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05

MONTHLY ROUND~UP: From the Desk of the National President

13

PRIDE: Honouring the LGBTQ+ Community Through Funerals and Funeral Directors

18

NEWS: FSA & BIFD Announce New Working Partnership

20

**DR JULIAN LITTEN
Kind Hearts and Coronets**

30

THE BENEFITS OF SCHEDULING SOCIAL MEDIA POSTS: Stay ahead even during your summer holiday



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From The Desk Of The National President Jeremy Mead, Dip. FS, LMBIFD



Hello again and welcome to another exciting edition of your journal. Yet another busy month here at HQ, but on the bright side, I have only had to go to London once this month.

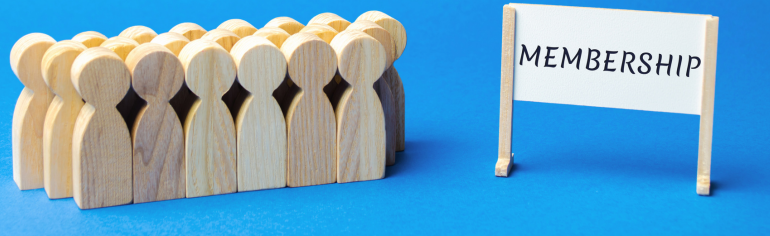
As an avid train buff, I can announce that I have a nearly full set of GWR Hitachi Engine numbers from going to London and back! – still once again looking on the bright side, I'm not going again until the middle of July.

It gives me great pleasure to tell you all that our kindred associations and I are communicating regularly for the good of the profession indeed, Barry Pritchard (NAFD), Mark Horton (SAIF), Richard Van Nes (BIE) and I are all singing from the same hymn sheet, that if we don't present a united front to the government and prove that we can regulate and educate our respective members then they will do it for us. As Barry says 'together we're stronger' a sentiment that I have to say, I fully endorse.



We have some more great free CPD Zoom sessions lined up for the next few months, mainly thanks to our IPP, Paul Stibbards, to whom we extend our grateful thanks, and I commend these to you. We will continue to record these sessions as we are mindful of the fact that some members cannot be present at the chosen times, to enable them to catch-up and complete their allotted number of hours to maintain their licenses.





Whilst talking of that, can I offer a gentle reminder to those of you who have still not renewed your membership for this year, to do so immediately out of respect to those that already have done so. If you suddenly find that communication from national office has dried up, this may be an indication that yours has not been renewed!!!

You will have seen the recent social media posts from our PR guru Hayley Bell, announcing our joint trade show with the members of the Funeral Suppliers Association at conference this year. This was always an ambition of mine to try and show more support for our willing advertisers in the journal, as a way of thanking them for their continued support. It is extremely pleasing to report that the feeling was mutual, when all the available places were taken up within 6 hours of the announcement!!!

This will add another very interesting avenue to conference this year however, at the direct instruction from Mrs President, we are not arranging any form of excursion, trip or visit to anywhere on the Saturday afternoon, to enable our wonderful ladies more time to preen themselves and make ready for our Gala Dinner and Awards Evening later that evening. The bookings are coming in quite quickly now, and we are almost half full already, so I urge you to book soon if you want to attend.



As always, that's enough from me so, please keep looking after your families and don't forget yourselves.

Take care, Jem.

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<i>Saturday & Sunday Bed & Breakfast</i>	<i>.....Single Room (1 Person) £335</i>
<i>Saturday AGM: On Arrival Tea, Coffee & Biscuits</i>	
<i>Saturday Lunch Included</i>	
<i>Saturday Evening Drinks Reception</i>	
<i>Saturday Gala Dinner – Includes 4 Course Meal Followed By Tea & Coffee</i>	

2. Friday Evening To Saturday Morning - ONLY

<i>Friday Dinner</i>	<i>.....Double Room (2 People) £220</i>
<i>Saturday & Sunday Bed & Breakfast</i>	<i>.....Single Room (1 Person) £145</i>
<i>Saturday AGM: On Arrival Tea, Coffee & Biscuits</i>	

Saturday Lunch Is Available On The Day At £25 PP

3. Saturday To Sunday Morning - ONLY

<i>Saturday AGM: On Arrival Tea, Coffee & Biscuits</i>	<i>.....Double Room (2 People) £310</i>
<i>Saturday Evening Drinks Reception</i>	<i>.....Single Room (1 Person) £195</i>
<i>Saturday Gala Dinner – Includes 4 Course Meal Followed By Tea & Coffee</i>	

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4. The Gala Banquet Dinner Only

.....£80 Per Person

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Mr. David Gresty

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From The Desk Of The Editor

Hayley Bell, Dip. FD, LMBIFD



Welcome all to issue six of the Journal and the halfway point of the year.

Today marks an exciting milestone in my career and a new chapter for the British Institute of Funeral Directors. I am thrilled to announce my appointment as the new Chair of Examinations. It is truly an honour to follow in the footsteps of the esteemed Margaret Nicholl, who has been instrumental in shaping the success of our institute.

As I step into this new role, I carry with me a deep passion for the funeral service industry and an unwavering commitment to upholding the highest standards of excellence. Having dedicated over 20 years to this profession. I have been continually inspired by the impact our work has on individuals and families during times of loss.

I am both humbled and excited to lead the examinations team and contribute to the continuous growth and development of our institute

Collaboration and Progress: The Diploma in Funeral Service Accreditation

Furthermore, I am pleased to inform you that the revalidation committee will be meeting online with Greenwich University in July to finalize the accreditation of the highly esteemed Diploma in Funeral Service. This collaboration reflects our ongoing commitment to ensuring that our education and training programs are of the highest calibre. By working closely with respected academic institutions, such as Greenwich University, we aim to provide our students with the most comprehensive and relevant funeral service education available.

Gratitude and Dedication: A Heartfelt Thanks to Margaret Nicholl

As I embark on this new journey, it is only fitting that I express my deepest gratitude to Margaret Nicholl for her exemplary leadership as the outgoing Chair of Examinations. Her tireless dedication to our institute and the funeral service profession has left a lasting impact, and I am honoured to follow in her footsteps. I would like to extend my heartfelt thanks to Margaret for her guidance and support, and most importantly, for her unwavering commitment to excellence. Her legacy will continue to inspire us all.

Looking Ahead: Upholding the Values of Our Institute

As the new Chair of Examinations for the British Institute of Funeral Directors, I am excited to embark on this new chapter and contribute to the continued advancement of our profession. Let us work together to uphold the values that define our institute and ensure that our students receive the highest quality education and training.

In the words of the great Maya Angelou, "People will forget what you said, people will forget what you did, but people will never forget how you made them feel." With this in mind, let us continue to make a lasting impact on the lives of those we serve.

Hayley

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Honouring the LGBTQ+ Community Through Funerals and Funeral Directors

Hayley Bell, Editor of The Journal

Funerals are a time of mourning and remembrance, and they can be especially meaningful for the LGBTQ+ community. LGBTQ+ individuals often face discrimination and marginalization throughout their lives, and this can extend to their deaths as well. That's why it's so important for funeral directors to be knowledgeable and sensitive to the unique needs of LGBTQ+ families and individuals. In this article, we'll explore the challenges and opportunities of serving the LGBTQ+ community and highlight some ways that funeral directors can make a difference.

Understanding the Needs of LGBTQ+ Families

Funeral directors who work with LGBTQ+ families need to be aware of their clients' diverse needs and preferences. For example, some LGBTQ+ individuals may not have close relationships with their biological families due to homophobia or transphobia, and they may rely on their chosen families or communities for support. Funeral directors should be prepared to work with these chosen families and respect their wishes. Additionally, LGBTQ+ families may have unique cultural or religious traditions that should be honoured during the funeral process. Funeral directors should be knowledgeable about these traditions and be prepared to offer appropriate support. It's also important for funeral directors to be aware of the legal rights and protections of LGBTQ+ individuals and families.



In some cases, same-sex partners or spouses may not have the same legal rights as biological family members, and funeral directors should be prepared to provide guidance and advocacy in these situations. For example, funeral directors can provide information about advance directives and other legal documents that can help ensure that an individual's wishes are respected after their death. Finally, funeral directors should be sensitive to the unique emotional needs of LGBTQ+ families. LGBTQ+ individuals may have experienced significant trauma or discrimination throughout their lives and may need extra support and care during the funeral process. Funeral directors should be prepared to offer counselling and other resources to help families cope with their loss.

Creating a Safe and Inclusive Environment

In order to serve LGBTQ+ families effectively, funeral directors need to create a safe and inclusive environment in their funeral homes. This means creating policies and practices that are welcoming and affirming for LGBTQ+ individuals and families. For example, funeral directors can display rainbow flags or other symbols of LGBTQ+ pride in their funeral homes and use gender-neutral language on their websites and other materials. Funeral directors can also take steps to ensure that their staff members are trained and knowledgeable about LGBTQ+ issues. This can include providing training on LGBTQ+ terminology and cultural competency, as well as offering resources and support for staff members who identify as LGBTQ+. By creating a culture of inclusion and support, funeral directors can help ensure that their LGBTQ+ clients feel comfortable and respected throughout the funeral process.

Providing Meaningful and Personalized Services

Funeral directors who work with LGBTQ+ families have a unique opportunity to provide meaningful and personalized services that reflect the life and legacy of the deceased individual. This can include incorporating LGBTQ+ symbolism and traditions into the funeral service, such as using rainbow flags or incorporating music or readings that are meaningful to the LGBTQ+ community.

Additionally, funeral directors can work with families to create personalized memorialization options. For example, some families may create a memorial garden or bench to honour their loved one, while others may donate to LGBTQ+ organizations or causes. By offering a range of personalized services and options, funeral directors can help LGBTQ+ families create a meaningful and lasting tribute to their loved ones.



Funeral directors play a vital role in supporting the unique needs and preferences of the LGBTQ+ community. By understanding the diverse needs of LGBTQ+ families, creating a safe and inclusive environment, and providing meaningful and personalized services, funeral directors can help ensure that LGBTQ+ individuals and families receive the care and support they deserve. Ultimately, by honouring the lives and legacies of LGBTQ+ individuals, funeral directors can help build a more inclusive and compassionate world.

IT'S A NICE DAY FOR A...
Lucie Kibbey,
Deputy Editor of The Journal



As we celebrate Pride Month 2023, I was incredibly honoured to be asked to make a wedding cake for my personal trainer, who was marrying an equally beautiful young lady.

The brief was “as gay as possible” and “rainbows”.

So, after much deliberation I settled on a design and began the 3-day task of baking and building. In 30 degrees heat it was my biggest cake challenge in a decade!

The wedding reception arrived, and I must say, it was the most beautiful wedding I’ve ever been to.

So here are some pictures, and I send all my love to the happy couple.

Pride is for Everyone



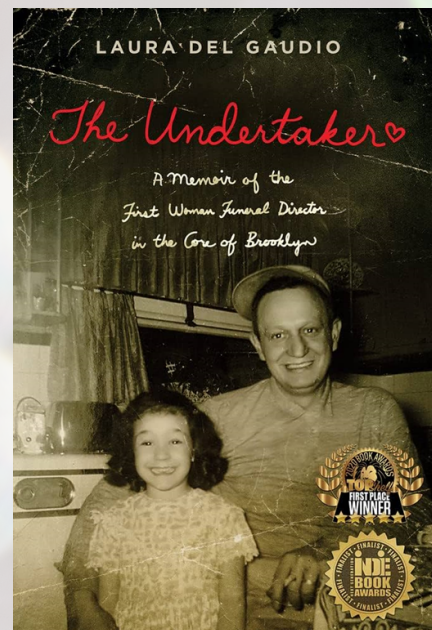
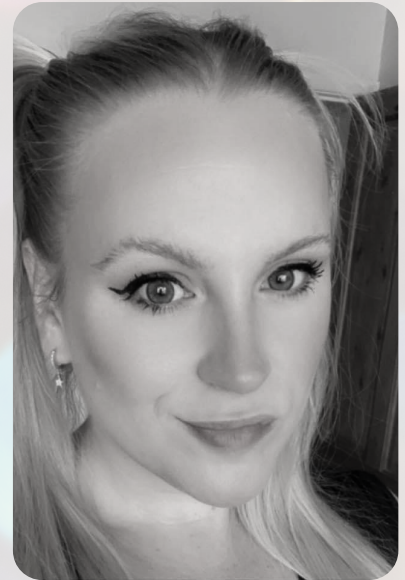
Deputy Editor's Desk

Lucie Kibbey, Cert. FS, MBIFD

Howdy Gang!

I hope you are all enjoying the beautiful weather, summer is finally here and now we can all start to moan about how its "too hot".

I read an interesting debate on a Facebook Forum recently about whether there should be a summer outfit for Funeral Directors, someone even suggested linen! In my opinion, if the weather is dangerously hot, a polite request to the family to remove coat or jacket probably wouldn't be refused. I would be interested in other thoughts – please see free to email me.



It's been a busy month since I last sat down to write for the Journal – me and the family made it away on holiday for a week. I started a great book on the flight, a review of which will feature in the next issue. Please look out for it and grab yourself a copy if you can.



I have shared one of my favourite modern poems for Father's Day, by the fabulous Donna Ashworth, later in the journal. But I wanted to take a moment to mention my own Dad and some of the words I wrote of him on the day of his own funeral service...

Today I say goodbye to My Dad. He wasn't always perfect, but nobody is ... But he was My Dad.

You taught me the value of money,

You bought my first guitar and taught me to play it,

You encouraged me to read – everything,

You showed me how to do crosswords on Sundays,

You educated me on what makes a good wine,

You taught me how to drink Whiskey,

You came to see me sing – and loved it!

You called me 'baby' when I'd come to see you and was down in the dumps, to make me smile,

You had impeccable taste in music and food,

You gave me your stubborn pride and strong-willed nature.

I think the loss of a parent leaves a hole that we never quite recover from, depending on your relationship. I was always a Daddy's girl, and I will raise a large glass of something to him, no doubt he's sat at bar in heaven.

For those of you who do not have a father or father figure to spend the day with, I send the biggest hug, and for those of you who do have someone – go and hold them close, tell them you love them.

One last mention to my better half, who manages to put up with me and the kids, whilst working long hours and never complaining about any of it.

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FSA & BIFD Announce New Working Partnership



We are pleased to announce a new working partnership between the Funeral Suppliers' Association and the British Institute of Funeral Directors.

Education is an important part of any funeral director's career and I feel that an important aspect of training that is sometimes overlooked is product knowledge and brand awareness. There are now more choices available to families arranging a funeral than ever before and it is important that funeral arrangers are aware of these options and have correct information available to them.

Therefore, in liaising with the BIFD our members will be given the opportunity to present online at their CPD meetings as well as hosting BIFD meetings at their premises.

The growth of the FSA, we have reached 90 members, and its diversity of membership best places the association to educate the profession in this way.

The two organisations have joined to present a Trade Show as part of the BIFD Conference weekend from 20th – 22nd October 2023 which will be held at the Alexandra House Hotel, Wroughton, Swindon SN4 0QJ. All exhibition space has been taken by FSA & BIFD Associate members.

FSA National President, Philip Halliday had the pleasure of attending a Service of Dedication at The Westerleigh Group Waseley Hills Crematorium along with colleagues from kindred associations.

Arrangements have been completed for the FSA Annual Dinner which will be held at The Alveston Manor Hotel, Stratford upon Avon on the evening of Friday 10th November 2023 commencing at 6.45pm

Full details of the Annual Dinner and a booking form are available from Alun Tucker by email chiefexec@funeralsuppliers.uk



Pictured L-R: Alan Jose, Amy Marsh & Kevin Davies (Westerleigh Group), Philip Halliday (FSA), John Adams (NAFD), Richard Van Nes (BIE), Jeremy Mead (BIFD), Jake Gaunt (Birmingham Guild of Funeral Directors), Heather White (ICCM), Michael Birkinshaw (FBCA), Wendy Buchan (CSGB), Mark Horton (SAIF), Steve Wallis & Joy Edginton (Westerleigh Group)



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KIND HEARTS AND CORONETS

Dr Julian Litten, FSA, Hon. BIFD

I've probably researched more burial vaults and mausolea than many another funerary archaeologist. All are similar, but no two are alike, unless one is considering the large parochial vaults beneath such places as Christ Church, Spitalfields and St Marylebone. Surprisingly, the simplest have been the Royal Vaults within Westminster Abbey, though the outer cases are, as one would expect, sumptuous and with gilded silver fittings rather than gilt brass. The "real treats" come with the ancestral vaults of the nobility, for it is here that one comes across the large tapered brass depositum plates, replete with armorials (sometimes enamelled), tailored grip-plates and, best of



all, coronets. Obviously these are not the real silver-gilt coronets - after all, who is going to leave the family collateral in a burial vault? - rather they made of stamped tin, gilded, with gilded wooden balls and, occasionally, a cap of maintenance with its ermine band.

There are about eight surviving pattern books for coffin furniture of period 1750-1850. Tantalisingly, none of them illustrate coffin furniture for nobles, nor of coronets, and to this day we have no idea which manufacturers produced them. Apart from the Sovereign and the Sovereign's children (Princes and Princesses), there are five orders of nobility: Duke, Marquess, Earl, Viscount and Baron; baronets are a distinct order of chivalry and are not entitled to coronets. Their spouses are known as Duchess, Marchioness, Countess, Viscountess and Baroness. Fortunately for the historian a duchesses coronet is the same that of a duke, are marchionesses coronet the same as that for a marquess, and so on, thus there are five styles of coronet to correspond to the five orders of nobility. This in itself can be utterly confusing to the funerary archaeologist for the only indicator as to the occupant of the coffin is the depositum plate, which tells us if the occupant is a duke or a duchess, even though the coronet is the same.

One question I am frequently asked is if these funerary coronets were ever worn by the deceased during their lifetime. The answer is "no", for they were intended to be representational and therefore made of gilt base metal, whereas those worn by the deceased were of silver gilt. Obviously, one is not going to leave a real coronet in a burial vault. However, the funerary coronets did have caps of maintenance, that is the crimson velvet ermine-trimmed inner lining of the coronet, but as these fabrics are susceptible to decay very few funerary coronets complete with their caps of maintenance survive. Usually constructed from thin die-stamped copper, encircled and pined with rivets, they are usually water-gilded. They looked fine on the day, but with the damp conditions of most burial vaults tend to lose their burnish over a period of fifty or sixty years. They are also extremely fragile, and endeavouring to lift one might lead to damage. So, as with other examples of historic coffin furniture, are best left alone.

Such coronets were in use between c.1660 and 1860, though there are some examples of the early twentieth century. Nowadays the standard format is to have the original silver-gilt coronet atop the coffin for the duration of the funeral service and if the coffin is destined for a burial vault then the coronet is removed and returned to the family. However, few noble families have original coronets; for example, most of those seen in photographs of the Coronation of Queen Elizabeth II were hired from jewellers. Now they seem to be elements of the past, as very few nobles at the Coronation of King Charles III were seen wearing them.



Funerary Coronet atop the coffin of George Gordon, 4th Earl of Aberdeen, d.1860. Stanmore, Middlesex. Lord George Gordon served as Prime Minister between 1852 and 1855.

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JOHN BLENKIRON & SONS ANNOUNCES EXPANSION WITH NEW BRANCH IN CATTERICK

Funeral Partners



(from left to right) James Blenkiron, Julie Elliott and Will Bellerby
at John Blenkiron & Sons' new Catterick branch.

A Funeral Directors which has been helping families for more than five decades has opened a new branch in Catterick. John Blenkiron and Sons Funeral Directors has opened its third home in a former military clothing shop in Hildyard Road.

The whole building has been completely refurbished to ensure families feel welcome and comfortable at a difficult time, allowing the team at John Blenkiron and Sons to provide the exemplary quality of service and care which has become their hallmark.

Business Principal James Blenkiron is the son of founder, John, and said he is thrilled to have opened another in his father's name. "He would be incredibly proud for the business which he started to be helping even more people further afield," James said.

"It's something we have wanted to do for a long time, and I am delighted that with the help of our parent company Funeral Partners, we have been able to make it happen. We've got a good relationship with the military based at Catterick Garrison and the Gurkha community based there."

Funeral Director Will Bellerby – himself a former soldier having served in the Royal Logistics Corps – will be Funeral Director at the new Catterick branch. Will said: "Previously, we have always helped families in Catterick from our base in Richmond, but hopefully it will be helpful for them to have a presence in town. It's a big moment in the history of John Blenkiron & Sons, and hopefully bereaved families will benefit from having us close by. Anyone who wants to pop in and speak to me is more than welcome."

A special open day is being held on Thursday, May 25 where anyone can attend the funeral home to meet the team.

Last month, the first ever John Blenkiron & Sons Community Fund was launched to allow charities and other not-for-profit organisations within three miles of the funeral homes in Catterick, Richmond and Barnard Castle to apply for grants of up to £1,500. In total, £20,000 is available for not-for-profit organisations to apply for to assist with their vital work.

The deadline for the first round of applications has now closed but the second round will open on August 1 at 12 noon.

More details and information on how to apply can be found at:

<https://www.blenkiron.co.uk/community-fund/>

PETER MULHOLLAND AND JIM ADAMS RAISE £3,000 FOR HOPE HOUSE IRELAND

Peter Mulholland, a well-known retired Funeral Director from Carrickfergus and his friend, Jim Adams, battled tricky weather conditions and a mammoth hill climb during a tough cycling challenge, to raise £3,000 for a charity that provides vital respite for cancer patients.

Peter, 70, was one of the 6,000 participants who took part in the gruelling Etape Loch Ness event - a 66-mile closed road route around the famous Scottish loch.

The two friends were cycling to raise money for Hope House Ireland - a charity that provides cancer patients and their carers with a place to stay for rest and recuperation during, or after their treatment.

Peter, who now works as a consultant at Mulhollands Funeral Directors, which was founded by his father in 1966, voiced his thanks to the many customers, friends and family who pledged their support. He also thanked Mulhollands' parent company, Funeral Partners, who boosted the donations already received by contributing £1,000 - bringing the total amount raised to just under £3,000.

"Jim and I would like to thank people for being so incredibly generous. The facilities Hope House provides are just fantastic, so it's a very worthwhile cause. I hope the money makes a real difference," Peter said.

He added: *"I'd also like to thank Funeral Partners for providing the cycling jerseys we wore with pride during the challenge."*

The event features a daunting hill climb, which Peter said was one of the most demanding parts of the ride, especially combined with the sleet and mist, which had rolled into Scotland on the morning of the ride.

"We were told before we started that a piper would be playing at the top of the hill, and when you could hear him, you were close to the finish line," Peter said.

"It was such a relief when we heard him playing because my legs were really hurting but despite the pain, I can honestly say that it was a fabulous experience, and I felt an amazing sense of achievement when we finished."

Megan Rodgers, Hope House General Manager, said: *"We're thrilled that Peter and Jim have raised so much money for Hope House Ireland. We're so grateful to them, and to each and every person who gave donations to offer people the chance to rest and recuperate away from the pressures of hospital treatments and appointments. For people and their carers who are living with cancer, time is so precious, and the money raised will go towards us continuing to provide what help we can."*

Find out more about Hope House Ireland by visiting
<https://hopehouseireland.org/>



(L to R) Jim Adams, Funeral Partners Business Development, Manager, Emma Moore, Hope House Ireland Trustee, Sam McCullough and Peter Mulholland



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Sam Bryan at the historic Woking Crematorium

A Funeral Director whose career began with an impromptu trial shift is now celebrating 20 years in the business.

Sam Bryan had left his job at a courier company when he answered an advert for a Funeral Service Operative at Woking Funeral Service back in 2003.

With Sam having dressed in appropriate attire for the interview, the then manager invited him to help out and see what the job entails because they were so busy.

After sufficiently impressing the manager, he was offered the job full-time shortly afterwards.

He has remained at Woking Funeral Service, now part of the Funeral Partners family of businesses ever since and has worked his way up to the position of Funeral Director, conducting and leading funerals across the Woking branches in Woking town centre, Horsell and Knaphill.

Having grown up in Barbados before moving to the UK in the 1960s, Sam said there was a deep-rooted respect for undertakers on the Caribbean Island, which attracted him to the profession.

"It means that I can give a little back to my community," he said.

"When I am wandering around the supermarket, and someone recognises me and thanks me for what I did, that's an honour, and a really nice feeling knowing I have helped and supported someone. If I can get somebody to say 'Sam, you made a difficult day more bearable' then that is great, I feel personal satisfaction that I have made a difference for that person and their family. I always say to people I can empathise with you, but I don't know how you feel, because the loss of a loved one is always deeply personal."

Sam said he had noticed a lot of positive changes during his two decades in the industry, including the improvement of processes, procedures, regulation and technology but believes the high level of service the team at Woking Funeral Service provide to their local community is as good as it has ever been and is proud to be part of the business.

"Live streaming has helped family and friends be a part of the funeral from anywhere in the world, we are able to offer greater choice for families on coffins, venues, vehicles and many personal touches to make every funeral unique," Sam said.

"And, most recently, there has been the introduction of regulation from the Competition and Markets Authority and Financial Conduct Authority for the sale of funeral plans to help protect our clients."

With a new granddaughter to support, Sam said he has no immediate plans to retire from the industry any time soon.

"I am very passionate and rewarded by my job. As long as I am fit enough to offer the same standard of service that I have over the years, I don't see why I cannot carry on for a bit yet."

JC ATKINSON HAS LAUNCHED A BRAND-NEW WEBSITE FOR THE FUNERAL TRADE.



www.jcatkinson.co.uk/ goes live this month and will, they believe, become the primary destination for funeral directors looking for competitively priced, superior quality and ethically manufactured coffins and caskets in the UK.

Incorporating the company's refreshed look and feel, the site will be the entry destination for funeral directors looking to access the company's full product directories, latest marketing campaigns, environmental policies, accreditations, and initiatives. They will also be able to log in to their specific portals via the new site.

The website will also feature the history of JC Atkinson, now in its 87th year, and its many highlights on the way to becoming an award-winning environmental innovator for the sector. There will also be a back catalogue of interesting articles and features.

Predominantly for the trade, the non-password protected areas of the website will also be accessible via consumer searches such as Google.

Greg Cranfield, MD of JC Atkinson, said of the new destination site: *"Our vision is of a funeral sector that meets the needs of all bereaved families by offering a wide range of choice, exceptional quality, and value for money, responsibly. We believe this brand new website takes us all one step closer to that and we can't wait to hear what our customers think of it."*

For more information visit: www.jcatkinson.co.uk/

Contact JC Atkinson's sales team 0191 415 1516

Follow: @jcatkinson

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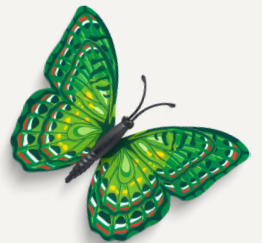
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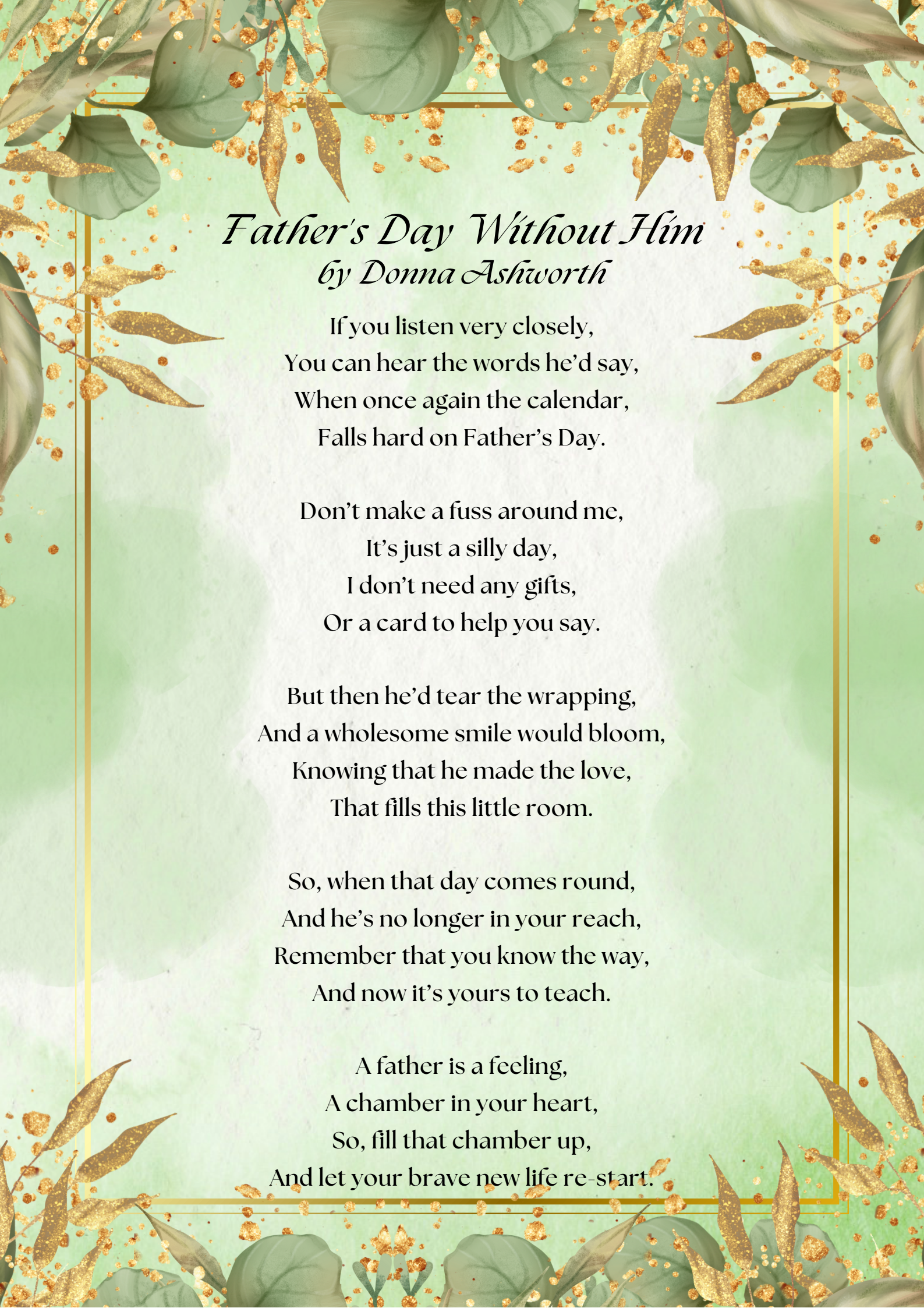


Prospect Hospice
together making every day count



Prospect Hospice is a local adult hospice and delivers with no charge to patients and their families, care, comfort and confidence, around the clock, every day of the year, to a community of 300,000 people across Swindon, Marlborough and north east Wiltshire. The services costs £7.5million to deliver and being funded only 25% from statutory sources Prospect Hospice relies on fundraising events & activities, the generous donations of the community and local business support, to help raise the income to deliver their care.

Sheryl Crouch, head of income at the hospice said: "We are thrilled to have been nominated by Mead Family Funerals as their chosen charity to support throughout the term that Jem Mead will be President for the British Institute of Funeral Directors. What an honour for us to be the beneficiary of any fundraising while Jem is serving, we are so very proud and humbled to have been chosen."



Father's Day Without Him
by Donna Ashworth

If you listen very closely,
You can hear the words he'd say,
When once again the calendar,
Falls hard on Father's Day.

Don't make a fuss around me,
It's just a silly day,
I don't need any gifts,
Or a card to help you say.

But then he'd tear the wrapping,
And a wholesome smile would bloom,
Knowing that he made the love,
That fills this little room.

So, when that day comes round,
And he's no longer in your reach,
Remember that you know the way,
And now it's yours to teach.

A father is a feeling,
A chamber in your heart,
So, fill that chamber up,
And let your brave new life re-start.



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PLANT A TREE FOR EVERY DEATH REGISTERED

Life Ledger have partnered with global environmental charity One Tree Planted and are proud to play a small part in helping them restore vital habitats across the planet. 2020 saw them plant 15 million trees.

THE BENEFITS OF SCHEDULING SOCIAL MEDIA POSTS AHEAD OF TIME: STAY AHEAD AND TOP OF MIND EVEN DURING YOUR SUMMER HOLIDAY

Eimer Duffy, FIT Social Media



Summer holidays are a time to relax, recharge and spend quality time with family and friends. As a Funeral professional, you support families during difficult times. And it's important to ensure your funeral business remains connected with your audience, especially when you're away on a well-deserved break. That's where scheduling your social media posts comes in.

You can schedule on each of the social platforms or use a 3rd party scheduling tool. Here are some benefits of scheduling your social media content:

Maintain a Consistent Online Presence:

Your Funeral business's online presence plays a vital role in reaching out to families. Especially for those seeking your services and establishing a sense of trust and reliability. By scheduling your social media posts, you can maintain a consistent online presence. Even throughout your summer holiday. If you're away from your computer your social media platforms will continue to engage with your audience. Ensuring that you stay top-of-mind.

Share Relevant and Timely Information:

Social media platforms provide an excellent opportunity to educate and inform your audience. From funeral services, grief support and industry updates. By scheduling your posts in advance, you can ensure that you share relevant and timely information. Such as upcoming events, sharing helpful resources, or offering words of support. Think of your social media channels like magazines. A good mix of content that is educational and informative. Posting death notices all the time is not a good strategy to keep your audience engaged. My tip is to have a pinned post to direct people to your death notices page on your website. That way you will get more traffic and people get to see what services you provide. Your scheduled posts will provide valuable content to your audience. And show your commitment to their needs.

Strategic Marketing Efforts:

Social media scheduling allows you to plan and execute your marketing efforts. You can pre-plan promotional campaigns, and events. And from there schedule posts to go live at specific times. This enables you to reach a wider audience, generate interest and increase brand awareness. Even stand out from your competitors who don't schedule. By leveraging social media scheduling tools, you can maintain an effective marketing strategy. And continue to drive engagement and conversions for your funeral business, no matter the season.

Respond to Comments and Messages:

Engagement is key to building relationships with your audience. And demonstrating your dedication to exceptional customer service. Scheduling your social media posts allows you to divide your time to respond to comments, messages and enquiries. Even if you're enjoying your holiday, you can dedicate a few minutes each day to engage with your online community. Ensuring their needs are met and their questions are answered. This level of attentiveness enhances your reputation as a caring and responsive funeral service provider.

Gain Time for Reflection and Strategy:



Scheduling your social media posts in advance, you'll free up valuable time. Especially during the summer. So you can make the most of your time for reflection and strategic planning. Use this time to assess your social media performance. Review analytics and brainstorm new ideas for future content.

Taking a step back and evaluating your social media efforts will help you refine your strategy. Identify areas for improvement, and ensure your funeral business stays ahead in a competitive market.

In Conclusion:

As Funeral professionals, your dedication to serving families in their time of need is unwavering. But it's important to focus on your own well-being and take time off for rest and rejuvenation. By scheduling your social media posts ahead of time; for e.g. during your summer holiday so you can maintain a consistent online presence. Sharing relevant information, engaging with your audience and gaining time for reflection and strategy. So, go ahead and plan your well-deserved break, knowing that your funeral business' online presence will be active and engaging.

If you have any further questions on this or need help in navigating the world of social media, please get in touch or visit my website www.fitsocialmedia.co.uk for more information. So please do explore it and let's connect on social media.



Eimer Duffy is a Social Media/Digital Marketing Consultant and Trainer for the Funeral Industry. Assisting Funeral professionals to gain a better online presence and build communities and trust online. Live online interactive sessions for all knowledge levels with the benefit of being held at a time to suit your diary via Zoom.



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Managing Director, Marian Sinclair: Serving families since 2002

COPING WITH FATHER'S DAY IF YOU'RE GRIEVING

Those occasion days of the year, like Father's Day, Mother's Day, Christmas, birthdays and anniversaries, can be incredibly difficult when you're bereaved. We call them milestone moments, special days that can be bittersweet, as you remember that person with love but miss them all at the same time. Navigating those milestone moments can be tricky for you and those around you who want to support you. **MuchLoved, the memorial tribute charity** shared their top tips for surviving the day (and the period beforehand) to help make it as stress-free as possible.



DO WHAT YOU NEED TO DO

Whether you want to mark the day and remember that special person, or hide away from the world, that's up to you – and either option is absolutely fine. It's best to let family and friends know ahead of time, so they don't try and arrange something that would make you uncomfortable, or, conversely, steer away from the day when you do want to talk about it. People often avoid these conversations because they don't want to upset you; starting the conversation yourself can make the whole situation more manageable.

REMEMBER THEM HOW YOU WOULD WANT TO

Ultimately, the most important thing is remembering your father, father figure or child in a way you feel comfortable. If you want to mark the day, light a candle, visit one of their favourite places, eat a favourite meal in their honour, or even add a virtual gift on your MuchLoved tribute page, that's absolutely fine. Death ends a life, not a relationship, so it's important that you can remember your loved one however you wish.

A LITTLE PLANNING CAN HELP

The run-up to Father's Day can often be as difficult as the day itself, when you're inundated by gift adverts, or social media posts and ads to celebrate the day, so limiting your access to these channels – at least for a little while - might be an easier option. Similarly, pubs and restaurants are likely to be full of those marking the day, so you might want to plan where you will be on the day if you're struggling. Planning to be at home with friends or planning an activity to keep you busy could help.

REMEMBER THEM TOGETHER

Although the day can be very hard, it can also be a good opportunity to remember that person, and celebrate their life. Other people grieving for them might like to connect and reminisce and share stories and memories, making the day a bit easier. Could you make some new traditions to take place every year to remember the person you love?

YOUR TRIBUTE PAGE IS HERE TO HELP

You could also connect with family and friends worldwide through your MuchLoved page, either by lighting candles on their tribute page, adding videos and stories to remember them, or even by organising a memorial event – which can all be done quickly and easily through your page. You can add virtual 'gifts' and 'cards' to their page, and change the theme of their page for the day. Add new photos to your gallery, and ask others to add their recollections and memories, to build your page for long into the future. If you need any help with any of these ideas please don't hesitate to contact the MuchLoved team; they'll be happy to help.



AND FINALLY...CHECK IN ON FRIENDS & FAMILY

If you know someone who has recently lost their Dad or might find Father's Day a difficult time, get in touch. Simply letting them know you're thinking of them and giving them someone to talk to if they want can be enough.

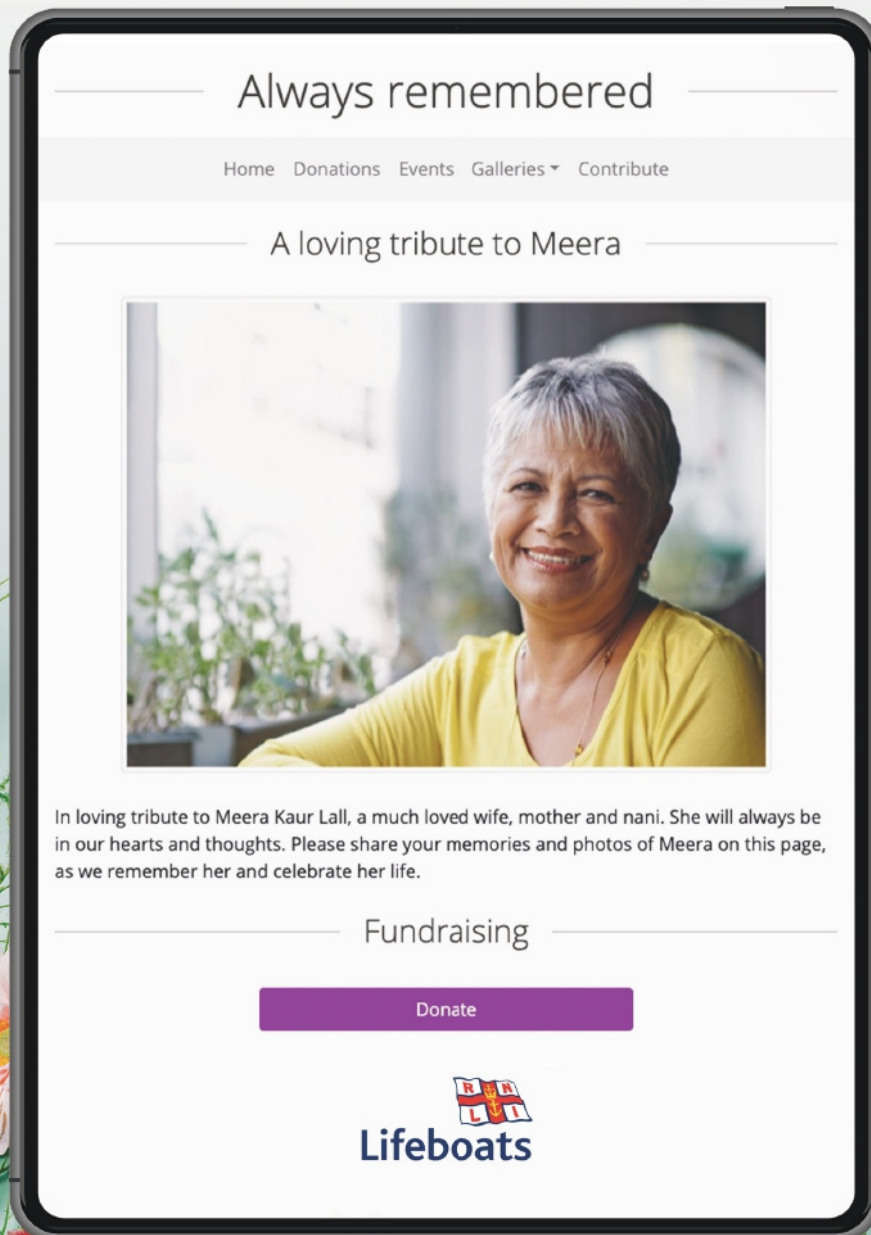
WOULD YOU LIKE TO TALK?

MuchLoved offer free online bereavement counselling, in partnership with bereavement care experts GriefChat. Connect to a trained counsellor for free, as many times as you need.

You can remain anonymous or provide your name, whichever you prefer. It is a completely free service and is available to you Monday to Friday, 9am-9pm or by email out of these hours.

Visit www.muchloved.com/gateway/grief-resources/grief-chat/
To access this chat service





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Challenge yourself to this 1km swim and you'll be alongside other like-minded swimmers – perhaps you want to beat a personal best or create one. Either way you'll be enjoying our beautiful open waters and getting active whilst raising funds to help Prospect Hospice continue our compassionate care for our patients and their families in our community. What better way to take to the water and raise vital funds for Prospect Hospice at the same time?

Your host at this popular event this year is Olympic medal swimmer, Cassie Patten, who will share her tips and experience. A team of experienced event organizers will be on hand to ensure that the event runs smoothly and safely. You'll also receive a medal at the end of your challenge as well as a fantastic sense of achievement. So why not take the plunge and join us for this fantastic event? Taking part costs just £25 per person and we ask everyone taking part to raise a minimum of £100 to help support local people at the end of their lives. Our dedicated team of fundraisers are here to support you every step of the way with ideas to help reach your target.

Register now to secure your place and start your fundraising journey. It promises to be a fun day out for all the family, and we hope to see you there.

To find out more, email the team at fundraisingandevents@prospect-hospice.net

This event is proudly supported by Arval UK

The Lions Club have kindly pledged to donate all profits raised from their annual swim to Prospect Hospice this year.





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