

# The Virger

Summer 2014  
Issue 283



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*~CEGV~*  
*York Province Festival ~ Lancaster Priory*  
*Wednesday 14<sup>th</sup> May 2014*



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

The Official Magazine of the Church of England Guild of Vergers





Welcome to the Summer 2014 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 by the Deadline Date below.

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

**Marek J Barden, MLJ**

**The Lord Mayor's Chapel c/o City Hall, College Green, Bristol BS1 5TR**

**E-mail: [CEGVCommsOff@gmail.com](mailto:CEGVCommsOff@gmail.com)**

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**PLEASE NOTE  
THE DEADLINE FOR  
THE NEXT EDITION IS:**

**Friday  
29<sup>th</sup> August**

## HOLY NAME EMBROIDERY

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

**Dee Caulton-Ball**

**Ecclesiastical Embroiderer**

**[deecb@hotmail.com](mailto:deecb@hotmail.com)**



## NATIONAL OFFICER VACANCIES



### National Chairman

3 year Term of Office

Only electable from the Current Area Leaders.

May only stand for two concurrent terms.

*The Current Post Holder is willing to stand again.*

### Overseas Liaison Officer

3 year Term of Office

Shall have responsibility for the recruitment of Members from outside the United Kingdom and for communications between the Guild and Guilds of Vergers from other countries.

*The Current Post Holder is willing to stand again.*

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

**FRONT COVER: The Group Photograph, York Province Festival, Lancaster Priory on Wednesday 14th May 2014.**

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## NATIONAL CHAIRMAN'S LETTER



There is a tradition in Carlisle Cathedral and possibly in other Churches of applauding the organist at the end of the voluntary after the main service on a Sunday morning. For a while now I have been feeling aggrieved or maybe a bit jealous of this practice, as I clear away the silver and put the dust covers onto the altar, I am often muttering to myself *"They never give their appreciation to the vergers or, for that matter, to the servers or the clergy"* so why do we applaud the Cathedral Organist who is paid to accompany the worship? Do not misunderstand me, I do enjoy the efforts and admire their skill which go toward enhancing the ends of our services but it is worship not a concert and all those who have taken part to construct and weave the liturgy into the praise which we give to the Lord do so with one singular goal.

Whilst thinking about this and how it affects us as vergers I have to admit that the organist does take the greater risk with their gifts in that, if the verger makes a mistake during the service we can quietly put it right without all but a few knowing, but if the organist plays a few wrong notes then we all know about it and as we are all experts in the field of criticism a knowing smile crosses our faces.

So let us just remember that however large or small a part we play as verger within the worship of the Church let it be with humility. For the bigger and louder you become the greater the chance for noticeable failure... and that is not the verger way.

A good many of us attended the York Province Festival at Lancaster. An amazing day well organized and executed, the welcome was as warm as the sun, which shone throughout the day, bathing the Priory in light which in turn made the stained glass jewel like.

Our grateful thanks must go to the Vicar and his colleagues for allowing us to overrun the Priory for the day and to the Blackburn, Chester & Manchester Branch, with special mention of Tony Hales, for their organisational skills. Well done one and all. My personal thanks to those who travelled from London and Boston to be with us and who would not get home until well past their usual bedtime. We hope the northern air, hospitality and cake slice sizes made it worth the journey.

The next national event is the Annual General Meeting which takes place during our Training Conference. If you have never attend our Training Conference please can I encourage you to do so, whilst our Training Officer will not be pleased with me when I say this but, it is not necessarily the wonderful and informative training sessions that you gain the most knowledge from. This happens over coffee, a ride in the lift, over the delicious meals, the short walk to the Church, anywhere really that we may encounter one another, where we can exchange ideas and chew over problems. This can only happen if you are there.

To steal a catchphrase that is being used a lot in Scotland at the moment "Better Together" I truly believe that this is one of the Guild's greatest strengths, the breadth of knowledge that we hold in common, after all none of us knows everything.

**James Armstrong**

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**or for Smartphone users with a QR Code/Barcode Scanner App then just scan the QR Code below:**



**FROM THE TRAINING REGISTRAR**



**Training Registrar, Sue Ansell, asks that anyone wishing to contact her by e-mail should do so via the Training Registrar Gmail address:**

**[CEGVTrainReg@gmail.com](mailto:CEGVTrainReg@gmail.com)**

**and not via: [ansell10@talktalk.net](mailto:ansell10@talktalk.net) as this email address is being shut down.**

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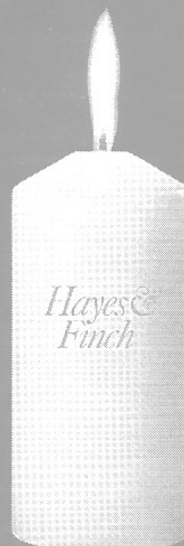
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## NATIONAL CHAPLAIN'S LETTER



Dear Friends,

Greetings! Having had three weeks of wonderful and warm sunshine the weather has now turned and we have had heavy rain showers over the last couple of days.

Last week I enjoyed two TV visits to the Chelsea Flower Show and some of the gardens which took my eye were very much in the theme on which I was reflecting – that of 'looking back and looking forward'. This year sees a great deal of 'looking back' – for example, we look back and commemorate those who fought in the First World War. Here the Three Choirs Festival, to be held at Worcester this year, has several concerts which reflect that dreadful event. It was a truly terrible war with much loss of life, much trauma for those who did come back, much sadness for so many families and a total change of society. Looking back reminds us of the horror, and puts into perspective the horror of conflict and loss of life which is sadly so much a part of today's world, in Syria, in South Sudan and elsewhere. In the Chelsea Flower Show there was a garden to commemorate the First World War, made by a woman whose grandfather had fought and although wounded had nevertheless returned home.

Another garden was made by a young man whose brother is on his fifth tour in Afghanistan and was designed as an aid to soldiers traumatised by the experience of war. This 'Help for Heroes' garden showed the path to recovery, and after the show, was to be transferred to a rehabilitation centre where it could continue to be used and enjoyed by our 'blokes'. To try to put a living garden alongside the horrors of the trenches, or the horror of bombs in Afghanistan seemed to me to bring theology into gardening: for the death – a terrible and inhumane death of our Lord Jesus Christ by crucifixion is set alongside eternal life to which we are all called.

A much happier 'looking back' has involved the women who were ordained to the priesthood in 1994 and there have been celebrations in almost every Diocese to mark that event. For the Church it was a significant landmark as it opened the way to a 'whole' new ministry, but in so doing I believe it changed the concept of what we mean by priesthood. But why should events and anniversaries be so important to us? We all want to look back at lives which enrich us which is why we commemorate events in the life of our Lord Jesus.

The yearly celebration of waiting for the Light in Advent; the birth at Christmas; the period of fasting and temptation in the wilderness during Lent; the passion, crucifixion and resurrection at Easter: all of these serve to highlight the teaching, the example and the amazing significance of Jesus' life for the life of Christian people everywhere. We commemorate the Saints too, those ordinary Christians who lived their lives extraordinarily well. Looking back helps us to put our own lives, our ideals, our values into a context which enrich us as we live today.

Sometimes looking back can be destructive as we see everything through rose-tinted spectacles: the illusion that everything was better then! In our Christian life we must always look forward too. The Clergy are bidden at the time of their ordination to 'reinterpret the Gospel for the present age' and this applies to all of us! Looking back leads us to thankfulness and moves us into a new way such that we bring insights from the past, lessons learned and use them in the present.

In the words of Dag Hammarskjöld:

'---Night is drawing nigh ---  
For all that has been – Thanks!  
To all that shall be – Yes!

I hope to see many of you at Conference in August where we have a programme of learning, worship and fun! Do try to join us.

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 Dutton & Margaret Morris***  
*Rochester & East Chichester: **Tina Lawrence***  
*Saint Albans: **Peter Hudson***  
*Salisbury: **Jean Jackson & Babs Taylor***  
*Somerset & Avon: **Lionel & Mary Holway, Roger Lawrence & Joy Stevens***  
*York: **George & Doreen Cook***

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



## YORK PROVINCE FESTIVAL



Once again the Blackburn, Chester & Manchester Branch provided a lovely sunny day for the York Province Festival at Lancaster Priory on Wednesday 14<sup>th</sup> May.

There were 53 vergers, 5 clergy and numerous family and friends who joined the Branch for this great occasion. We were all issued with a folder, a name badge with coloured disc denoting which meal we were having for lunch and various booklets on the Priory. Lancaster Priory is a truly beautiful building with many historic items inside.



We met at 9.00 a.m. for registration and drinks before robing to greet the Mayor of Lancaster, Councillor June Ashworth, and to be welcomed by the Vicar of Lancaster, the Reverend Chris Newlands. This was followed by the procession into our seats for the Eucharist. This was a lovely service with a superb sermon given by our National Chaplain, Canon Maureen Palmer. After the service it was time for the group photograph and we then disrobed ready to proceed down to the town for lunch.

Lunch was served in the Music Room at the Storey Institute. We were greeted with a glass of wine or fruit juice before proceeding into the

Music Room and settling down for lunch. This was a very amicable meal, and as our coloured dots matched up with our personal choice, it was easily served. The food was delicious and well cooked, I think most people enjoyed what they had chosen, and I didn't hear a single complaint. After lunch, and plenty of chat, we all walked back up to the Priory for the afternoon activities. We had a choice of visiting the Museums or the Castle which used to be the Gaol. This was a very interesting tour showing the many forms of restraint and the cells used by guilty people. The Pendle Witches were housed here before being executed. There was a guided tour of the Priory which proved very popular and of great interest.

We were treated to afternoon tea with plenty of homemade cakes and tea or coffee. Many of the cakes had been baked by Karen Derbyshire (daughter of Pam Derbyshire, Verger of Scorton). They were delicious and some of us were able to take home 'doggy bags' for eating later!

Afternoon tea was followed by Choral Evensong sung by the choir of Ripley Saint Thomas Academy School. After Evensong we all departed for various parts of the UK after a truly delightful day in a sunny but windswept Lancaster.

All the organising, (done by Tony Hales with a small team of helpers), was superb and I am sure all who attended had a really enjoyable day.

**Freda Murphy**

**Verger of Timperley & Assistant Secretary of the Blackburn, Chester & Manchester Branch**

(Photograph courtesy of James Armstrong)



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THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND NEWSPAPER: [www.churchnewspaper.com](http://www.churchnewspaper.com)

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## EASTER WITHOUT CHURCH



**'Behold 'the old order changeth, yielding place to new,  
And God fulfils himself in many ways,  
Lest one good custom should corrupt the world.'**

*with apologies to Alfred Lord Tennyson*

I left school in 1969 and straight away enrolled in catering college and entered into a love affair with food and all things culinary and epicurean.

The catering profession was a demanding one. By 1976 I had changed track and entered into Parish life followed by a sideways move in 1978 into Cathedral life and thus in the past forty-five years I have worked/been on duty for every Easter season. That is until this year, 2014. I was informed that I needed surgery and that it was scheduled for 16<sup>th</sup> April; Holy Week, the Day before Mandy Thursday! I was given ten days to bring all preparations, rubrics and instructions together and on Tuesday 15<sup>th</sup> April following a service for the Blessing of the Oils and the Renewal of Baptism and Ordination Vows I abandoned my team. For the first time in thirty-six years I would not be in Church, *on duty*, for Easter.

Some might relish the thought; some might be thrown into despair, others might contemplate 'Easter without God' and be horrified. I may have had an Easter without Church, saving one brief encounter, but certainly not one without God, with the help of telecommunications, internet technology, and social media I was able to connect with God and his people of the global village in which we live.

Recorded television afforded me the opportunity to experience Allegri's beautiful Miserere with Harry Christophers and the Sixteen on **Maundy Thursday**.

**Good Friday** provided me with live television from South Shields in the North East of England, the cradle of English Christianity and my homeland. The Great North Passion was a community project. During Lent twelve communities were each given a 'shipping container', Schools, Churches, Community Groups and Individuals worked on subjects covering; pain, bereavement, unemployment, homelessness, fear. Each container, used in a unique way was brought together on a headland overlooking the North Sea and formed a live, open air, contemporary Stations of the Cross. Music, modern, classical and local; dance, drama, silence and words brought all of the elements of the Cross into ordinary people's living rooms. This was contrasted later that day when I linked in live to the Good Friday Liturgy from Christ Church Cathedral, Nashville, the twelve words of Dean Kimbrough's sermon were worth a thousand of others **'Our Sin – His Nails' 'Our Pain – His Blood' 'His Death – Our Life**.

**Easter Eve** - the television brought words and music from Kings College, Cambridge; Byrd, Mozart and Vaughn Williams set cheek by jowl with Sassoon, Herbert and Donne, in the 'Nine Lessons and Carols' mode. Later that same evening the reassuring ringing of Great Tom, the largest of the Cathedral's twenty-one bells, heralding that Christ had risen, from the Liturgy of the Paschal Vigil within called to the outside world, to me and all domiciles in Lincoln.

An early start on **Easter Morn**, struggling out of my sick bed at 6.45 a.m. Pauline and I made it, all 30 yards, to the 8.00 a.m. 162 BCP Communion Service where the faithful early birds ended the liturgy with a unique offering of 'Jesus Christ is risen today'. Home for breakfast before tuning into the live worship from Leicester Cathedral with its multi-cultural service, which included colourful and meaningful 'Eastern' liturgical dance, followed at noon by Urbi et Orbi – the Pope's live Easter message to 150,000 faithful gathered in front of the Vatican and to countless unknown out in the world.

All of this peppered with the occasional further dip into liturgy at Christ Church Cathedral, Nashville, and helped by the social media which is Facebook, I was taken to the National Cathedral, Washington, and Saint Marks, Capitol Hill, and so I find that at Easter 2014 I was able to flit in and out of that great and varied tapestry which is the Church, finding God at every turn.

Normally I use the Church as a nest, to stay, settle and grow, this Easter I seem to have used it as a perch to rest a while among screen and pew, from the [dis]comfort of my cushioned chair, resting before moving on - taking each spiritual experience with me on my 'static pilgrimage' from betrayal, the pain of the cross, the void of the in-between to the reality of the empty tomb.

Whether you minister in a nest or on a perch remember the Searchers, Settlers and the Seekers, those who are with you yet unseen.

**John G Campbell, FBGU, FCEGV**

**Dean's Verger, Lincoln Cathedral & Overseas Liaison Officer**



## OVERSEAS LIAISON OFFICER HONoured



Two accolades for Guild Member and Overseas Liaison Officer, John Campbell. Dean's Verger of Lincoln Cathedral, elevated to Honorary Freeman of the City of Lincoln in April this year, has been appointed Chaplain to the Mayor of Lincoln for 2014/15. This will be the Mayor's fourth term of office since 2007.

John, the first lay person to hold the Chaplaincy is delighted to serve his adopted city in this capacity, seeing it as a great accolade for the Cathedral, the Ministry of the Verger and the Guild.



## Training Conference 2014

Sunday 10<sup>th</sup> – Thursday 14<sup>th</sup> August 2014

Elim Conference Centre  
De Walden Road,  
West Malvern,  
Worcestershire  
WR14 4DF

### **BOOKING FORM**



Please send the completed booking form by post or email it in a PDF to:

**Margaret Burston**  
**10 Prestbury Close**  
**Blackpole**  
**Worcester**  
**WR4 9XG**

[margaretburston@sky.com](mailto:margaretburston@sky.com)

**01905 455961**

***Please submit your booking form by Friday 26th July 2014***

***(Photocopies Accepted)***

## YOUR DETAILS

Title: Mr/Mrs/Miss/Ms/Dr/Rev Name:	
Address:	
	Postcode:
Home Telephone:	Mobile Telephone:
E-Mail:	
Parish Church/Cathedral etc.:	

**ATTENDANCE:** Full Time or Part – time (Please Tick **ALL** the Boxes that apply)

Sunday			Dinner
Monday	Breakfast	Lunch	Dinner
Tuesday	Breakfast	Lunch	Dinner
Wednesday	Breakfast	Lunch	Dinner
Thursday	Breakfast	Lunch	

## COST FOR THE WEEK

<b>SINGLE ROOM:</b>	Sunday – Thursday inclusive £285.00
	Monday – Thursday inclusive £210.00
<b>DOUBLE ROOM:</b>	Sunday – Thursday inclusive £230.00 per person
	Monday – Thursday inclusive £170.00 per person

### All prices include all meals.

The cost for one overnight delegate is £10.00 in a single room, this price also includes all meals.

A Deposit of £30.00 or Payment in Full must be sent with this Booking Form.

All cheques should be made payable to: **CEGV Conference Account.**

**RECEIPT REQUIRED:** YES/NO

## TOWELS

Towels are provided in your rooms, but should you wish to use the heated outdoor pool, please bring your costume and your own towel.

**MEDICAL INFORMATION etc...** *(PLEASE USE A SEPARATE SHEET IF NECESSARY)*

**Do you suffer from any medical conditions we need to be aware of?:** YES/NO

*(If Yes, please list below)*


**Do you suffer from any allergies?:** YES/NO *(If Yes, please list below)*


**Are you taking any medication?:** YES/NO *(If Yes, please list below)*


**Do you have any Special Dietary Requirements?:** YES/NO *(If Yes, please list below)*


**NEXT OF KIN CONTACT DETAILS**

Title: Mr/Mrs/Miss/Ms/Dr/Rev Name:	
Address:	
	Postcode:
Home Telephone:	Mobile Telephone:

**HOW TO GET THERE**

**While the Elim Conference Centre is nestled in the heart of the Malvern Hills, the M5 provides quick and easy road access when travelling South from Birmingham or North from Cardiff and Bristol. Elim Conference Centre is just two and a quarter hours from London by car, and linked to Birmingham and London Paddington Stations by a frequent and fast rail service. The nearest airport is Birmingham International, just one hour away.**

**BY ROAD:** The main entrance to the Elim Conference Centre is located on Croft Bank. There is a car park outside the main entrance. Croft Bank is accessed from the West Malvern Road (B4232). Further parking is available elsewhere at the Centre - follow the signs for the Elim International Centre when you arrive at Croft Bank.

**SAT NAV REFERENCE: WR14 4DF**

**BY RAIL:** The nearest stations are Great Malvern and Malvern Link. Taxi services from either to the Conference Centre will cost from £11.

The Training Team look forward to welcoming you to the 2014 Conference.

**CEGV Conference 2014 Programme**  
**'A sure Foundation'**

**Sunday 10<sup>th</sup> August**

18.30 Dinner  
19.30 Central Council Meeting

**Monday 11<sup>th</sup> August**

07.30 Morning Prayer  
09.00 Breakfast  
Delegates Arrive  
10.30 Annual General Meeting & Open Forum  
12.30 Lunch  
13.30-14.30 Robert Beattie – Psalms  
15.00-16.30 Practical Sessions in Church & Rehearsal for the Opening Eucharist  
17.00 Opening Eucharist with Guild Congregation  
18.30 Dinner  
20.00 *Social Evening on Site. "Singalong The Sound of Music"*  
*(costumes may be worn)*  
21.45 Compline & Reflection

**Tuesday 12<sup>th</sup> August**

07.00 Morning Prayer  
07.30 Eucharist  
09.00 Breakfast  
10.00-12.00 John Shearer – "When is it time to leave the stage"  
12.15 Midday Prayers  
12.30 Lunch  
14.00-16.00 Reverend Doctor Simon Taylor – 'The Bible in an Hour'  
16.45 Choral Evensong and Benediction with Sermon  
18.30 Dinner  
19.00 Standing Committee  
Evening free for walking the Prayer Walk/swimming/etc!!!  
21.00 Compline

**Wednesday 13<sup>th</sup> August**

07.00 Morning Prayer  
07.30 Guild Requiem  
09.00 Breakfast  
10.00-12.00 Father Tom Cameron & Canon Maureen  
12.15 Midday Prayers  
12.30 Lunch  
14.00-16.00 Reverend Roly Bain - The Holy Fool  
16.45 Committee Meetings and Free Time for swimming etc....  
18.30 Dinner  
19.15 Taize Service

**Thursday 14<sup>th</sup> August**

08.00 Morning Prayer  
08.30 Breakfast  
09.15 Meeting and Mop-UP Session  
10.00 Rehearsal for Final Eucharist  
11.00 Final Eucharist  
12.45 Lunch & Depart



### 'FENG SHUI' BEVERLEY MINSTER STYLE

Beverley Minster is a somewhat unusual Parish Church in that it is not only one of the largest in Britain, (THE largest by some measures), but also a very active non-religious concert venue.

This means that the team of two full-time virgers and one part-time/relief virger, (which is how we spell it here), is more used to rearranging the layout of the chairs and furniture than many. In our more battered moments we often tiredly claim that Beverley Minster has the ambitions of both a Cathedral and a Theatre - with the staff and resources of a simple Parish Church.

It is not unusual for us to be hosting a Wedding Fayre with sixty stalls in the nave, each equipped with a dedicated power supply on a Saturday afternoon but, when the congregation arrives at 8.00 a.m. on Sunday for the first Communion Service there will be no traces of the previous event anywhere in sight.

Our biggest effort recently was a tribute concert to Johnny Cash where we had a high stage between our two greater transepts, with lighting and amplification rigs focused on the performers, plus a fully functioning bar at the west end catering for the 499-strong audience. This was built out of the same sectional units as the staging at the other end and involved almost as many pieces.

By the time Head Virger John and I staggered home that night every single piece of the tubular section and flat staging was on a trolley and back in its storage area; the electrics packed, stacked and stored; all plastic glasses and empty drinks containers were in the bin and 500 chairs were back where they should be.

And the high altar was dressed for the next services; our round nave altar and the associated communion rails (which had been moved to accommodate the stage) and kneelers were all in place. Apart from a slight hint of alcohol in the air you'd never have known anything out of the ordinary had happened the night before.

At least twice a year we rotate the entire focus of the nave through 180 degrees to cater for the East Riding County Choir concerts. These normally require us to build tiered seating for more than 100 singers and clear floor space in front for up to 30 musicians – something we can't accommodate in the eastern end of the nave thanks to some rather badly-positioned choir stalls. We've developed our own techniques for turning the chairs, clamped in groups of three, to face the performers and, using these techniques, two of us have managed to turn all 264 chairs in the main body of the nave in under 20 minutes (although if anyone who doesn't know the technique tries to help us this trebles the time it takes to get everything back to its proper position).

We have filled the aisles with up to 400 chairs laid herring-bone fashion or backed to the walls, we have built staging for large northern brass bands with full percussion sections raised high above the other performers, we have put in an extra 200 seats to accommodate the demands of BBC Songs of Praise recording and then stripped the nave completely over the following 24 hours to house the completely different Antiques Roadshow, so we know what we're doing as far as the furnishings of the church are concerned. However, even we can be stumped.

Beverley Minster is still home to the remains of Saint John of Beverley, who was once one of the most important English religious figures of the 8<sup>th</sup> century and who rose to the status of Patron Saint to the English Royal Family in the 15<sup>th</sup> century.

Sadly for his reputation in the Church of England, the Reformers decided that he was the wrong type of Saint for Protestant worshipers and he was written out of Anglican history as far as the annual cycle of prayers is concerned. We were also supposed to demolish Beverley Minster at the same time but, due to an administrative oversight and some sharp practice by local notables, the building survived.

And so, also, does the reputation of Saint John himself in the Catholic and Orthodox Churches, for whom he is still the patron saint of the deaf and dumb. This is why we've recently had two Roman Catholic Masses celebrated in our nave and there has been talk of the Russian Orthodox congregation in Manchester crossing the Pennines, (themselves a substantial barrier between East and West), for a service in the Minster. We've already had a group of Orthodox pilgrims singing around the resting place of Saint John's remains, and very moving it was too.

As you can imagine, setting up the church for each of these traditions is something with which we Virgers are not familiar, so a lot of research has been undertaken and various problems confronted. I'll tell you all about these, if you're interested, in another issue.

And now you know why John and I have such marvellous physiques.

**Neil Pickford**

**Assistant Virger, Beverley Minster & York & South West Yorkshire Area Leader**

*(Photograph: Beverley Minster Virgers, Neil Pickford & John Dell clearing up after a recent Wedding Fayre in the nave)*





Saint Nicholas Church, Pluckley, was the venue for our AGM preceded by a service of Eucharist which included the dedication of a new Virge on Saturday 15<sup>th</sup> March, a lovely bright but chilly day.

The Virge was commissioned by the Branch Committee from Steve Ottewill at Ottewill Silversmiths and Jewellers Ltd of Smeeth, near Ashford, and the design and manufacture was done by his team of craftsmen and was therefore made in our Branch area. It was made possible by the kind donations given in memory of George Ballard, the Verger at Saint Saviour's Church, Folkestone, and sometime Canterbury Branch Treasurer and his daughter Rosemary Ballard, the Verger of Holy Trinity Church, Folkestone, sometime Area Leader, and Life Member of the Guild. Both sadly passed away within months of each other.



We were in the middle of a very welcome coffee and general natter when a tall young man and woman rushed in. They turned out to be Steve Ottewill, the silversmith, and his wife Karen. Pluckley is his home Parish and it has many family associations for him. They were joyfully welcomed by us all. We were duly called to order by our Chairman, Julian Thorn, we robed and processed in to the service of Eucharist conducted by our Branch Chaplain, Canon Clare Edwards, assisted by the Reverend Eileen Webb, our Treasurers wife. During the service Canon Clare dedicated the new Virge. Following the service we went to the Black Horse where we ate very well before returning to Saint Nicholas for the AGM.



After the election en masse of the Branch Officers we got down to some nitty gritty talking on the running of the Guild. Our Chairman, Julian, said he was sorry not to see members of the Rochester Branch there and hoped that they would join us for some of the visits we were organising on the Rochester patch. Malcolm Bates, our Area Leader gave us all news from Central Council and said that our National Chaplain, Canon Maureen, would like to know if any new local Branch Chaplain is elected as she has not been told of one or two new ones recently. We ended the meeting with prayers led by the Reverend Eileen Webb and Julian had organised tea and cakes for us all before we left for home.

I feel I cannot close without mentioning Roger Twigg, who died in November last year. He was born in Cheshire in 1943. He joined his local choir and also became a bell ringer there in the 1950's. He came to Canterbury in 1974 and he enthroned Archbishop Coggan and Archbishop Runcie. In 1986 he and his wife Dylis went to Winchester. Roger was the Guild's Welfare Officer for some time and I found out about the Guild from him. I dusted and mopped for many years in the Cathedral here and one Wednesday I had just finished my weekly dust of Saint John's Chapel when Roger came along. "Phew, I am going to have to sit down," he said, and he plonked himself down on a chair near me. From out of his breast pocket came a magazine. It was The Virger. I asked him about it and he told me all about the Guild. At the end he asked, "Cherry, you've not seen this before and you don't know anything about it do you?" I said of course not and was rather surprised to be told that the Vesturer did not like the Guild and would have nothing to do with it, a great shame.

In closing I know that all members will have Dylis and the family in their prayers, and may they all rest in peace, George, Rosemary and Roger.

**Cherry Johnstone**  
**Branch Correspondent**

*(Photographs & additional information courtesy of Chris Crooks)*



## FORTHCOMING EVENTS



**2014**

**Sunday 10<sup>th</sup> - Thursday 14<sup>th</sup> August**  
**Annual Training Conference**  
**Elim Conference Centre, West Malvern**

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**Tuesday 23<sup>rd</sup> September**  
**Canterbury Province Festival**  
**Hereford Cathedral**



What a treat, we all had with our first meeting of the year at Saint Mary & Saint Botolph with Thurleston & Akenham at Whitton in Ipswich. To get to the Church you have to drive through a large built-up area of housing, schools, parks and shops to arrive at your destination and you are greeted by a truly lovely building, and when you step inside ... a warm, friendly, well loved and cared for place of worship. (\*\*The photo's hopefully do justice). Mr Kenneth Game was our very proud Verger for this meeting. We started the day with a 'said' Eucharist led by the Revreend Andrew Dotchin and a poignant reading from The Book of Zechariah.

A little bit of history: There has been a Church at Whitton for many years. The Domesday Book (1086) has Widetuna (Whitton) listed as having a Church. The Parish of Thurleston was united with that of Whitton on 13<sup>th</sup> June 1514.

The building was enlarged in 1862 with the addition of a south aisle and the present tower was added. On the wall at the back of the north aisle is a roll of honour which records the inhabitants of Whitton Village who died in the Great War 1914 - 1918. At the front of the aisle adjacent to the font there is a stained glass window by the firm of William Morris.

Saint Botolph was born in the 7<sup>th</sup> century and was educated at an Abbey in Northern France. In the year 654 he began to build a Monastery at Icanhoe. This could well have been at Iken on the River Alde which also has a Church dedicated to him.

Saint Botolph was well respected, he was a good and pious man. He is recorded as having worked many miracles and also as having the gift of prophecy. He died, after a long illness, at his own Monastery at Icanhoe on 17<sup>th</sup> June (probably around the year 680). His body was eventually divided into four parts and buried in different holy places. This was considered a mark of veneration in those days.



The name Botolph is sometimes said to mean 'At the Gate' and sometimes 'Boat Help' which could have been the reason that Saint Botolph was known as the Patron Saint Travellers.

We then made our way over to the Community Centre for our meeting, which we actually got through in record time. What was to follow was the most welcome 'buffet lunch', all home-made by Angela and Gerald Margolam. Mini quiche, cheese scones, cakes, sandwiches, sausage rolls all an absolute delight. The whole event scored a 10/10. A thoroughly lovely get-together that incorporated our first meeting of the year for the Branch and delicious food, what more could anyone ask for.

Our next meeting will involve more food! as members drive to Aldeburgh for our AGM and BBQ. Until next time God Bless.

**Jean Cobb**  
**Area Leader & Branch Correspondent**

(\*\* Photographs: Saint Botolph's Church Exterior, Saint Botolph's Church Interior & the Window by William Morris)



## 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**.



## LEICESTER & PETERBOROUGH BRANCH NEWS



Sixteen Members along with one husband and two wives met at the Gynsills Premier Inn, Groby Road, Glenfield, Leicester on Monday 24<sup>th</sup> March for a meal. The meals, all individually chosen, were very tasty but sadly the level of service was very poor. We sat down very hungry at approximately 7.30 p.m. but we were ravenous by the time our food arrived an hour later. Afterwards we decided it would be open to discussion for another time to decide where to go and on what day and time. The Members from Peterborough and Derby did not come to the meal.

We have still not found a new Branch Chaplain, but we hope that one may soon be found and appointed. Kate Mobbs, our honorary Branch Secretary, thanked everyone for coming. We then had a photo call before departing for home.

On Monday 28<sup>th</sup> April, a beautiful spring evening, we set off through the lovely countryside of Leicestershire and Cambridgeshire for a service of Holy Communion at All Saints Church, Park Road, Peterborough. The service was conducted by the Reverend Peter Denton, Priest Emeritus of All Saints. We sang some very patriotic hymns, the reason being that Saint George's Day was being kept owing to the fact that the lectionary does not allow Saints Days to be kept during Eastertide or any other high season. Reverend Peter highlighted vergers duties and how the stave was used to be used to keep unruly people out, though not so much nowadays. The Verger, Robert Raven, could not be with us as he was in hospital, but it was hoped he would return home soon. We prayed for him and his wife, Anne, at this time and for caring for him when he returns home. There were thirteen members in attendance including our Area Leader, Lance Bloom, who led us in procession in a very dignified and reverent way, and his wife, Sandra, who read the Epistle. After the service we had a good natter and tucked in to some delicious refreshments in the Church Hall. Kate Mobbs thanked everyone for coming. She also thanked the Organist and Server as well as Anne Raven for preparing the refreshments. She informed us that as we were still in need of a Branch Chaplain she would be contacting the Archdeacon to see if he could help in this matter.

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



## THE LIVERPOOL CATHEDRAL BEES



Last year on the site that we use for the interment of ashes we had some bee hives placed. Since then we had not had any cause to go out there. A few weeks ago we did as we had to bury the ashes of one of our guides who had sadly passed away. The issue was raised about safety as the hole was dug very close to the hives. Myself and the Canon Precentor assessed the situation and decided that the best course of action would be to have the service some distance away and for the Verger to bury the ashes alone. This meant that instead of our robes we would have to wear the bee keeping suit!

The photograph is of Gratten Williams in the suit. We think that we should get a special black one just for this occasion.

**Tracy Lumb**  
**Head Verger, Liverpool Cathedral**



## OXFORD BRANCH NEWS



The Reverend Canon Roger Royle, deservedly popular speaker on BBC Radio Two, was our guest at the Oxford Branch 'Quiet Day' at Douai Abbey. The day of our meeting was the 'Annunciation of Our Lord to the Blessed Virgin Mary' (Lady day), so the theme was 'Memories and Mary'.

In his introductions, Canon Roger reminisced about his dealings with vergers in the past, recalling "Solid but humble servant: always there but not in the way" "dignity and service – key person". In all of this, the message came through: "Service is not a dirty word". Canon Roger gave the sermon during our communion, surprisingly based on a quote from Shakespeare's Macbeth. "*Memory, the warder of the brain.*" Pondering is the key to memory, and on Lady Day, we were reminded of how much Mary herself pondered: the words of the shepherds, Anna, Simeon, and Jesus himself.

For ourselves, in leading, assisting, and supporting worship: do this, but ensure our own faith is active, too. "Ponder, keep pondering, and your faith will not go stale."

In the afternoon session, Canon Roger continued the theme of "Memory, the warder of the brain", and of faith: but faith is built on memory, and remembrance on repetition. Sadly, we have bad memories too, and it is easy to recall harsh criticism. But how to deal with such? If the harshness is justified, say sorry for our fault, forgive others, and move on. Forgiveness is one of the greatest gifts we are given. Painful memories can be helpful though, and spur us on. These can still be part of our faith, and we should not run away from them. Share in the joys of good memories, and overcome the sorrow. In all this was a memorable meeting, we heard from a man well worth listening to.

**Dennis Wildman**  
**Branch Correspondent**



Monday 2<sup>nd</sup> June was a warm and somewhat humid day when fourteen Members from the York Branch of the CEGV gathered at Selby Abbey for a fascinating visit to this major Norman church.

Being market day the west gate of the churchyard was cheek-by-jowl with lively street stalls and the cries of traders helped set a jovial mood, making the building feel part of the daily life of the town.

Inside the church the mood continued as we gathered in the small but busy café before relocating for a business meeting. Here the only item on the agenda was the need to replace both Richard and Rosemary Babington who, between them, occupy almost all of the posts in the York Branch. They plan to move down south some time before the next business meeting and wanted to make sure the branch would continue to function between now and then. Once more Beverley Minster Head Virger John Dell stepped forward to fill the role of Chairman in a temporary capacity. The Branch owes both the Babingtons a huge debt of gratitude for providing so many interesting events to enjoy over they years – and today was as good as any.



Next stop was a Communion Service, followed by an excellent lunch prepared by the Abbey team where we were joined by various staff, clergy and volunteers. Then we split into two small groups under our guides, Margaret and John, for an exhaustive tour of the current building.



The present structure owes much of its very fine condition to work that was done in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, particularly the massive reconstruction required after a fire in 1906. The roof and fittings were replaced and the stone cleaned then, to create employment during the 1930's, two towers and a southern transept were added to the structure. A few traces of the pre-Reformation institution survive and there is also a good collection of modern windows which contain much older glass. One very interesting feature was the way in which the original Norman designs had been modified during building, as rounded arches evolved into the more pointed style we recognise from later buildings. There is also a good display about the Royal visit to present Maundy Money in 1969 - apparently the only time that the present Monarch has performed this ceremony in a Parish Church. Of particular note, however, is the extremely distorted Norman arch which looks as though it melted after construction, but is still standing 900 years later.

An excellent venue, a fascinating building in excellent condition, a warm welcome and a marvellous atmosphere: all-in-all a wonderful day out. Many thanks to all involved in organising and providing.

**Neil Pickford**

**York & South West Yorkshire Area Leader**



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‘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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