

# The Virger

Spring 2017  
Issue 294



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

The Official Magazine of the Church of England Guild of Vergers







Welcome to the Spring 2017 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 them to the Communications Officer by the Deadline Date below.

**PLEASE NOTE THAT ANY ARTICLES ETC... SUBMITTED AFTER THE DEADLINE MAY BE HELD OVER UNTIL THE NEXT EDITION TO AVOID DELAYS IN PRODUCTION! E-MAILED ARTICLES SHOULD BE SENT AS MICROSOFT WORD FILES ONLY & ANY PHOTOGRAPHS IN JPEG FORMAT, TEXT & IMAGE FILES SHOULD BE ATTACHED TO E-MAILS SEPARATELY!**

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**PLEASE NOTE THE DEADLINE FOR THE NEXT EDITION IS:  
Saturday the 13<sup>th</sup> May 2017**

# THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND GUILD OF VERGERS YORK PROVINCE FESTIVAL 2017

## BLACKPOOL

### Tuesday 30<sup>th</sup> May 2017

### *JOIN US FOR A DAY AT THE SEA SIDE*

#### PROGRAMME

10:00 a.m. Coffee and Welcome

Holy Trinity Church, Dean Street, South Shore

by Kind permission of the Reverend Tracy Charnock

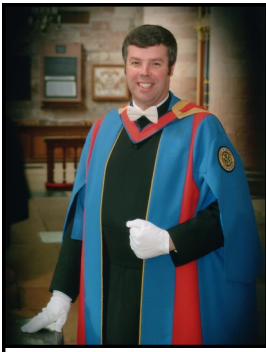
11:00 a.m. Eucharist (No Robes) followed by photo

12:00 noon Free afternoon to enjoy the sights and eat

For more Information contact: James Armstrong on 01228 535169

or Tony Hales 01253 314235

**FRONT COVER: *The Small Calvary* by The Master of Saint Veronica, circa 1400.**



## NATIONAL CHAIRMAN'S LETTER



Time where does it go? Looking out of the kitchen window of my flat the other day I spotted one or two snowdrops tentatively opening their petals, I then went to London for our Standing Committee and by the time I came back two days later there were hundreds of them in flower. It is the same as I prepare to stand down as the National Chairman.

I cannot believe it will be six years since you elected me into office. Time as they say seems to fly. My sincere and humble thanks for all the support you have shown me over those years.

But the big question is has the Guild blossomed and multiplied in that time? Well I am afraid I would have to say it has not. Please do not take this to be a despondent view, it is true like most organisations we are declining in numbers and in some areas of the country we have lost Branches due to the lack of members willing to hold Branch Office, but our spirit and resolve has not weakened.

We as a Guild may over the next few years have to slim down and become a bit more dynamic in our approach to our membership, communications and outreach. Never fear we are not on our last legs yet. Some good news on the membership front, most, if not all the Vergers of Chester Cathedral are being admitted to the Guild. Congratulations to them and welcome to our fellowship. Getting back to my time theme it will soon be Easter with all the joy that this season brings us both in the natural world and in the presence of our living God.

May I wish you and your loved ones a very Happy and blessed Easter.

**James Armstrong**



## 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 & Geoffrey Timms*

*Bournemouth & Channel Islands: Paula Lincoln*

*Chichester, Guildford & Portsmouth: Marilyn Lee*

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

*Ipswich: Val Pizzey*

*Leicester & Peterborough: Clifford Dunkley & Leslie Mitchelmore*

*London, Southwark & Chelmsford: Ken Allen*

*Oxford: Don Mitchener, Jeanne Scott, Reverend Canon Roy Taylor, Gill & Dennis Wildman*

*Saint Albans: Peter Hudson*

*Salisbury: Jean Jackson*

*Somerset & Avon: Pat Dawes, Lionel & Mary Holway, & SallyAnne Sommerfield*

*York: George & Doreen Cook*

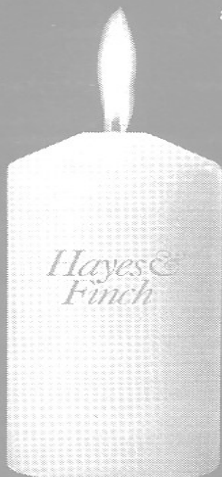
**And everyone not specifically mentioned who need love, counsel and the grace of our Lord**

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## NATIONAL CHAPLAIN'S LETTER



Dear Friends,

The Cathedral gardens are looking wonderful with Snowdrops, Hellebores of various hues, Winter Aconites with their bright yellow petals and their very dark green leaves. It all gives a sign of hope that Spring is really not far off. As I write this next Sunday will be the Second Sunday before Lent: designated 'Creation Sunday' when we think about the beauty and the suffering of the created world. The Lections are a great help to us: the Creation narrative of Genesis 1, the 'groaning' of creation as seen by Saint Paul and Jesus's command to leave aside anxiety and look at the beauty around us.

But life and beauty bring with it the possibility of suffering.

For all life, the cellular events of division and energy production that keep us in health are fragile so with trillions of cells in the body it is small wonder that sometimes things go wrong and we become ill and with this comes suffering. Not only is there physical suffering but we also suffer because we are greedy and possessive, anxious for our own welfare for the future, which in turn spoils the potential we have for building beautiful relationships

Jesus intimates that anxiety clouds our vision so that we no longer recognize the beauty of the lilies of the field or the choreography of birds in flight: nor do we see the necessity for preserving the ecosystems for their own sake. We consider that because we have been given domination over the created order, we can exploit the natural world as we like. So over the years our environment has become polluted by our activities which diminish its beauty. All over the world, the demands of rich nations are causing habitat loss in rainforest, savannah and wetlands, such that the endemic plants, birds and animals are forced into increasingly smaller and smaller areas, dwindling in numbers and falling to extinction So should we despair?

No! For Jesus was perceived as both divine and human so that we see in him the New Creation who was the one who through his ministry, suffering and death could make sense of the new perspectives given to him and share with us the life in God to whom he returned: a new dimension of creation. His was the glory promised by Paul when he writes about the 'creation groaning in travail until now'. For Paul, the whole universe needs redemption under the loving control of 'The-One-That-Is', the supreme God who loved the world so much, and saw that the creation was good. He never leaves us without hope. If God creates the world to include human beings, he will also endure the suffering that results in order to give us the chance of glory. God took the suffering into the Divine life where it was transfigured and changed into glory. From the time we desire to follow Christ, we are bidden to set our minds on the glory which comes by way of the cross. We stand with the suffering, crucified Lord and by this action the redemption of the pain and grief begins.

In the world creatures are free to make their own lives and they in turn affect the lives of their descendants and the lives of the community. Everything is bound together – we are part of the whole and we suffer with each other as we also find happiness in one another. Greed and desire makes us anxious to maintain position; it makes us cling to material things so that they have the priority, as Jesus suggests in the Sermon on the Mount. Worry is blind, refusing to learn the lesson of trust in God's providence: a lesson taught us by the creatures in the natural world.

The message of Creation Sunday, coming as it does just before we enter Lent, is clear – we must appreciate the created order, nurture it, protect it and accept our place within it. On Ash Wednesday we are reminded 'Dust you are and unto dust you shall return. Repent and believe the Gospel.' We are made of stardust: ephemeral and frail but we see the work of creation as the on-going activity of God: creating, sustaining and nurturing the whole universe. We also see it as a source of hope for the whole creation, for we look into the groaning of creation and into the suffering towards the glory.

As we move forward into Lent we have the opportunity to consider our place within the world and within the whole of creation.

So, I pray that you will all have a creative Lent of prayer, study and joy in the work of God's hands.

With every blessing and my love

**Canon Maureen**

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## GUILD FESTIVALS



We are looking for venues for the forthcoming Festivals in 2017 & 2018 and beyond. We currently have:

**30 May 2017 – Ebor Festival – Blackpool Lite**  
**Summer 2018 – Cantuar Festival – Hassocks/Lancing (*Festival Lite TBC*)**

We are looking for a venue for the Cantuar Festival (full) in Summer 2017, and an Ebor Festival (full) in Spring 2018, and others beyond 2018.

If your Branch is interested in hosting us, please make contact with myself and if the National Officers can be of assistance please do not hesitate to ask and where we can we will try to assist you.

The Head Vergers Conference takes place 11-13 September 2017 so these dates would be best avoided.

I look forward to hearing from you.

**Stephen Stokes, Dip GV (Hons)**  
**General Secretary**



## ANNUAL TRAINING CONFERENCE 2017



The Annual Training Conference 2017 will be held from Monday 14<sup>th</sup> August to Thursday 17<sup>th</sup> August at the Elim International Conference Centre, West Malvern. The Booking Form is included with this edition of The Virger.

Book Now to guarantee your place and come enjoy the wonderful fellowship, the opportunities to network, learn new skills, take part in the daily round of services and enjoy the peace and tranquillity of this fabulous location and the excellent facilities and good food and welcome provided by the friendly and helpful staff of the Conference Centre.

***It will be a supercalifragilisticexpialidocious time, LOL!***  
***(See the Booking Form for the explanation!)***



## BLACKBURN, CHESTER & MANCHESTER BRANCH NEWS



We have had a very busy twelve months. In February 2016 we held our AGM and were very pleased to have the company of Canon Maureen who came to admit our new Branch Chaplain, the Reverend Karen Marshall. We voted in a new Branch Chairman, Mr. Gareth Screeton, and a new Branch Treasurer, Mrs. Elaine Screeton. All other posts remained the same. It was decided that all posts would be for three years, thus enabling the Branch to have some semblance of stability.

Many of us joined Liverpool for their Easter Eucharist and lunch which took place at Newchurch Parish Church, Culcheth. This was a very happy time when Liverpool admitted new members to the Guild. In June we again met up with Liverpool for the retirement of the Verger at Saint Nicholas Church in Halewood. This was another very happy occasion.

Next came the Ebor Festival in York which around 6 members attended and found the day very enjoyable.

Two members attended the Conference and reported back that it was a good experience as usual.

On Tuesday 6<sup>th</sup> September we attended the celebration for Pam Derbyshire's thirty years as Verger at Saint Peter's Church in Scorton. A very happy service followed by refreshments and cake with the obligatory photograph!

Four of us attended the Cantuar Festival in Salisbury in September. We had a very enjoyable time meeting other Vergers. The services in the Cathedral were excellent and the singing at both Evensong Services was beautiful. It was good to see so many friends, who we only meet at Festivals.

In December we again met with the Liverpool Branch for their Christmas Eucharist and lunch, which was held this time in Liverpool Cathedral.

This year we will be admitting a new member to the Guild when we hold our AGM Eucharist in Blackburn Cathedral. This will be followed by lunch and then our AGM.

March sees a wonderful day for our Branch as we admit eleven new members to the Guild. These are ten Vergers from Chester Cathedral and one from Pentre Broughton, Wrexham. We hope to have as many members of the Branch as possible to witness this momentous occasion which will take place on Sunday 12<sup>th</sup> March at the Cathedral Evensong. This will bring our Branch membership up to 38!

So ends a really busy year for our Branch – one which has really been enjoyed by everyone.

**Freda M. Murphy**  
**Branch Secretary**



Wednesday 11<sup>th</sup> January saw fourteen members and guests converge at the Church of Saint Peter and Saint Paul, River, Dover, for a service of Holy Communion taken by the Vicar, Father Andrew Bawtree.

As all members of the Committee were present a meeting was held afterwards, before we all went for lunch at the Kitty-Wake Pub and I had a really lovely and surprising discovery walking round the church.

In a corner I spied a nice looking Font with a beautifully inscribed brass plate on the West wall above it.

To my great joy I found that it was the Font from Saint Mary Magdalene Church, Burgate in Canterbury, which was purchased in 1875 by the Reverend Charles Morice

from Saint Mary Magdalene's as it was being 'Tidied Up.' The Font is of great importance to me as it is believed to have been dedicated by Archbishop Aelphage in 1010. Two years later he was captured by the Danes and martyred at Greenwich. This was a lovely find for me as I was walking round.

The church has some fine Victorian glass and the Lectern is from Saint James the Apostle Church in Dover which was badly damaged by heavy bombing and long distance fire by the Germans during the war. It was presented to River Church for safekeeping. There is a splendid Royal Coat of Arms in the church and I loved the carved Oak Reredos and Pulpit.

I have to thank Chris Crooks for the two photos of the interior of the church looking towards the High Altar and the Branch members outside the Kitty-Wake Pub after our lunch. My own camera malfunctioned due to battery failure and Chris kindly produced the pictures.

I would also like to thank Suzanne Mills, Father Bawtree, our Secretary, Janet, and our Chairman, Julian, for all they did for getting this lovely day going so smoothly.



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



I am sorry I missed the last date but here is a record of the meeting our Branch had when about a dozen of us met at Saint Nicholas Church, Arundel, which was built in 1380 on the site of an earlier church, built in 1102 as a Priory.

The Priory was dissolved in 1380 when a College of the Holy Trinity, with an adjoining Hospice was established on the site by Richard FitzAlan, the eleventh Earl of Arundel, to serve the needs of Twenty Poor Men and to give them Ordination.

Beyond the East End of the church, adjoining it is the FitzAlan Chapel also built by Richard, but this was desecrated by the Roundheads in 1643. It was restored in 1886 by the fifteenth Duke. There is a Roman Catholic Chapel for the Dukes of Norfolk and their family.

The Dukes of Norfolk are Fitz Alan-Howard and he is the Earl Marshall, head of the College of Arms and responsible for the organisation of all State ceremonies and processions.

After being given various pieces of information about the church by a parishioner, and a Communion Service, a fish and chip lunch was collected and followed by ice cream. Two of our members had a Civic Funeral, so were unable to join us, (what a pity there were so few present.)

We had four meetings in 2016, but two of these were within a week of each other, the first to say a fond farewell to our long standing Chaplain of thirty-three years, the Reverend Canon Christopher Valins, on Wednesday 25<sup>th</sup> May and the installation of our new Chaplain, the Reverend Roy Woodhams, by our National Chaplain Canon Maureen Palmer, on Tuesday 31<sup>st</sup> May.

If we had not had these two occasions, there would have only been two meetings during the year

**Sheila J. Ford**  
**Branch Correspondent**





## GLoucester, Hereford & Worcester Branch News



### CHRISTMAS DINNER 2016 & AGM 2017

It has been a relatively quiet period for our Branch since last September's Canterbury Province Festival in Salisbury.

The one important exception was our Christmas Dinner, this time being held within Hereford Cathedral School Sixth Form Café. Sixteen members of the Branch were able to get together for a splendid evening in that most historical setting of Hereford. Due to our Branch covering three rural Counties it is important to try and hold events in different areas hence our move to Hereford from Worcester for last Christmas's celebrations.

Last October we heard the sad news concerning the death of Bill Pearce of Holy Trinity, Malvern. His funeral was attended by members of the Branch.

Our AGM was held at Saint Stephen's, Worcester, on the 24<sup>th</sup> January. The business was dealt with smoothly and quickly. Sadly, it was announced that our long standing Chaplain, the Reverend Canon Graham Lyall was retiring after 34 years of first class support and care for our members.

Graham is an amazing Priest who continues to care for any who require his support and prayers within Worcester, besides offering his services to any City Churches short of Priests. He and his dear wife Sue have been excellent servants of the Guild and we shall greatly miss their warmth, cheerfulness and commitment. Thank you with all our hearts Graham and Sue, from all the past and present members of our Branch.

Events proposed for the months ahead:

Tuesday 28<sup>th</sup> February – Shrove Tuesday. Once again we look forward to an evening of pancakes and fun at the home of Robert Beattie within the grounds of Worcester Cathedral, following the 5.30 p.m. sung Eucharist for the Feast of Saint Oswald.

Tuesday 25<sup>th</sup> April – Branch Quiet Day at the House of the Open Door, Childswickham.

Visits have been suggested to the following places:

Harvington Hall, Worcestershire. A great Catholic Shrine for the 40 English Martyrs, and the centre for many Priest's hidey holes during the great persecution.

Saint Christopher's Church near Cheltenham and also to Saint Michael's Church, Ledbury.

**Philip Dunne**  
**Branch Correspondent**



## IPSWICH BRANCH NEWS



### FOOD, GLORIOUS, FOOD.

After the very busy period of Christmas and the New Year, January can be a quiet month but at Ipswich Branch we started off 2017 with a 'New Year's Lunch' for Branch members. We re-visited a previous haunt 'The Railway Inn' at Westerfield.

A lovely restaurant with staff that certainly looked after us, the food was 'glorious' and as Paul and Laurence would say 'the Fish & Chips were wonderful' (we did wonder if they would actually get through it all) – they did!



It was nice for everyone to catch up and have a lovely couple of hours together. Some unfortunately could not come due to 'Verger' duties but we will all meet up again in March for the branch AGM.

A very short report!

Until next time  
God Bless

**Jean Cobb**  
**Branch Correspondent**



## BRANCH AGM

We began our year on Monday 23<sup>rd</sup> January with our AGM held in the Church of Saint James the Great, Birstall, Leicestershire.

After our Chaplain, the Reverend Canon John Tonkin, had opened the meeting with prayers our Chairman led the rest of the meeting. Apologies were received, the Minutes of the 2016 AGM and all matters arising were accepted. The Chairman read out correspondence from the National Communications Officer, Marek Barden.

Our Treasurer, Clive Mobbs, presented the accounts, which had been approved by an independent examiner. These were accepted by the Branch. The cost of subscription remains the same for 2017. Our Chairman's report included concern for members attending meetings during the darker nights, so it was decided that we meet in August instead of October. The Secretary's report had been written and presented to members in December.

In his Area Leader's report, Lance Bloom announced that he would be standing down this year as he felt he could not fulfill all the duties which he should. He was thanked for the work he had done in keeping us in touch with the Central Council.

Election of Officers: The new area Leader will be Les Mitchelmore; Chairman & Branch Correspondent: Marjorie Thomas, Dip GV; Secretary: Kathryn Mobbs, Dip GV (Hons); Treasurer: Clive Mobbs; Magazine Distributors: Clive and Kathryn Mobbs. All appointments were approved unanimously.

Any other business: Clive and Kathryn Mobbs had been to visit Clifford Dunkley, who is now in a nursing home in Kirby Muxloe. They said that he realized someone was there, but could not remember who. It was decided to keep him in touch as an Associate Member and send him The Virger Magazine to keep him in touch with us.

There is a possibility that there may be new members in our Branch soon, so things are looking up.

For our meeting in March there will be a Social at Saint Crispin's Church, Braunstone.

On Saturday 20<sup>th</sup> May there will be a Retreat/Quiet Day, (*can this be possible with Vergers?*), at Launde Abbey. The day will include coffee, Holy Communion, lunch and afternoon tea. (*By the look of the itinerary we shall be eating and drinking most of the time! There me even be time for a short afternoon nap!*) There is still time to decide and confirm details by the March meeting.

The AGM closed at 3.30 p.m. Refreshments, coffee, tea and biscuits were served afterwards. Our thanks were given to Kathryn and Clive Mobbs for being our hosts.

**Marjorie Thomas, Dip GV**

**Branch Chairman & Correspondent**



*On behalf of the National Officers  
& the Members of the Central Council  
may we wish all our Members & Friends, at  
home and abroad,  
a Quiet & Reflective Lent  
and a Happy and Holy Easter*





## THE ANNUAL DINNER

The Annual Dinner of the Branch took place on Tuesday 31<sup>st</sup> January 2017 at a new venue, Ye Olde Cock Tavern in Fleet Street close to The Royal Courts of Justice. It was a wet miserable evening outside but the company of friends and colleagues soon made everyone warm and welcoming.

The Standing Committee were honoured to be our guests at the dinner. After a few pleasantries we soon sat down to enjoy an excellent meal served by the very efficient staff.

Our guest speaker was the Reverend Dr Charles Clapham of Saint Peter's Church, Hammersmith, West London. I was fortunate to be seated next to him for the meal so we had already had some interesting conversations before the meal.

The Reverend Clapham produced an old book called, "How to be a Bishop without being religious" by Charles Merrill Smith, who was an American United Methodist clergyman. He has written six clerical books featuring a character called Reverend C P Randolph. Reverend Clapham read several extracts from the book, all of which were extremely humorous.



A very good evening was had by all. What more can be said, good company, good food and copious amounts of wine.

The Branch thanks Stephen Haude for the excellent individual table placements with our own personal name and menu printed on them that he had prepared. Well done Stephen.

**Alan Taylor**  
**Branch Correspondent**

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My name is Heather Ringrose, and I worship at the Church of Christ the Servant King in High Wycombe, I am an Associate Member and the new Branch Correspondent for Oxford. I was 'invited' to take over the role from Dennis Wildman, I hope that I can successfully follow in his pen-prints. Thank you Dennis for your years of literary delights.

## CHRISTMAS LUNCH: TUESDAY 6<sup>TH</sup> DECEMBER 2016

We enjoyed lunch at the Wee Waif, Charvil, on a very dreary and rather foggy day. There were twenty of us gathered to enjoy good food and good company and we were honoured and delighted to welcome Canon Maureen Palmer, our National Chaplain, especially as she had come so far to join us.

It was a very happy occasion, although we were bidding a sad farewell to Christopher Waterhouse who, with his wife Marianne, moved to Australia in January. The food was delicious, the company was excellent and the atmosphere joyous. One of our ladies, Hazel, the wife of our Secretary, crocheted and knitted covers looking like little Santa Clauses and Christmas Puddings for some delicious individual chocolates. Needless to say, we all greatly enjoyed the contents. After a very happy time and remembering those who were not able to join us, we all went our separate ways looking forward to more Christmas celebrations.

## A.G.M: TUESDAY 17<sup>TH</sup> JANUARY 2017

This took place at the Church of Christ the Servant King, High Wycombe, and began with the admittance of a new member, Mrs Jennifer Ballantine of Saint Mary's Church, Wendover, followed by a service of Holy Communion. We then enjoyed some very nice refreshments kindly prepared by Mrs Betty Golby. Why is it that refreshments are so important at Church events? After lunch we carried out our AGM under the able Chairmanship of Michael Golby, with its customary reports, discussions and thanks for all those Officers relinquishing their duties. This was then followed by the election of the Committee for 2017 and the proposed programme for the next 12 months. A bouquet of flowers was presented to Dennis Wildman to take home for his wife, Gill, who is currently recovering from surgery. The meeting ended with thanks to all and closing prayers led by our Chaplain, the Reverend Peter Viney.

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



# SAINT ALBANS BRANCH NEWS



## BRANCH AGM

The AGM of the Saint Alban's Branch was held in Saint Saviours' Church, Saint Albans on 23<sup>rd</sup> January 2017.

The Saint Albans Branch currently has eighteen Full Members, nine Associate Members and one Life Member.

A formal agenda for the meeting had been previously circulated. Apologies for the absent members were received. The reports by the Chairman, Secretary, Treasurer, Area Leader and Web Manager were presented verbally with support documentation as appropriate.

The Officers for the year were elected as follows:

Chairman: Mr Lindsay Kemp; Secretary: Mrs Lindsay Bevis; Assistant Secretary: Mrs Rosamund Russell (*the retiring secretary continuing as assistant*); Treasurer: Mr Antony Kempson; Assistant Treasurer & Branch Correspondent: Mr David Williams; Area Leader: Mr David Jones.

Mrs Nonita Palmer was proposed and elected to be an Honorary Member of the Branch as a continuing tribute to the late Canon Peter Palmer, formerly Branch Chaplain, additionally to Nonita herself remembering the long-term service she has given to the Branch.

Links with the Oxford Branch have grown over the years. For this year the Oxford Branch has planned two Quiet Days with talks and discussion. The Saint Alban's Branch has been invited to join the Oxford Branch at these events.

An appeal was made for photographs and comments from Members to provide material for inclusion on the Saint Albans' Guild of Vergers Website and for submission to The Virger Magazine.

The photograph below shows Mrs Audrey Mason after her admission as a member of the Guild with a group of fellow members of the Saint Albans' Branch.

**Back Row:**  
**Dominic Flynn; Brian Willett; Ian MacPherson;**  
**Antony Kempson; Lindsay Bevis**

**Front Row:**  
**Chaplain, Father Andrew Ferrar; Audrey Mason;**  
**Chairman, Lindsay Kemp; Michael Golby FCEGV ( Oxford Branch)**

**David Williams**  
**Branch Correspondent**





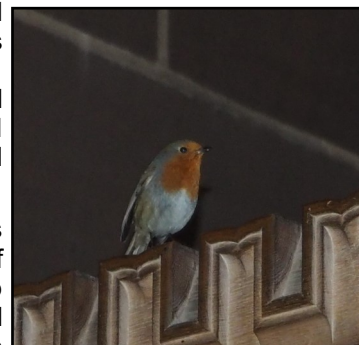


Christmas is over and we are returning to normal, whatever that may be for a Verger, in the Diocese of Liverpool. Our Christmas Eucharist was held in the Lady Chapel of Liverpool Cathedral and this was followed by an excellent lunch in the Sir Giles Gilbert Scott Suite, and a good time was had by all despite the usual mammoth raffle!

We were delighted to host several visitors from the Blackburn, Chester and Manchester Branch and we were pleased that Margaret Scott, our Area Leader, was able to attend. We also welcomed Canon Maureen as our main guest and during our Eucharist she inducted our new Branch Chaplain, Canon Cynthia Dowdle. Canon Cynthia is well known to us all in the Diocese as she has just retired as the Dean of Women's Ministry and as a Canon at the Cathedral.

The Eucharist was presided over by Canon Myles Davies, the Vice Dean and Canon Precentor of the Cathedral. During the service I presented four new members to Canon Maureen who admitted them into the Guild. The new members were Kate Cooper from Saint Nicholas Church, Halewood; Pauline Parr from Christ Church, Eccleston, Saint Helens; Rachael Harris and Keith Jones both Vergers at Liverpool Cathedral. I was well aware that when I became Chairman of the Liverpool Branch of the Guild that I would have to be a "Jack of all trades" but I never thought that, due to a lack of Cathedral organists, I would have to play the organ for our Eucharist!

When walking from the Lady Chapel to the West End of the Cathedral some of us noticed a Christmas visitor to the Cathedral, "Robin", he was perched on the top of the "sound box" he did in fact stay in the Cathedral for about three weeks leading up to Christmas Day living in the Christmas tree. He became quite famous in the local press and on local TV. We all enjoyed an excellent Christmas dinner after the service and chatted to each other as only Vergers can do.



We are all looking forward to 2017, our usual meetings have been arranged and our AGM will be on 9<sup>th</sup> March. We hope to visit our friends in the Blackburn, Chester and Manchester Branch for their AGM, and to be in Blackpool on 30<sup>th</sup> May, and generally ensure that all members enjoy themselves and have full support from the Guild. Our best wishes to all Guild members from all in the Liverpool Branch.

**Gratten Williams**  
**Branch Chairman**

*Photos: Members & Visitors photographed at the High Altar of Liverpool Cathedral; Liverpool Cathedral's Christmas Robin; Visitors from the Blackburn, Chester & Manchester Branch and Margaret Scott, our area Leader; Canon Maureen & Canon Cynthia*



## 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**.



***The views and opinions expressed in the articles and letters in this edition of The Virger should be taken as those of the author unless it is specifically indicated that the Central Council of the Church of England Guild of Vergers has given its endorsement.***

***The Central Council of the said Guild accepts no responsibility for the accuracy or otherwise of statements, or for any offence caused by any of the articles or letters published herein.***