



BRITISH INSTITUTE OF FUNERAL DIRECTORS

Educating the Funeral Profession



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APPRECIATING JEM MEAD'S IMPACTFUL YEAR AS BIFD NATIONAL PRESIDENT

Hayley Bell, Editor

Imagine a leader who not only excels in their own field but also dedicates their time and energy to uplift and support their professional community. Jem Mead, Dip. FS, LMBIFD, the immediate past president of the British Institute of Funeral Directors (BIFD), is one such extraordinary individual. Throughout his presidential year, Jem facilitated seamless communication between the institute and our kindred associations, attended numerous conferences, dedications, and meetings, and even extended his support to examine Diploma Students. Alongside his wife, Karen, Jem has shown unwavering commitment to the Institute by diligently running the National Office while managing their own successful funeral business. Let us take a moment to express our heartfelt gratitude to Jem Mead for a truly remarkable year as the president of the BIFD.



Dream Team: Jem & Karen Mead demonstrates the true meaning of partnership and commitment.

FACILITATING COMMUNICATION AND COLLABORATION

One of the key responsibilities of the BIFD president is to ensure smooth communication and collaboration with various people, including our membership, and kindred associations. Jem's exceptional leadership skills enabled him to excel in this aspect, fostering strong relationships and enhancing the Institute's reputation. Under his guidance, the lines of communication were always open, allowing for valuable exchanges of knowledge and best practices between the BIFD and other funeral director associations.

Jem's inclusive approach meant that all voices were heard and opinions valued. He actively sought input from BIFD board members and encouraged their involvement in decision-making processes. By creating this collaborative environment, he ensured that the Institute's policies and initiatives were aligned with the needs and aspirations of its members. Jem's dedication to fostering open communication was instrumental in strengthening the BIFD's position as one of the leading Institutes in the funeral profession.

ENGAGING IN PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT



Jem along with colleagues from kindred associations attended the dedication of New Forest Crematorium

As a true advocate for professional development, Jem led by example, demonstrating the importance of continuous learning and growth. Throughout his presidency, he attended numerous conferences, dedications, and meetings, both within the BIFD and other kindred associations. By actively participating in these events, Jem not only expanded his own knowledge but also represented the interests of the BIFD and its members.

Jem's involvement in dedications and meetings served as a testament to his commitment to the funeral industry and its traditions. His presence at these events showcased his respect for the profession's heritage, while also highlighting his forward-thinking mindset. Jem's ability to balance tradition with innovation has been invaluable in guiding the BIFD toward a future that honours the past while embracing the evolving needs of funeral directors and the communities they serve.

ASSISTING IN MENTORSHIP AND EDUCATION

In addition to his numerous responsibilities as president, Jem Mead took on the role of assisting with the examination of Diploma Students. This hands-on involvement in the education and mentorship of future funeral directors is a testament to his dedication to the growth and development of the profession.

Jem's extensive expertise and experience make him an invaluable resource for aspiring funeral directors. His guidance during the examination process not only ensured the highest standards were maintained but also inspired and motivated students to strive for excellence. By actively engaging with Diploma Students, Jem fostered a supportive environment and continues to play a significant role on the examination team, shaping the next generation of funeral professionals.



*Jem plays a significant role on the examination team
(L-R: David Capper, Roger Clark, Jem & Karen Mead)*

Furthermore, Jem's commitment to education extended beyond the examination room. He consistently advocated for the importance of ongoing learning encouraging members to attend CPD sessions and was part of the Events Team that arranged the hugely successful education weekend in Chelmsford back in May. His belief in the power of education as a driver of professional growth has undoubtedly inspired many in the Institute to further their knowledge and expertise.

Jem has left an indelible mark on the British Institute of Funeral Directors and the wider funeral profession. His unwavering support, dedication, and exemplary leadership during his presidential year have propelled the Institute to new heights. From facilitating communication and collaboration to engaging in professional development and assisting in education, Jem has consistently gone above and beyond to ensure the success and growth of the Institute and its members. As we express our gratitude for an amazing year, let us also acknowledge the invaluable support of Jem's wife, Karen, who has stood alongside him, demonstrating the true meaning of partnership and commitment. Jem's legacy will continue to inspire funeral professionals for years to come, as we strive to uphold the highest standards in our noble profession.



"Messing about on the River": Jem & Karen will be spending some much-deserved free time on the 'SNUGGLEPUG'



*During his presidency, Jem fostered strong relationships with Presidents of our kindred associations
(back L-R: Richard Van Nes, BIE, Phil Halliday, FSA, Mark Horton, SAIF
front L-R: Jem Mead, BIFD & Barry Pritchard, NAFD)*

Introducing Your National President...

Amanda Dalby

Meet Amanda Dalby, Dip. FD, LMBIFD, a remarkable woman with a passion for serving her community during the most difficult moments of their lives. As the National President of the British Institute of Funeral Directors, Amanda is a trailblazer in the industry, bringing a modern and personal touch to the age-old practice of funeral directing. With over 15 years of experience,



Amanda has honed her skills and expertise, making her a trusted and respected figure in the funeral profession.

Amanda's journey began in January 2005 when she first embarked on her career as a funeral director. Working for larger funeral providers in Calderdale, she quickly realized that there was a need for a different approach. She yearned to provide a more compassionate and personalized service to bereaved families, one that focused on their individual needs and wishes. In April 2007, Amanda took a leap of faith and established her own Funeral Parlour in the beautifully renovated premises at Salterhebble Hill, Halifax.



Amanda's Funeral Parlour is based in beautifully renovated premises at Salterhebble Hill, Halifax

Originally hailing from Idle in Bradford, Amanda moved to Halifax 34 years ago, making it her home and the heart of her business. She has deep roots in the community and a genuine connection to the people she serves. Amanda's dedication to her work goes beyond the office walls, as she sees herself as a pillar of support and comfort for those in need during their darkest hours.

A Vision For Change

When Amanda set out on her entrepreneurial journey, she had a clear vision of how she wanted to redefine the funeral industry. She believed that funerals should be a celebration of life, a meaningful tribute that captures the essence of the person who has passed away. Amanda's mission was to turn the traditional, sombre funeral into an uplifting and memorable experience that honoured the unique qualities of each individual.

In her pursuit of this vision, Amanda drew upon her extensive experience working for larger funeral providers. She learned the ins and outs of the industry, gaining valuable knowledge and insights along the way. However, Amanda felt that these companies often prioritized efficiency over empathy, treating funerals as mere transactions rather than deeply personal events. She knew there had to be a better way.

With her own business, Amanda has been able to change the narrative and bring a fresh perspective to the funeral industry. She takes the time to get to know each family she serves, learning about their loved ones and their wishes for the funeral. Amanda believes that every life is unique, and therefore every funeral should reflect that uniqueness. She goes above and beyond to ensure that every detail is tailored to perfection, creating a truly personalized and meaningful experience for the bereaved.

A Life Beyond the Funeral Parlour

While Amanda's dedication to her work is unwavering, she also knows the importance of finding balance and nurturing her own well-being. In her spare time, Amanda indulges in various activities that bring her joy and relaxation. One of her passions is the arts, particularly the theatre and cinema. She finds solace in the magic of storytelling and the power of performance, allowing her to escape and recharge.



Music and dancing are also sources of happiness for Amanda. Whether attending live concerts or dancing with friends, she embraces the freedom and joy that music brings. It is through these artistic pursuits that Amanda finds inspiration and a renewed sense of purpose, reminding her of the beauty and vibrancy of life.

Amanda's love for shopping and eating out provides her with opportunities to connect with friends and enjoy the simple pleasures in life. These moments of leisure and camaraderie are essential for Amanda to unwind and recharge her batteries, ensuring she can continue to provide the highest level of care and compassion to those she serves.



Despite her busy schedule, Amanda also makes regular visits back to Bradford to spend time with her family and friends. These trips allow her to reconnect with her roots and maintain the strong bonds that have shaped her into the remarkable woman she is today.

As National President of BIFD, Amanda is a shining example of compassion, dedication, and innovation within the funeral profession.

find out more about Amanda by visiting
www.halifaxfunerals.co.uk

ANDYSMANCLUB: BREAKING DOWN THE STIGMA OF MEN'S MENTAL HEALTH.



In the midst of 2016, a gathering of nine men convened in a modest room within the quintessential Yorkshire town of Halifax. Their purpose was simple: to engage in candid conversations about their personal struggles and provide mutual support for their mental well-being. All present unanimously felt an intangible connection within that room, compelling them to spread the magic they had discovered. Thus, the seeds of a transformative movement were sown, one that would far surpass the initial expectations of its founders.

Fast forward seven years, and **ANDYSMANCLUB** has burgeoned to encompass more than 130 groups spanning three counties in the United Kingdom.

The name **ANDYSMANCLUB** bears the memory of Andrew Roberts, a young man who tragically took his own life at the tender age of 23 in early 2016. Andy's family, utterly unaware of the extent of his suffering, delved deeper into the issue of male suicide and men's mental health. Their investigation revealed a stark reality: male suicide stands as the foremost cause of premature death among men under 50, shrouded in deeply ingrained societal stigma in the UK.

Elaine Roberts and Luke Ambler, Andy's mother and brother-in-law respectively, united their efforts to conceive **ANDYSMANCLUB**. This innovative group offers a safe haven for men aged 18 and older to openly discuss their mental health in a non-judgmental, non-clinical setting. Today, these groups operate nationwide, driven entirely by volunteers, many of whom initially sought support as service users.

With a weekly outreach extending to over 3,000 men and bolstered by a dedicated force of more than 900 facilitators, this movement continues to evolve and expand, week after week.

WWW.ANDYSMANCLUB.CO.UK



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FROM THE DESK OF THE EDITOR

Hayley Bell, Dip. FD, LMBIFD

Life has a way of throwing us unexpected curveballs, and this past month has been no exception for me. With my roles within the Institute, I have been immersed in a whirlwind of professional commitments, from successful in-person meetings to writing examination papers. But amidst the chaos, I have also had to confront a personal bereavement that has challenged me both emotionally and professionally.

The month began with a flurry of activity, I travelled to Walsall for an in-person meeting which brought together the board of education, accredited tutors, examiners, and prospective tutors. The purpose of the meeting was to foster collaboration and ensure that our educational programs were aligned with the needs of the funeral profession.



During the meeting, we discussed various topics, from curriculum development with Greenwich University to the integration of new teaching methods. It was inspiring to witness the passion and dedication of everyone involved, as we all shared a common goal of providing the highest quality education to future funeral service professionals. The discussions were dynamic and thought-provoking, leaving me with a renewed sense of purpose and excitement for the work that we do.



By the time you read this, the much-anticipated 41st BIFD AGM, Gala Dinner, and Diploma in Funeral Service awards weekend will have taken place. This annual event is a highlight for the Institute, bringing together professionals from all corners of the country to celebrate excellence of the Presidential year, our graduating Diploma Candidates and the Institute as a whole. In the next issue, I will share the coverage of this glittering weekend, including our inaugural Trade Fair collaboration with the Funeral Suppliers' Association.

As an avid lover of all things eerie and fantastical, Hallowe'en is the holiday that speaks to my soul. The enchanting atmosphere that surrounds this time of year is unlike anything else. The crisp autumn air, the vibrant hues of the changing leaves, and the anticipation of the unknown create a sense of magic that is truly unparalleled.



But what truly makes Hallowe'en special for me is the opportunity it provides for creativity and self-expression. From designing elaborate costumes to crafting spooky decorations, Hallowe'en allows us to unleash our inner artists and embrace our unique quirks. It's a time when we can be whoever we want to be without judgment or restraint.

There's just something so magical and thrilling about this holiday that captivates my heart every year. I have written an article in this issue where I delve into the Haunting History of Tradition and Tricks of Hallowe'en, exploring its origins, customs, and I'm sure you will see the reasons why it holds a special place in my heart.

Amidst the professional triumphs and celebrations, life had its own plans for me. I received the news of the death of a very close family friend. This loss hit me hard, not only on a personal level but also as the funeral director responsible for arranging the final farewell.

I found myself facing a unique set of challenges. On one hand, my professional experience allowed me to navigate the logistical aspects with relative ease. From coordinating with the church and cemetery to designing the service sheets, I knew exactly what needed to be done. But on the other hand, the emotional toll of losing someone so dear was undeniable. It was a delicate balancing act, as I had to compartmentalize my grief while ensuring that every detail of the funeral met the same high standards I offer to all families in my care.

Through this experience, I gained a newfound appreciation for the strength and resilience of funeral directors who navigate personal bereavement while supporting others in their time of need. It is a challenging role that demands both emotional intelligence and professionalism, but it is also incredibly rewarding to be able to provide solace and support to grieving families.

As I reflect on the whirlwind of events that unfolded over the past month, I am reminded of the unpredictable nature of life. From the highs of successful professional engagements to the lows of personal bereavement, it is these moments that shape us and remind us of the importance of our work. As a funeral director, I am grateful for the opportunities to make a difference in the lives of others, even in the face of adversity. As I prepare for the upcoming AGM and awards ceremony, I do so with a renewed sense of purpose and a deep appreciation for the resilience of the human spirit.

Until the next issue, take care.

Hayley



Deputy Editor's Desk

Lucie Kibbey, Cert. FS, MBIFD

Howdy All 😊

Welcome to the October Edition of the Journal, Hayley has been doing a fab job as always behind the scenes pulling everything together and finding fascinating, educational, and relevant content for us all to indulge in.

Sadly, I won't be attending the BIFD Annual Conference, but I hope it is/was a roaring success and everyone has a fabulous time. I very much look forward to seeing lots of photos.

It feels like my life has changed quite dramatically since my last write up as my beautiful little 4-year-old son started school and has left a huge hole in my Mondays to fill. Thankfully my 38-year-old man child likes to make just as much mess as the children, so he keeps me on my toes. As you can see, he hardly seems big enough in his age 2-3 school trousers to be heading off to Reception Class!!

In this edition I am really tugging at the heart strings and have given you two articles. One around Baby Loss Awareness Week, something which is very close to my heart having lost 3 pregnancies myself. And the other focusing on Stoptober and the benefits of quitting smoking.

With Halloween landing this month, both Hayley and I are very excited for our favourite part of the year to start. So, you will find some Halloween themed humour later on in this issue.

I have a 'Pumpkin Patch' day out planned with the children, because it's my chance to act like a big kid as well.

Stay safe everyone, don't work too hard, and if everyone attending conference could have a drink for me, I'd appreciate it!



*my 4-year-old
started school*

*Love,
Lucie x*



*for those who don't
know, I have a
slight obsession
with Otters!*





Baby Loss Awareness Week

Lucie Kibbey, Deputy Editor

Baby Loss Awareness Week is a wonderful opportunity to bring us together as a community and give anyone touched by pregnancy and baby loss a safe and supportive space to share their experiences and feel that they are not alone.

Having been through my own experiences of pregnancy loss and struggles with having my two beautiful children, this is something I feel very strongly about. There have been huge steps forward made in the way that we deal with and talk about Pregnancy and Baby Loss, but somehow there is a huge majority of people who find it difficult to process or discuss. You most likely would have experienced a friend, family member or maybe even suffered a loss of your own and have limited resources for dealing with the trauma and aftermath that follows such grief.

For me, I took solace in exercise, when anger got the better of me my personal trainer would throw some gloves at me, and we would spar away my frustrations. Channelling my emotions in a healthy way. And without realising I would talk and open to her whilst we boxed. Everyone has their own ways of coping, but often, we don't find a way to cope at all, so I wanted to share some common misconceptions and where you can reach out for support and guidance.

COMMON QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

CAN EVERYDAY ACTIVITIES CONTRIBUTE TO LOSING A PREGNANCY?

No – generally most miscarriages are entirely out of your control and are most likely the cause of chromosomal abnormalities and unlikely to repeat themselves in future pregnancies. However, there are other conditions that increase the risk of pregnancy loss such as certain medications, womb structure, weakened cervix, diabetes and PCOS, infections, and food poisoning.

DOES HAVING ONE MISCARRIAGE MEAN YOU'RE LIKELY TO HAVE ANOTHER?

After your first miscarriage, there is no greater chance of having a second. Your risk does slightly increase after having two miscarriages, though. If a woman is suffering recurrent miscarriages, it's best to consult with a fertility specialist who can offer a treatment plan.

DOES SPOTTING OR BLEEDING DURING PREGNANCY MEAN YOU'RE HAVING A MISCARRIAGE?

Vaginal bleeding is incredibly common in the first trimester, occurring in 20% to 40% of pregnant women. Even heavy, prolonged bleeding can happen during a healthy pregnancy.

CAN MISCARRIAGES BE PREVENTED?

Yes – the one major risk of miscarriages is smoking. If you are a smoker you should try to quit before you begin to think about conceiving, but at the very least the moment you find out you are expecting.

WHAT ARE THE STATS?

- **IN WOMEN UNDER 30, 1 IN 10 PREGNANCIES WILL END IN MISCARRIAGE.**
- **IN WOMEN AGED 35 TO 39, UP TO 2 IN 10 PREGNANCIES WILL END IN MISCARRIAGE.**
- **IN WOMEN OVER 45, MORE THAN 5 IN 10 PREGNANCIES WILL END IN MISCARRIAGE.**
- **ABOUT 1 IN 100 WOMEN EXPERIENCE RECURRENT MISCARRIAGES (3 OR MORE IN A ROW) AND MANY OF THESE WOMEN GO ON TO HAVE A SUCCESSFUL PREGNANCY.**

Wave of Light

15th October 7pm

Wave of Light is held on the final day of Baby Loss Awareness Week each year, which is October 9th - October 15th. The idea is that everyone around the world lights a candle at 7pm and let it burn for at least an hour, to remember all the babies that never made it home or came home and couldn't stay. This can be done individually or in a group, at home or in a communal space.

Global Wave of Light originated from the Pregnancy and Infant Loss Awareness Movement, which began in the United States in the 1980s. Parents and advocates came together to raise awareness about the emotional and often silent journey of pregnancy and infant loss. The movement led to the designation of October as Pregnancy and Infant Loss Awareness Month and the observance of Global Wave of Light on October 15th.

Since its inception, Global Wave of Light has grown into a global phenomenon, with individuals and organisations worldwide coming together to remember and support those who have experienced the loss of a child.

RELEVANT HASHTAGS

When sharing your support for Global Wave of Light 2023 and participating in pregnancy and infant loss awareness activities, consider using these relevant hashtags to connect with others who are joining in this worldwide remembrance.

By using these hashtags, you can join a global community that honours the memory of babies lost and provides support to those who have been touched by pregnancy and infant loss.

- **#WAVEOFLIGHT**
- **#PREGNANCYLOSS**
- **#INFANTLOSS**
- **#REMEMBERINGOURBABIES**
- **#SUPPORTANDREMEMBER**
- **#BREAKTHESILENCE**
- **#YOUARENOTALONE**
- **#BLAW2023**

SUPPORT AND ADVICE

There are lots of charities and organisations that can offer guidance, support, and counselling for anyone who is going through the sadness of Pregnancy or Baby Loss. Please see a list below, all of which have websites.

CHILDREN OF JANNA

supporting bereaved parents who experience baby loss, holding at their core the Muslim belief that all children who die enter Heaven (called Jannah in Arabic).

ACHING ARMS

offer support to recently and longer ago bereaved parents after a loss during pregnancy, birth, or infancy. Call or text: 07464508994.

CHILD BEREAVEMENT UK

Helping children, parents, and families to rebuild their lives when a child grieves or when a child dies. They support children and young people up to the age of 25 who are facing bereavement, and anyone affected by the death of a child of any age. Helpline: 0800 02 888 40

THE LILY MAE FOUNDATION

providing much needed support to parents and families who have lost a baby to stillbirth, neonatal death, miscarriage, or medical termination.

LULLABY TRUST

support for bereaved families who have lost a child through SIDS.
Bereavement Support: 0808 802 6868

THE MISCARRIAGE ASSOCIATION

support and information for anyone affected by miscarriage, ectopic pregnancy or molar pregnancy with helpline, live chat, email service and online support available.
Helpline: 01924 200799 (Mon-Fri, 9am-4pm)

SCOTTISH COT DEATH TRUST

Providing support to anyone affected by sudden unexpected death of babies and young children, regardless of where you live in Scotland and how much time has passed since your loss.
Phone: 0141 357 3946

SANDS

Saving babies' lives. Supporting bereaved families. Up-to-date information and support available for bereaved parents, families, and healthcare professionals. Helpline: 0207 436 5881.



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VICE PRESIDENT REPRESENTS BIFD AT THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF MEMORIAL MASONS AGM

On 30 September BIFD Vice President, Amanda Pink, joined other kindred associations at Lumley Castle, Durham on behalf of Immediate Past President Jem Mead at the National Association of Memorial Masons AGM, which saw the culmination of Yvonne Murray's term as NAMM's National President.



Amanda, as our VP, plays a vital role in representing the Institute, she is responsible for supporting the presidential team and has recently taken on the overall administration of the Institute to assist National Office and the Board of Directors.



Kindred Associations of the Funeral Industry travelled to Durham to celebrate Yvonne Murray's term as NAMM National President



Constructed during the 14th century by Sir Ralph Lumley, Lumley Castle, is an exquisite English castle that boasts a rich historical background, captivating architectural design, and a picturesque natural environment. With its elegant décor and beautiful surroundings, this magnificent castle stands as a testament to the grandeur of the past.

About NAMM

The National Association of Memorial Masons (NAMM) is a highly esteemed and influential organization committed to advancing the memorial masonry industry. With a strong focus on safeguarding the interests of the bereaved, NAMM strives to promote exceptional standards, provide an extensive range of choices, and enhance understanding in all aspects related to natural stone memorials.

HONOURING LIVES WITH TAILORED FAREWELLS

Clive Pearson, Tutor & Director of Region C



In recent years, the funeral profession has witnessed a significant shift towards embracing personalisation. Traditionally, funerals were held as sombre and uniform events, adhering to certain predetermined rituals and

customs. However, as society evolves and individuals seek more meaningful ways to celebrate and honour their loved ones, personalisation has emerged as a crucial element in the funeral profession.

The importance of embracing personalisation in the funeral profession cannot be overstated. Each person is unique, with a distinct personality, interests, and life story. By incorporating personalisation into funeral services, families are given the opportunity to create a truly individualized tribute that reflects the essence of their loved one. This shift from a one-size-fits-all approach to a more personalised experience not only helps families cope with grief but also allows them to celebrate and remember their loved one in a way that resonates with their shared memories and experiences.



One of the greatest benefits of personalisation is the ability to create a more inclusive funeral experience. In the past, funeral services often followed a standard template, leaving little room for customization. However, today's funeral professionals understand the importance of accommodating diverse cultural, religious, and personal beliefs.

They strive to create a supportive environment where families can incorporate rituals, music, readings, and

even unconventional elements that are meaningful to their loved one and their unique heritage. This inclusivity fosters a sense of belonging and comfort, allowing families to grieve and honour their loved one in a way that aligns with their values and traditions.

Moreover, personalisation in the funeral profession helps to commemorate a person's life rather than merely mourning their death. It encourages families to focus on the positive aspects of their loved one's journey, celebrating their achievements, passions, and contributions. By incorporating their hobbies, interests, or even displaying cherished belongings, the funeral becomes a reflection of the person's life story.

This shift in perspective can bring solace and healing to the grieving family, as they are reminded of the impact their loved one had on others and the legacy they leave behind.

Additionally, embracing personalisation in the funeral profession supports the overall well-being of the bereaved family. Grief is a complex and individualised process, and allowing families to have control over the funeral arrangements can provide a sense of empowerment during a difficult time. The ability to make choices and actively participate in the funeral planning process can aid in the healing process and provide a sense of closure.

In the early days, funeral processions were often accompanied by mourners walking alongside the horse-drawn carriages. As time went on, advancements in transportation led to the introduction of motorised hearses, replacing the traditional horse-drawn ones.

Today, funeral processions can be seen consisting of sleek and modern hearses, designed to reflect the deceased's personality and preferences.



Some families opt for vintage hearses, adding a touch of nostalgia to their loved one's final journey. Others choose more unique modes of transportation, such as motorcycles or even custom-designed vehicles that pay tribute to the individual's passions in life.

In addition to the transportation aspect, funeral services themselves have evolved to accommodate different cultural practices and beliefs. Traditional religious ceremonies are still prevalent in many communities, but there has been a significant rise in personalised and non-traditional services as well. These alternative services aim to celebrate the life of the deceased in a more personalised and meaningful way.



Furthermore, the rise of technology has also played a role in reshaping funeral services. With the advent of live-streaming and video recording capabilities, families can now include distant relatives and friends who are unable to attend in person. This allows everyone to participate in honouring and remembering the departed, regardless of their physical location.

As funeral service professionals, we learn to adapt to these changing trends and cater to the diverse needs and wishes of our clients. We understand the importance of respecting cultural traditions while also embracing new ideas and innovations. By staying informed and continuously learning about the evolving funeral industry, we can provide the best possible support and guidance to grieving families during their most difficult times.

Overall, the Certificate in Funeral Service along with the Diploma in funeral service equips us with the knowledge and skills necessary to navigate the ever-changing landscape of funerals. Through our understanding of how funerals have changed over time, we are better able to serve our communities and honour the legacies of those who have passed away.

In conclusion, embracing personalisation in the funeral profession is of paramount importance. It allows families to create a truly meaningful and tailored farewell for their loved one, incorporating their unique life story, beliefs, and values. By embracing personalisation, funeral professionals can provide a more inclusive, healing, and comforting experience for grieving families, helping them navigate the grieving process while celebrating the life and legacy of their loved one.



Oh Precious, Tiny, Sweet Little One

Oh precious, tiny, sweet little one
You will always be to me
So perfect, pure, and innocent
Just as you were meant to be.

We waited and longed for you to come
And join our family.
We never had the chance to play,
To laugh, to rock, to wiggle.
We long to hold you, touch you now,
And listen to you giggle.

I'll always be your mother
He'll always be your dad.
You will always be our child,
The child that we had.

But now you're gone .. but yet you're still here
We sense you everywhere.
You are our sorrow and our joy,
There's love in every tear.

Just know our love goes deep and strong,
We'll forget you never -
The child we had, but never had
And yet, we'll have forever.

~ Author Unknown



FUNDRAISING FUNERAL DIRECTORS BACK LOCAL CHARITY AS TRIBUTE TO COLLEAGUE WITH RACE NIGHT

A Funeral Directors raised thousands of pounds for charity in honour of a colleague who is battling Motor Neurone Disease.

The thoughtful team at WH Putnam Funeral Directors, which has branches in Harrow and Edgware, made sure the going was good for guests to place their bets at a special charity race night.

Generous punters, who also took part in a sport's themed auction and raffle, helped raise £6,500 for the North London Branch of the Motor Neurone Disease Association.

The charity was chosen because Jerry Bentley, Diary Manager for WH Putnam and other Funeral Partners brands in East London, is battling the disease.

Senior Funeral Director Lee Dimmock organised the night, following a similar event last year which supported their local hospice St Luke's.



Jerry Bentley, Funeral Partners Area Development Manager Loraine Charter, Gay Watson from the Motor Neurone Disease Association and Lisa Bentley, Jerry's wife



"The amount we raised and the support we had was absolutely amazing," Lee said.

"What is even better, is that the money is going to the local branch of the association meaning it is helping Jerry directly and other people in his position who live nearby. All charity work is, of course, very worthy but when you can see the difference it will make it means so much. We've already been told about some special equipment which has been bought to help people use iPads. Race nights are great because it gets people to donate throughout the evening and have fun while they are doing it. Hopefully we can organise something similar next year, too."

Loraine Charter, Area Manager for East London and W H Putnam's, added: "I have worked with Jerry for many years and it was great for him and his wife Lisa to support the event too."

Thinking of selling your business? Be part of our story...

“ We very much felt as though the DNA of our business would be respected, that our years in the business and expertise would be valued and, most importantly, our name and reputation would be held in high regard. ”

**Mike Jolly, Business Principal
Eaves Funeral Service**

Find out more from former owners about their story so far visit **corporate.funeralpartners.co.uk**



To get a free, quick estimated valuation of what your business could be worth. Visit our new online valuation tool for a quick, no obligation estimation of your funeral business. **funeralpartners.co.uk/value**



**Mike Jolly,
Business Principal**

**For an informal, confidential free valuation or conversation
about selling your business now, or in the future, call:**



**Sam Kershaw,
Chief Executive Officer**
on 07834 531822
sam.kershaw@funeralpartners.co.uk



**Steve Wilkinson,
Mergers & Acquisitions Director**
on 07528 970531
steve.wilkinson@funeralpartners.co.uk

corporate.funeralpartners.co.uk



Your reputation is our reputation

FUNERAL HOME MANAGER BEGINS TENURE AS WARDEN OF ANCIENT GUILD

A Funeral Home Manager working for Funeral Partners who have funeral homes in Richmond, Barnard Castle and Catterick, has been voted to govern one of Richmond's most ancient guilds.

Carl Tate, who has worked in the funeral industry for nearly a decade, has recently begun his year in office as Warden to The Company of Mercers, Grocers and Haberdashers.

With its origins in the Middle Ages, the guild is a charitable organisation administered by an active committee, which is dedicated to helping Richmond prosper. It does so by providing support to local businesses and by issuing grants to other charities and voluntary organisations in the North Yorkshire area.



Keith Jeffrey and Carl Tate.

Commenting on his new appointment, Carl, said: "It is a real honour to be part of one of the most prominent and long-established guilds in the area. I live in Richmond, so I share the Guild's commitment to supporting local companies that are the lifeblood of our community. To guard against losing local businesses, ongoing investment and support is essential. It not only helps to create a more vibrant and varied commercial environment for shoppers, making it more likely they will shop locally, but also creates much-needed job opportunities for local residents."



In addition to his new role as Warden, Carl is also a Freeman for another of the town's guilds – the Fellmongers of Richmond, having recently superseded Keith Jeffrey, who had completed his year's tenure. Keith is a Funeral Service Operative for John Blenkiron & Sons

John Blenkiron & Sons is part of the Funeral Partners network of high-quality funeral homes. For more information visit www.blenkiron.co.uk

Funeral Partners is the UK's third largest funeral business, with more than 230 funeral homes staffed by over 1000 dedicated funeral professionals serving communities across England, Scotland and Northern Ireland.

Chief Executive Sam Kershaw has over 40 years' experience in the funeral profession, joining the business back in 2016 as Chief Operating Officer. Funeral Partners, which celebrated its 15 year anniversary in 2022, has grown rapidly, building a strong reputation as a well-run, high quality funeral services business overseeing more than 25,000 funerals each year.



GHOULISH GIGGLES



**WHY SHOULDN'T AN ANGRY WITCH TAKE HER
BROOM TRICK OR TREATING?**

SHE MIGHT FLY OFF THE HANDLE.

**WHO DOES A WEREWOLF GO TRICK OR
TREATING WITH?**

HIS COUSINS WHAT WOLF AND WHEN WOLF.



**WHAT DO YOU CALL A SKELETON THAT IS
CLEANING UP?**

THE GRIM SWEEPER.

**WHAT DOES A ZOMBIE WEAR TO MAKE THEIR
EYES POP?**

MA-SCARE-A!





**WHAT DO YOU CALL SPIDERS THAT
WERE JUST MARRIED?**

NEWLY WEBBED.



**WHY DID THE HEADLESS HORSEMAN APPLY
TO COLLEGE?**

HE WANTED TO GET AHEAD IN LIFE.

**WHAT DID FRANKENSTEIN SAY WHEN HE
WOKE UP FROM HIS NAP?**

I HAD A SHOCKING DREAM.



WHY ARE SKELETONS ALWAYS SO RELAXED?

NOTHING GETS UNDER THEIR SKIN.

HALLOWE'EN:

A Haunting History of Tradition & Tricks

by Hayley Bell, Editor

Hallowe'en, the spooky and enchanting holiday celebrated on the night of 31 October, has a rich history and a tapestry of traditions that have evolved over the centuries. While it may be known today for fancy dress costumes, sweets, and haunted houses, Hallowe'en has its roots in ancient Celtic and Christian customs, and it has since transformed into a global celebration of all things eerie and mystical.

In this article, we'll take a journey through the history and traditions of Hallowe'en, exploring the fascinating origins and the ways people around the world mark this chilling occasion.

The Origins Of Hallowe'en

Hallowe'en's history is a mosaic of ancient beliefs and practices. Its origins can be traced 2,000 years back to the Celtic festival of Samhain (pronounced 'SAH-win'), which marked the end of the harvest season and the beginning of winter.

Samhain, celebrated on 1 November, was believed to be a time when the veil between the living and the dead was blurred, the Celts believed that the thinning of the veil made it easier for predictions to be made.

People lit bonfires to ward off evil spirits and wore costumes made of animal skins to disguise themselves from malevolent entities. These customs were aimed at ensuring a smooth transition into the dark and uncertain winter months.



The Púca Festival, held annually in Ireland salutes the Halloween spirits through folklore, food, myth and music reopening the pathways of reflection and celebration carved by travellers over 2,000 years ago.



Saint Pope Gregory III (690AD ~ 741AD)

Christian Influence

With the spread of Christianity, the Celtic festival of Samhain was gradually incorporated into the Christian calendar. In the 8th century, Saint Pope Gregory III declared 1 November as All Saints' Day, also known as All Hallows' Day or All Hallowmas, which was celebrated in a similar way to Samhain with bonfires and dressing up. The night before, 31 October, became All Hallows' Eve, eventually shortened to Hallowe'en. This Christian influence added a layer of religious significance to the holiday.

Trick-or-Treating & Fancy Dress

The tradition of trick-or-treating likely emerged from a blend of European customs.

In medieval Europe, "soulling" was practised on All Hallows' Eve. Children and the poor would go door-to-door, offering prayers for the souls of the dead or to keep malevolent spirits away in exchange for "soul cakes", a small round shortbread biscuit-like cake made with sweet spices. This tradition evolved into modern-day trick-or-treating, where children dress up in fancy dress costumes and collect sweets and treats from their neighbours.

Fancy dress costumes, an integral part of Hallowe'en, have evolved from the ancient Celtic practice of wearing disguises to escape the notice of spirits. Today, costumes range from spooky creatures to pop culture icons, allowing people to express their creativity and imagination.



Above: 'Soul Cakes'



Jack-o'-Lantern

The iconic jack-o'-lantern, a carved pumpkin with a lit candle inside, has its origins in Irish folklore. Legend has it that a man named "Stingy Jack" tricked the Devil by trapping him in the form of a coin; Jack negotiated with the Devil that should he die, the Devil would not claim his soul. Shortly after this deal was made, Jack died and was denied entry into heaven for being such an unsavoury character, and, keeping his promise not to claim his soul, the Devil refused Jack entry into hell.

Jack was condemned to eternally wander the Earth with a lump of glowing coal inside a carved turnip. When Irish immigrants arrived in America, they adapted the tradition, replacing turnips with pumpkins, which were more abundant and easier to carve.



Haunted House & Decorations

Decorating homes and gardens with spooky ornaments and creating haunted houses are modern Hallowe'en traditions that add an element of frightful fun.

These practices likely originated from the idea of warding off evil spirits, which was central to the Celtic Samhain festival.

Today, Hallowe'en enthusiasts go all out, transforming their homes into eerie spectacles, complete with cobwebs, skeletons, and scary sound effects.





In Mexico Día de los Muertos celebrates deceased ancestors in a vibrant way

Día de los Muertos

The Day of the Dead, known as "Día de Muertos" or "Día de los Muertos" in Spanish, is a traditional holiday celebrated on November 1 and 2, with some variations in dates like October 31 or November 6, depending on the region. This vibrant holiday has its roots in Mexico, where it has flourished, but it's also embraced by people of Mexican descent in various other places.

While it shares some timing with Christian observances like Hallowtide, the Day of the Dead distinguishes itself with its festive and joyful spirit rather than a sombre one. It's a time for families and friends to come together to honour and remember loved ones who have passed away. These gatherings often include humorous reminiscences of funny moments and stories about the departed.



'Calaveras' (skull-shaped symbols)

Central to this celebration are several traditions. People pay homage to the deceased using "calaveras" (skull-shaped symbols) and bright marigold flowers, known as "cempazúchitl." Home altars called "ofrendas" are constructed, adorned with the favourite foods and drinks of the departed, and graves are visited with these offerings as gifts for the deceased.



A home altar (ofrendas) decorated with bright marigolds (cempazúchitl) and bread of the dead (pan de muerto)

But the Day of the Dead isn't just about the deceased ancestors. It's also customary to exchange gifts with friends, such as sugar skulls, share traditional "pan de muerto" (bread of the dead) with family and friends, and compose light-hearted and often irreverent verses, known as "calaveras literarias," in a playful tribute to living friends and acquaintances. This unique blend of customs and celebrations makes the Day of the Dead a colourful and lively festival that celebrates both life and the memories of those who have died.

In Conclusion

Hallowe'en, with its captivating history and diverse traditions, has evolved into a beloved holiday celebrated by people of all ages around the world. From its ancient Celtic roots in Samhain to the Christian influence of All Hallows' Eve, and the modern customs of fancy dress costumes, trick-or-treating, and haunted houses,

Hallowe'en is a fascinating blend of ancient beliefs and contemporary creativity. As the leaves change colour and the nights grow longer, Hallowe'en continues to enchant us with its spooky charm, reminding us of the enduring power of tradition and imagination.

TAMWORTH CO-OP INVESTS £500,000 IN LUXURY FUNERAL FLEET

Tamworth Co-operative Society has taken delivery of a new luxury Mercedes funeral fleet costing £500,000 after a two-year wait.

Glen Speak, general manager of Tamworth Co-operative Funeral Service, said the two hearses and two limousines are the most environmentally friendly funeral vehicles the Society has ever owned.

“They are all hybrids capable of doing around 65 miles per gallon which is incredible. We ordered them during the pandemic, but the global chip shortage in the automotive industry slowed production levels right down. It’s fantastic to finally take delivery of them because they are stunning.”

All the vehicles started life as Mercedes E200 models but were immediately whisked away after being built to be given an extraordinary transformation.

“The body work and chassis is extensively modified and had the interiors stripped out,” explained Mr Speak. “A new section was then added to the middle, along with a whole host of features including bespoke windows. It’s a massive and complex operation.”

The work was carried out by Wilcox Limousines, a family firm of coachbuilders from Wigan which has been in existence for more than 70 years. The company has been providing funeral fleets to Tamworth Co-op since 1961.



·Glen Speak, general manager of Tamworth Co-op’s funeral division (left), receives the keys to the new luxury fleet from Louis Wilcox, sales director of Wilcox Limousines. The family firm has been supplying funeral vehicles to Tamworth Co-op since 1961.

“It’s remarkable to think that I’m the fourth general manager to have worked with them,” added Mr Speak. “My predecessors worked with different generations of the same family.”

On this occasion it was Louis Wilcox, the firm’s sales director, who personally handed over the four sets of keys at Tamworth Co-op’s main funeral home in Upper Gungate.

He said the carbon fibre design of the cars was upgraded to a sleeker style, and that each one is highly specified.

“The air suspension is perfect for funeral vehicles as it allows them to glide seamlessly over the road, and it minimises movement when going round corners. The engines are also very quiet.”

In addition, the vehicles are equipped with nine-gear automatic gear boxes, and multiple ambient lighting. The wooden coffin deck on the hearses can even be lit in various colours.

The new fleet will supplement Tamworth Co-op’s existing Jaguar cars and will replace an older set of Jaguar vehicles.

Mr Speak said: *“We need to be extremely flexible in what we offer because while some families might request a hearse and up to six or more limousines, others might want just a hearse, or possibly a hearse plus one saloon for them to follow behind in. We are conscious that the pandemic and cost of living crisis has hit many people in the Tamworth area hard, and we need to cater for all budgets.”*

“Some families on the other hand want several luxury vehicles for their loved one’s send-off. We can request the entire fleet or a specific number of vehicles to suit a family’s requirements. Whatever their needs, these new limos will add a touch of dignity and luxury to the occasion.”

He pointed out there is an added benefit of having funeral cars which is often not appreciated.

“Travelling together slowly and quietly in a comfortable limousine to the church or crematorium gives families an intimate space to talk to each other. This often gives them a sense of calm before the funeral takes place which can help them get through the day.”



Founded in 1886, the Tamworth Co-operative Society is one of the town’s best-loved and most iconic businesses. Today’s Society covers Staffordshire, Derbyshire, North Warwickshire and the West Midlands with twelve food stores and eight funeral service locations.

They also operate four post offices.

Where can I learn about coffins? | 🔍

Heartwood
Guardian
Reflections
Country Range
Forever Urns
Expressions

**Their history?
How they're made?
Choices available?**

The ACADEMY™

Elevate Your Expertise.



Introducing the Academy. A modern training facility dedicated to enhancing professional expertise on coffin choice. 24hr access filled with training videos and bitesize modules complete with certification. **We invite you to embark on a journey of discovery and growth with the Academy.**

Visit - www.coffinacademy.com



JC ATKINSON NEW TRAINING ACADEMY FOR FUNERAL DIRECTORS GOES DOWN A STORM

JC Atkinson's new Training Academy for funeral directors is going down a storm says the company, whose launch video promoting the free online learning platform received over one thousand views in the first 48 hours alone.

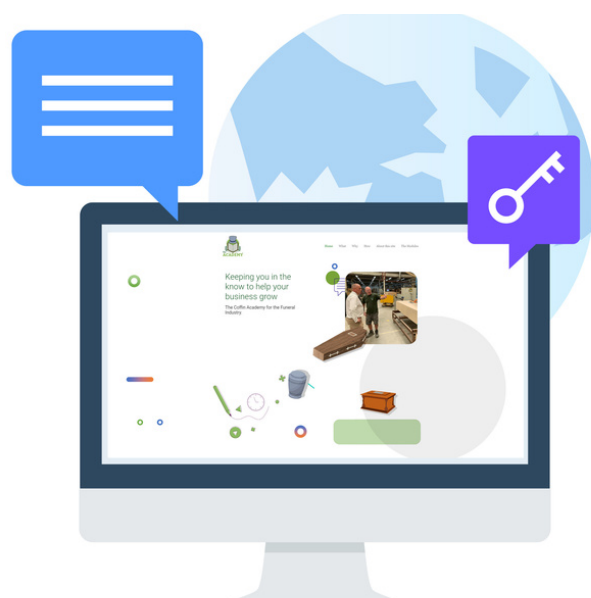
Based on a deep understanding of the challenges faced by funeral directors, the academy aspires to create a community of funeral industry professionals who are equipped with the latest knowledge, best practices, and a thorough grasp of the coffin choices available. Something, JC Atkinson's regional sales managers hear time and time again is a key gap in knowledge that funeral directors would value support with.

Greg Cranfield, JC Atkinson's Managing Director said of the interest so far: *"We've clearly tapped into a deep need amongst funeral directors who are first and foremost dedicated and caring professionals wanting to provide an excellent service to bereaved families, but who are not aware of all the details required to enable their customers to make an informed choice about which coffin is right for their needs. We are really encouraged by the interest shown already, especially by companies with lots of staff to train. We believe the academy will be transformative, helping shape the future of funeral service excellence, setting new benchmarks in quality, commitment, innovation, and compassionate care."*



The academy follows a comprehensive curriculum covering a wide range of topics essential to understanding the coffin manufacturing business. Broken down into bite-sized chapters, these combine engaging video with a follow up quiz to cement learning. You can only unlock the next chapter if you answer enough questions accurately and those undertaking the training receive a certificate for every module completed.

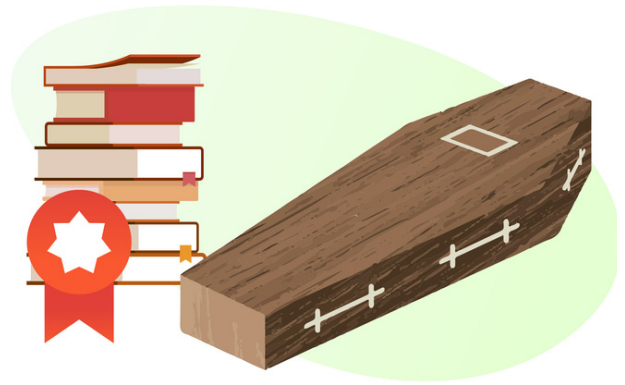
The first chapter covers a fascinating history of the coffin, where the name comes from, why they are shaped as they are and the coffin's role as a focal point for both grieving and celebrating a life. The second chapter looks at traditional coffins, how they are made and how the choice of wood shapes the final product. With loved ones increasingly wanting to know more about coffins and where the wood comes from, these sections provide simple but reassuringly memorable information to give funeral directors the confidence to address this growing need amongst customers.



The academy addresses funeral directors worries and gaps in knowledge when it comes to coffin choices

We're not salespeople so panic when it comes to the coffin choice bit as we don't know enough about them.

We focus so much on arranging funerals that we never look at the detail on coffin choices and the way they are made.



Regional Sales Manager Nigel Green-Smith adds: "For some people, the choice of coffin is fraught with anxiety whereas for others it could be choosing the right songs. Funeral directors really want to help the best they can here but admit they often revert to recommending the coffin they are most familiar with for fear of not knowing enough about the many other choices available."

The academy is a private, safe, inclusive, and supportive learning environment that runs through everything a funeral director needs to know at their own pace so that they can confidently and competently help families choose a coffin that meets all their needs whether those choices are style, financial or ethically driven. The academy enables practitioners to navigate this delicate landscape with confidence and integrity.

New chapters are being released by the academy every month. This month's is all about Personalisation, a major growth area in coffin sales where friends and families can design pretty much every aspect of their coffin to create a work of art that honours the unique nature of the person they have lost.



To have a go, visit: www.coffinacademy.com
Or contact JC Atkinson's sales team 0191 415 1516
Follow: @jcatkinson



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- Pet Insurance

PLUS MORE

HOW LIFE LEDGER WORKS

REGISTER

Create an account and add details of the deceased

CHOOSE

Select the companies you want to notify, add account details

SEND

Leave the rest to us...

IS LIFE LEDGER SAFE?

With bank-level security, Life Ledger is Cyber Essentials certified, is undergoing ISO27001 certification and undergoes regular security and penetration testing to ensure your information is safe.



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.

STOP TOBER

**STOP SMOKING
AND GOOD
THINGS HAPPEN**

BY LUCIE KIBBEY, DEPUTY EDITOR

Smoking is one of the biggest causes of death and illness in the UK. Every year around 76,000 people in the UK die from smoking, with many more living with debilitating smoking-related illnesses. Smoking increases your risk of developing more than 50 serious health conditions.

Smoking causes 70% of all Lung Cancers, it also causes cancer in other areas of the body such as mouth, throat, larynx, bladder, bowel, cervix, kidney, liver, stomach, and pancreas.

Smoking damages your heart and your blood circulation, increasing your risk of developing conditions such as coronary heart disease, heart attack, stroke, peripheral vascular disease (damaged blood vessels) and cerebrovascular disease (damaged arteries that supply blood to your brain).

Smoking also damages your lungs, leading to conditions such as chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), which incorporates bronchitis and emphysema and pneumonia.

Smoking can also worsen or prolong the symptoms of respiratory conditions such as asthma, or respiratory tract infections such as the common cold.

In men, smoking can cause erectile dysfunction (impotence) because it limits the blood supply to the penis.

It can also reduce the fertility of both men and women.

AND smoking can make it harder to recover from surgery.



DID YOU KNOW?

**BABIES EXPOSED TO SECOND-HAND SMOKE
ARE 3X MORE LIKELY TO DIE FROM COT
DEATH**



HOW CAN I GET HELP TO QUIT?

Now I've covered off all the scary stuff, let's get down to the positive. How to get support to quit and the benefits of doing so! First and foremost, you need to want to quit and be mentally and physically prepared for the changes it is going to have on your body as you do so.



Your GP can give you information and advice on quitting smoking.

You can visit the NHS Smokefree website to download the free NHS Quit Smoking app, get more information, or call the helpline on **0300 123 1044**.

DID YOU KNOW?

NICOTINE IS RELATIVELY HARMLESS. IT'S THE MAINLY TOXIC CHEMICALS IN TOBACCO SMOKE THAT CAUSE NEARLY ALL THE DAMAGE FROM SMOKING.

NICOTINE SMOKING AIDS TO HELP QUIT

- **nicotine replacement therapies** (NRTs), such as patches, sprays, gum, and lozenges
- **nicotine vapes** (e-cigarettes)
- **prescription-only medicines** (tablets)

You can ask a doctor or pharmacist for more advice on what's right for you or get free expert support from a stop smoking service – for the best chance of quitting for good.



NICOTINE REPLACEMENT THERAPIES (NRTS)

NRTs give you nicotine (the addictive substance in cigarettes and tobacco) without any of the harmful chemicals. They can help reduce the withdrawal symptoms of quitting.

NRTs have been widely used for many years as a safe treatment to help with quitting. They can be bought from pharmacies, supermarkets, and some other shops. They may also be prescribed by a doctor or a stop smoking service.

Types of NRTs include:

- | | | |
|----------------|------------|--------------|
| • PATCHES | • INHALERS | • LOZENGES |
| • NASAL SPRAYS | • GUM | • MICRO TABS |
| • MOUTH SPRAYS | | |



NICOTINE VAPES (E-CIGARETTES)

Vapes are electronic devices that let you inhale nicotine in a vapour instead of smoke. This is done by heating a solution (e-liquid), which comes in different nicotine strengths and flavours.

Vapes come in a variety of models. They can be bought from specialist vape shops, some pharmacies, supermarkets, and other shops. Unlike NRTs, they are not available on prescription from a doctor or other healthcare professional.

Research shows that nicotine vapes are an effective tool for quitting smoking. People who use a vape daily together with support from a stop smoking service have the most success at quitting.

Experts agree that although vapes are not risk-free, they carry a small fraction of the risks of cigarettes.

NICOTINE POUCHES

Tobacco-free nicotine pouches are new in the UK and currently are not recommended as a stop smoking aid, due to a lack of research on how safe or effective they are for stopping smoking. Nicotine pouches are placed between the lip and gum and come in different nicotine strengths and flavours. They may help some people with nicotine withdrawal symptoms.



PRESCRIPTION-ONLY MEDICINES

There are 2 prescription-only stop smoking medicines, which are in tablet form:

- **varenicline** (brand name Champix)
- **bupropion** (brand name Zyban)



These medicines do not contain nicotine, but they can help with withdrawal symptoms. If recommended by a doctor or a stop smoking adviser, they can be taken together with nicotine replacement products.

Both varenicline and bupropion are currently not available in the UK due to supply issues. Speak to a doctor or stop smoking adviser about availability or an alternative treatment.

What happens when you quit?

The sooner you quit, the sooner you'll notice changes to your body and health. Look at what happens when you quit for good.



After 20 minutes

Check your pulse rate, it will already be starting to return to normal.



After 8 hours

Your oxygen levels are recovering, and the harmful carbon monoxide level in your blood will have reduced by half.



After 48 hours

All carbon monoxide is flushed out. Your lungs are clearing out mucus and your senses of taste and smell are improving.



After 72 hours

If you notice that breathing feels easier, it's because your bronchial tubes have started to relax. Also your energy will be increasing.



After 2 to 12 weeks

Blood will be pumping through to your heart and muscles much better because your circulation will have improved.



After 3 to 9 months

Any coughs, wheezing or breathing problems will be improving as your lung function increases by up to 10%.



After 1 year

Great news! Your risk of heart attack will have halved compared with a smoker's.



After 10 years

More great news! Your risk of death from lung cancer will have halved compared with a smoker's.

ASSOCIATE MEMBER NEWS

BIFD ASSOCIATE MEMBER RECOGNISED WITH PRESTIGIOUS INDUSTRY AWARD

Eimer Duffy of FIT Social Media who provides social media and digital marketing consultancy and training services specifically for Funeral professionals has won the award for "Best Innovative Product/Service for the Funeral Industry 2023".

The Good Funeral Awards is an annual event hosted by The Association of Green Funeral Directors where they focus on eco-friendly products and services for the Funeral industry.

Eimer is an Associate Member of the BIFD and writes articles for our Journal as our resident 'Social Media Guru' and to celebrate she would like to for the month of November 2023 give BIFD Members a free audit of their online presence.



To avail of this go to
www.fitsocialmedia.co.uk
and "book a call" with Eimer.



OR
SCAN ME 





Motorcycle Funerals
For a dignified final journey
Serving Families nationwide:
England, Ireland, Scotland, Wales.
For information and arrangements
Call us: 01530 274888

Boom Trike



Suzuki Hayabusa



Harley Davidson



Triumph Thunderbird



Triumph Speed Triple



Triumph Bonneville



Managing Director, Marian Sinclair: Serving families since 2002

HOW TO PROTECT YOUR FUNERAL HOME'S FACEBOOK BUSINESS PAGE



Eimer Duffy, FIT Social Media

Recently I got a call from a Funeral Director who logged into Facebook. He told me he found he was locked out of his Facebook account and asked for some assistance. And it came to light that he had been hacked. And that's not all. His Funeral home's Facebook Business page was connected to his personal Facebook profile account.

This unfortunate incident highlights the intrinsic link between personal profiles and business pages on Facebook. You have to have a personal Facebook profile to have a business page.

And with the Funeral home's page attached to his personal profile, the breach had a ripple effect. This shows that there is a need for enhanced security measures. And so I thought I would share this with you and how to turn on extra security.

HOW TO ENHANCE YOUR SECURITY

Let's delve into the cornerstone of safeguarding your online presence. Two Factor Authentication (2FA), a simple yet robust security measure that acts as a sentry to your digital realm. Integrating 2FA is akin to having a double-locked door. Even if a hacker decrypts your password, they would be thwarted by the second layer of protection.



TWO-FACTOR AUTHENTICATION:

Start the Setup:

- On your Facebook newsfeed, click on your profile icon at the bottom of your screen.
- Click on "see more" at the bottom of your screen.
- Navigate to Settings & Privacy > Settings > Security and Login.
- Locate and click on "Use two-factor authentication."

Choose Your Authentication Method:

- You can opt for a text message code or an authentication app like Google Authenticator.
- If you select a text message, ensure your mobile number is correct and easily accessible.
- For the authentication app, download it onto your smartphone and follow the on-screen instructions to pair it with your Facebook account.

Finalise the Configuration:

- Once your preferred method is set up, follow the prompts to complete the process.
- Now each log-in will require a unique code from your chosen method, creating a robust security barricade.

ADDITIONAL SECURITY TIPS:

- **Regularly Review Page Admins:** Ensure only trusted individuals have administrative access to your business page.
- **Educate Your Staff:** Provide training on recognising phishing attempts and maintaining secure passwords.
- **Monitor Account Activity:** Regularly check for unusual activity on your account and investigate any unfamiliar changes.

IN CONCLUSION:

The importance of safeguarding your online realm cannot be overstated. It's a space where bonds with the community are nurtured. A secure digital presence enables you to continue being a beacon of solace in times of sorrow, without the looming fear of digital intrusions.

I hope you found this an interesting read and help. If you have any further questions, want to get started or really make the most of your Facebook business page let me know. Or do you need help in navigating the world of social media, your website or something else, please get in touch, email me on eimer@fitsocialmedia.ie and for more info go to www.fitsocialmedia.co.uk

Looking forward to being at the BIFD conference 20~22 October 2023, hope to see you there!

Thanks for reading.

Eimer

Eimer Duffy is an award-winning 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.

FREE HASHTAG GUIDE



THE FINANCIAL STRESS OF FUNERAL PLANNING: NAVIGATING AN UNINVITED GUEST

Planning a funeral is a moment to celebrate the life of the person who has died, and cherish their memories, except there's an uninvited guest lurking in the shadows, casting a shadow of stress over the event. That unwelcome intruder? The soaring costs of funerals.

According to a recent report by MetLife UK titled ***The Last Word: Tackling the Death and Funeral Planning Taboo***, nearly half (45%) of adults who recently planned a funeral found the costs highly stressful. The study surveyed a cross-section of 2,000 adults who had faced a bereavement in the last two years. It found that nearly one-fifth (18%) confessed to being 'extremely stressed' about the financial implications of bidding farewell to their loved ones.

WHO PICKS UP THE TAB?

One in eight respondents (13%) were left scratching their heads, unsure of how to foot the bill. 20% divided the costs with their partner, while almost a third (31%) dipped into the deceased's estate to cover expenses. For 16%, the financial burden was shared by other family members.

WHAT ABOUT SAFETY NETS?

Only a small portion of respondents had a safety net. Just 15% had a pre-paid funeral plan, 13% had life insurance, and a mere 7% could rely on a workplace benefit policy. Adrian Matthews, Head of Employee Benefits at MetLife UK, observed, "At a time when you're grappling with the emotional toll of losing a loved one, worrying about funeral costs, especially amidst a cost-of-living crisis, is an added burden no one needs."



THE STRESS DOESN'T STOP AT COSTS

But the stress didn't just stop at costs. The whole process of planning a funeral was a source of additional anxiety for almost a third (31%) of adults. In the midst of their grief, a quarter (25%) struggled with decision-making.

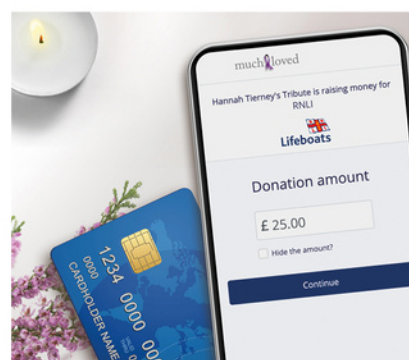
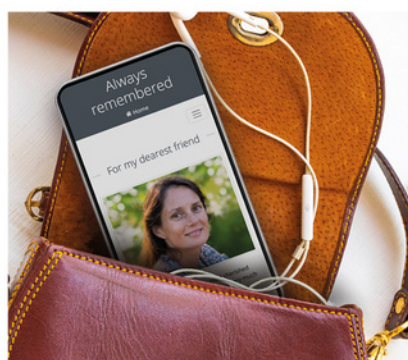
For some, the costs proved to be a nasty surprise. Almost a quarter (23%) were caught off guard by higher-than-anticipated funeral costs, prompting 11% to revise their funeral plans to cut costs.

LIGHT AT THE END OF THE TUNNEL

So, what could ease this stress? For 23%, knowing the deceased's wishes would have been a great help. A better understanding of what needed to be arranged (21%) and a clearer picture of the costs involved (19%) would also have eased the burden.

Adrian Matthews believes more open conversations about death and funeral arrangements need to occur. "It's a tough conversation to initiate, but knowing the deceased's wishes can spare loved ones additional stress and allow them more space to grieve," he said.

In the end, it seems that while dealing with the loss of a loved one is hard enough, grappling with the financial aspects of their final farewell can add a whole new layer of stress. It's a sobering reminder that sometimes, the most difficult conversations are the ones we need to have the most.



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LATE EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY COFFIN FURNITURE

Dr Julian Litten, FSA, Hon. BIFD

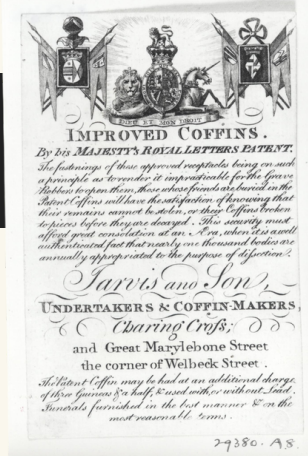
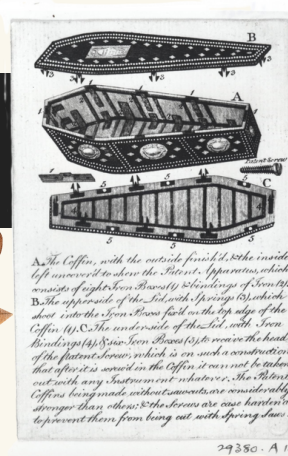


Few examples of late eighteenth-century coffin furniture survive, however that which are available to study tend to be found in the burial vaults of the nobility and landed gentry where the outer wooden cases of the triple coffins tend to be fabric-covered and larded with a multitude of gilt-headed upholstery pins, die-stamped motifs, escutcheons seen as the “finish” to Messrs Jarvis’s Patent Coffin of c. 1810, a late Georgian wood and iron construction created to foil the body-snatchers (p.1)

(below) p.2 Coffin of Colonel Poulett (d.1810) showing how the outer wooden case was made of 4in planks



(right) p.1 1810 advertisement for Jarvis & Sons Improved Coffins



The whole of the outer case would have been upholstered with black velvet - either Venetian silk or the less-expensive Utrecht cotton velvet - upon which would have been applied to the coffin furniture, either of silver tin-dipped stamped iron or of gilded tin-dipped stamped iron, depending on the purse of the purchaser. This applies to the twenty-six escutcheons on the lid and the matching thirty-eight escutcheons on the side panels as well as to the six grip-plates, with the grips themselves almost certainly having been of silvered or gilt iron. When it comes to the main lid motifs, he has reduced this to a simple die-cast lead plate of inscription, the name and date presumably having been applied by either an engraving tool or punch. Slightly later on, in 1818, Edward Bridgeman of Birmingham was offering a similar patent coffin to his clients.

Almost all of the leading London funeral furnishers - and, one assumes, those in the provinces as well - had their own “trademark” designs for the positioning of the gilt-headed upholstery pins. For Jarvis, this was “two rows all round” for the lid and “one row all round” to create the impression of side panels. No doubt it was an elegant beast, but other manufacturers could go even further.

In the narthex between the two Poulett Vaults at Hinton St George, Somerset is the coffin of Colonel William Poulett (p. 2). He died in 1810, the same year that Jarvis was producing his Patent Coffin, but its decoration is somewhat antiquated, being something of a throwback to the 1770s. This is also a London coffin, but here the funeral furnisher is using two rows all round of gilt-headed upholstery pins, has declined using escutcheons and preferring to decorate the edges of the coffin with what were known as “hinges”. In actuality, these were flat plates of silvered or gilded stamped tin, bent into right angles and nailed into place once the lid of the outer case had been sealed.

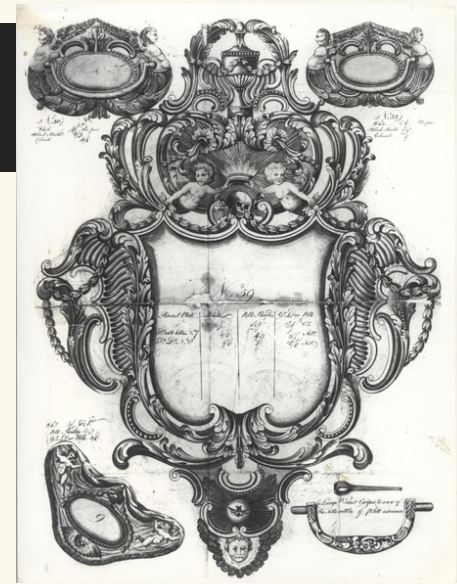
But for us the interest here lies in the lid decoration. If you look carefully you can see the elongated oval of the tin-dipped stamped iron breast-plate, and then two other large motifs, a “Glory” at the head end, and a “Flower Pot” (p. 3) at the foot end. Such items were popular within the trade for the better funerals between c. 1725 and c. 1775, one such maker being Thomas Pickering of Birmingham, whose wares were marked through Tuesly & Cooper of Southwark, as illustrated in their catalogue of 1783 (p. 4).



(left) p. 3 “Angel” & “Flower Pot” Motif
(right) p.4 Breast-plate and back-plate - Tuesly & Cooper (1783)

(below) p. 5

1795 Crimson Venetian Silk Velvet



The Poulett coffin is also velvet-covered, but in this instance, the client did not get what he expected. If you look carefully at the side of the coffin - which we can now see as the result of the velvet beginning to perish - the funeral furnisher has made up the sides of the outer coffin from 6in planks, rather than a single plank of 18in wood. Further examination shows the iron straps he used to hold the planks together. Had the family been aware of this then no doubt they would have asked for a refund. And yet he did not scrimp on the breast plate, which was also provided by Tuesly & Cooper of Borough High Street, Southwark.



Some of the finest coffin furniture of the Georgian period can be seen in the De La Warr Vault at Withyham in Sussex. The atmospheric conditions within this vault are superb, thus ensuring the conversation of the coffins to the highest degree. Amongst these is a magnificent outer case of 1795 covered in crimson Venetian silk velvet (p. 5). It is a *tour-de-force* of the craft. The foot end is slightly angled, but the lid is higher at the head end than the foot, providing an elegant interior for the placing of the body. It would have taken much skill to have created the sides of this case to have allowed for such a pleasant angle. Oh that such care was taken today!

But our interest here lies in the upholstery pins and their clever design in forming the side panels; they are two rows all round, though the main frame is just one row all round, admittedly of pins somewhat larger than those used for the panels. The gilded grip-plates, and one assumes the gilded and painted die-stamped panels. The gilded grip-plates, and one assumes the gilded and painted die-stamped coronets above them, were, again, provided my Tuesly & Cooper. Unfortunately, it was not possible to examine the quality of the lid decorations. And yet the magnificence of this item lies in the fact that the velvet is mounted on shoddy, 1/4in thick, thus allowing the gilt furniture to sink into the velvet. And this is extremely interesting to note, for it was one of the particular “skills” used by the London funeral furnishers of Dowbiggen & Holland. It is, indeed, one of the best-preserved coffins of its date.

An equally well-upholstered coffin made an appearance in February 1771 when a Colonel Luttrell turned up at one of Mrs Cornelys' Masquerades at Carlisle House, London, dressed as a coffin (p. 6). R S Kirby, who was also present, recorded that Luttrell 'cast such a pall of gloom' over the proceedings that he was obliged to leave almost as soon as he had arrived.

(right) p. 6 Colonel Luttrell at Mrs Cornelys' Masquerade in 1771



THE FALL OF SAFE HANDS: UNCOVERING A £60 MILLION FUNERAL FRAUD SCANDAL

WHEN 'SAFE HANDS' AREN'T SO SAFE: A TALE OF A FRAUDULENT FUNERAL BUSINESS



Before FCA Regulation, a pre-paid funeral plan promised peace of mind for your loved ones' future, once regulation came into force many plan holders came to find out they've been swindled by a company they trusted. This is the unfortunate reality for about 46,000 individuals who invested in Safe Hands Plans, a pre-paid funeral company, which collapsed last year. The fallout? A hefty shortfall of £60 million.

The Serious Fraud Office (SFO), with its new director Nick Ephgrave at the helm, has initiated a criminal investigation into the company and its parent company, SHP Capital Holdings. Ephgrave is on a mission, sending out notices to stockbrokers, financial institutions, and potential witnesses, seeking information to aid his investigation. The SFO's statement paints a clear picture of the gravity of the situation.

"Thousands of individuals from all corners of the UK lost peace and security after being sold a product on the basis it would help reduce the burden on their loved ones upon their death," the SFO noted.

THE CRUMBLING EMPIRE OF SAFE HANDS

Safe Hands Plans and its parent company, SHP Capital Holdings, were passed into the hands of administrators last year. This happened as the Financial Conduct Authority (FCA) took on the regulation of the pre-paid funeral market. Ironically, Safe Hands' marketing campaigns had featured late England goalkeeper, Gordon Banks, with the catchy slogan: **"Put your trust in Safe Hands', says Gordon 'Safe Hands' Banks."**

However, a probe by FRP Advisory (the administrators), revealed a grim reality. Customers of Safe Hands are owed an estimated £70.6 million but are likely to receive only between 11p and 15p in the pound. To add insult to injury, about £30 million of customers' funeral trust money was invested offshore in the Cayman Islands by SHP Capital.

THE PLOT THICKENS

SHP Capital, incorporated in 2019 shortly before acquiring Safe Hands, was reported to have funnelled millions of pounds into related companies. It also financed a film called The Chelsea Cowboy. The man behind this operation, Richard Wells, 37, declared bankruptcy last month. But the plot thickens further. The Times reported in March that the infamous convicted fraudster, Neil Debenham, was allegedly a

“50-50 partner” in SHP Capital.

THE CALL FOR ACCOUNTABILITY

MPs have questioned the FCA's and the government's handling of Safe Hands, urging the Commons Treasury select committee to launch an inquiry. James Daley, managing director of Fairer Finance, emphasized the importance of prosecuting any criminal activity. However, he pointed out the harsh truth: "Criminal convictions are unlikely to lead to the return of the millions of pounds that were lost." He called for an investigation into the failures of the government and the regulator to prevent the losses at Safe Hands.

As the dust settles, the story of Safe Hands serves as a sobering reminder of the importance of robust regulation and oversight. It's a tale that leaves us questioning - just how safe are our hands?



SFO

serious
fraud
office

The Serious Fraud Office (SFO) is a government agency that investigates and prosecutes serious or complex fraud, bribery, and corruption. It was established in 1987 under the Criminal Justice Act 1987. The SFO covers England, Wales, and Northern Ireland and is part of the UK criminal justice system. The SFO is not to be confused with the Serious Fraud Investigation Office (SFIO), which is an Indian agency that investigates corporate frauds.



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Civil Ceremonies are delighted to announce the **NOCN Level 4 Diploma in Advanced Practice Funeral Celebrancy**.

Building on the popularity and reputation of the NOCN Level 3 Diploma in Funeral Celebrancy, which is the entry level national qualification, the new Level 4 diploma has been created for practicing celebrants and is, as its title says, 'Advanced Practice'. MD Anne Barber says of the new qualification *'The aim has always been and remains, to make funerals better. They are indeed better - and could be better still. There was no progression for funeral celebrants, but this course will enable them to demonstrate their passion for creating and delivering the very best possible funerals.'*

Civil Ceremonies was rated as 'Outstanding' by Ofsted in all categories for the NOCN Level 3 Diploma which they have offered to those entering the profession for over 21 years. The Level 3 qualification is at the same level as an 'A' Level, the new Level 4 qualification is the equivalent of the first year of a Bachelor's degree and is the very highest qualification possible for funeral celebrants with 58 credits and 19 units. The content reflects this higher education standard and is organised into 8 sections, which are mostly completed by distance learning with Zoom sessions and audio files.



The course includes sections on inclusivity at funerals and the advanced practice sections on writing, delivery skills, challenging interview situations, child and baby funerals, deeper understanding of music and technology at funerals and advanced ashes ceremonies and memorial ceremonies. The course includes an hour of expert voice coaching on Zoom and accommodation for an assessment day, which is held at Mitchell Hall, Cranfield University in Bedfordshire.

Civil Ceremonies believe that, as funeral directors can choose to use celebrants from a growing number who approach them, it is becoming increasingly essential for celebrants to develop their skills and knowledge further and learn new techniques. Funeral celebrancy is a growing profession that needs progressive celebrants!

The course, which can take up to a year to complete, is open to **ANY** practicing funeral celebrant. It doesn't matter whether the celebrant originally trained with Civil Ceremonies or any other training provider, or how long ago they trained, there are criteria to fulfil for entry to the course and details can be obtained from Civil Ceremonies.

Changes within the funeral industry are increasing all the time and the demands and expectations of funeral directors and their clients are growing. There will undoubtedly be closer scrutiny of celebrant practices and the choices offered to clients. This qualification offers celebrants the opportunity to demonstrate continued professional development at a higher level.

For further information and a course prospectus, email info@civilceremonies.co.uk or call 01480 276080. Further information is also available at www.civilceremonies.co.uk



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NEWS FROM...



FSA

Funeral Suppliers' Association
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FSA National President, Phil Halliday

This year's Annual General Meeting will be held at the Alveston Manor Hotel, Stratford-upon-Avon on Friday 10th November 2023 commencing at 2.30pm.

As well as discussing the necessary business of such a meeting, the meeting will see the culmination of Philip Halliday's two year term as National President.

Phil has led the FSA with enthusiasm and commitment and through working closely with Chief Executive, Alun Tucker, ensured the smooth transition from FFMA to FSA.

Speaking of his role Phil said *"it has been a great honour to serve the FSA and to see it develop over the past eighteen months into a leading trade association so well respected throughout the funeral sector. I have been delighted at the excellent attendance at our meetings where members network in such friendly surroundings. I am in no doubt that the association will continue to grow."*

The President Elect is Anthony Hill, Managing Director of Somerset Willow. Anthony says *"I am looking forward to continuing the good work that Phil has done in promoting the FSA and to see the Association continue to thrive"*

Vice President Elect is Jade Wilcox, Managing Director of Wilcox Limousines.

At the AGM members will have to opportunity to elect the Executive Committee. Current members of which are:

- Alan Jose, Group Ambassador, Westerleigh Group
- Brian Hart, Managing Director, Unicorn IB Ltd t/a SAIFINSURE
- Julian Atkinson Chairman, Managing Director, Kindly Earth Ltd
- Carl Beswick, Sales Director, Trident Marketing Anglia Ltd
- Adam Masters, Managing Director, Tributes Ltd
- Catherine Betley, Managing Director, Professional Help Ltd
- Kim Franklin, Company Secretary, Association of Independent Celebrants

Executive meetings are held quarterly and online. Anyone interested in joining the Committee should contact Alun Tucker by email chiefexec@funeralsuppliers.uk

The National Funeral Exhibition is approaching and next year will see a significant change with the event running Thursday through to Saturday. Alun Tucker represents the FSA on the organising committee and is looking forward to the change in days. *“in recent times visitor numbers on the Sunday have been low which is obviously not good for exhibitors. I am hoping with the changes in days more members of the funeral sector will find the time to visit this great event”*

Established in 1939 and previously known as the FFMA, the Funeral Suppliers' Association (FSA) is the link between manufacturers & suppliers of goods and suppliers to the funeral sector. The FSA aims to safeguard and improve the traditional high standards of products and services that their members provide.

The FSA works tirelessly to ensure their members are well represented within the industry and, working alongside other funeral sector trade associations, represent members' interests on both the Deceased Management Advisory Group (DMAG) and the All Party Parliamentary Group on Funerals and Bereavement.



A BRIEF HISTORY
www.funeralsuppliers.uk



1939

In the early years, manufacturers of furniture and goods to the funeral trade were represented in the form of the Trade Secretary Mr Hands of Messrs Hands and Company, Chartered Accountants. During this period, many trade associations were represented in this manner. In 1939, with the advent of ever-increasing legislation and the forming of other allied trade organisations, the FFMA was created. There was representation from the Coffin Furniture Manufacturers, The Soft Goods and Woodwork Association, Hearse and Limousine Manufacturers and Insurance Brokers.

1967

In 1967, the FFMA was represented at the Llandudno Conference and held a forum that outlined the Association's basis and the agreed trade specifications. In the past, the Association has made a point of contributing a regular dialogue with various government departments. As a result, during the “three-day week” in the early 1970s, manufacturers were permitted to work normally. In addition, during the industrial disputes of 1977, approval was sought and obtained for the delivery of materials essential to the funeral trade. This special relationship ensured the continuity of supplies to funeral directors.

2008

In 2008, the FFMA was a leader in the planning for the potential flu pandemic – meetings were held with the Ministry of Justice (MOJ), which outlined the government plans to deal with such an emergency. FFMA were requested to contact some 65 suppliers to ascertain their capabilities as to how production could be increased. The MOJ retains our survey for future use.

2012

Early in 2012, we were contacted by the Federation of Burial and Cremation Authorities (FBCA), who reported various problems with cremating certain alternative products. A working party was set up to find a protocol for coffin testing to ensure that all coffins meet standards that are fit for purpose.

2022

In 2022, we rebranded and changed our name to the ‘Funeral Suppliers’ Association’ (FSA) and retained the FFMA as a separate self-interest group for coffin manufacturers and the Coffin Accreditation Programme. The FSA has grown to represent service providers that are not only coffin manufacturers but the whole funeral industry, including celebrants, clothing manufacturers, professional counsellors, memorial masons, refrigeration specialists, mortuary equipment suppliers, funeral vehicle specialists, insurance brokers, motorcycle funeral specialists, funeral service journals and crematorium groups. The FSA will be all-encompassing of these members allowing them to stand out with our eye-catching new logo and enjoy the many benefits available.

in the next issue...



Full Coverage of the 41st Annual
Conference, Gala Dinner &
Diploma Award Presentation





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