

THE VIRGER

The Official Magazine of the Church of England Guild of Vergers

Winter 2022 | Issue 317

MEET OUR MEMBERS

OLIVER HARCUS



www.cofegv.org.uk





FROM THE DESK OF THE EDITOR



Autumn moves into winter as I sit at my desk, watching the birds in the beautiful Silver Birch in the garden outside my current office spot. The leaves have been turning golden for a week or two, but the recent winds have blown a lot of them away. By the end of next week it will be bare and in winter mode... I find winter is often a time of stillness and re-evaluation as the past recedes into slumber and the hope of spring and regeneration beckon - particularly if, as so often here in Scotland, there is a covering of snow....

Thank you to those who have sent in articles and news - we appear to be a little "light" this quarter - I hope this means you're saving yourselves up for the Spring edition!

With Advent and Christmas so close on the horizon with their "busyness" and long hours for so many vergers, I hope that you will (as I used to do) find some time to be still and reflect upon the season within the spiritually special places that you are called to service. I would often stop for a while once the Crib Service had been cleared and the church was re-dressed ready for Midnight Mass and just look and breathe in the hush before opening the doors. I wish you a restorative Advent and joyous Christmas when it comes.

Jane Gorrie
CEGV Media Officer



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.



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FROM THE DESK OF THE NATIONAL CHAIRMAN



The nights darken with alarming speed at this time of year which is a gentle reminder that the season of Advent is drawing near. The other clue can be found in our shops. They are full of Christmas decorations, seasonal things to buy and things to tempt us to open our wallets and purses. It seems to come round faster and faster as the years go on. As Vergers, it is the time for school carol services with many long hours spent in church. The season starts with the first big event, the annual broadcast of the Advent Carol Service from St John's College, Cambridge, broadcast by the BBC. The Christmas Carol Service broadcast from Kings College, Cambridge is often another highlight for many.

This year, our gracious majesty Queen Elizabeth passed into glory in September. This massive event was marked throughout the country. Services were held in St Giles Cathedral, Edinburgh; Westminster Abbey, London; and St George's Chapel, Windsor. The services were beamed all over the world and were a showcase of both our choral and liturgical tradition. All of them were carried out with meticulous precision as befitting the solemnity of the occasion – just what Her Majesty would have deeply appreciated.

After a very good festival at Bury St. Edmunds, where three of the cathedral vergers were admitted to the Guild, Stephen Stokes and I flew to New York to join the vergers of the Episcopal Church's conference. It was held in St John the Divine Cathedral,

Manhattan where we met up with Fr. Tom Cameron. It was a good chance to catch up with friends from across the pond. It also gave us the opportunity to bring clarity to the links between the two Guilds under a Memorandum of Understanding. As vergers of the CEGV, we can now formally apply to become associate members of the VGEC without any fees and their members can also join our Guild, via the Overseas Membership office.

Finally, after a few discussions with Mthr. Rosemary, our National Chaplain, she has decided to step down from the role due to ongoing health issues. At the last Executive Committee meeting it was decided that Life Membership should be conferred upon Rosemary, to ensure that she continues to be a member

of our Guild family. As a result of this situation, plans were hastily put in place to find a replacement. I am delighted to announce that our successful candidate, the Venerable Canon Dr. David Jenkins, Archdeacon of Sudbury, was appointed, and has graciously accepted to join us once final approval from our two patrons has been received. Fr. David will join us in the beginning of January and we look forward to welcoming him to the Guild.

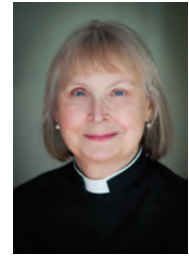
I wish you all a prayerful Advent and a very Merry Christmas, when that joyful day arrives.

John Kirby-Shearer
Chairman



John Kirby-Shearer - Ben Jenkins (newly admitted member) - The Ven Dr David Jenkins (proposed new National Chaplain [subject to references])

FROM THE DESK OF THE NATIONAL CHAPLAIN



Newly released Christmas stamps this year show scenes from the Nativity, illustrated in an art nouveau style by artist Katie Ponder. They are the last Royal Mail stamps to show the late Queen Elizabeth's silhouette, designed by the late Arnold Machin, marking the passing of an era.



The Rev'd Lucy Winkett, Rector of St James' Church, Piccadilly, gave advice over their content and has written, in the presentation pack, an analysis of the relationship between time and eternity at Christmas, and the significance of the Nativity.



Lucy was among those who interviewed me for the role of National Chaplain, and she is a Patron of the Quiet Garden Movement. Those at this year's Annual Conference in Malvern, may remember that I spoke about Quiet Gardens under the title: 'Finding the Beauty of Holiness Outdoors'.

This Christmas Rose is from my own garden, from which I take great delight.

With so much to be thankful for, I am greatly saddened to be standing down as your National Chaplain at the end of this year. My sadness is only lifted by warm memories of Guild gatherings and now, the very real honour of writing in the first edition of the Virger magazine to be published in the reign of His Majesty King Charles III.

As Chair, John Kirby-Shearer has explained to Guild branches that my decision to stand down is caused by ill-health. Looking back, I believe I was blessed to have taken on the role of National Chaplain in lockdown, when adaptations were made to communicating on-line.



With innovative change, there have been some surprising blessings. The occasional gathering of Branch Chaplains on zoom, as an example, has opened the way for Irene Money, Guild Welfare Officer, to elaborate on the support she can give to vergers. Irene, whom I visited in her London home in December 2021, is pictured here in her church, off-duty. In her own way, she has reaffirmed the Gospel message that we are bound together as one body in Christ. I hope and pray that the Guild's new National Chaplain, starting in January, will be rewarded as I have been, through mutual friendship and service.

Over 2000 years ago, the Angel Gabriel announced to Mary that she would conceive a son who would be called the Son of God. The incarnation marked the beginning of a radical change in the direction of human history. With God's saving grace revealed in our midst through the baby Jesus, the



world celebrates creatively and imaginatively on Christmas Day. His gift of love brings heaven to earth and earth to heaven. His love glorifies us all (John 17: 21-23).



As Christians, we are reconciled to death, yet ready to grasp the joy and gift of life. Thankfully, as we watch and wait, our Lord has a way of nudging us in the direction He desires. That isn't necessarily towards a specific job or role description, but a way of being, so that we can be a blessing to others.

I am in no doubt that I have been standing on the metaphorical shoulders of two much loved National Chaplains, in the late Fr Bill and Chaplain Emeritus Canon Maureen. In handing on the baton, the past, present and future are bound together in God's eternal love.

I would like to thank you for your prayers and support. I hope that the Guild and the friends I have made by association, will be a part of my life for some time to come. I pray that together in faith, hope and love, you will continue to flourish as you serve your churches and cathedrals. Entering one of the busiest times of the Church's year, I wish you all a blessed Advent and a joyful Christmas.

Mthr Rosemary
National Chaplain

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.

Leicester & Peterborough with Derby Branch
Pauline Haynes

Somerset & Avon
Marek Barden, Mary Holway, Roger Lawrence,
Trevor Llewellyn

York Branch
George Cook

East Anglia Branch
Val Pizzey,

Durham and Newcastle with Carlisle Branch
Jimmy and Margaret Guy

Gloucester, Hereford and Worcester Branch
Margaret Burston, Paul and family

Salisbury Branch
David Hall

Oxford Branch
Audrey Ashby, Hazel Knight, Molly Payne,
Heather Ringrose

Blackburn, Chester and Manchester Branch
Ann Woodward, Frank Woodward

RIP

You will be saddened to hear that one of our National Life Members, Charles Owen, has passed away

Please hold his family in your prayers at this time

May he Rest in Peace

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 MEMBERS

OLIVER HARCUS

Verger Oliver Harcus celebrates 25 years at Marks & Spencer, Kensington February 1997 to Present. I left Bredon School in Gloucestershire, aged 16, in July 1995, with really no idea in what I wanted to do career wise. In 1996 I started at South Thames college in Putney. During my 1st year at college, I studied NVQ Catering level one and NVQ Retail. Whilst the Catering course really didn't suit me due to my learning difficulties, the retail NVQ did, and I completed level two before I left.

During my time at college, we were all required to do work experience in a shop, my first work experience was at Topman, Clapham Junction, not far from where I live. At the end of the Topman placement, I thought I was going to work there for the rest of my life but, alas, it wasn't to be! A few months later I embarked on another work experience placement at Marks and Spencer's, Kensington – where I still am 25 years later!

I started working as a Saturday boy aged 17 in February 1997 and was supposed to do one week on foods and one week on Clothing. However, I did so well on Menswear they offered me a job and thus I worked on Menswear for 23 years helping customers on the shop floor and in the fitting rooms until I chose to go on furlough in March 2020, owing to the pandemic. In November 2020 I returned to work and was put on the front door directing customers down to the food hall, keeping them all socially distanced – which was a busy job! Then I was back on furlough from Christmas that year to July 2021. Since last July I have been working in the hustle and bustle of the warehouse in the store basement, stacking up the trolleys and baskets and dealing with store deliveries etc. This has been quite a change from being on the shop floor to working backstage and including some general office duties.

At Hallowe'en I stayed the night in the Hilton hotel in the West End of London and attended a West End show to mark my anniversary with Marks and Spencer. This was followed by a lovely day at our head office in Paddington, meeting other staff who have worked for the company for all these years.

Back in 1995, when I left school, my mother was anxious that I meet some new friends, preferably through a church community. An old friend suggested I go to Chelsea Old Church. My school was in rural Gloucestershire, so as you can imagine, I found coming back to London rather different than my six years in Gloucestershire! So I went to the Old Church for the first time, met The Reverend Peter Elvy, (the then incumbent) and the church wardens - and I'm still there all these years later!

I have been at the Chelsea Old Church for 26 years having been a Sidesman





(which is my title). I am not called a verger - that's my guild title - although I do the same work as a verger on a voluntary basis. In 2005 Peter and his wife retired and after a long interregnum David Reindorp became my incumbent for the next 15 years. He retired last year during the COVID pandemic. I am now on my third vicar, The Rev'd Max Bayliss, who was recently chaplain of Queens' College, Cambridge (nb the apostrophe does happen after the S here as the College was named after two Queens).

Within my role at Chelsea Old Church my duties include stewarding at services, assisting at Baptisms and helping at Communion, and when required, reading the lesson at services. I also help the vicar and our wardens run the services and taking the collection. At St. Paul's Cathedral my duties are serving at the altar, as is Hampton Court, but both are quite different to each other.

During my time at the Old Church I also became a server at St Paul's Cathedral (a position I have held for 12 years), which is where I carried the cross in the presence of the late Queen when St Paul's celebrated its 300th anniversary in 2011 as well as at other events both big and small. I was then 'head hunted' by the Chapel Royal, Hampton Court Palace a couple of years ago. Together with my paid role at Marks & Spencer and the other two churches I'm quite busy, but it's been a really interesting career for me and hope it will be for years to come.

I have also, in my time, been a deputy verger at St Clement Danes in the Strand which was great and really taught me what a wonderful job a verger does.

I have now been in the Guild for 12 years. The Guild way of doing things is so different from any of the Churches I have or I do work in.

So as not to get bored, I am also a member of the Company of Servers where I serve on the committee. Within the London, Southwark and Chelmsford Branch of the Guild, I am the Branch Correspondent. In the Guild I attend as many of the Festivals as I can and I regularly attend the Annual Training Conference and Retreat. I am also on the Committee for the sons of the Union veterans of the Civil War, which is an American civil war camp that has an re-enactment service at the Lincoln memorial in Parliament Square.

I hope you all have enjoyed reading this and wish you all a wonderful Christmas when it arrives.

Oliver Marcus
Chelsea Old Church, St Paul's Cathedral and Chapel Royal,
Hampton Court

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY



May 2023

A Festival has been offered by the York Branch for Sheffield Cathedral. More details to follow



11-13 July 2023

The Rev'd Thomas Cameron has offered to lead a pilgrimage to Walsingham



Monday 7 until Thursday 10 August 2023

Annual Retreat and Training Conference



Wednesday 27 September 2023

Croydon Minster has been offered by the London, Southwark Branch for a Festival. More details to follow



2027

The suggestion of returning to Leicester for a Festival to coincide with the 100th anniversary of the Leicester Branch of the Guild



2032

The 100th anniversary of the Guild. The proposal is that this might take place in York Minster as many of the previous major celebrations (75th & 80th) have taken place down South. There would be only one Festival this year and there will be both financial and logistical work from the National Guild

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

HER LATE MAJESTY QUEEN ELIZABETH II (1926-2022)

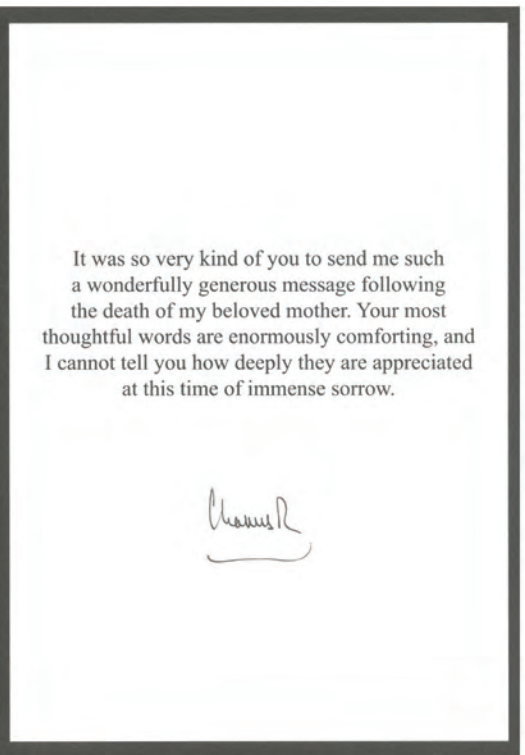
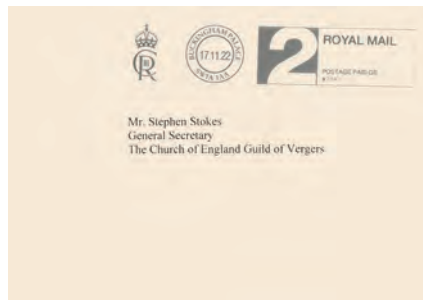
We were all saddened to hear of the death of Her Majesty The Queen, and Churches and Cathedrals rolled out tributes and the country went into mourning as the world watched on. I believe that, as a country, we showed the world "how things should be done". I hope that you would agree with me that both the Funeral Service at Westminster Abbey and the subsequent Committal Service and Interment at St George's Chapel, Windsor, were carried out with the correct level of solemnity and pageantry.

For me the most tear-jerking moment was when the Imperial State Crown, the Sovereign's Orb and Sceptre were removed from her coffin and returned to the High Altar. These objects represent the responsibilities and governance of the monarch, so their removal separated the late Queen from her crown for the final time. In light of the role held by Her Majesty, and now His Majesty King Charles III, as Supreme Head of the Church of England, on behalf of the Guild, I wrote a letter of Condolence to His Majesty.

I was overwhelmed when not so long ago, I received a response and I share these images with you here.

Long Live the King.

Stephen Stokes
CEGV General Secretary



AN HISTORIC AGREEMENT

Memorandum of Understanding

Subject: Vergers Guild of the Episcopal Church (VGEC) and the Church of England Guild of Vergers (CEGV) association.

There has been a long-standing consensus of a common unity of purpose within the VGEC and CEGV to uphold the office and ministry of the vergers in the Anglican Communion, by service, prayer, and fellowship. There has also been misunderstanding and confusion of what the associate membership status means within each guild.

John Kirby-Shearer, CEGV National Chairman, Stephen Stokes, CEGV General Secretary, Duke DuTeil, VGEC President, Diane Carlisle, VGEC Vice President, and Scott Smith, VGEC Past President, met during the 2022 VGEC Annual Conference to discuss this association. It was agreed that the two guilds desire to remain in association, but that the association needed clarification.

CEGV:

Members of the CEGV have the availability to become associate members of the VGEC. This associate membership will have voice but no vote in VGEC matters. This associate membership will have no dues associated with it. The process to become an associate member is:

1. Join the VGEC using the 6-month free trial membership at either try.vergers.org.
2. Once joining, the associate member will receive an email to set up their username and password in the VGEC membership database. Also in the email will be a link to a questionnaire which the CEGV member will be required to complete. This questionnaire will require the member to indicate their CEGV membership number.
3. Upon completion of the questionnaire, the VGEC will convert their trial membership to a CEGV Associate Member membership with no dues.

VGEC:

Members of the VGEC have the availability to become associate members of the CEGV. This associate membership will have voice but no vote in CEGV matters. This associate membership shall have no dues associated with it. The process to become an associate member is:

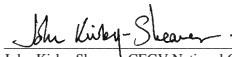
1. The VGEC member who wishes to become an associate member of the CEGV should contact the Overseas Membership Officer of the CEGV at: CEGVOverseas@gmail.com

Associate members of each guild will receive electronic correspondence and newsletters at no cost.

Active members of each respective guild are also welcome to become dues paying members of their sister guild. Members who have previously been dues paying members of the sister guild can opt to become non dues paying associate members by contacting the sister guild.

VGEC contact: support@vergers.org
CEGV contact: CEGVOverseas@gmail.com

This memorandum goes into effect upon ratification by each guild's governing body.


John Kirby-Shearer, CEGV National Chairman
7 November 2022


Claude "Duke" DuTeil, VGEC President
25 October 2022

At the last Executive Meeting an historic agreement between the Vergers Guild of The Episcopal Church (VGEC) and the Church of England Guild of Vergers (CEGV) was formulated.

Following the foundation of the VGEC in 1989 it has always been acknowledged that there was reciprocal membership between our two guilds, but this was disseminated by word of mouth and no proper avenues were made clear.

We have regularly welcomed many of the VGEC members to our Conference and equally many of our members have attended their conference and a warm welcome is always offered.

During the VGEC Annual Conference held in New York in September a meeting was held with the Presidents & some board members of the VGEC and the National Chairman & General Secretary of the CEGV to iron out the avenues for reciprocal membership, and a Memorandum of Understanding was issued and ratified by both Guilds.

As a member of the CEGV you are able to apply for Associate Membership of the VGEC – with no fees levied! And members of the VGEC can apply to Associate Members of our Guild – also with no fees being levied.

Members of the CEGV should contact support@vergers.org (with their membership number available) and likewise members of the VGEC should contact CEGVOverseas@gmail.com

More information can be found at www.vergers.org and our Statutes, which can be viewed and downloaded, on the Guild Website have also been updated accordingly.

This is a wonderful step forward for unity for our two Guilds.



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OUR ANNUAL TRAINING CONFERENCE AND RETREAT

MONDAY 7 AUGUST – THURSDAY 10 AUGUST 2023

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



If the answer is no, then think about it. This is a wonderful time for Fun, Fellowship, Friendship. Where we can meet new members and new faces and reacquaint 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.

Set in the beautiful Malvern Hills, with a heated swimming pool, en suite rooms, all meals (and any dietary

requirements) catered for. You are able to participate in as much or as little as you want, as well as have a say in how the Guild is run at the National AGM on Monday 7 August at 10.30am.

You can book for a day visit, or for the whole (or part) residence.

Please remember that the deadline for booking is 23 June, to qualify for the early bird discount 50% must be paid by 31 January 2023. Full payment must be received by 23 June. The Booking form

is available in this magazine and online. 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'.

Even if you have never been before you would be made to feel most welcome and it would a joy to have you with us.



FORTHCOMING ELECTIONS

The following roles terms of office are due to come to an end at the next AGM, the current role holders are all eligible for re-election:

- Media Officer, this role is becoming vacant in August. The role of the Media Officer is to oversee the publication of the Magazine and to keep the online presence of the Guild, both the website and Facebook, up to date. This is a three-year appointment.
- Training Administrator, this Officer works with the Training Officer

and is a prime point of contact for Candidates who are on or looking to embark on the Diploma, this is a three-year appointment.

- Shop Manager, this role is appointed by the Executive Committee, and looks after the Shop stock while also arranging for the shop to be set up at national events, this is a three-year appointment.
- Deputy Regional Representatives, this role is to deputise for the Regional Representative at Executive Committee meetings and in three years' time you would become

the Regional Representative [RR]. The RR is a valuable member of the Executive Committee who are involved in the management of the Guild. This role, for three years, is appointed at Branch Level in rotation of the Branches within each Region. Please speak to your Branch Officers for more information.

For further information and job descriptions, please contact the General Secretary, CEGVGenSec@gmail.com. A completed, and correct, Nomination Form must be received by 1 March 2023.



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A TIME TO CATCH ONE'S BREATH

On Tuesday 20th of September (the day after the funeral of Queen Elizabeth II), the second of this year's Quiet Days took place at Douai Abbey (our 'adopted' spiritual home).

It was anticipated to be a day of mixed emotions for numerous reasons but in the Chairman's welcome he felt that 'as we come together in these welcoming surroundings, we will be encouraged to shed a few tears, whether they be in sorrow or in joy or both, to listen, to laugh, to pray, and to be conscious of the needs of others. And, at the end of the day, to leave feeling fulfilled and with the knowledge that we have a God who loves each one of us dearly and constantly'.

The Rev. Marie Jackson (our Branch Chaplain) then led us in prayer incorporating the 'Seven Directions of Prayer', based on the four points of the compass, the sky, the earth and finally, turning inwards to ourselves.

The Speaker for the morning session was John Ledger, a member of the Mission Aviation Society (MAF) – Flying for Life, a well-known and highly respected Christian based charity administering through practical application using their fleet of small aircraft in 26 countries worldwide. For all those present it proved to be an enlightening presentation of MAF's formation, history, present day activities and future commitments – we are very grateful to John for his enthusiastic and encouraging insight to this much needed service in an ever increasingly troubled world.

Then followed some free time before replenishment was sought, firstly, for the soul by joining the Brothers in the Oratory for their Midday Service, and secondly, for the body by partaking of lunch served in the Refectory.

The afternoon took us to the small chapel within the grounds wherein we celebrated Holy Communion, sharing the bread and wine and the peace - a most appropriate way in which to conclude the day's proceedings.

And yes, there were tears and laughter and prayers, and we all listened and took strength from what we had heard and, hopefully, caught our breath!

Molly Payne
Oxford Branch Vice Chairman. October 2022

BLACKBURN, CHESTER AND MANCHESTER BRANCH

On Saturday 15 October 2022 the Branch held a Choral Evensong at Christ Church, Timperley. It was attended by 5 Vergers from Manchester, 1 from Chester and a visitor from Liverpool. The service was sung by Cantores Oecumenica, conducted by the church organist, Neil Provost. The organist was the Rector Chori of Southwell Minster, Mr. Paul Provost, who happens to be Neil's younger brother. As our Chaplain, Canon Adrian Rhodes, was unable to attend, the service was led by the new Parish Priest, Reverend Father Steve Dunton. The service was a joy to attend and enjoyed by all. As Paul had given his services free, I presented him with a donation to Southwell Minster's Music Department towards their Organathon fundraiser. The obligatory photo was taken. Refreshments were laid on after the service which were enjoyed by everyone there.

In December we have been invited to attend the Liverpool

Branch Christmas Eucharist and lunch at Liverpool Cathedral. It is hoped that many of our Branch will be able to attend.

On the 2nd February 2023, one of our members, Stanley Parkinson, is holding an Anniversary Eucharist to celebrate his 40 years as Verger of the Parish Church in Wrea Green, Preston. Stanley has asked that as many Vergers as possible attend this service. We just hope the weather will be in our favour! The service will be followed by refreshments. The Branch has recently been informed that two of our long standing members of the Blackburn Branch have both had to go into Residential Care. Frank Woodward has been diagnosed with terminal cancer and is in a hospice and his wife Ann has gone into a home in Blackpool. We ask your prayers for them both.

Freda Murphy, Branch Secretary



LEICESTER, PETERBOROUGH WITH DERBY BRANCH

Following the restrictions of COVID we are getting back to a full programme of meetings and we share the highlights of our year.

Back in June we admitted Marion Worrall as a full member of the branch at Holy Trinity Church Barrow on Soar. This was a very special service - Rev'd Clive Watts (Vicar of the Parish) thanked Pauline Haynes and a presentation was made on behalf of the Parish for her service as the parish vergers. Pauline will be known to many of you as she was a regular attender at the Conference and Provincial Festivals until recent ill health meant she was unable to continue in office.

On a lovely summers day we boarded a barge for a trip down the Cut, a scenic stretch of the Grand Union Canal from Loughborough to Mountsorrel and back, after mooring at a canal side pub for lunch.



Our October meeting was at Derby Cathedral to admit two full-time vergers and an associate member, using the new order for Admission to the Guild. As Training Officer, and supported by our Branch Chaplain Rev'd Arthur Deegan, we had the pleasure of welcoming Madeleine Newbury and Karen Whaley as Cathedral Vergers and Kim Hardy as an Associate Member. This was held during Choral Evensong in Creation tide with the Cathedral hosting the Gaia Exhibition. We also had the pleasure of welcoming the Midlands Regional Rep Pam Cobb and her husband Ian on their visit to our Branch before the end of her term in office.

We wish to thank Pam for her interest, encouragement and support shown to our branch since her appointment as Regional Rep and wish her every blessing as she hands on the baton at the end of the year. "Well done thou Good and Faithful Servant"



Recruitment Exercise

Following on from the very successful Worcester Festival where the branch had produced a booklet of messages from the Diocesan Bishops as part of the Guilds 90th Anniversary, I was pleased to see a letter from the Bishop of Leicester, + Martyn Snow, supporting the Guild. In conversation with his Chaplain on my return I asked if it would be possible to have a Branch meeting in his private Chapel at Bishop's Lodge. We are now arranging to have a Communion service in April when we intend to invite along to our meeting all those in our Parishes who act as Vergers - at Weddings, Funerals etc - who are not members. Hopefully with the encouragement of the Bishops blessing on our lay ministry some may see the fellowship we share and as a result of our outreach, join us.

Acts 2:47 Praising God and enjoying favour of all people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved

Branch Correspondent
Les Mitchelmore

OXFORD BRANCH

On 10th November 2022, members of the branch met at Oxford Christ Church Cathedral for Evensong. During the service two new members were admitted to the Guild - Liam Derry, who serves at the Cathedral, and Rory Darling, who serves at St John the Baptist, Burford. Other members of the Guild joined us for this delightful occasion. The atmosphere was warm, the music was uplifting, and the Cathedral staff were especially welcoming. Our thanks go to all involved, and may God's blessings rest on Liam and Rory.

Rev. Marie Jackson
Branch Chaplain



Left to right.
Back row: Mr. A. Hunt, Dan, Liam Derry, Dave French (Branch Social & Media), Rory Darling, Mrs Darling.
Front row: Mrs Judy Hunt (St John the Evangelist, Frieth), Lynnette Derry (St John the Baptist, Burford), Mike Golby (Branch Chair), Rev Marie Jackson (Branch Chaplain), Rev. Philippa White (Cathedral Precentor).

Picture: Taken by Dave French

Many of us have occasionally been in churches where the sermon left us a little wanting, and we found our minds wandering. For me, in my *much* younger days when I was a treble, the Choir would remain in place throughout the sermon – even when the “young church” went out to the Hall. So, to keep me from snoring too loudly, I would often read a book, or, on the occasions when I forgot to bring my latest ‘Famous Five’, I would turn to the Book of Common Prayer in the stall, and read through it all – some very interesting, some a close run thing with the sermon. However, two sections I read were at the beginning, the ‘Preface’ and the ‘Concerning the Service of the Church’. Little did I know that many years later I would be asked to write an article, for academic reasons, on the second Preface of the Book of Common Prayer ‘Concerning the Service of the Church’ so I felt I would like to share it with you.

CONCERNING THE SERVICE OF THE CHURCH

One of my main interests in *Concerning the Service of the Church* is to look at the reason why it was written in the first place, and how it was altered to keep in line with how the people of the day would understand it. In order to explore this I will firstly look at the history of *Concerning the Service of the Church*, then secondly look at how it has changed and thirdly look at how this impacts upon us today. To enable these to be looked at more closely I have attached an appendix showing the differing prefaces.



Since the first *Book of Common Prayer* compiled by Thomas Cranmer in 1549, the Preface has been included. This preface was continually used (with some minor alterations) in the Prayer Books of 1552 and 1559. In the revision to the *Book of Common Prayer* adopted on 20 December 1661, by both houses of the Convocations of Canterbury and York, a new preface was included (“The Preface”) and the old preface was retitled *Concerning the Service of the Church* (for

ease of explanation I will refer to this as the 1662 second preface).

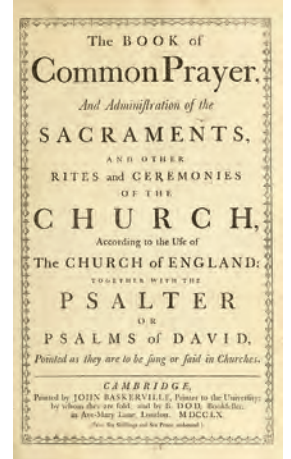
Cranmer based the original preface on Cardinal Quiñones’ (1475–1540) breviary of 1535. Cranmer originally included this in his second draft of the revision of Services which was written sometime between 1545 and 1548 in Latin.

The 1662 second preface is nearly identical to The Preface written in the 1549 edition. However, among the notable aspects that have changed is the omission, from the original, that “Furthermore by this ordre, the curates shal nede none other bookes for their publique service, but this boke and the Bible by the meanes wherof, the people shall not be at so great charge for bookes, as in tyme past they have been”. Prior to the *Book of Common Prayer* there was no single printed text for the congregation. Some had their own primers, however the level of literacy was low. In today’s church it is often the case that we need to have an order of service, a hymn book, a Bible, perhaps anthem words, and for the Officiant, their intercessions. Therefore, we are often trying to juggle all these different books while trying to come closer to God. The 1549 preface attempted to remove this and to have only the Prayer Book and the Bible. Some churches today have removed the need to have so many books in use by producing orders of service that include all the printed text, thus enabling us to concentrate on the words rather than on which page we have to turn to next.

Furthermore the section from the 1549 preface reads: “And if any would judge

this waye more painfull, because that all thynge must be read upon the boke, whereas before, by the reason of so often repeticion, they could saye many thinges by heart if those men will waye their labor, with the profite in knowlege, whiche dayely they shal obtain by readyng upon the boke, they will not refuse the payn, in consideracion of the greate profite that shall ensue therof.” This was not included within the 1662 second preface. The inclusion of the above shows that this was a move away from the pre-Reformation style of learning by rote owing to the lack of literacy and the cost of printing. The reciting of services by rote was seen by the Reformers as being too Roman and ritualistic. This, in my opinion, was not an entirely positive move! I believe that knowing the words by heart enables one to concentrate on the words and be prayerful rather than following the text. This does not in any way negate the need to follow an order of service and read the words for those who find more solace in this or who are not used to the words used today. As a diverse and inclusive church we have so many different patterns of worship that even the 1662 *Book of Common Prayer* service of Evening Prayer can differ from church to church!

Since the 1552 preface there is a provision for Bishops to turn to their Archbishops if they have any doubts in need of resolution. This emphasises the continuing episcopal structure of the Church. People who had problems with the patterns of service could raise this with their Bishop in the early days of change.



The 1662 second preface is mainly about how we the laity and clergy should use the *Prayer Book* for Divine Services. The preface sought to show the need for reform from the previous styles that had been adopted by the Church. This highlighted the inconsistency of how the Books of the Bible were read. This is noted where it mentions the Book of the Prophet Isaiah was started in Advent but then at Septuagesima the Book of Genesis would be started and Isaiah would not be completed. There was also the move, following the *Act of Uniformity* of 1549, to hold services in English rather than Latin so that the people would be able to understand what was being read to them and then be able to be edified by the Word.

The 1662 second preface also acknowledged that portions of the Psalms were not being read as they were in the *Liturgy of the Hours*, where many psalms would either be repeated or only a few used, meaning many were being omitted. The 1662 daily office lectionary allows us today to be able to read the

whole of the Psalms over a period of a month. It should be noted that today some psalms, and verses within some psalms, are omitted that are considered to be not in keeping with how some view the world today, this provision was introduced with bracketed verses/psalms that can be omitted in the 1928 *Book of Common Prayer* but again omitted in *Common Worship*.

Some churches have today moved away from strict adherence to the lectionaries of readings and psalms, and some churches use their own lectionary to meet the needs of their congregations. A good example of this is at St John's College, Cambridge, where the readings are set out so that the climax of the stories are not omitted owing to the vacation. During the vacation services do not happen as the 'congregation' of students has returned home.

For myself my love of the *Book of Common Prayer* emanates from its unchanging language over the past 450 years and knowledge that in most BCP

Churches the service will be, to a greater degree, unchanged. But then as now, "there must be some rules", even if they are not always followed!

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NATIONAL CONTACTS

National Chairman

Mr John Kirby-Shearer,
MA, Dip GV (Honoris), FCEGV
Mobile: 07891 168133
email: CEGVNatChair@gmail.com

General Secretary

Mr Stephen Stokes,
Dip GV (Hons), FCEGV
Mobile: 07968 111240
email: CEGVGenSec@gmail.com

National Treasurer

Mr Robert Beattie, MA
Tel: 01905 619429
Mobile: 07968 290319
email: CEGVNatTreas@gmail.com

National Chaplain

The Rev'd Rosemary Durward,
MLitt, MA, BSc (Econ)
Tel: 01932 860223
email: CEGVNatChap@gmail.com

National Membership Officer

Mr Andrew Wynn-Mackenzie
Mobile: 07940 769970
email: CEGVMembership@gmail.com

Training Officer

Mr Leslie Mitchelmore
Mobile: 07872 567390
email: CEGVTrainOff@gmail.com

Training Administrator

Mrs Susan Ansell, Dip GV
Tel: 01483 548980
email: CEGVTrainReg@gmail.com

Media Officer

Mrs Jane Gorrie
Mobile: 07866 401469
email: CEGVMedia@gmail.com

Welfare Officer

Mrs Irene Money, MBE, Dip GV
Tel: 020 8807 0232
email: CEGVWelfare@gmail.com

Conference Secretary

Mrs Denise Mead
Tel: 020 8688 5971 (Home)
020 8688 8104 (Work)
email: CEGVConference@gmail.com

Overseas Membership Officer

Mr John Campbell, BEM, FBGU, FCEGV
Mobile: 07733 276335
email: CEGVOverseas@gmail.com

Mailing Address

Mr Stephen Stokes, Dip GV (Hons), FCEGV
General Secretary
The Church of England Guild of Vergers
124 City Road
London
EC1V 2NX

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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