

BRITISH INSTITUTE OF FUNERAL DIRECTORS



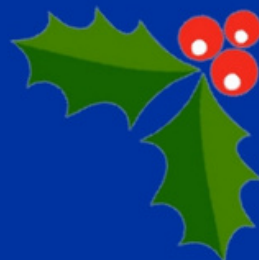
ISSUE 12

THE JOURNAL





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Letter From The National President

AMANDA DALBY, DIP. FD, LMBIFD

Dear Members, Students, Fellows and Associates of our Unique and Prestigious Institute,

What a great start to my Presidential Year! First off, I was invited to the Funeral Suppliers' Association Annual Dinner on my BIRTHDAY, on 10 November in beautiful Stratford-Upon-Avon.

Being a Shakespeare fan, I didn't hesitate to attend, and was not only delighted to visit this historic town, but overwhelmed by the friendly welcome and a rapturous rendition of 'Happy Birthday' by the outgoing President, Philip Halliday, their Chief Executive, Alun Tucker, their new President Anthony Hill and all who attended the event, including all of our kindred associations and their guests.

A week later I was invited to support our BIFD Associate Member, Canfly Marketing's Charity Race Day at Cheltenham. They were raising funds for Emily's Gift, a charity who support children with cancer, in Gloucestershire.



Despite the slightly inclement weather, this was not only a successful event for the charity, but a great opportunity to strengthen the links with like-minded professionals, including NAFD President Barry Pritchard. And although I didn't back any winners, I did win FIRST PRIZE in the raffle - a £500 Voucher from our friends at Somerset Willows. I chose a Wicker Coffin, which was delivered to me this week!

I could have opted for something from their 'Homes and Interiors Collection' but figured that as I've already pre-purchased a burial plot for myself in a local graveyard in my home village, a beautifully made coffin might come in handy in the future...I'm leaving it firmly IN STORAGE for the foreseeable, however!

And now, in the blink of an eye, Christmas is upon us. I'm sure that all our members, like me, are busy with not only preparing our own family festivities but also hosting Memorial Days and Services in order that our families can find a way to reflect on losing a loved one and remember them in a special way.

And although we all embrace technology, it's time to slow down and offer that HUMAN TOUCH that makes such a difference to our families at this sensitive time of year.

The Memorial Christmas Tree in my Funeral Parlour will be full of hand-made Memorial Tags after the day we set aside time to open our doors and offer a friendly hug, a mug of Yorkshire Tea, and a Mince Pie or two, to those grieving for a loved one.



So may I wish you special funeral people a Merry Christmas - enjoy being with your own families too, and have a happy, successful new 2024, working alongside the BIFD of course.

We're here to support you in learning - why not make a New Year's Resolution to put time aside to join us for our CPD Sessions? Watch out for invitations to sign up for them.

I look forward to seeing you all on ZOOM, if not in person, in 2024!

Yours funerally,

Amanda Dalby



The British Institute of Funeral Directors

Conference: 18th – 20th October 2024

*Cedar Court Hotel
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Venue & Itinerary For 42nd Conference & AGM

Our National President, Amanda Dalby, would like to invite all Members, Fellows, Students, Associates, Presidents of the Kindred Associations and all Guests to the forthcoming Conference, AGM and Gala Dinner, to be held, on 18th - 20th October **2024** at the Cedar Court Hotel, Ainley Top, just above Halifax, West Yorkshire.

The Cedar Court 4 star Hotel, offers comfortable rooms and excellent facilities for a relaxing stay. The hotel is conveniently located just off the M62 at junction 24, between Leeds and Manchester. The hotel has excellent modern facilities, a huge car park, and offers free Wi-Fi.

The President's Charity 2024

For her Presidential Year, Amanda has chosen to support **Andy's Man Club**, a charity set up by the brother-in-law of Andy Roberts, a 23 year old from Halifax, who took his own life. The aim of the charity is to prevent suicide in men. The charity is now nationwide, and their now familiar slogan is 'It's Okay to Talk'

The itinerary so far...

Friday 18th October 2024

The Board of Directors will be meeting in the afternoon.

After checking into your room, Amanda invites you to join her for a **3 course dinner** in the function suite.

Saturday 19th October 2024

The AGM will take place in the morning followed by a **buffet lunch**.

Amanda is planning something to occupy your time in the afternoon.....**watch this space!**

The evening will start with a Drinks Reception followed by a **3 course dinner**, plus cheese & biscuits, with wine in the **Yorkshire Room**. After dinner, we will have our **Diploma Awards Ceremony** and **Handover of Offices** followed by music and dancing until late.

Earlier than 18th or later than 20th October 2024

If you would like to enjoy a longer break, we have secured good rates either side of the Conference, so that you can enjoy Yorkshire for an extended stay! Ask Amanda about all of the interesting sights & places to visit around Halifax.



**I look forward to welcoming you all to
Yorkshire in 2024, Amanda Dalby**

DipFD, LMBIFD National President of the BIFD

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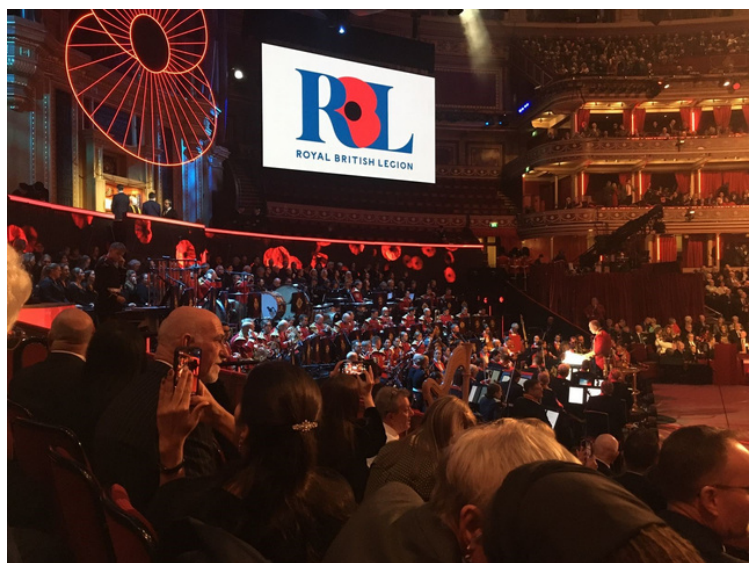
REGION K: Join Paul Buckland on his Journey to the Royal Albert Hall and Experience the Majesty of the Festival of Remembrance

Paul Buckland is a memorial fixer for P & S Gallagher Funeral Directors in Haywards Heath. He also has the honourable job of being Standard Bearer for the Lindfield Royal British Legion. This is a voluntary role, which when requested, he will parade the RBL Standard at a funeral of ex service personnel and at other RBL events.

On Saturday 12th of November, he was invited to the Royal Albert Hall in London, to be part of the Royal British Legion Festival of Remembrance. For Paul, the process started back in August when registration for the event took place and then as the 11th of November approached more instructions arrived giving details of times and key information. Guests were asked to arrive at the Royal Albert Hall on the Friday, late afternoon, to collect their security passes and to attend a briefing in the Great Hall under the supervision of the National Parade Marshall.



There were 100 RBL branches in attendance from all areas of the United Kingdom along with Ex-Service Associations' Standard Bearers. Security was strict with passes checked and the Standards X-rayed each time they entered the RAH building. The first rehearsal was the Standards Muster and for this they were handed over to the Garrison Sergeant Major, who certainly knew his left from his right and told everyone very politely that tick-tocking was not exclusive to clocks! By 19:30 the GSM was happy!



Paul had a very early start on the Saturday as he had to be on site for 07:00. Rehearsals resumed for all the elements of the programme and breakfast was served to all, service personnel, standard bearers, musicians and the choir.

Quite a feat itself to feed all the participants in just 20 minutes. "The Full Albert" breakfast was very welcome for Paul!

During the course of the morning up to lunch time, two more full rehearsals including a dress rehearsal. The afternoon matinee performance was when the general public got the first opportunity experience the 2023 Festival of Remembrance - 'Service' and 'Service Not Self'.



Through personal testimony and storytelling, through music and ceremony, the Festival expressed the core values of Service. Paul cannot express highly enough the admiration and esteem he has for our Armed Forces, placing others before themselves, devotion to duty and unfailing reliability. The Festival commemorated lived experiences of our Armed Forces community by honouring veterans who lost their lives or were injured in service. It further honoured their families, descendants and representatives. Paul defies anybody who says they were not emotionally moved by the personal stories that were relayed to the audience and participants. In all, Paul sat through four full performances of the Festival during Saturday, each time sitting as an emotional wreck as he witnessed and heard of the personal sacrifices.

The matinee and evening performances were separated by a dinner break. Again, in the company of all personnel taking part and a great spirit of togetherness could be felt in the atmosphere.

After another vigorous security check and we were lined up again waiting for the King and Queen Consort to arrive. Trumpeters sounded and part four had commenced and just like the three previous times that day and all the preparation paid off and the Festival proceeded to a conclusion in a faultless fashion. Incredible singers - Colin Thackeray aged 93 and a Chelsea Pensioner performed Arirang, remembering the Korean War, Mica Paris MBE, Katie Melua, Calum Scott. During the Drum Laying, Alfie Boe performed 'Bring Him Home' during which the RBL Standards mustered on the main stage and around the arena.



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The matinee and evening performances were separated by a dinner break. Again, in the company of all personnel taking part and a great spirit of togetherness could be felt in the atmosphere.

Once the muster was complete, the Book of Remembrance was carried in by Petty Officer Jones and his family, recently reunited and a lovely video tape played their story. The fall of the poppies was preceded by Malakai Bayoh, a 13-year-old boy, singing Pie Jesu. The Act of Remembrance followed, bringing the Festival of Remembrance to an end. Paul has just three words to summarise the two days: Unforgettable - Humbling - Admiration.

An amazing experience for Paul, one that will live with him for the rest of his life.

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PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS COMMITTEE MEMBER (VOLUNTARY ROLE)

The British Institute of Funeral Directors (BIFD) seeks committed individuals with extensive industry experience to serve as voluntary members of the Professional Standards Committee. This committee plays a critical role in evaluating complaints received by the National Office, determining whether they warrant escalation to a Disciplinary Committee or require no further action.

ROLE & RESPONSIBILITIES:

- **Complaint Review:** Responsibly and impartially assess complaints received by the National Office, evaluating their gravity and relevance to professional standards.
- **Decision Making:** Determine whether complaints merit further investigation by a Disciplinary Committee or if they can be resolved without further action, maintaining objectivity and fairness in decision-making.
- **Virtual Committee Meetings:** Participate in virtual committee meetings convened on an as-needed basis to review and discuss received complaints.
- **Adherence to Standards:** Ensure that decisions align with established industry regulations, standards, and the BIFD's code of Ethics.
- **Collaboration and Documentation:** Collaborate with fellow committee members to document decisions, maintain records, and provide a clear rationale for actions taken on each complaint when reporting to the Board of Directors.
- **Confidentiality:** Maintain strict confidentiality throughout the complaint review process to uphold the integrity of the profession and protect the parties involved.

QUALIFICATIONS AND REQUIREMENTS:

- **Membership Eligibility:** Full membership in the BIFD for at least two consecutive years is mandatory. Retired voting members and Fellows are welcome to apply.
- **Professional Experience:** Extensive experience within the funeral service industry, showcasing a deep understanding of industry practices, regulations, and ethics.
- **Decision-Making Skills:** Ability to make fair, impartial, and objective decisions while considering various perspectives and complexities of complaints.
- **Communication Skills:** Excellent verbal and written communication skills to articulate decisions and provide clear justifications for the committee's actions.
- **Commitment:** Willingness to commit time for virtual committee meetings convened on an as-needed basis.

BENEFITS:

- Opportunity to contribute to maintaining the highest standards of professionalism within the BIFD
- Collaboration with experienced professionals and an opportunity for continued professional development.

APPLICATION PROCESS:

Interested candidates who meet the membership criteria are invited to submit a cover letter outlining their relevant experience and motivations for joining the Committee to:

admin@bifd.org.uk

ANDREW GREY FUNERAL DIRECTORS LATEST 'PERFECT PARTNER' TO JOIN FUNERAL PARTNERS

A Funeral Director has hailed Funeral Partners as 'the perfect partner' after becoming the latest brand to join their growing network. Andrew Grey Funeral Directors, which has been serving families in the Sunderland area since 2011, is the newest addition to the country's third-largest funeral business. Andrew's first experience of funerals came when he was a child, as his parents, Syd and Mary, were Lay Ministers at the Easington Lane Independent Methodist Church, where they would help conduct services. After leaving school, Andrew learned to play the piano and keyboard at the same church and embarked on a music career which took him around the country.

He later returned full-time to the northeast and trained as a Funeral Director in 1998 with Scollen & Wright Funeral Service in Sunderland. Eventually, with the support of long-term partner Gillian Mason, Andrew set up his own funeral company in Hetton Le Hole in a building he renovated himself. He puts his success down to the standing his father had built in the local community: *"It was because of my father, his reputation and my name that they put their trust in me initially,"* Andrew said.

There are now three other branches in Houghton Le Spring, Easington Lane – which is on the road Andrew was born on – and South Hetton. Although Andrew never had any plans to go into funerals in his formative years, he now sees it as his true calling. *"As soon as I got started properly, I took to it like a duck to water,"* he said. *"To do a funeral right for the family and for the deceased means absolutely everything to me. You only get one go at it, but if you do it well, then the family will remember it forever."*



Andrew Grey with his partner and Office Manager Gillian Mason and Funeral Partners Head of Acquisition Integration David McCarthy

Andrew, 52, said now was the right time to look at his future and the ongoing support of the business; there is not a natural succession plan from within the family, so becoming part of the Funeral Partners family appealed as the best decision to secure the continued success of Andrew Grey Funeral Directors. A fresh, new, local, experienced team has already been recruited to help Andrew provide his trademark level of quality and care to families.

"With the full support of Funeral Partners I will continue to do what I love by running the client and community side of the business exactly as I have done before, and I am confident they will take away the back office stress that comes with being an independent business," he said. *"Funeral Partners are the perfect partner for me."*

Chief Executive Sam Kershaw said: *"It's a pleasure to have Andrew Grey and his four branches in the northeast join us at Funeral Partners. I'd absolutely echo Andrew's sentiment that we're the perfect partner for his business. I look forward to working with him and his new team for many years to continue the reputation and legacy he has built at Andrew Grey Funeral Directors."*

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Sam Kershaw, *Chief Executive Officer*

07834 531822 sam.kershaw@funeralpartners.co.uk

Steve Wilkinson, *Mergers & Acquisitions Director*

07528 970531 steve.wilkinson@funeralpartners.co.uk

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FUNERAL PARTNERS MAKES FIRST ACQUISITION IN WALES WITH HISTORIC LLANELLI BUSINESS

A respected funeral firm with more than 70 years of proud history has become the first Welsh business to join Funeral Partners. Arthur Cambrey Funeral Directors, based in Llanelli and set in more than an acre of beautiful grounds, has become the newest addition to Funeral Partners' growing network.

Mr Cambrey started his career by running a car hire business but founded his funeral company in 1950, having initially provided vehicles for local undertakers. He continued working to serve local families until the day before his death in 2012.

Mr Cambrey's daughter, Alison, began working for the business in the 1980s, firstly in accounting, but has gone on to follow in her father's footsteps by arranging and conducting funerals.

Her two daughters now have successful careers, meaning there is no natural successor in the family, and with Alison due to become a grandmother not once but twice early next year, she has decided now is the right time to seek an acquisition partner.

Alison said: "From my very first meeting, they made me comfortable, and I feel like Funeral Partners are here to support me. Funeral Partners can help me with the regulations, the HR and the back of house, while I can do what I love and what I am good at, which is helping people arrange funerals for their loved ones. I think they know they have a great business here because of the work that has gone into building it up."

Alison will remain an integral part of the team as Business Principal and said she hoped working with Funeral Partners would safeguard her father's legacy.

"This business was everything to him, and I'm proud and happy that my father's name is still above the door," she said. "I've always been dedicated to it, too, but even more so since he passed, and I think making sure it continued to be successful helped me deal with my grief. My mother, Joyce, lived in a bungalow on the grounds of the funeral home until she died two years ago, and it was so important for me that she knew the business was still running successfully."

Funeral Partners Chief Executive Sam Kershaw said: "I'm very excited about branching out into Wales, and we couldn't have asked for a better business to work with than Arthur Cambrey Funeral Directors. They have an enviable reputation, a dedicated team and a wonderful funeral home set in beautiful grounds, which is a brilliant combination."



Head of Acquisition Integration David McCarthy, Business Principal Alison Cambrey and Area Development Manager Sandra Murphy



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 of 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.

corporate.funeralpartners.co.uk



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AZTEC FUNERALS

with Clíve Pearson, 2nd Vice President



The Aztec culture, a pre-Columbian civilisation that thrived in the heart of Mexico from 1300 to 1521, was known for its intricate social, political, and religious systems. Among the myriad aspects of Aztec culture, their funeral rituals and practices were particularly fascinating, reflecting their unique perspective on death and the afterlife. So let us delve into the fascinating rituals and beliefs surrounding Aztec funerals, revealing an aspect of this ancient civilisation that was rich in symbolism and rites.

The Aztecs held a view of death that was vastly different from that of the contemporary Western perspective. They viewed death not as an end but as an integral part of the cycle of life. The Aztecs believed in the existence of an intricate afterlife where the manner of one's death determined their destination. They believed in thirteen heavens and nine underworlds, each with specific criteria and inhabitants.

The Aztec funeral process, much like their beliefs, was equally elaborate. Funerals started with a ritual purification of the body performed by the tlamacazqui, a priest. The body was then adorned with paper clothing to represent the deceased's status and profession. A green stone, symbolising the heart, was placed in the mouth to aid the deceased in their journey through the afterlife.

The deceased was then cremated or buried, depending on their social status. Commoners were generally cremated, while nobility and great warriors were often buried with a variety of grave goods. The burial process was marked by complex rites, which included sacrificing the deceased's favourite animals, and in some cases, humans, to serve them in the afterlife.



The Aztecs mourned their dead for a period of eighty days, during which they held elaborate rituals. Mourning rituals included prayers, fasting, and self-mutilation, all aimed at appeasing the deceased's spirit and aiding them in their journey to the afterlife. After the mourning period, the deceased was believed to reach their final destination in the afterlife.

The elaborate rituals and practices of Aztec funerals have had a profound influence on modern Mexican culture. Today, the Day of the Dead, or Día de los Muertos, is a widely celebrated Mexican holiday that pays homage to deceased loved ones, highlighting the enduring influence of Aztec beliefs on death and the afterlife.

Aztec funerals were a fascinating blend of ritual, belief, and cultural practice that underscored the civilisations intricate views on death and the afterlife. They were more than mere funerary practices; they were a reflection of the society's values, beliefs and traditions. Even today, the shadow of these practices can be seen in modern Mexican culture, attesting to the enduring legacy of the Aztecs. Their funerals, therefore, serve as a window into understanding the rich tapestry of this ancient civilisation and its lasting influence.

Thank You

We would like to extend our heartfelt gratitude to our incredible advertisers, guest article writers, loyal readers, and supporters ~ We are immensely grateful for the opportunity to collaborate with our cherished advertisers, and such talented guest article writers who have shared their knowledge and expertise with our readers. Your contributions over the last 12 Issues have not only enriched our content, but also empowered us to continue delivering top-notch articles and stories to our amazing readers. Your support fuels our passion for excellence and drives us to reach new heights.

Last but not least, we want to express our deep appreciation to our dedicated readers and supporters. Your engagement, feedback, and constant encouragement motivate us to push boundaries and strive for excellence. Together, we are creating a space where ideas flourish, knowledge is shared, and inspiration is born. Thank you for being a part of our journey.

With immense gratitude, The Editorial Team

HUNDREDS FLOCK TO ST EDITHA'S FOR RETURN OF TAMWORTH CO-OP CHRISTMAS MEMORIAL SERVICE

Hundreds of people attended Tamworth Co-operative Society's Christmas Memorial Service in St Editha's Church to remember lost loved ones.

It was the first time since the pandemic that the service had taken place, with young and old coming together to pay tribute to relatives and friends and to join in the singing of carols.

The event, in its eleventh year, was organised by the funeral division in partnership with St Giles Hospice, bringing words of comfort and music to the bereaved.

Tamworth Ladies Choir performed a beautiful rendition of Silent Night during the most moving part of the service when the lights were dimmed, and churchgoers held aloft remembrance candles while reflecting on those they had lost.



Tamworth Ladies Choir gave several performances during the evening.

Scottish piper Jonathan Prior then emerged from the shadows to add an atmospheric note to the occasion. He stood before the congregation playing Amazing Grace as the church lights were lifted.

Soloist Tom Clamp, a regular contributor from previous years, gave powerful and uplifting performances of You Raise Me Up and Oh Holy Night.

Tamworth Co-op funeral arrangers contributed to the evening too. Leah Sandford spoke about the emotional and practical realities of her role, saying it was a 'privilege to support families at one of the most difficult times of their lives' – while Jo-Anne Walsh read the poem, Missing You at Christmas.



Above: Scottish piper Jonathan Prior greets churchgoers at the entrance to St Editha's Church, Tamworth.



Above: Soloist Tom Clamp in full voice during the service.

Welcoming families back after a four-year break, Glen Speak, general manager of Tamworth Co-op's funeral division, said he and his team had an unofficial motto: **"We are here before, during and after a bereavement. This evening demonstrates that."**

“Some of you may not have suffered a bereavement and others will be entering Christmas without a loved one. So, tonight is not only to celebrate the start of the Christmas season but also to reflect on past Christmases with many happy memories surrounded by family and friends.”

Simon James, a trustee of St Giles Hospice, which is celebrating its 40th anniversary this year, thanked everyone who gave money to support its work. He said it cost £10m a year to run the Whittington-based hospice with only 25 per cent of that amount coming from the NHS. It was, therefore, dependent on donations from the local community.



Hundreds of people silently reflect on their lost loved ones while holding remembrance candles.

In his message, the Vicar of Tamworth, Reverend Andrew Lythall, who led the prayers, reminded those grieving that they have plenty of memories to treasure, adding: *“I’ve only lived here since March but what a wonderful town, what a great sense of community and fellowship we have here in this lovely place today.”*

Tamworth Co-op chief executive Julian Coles gave a closing speech in which he also announced his retirement next year.

He said: *“I find this to be the most rewarding and meaningful event in our annual calendar. There is something very special and moving about this service. I think that is from having so many people together in this wonderful church as we enter the Christmas period.”*

Mr Coles also thanked St Giles Hospice and the Society’s funeral team for arranging the evening and to both groups ‘for being there when we need them,’ as well as St Editha’s Church for again ‘hosting us.’

“On a personal note, I retire from the Society next summer and will greatly miss being able to make the closing remarks at this service.”

He concluded by reading David Harkins’ poem, *She is Gone*, which he had the privilege of being able to read out at a family funeral a few years ago. The poem was chosen by the late Queen for the Queen Mother’s funeral.



Above: Jonathan Prior plays Amazing Grace to the packed congregation.



Above: Glen Speak, general manager of Tamworth Co-op’s funeral division, welcomes people back to the Christmas memorial service for the first time since the pandemic.

Four generations of one family were among those attending. Rita Perry, from Glascote, whose husband Ernest passed away in March, was accompanied by her daughter Denise Perry, granddaughter Jessica Walton and great granddaughters, Sophia (9) and Isabelle (7).

Mrs Perry (84) said: *"I got married in St Editha's Church and we had pipes playing at my husband's funeral. I met him at Tamworth Castle and he asked me the time, even though he was wearing a watch."*

Ernest served in the RAF and took part in the Queen's Coronation parade in 1953.

Mrs Perry said the service had brought comfort to all the family. *"It was a very special occasion. I loved it."*

Afterwards families enjoyed complimentary hot drinks and mince pies served in St George's Chapel by funeral staff. There was also a free prize raffle for a seasonal hamper.

Proceeds from a collection on the night raised £592.42 to be split between St Giles Hospice and St Editha's Church.



· Above: Sisters Sophia (9) and Isabelle (7) Walton came to the service to remember their great grandfather Ernest Perry, from Glascote, who passed away earlier this year at the age of 88.

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ONLINE PRESENCE TIPS FOR CHRISTMAS AND THE NEW YEAR

As we head into 2024, we all make new year resolutions, true? And one I like to do is review my own online presence. Having a good online presence is key. Starting with an engaging, mobile and user-friendly website. When was the last time you updated yours? After that, ensure you optimise your online opportunities with the right channels. You have different audiences such as Baby Boomers and Gen X who are looking for your services. Millennials (Gen Y) and Gen Z you are your future employees. All of which are on different channels. And with this in mind, here are 12 practical tips to help. Tailored for Google Business Profile, Facebook, Instagram and LinkedIn. Along with a bonus tip at the end, to help you navigate and thrive in the online world as a Funeral professional.



GOOGLE BUSINESS PROFILE TIPS:

- **Posting Regular Updates:** Treat your Google Business Profile like a social media platform. Post updates about your services, who you work with and helpful informative content. These posts are visible on your listing to anyone searching for your business. Offering fresh content which Google will see as relevant. And it contributes to local search. So when people search for funeral-related services in your area, it will help your business appear more prominently.

- **Accurate Information:** Ensure your contact details, address, and operating hours are always current. This accuracy is crucial for building trust and reliability.
- **Encourage Reviews:** Seeking feedback on the experience from the families you've served. Positive feedback enhances your online reputation. It's influential for potential clients and families seeking your services. And always reply to these within 24 hours.

FACEBOOK STRATEGIES:

- **Optimise Your Business Page:** Ensure your business page is completed and gives a great first impression. It's a powerful platform to share your services, post helpful content and engage with the community. Have a pinned post for your death notices to guide people to your website. This will encourage them also to stay on your website and look at other pages.
- **Regular Posts:** People want help and guidance. Post about your services, community involvement, or general information. Think of your business page like a magazine. A mix of content e.g.: funeral planning, grief support and who is behind the business etc.... This regularity keeps your audience informed and connected.
- **Engage with Your Audience:** Respond to comments, reviews and messages within 24 hours. This interaction builds relationships and demonstrates your commitment to the community.

INSTAGRAM INSIGHTS:

- **Visual Storytelling:** Share images that reflect the care and compassion of your services. Remember to always get permission for any personal or sensitive content.
- **Hashtags and Geo-tags:** Use relevant hashtags and geo-tags (eg: your town as a hashtag) to enhance your visibility in local searches. This helps in reaching a broader audience.
- **Stories and Highlights:** Use Instagram Stories for quick and timely updates. And create Highlights for more permanent content such as testimonials or service overviews.



LINKEDIN TIPS FOR FUNERAL PROFESSIONALS:

- **Professional Networking:** LinkedIn is ideal for connecting with industry peers. Share insights, challenges, and trends in funeral services. Think of LinkedIn as a networking room and as your eco-friendly business card.
- **Share Your Expertise:** Regularly post articles or insights on industry-related topics. This helps in establishing yourself as a knowledgeable and approachable professional.
- **Recommendations and Endorsements:** Give and do request both from colleagues and clients. These will add to your credibility and professionalism to your profile.

BONUS TIP - PLANNING YOUR CONTENT:

- **Strategic Content Planning:** Develop a content calendar to streamline your online activities. This approach ensures a consistent online presence. And reduces the stress of last-minute content creation. Focus on themes like remembrance, care and community involvement. Times of the year etc... Your content will help reflect your service's values and do show who you are, what you do and how you can help.

IN CONCLUSION:

Your digital footprint is an extension of the compassionate and respectful service you provide. It's about connecting with families and communities in a way that's relevant and meaningful. I hope you found this helpful. If you have any further questions or need help in navigating the world of social media, your website or something else regarding your online presence, please do get in touch. For more info go to www.fitsocialmedia.co.uk.

Wishing everyone in the institute and all readers of The Journal a lovely Christmas and best wishes for 2024!

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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ARTIFICIAL INSEMINATION 2023

A Seasonal Letter from Senior Examiner, Roger Clark

Welcome and greetings to you all and as you can see I have come round and kept up with developments in modern technology and as usual these two sides will be educational! Life offers a multitude of experiences and thankfully those that read this are still able to enjoy whatever is on offer, although it might be less than you really would like. The revolution of the earth around the sun though really makes my day.



Carole and I were very disappointed that you were unable to be with us at Westminster Abbey for the Coronation and have a coffee with us in McDonalds afterwards but as I was saying to Suella at a local funeral recently (the ex Home Secretary to you and whose parents live less than 50 metres from me) it is not what you know it is who you know that matters. I now enjoy going to funerals more than weddings these days

because at least at the reception you get free drinks, food and don't have to take any presents along. Less costs so we can holiday more often. Also please remember a 'Wake' is held before a funeral not after it!!

This year Carole and I have been very fortunate to have cruised from Los Angeles through the Panama Canal then back across the 'Pond' to Southampton. Followed in June by a Danube River Cruise, 2 steam train day trips in England and then another delayed cruise (Covid) from Southampton to New England, Nova Scotia and back not long before our annual escape to Fuerteventura, when I write all this educational information on the flights. Ironically we are going on the 'Ventura' for a Caribbean cruise in January. You cannot take money with you on that last journey so enjoy life while you can but still caring for others as we must.



Carole and I are generally fit and healthy, although still succumbing to symptoms of Long Covid more often than we would like. We do have various interests and pastimes. I still enjoy umpiring cricket and hope to referee walking football at some stage. All the family thankfully keep well. No one is in prison and no one has changed their gender apart from them! Everyone safely housed and enjoying life. Carole told me yesterday that I do not listen carefully enough to what she says or it was something like that I think.

On one of the cruises I think we might have been some of the 'younger' ones there as after one of the shows presented by a very funny comedian, many must have enjoyed it so much as there were few dry seats in the theatre. Some even had a little sleep during it, no doubt before going off to the Late Night Disco.

On our recent holiday I spoke to a man who told me he was 74 and seemed very concerned and upset. He told me he had recently married a lady over 40 years younger than himself, that she had gone back to the room to put on some sexy outfit and was going to give him a nice treat when he returned. I said to him 'Crickey, how lucky you are, why are you so agitated and unsettled?' He said 'I can't remember where my room is'.



I still have my allotment which is very productive and help with Community work. The other day I also took an elderly neighbour nearby for his annual health check. The G.P. requested a urine and stool sample at some stage in the future. I suggested to her that she could have his underpants now to save booking another appointment. I also helped a friend the other day and bought him some 'Allways' as it says in the adverts that you can swim and ride a bike with them and he is not very good at doing either so should help him improve.

I also meet up with at least 6 of my old Junior School class at least twice a year which really is heart warming as we share old times together. We cannot lie about our age too. Do you find photographic memories take time to develop though? I do remember many times when I was at school. Particularly one instance being asked by a teacher if I was asleep. 'No Sir, but if you stop talking I will be able to nod off soon' In a French lesson the lady teacher asked me what tense 'I am beautiful'(in French) is. I told her the past tense! I told the music teacher in a lesson when asked about Mozart that he is decomposing now.

My sister wanted to test me on my knowledge on the Planets that I had been studying at school. She said 'Is Uranus bigger than Mars?' "No" I said, "Mum's is much bigger" My first girl friend told me I ruined her birthday. I don't know why as I never asked her when it was. I had told her that my mum was very deaf and she would have to speak very loudly and repeat herself. I told my mum that she had learning difficulties and would have to understand this. The relationship went well until that birthday! A school mate of mine told me to put a potato in my speedo trunks when swimming or on the beach to look good and attract the girls. I did but they all laughed at me until my mate told me to take it out of the back of my trunks.



I did have a holiday job as a student and worked briefly in a bank. An elderly lady customer came in and the manager told me to check her balance so I pushed her and she fell over. I then became a spokesman in a bicycle factory and learned a lot about menstrual cycles before eventually going back to school!

We continually see changes and progress. I notice that 'Poundstretchers' have taken over a few 'Marks and Spencer' shops and renamed them 'Stretchmarks'. I see that they charge for 'Air' at petrol stations now. That must be inflation. I saw a board outside a house the other day stating 'Chimneypots For Sale'. As I could use some at the allotment and as ornaments in the garden I knocked on the door and asked how much. I was told £ 450, 000. I told the person I could buy the house for less than that. I reckon that Nationwide must have looked silly when they opened up their first branch.

The other day I asked one of my grandchildren for a newspaper . 'Grandad , no one reads a paper these days here is my phone with the news on it. Have a look.' I did and gave it back 5 minutes later. 'Grandad the screen is shattered!' ' Yes' I said, 'I had trouble swatting the fly on the window'

I was lucky enough to get a seat at the Ageas for a 'One Day Cricket International' and sat next to a man who had a spare seat next to him which was unusual as it was a sell out. He told me it was his wife's seat as she really enjoyed cricket too. He told me she was a lovely woman but had died recently. I said how sorry I was for him but asked whether one of his family, a friend or a neighbour could have come with him for the game. He said ' I am sure they would but they are all at her funeral.' I do remember the first time I got a remote though, thinking this will change everything. I have also learned to borrow money from a pessimist if I need it as they never expect to get it back. I do wonder if women who carry a little extra mass live longer than spouses or men that mention it. It is a known fact though that 60% of men in Germany sit down to have a pee. I suppose it easier without Hans!

You can now use your brain cells to identify the following carols which are fairly well known. Go on have a go, answers later.

- 1. Manny's wife must have been so frustrated waiting for him to react.**
- 2. The sheep were being cared for then the sky lit up.**
- 3. These two evergreens are in my garden and quite happy near each other.**
- 4. Good chance of a disco happening in the next 24 hours**
- 5. Things never happen even twice in this large place where allegedly a regal person lives.**



I was going to tell you a joke about the Titanic at the start, just to break the ice but decided against it. Might have left you with a sinking feeling.

I was in Asda's the other day and a man kept rudely shouting out ' Broccoli and Cauliflowers'. I think he was suffering from Florets.

I feel sorry for the person who got sacked from working at the 'Job Centre' and had to go back the next day.

I happened to be stopped along with other motorists by the Police (no doubt as it is Christmas) and the officer told me it was a 'Spot Check'. I said 'That's good, can you have a look at my back for me?'

I did hear of an elderly driver who was following a lorry and thought it was losing its load.

When the lorry stopped at lights the old dear spoke to the driver about what she saw and was told it was a gritting lorry.

If you are wondering what to get a very elderly parent for a Christmas present. I bought my mum a 'Funeral Plan' one year and when she asked me why I had not got her a present the next year. I said 'Well you did not use last years.'



In the library the other day I noticed some interesting pamphlets and books to read. Here are a few for you.

- **How the four seasons cause changes in supermarket sales** Viv Aldi
- **Bladder problems experienced by men and women** Leigh King
- **Coping with discomfort whilst seated** Emma Royds
- **Simple measures to reduce swellings** Lance Boyle
- **How to deal with having to write more correspondence** Dick Tait
- **The importance of Annual Eye' tests for elderly men to improve their personal hygiene** Seymour Willey
- **Transgender Issues now appearing in the bird kingdom.** Donald Drake
- **How to learn to play medieval music with few strings attached** Amanda Lynn

Every year there are those we have loved, known or have been colleagues of ours who have left this world let alone many who have suffered because of man's inhumanity to fellow man. We must spend a moment in thought before enjoying the festivities in what ever way you feel it is appropriate to celebrate.

Love and best wishes to you all. Keep smiling, take care and hopefully moan about my script next year too

Roger & Carole x

ANSWERS:

1. O Come, O Come Emmanuel
2. While Shepherds Watched their Flocks by Night.
3. The Holly and The Ivy
4. Tomorrow will be my Dancing Day
5. Once in Royal David's City.



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SELF-CARE DURING

Christmas

A GUIDE FOR PROFESSIONALS IN THE FUNERAL AND DEATH INDUSTRIES

Christmas is a time of joy and celebration for many, but it can be one of the most challenging times for those working in the funeral and death industries. Not only are there typically more deaths in winter and over the festive period, but it is also a time when bereaved people often feel the weight of their loss even more deeply. As professionals in this field, we are not immune to the grief, sadness, and distress we encounter.

However, it is too easy for us to devalue our concerns when comparing them to the sometimes tragic losses experienced by those we serve. In this article, we will explore the importance of self-care during the festive season and offer some tips on how to look after yourself during this busy time.

TAKE A BREAK

Taking a break is one of the most crucial aspects of self-care during the Christmas season. As professionals in the funeral and death industries, we often work long hours and deal with emotionally challenging situations. Recognising the toll that this can take on our mental and emotional well-being is essential. Taking time off to rest and recharge is necessary and beneficial for both ourselves and the people we serve.



During the festive season, it can be tempting to keep working without taking a break, especially when there is an increase in demand for our services. However, pushing ourselves too hard can lead to burnout and can hurt our ability to provide the support and care that bereaved people need. By taking a break, we allow ourselves to relax, rejuvenate, and return to our work with renewed energy and focus.

Whether it's a few days off over Christmas or a more extended break during the holiday season, it is essential to prioritise our well-being and make time for self-care. This may involve spending time with loved ones, engaging in activities that bring us joy, or simply taking time to rest and recharge. Whatever form it takes, taking a break is essential to looking after ourselves during this busy time.



AVOID ISOLATION

Another aspect of self-care during the festive period is avoiding isolation. The nature of our work often means that we are exposed to grief and loss regularly. This can make it challenging to connect with others outside our profession who may not fully understand the emotional toll it can take. During Christmas, when feelings of grief and loss can be particularly acute for bereaved people, we need to seek support and connection.

Isolation can exacerbate feelings of sadness and loneliness, so it is essential to reach out to friends, family, and colleagues who can provide understanding and empathy. This may involve attending social gatherings, participating in community events, or simply spending time with loved ones. By seeking connection and support, we can help alleviate feelings of isolation and find solace in the company of others who understand the challenges we face.

Additionally, seeking professional support through therapy or counselling can also be beneficial during this time. A trained professional can provide a safe space for us to process our emotions, explore coping strategies, and gain insight into our own well-being. By actively avoiding isolation and seeking support, we can better navigate the emotional challenges of the festive season.

GET OUTSIDE

Getting outside and connecting with nature is another important aspect of self-care during Christmas. Spending time outdoors has been shown to have numerous physical and mental health benefits, including reducing stress, improving mood, and increasing overall well-being. As professionals in the funeral and death industries, we can often find ourselves surrounded by the heaviness of grief and loss. By immersing ourselves in nature, we can find respite and perspective.



During the winter months, getting outside may require some extra effort, particularly in colder climates. However, even a short walk in nature can provide a much-needed break from the demands of our work and the intensity of the festive season. Whether it's a peaceful stroll through a local park, a hike in the countryside, or simply sitting in a garden, spending time in nature can help us reconnect with ourselves and find solace in the natural world.



It is important to remember that self-care is not selfish. By taking care of ourselves, we can better provide the valuable services we offer to bereaved people. This Christmas, let's prioritize our well-being and make self-care a priority. By taking a break, avoiding isolation, and getting outside, we can navigate the emotional challenges of the festive season with compassion and resilience.

IN CONCLUSION

Christmas is always a busy time for those working in the funeral and death industries. It is a time when there are typically more deaths and bereaved people often feel the weight of their loss even more deeply. As professionals in this field, we must prioritise our well-being and practice self-care during this busy period. Taking a break, avoiding isolation, and getting outside are just a few ways to look after ourselves and navigate the emotional challenges of the festive season. By caring for ourselves, we can continue providing the valuable services we offer to bereaved people with compassion and resilience.

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ask for help"**



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