

THE VIRGER

The Official Magazine of the Church of England Guild of Vergers

Autumn 2019 | Issue 304

MEET OUR FELLOWS

John Campbell

GUILD AWARDS 2019

SILVER JUBILEE OF HER PRIESTHOOD

Canon Maureen

TRAINING CONFERENCE 2019

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FROM THE ACTING EDITOR

Welcome to the new-look Virger Magazine. It is hoped that it is easier on the eye and a joy to read. If you have any comments, suggestions, please do email them to our new Media Officer, Jane Gorrie.

Please note that all submissions for the next edition should reach Jane via email, CEGVMedia@gmail.com no later than the date here:



How should you do this....Submissions for all editions of The Virger should reach me before the set deadline. If they miss this date, they may be held over to the next edition. All articles should be sent in MS Word files only and photographs in JPEG format. Please attach text and image files separately in one email.



John Kirby-Shearer

FROM THE DESK OF THE EDITOR

My name is Jane Gorrie and I was elected to the newly re-named Media Officer post at this year's Conference. I'm a relatively new verger, having been at St Mary the Virgin, Horsham since 2012 and a member of the Guild since 2014. I'm married and have a grown-up family.

Before becoming a verger, I was a Civil Servant, working at COI (the now defunct Central Office of Information that started out making the war-time public information films); then DVLA and finally Department for Transport. I am an enthusiastic, if not very good,

singer both with my church choir and another community choir. I enjoy swimming, cycling and doing calligraphy (I am also the Guild Scribe, putting names into the Guild Obituary Book).

I am very much looking forward to the challenges of this new role.

'I'm a relatively new verger, having been at St Mary the Virgin, Horsham since 2012 and a member of the Guild since 2014.'



FROM THE DESK OF THE NATIONAL CHAIRMAN



Well, August is nearly over, and our annual training Conference has been and gone. It was a successful and fruitful week. We had a reasonable attendance including another five members of the US Guild.

The past 6 months has been hectic for me on a personal level, with a house move, the search for a new National Chaplain, acting magazine editor and a full agenda with the Central Council.

I was delighted that this year, we conferred a Fellowship to our Legal Advisor Timothy Wigglesworth. Tim has advised the Guild for over 20 years, giving his time and professional expertise on a pro-bono basis. Over nine students also were successful in their course work and three diplomas were awarded.

and our Facebook page. Sadly, over the past few months, his health is not what it should be, but hopefully he is on the mend, while managing a full-time job with Bristol Council. I am deeply grateful for all the hard work that he has undertaken during his tenure. A branch recommended, quite independently, that he should be become a National Life Member and we were delighted to make the presentation during the last service of the week.



Next year Canon Maureen will step down from being our National Chaplain following 15 years on Office. The Central Council formed a working party to seek a new Chaplain from August 2020, and following after the usual recruitment process, I am happy to announce that Rev'd Rosemary Durward has graciously accepted to become our National Chaplain from August 2020. Please remember Rosemary in your prayers as she prepares to join the Vergers and lead us into a new chapter in supporting us in our ministry within our Churches and Cathedrals.

This year continues to be a succession of change. Our magazine took on a new look for the summer edition and this edition the changes will continue. A new member of the team was appointed to the Central Council when Jane Gorrie was successful

in becoming our new Media Manager. Jane has already started in making a few changes to our website and Facebook page. She will take over the reins on the magazine at the next edition.

Andrew Page made his intention to step down as our National Treasurer and the search was on for over a year. I thought we had failed to find a replacement, but at the eleventh hour, Robert Beattie felt that his talents lay more in financial aspects rather than organising the Training department. This was confirmed unanimously one morning and Robert was appointed formally at our final service. It will be formally minuted at the next meeting of Central Council when we next meet. I am deeply grateful to Andrew for his years of devotion in keeping the Guild solvent.



At this point, I would like to pay tribute to Marek Barden, who decided not to stand for re-election as our Communications Officer. Over seven years, Marek has edited and designed the magazine and our other publications, managed the website

We have a busy year ahead as we work together in the shaping of our Guild to maintain its presence within our Churches. Please remember all the National Officers, Branch Officers and our members in your prayers

John Kirby-Shearer



FROM THE DESK OF THE NATIONAL CHAPLAIN



Dear Friends,

I am now recovering from the Conference - enjoyable and informative as ever. If you were present, I hope you enjoyed it all as much as I did: from the Champagne Party to celebrate my Silver Jubilee to the session of hilarity and also thoughtfulness that John Campbell gave us as well as worship and fellowship: though sadly the weather was too bad for swimming. If you weren't there, you missed a real treat! I was able to present three Diploma hoods this year and hearty congratulations to those candidates. I will not be really happy until every verger is wearing the Guild Hood! so start the study today!

Now we are all back in the 'normal' green time - whatever normal is for vergers! I was struck by the Gospel reading for last Sunday where Jesus tells us that he has come to bring division rather than peace. But isn't Jesus 'The Prince of Peace'? I think we have to look at this passage in the context in which Luke is writing. In around 85CE there would have been severe persecution of the Christian community both by the Romans and the Jews. To proclaim the faith of Christ might have led to discrimination, ridicule, torture or even death, so Jesus is encouraging his followers to speak out boldly. He is warning us that following him will not be an easy option and that we cannot sit on the fence and hope for a quiet life. This applies so much in our world today too! We feel that whatever we say will not be heard. What difference can we make to the awful situations of war and violence, to corruption and poverty and to injustice. I believe the quiet confidence of speaking the truth does make a difference. It is not always comfortable, but then Jesus did not promise us a comfortable rise but a baptism of fire. It is worth reading and pondering Luke 12 : 49 - 56 and then looking at the world to make it a focus for our prayers and our action.

I am hoping very much to visit many branches in my last year in office so please invite me to join you for [almost] any event! Meanwhile I hope you all enjoy a little of the summer before the term starts and you are inundated with school visits, concerts and other events which while I know you all enjoy can be sleeping depleting!

With every blessing on your work and all that you do and much 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**.

Our prayers are asked for:

Oxford Branch

Molly Payne and Gerry Knight.
Bill Pearce whose wife, June, passed away in June.

Somerset & Avon

Marek Barden, Joy Stevens, Trevor Llewellyn, Lionel & Mary Holway

London, Southwark & Chelmsford

The Very Rev'd Canon Ian Elliott Davies, Rector of St Thomas the Apostle Anglican Episcopopol Church, Hollywood, California, Janet and Gilford Crowell

York

Doreen & George Cook

St Albans

Peter Hudson

East Anglia

Marjorie Wakeling, Val Pizey

Blackburn, Chester & Manchester

Tony Hales, Freda Murphy, Patricia Platt, Margaret Scott

In Memoriam

Frederick William Ridyard (Fred) who passed away on 20 July 2019, 86 years old

Stephen Guy (Gloucester, Hereford & Worcester Branch) who passed away on Wednesday 4 September

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

CENTRAL COUNCIL ROUND-UP

During this year's Conference, your management committees met, with Standing Committee meeting twice and Central Council once, along with the Annual General Meeting.



During the Central Council Meeting, your Area Leaders were asked to bring back to you an idea that is being considered with regard to subscription. Currently we have two levels of subscription:

- Full Membership for those doing the work of Vergers, no matter their title, hours and remuneration.
- Associate Membership for members who are not Vergers, but support the aims of the Guild, such as partners.

The main practical difference is that only Full members have the right to vote, and they pay a higher rate for this. We are aware that some members, who should be Full members, decline to pay the extra £5 (which is less than two cups of coffee a year) and opt to become Associate members. It was talked about at equalising the fees, retaining the two levels, so that each person pays the same.

Through this discussion, we also started to explore that each person might receive the Magazine, as it was accepted that this was the mouthpiece of information from the Guild as a Fellowship. It was acknowledged that where there are two persons at one address, they might receive a reduction on 'joint' membership to receive only one magazine. Your Area Leaders would value your thoughts on this so that at the next Central Council they can bring your views to us.

Central Council also started to discuss the Statutes; it was agreed that the Management Documents of the Guild should be in three levels:

- Constitution – static and robust for the future.
- Statutes – with details of the running of the Guild, which can be slightly adjusted by Committee where needed over time, without the extensive work needed into the Constitution.
- Job Descriptions – which are updated by the roles and determine the roles each Officer is to play.

The *Statutes* were looked at for the first time and will come back to the table with some more adjustments. Again, chat with your Area Leaders to view these and talk about them.

As has been notified to all members the main items of Business that came to the Annual General Meeting was the Restructure and the Constitution, following an introduction by the Chairman this was voted on by ballot. Each member was reminded that only Full Members may vote (and they had to acknowledge this on their ballot paper) and that each vote was a personal vote and not, for Area Leaders, to be representative of their Branch. Both motions were successful which means that when your Branch next meets for their Branch AGM they will be electing a Regional Representative. More information will be sent out to help with this transition.

Stephen Stokes



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ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY

LP Ref: IH/GM

19th July 2019

A message from the Archbishop of Canterbury to the Church of England Guild of Vergers for their Annual Training Conference, August 2019

I am delighted to be writing once again, as Joint President of The Guild of Vergers, to take this opportunity to thank you for the tireless work you all do in churches and cathedrals across the country. The variety and scope of the work you do is extraordinary, and you daily have an invaluable impact on people's lives as they visit Church of England places of worship, whether as committed Christians, tourists or a mixture of the two.

Your dedication and commitment to these places of worship is hugely valued and appreciated, both by me as Archbishop and by the thousands of people you meet through your work. So much of what you do is unseen, and pointing away from yourselves, enabling the work of others, enabling services so that visitors and congregants can meet with God. Your ministry of patient service is invaluable.

I pray that this time of your gathering together may be fruitful and that the Spirit may refresh you in your work and lives.

+ Justin Welby

The Most Reverend and Right Honourable Justin Welby
Archbishop of Canterbury

Lambeth Palace, London SE1 7JU

CONFERENCE RECAP

This is my second conference I attended with my first being last year. Once again I was floored and overwhelmed by the amount of welcoming and hospitality shown to me by the officers and members of the Guild. As some may know, I have aligned with the Church of England Guild of Vergers over the Vergers Guild of the Episcopal Church and was welcomed by all with open arms.

It always takes forever it seems for the year to go by, and instantly for the week to go by, but I always leave with a wealth of information that I learned to bring back to my home parish. I look forward to returning to those beautiful Malvern Hills next year and visiting with everyone again and making new friends.

Scott Crowell

Saint Thomas the Apostle Anglican Episcopal Church,
Hollywood, CA

Editors note: it was a huge privilege that Scott was admitted as a member of the CEGV, since he has relinquished his VGEC membership. Being a Member of our Guild gives us reciprocal membership with the American Guild.

ANNUAL TRAINING CONFERENCE 2019

It's always heartening to attend conference and particularly as a Branch Chair, and this year was no exception. 14 members of L, S & C were in attendance! Fr Tom Cameron seems to have escaped the obligatory annual photo and Lilibeth Solajes (not captured in the photo either) was only able to attend on the Monday, in order to receive her Diploma Hood, this is an incredible commitment – well done L, S & C members!!

To everyone out there, next year will be Canon Maureen's farewell – do think about coming along. Conference is great fun and you won't regret it!



Denise Mead

London, Southwark & Chelmsford Chair

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CONFERENCE 2019





WHAT SHOULD WE PRAY FOR?



With the world in such a mess it is sometimes very hard to know what to pray for or whether our prayers make any difference.

Historically intercessory prayer was always to God through Jesus Christ, though there were generations of Christians in the Mediaeval Period who used the Blessed Virgin Mary and the saints as their intermediaries. This is perhaps not surprising for, although people attended Mass, they rarely received the sacrament; they probably could not hear what was being said, and if they could hear, they might not have understood since the service was in Latin and so they needed a focus for their own spirituality. Many great churches had elaborate altarpieces and paintings depicting the Virgin Mary and the saints and many, many candles so that these formed a visual focus for prayer. The Blessed Virgin Mary and the saints were human beings as they were, and when they observed the lives of the saints in paintings and stained glass, and perhaps when they listened to the Scriptures, it seemed as though the saints and Mary were those who could intercede for them before God. They had lost the intimacy of 'knowing Christ' as Paul says and so increasingly they relied on other sources of comfort.

The focus for their spirituality came through the use of meditation on the Birth, Life and Death of Christ as seen through the eyes of the Blessed Virgin Mary, and their prayers became more a prayer of meditation than a prayer of intercession. It is very easy for us to dismiss such prayer as superstition and yet at the time when there was no education in literacy and very little teaching by the Church, the ordinary folk still desired a closeness to God which was supplied by the saints, and especially by the Blessed Virgin Mary.

However, I want to pass nearer to our own time. The prayer during the 19th and 20th centuries was dominated by the desire for social justice for all. Bible study, especially of the prophetic writings, saw the desire for justice as part of the whole tapestry of prayer – and indeed it remains so until our own time. All the prophets demand justice for the poor and the weak but the prophet, Amos, demands justice in every aspect of life it is worth reading the whole of his short prophesy.

He has a sorry list of transgressions that Israel has committed: bribery, corruption, sexual immorality and exploitation of the sick and poor, worship is insincere and mere lip-service and the Jews compound their transgressions by refusing to give time to God.

The prophet Amos demands institutional righteousness, a compassionate life and suggests that the trappings of religion

are insufficient for life with God. Furthermore, he suggests that wealth and affluence were the causes of oppression of the poor. Corruption of the legal system as well as corruption in business and sexual immorality make the world a difficult place to live if a person is without influence and land and enslaved to the rich.

It was texts such as this that led many people in the 19th and 20th centuries to work for social justice. Dag Hammarskjöld, wrote: 'The road to holiness passes through the world of action'. And he and many before him and after him have seen prayer, not simply a stance of Biblical *lectio divina*, meditation and contemplation but rather action to change the world. There are perhaps three main areas or arenas in the struggle for social justice:

1. The personal arena which means an obligation on the individual to live justly, working for reconciliation and taking very seriously the concept of purity in both the sexual and moral aspects.
2. The social arena in which grace and compassion within the community overcome discrimination and exploitation.
3. The institutional arena which calls us all to work towards fair and just public policies, as well as laws which promote justice for all.

Attention to these arenas promotes a right ordering of society, it makes Christianity credible and emphasizes the basis of Christianity being in terms of love and service, it provides a bridge between our own personal arena and social ethics and it holds before us the relevance of working for the impossible ideal!

The 'Prayer for Social Justice', and the marriage between action and holiness as suggested by Dag Hammarskjöld leads us quite naturally to prayer of protest. These are prayers with a mixture of doubt, anger and perplexity – if you like a prayer of protest in social action. Protest gives us the feeling that it is alright to be angry and to express these thoughts to God, such that we realize that what we have felt and said has been acknowledged and heard. For millions of people this is the only prayer!

The word 'Protest' comes from the Latin root meaning 'to bear solemn witness' so protest is positive and negative but never passive. Often people don't pray because prayer seems to bear so little relationship to other things that they do. However, if the primary characteristic of God is love, then our human relationships of love will provide a 'model' for our relationship with God. So, our intercessory prayer is not an occasional occupation but hard work requiring perseverance, effort and honesty. The agenda for our intercessory prayer will embrace

our whole life – nothing is too trivial or too hard to be excluded. Prayers of protest require a rigorous and unflinching contemplation of reality, a discovery of real hope which may sustain us in the doubt and darkness and even through death, and above all a faith within ourselves that our experience of pain and suffering counts and has value, not only for us but for those we love.

We pray in protest that we may change the world, but even if we cannot, we express to God how we feel, what we and others have experienced and this will save us from despair. I suppose the important thing here is that the prayer is our prayer; that the protest is our protest; the challenge is our challenge. So, in summary prayer is a bit like a laser beam. The light is powerful because it is coherent – all the wave motion of the beam is 'in step'. In prayer we are seeking a coherence between our will and God's will. It is not a substitute for action but rather

a spur to action. Corporate prayer is aligning our wills to the divine will to bring about God's purpose for us. When we pray we commit ourselves to what we most desire - peace and justice. This is exemplified in this prayer of Mother Teresa of Calcutta:

O God the Father of all, you ask every one of us to spread love where the poor are humiliated, joy where the Church is brought low, and reconciliation where people are divided, father against son, mother against daughter, husband against wife, believers against those who cannot believe, Christians against their unloved fellow Christians. You open the way for us, so that the wounded body of Jesus Christ, your Church may be leaven of communion for the poor of the earth and in the whole human family: through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Canon Maureen

GUILD TRAINING

I t always gives me great pleasure and satisfaction when students pass the Foundation Unit and Diploma courses. I know only too well, just how difficult it is to find the time to sit down for a while and study after a long day at work.

This year nine Vergers successfully completed their Foundation Unit or Diploma. Unfortunately, four were unable to attend conference to receive their certificates and hoods.

The Vergers who passed were:

Foundation Unit: Evelyn Felton, David Anwel-Hughes, Jill Fountain and Samantha Fletcher.

Diploma: Lilibeth Solajes, Jeffrey Bassett and William Knight passed with Merit, Mathew Mawson and Nathaniel Hitchings passed with Distinction.



Congratulations to you all.

I wish all of you who are partaking the courses, all the very best and if anyone else would like to start on the Foundation Unit, please contact me. I am always at the end of the phone or email to help and advise in any way that I can. If I do not get back to you straight away, do not despair, I may be away or very busy in my own church.



Sue Ansell. Dip. G.V.
Training Administrator



SILVER JUBILEE OF HER PRIESTHOOD

In June 1994, after seven years as a Deacon, our own Canon Maureen was Ordained Priest in the Church of England. She started her ordained ministry as Deaconess, and then Deacon at St Paul's Tupsley in the Diocese of Hereford.



She then went on to be the Parish Deacon of St Mark's, Talbot Village in the Diocese of Salisbury.



Maureen then moved to Birmingham where she became Chaplain of St Philips Cathedral.



Following 5 years at Birmingham she was appointed Canon Pastor and Canon in Residence at Guildford Cathedral,



Where after only 3 years then became the Sub-Dean until her retirement in 2006, where she moved back to Hereford with Permission to Officiate.

All of this pale into insignificance until her most prestigious appointment in 2005 when she became the National Chaplain to the Church of England Guild of Vergers.

We were enormously privileged to be able to celebrate her ministry at Conference, in particularly her 25 years as Priest.



BRANCH DIGEST

BLACKBURN, CHESTER AND MANCHESTER BRANCH

On Saturday 6th July 2019, the Branch held its first Festive Choral Evensong since 2013, at Christ Church, Timperley (the Parish Church). Vergers from all over the country were invited to attend, but unfortunately there were only 12 who actually came, these being from the Branch – rather disappointing! The service was taken by my vicar, Revd. Jim Bridgman, the preacher was the Branch Chaplain, Canon Adrian Rhodes, from Manchester Cathedral and the choir was Cantores Oecumenica conducted by our Musical Director, Mr. Neil Provost. During the service two new members of the Branch were Admitted to the Guild – Michael Gray, Verger at Holy Trinity, Tarleton, nr Preston, and Mrs Sandra Hughes, Verger at St. James, Leyland.. Both in the Diocese of Blackburn. It was a wonderful service with plenty of people in the congregation. The vergers had



met for lunch prior to the service at The Hare and Hounds, Timperley, so we were all well fed and watered! Afternoon tea was provided by ladies from Christ Church after the service, to which everyone was invited. All in all, it was a very good afternoon thoroughly enjoyed by ALL who attended not just the Vergers. The photo shows the Vergers, flanked by Revd. Jim Bridgman (left) and Canon Adrian Rhodes (right).

A service was held at St. Peter's, Scorton at the end of July when yet another new member was admitted to the Guild – Penny Waters, Verger at St. Chad's, Poulton-le-Fylde, Blackburn Diocese. Unfortunately, I was unable to attend but Penny was admitted by the Vicar of St. Peter's, Revd. Anton

Muller. I understand it was a lovely day organised by Mrs. Pam Derbyshire, Verger at St. Peter's.

We should have held a BBQ at the home of Ron Griffiths on the 17th August, but unfortunately this had to be cancelled due to a family bereavement.

Our next event will be on the 4th December with the Christmas Eucharist and Lunch at Liverpool Cathedral. We have all been invited by Liverpool Branch and as Canon Maureen will be attending we are looking forward to a really large turnout. Hopefully, vergers from other parts of the country will be able to make it.

Freda M. Murphy, Branch Secretary

OXFORD BRANCH

On the 25th June, on a very wet day, some of our members met at the Parish Church of St John Baptist in Burford. After a very welcome cup of coffee and then we had a service of Holy Communion led by the Rev'd Cedric Reavley and the Rev'd Peter Viney, taken from the Book of Common Prayer which was very familiar to some of our members.

After the lovely, peaceful service the very knowledgeable and entertaining Head Verger, Stephen Price, gave us a

tour of the building. Some parts of the church date back to the 12th Century and additions were made up until the late 15th Century; a most recent addition being the Lady Chapel in the 20th Century. Sadly, this entertaining and interesting tour was cut short by lunch in the Warwick Hall. We were then free to explore at our leisure the church and the ancient town of Burford. We all had a most enjoyable day and certainly recommend a visit to this beautiful old church.

'After the lovely, peaceful service the very knowledgeable and entertaining Head Verger, Stephen Price gave us a tour of the building.'

We will be visiting Douai Abbey again for our September Quiet Day, led by Canon Angela Tilby, always a very peaceful and enjoyable time.

BRANCH DIGEST

LEICESTER, PETERBOROUGH WITH DERBY BRANCH

On a beautiful July evening driving through the stunning countryside of Rutland with the sun shining on the golden stone we met at St Kyneburgha Church at Castor in the Peterborough Diocese on the feast day of St Mary Magdalen. During the Eucharist, we admitted to the guild Guy Torrance, a verger at Peterborough Cathedral.



In September we visited Holy Trinity Church Barrow upon Soar, Leicester Diocese for Evensong. This was a first for the new incumbent the Reverend Clive Watts as he only arrived in July. Before ordination Clive was the head server at Leicester Cathedral and his partner David Spence was a Verger at the cathedral in till they moved to Cuddesdon Theological College.

Congratulations to Mathew Mawson



*Mathew Mawson and
Geoffrey Alvis Derby
Vergers*

The branch is very proud of Mathew Mawson, the verger at Derby Cathedral on completing his guild diploma course and achieving a distinction for his content and presentation. Well done good and faithful servant

"May the Lord bless your going out and you're coming in" Our branch Chaplain Canon John Tonkin who has recently entered his 90th decade. Canon John has served the branch for 5 years and now feels it is time to hand over. It is hoped that at the Leicester Festival during Evensong at 5:30 on Thursday, 19 Septembers we will the able to admit a new branch Chaplain

Marjorie Thomas
Branch Correspondent

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BRANCH DIGEST

EAST ANGLIA BRANCH

Our branch meets regularly through the year for general meetings. We do also try to hold social events and we were grateful for Rev'd Alan and Rev'd Catherine Forsdike (our branch Chaplains) offering their home and garden for a BBQ at the end of June. Vergers and their respective partners are always welcome to attend meetings and social events.

In the group picture on the back row are Pam Cobb, Rev Alan Forsdike, Peggy Seeley, Teresa Collard, Ian Cobb, Bernard Seeley, Marjorie Wakeling, Paul Collard: front row seated Rev Catherine Forsdike, Val Jeffery and Dick Jeffery.

The food was delicious, the company wonderful, the weather warm and sunny. A very good time was had by all.

On 11 August we were privileged to admit Margaret Robins at St Augustine of Hippo, Ipswich. Both Rev Catherine and Rev Alan Forsdike took part. Margaret is between our joining Branch Chaplains with myself on the left.

Our next branch meeting will be at Bury St Edmunds Cathedral in October.

Pam Cobb (Branch Secretary)



CANTERBURY WITH ROCHESTER BRANCH

This year our AGM was held in 12th Century Church St Oswald Paddlesworth. Services are still held here, even though the only access was via a long footpath, dotted that day with snowdrops and daffodils. The interior wall once plastered now stripped to bare knapped flints, looked like its stones had been picked up from the surrounding fields a simply lovely place. We were welcomed by Paul and admitted Robert to the Guild.

In May, we spent time at St Michaels, East Peckham. A Norman church set on a hilltop with sweeping views across the Medway valley. Deserted by its village which moved two miles away down to the river. Our guide was the inspirational, invincible Margaret Lawrence. Her book 'For All The Saints' brought to life the thousands of

men and women who had worshipped here. It is well worth a visit if you are in the area. The Church Conservation Trust, The Friends Trust, the Flower Festivals, Musical Events and Margaret Lawrence ensure that if the folks who moved down the hill decide to come back up the hill where St Michaels is ready and waiting for them.



Our next meeting on the 4th September will be to St Augustine's Abbey in Ramsgate and the Pugin House next door.

**Margaret Ovenden
Vice Chairman**

BRANCH DIGEST

SALISBURY BRANCH

On June 24 members of Salisbury Branch visited my chaplaincy at the Royal Naval Air Station at Yeovilton in Somerset, where we were joined by Canon Maureen.

We began the visit with a presentation on Naval Chaplaincy from Yeovilton's Chaplaincy Team Leader, the Reverend Graham Hitchins RN in which he explained such things as the role of a Naval Chaplain, how item 1 in the Articles of War instructs Commanding Officers to ensure that Divine Worship takes place, and about how Chaplaincy works at sea. We then went on a windscreen tour of the Air Station, with our 'tour guide' Leading Air Engineering Technician (Mechanical) Tina Keel (Tina and I have worked together on other projects and are usually grouped together as 'The Tina's'!) who is the fount of all knowledge regarding the Fleet Air Arm, it seems, aided and abetted by our driver 'Bear'. We stopped off to look at the Sea Harrier Gate Guard and Tina explained in brief the workings of the aircraft. Hearing her – and Father Graham's – personal experiences of their individual places within the Royal Navy really helped paint a picture of life in the RN.

During our tour, we stopped off to peep inside the hangar doors of Navy Wings and managed to get ourselves a tour of the collection of Navy Wing's historic aircraft by their extremely knowledgeable and enthusiastic Project Manager Katy Campbell. She walked us round the aircraft in the hangar - Phantom, Sea

Vixen, Sea Fury and more – and allowed us to get up close and personal with the wonderful Swordfish, currently the only flying Swordfish in the world.



There followed a whistle-stop lunch and then it was back into the transport to take us back to our cars to drive round the outside of the airfield to the St. Bart's, the Fleet Air Arm Memorial Church, in Yeovilton village, where our Custodian, Julie, showed us around the churchyard, the Royal Naval cemetery and the church, and Canon Maureen led a service of Holy Communion during which we admitted a new Associate Member, Steve Baker. More trips to the seaside are planned for later in the year, and members of other branches would be most welcome to join us.



MEET OUR FELLOWS

JOHN CAMPBELL

FAITH, FUN AND FELLOWSHIP (LIFE FELLOWSHIP)

Although I was baptised as an infant, the product of an Anglican mother and a non-conformist lay preacher father, whose mother, my grandmother, was an excommunicated Roman Catholic, and sent to Sunday School up to the age of seven or eight I do not consider myself as a 'cradle Christian'.

It was not until in my late teens that I was introduced to Jesus, it was in Montague Burton Tailors I was been measured for a suit, the tailor (who became a great friend) Kevin Dixon, was on his knees, his face level with my midriff and a tape measure (with a 4 inch brass end) in hand ready to take my inside leg measurement, then it happened, he thrust the brass end of the tape measures between my legs, looked up and said 'have you ever thought about Jesus?' I don't think a day has gone by since then, I haven't thought of Jesus, thanks (or maybe blame) goes to Kevin, of course aided by the Holy Spirit, for what was to follow.

After joining the staff of Bradford Cathedral, as Bishop's Verger, in May 1978 when the then Precentor said 'I'm sure that there is an organisation for people like you', "I'm sure there is" was my reply, and, by the Feast of All Soul's the same year I was admitted to the Guild in the Parish Church of Batley, West Yorkshire. Prior to my transfer to Bradford I had served two years as a parish social-work assistant in the Parish of Jarrow; where I met my wife Pauline - it was 'love over the blotter', as we'd had to share a desk!

Very soon after joining the Guild, in 1978 I was invited to form a branch of the Guild which soon became the Bradford & Wakefield Branch, becoming Chairman and Area Leader. At its height branch membership stood at around the forty mark, with membership stretching from Barnsley to Burleigh in the North. By 1982 branch members were preparing for the Golden Anniversary of the Guild which had been formed (in its present form) following a chance meeting between, Victor Buck, head verger of Leeds Parish Church and Lawrence Farrendon, head verger of Bradford Cathedral.

By 1983 I joined the staff of Winchester Cathedral as Assistant Verger, but due to the geography, the nearest branch was Bournemouth or Portsmouth and interest in forming a branch based

in Winchester was moribund, I failed miserably in breathing life into a dead dog which did not exist!

The invitation to join the staff of Carlisle Cathedral as Head Verger was too good an opportunity to miss and so in January 1985, we found ourselves rejoicing in the 'hills of the north'. History repeated itself, and, again I found myself (re) forming the Carlisle Branch of the Guild, which had been formed originally in the 1950s by founder member Lawrence Farrendon. Cumbria was a geographically challenging area in which to form a branch; mountains and lakes doubled journey times and distances but come they did and a full and active branch was a joy to serve as (again) Area Leader and branch Chairman. It was whilst at Carlisle that I became National Chairman in 1986; overseeing a re-write of the constitution and working with the late David Dorey, Liaison Officer and former General Secretary, on gaining synod recognition.

After five happy years serving the cathedral and the guild our great friend Roy McDonald died and again I was asked to consider a new position, as Dean's Verger of Lincoln Cathedral, who would not want the privilege to serve in that 'great pile of stones', be in no doubt - that is all it is, a pile of stones, but what a pile, a pile which gives the Church, the people of God, a springboard for the Gospel. And thus, on the feast of the Transfiguration 1990 we moved south again to the East Midlands. And yes, you may by now have guessed, there was no CEGV branch in the Lincoln Diocese, so feelers went out and, with the help of Michael Haines of Boston Stump, we formed the Lincoln Southwell branch. It was in my early days at Lincoln that I became General Secretary with the painful task of steering the Guild through some dark times, which was a painful time nationally. The Lincoln branch flourished and although we are in the southern province, a Northern Rally was held here with The Reverend Roger Royal as guest speaker.

I was appointed Overseas Liaison Office in 1996 and I continue in that role, also in that year, it was a privilege to be awarded Fellowship of the Guild. Being a fellow may be seen as the ultimate accolade and so it is, but to accept this tremendous reward comes with tremendous responsibility to be an ambassador for all that is good within our guild being out there as it were in the mission field heralding the work of those whose practical ministry of handling Yahweh's hardware, perhaps the true deacons of the church. Fellowship, does not mean that we can sit back, fold our arms and view from afar, no, the one whom we serve did not sit back and fold his arms, he held them out and said 'come'.

As I contemplate retirement I hope to carry on, with the Grace of God and the will of the guild, as Overseas Membership Officer and say to our overseas members - come





FOR YOUR DIARY MEMBERS

You may be interested in events happening across the country hosted by local branches. Please ensure that you contact the local contact prior to attending in case details have changed, especially times or locations. While we are a local Branch-based organisation, we wish to remember that we are equally a National organisation. If your Branch wishes to have their events listed here please let us know.

Wednesday 4 September 2019

Canterbury & Rochester Branch will meet at St Augustine's Abbey in Ramsgate. Further details can be obtained from Margaret Ovenden, Vice Chairman, on Virger@canterbury-cathedral.org

Wednesday 18 & Thursday 19 September 2019

Leicester and Peterborough with Derby Branch have offered Leicester Cathedral as a venue for a Full Festival. Further details can be obtained from Kathryn Mobbs on clivekathryn@yahoo.co.uk or les.mitchelmore@gmail.com

Monday 23 September 2019

The Chichester, Guildford and Portsmouth Branch will be attending the Flower Festival at St Andrew the Apostle in Worthing (BN11 1XB) on 23 September at 10.30am. See Flowers and say mid-day prayers, then wander into Worthing town centre for lunch and ice cream on the Promenade and time to visit some of the seaside attractions. We will re-group for Evening Prayer sitting on the sea wall (weather permitting) before either heading home or adjourning to a local hostelry for supper if we need warming up after being in the sea breeze all day! Please let us know if you'd like to join us - all welcome. Contact Jane Gorrie, verger@stmaryshorsham.org.uk

Thursday 3 October 2019

The East Anglia Branch are hosting a day at St Edmundsbury Cathedral, Bury St Edmunds IP33 1LS at 10.00am on 3 October. We will join Chapter 4 (the Cathedral Volunteer Social group) for a talk by Charles Garland approximately one hour duration, on his work at the BBC. Further details can be obtained from Pam Cobb on pamela_cobb@btinternet.com

Wednesday 4 December 2019

The Blackburn, Chester & Manchester Branch will be joining the Liverpool Branch for a Christmas Eucharist and Lunch on 4 December at 12noon at Liverpool Cathedral. Further details can be obtained from Tracey at Traceydru@hotmail.co.uk or 07969 213 673

Monday 10 – Thursday 13 August 2020

Annual Training Conference Elim Conference Centre, West Malvern. Anyone wishing to come should contact Margaret Burston on CEGVConference@gmail.com

Wednesday 16 September 2020

East Anglia Branch have offered St Edmundsbury Cathedral as a venue for a Festival Lite. More details will be forthcoming in the near future.

Monday 9 – Thursday 12 August 2021 tbc

Annual Training Conference Elim Conference Centre, West Malvern. Anyone wishing to come should contact Margaret Burston on CEGVConference@gmail.com

If your Branch has any events that you wish to have advertised on this page please contact the Communications Officer CEGVMedia@gmail.com

FROM THE DESK OF THE GUILD CHRONICLER




During John Campbell's sermon at conference he quoted a few lines from a poem written by James Walter Brown and published in 1922 in a book called *Round Carlisle Cross*. This was to illustrate our love of dressing up in a very tongue in cheek way.

A bit about the man himself: George Mason, entered on the duties of Cathedral verger, and Apparitor to the Bishop of Carlisle, in 1811, and performed them until 1866. He was also the last of such Apparitors, the duties attaching to the office in question lapsing when the proving of Wills, and other diocesan customs, came to an end, upon District Probate Registries being instituted. He was a venerable old gentleman, and as lovable as venerable.

I use the word gentleman advisedly, for in all my life I have not known anyone who more deserved the name. He was then approaching eighty years of age, and he moved in an atmosphere of old-world courteousness. Short and slender in build, with the whitest of hair, and the snowiest shirt and neck-cloth; always dressed alike, in black broadcloth, with coat cut in the old-fashioned swallow-tail style; calm and unflurried at all times, he was beloved by everyone. His headstone at Carlisle Cemetery states that he died on 13 March 1866 aged eighty-one years, having been 'Apparitor-General' of the Diocese of Carlisle for nearly fifty-five years.


James Armstrong, Guild Chronicler

'But passing all the rest by far, in most majestic mien, is Mr Watson, who doth bear the Verge before the Dean. In robes of velvet, gorgeous, rich as daily may be seen, that folks can scarce discover which of these two is the Dean'



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The Guild Prayer

Almighty Father, from whom every family in heaven and earth is named,
who has called us into the fellowship of your Church,
grant, we pray, that in all our churches we may fulfil the duties
and enjoy the privileges of our spiritual home.
And on those who offer themselves for service as vergers in the house of God
bestow the fullness of your grace,
that, united in love to you and to one another,
we may show forth your glory and hasten the coming of your kingdom.
Through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.



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