

On the vine

1600 years of Management, Ministry and Maintenance

There are many books available to assist Churchwardens, and some are written from personal experience. Eric Sanderson's 'Churchwardens: Reflections on 1600 years of management, ministry and maintenance' has been reviewed in the Church Times and continues to attract interest.

The work of Churchwardens is a key part of parish life, and the role is a responsible one, dealing with practical and legal matters as well as serving parishioners, vicars, bishops and archdeacons.

This requires a range of skills, good information, and knowing who to ask if need be (our Churchwardens Facebook Group is [here](#)).

Eric says:

"It was at the third time of asking that I accepted the role. Despite being an active member of St Peter's Church in Monkseaton, from 1969 to 1999, serving on the PCC, the facilities committee and also being a member of Deanery and Diocesan Synods, I knew little in respect of the origin or history of the churchwarden role.

"When part of a project led by Geoff Miller, then Archdeacon, looking at digitising the Terrier and Inventory, I casually mentioned that I was writing a pamphlet about the Churchwarden. Geoff enthusiastically supported the venture and suggested that we might issue it to Churchwardens at training days. The book was catchily entitled "The Churchwarden – Friend or Foe? Enigma or Anathema?... Or VIP?"

"(Well... all academical works have long titles so why should mine be any different?)

"In 1999 my wife and I moved to Poynton, in Cheshire to be closer to family and later, whilst sorting out my 'writings' file, I came across the pamphlet. Re-reading it, I thought it had possibilities for something more detailed and so I set about my research. I am forensically curious by nature, so it took little effort to spend many hours in my study, teasing out interesting and curious facts to include in what now would be a proper book.

"Over centuries, churchwardens have acquired many 'hats', requiring a broad range of skills both practical and pastoral. There have been many books written to assist them discharge their duties, some making the role appear quite a challenge. Churchwardens have played a pivotal role in parish life and this, sometimes whimsical book explores the dilemmas they

have experienced dealing with church and state politics and social problems. The aim of the book is to reassure current churchwardens that they are indeed better off than their predecessors.

"The problem with 'academic' books is that great care needs to be taken to avoid upsetting anyone. Virtually everything, except the author's own personal experience and words, has to be supported by citation and copyright agreement. A vast amount of time therefore is spent compiling the bibliography. I chose to self-publish through a print-on-demand service who formatted the final proof, assigned an ISBN number and arranged the legal distribution of library copies, which includes the British Library."

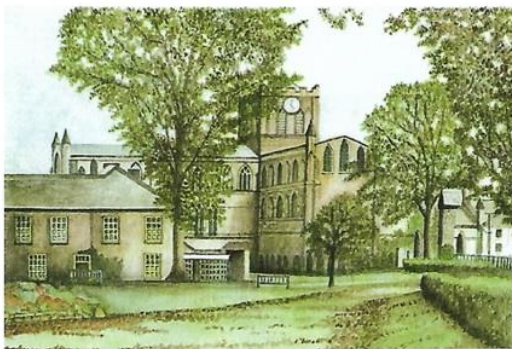
Eric Sanderson was born in Newcastle upon Tyne in 1946. The family engineering business roused his curiosity in all things mechanical and led to an apprenticeship with General Post Office Telephones. After many years as a telephone engineer, he became a Business Systems Quality and Compliance Auditor with British Telecom.

Eric retired from BT in 1999, which allowed him more time to indulge in his pastimes of walking, writing general interest articles for his church magazine, family history and building sets for his local theatre. He served as churchwarden at St Peter's Monkseaton in the Diocese of Newcastle, and now lives in Cheshire with his wife Elaine.

The book is £9.99, from www.churchwardenhistory.co.uk.

CHURCHWARDENS

Reflections on 1600 Years of
Management, Ministry
and Maintenance



By Eric Sanderson

