

PENSATIONES ECCLESIASTICI

Readers may have seen a brief report in *The Times* newspaper on the 30th August with the headline “Phoney Vicar Jailed”. My informant tells me that “Trev the Rev”, as he was known in Lowestoft, was holding himself out as a priest and wearing clerical collars in social and night clubs. He was brought before the local magistrates’ court for breach of an order made under section 2 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1988 and pleaded guilty. The order had prohibited him *inter alia* from “possessing and/or wearing articles of clothing made or intended to convey to an observer the impression that he is an Ordained Minister of Religion and in particular clerical collars; cassock; serple (sic); beretta (sic) hat; and/or church badges or other church insignia”. Quite apart from the misspelling of surplice, I am intrigued by a clerical hat incorporating an Italian revolver. Is it only worn by Italian canons? At the least the prohibition might (with the obvious corrections) form guidance to any tribunal wondering whether a real cleric has committed a breach of Canon C 27.

Burials and exhumations are once again in the news. As I write, a decision of the Court of the Arches is eagerly awaited on the question of exhumation. Unfortunately I have not been told whether my last *pensationes* on this subject were cited to the court. MPs, too, have been urging the re-use of graves in order to save space in cemeteries. Readers will be pleased to learn that diocesan chancellors (I understand) had discussed the same question at their residential conference last year. Perhaps it is now time for Anglicans to adopt the Moslem practice of burying bodies in a vertical position? The additional charge levied by sextons would be far outweighed by the benefit to future generations. My only concern is as to priests. Bearing in mind that their coffins during the burial service are traditionally placed in church in the opposite orientation to members of the laity would they be in danger of being buried head first thereafter? No volunteers, please.

Ecclesiasticus