

BRITISH INSTITUTE OF FUNERAL DIRECTORS



ISSUE 5

THE JOURNAL



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LETTER FROM THE NATIONAL PRESIDENT

Amanda Dalby, Dip. FD, LMBIFD



Dear Members, Students, Fellows & Associate Members of our Educated Profession

Well, April came & went without too much rain, and in fact boasted some marvellously clear & sunny days!

I took the opportunity to take my granddaughters on a 'Bluebell Walk' through Spring Wood, just across the border in LANCASHIRE, with a fellow BIFD member from Todmorden, Judith, who I trained with over 20 years ago, when we took our Dip. FD together.

And despite initial protests, my girls absolutely loved getting in touch with nature, running through the beautiful Carpets of Bluebells, whilst I cleared my head of all the week's funerals. It really does help to get some fresh air, after a busy week.



I also attended Marian Sinclair's Motorcycle Funerals Open Day & Memorial Service in April, where we all fondly remembered the founder, Marian's late husband, Revd. Paul Sinclair, in Measham, Leicestershire.

The weather was kind, as we took a tour of the premises & admired her huge collection of motorcycle hearses, and enjoyed a lunch of Street Food, whilst being entertained by a Gospel Choir. It was a great opportunity to chat with guests from around the country - including our friend, Barry Pritchard, the NAFD National President.



above: Marian Sinclair
far left: Barry Pritchard

Next stop was an invite to the NAFD Conference Weekend Gala Dinner, at the Beaumont Estate in Old Windsor, near London. I braved the train disruption, and travelled down South without too much delay, and had a very enjoyable evening in the company of all our Kindred Associations, and many friends from across the industry, as well as some of our great suppliers - including Frontline, Canfly Marketing & the Westerleigh Group.



above: Sean Bland:
Frontline



above: Alan Jose:
Westerleigh Group



above: Adrienne Peers:
Canfly Marketing



Cow & Calf Rocks, Ilkley, Yorkshire

Some of us had a look into the skies, late evening, in the hope of catching a view of the Aurora Borealis (Northern Lights) which one of my friends took amazing pictures of, the previous night, in Yorkshire, whilst I was packing for my trip!

We are blessed with very little light pollution in some parts of Yorkshire, and we really did experience a 'Celestial Spectacle' when it felt that Heaven truly came to Earth on the evening of Friday 10th May.



Hebden Bridge, Calderdale, Yorkshire

To more serious matters. Last month, in light of the Police investigation into Legacy Funerals in Hull, we were informed that the Government has sent a directive to all local Councils, instructing them to inspect all Funeral Directors from an Environmental Health perspective, across the country.

BIFD Funeral Home owners, please be aware that this can be on a 'spot check' basis, and we must all cooperate fully.

This is a precursor to Government regulation, and our Institute welcome it.

In the meantime, please keep informing your families & clients that we are EDUCATED & PROFESSIONAL, and do consider becoming a 'Licensed' member. Once you become one, you are then able to advertise your commitment to ongoing learning, through 12 hours of CPD per year, on both your websites and on Social Media platforms. You can also use our slogan 'Look for the Licence'.

There are some great ways that we are continuing to learn through our BIFD CPD sessions, on 'Zoom' or through visits to some of the super suppliers to this industry - see our 2nd Vice President, Clive Pearson's review of Region C's visit to Hanson Carriage Hire this month, on page 23.

The visit gave us a great insight into this very special suppliers approach & commitment to the funeral director who employ them through the North of England and beyond. The horses & their carriages were simply stunning, and James Hanson welcomed us with a very generous buffet to boot!



Looking forward to June, we have the bi-annual National Funeral Exhibition at Stoneleigh Park, Warwickshire, to visit, which takes place over three days, from 13th to 15th June. Come & find our BIFD Stand, No.256 in Hall 2. At this exhibition you can find anything & everything related to Funerals - it's an event not to be missed!

Myself & the Board of Directors will be there across the full 3 days, so do come & say hello.

If you're unable to make it, there will be a full report & pictures of the event in our next Journal - so watch this space!

Yours funerally

Amanda Dalby

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**MADE IN
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The British Institute of Funeral Directors

Conference: 18th – 20th October 2024

*Cedar Court Hotel
Ainley Top
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HD3 3RH*



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

**The British Institute of Funeral Directors Conference 2024:
18th – 20th October 2024**

Cedar Court Hotel

Ainley Top
Lindley Moor Rd
Huddersfield
HD3 3RH

The 42nd BIFD Conference 2024 Rates

1. Friday Evening To Sunday Morning – THE COMPLETE PACKAGE

<i>Friday Dinner</i>	<i>.....Double Room (per couple)</i>	<i>£595</i>
<i>Friday & Saturday Bed & Breakfast</i>	<i>.....Single Room (per person)</i>	<i>£370</i>
<i>Saturday AGM: On Arrival Tea & Coffee</i>		
<i>Saturday Lunch Included</i>		
<i>Saturday Evening Drinks Reception</i>		
<i>Saturday Gala Dinner – Includes 4 Course Meal</i>		

2. Friday Evening To Saturday Morning - ONLY

<i>Friday Dinner</i>	<i>.....Double Room (per couple)</i>	<i>£250</i>
<i>Friday Bed & Breakfast</i>	<i>.....Single Room (per person)</i>	<i>£160</i>
<i>Saturday AGM: On Arrival Tea, Coffee & Biscuits</i>		

Saturday Lunch Is Available At £25 PP

3. Saturday To Sunday Morning - ONLY

<i>Saturday AGM: On Arrival Tea, Coffee & Biscuits</i>	<i>.....Double Room (per couple)</i>	<i>£360</i>
<i>Saturday Evening Drinks Reception</i>	<i>.....Single Room (per person)</i>	<i>£225</i>
<i>Saturday Gala Dinner – Includes 4 Course Meal Followed By Tea & Coffee</i>		
<i>Saturday Bed & Breakfast</i>		

Saturday Lunch Is Available At £25 PP

4. The Gala Banquet Dinner Only

.....£80 Per Person

Saturday Evening Drinks Reception
Saturday Gala Dinner – Includes 4 Course Meal

5. AGM ATTENDANCE ONLY

.....Free To All Members & Students

Saturday AGM: On Arrival Tea, Coffee & Biscuits

Saturday Lunch Is Available On The Day At £25 PP

TO STAY BEFORE OR AFTER THE CONFERENCE B&B BASIS

<i>.....Double Room (2 People)</i>	<i>£100</i>
<i>.....Single Room (1 Person)</i>	<i>£90</i>

The 42nd BIFD CONFERENCE - 18th – 20th October 2024
Cedar Court Hotel, Huddersfield
BOOKING FORM

Members Name: Membership Number:

Address:

Post Code: Contact Telephone Number:

Email Address: Number of Rooms Required:

Special Dietary Requirements: Yes/No Details of Diet

Arrival Date:/...../..... Departure Date:/...../.....

Attending **Partners** Name:

Attending **Guests** Names:

See Rates Page To Complete Form & Payment

Tariff (1) – Full Package

Double Rate: £.....

Single Rate: £.....

Please return, or email, your completed booking form for the appropriate amount to the Conference Co-ordinator and make payment either by Bacs or by Cheque made out to "The BIFD":

Tariff (2) – Fri to Sat

Double Rate: £.....

Single Rate: £.....

Bacs Payments To:

Sort Code: 60-83-01 - Account Number: 20336550

Tariff (3) – Sat to Sun

Double Rate: £.....

Single Rate: £.....

Mr. David Gresty

C/O The British Institute of Funeral Directors
National Office
10 St John Road
Wroughton
Wiltshire
SN4 9ED

Tariff (4) – Gala Dinner Only

Total Attendees £.....

07354 847 702

Tariff (5) – AGM Only

£ No Charge

david-gresty@hotmail.com

Total Amount Due £.....

EXPLORING THE VITAL ROLE OF FUNERAL DIRECTORS: INSIGHTS FROM ROGER CLARK'S ENGAGING PRESENTATION

Unless you are really interested in promoting not only yourself but other colleagues in the B.I.F.D. who have also studied and worked hard to get qualifications then do not bother reading the following as I am 'beating the drum again' as I can hear colleagues say.



above: Roger Clark BIFD Fellow, Past President and Examiner

I was invited by a local church group to give a presentation about 'The Role of the Funeral Director'. There were 19 people present and although I finished after about 90 minutes (Getting close to my bedtime) from the number of questions asked during it and at teatime too it could have gone on much longer and the feedback from the persons who had arranged the evening for me was extremely positive and welcome.

As usual those attending were dismayed with what they read in the preamble and from my talk commented how important the qualifications the B.I.F.D. provide are. I told them that I had watched a debate on Parliament T.V. at lunchtime recently while eating my salad. Sad muppet I know I am. However more importantly one of the M.P.'s from Hull spent considerable time expressing much concern and it resulted in a motion that 'Licensing' should be debated sooner rather than later in Parliament. Everyone attending my presentation also concurred that this should happen and be in place.

For your information and to just make you realise what is happening elsewhere I recently was involved in the funeral of an ex-teaching colleague. I visited the premises and above the receptionist and the person who had arranged the funeral was a very impressive 'Diploma' that had been awarded as a 'demonstration' of her competence in Funeral arranging.

However, it meant nothing and the 'awarding body' was that company. I am going to print off a similar 'Diploma' and display it indicating my competence in 'Agriculture' after all I have an allotment successfully growing various vegetables and fruit.

Please do not let others mislead those you serve because they will by making out they are well qualified when they are not because they will!

Speak to local organisations in your catchment and offer to give a presentation. Church groups, U3AS, Rotary Clubs, Nurses, carers etc. Start with a small group to give you confidence if need be. Do not make a charge and for goodness sake it is NOT a direct advertising opportunity for where you work either. I really should not have to say that. It will be more subtle in as much as it will showing how qualified you are others in the B.I.F.D. and the message will resound have no doubts.

You have the talent and above all the expertise so use them. Develop you own style and one that you are comfortable with.

Use the 'events' that have happened in Hull and the media coverage to your advantage because if you don't others far less qualified than you will.

Thanks for reading.

Roger








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EXPLORING NEW FRONTIERS IN FUNERAL PRACTICES: MONTHLY CPD SESSIONS WITH THE BRITISH INSTITUTE OF FUNERAL DIRECTORS



In a world where tradition often guides our actions, it takes pioneers to challenge the status quo and offer fresh perspectives. The British Institute of Funeral Directors (BIFD) has embarked on such a journey with its monthly CPD (Continuing Professional Development) sessions, inviting professionals to explore innovative approaches within the realm of funeral services. The first session of 2024, held via Zoom, set a promising tone, featuring Simon Ferrar of Clandon Wood Nature Reserve and Natural Burial Ground.

Right: Simon Ferrar, founder of Clandon Wood Nature Reserve and Natural Burial Ground

Ferrar, a visionary in the field, shared his transformative journey, which began with a personal revelation at his aunt Rosie's 'Natural' funeral in 2005. The simplicity and beauty of a willow basket burial amidst the tranquil Warwickshire countryside sparked a profound question: "Why don't we do it this way?" This pivotal moment ignited Ferrar's mission to challenge conventional funeral practices and establish Clandon Wood Nature Reserve and Natural Burial Ground in 2012.

Clandon Wood stands as more than a burial ground; it is a sanctuary—a sustainable and responsible haven for both the departed and the bereaved. Ferrar's endeavour reintroduces forgotten rituals, fostering love, care, and connection often absent in traditional funeral services. Through his advocacy, families are empowered with knowledge and choices, enabling them to craft farewells that resonate with their unique needs and values.

Central to Ferrar's vision is fostering open conversations about death, dying, and grief—a space he affectionately dubs the 'Departure Lounge.' By demystifying these taboo subjects, he cultivates a culture where discussions around end-of-life matters are not only accepted but embraced.

As Ferrar eloquently puts it, "Once what you are doing has for you meaning, it is irrelevant whether you're happy or unhappy. You are content - you are not alone in your Spirit - you belong." His passion for service underscores the profound impact of meaningful work in the funeral profession.

Building on the success of this session, the BIFD's upcoming Zoom sessions promise to delve deeper into vital topics. Participants can anticipate insights on Funeral Finance and Vulnerable People with **FuneralSafe**, shedding light on ethical and financial considerations in funeral arrangements. Additionally, the sessions will highlight the invaluable support provided by organizations like the **Stroke Association** for families who choose to donate in memory, emphasizing the importance of compassionate aftercare.

Moreover, the BIFD aims to equip funeral directors with comprehensive training opportunities, ensuring they possess the knowledge and skills to navigate diverse client needs and preferences effectively.

In essence, the BIFD's monthly CPD sessions represent a pivotal shift towards innovation and inclusivity within the funeral industry. By embracing change and fostering dialogue, professionals can continue to honour the departed with dignity while providing solace and support to those left behind.

For more information on Clandon Wood Nature Reserve and Natural Burial Ground, visit www.clandonwood.com. To register for the next CPD session, please email National Office admin@bifd.org.uk.



GRIEF:

HOW BEREAVEMENT UNIQUELY SHAPES OUR GRIEF.

by Joy Pedder

There is 'no' comparison to a personal exploration of pain.

Choosing to write about "Grief" feels like stepping into uncharted territory for me. Despite dealing with losses throughout my life, I've never quite put pen to paper on this deeply personal subject until now. It's no secret that grief is one of life's toughest challenges, shrouded in taboo and stigma that still linger in our society. Each of us will surely face some form of grief along life's journey, but its manifestations different for everyone. There's simply no comparing one person's grief to another's.

When someone dies, the depth of pain you experience depends on the unique bond, relationship, and life you shared with them. No one's pain is identical; each person's experience is deeply personal and varies in intensity.

To truly understand the extent of your grief, you may find yourself comparing one loss to others you've experienced. I find reflecting on past deaths and losses can help me grasp the impact each has had on myself and the level of pain it evokes. Whether it's the sudden loss of a loved one in a tragic accident, the heartache of losing someone to suicide, or the passing of a cherished family member after a long illness, each situation brings its own depth of sorrow.

The pain of losing a child, parent, sibling, a friend or any family member is deeply felt, shaped by the bonds forged over time. For instance, the loss of a parent may resonate more profoundly than the loss of a sibling or a child, but unless you've walked that path, it's impossible to truly comprehend another person's grief.

There's a common saying, "when one door closes, another opens," but what if that next door never appears? What if this loss leaves you standing alone, the last member of your family with no one left to carry on the family legacy? This reality can be especially poignant for those who are adopted, with no bloodline or family tree to trace.

Grief isn't confined to the physical absence of a loved one: It's a living, breathing presence that can permeate our lives long after they've passed. As a Funeral Director, I've witnessed the myriad types and stages of grief that people may encounter. While I'm not a doctor or counsellor, my profession has equipped me with a deep understanding of the grieving process and the profound support and counselling needed by those who are mourning.



On a personal level, I've endured my own share of losses—both intimate and familial—that have left me grappling with lifelong grief and a sense of emptiness. Grief doesn't adhere to a timetable or discriminate based on age or circumstance. For some, it begins long before the physical departure of a loved one, lingering in anticipation of the inevitable.

Whether it's the slow erosion of a loved one's mind due to illness, the aftermath of a life-altering accident, or the silent grief of a lost unborn child, the impact is profound and life-altering.

Another form of grief often overlooked is the profound sorrow of childlessness. How does one recognize this as akin to bereavement? The simple truth is, you must experience childlessness to truly grasp the depths of the grief it entails. Childlessness isn't just a one-time loss; it's a daily ache, a constant yearning for the child that will never be. Couples and singles alike mourn the unborn child, a sorrow that accompanies them throughout their lives. It's a unique kind of bereavement, navigating each day without experiencing the joys of parenthood, the creation of a human life. To be deprived of motherhood or fatherhood, denied the opportunity to nurture your own family tree, is a perpetual form of loss. It's the absence of cradling your own child, the absence of watching them grow and flourish. This is the silent grief of the childless, a sorrow that shapes every aspect of their lives.

In the wake of grief, we find ourselves thrust into a world forever changed, where familiar landmarks seem unfamiliar, and the future feels uncertain. Yet, amidst the pain, there exists a glimmer of hope—a belief that from the ashes of grief, a new chapter of life can emerge. It's often said that grief unfolds in five stages: denial, anger, bargaining, depression, and acceptance. But the journey through grief is far from linear—it's a winding path marked by twists and turns, setbacks and breakthroughs.

As I embark on this exploration of grief, I invite you to join me on a deeply personal journey—one marked by vulnerability, introspection, and ultimately, resilience. Together, let's delve into the depths of grief and emerge with a deeper understanding of what it means to mourn, to heal, and to embrace life in all its complexity.



above: Joy Pedder a Funeral Director with extensive experience, recently joined the team at Mead Family Funerals in Swindon



above: L-R Joy Pedder, BIFD Treasurer Karen Mead and BIFD Immediate Past President Jem Mead

Joy Pedder brings a compassionate touch to the delicate role of Funeral Director, drawing from her extensive experience in the field. Recently, she embarked on a new chapter in her career, joining the esteemed team at Mead Family Funerals in Swindon. With a commitment to providing solace and support during life's most challenging moments, Joy approaches her work with empathy, professionalism, and a deep understanding of the diverse needs of grieving families. Her dedication to guiding families through the funeral process with care and dignity makes her a valued asset to the community she serves.

UNICORNS AND TRACTORS SET NEW TRENDS FOR CHILDREN'S COFFINS

Colourful Coffins says changing trends in children's coffins means unicorns and tractors are now the most popular designs requested by grieving families.

In recent years princesses and dinosaurs have led the way, themes often fuelled by the latest favourite films.

Colourful Coffins' Kate Bye says: "Princesses were all the rage for little girls but now it's all about unicorns – our Unicorn Sparkle and Rainbow Unicorns are especially popular, as is Unicorn Magic for slightly older girls.

"For little boys, dinosaurs and building blocks are out and tractors and cars are in – many families who live in the countryside choose a personalised tractor design, while Duncan's Car is a perennial favourite."



Dan Cox, Colourful Coffins' design and print manager with a unicorn casket

The company's bespoke approach means each design can be personalised, for example with a child's name or special message, and families can choose the colours of their choice.

While these designs are mainly for children aged three-10, when it comes to younger children (up to five) traditional designs for coffins and caskets are more likely to be chosen.

Kate continues: "Twinkle Twinkle Little Star and I See The Moon were some of our first designs – the images were painted by my mum Mary's cousin – and they remain among the most popular. I think when a family loses a very young child, they are drawn to an image which simply embraces the love they shared.

"Our rainbow designs are also very special and we can incorporate different images, such as our Butterfly Rainbow and Glittering Rainbow designs, adding tiny crystal sparkles which really shine in the light.

"We know that the decisions families have to make at a time of overwhelming loss are incredibly hard and we're always here to help."



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LOVED – IN STITCHES



Mary Tomes, Colourful Coffins' founder with an embroidered pillow

Loved – In Stitches is the latest innovation from Colourful Coffins.

Designed for families who choose an American Casket for their loved ones, Loved – In Stitches provides a unique opportunity to have a special message or image embroidered on the inside of the lid, pillow or viewing blanket.

Colourful Coffins' Mary Tomes explains: "Bespoke American Caskets are becoming more and more popular and, while we regularly create amazing designs for the exteriors, our new embroidery service takes interior personalisation to a whole new level. Loved – In Stitches allows families to choose a line from a poem or a song, a goodbye message or simply an embroidered image – such as a heart or a flower – and have it stitched in the colours of their choice into the interior, making it very special to them as they say their final farewells."

The newly-installed embroidery machine even includes the ability to stitch sequins into the images to enable families to add a little sparkle.

**To find out more, contact Mary by email
mary@colourfulcoffins.com
or call 01865 779172.**



Our motto is "As Individual As You" and that perfectly sums up the way we work. We know that everyone is unique and that's why at Colourful Coffins we provide a personalised service and unrivalled design excellence for each of our customer's families.

As a family owned independent business created in 2004, we're proud of the wonderful feedback from people who have been kind enough to share their experiences of choosing a Colourful Coffin. We're often told that having one of our beautiful, bespoke designs for a loved one brought a smile to their face on a very difficult day.

We know that sharing such stories can help other families, which is why, through our Facebook page we'd like to invite more people to tell us about their special memories. By doing so, we hope we can create a wonderful community which will provide help, support and comfort to future families.

Choosing a Colourful Coffin is a wonderful last gift – let's help others appreciate what it truly means.

BETH HARRON (21) BECOMES THE YOUNGEST QUALIFIED FUNERAL DIRECTOR IN YORK.

by Anna Wallace, Journalist and Celebrant

Beth Harron, 21 from York has just qualified as a Funeral Director and now becomes the youngest qualified female funeral director in York.

Beth has been mentored and works alongside Hayley Owen who herself is one of York's most qualified funeral directors, undertakers, and embalmers was the first woman in the city to qualify as a funeral director and has encouraged Beth to follow in her footsteps. Hayley recently qualified as a tutor to help other people qualify to work in the funeral industry.

Beth, who was born in Barlby near Selby but, now lives in York was encouraged to go into the funeral industry by her dad Frank who is a trained embalmer. When Beth approached her careers teachers at school, she was told that being a female funeral director was not a proper job. She then set out to prove her careers advisors wrong!

Beth began her studies to qualify as a funeral director a couple of years ago when she completed the certification course with the BIFD (British Institute of Funeral Directors) before going on to complete a Diploma in Funeral Service (Dip.FS) with the BIFD accredited by Greenwich University.



Beth on Duty

Amanda Dalby, National President of the BIFD says:

"Congratulations to Beth on her remarkable achievement in completing the BIFD Diploma in Funeral Service (Dip. FS). As representatives of the British Institute of Funeral Directors, we are immensely proud to see young talents like Beth excel in our industry. Beth's dedication, hard work, and commitment to excellence are truly commendable. Under the expert guidance of her tutor, Clive Pearson, Beth has demonstrated not only her academic prowess but also her genuine passion for serving families during their most challenging times. We applaud Clive for his invaluable mentorship and support in nurturing the next generation of funeral service professionals.

Beth's success not only highlights her individual capabilities but also underscores the importance of diversity and inclusivity within our profession. As an institute, we are committed to fostering an environment where aspiring funeral directors, regardless of gender, are empowered to pursue their ambitions and make meaningful contributions to our industry.

We extend our heartfelt congratulations to Beth, and express our gratitude to her tutor, Clive Pearson, for his unwavering dedication to nurturing talent within our field. We are confident that Beth's journey will inspire other young women to embark on fulfilling careers in funeral service, guided by passion, compassion, and a commitment to excellence.



L-R: Beth Harron and her Mentor, Hayley Owen



L-R: Beth Harron and her Tutor, Clive Pearson

Beth Harron says:

"It's important to me to have a credible qualification that is accredited to one of the major training providers within the industry such as the BIFD and it's key to look out for those qualifications when you're considering a funeral director to care for your loved ones. Therefore, it's important to me going forward that I work with others who have these qualifications because they set the standard of care families and loved ones can expect. It is also important to me to continue with my own professional development within the industry which instructs me in the way I work with families. It is truly a privilege to be a funeral director in our beautiful city and I'm really grateful to everyone who has helped me become a qualified funeral director, it cannot be underestimated how much help and support I have been given to achieve my dream"

Hayley Owen says:

I have known Beth since she was 3 due to attending embalming meetings, and social weekends at Keele University with her dad Frank. Frank is also the chairman of the Yorkshire Division of the British Institute of Embalmers. I feel honoured to be able to share my knowledge and experience with Beth, it was also a great privilege to be one of her tutors throughout her Certificate and Diploma course alongside Clive who was also one of my tutors when I qualified.

It is also very important that the profession should be regulated and have compulsory training to bring the profession into the 21st century, although some firms have in-house training this does not mean it's a recognised qualification such as NVQ's. Funeral firms should be part of an organisation that inspects premises to ensure high standards are kept and a rating could be given like at a restaurant as currently there is no right or wrong environment to care for deceased people at funeral firms. As a tutor, the next course I will be teaching is in June, it's a course that runs every other week in the evening and the written exam is in March 2025, following that students then move on to take a Diploma. This qualification is accredited through Greenwich University and is 30 credits. I would encourage all funeral directors to consider this course for their staff. I feel delighted in teaching others, and I couldn't have become a tutor without Clive Pearson or the dedication of the British Institute of Funeral Directors and their excellence in educating the funeral profession.



L-R: Hayley Owen and Beth on Duty

At the British Institute of Funeral Directors, we take pride in being the leading funeral education provider in the UK. We believe in equipping our certificate and diploma holders with the knowledge and skills to excel in their role of caring for the deceased and the bereaved.

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EDUCATIONAL VISIT: HANSON CARRIAGE MASTERS

by Clive Pearson, 2nd Vice President

The friendly staff, whose passion for their work and the animals was immediately evident led us on a tour of the stables, where we had the chance to meet the horses that are at the heart of Hanson Carriage Hire. Each horse, from the majestic Clydesdales to the graceful Friesians, was not only stunning in appearance but also impeccably trained and cared for. The bond between these magnificent creatures and their caretakers was palpable, a testament to the dedication and love poured into every aspect of their well-being.



The highlight of our visit was undoubtedly the showcase of the horse-drawn hearses and wedding carriages. The hearses, with their solemn beauty and intricate craftsmanship, spoke volumes of a bygone era where such carriages were a mark of respect and honour for the departed. The attention to detail in the restoration and maintenance of these hearses was remarkable, from the polished woodwork to the gleaming brass fittings.

At Hanson Carriage Hire, each horse is assigned its own harness, with the tack room meticulously organised: gear for black horses is stored on the right, while equipment for white horses is kept on the left.

Founded in 1973, the company's origins trace back to when James Hanson's father purchased a farm, along with a horse and carriage, establishing the foundation for the family business. James embarked on his inaugural assignment at the tender age of 13, a pivotal moment that marked the beginning of his lifelong dedication to the enterprise. Over the years, James assumed leadership from his father, steering the company through the evolving preferences of its clientele. This evolution necessitated a shift from traditional black wedding carriages to white and even a fairy tale-inspired Cinderella carriage to meet changing tastes.



The company boasts approximately 125 horses on site, of which 25 are designated for carriage duties. These horses receive exemplary care, including being brought in a day prior to their engagements for preparation and undergoing a rotation system to ensure adequate rest post-service. A farrier is in attendance every Wednesday, with horseshoes being replaced every six weeks, underlining the commitment to equine welfare.

Training a horse for carriage service is a meticulous process, taking up to two and a half years to achieve the desired level of proficiency. Similarly, carriage drivers undergo rigorous training to meet the highest standards, complemented by James Hanson's specialised expertise in carriage maintenance.



The horse-drawn hearses are sourced from Poland. Procuring new parts for repairs and maintenance presents a challenge due to their rarity in the UK. The horses are adeptly trained to manage the heft of a fully laden hearse, which can weigh up to one Ton, demonstrating both strength and finesse in their duties.

Among the fleet of 17 carriages, the oldest dates back to 1898, however, it is a carriage from 1909, crafted by the esteemed coachbuilders J.A. Lawton and Co., that James holds in particular esteem, a legacy piece from his father's collection.

Today, Hanson Carriage Hire operates a substantial fleet, facilitating approximately 450 funerals and weddings annually. Under the stewardship of James and his wife, the company continues to honour its tradition while adapting to the demands of contemporary celebrations and commemorations.



Equally impressive were the wedding carriages, each telling its own story of romance and celebration. These carriages, ranging from the Cinderella-style pumpkin carriages to the classic vis-à-vis, promised to turn any wedding procession into a fairy tale come to life.

Throughout the tour, the staff shared fascinating insights into the history of horse-drawn carriages, the training of the horses, and the meticulous care that goes into preparing for events. Their expertise and enthusiasm made our visit not only educational but also deeply engaging.

As we concluded our visit, it was clear that Hanson Carriage Hire offers more than just a service; it provides an experience that bridges the past and present, celebrating the timeless beauty and elegance of horse-drawn carriages. Whether for a solemn occasion like a funeral or a joyous celebration like a wedding, Hanson Carriage Hire stands out as a beacon of tradition, craftsmanship, and unmatched care for both its animals and clients. Our visit was a memorable journey through time, leaving us with a deep appreciation for the art and soul of carriage driving.

FUNERAL DIRECTOR COMPLETES LONDON MARATHON IN THREE-PIECE MOURNING SUIT TO RAISE AWARENESS OF VITAL HOSPICE UK CAMPAIGN

A Funeral Director has raised thousands of pounds for charity and helped hundreds of people break down the taboos around discussing death 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, was inspired to take on the 26-mile by the Hospice UK's Dying Matters campaign, which aims 'to make things better for people across the country who are dying or grieving.'



Anghus Weightman at the end of the London Marathon

Anghus, who is an experienced runner, completed the course in 4 hours and 21 minutes, and has raised more than £7,000 for the charity.

Having practiced at local events wearing the same clothing, Anghus was well prepared for the showpiece event and said standing out amongst the participants earned him huge support from the marathon crowds.

"I couldn't go 20 metres without someone encouraging me from the sides. The atmosphere was unbelievable," he said.

"I was expecting to have blisters from the rim of my top hat, but thankfully they didn't materialise. It was the braces I used to keep the trousers up which actually caused the most discomfort, on top of the usual aches and pains from running that far. I wanted to complete it in less than four hours but woke up a little under the weather a couple of days before and felt my body cramping up with ten miles to go, so I made the decision to slow down a little to make sure I got to the finish line."

Anghus said he had been delighted to support the Dying Matters campaign. *"I thought I would just raise some money and that would be the end of it," he said.*

"But the number of conversations I have had about this issue have been brilliant. The story has reached thousands of people and helped people understand that Funeral Directors are approachable and we do good work in the community; our door is open if you want to pop in for a cup of tea or a chat."

Anghus, who has a history of taking part in running challenges, added: *"I am looking forward to going for a run in my normal clothes soon. But I will definitely be keeping the suit, because I am sure I will soon think of another challenge it can be used for."*

You can still donate to the fundraising cause by visiting
www.justgiving.com/page/anghus-weightman-1692472673581

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HISTORIC FUNERAL BUSINESS OPENS NEW FUNERAL HOME AT PICTURESQUE LOCATION IN WOODBRIDGE

A business steeped in more than 180 years of rich history has launched a new funeral home to help them continue to offer their outstanding care to people living in an historic Suffolk town.

Farthing Funeral Service have opened a premises in Woodbridge converting a building which has previously been an office and a dental surgery into a high-quality funeral home.

The business, now part of the Funeral Partners network, has operated in the county town of Ipswich since 1840 and also has funeral homes in nearby Felixstowe and Debenham which remain open, with dedicated teams ready to provide quality care for the bereaved.

The new Woodbridge home will be staffed by Funeral Director Francesca Souter and Funeral Arranger Ammie Nichols, both of whom live locally, and are in touch with the needs of the local community.

Area Development Manager Jamie Waters said he was delighted to see the new home opening and said the team had been patient to find the right location for the community. *"We have looked at several properties over the last 18 months, but this was by far the outstanding choice for our new Funeral Home,"* he said.



Funeral Arranger Ammie Nichols and Funeral Director Francesca Souter at the new Farthing Funeral Service funeral home in Woodbridge

"It is in an ideal location for clients on a main road with ample parking, close to the train station with beautiful views of the River Deben. The refurbishment and new facilities for funeral arrangements and to care for the deceased are both welcoming and of a high standard – it is somewhere you can be sure your loved ones are being looked after and there is also a lovely chapel of rest. We have always looked after families in the Woodbridge area, and we hope having a new funeral home in the town will make it easier for them to access us when they need our services. The team and I are looking forward to becoming a bigger part of the community with our involvement in local events and charities, anyone is welcome to pop in for a chat, take a look around or if they need any bereavement support and information on funeral plans. Francesca and Ammie are available and happy to help."

for more information about Farthing Funeral Service visit

www.farthingfunerals.co.uk/

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

Chief Executive Sam Kershaw has over 40 years 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.



LIFE AFTER DEATH: WHAT MAKES YOU A FUNERAL DIRECTOR?

by Normandie Fletcher

*Former Funeral Director, Diploma Tutor and
course developer/tutor at CDAS*



***Do you ever wonder why you do what you do?
Why are you a Funeral Director? What makes
you keep doing it, day after day?***

It is something I still ask myself, and why, after all these years of not working in the trade, am I so drawn to the profession, and it being publicly upheld as one of the most important jobs a person can do?

In my case, as I am sure is the case for many others, I initially fell into it.

I had grown up wanting to be an embalmer (or a tattooist – I was that sort of teenager). I had never heard of, or particularly thought of, a career in other areas of funeral service. My careers advisor at school told me I was being silly anyway, and that I should be a teacher instead. So, I did. I quickly discovered that swarms of knee-high children were not for me, and after briefly working in retail management, I found a role as an Administrator for an Independent funeral firm.

I fell in love with the job immediately.

It encompassed everything I could do, and everything I wanted to do. I was in my early 20s, a rare-ish female in the business locally, and had so much confidence in myself. I had never experienced bereavement or seen a dead body until my interview, when the then owner took me into the Chapel of Rest. I immediately had a chat with the old guy, he looked smiley, like he should be offering me Werther's.

Later in my career, that kind of compassion and calmness may well have been a trait I looked for in new employees, however the guys I worked with used to like to remind me I was not the first choice for the position anyway and I was just a bit crackers.

It was generally a pretty lawless place, full of strong personalities, built on a solid foundation of trust. I loved every single day at work there. Jovial, but sometimes putting up with what could now be deemed as harassment (and honestly, probably was then too) but the intention was always friendly.



I felt safe, part of a brilliant team, able to have a voice and ultimately, we fostered really high standards of ethics and care. We all needed the highs to cope with the lows, having each other's back, passing clients to other members of staff if their expertise was more relevant, stepping into a job at short notice if someone was struggling. Spinning metaphorical plates so that our small team could be everywhere, doing everything, all at once – and still sometimes actually seeing their own family.

When I first joined, there were still some old attitudes, but if I was ever told a particular job was not a job for a girl, they quickly realized it meant I would do it. However, I was safe to actually speak up if I needed help, or to ask someone to take something from me if it was too much. It worked both ways, and it meant the client got the best result, and the deceased got the best care.

One day, I decided I would dig a grave, to prove I was as physically strong and capable as any of the others. I did it. I was so proud, down that hole a foot deeper than I was tall, in a rural churchyard on a beautiful, Spring day. I looked up to see the Gravedigger (who also worked as a farmer, who we could get three-legged Turkeys from at Christmas), and the Vicar, sat on the grass with their legs swinging over the side of the grave watching me. Smirking. Eventually, I was forced to admit that whilst I was as capable, I wasn't as clever as if I was, I would have taken a ladder down with me, so that I could get out on my own too! That said, it gave me such insight, a bit of humility and a fabulous working friendship with the Vicar and his wife (who had also come to have a look before I had climbed out).

I very quickly studied for my Diploma, and my Diploma teaching qualifications with the BIFD. I went to every meeting I could pretty much and made some great friends. Within a year of starting, I was conducting and arranging funerals, and able to perform operative tasks (though I never did become an embalmer). I just wanted to learn and to be the best I could be.

Every single family I worked with touched me in some way. Even now, I can remember the bonds, the little personal details.



The baby girl born a few hours after a burial that they 'named after me' (My name is Sandy, their deceased father was Alexander. He was nicknamed Sandy, but they hadn't thought of it as a female name until meeting me. It became a running joke whenever I saw them, and being part of the local community, we would from time to time), being adopted into families, the special clothes and make up clients chose, the ice cream van cortege, the special routes we took, the stories of how partners met, or why specific music was chosen, and so on.

I was happy to sacrifice weekends and time off to give a bereaved family an extra hour in the chapel of rest. Happy to smile, and wave them into the nearest pub when the hearse doors jammed shut with the keys inside. Shiver to the point of being blue because I hadn't been provided with a uniform overcoat (strategically placed hand warmers in my gloves and under my hat helped, mind) as I paged the hearse for about a mile in the snow as a tactic to allow weather-delayed gravediggers to finish their job.

Every single person meant something to me. I was devoted to the Company name I worked for.

Every single person meant something to me. I was devoted to the Company name I worked for. I am thankful that every single funeral taught me something. I only worked for the Independent firm for a relatively short time, about 4 years, but I learned fast and was supported by a fabulous, diverse team of people.

I was lucky to never have to regret a day, and they were all different. Whilst we had complaints, they were resolvable. A coffin plate with a spelling mistake, lateness, a death notice correction -that sort of thing.

So, as I said, I am no longer in the trade. I am mostly in a wheelchair now due to a health condition, which came on quickly. Whilst the industry has changed since I started in 2000, I can't see equality for the disabled being embraced by any Funeral firm, even if they say they would. My days of shoving a body on my shoulder, squatting under a Ferno to lift an awkward Coroner's removal, and walking across muddy cemeteries are long gone.

Truth be told, and a slight spoiler alert, I left over ten years ago - five years before needing the wheelchair - but that's a subject for another day. However, despite everything inside, I am still continually drawn back to the funeral industry. I have never fully switched off. I am not sure if that is because I can't, or because I don't want to. I would do those days again in a heartbeat if I could.

I find myself writing this after finally admitting to others that I missed it, and that I wanted to go back in, in some way. Like an addict almost, I got 'got' my old crowd at a local Death Café type event and I was reminded what a privilege this job is.

So, why on Earth do I still feel that I am a Funeral Director to my core, when on the grand scale of things, I have been professionally in other roles for longer? It isn't about success – whilst I no doubt achieved and experienced a lot whilst working in funerals, my 'out of Funeral Industry' achievements are more.

In terms of friendships, people I have met, places I have been...again, my circle is huge, and varied. I am generally happy-go-lucky, privileged to be able to live a peaceful, enjoyable, and artistic life.

So, do I have some kind of pathological mental disruption that draws me to chaos, Victorian Clothing and permanently disrupted sleep?!

I am a writer now, so writing about it is what I shall do. I'm also older, wiser, and due to health, a lot more aware of mortality. Having to go to work is a necessity for most people. Some jobs feel like they drain away your spirit.

The days of just going to work for the money seem to be long gone, with the cost-of-living crisis affecting all but the privileged few, money isn't the reward for effort and time it used to be. Life is too short to not enjoy what you do, and working realistically needs to be part of living a full, and happy, life.

Is Funeral Directing that job for you?

Could anything ever take its place? Does it define who you are? Is it worth all the sacrifices you make? Could you feel more fulfilled at work?

You are so damn lucky.

You might already know how lucky you are, and embrace your job with love.

My wish for you all is that you continually feel lucky.

(If you are a manager of staff like this, treat them like gold dust, for you are the luckiest of all)

Normandie Fletcher, also known as Sandy Clare Higgins, has worn many hats throughout her career. From her early days as a Funeral Director and Diploma Tutor at CDAS until approximately 2011, her journey has been diverse. However, her passion lies in the realm of historical knitwear reproduction. Renowned for her meticulous designs, Normandie crafts exquisite pieces for stage productions like "The Mousetrap," screen adaptations such as Jon Hamm's attire in "Good Omens 2," as well as for museums and re-enactments.

Beyond her creative pursuits, Normandie is a dedicated historian. Under the pseudonym Normandie Fletcher, she delves into the realm of non-fiction, with forthcoming works slated for publication by Pen & Sword in 2025. Despite facing chronic illness and disability, Normandie remains undeterred in her pursuits. You can connect with her across various social media platforms, including LinkedIn, Instagram, and Facebook. For insights into her thoughts and musings, check out her Substack newsletter, "Normandie Fletcher Thinks." For enquiries and correspondence, she can be reached via email at normandiefletcher@gmail.com.

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JC ATKINSON LAUNCHES FLAT-PACKED JUTE COFFIN



JC Atkinson has launched a new flat-packed coffin, and it's made from premium jute fabric. Meticulously crafted, the coffin offers a blend of natural materials; a Paulownia timber frame bringing lightness and strength, and the natural texture and earthy tone of jute adding a serene and organic aesthetic.



In line with the sustainable practices we have come to expect of JC Atkinson, the flat-packed Jute Coffin ensures minimal environmental impact. From the biodegradable jute to the rapidly renewable bamboo and Paulownia timber, every component is chosen with the planet in mind. The Paulownia timber gives a sturdy foundation for the coffin and the jute strap and string complete it, ensuring secure fastening. The jute strap and string mechanism lend a cohesive look while maintaining the coffin's integrity and keeping everything firmly in place. The bamboo handles add a touch of practicality and beauty as well as ease of transportation and a nod to timeless, eco-friendly craftsmanship.

Practical and convenient, the patten protected flat-packed design makes storage and transportation straightforward, ensuring that it can be effortlessly assembled when needed.

The Jute Coffin is a new addition to the Oasis fairtrade range that sits within JC Atkinson's Country Range of coffins made using only sustainable materials. Readily biodegradable, these coffins are suitable for all types of natural or traditional burials and have been independently tested and accepted for cremation.

Greg Cranfield, Managing Director of JC Atkinson said of the new product: "We're delighted to add the game-changing Jute Coffin to our Country Range. Eco doesn't mean expensive. It's a great choice for the environmentally conscious looking for a coffin that is natural and strong with an organic aesthetic; and it's a great choice for Funeral Directors with its convenient to transport and store flat-pack structure. Assembly is simple. We expect the Jute Coffin will be a popular choice."



For more information visit <https://www.coffins.co.uk/country-range/>

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Harness The Power of...

#NFE24: ELEVATE YOUR EXPERIENCE AT THE NATIONAL FUNERAL EXHIBITION!

Last month I touched on how you can get ahead with being online especially with The National Funeral Exhibition just around the corner. Whether you are exhibiting or attending there is one key thing that will help you not just make the most of being at NFE, but expand your online visibility before, during and afterwards.... And that's using the official hashtag! So let's look at how #NFE24 can make a real difference to you. By using this hashtag on social media, Attendees and Exhibitors can increase visibility, build valuable connections and share knowledge effectively.



BOOST YOUR VISIBILITY

A hashtag is a word or phrase preceded by the pound sign (#) used on social media to categorise content and make it easily searchable. An event hashtag, like #NFE24, is specifically created for the event, allowing attendees to connect and share related posts. By clicking on the hashtag, you can see all the posts that have used it, giving you access to a broader conversation. This will help you stay updated, engage with other participants and enhance your overall event experience.

Visibility is crucial for both Attendees and Exhibitors. Using the official hashtag #NFE24 helps Attendees in several ways:

- **Enhanced Visibility:** By including #NFE24 in your social media posts, you ensure that your content is easily discoverable by others interested in the event. This increased visibility can help you connect with like-minded professionals and expand your network.
- **Real-Time Updates:** The hashtag serves as a live feed of the event, providing real-time updates, announcements, and insights. This ensures you don't miss any important information or exciting developments during the exhibition.
- **Networking Opportunities:** Following and engaging with the #NFE24 hashtag allows you to interact with other attendees, speakers, and exhibitors. This can lead to meaningful connections and potential collaborations that can benefit your professional growth.
- **Knowledge Sharing:** The hashtag aggregates valuable content shared by participants, including session highlights, expert opinions, and industry trends. By browsing posts tagged with #NFE24, you gain access to a wealth of knowledge and perspectives that can enhance your understanding of the funeral industry.

For Exhibitors, this increased visibility can be a game-changer:

- **Increased Brand Exposure:** By tagging posts with #NFE24, exhibitors can significantly expand their reach beyond the physical confines of the exhibition hall. This ensures that their products, services, and brand messages are seen by a wider, targeted audience, including those who may not be attending the event in person.
- **Engagement with Potential Clients:** The hashtag creates a direct line to potential clients who are actively following the event. Exhibitors can engage with these prospects by sharing updates, special offers, and engaging content, fostering relationships that could lead to future business opportunities.



- **Showcasing Innovation: #NFE24** is a platform for exhibitors to highlight their latest innovations and unique offerings. By sharing demonstrations, product launches, and behind-the-scenes glimpses, exhibitors can capture the attention and interest of attendees who are specifically looking for new and exciting solutions.
- **Real-Time Feedback and Interaction:** Exhibitors can use the hashtag to monitor conversations and gather real-time feedback from attendees. This immediate insight can be invaluable for making on-the-fly adjustments, addressing questions or concerns, and enhancing the overall experience for visitors to their booth.
- **Build Valuable Connections:** Exhibitors can leverage this platform to position themselves as thought leaders by sharing expert advice, industry trends and educational content. This not only reinforces your authority in the field, but also attracts potential clients looking for knowledgeable and reliable partners.

SHARE AND GAIN KNOWLEDGE

One of the greatest advantages of using #NFE24 is the wealth of knowledge it offers. Throughout the event, attendees and exhibitors share key takeaways, session highlights, and valuable insights using the hashtag. By following #NFE24, you gain access to real-time updates and a curated stream of information that can enhance your learning experience.



ANOTHER HASHTAG TO ADD...

#BeatTheBear yes I did say that! That's the hashtag that I will be using alongside Ian Henderson of Flourishh. We will be at NFE with our **"Beat The Bear"** solution in **Hall 2 on Stand 225/226**. So what is **"Beat The Bear"**?, I hear you ask. This was born from the recognition of the growing trend of direct cremations and the impact it's having on traditional funeral services. Our goal? **To equip Funeral professionals with the tools to not just survive, but thrive amidst these changes.**

UNDERSTANDING BEAT THE BEAR

The concept of **"Beat The Bear"** is simple yet powerful: It's about staying one step ahead in the race, not just against the looming bear of direct cremation services but ahead of your competitors.

Imagine a bear appears during your friendly hike with a competitor of yours; while you don't all together panic, you confidently equip yourself with a pair of running shoes. **Your competitor says "you'll never outrun a bear" and you reply "I don't need to outrun the bear, just you!"**

This metaphor encapsulates our approach to helping professionals to excel in the funeral industry **"think of us like your running shoes"**. With direct cremations gaining traction, capturing every potential opportunity is more crucial than ever. Traditional methods unfortunately will no longer suffice, having a robust online presence is essential to outpace the competition. Our **"Beat The Bear"** solution offers a comprehensive suite of services designed to enhance every aspect of your digital and physical presence: Website, Branding, Graphic Design, Digital Marketing, Social Media, Training and Edu-Therapy™.

Navigating through the woods of the funeral industry requires consistency, not just in pace, but in how your brand is presented across all platforms. This consistency ensures that families feel secure and connected, reinforcing their decision to choose your services over others. In an era of rapid change, online trust becomes your most invaluable asset. It's vital to communicate the integrity and dedication of your services clearly and effectively. **"Beat The Bear"** is designed to help Funeral professionals do just that, ensuring your community understands and appreciates the true value you offer.

Find out more at www.beatthebear.co.uk.

NFE SEMINAR/TALKS PROGRAMME

There is a full agenda of seminars/talks happening at NFE over the three days. Let people know what you will be attending using #NFE24. I'm delighted to share that Ian Henderson and I will be delivering a CPD session on **how to stand out online in a competitive market**. Our session will focus on how to stand out locally and nationally on and offline. Sharing some great foundations and using Google-informed best practices, we will help you leverage your website and social media to boost your online/offline presence to build community engagement with minimal daily effort. So do come along, join us and don't forget to use **#BeatTheBear** at our session!

OVERALL...

The **#NFE24** acts as a digital gathering point, where attendees/exhibitors can connect, exchange insights, and engage in meaningful conversations. By following and using **#NFE24**, you can easily discover and interact with other professionals at the event, creating opportunities for valuable relationships that can benefit your career and business.

Remember to include **#NFE24** in your all posts before, during and afterwards to become part of the conversation. This allows you to see what others are sharing, comment on posts, and ask questions, making it easier to network and engage without needing advanced technical skills. Whether you're sharing a photo, a quick update or a detailed post, the hashtag connects you with the broader event community.

Think of the hashtag as your gateway to the exhibition's online world. It's an easy way to stay informed, connect with others, and maximise your **NFE** experience without having to navigate complex social media strategies.

JOIN THE CONVERSATION...

As the National Funeral Exhibition approaches, we encourage all attendees and exhibitors to embrace the power of **#NFE24**. Follow the National Funeral Exhibition on social media to stay updated with the latest news and announcements.

See You Soon...

Excited to be at **NFE2024**, do stop by **Stands 225/226 in Hall 2**. Ian and I are excited to discuss more about our "Beat The Bear" solution and even help you lace up your running shoes!

If you're ready to explore more on this ahead of these events, I'm here. 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!

~ 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.





Life Ledger

The free, easy-to-use service that makes notifying companies of a death simpler, faster and less stressful.

www.lifeledger.com



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- Pet Insurance

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

BOOST THE REPUTATION OF YOUR FUNERAL BUSINESS

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

Apply for or Renew your BIFD membership in 2024

- **FULL MEMBER (MBIFD)**
- **FULL LICENSED MEMBER* (LMBIFD)**
- **STUDENT MEMBER (SMBIFD)**
- **ASSOCIATE MEMBER (AMBIFD)**
- **RETIRED MEMBER (RMBIFD)**

APPLICATION FORMS INSIDE THIS ISSUE

***FULL LICENSED MEMBER APPLICATIONS
MUST BE ACCOMPANIED WITH A COMPLETED
CPD RECORD**

or visit our website:

BIFD.ORG.UK





BRITISH INSTITUTE OF FUNERAL DIRECTORS

Administration Office: 10 St John Road, Wroughton, Swindon SN4 9ED

Email: admin@bifd.org.uk

Telephone: 0800 032 2733

2024/25 MEMBERSHIP SUBSCRIPTION RENEWAL

Please complete this form IN FULL and return it with your payment and any supporting documents, as required.

Name:		BIFD Membership No.:
Address:		
Town:	County:	Post Code:
Telephone:	Email: please print clearly	

I hereby apply to renew my membership in the British Institute of Funeral Directors, as follows:

✓	MEMBERSHIP TYPE	SUBSCRIPTION AMOUNT		
	Licenced Full Member (CPD FORM MUST BE COMPLETED)	£185.00		
	Full Member	£160.00		
	Retired Member (voting)	£ 75.00		
	Retired Member (non-voting)	£ 50.00		
	Student Member	£ 75.00		
	Associate Member	£100.00		
✓	ADDITIONAL MEMBER ITEMS	Quantity	Cost	TOTAL AMOUNT
	Additional copies of Annual Licence <i>(ONLY available to Full Members with a Licence, as above)</i>		£10.00	£
	Member's Lapel Badge		£ 5.00	£
	Member's Window Sticker		£ 2.45	£
	Member's Tie (normal straight tie or clip on)		£10.00	£
	Member's 40 th Anniversary Tie (straight tie) – all funds from tie sales donated to the National Presidents chosen Charity.		£15.00	£
Total Additional Member Items				£
Membership Subscription (as above)				£
TOTAL TO PAY				£

Member's Signature:

✓	Payment Method
	Cheque - enclosed <i>(Cheques to be made payable to the British Institute of Funeral Directors)</i>
	BACS (internet banking) Sort Code: 60-83-01 Account No.: 20336550 (please quote your surname as the reference when paying by BACS / Internet Banking)

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.

1st April 2022-31st March 2023

National Office: 10 St John Road, Wroughton, Swindon SN4 9ED
Email: admin@bifd.org.uk Tel: 0800 032 2733



NAME:

MEMBERSHIP NUMBER:

Date	CPD provider (Please include: name, address and contact details)	Subject matter & training activity received	Comments	Number of hours
TOTAL				

National Office will require this log in support of your Licence application for 2024/2025. This information must be retained for a minimum of three years.

A continuation sheet may be used.



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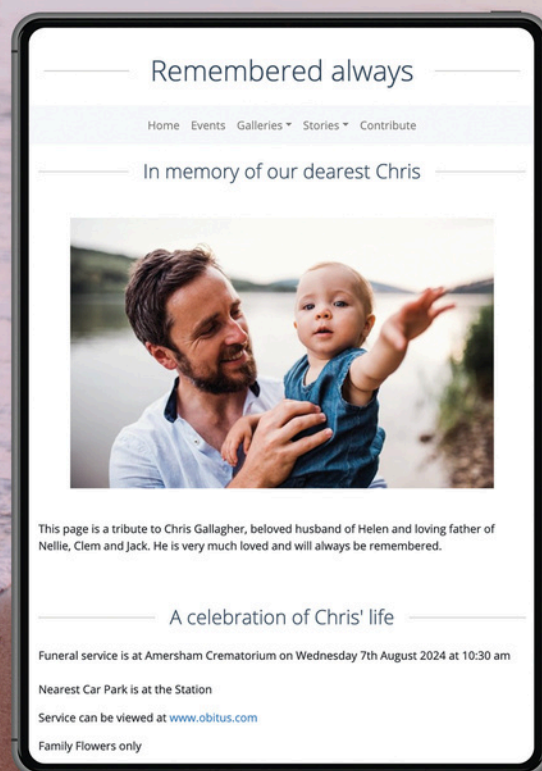
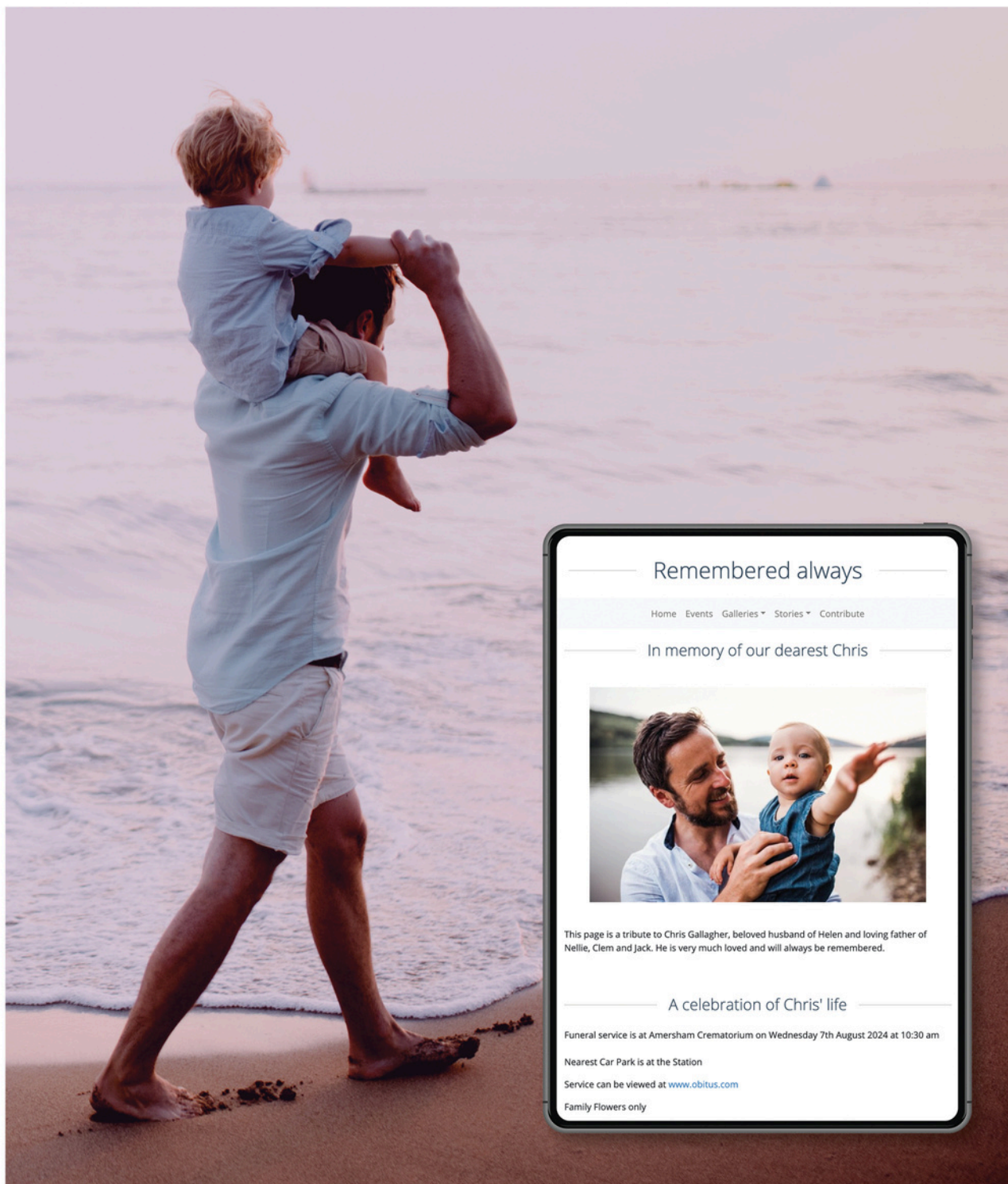
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Managing Director, Marian Sinclair: Serving families since 2002



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MUCHLOVED.COM

EXCITING NEWS FOR THE FUTURE OF MUCHLOVED: NEIL DAVIS APPOINTED AS CEO



Following our announcement from January that MuchLoved has transitioned to a social enterprise, we are pleased to share the exciting news that Neil Davis has joined us as our new CEO.

Neil's appointment is an important step forward in MuchLoved's service development, and we are delighted to welcome him to the team. Our founder, Jonathan Davies, is still very much involved and Neil's appointment reflects both our significant growth over the past 18 years and our determination to continue to develop and improve into the future. Our focus is on providing the best possible online tribute service available anywhere, and this means continuing to invest in our people and our platform.

Neil has spent most of his career with digital agencies, in particular working with charities and not-for-profit organisations. His experience will be extremely valuable as we work hard to help many more bereaved families by providing a place to remember their loved ones, whilst delivering an excellent service for the charities and funeral directors that we are proud to work with.

Neil said, "MuchLoved is unique as the only service that truly connects both funeral directors and charities in supporting bereaved people. I am excited about how we can build on what is already the UK's leading in-memory service to help many more people remember their loved ones in the way that is most meaningful to them."

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.



TRIBUTES

COFFINS | URNS | KEEPSAKES | ENGRAVING



Where Service Matters

We are a creative, professional and dedicated team, who take pride in supporting our customers to meet the needs of the families they serve.

info@tributes.ltd.uk

0345 388 8742

www.tributes.ltd.uk



FSA PRESIDENT ANTHONY HILL AND HIS COMPANY, SOMERSET WILLOW, UNDERTAKE CHALLENGES TO RAISE FUNDS FOR YOUNG LIVES VS CANCER.



SOMERSET WILLOW

We will be fundraising for Young Lives vs Cancer throughout 2024 with numerous fundraising activities. Two of the challenges we are embarking on are The National Three Peaks Challenge, which we will undertake on 17th August, and The Mile an Hour for 24 Hours challenge on 29th June. Through these two challenges and other events, we are determined to raise crucial funds to provide support, care, and resources for children and families facing the challenges of cancer.

Your generous contributions and participation will make a transformative difference in the lives of those battling cancer. Together, let's make a meaningful difference and empower Young Lives vs Cancer.

Donate here: www.justgiving.com/page/somersetwillow



YOUNG LIVES VS CANCER

When a child is diagnosed with cancer life becomes full of fear, for them and their family. Fear of treatment, but also of families being torn apart, overwhelming money worries, of having nowhere to turn, no one to talk to.

At Young Lives vs Cancer, we help families find the strength to face whatever cancer throws at them. But every day 12 more children and young people hear the devastating news they have cancer. We'll face it all together – but we can't do it without you.

To find out more visit www.younglivesvscancer.org.uk

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FSA

Funeral Suppliers' Association
est. 1939

COME VISIT US AT THE NFE SHOW 2024

If you are a manufacturer or supplier interested in joining the only trade association solely for companies such as you, please contact chiefexec@funeralsuppliers.uk for information on the benefits of being a member.

If you would like to enjoy networking opportunities with like-minded professionals within the funeral sector, the Funeral Suppliers' Association is the place for you.

FIND US IN HALL 2 AT STAND 308



Thursday 13th - Saturday 15th June 2024



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