

BRITISH INSTITUTE OF FUNERAL DIRECTORS

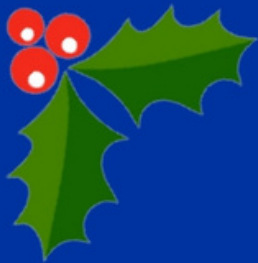
THE JOURNAL

Conference Edition

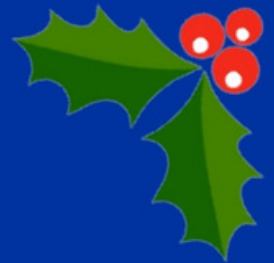


ISSUE 11





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**MADE IN
BRITAIN**

FROM THE DESK OF THE NATIONAL PRESIDENT

Amanda Dalby, Dip. FD, LMBIFD



Dear Members, Students, Fellows, and associates of our unique and prestigious Institute,

Thank you to all of those who attended the successful Conference Weekend in Wiltshire last month - and to the 150 Gala Dinner guests who welcomed me as I was inaugurated as your National President.

It really is an honour for me, and one which I shall treasure over the next year, as I represent the Institute, hopefully meeting many more fellow members in my new role.

What a great evening we had in Wiltshire, as we not only dressed in our finery, had a meal, and danced the night away, but we proudly witnessed our latest students as they were presented with their Diplomas in Funeral Service.

And that's what we're all about - **EDUCATING THE PROFESSION.**

It was both emotional and heartwarming to see the next generation of enthusiastic Funeral Professionals joining us, in what is a truly rewarding vocation. Good luck to you all in your careers within this industry - the BIFD will always be here to support & nurture you.

During the evening I announced my Presidential Charity of the Year - **Andy's Man Club**, a national charity founded in my beloved Halifax, Yorkshire, which offers a safe space every Monday evening at 7 pm, across the UK, and aims to prevent suicide in men. Please support them whenever and wherever you see their advertising, which features the slogan 'It's Okay to Talk' and their clever logo. You will meet the founders at my Conference in Yorkshire next October 18-20th, 2024.

The event will be at the Cedar Court Hotel, just above Halifax, in the **YORKSHIRE ROOM**, of course!

As I mentioned in my acceptance speech, my aim for the year is to encourage our membership to **STAND FIRM** together, as the UK Government looks to further regulate our Industry. I will be encouraging our members to attend as many BIFD CPD education sessions and ZOOM meetings as they can, in order to keep updated in all areas of our very special trade, as this will show the government that the BIFD is an institute of members to be highly regarded for their professionalism & commitment.

And we ARE truly the leaders in 'Educating the Profession' as we are the **ONLY** Institute with a University accredited Diploma - something which is hard-earned and to be really proud of.

So let's all encourage as many funeral professionals that we work alongside to take our Certificate and Diploma courses to enhance their careers and status and then to stand up as **BIFD AND PROUD!**

Yours Funerially,

Amanda Dalby

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We are a peer to peer support group for men. Come have a brew and a chat!



41st Conference & Gala Celebration Highlights...

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WILL CASE & PARTNERS
INDEPENDENT FUNERAL DIRECTORS

Friday 20 October

The 41st BIFD conference weekend kicked off with the Board of Directors' in-person meeting, where Past President, Paul Stibbards was presented with a certificate from his chosen charity, The RNLI for helping to raise £4,000 in vital funds. This prelude to the weekend's main event allowed the board to address important matters and ensure that the AGM (Annual General Meeting) would run smoothly the following day.

Left: Past President, Paul Stibbards was presented with a certificate from the RNLI, his chosen charity for his Presidential Year.



L-R: Amanda Dalby, National President, Karen Mead, Treasurer & Amanda Pink, 1st Vice President



Phil Halliday, President of the FSA officially opened the Trade Fair



L-R: Margaret Dow, Past President and Examiner, Jem Mead, Immediate Past President & Karen Mead, Treasurer



Above: 'Chocolate Candy Band' in full swing



Right: Past President, David Capper, joins the band



Karen & Jem Mead along with all the guests sang and danced the night away.



FSA Drinks Reception

However, it wasn't all work and no play. The evening began with a delightful drink reception sponsored by the Funeral Suppliers' Association (FSA). This provided an excellent opportunity for attendees to mingle and connect with one another in a relaxed setting. President Phil Halliday and Chief Executive Alun Tucker joined in with the festivities, making it even more special for everyone in attendance. Associate FSA members were also present, showcasing their products and services throughout the weekend.

Following the drinks reception, everyone gathered for a sumptuous dinner that exceeded all expectations. The carefully curated menu showcased the best of British cuisine. As attendees savoured each bite, the room buzzed with conversation and excitement, creating an ambiance of shared joy and appreciation.

Adding to the enchanting atmosphere was the live band "Chocolate Candy Band" who provided the evening's entertainment. Their captivating performance had attendees dancing and singing the night away, letting loose and embracing the joyous spirit of the occasion. The band's infectious energy and undeniable talent ensured that the celebration continued well into the night, creating memories that would be cherished for years to come.

Saturday 21 October

First on the agenda for Saturday was the Annual General Meeting (AGM), where members had the chance to voice their opinions, vote on important matters, and hear updates from the board. The AGM served as a platform for open dialogue and transparency, ensuring that the BIFD remains a democratic and member-driven organization. During the AGM, members had the opportunity to engage with the board and raise any concerns or suggestions they had. This interactive session showcased the Institute's commitment to its members. It was an empowering experience for all attendees, as they witnessed first-hand the impact they could have on shaping the future of the funeral industry. Highlights of the AGM included the news that Subscription Rates were being frozen for a fourth year, the news that the relationship between the Education Team and Greenwich University is strong, and there are seven people who will be embarking on their Tutor training before the end of the year. Finally, a vote from the floor for Clive Pearson to become 2nd Vice President was approved by the board and the majority of members.



The Board of Directors: L-R: Hayley Bell (PR Officer), Amanda Pink (1st Vice President), Jem Mead (Immediate Past President), Amanda Dalby (National President) & Paul Stibbards (Past President)



Senior Examiner Roger Clark addressed the Members about the importance of Education and called for them to consider training as Invigilators/Scribes



L-R: Jem Mead, Immediate Past President & David Gresty, Conference Secretary enjoying the FSA Trade Fair

FSA Trade Fair

Throughout the conference weekend, associate members of the Funeral Suppliers' Association had the opportunity to showcase their products and services. This trade fair in collaboration with the BIFD allowed funeral directors to explore new and innovative offerings, learn about the latest industry trends, and establish valuable connections with suppliers.

The showcase was a testament to the spirit of collaboration and innovation that underpins the funeral industry. Funeral directors had the chance to engage with suppliers, ask questions, and gain insights into how these products and services could enhance their own businesses. It was a valuable opportunity for both funeral directors and suppliers to learn from one another and forge mutually beneficial relationships.

The Trade Fair also highlighted the commitment of the Funeral Suppliers' Association to supporting its members and fostering a sense of community within the industry. By providing a platform for suppliers to showcase their offerings, the association not only helps funeral directors discover new solutions but also contributes to the overall growth and development of the industry as a whole.



The FSA in collaboration with the BIFD Trade Fair



EXPLORING THE FUNERAL SUPPLIERS' ASSOCIATION TRADE FAIR AT THE 41ST BIFD CONFERENCE 2023

Hayley Bell, Editor of the Journal



The Funeral Suppliers' Association (FSA) Trade Fair was an integral part of the 41st British Institute of Funeral Directors (BIFD) Conference. As a professional in the funeral industry, attending this trade fair was an opportunity to witness the latest innovations, network with industry leaders, and gain valuable insights into the ever-evolving world of funeral services.

suppliers from all corners of the country gathered to showcase their products and services. The FSA Trade Fair is a unique platform where professionals can explore the latest

advancements, learn from industry experts, and forge valuable connections with like-minded individuals, all with the aim of enhancing their own funeral businesses.

COFFINS AND CASKETS

One of the most prominent sections of the FSA Trade Fair is dedicated to coffins and caskets. You are greeted by a stunning display of craftsmanship and design. Traditional wooden coffins shared the space with colourful bespoke designs and eco-friendly alternatives, such as willow and cardboard coffins, catering to the growing demand for sustainable funeral options.



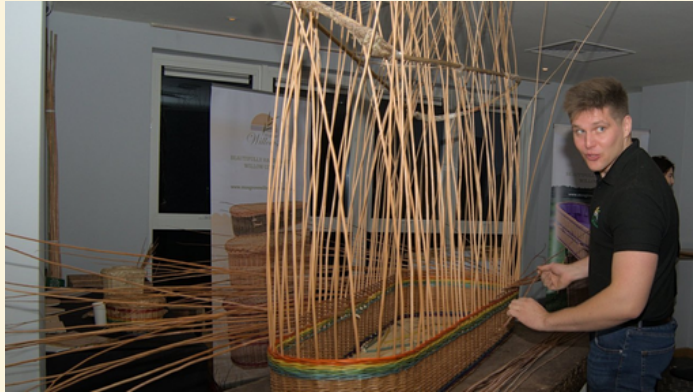
COLOURFUL COFFINS



JC ATKINSON



LIFELIA



MUSGROVE WILLOWS



PARLEY GREEN

DIGITAL MEMORIALISATION AND INNOVATIVE SOLUTIONS

This section of the FSA Trade Fair is a testament to the industry's embrace of technology and innovation. Funeral professionals recognise the importance of adapting to the digital age and providing families with modern memorialisation options.

These Virtual memorials and online tribute platforms along with Social Media Solutions for funeral directors, bring the profession online and to a wider audience.



FIT SOCIAL MEDIA



MUCHLOVED



COLOURFUL COFFINS



HEART IN THEIR HAND

While urns hold the cremated remains, keepsakes play a crucial role in preserving precious memories. These small mementos allow individuals to keep their loved ones close, even after they have died. Suppliers showcased an extensive collection of keepsakes, each offering a unique way to remember and honour a loved one. From Teddies and Hearts to Jewellery, there were plenty of beautiful pieces to view.



CANFLY MARKETING

URNS & KEEPSAKES

When it comes to urns, there is no one-size-fits-all solution. Funeral directors understand the importance of offering a variety of options to cater to the diverse needs and preferences of their clients. At the FSA Trade Fair, there was an array of urns made from different materials, such as wood, ceramic, and metal. Each material has its unique characteristics, offering a range of styles, colours, and finishes to choose from.

For those seeking a more traditional and timeless option, wooden urns are a popular choice. They exude a sense of warmth and elegance, with intricate designs and engravings that add a personal touch. Ceramic urns, on the other hand, offer a delicate and artistic appeal. Metal urns, often made from brass or stainless steel, provide durability and a sleek, modern aesthetic. There were even branded presentation bags to place urns & keepsakes to give to families.



TRIBUTES



YARWOOD MEMORIAL PRODUCTS

VEHICLES

Transportation plays a significant role in funeral processions, symbolising the final journey of the deceased. The FSA Trade Fair featured an impressive display of funeral vehicles, each offering a unique and dignified mode of transportation.



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Gala Dinner & Diploma in Funeral Service Presentations

The highlight of the whole Conference weekend was the glittering Gala Dinner on Saturday night. This highly anticipated event brought together all the presidents of the kindred associations, industry professionals, and distinguished guests to celebrate the achievements of the past year and honour those who have graduated with a Diploma in Funeral Service.

The Gala Dinner was not merely a social gathering; it was a momentous occasion to recognise the dedication and commitment of funeral service professionals who tirelessly serve their communities, providing solace and support during the most difficult times.

Among the highlights of the evening was the celebration of Jem Mead's year as National President of the BIFD. Jem had led the institute with unwavering passion and had made significant strides in promoting excellence in funeral service. His dedication to the profession had not gone unnoticed, and the Gala Dinner provided the perfect platform to acknowledge his outstanding leadership.



Photo credit: Eimer Duffy



The evening's program commenced with a series of captivating speeches that paid tribute to the remarkable achievements of funeral service professionals. Each speaker highlighted the importance of compassion, empathy, and professionalism in this noble profession. It was a poignant reminder of the immense responsibility shouldered by those who guide families through the challenging process of saying goodbye to their loved ones.



One of the most memorable moments of the evening was the presentation of the coveted BIFD Chain of Office to Amanda Dalby. Amanda's dedication and expertise had earned her the respect and admiration of her peers, making her the ideal candidate to take on the role of National President for the coming year. As she gracefully accepted the chain of office, the room erupted in thunderous applause, a testament to the profound impact she had already made in her career.

The Gala Dinner was not just a celebration of individual achievements but also an opportunity to reflect on the collective accomplishments of the funeral service profession as a whole. The camaraderie in the room was palpable, as professionals from different corners of the industry came together to support and uplift one another.



A series of diploma presentations took centre stage. The Diploma in Funeral Service is a prestigious qualification awarded to individuals who have demonstrated exceptional knowledge, skills, and commitment to the funeral service profession. This year, ten recipients were honoured for their dedication to their craft.



Each diploma presentation was a moment of triumph, as the recipients were invited to receive their certificates beaming with pride.

Their families and colleagues cheered them on, recognising the countless hours of hard work and sacrifice that had led them to this moment.

It was a testament to the relentless pursuit of excellence that permeates the funeral service community. Finally, the award for the Diploma Candidate with the highest marks was presented to Shannon Harty, who scored 99% and 100% in her final written and oral examinations respectively.



Amidst the applause and congratulations, a prevailing sense of inspiration filled the room. The Gala Dinner served as a reminder of the immense impact that funeral service professionals have on the lives of others. It was a call to action, urging attendees to continue their pursuit of education excellence and to embrace the challenges and opportunities that lie ahead.



The BIFD Gala Dinner not only celebrated the past year's accomplishments but also set the stage for a future filled with promise and growth for the funeral service profession.



There are plenty of photographs which are available for download; please get in touch with National Office for the link:

admin@BIFD.org.uk

Incredible Donation for Charity

Guests at the Gala Dinner demonstrated profound generosity and community support by rallying together and successfully raising an awe-inspiring £6,000 for Prospect Hospice, Jem and Karen's Chosen Charity for the year. Their unwavering commitment to aiding such a crucial institution showcases not just their dedication to their profession but also their heartfelt concern for the welfare of their community. This remarkable contribution underscores the essence of solidarity and compassion, highlighting the positive impact that collective efforts can have on supporting vital services like hospice care.

Prospect
Hospice



INTERVIEW :

Jem Mead

Immediate Past President
with Lucie Kibbey, Deputy Editor



LK: What is it like to be President of the BIFD?

JM: It's a total honour to represent our members, and to be the 'face' of the Institute however, it does bring along a few challenges.

LK: Do you think it has changed your view of the institute in any way?

JM: Certainly, we both (Karen and I) now have a much clearer vision of how the Institute needs to be run, and where we need to be aiming as regulation gets ever closer.

LK: What do you think went well for you this year?

JM: The interaction with the leaders of other Associations, the closeness of the communication, and the ability to speak freely to them.

LK: What would you have liked to have done more of?

JM: Clearly to carry on with the process of uniting the whole profession with one university-based education system ready for proposal to government pre-regulation.

LK: What was your biggest achievement as President?

JM: We survived it! Opening the doors to uniting the whole profession regarding education. If that is my legacy, then I'm happy.

LK: What one piece of advice would you give to the incoming President?

JM: I have told Amanda (Dalby) to enjoy herself, we are both here to support her in any way she chooses, it's an honour and a privilege to represent the BIFD, and do not blink as very quickly it will be all over.

LK: Would you take the job again if it was offered?

JM: NO! I have spent the last 3 or 4 years encouraging younger members to take a more active part in the Institute and all our futures. As I said at the Awards Ceremony, they are the future of the profession and the Institute.

LK: What will you miss about being President?

JM: The other Presidents! We have made some lifelong friends this year, and it has become obvious to us that they are all as mad as a box of frogs. Also, the ability to be away from our own business for a jolly good reason, to attend other conferences. It made us slow down and reflect upon where we are and what we are doing.

LK: Did you enjoy hosting the Conference?

JM: Conference – what conference?! It was over and gone in the blink of an eye! I had so many things I wanted to do, and people I wanted to talk to that just never happened... So please everyone, accept my humble apologies for not spending more time with you all. I had certainly planned to.

LK: What is next for you personally for 2023?

JM: To rest and recoup, and try to get rid of these little blighters in my head... Shingles is NOT nice, please if you are offered the jab for it – TAKE IT, you do not want this. We will be spending more time on Snugglepug while we plan our/my retirement. The Board has given me permission to carry on the talks with NAFD and SAIF with our much prettier new President assisting and guiding me. I really want to see this through, as I am totally committed to presenting ONE level of education to the Government before they present it to us. What will come of the talks, I cannot predict but, the BIFD will be at the forefront of whatever the final proposal is.

Thank you all for being ‘my’ members, we couldn’t have achieved half of what we did without the support of you and the board of directors. I truly consider you are all the future – to the extent that one of this year’s Diploma Students, rang me yesterday and told me that he wants to be the National President soon. You can now understand why I get a ‘lumpy’ throat. I am proud of you all and please keep doing what you do. Once again, thank you and may your God bless you all. Jem (& Karen)




Past Presidents

1982: R F HOLLAND
1982/83: M A WRIGHT
1983/84: J PATTERSON
1984/85: M HARPER
1985/86: L J LAMBERT
1986/87: M P CASE
1987/88: P MILLS
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1990/91: A D MOAR
1991/92: J G MURREN
1992/93: R P PUTT
1993/94: D M TAYLOR
1994/95: R W ROWNTREE
1995/96: A P PUXLEY
1996/97: J BUTTERWORTH
1997/98: J W CONSTABLE
1998/99: N ALDERSON
1999/00: C J MURRELL
2000/01: P GALLAGHER
2001/02: R G FENN

2002/03: K GILMORE
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2004/05: A SINCLAIR
2005/06: D GRAINGER
2006/07: R CLARK
2007/08: A PINK
2008/09: S LEWIS
2009/10: K SATTERLY
2010/11: G EASTON
2011/12: C KIRK
2012/13: R GRESTDY
2013/14: S WALTON
2014/15: D GRESTDY
2015/16: C PEARSON
2016/17: D CARPENTER
2017/18: A PUXLEY
2018/19: D CAPPER
2019/20: M SERJEANT
2020/21: M SERJEANT
2021/22: P STIBBARDS
2022/23: J MEAD

In Flanders' Fields



In Flanders' fields the poppies blow
Between the crosses, row on row,
That mark our place: and in the sky
The larks, still bravely singing, fly
Scarce heard amid the guns below.

We are the dead. Short days ago
We lived, felt dawn, saw sunset glow,
Loved and were loved, and now we lie
In Flanders' fields.

Take up our quarrel with the foe;
To you from failing hands we throw
The torch; be yours to hold it high,
If ye break faith with us who die
We shall not sleep, though poppies grow
In Flanders' Fields.

John McCrae



Turning 40: Embracing a New Chapter in Life

Hayley Bell, Dip. FD, LMBIFD - Editor of the Journal

9 NOVEMBER 2023

As I sit here, sipping my morning coffee and reflecting on the past four decades of my life, I can't help but feel a mix of emotions. Today, I turn 40, and it's a milestone that comes with both excitement and a touch of trepidation. It's a time to celebrate all that I've accomplished and experienced, but also a time to ponder what lies ahead.

Turning 40 feels like stepping into a new chapter of life, a chapter that promises growth, wisdom, and self-discovery. It's a time when many of us reassess our goals, relationships, and priorities. It's a time to let go of the baggage we've been carrying and embrace the opportunities that await us. In this article, I want to share some insights and reflections as I embark on this new journey, hoping to inspire and connect with others who are also turning the corner into their 40s.

The first thing that comes to mind as I reflect on my 40 years is how much I've grown and changed. From the wide-eyed innocence of childhood to the turbulence of teenage years, and now the maturity and stability of adulthood, each phase has shaped me in unique ways.

My journey in the funeral profession began in 2001 when I was just 17 years old. Fresh out of school, I started working as a receptionist at a local conglomerate. It was during this time that I discovered my passion for helping families navigate through the difficult process of saying goodbye. I quickly realized that I wanted to make this my career and dedicated myself to learning everything I could about funeral directing.

After several years of working as a receptionist and assisting funeral directors, I was given the opportunity to pursue the NAFD diploma in funeral directing. In 2007, I successfully completed my diploma. Armed with my newfound knowledge and skills, I embarked on a journey that would take me through three funeral homes, both large conglomerates and independent establishments.



9 November 1983: a 'fresh out of the packet' Editor with my late Grandma Christine, and Uncle Richard



2001: A fresh out of college 17-year-old, I started working as a Receptionist at a large Conglomerate



2006 at a presentation of my Foundation in Funeral Directing Certificate along with colleagues from the conglomerate I worked for



2019: After 12 years working for an Independent Funeral Director and a year of consulting work, my partner, Richard and I opened our own business.

THE BIRTH OF A BUSINESS

While working for different funeral directors, I gained valuable experience and insights into the industry. However, I have always had a burning desire to create something of my own. In 2019, after years of dreaming, I finally opened my own funeral business with my partner, Richard. This was a significant milestone for me, as it allowed me to put my personal touch on every aspect of the funeral process.

As a business owner, I am focused on providing personalised and compassionate service to grieving families. I understand the importance of creating a meaningful and memorable farewell for the deceased, and I am dedicated to fulfilling the wishes and honouring the traditions of each family served.

A COMMITMENT TO EXCELLENCE

While running our business, I have continued to pursue professional growth and development. In 2020, I was appointed as the deputy editor of the Journal. This role allowed me to share my knowledge and experiences with a wider audience.

As the PR officer for the BIFD, I became the social media 'voice' of the Institute, promoting the importance of qualified funeral directors and the invaluable services they provide, and highlighting the compassionate and dedicated nature of BIFD members. I hope that my efforts have not only raised awareness about the profession but also helped to attract and inspire the next generation of funeral directors.

In addition to my editorial and PR roles, I have also taken on the responsibility of chairing the examinations for the BIFD. This position allows me to play a crucial role in ensuring the competence and professionalism of future funeral directors.

One of the most profound lessons I've learned as I approached 40 is the importance of self-acceptance. We live in a society that often tells us we're not good enough, that we need to look a certain way or achieve certain milestones to be considered successful. But as I've grown older, I've come to realize that true success and happiness come from within.

Turning 40 is a time to let go of societal expectations and embrace our authentic selves. It's about accepting our flaws and imperfections, knowing that they make us unique and beautiful. It's about celebrating our achievements, no matter how big or small, and being grateful for the journey that has brought us to this point.

Gratitude is a powerful tool that can transform our perspective on life. It allows us to focus on the positive and appreciate the blessings that surround us. As I enter this new chapter, I'm filled with gratitude for the experiences, relationships, and opportunities that have shaped me. I'm excited about what the future holds and ready to embrace all the joys and challenges that come my way.



2023: I'm blessed to have made some truly wonderful friendships within the Institute - At Conference Past President David Capper and I were put on the 'naughty table' - I have no idea why!

Hayley x

ALLSOPS

MERRY CHRISTMAS

This December, shop at Allsops and support St. Barnabas.
Spend over £50 and we'll donate £1 to the hospice.
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Please note our Christmas Opening hours are:
Closed from 12.30pm on Thursday 21st December.
Open as usual from 8:00am on Tuesday 2nd January 2024.

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Bennetts Funeral Directors have had a busy few months. Back in the summer we held a charity football match raising awareness and funds for the Craig Tyler Trust and Andy's Man Club, both of whom support men's mental health; the final total raised was £9000, both charities were delighted: the money raised will support those struggling through difficult times.



In September we held a workshop entitled 'Grief in the Workplace', with a filmed introduction from Dr Bill Webster. Allied colleagues and businesses were invited, the topic for the day was 'Compassion v. Policy', we worked through a guided scenario put together by our colleague Bridget Holley. Much information was gained from the day and great speakers, including Leanne Turner from Aching Arms talking about death of a baby.



Our Land Rover Defender Hearse was out at events, it is a great conversation starter, these Land Rover weekends are good family fun. Here we had the opportunity, not only to drive over the very dusty track but also to explain to those attending the importance of the 'final journey' and making it appropriate for their loved ones.

Bennetts Funeral Directors are part of the Dementia Action Alliance, working with The Alzheimer's Society we sponsored a big band event in the local church, it was very well received, lots of clapping, some singing along and a little dancing too. Care home residents were brought along, one was celebrating her birthday, it was lovely.



Deputy Editor's Desk

Lucie Kibbey, Cert. FS, MBIFD

Howdy All 😊

Welcome to the November Edition of the Journal which as always has been fantastically put together and edited by Hayley, she really does do a lot of hard work behind the scenes to get this out to you all, so keep reading and enjoying the content and if you have any questions or suggestions, please do email us. This is YOUR journal as much as it is ours.

I must extend my congratulations to the Presidential team – Jeremy on a fantastic year in office as President, Amanda Dalby on her (now) promotion to current BIFD president, and of course huge excitement for my big sister Amanda Pink on stepping into 1st Vice President shoes. You're all working so hard for the institute, and we can't wait to see what you get stuck into over the next 12-24 months.

November is my favourite month of the year, not only do me and Hayley both celebrate another trip around the sun (Happy Birthday Hayley!!), but it's fireworks, bonfires, comfy knitwear, slippers, and books in front of the fire time.

From a young child I loved firework night, as it meant my birthday was close. But I have always been mesmerised by fire generally, I think nature has many weapons and fire can often be the worst.

Annual traditions continued as me and the kids headed off to a local display, I've shared some photographs of poor (old) Mummy having to sit on the cold floor so that my son could sit in comfort on my lap! But that's what us Mumma's do.

It wouldn't be Fireworks without a hotdog and a freshly cooked doughnut, taking me instantly back to childhood with the smell of them.

The next few weeks are busy for me as I get ready for my daughter turning 7 in December, on top of Christmas of course, and I'm taking a little trip up to Scotland to see Jo O'Hare at Memory Within and have a tour of her memorial jewellery studio – might even try my hand at it, watch this space for my full report!

Have a wonderful November, keep warm, fight the colds, and look after each other.
Lots of Love!

Lucie x



THE ONE WHERE WE ALL LOST A FRIEND

by Lucie Kibbey, Deputy Editor

I'm sure most of us were incredibly shocked and saddened to hear about the recent passing of the superbly talented actor Matthew Perry. Known best for his animated portrayal of Chandler Bing in the TV show Friends, but also credited for his parts in The Whole Nine Yards, Three to Tango, The Kid and Birds of America.

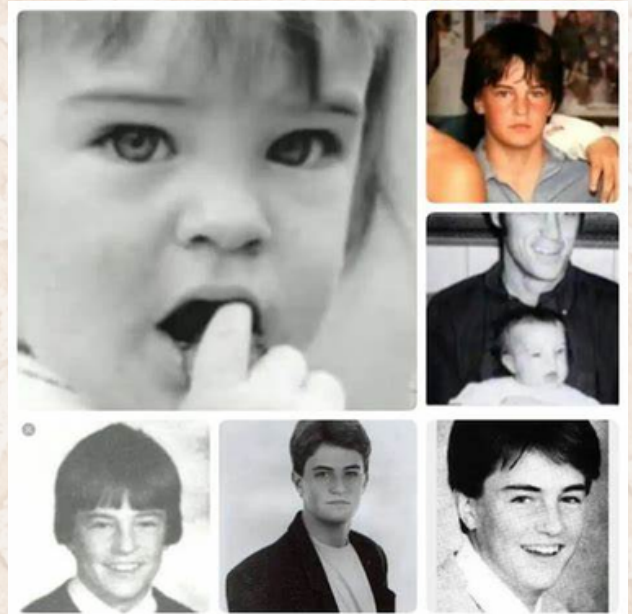
Matthew Langford Perry was born on August 19th, 1969, in Williamstown, Massachusetts to Suzanne Langford and John Perry. His parents separated when he was just one year old, and he was raised mainly by his mother in Canada.

Perry attended Rockcliffe Park Public School and Ashbury College, and had four younger maternal half-siblings, as well as a younger paternal half-sister named Maria. His siblings "would stand and applaud" him for early performances.

By age 10, Perry started misbehaving. He stole money, smoked, let his grades slip, and beat up fellow student and future Canadian prime minister Justin Trudeau. Perry later attributed this to feeling like a family outsider who did not belong when his mother began having children with her new husband, writing "I was so often on the outside looking in, still that kid up in the clouds on a flight to somewhere else, unaccompanied". He began drinking alcohol at age 14 and was drinking every day by age 18. Perry practiced tennis, often for 10 hours per day, and became a top-ranked junior player in Canada with the possibility of a tennis career. However, at age 15, he moved from Ottawa to live with his father in Los Angeles, where competition was tougher.

At 15 years old, Perry studied acting at Buckley School, a college-preparatory school in Sherman Oaks, Los Angeles, and graduated in 1987. While in high school, he took improvisational comedy classes at L.A. Connection in Sherman Oaks.

Learning of his troubles in younger years and early adulthood, it is easy to see how he was susceptible to other addictions as he progressed with his acting career. He is not the first celebrity to have struggles with addiction and sobriety.



As of January 2018, Alcoholics Anonymous estimates that there are 61,904 AA groups in the U.S. totalling 1,297,396 active members. In Canada, there are an estimated 4,956 AA groups totalling 84,558 members, and worldwide, there are an estimated 120,300 AA groups and 2,087,840 members.



Before landing the role of Chandler, Matthew Perry was committed to a pilot for a sitcom called LAX 2194, set in the baggage handling department of Los Angeles Airport 200 years in the future. After the pilot fell through, he was cast as Chandler Bing in Six of One – which was renamed to Friends!

Friends was hugely successful, and it made Perry an international celebrity. By 2002, he and his co-stars Jennifer Aniston, Courteney Cox, Lisa Kudrow, Matt LeBlanc, and David Schwimmer were making \$1 million per episode. The program earned him an Emmy nomination in 2002 for the Outstanding Lead Actor in a Comedy Series award.

I cannot go any further in this article without talking about the sheer masterclass that is Chandler Bing and the immense comedic acting that Perry brought to the character.

In my teens I found all my pals at school wanting to be Rachel and Ross, but I connected most with the character of Chandler. I came from a different family dynamic to most, and often used humour to appeal to my peers and handle difficult situations. I went into Drama GSCE wanting to play the comedy character in plays and sketches because it's where I felt most comfortable.



Matthew Perry would often help write the lines and script for Chandler and improvised on set. His witty comebacks and random one-liners are often quoted by groups on nights out or in day-to-day conversations. Here are a few of my absolute favourites...



But Matthew wanted to be remembered for all the great things he did outside of the TV show, so let's delve into his life and work around addiction and go beyond Chandler Bing and discover more of Matthew Perry.

In his memoirs, Perry wrote that he became an alcoholic at age 14. He became addicted to Vicodin after a jet-ski accident in 1997 and completed a 28-day rehab program at the Hazelden Betty Ford Foundation that year. His weight dropped as low as 128 pounds (58 kg), and he took as many as 55 Vicodin pills per day. At age 30, he suffered from alcohol-induced pancreatitis. In May 2000, he was admitted to Cedars-Sinai Medical Centre.

While Perry said in 2002 that he had tried not to drink on the set of Friends, he did arrive with extreme hangovers and sometimes sweated and shook on set. During the later seasons of the series, he was frequently drunk or high on set. His castmates made efforts to help him, even staging an intervention, but were unsuccessful.

In February 2001, Perry paused productions of Friends and Serving Sara for two months, so that he could enter in-patient rehabilitation for his addictions to Vicodin, methadone, amphetamines, and alcohol. He said later that due to his substance use disorder, he had no memory of three years of his work on Friends.



In 2018, Perry spent five months in a hospital for a gastrointestinal perforation. During the hospital stay, Perry nearly died after his colon burst from opioid abuse. He spent two weeks in a coma and used a colostomy bag for nine months. Upon being admitted to the hospital, doctors told his family that Perry had a 2% chance of survival. He was connected to an extracorporeal membrane oxygenation (ECMO) machine.

Two years later, while attending rehab in Switzerland, Perry faked pain to get a prescription for 1,800 milligrams of Oxycontin per day and was having daily ketamine infusions. He was given propofol in conjunction with a surgery, which stopped his heart for five minutes. The resulting CPR gave him eight broken ribs. He paid \$175,000 for a private jet to take him to Los Angeles to get more drugs. When doctors there refused, Perry spent another \$175,000 to take a private jet back to Switzerland. In 2022, he estimated that he had spent \$9 million on his addiction, including 14 stomach surgeries, 15 stays in rehab, and therapy twice a week for 30 years, and had attended approximately 6,000 Alcoholics Anonymous meetings.



In July 2011, Perry lobbied the US Congress as a celebrity spokesperson for the National Association of Drug Court Professionals in support of funding for drug courts. He received a Champion of Recovery award in May 2013 from the White House Office of National Drug Control Policy for opening Perry House, a rehab centre in his former mansion in Malibu. In 2015, Perry sold the mansion and relocated its services. During the COVID-19 pandemic, he launched an apparel line inspired by Friends, with proceeds donated to the World Health Organization's COVID-19 relief fund.

On October 28, 2023, it was reported that Perry returned to his home in Pacific Palisades after playing pickleball and was found unresponsive in his hot tub by his assistant Briana Brancato two hours later. He was later pronounced dead at the age of 54. Los Angeles Police Department (LAPD) Captain Scot Williams said the "cause of death may not be known for some time, but at this point, foul play is not suspected". The following day, the cause of death was listed as "deferred" by the Los Angeles County Medical Examiner's Office, pending "additional investigative steps".

On October 30, Perry's Friends co-stars issued a joint statement:

"We are all so utterly devastated by the loss of Matthew. We were more than just castmates. We are a family. There is so much to say, but right now we're going to take a moment to grieve and process this unfathomable loss. In time we will say more, as, and when we are able. For now, our thoughts and our love are with Matty's family, his friends, and everyone who loved him around the world."

On November 3rd, 2023, Perry's funeral was held at Forest Lawn Memorial Park in Los Angeles. His five Friends co-stars attended, as did his father and stepfather. The Peter Gabriel and Kate Bush song "Don't Give Up" was played at his funeral. Perry was enamoured with the song, and it was referenced in signed copies of his autobiography, released in part to help people suffering from depression or addiction issues. When promoting his memoir, he praised the ending of the track's music video as "so cool" for the hugging featured and mentioned "I always put 'Don't give up' because you shouldn't give up.

Matthew Perry will be missed by the world, but Chandler Bing will be cherished forever by it. Rest Peacefully from your demons now.



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I am sure by now that most members are aware that both Margaret Nicholl and myself have relinquished the respective roles that we held in Examinations for the BIFD. We have both thoroughly enjoyed what we have done and are so pleased that the BIFD is in such a prominent position Education wise and that it provides the highest possible qualifications in the funeral profession and accredited by Greenwich University.

I do hope that at every appropriate opportunity you mention or indeed promote that this is the case to make sure not only others in the profession are fully aware but also the communities that we serve are too. I know that I keep 'banging the drum' but you worked hard for your qualifications so do not let others debase them by ignoring what you achieved.

Education, being the bedrock of the BIFD continually needs to move forward positively, responding and reacting to both societal and all other changes that are prevalent. We are very fortunate that there are those like Andy Floyd (the new Chair of Education) and in Examination work, Hayley Bell and Jane Clements who are taking over Margaret and my roles, have the undoubted talent, experience, competence and determination to do this and I am absolutely certain they will.

I know that the support that was given to Margaret and I by many will be continued as everyone is 'singing from the same hymn sheet' and determined that the momentum is maintained. It certainly made Margaret's and my decision to stand down much easier to do knowing that we are in safe hands. We will still be around to help in any way we can so you are not getting rid of us!

As we progress and become more inclusive in who studies our courses, we also have to respond by supporting those who have specific learning needs. The Examining Board has already done this by, for example, providing questions printed on a different coloured paper or extra time during examinations for candidates who also needed to be on their own with an invigilator to allow this. I am certain that Hayley and Jane will also need to provide support like 'scribes' and additional invigilators in examinations in the future to accommodate this progress and support the experienced invigilators already involved in Diploma Examinations. Unlike schools, colleges and other examination centres, the BIFD may not be in a position wither financially or logistically to provide the technological advances in examinations that I anticipate will continually happen. Therefore there will always be situations where a more personal intervention is needed.

Tutors and Examiners are not allowed to invigilate and therefore help is needed from members. You honestly can help so please seriously consider doing just that. It is not an onerous task and is only likely to happen once or twice a year during examination time and fees are payable. However not the 50p a word I joked at Conference to make sure members were awake!

With experience of scribing and supporting candidates as an invigilator in university examinations I am more than happy to advise and ensure invigilators are confident and competent enough to carry out examination requirements as standards have to be maintained. How, when and where this takes place will be decided as soon as those interested (hopefully more than 1) have informed Hayley or Jane they would like to help. If you are interested please let one of them know as soon as possible so that a suitable session can be arranged to take place probably by mid-summer next year.

I do hope that you have read this far and moreso feel that you want to help.

Many thanks, and best wishes,

Roger

Roger Clark, Senior Examiner

RECAP OF THE EDUCATION MEETING HELD IN WALSALL

The British Institute of Funeral Directors Education Committee, Tutors and Examiners gathered in Walsall on the 1st of October, 2023. The meeting was filled with exciting updates, new plans, and inspiring discussion. Here are some key takeaways:

WELCOMING NEW TUTORS

Adrian Pink and Richard Vines were both present at the meeting, radiating enthusiasm about their future roles as tutors. The decision was made for Andy Floyd to lead prospective Tutors' training this year. Training is expected to commence towards the end of November, and guess what? All those who have previously shown interest in the course will be contacted by David Gresty personally.



CERTIFICATE & DIPLOMA CLARIFICATIONS

There's been some re-evaluation of the certificate and diploma courses in collaboration with Greenwich University, resulting in some exciting changes. Check these out:

Certificate Course: To take on a candidate, they must have a connection with a funeral director who can assist them with training and mentoring. Employment is no longer a requirement, and assessments need to be "diet rich". This means using a variety of assessment methods such as written Q&A, presentations, verbal Q&A, etc.

Diploma Course: Prior to the final examination, candidates must complete the 25 arranged and conducted funerals. A minimum of 25 hours of employment is mandatory. Tutors are expected to provide at least 4 in-person oral examination training sessions and one-to-one mock oral examination.



EXAMINATION & VERIFICATION PROCESS

Our tutors were urged to impart more knowledge on Embalming, a topic often misinterpreted in the final exams.

After the 2nd internal verification, the candidate will be told if they have passed or not, and ideally, their certificate will be presented at the annual conference in October. Once Greenwich approves the results, the student will be informed about their marks and university credits.

EXAMINATIONS 2025 - MARK YOUR CALENDARS!

For the year 2025, here's what you need to know: The Certificate Exam is in February, followed by the Diploma Exam in March. And in July, we will have availability for resits for both Certificate & Diploma, including those who couldn't take the February or March exams due to exceptional reasons. Remember, only one resit is permitted. If you miss the February or March exams without an exemption, sadly, it's a default course failure.

All current student contracts will be honoured for examinations to be held in 2024. Tutors must set their new schools in 2024 to meet the examination requirements as above. There will be NO additional exams in 2025 or in the future.

TUTORS & EXAMINERS GATHERINGS

We're planning for four meetings a year, with a blended approach that includes Continuing Professional Development (CPD) sessions. So, keep your calendars free and your enthusiasm high!



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FIRST FORD MUSTANG MACH-E ELECTRIC HEARSE AND LIMOUSINE ARRIVES AT FUNERAL PARTNERS

Funeral Partners have taken delivery of the first of two new state-of-the-art electric vehicles based on the Ford Mustang Mach-E as they continue their ambitious plans to reduce their carbon emissions.

The country's third largest funeral business were the first to secure the Mustang hearse and limousine from the new Ective range from vehicle specialists Coleman Milne.

Both of the vehicles will be based at G W Turner Funeral Directors in Edgeley, near Stockport, which has been serving their community for more than a century having first been established in 1907.

Funeral Partners' investment in electric vehicles is part of their exciting Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) Strategy.

As well as being carbon neutral, the vehicles also offer a smooth comfortable ride, have all the modern benefits and innovations found in modern electric cars and are quiet, which is crucial for use in funerals.

Mark Potts, Head of Operational Support at Funeral Partners said: *"These cars are absolutely exceptional, and I am sure they will be very popular with the families we serve at G W Turner Funeral Directors. A lot more people are now more conscious about their environmental impact, so if we can offer their family the option for a carbon neutral vehicle for a funeral then that can only be a positive. I can't wait to see them on the roads and operating during one of our funerals."*

Funeral Partners Chief Executive Sam Kershaw added: *"We've made a commitment to cut our carbon footprint, and this is another step in our planning. These vehicles will help give families other choice and they are also an impressive and unique transportation for a loved one's final journey."*

Below: National Sales Manager at Coleman Milne, Chris Taylor, hands over the keys to the vehicles to Mark Potts, Head of Operational Support at Funeral Partners.



FUNERAL DIRECTOR MARKS FOUR DECADES HELPING LOCAL FAMILIES IN THE NORTH EAST

A Funeral Director has said his 40 years helping bereaved families in Crawcrook and Ryton has been an honour and a privilege.

Darren Johnstone, 57, is celebrating four decades at E Peart Funeral Director in Kepier Chare, Crawcrook.

The Peart family set up the funeral home in the 1930s and were friends of Darren's family. He then began helping out when he was 17.

Darren continued to work at the funeral home when the owners Bob and Joe Peart retired in 1985, and it was sold to local businessman Graeme Ward.

The business was left to Darren when Graeme died in 1994. He has been at the helm ever since, selling the business to the country's third largest funeral business Funeral Partners in 2021 but remaining as the face of E Peart for local families in his role as Business Principal.

Darren said he knew he wanted to be in funerals from an early age, having sung in the choir and played the organ at St John's Parish Church in Greenside where he would see funerals being conducted.

"It was something I always knew I wanted to do," he said.

"Obviously, back then, I was helping out with whatever I could to get a foot in the door. My father had a printing business, but that just didn't appeal to me."

During his four decades in the industry, Darren has seen a host of changes in the industry and the local community but said one thing that hasn't changed is the exceptional level of care at E Peart that has remained a constant. *"The personal side of things has stayed the same – the way we look after people hasn't changed – and that's why I have stayed so long," he said.*

"You go into client homes and often find people who are understandably distressed and hopefully leave with them feeling a little bit better that we will be there for them, to support and guide them throughout the funeral arrangements. You only get one chance at a funeral, and I think over the last 40 years we've done well at getting it right for our families. I have also been incredibly lucky with the people I've worked with. All of them have stayed with me for long periods and have been the right fit. The thing that has changed is how aware family members have become about the funeral process and their options. Back then, it was almost like you would tell them what they were having, whereas that has now reversed, and things are much better for it."

Darren, 57, has no immediate plans to retire and said a lot of the pressure lifted from his shoulders when he began working with Funeral Partners, so he could concentrate on the families he and his team serve.

"I'm still enjoying it, and, although I'm working a little less than I used to, I've still got a lot to offer," he added



*Darren Johnstone is celebrating 40 years
at E Peart Funeral Director*

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.

For more information about E Peart, visit
www.epeartfuneraldirector.co.uk/



FUNERAL SUPPLIERS' ASSOCIATION HOLDS ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The Funeral Suppliers' Association recently held their Annual General Meeting at the Alveston Manor Hotel, Stratford-upon-Avon.

The meeting, with over 40 attendees, saw the election of Anthony Hill of coffin makers Somerset Willow as National President succeeding Philip Halliday who was completing a two year period role.



(Left) SAIF National President Mark Horton proposing the toast to the FSA with Outgoing President Philip Halliday responding (Right)



(Above) Anthony Hill, newly installed National President received a rousing cheer

An evening of much fun was hosted by FSA Chief Executive, Alun Tucker during which Mark Horton, National President of SAIF propose the toast to the FSA to which FSA outgoing President Philip Halliday responded.

Anthony Hill was then installed as President during the evening's Annual Dinner and received a rousing cheer from over eighty guests, among whom were the Presidents of the eleven Kindred Associations.



(Above) "It's the most WINE-derful time of the year" BIFD National President Amanda Dalby with surprise guest, Santa



During the evening, a raffle raised £1260 for Macmillan Cancer Care and there was a surprise visitor to give out the raffle prizes when Santa Claus called in on his way to the North Pole. Even Santa won a prize!

FSA INTRODUCES NEW PRESIDENT

Anthony Hill

Anthony Hill, the newly elected President of the Funeral Suppliers' Association comes from an unassuming part of Somerset best known for its prominence in cider and cheese making. In addition to these well-known products is the less well-known art of basket making, this is where Anthony's career began. Starting out, Anthony worked alongside his father and grandfather, learning to make the majority of the willow products Somerset Willow still make today. Those skills accrued over time helped him to think creatively about what the company does as a business.



Anthony Hill (Right) brings twenty years' experience with Somerset Willow to his new role as President of the Funeral Suppliers' Association shaking hands with Immediate Past President Philip Halliday (Left)

Throughout the twenty years of his career to date, Anthony has been blessed with the opportunity to progress the family business. He has thoroughly enjoyed creating relationships and developing new products and brands.

The advent of willow coffins as an alternative option for families has inevitably brought his path closer to the funeral industry, where he's been fortunate to meet fascinating individuals, some of whom he has learned so much from.

Representing the Funeral Suppliers' Association as the incoming President is truly an honour for Anthony and certainly one he wasn't expecting, though one to which he will undoubtedly give total commitment.

Addressing members on his installation, President Anthony paid tribute to immediate Past President Philip Halliday.

"I want to thank Phil for his tenure as FSA President. I can safely say on behalf of the membership your commitment, presence, and hard work have been undeniably reassuring for us all...throughout this you have firmly cemented your position, including your lectern, within the echelons of FSA history. Unfortunately, though all good things do come to an end.

As I step forward as incoming FSA President, I will have reduced the average age of the association's Presidency by a quarter of a century! However, let that not deter your faith in my ability to be totally committed and professional in all my work for the Association. I will promise to channel my energy into representing the FSA to the highest standard and to the best of my ability over the next twelve months."



FSA

Funeral Suppliers' Association
est. 1939



Over eighty guests, among whom were the Presidents of the eleven Kindred Associations joined together at the FSA AGM in Stratford-Upon-Avon: Back, L-R: Jeff Heaton AOIC; Amanda Dalby BIFD; Marian Webb ICCM; Cllr Ted Latham FBCA; Professor Hilary Grainger CSOGB; Steven Davis NAMM; Barry Pritchard NAFD
Front, L-R: Richard Van Nes BIE; Philip Halliday FSA; Mark Horton SAIF; Michael Tiney LAFD

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RESOMATION: A COMPASSIONATE FAREWELL, A SUSTAINABLE LEGACY

Clive Pearson, Senior Tutor & 2nd Vice President

The question of how we choose to honour our loved ones after they pass away is an important and deeply personal decision. Two common methods of disposition are burial and through the process of cremation. Resomation, also known as water cremation or alkaline hydrolysis, is an innovative and environmentally friendly alternative to traditional cremation. On the other hand, cremation has been practiced for centuries and holds cultural and religious significance for many. So let us explore the differences between resomation (also known as aquamation or Alkaline Hydrolysis) and cremation, focusing on their environmental impact, cultural considerations, and emotional aspects.



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 most significant factors to consider when choosing between resomation and cremation is the environmental impact. Cremation, though widely practiced, produces harmful emissions such as carbon dioxide, mercury, and other pollutants. These emissions when not filtered out contribute to air pollution and the greenhouse effect, exacerbating climate change. Additionally, cremation requires the burning of fossil fuels, further depleting non-renewable resources.

On the other hand, resomation offers a more environmentally friendly alternative. This process involves dissolving the body in a water-based solution using heat and alkaline chemicals. The result is a liquid that is safe to be returned to the environment, similar to the process of natural decomposition. Resomation requires significantly less energy compared to cremation and does not produce harmful emissions. It is a sustainable choice that aligns with our responsibility to preserve and protect the planet.

Cultural and religious beliefs play a crucial role in the decision-making process between resomation and cremation. Cremation has been practised for centuries in various cultures and holds deep religious significance in Hinduism, Buddhism, and Sikhism, among others. The belief in the purification of the soul through fire is a fundamental aspect of these religions, making cremation the preferred method of disposition.

However, it is essential to acknowledge that cultural perspectives are diverse and can evolve over time. Resomation, as a relatively new concept, may not yet be widely accepted in certain communities. It is crucial to respect and honour these cultural differences when making decisions regarding the final journey of our loved ones.

Grieving is a deeply personal and emotional process. Choosing between resomation and cremation can be influenced by one's emotional connection to each method. Traditional cremation allows for the preservation of ashes, which can be kept in urns or scattered in meaningful locations, providing a tangible connection to the deceased. The act of scattering ashes can be cathartic and symbolise the return of the loved one's essence to nature.



Resomation, while also producing ashes which are pure white, offers a different emotional experience. The focus is on the gentle dissolution of the body, mimicking the natural process of decomposition. Some individuals may find solace in knowing that their loved one's remains are returned to the environment, fostering a sense of renewal and interconnectedness with nature.

The decision between resomation and cremation is deeply personal and should consider various factors such as environmental impact, cultural beliefs, and emotional needs. Resomation presents a more environmentally friendly option, minimizing harm to the planet and conserving resources. However, the cultural and religious significance of cremation cannot be overlooked, as it holds deep-rooted traditions and beliefs for many communities. Ultimately, the choice should be made with respect for the deceased's wishes, cultural considerations, and the desire to preserve our planet for future generations.

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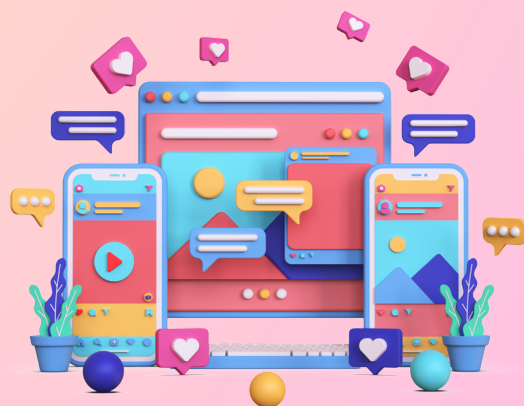
Tinner Buffy

GET MORE ENGAGEMENT ON YOUR FACEBOOK AND INSTAGRAM BUSINESS PAGES

The other day I was asked about how to boost engagement on a Funeral home's social media pages. This is a good question. So, let's take a look at how you can improve your Facebook and Instagram accounts' engagement value.

WHAT IS ENGAGEMENT AND WHY IS IT SO IMPORTANT?

Engagement on social media refers to the meaningful interactions individuals have with your online content. It's the likes, comments, shares and discussions that sprout around the content you share.



Engagement is a crucial aspect when it comes to being on social media, no matter what business you have. It not only signifies a deeper connection with your audience, but also boosts your visibility online. Social channels rank on Google as more and more. And that means that social posts can attract interest and encourage click through, leading to more engagement. And when people engage on those, it's a nod to the value and relevance of the social media post content. High engagement amplifies your message, reaching more individuals and making you stand out from your competition.

Furthermore, engagement fosters a sense of community. Allowing for a two-way conversation between you and your audience. This in turn, enhances trust and loyalty. Fostering engagement means offering support, understanding and a comforting presence. Which at the end of the day is invaluable.

PLANTING THE SEEDS FOR MORE ENGAGEMENT.

Let's look at some content ideas that invite increased engagement:

❤️ 142 💬 37 👤 27

- **Informative Posts:** Offering a peek into funeral planning. Also memorial traditions, grief counselling and bereavement services can feel like extending a comforting hand. Through these posts, you're not just sharing nuggets of wisdom, but also offering a comforting shoulder.
- **Community Chronicles:** Sharing touching stories from the community. These can weave a warm tapestry of shared experiences.
- **Visual Journeys:** A visual tour of your Funeral home can provide a soothing glimpse into the peaceful ambiance you provide. It's about dissolving apprehensions and making the unfamiliar a tad friendlier.
- **Live Heart-to-Hearts:** Hosting live Q&A sessions can create a nurturing cocoon of real-time interaction. It's about being present, among the community, addressing their concerns, and offering soothing words.

BEING A GENTLE GUIDING LIGHT.

A great strategy is to have a highlighted pinned post that guides visitors to the death notices on your website. And this will lead as a subtle guide to making sure essential information is gently accessible. And from there people can visit the rest of your website to gain more insight into who you are, what you do and how you can help them.

Below your pinned post you have a real opportunity to not just increase engagement, but also gain more new followers. By providing a real mix of helpful, informative, educational and supportive content it will appear in your followers' social media feeds, and from there encourage tagging others to notify them and even sharing your content to their network.

EMBRACING THE DIGITAL VOYAGE

Embarking on this digital voyage might have a gentle learning curve. By giving more value to what you share, you're not only reaching more people, but also gaining more engagement. Your Funeral home's social media pages can morph into comforting havens. This will help you stand out, stay top of mind and build a loyal following.

IN CONCLUSION

When it comes to acquiring more engagement there are a few things to consider. It's about nurturing soft conversations, a soothing presence and supplying content that people need. Leading to more likes, comments, shares etc... By moving beyond posting death notices and being relentlessly helpful, you become "The go-to and valuable" Funeral Director. This will leverage you to stay top of mind and create a ripple of positive engagement on social media for you and your Funeral services.

All in all, people's searching tactics are changing. They are using social media search bars like Google more and more. By posting content that answers the questions people have regarding Funerals and things such as pre-planning, direct cremation, non-religious funerals etc.. you will increase your engagement value and that is a win-win for engaging your current and new followers online, and you will build a strong, interactive and loyal online community around your Funeral services going into 2024 and beyond.

Would you like more up-to-date information on how to optimise your content for more engagement on social media? I can provide some current insights and tips if you're interested. I hope you found this helpful. If you have any further questions or do you need help in navigating the world of social media, your website or Google Business Listing etc, please get in touch, go to www.fitsocialmedia.co.uk and book in for a free consultation. 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.





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Issue 12

*Reflection on Stardust:
Celebrities Lost in 2023*

*Join the Team:
We're Hiring!*



To be featured in Issue 12, please provide all content c/o
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GREENER GLOBE TRUSTED SUPPLIER AWARD LAUNCHED AT FSA



Greener Globe are extremely excited to launch the latest environmental standard for the bereavement sector, the Trusted Suppliers Award. They recognise the vital role suppliers play supporting funeral directors and how they can not only reduce their own impact on the environment but also that of their customers – the funeral director

A recent survey of UK consumers found 76% are doing what they can to support the environment and they expect businesses to play their part in protecting the planet. As a result, funeral directors are aware of the need to not only offer green funerals but also operate their business in a more sustainable manner.



The greenhouse gas emissions from products provided by suppliers falls within funeral directors 'scope 3' emissions. As these make up 70% of emissions from businesses, funeral directors are increasingly looking at their supply chains, expecting suppliers to reduce their impact on the environment and operate more sustainably. To reassure customers leading suppliers are demonstrating that they are taking the environment into account when producing their products. Holding a dedicated suppliers environmental award demonstrates your commitment to the environment and recognising the needs of your customers.

In addition to reducing your own impact on the environment, and that of your customer, obtaining a sustainability audit of your business will help reduce the cost of utilities and other supplies.

The Supplier's Award has been designed with input from those working in the sector and members of the Funeral Suppliers' Association. As a result, it does not seek to implement sudden, expensive change, instead it is pragmatic, online and straightforward, supporting businesses as they transition towards more sustainable ways of working.



It is fundamentally a 3 step process:

- 1. Adopt an environmental policy – an important first step for any businesses seeking to be more sustainable and qualifies for the Suppliers Bronze Award. If you do not have an environmental policy, adopt our own straightforward Trusted Suppliers Environmental Policy designed especially for you.*
- 2. Complete the Sustainability Audit Questionnaire enabling you to quickly examine all parts of your business to identify the areas which are already sustainable and those where further work is required. Submit the audit online, it is assessed by ISO 14001 qualified auditors and results in a Silver Gold or Platinum Award.*
- 3. In addition to receiving your award, you will receive your own bespoke improvement plan to guide you on your journey to lessen the impact of your business on the environment.*



In recognition of the support Greener Globe have received from the Funeral Suppliers' Association they are delighted to be able to offer members of the FSA a 10% reduction, using voucher code FSA10%, to the joining fee of £495 to £445 which includes registration, environmental policy submission for the Bronze Award, assess your completed sustainability questionnaire, receive your own bespoke improvement plan, Award Certificates, Welsh slate plaque for Gold and Platinum Awards. Your award to be listed on their website for all to see. Use of the Greener Funerals logo and award on your marketing.

**FOR FURTHER DETAILS VISIT
WWW.GGFA.CO.UK/SUPPLIERS/**





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