

# Committee



**Seminar for Registered, Accredited, Prospective Tutors and Members interested in funeral service education (5th-6th March 2010) at ParkInn Hotel in West Bromwich.**

From L to R: Angela Allen, Ken Satterly, Peter Gregory



*Sheila Dicks*

An excellent attendance was rewarded by an equally excellent education session at the most recent gathering. It proved to be a most productive and busy weekend indeed. Much thought had been invested in ensuring that a diverse and informative weekend was at hand. The sessions covered the NAFD Code of Practice, a joint presentation of the progress made by the NAFD/BIFD working party on education, the work of the Coroner in Northern

Ireland, Fire Safety, update of procedures surrounding education, and manual handling. Photos were posted on the BIFD website on the following day.

The group was welcomed by the chairman of the Education Committee, Sheila Dicks who handed over to the National President, Ken Satterly; his first duty was to present three Tutor's certificates to Mary McDonald, David Parslow and Derek Case. During his presentation the National President stressed the value of Tutor Training and his subscription to education, he acknowledged the tireless work of those



Loraine Charter

is one of three full-time Coroners who all operate from the same dedicated location in Belfast. He discussed some of the principle differences (cultural and legal), and quoted that three days was the usual turnaround between death and the funeral. The office employs databases that add tremendous value to his work, also within the staffing are three full-time

dedicated Coroner's Liaison Officers.

The Coroner in Northern Ireland is on call 24/7 365 days of the year, and they deal with approximately 15,000 deaths each year. The figures broadly break down as follows:

15,000 deaths of which 4,200 (28%) are referred to the Coroner, of these 1,600 (38%) are subject to a post-mortem examination, of which 300 (19%) conclude with an inquest. Their office also employs a dedicated full time medical officer, whose intervention and experience has equated to 10% fewer post mortems and inquests.

A view of the website reveals a host of supplementary information, including downloadable publications which focus on the many roles and responsibilities connected with the office. It can be found at: [www.coronersni.gov.uk](http://www.coronersni.gov.uk)

Accredited BIFD Tutor, Derek Case provided a thought provoking, and an interactive session on Manual Handling; demonstrating with some grace, just how interesting a session well researched and presented in the right hands can be. He delivered touching information about the perils

of the subject by way of his introduction, explaining that his own brother was seriously and permanently disabled following an incident involving work. Shouldering coffin teams of 4/6/8 brought the subject home to all those present. An important fact is that 38% of all accidents at work relate to Manual Handling. The audience participation portion of the presentation utilised the enlisted help of Richard Vines and Loraine Charter to demonstrate the rights and wrongs

of this important subject. A valuable lesson, and again another hour of CPD, under the by-line of Plan – Prepare – Perform.

Mr Graham Lymn, breathed new life into the subject of the NAFD Code of Practice, and kicked off the session with a group galvanizing exercise (please try it at your next meeting).

Each delegate had to introduce themselves and advise of one thing that the rest of the group would not

guess about them. No names and no pack drill, but I can report amongst this august and noble group were: a collector of Eddie Stobart model trucks, a prospective singer in the Human League, someone who once sat on the knee of Frankie Valli, a collector of cheese labels, a qualified Yachtmaster and a collector of mourning jewellery. Your editor is keen to point out that this in fact a selection from the collective list, and not the activities of one member....

The rest of the presentation contained the latest updates on the codes, always worth another look, and the issues surrounding the cool-off period granted to clients who have given their instructions at home or place of work. This is a verbatim quote of paragraph 5 of section 9 (professional conduct) of the code: "When funeral arrangements are made in a client's home or place of

involved who deliver training within the industry, and his gratitude to those delivering it.

Mr Brian Sherrard, The Coroner for Northern Ireland gave an insight into his varied and interesting work. It was clear that the three principles on which his service is founded are empathy, proportionality and transparency. Mr Sherrard





Mary McDonald



Derek Case



David Hall



David Parslow



David Grainger

work, the funeral director shall make the client aware of their right to terminate such a contract within a cooling-off period of seven days. During this cooling-off period the performance of the contract cannot commence without the specific authority of the client. The funeral director will make available during the arrangement suitable documentation advising the client of their rights."

This aspect elicited some excellent practical matters from the floor, most notably what can be done in the event of such a cancellation, and the circumstances a funeral director can charge for services ordered and provided for - up to the point of cancellation.

First vice president, Graeme Easton, dressed in appropriate clothing, presented a session on Fire Safety, emphasising the importance the Fire Service place on getting ahead of the game, being proactive instead of reactive, and the value of

well documented procedures and training to staff. Good housekeeping, like in all things is the key to success, and electrical fires still feature heavily.

A presentation on the progress of the joint NAFD/ BIFD working party was given by Angela Allen. Peter Gregory, the Chairman of the Board of Examiners gave the update on procedures, and consulted extensively on them; bringing transparency to the process and promoting further understanding between the NAFD and BIFD.



Graeme Easton

On business matters, David Grainger and David Hall, will replace Michael Dillon and Derek Case on the Education Committee for 2010.

In between times there was an opportunity to share experiences and catch up with friends at the coffee breaks. Again this one day provides over 60% of the annual CPD entitlement, in convivial company.

The Education Committee will always make visitors feel like friends, and when learning does not seem like learning, it all adds up to a winning combination and a significant benefit to the BIFD member, wishing to keep ahead in their professional standing.