THE VIRGER

The Official Magazine of the Church of England Guild of Vergers

Summer 2026 I Issue 331

Photo: Stephen Stokes

www.cofegv.org.uk

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

Dear Friends

I am writing this email in the days leading up to the Feast of the Ascension. Outside the weather is glorious and new life is springing up before my eyes in the small wood just outside my study window. I have watched and listened to this scene unfold for the last 16 years and yet I never tire of it. A deafening morning chorus, a carpet of wildflowers, hooting owls and noisy foxes, very bad-tempered rooks, and a rather lonely but very prosperous pheasant who is assuming alarming proportions from being overfed by my doting neighbours.

All of this is a reminder of the constancy of God's creation in an uncertain world. It warms my heart and provides a happy place for me to retreat to when being an archdeacon gets too much which is an increasingly regular emotion. I am getting old.

Joking apart, it is certainly true for many, perhaps most of us, that rarely has the world felt quite so inconstant and uncertain. We seem to lurch from drama to crisis and back again. On the international stage the incredulity barometer seems to know no limit. Here at home the aftermath of the local government elections which took place throughout much of England, and other elections beyond that, seems to be one of bewilderment, division, and recrimination. Within the church we too are struggling with fracture and dissension. I discussed one aspect of this in my last letter, but in truth this is about more than just one single issue. We seem to have lost the ability to communicate civilly and to listen tolerantly to the opinions of those with whom we disagree. The public and ecclesiastical discourse has coarsened, and we are all the worse for it.

Of course, these times will pass, and the present actors will leave the stage, and new appearances will be made and hopefully we will enjoy a more settled and gentle existence. Christ's Ascension is a moment in time, but it is an eternal reminder that Jesus's presence amongst us here on earth has changed forever both the course of world history and the ontological relationship between creator and created. From that supernatural moment on we are called to live lives that honour that presence and sacrifice and that speak of God's love for his creation.

So, no matter how stormy the present waters might seem and no matter how off course the 'ship of fools' might feel, for those of us who are the church, clergy, vergers, other laity this season reminds us that Christ dwells at God's right hand and that we follow a God who sees us and knows us.

The next time we meet will probably be in Malvern at the national conference. Please do join us for what is always a wonderful and inspirational few days in a stunning setting. I look forward to seeing you there.

With very best wishes

Your chaplain,
Fr David

From the desk of the Chairman

At long last, Spring has arrived. Clear blue skies, blossom on the trees, spring bulbs have erupted with colour, and the grass is growing again, along with the countless dandelions. It is time to tend to the garden and get rid of the weeds and leaf debris. However, do not be deceived that it is now warm enough to shed the woolly jumpers. I can still hear my grandmother saying "Ne'er cast a clout till May is out" – a Scottish proverb which warns against discarding warm winter clothing too early and wait until the Hawthorn tree or "May tree" blooms or the month of May ends. Up here in Edinburgh, the nights get cooler, yet the days seem longer than those down in the South!

In March, the new Archbishop of Canterbury was installed in Canterbury Cathedral on the seat of St Augustine, the first woman to hold this position. It was with great joy that in my capacity as National Chairman, I was invited by Lambeth Palace to attend the installation service. My view from the North Aisle was limited, but fortunately there was a monitor close by. I had a cracking view of most of the cathedral Deans from my seat. The atmosphere inside the cathedral was that of joy and warmth towards Archbishop Sarah. It was wonderful to see Charlie Maggs, the Head Virger at work with his team of vergers and volunteers, choreographing the event with such ease.

We are fast approaching the summer, and it will be time for our annual training conference and retreat in West Malvern. I do hope you have booked your place for this fabulous event where we will be focusing on "The Church in which we serve". We have some exciting speakers booked and hopefully another BBQ on our opening evening. The planning is well underway, and I would like to thank all those who have worked tirelessly behind the scenes to make this event happen seamlessly. Many of our officers hold down full-time jobs and still manage to bring a professional approach to help the Guild. Please be kind when you have any dealings with them throughout the year. I would like to give a special mention about our General Secretary, Stephen Stokes. In the coming term, it will be his last as Chapel Clerk at St John's College, Cambridge as he leaves after 19 years to become Dean's Verger at Chelmsford Cathedral. During all of this, he is preparing for his forthcoming wedding in July, hotly followed the week later by our conference. I wish him well for the new job and his future with Steph.

John Kirby Shearer

The Church in which we serve

The Vocation in which we are called to is often varied. Have you taken time for yourself to recharge?

This year's Annual Retreat & Training Conference may be exactly what you need, and also maybe what you can bring to others.

This year's lineup has been set:

Monday 3 August	**10.30am**	**National Guild Annual General Meeting**
Monday 3 August	**1.30pm**	**Session 1 – Ms Alison Evans (Chief Operating Officer, Winchester Cathedral)**
Tuesday 4 August	**10.00am**	**Session 2 – Hilary Higton (Worcester Diocese Safeguarding Officer)**
Tuesday 4 August	**2.00pm**	**Session 3 – The Rt Rev'd Moira Astin (Bishop of Crediton, Diocese of Exeter)**
Wednesday 5 August	**10.00am**	**Session 4 – Timothy Wigglesworth, Fellow (former Churchwarden, Newcastle Cathedral)**
Wednesday 5 August	**2.00pm**	**Session 5 – Workshops**

The Booking form is included within the magazine, or available on the Guild Website. Remember first time attendees are offered a discount (contact the Conference Secretary). Please contact the National Chaplain should you wish to discuss the possibility of a bursary, which are kindly provided by our Bishops.

Hilary Higton, Worcester Diocese Director of Safeguarding

Hilary Higton is the Director of Safeguarding and the designated Safeguarding Officer for the Diocese of Worcester. She has journeyed with the diocese and cathedral through the many safeguarding developments that have occurred within the Church of England since she started in 2015. She has supported the diocese through 2 major external safeguarding audits (SCIE in 2016 and Ineqe in 2024) which all dioceses and cathedrals have been subject to and has represented the diocese during the Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse (IICSA) when Worcester was one of 4 dioceses randomly chosen to delve into much more deeply to understand how the CofE carried out its safeguarding responsibilities. She has been the lead representative for the Diocese and Cathedral, when together they became pathfinders for the new Regional Model – one of the IICSA recommendations and has also supported the National Safeguarding Team in delivering the Senior Leadership training to dioceses and cathedrals.

She works closely with the senior leaders in the diocese, cathedral and the national safeguarding team and manages a small, professional diocesan safeguarding team (DST). Through her time working for the CofE she has seen many acts of kindness, compassion and care towards vulnerable people which always inspires her. She has also listened to victims and survivors of abuse and is all too aware of the life-long impact of abuse, compounded even more if it has been perpetrated by someone from within the church community. This has compelled her to continue to do all she can to help the many faithful people in the Church who, like her and her team strive to change things and make our churches and cathedrals welcoming and safe places for all.

Before working for the Church of England Hilary worked as a Children's Services Manager for a national children's charity, setting up and managing Surestart Children's Centres, and prior to this she worked as a midwife and a nurse. She considers each role has been a privilege, being alongside those at particularly vulnerable times in their lives and working with many extraordinary people who seek to serve and protect others.

The Rt Rev'd Moira Astin, Bishop of Crediton

Moira studied Natural Sciences at Cambridge, and felt called to ordination in her early twenties. This led to her training at Wycliffe Hall from 1992 to 1995. She was elected to General Synod in 2000 and served for 12 years, in which time her interest in Church Law grew. She was also an Ecumenical Officer for Oxford Diocese and needed a good grasp of Anglican structures to help clergy navigate their relationship with other denominations. After serving as Team Vicar in Thatcham and then in Woodley in Reading she became Vicar of Frodingham and New Brumby in the heart of Scunthorpe and Area Dean of North Lincolnshire. Here she developed children's work and a ministerial apprenticeship scheme, and in the Area Dean role discovered the complexities of multi parish ministry. She was invited to remain on the Clergy Discipline Commission, having previously served on it as a General Synod member. In 2016 she moved to Surrey as Archdeacon of Reigate in the Diocese of Southwark. Her interest in Church Law led her to an active involvement in the Ecclesiastical Law Society , becoming a trustee, chair of the education committee and latterly treasurer.

In the summer of 2025 she was consecrated as a bishop and is the suffragan bishop of Crediton in Exeter Diocese.

Alison Evans, Winchester Cathedral Chief Operating Officer

Alison is the Chief Operating Officer at Winchester Cathedral, Alison leads the activities facilitating the mission of the cathedral, including the tenanted property, commercial and visitor business with their supporting functions, including the legal requirement to conserve and maintain the historic fabric of the cathedral estate. She was previously trustee at Painshill in Surrey, and is currently a trustee of the Cathedrals Workshop Fellowship. Alison is keenly interested in accessibility, particularly intellectual, breaking down the barriers to knowledge, and is deeply committed to the Cathedral's vision of creating a place of welcome for people of all faiths and none.

Executive Committee Round-up

In April the Executive Committee met in Southwark, during the meeting we agreed on the following courses of actions:

The Executive Committee has agreed to rename the previously held as Guild Chronicler to be as Guild Archivist.

With the closing of the deadline for nominations now passed when the Executive Committee met, we appointed the following roles. These are appointments, as opposed to Officers who are elected at the AGM by members.

- Legal Advisor to the Guild – Mr Timothy Wigglesworth, who has served as our legal advisor, was appointed for a 5-year period.

- Guild Archivist – Stephen Short, Canterbury with Rochester Group has agreed to stand for the role. Stephen was appointed for a 3-year period.

The following roles which are appointed by members at the AGM but The Executive Committee is asked to vote to propose to the AGM the candidates for the roles.

- National Treasurer – This role will fall vacant in August. Robert Beattie has decided, following personal reflection, not to stand for re-election.

- Training Officer – Charles Maggs (currently Overseas Officer) has been nominated for this role, the Executive has endorsed this and offered Charles for the AGM to vote for him to fulfil the role for the remainder of the term that fell vacant.

- Training Administrator – Susan Ansell, who has held this role for many years, has been nominated for this role, the Executive has endorsed this and offered Susan for the AGM to vote for her to fulfil the role for a 3-year term of office.

The Executive Committee did note that should Charles be elected to the role of Training Officer this would vacate the role of Overseas Officer and the Executive Committee would look to amalgamate the roles of National Membership Officer and Overseas Membership Officer following the AGM.

The National Chairman also thanked Robert Beattie for all he has done as he announced, following personal reflection, not to stand for re-election as National Treasurer. Should anyone know anyone who may be able to take on this role, they need not be a member of the Guild as we can always offer them associate membership.

Full Members of the Guild are able to vote, in absent voting, should they wish by writing to me to indicate a vote (for the person or for RON (re-open nomination)). These votes should be received by the General Secretary no later than 20 July.

The Current Role Holder, Sue Ansell, has agreed to stand for the role. Executive was asked to vote and this was approved unanimously.

Therefore, Sue Ansell was recommended to the AGM for consideration to serve as Training Administrator for a term of three-years.

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.
When submitting articles could you provide images and text documents into wetransfer this is to make sure that all images come over in the best quality possible

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The Installation of the 106th Archbishop of Canterbury – the view from the front of the procession…

This article hardly needs more introduction than that! The 25th March 2026 was certainly a day to remember, and for all the right reasons.
As those of us who have been part of large services like these before, we know that careful preparation has led to this point. For us, this journey really began in late September when we first received notice that the new archbishop would be announced at Canterbury rather than Lambeth. From there, it was all systems go to get the cathedral looking its best.

At Canterbury, we are blessed with the wonderful housekeeping team at the Cathedral Lodge Hotel who undertake the day-to-day cleaning of the cathedral, and they pulled out all the stops for that day!

Knowing who the archbishop was going to be, meant that planning for the service then progressed, until we had a firm idea of what the structure of the service would look like. As the Dean put it, we had the bones of the service and now we could all put the flesh on it! Before we could get to installing the archbishop, we had to elect her. We all gathered in the Chapter House on a cold, dark November evening for what would be the most free and fair election since the establishment of Rotten Boroughs. There was one candidate, proposed by the King, who you could vote against, but your vote was recorded and you would be considered agnostic to the king's demands if you voted against. The details of the result are never published but a 2/3 majority is required. This was duly reached and pronounced by the Receiver General, and I had the honour of placing the notice of election in the archbishop's throne for all to see.

Credit: Canterbury Cathedral

On an equally cold, but not quite as dark, January day, I found myself leading my entire Chapter into St Paul's Cathedral for the Confirmation of Election. The new Chapter Gowns had not yet arrived and so on the train to London, I was sewing a chapter badge onto a couple of Academic Gowns for the two Non-Executive Members of Chapter, who didn't have gowns.

I was shall we say, somewhat anxious that my Chapter behave themselves and get to the right place at the right time. The Receiver General promised due obedience to her Head Virger and I am pleased to report that all did as they were told. Walking down the aisle of St Paul's, accustomed as I am to large cathedral's, I was struck by its sheer size! Perhaps it was the rounded baroque arches that made the place feel bigger, or maybe it was the huge dome, I don't know.

The Dean somewhat jokingly showed the Church Times article the following day with the picture of the archbishop on the steps outside St Pauls, and me in the background bringing out the Chapter!

Now she was officially the Archbishop, there was very little standing in the way of the Installation service. Planning ramped up to another level over the next few weeks. The Installation was the last thing I thought about when I went to sleep at night, and the first thing I thought of in the morning.

The days leading up to the Installation are but a blur of late nights and early mornings. As those of us that have had the BBC or other TV companies descend will know, it can be absolute chaos. It was a slightly hair-raising moment when I was talking to the Dean and out of the corner of my eye, I saw the lid of our beautiful baroque 17th Century Laudian font swinging wildly having been caught by a cable on it path upwards! I think it is safe to say that there was a collective intake of breath from myself and the Dean.

The day before the big day was rehearsal and camera blocking day. Even now, I am not 100% sure how I ended up standing in for the Archbishop, but I found myself being challenged by my colleagues who were standing in for the Pupils from John Wallis Academy, making the Declaration of Assent to the Archbishop of York's Chaplain, being Installed as the Diocesan Bishop of Canterbury by the Archdeacon of Canterbury (my colleagues who were standing in for Chapter were nearly wetting themselves by this stage), and being installed as Primate of All England in St Augustine's Chair by the Dean – just as the real Archbishop came in!

The Dress Rehearsal was quite surreal. I was far removed from the action but could hear everything that was happening due to the radio traffic in my ear. However, lessons were learned in that rehearsal. For example, when my hood flew over my head and out in front of me like a propeller because of the high winds, I decided to have it pinned in place for the following day.

The 25th March dawned bright but very breezy! The wind had not abated overnight as we were promised and now there was the threat of rain! The virgers were all in early – 15 from the home team, plus two visitors. One of the visitors was our very own General Secretary.

The final touches were put to all the little bits and bobs. I should at this point pay tribute to the wonderful ladies of the Flower Guild who managed, at six weeks' notice, to create some wonderful arrangements with not a crumb of Oasis! They did wonders with the greenery (we did not have flowers for we were still in Lent) and I think proved just what can be done in the name of sustainability.
The Gospel Volume of the large St John's Bible was set out on its stand, open on the page of The Annunciation, ready for the Archbishop to make her Corporal Oath

A final hoover of the return stalls where the Prince and Princess of Wales, and other Government Figures would be sitting, and we were ready for the world.

Credit: Nathan Eato-Baudains

Down in the Crypt, robing areas were awaiting their processions, and the final checks were undertaken. At Noon, just before the doors opened, the Virgers all had a group photo in front of the Nave Altar.

From then, it was a waiting game. All the planning, all the careful plotting, all the painstaking calculations; and we were about to see if it actually worked. Our Virges were polished, and a final check-up of the notes and we were away.

First, there was a trickle, then there was a flood... Bishops and Clergy EVERYWHERE! The Western Crypt was a see of Bishops (like what I did there?), the Lady Chapel was full to bursting with Ecumenical Guests, and the Aisles were awash with Clergy from various places.

At the appointed time, Virgers adopted their best schoolteacher voices and called for order as they marshalled their processions. For a brief moment, there was something every Virger craves – silence and calm order.

Getting the processions in order, did take slightly longer than I had calculated. The first processions were supposed to enter the cathedral at 14:10, however, at 14:20, we were still lining up. I was trying frantically to hold my nerve in the face of a delayed start and trying not to imagine my head on a spike over London Bridge if the Royals arrived and had to wait for the processions.

As soon as they started though, the processions slipped in like water through a grate, and the delay in start ensured that the opening moments of the broadcast were our very own General Secretary holding his virge aloft (and my what a big one he has!) leading in the Officers of the Convocation of Canterbury.

No sooner had the last Primate slipped in through the Great West Doors, the hailstones began to pound the cathedral. There was some consternation as the Royal Arrival drew nearer and the decision was made to unload the Royals just outside the Great West Doors, instead of them walking from Cathedral House, meaning the Lord Lieutenant had to break cover and run round to the West Doors!

By this point, I had left the cathedral and could only hear what was happening in there. I now realise how difficult it is to let go sometimes; the walk to the archbishop's residence was probably the first time I had been alone with my thoughts and not been worrying about what everyone else was doing. I now had to trust that everyone knew what they were doing and remind myself that they were all more than capable of the tasks assigned to them. On my way over to collect the archbishop, colleagues from other departments were all giving words of encouragement or pride; people I have known, worked, and grown with all my adult life had such confidence and pride in me, something that still strikes me even writing this now.

We watched the Royal Arrival on the Archbishop's iPad and saw the Princess of Wales' hat nearly take off in the wind! Although thankfully, the hailstorm had abated just in time. Then came the cue from Emma, our wonderful Events Manager, telling me it was time for us to go.

The rest I'm sure you all saw on the TV, and I'll leave you to enjoy that for what it is, although I will say this – I think the 25th March 2026 was one of the proudest days of my life, as a cathedral, we all worked so hard together and pulled off something absolutely magnificent, but also the other teams involved such as the sound and lighting teams who made the cathedral look and sound amazing too, I think we did ourselves, and the Anglican Communion proud.

I did not however, escape the day entirely unscathed: I got turned into a Meme, partly because my reactor lights had gone bringing the archbishop round!

Some of my colleagues also enjoyed themselves with the guardsmen on duty:

After the service had ended, we all made our way out to the Buttermarket for the blessing of the City and Diocese. This was perhaps the 'local' part of the ceremonies, where the City Civics welcomed the new Archbishop, and she took the opportunity to greet some of the local people who had gathered in the Buttermarket.

On the way back into the precincts, the crowds were dense and they all wanted to get a photo and greet the archbishop. A colleague and I knew we had to carve a path back towards the cathedral and

revived the tradition of 'Double Virging' the archbishop

'Is she still with us?'

The end of the service was not however, the end of the day for the Virgers, 650 chairs needed shifting!

I'm pleased to report though, that the Bishop of Dover managed to catch us in the act, and as a token of her

admiration, she brought the Virgers a very large box of chocolates which I unfortunately do not have a picture of as they disappeared rather quickly!
To all our readers though, I hope you have all enjoyed reading this as much as we all did taking part in it. It was an honour and a privilege to be part of, and a wonderful story to tell!

Best wishes to you all
Charlie and the team at Canterbury

Worcester, Hereford and Gloucester branch

On Palm Sunday Dee Caulton-Ball, a member of Worcester, Hereford and Gloucester Branch and Guild Welfare Officer (also known to Conference attenders as the stitch witch), was commissioned by the Revd. Dr. Elizabeth Wild, Diocesan Director of Mission and Ministry, as a Local Minister in the Parish of Wigmore Abbey. In her sermon at the service, attended by representatives of other local churches and the Diocese, Dr. Wild stressed the increasing importance of lay leadership in sustaining parish ministry.

On Easter Day, Dee led the Parish Eucharist in a gathered service (President: the Priest in Charge). She now regularly takes services in her own local church (where she doubles as churchwarden) and is available, and called on, to lead worship in some of the other six churches in the parish as well as continuing in her role as a Day Chaplain at Hereford Cathedral.

Andrew Page

Blackburn, Chester and Manchester branch

On 9th March 2026, we were delighted to join together at the Parish Church of St Mary, Bowdon to admit and welcome Sue Redford into the Guild.

The service was conducted by the parish minister, Rev. Dr. Andrew Knight, assisted by Branch Chaplain Fr. Stephen Dunton.

Sue was strengthened by fellow Vergers, family and congregation who all turned out to support and welcome her.

Following the service, we adjourned to The Griffin, for refreshment and fellowship.

Daniel Mellor, Branch Chairman

Lincoln and Southwell branch

On a beautiful spring day at 9.15, the Wednesday morning before Palm Sunday, and the Feast of the Annunciation, we met at the Church of All Saints, Upton, to join them at their weekly celebration of Holy Communion.

All Saints is truly a little gem, and the congregation is very welcoming. The service was BCP and we sat in the choir stalls in the chancel for the service. Afterwards with coffee and biscuits we had a look around the church. Clean, light and altogether in good order, there is a wonderful collection of kneelers, all with different designs. With kitchen facilities and a toilet it serves as a centre for village life. Architecturally, parts of it date back to the 11th century with restoration work being carried out in 1867 by Ewan Christian who also restored Southwell Minster and built the National Gallery, and in 1874-80 by James Fowler who unblocked the arcading and built the north aisle.

We next went to an even smaller little gem, the Church of All Saints, Pilham (a village I had never heard of before this visit). It is largely a Georgian rebuild of 1754, with a Norman looking west front and small tower partly rebuilt in 1884. With a nave of only 21 feet and an east end apse about six feet deep, it claims to be one of the smallest churches in the diocese. Again, it is clean and well cared for, the painted interior looks fresh and welcoming.

Our third stop was to the 'cathedral' of the Lea Group of nine parishes, the Church of St Lawrence in Corringham. A medieval church, part Norman at the west end and 13th century where it was extended to the east, this church was extensively restored

at the expense of Mary Beckett by the architect George Bodley. An Anglo-Catholic, Miss Becket seems to have given Bodley a pretty free hand, and the painted ceiling is one of the most eye catching aspects of his work. He was also a friend of Charles Kempe, a number of whose windows can be found in the church.

A big 'Thank You' to the Rev'd David Cotton for arranging and hosting the visit; to the Rev'd Lorna Lucas who took the service at Upton; churchwarden Carol Pugsley and her team for their hospitality; and to churchwardens Janet Thorpe at Pilham, and Paul Howitt-Cowan at Corringham for showing us round.

Colin Beever

Visit to Eton College Windsor on Tuesday 24th March branch

On a somewhat drab and windy afternoon, a goodly number of Branch members and invited guests assembled at the Porters' Lodge of Eton College, where we were met by our host, Simon Shergold (a long-standing member of this Branch and of the Guild). After completing safety and security procedures we were introduced to our guides who were to show us around each of the two chapels, Rachel Elliott the Chapel of the Blessed Virgin Mary and Marcin Zamozny, the Lower Chapel. As time was limited a choice by those attending had to be made as to which they wished to see; both chapels proved to be of special interest with their own usage and varied history.

We reassembled and adjourned to the Upper Prayer Room where we were presented with a welcome selection of food and beverages provided by Simon and his colleagues. A time for catching up and meeting with others, reflecting on what we had seen and preparation for what was to come.

A walk through the Upper School Room led us to the main Chapel to attend Evensong taken from the Book of Common Prayer and led by our Branch Chaplain, the Revd. Marie Jackson. During the service, three members were admitted to the Guild, they being Rachel Elliott and Marcin Zamozny (mentioned above) and Kevin Tidy of St. Michael and St. Mary Magdalene, Easthampstead. Also, our new Branch Treasurer, Carol Wotherspoon, was acknowledged.

The proceedings concluded with our Chairman thanking all those for making our visit possible and memorable, not only for those for whom this was their first time at Eton, but also for those who have been here previously including the Chairman himself who had been a voluntary verger here for some 16 years until his (second) retirement.

Dave French, Oxford Media Officer

Roger James Lawrence

December 1940 – April 2026

Just after Christmas Pam rang me to inform me that Roger had had a stroke and was back in hospital. Sadly, he had another stroke a few weeks later and he lost the ability to speak. On Wednesday 22 April, whilst on holiday, I had another call from Pam to inform me that Roger had passed away peacefully. Roger was a quiet gentle man who loved his church and the Guild. I am proud to have had the privilege to have known him and thank him for all that he did for the Guild behind the scenes.

May he rest in peace and rise in glory.

John Kirby-Shearer

Some members of the Guild who undertook the Diploma course will have come across the name Roger Lawrence, who, as Training Registrar, would have submitted their coursework to him. I met Roger who was a member in the Somerset and Avon Branch, while I worked at St Mary Redcliffe and was also the Training Officer. At that time, the Guild was searching for someone to fill the post, and Roger volunteered.

Roger lived in a small village called Yatton with his wife Pam and was verger at St Mary's Yatton. His background was in administration, and he also volunteered with the War Graves Commission, updating their records, a keen photographer and one of the directors with Community Action – West of England. Taking on the role as Training Registrar was second nature to him, and in no time at all he had a system set up to make the job seem simple. During his time, he assisted in rewriting the Administration Unit. Owing to the sudden resignation of the General Secretary, Roger offered his services and stepped into the breach for six months. Again, he brought order to the role and it was in good order to pass on to Stephen Stokes.

After three years as our Training Registrar, Roger informed me that he felt the need to step down owing to health issues and we should find someone else. Very quickly, Sue Ansell stepped into the role and Roger quietly stepped back. As I worked with Roger quite closely, we had built up a good rapport over his three years. He didn't attend many branch meetings and mainly stayed at home. It was a huge shock when his wife informed me that Roger had a brain tumour. He spent many weeks in hospital in Bristol and was finally discharged to a care home in Weston-Super-Mare. I ensured that his membership continued so as to keep him up to date with the happenings in the Guild. He was also pleased to receive cards from Irene Money, the then Welfare Officer

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**.

Jim and Meg Guy, both of Durham, Newcastle with Carlisle Group, both of St. Paul's Church, Jarrow, Michael Golby, Thelma French, Heather Ringrose. Oxford

For those who have died

Roger Lawrence - former training officer and former Acting General secretary
Emilie Rowe – Albuquerque, United States of America

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.

The Church of England Guild of Vergers

Centenary Committee

11 Wessex Way
Ingham
Lincoln
LN1 2YT

Centenary Celebrations
2032

Save the date – well at least the year.

A call, from our General Secretary [on behalf of the Executive Committee], in June 2025, with an invitation to chair a 'working party' to look at organizing celebrations for the Guild's 100th anniversary came out of the blue. I was enthused by the fact that the committee were happy to entrust me with the task and encouraged that they had confidence that I would survive to the great age of 78 to see things come to fruition!

Among the great gamut of a verger's raison d'etre is that of a 'ministry of preparation', and so in preparation for the task I have spent time pulling together a small team to help tackle the quest, wanting to get a balanced mixture of representation I have considered; geography, gender, age range, cathedral & non-cathedral vergers to give a balanced representation.

The composition of the Working Party will be;

Les Mitchelmore – Guild Executive Committee member		
Maddie Newbury – Head Verger, [elect] St Albans Cathedral	Chairman	]
Jo Blanchard – Canons' Verger, Lincoln Cathedral	Gen Sec	] Ex officio
Andrew Wyn-Mackenzie – Lancing College	Chaplain	]
John Campbell – Rtd Dean's Verger Lincoln Cathedral		
T B C - Host Verger of the chosen venue		

The Working Party will, largely, meet 'on-line' and will consider; location, costings, accommodation, content, format, invitees, memorabilia, commemoration legacy etc. and in time will be soliciting thoughts & ideas from membership at large – so please put your thinking caps on.

Yours and His

JGC

><>

John G Campbell. BEM. FBGU. FCEGV
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A voluntary society founded in 1932 by Vergers for lay-workers in the church, providing:
Fellowship Communication Support Advice Training Welfare

Presidents: The Archbishops of Canterbury and York
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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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