

BRITISH INSTITUTE OF FUNERAL DIRECTORS



ISSUE 3

THE JOURNAL



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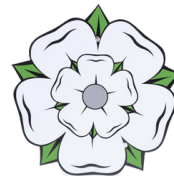
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LETTER FROM THE NATIONAL PRESIDENT

Amanda Dalby, Dip. FD, LMBIFD



Dear Members, Students, Fellows & Associate Members of our Much Respected Institute

I hope everyone had a good February?

Mine was a sad one, but after my father's funeral on 1st March, I escaped to London, and thoroughly enjoyed representing the BIFD at the London Association of Funeral Directors Annual Banquet on 2nd.

What a fabulous do, hosted by the LAFD President, Michael Tiney, and with a glamorous 'Night at the Oscars' Theme. It was great to get the chance to dress up & have some fun, and exchange a Top Hat & formal attire for some Evening Wear!

It was also a great opportunity to chat with & get to know our Southern funeral friends & suppliers, and the next day I attended a Church Service at the beautiful Westminster Abbey, after a lovely stroll through the Daffodils in St. James Park in the sunshine ☀️ Spring is definitely here!



The following week was time for my Region C Meeting & a visit to the newly built SHAY GRANGE CREMATORIUM, Bradford, where some of our BIFD Students received their 'Certificate in Funeral Service' in this 'State of the Art' and 'Scandi Style' space. Well done to those who have studied hard to achieve this respected qualification, and many thanks to their dedicated tutors.

(We're looking forward to getting the results of this months Diploma Certificates, after the March exams too)



We then had a super, friendly Curry at a nearby Asian restaurant - which is something that was discussed at this month's National Zoom Meeting on 14th March - we should eat out more together!

Why not come up with some ideas for Regional Meetings that are a bit more fun, to try to encourage Members old & new to come along & share ideas about our Noble Profession, and to get to know & support each other more?

Perhaps arrange a 'Private Dining Evening' at your local, favourite restaurant or pub? Or a 'Bring & Share Supper' at your Funeral Parlour?

A 'Family Fun Day' might be something our younger Members could get together for? It's always good to make new friends & gain support from other like-minded folks. It's good to talk. And if this can be in a more social way, and in a fun setting, all the better!

Let me know if you've managed to arrange something a bit different? And I'll get my thinking/planning cap on too. Watch out, region C!

On 8th March it was 'International Women's Day' and I sadly conducted the funeral of a much loved family friend, Andrea, taken too soon. Fortunately, my lady hearse driver, Skye, calmly & professionally drove us to her funeral, and we both agreed that it was a privilege to look after this Special Lady on a day that Celebrated Women 🍷

My next invitation to represent the BIFD will be at the SAIF (Society of Allied & independent Funeral Directors) Annual Conference Weekend in Historic York, on 23rd March. Another great chance to get FD's from all over the UK to visit my beloved Yorkshire! And many BIFD members are also SAIF members - so I'll be seeing all of you dual members there.

Then, very quickly, Easter will be upon us - a time to reflect & thank God that Jesus rose again, serving as a reminder of Victory over Sin, and Eternal Hope.

We also get some Bank Holidays too - so here's hoping for a few quiet days off...or at least a few scrumptious Easter Eggs!



Here is a picture of my four granddaughters, taken last Easter - on an Egg hunt with me at my home. I'm secretly hoping that one of them is a 'budding funeral director' but which one will it be? My money is on the eldest one, Millicent 🎩 who is curious about my job.

Have a blessed one, and enjoy the lighter nights & milder Spring Days. And God bless you all this Easter Time.

Yours funerally,

Amanda Dalby



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2024/25 MEMBERSHIP SUBSCRIPTION RENEWAL

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To opt out of allowing your personal information to be shared, please tick the box.

PLEASE NOTE: If you are applying for a Licence, you must complete the 2023/24 CPD Return and enclose it with your Subscription Renewal. CPD Returns will be checked and verified and you may be contacted and requested to supply additional information if we need further verification.

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All the activities must have been undertaken between 01/04/23 - 31/03/24. No carry forwards of any description are acceptable.

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LETTER FROM THE DEPUTY EDITOR

Lucie Kibbey, Cert. FS, MBIFD

Hello, Howdy, Bonjour, Guten Tag and 'Allo,

What a month it has been since the last edition.

Hayley has been working tirelessly behind the scenes as usual making sure the Journal is pulled together in it's typical professional fashion. She makes it look easy but there is a lot that goes into it!



In the work world of Lucie, I have been helping Amanda Pink (Admin) get the membership renewals sorted, and certificates and licences sent out. Please make sure you get your renewals sent in so that we can process them. With everything in the media the last few weeks it really would be beneficial to proudly show families that you are a member of the institute.

I also had a previous family come back to me to take the service of another loved one, I must say it really does warm the heart when that happens, to know you've looked after someone so well that they want you to do it all again, in their deepest moments of grief, you become a trusted friend.



In home life we are on a mission to increase our steps on a weekly basis, so when it hasn't been raining, we have been out enjoying the local country parks, feeding the ducks and a swing in the park.

Hayley has been sending out information on the social media side of things relating to the changes happening for Cremation paperwork from doctors – please, please read this and ensure you have a good understanding to explain this to your clients. If you have any questions, email us and we will do our best to advise where we can.

I have included a list about some special days that occur in March that you may find interesting.

Also, my best friend happens to be Iranian and inspired me to write a little piece about Nowruz, which is Persian New Year.

I hope they are enjoyable and educational in equal measure!

Until next time folks....

Lucie x

NOWRUZ

WEDNESDAY 20TH MARCH AT 3:06 AM

LUCIE KIBBEY, DEPUTY EDITOR



Nowruz is the Iranian or Persian New Year, celebrated by a host of ethnic groups worldwide. It is a festival based on the Iranian Solar Hijri Calendar, on the Spring Equinox.

The day of Nowruz has its origins in the Iranian religion of Zoroastrianism and is thus rooted in the traditions of the Iranian peoples; however, it has been celebrated by diverse communities for over 3,000 years in Western Asia, Central Asia, the Caucasus, the Black Sea Basin, the Balkans, and South Asia.

Presently, while it is largely a secular holiday for most celebrants and enjoyed by people of several different faiths and backgrounds, Nowruz remains a holy day for Zoroastrians, Bahá'ís, and some Muslim communities.

As the spring equinox, Nowruz marks the beginning of spring in the Northern Hemisphere, i.e. the moment at which the Sun crosses the celestial equator and equalizes night and day is calculated exactly every year.

اردیبهشت ۱۳۸۳					
۲۶	۱۹	۱۲	۵		شنبه
۲۷	۲۰	۱۳	۶		یکشنبه
۲۸	۲۱	۱۴	۷		دوشنبه
۲۹	۲۲	۱۵	۸	۱	سه‌شنبه
۳۰	۲۳	۱۶	۹	۲	چهارشنبه
۳۱	۲۴	۱۷	۱۰	۳	پنج‌شنبه
	۲۵	۱۸	۱۱	۴	جمعه

Traditional customs of Nowruz include fire and water, ritual dances, gift exchanges, reciting poetry, symbolic objects and more; these customs differ between the diverse peoples and countries that celebrate the festival.

The first day of the Iranian calendar falls on the March equinox, the first day of spring, around 21 March.



In the 11th century AD the Iranian calendar was reformed in order to fix the beginning of the calendar year, i.e. Nowruz, at the vernal equinox. Accordingly, the definition of Nowruz given by the Iranian astronomer Tusi was the following: "the first day of the official New Year [Nowruz] was always the day on which the sun entered Aries before noon. Nowruz is the first day of Farvardin, the first month of the Iranian solar calendar, which is the official calendar in use in Iran, and formerly in Afghanistan.

While Nowruz has been celebrated since the reform of the Iranian calendar in the 11th century CE to mark the new year, the United Nations officially recognized the "International Day of Nowruz" with the adoption of Resolution 64/253 by the United Nations General Assembly in February 2010.

TRADITIONAL CUSTOMS OF THE HOLIDAY:

- House cleaning and shopping
- Visiting friends and family
- Food preparation
- Haft-Sin
- Haft-Mewa
- Khoncha
- Amu Nowruz and Hajji Firuz Kampirak and Nauryz kozhe.



HAFT - SIN

Typically, before the arrival of Nowruz, family members gather around the Haft-sin table and await the exact moment of the March equinox to celebrate the New Year. The number 7 and the letter S are related to the seven Ameshasepantas as mentioned in the Zend-Avesta. They relate to the four elements of Fire, Earth, Air, Water, and the three life forms of Humans, Animals and Plants. In modern times, the explanation was simplified to mean that the Haft-sin, seven things beginning with the letter S are Sabze, Samanu, Senjed, Serke, Sib, Sir and Sumac.



HAFT - MEWA >

In Afghanistan, people prepare Haft Mēwa (English: seven fruits) for Nauruz, a mixture of seven different dried fruits and nuts (such as raisins, silver berry, pistachios, hazelnuts, prunes, walnut, and almonds) served in syrup.



< KNONCHA

Knoncha is the traditional display of Novruz in the Republic of Azerbaijan. It consists of a big silver or copper tray, with a tray of green, sprouting wheat (samani) in the middle and a dyed egg for each member of the family arranged around it. The table should be with at least seven dishes.



AMU NOWRUZ AND HAJJI FIRUZ

In Iran, the traditional heralds of the festival of Nowruz are Amu Nowruz and Haji Firuz, who appear in the streets to celebrate the New Year.

Amu Nowruz brings children gifts, much like his counterpart Santa Claus. He is the husband of Nane Sarma, with whom he shares a traditional love story in which they can meet each other only once a year. He is depicted as an elderly silver-haired man with a long beard carrying a walking stick, wearing a felt hat, a long cloak of blue canvas, a sash, giveh, and linen trousers.

Haji Firuz, a character with his face and hands covered in soot, clad in bright red clothes and a felt hat, is the companion of Amu Nowruz. He dances through the streets while singing and playing the tambourine. In the traditional songs, he introduces himself as a serf trying to cheer people whom he refers to as his lords.

NAURYZ KOZHE >

In Kazakhstan, Kazakhs start the new year by cooking nauryz kozhe, a traditional drink or soup.



In the folklore of Afghanistan, Kampirak and his retinue pass village by village, distributing gathered charities among people. He is an old, bearded man wearing colourful clothes with a long hat and rosary who symbolizes beneficence and the power of nature yielding the forces of winter. The tradition is observed in central provinces, specially Bamyar and Daykundi.

HALLIDAY FUNERAL SUPPLIES APPOINTS NEW NATIONAL SALES DIRECTOR



Halliday Funeral Supplies Ltd is delighted to announce the appointment of Chris Taylor as its new National Sales Director.

Chris joined the business towards the end of 2023 after a relatively short stint as National Sales Manager at Coleman Milne, and a longer period prior to that as the Northern Area Sales Manager at J C Atkinson & Son Ltd.

Over the last seven years, Chris has developed a high level of connections within the funeral industry through various regional and national meetings, exhibitions and conferences. This, coupled with his commercial and marketing experience gained from earlier job roles outside of the funeral industry, made him an ideal choice when Hallidays were looking at further expanding their business.

As Philip Halliday says, *"By appointing Chris, we have someone with a proven record of not only dealing with Funeral Directors but who can also help the business to grow and improve the overall offering that we have."*

Based on the Wirral, Hallidays has, since 1979 been a dependable supplier of coffins and all funeral requisites to Funeral Directors nationwide, and as far afield as the Channel Isles, Gibraltar and the Falkland Isles. Today, the business is owned and run by the three Halliday Brothers - Richard, Stephen and Philip.

In addition to speaking to Funeral Directors, Chris will also be looking at adding other products to the Halliday range and seeking ways of gaining further brand recognition.



Chris Taylor, National Sales Director, Halliday Funeral Supplies

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Honouring the Past: A Tale of Closure and Compassion

In 2021, a poignant event unfolded within the tranquil grounds of a local cemetery in Region G, orchestrated by Peggy Snell, a dedicated figure in the Institute. This significant undertaking aimed to provide closure to the next of kin by exhuming a body for cremation. The deceased, who had died in the USA in 1998, was brought back to Warminster by their family for burial, setting the stage for a journey of remembrance and final farewells.

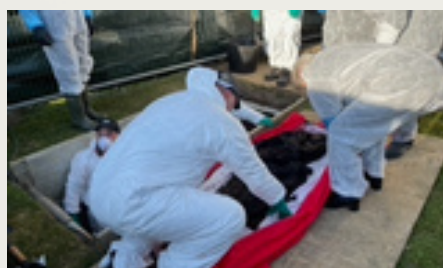


On the appointed day, Peggy, accompanied by her husband Keith and two devoted bearers, embarked on this solemn task. Alongside them stood council representatives, public health officers, and the diligent grave diggers. Though a scheduled police officer was unable to attend due to an emergency, their absence did not deter the collective commitment to this sensitive undertaking.



The process unfolded with reverence and meticulous care. Excavating the grave to the depth of the coffin revealed the passage of time, with the wooden enclosure succumbing to decay over the years. Despite this, the dignity of the deceased remained intact, clothed in garments that whispered echoes of a life once lived. As the body was gently lifted from its resting place, poignant fragments – bones from hands and feet – emerged during the sifting of soil, a poignant reminder of mortality's embrace. Adhering to regulations, all remains, including remnants of the original coffin, were placed in a new coffin, a symbolic gesture of continuity amidst the passage of time.

Fortune smiled upon Peggy Snell during this endeavour, as a retired funeral director offered invaluable insights into the dimensions of the original coffin, streamlining the process of procuring a new coffin. This act of kindness underscored the spirit of camaraderie and support that permeates the funeral service community.



The exhumation commenced at 7.30am, delayed only briefly as the council official arrived to oversee proceedings. By mid-morning, the task was accomplished, and the solemn procession returned the coffin to the funeral premises.

That same afternoon, the coffin and its precious contents were cremated, a testament to the circle of life and the transformative power of remembrance. Within two days, the cremated remains were returned to the next of kin, signalling the conclusion of this poignant chapter with dignity and closure.



In the annals of time, this event serves as a testament to the unwavering commitment of individuals like Peggy and Keith Snell and the collective resolve of a community dedicated to honouring the past, embracing the present, and facilitating closure for those who journey through the valley of grief.

Special thanks to Peggy and Keith Snell for sharing this collection of photographs and experiences of arranging an Exhumation.



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EDUCATIONAL VISIT: SHAY GRANGE CREMATORIUM BY CLIVE PEARSON, 2ND VICE PRESIDENT

The British Institute of Funeral Directors recently embarked on a journey to Shay Grange, an exquisite crematorium nestled in the heart of Bradford. This state-of-the-art facility became the backdrop for an enlightening experience as the attendees were treated to an immersive tour, delving deep into the inner workings of this magnificent establishment



At the Crematorium, a remarkable feature has been incorporated to enhance the experience for visitors. Two chapels are seamlessly connected through the central catafalque, cleverly concealed by exquisite woodwork and a specially designed backdrop. This ingenious design allows the chapel that is not in use to be discreetly hidden from sight, ensuring a serene and uninterrupted atmosphere for the congregation.



These two interconnected areas have the ability to accommodate a wide range of seating capacities, making them suitable for both intimate gatherings of under 20 people and larger congregations of over 150. This exceptional flexibility allows the space to effortlessly adapt and create an ambiance that is perfectly tailored to the specific needs of each occasion.

In accordance with certain religious customs, after the ceremony concludes, mourners have the opportunity to pay their respects in the viewing room. This sacred space is reserved for those who wish to personally witness the poignant moment when the coffin is gently placed into the cremator, honouring the transition of the departed soul. One fascinating aspect of this viewing chamber is its inclusion of buttons that enable the transfer of the coffin into the cremation chamber. This unique feature allows the grieving family the option to personally carry out this final duty for their dearly departed.



Shay Grange Crematorium takes pride in providing ample parking facilities for up to 199 cars. However, recognising the importance of a stress-free experience, overflow capacity is also available to accommodate up to 300 cars. To further ease any concerns about parking, designated drop-off spaces for coaches are conveniently provided. This thoughtful provision ensures that mourners can focus solely on their visit to the crematorium, without any added anxiety of finding a parking spot.



By prioritising the comfort and convenience of visitors, the Crematorium enables every individual to navigate the premises with ease and fully engage in the grieving process, honouring their loved ones in a tranquil and supportive environment

At Shay Grange Crematorium, a thoughtful one-way system ensures that each funeral procession remains undisturbed by the one ahead. Upon parking your vehicle, you gracefully navigate through the car park to reach the waiting area. This separate building serves as a serene space where loved ones gather before the service commences. To accommodate any overflow, the waiting area is equipped with large televisions that display the funeral proceedings in real time, should the chapel reach its capacity.



Behind the crematorium, where the cremation process occurs, meticulous planning is evident. The cremation chambers themselves are spacious, measuring up to 40 inches wide. Each chamber is equipped with its own abatement system, ensuring that if one malfunctions, the second chamber can continue the cremation process independently.

Another noteworthy aspect of this facility is its implementation of Nitrogen Oxide abatement. Shay Grange proudly claims to be one of the pioneering crematoriums in the country to adopt this practice. It is expected that many other crematoriums will soon follow suit in order to meet future requirements. Currently, if the cremator experiences issues with abatement, it may be necessary to activate the bypass mode. However, upcoming regulations will soon prohibit this practice, which is why the cremators were built in this independent working way.



Among the privileged participants were the accomplished students of Clive Pearson and Hayley Owen Barker, who had triumphantly completed the rigorous qualification, Certificate in Funeral Service. As the students stood tall and proud, their hard work and unwavering commitment were duly recognised with the presentation of their well-deserved certificates by National President Amanda Dalby.

The visit to Shay Grange crematorium proved to be a transformative encounter for the students and members, not only exposing them to the practical intricacies of funeral services but also bestowing upon them invaluable insights into the ever-evolving landscape of the profession. With every step through the facility's hallowed halls, their knowledge and proficiency were further refined, elevating their skills to new heights.

Just like our previous CPD gatherings, this particular one welcomed everyone in the funeral profession. We were honoured to have not only our own members but also colleagues from different crematoriums and Civil Celebrants, making a total of 24 attendees.

This immersive journey left an indelible mark on all those involved, fostering a sense of enrichment and empowerment within the realm of funeral services.

EDUCATIONAL MEETING TO SEE THE HORSES AT HANSON CARRIAGE HIRE

Region C welcomes everyone to a guided tour
around the stables and to meet the horses.

The evening will include supper

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BOOST FOR WHITLEY WOOD COMMUNITY WHO NOW HAVE BRANCH OF RESPECTED FUNERAL DIRECTOR ON THEIR DOORSTEP

Whitley Wood now has their own Funeral Directors after a business proudly at the heart of the local community opened a new home in the area.

Miles & Daughters Funeral Directors has opened a new premises making their services are more accessible for people living in the south of Reading.

Miles & Daughters is part of the Funeral Partners network – the country's third largest funeral business – and their investment has helped transform the site into a welcoming funeral home.

Regional Development Director Peter Dearing said: *"It has taken a good amount of time and investment, but we are really pleased with how the home is looking. We've always served the families of Whitley Wood from our home in Winnersh, but having somewhere more local can only be a positive thing."*

This branch is the eighth Miles & Daughters funeral home and Peter said the reputation built by the late Adam Miles, who founded the business in 1999, was a key reason for their excellent standing in the area.

"Adam built the business up brilliantly, and it has been serving communities across Berkshire for more than 20 years now," he said. *"On top of that legacy, we have got great teams in all of our branches who look after people and who families want to see again when they are experiencing a difficult moment. The Whitley Wood branch will be looked after by Funeral Arranger Catherine Shaw who is fantastic, brilliant with clients and will be perfect for this new role."*



Above: Funeral Arranger Catherine Shaw outside the new Miles & Daughters branch in Whitley Wood

As well as the care and personal service which is the hallmark of Miles & Daughters, they also offer the use of a classic Austin FX3 hearse, lovingly known as Morag, believed to be only three or four of their like in existence. It is affectionately nicknamed the Heartbeat hearse having appeared on the classic television show, and also boasts appearances in Midsomer Murders, Father Brown and in the Batman movie franchise.

Area Development Manager Sarah White said: *"It's a special car which is beautiful and quirky and when you see her you can't help but smile. It's a real asset to us which is recognised by people in the area."*

In 2023, Miles & Daughters launched their first ever Community Fund which supported six local causes with grants to continue their outstanding work. The second cycle, where new charities can apply for funding, is opened in February, and the team are encouraging causes in Whitley Wood to apply.

Sarah said: *"The discussions have already started and we know there is brilliant community work in the area which we hope to support."*

For more information about Miles & Daughters Funeral Directors, or for more information about their Community Fund, visit www.milesfunerals.com

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steve.wilkinson@funeralpartners.co.uk

FUNERAL DIRECTOR HOPING TO SET WORLD RECORD BY RUNNING MARATHON WEARING MOURNING SUIT AND TOP HAT

A Funeral Director is hoping to break down the taboos around discussing death while raising vital funds for charity by running the London Marathon in his full work attire – including frockcoat and top hat.

Anghus Weightman, who works alongside his father Paul at Godalming Funeral Service, has been inspired by Hospice UK's Dying Matters campaign, which aims 'to make things better for people across the country who are dying or grieving.'

The 34-year-old is hoping to set the fastest marathon time run by a Funeral Director in their full uniform ever and has contacted the team at Guinness World Record to verify whether the record exists or if he is the first to attempt the feat.



Anghus, who has run the Brighton Marathon twice and completed two virtual marathons during the Covid-19 lockdowns, has now begun training while wearing the three-piece outfit in preparation for the world-famous 26-mile challenge in the capital on April 21.

He said: "I used to do some buggy running and around Christmas I would wear a festive suit and decorate the pram. It would put a smile on people's faces. For this particular idea, I've been really inspired by the Dying Matters campaign. Death isn't something to avoid talking about, and when people do pass away it doesn't mean you can never mention them again. I also want to try and get away from the stereotype of a Funeral Director being scary or unapproachable, it's just not the case, and hopefully doing this will start conversations."

Left: Anghus Weightman following an 18-mile training run in his full Funeral Directing suit

"I will be running wearing the attire I wear when conducting funerals, it hasn't been altered at all, so it is a real challenge. If it's wet the suit gets heavy, if it's sunny then it will be hot and if there is any wind then the hat is going to be unstable."

So far, Anghus has raised more than £2,500 for Hospice UK, and is hoping to raise £5,000 in total, which will be boosted by a bake sale at Godalming Funeral Service in Bridge Road on April 4.

To donate, visit <https://www.justgiving.com/page/anghus-weightman-1692472673581>

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.

It now includes more than 130 family businesses, which have entrusted their reputation and heritage to Funeral Partners.

LET'S GET SOCIAL

AMANDA DALBY, NATIONAL PRESIDENT

At our National Zoom Meeting this month, an enthusiastic Member suggested that Regional Meetings may get more interest, and a higher turnout, if we arranged 'Social Events' instead of supplier visits or Zoom meetings in our Regions? I for one, like to get 'out & about' socially, so here are a few ideas..

PRIVATE DINING OR RESTAURANT BOOKING 🍷🍴

Everyone loves a meal out, and what better than having a culinary night, peppered with funeral conversation, over a 'tasting menu' Sunday lunch or some sharing Tapas maybe?



You can always add a 'Wine Flight' too..and become experts at pairing food with the perfect Wine, all whilst sharing industry news & gaining knowledge from other funeral professionals. Let's get booking!

REAL ALE TRAIL 🍺

We have lots of Real Ale Pubs around Yorkshire, and most of them sell beers & ales from Independent Breweries. Why not support the ones in your area, and arrange a tour of the Brewery itself, or go on a 'Real Ale Trail'? The Non-drinkers can do the driving, and sample all of the Non-alcoholic beer & beverages on offer too.



FAMILY DAYS OUT 🧠📈

For members with young families, why not arrange a day out to a local Theme Park attraction, or a Petting Zoo? My young grandchildren absolutely love a trip out, and perhaps it would be chance for the Next Generation of budding Funeral Directors to bond together?

Flamingo Land, at Malton, and Cannon Hall Farm, Barnsley, are both in Yorkshire, and so much FUN! And I think you'll agree that we all need a bit of that, after a hard week funeralising!

Here are two of my granddaughters enjoying their day out with me, last April.



A WALK IN THE WOODS 🌿

Why not get back in touch with Nature, and organise a Woodland Walk? If you're a bit of a 'tree hugger' like me, and enjoy the outdoors, you may want to enjoy the carpets of Bluebells which will be popping up over the next few weeks too. I like to take pictures for my Social Media & Website pages, as I go along...other Members might want to participate in a bit of amateur photography for their marketing too?

A CANAL BOAT TRIP 🚢

There's nothing more relaxing than a slow ride along our Canals & Waterways. Look up the trips available in your area, and maybe combine it with an evening meal on board? The weather is picking up, so it shouldn't be too chilly from April onwards. A friend of mine has a Canal Boat, and took me & my granddaughters out last year - it was great fun, and definitely a much needed 'get away from it all' experience.

Let me know if any of you manage to organise a Regional Meeting with socialising in mind - or if you have any other ideas for trips out with other Funeral Professionals - email your thoughts or ideas to me at admin@bifd.org.uk And above all - enjoy yourselves!

Your National President
Amanda Dalby




GET INVOLVED WITH THE JOURNAL




Are you looking for a platform to share your expertise, stay updated with industry news, and connect with fellow professionals? Look no further! Get involved with our online publication, The Journal!

Here's how you can contribute:

 **Write an Article:** Share your insights, experiences, and knowledge with our community. Whether it's a piece on new trends in funeral services or tips for providing exceptional care to families, your voice matters!

 **Share Regional News & Updates:** Keep our readers informed about happenings in your area. From upcoming events to regulatory changes, your contributions help create a comprehensive resource for funeral directors nationwide.

 **Letters Page:** Have something on your mind? Share your thoughts, feedback, or questions in our Letters Page. Engage in meaningful discussions and exchange ideas with your peers.

Submitting content is easy! Simply email all your contributions to the editorial team at journal@bifd.org.uk. Your submissions will be reviewed and featured in upcoming editions of The Journal.

Don't miss out on this fantastic opportunity to showcase your expertise and contribute to the advancement of our profession. Let's work together to make The Journal an invaluable resource for all funeral directors.

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PLUS MORE

AN UPDATE FROM LIFE LEDGER

Many of you (over 1000 independents and some bigger businesses) already signpost our free service that lets families close the accounts of loved ones online, quickly and easily.

We are now also working with over 100 local authorities, again to simply make the bereaved public aware of the help that is available.

We would like to extend a big “thank you” to everyone who has made this happen. If you are not working with us then do get involved. For more information see our dedicated page here:

https://lifeledger.com/funeral_directors/

Life Ledger is free for the public to use and the feedback we get is great - please see some examples from families:

"You and your company have been brilliant on all fronts, and it helps to ease the pain we are all going through at the moment with losing Dad."

JH, Yorkshire

"Thanks for this and all the help. I have to say Life Ledger is proving to be a really valuable resource. Thanks."

KG, Stockport

"You've truly been marvellous and have taken away some of the arduous tasks we have had to deal with. Thank you again! Best wishes and gratitude."

HR, St Albans

"I think this service is brilliant. It's been such a help to me already and removed a big bit of worry and stress in contacting the companies."

EH, Stockport

"I must say this is the most wonderful service and has taken a lot of stress out of an extremely traumatic time. Thank you for everything you do."

ES, Swansea



Life Ledger

Reviews 17 • Great



4.2

VERIFIED COMPANY

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From March 2024, and based on feedback, we are pleased to now also offer two additional levels of collaboration as follows:

STANDARD PARTNERSHIP (FROM £10 PER MONTH) INCLUDES:

- A promotional listing on LifeLedger.com to encourage both pre-need and at-need enquiries
- Branded landing page
- Life Ledger branded leaflets to give out or co-branded leaflet PDF for self-printing
- Co-branded social media partnership pack
- Software integration with eFD, Oak and other FMS softwares
- Enrolment in our rewards scheme, with the opportunity to earn rewards with referrals
- Official Partner window stickers

PREMIUM PARTNERSHIP (FROM £20 PER MONTH) INCLUDES ALL THE ABOVE PLUS:

- A Life Ledger widget to embed on your website, that will help families start telling companies without leaving your ecosystem
- Branded dashboard for families highlighting YOU as the referrer
- A 400-word review of your business on LifeLedger.com, perfectly SEO-optimised, designed to drive visitors back to you
- A quarterly LinkedIn post dedicated to your business

WHY UPGRADE?

Our website gets a high level of traffic - mainly from individuals who are expecting a bereavement soon, or are very recently bereaved. People are also signposted from service providers, Google, registrars and other sources.

For a demo/discussion about any of the free or paid services available, please call or email dan@lifeledger.com or by phone 07702 639919.

As always thank you for your support and for helping families with their end of life admin journey.
The Life Ledger team



"The service Life Ledger provides the bereaved, allows a family the space and time to grieve without having to worry about administration processes which in the past may have caused unnecessary stress and concerns when sorting out our loved one's accounts"

John Adams Dip FAA, Dip FD,
Cert. ED

"Life Ledger makes the process easier for families. Anything that makes it easier for them is a must!"

Emily Houghton DipFAA,
DipFD, CertED, MBIFD

"Life Ledger is an essential service to offer to families. We have used it personally following a family bereavement and it made the closing of accounts very easy and stress free. It is highly recommended"

David Barrington Dip FD,
CTLLS

NAVIGATING CHANGE: ADAPTABILITY IN FUNERAL SERVICES

In our profession, change is not just a constant; it's an essential aspect of our role. As funeral directors, we are entrusted with supporting families through some of the most difficult times of their lives. However, the landscape of funeral services is evolving, and it's crucial for us to adapt to these changes while upholding the core values of empathy, respect, and professionalism that define our profession.

Technology and Innovation: The digital age has brought about significant changes in how we communicate, plan, and conduct funeral services. From online memorials and virtual gatherings to digital planning tools, technology offers new avenues for connecting with families and providing support. Embracing these innovations can enhance the overall experience for both funeral directors and the families we serve. However, it's crucial to strike a balance between embracing technology and maintaining the personal touch that is so vital in our profession.

Environmental Sustainability: As awareness of environmental issues grows, so does the demand for eco-friendly funeral options. Families are increasingly seeking environmentally sustainable alternatives, such as green burials, biodegradable caskets, and carbon-neutral services. By offering these options and implementing sustainable practices in our operations, we can support families in honouring their loved ones while also minimising our impact on the planet.

Embracing Diversity: One of the most significant shifts in recent years has been the increasing diversity in funeral customs and traditions. As our society becomes more multicultural, families may have unique preferences and cultural practices that differ from what we traditionally offer. It's essential for us to embrace this diversity, respecting and accommodating the wishes of each family we serve. This might mean providing services for different religious or cultural practices, offering eco-friendly options, or incorporating personalised touches that reflect the life and personality of the deceased.

Education and Professional Development: In a rapidly changing industry, ongoing education and professional development are essential. Keeping abreast of the latest trends, techniques, and regulations ensures that we can provide the highest level of service to our clients. The British Institute of Funeral Directors plays a crucial role in this regard, offering training programs, workshops, and resources to help members stay informed and up-to-date.

Caring for Ourselves: As funeral directors, we dedicate ourselves to caring for others during times of grief and loss. However, it's equally important to prioritise our own well-being. The emotional toll of our work can be significant, and it's essential to recognise when we need support and to seek help when necessary. Building a strong support network within our profession and practicing self-care are vital for maintaining our own mental and emotional health.

In Conclusion: As members of the British Institute of Funeral Directors, we are part of a profession with a rich history and a crucial role in society. By embracing change, staying informed, and prioritising both the needs of the families we serve and our own well-being, we can continue to uphold the highest standards of professionalism and compassion in our work.

Together, let us navigate these changes with empathy, integrity, and a commitment to serving our communities with excellence.



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Managing Director, Marian Sinclair: Serving families since 2002


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Google's Latest Update...

A GOLDEN OPPORTUNITY FOR YOUR FUNERAL SERVICE!

Being online and using social media can seem overwhelming at times with its changes and updates especially when trying to find the time for it and running a Funeral business. The recent updates to Google Business Profile, particularly the incorporation of "Social Media Updates," offer you a unique opportunity to rethink how you connect with the families and communities you serve.



THE HEART OF VISIBILITY: YOUR GOOGLE BUSINESS PROFILE

Consider a family in need of the services you provide; their first step is often a search on Google. Here is where your Google Business Profile becomes their first encounter with you. The addition of social media posts directly into this profile means that your voice, your message and your care can reach them from the outset. It's a chance to show who you are and what you stand for, not just through words but through the warmth and understanding that guides your service.

A CALL TO SHARE MORE MEANINGFULLY

With Google highlighting the importance of social media through these updates, it's a gentle nudge for us to look at what we're sharing. It's about going beyond the basics, beyond death notices and sharing content that educates, comforts, updates and connects. Here are a few ideas to enrich your social media and by extension, your Google Business Profile:

- **Educational Posts:** Share insights into the funeral planning process, advice on coping with grief or explanations of funeral traditions and customs. This not only informs but also demystifies aspects of our work for those who may be overwhelmed.
- **Behind-the-Scenes:** Offer a glimpse into your daily life and the care that goes into your services. Whether it's arranging flowers, setting up for a service, or maintaining serene spaces for families to gather, these snapshots can offer comfort and reassurance.
- **Community Involvement:** Highlight your involvement in local events or support initiatives. Showing your engagement with the community builds a deeper connection and showcases your dedication beyond your services.
- **Testimonials and Stories:** With permission, sharing stories or testimonials from families you've supported can be incredibly powerful. These narratives speak volumes about the impact of your work and the comfort you provide.

TOGETHER ON THIS JOURNEY

I understand the hesitation that can come with stepping into the digital arena. You can harness these new opportunities to not just enhance your Google Business Profile, but to make a real difference in the lives of the families you serve. In embracing these changes you're not just adapting; you're growing. You're extending your reach and deepening your connections, one post, one story, one heartfelt interaction at a time.

If you're ready to explore how you can bring this digital vision to life for your service, I'm here, ready to embark on this meaningful journey with you. Want to have a chat or book a free online video audit of your current online presence, then do get in touch with me.

Visit www.fitsocialmedia.co.uk for more information. And you can email me at eimer@fitsocialmedia.co.uk. Thanks for reading.

GET A FREE ONLINE VIDEO AUDIT OF YOUR ONLINE PRESENCE

In today's digital age, establishing a robust online presence is more crucial than ever for Funeral Directors, businesses and suppliers. Understanding this, Eimer Duffy of FIT Social Media offers a complimentary overview video audit of your online presence.

As an Associate Member of the BIFD, Eimer Duffy brings a wealth of expertise in social media/digital marketing specifically tailored to the funeral industry. This personalised overview video audit is crafted to provide you with a clear, insightful analysis of your digital footprint, covering critical areas such as your website's user experience, social media platforms, Google Business listing and much more.

SOME OF THE BENEFITS OF A VIDEO AUDIT:

- **Tailored Strategies:** Receive bespoke recommendations to enhance your website's visibility and user engagement.
- **Boosted Online Presence:** Learn how to maximise your impact on social media and Google Business, attracting more families in need of your services.
- **Competitive Edge:** Gain insights into how you can set your services apart in the digital landscape, ensuring you remain a step ahead in the industry.



This service is available to BIFD members to support your journey in embracing the digital world effectively. Don't let this opportunity pass you by. Elevate your online presence, connect with more families and enhance your digital marketing efforts. Book a free exploration call with Eimer and claim your complimentary overview video audit and start transforming your digital approach today.

Embrace the future with confidence, knowing you have the tools and insights to thrive online. For more on this head to www.fitsocialmedia.co.uk or email eimer@fitsocialmedia.co.uk.



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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FIVE REASONS FOR MOVING TO CASHLESS FUNERAL DONATIONS

A growing number of funeral businesses are choosing to offer digital-only donations, mirroring the general trend in society away from cash payments.

Online payments are now more popular than cash and cheques, and contactless payments have increased from 7% of payments in 2016 to 37% in 2022.*

SO WHY SHOULD FUNERAL BUSINESSES AND ARRANGERS CHOOSE DIGITAL-ONLY DONATIONS?

- 1. More time to care for your families:** Anyone who's worked in a funeral business will know that handling cash is very time-consuming. With digital-only donations, arrangers can spend more time organising funerals and supporting families.
- 2. More time to work in your communities:** As funeral businesses, you are at the heart of your community. Relieved of the burden of handling cash, you can devote more time to community activities, including getting to know local charities which could benefit from online funeral donations.
- 3. Positive feedback from your families:** Digital-only payments will be well received by families who want to know that donations made in memory of their loved one are managed securely. By going cashless there will be less burden on families who often get involved in processing cash and cheques. It's one less thing for them to worry about at what is an incredibly difficult time.
- 4. Convenience for donors, leading to more donations overall:** Payment trends certainly indicate that convenience trumps cash, with cash representing a dwindling minority of 22% of all payments.* Furthermore, in 2023, 18% of donations via MuchLoved were made using mobile wallets (Apple Pay or Google Pay), simpler for donors than inputting card details. Donations via MuchLoved increased by 20% in 2023, showing the popularity of making donations online, and the average donation amount also increased.
- 5. Greater efficiency for your business:** With less cash held in branches, the cost of third-party cash collection may be significantly reduced. What's more, handling cash in-branch comes with several risks which will then need to be managed, adding more complexity to day-to-day operations and potentially carrying an added cost.

HOW TO MAKE GOING CASHLESS A SUCCESS

- **Make time to brief colleagues:** For the switch to digital-only donations to be successful, it's important that funeral directors and arrangers are well briefed on how to talk to families about cashless funerals. MuchLoved can support your business through the change.
- **If a family still wants to receive cash:** They can provide their own donations box and take responsibility for the money themselves. However, arrangers who can put options and benefits on the table, and are knowledgeable about local causes, are likely to guide families away from cash.
- **Pre-paid funeral plans are not affected:** You should check with your plan provider, but an online tribute site is likely to be sufficient for anyone choosing donation management as part of their funeral plan.
- **Use our downloadable QR Codes:** Adding a QR code to the Order of Service is an easy way to signpost families to the donations page via their smart phones. QR codes are easy to download from your MuchLoved partner area.

**Source: UK Finance – UK Payments Markets Summary 2023*



HOW MUCHLOVED WORKS

The MuchLoved tribute service is quick and simple to set up and use. It provides you with the very best way to record and share your memories and stories. You can add pictures, music and video, as well as light virtual candles to help you create a truly special and unique tribute site. Comprehensive privacy and invitation settings enable you to keep complete control over both access and display. It is optimised for desktop, tablet and smartphone devices and you can change anything on your tribute instantly through your own personal control settings.

Your tribute will also have the ability to process donations and collect Gift Aid for UK charities if you are looking to fundraise for a chosen cause in response to the death of a loved one. There are also additional features to enable you to record ongoing events and activities carried out in their memory.

The optional Funeral Announcement facility provides an ideal way to communicate funeral information to guests and collect funeral donations, with MuchLoved being awarded the Best Online Bereavement Resource at the Good Funeral Awards in both 2014 and 2016.

MuchLoved works in partnership with over 2,000 funeral directors and over 400 UK charities had good causes, including the RNLI, Stroke Association, British Lung Foundation, Sue Ryder, Prostate Cancer UK and Alzheimer's Society. It is with their support that the tribute service is totally free for you to use and keep, to help with your grief journey.

We are very easy to contact and are always keen to hear input and suggestions as our whole purpose is to make MuchLoved supportive and helpful to you.

Offering you a really special service and helping raise substantial income for good is something we are really proud and excited about. Remembering the person that has died and helping those affected by their death will always remain at the heart of the service. We hope that it becomes of real benefit to you as well.

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Preparations are firmly in place for this year's National Funeral Exhibition. With FSA members occupying a large number of stands, funeral directors will learn of the vast diversity of our members, including coffins, funeral vehicles, mortuary equipment, marketing & promotional materials, memorial jewellery, commercial insurance, online donations, funeral wear, celebrants, soft goods, memorial products to name but a few.

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