, where Neil had continued his Christian work as the landlord.

Su Graves, Branch Correspondent

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