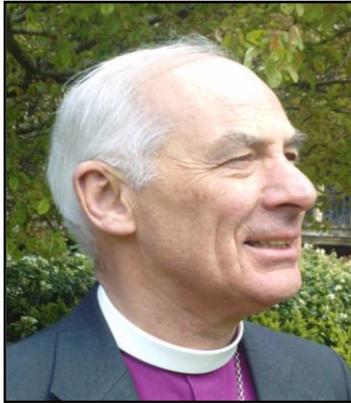




Summer Newsletter 2014

*Retired
Clergy
Association*



FROM THE CHAIRMAN

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

As I write this letter there has been (almost!) two weeks of continuous sunshine - Summer!

Summer turns our minds to holidays and this is often the time of the year when those of us who are willing and able are asked to assist our colleagues so that they can have a holiday. What a joy it is to do so!

The benefice where we live in Gloucestershire consists of a small town and seven villages. We have a new parish priest coming at the beginning of September, but since last September I have been the Interim Minister. After 21 years, eight as Archdeacon, nine as bishop and four in retirement, it has been a real joy and privilege to be a parish priest again.

What a lot has changed during that time! Sunday trading is now in full swing, there has been a vast increase in Sunday sport, people seem to be much more mobile, often away, often looking after grandchildren, and while more people work from home, many travel considerable distances to work so that the family can be settled. But at the same time, what a lot has stayed the same! The great spiritual thirst, pastoral care, the endless opportunities to share the Good News of Jesus!

As a serving bishop I used to say to all those I was about to licence or institute, 'Love the Lord and love his people.'

I sometimes feel that we make things rather too complicated these days. So whether or not we are called to help our colleagues this summer, wherever we are and whatever our circumstances we can always 'Love the Lord and love his people.'

+David Jennings.



New President for the Association

We are delighted to welcome the Rt Revd Robert Atwell, newly-appointed Bishop of Exeter as our next President.

Bishop Robert was previously Bishop of Stockport, in the diocese of Chester. He was born and brought up in Ilford, Essex.

He read theology at St John's College, Durham, and trained for the ministry at Westcott House, Cambridge. During training he was sent to study at the Venerable English College and Pontifical

Gregorian University in Rome. Attending lectures with seminarians from around the world and exploring the Eternal City was an education in itself.

After a curacy in north London he was appointed Chaplain of Trinity College, Cambridge where he taught Patristics. From there he took the unusual step of becoming a Benedictine monk at Burford Priory in the Cotswolds. His ten years in monastic life gave him an abiding love of contemplative prayer. These days he maintains his Benedictine vocation as an oblate of the Abbey of Le Bec in Normandy where he makes an annual retreat.

He was Vicar of St Mary's, Primrose Hill, in the Diocese of London for nine years before being consecrated Bishop of Stockport in 2008. He is the compiler of two volumes of daily readings for the liturgical year, *Celebrating the Saints* and *Celebrating the Seasons*, together with three anthologies of devotional readings: *Gift, Love, and Remember*. He is the author of *The Contented Life: spirituality and the gift of years*, *The Good Worship Guide: leading worship well*, and joint author of the new Church of England discipleship course, *Pilgrim*. He is currently writing another book on funeral ministry, to be published this autumn.

Like his predecessor in the Association, Bishop Michael Perham, Bishop Robert is a liturgist and will chair the Church of England's Liturgical Commission from January 2015. We look forward to meeting him at our General Meeting at St Edmundsbury Cathedral in June next year.

The Annual General Meeting will be held at Bishopthorpe Palace on Friday 26 June next year, by kind and generous invitation of the Archbishop of York.

New Council Member for the North-East

After many years of faithful service, the retirement of Paul Conder from the Association's Council has created a Vacancy for someone to represent the North Eastern Dioceses – **Durham, Newcastle, West Riding and the Dales, and York**. After circulating Retirement Officers and Association Branch Secretaries in these dioceses, we have two candidates:

Revd Canon Dr Malcolm Grundy
Revd Alan Middleton

If you are an RCA member and if you live in any of these dioceses you may vote for one of these candidates by:

EITHER: **sending an email to the Secretary** at david@phypers.co.uk

The email should be headed **RCA Election** and should contain your name, the name of your preferred candidate and your current diocese of residence.

Please ensure your email is sent **before 31 August 2014**.

OR: **completing the form below and sending it to**

Revd David Phypers
Secretary, Retired Clergy Association
15 Albert Road
Chaddesden
DERBY
DE21 6SL

to arrive before 31 August 2014.

Each of the candidates has submitted a short statement overleaf.

Retired Clergy Association **Election of Council member to represent** **the Dioceses of Durham, Newcastle, West Riding and the Dales, York**

Candidates: Revd Canon Dr Malcolm Grundy **Name of voter**

Revd Alan Middleton

Signed

Diocese of residence

Date

Voter's choice

Revd Canon Dr Malcolm Grundy

I have a great interest in the development of parish ministries and now of how retired clergy support and contribute to them. For most of us the vocation to ordained ministry is life-long and I want to continue to contribute in my writing and other work to this stream of spirituality. Throughout my time as Archdeacon of Craven in the Diocese of Bradford I was active in supporting and developing work for and with our retired clergy and their spouses so have some idea of the many issues they face. As a member of our York RCA group I now have an interest in the transitions and changes many clergy and their families have to make to begin retirement, not least in finding the right property – and the right church to attend!. I would welcome the opportunity to represent clergy in the North East Region and to take our experience and interests to the national Church as an active member of the RCA Council.



Crockford's Biography

GRUNDY, Canon Malcolm Leslie. b 44. Open Univ BA76 Leeds Univ PhD14. St Boniface Warminster AKC68. d 69 p 70. C Doncaster St Geo *Sheff* 69-72; Ind Chapl 72-80; Dir of Educn *Lon* 80-86; TR Huntingdon *Ely* 86-91; Hon Can *Ely* Cathl 88-94; Dir Avec 91-94; Adn Craven *Bradf* 94-05; Dir Foundn for Ch Leadership 05-09; rtd 09; Perm to Offic *York* from 09. 4 Portal Road, York YO26 6BQ Tel (01904) 787387 Mobile 07950-816641 E-mail mlgweg@gmail.com.

Revd Alan Middleton

I offer to serve on the RCA Council to represent members and to address their concerns. The many issues currently facing retired clergy include: finding opportunities to serve; problems over retirement housing and rent levels; concern over exclusion from training opportunities and synodical governance; and the payment of statutory fees and recommended expenses. As time moves on and the percentage of retired clergy continues to increase, the list of concerns will undoubtedly grow!



Forty years service in three dioceses - Lichfield, Durham and Southwark - taught me to appreciate and value the assistance of retired colleagues. In the first three years of my retirement I have been fortunate enough to be made welcome and offered opportunities to serve. I know that some sisters and brothers have not been so fortunate, and the variety of approach and circumstances between the dioceses make the overall picture complicated and puzzling!

If elected to serve I would do my best to find ways forward and to make a difference.

Crockford's Biography

MIDDLETON, Alan Derek. b 46. St Jo Coll Dur BA68 MA85 Bris Univ PGCE70 Sheff Univ MMin00. Qu Coll Birm. d 72 p 73. C Cannock *Lich* 72-76; Warden St Helen's Youth & Community Cen Bp Auckd 76-79; V Darlington St Jo *Dur* 79-89; TR E Darlington 89-90; V Upper Norwood All SS *S'wark* 90-99; TR Warlingham w Chelsham and Farleigh 99-11; Bp's Ecum Adv 96-11; AD Caterham 05-11; rtd 11; Perm to Offic *Dur* from 11. 21 Boste Crescent, Durham DH1 5US Tel 0191-386 4467 E-mail alan.middleton21@btinternet.com.

NEW DEAL FOR CHARM RESIDENTS/CUSTOMERS

At the recent General Synod the Pensions Board unveiled its new proposals for calculating rents for retired clergy and their widows who fully rent their homes from the Board under the CHARM scheme. Their Presentation to Synod reflected their publication *Response to the consultation on a new approach to housing retired clergy* hereafter called *Consultation Response*.

Church Housing Assistance for Retired Ministers (CHARM) began in 1983 to assist clergy in retirement who could not afford to buy their own homes. It provides fully-rented and shared ownership properties. Initially, 'maintenance contributions' did not exceed 25% of beneficiaries' joint gross income (the **rent guarantee**) and water rates were paid by the Board. Properties were owned by the Church Commissioners, to whom they had to be sold back when the initial beneficiaries no longer needed them.

In 2003 the rent guarantee was raised to 30%, and in 2006 beneficiaries were asked to pay their own water rates. As a result, many retired clergy today find they are spending 50% of their net income on rent, Council Tax and water rates.

Since 2009 the Board itself has bought properties through the facility of a multi-million pound loan from Santander Bank. Beneficiaries now pay rent through Assured Shorthold Tenancies, and, in the latest proposals, are described as 'customers.'

Target Rent principles

From April 2015, the rent guarantee will no longer apply to new customers. Instead, their rents will be calculated according to Target Rent principles similar to those used by other social housing providers in the public and private housing sectors.

A 'basket of indices' will determine the new rents. Calculations will be made by Savills, a City firm of chartered surveyors who will use 'industry standard methodology' to determine one of the indices, property values.

A pool of properties

Currently, clergy may only seek housing assistance from the Pensions Board within 12 months of their expected date of retirement. This will be extended to five years. Instead of the Board then buying a property, clergy will be offered somewhere to live from a nationwide pool of properties with details of their likely rents. Once chosen, agreed improvements to properties will be made in good time to allow an easy move ahead of the retirement date. The homes 'will include modern kitchens and bathrooms, double glazing, insulation and energy-efficient heating systems' - *Consultation Response* page 6.

State benefits

The Board will also help its 'customers' to access the state entitlements they have paid for through their taxes and national insurance contributions. To

this end it will employ a dedicated advisor who will be able to offer advice and practical help in receiving benefits. Because Target Rents are nationally recognised, Housing Benefit, for example, will become easier to claim than it is under the present system.

Eligibility criteria

Currently, clergy have to serve for a minimum of ten years in order to qualify for CHARM assistance. From 2015 this will increase annually to reach 15 years in 2019.

Existing residents

From the beginning the Board has recognised that some of its existing residents are paying less than their future 'Target Rents' and some are paying more. New rents will be calculated for everyone from April 2015. But those currently paying less will only see their rents rise by £60 each year (£5 each month) until their 'Target Rent' is reached. Similarly, those paying more will see their rents fall by £60 each year until they reach their 'Target Rent.' Because rents increase each year in any case, this will mean that those paying more will reach their 'Target Rents' more quickly than those paying less.

The Chairman, Bishop David Jennings, the Vice-Chair, Owen Barraclough, and the Secretary, David Phypers have been grateful to Officers of the Pensions Board for consulting us and listening to us in regular meetings at Church House during this process of change. We quickly pointed out that the real losers would be the most elderly and their

widowed spouses who still enjoy the 25% rent guarantee. So we are particularly encouraged by the Board's decision, 'that the rent guarantee, under which rent will be adjusted to reflect a loss of income, will continue to apply for any resident whose tenancy commenced/commences on or before 31 March 2015. This guarantee will continue for as long as they remain in the CHARM scheme' - *Consultation Response*, page 9.

Unforeseen consequences?

The CHARM presentation to Synod was made during the evening of Monday 14 July, after the heady excitement of the vote on women bishops earlier in the day. The previous Saturday evening, an hour before the start of the World Cup Final, the Board held a 'Fringe Meeting' at which it outlined its proposals and invited comments. Our Council member and Retirement Officer in Manchester Diocese, the Venerable Alan Wolstencroft, was present at both meetings.

Alan reports that the Fringe meeting was 'a lively affair' with questions about the term 'customers', clarity about 'Target Rents' and the effect of the changes on current tenants. In Synod itself, the Revd Stephen Coles observed that, 'even subsidised rents would be unaffordable for some clergy in some very expensive areas,' while the Rt Revd David Walker, Bishop of Manchester and former Chair of the Pension Board's Housing Committee, asked, 'whether there would still be any available property in the CHARM pool by the time his generation of clergy retired.'

The Board reports enthusiasm for 'Target Rents' among clergy approaching retirement, but will they be as enthusiastic when they discover they may not be able to afford to live in their desired part of the country or near adult children as they hope? And how will their spouses feel when they discover that their rents will continue to rise, without any rent guarantee, after their income falls when they are widowed?

Alan Wolstencroft concludes his report: 'There were many assurances from the

Board that they will still exercise pastoral oversight in all their dealings with "customers" and that they remain committed to maintenance and improvement of the CHARM offer and to ensuring that it is sustained for future generations of clergy.'

We record our appreciation to senior staff at the Pensions Board for their hard work in bringing this difficult measure to fruition.

DJP

To receive a .pdf copy of the *Consultation Response*, please email the Secretary at david@phypers.co.uk.

To receive a paper copy of the *Consultation Response*, please write to:
Maria Jacobs, Church of England Pensions Board,
29 Great Smith Street, LONDON, SW1P 3PS

Retired Clergy Association

President: Rt Revd Robert Atwell, Bishop of Exeter
Chairman: Rt Revd David Jennings
Laurel Cottage, East End, Northleach, CHELTENHAM, GL54 3ET
Telephone: 01451 860743
Email: bishopdavidjennings@gmail.com

Secretary and Treasurer:
Revd David Phypers,
15 Albert Road, Chaddesden, DERBY, DE21 6SL
Telephone: 01332 239134
Email: david@phypers.co.uk



Email or Snail Mail?

Nearly 1400 members now receive their Newsletters in colour by email, saving us time and money. If your letter has come by snail mail and if you have an email address, please send it to david@phypers.co.uk.



WRITING FOR GOD

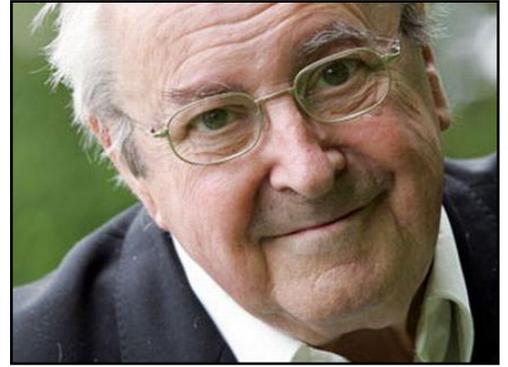
by Francis Wood

Once they called Theology the Queen of Sciences. It was for everyone, 'not only,' as John Betjeman would say, 'for the shining ones who dwell, safe in the Dorchester Hotel.' Today it appears that theologians are happy keeping God to themselves. A recent survey of books in Australia revealed that the most difficult books to read were those on theology. Have Church writers lost confidence in their subject? Have they forgotten how to communicate anything useful about God or is that just too difficult? It's no wonder Alistair Campbell said of Downing Street, 'We don't do God here.'

When Sammy Kahn wrote the song *Three Coins in a Fountain* he was asked, 'When you write, Sammy, what comes first, the words or the music?' He replied, 'First comes the telephone call!'

It was the same for me. In 1993 came a call from an editor after I gave a talk on local radio about Sailing. The editor of the *Chronicle* said, 'I heard your talk. Do you think you could write us a weekly column?' I said, 'What could I write about?' 'I don't mind what you write about. All that matters to me is, will the readers read it? I'll pay the usual freelance fee. I like your style.' Twenty years on, I still write *Church Matters* in the *Chronicle*, every Friday page 15, having survived five editors!

When a vicar retires, does his Vocation stop? Or do new vocations open up now we've got the time? Friends suggest how we might spend our time. Gardening? Bowling? One thing leads to another. If you feel a vocation to write, how do you go about it? Get a copy of the *Artists and Writers Yearbook*. It'll tell you how to write a letter to an editor offering a piece (everything's a 'piece') in which he may be interested. It lists all publications which accept unsolicited scripts and in some cases how much they pay for lineage. Best is to get to know an editor



and offer him a drink. Failing that, write something that you

know about for your own amusement. Something which interests you may interest someone else. Ideas come when we least expect them.

Every writer should carry a *Common Place Book*. It could be the spare pages at the back of your diary. Jot down every idea which comes. Remember what interests readers are the unusual and the controversial. If all the lamp-posts in Acorn Road are standing upright, there's no story. But if one falls over and holds up the traffic and lands on a pram and blows the electric fuses, that's a story.

What an opportunity! After 50 years of ministry, surely there are some retired clergy capable of putting their fingers to work on the computer in the service of God? Your Church needs you, brothers and sisters.

You'll need a fund of stories. And you may be surprised. When our vicar, Peter Ramsden announced in Church that he was to be the next Bishop of Port Moresby in Papua New Guinea, I called up a local reporter. 'Our Vicar is to be the Bishop of Port Moresby,' I announced. 'Oh my!' said the reporter. That's a long way away. In South Wales isn't it?' 'No. That's Port Talbot,' I countered. 'Ah. Is it in the Hebrides?' 'No. You're thinking of Port Charlotte on the Isle of Islay.' 'Go on then, give me a clue.....' 'PNG,' I suggested. 'My goodness!' he said. 'What's Proctor and Gamble to do with it?'

Above all, enjoy writing. Make yourself laugh as you write. Remember, you're only as good as your next piece.

Read more about Francis' writing career at

<http://www.chroniclive.co.uk/news/north-east-news/newcastle-vicar-rev-francis-woods-1362488>