

The Virger

Autumn 2016
Issue 292



*~CEGV~
The Conference Group Photo
Monday the 15th of August 2016*



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The Official Magazine of the Church of England Guild of Vergers





Welcome to the Autumn 2016 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.

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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**'.

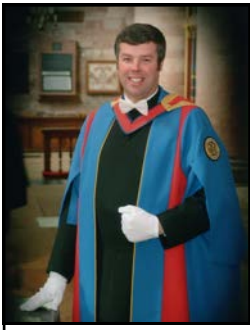
If you are interested in learning more about the Course, please contact the **Training Registrar: Susan Ansell** or the **Training Officer: John Shearer**.

FRONT COVER: *The Conference Group Photograph, Monday 15th August 2016*

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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.



NATIONAL CHAIRMAN'S LETTER



Having spent time at the Guild's Annual Training Conference in West Malvern, I returned to work exhausted but in a good way. My thanks must go to the Conference organisers, John, Sue, Canon Maureen and our Conference Secretary Margaret who put everything together and pulled off what seems like a miracle but is months of hard work coming to fruition. A great time of fellowship and learning was had by those who attended. You will be able to read more in the next few pages.

Many congratulations to those who have completed their Foundation Units and to those who were awarded their Guild Diploma, much respect and many pats on the back for a job well done. We are very proud of your achievements. Congratulations also to Sue Ansell (Training Registrar) and Marek Barden (Communications Officer) as they were returned to office for a further three years, well done. We rejoice with Stephen our General Secretary as he has been given the all clear from his cancer.

As the summer months draw to a close I hope you have had some time to relax and recharge your batteries and have enjoyed the occasional burst of Sun light.

James Armstrong



A SERVICE OF THANKSGIVING FOR CHRISTOPHER NOTTAGE



On Monday 4th July seven members of the Branch attended Saint Pancras Church, Euston Road, London, for the Memorial Service for Christopher Nottage, who passed away in May after losing a brave battle against Cancer. Chris, who was aged 83, had donated his body for Medical Science.

He had been the Verger at Saint Pancras Church from 1983 to 1985 where he had been well loved. The Clergy Team led in by the Incumbent, the Reverend Anne Stevens, were verged in by our own Stephen Haude and Irene Money. The wonderful Choir sang "The Hymn to the Trinity" by Tchaikovsky, and two Hymns, "Immortal, invisible, God only wise" and "Lord of all Hopefulness", the Reading was from John: chapter 6, verses 35 – 39.

Chris had lived in the Saint Pancras Alms Houses for some 20 years. I spoke to the manager and he stated that Chris had been a very well-liked and busy member of the community.

A member of the congregation, Jeanette Kelly, had written a poem in memory of Chris:

*Today I learned that Chris had died
He slipped away from earthly evil pain
This gentle gentleman so dignified
We will not see the like of him again
A son of a priest who hoped a priest he'd be
Instead of which the management and care
Of church, religion and its history
His own career his own pursuits to share
With all his friends and many interests shown
When age and sickness overtook life span
They made sure that he did not die alone
For there will be no monument to this man
So in mind's eye I'll see you in your panama hat and smart attire
I'll say a prayer for you amen to that and you admire.*

After the service ample refreshments were served for the congregation who had come to show their respects for Chris.

Alan Taylor

Branch Correspondent – London, Southwark and Chelmsford Branch



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 & Graham Williams

Liverpool: Gratten Williams

London, Southwark & Chelmsford: Ken Allen

Oxford: Anita (Annie) Bayliss, Ernestine Denham, Jeanne Scott & Reverend Canon Roy Taylor

Rochester: Tina Lawrence

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



NATIONAL CHAPLAIN'S LETTER



Dear Friends, Greetings!

I hope you have all recovered from Conference: from the excess of food [I have been very moderate since], the excess of services, the Mamma Mia impersonations and so on.

Conference was a very happy occasion and I was delighted to give seven Diplomas to the students who have now completed the Course. We had a short mention in the Church Times, for which I was particularly pleased – no photograph, but at least a few words. I hope the large number of awards will spur others on to get down to work!

Today, as I write this, it is the Commemoration of John Bunyan who wrote the incredibly influential book 'Pilgrim's Progress'. I was reflecting about pilgrimage: that the pilgrimage we are all making has many different paths at the different times within our lives. The people who gained the diploma have completed a long learning pilgrimage, which was for most a very costly pilgrimage in terms of time and effort but which has been rewarded by the confidence of knowing that the work they do has been enriched by the Course and that they themselves have gained expertise and competence in so doing.

Whatever 'pilgrimage' one might make there are certain facets which are similar for all. The first is perseverance. If we are to undertake a journey we must have the perseverance to continue even when the going is hard and we seem to take the one step forward and two steps back. Perseverance is particularly difficult in those times when we feel unsupported and alone. I pray that the Guild does provide that support and love so that none of our members feel isolated. Perseverance is needed for prayer, for living as disciples and well as for satisfying the examiners of the Diploma Course. I was very interested to read the latest book from the pen of +Rowan Williams – a helpful book called 'Being Disciples: Essentials of Christian Life.' Within it he suggests that discipleship is a 'state of awareness'. It is not just a case of looking at ideas, perhaps jotting them down and then going away to think about them. No, it is the perseverance to allow Christ to change us, to develop skills that will enable us to remain attentive and not to miss the great moment when it comes. So we need not only perseverance but also a constant expectancy that something will happen to us and to the world around us.

During the final weeks of Trinity when we are preparing for school visits, the Harvest Thanksgiving, the season of Remembrance, the penitential season of Advent and the great Feast of Christmas perhaps we could focus on the twin graces of perseverance and expectancy – who knows where the Lord might take us!

I shall look forward to seeing some of you at Salisbury for the Cantuar Festival, and hopefully I shall be able to share Eucharist, and Christmas meals as well. Please invite me!

With every blessing on your ministry.
Much love.

Canon Maureen



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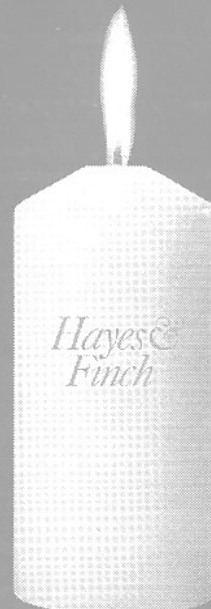
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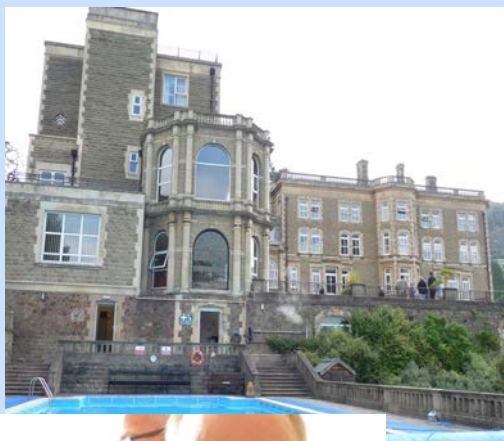
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CONFERENCE PHOTO ALBUM 2016



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Photographs Courtesy
of Philip Dunne



CONFERENCE REPORT

Although the Sunday 14th August was not the official day for general members to join the Training Conference many do travel to Malvern early, especially to get booked in and settled into their rooms and to take full advantage of this stunning area of middle England in all its glory. The Sunday is set aside for the Central Council to get together for a full meeting post dinner. I arrived in glorious weather having driven from Bristol with a fellow Verger.

Part of the Central Council meeting is to elect National Officers to serve in the various administrative roles within the Guild. This year both the Communications Officer and the Training Registrar were up for election. Both Marek Barden, the Communications Officer, and Susan Ansell, the Training Registrar, were both unanimously re-elected for a further three years and were thanked for their hard work over the past three years.

We were absolutely blessed for most of the week with beach relaxing sun type weather. The swimming pool was enjoyed by those who had swim suits whilst others sat on the side dipping toes. Donning full robes for services soon became a struggle, however, being inside of Saint James' Church did offer some respite. Perhaps on the whole it was a little too warm as the afternoon sessions did prove a little tiring for some of us, but we were amongst friends, and although the structure of the week this year was headed 'Looking after ourselves' we spent more time looking after each other. Lots of banter and laughing throughout the week.



The AGM was held on Monday morning, and I have never known an AGM be less boring than ours was on that day. Even the General Secretary was joking and the Chairman very full of mirth. For full measure the National Treasurer had a sense of humour; who said discussing accounts was dull!

There was the normal round of simple services each day, in both the Church and within the Conference Centre as well as the bigger services in the Church. Morning Prayer each day and the early Eucharist on the Tuesday in the Church; Midday Prayers and the Angelus, and Compline held in the Centre. These are a good opportunity for members to take part and try things they may not do in their own Church. In addition to these there are interesting and informative sessions with guest speakers, and opportunities to relax and network with fellow Vergers and build connections with others near and far, or catch up with friends that we may not have seen in a while.

During the afternoon of the Monday there was a session led by a Welfare Officer from the Ely Diocese, the Reverend Bruce Kinsey, on 'Our personal wellbeing'. To quote from a colleague's notes: 'His presentation was full of wonderful insights and nuggets of wisdom. He focussed on the wide ranging role of Vergers, the difficulties faced by those who work alone, voluntary or paid, the stress and emotional impact of being at the sharp end. The various strategies offered were developing positive relationships, allowing some quality time for ourselves and taking it, caring for our mental and physical health, a balanced diet, asking for help, planning the day, quiet times and prayer and finally engage with non-Church activities. He did add a controversial suggestion that was to give up the internet etc... during Lent'.

The opening Solemn Eucharist with Guild Congregation was held that afternoon and was an exceptional service with so much attention to detail, those only professional Vergers can produce. During this service nine Foundation Unit certificates were awarded, plus this year being an exception in that seven members were awarded full Diplomas, some with Merit, Distinction or Honours. There were two extra presentations. John Shearer, the Training Officer, was presented with an Honorary Diploma in recognition of his sterling work over the past few years on the Diploma Course and the Training Conference, this was a complete surprise to him and well deserved; and Ernest Kröhn was awarded Life Membership of the Guild, he was presented with a piece of engraved glassware.

Also, Marek Barden had presented the Guild with a Processional Cross in memory of his mother. This Cross was given to Marek originally for his twenty-fifth birthday and he used it for many years in his former Parish Church, Saint Mildred's in Tenterden, Kent. The Cross had been restored by and plated with silver and looks very beautiful. It was formally presented during the Opening Solemn Eucharist where it was blessed and dedicated to the use of the Guild by Canon Maureen.





CONFERENCE REPORT CONTINUED...

Monday evenings are usually reserved for light entertainment and this year the show was Mamma Mia, a singalong for some and a chance to dress up for others, although I have to admit it's only for the brave! Then the local pub called.

The main session on Tuesday was entitled 'Personal Safety – being a lone Verger' led by Inspector Nick Semper from West Mercia Police. In many ways this was more a lecture on how the police are seeking improved ways to achieve objectives in the face of budget cuts. For instance, Nick praised highly the work of the Street Pastors and the crucial role that they play being witnesses on the streets. In this category he included Vergers and he gave many examples of how Vergers, whom we all know are unofficial police within the bounds of their churches and cathedrals, have helped the police in their pursuit of crimes, especially stolen Church artefacts. Nick gave us clues on how to spot potential criminals and introduced us to a new scheme called Church Watch from one called Face Watch. He also asked us to google 'Operation ICARUS Churches' to help identify stolen goods.

On Tuesday evening a very moving Healing Service was held within Saint James' Church led by Canon Maureen, our National Chaplain. Anyone could attend. There was an informal laying on of hands and anointing with oils.

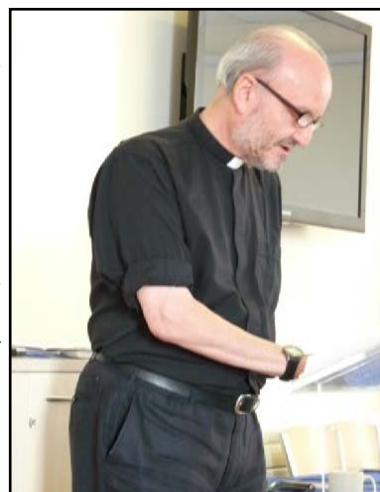
Wednesday saw the traditional 7.30 a.m. Guild Requiem in which many past Vergers names are recalled. Sadly, many more have deceased this past year.



Later practical workshops were held for all members, such as Intercessions, Care of Linens and Vestments, Reading, Serving and Verging plus for some a strong desire to try swinging the incense thurible over their heads.

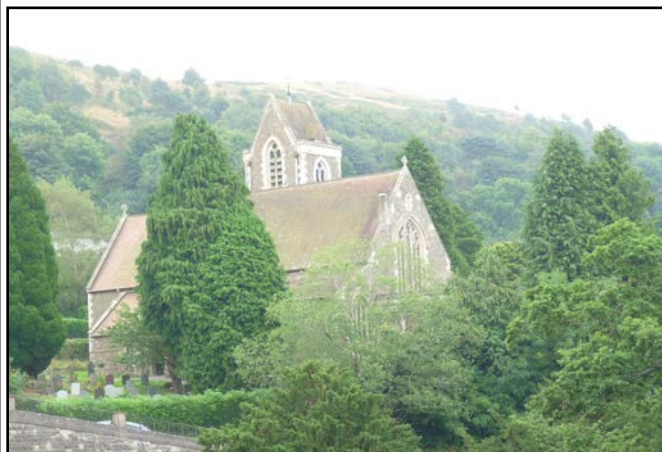
The afternoon's session was led by Canon Neil Heavisides, formerly of Gloucester Cathedral, his subject being entitled, 'Losing touch with ourselves'. Using poetry to make his point and picking up on a relevant suggestion from an earlier speaker – 'Making time for ourselves'. Neil stated that a busy diary may look good but it isn't; we need TIME for ourselves and TIME for others. Soon after this discussion our Annual Choral Evensong was held with Canon Neil preaching. At this point I must mention that not only is a Choir of excellent voices drawn from amongst the Vergers but throughout the week we have the first class services of our residential Organist, Philip from Saint Georges C of E, Edgbaston. I also must add that one of the great delights of the week is the quality of the total singing in Church. It's beautiful and inspiring!

Thursday saw what is known as the Meeting and Mop-Up Session. This is always another encouraging get-together with formal and informal notices and banter between the Committee and Members. A couple of our USA Vergers were asked how much they had enjoyed the week compared with their meetings in the States, they replied, 'where do we begin...' John Shearer, our excellent Training Officer who organises the week, gave closing remarks which were so positive, especially about encouraging others to join the Guild; stating that when some say, 'what's in it for me', the reply should be what more can I do; i.e. in training, in being more professional, in my example within the Parish. John is now in his final year in post and he is going to be a very hard act to follow.



Our final Solemn Eucharist then took place followed by lunch, after which we all departed back to our own Parishes in what I can only describe as being the friendliest Conference I had attended. I am looking forward to next year.

Philip Dunne
Conference Correspondent





CONFERENCE 2016



*Photographs Courtesy
of Philip Dunne
& Stephen Haude*



*More Photographs
on FACEBOOK*





On Friday 20th May twenty members and friends gathered by the Memorial Cross in the Buttermarket, Canterbury, and, when all had arrived, were led to the Old Palace by Chris Crooks, Vesturer of the Cathedral, where we were greeted by the Reverend Julia Pickles, Chaplain to the Bishop of Dover, who gave us all some refreshments. She then guided us round the Palace, through the Hall, the sitting Room and slowly up the Central Staircase. It is a very tall building and some of the exterior walls on the North side and two beautiful arches date from Archbishop Thomas Langley's building, which was smashed to bits by Colonel Sandys in 1642, and the Palace was left in ruins until Archbishop William Temple's time. Before that the Archbishop and his staff had all stayed at the Deanery when they came to Canterbury.



We were then taken to Saint Anselm's Chapel, where Julia gave a very interesting talk on the Chapel and we had a good look around. Julia then led us in the Midday Office. Chris Crooks played the hymn "All people that on earth do dwell" on the lovely little organ which is built into the wall and he had to go through a narrow passage to get on the organ seat to play. The service over, Chris and Debbie took us on a mini tour of Palace Street, just outside the Old Palace. We stopped at Parker's Gate, a large gate built by Archbishop Parker. We then moved on to the Parrot Pub where we climbed stairs to a wonderful Hall, the roof beams of which are exposed for all to see. Built originally to house the Clergy of the Black Prince's Chantry, it was converted into five cottages following the Dissolution and the abolition of Chantry Chapels. It was nearly completely demolished in the early fifties. Luckily the builder in charge, having found whacking great beam structures inside the brickwork called in William Urrey, Archivist to the Dean and Chapter of Canterbury, who recognised what the building was and promptly phoned Anthony Swain who, on viewing the finds, called a stern halt to the demolition and eventually the building was restored as we see it today and is much enjoyed by all who visit it.



We had a lovely meal, I personally ate far too much, but it was delicious! Looking back on the building it is surprising that it wasn't burned and bombed to bits during the Blitz, several bombs fell very close to it. The Old Palace burned after incendiary bombs landed on its roof, a neighbour who lived with her mum at number 5 saw Walter Brindle, Steward to Archbishop Temple, and Ian White-Thompson, the Archbishop's Chaplain, throwing a well-alight bed and a settee out of the sitting room window onto the lawn where they burned out leaving a large black patch on the greensward. The Archdeacon of Canterbury's residence at number 29, the Cathedral Library next to it, also the Deanery were all hit and blown to rubble. Some eighteen buildings within the actual Precincts were destroyed and a large amount of Chapter property outside the Precincts was either damaged or destroyed in the raid. The Cathedral itself had several near misses, but was luckily not hit.

Our Chairman, Julian, got up and said a few words, at the end of which he thanked Chris Crooks for organising the day. We thanked Julia for giving us such an interesting tour and for taking the Midday Office. We all departed about 2.50 p.m. after a very interesting and enjoyable day.

Cherry Johnstone
Branch Correspondent

Photographs: Top Row - The Reverend Julia Pickles, Chaplain to the Bishop of Dover with Chris Crooks; Carved Pew Ends in Saint Anselm's Chapel; Carved Decoration on the Archbishop's seat. Bottom Row - Members & Friends in Saint Anselm's Chapel; The Restored Pub: The Parrot; The Fourteenth Century Roof Beams in The Parrot.



CHICHESTER, GUILDFORD & PORTSMOUTH BRANCH NEWS



Yes, our Branch is still in existence despite no news in the last two issues.

On Wednesday 20th January, we had our Christmas Lunch in a Wetherspoons Restaurant in Worthing, with about a dozen present.

Our AGM was on Thursday 18th February at Saint Bartholomew's Hall, Haslemere. Unfortunately I was not present, having been hospitalised in Turkey with pneumonia, shortly before. The attendance again was only about half our membership. Steve Reeds has taken over from me as Chairman.

On Wednesday 25th May we said a fond farewell to the Reverend Canon Christopher Vallins, our long-standing Branch Chaplain, - is 33 years a record? We met at Saint Mary's, Worplesdon, his last Parish before he went on to Hospital Chaplaincy work. Following a celebration of Holy Communion, we adjourned to the pub next door for lunch. Unfortunately less than half our members were present. Canon Christopher was presented with a book token for his dedication and loyalty to the Branch.

Less than a week later, on Tuesday 31st May, we gathered at Saint Nicolas Church, Cranleigh, for the installation of our new Branch Chaplain, the Reverend Roy Woodhams, Rector of Cranleigh. Our National Chaplain, Canon Maureen Palmer, very kindly came from Hereford to officiate at this memorable event which took place part way through the service at which Canon Maureen celebrated. Again only a small number were present but as the Parish usually has its weekly service of Holy Communion at midday on a Tuesday, we were joined by some of Roy's own parishioners in church and afterwards in the Parish Hall for a lunch, which was ably organised by the Verger and our Area Leader, Sue Ansell with some local ladies help.

As yet I have heard nothing about any future meetings.

Sheila J Ford
Branch Correspondent



GLOUCESTER, HEREFORD & WORCESTER BRANCH NEWS

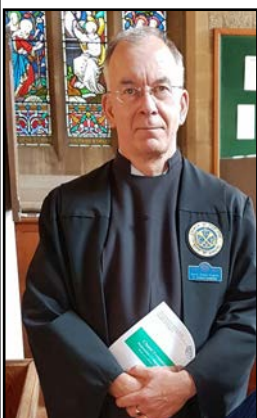


It has been a very busy and interesting period for our Branch since our last article. During May the Branch came to my home at Saint Oswald's Hospital, an ancient Almshouse steeped in history, set within an oasis of tranquillity just ten minutes from the busy bustling City Centre. Within the well-manicured grounds there is a beautiful Victorian Chapel in which many services take place. Saint Oswald's has a resident Chaplain, who on the day presided over a specially put together Eucharist with Hymns for the Feast of the Visitation. The afternoon began with a picnic in the park area for those who chose to arrive early, followed by a short presentation of the history of Saint Oswald's. After which there was a guided tour of the grounds. The day ended with afternoon tea within the common room. It was a very lovely experience for all able to attend.

A number of our Branch was able to travel to York for their Festival within the City Centre. A fellow Verger and I were very lucky to be able to stay with a good friend who cares for the Church of The Holy Trinity and he, that is Father Eric, presided over the Festival Eucharist. York certainly has the wow factor when it comes to historic buildings.

This was followed, also in June, by a guided tour of Saint Mary's, Fairford. This stunningly interesting and ancient building is full of beautiful stained glass. Fairford is also the home of the famous RAF base and air flying display. A large group of our members were able to travel through the beautiful Cotswolds for an excellent day out in glorious weather and made so welcome by the team at Saint Mary's.

In July our past Chairman and his wife, Tony and Jean, held their annual BBQ in Tewksbury. The sun fortunately stayed out so that we could be both inside and out, enjoying vast amounts of a whole range of food and drink. Tony and Jean are excellent hosts, this is an event worth joining each year. A committee meeting had taken place before the BBQ leaving the rest of the evening for any other sobering thoughts...



In our Branch area we are most fortunate in that the Annual Training Conference is held at West Malvern. For those who have never managed to join, even for a day, this gathering of Vergers within the most magnificent beauty of middle England you are missing a glorious treat. This year our new Area Leader, David Anwyl-Jones was officially appointed during the final Sung Eucharist by Canon Maureen. Our Branch is now looking forward to the Cantuar Festival in Salisbury, a visit to Saint Michael's Church, Ledbury, plus the Annual Christmas Dinner, which for a change could be held in Hereford.

Philip Dunne - Branch correspondent





Monday 4th July – a super day with plenty of sunshine for driving around the country lanes of Suffolk, with the help of our Sat Navs, to visit three very different Churches, although one being a Chapel. Our leader for the day was the Honorary Lay Canon, Roy Tricker, (author and a somewhat local celebrity) Roy's knowledge of all Churches within the Suffolk (and wider area) is second to none, Roy is a very passionate speaker. Saint Andrew's Church, Cotton, was our first port of call, the core of the present Church dates from the fourteenth century.

Saint Andrew's Church, Mickfield, – a Saxon Church dating from the mid eleventh century. The most outstanding feature of this Church is the West Tower where there stands a huge and lofty arch, possibly 15th or 16th century. Beneath this vast tower, open to wind and weather, are the ropes which operate the ring of eight bells. The Tower is supported by massive angle buttresses at the Western corners. The sad part of this is that although Cotton has eight bells there are no bellringers, but the bells are rung regularly by visiting bands and are kept in good order by a group in Stowmarket.

Chapel of Saint Nicholas, Gipping, – "small is beautiful" build around 1340 as a private Chapel of the 'Tyrell' family, who were Lords of the Manor. Sir James Tyrell was created a Knight Banneret in 1482, but unfortunately (and very careless of him!) lost his head for treason (for his friendship with Edmund De La Pole, Earl of Suffolk and a rival to King Henry VII) in 1502. His body, hopefully with his head, is buried at Stowmarket. As you walk around the outside of the Chapel you will see evidence of the Tyrell Knot, The Tyrell Coat of Arms and his wife, Dame Anne Arundell - The Arundell Hearts (entwined). You approach the Chapel over a small footbridge and the whole Chapel and grounds are surrounded by a moat.



We rested a while at Mickfield, which had loo's available (very important) and the use of a kitchen for a midday picnic and a wonderful selection of a bring-and-share extra's, thanks at this point must be extended to Lawrence Kidman for the (there's only one word for it) 'feast' that he brought to share with us all. We sat in the lovely courtyard/garden, all topping up our tans, enjoying friendship and food. I think we could have possibly sat there all afternoon but we did have to move on to Gipping.

I did think if the locals were wondering "what was going on?" as possibly the sight of all our cars crisscrossing and double backing the country lanes to visit these Churches for the time we were there. They must have thought "I've seen those cars before?" It was a super day where insight was gained from an inspirational speaker and for most of us visiting places that you would not normally think of going to and seeing for yourself, even though they are virtually on your own doorstep. There are hidden gems all over the country.



On Friday 22nd July we held our AGM at the home of our Chaplains – Reverends Alan and Catherine Forsdike, we started our meeting with a short informal service, which was also the Feast Day of Mary Magdalene. It was lovely to see Stephen Stokes at the meeting looking and feeling, no doubt, so much better after his recent run of ill health. Welcome back Stephen we have missed you. We covered the usual 'business' and the present officers were all duly re-elected apart from the Area Leader who was standing down, the Branch Secretary will be taking on that role for the remaining year of office.

Before the BBQ Alan entertained us with a history of their home (complete with slides), its past occupants and how it originally was part of Christchurch Park (a very large open area where many events are held and in its grounds stand Christchurch Mansion).

The sheer amount of hard work, they had, to do to turn it back into a home with its original features, a real labour of love. Even the garden had major reconstruction but when you stand back and look and sit, a very peaceful experience. Friday was a beautiful day, very warm and the evening of our AGM was very much the same. We concluded the meeting/evening with a BBQ (I must admit at this point I had to leave) but I understand that those who remained had a very enjoyable evening, with good fellowship, good food and lovely surroundings.

Jean Cobb
Branch Correspondent



SPRING & SUMMER MEETINGS



We met on Tuesday 24th May in the Church of Saint Philip and Saint James, Groby, Leicestershire. This meeting was very special for the me, as myself and another lady were celebrating fifty years in the Church Choir. We had a Songs of Praise service and members chose their favourite Hymns. Apologies were given by the Vicar at the end of the service because she ran out of time and could not fit all the Hymns in, but we all enjoyed those that were sung. Four members read poems/readings, and our Branch Chaplain, the Reverend Canon John Tonkin, led us in Psalm 84 and he reflected on it afterwards. The Intercessions were led by yours truly, the theme being 'Prayer to God and Thanks to Everyone'.

The service was led by the Vicar, the Reverend Louise Corke. Eleven members were in attendance plus the regular Church Choir, augmented by members of "Groby Sings" Community Chorus, accompanied by the Reverend Peter Folks on the organ. Amongst the congregation were members of my family and some of the Church family with the ladies who prepared and served the refreshments. I was presented with a card and a bouquet of flowers by Kathryn Mobbs, our Branch Secretary, on behalf of the Branch to congratulate me on my fifty years in the Choir. Four of our members rang the bells to herald the service beforehand. Kathryn Mobbs, Dip GV Hons, verged the Clergy procession, and Pauline Haynes verged the members, very impressive.

On Monday 27th June ten members and one husband plus our Branch Chaplain, Canon John Tonkin, set out into the Leicestershire/Rutland countryside to the Church of Saint Peter and Saint Paul, Uppingham. We were delayed on the way by an accident, but after a detour we managed to arrive on time. We had a service of Holy Communion with two Hymns, "All people that on earth do dwell" and "Lord of all hopefulness", the service was celebrated by the Reverend Canon Rachel Watts with an Assistant Priest who both welcomed us to the Church. Canon John read the Lesson. After the service we had tea or coffee and there was a chance to look around the building.

The Church in Uppingham is not listed in the Domesday Book, but it is likely to have been one of three Churches attached to the Royal Manor of Ridlington, just to the North of the neighbouring village of Ayston. Much of the building dates from the fourteenth century. In 1860 it was rebuilt and restored in the Victorian style at a cost of £6,717. Some of the main points of the Church are in the North Aisle.



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DECORATIVE GOSPELS, the design of which is based on the Parable of the Sower and was hand carved and painted by Jean Lamb. **GOLDEN ANGELS** decorate the ceiling of the Chancel. **WALL PAINTINGS**, the only surviving remnants of the Church's Mediaeval decoration. **THE HARRISON & HARRISON ORGAN** dates from 1894. It was moved to Uppingham in 2006 from All Saints, Eppleton, Vounty Durham, at a cost of £70,000. **THE EAST WINDOW** dates from 1861 and depicts the Ascension. Below this is the Victorian Marble and Caen Stone Reredos behind the Altar, with the heads of the Patron Saints, Peter and Paul. The Lady Chapel, the stained glass window of which reuses a fifteenth century design, but is made of modern glass. In 1955, artist Peter White, created twelve medallions portraying events in the Life of Jesus. The Rector explained to us that the white Altar Frontal had been left on the High Altar from Sunday because it had been designed by children.

The Chairman thanked everyone for coming and the Rector for taking the service and her Assistant. We returned home quicker than we came and hoped to come again in the future. *(History Information taken from a leaflet at the Entrance to the Church.)*



On Monday 25th July eleven members and our Branch Chaplain met at Saint James the Great, Birstall, Leicestershire, for a service of Evensong (BCP) led by the Curate, the Reverend Ann Crosby. Two of our members, Val Clarke and Ann Anderson read the Lessons.

There was a very nice welcoming sound from the bells heralding the service as we arrived and the Choir added beauty to the singing, It has been some years since I followed from the BCP and it is very easy to slip into different forms of words when you are used to Common Worship these days. It was nice to hear the Responses intoned and to sing the Magnificat and Nunc Dimittis, but we said the Psalm. The Intercessions were led by our Branch Chaplain, and the Hymns were "There is a Redeemer", "Thy hand, O God, has guided", "Bind us together" and "A Hymn to Saint James". I knew the tune to the last one but did not know where the words came from.

We were pleased to see Clifford Dunkley, who is having mobility issues and is awaiting treatment. We continue to pray for John Walters who is not well enough to attend meetings, but we send him our love. After the service we had some lovely refreshments prepared and served by the ladies from the Church. Thanks were given to the, also to the Reverend Ann Crosby, the Choir, the Bell Ringers and to our hosts, Clive and Kathryn Mobbs.

Marjorie Thomas, Dip GV - Branch Chairman & Correspondent



CELEBRATION OF SERVICE



The bright sunshine of early May saw us meeting at Saint Botolph's Church, Boston – the famous Boston Stump – to celebrate the Eucharist, to dedicate a plaque in the Church to the late Scott Amos who was the Verger there, to hear about our Secretary, Mike Haynes, receiving the Royal Maundy and to admit three new members to the Guild.

The evening began with the Eucharist. The service was taken by the Reverend Alison Buxton, Rector, members were robed and processed in. We celebrated as our three new members, David Jarrett, Claire Dimmock and Adam Kelk were admitted after the readings and Scott's Memorial Plaque, celebrating his service as Verger, was dedicated just before the Peace. We were pleased to be joined by Scott's widow, Margaret, who is also a Guild member. The plaque reads: **"GRAHAM (SCOTT) AMOS, 1929 – 2015, VERGER 1987 – 1994"**. We sat and prayed in silence for a

few moments, remembering Scott and also thinking of the Vergers and others over the centuries responsible for the life, work and worship of this huge and beautiful building.

As we settled down to sandwiches, scones, cakes and tea, Mike Haynes told us how privileged he felt to have been nominated by the Bishop of Lincoln to receive the Royal Maundy in Saint George's Chapel, Windsor, this year. Mike's nomination was in recognition of his years of service, both at Saint Botolph's and to Scouting. He was one of ninety men and ninety women, one for each year of the Queen's age, to receive the two purses, one red and one white. The Red Purse contained a £5 coin commemorating the Queen's ninetieth birthday, and a 50p coin commemorating the 950th Anniversary of the Battle of Hastings. The White Purse contains uniquely minted Maundy Money, this year 90 penny worth of small 10p silver coins. Mike retired recently from his role after ten years as Churchwarden at the Stump, but continues to work with the 5th Boston Saint Botolph's Scouts, and he wore his uniform to the ceremony.



MEET OUR NEW MEMBERS

Claire Dimmock, from Pudsey in Yorkshire, started work in January as part-time Verger of Holy Trinity and Saint Mary's Church, Old Clew; a Church whose recorded history goes back over a thousand years. Claire became a Verger by accident. She is married with two young children, Aidan who is six and Macy who is two and a half. Since moving to Cleethorpes Claire became more involved with the Church, and after a Bible study, the Reverend Richard Holden, the Priest in Charge, asked her if she would consider becoming Verger. Claire takes great pride in the Church and loves being there. She enjoys the peace and especially loves talking to visitors, and finds herself doing more and more. As well as being a Verger, Claire is also a sculptor and the owner of Captured Moments Casting, making plaster sculptures of parts of the body, especially baby's hands and feet.

David Jarrett is the Verger of Saint Wulfram's Church in Grantham. Like Saint Botolph's in Boston, Saint Wulfram's is a very large Parish Church built on the profits of the Mediaeval wool trade. David also began his life in Yorkshire. After a career in the RAF as an Aircraft Engineer, David and his family moved to Grantham and now works part-time as a driving instructor and as a Verger. David served his time first as Server and Sacristan before changing white for black and Verging his first service on 12th October 2014. David likes to see things are done right and enjoys leading the processions during the services.

Adam Kelk is full-time Head Verger at the Stump, with responsibility for events management. A Bostonian by birth, he took a law degree at Lincoln University before working for the Passport Office. Being able to help at the Stump mid-week, Adam fell under the tutelage of Saint Thomas's Church Sacristan, the late Beryl Kingston, who's eye for detail he hopes to emulate. The Eucharist is special for Adam who is working through his vocational calling and hopes to be ordained. He finds, as many of us do, that Verging for Civic Services often presents something of a challenge.



Continued on the Next Page...



VERGERS CAN ORGANIZE A MEETING IN A BREWERY!



July saw members of the Branch heading for Wainfleet on the East Coast of Lincolnshire and ultimately to Bateman's Brewery for pie and mash, washed down by Lincolnshire's finest beers — in the opinion of the author that is. Other Lincolnshire beers are available!

But first we visited All Saints Parish Church where the Reverend Gary Morgan said Evening Prayer with us and told us something of the history of the building. All Saints was built in 1820-21 after the demolition of a previous medieval building. They used part of the old Church's stone arches and carvings in the new building.

Wainfleet's most famous son was William of Waynflete who, in the fifteenth century, was Bishop of Winchester, Lord Chancellor and founder of Magdalen College, Oxford. During the demolition of All Saints the tomb of his father, Richard Patten, was broken up but was later restored in Magdalen College Chapel.

And so a short walk to the brewery where we were welcomed by the staff and we are most grateful to Angie Kisby, one of the Boston Vergers' team, for organising the visit. Bateman's was founded in 1874 by George Bateman, a local farmer who sold up to buy the brewery. By 1880 Bateman had made enough to buy Salem House, a Georgian building some 200 yards from the original brewery, and a new brewery was built in its coach houses. After the First World War the company expanded into buildings opposite Salem House — including a derelict windmill which was to become the brewery's trademark and houses its bar.

Our next meeting in September is a dinner to commemorate the Branch's 25th Anniversary.

Colin Beevers
Branch Correspondent



OXFORD BRANCH NEWS



THE WEDDING OF CHRISTOPHER WATERHOUSE & MARIANNE CLOSE



There were many, many Clergy at the wedding at Christ Church Cathedral, Oxford, at 11 a.m. on Saturday 18th June. There were more Vergers than originally met the eye as well. The Groom (Christopher Waterhouse) is a Verger, the bride (Marianne Close) is a Verger, and there were one or two of us from the Oxford Branch in the congregation, temporarily in mufti.

The wedding was as well-planned and joyful as one would expect. There was a Nuptial Eucharist (another novel experience for a low-churchman like myself), where I noticed a rather wonderful phenomenon: not all the attendees took communion at the service. Wonderful because evidently not everyone there was "church" — rather, it was gathering of family and friends there to support and show appreciation.

As befitted the setting, the music was superb — a string quartet played until the service began (and again at the reception), the Choir sang magnificently, and (joy!) we sang to the Vaughan Williams' setting of the Old Hundredth — with a real trumpet sounding.

A pair of guys furtively left the service during the last hymn, to reappear in Vergers' robes as the newly married couple left the church, who passed under an arch of crossed Verges (or whatever was at hand). A memorable day, a magnificent day, and we hope the start of a long and happy married life for Marianne and Christopher.

Photo by Ralph Williamson

FULL IMMERSION BAPTISMS

Those who recall my previous articles will remember my Church's use of a Baptism Pool (like a Birthing Pool) for full-immersion Baptisms. Normally we deploy this at our home Church, on the grass, and we gather round it as the officiating Minister gets in (usually with a sigh of relief that the heaters have been working) and starts the business of dunking (or ducking) adults, and occasionally children. The congregation look on in envy at the warmth (in winter) and cool (on hot sunny days).

We recently had an open-air service on a junior school playing field complete with Baptisms. Can you guess whose job it is to sort all that out? I started by establishing where, approximately, the Baptistery would be put. Fortunately, this was on level and flat ground. The only outside tap was 30 metres away, and the drain was located near to it. This is important, because the Baptistery holds about 1.5 tonnes (1500 litres or 330 gallons) of water. No-one would appreciate that being discharged into one spot on a school playing field, especially since Berkshire has seen some rain recently and some areas were already "soggy".



Continued on the Next Page...



So: we know where to put the thing, and how to get and discharge water but the power is a problem. To raise the temperature of that much water needs about 38kW of power. The heater produces 2.5 kW or 5kW, so would need to be on for up to 15 hours; so I assumed the lower rate, and counted back from 10 a.m. on Sunday...heat needed from 7 p.m. on Saturday night. There was a school fete on Saturday afternoon, so we could not get access to the site before 4 p.m.

But getting electricity to the heaters was a challenge. The school would not allow a window to be left open for cables to be run, and a generator is either noisy (unwelcome overnight near a housing estate) or very expensive, as well as being a target for miscreants. So we opted for an "off the wall" approach; offering to pay for the school to have an eternal socket put in. They agreed, so we paid an electrician, who did the job on Thursday evening. The socket would be a blessing to both us and the school.

Saturday – we brought all the kit on site, built it, connected power and water ... and found that flow from the outside tap was slow. The normal 2-hour fill would take nearly four hours. Thankfully we have a float valve to turn the water off when it's deep enough. Then I realised that then drain hose wasn't long enough, so off I went to buy some new pipe, only to find that the large bore pipe is not readily available on a Saturday evening. So I had to make up a pipe adaptor to match a single ¾ inch hose to two ½ inch pipes (plenty of that around). Insulating (from heat loss), wrapping, and covering the whole rig with a tarpaulin took another hour on Saturday evening, and then we all left site. Thankfully (Deo gracias!) on Sunday we found no leaks, and a Baptistry full of warm water. Someone was producing bacon rolls for the setup crew (sound technicians, worship band, those putting chairs out, those on car-park duties) and earned the blessings of all the early arrivals.



Photographs: The Reverends Kate Bottley and Paul Collins Baptising by immersion. In these photos, the faces of children have been deliberately obscured for reasons of child protection.

As the morning progressed, the people (about 400) arrived and the service started and we had ten people Baptised. The barbecues were primed and lit, the major wave of cooking started, and the "fellowship lunch" commenced. After the service, drain-down and pack away took a while, and there will still be some sorting out to do – but the Church teams pulled together to allow us to worship together in the open air, and see Christians Baptised as a public witness (maybe wetness?) to their faith.

THE BIBLE LIVE!

The whole Bible read aloud from start to finish..... in three days!

In 1016 Queen Emma (famous for being married to King Canute) granted permission for a chapel to be built on the site of the present Saint Michael the Archangel Parish Church in Warfield, Berkshire. Over the past millennium the histories of Warfield Parish and its Church have been inextricably intertwined. Warfield Church is now one of the largest Churches in the Reading and Oxford Diocese made up of seven congregations meeting at different venues each Sunday with a wide range of activities during the week and a heart to remain at the centre of the community.

The Bible Live is Warfield Church's big celebration of 1000 years of worship and witness within the community. From 10 a.m. on Wednesday 7th September to 5 p.m. on Saturday 10th September 2016 we will be reading the Bible aloud, continuously, from beginning to end at Saint Michael's in Church Lane, Warfield. This is a huge milestone for Warfield, not just for the Church. Representatives from all parts of the community as well as the congregations are being invited to take part and share in this exciting project. Many people have already signed up. Some groups are planning creative ways of reading including one group who will read the whole of Job in character roles!

Everybody is warmly welcomed to drop in and listen to the readings at any time, night or day. We don't want anyone to miss the chance of playing a part in this once in a lifetime event. They can come and sit in this beautiful medieval Church and soak in God's Word. People can listen to parts of the Bible that they may not have heard before or enjoy listening to well-known sections in a new way in the full context of the complete text. There will be a constant supply of refreshments on hand. There will also be displays demonstrating the history of the Bible and of Warfield Church for people to peruse at leisure whilst still listening to the readings.

The three days will end with everyone gathering together for a final celebration (with food and drink of course!). The whole event culminates with the Bishop of Reading, Bishop Andrew, joining us on the Sunday at Saint Michael's Church to share in our millennium festivities.

SOME FACTS ABOUT WARFIELD CHURCH

Warfield Church has over 600 people on its electoral roll but receives many more through its doors in a wide variety of ways. The centre is based at Saint Michael's Parish Church with seven congregations meeting both there and at three local schools, as well as Saint Andrew's Church in Priestwood. The Church runs a range of activities during the week including Coffee Mornings, Life Groups and Community Bible Study Groups. The All Starz Children's Clubs welcome hundreds of children from babies upwards every week. The Church has a thriving Youth Ministry and works closely with local schools. There are also activities for the more senior members of our community. Congregations arrange social events on a regular basis to which all are welcome. Many members can be found running the BBQ and Tea Tent at the Annual Warfield Fete and at various local school fetes. The Church also offers support where requested through its pastoral care structures and courses. It provides help for those with financial difficulties through the CAP money scheme.

Dennis Wildman
Branch Correspondent & Area Leader



SOMERSET & AVON BRANCH NEWS



Hello Everyone. Here is an update from The Wurzels in the West (alias the Somerset & Avon Branch).

Our AGM took place in February this year at The Lord Mayor's Chapel, College Green, Bristol, and yours truly was elected to serve as Branch Chairman for a further twelve months. This venue is very convenient as it is right in the Centre of Bristol and easily accessible for the regular members who attend. This was courtesy of our Area Leader, Marek Barden, who at the conclusion of the meeting provided us all with an excellent lunch.

On Wednesday 13th April members of the Branch were invited to the Church of Saint Michael's within the Wall, Bath. The Reverend John Goodden very kindly offered us the opportunity to join in a service of Holy Communion with him and some of the residents of the adjoining Saint John's Hospital. I was privileged to be asked to read the Epistle, and our Branch Chaplain, Colin Maggs, was invited to play the organ.

After the service we were introduced to the recently appointed Verger, Richard Britton. Richard had recently been successful in completing all the necessary units of the Guild Diploma, and was to receive his Diploma and Hood at the Annual Training Conference in August. He is to be congratulated for this achievement. We were supplied with a superb buffet lunch, for which we were truly grateful to Richard and the Reverend John Goodden. They could not have made us feel more welcome!

We were scratching our heads for a venue for our June meeting when someone suggested a pub lunch. We decided to meet at The Sidcot Arms, Sidcot, which is near Axbridge in North Somerset. It is part of the Brewers Fayre chain and it has meals at affordable prices with a wide choice of food on the menu. Sixteen people attended and the lunch was deemed a great success.

We had hoped that our August meeting might be a visit to Hereford and the Cathedral. However, due to unforeseen circumstances we could not go ahead with this, so once more we opted for another Brewers Fayre pub lunch, this time in Portishead. This was followed by a visit to Saint Mary's Church, Shirehampton, which is my home Parish Church. Here we enjoyed tea, coffee and cake and an opportunity to have a look around the Church building which was built in 1930 to replace a much smaller building that was destroyed by fire in 1928. With very full "tums" we then adjourned to our homes with plans to meet again in October At Saint Mary Redcliffe, Bristol.

Well that is all the news from the West Country, So God bless you all until next time.

Christopher Eynon
Branch Chairman & Correspondent



YORK BRANCH NEWS



VISIT TO NORTHALLERTON



On Wednesday 20th July a good number of us gathered in All Saints Church, Northallerton.

We took a few moments to remember two of our members, Maurice and Gordon, who sadly passed away earlier in the year. Maurice was remembered fondly for his good sense of humour, extensive knowledge of not only his own Church, but the wider Church community. Gordon was a quiet stalwart, who beamed with pride when showing people around his church. It was our youngest member Ben's birthday so we sang "Happy Birthday" to him and wished him well.

The Reverend Fiona Mayer-Jones and her team welcomed us with a cup of tea and showed us around this very interesting building. People have worshipped here on this site for 900

years. The North Aisle pillars are dated early 12th century and are the oldest part of the present building. There is a scratching on one of these from a much later time of a man wearing a wig. On the South Aisle the pillars are late 12th century and the arches are higher than the North side and are pointed, showing how styles of architecture changed during the century.

We celebrated Holy Communion together in the Chancel which was a beautiful uplifting service. We were lucky to be accompanied by their Organist. The Chancel is one of the most recent parts of this building, being a Victorian replacement for an earlier Chancel; there are some delightful animal carvings on the pew ends. The Choir normally sits here; music is a big part of the worship in All Saints. After the service we dispersed to go shopping, visit at the market, do the Norman Cornish Gallery and enjoy a pub lunch.

Su Graves
Branch Correspondent



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