

# Member News - Allan Sinclair MBE



**B**IFD Past President and Trustee, Allan Sinclair was awarded the MBE in recognition to his work in the funeral industry. For the few members who may be not fully aware of his lifetime achievements, many of which are attributed to embalming, the Journal felt it apposite to contact Allan and invite him to give the readership an insight.

Both my grandfather and my uncle were Funeral Directors so it seemed natural to follow into the profession. I decided to specialise in the art and science of embalming and enrolled in the Lear School of Embalming in Clapham in South West London in 1963. It was here that I was introduced to my first 'PM case' ably demonstrated by a fresh-faced keen student called Adrian Haler! My principle Tutors were the late Mr Leonard (Len) Menlove FBIE and Mr Robert (Bob) Taylor (the father of BIE Past President Geoff Taylor).

After a year of study at the School students were "apprenticed" to an experienced member of the Lear staff, and I was fortunate to be taken under the wing of the late Mr Pat Foy. Pat taught me such a lot regarding trade embalming and I am sure that being so keen I must have tested his patience at many times. I qualified as a Member of the British Institute of Embalmers in 1965 and started work with the Lear Embalming Service as a Trade Embalmer. My first seven years were spent as an "in house" embalmer for W.H Truelove and Son in Sutton, Surrey where, when I was busy I could call upon the help of Mr Peter Ball and Mr Tony Rowlands. I have many happy memories of these years.

After leaving Lears I became a self-employed Trade Embalmer and working closely with Mr Terry Stowell who is still a member of the BIE and who joined in 1950. Terry is now retired and lives in Carshalton, Surrey and to me he was an extremely talented embalmer who had a particular skill at the final presentation of the deceased.

I was Chairman of the Southern Division of the BIE in 1976 and Social Secretary for over 20 years. I was Technical Editor of "The Embalmer" for three years and Editor for seven.



In 1978 I was called upon to embalm the body of Kenya's President Mr Jomo Kenyatta in Nairobi. I was then the Senior Embalmer at F.W. Paine in Kingston-upon-Thames which was then owned by the Great Southern Group.

I was also the founder and principal of the Great Southern School of Embalming.

In 1979 - 80. I was privileged to be the National President of the BIE and in 1986 I was elected to Membership of the Company of Fellows. In 2005 I was appointed Master Fellow of the Institute for a three year period which is the highest honour the BIE can bestow on a member and of which I am very proud. I was a Member of National Council for many years and also served on the National Education Committee.

I am currently a member of the BIE Text Book Committee who are revising the publication. I am Chairman of the BIE Examination Authority and Chairman / Treasurer of the International Examinations Board of Embalmers. I am also a long-standing examiner for the Board, both in theory and practical examinations. I have served on the National Disaster Team attending the Lockerbie and Piper Alpha Oil Rig disasters.

With respect to funeral directing, in particular, I obtained my Diploma in Funeral Directing in May 1975 and my NAFD Tutors Certificate in March 1980. I received my BIFD Tutor's Certificate in October 1985 and my wife and I ran a Diploma Course for many years. I became a Member of the British Institute of Funeral Directors in October 1980 and was a founder Member of Region K and Secretary from 1983 - 1995. I was also Chairman of Region K and was honoured to be the BIFD National President in 2004-05. I am currently a Trustee of the Institute.

I have served the community as a Funeral Director for over 30 years until my retirement in December 2007. In all this time I have been supported by my wife Maureen, and we are proud that our son Kevin as recently been elected as Second Vice President of the BIE.