

## Marriage Supporters on the Front Line

**Peter and Hazelmary Bull** are running a bed & breakfast guest house in Cornwall with a Christian ethos, and as part of their terms and conditions they specify that couples requiring a room with a double bed should be married. It worked just fine, everybody accepted it, until two homosexual men turned up claiming to be “married”. They could have been given a room with two single beds, but there wasn’t one available, so they had to be turned away. Instead of gracefully accepting the situation like most people would, they sued the proprietors for “discrimination”.

**Ashers Bakery**, run by the McArthur family in Belfast, have been producing decorated celebration cakes for years. They have occasionally turned down orders that involve pornographic images or crude language, but they got into trouble when someone ordered a cake for a campaign event, bearing an image of the puppet characters Bert and Ernie and the slogan “Support Gay Marriage”. They had to turn it down because it was against their Christian principles. They didn’t know at the time that the customer, one of their regulars, was homosexual, and it was irrelevant, their objection was only about the message on the cake and they would have still rejected it if the customer had been straight, but they got sued for “discrimination”.

**Bryan Barkley** held up a placard outside Wakefield Cathedral saying “No same sex marriage”. He had been a Red Cross volunteer for 20 years, including 14 years with the International Tracing and Message Service, helping people to find their missing relatives, but he was dismissed because his views were considered to be incompatible with the values of the Red Cross.

**Adrian Smith**, housing manager at Trafford Housing Trust in Manchester was demoted and had his salary cut by 40% because he wrote on his personal Facebook page, not accessible to the general public, that gay weddings in churches would be “an equality too far”. He took legal action and his case was upheld by the High Court in London, but he received only £98 in damages and was not reinstated to his original job.

There are many more cases like these. For details see:  
<http://c4m.org.uk/downloads/30cases.pdf>

**Support 4 the Family** is an independent non-commercial organisation campaigning on the issues described in this leaflet. If you would like to get involved, please contact Alan Williams (chairman) 0794 623 8862 or Mike Gascoigne (secretary) 01252 874489.

## Support 4 the Family

Marriage is the permanent and exclusive union of one man and one woman.

Support the rights of parents as primary nurturers and educators of their children.

Support the rights of children to access the parents who brought them into the world.



No sex education in primary schools.

Support legal rights for expression of religious conscience on the nature of marriage.

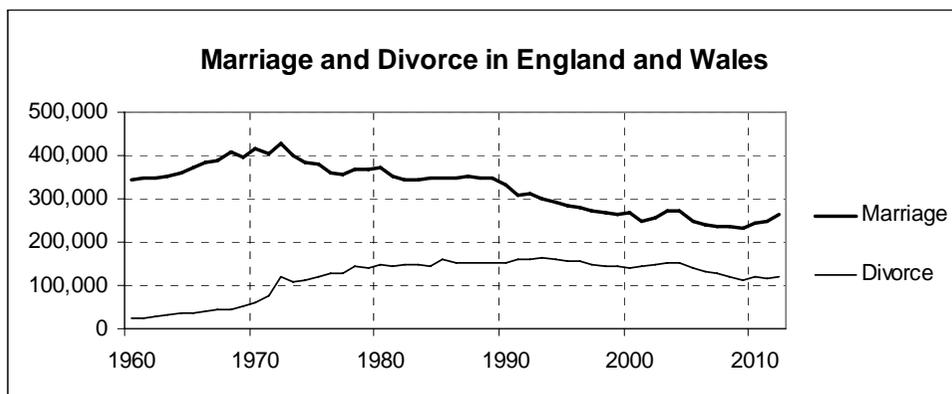
Married mothers and fathers should be given a tax allowance while they have children under 18.

## What's happened to marriage?

For centuries, marriage has been acknowledged as the basic unit of society and the most stable foundation for raising a family. There is a virtue in standing up in front of your friends and relatives and saying that you will stay together for life. However, we have a problem. Marriage is becoming less popular, more unstable, and in some cases subject to conditions.

In 1960, in England and Wales, there were 343,614 marriages, rising steadily to an all-time high of 426,241 in 1972. Then it declined to a low point of 232,443 in 2009 and recovered to the latest provisional value of 262,240 in 2012.

The corresponding number of divorces was 23,868 in 1960, rising steadily until 1971 when it shot up as a consequence of the Divorce Reform Act 1969 which made divorce much easier after a two-year separation period. It reached a peak of 119,025 in 1972, then dropped slightly after the surge of applications had been processed. Then it continued to rise to 160,300 in 1985, remained fairly steady until 2004 and gradually reduced to 118,140 in 2012.



While the recent fall in the divorce rate and the recovery of marriage might be good news, the overall long-term trend since 1960 has been more divorces in proportion to the number of marriages. In 2012 the Office of National Statistics estimated that 42% of marriages in England and Wales end in divorce. Scotland and Northern Ireland have their own legal histories, but the long-term trends are the same.<sup>1</sup>

There could be all sorts of reasons for the decline in the number of marriages from 1972 to 2009, but there is obviously a trend towards cohabitation. We all know people who live together and raise children without bothering to get married. When they break up there is no divorce, no statistical record, but the children have to face all the usual consequences.

The recent recovery of marriage could be partly a consequence of the increasing number of prenuptial agreements since a landmark case in the Appeal Court in

2009 gave them legal recognition.<sup>2</sup> But is marriage really the same when it's subject to terms and conditions?

While marriage is under threat from long-term decline, instability and supplementary contracts, it's now being redefined as a genderless institution by people getting "married" who are not even opposite sex. They cannot produce children, not because they are infertile, but because they do not have the complementary sex organs that are required to consummate a marriage. Children are not born within the marriage, they have to be obtained from outside, by adoption, surrogacy, or in the case of lesbians, by a sperm sample from a clinic or by normal sex with a disposable man. These types of family have varying consequences for children. They might cope with it well enough while they are young and it might seem normal, but when they get older they have identity problems and begin to search for their natural parents.

The battle for same-sex "marriage" has been fought as an equality issue on the basis that all minorities should be given their rights. The argument has been accepted by social libertarians in the mistaken belief that it has no effect on marriage as we have always known it. But it does have consequences, because it affects what children are taught in school. Sex education has to include all forms of marriage. Children are curious and inquisitive, and will want to know what a gay married couple actually do, whether it's included in the syllabus or not.

Many parents have expressed concern about the CHIPS programme (Challenging Homophobia in Primary Schools) which teaches gay values to children under the guise of an anti-bullying campaign. There is no statistically significant data to show that homophobic bullying is a problem in primary schools, and the programme attempts to solve a problem that doesn't exist. The real purpose has nothing to do with bullying, it's about sexualising children.

What is marriage about? It's not about equality as some would suppose, it's about the family. Since ancient times it's been recognised as a public commitment by a man and a woman, that they will stay together and create conditions that are suitable for raising a family. But recently it has become introspective, a private matter for the man and woman alone. They are concerned with their love for each other (and perhaps also their money), forgetting that love is just the ingredient that makes the marriage work. In reality, the only thing that's private is what they do in bed. The marriage itself is about what happens to the offspring of their love, and their need for health, education, and contact with their natural relatives. Marriage is more than love, it's about society.

*Mike Gascoigne*

<sup>1</sup> Statistical data for the whole UK is available from the Office of National Statistics, with divorce data from Northern Ireland limited to 1971 onwards. [www.ons.gov.uk](http://www.ons.gov.uk)

<sup>2</sup> *Radmacher v Granatino* at the Appeal Court. *Pre-nuptial agreements given recognition in English law*, Telegraph, 3 July 2009. [www.telegraph.co.uk/news/uknews/law-and-order/5723436/Pre-nuptial-agreements-given-recognition-in-English-law.html](http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/uknews/law-and-order/5723436/Pre-nuptial-agreements-given-recognition-in-English-law.html)