

The Virger

Summer 2013
Issue 279



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~CEGV~
York Province Festival ~ Beverley Minster

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The Official Magazine of the Church of England Guild of Vergers





Welcome to the Summer 2013 issue of *The Virger*. If you would like to include Branch news, articles, adverts, photos, book reviews or any other information you feel our readers would find of interest please send to the Communications Officer.

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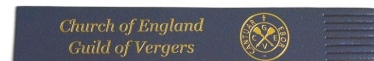
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NATIONAL CHAIRMAN'S LETTER



Trinity Sunday saw the Vergers of Carlisle Cathedral standing like a lot of naughty schoolboys alongside the Dean, Canons and fellow officers who serve the Cathedral as our names were read out by the Chapter Clerk in accordance with the statutes of 1545 revised in 2001. A firm "present" is required unless you were excused in writing by the Dean. Our names then join a long and distinguished list of people who have served our Lord in Carlisle, some 41 Deans, 130 Residentiary Canons, 21 Masters of Music and 25 Vergers. Assistant Vergers are also included but over the years they have had different titles and roles.

A great number of vergers were on the roll call as we gathered for the York Province Festival hosted by the York Branch at Beverley Minster on the 21st May. Our grateful thanks must go to the Vicar, the Reverend Jeremy Fletcher, and his excellent team of Vergers who made us feel most welcome. The day ran like clockwork thanks to the well constructed program. Worship was a glorious merging of music and word, the food delicious and was so efficiently served, the tours conducted by people who had a genuine love for their subject and even the weather behaved itself. Thank you all for making this a day to remember. We even made it into the local paper, group photo and substantial article. I think Neil Pickford the Area Leader had a hand in this, so thanks Neil.

I think I have been suffering from a lack of your company. I came back from the Festival on a bit of a high, my mind whirring with ideas and suggestions.

This is one of the Guild's strengths, the gathering of likeminded people and ideas together. Whether you agree or disagree with your fellow vergers you will always come away with a nugget of information or the seed of an idea to keep the mind turning over. It is vital for our sanity to keep in contact with one another whether it is at a Branch meeting, a Province Festival or the Annual Training Conference. I know life is very hectic and it takes real effort to decide to come to one of our events but they are very rewarding and a lot of fun.

Over the last few months we have been holding those of our friends in the guild who are suffering through ill health in our prayers and we continue to do so. We also have been saddened by the loss to us, but not to the Lord, of some of our stalwart members. We will miss their wise and loving council.

James Armstrong



LIAISON OFFICER'S NEWS



Are we a dying breed? According to the new Archdeacon of Croydon 'Vergers' are a dying breed. For the third year running we were hosting the Annual Archdeacon's Charge or 'Visitation' where Churchwardens, Sidespeople and PCC members are sworn in. I presume this happens all over the country. Anyway, the new Archdeacon, who only been in post for three weeks, but has been an Archdeacon elsewhere, should know better.

Unusually he didn't read out his 'charge' but gave it out in a booklet, so he preached a sermon stating what the role of the Churchwarden incorporates, and yes for many Parish Churches he is probably correct. Churchwardens should be first in, last out, unlocking, locking, checking the hymn boards, making sure that Communion is laid out and sufficient and that all is in good order which includes purchasing of the toilet rolls! He said they should have the 'eye' for detail.

I am not sure that over the past 18 years any of my Churchwardens have ever set up our church on a Sunday, let alone know how to do this or where to purchase toilet rolls from. If I am away I have to leave a two page crib sheet on how to set up the church including replacing toilet rolls and usually my Vicar will take charge of these things, not our Wardens. And I know for the Cathedrals etc... the vergers are crucial in setting up, clearing up, the eye for detail.

Almost every Sunday, for myself and, I expect, for many of you, and up and down the country many others, who may not be in the Guild and probably are not even referred to as the 'Verger' and certainly aren't robed, do this regularly without deference to their Wardens.

So how can an Archdeacon justify his remark that we are a dying breed? He totally missed the point of the role of a Verger when I asked him about it afterwards. He said that in Lambeth where he had previously worked, there were 'no' Vergers. I asked him to expand – were there no Churches in Lambeth where a lay person set up, opened the church, welcomed people, other than the Churchwarden? And, can't Churchwardens be called 'Vergers' as well.

If we, at basic Parish Church level, don't get the support and encouragement from the Archdeacon then yes we will become a dying breed. I repeat from one of my previous messages: "If you know of a neighbouring Parish that has someone who performs the role of Verger, albeit unpaid, unrobed etc.. but needs some encouragement or some information about the Guild, please remember I am here in Croydon and would be happy to come and visit.

Please ask your Vicar to see whether the local Chapter would benefit from a talk from the Liaison Officer of the Guild of Vergers."

I hope you are all well & send you my best wishes.

Denise Mead



Dear Friends, Greetings for the great Feast of Pentecost!

I preached the following Sermon at the Festival in Beverley Minster and as it was exactly what I would want to write to you all, I decided to send the Sermon.

SERMON PREACHED AT THE NORTHERN PROVINCE FESTIVAL AT BEVERLEY MINSTER 2013

The Cathedral Church at Guildford is dedicated to the Holy Spirit and during a visit of nine year olds from a local school, the children were encouraged to speculate about the role of the Holy Spirit. One little lad said: 'The Holy Spirit is scary. You don't know where it is or what it is doing – you only know afterwards that it has 'got' you.' I thought that was a very neat definition! When we look at the promises that Jesus made for the coming of the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, we find four distinct roles:

The Holy Spirit is a promise of new life in God.

The Holy Spirit will abide/dwell in the hearts of all who believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.

The Advocate/ the Spirit of Truth will lead the believer into all Truth.

On those receiving the Holy Spirit there will be a new understanding of the love of God so that they will be able to prophesy.

The story of Pentecost is told quietly in the Gospel of John and more graphically in the Acts of the Apostles. Let us take the story from Acts first. The disciples are all together in one place at the Feast of Pentecost – the fiftieth day after the Passover when the Jews presented the first-fruits of the grain harvest to the Lord, and also commemorated the giving of the Law to Moses on Mount Sinai with the accompanying theophany of thunder, lightning, wind and flame. Luke reports that something very similar happened in that upper room that day to the disciples of Jesus: there was a violent mighty wind which filled the whole house and shook it to its foundations and as the disciples looked at each other, tongues of fire appeared on each. As that small boy suggested, it was a scary experience but one which resulted in the disciples losing their fear and going out into the market place to proclaim that Jesus Christ was their risen and ascended King. Not only did they become brave but whoever heard them, understood the message in their own native language. Although the disciples had seen Jesus, risen and in the flesh and had been present when he withdrew from them into heaven, their fear still remained. How were they to proclaim the kingdom of God in a world reluctant to hear? How were they to overcome their fear that in speaking the truth, they themselves would not be arrested, tortured and killed as Jesus had been? The memory of that dreadful day of the crucifixion must have been still vivid for them. But now the experience of the fire and the wind purged their fear and they were able to proclaim Jesus, their beloved Lord and Master. Some of them, no doubt, would have been with him from the very beginning of his ministry when he himself had been anointed with the Holy Spirit at his baptism and endowed with the sevenfold gifts promised in the prophecy of Isaiah. Perhaps some would have been present at that first sermon, preached at Nazareth when he affirmed that the prophecy of Isaiah was fulfilled. The Holy Spirit came in wind and fire anointing the disciples – and we might dwell on the consequences of that burning experience for a while. The properties of fire are such that:

The Apostles were made fit preachers of the word: for as the Feast of Pentecost commemorated the giving of the Law to Moses, so now the Apostles were able to preach the living Word.

The Apostles were given the gift of tongues to preach to all people of whatever race and language.

The Apostles were given wisdom and perception to understand the mysteries of God and of his Christ.

The divine Spirit set the souls of the Apostles on fire with the love abiding within them.

The burning love was such that the earthly 'dross' was burned away making them pure.

By contrast, the Gospel of John speaks of Jesus appearing in the upper room on Easter evening. He greets them with the words, 'Peace be with you.' He imparts the Holy Spirit by breathing on them so that his abiding presence will be with them for ever. The great Swiss theologian Emil Brunner wrote: 'The Church exists by mission as fire exists by burning.' The Church exists by being the inexhaustible fuel of the Holy Spirit. Although all in its path is burned by fire, they themselves do not constitute the fire. The fire dances between the obstacles in its path, changing them, purifying, transforming and sometimes destroying but always leaving a fertile ground, a seedbed for what follows. In the Church we have to ask; do we allow the fire of the Holy Spirit to change us and help us in the transformation of our lives, or do we place a fire-proof barrier around ourselves so that we cannot be changed? John Taylor, in his book 'The Go-Between God' suggests that if we thought more about the Church being given to the Spirit rather than the Spirit being given to the Church our theology might become more meaningful. The Spirit is not a 'superman sword' enabling and equipping the Church to do heroic deeds: rather the Spirit fuses individual Christians into a great fellowship which in turn is caught up in the life of the risen Lord Jesus giving them a new awareness of his compassion, his forgiveness and his love. The disciples had already had such an experience on that first Easter Day and the days following: think of the forgiveness and reinstatement of Peter, the man who denied Jesus; think of the love and the commission which made Mary Magdalene the 'Apostle to the Apostles'; think of the communion of the two disciples on the road to Emmaus when as Jesus spoke to them their 'hearts burned within them' and how the familiar action of breaking bread opened their eyes to his glory. John Taylor says that the gifts of the Holy Spirit first enables Christians to BE; having the risen Lord abiding within them as he promised and as suggested by the Gospel of John, and only then does it equip them to GO OUT and proclaim the nearness of the kingdom and salvation for all.

I do hope I shall see many of you at Conference. The material is geared to the Pastor Unit so it would be especially relevant for anyone in the middle of this Unit: as well as others who may be thinking about it or have already done it!

With all good wishes

Canon Maureen



FRANK LANE ~ A PHOTOGRAPHIC TRIBUTE



Frank Lane
Born 2nd June 1929
Died 10th April 2013
R.I.P



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LIFE MEMBER
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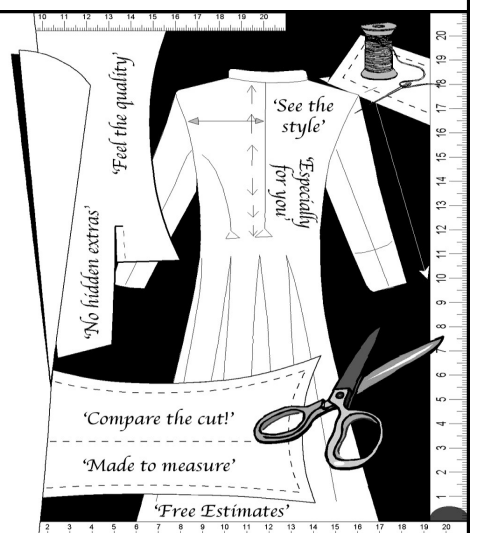
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FRANK LANE'S FUNERAL



Tuesday 23rd April turned out to be a very fine day, just like the weather for the Easter Monday Pilgrimages to Saint Alban's Cathedral, a favourite event at the Abbey for Frank. Around thirty vergers in total from both the Saint Alban's Branch and across the country turned up at the Abbey for the Requiem Mass at 2.00 p.m., knowing that they would be able to robe and that there would be an Honour Guard for him. We duly robed in the Lady Chapel; the funeral itself had been moved to the Quire, Crossing and Presbytery due to the numbers expected to attend. Typically for the Church of England, just before the service we were told what was going to happen. We lined up in rank two by two and then filed out of the Pilgrim Door on the North side of the Cathedral, splitting each way from the door to form the guard as the coffin arrived. When Frank had arrived, we were then led back into the Cathedral to form two ranks ahead of the coffin. We waited by the North Transept for the Clergy; Sub Dean: Canon Richard Watson, Precentor: Reverend Paul Arbuthnot, Minor Canon for Young People: Reverend Austin Janes; to take their places. We led off as the first hymn 'At the name of Jesus' was sung with Janet Lindsay, a very old and dear friend of Frank's as well as a Saint Albans Branch Member, leading the way carrying the Guild's Millennium Virge which Chris Crooks had brought with him. Chris was also keeping us in order. The Head Verger virged Frank's coffin in with his personal Virge, given to him on his retirement from the Abbey. We proceeded into the Crossing and up into the Presbytery, peeling off before the High Altar and into our places. Once Frank's coffin was in place before the High Altar symbols of his life were placed on it, his Virge, clown hat (actually a jester's hat) and a clown puppet. The clown hat and the puppet symbolised him as a character but also the fact that he was a member of the Holy Fools, one of the many organisations to which he belonged. There were readings by members of his family and a very moving tribute was given by his daughter.

Bits that I can remember were: ***"His life was very full; he was born on 2nd June 1929, he did his National Service in the Navy, worked at various jobs in London and Welwyn Garden City before coming to Saint Alban's Cathedral in 1967. After retiring as Head Verger from the Abbey after around 35 years of service he then worked at Morrisons for 3 days a week right up until his last illness. He married Lynda in April 1948 and they recently celebrated their 65th Wedding anniversary whilst he was ill. But he still chose the flowers and card for Lynda. Together Lynda and Frank had 3 children of their own, a son and two daughters, and also a foster son. Although their first child, a daughter, died soon after birth and this led them to life long association with the Children's Society."***

The other two hymns were, 'Mine eyes have seen the glory of the coming of the Lord' and 'Thine be the glory: risen conquering Son'. All hymns were taken from those sung at the Easter Monday Pilgrimage Services at the Abbey. The Sermon was preached by Canon Richard Watson who also had comments and tributes to Frank amongst his words. Then Communion was taken by all. There were, what I thought, about 500 people but the Abbey Vergers put it at around 375 in the congregation, including senior clergy and people from all walks of life whose paths had crossed Frank's, who took communion. Many clergy appeared as ordinary folk just wanting to pay their respects. As Frank's grandson said "once met never forgotten." The Reverend Canon Richard Watson remembered the first time he met Frank and recounted a typically amusing tale of him removing a heckler from the Abbey at the retirement of a Bishop. The Archdeacon of Saint Alban's performed the committal. At the end of the Service the vergers once again formed two ranks to precede the coffin out the way we had come in and then outside towards the West End of the Cathedral where we stood each side of the path in the sunshine. The Vergers of the Abbey led the hearse on its final journey from the Abbey, the family following behind, which was applauded as it went on his way.

There was a retiring collection in support of the Cathedral and the Children's Society. Donations may also be made c/o **Phillips Funeral Services, 68 Alma Road, Saint Albans AL1 3 BL (01727 851006)**

Frank's Ashes were interred in the North Churchyard at the Abbey on the Saturday after the funeral before his son went back to Canada. Frank had been a member of the Guild since 1968 and a Life Member since 2008. There will be a full obituary for Frank in the next edition of The Virger.

Rosamund Russell, Saint Albans Branch Secretary



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

Canterbury: Rosemary Ballard

Chichester, Guildford & Portsmouth: Graham Brindley

Gloucester, Hereford & Worcester: Joy Birkin & Jim Wooldridge

Lincoln & Southwell: Reverend Robert Whitehead

Oxford: Anita (Annie) Bayliss, David Dutson, Jean Hedley & Margaret Morris

Saint Albans: Peter Hudson

Salisbury: Barbara Carr, Jean Jackson & Babs Taylor

Somerset & Avon: Lionel & Mary Holway

York: Doreen Cook

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

R.I.P: Salisbury: Peter Wills & Liverpool: Doris Mills



VIRGING ON THE RIDICULOUS



A Beadle, an Ostiarius, one Cathedral Custos, four Cathedral Head Vergers, one Vesturer and seventeen Virgers; is this a record for Virgers in procession for one service? I do hope so! Add to this two Door-Keepers, ten Marshalls, sixteen Altar Servers (with four sets of processional cross and candles) the Cathedral Choir, the Ceremonarius, three Archiepiscopal Chaplains, six African Drummers, and 726 robed guests in the processions; then throw in seventeen radio-mics, nineteen TV cameras, hundreds of lights, tons of scaffolding supports, miles of cables and four massive generators... not to mention 2,000 chairs, a sixth century Book of the Gospels, some rice from Asia, water from Canada, and a Jerusalem Cross.

But what could this great occasion be?

What else - other than the Inauguration of the Ministry (Enthronement) of The Most Reverend and Right Honorable Justin Welby as the 105th Archbishop of Canterbury!

With over 720 people in the processions, arriving in various directions from six different robing venues around the Precincts, it was quite a feat! The remainder of the 2,000 people attending the service were seated according to the detailed seating plans throughout the length of the Cathedral by over forty Stewards.

After several months of planning, lots of meetings and a huge amount of amazing team work and co-operation, a very detailed plan was devised, revised, re-worked, timed, tested, re-timed and rehearsed. Site meetings with the BBC, discussions on camera angles, microphone positions, "studio" location for the commentary team, where to park all the vehicles, how to run all the cables, press positions for photographers, all to be fitted around the Cathedral's busy daily schedule, not forgetting the organ tuning, special flower arranging, the police searches and sniffer dogs scampering all over the place. Flags to fly, and lunch to provide; cobwebs removed from inaccessible places, and robes cleaned and ironed. Who knows how many gallons of tea were made for the hundreds of guests? Processions were robed, marshalled, lined-up, and set off to a strict timetable; each procession arriving at its allocated place on time.

To get all 720 people to their seats so that the ceremony could begin on time, the first procession set off 51 minutes before the 3.00 p.m. service. Finally, when all were in their places and the Dean had called for the legal documents authorizing the act of installation to take place, the Dean and Chapter, and the legal representatives processed to the inside of the Great West Door and waited.

Then at precisely 3.00 p.m. the Archbishop arrived at the closed West Doors and struck them three times with his Pastoral Staff. From then on the ceremony followed through as rehearsed, and everything went amazingly to plan, with carefully choreographed processions, beautiful music from around the world, and the rest – as they say – is history!

If you were fortunate enough to be there, or watch it on the TV, the internet, or listen on the radio, you may have been able to see how the liturgy unfolded.

There were also some very special Guild connections with the service; the Millennium Virge was carried in the service by one of the resident Cathedral Virgers, a member of the Canterbury Branch of the Guild; Bryan Webb - Canterbury Branch Treasurer and a skilled wood-turner - had made two different pairs of processional candles to match existing processional crosses belonging to the Cathedral, all of which were used in the service. One pair was presented to the Cathedral by the Canterbury Branch, as a thanksgiving for the Cathedral's generous help with the Guild's 80th anniversary Festival last September.

For those of us privileged to be a part of the day, it was an amazing experience, and one never to be forgotten.

Chris Crooks, FCEGV
Vesturer, Canterbury Cathedral

(Picture Courtesy of the Canterbury Cathedral Press Office)

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On a rare warm day in late May more than 80 vergers (and virgers, as we spell it at Beverley Minster) gathered in one of the largest Parish Churches in England for the 2013 York Province Festival.

Beverley Minster, home to the remains of Saint John of Beverley, is a gothic masterpiece that reflects the power and prestige attached to what was, until the Reformation, one of the most important Saints in Britain – in fact one of the Patron Saints of England. Although no longer a significant figure in the Anglican Church, this final resting place for his remains still attracts worshippers and pilgrims from the Catholic and Orthodox traditions.

The team of two full-time and one part-time Virger, plus a large number of volunteers from the Minster family, were hosts through the day, providing coffee, lunch and also leading the various tours which were on offer. Sadly, just as the first delegates were arriving the 'phone rang and we were informed that any visit to the Treasure House was 'off' due to illness, but everyone who had that as their first choice quickly merged into their second choice parties, so no harm was done.

After a welcoming drink and biscuits, a robed procession gathered for the Eucharist which was conducted by the Reverend Jeremy Fletcher, Vicar of Beverley Minster, with organ and voluntaries played by the Minster's Musical Director, Robert Poyser. The traditions and dedication of vergers was praised by the Vicar in a service that had an unusually old-fashioned feel. This was partly because the whole thing was unamplified, the Minster's system having failed on the Sunday previous (ironically, during the Pentecost Service).

Time for a quick group photo, then several nominated individuals were descended upon by the media: the local daily and weekly newspapers sending reporters and photographers to cover the event, whilst Radio Humberside recorded various interviews for broadcast in the following Sunday Morning Faith Programme.

A magnificent lunch, which was prepared by a highly experienced team of Minster volunteers who produce monthly, highly profitable Shoppers' Lunches for up to 150 people at a time, took us into the afternoon and the tours. Nearly 20 people braved the 113 steps to the roof of the Minster for a unique tour led by yours truly, taking in the missing towers of Beverley, the biggest and oldest working treadwheel crane in the country (it's all right Salisbury – you've got a windlass so we're not competing with you) and a detailed look at the fabric and repair record of a colossal building which is actually built in the middle of a swamp.



A larger group enjoyed the delights to be seen around the ground floor, as demonstrated by the combined leadership of Head Minster Virger, John Dell, and Researcher, (and former King's College Chorister), John Phillips.

The quality and quantity of fourteenth century carvings that have survived the centuries is astounding and, when coupled with the wooden sedilia, the Percy Tomb canopy and the restored reredos, as well as 68 sixteenth century misericords, presents a truly incredible treasure-trove of pre-Reformation decoration.



Two small groups were led outside the Minster – one going to Saint Mary's Church in North Beverley, courtesy of the Vicar, Becky Lumley. In itself Saint Mary's is a structure of a size, quality and majesty that many a market town would be glad to have as a centrepiece and yet, compared to the Minster it is a mere Chapel (which, back before Henry VIII, is what it was). These days its most popular claim to fame is that it supposedly contains a carving of a white rabbit that inspired Lewis Carroll when writing 'Alice in Wonderland', but its sixteenth and seventeenth century church furnishings also complement the earlier ones in the Minster. The other group went to Beverley Guildhall, which was kindly opened for us by Beverley Town Council who provided a special tour. The building has been in continuous use since 1501 and features a stunning Georgian courtroom with plaster stucco-work by Giuseppe Cortese.

Although many of our group then had to leave to complete long journeys home a good number remained for Choral Evensong which was sung, very unusually, by the Minster's Boys' Choir alone. A rare but very delicate and beautiful balance was achieved by the youthful choristers without adult voices in support. The concluding voluntary was played by Richard Babington, Chairman of York Branch, CEGV, who, with Rosemary, his wife and Branch Secretary, did much of the administrative work and behind the scenes planning.

It was a great success, the first York Province Festival in Beverley Minster since 1979 and a day to be cherished. We found out that there was a total of 1240 years of verger-experience together under our roof and it was a privilege and pleasure to be able to welcome so many of our colleagues and make new friends. We must do it again – some time.

Neil Pickford

Assistant Virger, Beverley Minster & Area Leader, CEGV Yorkshire Branches



BIRMINGHAM, LICHFIELD & COVENTRY BRANCH NEWS



Our AGM was held at Saint Nicholas Church, Codsall on 14th March 2013. At this meeting, thanks were given to our out-going Chair, Dee Caulton, for all her hard work during her time as chair. Our new Chair is now Chris Craddock who is looking forward to taking on this role.

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

All Branch members are welcome to attend our meetings, worship and social events.

The Branch will meet next on 12th June 2013 at Saint Nicholas Church, Codsall at 12 noon for worship followed by a Fish and Chip Lunch.

The Branch will also meet for a dinner in September details in the next magazine.

The next Branch AGM will be on Wednesday 12th March 2014.

We look forward to meeting and getting to know you.

Chris Craddock
Branch Chairman



CANTERBURY BRANCH NEWS



The Enthronement of Justin Welby in Canterbury Cathedral on 21st March was a wonderful occasion and took many months of detailed work and organisation by a team of people from the Cathedral, both lay and clerical, chaired by the Dean of Canterbury, Dr Robert Willis, and followed the mediaeval practice of arrival, presentation and placing in the two thrones. After the Oath, made before and holding the Canterbury Gospels, and the blessing by Archbishop Ntahoituri of Burundi, the new Archbishop was placed firstly in the 'Throne' for the Diocese by Archdeacon Sheila Watson, and then in Saint Augustine's Chair by the Dean, who also presented him with the Pastoral Staff after the Vice-Dean had collected it from the High Altar. The Peace then followed and dancers performed as the Archbishop was virged to the Pulpitum Screen where he read the Gospel before returning to Saint Augustine's Chair where he preached the sermon followed by the intercessions.

Hymns were sung, then a long procession made up of the Cathedral Foundation made its way to the Chapter House via the Martyrdom. On arrival the Cathedral Choir sang the anthem 'I will not leave you comfortless' by William Byrd. The Dean then placed the new Archbishop in his seat and all the members of the Foundation made the Promise of Obedience in order. The service ended with the Archbishop and his company being escorted to the Deanery.

The Cope, Mitre, Chasuble and Stole worn by the Archbishop were made originally for Dr Ian Cundy when he was made Bishop of Peterborough by Juliet Hemingray and commissioned by the students of Cranmer Hall, Saint John's College, Durham, where he had been Warden. The new Archbishop had been a student there in the last three years of Dr Cundy's tenure. Following his death, aged 64, in 2009 from a rare lung cancer, his widow gave the vestments to Justin Welby on his appointment as Bishop of Durham. As it is the custom of Archbishops not to wear a Chapter Cope but instead to wear their own at an Enthronement he chose this very beautiful and symbolic set which depicts the three fishes and the water changed into wine. It also has a variety of cords and rhinestones to remind us that Jesus is the Light of the World. Juliet Hemingray also made the vestments for George Carey's Enthronement.

History was made at this Enthronement, as for the first time the Archbishop was installed in the 'Throne' in the Quire as Bishop of the Diocese by a female Archdeacon, the Venerable Sheila Watson. On the Tuesday before, Pope Francis I had celebrated his first Mass in Saint Peter's Square, also making history as the first Jesuit Pope. So the week of 17th to 24th March 2013 was definitely one to remember.

To make everything run smoothly 'extra staff' were 'recruited', some thirty people in all and extra Virges were brought in from Saint Mary de Castro, Dover, Lincoln, Rochester and Winchester, which were all used to virge processions in, round and about the Cathedral. I had a surprise at the Speaker's procession – he had no wig on! Well done to everyone. My grateful thanks go to Chris Crooks and Paul Lockyer for the information they gave me regarding the Archbishop's vestments.

The Diocesan Service to welcome Archbishop Welby was a lovely one and many people from all over the Diocese were there. I was with three other wheelchair bound members of the public and their carers in front of the screens at the East end of the Nave. I jumped at the first hymn, because 'Where have I heard that before' hit me, only to realise that it had been the closing hymn at the Enthronement. The Dean told us this in his welcome, then he and Anne Rees had a question and answer conversation. After that Bishop Trevor, Bishop of Dover and Bishop in Canterbury, took over and had a very happy natter with pupils from Bredgar Church of England Primary School. The Reverend Sheila Cox was then in conversation with Anne Rees, then Anne spoke with Bishop Trevor.

The Choir of Canterbury Christ Church sang 'Now behold the Lamb', and Jane Roberts of Kent CAN (the Community Alliance of Networks), was in conversation with Anne. After a hymn, the Archbishop reflected on the journey into Holy Week. The intercessions followed, led by members of the Archbishop's Council. The service closed with the lovely hymn, 'My song is love unknown', and the blessing given by Archbishop Ian Ernest of the Indian Ocean. We then all went to the Chapter House where Peter and his team gave us tea and buns and had a good natter.

Cherry Johnstone
Branch Correspondent



CHICHESTER, GUILDFORD & PORTSMOUTH BRANCH NEWS



Our A.G.M. was held at Saint Barnabas Church Hall, Haslemere, on Tuesday 12th February. Some members had assembled for a fish and chip lunch prior to the meeting. Only a small group of about 20 were present for this and apologies were received from 12 members. We were sorry to hear that our Chairman, Bill Groves, was too unwell to attend and greetings were sent to him. The Chair was taken by our Vice-Chairman. Several years ago we were one of the largest Branches, but our numbers are way down now, mainly due to the older members decreasing and the lack of new younger Vergers joining or not being appointed. They are the ones who would be more likely to have the technical skills which are now essential for holding posts on committees. This is a universal problem and we were sorry to learn of Carlisle and Winchester folding.

Our Area Leader enquired about members reaction to "The Virger" in its new style and said that Marek had found a printer who needed less time and was less expensive, no complaints were forthcoming. We were pleased to learn of the good progress being made by our Branch Chaplain, Reverend Christopher Vallins, who had recently undergone heart by-pass surgery.

On 10th April the Branch had a joint meeting with the remaining members of the Guildford Cathedral Fellowship (at one time several people were members of both) with whom we have shared meetings over past years. After a brief business meeting we were delighted that our Branch Chaplain was with us to tell us of his recently acquired new post. For many years he was Senior Chaplain at Epsom and Saint Helier Hospitals and since his retirement has been the Bishop's Adviser for Healthcare Chaplaincy and has travelled the country talking on this subject. He is now the new Chairman of the London Surrey Borders Research Ethics Committee. This group consists of medical and surgical consultants, senior nurses, pharmacists, statisticians, lawyers and lay members. No new drug can be trialed without having their approval, after a full description has been given and it must receive their informed consent. There are so many deep ethical problems to be addressed by such a committee and it is the first occasion that a member of the clergy has been involved which is cheering news for the future.

Sheila J Ford
Branch Correspondent



FORTHCOMING EVENTS



2013

Sunday 28th July — Thursday 1st August
Annual Training Conference at the Elim Conference Centre, West Malvern

Thursday 12th September
Canterbury Province Festival at Saint Alban's Cathedral

2014

Canterbury Province Festival at Hereford Cathedral (**Details to be Confirmed**)



THE GUILD 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 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 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 Officer: John Shearer**.



A cold, dull, damp and overcast day, Monday 25th February, saw the members of the Ipswich Branch once again travelling along the A14 to Saint Edmundsbury Cathedral at Bury Saint Edmunds for our first meeting of 2013. But after a warm welcome by Matthew Kemsley (Cathedral Verger), the gathering of members started with a Eucharist and Office of Admission by the Reverend Dr Steve Griffiths (Chaplain), the Service was held in the Lady Chapel with Matthew acting as administrant in the Eucharist.

During the Service we welcomed into The Guild of Vergers – Paul Collard and Ted Simmons as Full Members, both Paul and Ted are Vergers at the Cathedral. The picture here shows Paul and Ted after their admission into the Guild. The order from left to right: Ian Cobb (Chair), Paul Collard, Ben Elliott (admitted last October), Ted Simmons and Matthew Kemsley (Cathedral Verger and Area Leader). It is so good to see that we are still admitting new members both into the Branch and the Guild as, after all, the future of the Branch depends on a healthy membership. Hopefully in the near future there will be more members joining the Ipswich Branch.



After a lovely service we then adjourned to the Refectory for lunch. I must mention at this point that my feet, no doubt along with others, during the service were very warm due to the under floor heating, very much appreciated on a quite chilly day. After a leisurely time spent eating good food and catching up with various people that possibly some had not seen since our last get together it was then time to make our way to one of the meeting rooms for the next part of the days' gathering.



For the next hour we discussed various points of business and reports were given by the relevant Officers where we were brought up to date with what is happening within the Branch and the Guild in general. Honorary Branch Life Membership was awarded to Brian Peverett. As Brian was unable to attend the meeting Matthew Kemsley presented Brian with his certificate at his home in Bury Saint Edmunds. He was delighted to be awarded this honour by members of the Branch. Brian has helped at Bury Cathedral on many occasions and in the past has also been a Branch Officer. Our very good wishes go out to Brian.

Our next meeting will be our AGM/BBQ to be held in Aldeburgh on 26th July, where hopefully the summer will be upon us and the sky full of lovely warm sunshine!

Until next time, God bless.

Jean Cobb
Branch Correspondent

The following paragraph contains 22 books of the Bible. Can you find them all? (*The Solution to this puzzle will appear in the Autumn Edition of The Virger.*)

The Bible books number sixty-six in the King James Version and they form a most remarkable library. The impact of the Bible, whose ancient writings and truth still apply, has been dynamic. A hard-to-ignore fact is the quality of its teaching. Most of the Old Testament was written in Hebrew, somewhere east of Suez, rather close to Judea. Accounts such as these are interesting, but the main job is to find the Bible book names in this paragraph. All may compete. Respond by underlining each book as you find it. It usually takes but a few minutes to judge several sentences for such names. There is the danger of seeking so hurriedly that one will overlook names in going from answer to answer. This is just a fluke of eyesight. Though twenty-two books are here concealed, it is hard to say what score is normal. A child may find certain books whereas adults will overlook them. At the worst, one should find a few. As a matter of fact, some are obvious in a humorous sort of way.

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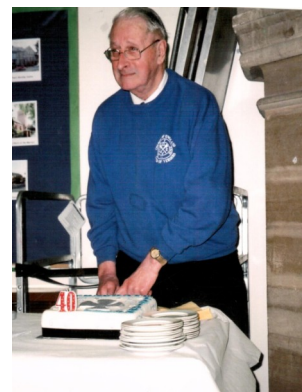




We began the year with our AGM at the end of February; this had been postponed from 21st January due to the snow. Thirteen members attended at Saint James' Church Hall, Birstall. After the opening prayers by our Branch Chaplain, Father James Shakespeare, the meeting went very smoothly. Various reports were given, the Officers: Chairman – Jack Lippitt, Secretary – Kathryn Mobbs, Treasurer – Clive Mobbs, Branch Correspondent – Marjorie Thomas and Magazine Distributors – Kathryn and Clive Mobbs; were all re-elected for a further term.

For our March meeting, fifteen members and the General Secretary, Mr Stephen Stokes, met at Saint Peter's Church Hall, Braunstone, for a party to celebrate Jack Lippitt's 40 years of being Verger at Saint Peter's Church. We began with Compline in the church, then we all repaired to the hall for the party.

During the evening our Area Leader, Lance Bloom, and the General Secretary presented Jack with a Branch Life Membership Certificate to commemorate his 40 years service as Verger and his services as Branch Chairman for a number of years. Jack also cut a special cake that had been provided for him by his Church family. A very enjoyable evening was had by all.



I had the pleasure of watching the Enthronement of the Archbishop of Canterbury on the television and I must say how pleased I was that the team of vergers led by Chris Crooks was highlighted, which is something that is not often done these days.

On Wednesday 24th April we set out into the lovely countryside, and as we drove along we saw lots of beautiful clumps of daffodils in the grass verges. We eventually arrived at the Church of Saint Peter and Saint Paul, Great Bowden near Market Harborough. This is a thirteenth century building in origin. Parts of the chancel survive from this time, possibly the piscina, where one can still see a slot cut into the wall to receive a wooden shelf, and the doorway to what is now the clergy vestry in the South wall.

Like most English Church buildings Great Bowden experienced continuous alterations and modernisation throughout the Middle Ages. Its tower was built during the latter half of the fourteenth century. In the second half of the fifteenth century the nave was rebuilt, the three light clerestory windows were added at the same time and the South Chapel rebuilt and extended to the East end of the chancel. Later a North Chapel was added and a two bay arcade built to connect it with the chancel. It retains its original main roof timbers though the rest were renewed in 1971.

The nineteenth century saw restoration works being carried out. The masonry was generally restored and re-pointed, this included new nave parapets. The gallery was taken out and the organ moved to its present position in the North Chapel. The box pews of 1790 were cut down and converted into the present open seating.

In the twentieth century there were further repairs and modernisations to the building. In 1926 the electric lighting was installed. After damage during the war in 1941, permanent repairs were carried out in 1946. In 1949/50 the hot water heating system was put in. 1951 saw the organ completely restored. In 1952 the top six courses of the spire were taken down and renewed. A new treble bell was installed in 1954, making the number of bells up to six. In 1958 the building was rewired.

There are five stained glass windows dating from 1887 – 1920. A large Parish Chest with three locks, one for the Vicar and one each for the two Churchwardens, stands in the North Chapel. Its date is somewhat uncertain, but comparison with similar examples suggests it may be late Mediaeval. The chancel screen is made of wrought iron and was erected in 1895. The screen in the South Chapel dates from 1925 and the tower screen was erected in 1927. At the base of the tower a hole has been made to receive the descending clock weights, this is protected by a two meter high screen. The stone weights from the old clock are presently situated in the South Porch.

Seventeen members attended a service of Holy Communion with hymns led by our Branch Chaplain and Team Vicar of this Church. During the service we admitted three new members, Anne, Robert and Diana, all from Peterborough. We hope that they will all enjoy our meetings in the future. Kate Mobbs acted as Crucifer and led us in procession with dignity and reverence.

After the service we had tea, coffee and biscuits. Our Branch Chairman thanked Father James for inviting us and for conducting the service. He also thanked the Organist for playing, and the Churchwardens for providing refreshments.



LEICESTER & PETERBOROUGH BRANCH NEWS CONTINUED



Nine members of the Branch met on Monday 13th May at the Church of Saint Philip and Saint James, Ratby, for a service of Holy Communion with hymns for Ascensiontide. The service was conducted by the Team Rector, Dr Peter Hooper, and the intercessions were led by yours truly. The Organist was Mr Christopher Banks. The number of members attending was a bit disappointing, but it was probably because it was a different week in the month or due to illness. After the service Dr Peter's wife, Sue, kindly provided us with refreshments. Our Branch Secretary, Kate Mobbs, thanked everyone for coming and the Rector for taking the service.

The dates for future Branch meetings are:

Monday 22nd July at 7.30 p.m. in Saint Mark's Church, Lincoln Road, Peterborough.

Monday 19th August at 7.30 p.m. in Saint James the Great Church, Birstall.

Thursday 12th September – Canterbury Province Festival in Saint Alban's Cathedral.

Please bring your robes to all these meetings.

I will be attending the Canterbury Province Festival in Saint Alban's Cathedral, so I hope that I will meet friends there that I gained whilst attending the Training Conferences.

Marjorie Thomas, Dip GV
Branch Correspondent



SAINT ALBANS BRANCH NEWS

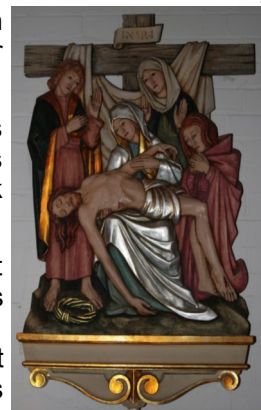


Winter and the cold weather seemed to go on forever, so, once again we had to move our AGM from the end of January to the end of February due to snow. This also meant we had to cancel the Compline and buffet organised for the retirement of our Branch Chaplain, Reverend Canon Peter Palmer. Canon Peter was retiring after serving us faithfully since around 1999.

Therefore at our AGM in February we duly said farewell to Canon Peter and welcomed Reverend Andrew Ferrar, who was elected as our new Branch Chaplain. We are not, however, losing touch with Canon Peter altogether as he was made Branch Chaplain Emeritus, remaining an honorary member of the Branch. All the serving Branch Officers were elected to serve another year.

Our first event was Lenten Devotions lead by Father Andrew who took as through the Stations of the Cross using the painted wooden figures of the Stations on the walls of Saint Saviour's Church. Little did we know then that this would be the last time any of us would see Frank Lane, as on 10th April Frank passed away after a short illness.

However we were grateful to Lynda that we could use Frank's personal Verge once again at the Corporate Communion held at Saint Saviour's Church on 22nd April. We all felt that it was a way of having part of Frank still with us.



The refreshments at both the events at Saint Saviour's were provided by Father Andrew's wife, Ann. Everyone enjoyed these and felt they were well up to the same standards as those Canon Peter's wife, Nonita, had provided in the past.

About half our membership together with others from around the country turned up to form an honour guard at Frank's funeral on April 23rd as Lynda had requested as many as were able to come to be a fitting tribute to a well loved and respected man, a true gentleman in every sense of the word.

(Please see the report of Frank's Funeral on page 6 for more details)

We now look forward to future events this year, our Alban Supper and the Summer Outing.

Then on 12th September we hope to welcome you all to Saint Alban's Cathedral for the Canterbury Province Festival.

(A copy of the Festival Information and Booking Form is included once more with this edition of The Virger. If you are intending to come and have not yet booked, please complete and return your forms as soon as possible.)

Planning for this event is keeping the sub-committee busy as it is not long to go now, in this we are ably guided by our honourable member, Mr Michael Golby, who draws upon his recent experience of surviving the Oxford Branch's hosting of the Canterbury Province Festival at Eton and Windsor!

Rosamund Russell
Branch Correspondent



2013 has been a 'mixed bag' so far for us at the Salisbury Branch. We started our year off in March with our AGM and first quarterly meeting in Salisbury. We were delighted to be joined this year by Canon Maureen. As always it was lovely to see her and she was able to clarify one or two points of Guild business we were not clear on and led us in prayer at the meeting and at our Evensong in Saint Thomas' Church where we also bade a fond farewell to Jean Jackson who, until her recent retirement, had been Verger of Amesbury Parish Church for over 40 years and has been a loyal member of our Branch for over 20 years. We will miss her at our meetings. Sadly, since the meeting, Jean has had a nasty fall. We wish her well in her recovery.

At previous meetings we had been toying with the idea of admitting new members to the Branch annually, at our AGM, but it was felt that it would be better to admit them as and when they joined, and have a service of rededication to our calling as vergers at the AGM. Our first Rededication Service was held this year, and was felt by all to be most appropriate. If any other Branches are interested, they are welcome to contact us.

14th May saw the second of our quarterly meetings. This was held in Lady Saint Mary Church, Wareham, (not the Abbey as advertised by the Chair who has moved on from blonde to grey moments!), where we were hosted by Clive Cherritt and Eddie Taylor. During the meeting a discussion was held on the subject of the changes we all see when new clergy arrive and introduce new ideas, styles of worship etc... Whilst this can be a difficult time if some of us feel that the ideas won't work, have been tried before and failed, or would be disagreeable to the congregation, we are our own worst enemies if we aren't flexible in our approach to change. In these times where many vergers are struggling to hold on to or have lost their jobs, it is surely better to remain impartial in these matters and help facilitate the changes in a compassionate way, thus supporting both clergy and congregation alike than to try and dictate to the clergy 'how it should be done'? The verger holds a lot of influence within the Church, but if we don't work with our clergy we lose that privilege. After the meeting and a delicious lunch, we visited Wareham Museum, which, although small, is a mine of interesting information and artefacts about Wareham. Our day ended with Evensong, followed by tea. Our thanks go to Clive and Eddie and their team for giving us such a lovely day.

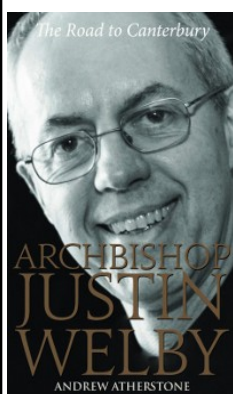


Sadly, on Friday 17th May, Peter Wills, until recently Verger at Holy Trinity Church, Bradford on Avon, Wiltshire, died suddenly. A stalwart member of the Branch, Peter held positions of Secretary and Area Leader. His knowledge of the Constitution and procedures was invaluable. He will be greatly missed and our condolences go out to his wife Jo, and their family. Funeral details are not finalised at time of going to press, but they can be obtained by e-mailing tinamcullen@aol.com. An obituary will appear in the Autumn Edition of The Virger.

Beth Steele, Chair, Tina Cullen, Area Leader, & David Guy, Branch Treasurer



BOOK REVIEW



Archbishop Justin Welby: The Road to Canterbury by Andrew Atherstone (2013)

Who is Justin Welby and what sort of Archbishop will he be? This little book offers a readable account of his life thus far. It is not really a biography, but more a combination of an expanded commentary on his CV and a letter of recommendation by an evangelical scholar who teaches history and doctrine at Wycliffe Hall, Oxford.

The book is well-documented, drawing on interviews, archives, articles from parish magazines and even audio recordings of seminars given at New Wine. The references are all footnoted, but hard to follow-up in the absence of a list of abbreviations or a bibliography. This gives the book a gossipy flavour in places that readers will either find entertaining or exasperating. For example we are told that Justin was a honeymoon baby but that his parents soon divorced and his father became engaged to be married to Vanessa Redgrave, 'a 23 year old budding actress less than half his age'.

The early chapters contain quite a bit of padding, such as the statistics of Enterprise Oil's production from 1984 to 1989, and the chapter on Welby's Curacy and first Incumbency in Coventry Diocese is unremarkable, describing the work of a capable evangelical minister. In complete contrast, the chapter on his time at Coventry Cathedral is more nuanced. It shows him using his gifts to engage in a costly ministry of reconciliation, particularly in Nigeria, complete with the 'Six R's' of reconciliation. The recurrent themes of Welby's time in Liverpool and Durham are mission and evangelism, with godly money management.

Overall, the picture emerges of a likeable leader with a genuine desire to follow Christ. I valued learning a little more about the new Archbishop's experience and priorities. These do not necessarily indicate the way he might take in the future, as his obedience to Christ has taken him in some unexpected directions thus far.



NATIONAL VACANCIES ~ GENERAL SECRETARY



The post of **General Secretary** is up for election at the AGM in July

The General Secretary is a non-voting member of Central Council and shall carry out the decisions of the Central Council and submit a report thereon at the Annual General Meeting.

The General Secretary may be either a Full or Associate Member of the Guild. Enquiries relating to the work of The Guild and requests from third parties will be directed to the General Secretary, who is authorised to provide such information as appropriate. **The General Secretary is a 5 year appointment.**

The present post holder - Stephen Stokes has indicated he is willing to stand for a further term.

For more information or a Nomination Form, Please Contact the General Secretary.



NATIONAL VACANCIES ~ COMMUNICATIONS OFFICER



The post of **Communications Officer** is up for election at the AGM in July

The Communications Officer is responsible for all communications and publicity in relation to the Guild, including (but not limited to) the Guild magazine, and the Guild website. **The Communications Officer is a 3 year appointment.**

The present post holder - Marek Barden has indicated he is willing to stand for a further term.

For more information or a Nomination Form, Please Contact the General Secretary.



NATIONAL VACANCIES ~ TRAINING REGISTRAR



A vacancy has arisen due to the sudden resignation of Roger Lawrence. Under the rules of the Constitution, the post has to be advertised and interviews held. If there is anyone in the Guild who would like to undertake this valuable role, please contact me via email: CEGVTrainOff@gmail.com in the coming weeks. Interviews will be held whilst at Conference.

I would like to pay tribute to Roger for his tireless work over the past four years that he has held this post. It is hoped that Roger will be present on the first day of Conference, so we can say a formal farewell to him.

In the meanwhile, I would be grateful if all students could direct their completed work and any queries to me from now on until a new Training Registrar has been appointed.

John Shearer
Training Officer



FROM THE TRAINING OFFICER



The Training Conference is nearly upon us. Once again we will be heading to the wonderful Malvern countryside to enjoy the picturesque views at the Elim Conference Centre at West Malvern.

Those who were unable to join us last year would have marveled at the outstanding hospitality that both the new venue and the adjoining Parish Church showed us. Set on the side of the Malvern Hills, the Conference Centre sported an outdoor pool and views that stretched out into Herefordshire.

This year's programme is hoped to utilise the peace and tranquility of the Centre and the stunning grounds. We are delighted that the Bishop of Worcester will join us for Dinner and Choral Evensong and with the theme of caring for each other; we will be focusing on the 'Verger as a Pastor' unit of the Diploma Course. The Reverend Ann Ogram will be guiding us through the CRB and Safeguarding processes.

So, when is all this happening? Well, make a note of the following dates: Sunday 28th July until Thursday 1st August inclusive.

Spread the word and come and have a few days in the Malvern Hills. The Booking Form, which has already been circulated in the previous editions of The Virger, is also included in this edition, so make sure you grab your copy and fill it in. The Training Team is looking forward to greeting as many of you as possible to West Malvern.

John Shearer

'I would rather be a door keeper in the house of our Lord,
than to dwell in the tents of the
Ungodly'

Psalm 84

The Guild seeks to make effective the ministry of Vergers
through the following key **objectives**, by :

Promoting the spiritual nature of the **Vergers' Vocation**
through Christian Fellowship and spiritual guidance for all its
Members;

Encouraging the advancement of knowledge by education,
through maintaining standards of good practice, and by
equipping Members for Ministry as vergers in all its aspects,
through the provision of advice, training, resources, and by
organizing and promoting training courses and conferences;
Providing the means and opportunity for **communication** and
discussion of ideas and proposals of common interest to

Members;

Providing **support** and encouragement to the Membership in
all aspects of their duties whatever they may be and wherever
performed;

Advising, upon request, and making recommendations as to
terms of employment and welfare of any Member;

Recording the gamut of work undertaken by Vergers; in
addition noting each Member's training, experience and
qualifications.

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