**EXHUMATION**

Once a burial has taken place it is a criminal offence to disturb human remains. If the coffin or ashes are in consecrated ground (whether a churchyard or a civic cemetery), then the remains may only be removed by the authority of a faculty from the chancellor of the diocese, who acts on behalf of the bishop. In some cases you may also need to apply for consent from the Ministry of Justice.

The Church of England believes that, once interred (especially if in consecrated ground), human remains should normally be left undisturbed. Therefore the chancellor is generally reluctant to grant faculties for exhumation, although he will look sympathetically at any special reasons for a request. If there is any likelihood that a member or members of the family will object, the chancellor will almost always refuse the application.

If you wish to apply for a faculty, please complete and return the enclosed form (petition for faculty) to me. I will also need:

a) A cheque in favour of Birketts LLP, non-refundable, for the application fee of £250, or (preferably) payment by bank transfer to Birketts LLP client a/c 00136604 at Bank of Scotland, sort code 12.16. 39. Please quote the reference 2345/153 followed by the name of the churchyard / cemetery.

b) A letter from the church / cemetery authority where the remains are to be re-buried (assuming a faculty is granted).

c) A letter from the priest responsible for the place where the remains currently are agreeing to their being moved if a faculty is granted.

d) Details of any close relatives of the deceased (spouse, children, parents) and evidence of their agreement.

Once I receive the above I will forward the application to the diocesan chancellor (the judge of the diocesan ecclesiastical court) for his decision. Public notices may need to be displayed, and if this applies, I will arrange them.

Yours sincerely

James Hall