

# Why we're both RC and C of E!

**THEIR family is an ecumenical project all by itself!**

And their church life has encouraged links between churches of all denominations in Fareham. Meet Paul and Lucy Docherty - living proof that such barriers can be hurdled.

Paul was brought up as a Roman Catholic, while Lucy's origins are Anglican. But they and their four children are members of both St Philip Howard RC Church and Holy Trinity C of E Church, Fareham. They attend services at each church in alternate weeks.

The baptism of their children gave them a chance to promote unity between the two churches. And their work in helping to pre-

## my faith

*As part of our series on lives changed by faith, we meet Lucy and Paul Docherty, a couple who have proved that denominational differences are no barrier*

pare couples from all denominations for marriage has helped ecumenical relations blossom.

Lucy, 48, chairs the Fareham and Gosport Primary Care Trust, while Paul, 51, is captain of HMS Temeraire in Burnaby Road, Portsmouth, and directs the Navy's physical training programme. They met at Nottingham University in the 1970s, where Anglicans and Roman Catholics met for coffee after chaplaincy services.

"It was actually the first time I'd got to know a Roman Catholic, so it was a real eye-opener," said Lucy. "We were lucky because there was a strong drive at university for the denominations to do everything together, but we were warned things might be different in the 'real' world."

"It took us five years to be married, once I'd decided I could cope with Paul being at sea, and the separation. But I wasn't prepared to be Catholic and Paul wasn't prepared to be Anglican. We were able to work through various issues together, and were married in an Anglican church with Paul's RC naval chaplain taking a full part in the service."

"We had our first child, Hannah, baptised as a Roman Catholic but with Anglican and Catholic godparents. We intended that our second, Julia, would be baptised as an Anglican, but it was then that we hit problems and contacted



*Paul and Lucy Docherty*

the Association of Interchurch Families for guidance. In the end, Julia was baptised at St Philip Howard, but with our Anglican curate, Peter Sutton, participating. It was the first time since the church had been consecrated 12 years previously that an Anglican priest had taken part in a service.

"We were happy with what we'd achieved liturgically, so we did the same for Rachel and William's baptisms. But William's was the first baptism at which I was able to receive Communion."

"We had to speak to the Roman Catholic bishop, Bishop Crispian, to see whether this counted as an occasion when non-Catholics could receive. I let him see the hurt that such rules could cause. You can't help feeling left out if the person with whom you share the sacrament of marriage and your children are taking Communion at such a spe-

cial family event. He thought about it and said yes."

The couple have been involved in marriage preparation for the past 14 years, and helped set up an ecumenical course three years ago. Groups of four or five couples from all denominations are helped to prepare for their lives together in the context of their marriage vows.

"We initially did it through the Roman Catholic church for 10 years, working with couples on a one-to-one basis," said Paul. "We felt there was scope to expand it to other denominations, and now run a programme - *Love and Cherish* - with another Catholic couple for all the churches in Churches Together in Fareham."

"Anybody getting married is welcome, although each church talks separately to the couples about their own denomination. There's been a lot of interest, as very few places in the country have pooled their resources in this way."

Both they and their children feel part of both of the congregations they attend. It does mean life can get complicated, as various members of the family are choir members, Readers and chalice assistants at the two churches. But they regard themselves as being luckier than most of us, for they have 'double belonging' in both churches.

Their experiences have prompted them to work strenuously for other ecumenical programmes.

Lucy is a member of the executive of Churches Together in Hampshire and the Islands, and the pair are heavily involved with the Association of Interchurch Families which supports couples in situations such as theirs. They also meet in a "Teams of Our Lady" house-group - an RC organisation that encourages marital spiritual growth, prayer and Bible study.

Despite the apparent hurdles, their marriage across the denominations has brought them closer to each other spiritually and deepened their faith.



## Unlocking people... ...releasing potential



**Gilead Foundations is a Christian rehabilitation centre based on a 320-acre dairy farm in West Devon.**

**It is committed to helping people with life-controlling addictions to live successful and fruitful lives, providing care, support and rehabilitation services based on Biblical principles for up to 40 students of all ages and backgrounds.**

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Salary negotiable depending on experience but likely to be in the region of £15,000 per annum.

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## Big moment as couple see Pope

**IT was an exciting moment for both Paul and Lucy when they got to see the Pope during the summer. The family went to a conference for interchurch families near Rome in July, with 100 couples from 12 countries who have similar backgrounds.**

**While they were there, they saw Pope John Paul II in the courtyard of his summer palace in Castelgandolfo. During his half-hour appearance, he welcomed the inter-church families present with a message of support.**

**"It was hot, with temperatures in the 40s," said Paul. "But at midday, the Pope was wheeled out to a raucous roar of adulation, the equal of any welcome for Pompey at Fratton Park! No matter**

**how much one might wish to remain aloof from the pursuit of celebrities, I felt it a huge privilege to see a man who made such an impact upon the history of the last quarter-century and on the Church.**

**"Alongside this respect for a great religious and moral leader was a feeling of sadness and pity for a man whose physical capabilities were deserting him as he becomes more affected by Parkinson's disease.**

**"His frustration was clear to see as he struggled to talk. It was a particular sadness that he was no longer able to smile his famously warm greeting as an acknowledgment of the immense devotion and love being shown to him."**