

BRITISH INSTITUTE OF FUNERAL DIRECTORS



# THE JOURNAL

ISSUE 7





# Help support families and keep babies safe.



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**The Lullaby Trust** raises awareness of sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS), provides expert advice on **safer sleep for babies** and offers **emotional support for bereaved families**.

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**National President's  
Chosen Charity**



**The Presidential Team:**

**National President, Amanda Pink:**

**[amandapink@bifd.org.uk](mailto:amandapink@bifd.org.uk)**

**1st Vice President, Clive Pearson**

**2nd Vice President, Dr Philip Gore**

**Immediate Past President, Amanda Dalby**

**[admin@bifd.org.uk](mailto:admin@bifd.org.uk)**

**Chair of Education, Andrew Floyd:**

**[a.floyd.bifd.edu@gmail.com](mailto:a.floyd.bifd.edu@gmail.com)**



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## Letter from the National President

# Amanda Pink

Dear Members, Associates, Students, and Supporters.

It has been a pleasure to attend a number of meaningful and inspiring events over the past few weeks — all of which serve as a powerful reminder of the passion and commitment that runs through the heart of our profession.



On 14th June, I was especially proud to attend the AGM of my own Region, Region G, which was hosted at Parley Green Coffins in Dorset. We were fortunate to be shown around their impressive 105,000 sq ft in-house manufacturing facility, where every aspect of their eco-friendly, sustainable coffin production takes place. From initial concept to final creation, all elements are crafted on-site — supported by their dedicated design, manufacturing, and fulfilment teams. Remarkably, Parley Green has the capacity to produce up to 500 coffins per day, offering environmentally-conscious families a beautifully made and sustainable choice.



Just a few days later, on 19th June, I made the journey to Thirsk in North Yorkshire for Region C's educational visit to Maple Park Crematorium. The tour gave us insight into their thoughtful and tranquil facilities, including a spacious and airy service hall that seats up to 120 mourners, naturally designed memorial gardens featuring calming water elements, and their electric cremator, which provides a more environmentally responsible alternative to traditional cremation. It was also my honour to present certificates to 11 of our recent Certificate in Funeral Service graduates — congratulations to all! The visit concluded with tea and cake in their lovely on-site café, creating a relaxed moment to reflect and celebrate.

My husband Adrian was able to join me at two memorable engagements in recent weeks. On 24th June, we attended the Cremation and Burial Communication and Education (CBCE) Banquet at the Hilton Southampton — Utilita Bowl. This event, jointly hosted by the Cremation Society and the Federation of Burial and Cremation Authorities (FBCA), brought together friends from across our Kindred Associations and was a wonderful evening of connection and collaboration.





Then, on 2nd July, we were generously hosted by the Wilcox Limousines team at the Henley Regatta. A heartfelt thank you to Jade, Leila, Trish, and Louise for a truly enjoyable and relaxing day among friends and colleagues.



On a personal note, I'm thrilled to share that my funeral business recently celebrated a very special milestone — five years since I collected the keys to our Camberley premises on 3rd July. It's been a rewarding journey of growth, learning, and service, and I'm incredibly grateful for the support I've received along the way.

Looking ahead, Region C will be holding another CPD session on 23rd July at The Memory Tree Co., York's first memorial woodland. This promises to be a unique and reflective experience, and I encourage all who are able to attend. For more details or to book your place, please contact Hayley Owen at [hayleyowenfd@gmail.com](mailto:hayleyowenfd@gmail.com).

And of course, I must remind everyone that places are now very limited for our Annual Conference and Gala Dinner, taking place from 24th – 26th October at the Copthorne Hotel Slough-Windsor.

We look forward to welcoming Members, Students, Association Members, and guests from our Kindred Associations for a weekend that brings the BIFD back to its roots of education, inspiration, and celebration.

The Copthorne Hotel is a 4-star venue situated in historic Windsor, with comfortable rooms, an on-site restaurant, health club, and car parking facilities — conveniently located just off Junction 6 of the M4.

Booking forms can be found in this edition of The Journal or by visiting [www.BIFD.org.uk](http://www.BIFD.org.uk).

Lastly, I continue to raise funds for my chosen charity, The Lullaby Trust. Their vital work supporting bereaved families and promoting safer sleep for babies is close to my heart. If you are able to contribute, donations are most gratefully received and can be made here: <https://lullabytrust.dedicationpage.org/charityoftheyear2024>

Thank you once again for all that you do to support each other, our communities, and the wider profession. I look forward to seeing many of you at upcoming events.



Best Wishes to you all,

**Amanda Pink, Dip. FS, LMBIFD**  
**National President, Region G**



# 43RD ANNUAL BIFD CONFERENCE

## 24TH – 26TH OCTOBER 2025



The Copthorne Slough-Windsor Hotel  
Clippenham Lane, Slough, SL1 2YE

### The BIFD Invites You To Conference 2025

National President, Amanda Pink, would like to invite all Members, Fellows, Students, Associates, Presidents of the Kindred Associations and all Guests to the forthcoming Conference and Gala Dinner to be held on 24th - 26th October 2025 at The Copthorne Slough-Windsor Hotel.

The Copthorne Hotel offers comfortable and contemporary facilities, where modern comfort seamlessly blends with the historic Windsor. With 219 spacious and comfortable rooms, the 4-star hotel is the perfect base to feel relaxed and rejuvenated for our Conference Weekend.

From here, you can visit the medieval **Windsor Castle** still in use since the middle ages, see the changing of the guard and experience Windsor's rich history. The hotel is also located very close to **Legoland Windsor** perfect for our guests who would like to attend with their family.





The **Bombay Pavillion Restaurant** offers dishes inspired by the traditional clay oven 'Tandoor' and curries that stay true to their origin.

The **Motion Health Club** provides comprehensive leisure facilities and state-of-the-art gymnasium and swimming pool.

Heathrow Airport is a mere 15 minute drive and is ideally located just outside of central London, just 30 minutes away by train.

## The President's Charity 2025

For her Presidential Year, Amanda is supporting The Lullaby Trust.

The charity works to educate and support new parents in the best sleep practices for their babies with the aim to prevent deaths. Their aim is to reduce the level of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS) which they have helped to reduce by 81% since 1991 saving over 30,000 babies. They also support bereaved parents following the tragic and devastating loss of a baby or young child and have so far helped over 800 families. A fantastic charity that needs funds to continue its important work and any support provided to our campaign for the Lullaby Trust throughout 2025 and at Conference will be gratefully appreciated.





## The itinerary so far...

Friday 24th October 2025

The Board of Directors will be meeting in the afternoon.

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

Saturday 25th October 2025

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

In the afternoon Amanda is planning an educational session...Watch this space for further information.

The evening will start with a Drinks Reception followed by a 3 course dinner with wine, plus cheese & biscuits. We will also have our Diploma Awards Ceremony and Handover of Offices followed by music and dancing until late.

Earlier than 24th or later than 25th October 2025

If you would like to enjoy a longer break, we have secured good rates either side of the Conference, so that you can enjoy Windsor for an extended stay.

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The British Institute of Funeral Directors Conference 2024:  
24th – 26th October 2025

The Copthorne Slough-Windsor Hotel  
Clippenham Lane  
Slough  
SL1 2YE

The 43rd BIFD Conference 2025 Rates

1. Friday Evening To Sunday Morning – THE COMPLETE PACKAGE

Friday Dinner .....Double Room (per couple) £675  
Friday & Saturday Bed & Breakfast .....Single Room (per person) £425  
Saturday AGM: On Arrival Tea & Coffee  
Saturday Lunch Included  
Saturday Evening Drinks Reception  
Saturday Gala Dinner – Includes 4 Course Meal

2. Friday Evening To Saturday Morning - ONLY

Friday Dinner .....Double Room (per couple) £295  
Friday Bed & Breakfast .....Single Room (per person) £200  
Saturday AGM: On Arrival Tea, Coffee & Biscuits

Saturday Lunch Is Available At £30 PP

3. Saturday To Sunday Morning - ONLY

Saturday AGM: On Arrival Tea, Coffee & Biscuits .....Double Room (per couple) £395  
Saturday Evening Drinks Reception .....Single Room (per person) £235  
Saturday Gala Dinner – 4 Course Meal Followed by Tea & Coffee  
Saturday Bed & Breakfast  
Saturday Lunch Is Available At £30 PP

4. The Gala Banquet Dinner Only .....£85 Per Person

Saturday Evening Drinks Reception  
Saturday Gala Dinner – 4 Course Meal Followed by Tea & Coffee

5. AGM ATTENDANCE ONLY .....Free To All Members & Students

Saturday AGM: On Arrival Tea, Coffee & Biscuits

Saturday Lunch Is Available On The Day At £30 PP



The 43rd BIFD CONFERENCE - 24th – 26th October 2025

The Copthorne Slough-Windsor

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: £.....

Tariff (4) – Gala Dinner Only

Total Attendees £.....

Tariff (5) – AGM Only

£ No Charge

Total Amount Due £.....

Mr. David Gresty

C/O The British Institute of Funeral Directors

National Office,

2 Heather Ridge Arcade,

Heatherside,

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# Letter From Our Editor

*Kayleigh Ingham, Region C*

Happy July All,

I hope everyone is enjoying the summer so far and keeping busy. It's been a jam packed few months for me and my children.



In May, we took a trip to Alnwick and visited the castle. My youngest is a big Harry Potter fan, so we joined a talk for filming locations. Alnwick castle was built in 1096. In 1309, it was purchased by the Percy Family who are still the current owners, with the 12<sup>th</sup> Duke of Northumberland and his family still inhabiting the castle. The state rooms are open to the public at certain times.. There is so much to see and do at Alnwick castle, with lots of various talks and different areas to explore throughout the castle grounds. One such area is the Fusilier's Museum, where an original wooden grave marker is displayed, along with a soldier's dog, who stole onto a train to be with his owner, and took part in World War One.

Whilst doing some restoration work over time, many items have been found within the castle grounds and many have been conserved and on display in the various parts of the castle, including bones from unknown people, along with goods found in the gravesites.

Alnwick itself, is a lovely market town with some beautiful architecture, shops to pay a visit to and a market every Thursday and Saturday. While we didn't visit the gardens this time, they are on our to do list for the future!







In June, we took another visit to Northumberland. This time to Bamburgh Castle to watch a jousting event, which was very entertaining. Bamburgh is a site that has been inhabited for around 3000 years, although the first fort was built in around 420AD and thought to be the capital of the kingdom of Bernicia.



In around 600AD, Aethelfrith gave the fort to his wife Bebba, and the now castle became known as Bebbanburg.



Bamburgh is not always inhabited, unlike Alnwick but it does have state rooms for when it is and these are open to the public. There is also accommodation to stay in the grounds and to hold weddings.

In 1894, the castle was purchased by William Armstrong, and there is a museum in the old washroom, dedicated to his inventions, many of which were used on Navy ships and Aircraft such as the Spitfire in World War Two. The Armstrong family still own the castle today.

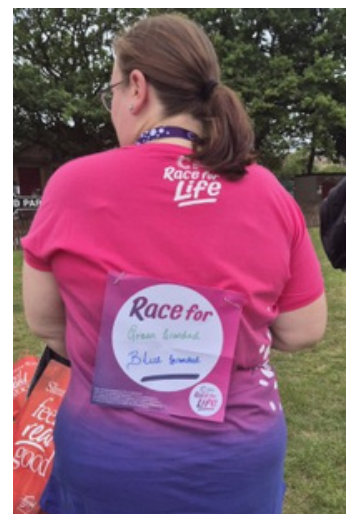


Many restorations have taken place within the castle grounds with many burial sites found, and some of the old castle structure is also on display. Bamburgh also has a lovely beach which is perfect for enjoying a sunny day.

Northumberland is worth a visit if you haven't been already! We plan on spending more time there.



Whilst at Bamburgh, we stayed in an old coaching inn in Belford. St Mary's Church was directly behind. I took the boys into the graveyard where we looked at old headstones. The oldest one we found, that we could read, was a family vault first used in 1742 and contained at least 10 family members. Did you know shaving foam will help you to read old headstones? I have only recently found this out!



The week after Bamburgh, I took part in the Race for Life. I walked the 5k in 47 minutes, and raised £145. Thank you to everyone who sponsored me.

Don't forget to book your place at our Conference in October. See you all later!





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## CPD Opportunity

Tuesday 12<sup>th</sup> August at 7pm -  
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details





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# Region C visit to maple Park Crematorium and café Thursday 19<sup>th</sup> June 2025



Region C organised a visit to Maple Park Crematorium on Thursday 19<sup>th</sup> June 2025 Maple Park has recently been built 3 years ago when Hambleton council felt the need to build a new crematorium in the area to support the local community. It was originally Hambleton Council but has since moved to North Yorkshire Council.

We welcomed The President Amanda Pink to our meeting and the evening included Certificates being presented to students who had completed the certificate course. Some students travelled over 100 miles to receive their certificates and in total 11 certificates were presented. Pippa the crematorium manager gave us her time to speak to the members, students and guests about the crematorium and how it's different to other crematoriums, along with a tour of the crematorium.

Maple Park offers 4 – 5 services per day the service times are long to allow families the time for a service that doesn't feel rushed. The timings also include 15 minutes before and after the service to allow family and guests to gather without the feeling of being pushed along by another funeral cortege. When Maple Park was being designed and built the time was an essential matter of concern as feedback established other crematoriums had shorter service times and families felt it was like a conveyor belt. Pippa spoke about the chapel at Maple park and expressed that when a family has a service, they can move the furniture to where they want, she said 'it's their time, and the family can do what they want when they come here to say goodbye' Pippa spoke about all the other alternative funerals that have taken place at Maple Park that include different musicians and dancers with the chapel furniture being movable it gives families the chance to express the wishes of the deceased and make a personal service to remember.

Maple Park is fuelled by electricity the crematorium has 1 electric cremator and is built with refractory brickwork which is more eco friendly and the heat from a cremation is retained for a longer length of time. At the end of the week the energy and heat that has been stored can cremated deceased without using any additional electric. The crematorium can only accept deceased people of 39 stone and below and the cremator is smaller than a gas cremator as its design and build are different to gas cremators.

The cremator at Maple Park is less industrial, it doesn't make as much noise as gas cremators, the way in which it works differs from gas cremation and the process still includes filtration before reaching the atmosphere. The ashes are processed in the same way by being cooled in the hopper before being cremulated.





Choice of coffin is important at Maple Park, the electric cremator is not suitable for the cremation of banana leaf coffins this is due to the high risk of the basket setting alight before it has been safely charged into the cremator.

Secondly, if families wish to watch the coffin being charged it's essential to have good communication with the crematorium, this is usually the case with every crematorium you use due to capacity on busy days quite often the coffin may be charged 2 or 3 hours after the service. At Maple Park especially it's essential to discuss these needs for families as in quiet periods some coffins are kept until there is a busier day before the cremation takes place, this is also to be mindful about how energy can be used and ensuring the crematorium is working efficiently. There is a viewing room for families to witness the charging once the ceremony has finished.

After the tour and presentation of certificates we went next door to the café, another new building that caters for funeral wakes and holds events during the evening to support events such as children's and community run events, the café is popular not only for refreshments after funeral services but also for people who return afterwards. The café is set up for half of its use for funeral refreshments and the other half for the public to use daily. The café has been a great success being next door to the crematorium supporting families for funeral wakes and being an additional part of the community. David provided us with tea, coffee and cake which went down well.



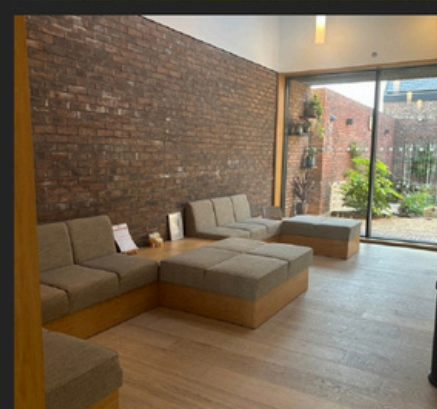
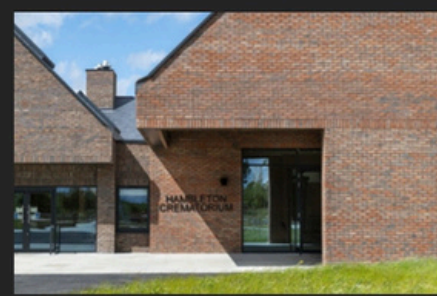
Region C will have their next meet up at The Memory Tree which is situated in Shipton by Benningborough, North Yorkshire on Wednesday 23<sup>rd</sup> July from 7pm, everyone is welcome.

Region C would like to thank President Amanda Pink for finding the time to travel and join us for the visit, to Pippa at Maple Park Crematorium for taking the time to speak to us and share her knowledge and to David at the café for the refreshments. Special thanks to everyone who made the effort to attend.

Hayley Owen - Barker (region C)







*Maple Park Crematorium*





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## Joseph A. Hey & Son's legacy secured by Funeral Partners



Robert Morphet, and Joan Hey- Morphet with  
Regional Development Director David Dernley

Joseph A. Hey & Son, a respected fourth-generation funeral business in Bradford, has joined Funeral Partners, one of the UK's largest funeral providers.

Established in 1908 but tracing its funeral directing heritage back to 1856, the firm has served families across Bradford and the surrounding areas for over 120 years.

Current custodians of the business Robert Morphet and his wife Joan (Jo) Hey, who is a direct descendant of founder Joseph A Hey, bring over 40 years of combined experience serving local families. However, they felt it was time to lighten their daily responsibilities while still preserving the company's legacy.

With no immediate family to continue the business, they carefully considered how best to protect its future, ultimately choosing Funeral Partners for its commitment to preserving local heritage, protecting staff, and upholding family values.

Robert said: "From very early on, it was evident that Funeral Partners shares our values, and we felt confident they were the right people to entrust our business to.

"The whole team has been incredibly supportive and reassuring from the outset - David McCarthy, Head of Acquisition Integration, and everyone involved guided us through each step, ensuring a smooth transition for us, our colleagues, and our clients."

He continued: "We know the business is in safe hands and will continue to flourish under the Funeral Partners umbrella, and we look forward to continuing our work here in Bradford, knowing we have a partner fully invested in our community and the teams that serve it."

Sam Kershaw, CEO of Funeral Partners, also expressed his enthusiasm: "I am proud to announce that Joseph A. Hey & Son has become part of the Funeral Partners family.

"It has a remarkable history and reputation in Bradford, and I am delighted Robert, and his wife, Jo, will continue to run it, supported by their dedicated team. I've known Robert for over 30 years, and it's a pleasure to finally work alongside him."



Before the acquisition, Funeral Partners recommended increasing staffing to reduce the pressure on Robert and ensure continued high standards of care.

An investment plan has also been agreed to refurbish the premises and upgrade the funeral fleet, reflecting the group's dedication to investing in both people and infrastructure.

While now part of a larger network, the business will retain its name and longstanding presence in the community, with Funeral Partners providing additional support, training, and resources.

This ensures the values that have shaped the company for more than a century remain at its core. As part of the integration, it will also become an authorised representative and seller of Funeral Partners' regulated Choice Funeral Plan products.

For more information about Joseph A. Hey & Son, please visit:

<https://www.heyfunerals.co.uk/>

For more information about Funeral Partners and its acquisition process, visit:

<https://corporate.funeralpartners.co.uk/>



#### **About Funeral Partners:**

Funeral Partners is the UK's third largest funeral business, with more than 280 funeral homes staffed by over 1000 dedicated funeral professionals serving communities across England, Scotland and Northern Ireland.

Chief Executive Sam Kershaw has over 40 years' experience in the funeral profession, joining the business back in 2016 as Chief Operating Officer. Funeral Partners, which celebrated its 15-year anniversary in 2022, has grown rapidly, building a strong reputation as a well-run, high-quality funeral services business overseeing more than 25,000 funerals each year.

It now includes more than 140 family businesses, which have entrusted their reputation and heritage to Funeral Partners.

#### **Contact:**

For more information about Funeral Partners visit [www.funeralpartners.co.uk](http://www.funeralpartners.co.uk) or [corporate.funeralpartners.co.uk](http://corporate.funeralpartners.co.uk)

For all media enquiries please contact [pressenquiries@funeralpartners.co.uk](mailto:pressenquiries@funeralpartners.co.uk)



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**Your reputation is our reputation**





## Bleed control kit installed at funeral home to help in emergencies

A potentially life-saving bleed control kit has been installed at a funeral home in South Yardley.

The equipment, which allows victims of knife wounds or other serious injuries to be treated quickly, is being housed at William H Painter Funeral Directors main hub on the Swan Island following a request from Funeral Service Operative Darren Barton.

The kit has been provided by Birmingham Says No, a Community Interest Company (CIC) which aims to reduce violent crime in the West Midlands and support the affected individuals and communities.

Darren said: "I hope we never have to use the kit, but if it helps just one person then it is completely worth it. I know what it is like to lose a family member at a young age and I wouldn't wish that on anyone. Violence amongst the younger generation really concerns me, and hopefully this is a small step towards helping in some way. Having it in our funeral home also means there are more spread around the area in case something terrible happens."

The team at William H Painter Funeral Directors are set to have training from Birmingham Says No enabling them to confidently assist in an emergency if required.

William H Painters Funeral Directors is part of the Funeral Partners family of businesses.

Gavin Bruce, Area Development Manager said:

"Darren felt so passionately about this that he actually offered to pay for the kit himself, which was of course, not necessary. We are happy to support his idea and hope to install others at more of our funeral homes soon."

For more information about William H Painter Funeral Directors, visit

<https://www.williamhpainter.co.uk/>



The team at William H Painter Funeral Directors receive the bleed control kit from Dee Kelly of Birmingham Says No

# July

Barbecues and picnics,  
Swimmers soaking up the rays,  
Bike rides in the country,  
Shady spots on sunny days...  
Summertime vacations,  
Lemonade on front-  
porch swings —  
Special thoughts and memories  
of July's most favorite things.





## About Heart in their Hand

We provide special little hearts for families going through a bereavement.

The little heart pops out of the keyring/keepsake and can be placed in a child or loved one's hand by the family when saying goodbye. They then keep the matching piece, creating a tangible connection that lasts forever.

We started working primarily with families experiencing baby loss, which is very close to my heart having lost our middle son Adam through stillbirth and wishing we still had a physical connection to him, created the idea of Heart in their Hand.

We work with most Maternity units, Sands and 4Louis and many Adult ICU's, Organ donation teams, charities and funeral directors up and down the country and our project is really growing. We've also started working with several hospices who love our hearts and the support they bring as families say their goodbyes, and families can sponsor them in memory of their loved one or child and donate them to a hospital or hospice of their choice.

It is our passion and goal to provide our hearts to as many families as possible as we know how much comfort they bring to bereaved families saying goodbye.

Our website and face book page are below if you would like to have a little read about who we are and please let us know if you have any questions.

Kindest Regards,

**Cathy**

Mummy to Adam

**Heart in their Hand Project**

[www.heartintheirhand.co.uk](http://www.heartintheirhand.co.uk)  
Facebook: @heartintheirhandproject

07387 669036    [hello@heartintheirhand.co.uk](mailto:hello@heartintheirhand.co.uk)

# HEART IN THEIR HAND

*Collection*

Open Day 26<sup>th</sup> June 2025

We've knocked down every wall that we can possibly knock down at home and have now been blessed with buying an office unit at Dorcan Business Village!

We have been able to spread out, organise ourselves better and now have room to grow even more. We would love to open our doors to the community to host creating memories workshops, counselling support and community meetings that all have a focus on supporting bereaved families in our community.

This special project came about through our heartache of losing our baby boy Adam through stillbirth and we recently held a special family dedication at the office and placed a plaque on the wall in Adam's memory.

The purpose of the Open Day was to invite our neighbours at Dorcan, local bereavement organisations, counsellors, funeral directors, hospital staff and local MP's and of course our Mayoress.

We were excited to share who we are, what we do and why we do what we do. During the open day we served cuppas and cakes and showed people around our beautiful space.





# Using Funeral Livestreaming to Support Families in Saying Goodbye

Previously live streaming wasn't considered to be an integral part of a funeral service, but with the introduction of modern technology, families are now starting to look at the many options they have available for connecting with their loved ones and preserving memories - even in bereavement. Funerals around the world have been livestreamed and recorded in different capacities for over twenty years, but it was less heard of until the global pandemic restricted many people from attending their loved one's service in person.

During this time, we partnered with funeral venues across the UK to add live streaming options to their chapels, knowing the importance for families to say goodbye to their loved ones even if they weren't able to attend the service in person. Even after several years, live streaming still remains a popular option for families having a funeral service, with almost 25% of Obitus-supported services having a Live and On Demand stream booked. The inclusion of livestreaming in funerals has not only become a way to connect people from a distance, but to act as a memento for years to come.

## How can our Live and On Demand streams help bereaved families?



### **Closing the distance for the bereaved**

Despite making every effort to be there in-person to say goodbye, sometimes time constraints or personal responsibilities can make it difficult to attend a service. The option of being able to log-in to a Live and On Demand streaming service can help bereaved individuals who can't be there on the day to gain closure and comfort in seeing a close friend or family member's service.

Even if time is an issue, every Live Stream we provide comes with a 28 day On Demand service as a standard, to watch a recording again at a later date. Once the Live Stream of the service has ended, our team works to process the footage & put the best version back online within 2-3 working days. They will then have the opportunity to watch the service again for that 28-day period, whenever they feel its right to.

### **Preserving the memory of the day for the future**

As an option, families can also request a downloadable or keepsake copy of the service recording from a Live and On Demand that they can keep forever. While this might not be something they consider straight away, the option is available for a length of time after the service just in case.

After some time, a family may request a recording to replay the day from a different perspective, especially as funeral services are highly emotional. It can be a useful reminder, for old and young members of the family, of who attended the service and how their life was meaningfully celebrated.

### **Private and safe streaming, for as many people as they wish**

Whether a livestream is ordered for a single family member or a larger group, everyone that wants to access a funeral stream should feel reassured that they can watch a service with ease and be able to focus on saying farewell.

While a service can occasionally have an independent live stream, typically funeral venues have chosen to partner with their AV provider, such as Obitus, to deliver live streaming to families.

Funeral streaming scams are becoming more and more common, and it can be difficult for anyone to determine the legitimacy of a link. We only send the unique live stream log-in details to funeral professionals linked on the Obitus Dashboard – giving families a central contact if they have any concerns about the legitimacy of a stream or to confirm the log-in details.

If you have any concerns about live streaming scams, our website can provide further guidance.

We hope that families who want to share their loved one's service with friends and family, wherever they are in the world, will have the option to do so through Live and On Demand streaming. We're here to support funeral arrangers and families in creating the best farewell they can, through providing them with even more meaningful options.



Discover more about our Live and On Demand services  
at [www.obitus.com/streaming](https://www.obitus.com/streaming)

# Obitus







## *Extending the Conversation: A Bereavement Café Making a Lasting Impact in North Yorkshire*

When funeral celebrant Fiona Brown launched a bereavement café at The Yorkshire Barn, Murton Park in 2023, it was born out of a deep understanding of what families often need after the service ends: continuing connection.

“As celebrants and funeral professionals, we witness firsthand the early stages of grief,” Fiona has said. “But for many, it’s in the weeks and months after the funeral that the real loneliness and questions begin.”

The bereavement café model Fiona established offers exactly that ongoing support. Held on the second Monday of each month from 10am to noon, the café provides a welcoming, informal space for anyone who has experienced a bereavement—regardless of when it occurred. Attendees are greeted with a complimentary cup of tea or filter coffee, thanks to Fiona’s husband Jonathan, owner of The Yorkshire Barn, and are invited to simply sit, talk, and share with others. The environment is relaxed and peer-led, with no formal agenda, but plenty of listening ears.

Importantly, the café is not a counselling session—it’s a space for companionship, story-sharing, and community-building. It has grown steadily, drawing around 25 attendees each month, and has become a reliable fixture in the local grief support landscape.

Before stepping back from leading the group due to the death of her mother last July, Fiona hosted some of its most memorable sessions, including a well-attended remembrance event for pets and an annual Christmas Carols and Candlelighting gathering that now draws over 100 attendees.

After Fiona’s bereavement, Amy from the charity Talking About Loss stepped in to lead the monthly sessions. Amy’s approach blends informal conversation with hands-on crafting activities—an effective way to ease the flow of dialogue for those who may struggle to open up. Under her guidance, the café has continued to thrive.

The group is also expanding its reach. This August, Talking About Loss is partnering with Murton Park and Hayley Owen Funeral Directors to host a bereavement support day for children and their carers. Set among the animals and living history experiences of the park, the event aims to create a gentle, age-appropriate way to explore grief in a family-friendly environment.

Fiona continues to support the bereavement café behind the scenes—helping with fundraising, attending sessions, and providing continuity for the community she helped build.

For those in the funeral industry, initiatives like this offer a powerful reminder that our duty of care doesn’t always end at the graveside. The bereavement café model is a simple yet impactful way to provide aftercare, reduce isolation, and create space for ongoing healing in the community.





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## AI is a tool, and cannot replace your experience and expertise

By Kate Walker, Manager of Funeral Director Websites at MuchLoved

When I'm working with funeral businesses on website projects, one of the questions I often get asked is: *Can I just use ChatGPT or AI to create website content?*

Yes, AI tools can help you to get started and create content faster, but what they totally lack is **your** experience and **your** expertise.

*"But I'm no writer – I don't know where to start"* I hear you saying!

In this article, I'll look at how you can use AI content as a starting point but put your own stamp on it to ensure it is authoritative and trustworthy. I'll also explain why this is important.

### Why does my website need good content?

All good, engaging content can help drive traffic to your website. It should be informative and compassionate, providing resources for people who are organising or attending funerals, or planning their own funeral. Useful information will also help families to remember you when they need your services.

Remember, **you are experts in your field**, so create content that demonstrates this to visitors. Partnering with MuchLoved also provides a simple and effective way to generate valuable content. Every new tribute created, or review posted, means new **good and relevant** content added to your website.

### How can AI help?

AI tools like ChatGPT, Jasper and Copy.ai are trained on enormous data sets. They are very good at outlining topics, summarising facts, and writing initial drafts of articles. You could use them to help you come up with ideas or structure content before writing the article yourself. For instance, if you want an article on what to do when a loved one dies, or a guide to green funerals in your area, you can start with the bullet points that AI generates and **inject your own expertise**.

AI tools can help with different types of copywriting, from bullet points to full paragraphs, or to finesse sections you can't seem to get quite right. They can also be invaluable for devising punchy headlines or enticing 'calls to action', or to ensure your content is optimised for SEO.





## What are the pitfalls and limitations?

Remember that **AI-generated content is not perfect** and if you use it without input from real people, it could harm your reputation.

- **Fact-check** - AI can misstate facts, make up statistics, and even suggest 'experts' that don't exist. Publishing this content in your name can damage your trustworthiness with visitors and search engines.
- **Originality** - AI tools get data from existing sources resulting in content that lacks originality, so it will be hard for search engines to see your site as an authority on the topic.
- **Accuracy** - Don't rely on AI for legal or compliance issues. For instance, it won't generate an accurate standardised price list or provide up to date funeral plan regulations.
- **Trust** - Potential clients are also gaining experience in AI. When they think something seems too generic, they will lose trust and may go to a competitor instead. Make your content 'human' and your readers will find it more engaging.

## How to use AI, but avoid the pitfalls

Remember, **AI content isn't "real", but you are**. The best way to make your content authentic is by showing who wrote it, so **include author biographies** that showcase your experience.

**Follow Google's "EEAT" model** to ensure that your content is good quality:

- **Experience** – provide answers to questions that your clients often ask
- **Expertise** – write something you would like to read
- **Authority** – show your authority in your industry and link to other credible sites
- **Trust** – ensure content is accurate, transparent and honest

## My final thoughts

AI is a helpful tool for generating content quickly, but it shouldn't replace real experiences and insights. Without your personal input, you'll miss the quality and trustworthiness needed to attract potential clients. For transparency and ethical use, it is recommended that you attribute your content to AI if it played a role in creating it.

**If you want your business to feature in search results** and stand out amongst the competition, you need to make it clear that there are real people with experience and compassion behind your content.

## Kate Walker

Kate has 15 years' experience in creating search-engine optimised websites and has worked with the Funeral profession for over five years.

**About Funeral Director Websites** – MuchLoved's web design service, with our tribute and review service built-in, helps you transform your website, increase client engagement, and strengthen your digital presence.

# A Rose That Lives On: A Lasting Tribute to a Loved One

In times of loss, we instinctively reach for flowers—symbols of love, remembrance, and the beauty of life itself. Yet as beautiful as they are, traditional floral tributes fade all too quickly, their petals wilting even as grief still lingers. What if, instead of watching flowers wither, we could give a living tribute that blooms year after year—a personal, lasting reminder of the one we have lost?

This is the powerful sentiment behind the idea of naming your own rose in memory of a loved one.

A memorial rose is no ordinary flower. It is a lasting legacy—a rose specially cultivated, named by you, and connected forever to the person it honours. Each year, as it blooms, it brings comfort, beauty, and the enduring presence of someone cherished.

Unlike cut flowers that last days, a memorial rose lives for generations, becoming a treasured part of your family's story. But the tribute doesn't stop at the name. With our "Name Your Own Rose" service, families can take the memorial one step further by attaching a personal photograph of their loved one to the rose's profile—turning a flower into a living, growing memory. It becomes not just a rose, but *their* rose. A personal, visual, and tangible connection that loved ones can visit, nurture, and share across generations.

For many families, this becomes a unifying gesture. Rather than each person buying separate flowers or tokens of remembrance, the entire family can come together to honour the memory of someone special with a unique rose named just for them. It becomes a family keepsake, a shared remembrance, and a gift that grows alongside the healing journey.

Imagine planting this rose in a garden, a churchyard, or even in a memorial park. With every bloom, it speaks quietly of love, remembrance, and enduring connection. It allows space for reflection, for celebration, and for storytelling. And because it's personal—carrying a name chosen with care and, if desired, a photo of your loved one—it captures the essence of the individual in a way that few other memorials can.

In a world where we are often searching for ways to hold on to the people we've lost, naming a rose is a simple yet profoundly meaningful act. It is more than a flower; it's a legacy. It doesn't fade with time—it grows, it blossoms, and it continues to bring comfort year after year.

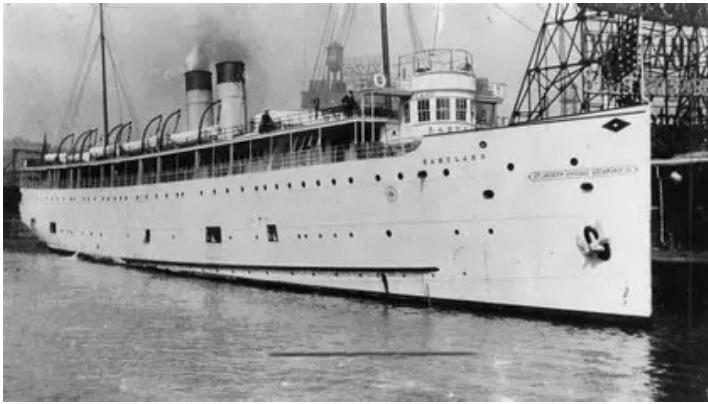
Let their memory live on, not just in our hearts, but in the gentle bloom of a rose that is as unique and enduring as they were.





# The Sinking of the SS Eastland

*By Clive Pearson 1<sup>st</sup> Vice President*



The tragic sinking of the Titanic on April 15, 1912, is a well-known maritime disaster that resulted in a significant loss of life. One of the critical lessons learned from this event was the necessity for ships to enhance their lifeboat capacities. Unfortunately, this led to another maritime calamity that remains less recognised.

On a cool, damp day along the South Bank of the Chicago River on July 24, 1915, the SS Eastland was docked as passengers boarded, some jokingly commenting on the ship's noticeable list. Little did they realise the impending disaster. Many of the passengers were employees of the Western Electric Company in Illinois, along with their families, gathered for a company-sponsored picnic. Seeking warmth before departure, many moved below deck.

Upon reaching its capacity of 2,500 passengers, the gangplank was removed. The ship's orchestra began to play lively music in the ballroom, where many passengers were enjoying themselves. As the vessel prepared to set sail, numerous passengers shifted to the port side to wave farewell to their loved ones. Suddenly, as the engines engaged, the SS Eastland lurched violently to port and capsized.



Panic ensued as most passengers remained trapped below deck, where they were overwhelmed by falling furniture, including heavy chairs, bookcases, and pianos. The harbour master ordered that no ropes be cast off until the ship could be righted; however, the ropes snapped under the weight. Those who managed to jump into the water found themselves in raw sewage, with many drowning due to their formal attire —women in long dresses and men in three-piece suits.

Warehouse workers attempted to assist by using blow torches to cut holes in the hull, responding to the cries for help from below, only to be met by the ship's captain, who lamented the damage to his vessel. The chief engineer successfully activated injectors to fill the boilers with water, fearing an explosion, and managed to escape by climbing through an air duct.



Mortuaries were established in nearby buildings, where the deceased were laid out for identification. A total of 844 passengers perished, including 472 women, 290 children, 82 men, and 4 crew members. Tragically, 22 families were entirely lost. Unidentified bodies were transported to the 2nd Regiment Armoury, which is now considered one of America's most haunted locations, reportedly haunted by the sounds of crying children and a weeping gray lady.

The magnitude of the disaster soon overwhelmed local churches and cemeteries, leading to numerous combined funerals. Freight trucks were repurposed as makeshift hearses to accommodate the overwhelming number of funerals. Survivors had to be immunised for typhoid due to their prolonged exposure in the river.

The disaster stemmed from the slow-reacting ballast tanks and poor weight distribution, largely attributed to the increased number of lifeboats, which added an extra 14 tons to the ship's weight. In stark contrast to the Titanic tragedy, media coverage of the Eastland disaster was relatively muted, primarily due to the working-class status of the passengers. A week later, a millionaire heiress's wedding gained far more press attention, overshadowing the Eastland disaster and allowing it to fade from public memory.





# DON'T FORGET!!!!!!

Our Conference Runs from October 24<sup>th</sup> - 26<sup>th</sup> this year  
At The Copthorne Slough - Windsor Hotel

Places are limited so please use the forms included in this  
edition to book your places



Our President Amanda Pink is bringing the Institute back to its  
roots of Education and Saturday afternoon will be filled with meet  
and greets and talks from various people.

This afternoon is open to members of the public who wish to know  
more about what we do. Alternatively, you can explore the facilities of  
the Hotel or have a wander around Windsor

Saturday Night will include a drinks  
reception, followed by a 3 course meal.  
and the Handover of Offices. Students  
who have passed their exams, will be  
presented with their certificates



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