

# THE VIRGER

The Official Magazine of the Church of England Guild of Vergers

Summer 2024 | Issue 323



[www.cofegv.org.uk](http://www.cofegv.org.uk)





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



**T**owards the end of March, the weather reporters were reminding us that Spring has sprung and all the spring flowers were much in abundance. My heart started to lift in the joy of seeing daffodils, banks of crocuses in the Meadows in Edinburgh and delicate snowdrops sprouting in our gardens. It is a time when Lent has passed, and we have celebrated the joy of Easter with the resurrection of our Lord.

Alas, from my experience in the capital of Scotland, it was far from the truth. Heavy rain and high winds were constantly with us day after day. Very carefully, news reports started to show how all the rain, which was not just in Edinburgh but around the country, was affecting our crops and devastating our farmlands. As I journeyed to London on the train where green fields should have been, all I could see was water. My heart went out to the farming communities for the huge amount of damage that they

were experiencing, and their livelihoods were at risk. Add this to the cost-of-living crisis that our governments are highlighting, the picture all round is rather gloomy.

As I write this letter, I do believe that Spring is here, and we have turned the corner. The sun is shining and the lawn needs cutting. New chutes are growing in the garden, leaves on the rose bushes and blossom on the trees. It is a time for growth not only in the garden but in your day-to-day activities with the lighter evenings. As vergers the gloom of a dark church is lifted, and we can admire the beauty of our surroundings. Many of our churches, sometimes referred to as a pile of stones, have stunning architecture and stained-glass windows. They can bring comfort and solace to some and joy to others.

As vergers, our role as the welcoming face to the church can be much valued. It is too easy to become negative as we find tourists trampling over our clean floors and upsetting the kneelers in the pews. It is important that our first reaction leaves a lasting and positive response on visitors, tourists and pilgrims.

As a Guild, we have much to look forward to this year. Our annual conference in the Malvern area, and a day in Windsor Castle in October. I do hope that as many of you as possible will be able to join us at forthcoming events.

**John Kirby-Shearer**



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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 Ven Dr David Jenkins, National Chaplain writes...

Dear Sisters and Brothers

Some of you may know that before coming to Suffolk I was a residentiary canon at Carlisle cathedral. Several years ago, I came into the cathedral at 7.30am on the Monday after the Sunday celebration of the Ascension to say the morning office as we did every weekday. As I sat down in my stall, I noticed a picture sitting on my seat. I instantly recognised the distinctive artistic style to be that of my eight-year-old daughter Niamh. It was a picture of a redheaded Virgin Mary looking up at a pair of feet disappearing into the clouds with a speech bubble coming out of the clouds enclosing the word 'Bye'. This drawing was undoubtedly artistically primitive, perhaps even theologically suspect, but it was also instantly recognisable as a visual depiction of the Ascension. Indeed, if one takes the biblical text as a guide then the sight of a pair of feet disappearing into the clouds is possibly not too far off the mark.

My daughter's attempt at drawing what the Ascension of Christ might have looked like to those who were present has a long and honourable history. Down the Ages artists have made many attempts, with varying degrees of success it has to be said, to depict in visual image what the act of Ascension might have looked like to those who were witnesses and to be honest my daughter's take was as good a guess as anyone else's.



I begin my letter for this edition of the magazine with this story because I am writing in that period between Ascension Day and the Feast of Pentecost as we await the coming of the Holy Spirit amongst us. I marked this Ascension Day with a gravity defying climb to the top of Lavenham church for an early morning act of worship and a view of the stunning English countryside that could not be bettered. It was truly divine.

Of course, while the Ascension marks the end of Jesus's ministry it is not an end but a beginning. The Great Commissioning at the end of Matthew's gospel; the exhortation at the end of both Mark and Luke's gospel to go out into the world and preach Christ crucified; the promise at the end of Luke's gospel that Jesus was soon to send the Holy Spirit to them; and the commissioning of Peter at the end of John's gospel; all these things speak of what is to come. The reader is left in no doubt that whatever else the Ascension might be it is also a beginning and a catalyst.

We, of course, are part of that 'what next?' Whatever the truth about the actuality and detail of the Ascension event the important message for every believer is that even though Jesus is now absent *physically* from the earth, he is still *spiritually* present with his church, the Body of Christ on earth. We all lead very busy lives, and the last few months will have been no exception but in the midst of the busyness we recall that what we do we do in the name of our Lord. No matter how mundane a task, or how lowly a calling, we are all part of the ongoing narrative of God's redeeming love for his world and we all play a vital part in that unfolding drama.

I am looking forward immensely to seeing as many of you as possible at this year's conference in West Malvern. This is always a wonderful occasion for study, retreat, fellowship and just plain good old-fashioned fun so do please try and join us. See you there!

Yours in Christ





# Executive Committee Round-Up



**T**he Executive Committee met in April at the Royal Foundation of St Katherine, in Limehouse, London. During this meeting we received an update of the Way Ahead Group – which is also in this magazine.

The two other main areas that were discussed was the following:

National Chairman Terms of Office – A paper was written by our legal advisor detailing that the current Statutes were outdated for the needs of the Guild, the National Chairman was the only role within the Guild that set a number of terms limit. The statutes stated that a person may serve a three year Term of Office as National Chairman, and then stand for a second three year term, but at this point must step down for at least one period of three years before standing again – should they wish – it was felt that, considering how every other term of office for a position allowed a person to stand for as long as they wished, that the National Chairman should fall into this routine. It should be noted that this does not and should not mean that they should stand unopposed and should a person wish to stand for a role they must not feel that just because a person is willing to stand that they should not stand against.

This paper was presented to the Executive Committee for consideration, and following a discussion an anonymous vote was taken – overseen by the National Chaplain who is not able to vote – the result of this was unanimous support of the paper and the Statutes were agreed to be adjusted with immediate effect. The paragraph within section 1.1 of the Statutes was adjusted to:

On completion of their three-year term they may choose to stand for election for one further consecutive term of three years. There is no limit to the number of consecutive terms a person may serve as National Chairman

This is available to be viewed on the Guild's website under 'Downloadable Publications' where the Statues have been updated.

This now means that if our current National Chairman, John Kirby-Shearer, wished to stand again he would be eligible to do so.

GDPR advice – One of the other areas of discussion held was the use of work emails for guild correspondence. It was advised that should we receive any information that would be considered a protected Characteristics of GDPR, the

seven main Protected Characteristics are:

- age.
- disability.
- gender reassignment.
- marriage or civil partnership (in employment only)
- pregnancy and maternity.
- race.
- religion or belief.
- sex.

If we receive any of this information from the Guild or any other organisation into our work email accounts we may be opening ourselves up to a potential breach. The reason for this is that our employers own the work email account and have the right to access our email and therefore have access to this data that is not work related.

It is recommended that we use personal email accounts to receive this information and if we are Officers of the Guild – be this National or Branch – we do not use work accounts.

Should you be currently doing so please update the General Secretary with a new email address.

# Vocations

**S**ermon Preached on Vocations Sunday at St John's College Chapel, by the Dean of Chapel, Revd Dr Victoria Johnson

St Thérèse of Liseux was someone who thought long about what her vocation might be. She was a young nun, born in 1873, and reflected on how and why she was being called. She prayed to God with these words: *I seem to have so many vocations!* She felt called to be a soldier, a priest, an apostle, a doctor, a martyr, a missionary. How did she discern her call, her vocation? In the end Thérèse remembered that she was part of the body of Christ. This wasn't just about her. Her identity and her calling was found in him. She came to the conclusion, that her vocation wasn't a job, or a role, it wasn't even about being a nun. Her vocation was to inhabit, to follow, to live out the very nature of who God is: pure, unbounded love. Without this love, she said, there would be no church, and this love is the motivating force which enables members of the church to act. Love, in fact, is the vocation which includes all others; it's a universe of its own, comprising all time and space, said this young woman who gave her life to Christ. Perhaps Thérèse's words can encourage each one of us to spend some time thinking, not necessarily about

what course we complete, or what job we do- not about how much we earn or the letters after our name, but about God's will in our life, and in the life of our communities. God's call in our lives does not promise to be easy or comfortable, or even free from pain and sorrow. But it does promise to be the means by which we find our fulfillment, where we live out our resurrection faith and where we become people made in the image of love.



## Mr John Campbell & Mr Colin Beevers

**O**n behalf of the entire Lincoln and Southwell Vergers Guild we would really like to express our deepest gratitude to Mr John Campbell for the remarkable service as our chairman for the past three decades. Also Mr Colin Beevers as our long standing secretary. Their unwavering

dedication, wisdom, and leadership have been instrumental in shaping our Guild into what has been and still is a strong and supportive community still today.

Their passion for Faith, friendship and mission and their commitment to excellence have truly been an

inspiration to us all. Their guidance and mentorship have touched countless lives within our guild and I'm pretty sure beyond. As they both embark on this new chapter in their lives, please know John and Colin that your legacy will continue to live on in the hearts of those you've touched.

We wish you all the best in your new well-deserved retirement-ish lives !! May this new journey be filled with joy, peace, friendship and fulfillment.

May God bless you both as you continue to bless all those around you.

With warmest wishes from all at The Lincoln and Southwell Branch of the Guild of Vergers

**Joanna Blanchard**  
Branch Secretary





# 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 Guild Chaplain and Archdeacon of Sudbury

### Tuesday 6 — Session II

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

Revd 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

Brother Stuart Burns OSB  
– Muchnell 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.



### Wednesday 7 — Session IV

The Rev'd Wendy Dalrymple  
– Precentor, Residentiary Canon Designate, Canterbury Cathedral

Prior to ordination, Wendy was a Youth and Community worker, working in faith-based and secular settings, including for the YMCA where she ran projects in prisons. She served her curacy in the Mirfield Team Parish in Wakefield Diocese before becoming the first chaplain to the Sir Robert Woodard Academy in Lancing, West Sussex. She spent three years in Guildford Diocese as Priest-In-Charge of a rural multi-parish benefice, and for the past eight years has been Rector of All Saints with Holy Trinity, Loughborough in the Diocese of Leicester where she has fostered an inclusive approach to both the pastoral and liturgical life of the church. She has also served as Area Dean, Chair of House of Clergy and most recently as a General Synod representative.



She has been attending Greenbelt festival for more years than she cares to remember, and likes nothing better on her day off than a long walk followed by a boxset binge. She is married to Chris who is a retired Police Officer which gives him more time to enjoy his love of wildlife and the countryside, particularly fly-fishing. They have three grown-up children, two grandchildren, and two canine companions, Angus and Thorn.

## Wednesday 7 — Session V

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.

**Do not miss out on this wonderful line up, Book now.**

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](mailto:CEGVConference@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**.

**Blackburn, Chester and Manchester**  
Freda Murphy, Anne Woodward

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

**Chichester, Guildford and Portsmouth**  
Sue Ansell

**Somerset & Avon**  
Marek Barden, Chris Eynon

**St Albans**  
Jackie Rudom, Peter Hudson


**HQ Member**  
Roger Lawrence

## For those who have died

Bill Butler – London, Southwark and Chelmsford

**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 Way Ahead Group

In April, a small group gathered in London to discuss the future of the Guild of Vergers. The areas covered were the management of the Guild and their branches, magazine and communication, the officers of the Guild, links with other organisations. We opened with a general discussion session when everyone around the table expressed their viewpoints on how the Guild did or didn't work.

The group comprised of a Bishop, a new member of the Guild, Standing Committee and a few of selected members. After the first session, it became very evident that the Guild of Vergers were not the only organisation that were in a similar situation.

Recently we have sadly been in the situation where branches have closed due to the ageing population and reticence of members willing to step up to undertake branch officer roles, coupled with dwindling numbers.

The first session dealt with the management of the Guild. We currently have branches around the country, with at least three officers managing each branch. The aim of the branches is to give local support and fellowship for our members. With the difficulties now facing branches in finding volunteers to take on roles within their branch, it is now a suggestion that branches should remain in situ, but the administration be centralised. This will do away with the formality of AGM's, formal meetings and all financial aspects of running a branch. The suggestion is that members will pay directly to headquarters and all funds will be submitted to the Central Fund. Each branch will have a coordinator who will be the link between headquarters and members. Any visits, tours or meals will be funded by those who attend in their areas and information will be sent directly to members from the centre of the Guild. It was suggested that spiritual support would still be required by local chaplains. As a result of these changes, it could assist smaller groups to be reformed rather than the very large branches that have now created problems of travel around the branch.

To assist with the new branch set up, the role of the Regional Representatives and their deputies was the next item for discussion. It was generally felt that the current system was clearly not working. Their ongoing role was examined, and it was felt that there is a need for a representative to be a link with several branches in their area and be able to give support when needed and be a voice on the senior management committee. The complex system of selection needs to be simplified.

The make-up of the senior management team was also discussed. All the posts currently held by members who serve on the Executive Committee and appointed posts were looked at by the working group. It was generally felt that tightening the roles and look at updating job descriptions and strengthening job roles with the view to becoming a more professional organisation.

The Virger Magazine was discussed the next session. It was generally felt that the overall tone and quality of the magazine has improved over recent years. The wider range of articles was felt to be a good thing. The usual points were covered about size of the magazine, paper quality and number of editions were also discussed. The central posting out of the magazine four times a year was now embedded into our way of life and should remain. It is important that all members should inform headquarters on any changes in personal information so that records are up to date.



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Greater use of electronic media was needed with use of the website and current social media sites such as Instagram should be embraced, with the correct checks and balances. Training is a large part of what the Guild is all about. We currently have the Training Course, which has a Foundation Unit and three other units which culminates in being awarded an in-house Diploma. It was felt that the contents is in constant need of updating to meet the changing requirements of today's church. This will equip vergers to embrace the changes that are required in the workplace and become a creditable entity to the Church as a whole. The annual conference and retreat serves a huge purpose, but is in grave danger of becoming a monster. It was agreed that the programme should be looked at to enable a stronger teaching element with updated training issues being covered, but mindful that it is also a time for retreat as well as learning. It is a time for fellowship along with the festivals that are currently organised. Costs, organising events around the country were outlined and work on reshaping our times together will need to be looked at.

The issue of recruitment of new members is a recurring subject, but it was felt that over the past few years, the membership of the Guild has attracted younger and new members and this is not so much of an issue to worry about at the moment.

There was a suggestion that links should be explored and strengthened between the Deans' Vergers and the Vergers Guild of the Episcopal Church. Some work has already started with the VGEC with the Memorandum of Understanding which formalises our links between the two Guilds.

The initial discussions that were undertaken by WAG gave the current Executive Group a great deal to think about and it now the hard work begins in teasing out solutions to the suggestions that were made. It is important to note at this point, that there will have to be changes and some hard decisions will have to be made to enable the Guild to move forward and survive into the future. The implantation will have to traverse through the usual channels over the coming months. It is important that all our members are part of this process to enable the Guild to thrive so please remember the Executive Group in your prayers as we move forward and embrace the changes that are needed.

**John Kirby-Shearer**

## DATES FOR YOUR DIARY



**Tuesday 18 June**

Oxford Branch visiting St John's Church, Mortimer, including admission of new members  
Information from  
Heather Ringrose 01628 4886836



**Tuesday 10th September**

Quiet Day at Douai Abbey  
Information from  
Heather Ringrose 01628 4886836



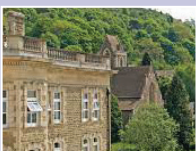
**Monday 4 until Thursday  
7 August 2025**

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



**Thursday 3 October 2024**

A Festival Lite to be held at St George's Chapel, Windsor. Booking form included with this magazine.



**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**

# Forthcoming Elections

**O**n 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 following elections are to be held at the Guild's AGM at 10.30am on Monday 5 August 2024. All Full members of the Guild are welcome to vote, whereas Associate members are welcome to attend and have a voice but are not entitled to vote. Should you wish to cast an absentee vote, this can be done only in writing stipulating the following:

- Position you are voting for
- Your name – your details will be redacted but this information is requisite to ensure a fair voting system
- Your Branch
- That you are a Full member
- And your Vote – either for a nominated person or for RON – RON stands for Re-Open Nomination

These must be received by Friday 26 July 2024 with the General Secretary – please contact the General Secretary [CEGVGenSec@gmail.com](mailto:CEGVGenSec@gmail.com) (details on the back page) for a postal address.

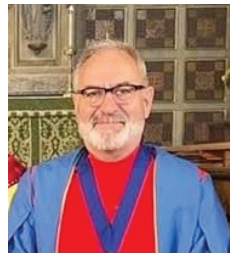
The positions for election are:

- 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.

Completed and correct nominations have been received from:

**National Chairman – John Kirby-Shearer** (following the adjustment to the Statutes as noted in the Executive Roundup)

John has been National Chairman for the past seven years. Previous posts held within the Guild have been Training Administrator, Training Officer and Guild Chronicler, an Area Leader and Branch Secretary and Branch Chairman. He has been a verger in three churches, two in London and one in Bristol. Before becoming a verger he was an senior administrator in three London hospitals.



**General Secretary – Stephen Stokes**

Stephen has been General Secretary for the past 12 years. Within this time he has striven to make the Guild a more professional and accountable organisation working closely with the Chairman and Officers of the Branches. He has served as Verger in three Churches, having been at St John's College, Cambridge for the past 17 years.



**Training Officer – Leslie Mitchelmore**

It has been his pleasure to serve the Guild over the past 3year term of office as Training Officer. He has enjoyed the opportunity of meeting together at Conference and Festivals and building on friendships together in learning and



worshiping, meeting new and long lasting members, listening to what each group needs from Conference.

Les offers himself again for election as National Training Officer . He will commit to offering Good speakers ,Quality Worship, Thoughtful Prayer time and a good Social Down time to relax with. He thanks you all for your support and friendship and he looks forward to serving The Guild as National Training Officer for a further term if so elected

**Overseas Membership Officer – Charles Maggs**

Charles is a full time Virger at Canterbury Cathedral. He joined the Guild in 2022 and attended



his first conference the following year in 2023. Almost as soon as he joined the Guild, he began the Guild Diploma, which he have thoroughly enjoyed and have recently submitted the final unit.

He has lived in East Kent all his life, and he is very fond of his little corner of England. Whether it is walking leisurely through the chalky grasslands that surround his hometown, or pounding the familiar streets on his way to work, he loves the landscape, the people, and the distinctive East Kent accent!

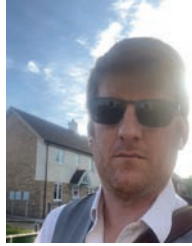
In 2024, he was honoured to be asked to serve on the 'Way Ahead Group' which seeks to help shape the Guild into the future and ensure it not only survives, but thrives.

For this reason, he has decided to stand for election as the Overseas Membership Officer as believes that Overseas Members are an important part of the Guild going into the future and he feel that he can bring fresh ideas to the Guild through this office.



### Media Officer – Jason Stevenson

Jason is a longtime resident of Boston, Lincolnshire, and is thrilled to share a bit about myself as he seek the role of Media Officer within the National Executive of the Guild of Vergers.



His faith journey began nearly thirty years ago at a charming place the locals call the Boston Stump. Although he wasn't raised in a deeply religious family, one Sunday morning changed everything. Invited to assist at the altar by their new curate, he soon found his niche and even managed the occasional mishap with the incense as a thurifer during major services.

Outside of church, he is an avid cyclist, using his bike not only as a way to keep fit but also as a means of connecting with the

community and the beautiful Lincolnshire landscape. This hobby has given him a unique perspective on sustainability, which he brings to his roles on two parish councils. Here, he is particularly proud of leading a project to develop a new, self-sustaining council website designed to be cost-effective for taxpayers.

His passion for digital innovation also extends to building several personal websites and recently earning a Level 2 qualification in Digital Media. Inspired by his parish council work, he felt it was finally time to step forward for the Media Officer position, seeing an opportunity to use his digital skills and diplomatic touch to benefit the Guild of Vergers.

He hopes to bring his blend of grassroots enthusiasm, professional experience, and a pinch of humour learned from managing a celebrity vicar to this role, fostering greater engagement and connectivity within this community.

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# The Royal Foundation of St Katherine

**A**s has been reported in the Chairman's round up of the Way Ahead Group, a group of us met at the Royal Foundation of St Katherine, based in Limehouse, London. This involved an overnight stay and fully catered.

The centre offers both conference stays – sadly too small for our needs – retreats as well as individual Bed and Breakfast stays. Clergy are able to stay here for at a reduced rate.

Following the end of our time here we approached the Master, The Ven Roger Preece, to discuss if the Guild might

be able to get a discount on staying at the centre when individually booked.

We are pleased to be able to report that members are now able to obtain a 10% discount on the best rate available on their website. To take advantage of this please enter the code is: **VERGER24** on their website in the top right hand side on our website <https://www.rfsk.org.uk/>, in the window called: "Promo code" (the code applies until 31st December 2024). The discount rates will appear after pressing search button (if there is room availability).





## David Anwyl-Hughes, Branch Secretary of the Gloucester, Hereford and Worcester Branch writes...

One of the great joys in life is to be able attend choral evensong in an English Cathedral on a beautiful late spring evening. Fifteen members of the Gloucester, Hereford and Worcester branch were able to do exactly that when they attended a most uplifting and splendid choral evensong service on Tuesday 14 May 2024 in the beautiful Cathedral Church of St. Mary the Virgin and St. Ethelbert the King in Hereford.

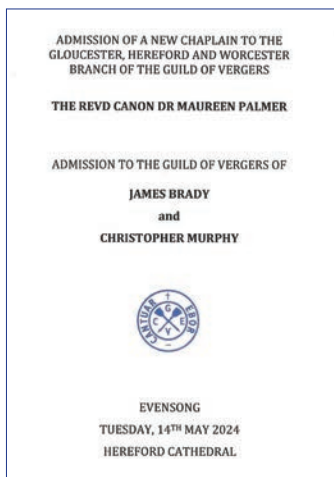
As part of the service, the branch had been granted permission, by the Dean and Chapter to admit Christopher Murphy and James Brady, both Hereford Cathedral vergers, as members of the Guild, to say farewell to our branch chaplain Revd Canon Greville Cross, and to admit Canon Greville's successor Rev'd Canon Dr Maureen Palmer.

Following the first lesson, read by Canon Greville, the branch chair, Dee Caulton-Ball admitted Canon Maureen as branch chaplain – we are extremely grateful to her for taking on this role. The branch treasurer Robert Beattie then paid

tribute to Canon Greville's service as branch chaplain. When appointed in 2019 Canon Greville intended to serve for three years but during the pandemic and its aftermath he stayed in post. The branch will always be extremely grateful to him for his kindness, his spiritual and pastoral care, and his support throughout the pandemic. Gifts were presented to him on behalf of the branch membership as a token of their appreciation.

After the service, a reception was held in College Hall to which all members of the branch and cathedral congregation were invited. Following this, branch members decamped to a local eatery where a most enjoyable evening was had by all.

The grateful thanks of the branch go to the Dean, the Very Revd Sarah Brown, and Chapter, Precentor Revd Canon Andrew Piper, Dean's Verger Tim Pryse-Davies and Commercial Manager Kirsty Price (and her volunteer colleagues) for their kind permission and assistance in making this such a memorable occasion.



The newly admitted! Rev'd Canon Dr Maureen Palmer, James Brady and Christopher Murphy.



Rev'd Canon Dr Maureen Palmer being admitted as Branch Chaplain.



Rev'd Canon Greville Cross (outgoing Branch Chaplain), Dr Andrew Page FCEGV (Branch member), David Anwyl-Hughes (Branch Secretary), Dee Caulton-Ball (Branch Chairman), Robert Beattie (National and Branch Treasurer), Carol Oliver (Branch Committee member), Rev'd Canon Dr Maureen Palmer (incoming Branch Chaplain), Christopher Murphy and James Brady (Cathedral vergers & newly admitted members of the Guild).



Robert Beattie, Branch Treasurer presents Canon Greville with gifts from the Branch.

## Joanna Blanchard, Branch Secretary of the Lincoln and Southwell Branch writes...

**D**espite the rainy weather, members of the Lincoln and Southwell Vergers Guild recently enjoyed a delightful visit to All Saints Church, Gainsborough. The drizzly, wet weather did little to dampen the spirits of the group as they gathered inside the historic church for a warm cup of coffee.

Sue and Eddie both knowledgeable members of our guild, treated us to a fascinating talk on the history of the church. Their insights shed light on the rich heritage and significance of the All Saints Church within faith and it's community.

One of the highlights of the visit was the stunning replica painting of the Last Supper. The intricacy and attention to detail in the replica left a lasting impression us, serving as a reminder of the timeless beauty of religious art.

Despite the rain outside, the Vergers Guild members departed from All Saints Church, Gainsborough with hearts full of appreciation for the history, hospitality, and camaraderie they experienced during their visit. It was an afternoon filled with warmth, knowledge, and shared reverence for the cultural and spiritual significance of this cherished place of worship.

A big thank you to Sue and Eddie and all who shared lifts for that visit. Many thanks

Joanna goes onto write regarding another visit they undertook... After a drizzly start to the day, we were grateful to be greeted by a beautiful sunset evening when we visited St Mary Magdalene Church in Newark. It was good to meet up again with our friends from near and far, and also thinking of those who couldn't be with us on the night.

We were so grateful to have had a really fabulous time looking around the church and have an informative talk from Head Verger Ryan and his colleague Rita. The Church is steeped in a great deal of history which is also the fifth largest Parish Church in the UK!

After a much chat and giggling over very tasty coffee and cake, we completed the evening's visit with a peaceful candlelit Compline lead by Fran.

We were all very grateful for the warm welcome given by the staff of St Mary Magdalene.





## Molly Payne, member of the Oxford Branch writes...

**O**n Tuesday, 23rd April, St. George's Day, seventeen members and friends of the Oxford Branch of the Guild of Vergers met at Douai Abbey, Woolhampton near Reading for our first Quiet Day of the year. Our Chairman, Michael Golby and our Treasurer, Peter Viney, were unable to join us due to family illness, so our Secretary, Heather Ringrose, ably guided us through the day. As usual on arrival we met in the Refectory for a welcome cup of tea or coffee where we were able to greet each other and generally catch up on the news, after which we moved to the Meeting Room that was to be our base for the day. We were pleased to welcome guests including Canon Maureen Palmer who had driven up from Hereford to be with us. We also welcomed two new members, Darylín and John Francis who come from the Swindon area.



Once back in our room, Heather greeted us and our Branch Chaplain, the Revd. Marie Jackson opened our day in prayer before she gave an interesting talk about St George. St. George, also known as George of Lydda, was an early Christian martyr. According to tradition, he was of Greek origin but was a soldier in the Roman Army, became a member of the Praetorian Guard under the Emperor Diocletian, but was sentenced to death for refusing to deny his Christian faith. He has been adopted by many counties besides England as their patron saint and various stories have been told about his life. Henry VIII decreed that the cross of St George should become the English National flag.

After the talk there was free time to spend quietly as we wished before joining the Brothers in their beautiful Oratory for the noonday service. A tasty lunch was served in the Refectory and in the afternoon, we assembled in the St Mary's Chapel for a service of Holy Communion celebrated by our Chaplain and assisted by Janice Allerston.

After the service we went back to our meeting room to have our photograph taken by Dave French, our Media Officer and Branch Photographer, before saying our 'Good Byes' and heading off home in several directions.

For our next meeting we will be going to St John's, Mortimer on Tuesday, 18th June when we will be admitting our new members. If you would like to join us, please contact our Secretary, Heather Ringrose, on [heatherringrose8@gmail.com](mailto:heatherringrose8@gmail.com).

## THE VERGER

A person of parts  
Where does one start?  
At the Altar?  
Where they must not falter  
to pour the wine  
and water in kind.  
As the priest prepares  
themselves and the people to care  
for the moment they remember  
the Sacrifice of Christ Eternal!  
That gives us proof that life's for ALL.  
Time and Future to Befall.

They then give welcome, thanks and praise  
from ALL present there to raise  
that God is here for ALL to know  
that God is everywhere, up and below.  
And as the Bread and Wine are Blessed,  
they help the people to be at their best,  
in the Now and Reverent  
as the HOST is so present!  
So, in reflection of this Gift  
that's available to ALL, there is NO Rift!  
To say, again and again  
It's a Must,  
"God's for everyone  
To Love and to Trust!"

Then we leave this Holy place  
God does not send us on a race!  
Just be Steadfast and Sincere  
to give this message, for all to hear.  
To LOVE your neighbour as you would for self,  
Life's never been there for Conquest.  
It's where the Verger meets you in one Accord;  
Go in Peace and Serve the Lord.

Mr M J Hockin MA © 2024  
Member of the Durham & Newcastle with Carlisle Branch



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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](http://www.cofegv.org.uk)



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