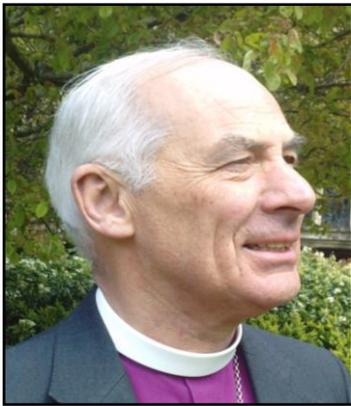




Lenten Newsletter 2013

*Retired
Clergy
Association*



FROM THE CHAIRMAN

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

You will remember that in my last letter, I reported that Owen Barraclough, David Phypers and I had had a good meeting with Bernadette Kenny, the Secretary of the Pensions Board and Loraine Miller, the Housing Manager. In the article on *Fees* you will find their letters that we have received following the meeting. Please do follow up their invitation to share any matters of concern with them - they really do mean it!

The three of us will be meeting them again in early May, so there is an ongoing dialogue.

The new Fees Order was flagged up in our last Newsletter. Since then Owen, David and I have met with Sarah Smith and John Barton at Church House, Westminster. They are engaged on the 'Funerals Project' on behalf of the Archbishops Council. They wanted to hear our perspective on the way in which retired clergy continue to exercise a ministry through the conduct of funerals. The result of this discussion is the Questionnaire that you will find elsewhere in the newsletter. The intention is that we have a say in shaping the way this vital ministry is exercised with all the opportunities both pastoral and evangelistic that spring from it. As Bishop of Warrington, I would ask adults after a Confirmation service, why they had come to be confirmed at that moment in their lives and one of the regular answers was, 'I was bereaved, and the local church were so wonderful to me, that.....'

We retired clergy take many hundreds of funerals each year, do please respond to the Questionnaire.

We can only exercise the ministry to which we have been called as we both kneel at the foot of the Cross and stand at the Empty Tomb. May the wonder of God's love displayed in the Crucified and Risen Lord be ours to receive and share this Holy Week and Easter.

With all good wishes,

Yours sincerely,

+David.

THE ONLY TWO DAYS THAT MATTER

by Lord George Carey,
formerly Archbishop of Canterbury



Martin Luther once said that he had only two days on his calendar: today and **that** day. I have always found that a inspiring thought. But I want to put a different twist on the idea - the only two days that ultimately matter are the Resurrection of Christ and that day to which we are all travelling because, without the Resurrection, today has no significance and the future is futile.

And that is where the secular world divides most sharply from the Christian message. For the secular mind, life has no meaning apart from what we give to our personal experience in it. The secularist scoffs at the word 'supernatural' because there can be nothing above nature and nothing outside it to interpret it.

So, let's specify Christian faith in the resurrection. It is not mere continuance of this present life, but a transformation of it. If we are to give due attention to the character of the new life awaiting us in Christ, it is about the lifting of our personal lives into a wholly new dimension of life, power and beauty.

By the same token, resurrection is not the 'immortality of the soul' but the raising of the whole person. That is why the creeds speak of the 'resurrection of the body'. This implies the raising of our personhood according to God's gift to us in Christ, not the mere survival of muscles and flesh. That is why **THE DAY** of Christ's

resurrection remains the pattern and prototype of that day that awaits us.

But what do we know and what can we know of Christ's resurrection? Years ago JB Phillips coined that happy phrase 'the ring of truth' by which he meant the way the record of the New Testament seems to echo our convictions about its testimony. So we find that echo there in the testimony of the gospels.

The four accounts of the resurrection agree that Christ confronted his disciples; they do not conjure up a fiction of a happy ending. All the stories show that the disciples were taken unawares by One who came to them.

We see the craven cowardice of the men, the bravery of the women and then the remarkable change in behaviour as the same men become extraordinary and powerful leaders of mission.

It is very clear that the New Testament documents were not written by men who took refuge in illusions and who set out to create a new faith. Surprise is the only word to explain their reaction; the resurrection of Jesus came as an event that confounded them and changed them dramatically.

But we should be quick to acknowledge that faith in the resurrection of Jesus remains faith and there is no weakness is

stating that. The ‘proof’ of faith comes through grace experienced and lived out in following Christ, and living it also within that contradiction we call ‘the Church’.

But we must not make the mistake of looking only to the resurrection. Good Friday and Easter Day are not two events but one – one moment of redemption which informs us that we are reconciled to God and which forms us in his likeness. Barnabas Lindars was correct to observe: ‘There never was a time when Christianity existed as an interpretation of Judaism, without the resurrection as the fundamental belief.’ But it is also clear that this applies to the cross as well. The cross remains a stumbling block to those who want to find some role for human dignity and pride in God’s relationship with his world.

That is why in the gospel record Jesus never revealed himself to his enemies - he

appears only to his friends. He did not appear in Pilate’s Palace, for politics gave him no welcome; nor did he appear in the courts of the High Priest because religious pride left him no room; nor did he reveal himself in the market place because he challenges the values of the market which reduces everything to commodities to be used and thrown away.

Ultimately, there are no convincing proofs of the resurrection nor do we need them. The temptation of over-preaching Easter sermons must be avoided because God beckons and never badgers, he calls and never compels.

Two days! Little wonder CS Lewis wrote: ‘I believe in Christianity as I believe the sun has risen, not only because I see it, but because, by it, I can see everything else’.

George Carey

ANNUAL MEETINGS 2013

Thursday 6 June	11 15 am – 3 30 pm	Salisbury Cathedral
Wednesday 26 June	11 15 am – 3 30 pm	Bishopthorpe Palace, York

by kind invitation of the Archbishop of York

Please book your place at either of these events by email now to david@phypers.co.uk

These two meetings are the only occasions each year to which we invite all our members. For many years we have started with a celebration of the Eucharist, followed by lunch, an address and the business meeting. This year at Salisbury we hope formally to adopt the new Constitution prior to applying for charitable status. The York meeting will be the Annual General Meeting. There will be no charge, but we hope a freewill offering will pay for lunch at Salisbury and make a gift to the Archbishop at York.

Would you like to see a change in the pattern of these days? Should we just have one General Meeting each year alternating between the north and the south? Should we give more time to an address by a keynote speaker followed by discussion? Are there issues you would like to see discussed? Your thoughts, please, to our Secretary at david@phypers.co.uk.

THE FUNERALS PROJECT

Five years ago, alarmed at the steep decline in the number of church weddings, the Church of England commissioned the **Weddings Project**. Now, with the publication of *The Church Weddings Handbook* and the launch of two websites, one for clergy and another for prospective couples, resources are available nationwide to encourage weddings in church.

Last January, because many retired clergy are often asked to take funerals, Bishop David, Owen Barraclough and I were invited to meet Sarah Smith and John Barton who have been working together on the **Funerals Project**. In recent months they have conducted research with unchurched members of the general public, with funeral directors and with deanery chapters in the Dioceses of Blackburn and Rochester. Although retired clergy were invited to the deanery chapters very few responded.

Officially, 37% of funerals nationwide are conducted by the Church of England. However, John and Sarah think the figure is closer to 70% because funerals in crematoria do not figure in the national statistics. Without the help of retired clergy John and Sarah do not think the Church of England could continue to provide a funeral service to the nation.

So, we have been invited to respond to a short Questionnaire about our funerals ministry. The Questionnaire is included as a separate attachment with this Newsletter.

Please take a little time to respond to this Questionnaire.

As the Questionnaire is attached as a Word document, answers can be inserted between the questions and the document returned as an attachment to an email.

THE RETIRED CLERGY ASSOCIATION COUNCIL

RCA Council comprises the Chairman, the Secretary and Treasurer, and eleven other members each representing groups of dioceses. Council normally meets in the spring and autumn of each year at London Diocesan House in Pimlico. Council members become Trustees of the RCA on appointment. They are nominated by the Chairperson to the Council for a period of five years and their appointment is ratified at the following AGM. Their appointment can be extended for further periods in a similar manner.

Council members' primary task is to ensure that the Association keeps to its aim of caring for retired clergy with a view to co-ordinating and forwarding their interests and encouraging fellowship amongst them.

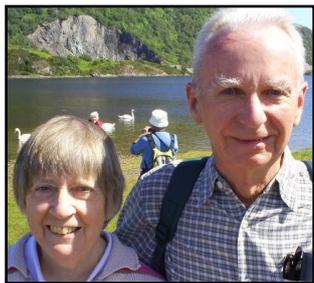
We currently have three vacancies on the Council and wish to fill them as soon as possible. These vacancies are for:

the Dioceses of Exeter and Truro;
the Dioceses of Guildford, Portsmouth and Winchester;
the Dioceses of London and Southwark.

If you live in any of these dioceses and would like to become more involved in representing and promoting the interests and concerns of retired clergy, please write to the Secretary at david@phypers.co.uk. We particularly wish to appoint women to the Council, but shall be happy to receive applications from men as well.

Once appointed, all reasonable travel and other expenses will be paid by the Association.

"China Alive" - A Christian ministry among mainland Chinese intellectuals by RCA member The Revd Keith and Mrs Catherine Ranger, keithcath@ranger144.fsnet.co.uk



"I have always believed, because I have always been taught, that Christians, especially Western ones, are imperialists, reactionaries, obscurantists and rogues, but now I know the truth.

The people here in England who have opened their homes to me and shared their lives with me have almost all been Christians. I shall return to China with a totally corrected view of both Christianity and the West" - a laser guidance systems expert.

"Now in my Lord I have an invisible Asset of infinite value. And in this age of the credit crunch and of economic recession I am so grateful that my 'real and eternal assets' are in a safer bank than Northern Rock!" - a lady scholar in Accountancy, humorously using her professional language to contextualise Philippians chapter 3 and The Sermon on the Mount, having become a Christian in England.

"As a research scientist, answered prayer is the most convincing experiment I have ever tried!" - a former atheist, now a Christian, who had had two narrow motoring escapes on the M1 after prayer for protection offered by two Christian friends, one Chinese and one English.

"To us as a family, and to me as a child, Chairman Mao meant everything. He was the Red Sun in all of our hearts, the Great Helmsman who had enabled our ancient nation to lift up its head. We all learnt phrases from the Chairman's Little Red Book. Every morning, my mother made me bow to the Chairman's picture which hung on our wall. If I did something wrong, she always said - 'It's a good thing the Chairman doesn't know what kind of a girl you are, isn't it?' But now as a Christian I have come to know not just a human but a human and divine Saviour. My former idol is broken and Jesus is my New Everything!" - a Chinese scholar's wife who, with her PhD husband, became a Christian in England.

From our ministry experience over the past two decades in the British Isles, using English and Mandarin in visits to our university cities to dialogue with Chinese students and scholars who wish to explore the Christian option both for themselves and their country during their time over here, the above case histories, chosen from among many, are typical of the openness and spiritual hunger we consistently

encounter. These strategic men and women are the intellectual élite of the world's most populous and increasingly influential nation. Reaching them with the love of Jesus makes sound sense spiritually, for the growth of the church in China, and internationally, in terms of foreign relations between our two countries. Historian Arnold Toynbee put it so well back in the 1970s: "Viewing the tides and trends of modern history, the nineteenth century can be viewed as the Age of the English, the twentieth century is shaping up as the Age of the Americans, but the twenty-first century will be the Age of the Chinese!"

The big challenge we faced back in 1990, when we first became involved with interested Chinese intellectuals here in the UK, was what model of ministry should we seek to establish? It soon became clear that we needed to serve as both specialists and catalysts. We needed to lead from the front in contacting scholars and students from China, listening to them and sharing Christ with them. Recent or projected university city visits include Oxford, Bradford, Telford, Manchester and Cardiff. At the same time we needed to involve, train and resource caring churches and Christians up and down the country to befriend Chinese students and to share the love of Jesus with them.

For example, Catherine arranges regular visits of students to our church here in the Diocese of Chester. They attend a Sunday service, receive a warm welcome, and then have lunch in church members' homes.

We also make bilingual English and Mandarin DVDs on key subjects such as "The Christian Faith and Chinese Culture" for English Christians and their Chinese friends to watch and to discuss together.

We ourselves continue to learn as we develop this ministry. A six character Chinese saying - "Huo dao lao, xue dao lao" encourages us "to keep learning new lessons, no matter how old you are"!



Retired Clergy Association and the Church of England Pensions Board

Last November Bishop David, Owen Barraclough and I met with the following senior officials at the Pensions Board's offices in Westminster:

Bernadette Kenny, Pensions Board Chief Executive,
Linda Ferguson, Pensions Board Director Customer Insight and Strategy,
Lorraine Miller, Pensions Board Housing Officer.

Detailed discussion took place on the eight areas of concern we had previously identified. The following points were made, among others:

1 - Purchasing of a Retirement Home

Ex-local authority homes are considered on a case by case basis.

2 - Charm Rents – Fully rented properties

Lorraine Miller doesn't like rents based on income. Changes will be proposed. There will be winners and losers. No quick decisions will be taken. There will be a consultation process. Tenants will be encouraged to claim Housing Benefit.

3 - Charm Rents – Shared equity properties. Letter from Lorraine Miller

A. *The level of Payments (Rents) on the Pensions Board share of the property*

I have tried to explain this under two separate headings:

- (i) **Mortgage Interest** – *This was determined at the time of purchase and in the last few years of the mortgage scheme was based on a starting interest rate of 4% on the capital required from the Board to buy the property, rising by RPI annually. It is part of the mortgage deed and should have been explained fully to applicants by their solicitors before signing the deed. Historically the Church Commissioners provided the capital for this scheme and although the Board receives interest monthly and the share of our capital interest on redemption of the mortgage, our agreement with the Commissioners as our stakeholders is that both are passed directly to them. As they are tasked with funding the work of the Church, they are required to meet investment targets and did offer mortgage rates of 4% in the 1980's when interest rates nationally were anything from 8 to 12%.*
- (ii) **Shared Ownership** – *In Shared Ownership the level of rent is based on the interest rate of the capital we have drawn from the loan* to provide sufficient fund for purchase. At present this is 4%.*

** the loan. In 2010 the Board negotiated a facility to borrow up to £50 million pounds from Santander Bank. We draw down the loan as and when we need capital for purchasing. The interest rates are variable, and can only be held 3, 6 or 9 months, so the rate at which we borrow chunks of capital can change.*

B. In terms of service *we have increasingly recognised over the last 12 months that for Leaseholders in Shared Ownership we need to review and revise costs which are allocated to the service charge pots. The existing process using Sanctuary offers us consistency of standards: a national partner to go back to if there are problems with work and value for money. However, it is not we who are paying for this and we appreciate the need to give leaseholders more flexibility. We are meeting Sanctuary on 19 December to agree a new way forward. I hope that we can then write to leaseholders in shared ownership early in 2013 to explain a new process which includes greater choice for them.*

C. In terms of why the Board does not pay its share of repairs and improvements – *this is not how shared ownership works. We are clear in all documentation that shared ownership does not mean shared costs. In the external housing world shared owners are responsible for all repairs and maintenance, much as the mortgagors are, and properties are regularly inspected to ensure that the housing provider's investment is protected. We introduced shared ownership seeking to smooth these costs through service charges in an effort not to repeat the difficulties faced by mortgagors in later years when capital was decreasing.*

*D. In all our properties many customers express concerns about the **distances contractors travel** to carry out repairs, but when contractors submit tenders every August to Sanctuary they are appraised of the geographical distances that they will be required to travel, and price their tenders accordingly. We are not charged for additional travel for any work once the tender is successful.*

4. Bank Statements

These will no longer be required to support the annual income and capital declarations

5. Moving house once a person has retired

A representative of the Board will visit the tenant to discuss the options available.

After the meeting Mrs Kenny wrote to us as follows:

Dear David,

Meeting between the Pensions Board and the Retired Clergy Association 21 November 2012

I am so pleased that we were able to meet you, Bishop David and Owen Barraclough here in Church House last November. I am really very sorry indeed that circumstances have intervened to delay my response.

We have a common interest in ensuring that the services offered by the Pensions Board, whether through the management of clergy pensions or the provision of retirement housing, meet the needs of the retired clergy and their spouses and partners. The Board has perhaps in the past not always been as approachable nor as responsive as it should be to questions and criticisms.

I welcomed, therefore, the opportunity to hear from you and your colleagues about the concerns of your members. It was extremely helpful that you had gone to so much trouble to collect these together in a very comprehensive document, backed up by quotations and examples provided by your members. We had a very full, open and good spirited discussion on all the issues raised. We covered a significant amount of ground so Loraine Miller promised you a full written response on all your detailed points. Loraine has provided this separately.

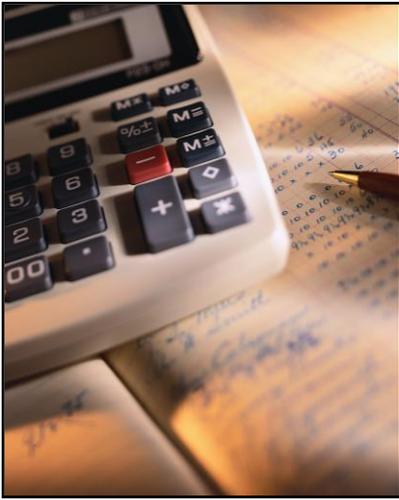
We agreed in particular that we should meet regularly to exchange views and for us to hear of any concerns. We explained that we were going to be doing a major review of the CHARM rental scheme over the next 12 months. We suggested that we might usefully discuss our emerging views on this at our next meeting. This will give you an early opportunity to comment and provide us with reactions and ideas for us to consider as we develop our thinking. We are also now agreeing the date for this next meeting which I hope will take place in April/ May.

*Best wishes,
Bernadette .*

Bernadette Kenny
Chief Executive

This next meeting has now been arranged for Friday 3 May. At this meeting, as Bernadette says, the new proposals for fixing the level of rents are to be discussed. We have no idea what the Board has in mind, but **we need your feedback on the present system and any ideas for improvement** before we go.

Please send your thoughts as soon as possible and, in any case **before the end of April**, to david@phypers.co.uk.



FEES WILL NEVER BE THE SAME AGAIN! The 2012-2014 Fees Order

In our last Newsletter, published just before Christmas, we reported on the then forthcoming implementation of this Order on 1 January 2013. The main recommendations from the Archbishops' Council were:

- (i) Incumbents' fees for weddings and funerals would become Diocesan Board of Finance fees;
- (ii) DBFs could offer up to 80% of their fees to retired clergy, other self-supporting ministers and Readers when they conduct these services.

Since January we have been trying to collect information on the implementation of this Order around the country. Needless to say (this is the Church of England!) practice varies widely. Some dioceses are offering 100% of fees, some 80%, many 67%, some 50% and one 43%! Some dioceses are offering fees to all retired and self-supporting clergy and Readers, others to different combinations of these categories. Our main concern is the amounts being offered to retired clergy.

So far we have no information from the following Dioceses:

Bradford
Canterbury
Carlisle
Chelmsford
Chester

Coventry
Ely
Hereford
London

Manchester
Peterborough
Portsmouth
Sodor and Man

Southwark
St Albans
Wakefield
Winchester

If you live in any of these dioceses and take funerals and weddings please let us know the percentage of the DBF fee you are receiving. The 2013 Fees Table can be viewed at:

<http://www.churchofengland.org/media/1479828/fees%20table%202013.pdf>

We are also interested to learn how you are claiming and receiving your fees. A letter was published in the *Church Times* on 15 March from a quite discontented retired clergyman in Derby Diocese.

If you take funerals, particularly in crematoria:

- are you paid directly by the funeral director?
- if so, do you pass on any payment(s) to a PCC and/or your DBF?
- are you paid by a PCC or DBF?
- are you having difficulty receiving payment?

Please tell us of your experience – david@phypers.co.uk

Of course, any complaints about levels of fees or difficulties with DBFs should be made, in the first instance, to your Diocesan Retirement Officer. Except for London, where we know of no-one representing the interests of retired clergy, we can let you know who your RO is.

