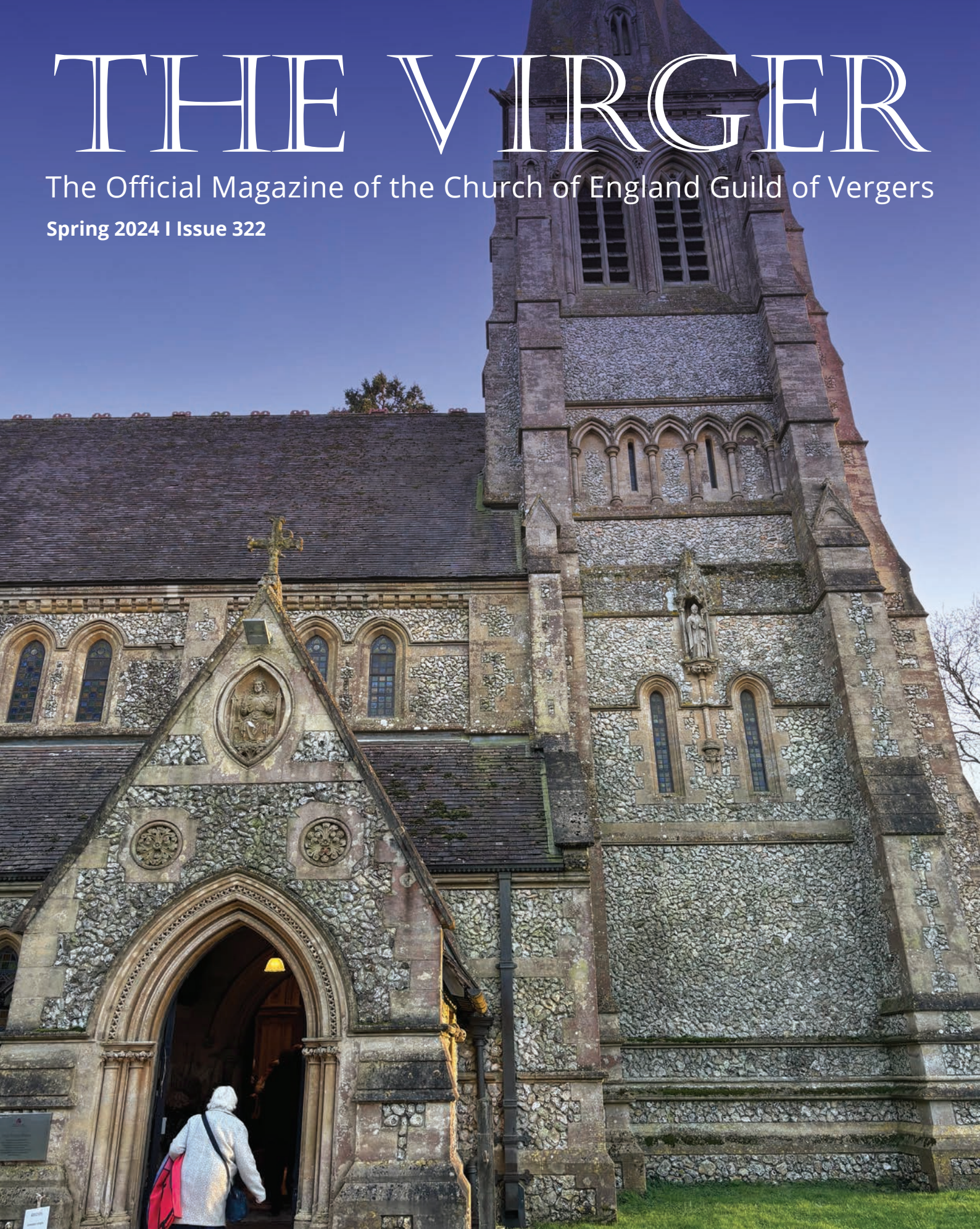


THE VIRGER

The Official Magazine of the Church of England Guild of Vergers

Spring 2024 | Issue 322



www.cofegv.org.uk



The National Chairman, John Kirby-Shearer, writes...



Welcome to 2024, a new year and a busy time ahead. In April, a newly formed group will be meeting in London to look at the future of the Guild. The Way Ahead Group has been made up of a Bishop, vergers from parish churches and cathedrals, members and non-members of our Guild along with our Standing Committee. The aim will be to discuss how we can attract new members and look at ensuring that our Guild can be a thriving organisation as we head towards our Centenary in 2032. Our churches and cathedrals are also changing, with buildings now being used more for secular fundraising activities and our services dovetailing into the available spaces in a hectic diary. The pressure is on all sectors of our community to be as financially solvent as possible. To this end, the role of the verger as we currently know it, is also under change. It is therefore important that our network is strong to ensure that we all offer support and fellowship to one another.

Over the past few months, we have lost some much-loved members of the Guild, and at this point I must pay tribute to Rosemary Durward. Rosemary was selected to be our third National Chaplain after the retirement of Canon Maureen Palmer. She joined us huge energy and dynamism and soon slotted into the Guild. One of her aims was to link up with all the branch chaplains and hold regular meetings with them via Zoom. It was with a heavy heart that Rosemary informed me that her cancer had returned and she felt that after 3 years with the Guild, she stepped down as our National Chaplain and we should seek out a new chaplain. This act showed great strength of character and foresight. During her treatment, Rosemary attended meetings and gave support to the Guild until Fr David was appointed. As National Chairman, it was a pleasure to have Rosemary as part of our team, her support and happy disposition will stay with me. She was always upbeat when we spoke and was a true inspiration to me and to many.

Please remember the Guild and all its work during your prayers during this Lenten season. Please uphold all branch officers and branches in their work during the AGM season. There are some branches who are struggling and others that are growing. I look forward to seeing as many of you as possible in person during our Annual Conference in the summer.

John Kirby-Shearer



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Holy Trinity Church, Privett



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.

The National Chaplain, The Venerable Dr David Jenkins, writes...

Dear Sisters and Brothers

One of the challenges of the magazine article is that it is often written well in advance of the moment when it will be read! I write this letter on the eve of Candlemas when it is time to consign the crib figures back into the loft for another year. We stand Janus-like, looking back through Epiphany and the Baptism of Christ to Christmas, and gazing forward to Lent and the Easter mysteries which will be upon us by the time you read these words.

Candlemas, like Christmas itself, is a good example of an occasion when Christian doctrine and tradition meets folklore and popular superstition to create an intriguing synthesis which only serves to enrich our spiritual understanding. Although there is plenty of evidence from early on in the Christian story that candles were indeed liturgically blessed on this day, this time of year was already highly significant within pre-Christian society. The pagan festival of *Imbolc* was celebrated on the eve of 2nd February, at the astronomical midpoint. This is also the date of the feast of St Brigid and in Ireland *Imbolc* became known as "St. Brigid's Day". St Brigid, along with St Patrick, is a patron saint of Ireland, renowned as the Abbess of Kildare and revered by early Irish Christians as the midwife of Christ and "Mary of the Gael". Central to the story of St Brigid was the guardianship of a sacred and eternal flame at her abbey of Kildare. In Irish homes, there were in ancient times many rituals around welcoming her pagan predecessor and namesake Brigid or Bride into the home and some of these pagan 'Brigid' rituals later became attached to the Christian Saint Brigid and remain in practice today. Indeed since 2023, St Brigid's Day is a national holiday in Ireland.

But what does the Feast of the Presentation mean for us today? We are the inheritors of this heady mix of pagan and Christian symbolism and belief; how do we make sense of it all? What today can we present to the Lord as we stand or kneel before Him? The penitential season of Advent and the self-inflicted self-righteousness of New Year resolutions have given us plenty of opportunity for us to look at ourselves in the spiritual mirror. So, in what condition do we present ourselves to Christ as we look to Lent and Easter and the Passion and Resurrection of our Lord? What spiritually enhancing sacrifices did we make during Advent? Have we begun cultivating a new virtue? Have we attempted to give up an old vice? Have we said our prayers? Have we set a Christian example to our neighbours? Have we thanked God for all that we have received? What has changed in our way of life since we celebrated the Birth of Christ just a few weeks ago? Does the flame of faith still burn in our hearts? Lots of difficult questions with even more challenging answers!

I suspect that for most of us the answers to these reflections will be underwhelming if not downright depressing. Yet if the Feast of the Presentation is about anything it is about encounter



and especially the encounter each of us may have with our Christ and saviour. Simeon and Anna had waited a lifetime to encounter the Christ and as soon as they set eyes upon this tiny child they knew. They knew and recognised him for what he was, the Son of God. For us perhaps the flame sometimes burns a little less brightly and we fail to recognise our moment of encounter. We talk much these days of a vocation under God for all but many of us stumble around failing to hear the call. Yet if the church is truly to be the body of Christ here on earth, then each and every one of us needs to have that encounter or at least be open to the reality, not the possibility but the reality, that Christ waits to meet all of us just as he did that day over 2000 years ago when he came into the lives of Simeon and Anna. So, one thing is certain: Christ is ready to meet us; the question is are we ready to meet Him this Lent and Easter?

I hope you all get a chance to have a well-earned rest over the post-Easter period. Until our next meeting every blessing on you all.

Yours in Christ
Fr David
National Chaplain





This Year's Annual Training Conference and Retreat THE MINISTRY OF WELCOME

Monday 5 – Thursday 8 August

Monday 5 — Session I

The Venerable Dr David Jenkins – National Chaplain and Archdeacon of Sudbury

Tuesday 6 — Session II

The Rev'd Canon Tim Goode –
Residentiary Canon for Congregational Discipleship and Nurture, York Minster

The Rev'd Canon Tim Goode. was brought up in Worcestershire. His father was a Vicar and Tim was a chorister at St Michael's Tenbury before gaining a music scholarship to Ellesmere College. Tim studied Music Composition and Performance at Huddersfield Polytechnic and trained as a secondary school teacher at the Roehampton Institute. He was a music teacher at St Philomena's School in Carshalton from 1991-1995, before being appointed Director of Music of Homefield School in Sutton from 1995-2007. He trained for ministry at Ripon College Cuddesdon and served his title at Croydon Minster, in the Diocese of Southwark, and was ordained priest in 2010.



Tim was Team Vicar of St Luke's Whyteleafe and St Peter and St Paul, Chaldon from September 2012 to May 2018, part of the Caterham Team Ministry. From 2013 to 2021 he was also the Southwark Diocesan Disability Advisor. He was appointed Rector of St Margaret's Lee in the Southwark Diocese in May 2018

Tim is a member of the National Disability Task Group, which advises the Archbishops of Canterbury and York on disability issues. A member of the General Synod between 2015–2023, Tim led the first debate on disability at the General Synod in July 2022. He was a member of the Archbishops' Council between 2020–2023. Tim was made an Honorary Canon of Southwark Cathedral in September 2020 and has been a trustee of the Churches Conservation Trust since November 2020. Since September 2023, Tim has been the residentiary Canon for Congregational Discipleship and Nurture at York Minster.

Tim has been married to Bernie since 1995. Tim is disabled and writes and lectures on the Theology of Disability. His particular academic interest is exploring how a Christian anthropology, founded upon the resurrected body of Jesus Christ, challenges our cultural perceptions of perfection.

Tuesday 6 — Session III

The Rt Rev'd Mike Harrison – Bishop of Dunwich

Mike has been the Anglican Bishop of Dunwich since 2016 and has a national responsibility for Pioneer Ministry in the Church of England. He has written on missional church, theological education and worship. Before 2016 Mike was a vicar in suburban South London, and then Director of Mission and Ministry in Leicester Diocese where, with colleagues, he developed the Fresh Expressions work and Pioneer Ministry as well as piloting diverse mission experiments.

Mike is married to Rachel, an Occupational Therapist and they are blessed with four children aged 21-29. He supports Bolton Wanderers football club and other lost causes.



Wednesday 7 — Session IV

TBC

Wednesday 7 — Session V

Brother Stuart Burns OSB – Mucknell Abbey

Stuart was ordained in Ripon Cathedral in 1969 and for the next 20 years ministered in Ripon Diocese in both urban and rural parishes, as a chaplain to Leeds University and Polytechnic and as chaplain to a large motorcycle club. In 1989 he joined the community of Benedictine nuns and monks at Burford in Oxfordshire, and in 1996 was elected to succeed the retiring Mother Superior. As abbot he oversaw the re-location of the community to Worcestershire, having bought the then derelict Mucknell Farm and had it transformed into a "sustainable" 21st Century monastery. After 21 years 'at the helm' he returned to the ranks of his sisters and brothers having handed on the abbacy to Br Thomas.



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The booking form is enclosed with this magazine and is also available on the Guild Website. For further details, please contact the Conference Secretary,
CEGVConference@gmail.com



Guardians of the Sacred

The term 'Guardians of the Sacred' is one which I first came across while reading the dissertation submitted for the degree of Masters by Research to Canterbury Christ Church University by Chris Crooks, sometime Vesturer of Canterbury Cathedral, and I should hope he will have a good laugh if he is reading this.

My first thought when I read the phrase was 'this must have applied in a bygone era when people were less civilised than they are now'. I had been told by the great man himself that we virgers were occasionally called upon to stop those who would otherwise try to disrupt services, and he recounted fondly an encounter with some protesters during an enthronement from before he came to Canterbury Cathedral. Still to me, this seemed like an awfully long time ago and that times were different back then.

Never did I imagine at that stage, I would be called upon to be the 'Guardian of the Sacred'. There had been many times when protests were threatened in and around Canterbury Cathedral and on one particular occasion, I even went so far as to ask what we were supposed to do should a protest be launched mid-service, and I remember one of my colleagues answered, rather humorously, 'That's what your virge is for!'. None ever materialised and as I relaxed into my role, every time the word protest was mentioned I found myself growing anxious, rather than my earlier and somewhat hot-headed attitude of 'BRING IT ON!'.

Owing to the rather unfortunate episode when Peter Tatchell forced his way into the pulpit during a sermon being given by the then Archbishop of Canterbury, George Carey, Canterbury Cathedral Virgers have a long and proud history of standing at the bottom of the pulpit steps whenever the archbishop preaches.

On this occasion, it was Remembrance Sunday, and the Dean was preaching. Through a catalogue of catastrophe's, I had ended up in charge of the civic service of remembrance and we were three team members down. Everything was running so wonderfully smoothly; no problem was insurmountable; no complication was too great. The Dean preached the first half of his sermon before the two minutes silence, I struck the bell to signify the start of the silence and the lone bugler echoed the mournful notes of the last post throughout the cathedral.

The sound of the reveille saw me spring into action, dashing through the pilgrims tunnel to get in position to take the Dean back during the hymn, I myself having forgotten we still had the other half of his sermon to go, but no bother, the organist had also forgotten! Once someone had told the organist to stop, the Dean resumed his sermon with a little joke, by which stage, I was situated by the bottom of the pulpit steps.

A way into the second half of the Deans sermon and one of the stewards came up to me and whispered in my ear 'There's a man!' my initial thought was a first aid emergency; however, this thought was quickly dissipated when an elderly gentleman began shouting up at the Dean about Gaza, mid-sermon. I do not recall what side the gentleman was on, but his agenda has no place here in any event.

Before I could reach the man, there was already a member of the public trying to pull him away. Not wishing to get in the way of any fists should they start flying, I hung back momentarily and saw out of the corner of my eye, the Chief Inspector, who was a civic guest and in full ceremonial uniform, come flying across the Nave to try and pull the man away. I sent a message out via the radio, to my colleagues to let them know (as if they weren't already aware) that we had a protester and to ask if one of them could summon the Cathedral Close Constables.

I know some reading this will agree that you can never find a policeman when you need one, but on this occasion, I was certainly not found wanting! No less than four police officers from the congregation got up and started to try and herd the man out of the cathedral. And as the group of them ushered him down the north aisle, he began to try and make tracks back (thankfully he had stopped shouting at this stage), but I stood firmly behind the police officers, virge in hand, ready to be the last line of defence if necessary.

Thankfully, the gentleman picked up his bags and was escorted out of the precincts by one of the Cathedral Close Constables, who when asking another member of staff to let the gentleman through, did so with the truly British phrase 'Excuse me, this gentleman is just leaving.'. It was only after the service, and with a broad smile, that I found out one of my younger and more agile colleagues at the west end of the cathedral had sprinted over to the Constables Lodge, fully robed and virge in hand, to inform them of the situation!

The Dean I must say handled the situation magnificently. He paused briefly to allow the gentleman to speak and continued with his sermon after the gentleman had left, with unshakable voice and undeterred heart.

After this, now second, unscheduled interruption to the Deans sermon, I positioned myself three steps up the stairs to the pulpit, fully robed, unruffled, and virge on full display to reassure those who needed reassuring; to remind those who needed reminding of where they were; and to guard the sacred.

Charlie Maggs
Canterbury with Rochester Branch

Stephen Short, Branch Treasurer, Canterbury with Rochester Branch, writes...

With members from across the counties of Kent and East Sussex, we try to offer a mixture of events throughout the year. Whether it's a day trip to the National Trust; an English Heritage castle; The Deans Garden at Canterbury Cathedral; a service at a members parish church; a bring and share lunch or simply a pub meal...it is our members who make these events all the more memorable.



So whether you have attended a branch event before or maybe never attended one, perhaps we might meet you this year? Our Branch Secretary will be contacting branch members with further details of forth coming events.



Photos from some of our events including the Treasurers favourite – fish & chips!

**Remember we are in
AGM season; Branches
are required to have
held their AGM by
31 March 2024.**

**Annual Returns need to be sent to the Regional
Representative, National Treasurer and the
General Secretary.**

Capitation needs to be sent to the National Treasurer.

**Full membership details (address, email, phone numbers
etc) need to be sent to the General Secretary.**

Les Mitchelmore, Branch Chairman, Leicester, Peterborough with Derby Branch, writes...

Our Branch met in January for our AGM with a gathering of 17 members from across our three Diocese, All our officers continue in post and our Branch is going from strength to strength with both Peterborough and Derby Cathedrals having new Vergers to Admit

This Photo was taken at Peterborough Cathedral on the 5th February when we attended Choral Evensong and admitted Malcolm Hopkins. (back row 2nd on left)

It was good to have Oliver Harcus visiting us on this occasion. Three new Vergers at Derby Cathedral will be admitted later in the Summer at Choral Evensong (date to be confirmed)



Heather Ringrose, Branch Secretary, Oxford Branch, writes...

No sooner have we completed Christmas celebrations and exchanged new year greetings (for a healthy and peaceful 2024, which we extend to our friends and colleagues within the Guild), than it is time to prepare for our Annual General Meeting and the year ahead – one that will have many challenges, collectively and individually.

The end of 2023 saw this Branch gathered at the Wee Waif Restaurant, Charvil, for our Christmas Lunch, and, although the final number was somewhat depleted, we were pleased to welcome amongst this number, our guests, including Alistair Banks (our Regional Representative), colleagues from St. Albans Branch and Canon Maureen Palmer, FCEGV. Once again, we were well attended to by the staff, in surroundings we now feel quite at home in, and the opportunity to be together, to share dialogue and a moment to reflect and give thanks for the blessings we had received.

We welcome two new members into our fold, and each will be admitted at forthcoming Branch functions; so far arranged are our usual two Quiet Days at Douai Abbey, on 23rd April and 10th September – both Tuesdays – to which other members are invited. For further information, please contact Heather Ringrose – Branch Secretary – on **01628 485836** or **heatherringrose8@gmail.com**

We were very pleased that Dave French, our Hon. Media Officer, attended Revd. Rosemary Durward's funeral on our behalf, and was privileged to join the robed procession.

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Su Graves, Branch Chairman, York Branch, writes...



Greetings!

2023 was a very up and down year for us. Sadly we lost 3 members over the year, each one will be greatly missed.

- Christine McLaren's Funeral was attended by 4 branch members, some robed.
- George Cook; sadly we only found out about after the funeral, surprisingly, as he had kept in close touch with the Rev'd Marian.

- George Lazenby; owing to an emergency I was unable to represent the branch. A letter was sent to the Vicar and church and another of condolence to his family.

May they all rest in peace and rise in glory.

Please remember them and their families in your prayers.

We are continuing to support Julia from Hull who is quite poorly.

We admitted 3 new members, 2 Vergers and an associate member.

Now that Sharon Beanland has retired we are seeing more of her, which is lovely.

We have met several times and found a new home at St Olave's, Marygate, York. The Deacon, Kingsley Boulton, who looks after us there, was Priested on Epiphany. We have sent him a card from the branch to congratulate him. (Kingsley is on the right of 'Saint' Ben)

The Christmas get together was well attended and as always it was good to meet up with so many friendly faces. "The Whippet" is on the far river bank between the 2 bridges. A quirky and eclectic pub, the Christmas lunch did not disappoint and very traditionally they hid the sprouts under the turkey! It was a memorable day as the Trans-Pennine was running between Leeds and York so we had the pleasure of Ian's company.

2024 is an exciting opportunity for us to try some new things.

Marian and I are planning a quiet/retreat day in early summer. Not forgetting Province festivals and the Annual Conference in August.

God bless.



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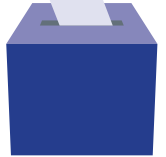


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Forthcoming Elections

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

- National Chairman This is a three-year appointment open to all Full members.
- General Secretary. This is a five-year appointment open to all members.
- Training Officer. This is a three-year appointment open to all Full members.
- Overseas Membership Officer. This is a three-year appointment open to all members.
- Media Officer. This is a three-year appointment open to all members.



**For further information and job descriptions,
please contact the General Secretary, CEGVGenSec@gmail.com.
A completed, and correct, Nomination Form
must be received by **30 April 2024**.**

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY



Tuesday 23rd April 2024

Quiet Day at Douai Abbey

Information from

Heather Ringrose 01628 4886836



Tuesday 10th September

Quiet Day at Douai Abbey

Information from

Heather Ringrose 01628 4886836



Monday 4 until Thursday

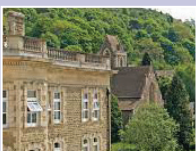
7 August 2025

Annual Retreat and Training Conference



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.



**Monday 5 until
Thursday 8 August 2024**

Annual Retreat and
Training Conference



There is a possible Festival Lite to be held at St George's Chapel, Windsor in October 2024. More details to follow.



2027

The suggestion of returning to Leicester for a Festival to coincide with the 100th anniversary of the modern diocese.

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

In Memoriam

Over the past few months, we have lost a few of our members, please take time to read their obituaries.

The Rev'd Rosemary Durward (25 February 1958 – 5 January 2024)



Holy Trinity Church,
Merepond Road, Privett



Funeral Eucharist
for The Revd. Rosemary Durward
25 February 1958 – 5 January 2024
Saturday 27 January 2024

On a cold yet beautiful afternoon 15 Members of the Guild of Vergers gathered in the small village of Privett, Hampshire, to say farewell to Rosemary.

The Rev'd Rosemary Durward was appointed by our National Chaplain during COVID times and she took to the role with ease.

The Church in Privett was packed, which showed the type of person Rosemary was, she was adamant not to have a Eulogy, which was a tall order to someone who had done so much. At the beginning of the service, the Rev'd Susie Collingridge, Area Dean, Petersfield Deanery and Priest in Charge of Steep and Froxfield with Privett welcomed us all, she listed a number of the organisations that Rosemary had been involved in, she welcomed Members of the Guild of Vergers recognizing Rosemary's past role as National Chaplain. The rod, or 'verge' used at the service was the Millennium Verge. She included in her welcomed her family and close friends who bring important memories from many years – moments of happiness, devastation, confusion, pride, joy, and plenty of boring normality. She welcomed those from Rosemary's childhood in Stoke D'Abernon in Surrey, or schooldays, at Lady Eleanor Hollis school, or university life in Aberystwyth or Aberdeen and Rosemary's studies of International Relations. Rosemary was, for 20 years senior tutor at Sandhurst Military Academy, lecturing on Peace studies, developing her fascination and expertise in the intersection between war and religion, she was also co-leader of





CCADD (Council on Christian Approaches to Defense and Disarmament).

She was also involved in many different churches from her own discernment and ministry, in Cobham, Notting Hill and East Horsley. She found time to be involved with children's work at Winchester Cathedral and could be seen as a duty chaplain at Westminster Abbey from time to time. During her Ministry, she was also Chaplain to the High Sheriff of Hampshire when Sarah Le May held the position,

this was a role that Rosemary particularly appreciated and enjoyed. She was also involved in the 'Sodality of Mary' whose fellowship Rosemary very much valued, especially during the pandemic period. But perhaps more importantly as a wife and mother as she supported the children and Keith while he worked abroad on business, she as the lynchpin of family life

Rosemary was aware of the restrictions that her cancer imposed upon her, and where possible tried to move beyond

this. Following the festival held at St Edmundsbury Cathedral in 2022 she had a difficult conversation with John Kirby-Shearer. Where she informed him that she felt that due to the progression of her cancer it would be time to step back from her role as National Chaplain, a role that she had loved and she had brought so much too, during her time she had re-galvanised the Branch Chaplains with a regular meeting of just them. The Guild wanted to mark Rosemary's time, albeit short but influential, as our Chaplain and



the Executive Committee conferred upon her National Life Membership.

During her time following this she still was a wise voice to many of us, and a support to David as he took on his role as our new National Chaplain. She was also planning her future, from ensuring she was at her son's wedding, and family holidays—her family was very important to her.

It was Rosemary's wish that her funeral and burial would be held in the church opposite the family home. The Church of the Holy Trinity, Privett, is a redundant Anglican church in the parish of Froxfield and Privett, Hampshire, England. It is now under the care of the Churches Conservation Trust. Careful thought to get heating, an organ and choir into the church were again all part of Rosemary's planning. At the start of the service, in a Church that was full to standing, Sue

Ansell, member of Rosemary's Branch, lead the Vergers to their seats while John, as National Chairman, lead the Clergy as Rosemary had been brought in the evening before. The Eucharist service was presided over by the Rev'd Renos Pittarides, Rector of East Horsley with Area Dean, Leatherhead Deanery, and many other Clergy either involved or as part of the vast congregation.

The service again, was meticulously planned by Rosemary, to include the music. The Choir opened the service with William Croft's Funeral Sentences and Psalm 121 set to Henry Walford Davies' chant. The Soprano soloist, Alice Howell sang the aria 'I know that my Redeemer liveth', from Handel's Messiah and Faure's 'In Paradisum' at the Commendation.

During the last hymn, Sue led the Vergers out to form an honour guard in

the churchyard as John led the Clergy, Rosemary followed by the Family to the graveside where she was laid to rest.

I know that many more vergers wished to have attended and they were with us all in spirit. It was truly a remarkable service.

May she rest now in peace.

Stephen Stokes

A collection was taken for The Rosemary Foundation, which is an at home palliative care service providing 24hr nursing and bereavement counselling in North, East and Mid-Hampshire.

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John Lazenby

(14 April 1937 – 19 November 2023)

It is with great sadness that I write about the passing of John Lazenby. John was Verger of St Mary's Church, Thirsk, North Yorkshire for 54 years, first taking up his post in 1961 under Reverend Dudley Hill. However, John's association with St Mary's Church didn't just start there, because he joined the Choir of St Mary's as a boy in 1946, he would fondly recall back then that all the choir stalls were full of men and boys.

John Lazenby was born in Thirsk on 14th April 1937, he attended School in Thirsk and also worked in Thirsk and its surrounding area. In 1955 John received his calling up papers, to do National Service with The Green Howards, and this was to take him to Hong Kong. In his later life John often would say how good National Service was for young men and should never have been stopped! John was happily married to his wife Pam, and they had a son called Richard.

For many people in Thirsk, he is remembered as being a diligent and very jovial Postman. When John worked for the Post Office it involved an early start in the morning, however this also meant an early finish, and after work John would often rush to Church to assume his role as Verger to assist with funeral services.

John was a very loyal and committed Verger to St Mary's Church, a familiar figure to his local branch of the Guild of Vergers, and a proud recipient of Life membership of the Guild. John hardly ever missed a Sunday service, he served under 6 Rectors at St Mary's, and was much loved by our Congregation. Before John retired as Verger, he chose a successor, and after a three-year period of sharing the role, and with John's guidance, I can proudly say I am now Verger of St Mary's Church.

God Bless you John.

Paul Pepper B.A (Hons).
Verger, St Mary, Thirsk



John with the late Doreen Cook



George Henry Cook

(3 September 1931 – 17 October 2023)

George was born in Redcar in 1931. Mum had wanted to call him Robert but a matriarchal grandmother insisted as he was the first grandson he must take the traditional family name of George Henry.



Two bouts of pneumonia resulted in a childhood plagued with illness that meant a recovery period of 18 months which made him extremely late starting school. Grandma wanted the best of education for him so paid for him to go to "Sir William Turner Grammar school" in Redcar. He did well in academic subjects Maths, Physics, Chemistry, Latin and French and played both Cricket and Rugby but never managed to learn how to swim.

On leaving school his father secured an apprenticeship at ICI as an Instrument Artificer.

National Service in REME saw him train as a Technical Clerk. He was posted to Korea which he described as "Quite an experience" with R&R being spent in Tokyo seeing the sights. His return to England brought him back via the Panama Canal which he said meant he'd circumnavigated the Globe at the age of 23.

On return to Redcar he went back to ICI and there began many different roles that all added to his skills, eventually leading to management. One of his moves took him to "Alpha and Beta Naphthylamine" that was to play a major part of his later life. Going into the plant workers had to strip to underclothes dressed in freshly laundered work clothes the reverse on leaving after a 10 minutes shower, and leaving a urine sample. This was to continue for many years even after leaving the plant until Astra Zeneca contacted him in 2013 and further tests revealed Cancer connected to his work all those years before.

A friend Geoff demobbed at the same time lived in Cleckheaton and when George went to visit his pal and his, he was introduced to her sister, she was a nurse SRN, was a degree qualified theatre sister, and was training to be a midwife. The rest as they say is history!. Doreen moved north and became a theatre sister in Middlesbrough and lived in the Nurses home until they married in Heckmondwike in 1956. They were blessed with 2 children Philip and Wendy. They celebrated their diamond wedding in March 2016.

Strenuous and heavy workload led to a breakdown and eventually he left ICI after 30 years of service.

On recovery he began work initially for a company in Staines which took him all over the country and away most of the week from the family. Later he decided to be self-employed, and found himself in great demand, a role that was to take him all over the world. Doreen at home was heavily involved in work for the church and was for a time a local councillor.

Holidays were very important to this couple with busy lives and they had initially holidayed in the UK but later Spain, Italy and Greece. Friends invited them to go on a cruise and they were hooked and cruised ever after mainly to the Caribbean and the Mediterranean, with one half world cruise from Hong Kong back to Southampton.

In 2008 Kirkleatham hosted the York Vergers Festival when Doreen was made the first female Fellow of the Guild of Vergers. Often she would go to London for executive meetings and with George alongside always went to the annual conference. George became a regular at Vergers events and eventually took over running the Guild shop. For many years George was one of the Guild until it was realised he was not a Guild member although he had been a supporter for many years. George was made a National Life Member of the Guild, something I know he was proud of.

2008 saw George and Doreen move to the William Turner Almshouses (just across the road from what had been the Grammar school now a museum

There George became secretary of the residents Association where an active committee organised many events for the residents. George also with his vast engineering and technical experience offered his services to the residents sorting out TV's computers, and domestic electrical repairs.

A valued member not only as a resident of the Almshouses but also a valued member of the Guild of Vergers

When Doreen died at the height of the Covid outbreak George always regretted not being able to give her the funeral she deserved with only 7 of us present at her graveside. A memorial was always a plan but sadly never came into being as George's health began to fail.

This article was written in first instance by George Cook

Edited by The Rev'd Marian Gardner
Chaplain, York Branch

Edward James (Jim) Boughton

(29 January 1938 – 4 January 2024)

It is with great sadness that we announce the passing of Jim Boughton, a member of the Canterbury with Rochester Branch of the Church of England Guild of Vergers and served on the Branch's Committee..



Jim was always willing to help his colleagues and was a long-time active member of our Branch.

Quietly spoken, Jim was always willing to support, organise and manage events with his dear wife Pat.

On one occasion Jim explained that he had been a Virger for Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth The Queen Mother, when she attended church whilst in residence at Walmer Castle.

Being a new CEGV member, I only knew Jim for a couple of years, however I for one will miss his presence and his smile. Our thoughts and prayers are with Pat and family at this time.

Stephen Short

In a recent email, it was noted by a member that 'there is very little information in the CEGV Magazine'. A reminder that we can only publish what we are provided. With 15 Branches, only 4 have sent in reports to this edition of the Magazine. We would love to hear from more of you. Please note the deadline for the next magazine.

The editors

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**.

Blackburn Branch

Freda Murphy, Anne Woodward

Chichester Branch

Sue Ansell

Oxford Branch

Michael & Betty Golby, Audrey Ashby
Heather Ringrose, Molly Payne

Somerset & Avon Branch

Marek Barden, Chris Eynon

St Albans Branch

Jackie Rudom, Peter Hudson

HQ Member

Roger Lawrence

His Majesty King Charles III

RIP

Rosemary Durward (Priest)
Jim Boughton
George Cook
John Lazenby
Gary John Hargreaves
Brian Willett

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.



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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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