



BRITISH INSTITUTE OF FUNERAL DIRECTORS

THE JOURNAL

ISSUE 8



#ANDYSMANCLUB

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KILLER OF MEN UNDER 45
1 MAN EVERY 2 HOURS**

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WWW.ANDYSMANCLUB.CO.UK**

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#ITSOKAYTOTALK

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



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The CPD Standards Office
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2023-2025
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Tel: 0800 032 2733
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LETTER FROM THE NATIONAL PRESIDENT

Amanda Dalby, Dip. FD, LMBIFD



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

Midsummer brought the long awaited sunshine and a quiet spell at my Parlour. It gave me the chance to catch up on my long 'To Do List' and then water my colourful, blooming pots in the evening sunshine, at the end of the working day.

Gardening is a bit of 'escapism' for me, and I get quite lost in tending my bedding plants, as they flourish. Families love to be greeted by the blossoms too. I truly believe that the doorstep to my Parlour gives off a good, positive feeling to them, before they cross the threshold, so it's time well spent.

And there were more positive vibes in sunny, late July, when I had the privilege to attend the Wedding Blessing of Past BIFD President, Paul Stibbards & his lovely new wife Esther, at Leez Priory in Chelmsford. What a beautiful day it was. I'm sure you'll all join me in wishing them a wonderful future together!

Paul was a super president in 2021/22 and has been a very good support to me throughout my year, so far, and it was an honour to be amongst their guests.

Many congratulations to Mr & Mrs Stibbards! The sun shone for them, and it was a truly memorable day 🌟



I swapped my top hat for a colourful 'Fascinator' for the event, and Marian Sinclair, from Motorcycle Funerals, was honoured to be beautiful bridesmaid 🌟



Into August, and 'Calderdale Pride' was next in my diary, with Pride Events taking place all over the Country - perhaps in your region too?

As 'inclusive funeral directors' we strive to create the best funeral for any gender type, of any age.

I decorated my Parlour Window with rainbow bunting & a rainbow ashes casket & Scattertube to mark the celebrations, and I have had lots of positive feedback.

Here's me, at my local independent, family run department store, Harvey's, having a bit of a photoshoot in my funeral attire. Their artistic Director handpainted this amazing window display for Calderdale Pride, in the town centre of Halifax.

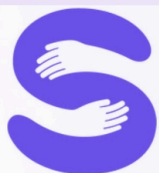


Oh, and let's not forget YORKSHIRE DAY, on 1st August. We proudly flew the Yorkshire Flag in Halifax, and celebrated everything 'Northern'.

Here's a little taster of our regional flag that you'll be seeing lots of, at my Conference 'Up North' from 18th - 20th October. Don't forget to book, before the hotel rooms are filled! It will be a super weekend, and is a great opportunity to meet up with like-minded professionals. All things Yorkshire will be celebrated - and look out for the framed Yorkshire quotes dotted around. Here's a couple for you to practice, in the meantime.

Please don't delay in making your booking, as places are becoming limited.

Details are on our website & in the Journal, or you can contact our Conference Organiser, David Gresty to secure your place. You can email him on: david-gresty@hotmail.com



**Survivors of
Bereavement
by Suicide**



**We offer UK peer-led support
to adults impacted by
suicide loss**

Call for support [0300 111 5065](tel:03001115065)

Our monthly CPD sessions are going well, with a very sad, but interesting presentation by SOBS (Survivors of Bereavement by Suicide) held on 12th August.

I'm sure you'll all agree that a funeral of someone who has taken their own life is both shocking & heartbreaking. It's good to know that there is support out there for both families & us. We all had lots of questions for Kate Bell, their Volunteer Co-ordinator, which were fully answered. Thank you to all those who attended.

Next month, we have Eimer Duffy & Ian Henderson's CPD talk (Wednesday 4th September) on 'How to stand out more online in a competitive market, and beat the bear!'

Competition online is FIERCE, especially with the ever growing 'Direct Cremation' companies joining 'Pure' in their quest to get rid of traditional funerals, and persuade the public that their 'no fuss' unattended services are the best & cheapest option.

Let's all listen to what Eimer & Ian have to say about how we can be more 'outstanding' and keep all of our wonderful funeral traditions alive & in the public eye.



An 'Obitus' presentation follows on Wednesday 2nd October. They are sure to provide us with some excellent training, with their aim to help families make the most of every song, picture or video - and create a funeral service that is as special & personal as it can be.

Please do consider joining these FREE 'Zoom' sessions as part of your Continual Professional Development. As the saying goes 'every day is a school day' and especially when we have the opportunity of these people who want to pass on their knowledge to us. All details are on our website & will be posted on Social Media.

And as consummate professionals, we will all now be familiarising ourselves with the Medical Examiner involvement in Cause of Death Certificates (MCCD) & new Registration & Cremation Form reforms - set to change on 9th September 2024.

Local Councils in Yorkshire are sending out guidance to all Funeral Directors, but if yours doesn't & you have any questions, don't hesitate to contact either your local hospitals, and speak with one of the Medical Examiners, the Coroner's Office or our Head Office, regarding the new system.

With no more Doctors Fees to pay, this is a saving of £82 for our families, and means that we don't have to explain why this fee is charged any longer. Families always seemed surprised at these Doctors fees - in Yorkshire anyway!

Let's hope that the changes go through smoothly, and they won't result in any long delays for our families being able to register a death.

And let's hope that the new MPox Virus (previously known as 'Monkeypox') with the new variant, Clade 1b, doesn't come from Africa to the UK anytime soon.

It is currently causing global concern, having previously spread to over 100 countries. According to the World Health Organisation, vaccines are available in the UK for those at risk.

On a charitable note, could I ask if anyone would like to sponsor me for my 'HIGHLIGHTS OF HALIFAX WALK' on Saturday 31st August?

Myself, friends & colleagues are raising money for my Presidential Charity - Andy's Man Club. The charity was born in Halifax in 2016, and is now Nationwide. Their aim is to prevent male suicide, and they hold meetings every Monday evening at 7pm, for men to just 'turn up & talk'. It's a great cause, and I'd really like to raise at least £1,500 towards their great work.

Please donate through my JustGiving Link: www.justgiving.com/page/amanda-dalby-1723250284880

Yours funerially,

Amanda Dalby



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The British Institute of Funeral Directors

Conference: 18th – 20th October 2024

*Cedar Court Hotel
Ainley Top
Lindley Moor Rd
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 £.....

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**MADE IN
BRITAIN**

RECENT CPD SESSION HIGHLIGHTS SURVIVORS OF BEREAVEMENT BY SUICIDE (SOBS) EFFORTS



In a recent Continuing Professional Development (CPD) session held online, the invaluable work of the Survivors of Bereavement by Suicide (SOBS) was brought to the forefront.

This session aimed to shed light on the crucial support services provided by SOBS, the only UK organisation offering peer-to-peer support to individuals over the age of 18 who have been impacted by suicide loss. SOBS has carved a niche in providing a supportive environment where those bereaved by suicide can find solace and understanding through shared experiences.

About SOBS: A Lifeline for the Bereaved

SOBS is a self-help organisation dedicated to creating a safe, confidential space for individuals to share their feelings and experiences after a suicide loss. This peer-led model ensures that those grieving can both offer and receive support, fostering a community of understanding and empathy. By improving public awareness and maintaining connections with various statutory and voluntary organisations, SOBS not only supports individuals but also works towards broader societal change.

Comprehensive Support Services

SOBS offers a variety of support options tailored to meet the diverse needs of the bereaved:

- **Peer-Led Support Groups:** Regular in-person meetings provide a safe space for individuals to connect and share their journeys.
- **Online Virtual Support Groups:** These sessions offer a convenient and accessible option for those who may not be able to attend in person.
- **National Telephone Helpline:** Available for immediate support, the helpline is staffed by volunteers who have also experienced the loss of a loved one to suicide.
- **Online Community Forum:** This forum allows for continuous support and connection, fostering a sense of community and mutual aid.
- **Email Support:** For those who prefer written communication, email support offers another avenue for assistance.

These services ensure that SOBS can reach and support as many individuals as possible, breaking down barriers of social, ethnic, and cultural boundaries.

The CPD Session: Key Insights and Takeaways

The CPD session was graced by the presence of Kate Bell, who joined via Zoom to provide an in-depth look at the organisation's work and impact. Kate shared insights into how SOBS operates and the critical role it plays in the lives of the bereaved. She highlighted the unique aspects of the peer-to-peer support model, emphasizing the power of shared experiences in the healing process.

Participants of the session gained a deeper understanding of the challenges faced by those bereaved by suicide and how SOBS addresses these challenges through their comprehensive support services. The discussion also touched on the importance of public awareness and the need for continued collaboration between various organisations to enhance support networks.

MONTHLY CPD SESSIONS

Looking Forward

As SOBS continues to expand its reach and services, the organisation remains committed to its mission of providing unwavering support to those navigating the difficult journey of suicide bereavement. The CPD session not only highlighted the significant impact of SOBS but also inspired attendees to advocate for and support the organisation's efforts.

This recent CPD session has undeniably reinforced the essential role that SOBS plays in offering hope, understanding, and community to those affected by the tragedy of suicide loss.

FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT SOBS AND THEIR SERVICES, PLEASE VISIT THEIR WEBSITE AT
WWW.UKSOBS.COM

TO DOWNLOAD A PDF COPY OF 'SUPPORT AFTER SUICIDE, PLEASE VISIT:
WWW.UKSOBS.COM/UPLOADEDRESOURCES/1700487067-SOBS-BOOKLET-PORTABLE.PDF



Survivors of
Bereavement
by Suicide



Support After Suicide

“Those of us who have experienced
this terrible tragedy truly understand.

None of us need to suffer alone.

Together we help each other.”

FORMER AOIC CHAIR TAKES UP ROLE AS INTERIM CEO

THE Association of Independent Celebrants (AOIC) has warmly welcomed its former chair, Phil Spicksley, into the position of interim CEO as Grace Jevons steps down from the role.

Leaving the AOIC in a strong position, Grace has been at the helm of the organisation since 2023.



above: Phil Spicksley

Until a new CEO is found, celebrant, former president and chair, Phil, will be undertaking Grace's duties whilst conducting a thematic review of the association, to ascertain its needs as it looks to a big and bright future. The review will also shed light on the CEO role, and the type of person required for the job.

Phil said: *"It is with a sad heart that Grace decided to step down. She was the first CEO for the AOIC, and our committee and directors fully understand the hard work she put into the association during her tenure. Grace will be remaining with the AOIC as a director, and we look forward to continuing our work together in the future. We send her our thanks and bid her farewell as she builds on other work she has around Devon and Cornwall."*

Grace, who created a vast network of invaluable AOIC contacts during not only her time as CEO but also her year as president prior to that, will surely be seeing some of her colleagues in organisations such as SAIF and NAFD in the months and years ahead.

She commented: *"This is an exciting time to be a part of the AOIC and I hope to see it keep going from strength to strength. I remain a director on the association's board and look forward to continuing to be instrumental in its success."*

Phil returns to the AOIC and is looking forward to supporting the CEO role until a suitable candidate is found. He is looking forward to meeting old and new members and is certain to appear at conferences and meetings hosted by fellow organisations during the coming months.

He finished: *"I am looking forward to helping the AOIC, an organisation I helped to shape and build since its start in 2007, move to the next level with the person who will continue to lead it to a bright and successful future."*

The Association of Independent Celebrants is a vibrant and forward-thinking trade association for professional celebrants across the UK. If you would like more information, visit the website at www.independentcelebrants.com, or email: admin@independentcelebrants.com



PLANNING AHEAD OF TIME



Dayle Adams of
www.planningaheadoftime.com

We spend our lives planning for events, such as birthdays, engagements, marriages and births. However, there is one thing we know for sure. Life cannot exist without death. Later life, end of life, death and post-death are topics that we shy away from, even though they are the only guaranteed events of life.

Incredibly, every living person is unique. Not just their finger print, but how they live their lives. As we reach and celebrate life's milestones, we plan ahead for the next one, imaging how our lives will change and planning to make sure we have what we need and want. Being prepared allows us to be in control and having a plan for the future brings peace of mind. Every day we make choices, often subconsciously, based on our individuality.

When people think of planning for death, they often relate it to writing a will... and then, only when they feel they have something worth leaving. This puts great emphasis on our monetary value, yet we are worth much more than our assets, and when it comes to end of life, money is not the main focus.

Planning Ahead of Time gives us the opportunity to organise documents that have the power to protect us and our families when we need it the most. Lasting Power of Attorneys (LPA), advanced decisions, expression of wishes, wills, trusts, digital asset instructions, funeral plans... and don't forget pet provisions.

When people are told of a life-limiting condition or given a terminal diagnosis, they often start planning. Why? Because they want to help their loved ones cope with the changing circumstances. Making plans for their care, ensuring people know what they want, disclosing passwords, organising documents, giving financial details, leaving instructions for personal items and planning funeral celebrations is normal practice for taking control of the situation to create peace of mind. When all is said and done, we want to make our own choices until our last breath, and beyond.

It is becoming more commonplace to make plans without an end in sight, because life is not promised. Don't plan through the pain of a terminal diagnosis, plan through the positivity of life. It is never too early to gather some information, make some choices and support the people you love. But it can be too late.



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The Land Rover Defender hearse accommodates for the coffin and flowers with 4 available seats for funeral staff, whilst the support vehicle has 7 seats available.

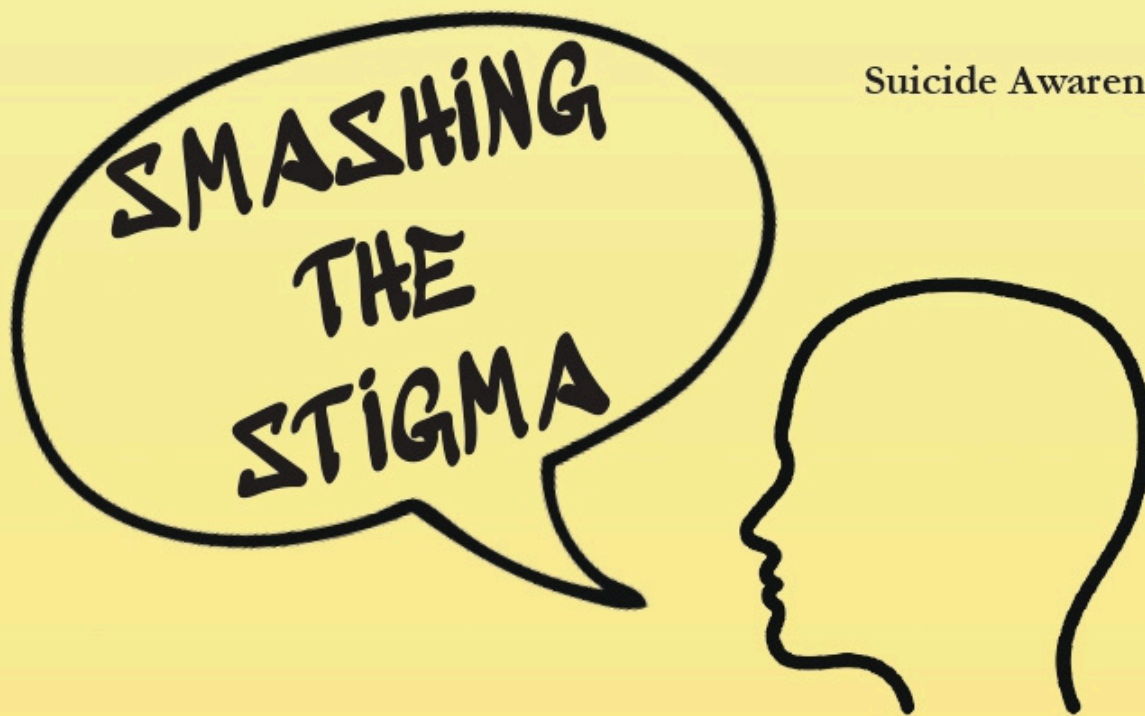


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Suicide Awareness



If you have lost a loved one, friend or colleague to suicide, please join us for an afternoon at:



Butterfly Meadow
Hall Lane, Shenfield, CM15 9AN
Sunday 8th September 2024
13:00 - 16:30

Refreshments provided

Scan the QR code for more information.

Some of the organisations involved:



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BOROUGH COUNCIL



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Thurrock
and Brentwood

phoenix
98fm

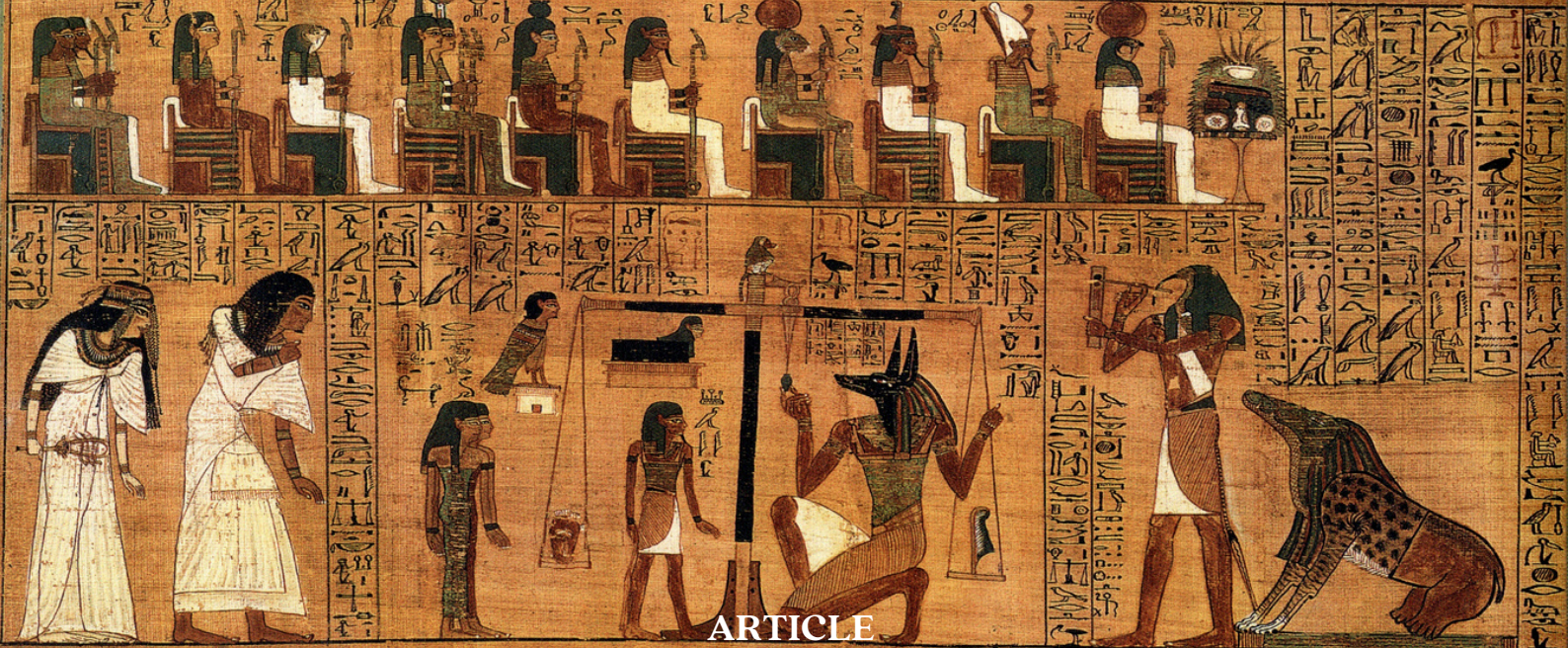
St. Mary's Church, Shenfield

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ARTICLE

THE HISTORY OF EMBALMING

by Clive Pearson, Dip. FD, LMBIFD ~ 2nd Vice President

When considering the history of embalming, our minds often drift back to ancient Egypt, with Tutankhamun being one of the most renowned examples. Visitors to the Valley of the Kings and the Cairo Museum are invariably struck by the grandeur and meticulous effort invested in preserving their dead.

So what were the reasons for Embalming in Ancient Egypt? The Egyptians had two primary motivations for embalming. Firstly, the Nile's flooding often delayed burials, posing a public health risk. Secondly, they believed in the "Circle of Necessity," a state in which they would remain for thousands of years. Upon returning, they would need their bodies intact for reuse.

The embalming process varied according to social status. Pharaohs were regarded as gods, they were embalmed with utmost dignity and respect. Internal organs were removed and stored in canopic jars filled with Natron, a sodium salt. The body cavity was dried, filled with spices, herbs, and bitumen, and then stitched up. The body was immersed in a natron solution for up to forty days, after which it was straightened and dried. The mummification process involved wrapping the body in bandages soaked in oils like cedar, with herbs, spices, and valuable ornaments placed within. Arabic gum secured the bandages and sealed the body from the elements, ensuring eternal preservation. Finally, the body was placed in a sarcophagus, often nested within additional sarcophagi, and entombed with elaborate ceremony.



Middle Ranking Individuals underwent a similar process but with a corrosive chemical used to dissolve the organs. Depending on affordability, the body might or might not be mummified before being returned to the family. Peasants were simply immersed in a natron solution without any mummification.



So how has everything changed in today's world? Today's embalming shares some similarities with ancient practices, primarily in the goals of preservation and sanitation. However, modern embalming also focuses on presentation. One of the key aims is to leave families with a pleasant final memory of their loved one.

Over my 30 years in the profession, the equipment and products available for embalming have evolved significantly. Innovations such as low-formaldehyde products have made the process safer and more efficient. High-quality embalming products can significantly enhance the final result, providing better preservation and presentation.

The British Institute of Embalmers (BIE). Since 1927, the British Institute of Embalmers (BIE) has been a cornerstone of our profession. Formed by fifteen Funeral Directors, the BIE recognised the need for a dedicated organisation for professional embalmers. Upon passing the qualification, one can apply for membership and earn the MBIE designation.

In reflecting on the history of embalming, it is evident that while the foundational principles remain, the processes and techniques have significantly advanced since ancient times. Looking ahead, technological advancements will undoubtedly continue to provide us with even more sophisticated products and equipment.



REGION C VISIT TO

COLEMAN MILNE

WIGAN ROAD, WEST HOUGHTON, BOLTON, BL5 2EE

*Wednesday 11th
September 2024*

6.30PM

Light refreshments are kindly
provided further enquires to
hayleyowenfd@gmail.com

Don't miss it!



THE POWER OF MUSIC AND VISUAL TRIBUTES IN FUNERALS

by *Phil Perry*

Funeral Director Partnerships Manager ~ Obitus



It never ceases to amaze me how powerful listening to a piece of music can be in stirring our feelings. The memories that we associate with a particular song can often last forever, whether it's the first record that you bought or the first song you danced to with an old flame. It could be the theme tune to your favourite movie, or a piece of music that evokes a specific, personal set of emotions every time you hear it.

There are many songs that rekindle memories from my past. I can distinctly remember where I was, who I was with, and what I was doing, simply by listening to a particular track. Music can often say what we are feeling when our own words fail us. It gives voice to our emotions and lets us express our thoughts, reflections and indescribable feelings.

Pictures can contribute towards the same result.

We take photos so that we can share the memory of a time that holds a special meaning for us; allowing us to relive the experience time and time again. We can reflect on a photograph from years ago and remember the feelings associated with being in that moment on that day. The great singer songwriter Paul Simon captured this notion in his memorable song 'Bookends,' when he wrote: 'Preserve your memories...they're all that's left of you.'

It is not surprising that when someone passes, the healing nature of both audio and visual memories associated with the deceased come into their own. They play a vital role in the grieving process, enabling those who are left behind to reflect and celebrate the life of the deceased, making their funeral a truly unique occasion. The music and images chosen to be displayed throughout a service can create a personal tribute that has real meaning for friends, family and loved ones.

It is no coincidence that songs such as 'My Way', 'Wind Beneath My Wings', and 'Time To Say Goodbye', are requested time and time again for funeral services. A significant piece of music, coupled with specially chosen photographs, are fast becoming an integral part of funeral services, capturing the sentiment of those who have gathered to be with the deceased on their final journey.

When the moment comes to say goodbye, for some families there may be no better way to honour the deceased than to take some time to reflect on their life.

Here at Obitus, we're dedicated to making sure families know the options available to pay tribute to their loved ones. Our expertise in both the bereavement industry and audio-visual experiences means we're here to support you in helping families to make a clear, informed choice for a service. We use our experience to create the perfect goodbye for families.

When families find out after the event that they could have had a particular song played, or had a photo of their mum, dad, brother or sister displayed, but were not presented with these options, is hugely disappointing. I suspect that in these instances, families would think twice about how and where they arrange a funeral in the future. Even for those who choose not to have media, our hope is that families know the options available to them, so that they can create the funeral they need.

From families who only want simply a small, intimate committal service to those who wish a full multi-media send-off, Obitus are happy to help our business professional partners to support families to make the best-informed decision for them. Our team is constantly working to help you, as funeral directors and arrangers, be equipped with the confidence, competence and knowledge of what we can offer to families for their services.

As always, if you feel you need support in learning more about Obitus products you can browse: www.obitus.com, or get in touch with our team and we'll be more than happy to help.

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ASK A CELEBRANT

Part Two: Inclusivity for All

by Independent Celebrants, Dinah Liversidge and Berni Benton

As Funeral Directors and Celebrants, we work hard to ensure that all mourners have access to and feel equally welcomed at any service. We check with our clients whether they are expecting anyone who uses a wheelchair or needs the hearing loop. And this is a great start. But we can always do more.

In this second Ask a Celebrant, we share some ideas on how to make the planning, the ceremony and the follow-up more inclusive, enhancing the experience and reducing the stress, for our clients and those who are grieving.



BEFORE THE FUNERAL: ENSURING ACCESSIBILITY AND INCLUSION IN PLANNING

Berni Says: As Funeral Directors and Celebrants, our role is to facilitate and guide people into and through unfamiliar and potentially highly emotive territory. We all do it as second nature but adding just a few things to our checklist we can ensure **ALL** mourners feel welcome.

Primarily, the answer is to ask. Ask your next of kin if there is anyone in the congregation who might need reassurance or adaptation to feel comfortable attending. By doing this you are opening the door to attendance rather than people simply assuming they shouldn't attend.

Secondly, allay fear. I've never officiated a ceremony where an unexpected interruption from a child, person with dementia or baby crying hasn't relaxed the mood.

Thirdly, do your homework. Both adults and children with autism spectrum issues, or anyone who struggles with changes to routine and new environments, would perhaps welcome knowing that they could pre-visit a crematorium. See it, walk through it, choose a seat, know where the entrances and exits are, what it sounds like, smells like, where the coffin will be. For others we may need to look at if there are hearing loops, or options to have subtitles on the screen or a printout of the service for them to follow. That the ramp access is in the same place as the main entry and exit. That the toilet is clearly signposted.

Dinah Says: I often begin by asking if any attendees use wheelchairs, walkers, or have mobility challenges. This information allows us to liaise with the venue about their access, including ramps, parking, and accessible toilets. We should also consider the layout of the seating, ensuring there is enough space for those with mobility aids to move freely without feeling isolated.

Inquire about sensory sensitivities among guests, such as the need for a hearing loop, sign language interpretation, or visual aids. Offering these options ensures that everyone can fully participate in and understand the service, reducing stress and fostering a sense of inclusion.

It's important to recognise that people on the autism spectrum may have unique needs when attending a funeral. Discuss with your clients whether any guests might benefit from specific accommodations, such as a quiet space away from the main service, clear and simple instructions about what to expect, or visual schedules to help with transitions during the event.

Understanding and planning for these needs can greatly reduce anxiety and make the experience more manageable for those who are neurodiverse.

To ensure no detail is overlooked, maintain clear and compassionate communication with your clients. Encourage them to share any concerns or special requests their guests may have. This proactive approach not only demonstrates empathy but also helps to prevent any last-minute issues that could cause distress on the day of the funeral.

AT THE SERVICE: CREATING AN INCLUSIVE AND WELCOMING ENVIRONMENT



Dinah Says: On the day of the service, it's our responsibility to ensure that the inclusive plans made during the preparation phase are effectively implemented. This includes everything from the physical setup of the venue to the emotional atmosphere we create for those attending.

Work with the venue staff to ensure that all accessible entrances are clearly marked and easily navigable. If the service is held in a venue with multiple levels, ensure that lifts are functional and easy to locate.

Seating should be arranged to accommodate those with mobility devices without segregating them from the rest of the congregation. For those with hearing or visual impairments, ensure that they are seated in areas where they can fully engage with the service, with access to any assistive technologies. It's helpful to have someone on hand who can assist with technology or provide information to guests who might be unfamiliar with it.

Funerals are inherently emotional, and some attendees may struggle more than others. Consider designating a quiet space where those who need a moment of solitude can retreat.

If the ceremony involves complex rituals or practices that some guests may not be familiar with, providing a brief explanation in the Order of Service, can help everyone feel included and comfortable.

Berni Says: Set the tone. If there are children, show the family where the exists and loos are should they need to get up and move during the ceremony. Perhaps set up an area at the back with a few cushions and toys.

Think about how everyone and when everyone enters and exits, maybe suggest doing it differently if it better caters for individuals within the family or congregation.

As a celebrant I always remind the family that it's not a performance, it is a process to help them, whatever they need is what matters. And if I know there might be 'interruptions', I'll add some words to my intro to ensure that those who are caring for others who may do the interrupting are aware that it is okay.

As Funeral Directors, you'll probably be at the back anyway, and the doors are closed, so just reassure the family that you have eyes on wandering kids!

CONTINUE WITH YOUR FOLLOW-UP

Berni Says: Check in. You'll be doing it anyway for the next of kin, so whilst you're at it, find out if everyone felt catered for, ask if there was anything else you could have done to relax and include others in the future. Think about how you communicate with the NOK. In print, is it large enough? Is the language clear enough? Would it be better to communicate by voice? Is it worth simply acknowledging how the children's laughter/movement took the tension from the congregation. We all know how people dwell and worry about what they perceive as 'wrong'.

Dinah says: Inclusivity doesn't end when the funeral service concludes. The follow-up period is equally important in ensuring that all mourners feel supported as they begin the process of grieving and healing.

After the service, reach out to your clients to gather feedback. Ask them how they felt the service went and whether there were any aspects of inclusivity that could be improved. This not only helps you to continually refine your approach but also shows your commitment to providing a compassionate and supportive service.

Offer information on resources to the family and mourners that cater to diverse needs. This might include grief counselling services that are accessible to people with disabilities, support groups that respect different cultural backgrounds, or even printed materials in multiple languages for non-English-speaking mourners.

Keep the lines of communication open with your clients after the service. A simple follow-up call or message to check on their well-being can make a significant impact. For those who may have faced barriers during the service, acknowledging their experience and offering additional support can help them feel heard and valued. A ceremony that supports and involves these young people might mean we have to be outside our comfort zone; and that's okay. We've got to be prepared to change if we want to prevent trauma from being part of the memory.

IN CONCLUSION

It's easy, in our roles, to forget how daunting and alien the spaces we inhabit for work are for families. So, every now and again, just take a moment to remember what a hearse, coffin, crematorium felt like on that first occasion... and then imagine it again without the interest in having a career working with it.

By making inclusivity a priority before, during, and after the funeral service, we not only enhance the experience for all mourners but also uphold the dignity and respect that every individual deserves in their time of grief. Through thoughtful planning, attentive service, and compassionate follow-up, we can ensure that everyone feels welcome and supported during one of life's most challenging moments.



above L— R: Berni Benton & Dinah Liversidge

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Dinah Liversidge and Berni Benton are both Independent Celebrants. Berni is a member of the Committee for the Association of Independent Celebrants (AOIC) and an end-of-life Doula. Dinah trains Independent Celebrants and her training is recommended by the AOIC. They are both based in Wales.



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FUNERAL COMPANY BOASTING 200-YEARS OF TRADITION AND COMMUNITY SERVICE JOINS FUNERAL PARTNERS

The team behind a business with more than two centuries worth of proud history has entrusted the team at Funeral Partners to continue its legacy.

G E Hartley & Son, based in Yorkshire, was established in 1808 in the village of Thorner under the name of A&B Harrison.

Initially focusing on cabinet and chair making, they would begin to carry out funerals after people came to them for coffin making.

The Hartley family worked for the Harrisons but took over the running of the business four generations ago.

The business expanded into nearby Garforth in 1995, then to Wetherby in 2008, moving into new premises seven years later following a substantial refurbishment.



above: G E Hartley & Son Business Principal Stewart Hartley

Stewart Hartley, Business Principal, joined the business in 2007 after a successful corporate career and soon began to love working in the family trade.

"I very quickly saw the appeal in helping people. It was a big change from my old career, but it has worked out really well," he said.

Stewart decided this was the right time to secure the future of the company and search for an acquisition partner that would enable a path to retirement but leave the business in safe hands.

"It's getting more and more difficult to run a small business, especially a Funeral Directors," he said.

"The proposition from Funeral Partners was appealing because it allows me to stay on as part of the business but work a little less, which gives me a better work life balance and enables me to concentrate on arranging and directing funerals – the part of the job I really love. Worrying less about the running of the business has given me a bit more headspace, less stress and the chance to switch off a little bit more. The value from a professional organisation like Funeral Partners with support functions such as marketing, HR, payroll, IT, finance and compliance is already apparent. The team and I are looking forward to seeing the business thrive"



Sam Kershaw, Funeral Partners CEO, said: *"Having a business of the calibre of G E Hartley & Son working with us is a real honour – they have more than 200 years of heritage and a reputation to be proud of. I am delighted Stewart decided we were the right partner for his funeral service business and that he has chosen to stay on to continue working with families in Wetherby and Garforth, – working together we will ensure his family legacy lives on."*

left: G E Hartley & Son Business Principal Stewart Hartley outside the funeral home

Sheltering legacies, weathering change.

Funeral Partners will look after your past and protect your future



As a business owner, you've put your heart and soul into building your business. You've overcome countless challenges, made pivotal decisions, and worked tirelessly to see it thrive.

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



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

FUNERAL DIRECTORS RUN BY SEVEN GENERATIONS OF FAMILY JOINS FUNERAL PARTNERS NETWORK

A funeral business in its 175th year of celebrated history has joined Funeral Partners.

W Sherry & Sons was formed way back in 1850, and now boasts an impressive nine branches across Middlesex and London.

Now run by the sixth and seventh generations of the Sherry family, father and daughter Neil and Brooke, the Funeral Directors continues to provide members of the community with a dignified final goodbye.

Neil has worked in the business for four decades, running it for more than half that time, while Brooke enjoyed a career as cabin crew for British Airways before joining full-time during the pandemic.



above: Funeral Partners CEO Sam Kershaw with Neil and Brooke Sherry from W Sherry & Sons

Neil said the key to their longevity is their desire to help people. *"The satisfaction we get is helping families through the most difficult times in their lives,"* he said. *"That's what we have always done and that is what makes the hard days worthwhile."*

Neil has managed an impressive expansion of the business since he took the helm in 2000, adding five more branches which included the acquisition of J R Barton & Son – another established local business. He said now was the right time to join Funeral Partners. *"It's been a difficult decision, but Brooke has a young family and, rightly, different priorities so it was the right move to make,"* he said. *"We've had several offers to value the business over the years, but Funeral Partners were the only people we seriously considered, given how they've acquired so many similar businesses to ours in recent years."*

Sam Kershaw, Funeral Partners CEO, said he was delighted to have the well-established brand on board.

"I am excited to be working with Neil and Brooke and am proud to have this historic funeral business as part of our growing network. Their reputation is truly exceptional, as are the standards they have across each of their nine branches. I look forward to being part of this exceptional business' bright future."

For more information about the business, visit www.wsherryandsons.co.uk/personal-funeral-service or www.facebook.com/wsherryandsons

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.

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PRESS RELEASE

Legacy Expressions Launches New Website

Legacy Expressions is pleased to announce the launch of a newly designed website, a valuable resource for those seeking meaningful ways to honour and remember their loved ones. This innovative platform offers an extensive range of memorial products, all available for easy browsing and purchase.

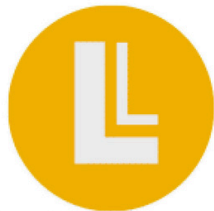
At the heart of the new website is a user-friendly browsing experience, allowing visitors to explore a variety of collections. Among the standout offerings are the 3D crystal laser engravings, which transform cherished photos into stunning three-dimensional keepsakes. Additionally, the memory tags collection provides a modern way to create personalized, portable tributes.

Legacy Expressions is dedicated to helping families preserve the essence of their loved ones through beautifully crafted, high-quality memorial items. Each product is designed to capture and reflect the unique stories and memories that define a life well-lived.

Discover the full range of memorial products and find the perfect tribute at

www.legacyexpressions.co.uk

Shop now to create lasting memories that will be cherished for generations.



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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



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- Official Partner window stickers

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- A quarterly LinkedIn post dedicated to your business

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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,
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NEW MUCHLOVED SERVICE TO ELEVATE YOUR FUNERAL DIRECTOR BUSINESS IN THE DIGITAL ERA

MuchLoved has a strong heritage as the UK's leading in-memory service. As the funeral profession evolves, we are changing too and are pleased to announce that we have acquired Funeral Director Websites (FDW). As we join forces with FDW our combined expertise now makes us the digital partner of choice for funeral businesses. We can now offer industry-specific web design, development, and SEO services as well as ongoing website updates and social media support All this in addition to the funeral notices, tribute pages and donations service that we are known for.

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Gerry King, Founder of FDW, said, *"Funeral Director Websites and MuchLoved are a perfect fit. We are joining forces to deliver a comprehensive set of digital support services to funeral directors, allowing them to prioritise client care and fuel business growth."*

MuchLoved CEO, Neil Davis, said, *"MuchLoved has a strong heritage as the UK's leading in-memory service. We want to extend our expertise to provide all the digital services that a funeral firm needs, making it easier for them to grow their business online in partnership with a trusted specialist provider."*

By partnering with MuchLoved you can transform your online presence, enhance client engagement, and put your funeral director business into the digital forefront. Let us handle the technicalities, while you focus on providing compassionate services to your families.

For further information, please contact MuchLoved by email: support@muchloved.com or phone 01494 722818.

**Muchloved.com
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A photograph of a person with curly hair hugging a child from behind. They are standing on a beach, looking out at the ocean. A wicker picnic basket with a silver thermos and a white mug is on the sand to the right. The background shows the sea and distant hills under a hazy sky.

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EAST MIDLANDS FUNERAL DIRECTORS SUPPORTS LAUNCH OF UK'S FIRST 'UNCOLLECTED ASHES' DATABASE

A.W. Lymn The Family Funeral Service, an award-winning independent funeral directors in the Midlands, is the first funeral director in the UK to address the lack of formal regulation of uncollected ashes in the industry - by creating a record on an online public register.

The family funeral directors headquartered in Nottingham, which was first established in 1907, has uploaded information of all cremated remains in its possession since before 2000 to 'The Ashes Register', a new initiative designed to map the location of ashes.



above: Matthew Lymn Rose

A total of 136 ashes have been uploaded to the online database by A.W. Lymn, with the oldest dating back to 1952. Amongst this list also includes decorated veteran, Air Commodore George Lawson CBE MC.

Uncollected ashes have been a longstanding challenge in the funeral industry, with an estimated hundreds of thousands of unclaimed urns sitting in funeral homes across the UK, some of which date back to the 19th century.

In the immediate aftermath of a funeral, it is the funeral director's duty of care to look after the ashes. Stored in a locked room called a Columbarium, they are kept safe until whoever made the funeral arrangements is ready to collect them, with records kept in paper format as well as electronically centrally.

Explaining why ashes are then left in the possession of funeral directors for decades, Matthew Lymn Rose, Managing Director and fifth generation at A.W. Lymn, said: *"It's a saddening thought to think of ashes that have been left uncollected, however there are many reasons why this might occur. Sometimes, in the aftermath of a funeral, people can be in denial and taking possession of the ashes can be a hard thing to do. In other instances, there is a breakdown in communication amongst a family as to who will collect them. As ashes do not belong to anyone under British law, unless the person who made the funeral arrangements collects them, they go unclaimed."*

The National Association of Funeral Directors (NAFD) recommends its members store ashes for at least five years, with efforts being made to locate the rightful recipient before a funeral company can dispose of them. This often includes scattering them in a garden of remembrance or at a beauty spot with land owners' permission.

PRESS RELEASE

On why A.W. Lymn have held onto cremated remains for so many years, Matthew said: *"As a fifth-generation family business that has been supporting the bereaved in the region for nearing 120 years, we feel a deep sense of responsibility and duty of care to look after cremated remains in our possession, in the hope that they will one day find their way back to someone. We do however strongly believe that everyone deserves a final resting place, which is why we are so passionate about this new register. We hope that by leading the way in adding our records, other funeral directors will follow suit and it will become best practice within the industry, hopefully aiding in reducing the number of uncollected ashes stored at funeral branches across the country."*

The Ashes Register is a new online initiative, set up by founder Richard Martin. It's a free service available to the public to register a set of ashes and mark the location of where they were scattered. The option to find lost ashes is a new element to the website, with A.W. Lymn being the first funeral directors to use its register.

On working with A.W. Lymn to bring this new service to the public, Richard said: *"Our goal is simple and it's to reunite as many people as possible with the ashes of a relative or loved one. We feel so passionate about history not being lost in time, which is why we set up this website to provide a space for people to document someone's final resting place. We have received lots of support from leading companies and organisations in the cremation sector on the Ashes Register but A.W. Lymn is the first funeral directors to step forward and be involved in the unclaimed ashes section of the website. They are really paving the way in the industry and we hope this is the start of other funeral directors following suit."*

Operating 28 funeral homes throughout Nottinghamshire and South Derbyshire and with one recently opened in Leicestershire, A.W. Lymn is an award-winning family business that prides itself on helping the bereaved with quality of service and value for money at the heart of its ethos.



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