

The Virger

Autumn 2014
Issue 284



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~CEGV~
The Conference Group Photo
Monday 11th August 2014



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The Official Magazine of the Church of England Guild of Vergers





Welcome to the Autumn 2014 edition of *The Virger*. If you would like to include Branch news, articles, adverts, photos, book reviews or any other information you feel our readers would find of interest please send to the Communications Officer by the Deadline Date below.

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FRONT COVER: The Conference Group Photograph, Monday 11th August 2014

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NATIONAL CHAIRMAN'S LETTER



August saw us in West Malvern for our Annual Training Conference where we got to grips with the Psalms, Robert Beattie from Worcester Cathedral shared with us his considerable knowledge and expertise on the subject, after our opening Eucharist we all settled down to entertain ourselves with some communal singing, costumes were optional I understand. There is a full report about our activities during the rest of the Conference in this issue, so I will not bore you with my ramblings. Throughout the duration of the Conference the Training Team fed, watered and nurtured us both spiritually and intellectually. Thank you so much John, Sue, Margaret and Canon Maureen for all you did to make it such a success. We were wonderfully looked after by all the staff of the Elim

Conference Centre who took care of our physical needs providing a steady supply of wonderful food and drink. To the Vicar and PCC of Saint James' Church, who very trustingly allow us the use of the church, a very big thank you.

At the meeting of the Central Council on the Sunday night I was elected to serve you as your National Chairman for a further three years. A position I am privileged to hold and I am humbled that you have chosen to honour me in this way. Thank You. The AGM on the Monday morning gave the Officers a chance to report on their activities during the year. To them I would like, on your behalf, to say a very big thank you for all the hard work they do to keep the Guild running smoothly.

Hereford Cathedral is the venue for our next Festival. I do hope to see as many of you that are able to be there. The planning committee have a great time in store for us.

By the time you read this magazine I should have been on a little holiday into Northumberland to reconnoitre some venues for the York Province Festival 2015, be warned it may be a little different from what we are used to. Hopefully you will enjoy what I have in mind, please keep an eye out for details to be published soon. The Canterbury Province Festival in and around Temple Church, London, looks very exciting too. Join us if you can.

I hope you have had the chance to have some time off work to relax and recharge your batteries ready to face your duties as children go back to school and you get swept up in assemblies and concerts again.

James Armstrong



A VIEW FROM THE ORGAN LOFT



As both a Church Organist and an Assistant Verger I felt I must respond to the opening remarks in the National Chairman's letter in the last issue of The Virger.

When learning the organ, I was told that music before the service should be quiet and contemplative to assist the congregation to prepare themselves for the service. The amount of chatter that goes on in many Churches these days renders any quiet music the organist plays almost inaudible. As far as a concluding voluntary is concerned, an organist at Salisbury Cathedral once wrote: "The first note of the concluding voluntary is like a starting pistol for the congregation to rise noisily from their seats and rush for refreshments or the exit doors!"

However, in Denmark, where I lived and worked for a while, music before and after the service was an integral part of worship. To start the service, a bell sounded nine times (3x3) at which stage the priest entered and sat in his place. The congregation fell silent and the organist played a short piece of quiet music (preludium). This provided the congregation with a period to prepare for the service. At the end of the service, the priest again sat down and the congregation listened to the concluding voluntary in silence (postludium). As for applause afterwards; never! After that, the congregation left the church and quite often continued socialising at a meal in the church hall. This pattern of worship is still true today at the Danish Seamen's Church in Hull, where Rosemary and I attend as often as we can and I am one of the organists.

If you want to hear exhibitionism from the organist, you need to visit Churches in Europe. I worked in Holland for a while and used to attend Church in Dordrecht. There, the organist was also the carillonneur. Not only did he play the organ and produce elaborate play-overs of hymns, he would accompany them with a variation of harmony for each verse as there was no choir. During the sermon he would disappear from the organ loft to play the carillon. As I could understand very little of the sermon due to the resonance in the building and my Dutch being rather limited, I used to listen to the carillon instead. In Denmark, in the larger Churches, the organist would often "dress up" the introduction to a hymn to such an extent it almost became like a "Name that Tune" competition.

At the Churches where I play in East Yorkshire, some members of the congregation sit and listen before and after the service. Sometimes there is applause or comment at the end of the concluding voluntary, but at other times, the noise of chatter as members socialise over a cup of coffee at the back of the church almost overwhelms all but the loudest music. This can be very frustrating, especially when you have spent a long while practicing a piece of music.

Regarding verger duties, Rosemary and I carry out our tasks dutifully and we rejoice inwardly when everything goes according to plan. Now we are leaving Saint Patrick's for pastures new, the PCC has asked us to prepare a list of everything we do in and for the Church. That will be revelation for some members of the PCC methinks!

Richard Babington

Saint Patrick's Church, Patrington, East Yorkshire



NATIONAL CHAPLAIN'S LETTER



Dear Friends, greetings.

I hope you are enjoying a slightly less hectic time while the Summer Vacation lasts. Fifty or so of us gathered and had a very enjoyable Conference at West Malvern with plenty of good food, instruction, worship and a lot of fun too – to see our beloved Chairman dressed as a nun singing 'How do you solve the problem of Maria' had to be seen to be believed!

I have just returned from a few days away and have been reflecting on Truth. We visited some 'stately homes' and this question of truth was brought into sharp focus for me. One, although built in the 14th Century had practically nothing of the old building left except a curtain wall and gatehouse. It had been extravagantly 'restored' but was anything other than the building it had once been. Nothing about it was truly genuine. The other belonged to a much less wealthy family and had been kept up in the style of its original build. It felt like a family home – which indeed it was. The owner of the gardens of the first house had imported much masonry, statuary and pots from Italy, and although beautiful they were somewhat out of place. The second house had Elizabethan gardens, which were allowed to speak for themselves. Truth is transparent and when we observe critically, we see the real thing rather than some sham mock up.

Truth is a very biblical word – in the Old Testament it is a quality which properly belongs to God – God is a God of truth. It really indicates that God is reliable, dependable and has the ability to perform exactly what is required. The word 'truth' is sometimes rendered 'faithful'. Truth is also what God requires of humans – 'I desire truth in the inward parts' writes the Psalmist. In the New Testament truth means an actual state of affairs contrasted with rumour or false report. The Greek philosophers think of truth as that which really exists as opposed to that which only appears to exist – my example of the two houses! In Saint John's Gospel the dominant meaning is of the divine truth or the revelation, rather than the rather unspecified connotation of the truth that seems to dominate our society. After the resurrection of our Lord Jesus it became the function of the Holy Spirit to lead us into 'all truth' and it fits us for a life in fellowship with God and each other such that we understand that Jesus is 'The way, the truth and the life.' As far as we see Jesus as the truth in this light, we will be sustained by the Holy Spirit so that we can worship and live in a way acceptable to God through Jesus. Newspaper reports often show us how far we are from the truth and it is often difficult for us to know just 'what is truth'. The best that we can do is to live the truth ourselves and take no part in perpetrating half-truths for any reason. As Christians, people need to be able to accept what we say as truth at all levels of our conversation.

With every blessing and my love

Canon Maureen



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

Chichester, Guildford & Portsmouth: Graham Brindley

Gloucester, Hereford & Worcester: Michael Bayliss, Joy Birkin & Jim Wooldridge

Oxford: Anita (Annie) Bayliss, Ernestine Denham, David Dutson & Margaret Morris

Rochester & East Chichester: Tina Lawrence

Saint Albans: Peter Hudson

Salisbury: Jean Jackson

Somerset & Avon: Lionel & Mary Holway, Roger Lawrence & Joy Stevens

York: George & Doreen Cook

R.I.P - London, Southwark & Chelmsford: Ralph Smith

R.I.P - Norwich Branch: John Barker



R.I.P EDWARD 'TED' HARRIS



A recent communication received from a firm of Solicitors was the first we knew of the death (through natural causes), of Ted Harris who passed away on Tuesday 4th March 2014.

Ted had been a member of the Oxford Branch from the early years of its infancy, and although he did not attend Branch functions in the latter years, he remained a stalwart supporter of the Branch and the Guild.

He lived on his own in a Victorian row of houses down by the Oxford/Coventry Canal (next to the River Thames), in an area of the City of Oxford known as Jericho – Inspector Morse territory. We will remember the 'call' sign on his telephone answer machine which informed callers that '... the telephone of 'Bomber' Harris who is on a sortie'

His ministry was at the Church of Saint Barnabas and Saint Paul in Jericho; we are much saddened by this loss and the fact that we were not able to be in attendance at his send off to be with our Lord but we give thanks for Ted's involvement within the Guild and his service to all those who came into contact with him. Safe Landing, Ted.

Michael Golby, FCEGV
Oxford Branch Chairman



70th ANNIVERSARY OF D-DAY



I have been to Normandy on 6th June for the D-day celebrations several times. This year being the 70th anniversary was to be no exception. I contacted my friends in Normandy several months ago to make sure of my accommodation and in January booked our ferry from Dover to Calais. All well and good until the French authorities brought in new rules because so many Heads of State were attending events. The French declared that there would be an exclusion zone measuring some 35 miles long and about 5 miles wide. To get into this zone every car had to display a pass (including French residents) and to attend the main four events, every person had to have accreditation.

I found out about these facts on 30th April which was also the deadline for the applications, all of which had to go to the Ministry of Defence and then had to be approved by the French authorities in Paris. I e-mailed details of my wife, my son James and myself together with the registration number of my car around 2:00 a.m. on 1st May and crossed my fingers. Several days later I received an e-mail stating that my application was being processed. Eventually on 31st May, three days before we were due to leave for France, our passes arrived with instructions that we needed to attend Caen in person on 4th or 5th June to collect tickets for the main anniversary event, which was being attended by Her Majesty The Queen.

James and I shared the driving for the 250 mile journey from Calais to Cerisy-la-Forêt where our friends lived. On 5th June we made the 60 mile round trip to the Hotel-de-Ville at Caen to collect our tickets and passes for the ceremony the following day.

That afternoon we visited Bayeux Cathedral where we saw the Therese-Benedicte Bell. The bell was cast in honour of the D-Day landings, and is named after Saint Therese-Benedicte, the Patron Saint of Europe, who was executed in Auschwitz in August 1942. The bell was to be blessed by Prince Charles on 6th June.

Among the names inscribed on the bell are Her Majesty The Queen and Justin Welby, the Archbishop of Canterbury. Bayeux was the first town liberated by the Allies after the landings and was not damaged at all by the fighting.



Friday 6th June, the big day, arrived. We set off for the 10 mile drive to Bayeux cemetery.

The Police were out in force at every junction. As we reached the exclusion zone we were stopped by the Police who made sure that we were wearing our accreditation around our necks and that our car pass was displayed. As we approached the cemetery we were told where to park and on entering the cemetery proper, our accreditation was again checked. We managed to find ourselves a good position and watched the hundreds of veterans take their seats. Five years ago at the 65th anniversary there were no seats provided for the veterans and many of them fainted in the heat. This year seats were provided for them, together with a poncho in case of rain and a welcome tent with food and drink.

Her Majesty The Queen, the Prime Minister and other dignitaries passed just a few yards away from us. An Order of Service was provided for everyone so that we could sing the two hymns. The Lesson (*Romans*, ^{chapter} 8, ^{verses} 31b -39) was read by The Prince of Wales. After the service we had to drive to the main International Ceremony at Sword Beach, Ouistreham, some 27 miles away. This was where many of the British had landed on D-Day. We had been warned that there would be difficulty in getting there as the main A13 dual carriageway was closed to normal traffic.

We got back to our car where there were many British military personnel. I spoke to one of the RAF airmen and he told us that a convoy was just about to leave for Sword Beach. James was driving and he tagged on to the end of the convoy and with the Gendarmerie motor cycle outriders we had a high speed journey to Sword Beach along the closed dual carriageway. James thought that the drive was one of the highlights of the holiday.

I am not a veteran although I did National Service from 1957-1959 in the Royal Military Police. As a mark of respect to the Military Police who had been killed on D-Day I wore my medals and my red beret. I felt quite honoured when the Royal Military Police on duty came up to me and shook my hand and telling me that mine was the only red beret that they had seen. I was saluted many times by the French Police, mainly I think because of the red beret.

We were checked again for our accreditation, had our bags searched and went through the X-Ray arch before taking our seats for the ceremony. From our seats we saw the entrance of the 17 Heads of State as they entered one by one to be greeted by Françoise Hollande, the President of France. One surprise that as President Putin of Russia walked down the red carpet, he was booed by a section of the British people. The contrast was the applause for President Obama and the rapturous welcome that was given to Her Majesty The Queen.

It was a wonderful and very moving ceremony and the French people taking part were rightly applauded by the large British contingent. Unfortunately after the ceremony the town was closed down while the dignitaries left and was a gridlock for three hours.

Our 6 days in Normandy were very tiring but I am glad that we managed to see two of the main events. When we returned home on Sunday we had driven 1100 miles, but at least James has now had a lot of experience of driving on the wrong side of the road!

Alan Taylor

London, Southwark and Chelmsford Branch Correspondent



THE TRAHERNE WINDOWS OF HEREFORD CATHEDRAL



Fed up with straining your neck to see stained glass windows high up in triforium or clerestory? Here in Hereford's Audley Chapel you can see modern eye-level windows created by the internationally renowned stained glass artist, Tom Denny, in 2007.

Its four panels comment on the life of the mystical mid-seventeenth century poet Thomas Traherne. With his reverence for all forms of life as God's creation, we might describe his approach today as ecological.

Reading from left to right, the first panel (*pictured here*) shows Traherne running up a hill – Credenhill – towards his hillside Parish Church which is not visible. Hereford can be seen in the distance.

The second panel lies within the hillside woodland with a Christ-figure suspended on the foreground tree. Above him the Spirit, as a multi-coloured bird, returns to God. On the ground beneath him is a gathering of birds and beasts of the wood.

The third panel portrays Traherne face-view rejoicing in the early morning sunshine with the River Wye in the background below.

Lastly in Hereford we see the tower of the Cathedral, the balconies of the houses in High Town and a crowd to whom Traherne, standing on the left, is preaching. In all the borders, look for moths, beetles, dragonflies and other small creatures, also apples and gem stones.



Stella Rogers

Associate Member, Gloucester, Hereford & Worcester Branch



GREETINGS FROM THE JOINT PRESIDENTS



The following greetings were received from the Joint Presidents of the Guild at the start of the 2014 Conference:

I am pleased to have the opportunity, as Co-President of the Church of England Guild Of Vergers, to pass to you all you my sincere thanks for your tireless efforts to help churches across the country run smoothly and to thrive. The work you do plays a vital role in welcoming people to Christ and to prayer. Please be assured of my best wishes and blessing for you and your ministry.

Archbishop Justin Welby, Feast of Saint James the Apostle, July 2014

As Joint President of the Guild of Vergers I am delighted to send you this message of greeting as you gather for your Annual Training Conference. As Archbishop of York, I am reminded daily of the vital role which Vergers contribute in welcoming all visitors, helping those who visit our churches and cathedrals to feel at home and ensuring that all our worship is to the glory of God. Thank you for all that you do. I am grateful for the generosity of all those men and women who offer their skills and dedicated service in this ministry. I wish you all the very best for your Conference and pray that for each person attending, whether new or experienced, that this may be a time of learning, joy and mutual refreshment in which you may hear God's call to you afresh. With every blessing.

+Sentamu Eboracensis



DOWNLOADABLE PUBLICATIONS



A large number National Publications are available to download and print from the website, including:

A FORM OF ADMISSION TO THE GUILD and ADMISSION OF A BRANCH CHAPLAIN

A FORM OF ADMISSION TO THE OFFICE OF VERGER

A GUIDE TO ORGANISING A GUILD FESTIVAL

AREA LEADERS – ROLE AND RESPONSIBILITIES

BRIEF HISTORY OF THE OFFICE OF VERGER

CEGV CONSTITUTION – REVISION 5 – June 2009

DIPLOMA COURSE LEAFLET

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HINTS AND TIPS FOR BRANCH OFFICERS

INFORMATION FOR MEMBERS

NEW MEMBERS FORM

NOMINATION FORM

Previous editions of The Virger are also available to download. Official Guild Certificates and Porch Notices, both of which contain non-standard information, are available upon request from the Communications Officer. For a full list of all the publications available please visit the website or contact the Communications Officer. All publications are in PDF format.



Having braved the horrendous rainfalls on the Sunday many delegates arrived safely to glorious sunshine and the magnificent views of the Malvern Hills. The Annual Training Conference began that evening the 10th August, mainly for the benefit of the Central Council so that following dinner the Central Council could meet.

Although it is termed the Annual Training Conference of the CEGV, in reality it doubles as a wonderful opportunity to make new friends, catch up with old friends and use the great network of support, so beneficial to many, who can often feel cut off working many hours, often on their own, in Parishes and Cathedrals spread throughout the land.

The majority of delegates arrived on Monday 11th in time for the AGM followed by a lively open forum discussion. This is also a chance for vergers to question the National Officers. An excellent lunch followed, and I must add at this point that the food was of high quality, with lots of choices, especially at breakfast. No slimming this week!

The afternoon began with an interesting talk on the history of the Psalms, given by Robert Beattie from Worcester Cathedral. He then moved onto the practicalities in understanding Psalms within our daily worship and the lectionary. Many interesting questions were raised by delegates which Robert was able to answer.

Rehearsals followed for those taking part in the Opening Eucharist at 5 p.m. This was a splendid service, full sung Eucharist – bells and smells at the ready. Certificates were presented and two new members were admitted, plus our National Chairman, James Armstrong, received his Medal of Office as he begins a second term. Canon Maureen preached beautifully on Saint Claire, whose feast day it was. Following this service we all made our way into the grounds for the official conference photograph; which is usually a time of great fun, laughter and cajoling. Thankfully, as if on cue, the sun came out. The main event for the evening was a sing-a-long to the Sound of Music. Delegates were invited to dress up in whatever costumes they wanted and some did, much to the great amusement of others. An hilarious event. This lovely day was completed with Compline – although some chose to go to the village pub.

Tuesday 12th began with the 7 a.m. services in Saint James' Church, followed after breakfast by an excellent talk and discussion led by John Shearer, our National Training Officer. It was entitled 'When is it time to leave the stage' A mixture of light-hearted fun and serious meditation on the role of vergers and their futures. Discussions took place within groups on other roles vergers could take on if they were sacked or made redundant. The aim being to get us to realise how many hidden talents we possessed and to also find ways to lessen the pain of change.

The afternoon session was led by Reverend Canon Dr Simon Taylor from Derby Cathedral; the subject being 'The Bible in an Hour'. This well prepared talk and discussion was greatly helped by the benefit of a detailed hand-out dividing the bible into nine parts from the story of the Bible to section 9: 'surprising witnesses'. Following the talk we all attended Saint James' for Choral Evensong followed by Benediction, enhanced musically by a number of willing delegates who formed a choir. Dr Taylor preached on the need for vergers to remind themselves continually that they were human and needed to keep examining their lives, especially in taking time out for themselves.

Following Morning Prayer on the Wednesday the annual Guild Requiem was held. Many names were read out of past members no longer on earth. A beautiful Eucharist in which so many living delegates took part, helping to make it a fitting memorial for our past friends.

The main morning session was led by Canon Maureen and Father Tom on Worship, the quality of worship, and the responsibilities of both clergy and vergers. How do we balance the practicalities verses the concentration on sincere worship? Much was said and there were lots of healthy group discussions. However as usual there was a rush for the pastries including threats made if there were none left by the time the leaders reached the coffee tables.

The afternoon session was given over to what appeared on the surface as a silly, light-hearted clowning session by the well-known Reverend Roly Bain, both a real Priest and Clown. However, following an hour of much merriment and skill, Roly went on to explain the how, when, and why all this came about; plus how he had used his gifts as a way to get Christ's message into schools and other groups. Roly is an amazing man whose whole life has been a continual struggle to achieve his goals. Part of his message being that the Churches can still hold great services in praise of God without becoming pompous and self-righteous. As our Lord stated; 'do not exalt yourself for you will be humbled'. Roly's acts were at times extremely precarious and scary – as many clowns are but underneath lay a clearly devout message – if only we opened our ears and hearts to the simplicity of our Saviour's words.

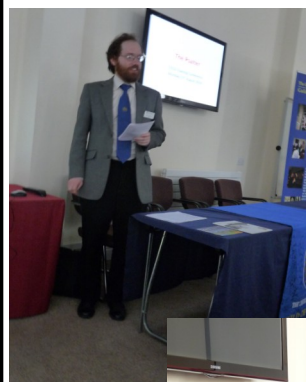
Unless you were a committee member then throughout the conference there were many opportunities for personal choices, be it climbing the hills, swimming outdoors or even visiting pubs. This was one of those days, however the evening did call many of us together for a most beautiful, informal, tranquil Taize service at the back of the church, with chants and prayers and quiet times around an array of flickering candles.

Thursday 14th our final day. Following the early service and breakfast a 'mop-up' session was held. A chance for any delegates to raise queries with the conference leaders and to help formulate future events but most of all for us to show our grateful thanks to those whose hard work had made this a most successful conference. It really shouldn't be missed and to that end the leaders have decided to grant a reduced fee for next year if booked by 30th December 2014. Our final sung Eucharist was another great occasion to Praise and Thank God with full ceremony and raised voices. A wonderful occasion for us all to reflect on why we came to West Malvern and to realise what a great group of individuals and friends we were to each other. Terrific support and great networking! Roll on next year!

**Philip Dunne, Member of the Gloucester, Hereford & Worcester Branch
Conference Reporter**



CONFERENCE PHOTO ALBUM 2014



This is just a small selection of the photographs from a most enjoyable Conference. For more pictures please visit our Facebook page.

Photos taken by Philip Dunne & Stephen Haude.





A CONFERENCE REPORT FROM THE CEGV TO THE VGEC



The Church of England Guild of Vergers (CEGV) holds its Conference in West Malvern, Worcestershire, every year. This year 55 Vergers and Clergy attended the event located in the middle of the Malvern Hills, two and a half hours north west of London.

West Malvern is a village and a parish on the west side of the north part of the Malvern Hills at the western edge of Worcestershire. Due to its altitude (up to 750 feet above sea level) West Malvern has panoramic views of the rolling Herefordshire countryside. The village has a Church dedicated to Saint James, built in 1840 and a primary school, Saint James' Church of England Primary School. In the churchyard can be found the grave of Peter Mark Roget - author of Roget's Thesaurus.

Stephen Haude, Verger of Saint Peter's Church, Hammersmith, London, UK, reports on the Annual CEGV Training Conference held this year, August 10th-14th at the Elim Conference Centre, West Malvern, Worcestershire, England. Stephen is one of three CEGV members who will be attending our VGEC Conference in Burlington, Ontario next month. Be sure to find Stephen & company and offer your hands - "across the pond".

Stephen's first-hand observations of the CEGV Conference are a delight:

"Our CEGV Conference was held over 5 days (4 nights) at our usual venue in the beautiful Malvern Hills. It is said to have the finest views in England. The Elim Conference Centre is a lovely country house with modern facilities, en suite rooms and wonderful food with all meals provided. Apart from the lecture room, we have full use of the beautiful historic church a few yards away where we hold all our services."

"The services covered all types of worship including Morning Prayer, Eucharist, Benediction, Choral Evensong, Compline and Taize. We tend to be on the 'high' side with incense etc... This provides good experience for those of us who are 'middle of the road' when in our own Churches. We try to give everyone a job to do at sometime during Conference services, acolytes, crucifer, thurifer, verging, reading and singing (I was cantor - how I made the poor souls suffer)."

"We had interesting talks on the Psalms by Robert Beattie from Worcester Cathedral, 'The Bible in One Hour' by Reverend Dr Simon Taylor and a wonderful performance by the famous Clown Priest, the Reverend Roly Bain, known as the Holy Fool. This red-nosed apparition walked a tightrope whilst juggling and spinning plates. His whole act was threaded with a Christian message while our sides ached with laughter."

"During our free time some vergers took advantage of the outdoor heated pool. In the evenings some of us would stroll half a mile down the country lanes to a traditional English pub (which we re-named The Verger's Arms) for some liquid fortification. It was a good Conference with tremendous fellowship. Fourteen members of our London, Southwark & Chelmsford Branch attended. I will be among the three of us who will be flying over the Pond to be with you all in Burlington. We can hardly wait!"

Stephen Haude

**Verger at Saint Peter's Church, Hammersmith,
and Ken Holloway of the VGEC**



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BLACKBURN, CHESTER & MANCHESTER BRANCH NEWS



Five days after the Branch hosted the York Province Festival at Lancaster Priory we met with the Liverpool Branch at Wigan Parish Church on Monday 19th May to share with them the 'Easter' Eucharist, which was celebrated by their new Branch Chaplain, Reverend Canon Cynthia Dowdle, who is a Canon of Liverpool Cathedral. This was followed by a delightful lunch with desserts to die for.

On Thursday 10th July five members of the Liverpool Branch joined with our Branch on a bright and sunny day in Manchester. We met in Manchester Cathedral and were greeted in the south aisle by Elaine Screeton, who had laid out cakes, biscuits and homemade scones for us to consume along with copious amounts of tea, coffee and orange juice to drink. There followed a welcome by the Canon Precentor, Philip Barratt, and the Senior Verger, Derek May.

After we had had our fill of food, Martin Taylor, the Second Verger, gave us a very informative tour of the Cathedral, pointing out some of the refurbishments that had taken place in 2013, including the new eco-friendly heating system underneath the Cathedral, nicknamed 'The Submarine'.

By this time we were all getting peckish, so we repaired to the refectory to finish off the cakes, biscuits and scones, before attending the 1:10 p.m. Eucharist Service, which was celebrated by Canon Ian Stamp. Garath Screeton, the Third Verger, read the Epistle and assisted with the chalice.

After the Eucharist it was time for lunch. We then walked over to the print works, which is the building where they used to print the Daily Express, but this has now been converted into restaurants, cafes, shops and a cinema. We dined in a Harvester restaurant, where we had an appetizing lunch, before making our way home after a captivating day.

Geoffrey Timms
Branch Secretary



CANTERBURY & EAST KENT BRANCH NEWS



On Wednesday 28th May nineteen lucky members of the Canterbury & East Kent Branch assembled in the car park of Messrs Ottwells Silversmiths and Jewellers in Smeeth near Ashford, Kent, and were welcomed by Steve & Karen Ottwell, the owners. We were divided into two groups, one led by Karen and the other by Steve, and were shown some beautiful pieces of silversmith's work, including the full sized drawings of a Mace made for Southwell Minster in gilt and enamel work by the firm in 2009.

I loved a beautiful set of modern candlesticks that all fitted together and with them a modern tea service, all in solid polished silver. I watched one craftsman as he laid silver wire on a silver surface to make a cloisonné pattern and I admired the 'pettled' mace of the Columbia University. It symbolises the three different colleges that have been brought together to form the new university. I also saw a lovely drawing of a chalice made by the firm for Canterbury Cathedral in 1994.

We were moved from department to department, squeezing past workers to do so, and I felt rather guilty of getting in their way, as I did so because several times staff had to squeeze past me to do a job of polishing etc... Three of the staff were off sick and it was quietly hoped that they would be well and back to work soon. It was obvious to us that all the staff loved their jobs and a lovely, friendly atmosphere pervaded the somewhat cramped workshop.

Everybody really enjoyed the visit and I know I speak for all of us when I say thank you to Steve and Karen for a wonderful tour. For obvious reasons of security I did not take photographs of the visit but a photograph of the Virge made for the Branch by the firm in memory of George and Rosemary Ballard was featured in the Summer Edition of the magazine. Once again, thank you Steve and Karen.

It was a very hot day indeed when twelve members of the Branch met in the car park of Judge Sampsons factory in Saint Leonard's on Sea. Thursday 31st July was in the middle of a very long heat wave and we were all glad to be taken inside. We were told about the beginnings of Judges Cards and given some very interesting bits of the firms history. Having collected several of the early Royal cards, it was lovely for me personally to be guided round the place where they were made. The printing, cutting, and, for the calendars, the 'wirework' to hang them by was truly fascinating, as well as very noisy.

We found out about half way through that our guide was the grandson of the founder, what a lovely surprise for us all and I felt privileged to be taken round by him. After we had finished the tour, we had done a full circle of the building and ended up where we began. We did buy one or two things and have a chat with our guide and some of the staff. Eventually we all left and went to the beach for a bring and shared lunch.

Thank you Janet, our Secretary, and Julian, our Chairman, for organising this very interesting day. And thank you to our guide for taking us round the factory.

Cherry Johnstone
Branch Correspondent



CHICHESTER, GUILDFORD & PORTSMOUTH BRANCH NEWS



On Wednesday 4th June a dozen members assembled at the Museum in Arundel, West Sussex, from which we had a great view of the Castle - home to the Earl Marshall who is responsible for Coronations and other great events.

The museum is fairly small but has a very comprehensive record of that area of Sussex over many centuries. From there we 'climbed' or drove up the hill to the Parish Church of Saint Nicholas, where the east side of the chancel is reserved for the Earl Marshall and his family. After sung Evensong we had some refreshments and a brief meeting regarding our next meeting.

On Monday 21st July, 14 members assembled at the National Trust property of Uppark in West Sussex. This is a smallish house which suffered an horrendous fire in 1989. The restoration work is fantastic, and shows that good craftsmanship is still about if the need arises. It was a beautiful day and we later gathered in the gardens for some tea and to discuss future meetings, which are proving somewhat of a problem due to distances and some members not driving at night, but this penalises those members who are still working so are unable to attend meetings in the afternoon.

Sheila J Ford
Branch Chairman



IPSWICH BRANCH NEWS



Another year, another AGM (where does the time go?). Members of the Branch made their way to the home of Dick & Val Jeffery at Aldeburgh for the AGM plus BBQ, always good to have food at one of these events. AGM's are meetings that are very quick and precise regarding Branch business, but, very nice to see everyone who can make them and we miss the ones who cannot attend. The Branch Officers for the coming year were elected and dates for future meetings were planned.



Branch Officers remained the same: Ian Cobb (Chair), Pam Cobb (Secretary), Dick Jeffery (Treasurer), and Jean Cobb (Area Leader – 2 years remaining). Do you notice a 'theme' here? Ipswich Branch have had their AGM in July for a number of years, the Secretary assures us that the Annual Returns are always in on time! As members of the Branch are quite well spread across the county and travelling does take some longer than others, if we were to have the meeting earlier in the year, weather permitting, we are not too sure how many could attend so it makes sense to have it in July with finer weather and the opportunity to eat outside and more members able to attend.

News from the meeting was that we had a member who had retired as a verger completely, one other who had moved to Sheffield and our Chaplain, Reverend Dr Steve Griffiths left Cambridge for Saint Andrews, Enfield. We wish them all the very best in this new stage of their lives. So we found ourselves being without a Chaplain, but not for long (all of ½ hour!), as at the meeting there was not one but two (husband & Wife) Reverend's who were more than happy to become our Chaplains, reminds you of a BOGOF offer. At our next meeting (Linton, Cambridge) in October both Reverend's Alan & Catherine Forsdike will be installed by Canon Maureen to become 'joint' Chaplains of the Ipswich Branch.

As my role of Area Leader also covers Norwich Branch I feel that I must mention them. They are going through slightly difficult times at present and have recently had one of their members, John Barker, pass away. Hopefully all will be well given time. We hold Norwich Branch in our thoughts and prayers.

The photographs are of landmarks of Aldeburgh: "The Scallop" and "Aldeburgh Lifeboat Station"

The Scallop is a sculpture dedicated to Benjamin Britten. It is made from stainless steel, stands 4metres high with the words "I hear those voices that will not be drowned". The words are taken from Britten's opera 'Peter Grimes'. The public are encouraged to climb or just sit on The Scallop and just watch the sea.

Aldeburgh Lifeboat Station was founded in 1851, two boats are housed at the station. The 'Freddie Cooper' (AWB) (1994 to present) and the 'Christine' Inshore (2007 to present). The boats cover the coast from Harwich to the South & Southwold to the North. The current Lifeboat Station was built in 1994.

Enjoy the summer. Until next time, God Bless.

Jean Cobb
Branch Correspondent & Area Leader – East Anglia





Thirteen members of the Branch met at Saint Mary's Church, Humberstone, for a service of Holy Communion on Monday 23rd June. We sang two hymns, 'Christ, whose glory fills the skies', and 'On Jordan's bank the Baptist's cry', as it was the Eve of John the Baptist's Day. The service was celebrated by Reverend Canon Ken Baker, and Les Mitchelmore, the Verger and Churchwarden, acted as server.

Although it is only a small building, it is very beautiful inside. It has some lovely stained glass, a stone font and a very fine organ. The Organist was not able to be with us, but with choristers among us we were able to sing the hymns 'a cappella' throughout.

We are still without a Branch Chaplain. Our Secretary, Kate Mobbs, thanked everyone for coming, as well as the Priest in Charge and Les the Verger for inviting us and providing lovely refreshments.

On Monday 28th July, a very hot summers evening, fourteen members set out for Derby Cathedral for a service of Holy Communion with hymns. The service was celebrated by the Canon Precentor, the Reverend Canon Chris Moorsom. The three Cathedral Vergers, Geoffrey, John and David, made us very welcome and provided us with some lovely light refreshments. Thanks were given to everyone afterwards.

One of the most interesting parts of the Cathedral is the wrought iron screen which leads into the chancel and the sanctuary. It was made by the Derby ironsmith, Robert Bakewell, (1662-1752), and is aptly described as delicate as lace and as intricate as a fugue. It separates the nave and chancel without obscuring the view. Bakewell was paid for the screen in 1730.

The pulpit and chancel stalls are by Temple Moore and date from 1873 and 1894. At the front of the central passage are the two Civic Pews. The Mayor's Pew is decorated with Bakewell ironwork. On the opposite side is the County Council Pew, which was established in 1972. It is fitted with ironwork to the design of the then Cathedral Architect, Antony New. Either side of the altar are the only two coloured windows. These were installed in 1965 and are the work of Ceri Richards, a Welsh artist who died in 1971.

The Cavendish area of the Cathedral is where several of its treasures are to be found, including a statue of the Blessed Virgin Mary and Child, with the Mother's Union Banner. Nearby is the new font, placed here in 1974 and sculpted out of Pentelic Marble from the Aegean to a design by James Gibbs. In the gallery at the west end of the Cathedral is the Compton Organ with its 3,077 pipes, built in 1939.

Derby Cathedral was a Royal Collegiate Church until 1927 when it was hallowed. It was built between 1510 and 1532 and it still dominates the City today. The Bishop's Chair of Cathedra is Greek Orthodox in origin and was given to the Cathedral in 1927. The Florentine canvas-work decoration of the chair and the cushions in the stalls were made by members of the Cathedral's own embroidery workshop.

The next meeting of the Branch will be at Saint Mary's Church, Anstey, on Monday 27th October at 7:30 p.m.

Marjorie Thomas, Dip GV
Branch Correspondent



THE DIPLOMA COURSE



The Central Council of the Guild, at the recommendation of General Synod, formulated a course to cover the work and ministry of the Verger. The course is formulated in four units set in two stages:

The first stage is the **Foundation** Unit, which comprises of sixteen assignments, covering preparation for worship, care of the building, record-keeping, and archives, care of the churchyard, and caring for the people of God.

The second stage comprises of the other three units:

The Verger as **Pastor** covers the individual's personal development, their relationship with the people and God, care for others, and for Church resources.

The Verger as **Historian** covers the history of church building, architecture, and the history of worship, including the Book of Common Prayer, and the Bible.

The Verger as **Administrator** covers communication, forms and registers, and the structures of the Church.

Students who complete the course successfully receive a diploma, an academic hood, and the right to use the post-nominal letters '**Dip.GV**'.

If you are interested in learning more about the Course, please contact the **Training Registrar: Susan Ansell** or the **Training Officer: John Shearer**.



A VISIT TO THE HOUSES OF PARLIAMENT

On Tuesday 2nd September members of the London, Southwark & Chelmsford Branch paid a visit to the Houses of Parliament. The visit had been arranged by Nina Taylor who is the Constituency Assistant to Andrew Lansley, CBE, the Member of Parliament for South Cambridgeshire. You may ask what is the connection between the London, Southwark & Chelmsford Branch and an MP for South Cambridgeshire? Well, Andrew Lansley was born in Hornchurch, Essex. Both his mother and father worshipped in my Parish Church. Tom Lansley, the father, was a regular member of the Saint Andrew's Church Parish Men's Group. I verged at both their funerals and their ashes have been laid to rest in the Remembrance Garden at Saint Andrew's Church.

Our Group met at Oliver Cromwell's statue in Saint Margaret Street prior to going through the airport style security entrance, (coats off, belts off, money out the pockets and passing through the metallic arch), then having coffee. At 9:55 a.m. promptly we went into Westminster Hall where we met our Parliamentary Tour Guide, Mr Barry Hall. He gave us a short history lesson before we walked along to Saint Stephen's Hall and then into the Central Lobby of The House of Commons. Because of the political situation in Iraq we found that the House of Commons was due to sit that morning and that the Chamber was due to close to the public at 10:15 a.m.

Our guide managed to get us into the Chamber before it closed so we were able to learn about the traditions that Members of Parliament must comply with that take place in the House prior to it being televised. One of them is the prayers that take place before a sitting. If an MP attends, then if he is a Backbencher he can place his card into a holder on the bench to reserve his place. None of the Government or the Shadow Government have to reserve places as they are the Front Bench. All the MP's have an office.

We then went through a corridor to the House of Lords which was a complete contrast to The Commons. The benches in The Commons are green while The Lords is far more luxurious in red. None of the Lords have an office. The only benches that are reserved in The Lords are for The Bishops. We were then taken back to the Central Lobby which is at the heart of The Palace of Westminster. It is the place where people can exercise their right to lobby their local Member of Parliament, and it is also where interviews take place for the television news. Statues of former Prime Ministers are very prominent in this area.

Leading off from the Central Lobby is Saint Stephen's Hall which stands on the site of Saint Stephen's Chapel and it is where monarchs and their families worshipped when staying at the Palace. In 1550 the Chapel was converted into the original debating chamber. Saint Stephen's Hall then leads to the steps at the top of Westminster Hall which has the largest surviving single span mediaeval timber roof in Northern Europe. It is on these steps that some of the great statesmen of the world have come to address Parliament and it has witnessed some of the most famous trials in British history, including Guy Fawkes and King Charles I. There are brass plaques on the steps and on the floor itemising various events.

We were then met by our host, Andrew Lansley. By prior arrangement with him we were allowed access to the Chapel of Saint Mary Undercroft, which members of the public are not allowed to go in to. It was rebuilt in the 19th Century when the original Chapel was destroyed by fire. The Chapel can be used by Members of Parliament for baptisms and weddings. It is a very ornate and beautiful building.

Behind the organ is a small broom cupboard and it is in here that on the night of Sunday 2nd April 1911 that one of the suffragettes named Emily Davison hid. She chose this date because on the night before the census she was able to show her place of residence as the House of Commons. A brass plaque was placed on the door in 1999 by the Labour Member of Parliament Tony Benn. Two years later Emily Davison was killed when she threw herself in front of the Kings' horse at The Derby.

Our thanks go to Andrew Lansley and Nina Taylor for giving us the opportunity to visit The Palace of Westminster, and to Barry Hall, our guide.

For the information of any other Branches visiting London, if they contact their Member of Parliament a tour can be arranged free of charge, otherwise a tour as a member of the public is about £25.

As we were on a Members Tour of Parliament we were also allowed free entry to The Jewel Tower which is opposite Parliament.

It is one of only two buildings from the medieval Palace of Westminster to survive, the other one being Westminster Hall.

The building is maintained by English Heritage and was built in 1365. It was the records office for The House of Lords and did at one time hold every Act of Parliament. This was another very interesting building to round off our day in London.

Alan Taylor
Branch Correspondent



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FIRST AID AT WARFIELD

At Saint Michael's Church, Warfield, on Tuesday 27th of May, after celebrating a service of Holy Communion and enjoying some refreshments, twelve members and guests of the Oxford Branch saw and took part in a series of presentations on the subject of "First Aid Tips for Vergers".

This was based on the assumption that there will be a first aid trained person in most congregations, so, how can a Verger do most to help if first aid is needed? After considering the specialist knowledge we hold (intimate knowledge of buildings and routines) and its value in an emergency, we saw a demonstration of an "incident" (varicose bleed) to put the new knowledge in context. We checked several first aid kits (some were found wanting!) to prompt members to check and upgrade their Churches' own kits.

Some 'take away' points were:

- Use the number 112 from a mobile phone to summon an ambulance: there are advantages over using 999.
- Ensure your first aid kit has decent scissors or shears: the first aider can't open some dressings and bandages without them, nor can they cut clothing.
- A high-visibility tabard is a useful accessory to a first aid kit.
- Avoid the "non-woven" cheap triangular bandages, and "white open weave" bandages.
- Use the word ICE on the contacts list of your mobile phone: this refers to "In Case of Emergency" and highlights people you want contacted if you yourself are injured.

CULTURE AND CALM AT CUDDESDON

On Tuesday 5th of August, sixteen members, associates and guests of the Oxford Branch visited Ripon College, Cuddesdon, the second largest Theological College in the U.K. This visit was organised by our Branch Chaplain, Peter Viney, who is also Chaplain to a group at the site. Ripon College is situated in the depths of rural Oxfordshire, accessible by single-track roads running through open and beautiful farmland.

We were told of the design of the beautiful Edward King Chapel: "for personal prayer, ...public worship,...a work of art that will touch the spirit." The elliptical shape was inspired by hands; and by a Seamus Heaney poem where the word "nave" describes the ecclesiastic space, a ship, and "the still centre of a turning wheel". The central space has two foci: the altar and the lectern, bringing together both wings of the Anglican Church.

Later, we were privileged to hear from Sister Elisabeth Jane, one of the remaining Sisters of the Community of Saint John the Baptist. She described to us the founding of the Order, its aims and motives, how the sisters had become incorporated into the life of the College, and how both have benefited. This humbling and gentle session, gave us insights into the "changing scenes of life" experienced by this lady.

Dennis Wildman
Branch Correspondent



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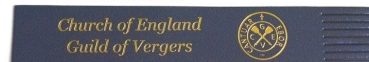
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WAREHAM

The Church was in the news recently when Clive Cherritt found a bag at the vestry door. On opening it he discovered a skull! The police were called and the area was sealed off. The incident made both the local and national news (<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-dorset-28417534>). You will be relieved to learn that after carbon dating, it was found that the skull was very old and not that of some poor, unfortunate victim of a Dorset beheading. In talking about this subject other mysterious findings around the country were mentioned, including a bag found recently which contained 15 kittens, and yet another bag found at a curry-house containing a number of kitten heads. It was not ascertained whether or not these stories were true!

SAINT THOMAS, SALISBURY

Amanda has been very busy during the summer with 41 children attending the Holiday Club which has been held at the nearby, larger venue of the Methodist Church.

SALISBURY HOSPITAL

Arthur Kendrew has retired as children's entertainer at Salisbury Hospital and is keen to find a replacement. If you, or anyone you know, has the necessary skills, live in the area, and would like to take on this role, please contact Arthur.

SAINT PETER AND SAINT PAUL, SOUTH PETHERTON

Rob reported that they are now running a monthly Café Church at Seavington village shop which is going very well – 75 attendees last month alone. They are also running all-age and children's services.

SAINT MICHAEL'S GARRISON CHURCH, TIDWORTH

Christine and Beth have also been running a very successful and enjoyable children's group on the last Thursday of every month. This has been taking place since the beginning of the year and it has been fortunate enough to have received some funding from SSAFA.

CHARMINSTER

Stephen and Hannah say that their church will not now be open until next year. In the meantime, the contents of the building have been removed and are being stored in the Church House, and Village Hall is being used for Sunday Services. The village have been very supportive, and have been doing a lot of fundraising. £1,400 was raised at a recent golfing competition, and the local pub, The Gamekeeper, is running a monthly event (curry night, quiz etc) in aid of the Church. £35,000 of the £60,000 required has already been raised so far (including grants either received or promised). Stephen and Hannah said that Ecclesiastical Insurance have been most helpful, both covering the lost revenue from the letting out of the Church House, and paying for the restoration to the original state. Any extra work deemed necessary will have to be met via fundraising. When the work is complete, Stephen and Hannah would love to welcome the Branch to the church once more. Eddie said that their insurance company at Wareham are covering the costs of the repairs to the roof, but not the redecoration necessary to repair the recent storm damage.

FLEET AIR ARM (FAA) MEMORIAL CHURCH OF SAINT BARTHOLOMEW, ROYAL NAVAL AIR STATION YEOVILTON

Tina reports that life is quiet at present, although there is the usual round of weddings and baptisms. Unlike a Parish Church, Saint Bart's gets very few funerals, although an increasing number of ex-FAA personnel are requesting that their ashes be interred in the Royal Naval cemetery there. Saint Bart's has a website (www.faamc.co.uk), as well as a Facebook page (<https://www.facebook.com/TheFleetAirArmMemorialChurch?fref=ts>) where you can see news and photos.

Recent highlights of life at Saint Bart's include: A service of remembrance which was held on Monday 4th August to commemorate the centenary of our country's entry into what was to become 'The Great War', which was well attended, despite the late hour. The names of over 800 FAA personnel, Royal Naval Chaplains and local men who lost their lives during WWI are on display on a Roll of Honour in the church, and will be read out on the centenary of their deaths during the next 5 years.



A recent commemorative (*Centenaries of both WWI and of Naval Aviation*) concert was also well attended, selling out and raising over £1000 for the Trustees of the FAA Memorial Church whilst also donating over £5,000 to local charities. Further concerts will be held once the Verger and Custodian have recovered!

We also received a visit from the Riders Branch of the Royal British Legion on 21st August during their 'Ride of Respect'. Organist Richard Williamson entered fully into the spirit of the event, wearing a crash helmet throughout the service. (<https://navynews.co.uk/archive/news/item/11155>).



The Branch's next gathering this year will be at Salisbury on Wednesday 5th November.

Tina Cullen
Area Leader

‘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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