



Why Explore, you may ask?

Three years ago, we were attending Mass in St Peter's when, just before the end, we were all given a brief presentation on the work of 'Explore' and invited to volunteer to help it fulfill its mission. The person talking to us was Rex Chester, who had been the Founder of the Charity a decade or so previously. It had started in Winchester, but it was now increasingly carrying out its work right across the country. Last year, Rex retired from the position of President: he now lives in Winchester, where he has recently become a member of St Peter's Parish.

Together with several other couples we accepted the invitation to participate in the work and, after a bit of training, we were soon sent off to St Mary's School in Bitterne to undergo our first experience of being interrogated by around twenty sixteen/seventeen year olds. The subject was our experience of marriage! We had been warned to expect questions addressed to each of us, separately, typically:-

- How long have you been married?
- How long had you been going out with each other before you were married?
- How did you get on with each other's parents?
- How did you know you were right for each other?
- Did you live together first? Have you got children?
- Did you have other relationships before this one?
- Did getting married change your relationship?
- Have you had any big rows?
- Have you ever felt like walking out?
- Who wears the trousers in your relationship?
- Did you ever get jealous if you saw each other with someone else?
- Have you ever had an affair?
- Do you still have sex?
- Is sex just the same now as it was when you started?
- Do you think it is right or wrong if people get divorced?
- Did you get married in a church?
- Why do you think getting married is important?
- Is there anything you would change if you could start again?

These sessions in the classrooms – and we participated in a number of them before retiring – were both demanding and rewarding, not only for the children, but also for ourselves.

The scale of the Organisation's success can be understood from this extract from one of last year's Newsletters.i.e.

“Over the past academic year, 5,477 young people have participated in Explore events. This is a new record for the charity and a 19% increase on the 2008/09 year. It signals the growing importance being placed on Relationship Education in schools and colleges across the country. Since the registration of Explore as an educational charity in December 2000, there have been 31,290 young people involved in ‘Explore’ events.”

We hope that, during the year, you will be generous in your support for ‘Explore’.

David Morgan 5th May 2011

