

BRITISH INSTITUTE OF FUNERAL DIRECTORS



THE JOURNAL

Conference Edition



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*National President's
Chosen Charity*



The Presidential Team:

National President, Clive Pearson

1st Vice President, Dr Philip Gore

2nd Vice President,

Immediate Past President, Amanda Pink

admin@bifd.org.uk

Chair of Education, Andrew Floyd:

a.floyd.bifd.edu@gmail.com



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Reflecting on a Year of Leadership: An Interview with Amanda Pink, Immediate Past President of the BIFD

As her term as National President comes to a close, Amanda Pink reflects on a year of remarkable experiences, challenges, and achievements. Her time in office has been defined by connection, education, and personal growth, and she departs the role with a deep sense of pride and gratitude.



1: What is it like to be President of the BIFD?

Being President has been a wonderful experience. I've had the privilege of meeting so many colleagues from across the profession, all in different roles, yet united in our commitment to supporting one another and providing the best service we can for families.

2: Has the role changed your view of the Institute in any way?

No. I still firmly believe that we offer some of the very best education within the profession, and I am confident it will continue to grow and develop.

3: What do you feel went particularly well for you this year?

I feel that the year has gone really well. I attended every event I was invited to, apart from one, and have had a very positive experience overall. We partnered with Obitus, which will bring real benefits to our members, and we've hosted some excellent CPD sessions. All in all, it has been a successful and rewarding year.

4: What would you have liked to have done more of?

Honestly, I don't think I could have fitted any more in! It has been an incredibly busy year already.

5: What do you consider your biggest achievement as President?

Without doubt, completing a skydive from 15,000 feet to raise money for charity. If I hadn't been President, I don't think I would have pushed myself to take on that challenge.

6: What one piece of advice would you give to the incoming President?

Take each day as it comes, and enjoy every moment, it really is a unique and special experience.

7: Would you accept the role again if offered?

Probably not. Not because it hasn't been wonderful, but because I don't think it would ever be quite the same the second time around.

8: What will you miss most about being President?

I'll really miss meeting people and having those conversations about the day-to-day challenges we all face in the profession.

9: Did you enjoy hosting the Conference?

Absolutely. I'm an organiser at heart, so I loved the challenge of pulling everything together and seeing it all come to fruition.

10: What's next for you personally in 2026?

For me, 2026 will start with a well-earned holiday somewhere warm! After that, my focus will be on my business and my family.

Amanda

*Amanda Pink, Dip. FS, LMBIFD
Immediate Past President, Region G*



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INTRODUCING

Clive Pearson

National President

Dear Colleagues, Members, and Esteemed Friends,



It is a tremendous honour and privilege to address you today as the newly appointed President of the British Institute of Funeral Directors. I am deeply grateful for the trust you have placed in me, and I accept this responsibility with the utmost respect for the traditions and values that have shaped our profession for generations.

For those of you who have not yet had the opportunity to meet me, I have been dedicated to the funeral profession since the age of 14. Throughout my career, I have obtained qualifications in both embalming and funeral directing. Driven by a desire to give back to the profession, I pursued and achieved a teaching qualification in embalming and funeral directing. Over the years, I have had the privilege of educating many students, guiding them towards becoming qualified professionals in this field.

I reside with my wife, Leanne, and our five children in a picturesque location where "Last of the Summer Wine" was filmed. We manage our family business that is currently celebrating 105 years of successful trading. I am also an associate member of Kenyon International, where I have participated in numerous deployments over the years.

Our institute stands as a beacon of professionalism, compassion, and integrity within funeral service. For decades, we have provided comfort and support to families in their moments of greatest need, upholding the highest standards of care. This legacy is not only our foundation, it is our guide as we move forward.

The institute would not be where it is today without the members who founded the institute in 1982 believing that education should be at the forefront of what we do as a profession, believing that every funeral director should be qualified which sadly is still not the case. As we reflect on the past years of the institute we should give thanks for the past, for the members who made the institute what it is today and remember those who have passed on with fondness.

So what about the future? The world is changing rapidly, and our profession faces new challenges and opportunities. Advances in technology, evolving cultural expectations, and shifts in legislation require us to adapt while remaining true to our core values. At the heart of our adaption must be education, ensuring every member has access to the knowledge and skills necessary to grow with these changes. The British Institute of Funeral Directors provides outstanding Continual Professional Development (CPD) to our members and asks any member who has an idea for CPD to get in touch with National Office.

Education is the cornerstone of excellence in funeral service. One of our foremost responsibilities is to ensure that every funeral director, whether new to the field or seasoned by years of service, can access robust training, as an Institute we shall actively seek feedback from our members to ensure our initiatives remain relevant and valuable. Our goal is to embrace a culture where learning is continuous, curiosity is encouraged, and every member feels empowered to pursue further knowledge.

At its heart, funeral service is about compassion. It is about supporting families, honouring lives, and helping communities heal. As President, I am committed to a spirit of collaboration within our institute and beyond, working closely with allied organisations, government bodies, and the public to strengthen the bonds of trust that are the hallmark of our profession. Education will play a vital role in building these bridges and advancing our shared mission.

As we embark on this journey together, I invite you all to share your insights, ideas, and aspirations. Let us uphold the dignity of funeral service, champion innovation, and ensure that the British Institute of Funeral Directors remains a source of pride for generations to come. Most importantly, let us make learning our legacy, so that every funeral director, every colleague, every member of our community is equipped and inspired to serve at the highest level.

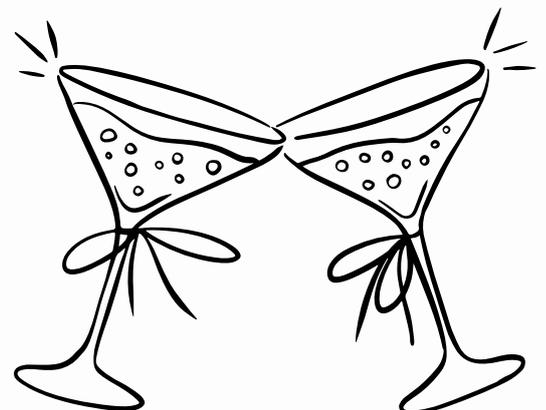
Throughout the year, we will be raising funds for the Samaritans. Since answering their first call in 1953, the Samaritans have responded to over 134 million calls, providing crucial support to individuals in their most challenging times and helping to save lives. As part of our fundraising efforts, we will be organising a sponsored walk over the Yorkshire Three Peaks. The date for this event will be announced, and we warmly welcome anyone who wishes to join us in supporting this worthy cause.

Thank you for your dedication, your compassion, and your commitment to excellence. Both my wife Leanne and I, look forward to working and meeting with each of you through the coming months.

With sincere gratitude and best wishes,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Clive". The script is fluid and cursive, with the 'C' being particularly large and stylized.

President, British Institute of Funeral Directors



INTRODUCING

Dr Phil Gore

1st Vice President



Philip joined Gore Brothers Ltd in Margate in January 1978, after a decidedly mediocre spell at Chatham House Grammar School, trained with Lears of London as an embalmer in September 1978 working at 369 Clapham Road, qualifying in 1980. He briefly left the firm to read for a science degree in Psychology and Sociology at the university of London that same year. He returned, full time, to the firm in 1983, completing his Dip FD in 1988. A chance encounter at a conference pointed him in the direction of post graduate activity. A masters by research at the University of Kent, with the title of 'From undertaker to funeral director: emergence of funeral firms in east Kent', completed in 1992 and his Ph.D entitled 'Embalming and the social construction of the dead in contemporary England', completed in 2005, kept him very well occupied for years. In addition he has overseen the expansion of the family firm from premises in Addington Rd Margate, originally acquired in 1862, to a location more in keeping with dynamic pace of contemporary funeral practice. The addition of five branch offices from the mid-eighties onwards has also kept him quite busy.

Philip is a first responder for Kenyon International Emergency Services as an international repatriation specialist and has attended aviation, man-made & natural disasters and incidents within the UK and also in countries within Europe, North, Southern and West Africa, the middle East, the far East, America, the Gulf and the Caribbean.

Philip is married to Liz and they have four children: Tom a history teacher, married to Rachel, Alex, a BIE member and business partner, also working in the family firm, Amy who, after a degree at Oxford is now the logistics director for GT embalming and Nick, a solicitor, married to Ruth. The addition of eight grandchildren in recent years has been very widely appreciated, as has also the afternoon snooze, following their visits.

Any residual time not taken up with things at work, home, ballroom dancing or choral singing within a small chamber choir, where he successfully brings down the tone and being a trustee of a local Margate-based Alms house is very rare. However local history is of great personal interest and researching (on a very part-time basis) the distant roots of Gore Brothers Ltd, from its Nineteenth century elements, when the company described itself as 'furnishing undertakers' back through a nautical boat building element in the later Eighteenth century, and finally back to 1736, when John Gore in Margate inserted a notice into the local paper that he was now going to provide the soft furnishings (vital to funerals at the time) has produced a tantalising clue to the origins of his family company, now dating back ten generations.

INTRODUCING

Judith Dandy

2nd Vice President



I am a first-generation independent funeral director; founder and owner of Dandelion Farewells in Wisborough Green, West Sussex. I established my business in 2015 and began studying for the BIFD Certificate that year, which I gained in 2016; later qualifying with my Diploma in 2017.

Prior to my career as a funeral director, I was a qualified Social Worker in Adult Services and also had a role as a Carer's Support Worker attached to GP surgeries. In my training I studied grief and bereavement as the chosen specialist subject for my dissertation – not thinking for one minute that I would use that learning within the funeral sector! I feel privileged that my professional and vocational journey has led me to support my community through providing compassionate, proficient, individual, funeral support.

I have always been a passionate advocate for training in the funeral profession, believing in the importance of true understanding of the many themes and responsibilities within our role and striving for excellence in our work. Accepting the invitation to take a position on the Board of Directors of the BIFD enables me to contribute to the Institute, in gratitude for all that I have received as a student and member, and to further the provision of the high standard of training we offer. I want to support and encourage the tutors in their commitment to teaching; and strengthen the network among the members of the Institute as we continue to each ensure that our knowledge and expertise is current within changing regulations, policies and the diversity of funeral choices available.

Alongside the personal funeral care we support, I am also involved in delivering training and presentations for health and social care teams and community groups. Opportunities to develop people's understanding of end-of-life care and funeral options is a key part of the mandate for Dandelion Farewells.

Moments to unwind and recharge include time spent with family and friends, and walking the countryside of West Sussex.



INTRODUCING Victoria Wells

New Deputy Editor, Region C

A keen member of the funeral industry since the age of 22, Victoria brings a comprehensive skill set and deep passion to her roles. She is uniquely trained across the spectrum of funeral care, having studied embalming, Funeral Directing, and qualifying as a certified Funeral Celebrant.

Her expertise is underpinned by formal qualifications, including the NAFD Foundation Certificate, Level 3 in Bereavement Counselling, the BIFD Cert. FS, and she is actively studying for her BIFD Diploma in Funeral Service. Victoria lives for her work—and her family—and enjoys active pursuits such as skiing, running, and also enjoys reading!



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For more information on The Samaritans and the work that they do visit their website

www.samaritans.org

Samaritans | Every life lost to suicide is a tragedy | Here to listen

This year's President, Clive Pearson has chosen The Samaritans as his Charity of the Year.

Clive's big event to help raise money for the charity will be climbing the Three Peaks, with further details to follow at a later date.

A Little Background to The Samaritans

In November 1953, Chad Varah, a 42 year old, Anglican Priest in London, was shaken to his core while officiating the funeral of a 14 year old girl who had taken her own life. The girl, who's name was never publicly disclosed, had experienced her first menstrual period and, in a tragic misunderstanding, believed it was a symptom of a sexually transmitted disease. Overwhelmed by shame and fear, and with no one to turn to for guidance, she ended her life in despair.

Varah, reflecting on her preventable death, later wrote in his memoir, *Before I Go*, "Little girl, I never knew you, but I promise you that you have changed my life". This moment became the catalyst for his lifelong mission to prevent such tragedies through education and support.



Chad Varah, Founder of The Samaritans

Varah, already a vicar at St. Stephen Walbrook church, recognized the deadly consequences of ignorance about sex and the lack of safe spaces for people to share their struggles.

Determined to act, he founded The Samaritans on November 2nd 1953, launching the World's first suicide prevention hotline from his church's crypt.

Initially a single telephone line, manned by Varah himself, the service offered anonymous, non judgemental listening to those in crisis. He advertised it with a simple poster.

"Telephone MAN 9000 for a talk - day or night"



Volunteers, trained to listen, without preaching, soon joined and by the end of the first year, the Samaritans had handled hundreds of calls, saving countless lives.

Beyond the hotline, Varah became a fierce advocate for sex education to dispel myths, like the one that led to the girl's death. He wrote articles, gave lectures and published "The Samaritans: To Help Those Tempted By Suicide Or Despair" in 1965, emphasizing the need for open conversation about mental health and bodily changes.

His work transformed societal attitudes, and the Samaritans grew into a global organisation, now operating in 40 countries with over 20,000 volunteers.

Varah, who died in 2007 at age 95, left a legacy that endures, with the Samaritans' 24/7 helpline (116 123 in the UK) still saving lives.

Last Year's Charity

Immediate Past President Amanda Pink chose The Lullaby Trust for her President's Charity.

In April 2025, she braved the skies and jumped out of a plane at 15,000ft to raise money for them.

Throughout the year, she has raised a whopping £5320 for this charity which is close to her heart.

What an achievement! Well done Amanda!



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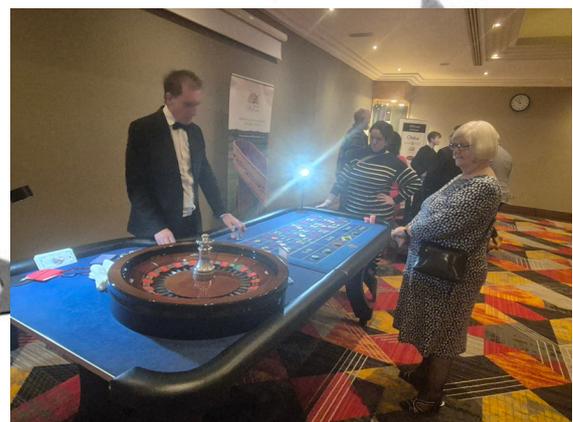
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Friday 24th October

Friday night kicked off our weekend with a drinks reception at 6.45pm followed by a 3 course meal. The DJ kept us entertained throughout with dancing and Casino Tables afterwards.



Saturday 25th October - AGM

Saturday Morning was our Annual General Meeting, starting at 10am in The Royal Suite.



Saturday 25th October - Education Afternoon

Our Education Afternoon ran from 2pm until 4pm with speakers from Obitus and MuchLoved, talking about how Funeral Directors, can help families by using their services.



Saturday 25th October - Gala Dinner

Saturday evening started off with a drinks reception at 6.15pm, where a magician kept us entertained, before heading into The Royal Suite for a 4 course meal, in between presenting successful Diploma Students, their awards and handing over the offices. The entertainment for the night were Dohl Drummers and Bollywood dancers.







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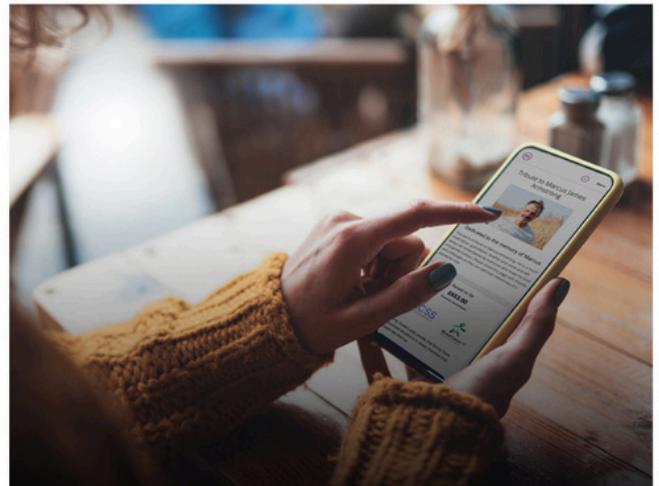


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One of the great things I love about my job here at Obitus, is the opportunity it gives me to attend numerous sector engagements and to spend quality time with a wide range of funeral professionals.

It is true that there is no 'one-size-fits-all' within the funeral community. Everyone is different and individuals approach their role in a unique way.

However, from my experience, there is one thing that unites us all. And that is our dedication to 'do the right thing' in supporting families, in their hour of greatest need.

I don't think it really matters whether individuals are seasoned pros, second or third generation funeral directors or relatively new to the funeral sector. We all seem to have this common desire to help families create a unique bereavement experience – delivering the funeral they desire.



BIFD Conference

So, it gave me enormous pleasure in attending the recent BIFD Annual Conference in Windsor, where I was fortunate enough to meet so many dedicated funeral professionals, who'd travelled from far and wide to attend this highly enjoyable event.

As a Strategic Partner, we were able to showcase our products and services to BIFD Members, along with presenting the various practical ways that we are able to support their training and development needs.

Our goal is for every member to feel confident, informed and equipped to offer families the very best experience.

That's why we created the Obitus Academy, an online learning platform, designed especially for funeral professionals.

Through short, flexible modules, you can deepen your understanding of Obitus, build confidence in presenting media options and gain recognition through CPD-accredited training.

I hope that many BIFD Members will find our training programmes useful, practical and informative in helping arrangement discussions relating to media options.

We're truly grateful for this ongoing partnership with the BIFD and look forward to connecting with many of you again soon.

Get in touch

If you'd like to learn more about our training options, or discuss how we can support your team, please contact me at phil.perry@obitus.com

Many thanks
Phil
Partnerships Manager – Obitus



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1983/84	J Patterson	2005/06	D Grainger
1984/85	M Harper	2006/07	R Clark
1985/86	L J Lambert	2007/08	A Pink
1986/87	M P Case	2008/09	S Lewis
1987/88	P Mills	2009/10	K Satterly
1988/89	M Dow	2010/11	G Easton
1989/90	E Eyre	2011/12	C Kirk
1990/91	A D Moar	2012/13	R Gresty
1991/92	J G Murren	2013/14	S Walton
1992/93	R P Putt	2014/15	D Gresty
1993/94	D M Taylor	2015/16	C Pearson
1994/95	R W Rowntree	2016/17	D Carpenter
1995/96	A P Puxley	2017/18	A Puxley
1996/97	J Butterworth	2018/19	D Capper
1997/98	J W Constable	2019/20	M Serjeant
1998/99	N Alderson	2020/21	M Serjeant
1999/20	C J Murrell	2021/22	P Stibbards
2000/01	P Gallagher	2022/23	J P Mead
2001/02	RG Fenn	2023/24	A J Dalby
2002/03	K Gilmore	2024/25	A Pink

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