

# MR PHILIP BEALE

21 MAY 1925 – 16 APRIL 2024

We were saddened to hear that Philip Beale died at his care home in Eastbourne last April. Philip was one of our much loved Local Preachers, and Liphook Methodist was his church in retirement for many years until he and his wife Barbara left to live in sheltered housing in Eastbourne, and nearer to his sister. Many of us kept in touch with them.

Barbara died suddenly several years ago and, after a while, Philip moved to a care home for his last years. He was the most kind and generous of men, quietly helping those in need in the church and community where he saw their need. His sermons were always full of anecdote and with a worthwhile Christian message, always something there worth listening to.

Philip was born in China where his parents were missionaries, but they had to leave in a hurry, when Philip was very young, owing to the threat to their lives due to the developing political situation in the country. Back in England, Philip grew up and was due to go to Cambridge University when WW2 broke out. He had been in the RAF cadets at school and expected to be drafted into the RAF but instead the entire draft were sent to the mines as 'Bevan Boys', apparently much resented at first by the miners that had not been conscripted. I asked Philip how he felt about that and he surprised me by saying it was the best thing that could have happened to him. He said that he had to learn to work with and to value people of all backgrounds and this was an invaluable experience for him. After the war ended, Philip took up his place at University to study history and after graduation trained as a teacher. He met and married Barbara in 1951 and they were happily married for more than 60 years.

Philip and Barbara spent some years running a Methodist school in The Gambia in West Africa, a Muslim majority country then and now, it was not always safe running a Christian school in the country, but Philip worked well with the Gambian people that he came in contact with. Philip's last teaching post was as deputy head of Lewes Grammar School in Sussex, he told me once of a talented pupil who broke his neck on the school rugby field and was paralysed, and of how he was able to ensure that he could successfully continue his education. That tragedy had affected him deeply.

After retiring from teaching Philip and Barbara came to live in Liphook, meeting Bob Law gardening outside the church when he came to to investigate and had a very warm welcome from Bob that he never forgot. In retirement Philip was able to pursue his interests and hobbies. Apart from his local preaching in the Circuit, he was a member of the Society of Antiquaries and spent many hours researching there. He researched and wrote a book about the 'History of the Post in England from the Romans to the Stuarts', a book about the postal service and stamps in Sierra Leone in West Africa as well as a book about the narrow gauge railways of the same country. His last published book was about 16th century letters sent to a merchant business in London in Tudor times, 'The Corsini Letters' giving a good insight into life in London at the time of Shakespeare.

Philip had relations in new Zealand and when visiting them he spent some time in Fiji where he was made most welcome by the Methodist community there.

Philip was an extraordinary man whom it was a great privilege to know, may he rest in peace with his Saviour and Lord

Joan Stephens

