

# London Funeral Exhibition 2011

*Epping Woodland Burial Park*



**THE SUN** shone, the wind blew and the sun shone again. Luckily, for once it was not the weather that dominated the conversations but the fabulous array of coffins, caskets, service providers, organizers, face-painters, jazz bands, solos saxophonists and most crucially for those seeking the best in CPD, guest speakers.

The event was designed for the public to be educated and enlightened; this it could not have failed to achieve with eminent guest speakers such as Charles Cowling

from the Good Funeral Guide, who always provokes thought and opened the show with 'Funerals – who needs 'em?' A masterclass in erudition which could not be forgotten, or in my case, even argued with. Other speakers who graced the podium with their fabulous views and news were Dr. Kate Woodthorpe from the Centre for Death and Society, University of Bath, the journalist and convention organizer of Six Feet under, Brian Jenner, Angie Whitaker who spoke from a touchingly personal perspective of loss and

funerals and BIFD past president, Richard Putt from Leverton's – in 220 years he is the first company director appointed to the firm from outside the Leverton family. And this was just Saturday! Sunday saw Mervyn Pilley, the CEO of Civil Funerals (and administration provider for the BIFD), providing his lecture entitled, death and taxes and to round off Rosie Inman-Cook from the Natural Death Centre (NDC), with 'no longer on the fringe'. I was delighted to learn that the NDC has been in existence for twenty years. I actually owned a copy of



the Natural Death Handbook, before I looked at a copy of the Manual of Funeral Directing. Here is to the next twenty!

There were film screenings, Dr Hannah Rumble, presented her piece 'Earth to Earth: Natural Burial and the Church of England' which followed directly on from Angie Whitaker's presentation and an exclusive outside showing of First Darkness, a multiple award-winner from the artistic collaboration of Wyllie O Hagan, who have generously agreed to provide the BIFD Journal with an article in

December.

The exhibitors included local funeral directors, Motorcycle Funerals Limited, horse and carriage rides, Priscilla Etienne and her fabulous funeography concept (as seen in the March edition of the Journal) and coffins and caskets from such well known providers as The London Casket Company, JC Atkinson, Winter Willow, Ecoffins, Sunset Coffins and Greenfield Creations, providing all the public a fantastic, unique tableau of availability.

The Natural Death Centre, the Institute of

Civil Funerals, Green Fuse Funeral Celebrants, Emlyn Budd the woodcarver, FuneralMap.co.uk, David Wasley stained glass workshop, a will writing consultant and a face-painter also provided great support, and lastly a raffle in aid of the Winston's Wish Charity.

So wrapping this up then. Thanks to the indefatigable and fabulous Fran Hall, and all of the staff from the woodland burial park who pitched in with such great humour and put their everything into it. Watch out for next year, it will be another winner. ▲

