



*Mounted on a worn ebony wand, with inverted cone from which emanate two lilies growing around a central gold medallion, which was made to commemorate the completion of the church spire in 1875 and added to the virger's staff in 1955. Above the medallion is the Abbot's Mitre, the symbol of St Mary Abbots church. The staff was designed by J.W. Bridges and made by Hurst & Franklin & Co. The names of the most long serving virgers of St Mary Abbots can be seen mounted in silver at the top of the staff.*

## THE VIRGER'S STAFF

### **What is a Virger (or Verger)**

The name is derived from the 'Verge' which is the virger's rod of office (Latin – Virga; Old French – Vergier), and is carried at the front of the procession as the ministers enter and leave the church. This was originally used to ensure that sacred processions were not impeded during worship, which was an important duty in the Middle Ages when there were many processions both inside and outside the church, and on important festivals two Virgers were on duty.

The verger (or virger) was also traditionally responsible for the order and upkeep of a house of worship, including the care of the church buildings, its furnishings, vestments and sacred treasures, preparations for liturgy, conduct of the laity and preparing graves. Today our virgers at St Mary Abbots continue to care for the fabric of our church and its treasures, prepare our twenty-two weekly services and also offer help and information to those visiting the church.