

THE VIRGER

The Official Magazine of the Church of England Guild of Vergers

Summer 2022 | Issue 315

TWO VIEWS OF THE WORCESTER FESTIVAL

**MEET OUR LIFE MEMBERS
- MARGARET BURSTON**

www.cofegv.org.uk



FROM THE DESK OF THE EDITOR



...and so another three months passes by....

Personally, the past year has been one for taking stock - of friendships, changes in circumstances, new jobs, old jobs, what has (or should have) been left behind, and what must be cherished as being most important.

In the hours before the last Executive Committee (wandering around Manchester with friends, heading for the Cathedral to explore before lunch) I got a phone call from my sisters to tell me that my Mum had passed away unexpectedly. Looking back now, it was another revelatory moment. Once I got my breath back I was immediately aware that I was surrounded by people who understood, who cared, who wanted to know how to help me process the shock, and who prayed for me and my family. I could never have imagined the comfort of feeling supported by exactly the right friends on that day. Vergers are never "off duty"... we were all away from our churches, not working but every single person was "there for me" that day.

A couple of weeks later, at a friend's funeral I was able to "be there" with and for the choir of which he had been such a loved member. Although I was no longer an employee of the church, I was there as an understanding, caring member of the choir community. The same feeling was evident to me when working with my Mum's vicar to put together her funeral service - professional skills came back to the fore and I was conscious of "being there" and ministering to my sisters and family, whilst also caught up in my own grieving - God-given gifts binding us all together with a strength I cannot understand, but for which I was so grateful. The resulting service was a wonderful celebration of a life well-lived, underpinned by faith and with an abundance of love, given and received.

We are not always aware of the effect our Verger ministry has on those with whom we have contact - indeed, this was a recurring theme in the farewell and thank you cards I received from my previous church. I found them only this week whilst tidying up and putting away one of the last few boxes from our move. The tears for the loss of old friends finally came and I'm now even more aware of being in a new phase of my life - but carrying forward those same, priceless skills to use wherever and whenever I'm asked. Deo gratias

Jane Gorrie
CEGV Media Officer



Cover photo

Worcester Cathedral

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.



FROM THE DESK OF THE NATIONAL CHAIRMAN



Today, we tend to be governed by our diaries and even worse, mobile phones. Communication is perceived and expected to be instant, with emails, text messages, Instagram and WhatsApp etc all at our fingertips. So it is always a joy to get our magazine and learn about what is happening in our Guild in a more traditional way.

This year is our 90th year since the Guild was formed in 1932. Our festivals will be referring to this fantastic achievement in our history. The first of three Guild National events this year has taken place with a very successful Festival in Worcester. These events held and hosted by branches around the country give our members a chance to join for a period of fellowship and fun.

We are now gearing up for our Annual Training Conference and Retreat. The setting in West Malvern is a pure joy with the majestic Malvern Hills at the side of the conference centre and the fantastic views from the terrace. Last year we met under the tight guidelines of Covid. While restrictions have been lifted, we ask that we are mindful each mindful of each other. Covid is still prevalent, and we should be careful and respectful around our members some of whom are vulnerable. Let us hope that the weather is good enough to enable those who wish to take a walk up the hills and take in the beauty that surrounds us.

This year there are some new faces at the helm of our conference, and I am sure that any slight changes in organisation and content will help to bring a sparkle and excitement to proceedings. It is always good to shake things up a little bit otherwise complacency tends to set in. The most important



change to be aware of is that payment for conferences from now on, should be made about 6 weeks prior to attendance.

Our final event of the year is the Festival in Bury St. Edmunds in September. Again, it is an occasion when we can gather socially as members away from our normal routine. It is always good to catch up with friends and colleagues.

If branches have events that they are also organising, it would be wonderful for all forward plans are advertised in our diary section. Please share events with us, to encourage other members who might wish to attend, to share in the variety of happenings around the country.

John Kirby-Shearer
Chairman



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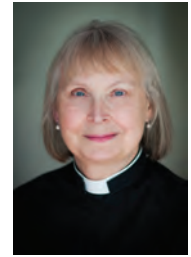
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FROM THE DESK OF THE NATIONAL CHAPLAIN



Above Coventry Cathedral's high altar hangs a tapestry, the largest in the world, on which the figure of Christ in Glory is depicted, seated with his hands raised to either side of his face as if in prayer. The Cathedral is a living monument to the desolation of war and the hope we place in peace.



Christ in Glory, Graham Sutherland, tapestry in Coventry Cathedral. Creative Commons, Jim Linwood.

The kind of suffering we see in any kind of conflict has a way of knocking our faith, yet God will not abandon his own. Remember these words of reassurance to exiled Jews in Babylon: 'I will not forget you. See, I have inscribed you on the palms of my hand; your walls are continually before me.' (Isaiah 49: 16)

From the nave, the full glory of Coventry Cathedral's tapestry is visible. Close up, we can see the detailed thread, be amazed by the scale but perhaps miss the full glory. That seems to me to be like our experience when we are immersed in conflict and struggle. To avoid being overwhelmed, it helps sometimes to stand back so that that we can see the whole picture and discern God working his purposes out through the warp and weft of life's events.

Looking through a long lens, the BBC commentary on the State Opening of Parliament in May spoke of the 'twilight years' of the second 'Elizabethan age'. As we look ahead to the Queen's Platinum Jubilee celebrations in June, Church of England resources are filtering through and some of you will be preparing

special services of thanksgiving. Working as a verger or not, I hope there will be a chance to try out the prize-winning lemon and Swiss roll Amaretti Queen's Platinum Jubilee trifle! For those members of the Guild who may be slowing down for reasons of health or natural ageing, the Queen's outstanding service is witness to the fact that we don't leave a community just because we reach our 'twilight years'. Moses' prayer was to 'count our days that we may gain a wise heart' (Psalm 90: 12). The treasure of Christ lives in us and we in him. It is this wisdom that is perhaps our most important legacy and open to us all.

At the Guild Conference in August, Sophie Hacker, Winchester Cathedral's artist in residence, will be giving us the benefit of her wisdom when she speaks about art and well-being. Most recently, she has designed a processional cross called *Resurrection*, in memory of the Very Revd Dr James Atwell, Dean of Winchester Cathedral (2006-2016). Dean James was born in June 1946, a year after VE Day in Europe. His father was a Wiltshire tenant farmer. Sophie has captured his life and vocation in a cross of delicate wheat.



Lorna Atwell, Dean James' widow (left), with Sophie Hacker, wheat in hand. 'Very truly I tell you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains just a single grain...' John 12: 24.

If your life were to be depicted in a single object, I wonder what it would be? How would you like to be remembered? We might feel that when we are less visible, we will soon be forgotten but it is not celebrity status that counts. Far more important will be our love for God and how that bears fruit.

Mthr Rosemary
National Chaplain

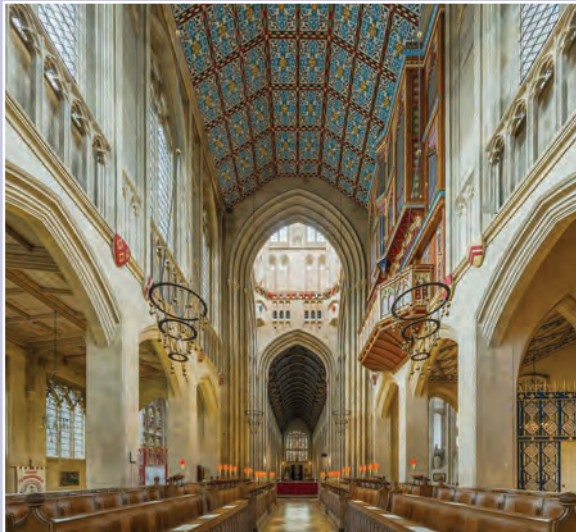


DATES FOR YOUR DIARY



Monday 15 until Thursday 18 August 2022

Annual Retreat and Training Conference



Wednesday 14 September 2022

A Semi-Lite Festival, St Edmundsbury Cathedral (provide your own lunch BUT Robes are welcome to be worn (hence the 'Semi'))

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

PRAYER REQUESTS

If you know of someone for whom prayers would be of benefit, or someone who has been prayed for and has recovered shown improvement, please inform the **National Chaplain** or the **National Welfare Officer**.

Prayers for our Vergers during this time of half-open churches, for those who feel alone, are furloughed, redundant or struggling in new, unfamiliar and uncertain times.

Somerset & Avon

Marek Barden, Mary Holway, Roger Lawrence, Trevor Llewellyn

York Branch

George Cook

St Albans Branch

Peter Hudson, Heather Ringrose, Molly Payne, Audrey Ashby

East Anglia Branch

Val Pizzey

Blackburn, Chester & Manchester Branch

Patricia Platt, Margaret Scott, Freda Murphy, Frank Woodward

Oxford Branch

Gerry and Hazel Knight

Durham and Newcastle with Carlisle Branch

Jimmy and Margaret Guy

Gloucester, Hereford and Worcester Branch

Margaret Burston, Paul and family

And all people facing hardship and difficulties and who are facing uncertainties.

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

MEET OUR NATIONAL LIFE MEMBERS...

MARGARET BURSTON

I was admitted to the Guild very nearly thirty years ago in Tewkesbury Abbey, on 29/9/92, a very easy date to remember because it is the same backwards. I had just become the verger of St Peter's, Cowleigh (near Malvern), the church where I grew up, and where I had been baptised, married and confirmed, and where I was singing in the choir. I asked the vicar did they want a verger, and it turned out he did! I'm not sure precisely where I had first heard about vergers, but I sang in the choir at Holy Trinity, Malvern for a few years, and they did have a verger there.

We made a verge for me by shortening a churchwarden's staff, and initially I wore an old choir robe until a friend made me a new gown. That gown's still hanging in my wardrobe and I want to be buried in it!

Eighteen years ago Roy and I moved to Worcester, so I began worshipping at St Stephen's, Barbourne, and singing in their choir. Pretty much the same happened – I noticed they didn't have a verger, so after some of the PCC interviewed me I became their parish verger, opening up

the church, laying up for services, serving at the Thursday communion, and lots of other jobs.

As a verger, I was only ever paid for weddings and funerals. My job was on the district nursing team, and often when I wasn't working the next day I would do night duties in people's homes for Marie Curie. Before that, I started off as a carer in a nursing home, part-time while the children were in school. I have five children, fifteen grandchildren (and some step-grandchildren), and nine great grandchildren. They've kept me on my toes.

In the Guild, I've been Branch Secretary, Branch Chairman, and Area Leader. I completed my Diploma in 2017, on a second attempt. I was the Conference Secretary for ten years after Richard Falla died. The first year he was still alive, so could tell me what I needed to do. The Training Conference was in London Colney then, before it moved to Malvern. I love meeting people at the Conference, and the Guild has given me the opportunity to visit different cathedrals across the country. When I retired from being



Conference Secretary last August I was made a National Life Member – that was really nice, I wasn't expecting that.

Then I got a letter this February saying you have been nominated to receive the Maundy Money by the bishop of the diocese. It came as a big surprise. I thought, wow, why me?

I stayed in Windsor the night before, and everything was very well organised. There was no pause, no break, it was all so smooth. They moved us around the castle in golf buggies, a minibus, and I got taken up to the reception room in a wheelchair, so there wasn't a lot of walking required. The music at the service was out of this world – I do love a loud organ!

Because the Queen is 96 this year, Maundy Money was presented to 96 men and 96 women. Everyone is given two purses – in the red purse is a nominal allowance of £5.50 for clothing and provisions, in two special coins commemorating the Platinum Jubilee, and the white purse contains small coins adding up to 96p. HRH Prince Charles gave them out on HM The Queen's behalf this year.

I was sat there before the service when I felt someone's hand on my shoulder. "Nice to see you – glad you could make it." It was Bishop John (of Worcester), who was there

for the ceremony as Lord High Almoner. Then he found me again later, during the reception in the royal apartments: 'Let's have a selfie'. I really appreciated that – I don't think he went round everybody. We had all been told not to take photos!

It's been fun. It's fun being a verger! It has its moments, but it takes all sorts doesn't it!



OBITUARY – RAYMOND FOWLER



Raymond was born in 1935 in Bromham, Bedfordshire, and it was at St Owen's, Bromham that he became a bellringer and then, after National Service in Hong Kong, began his career as a part-time honorary verger. He remained verger of St Owen's for twenty-two years, but didn't join the Guild until 1976, two years before he finally turned professional.

Meantime he had worked for four years in a hospital laundry, before transferring to more congenial work in the hospital gardens and greenhouses. Raymond never lost his love or talent for gardening; and would later allege he was only hired at Worcester because the Cathedral Chapter had needed someone who could look after the large garden that came with his flat.

His diocesan bishop had once encouraged him to apply for full-time posts,

offering to write a reference; though when Raymond and his wife Elizabeth took the plunge and applied jointly for the post of Beadle at St Bartholomew's Church, Edgbaston it didn't seem appropriate to offer the now Archbishop of Canterbury, Robert Runcie, as a referee. The vicar of St Bartholomew's proved an unsatisfactory employer, and it seems to have been with relief that Raymond secured a verger job at Worcester Cathedral two years later. He took to it like a duck to water, and after only two more years was appointed the cathedral's Custos, or head verger, in 1982, a role for which he (with Elizabeth's unofficial support!) proved ideally suited.

He was a member of the Guild's Worcester (now Gloucester, Hereford and Worcester) branch since its founding, including terms as Chairman and as Area Leader. He was likewise a

founding member of the Deans' Vergers Conference. And after retiring from the cathedral in 1998, he served as the Guild's National Chairman from 2001 to 2004. (The present Chairman may find it wearily familiar that during Raymond's time in office the Guild's constitution was revised, a new glossy format adopted for the magazine, and new policies on safeguarding and data protection adopted.)

Raymond had left school aged 15; and his highest qualification on paper might well have been a City and Guilds Steam Boiler Operator's Certificate. But he was a wonderfully thoughtful and intellectually curious man whose knowledge of history and literature, if worn less lightly, could have put most graduates to shame. He was justly proud of his role in establishing the Guild's Training Course, and steered many students through it as tutor and mentor.

Indeed by now generations of Foundation Unit students must have read and summarised Raymond's paper on 'The Position of Verger in the Church', which stresses how a verger needs to be both a 'thinking' and a 'feeling' person, and someone with a vocation to the role. There could be no doubting Raymond's own vocation; nor is it any coincidence that paper's longest paragraph concerns the verger's own spiritual

life, "the reality of God in the life of the verger". Raymond's Christianity was not simply intellectual or social, but of real spiritual depth.

He was someone who conspicuously nurtured others' vocations. A tribute quoted at Raymond's funeral tells a tale that could probably be repeated many times:

"When I was an 18-year-old who was slightly at a loss with life, Raymond took me under his wing, and before I knew it, he had me serving as a verger, interacting with eccentric volunteers, kind and difficult visitors, kind members of the congregation and, of course the clergy! He entrusted me, not only with the keys to the Cathedral, but with a trust in my interactions with every type of person. Those nine months gave me a kind, gracious, yet gently challenging experience of working life. More than that, he invited me into his family, where I learned so much from watching him operate as a godly husband and dad, as well as boss in the workplace. His authentic and grounded faith in Jesus will live with me forever."

That young man is now a nondenominational clergyman in California. Another young man similarly quoted at the funeral is now Primus of the Scottish Episcopal Church.



I never shared that privilege of working under him, but have benefitted from his ministry of encouragement. It was he above all who badgered me to join the Guild, and took me under his wing when I first attended the Training Conference. It was also he who encouraged me to visit Glasshampton Monastery, where he once helped tend the gardens and where I

now regularly make retreat. I have particularly fond memories of a visit with him to Leighton Bromswold, a church famously rebuilt by the poet George Herbert, and in whose churchyard Raymond's own ancestors lie buried, and its neighbouring parish of Little Gidding, immortalised by another poet as a place "where prayer has been valid".

Raymond's lifetime of service was acknowledged when he was made a National Life Member of the Guild in 2006; and again in 2018 when he was nominated to receive Maundy Money from the Queen.

Raymond died on 11 February 2022, aged 86 and survived by Elizabeth, their children John and

Ruth, and grandchildren. His well-attended funeral at Worcester Cathedral included an honour guard of vergers from across the country. His ashes are buried at St Owen's, Bromham. "In my end is my beginning."

Robert Beattie
National Treasurer

CANON MATTHEW CORKERN. R I P



Many vergers will have come across Matthew when he served as Chaplain to the Vergers Guild of the Episcopal Church and his leadership of UK pilgrimages.

Indeed, it is his passion, 'Pilgrimage', that will be his legacy for me. Having been enlisted, even cajoled, Matthew and I worked on several pilgrimages within the UK; Lincoln, Rydal/Cumbria & St Paul's Jarrow to name but a few. Hosting Matthew and his fellow pilgrims at our house in Minster Yard, Lincoln was privilege, however in his heart he had a 'Canterbury shaped hole' and his work with the US friends of Canterbury Cathedral is legendary.

Matthew was known in many a stately home around the UK and he never let modesty get in the way of 'name-dropping'.

He will be a great loss to many on both sides of the Atlantic.

John G Campbell
Overseas Membership
Officer

With sadness I share the news of the death of the Rev. Canon Matthew T. L. Corkern on Sunday, April 24, with his family by his side.

Matthew served at McLean, Virginia. Christ Church Cathedral Nashville and Mobile Alabama, before becoming 13th Rector of Calvary Church in Summit, New Jersey until recently. He also served the diocese of Newark on the several committees including the Bishop Transition Committee, and the Cathedral Chapter. His association with Yale and Berkley universities helped form him.



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EXECUTIVE ROUND UP

The Executive Committee met in person in March, in Manchester. We discussed many aspects of the management of the Guild on a long agenda. It was felt it would be good to impart some of this information to you all via the magazine.

We looked at the forthcoming Guild National Officer elections and the Executive Committee was encouraged that members are standing for National Roles within the Guild. We voted and the following members are to be presented to the AGM for elections:

National Membership Officer	Andrew Wynn-McKenzie
Conference Secretary	Denise Mead
Welfare Officer	Irene Money
Guild Chronicler	James Armstrong

We look forward to hearing your voice at the AGM in August, so be there to have it heard in person.

As a Guild we are always looking forward, and try to ensure that our documentation is proactively updated to be pertinent to the needs of the Guild. We therefore need to adjust our Constitution in two areas. (Do remember the current Constitution is available on the Guild Website.) The changes are:

- 2.8 Only members of the Guild shall be entitled to stand for election to any Office of the Guild specified in clause 3.1. The National Chaplain need not be a member.

6. The Executive Committee may initiate Statutes to govern the operation of the Guild and the performance of its Officers. These must be ratified by an Executive Committee Meeting and will be binding on the Membership.

One of the biggest topics at the Executive Committee was the centralisation of the magazine distribution. The current system is slow and is dependant on magazine distributors being available to post out magazines at issue time. The printers send all the magazines to the Media Officer, who then sends them on to the magazine distributors. Only then does the local Branch distributor send them to you, the members – that’s three sets of postage when such costs are climbing.

The proposal, that was accepted at the Executive Committee, is that from the Autumn 2022 edition, the magazine will be sent to you direct from the printers. This will save postage, be more environmentally responsible, and will mean that get

your copy of the magazine sooner. It will mean that the cost of the magazine will increase from 2023 to cover the change, but as the cost of the local postage for the magazine will then be covered within the national magazine capitation it is hoped that Branches will be able to pass on the reduction of postage savings to you, the members, at the local capitation level. We are aware that a couple of Branches wish to remain on the old system and we are happy to facilitate this but it will be at the new magazine cost.

More good news - after discussions we are bringing back an old shop stock item that has not been available for over 20 years. We have now placed an order for some new Guild Scarves (similar to University Scarves). These will be launched at this year’s Conference at a cost of £24.00.



It was felt that it might be helpful to you as members to have a reminder of when each current National Officer’s term of office is up, following the year extension that was implemented in 2020 when we were unable to hold an AGM (excluding those roles up this year)

National Chairman	2024
General Secretary	2024
National Treasurer	2026
National Chaplain	2025
Training Officer	2024
Training Registrar	2023
Media Officer	2023
Overseas Membership Officer	2024
Legal Advisor	2026
Regional Representatives	2023

EAST ANGLIA BRANCH

The East Anglia Branch held their AGM at the Pavilion, located behind Linton Church, Cambridgeshire. Due to illness and unavailability of members our attendance was less than expected. We held our meeting, had a shared lunch together and afterwards we looked around Linton Church. Nanette Blackmore, Verger at Linton, spoke to us about the fascinating history of the church, from its first written records some time before 1163, through its time under the Rectorship of Benedictine Priors, through its extensions and improvements made by prominent local families including the reconstruction of

the chancel arch (out of true centre). In John Betjeman's 1958 book on English Parish Churches he described St Mary's Linton as "*an archaeologist's church, very enigmatic*".

As far as future dates go, our meeting this month will be hot on the heels of the Summer edition of The Virger. We have a meeting at St Mary's Church Hall, Walton, Felixstowe IP11 9BH on Monday 13th June at 11am, followed by a shared lunch. August will see some of us at Conference, and then we are hosting the September Festival at St Edmundsbury.

Pam Cobb, Branch Secretary



YORK BRANCH

On Monday 21st February thirteen members of the branch attended the Branch AGM at Holy Trinity Micklegate York. During the meeting the usual reports from the chair, chaplain and treasurer were made along with the usual election of officers for the forthcoming year. The elected officers were as follows:

Chair: Su Graves

Chaplain: Reverend Marian Gardner

Secretary: Samantha Fletcher

Treasurer: Alan Gardner

Publicity Officer: Ben Elliott-Hill

In addition to these posts it was also agreed that Ted Lemons would take over the distribution of the Virger magazine from the Reverend Marian Gardner.

At the Communion service, which followed, Richard Crow, Canons' Verger at Sheffield Cathedral, was formally admitted as a member, supported by Sheffield Cathedral's Liturgical Verger, and Branch Publicity Officer, Ben Elliott-Hill. Following the Eucharist the branch members enjoyed a picnic lunch in Jacobs Well, on a nearby street to Holy Trinity Micklegate.

A meeting was initially planned for Monday 4th April, but this was cancelled. At the time of writing a meeting hasn't been planned, although at the AGM the Virgers from Beverley invited the branch to a flower festival that is due to take place at the beginning of July.

The attached photo shows Ben Elliott-Hill, Branch Publicity Officer, and Liturgical Verger of Sheffield Cathedral, the Reverend Marian Gardner, Branch Chaplain, and Richard Crow, Canons' Verger of Sheffield Cathedral. This was taken following Richard's formal admission to the Guild.

Ben Elliott-Hill
Publicity Officer



TWO VIEWS OF THE WORCESTER FESTIVAL

LONDON, SOUTHWARK & CHELMSFORD BRANCH

On Thursday 5th May an excited group of Vergers met at Worcester Cathedral. We gathered together in Undercroft Learning Centre, part of the cathedral crypt, for the first Guild Festival since the start of the pandemic March 2020. The crypt, we were told, was where the monks lived many years ago and it housed a 'squint' from which the abbots and bishops could keep an eye on the situation in the cathedral (making sure the monks were working and worshipping as they should). During coffee time, once we had greeted one another, we were warmly welcomed by the Cathedral Sub-Dean, Revd Canon Stephen Edwards, James Prior the Head Verger & Dee Caulton Ball, Branch Chair.

After registration we made our way up to the high altar where we sat either side of King John's Tomb for a service of Holy Communion presided at by the Branch Chaplain. Here we listened to an outstanding sermon by the Revd Tom Cameron, the Assistant National Chaplain who gave greetings from Mtr Rosemary who, due to ill health, could not be with us.

Once the Eucharist was over, we took our seats in the cathedral's main aisle for a fabulous organ recital given by the Cathedral's Organ Scholar Edward Byrne. Edward played a selection of popular organ music from various musicians

including Johann Sebastian Bach. Following the organ recital, we gathered in the Chapter House for lunch where we enjoyed a lovely time of fellowship whilst eating our delicious meal. We were joined by the Cathedral Dean, The Very Revd Peter Atkinson who said Grace and made us feel very welcome as did everyone in the cathedral.

After lunch we got in to our groups for our chosen tours. These were either a tower tour, a tour of the cathedral, a tour of the vestry, the many vestments and treasures of the cathedral, or along to the Worcester pottery museum. I went on the vestry and cathedral tours which were both informative and very enjoyable.

The history of the cathedral dates back to 1084 and 1504 and represents every style of English architecture from Norman to perpendicular gothic. The chapter house, where we had lunch and the crypt has fine woodwork. The tower, which, I had been told was very high, had 250 steps. Those who went up were awarded with a amazing views of Worcestershire and some even managed to glimpse the Worcester Cricket Club, which just happened to be holding a match.

At 4.30pm we returned to the relatively new education rooms for afternoon tea and a cake to celebrate the Guild's

90th Anniversary. Here we robed and processed to join Choral Evensong sung by some of the cathedral choir. It felt good to be in procession at a festival again. What was really nice was that the Dean led us in reciting the Vergers prayer. We ended the day in true Guild style with a group photo on the steps leading to the chancel. And then sadly, all too soon, we dis-robed and departed to own parts of the country.

Thank you to those on the organising committee for arranging such a wonderful day. It was good to see everyone happily enjoying themselves in such a lovely, prestigious setting as Worcester Cathedral.

Oliver Harcus, Branch Correspondent



CANTERBURY PROVINCE FESTIVAL – WORCESTER 5TH MAY 2022

On a fine May afternoon, vergers from around the country arrived in Worcester for the Canterbury Province Festival and also to celebrate the 90th anniversary of the Church of England Guild of Vergers.

Those who arrived on 4th May were welcomed by members of the local branch of the Guild and given a goody bag full of souvenirs of the occasion before they took their seats in the Quire where we were treated to a wonderful Choral Evensong sung by the upper voices of the choir of Worcester Cathedral.

Following evensong members dispersed into the evening sunshine, some to join the organising committee for a thoroughly enjoyable and convivial evening of fellowship in a local bistro and others to enjoy other aspects of this beautiful cathedral city.

The morning of 5th May dawned with blue skies and sunshine. Further members arrived for registration, and everyone enjoyed light refreshments in the Cathedral's newly refurbished Undercroft Learning Centre where they were welcomed by the Vice-Dean Canon Dr. Stephen Edwards; before attending the Guild's said Eucharist at the High Altar. This occasion enabled our branch chaplain, Canon Greville Cross to celebrate the Eucharist for the first time, at the High Altar, in his 'home' Cathedral. He was assisted by the Guild's Deputy National Chaplain Fr. Tom Cameron who preached and Mrs Irene Money, MBE, read the New Testament reading.

Following the Eucharist members were able to listen to an organ recital by the Cathedral's organ scholar Edward Byrne, explore the Cathedral and grounds or venture into the High Street.

Some then gathered in the beautiful circular Chapter House for lunch where the Dean the Very Reverend Peter Atkinson joined them.

In the afternoon members were treated to various tours including Cathedral Highlights, the Cathedral Tower, the Vestry, the Stonemason's Yard, and the Worcester Porcelain Museum which is situated a short distance from the Cathedral.

The tours were followed by a further opportunity to meet up with old friends back in the Undercroft Learning Centre for a much-needed cuppa and a slice of a cake specially commissioned to celebrate the Guild's 90th anniversary.

The Festival concluded with Choral Evensong, this time with the girl choristers and lower voices of the Cathedral choir. Members of the Guild robed to join the procession and our National Chairman John read the lesson.

Following the traditional Festival photograph members said their farewells, having enjoyed a wonderful opportunity to join kindred spirits in worship, fellowship, and hospitality in what was the first face to face festival since the start of the Covid 19 pandemic in March 2020.

The Gloucester, Hereford and Worcester branch are most grateful for all the generous and kind support they have received and in particular would like to thank the Dean and the Head Verger James Prior for allowing the Guild to base the festival in this wonderful cathedral.

David Anwyl-Hughes, Branch Secretary, CEGV Gloucester, Hereford and Worcester





OUR ANNUAL TRAINING CONFERENCE AND RETREAT MONDAY 15 AUGUST – THURSDAY 18 AUGUST

Have you booked for this year's annual Training Conference and Retreat?

If the answer is no, then do think about it. It is a wonderful time for fun, fellowship and friendship, where we can meet new members and new faces as well as reacquainting ourselves with old friends.

It is a time to share our collective knowledge with each other and soak up the wealth of information we all have to bring.

Our venue, Elim College, is set in the beautiful Malvern Hills, with a heated swimming pool, en-suite rooms, all meals catered for (including any dietary requirements). You are free to participate in as much or as little as you want, and also have the opportunity to have a say in how the Guild is run at the National AGM on Monday 15 August at 10.30am.

You can book for a day visit, for part, or for the whole conference.

Please remember that the deadline for booking is 1 July, and full payment must be received by this date. There is a booking form included in this magazine and it can also be downloaded and printed from the CEGV website. If you are in need of a bursary, please make direct contact with the National Chaplain.

If you are still unsure, please do give me a call, or any of your Officers who will hopefully direct you to an 'old hand' to answer any queries.

Even if you have not been before you'll be very warmly welcomed and it would be a joy to have you with us.





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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.



www.cofegv.org.uk

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