

BRITISH INSTITUTE OF FUNERAL DIRECTORS



THE JOURNAL

ISSUE 6



Let's prevent suicide today.
Because tomorrow's too late.

SAMARITANS

If you, or anyone else is struggling you can contact The Samaritans on 116 123 any time, day or night.

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



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*National President's
 Chosen Charity*



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Letter from the National President

Clive Pearson

Dear colleagues and friends

Welcome to this month's edition of the journal. As we fast approach the midpoint of what is shaping up to be an incredibly busy and rewarding year, I am filled with immense pride reflecting on the dedication, resilience, and community spirit that defines our institute.

From battling the elements on Yorkshire's highest peaks to connecting with so many of you on the exhibition floor, the last few weeks have truly highlighted the strength of the BIFD network.



I want to start by expressing my deepest gratitude to everyone who supported, donated to, or participated in our recent charity walk over the Yorkshire Three Peaks.

To say the weather was challenging would be an understatement. We were met with heavy rain, biting winds, and a thick fog that obscured the summits entirely. In fact, the conditions were so severe that another charity group on the mountains that day unfortunately had to cancel their walk after the second hill.

But true to the spirit of our profession, we kept going.

Thanks to the sheer determination of our walkers and the incredible support crew, we pushed through and successfully completed all three peaks.

Thanks to your incredible generosity, we have raised over £2000 so far! This is a fantastic achievement that will make a tangible difference. Thank you to everyone who helped out, braved the weather, or cheered us on from a dry distance.



It was wonderful to see so many of you at the recent National Funeral Exhibition (NFE). The event was an absolute success for the BIFD.

Our stand was incredibly busy throughout the weekend, and we saw a tremendous amount of interest in both new memberships and our accredited training courses. I found the high level of engagement deeply heartening. In a rapidly evolving sector, seeing so many professionals both seasoned and new to the industry actively seeking to elevate their standards through the BIFD's educational pathways gives me great confidence in the future of our profession.



Thank you to everyone who stopped by to say hello it was so lovely to see you in person.

Turning our attention to the rest of the month, the diary remains wonderfully full. In the next few weeks, Leanne and I are very much looking forward to attending the Cremation Society's CBCE banquet, which always promises to be a fantastic evening of networking and collaboration with our industry colleagues.

We also have the distinct honour of attending a centenary celebration with one of our long-standing members. Reaching 100 years of service which is a magnificent milestone, and I look forward to sharing this special event with you in the next edition of the journal.

With best wishes,

Clive

Clive Pearson
National President, Region C

BIFD FUNDRAISING WALK: CONQUERING THE YORKSHIRE THREE PEAKS FOR SAMARITANS



SAMARITANS

Leek & District

National President, Clive Pearson, took on the Three Peaks on Thursday 4th June to raise money for his chosen charity The Samaritans



British Institute of Funeral Directors Presidents Charity Supporting the Samaritans

Help raise money to support Leek and District Samaritans

 JustGiving

Please show your support by donating via the link, or through our social media pages.

SAVE THE DATE!

TUESDAY 23RD JUNE TO THURSDAY 25TH JUNE 2026

We're delighted to announce the dates for CBCE 2026 which will see us returning to the Hilton Utilita Bowl - Southampton



There are a number of ticket options - head over to www.cbce.org.uk to book your place today!

44th ANNUAL BIFD CONFERENCE

23rd – 25th October 2026



Mercure Tankersley Manor Hotel

Church Ln, Tankersley, Barnsley S75 3DQ

The BIFD Invites You To Conference 2026.....

BIFD National President, Clive Pearson, and his wife Leanne cordially invite all Members, Fellows, Students, Associates, Presidents of Kindred Associations, and Distinguished Guests to attend the upcoming Conference and Gala Dinner of The British Institute of Funeral Directors. The event will take place from 23rd to 25th October 2025 at The Mercure Tankersley Manor Hotel.



Tankersley Manor centres around a renovated 17th-century residence, conveniently located just a minute from Junction 36 off the M1 and offering free parking. Its 98 refurbished rooms are designed with elegant craftsmanship and bursts of colour to create an inviting atmosphere for guests. You'll find leisure amenities such as a gym, swimming pool, jacuzzi, sauna, steam room, and five spa treatment rooms—perfect for enjoying some relaxation during Conference Weekend (advance booking is recommended). The Woodman Restaurant offers a cozy spot by the fire where you can unwind and savour classic Yorkshire dishes.

Nearby attractions include Elsecar Heritage Centre, Cannon Hall, and Chatsworth House.

The President's Charity For 2026.....



Clive and Leanne have selected The Samaritans as the Institute Charity for 2026.

Founded in 1953 by Chad Vara, who recognised through his own life experiences the importance of listening, the organisation empowers individuals by offering a compassionate ear to callers wishing to talk about their emotions, feelings, challenges, and concerns, hoping to help them make positive informed decisions about their lives.

The Samaritans' mission is dedicated to reducing the number of individuals contemplating or attempting to take their own lives. The organisation currently provides comprehensive 24/7 telephone support across England, Wales, Scotland, and Ireland. Its services have expanded to help individuals facing a broad range of issues, including suicide, depression, anxiety, stress, loneliness, all forms of abuse, and alcohol or drug use.

The itinerary so far...

Friday 23rd October 2026

The Education Committee is scheduled to convene in the morning, followed by a meeting of the Board of Directors in the afternoon.

Once you've settled into your rooms, Clive welcomes you to join him and Leanne for a three-course dinner in the hotel's function suite.

Saturday 24th October 2026

The Annual General Meeting will be held in the morning, and a buffet lunch will follow afterward.

In the afternoon, Clive has tentative plans for an activity of interest; further details will be provided once arrangements are confirmed.

The evening will commence with a drink's reception, followed by a three-course dinner accompanied by wine, cheese and biscuits, as well as tea and coffee. The programme will include the Diploma Awards Ceremony and the official Handover of Offices, concluding with music and dancing later in the evening.

Earlier than 23rd or later than 25th October 2026

Should you wish to extend your stay, we have arranged favourable rates for dates surrounding the Conference, allowing you to enjoy Yorkshire for a longer visit. Kindly inform us of your specific requirements, and we will endeavour to secure the most advantageous arrangements on your behalf.

The British Institute of Funeral Directors Conference 2026:

23rd – 25th October 2026

The Mercure Tankersley Manor Hotel

Church Ln, Tankersley, Barnsley S75 3DQ

The 44th BIFD Conference 2026 Rates

1. Friday Evening To Sunday Morning – THE COMPLETE PACKAGE

<i>Friday Dinner</i>	<i>.....Double Room (per couple)</i>	<i>£675</i>
<i>Friday & Saturday Bed & Breakfast</i>	<i>.....Single Room (per person)</i>	<i>£425</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 3 Course Meal, Cheese & Biscuits & Tea and Coffee</i>		

2. Friday Evening To Saturday Morning - ONLY

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

Saturday Lunch Is Available At £30 PP

3. Saturday To Sunday Morning - ONLY

<i>Saturday AGM: On Arrival Tea, Coffee & Biscuits</i>	<i>.....Double Room (per couple)</i>	<i>£395</i>
<i>Saturday Evening Drinks Reception</i>	<i>.....Single Room (per person)</i>	<i>£235</i>
<i>Saturday Gala Dinner – Includes 3 Course Meal, Cheese & Biscuits & Tea and Coffee</i>		
<i>Saturday Bed & Breakfast</i>		

Saturday Lunch Is Available At £30 PP

4. The Gala Banquet Dinner Only

.....£85 Per Person

<i>Saturday Evening Drinks Reception</i>
<i>Saturday Gala Dinner – Includes 3 Course Meal, Cheese & Biscuits & Tea and Coffee</i>

Saturday Lunch Is Available At £30 PP

5. AGM ATTENDANCE ONLY

.....Free To All Members & Students

<i>Saturday AGM: On Arrival Tea, Coffee & Biscuits</i>
--

Saturday Lunch Is Available On The Day At £30 PP

TO STAY BEFORE OR AFTER THE CONFERENCE B&B BASIS

Please add extra dates to booking form:

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

The 44th BIFD CONFERENCE – 23rd – 25th October 2026

The Mercure Tankersley Manor

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 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

Reference: BIFDCONF

Tariff (3) – Sat to Sun

Double Rate: £.....

Single Rate: £.....

Mrs Margaret Dow

C/O The British Institute of Funeral Directors
National Office,
7-9 Station Street,
Meltham,
Huddersfield,
HD9 5NX

Tariff (4) – Gala Dinner Only

Total Attendees £.....

Tariff (5) – AGM Only

£ No Charge

Email: treasurer@bifd.org.uk

Total Amount Due £.....

Funeral Spotlight on South Korea: Turning Ashes into Beads

Victoria Wells

Deputy Editor, Region C



Death is the ultimate universal human experience, yet how we respond to it is beautifully, radically diverse. Around the world, funerals are much more than a final farewell—they are a profound reflection of a culture's values, spiritual beliefs, and views on the afterlife.

The concept of South Korea's "death beads"—known locally as Bon-hyang-ja-ri (which roughly translates to "beads of spiritual aroma")—is one of the most fascinating intersections of ancient ancestor veneration and modern, space-saving technology.

If you want to look under the hood of how this practice came to be and how it actually works, here is a deeper dive.

To understand why death beads became popular, you have to understand Pungsu-jiri (the Korean version of Feng Shui). For centuries, Korean Confucian tradition dictated that the dead must be buried in gravesites on auspicious mountain slopes. This kept the ancestors happy, which in turn brought good fortune to the living descendants.

However, by the late 1990s, South Korea was running out of land. Mountainous burial plots were overtaking valuable real estate.

- In 2000, the government passed a strict law: any new burial plot could only remain for 60 years. After that, the body had to be exhumed and cremated.
- The public took the hint. In the early 1990s, less than 20% of Koreans chose cremation. By the mid-2010s, that number skyrocketed to over 80%.

But cremation left families with a cultural void. Storing a cold, gray box of ash at home felt un-Confucian, and putting it in a crowded indoor columbarium felt detached. Death beads solved this by transforming ashes into something beautiful, clean, and portable.

How Are the Beads Made?

The transformation process is a blend of science and respectful ritual. It takes about 90 minutes to two hours.

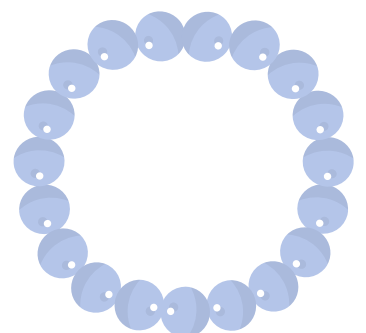
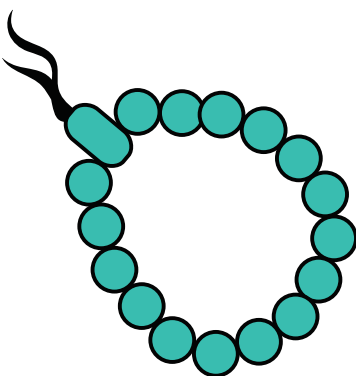
- 1. Purification:** The cremated ashes are first ground down into a very fine, uniform powder. Any metallic impurities (like surgical screws) are meticulously removed.
- 2. Super-Heating:** The powder is placed into a specialised, high-tech kiln. Unlike glassmaking or pottery, no chemicals, resins, or binding agents are added.
- 3. Liquefaction & Crystallisation:** The kiln is heated to an intense temperature—typically around 1,200°C to 1,300°C (2,200°F to 2,400°F). At this point, the natural minerals within the bone ash (like calcium phosphate) melt into a liquid state.
- 4. Cooling:** The liquid ash is dropped or poured in tiny increments, cooling rapidly as it hits the air to form perfectly smooth, glossy, pea-sized beads.

The Mystery of the Colour

One of the most poetic aspects of the process is that families never truly know what colour the beads will be until they come out of the kiln.

Because no artificial colours are added, the final hue depends entirely on the unique chemical and mineral makeup of the individual's bones.

- Most beads turn out a soft, translucent blue-green or turquoise.
- Others turn out stark white, pitch black, or even a warm amber/pink.
- Factors like the person's diet, medications they took, or their bone density can completely alter the final colour.



Why Families Choose Them

For many South Koreans, especially younger, urban generations living in compact Seoul apartments, death beads offer several unique comforts:

- **No Decay or Odours:** Raw ash can absorb moisture from the air, clump up, and grow mould over time. Sintered beads are completely sterile, waterproof, and will never degrade.
- **Proximity without Macabre:** A jar of ash on a living room mantle can feel grim to some guests. A beautiful glass jar filled with what looks like polished sea glass or gemstones looks like art, allowing families to keep their loved ones in the centre of the home without it feeling morbid.
- **Mobility:** In a globalised world, younger Koreans change apartments or move abroad frequently. You can't easily move a mountain grave, but you can easily take a small jar of beautiful beads with you wherever you go.



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THE BIFD CODE OF ETHICS

All members of the Institute have agreed to be bound by the following code:

A Fellow and a Member shall not conduct herself/himself at any time in a manner likely to prejudice her/his professional status as a Funeral Director or the reputation of her/his profession.

A Fellow and a Member will treat with respect each dead human body. A Fellow and a Member will pledge a complete confidential relationship to those she/he is called upon to serve.

A Fellow and a Member shall not solicit funeral orders nor employ any person to do so on her/his behalf, nor shall she/he either offer or give any rewards for any recommendations.

I _____ have read, understood and agree to the BIFD Code of Ethics.

I acknowledge that if any concerns arise from my compliance with these commitments, the Board of Directors will assess the concerns and may suspend my membership of the Institute.

Signed _____

Date _____



BRITISH INSTITUTE OF FUNERAL DIRECTORS

BIFD National Office 7-9 station Street Meltham Holmfirth HD9 5NX

Tel: 0800 032 2733 Email: admin@bifd.org.uk Web: www.bifd.org.uk

Email: admin@bifd.org.uk

Telephone: 0800 032 2733

2026/27 MEMBERSHIP SUBSCRIPTION RENEWAL

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

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

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

✓	MEMBERSHIP TYPE	SUBSCRIPTION AMOUNT		
	Licenced Full Member (CPD FORM MUST BE COMPLETED)	£195.00		
	Full Member	£185.00		
	Certificate Member (non voting)	£ 75.00		
	Retired Member (voting)	£ 75.00		
	Retired Member (non-voting)	£ 50.00		
	Student Member	£ 75.00		
	Associate Member	£100.00		
✓	ADDITIONAL MEMBER ITEMS	Quantity	Cost	TOTAL AMOUNT
	Additional copies of Annual Licence <i>(ONLY available to Full Members with a Licence, as above)</i>		£10.00	£
	Member's Lapel Badge		£ 5.00	£
	Member's Window Sticker		£ 2.45	£
	Member's Tie (normal straight tie or clip on)		£10.00	£
Total Additional Member Items				£
Membership Subscription (as above)				£
TOTAL TO PAY				£

Member's Signature:

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

To opt out of allowing your personal information to be shared, please tick the box.	<input type="checkbox"/>
---	--------------------------

PLEASE NOTE: If you are applying for a Licence, you must complete the 2025/2026 CPD Return and enclose it with your Subscription Renewal. CPD Returns will be checked and verified and you may be contacted and requested to supply additional information if we need further verification.



BRITISH INSTITUTE OF FUNERAL DIRECTORS

APPLICATION FOR FULL MEMBERSHIP - 2026/27

FULL NAME		
Address:		
		Post Code:
Telephone:	Home:	Business:
Mobile:		
Email:		
Website: www.		

Details of qualifications ie Diploma in Funeral Service or Diploma in Funeral Practice

Please complete and return this form to National Office with evidence of your qualifications. ie. a copy of your NAFD Diploma Certificate or IFD Cert FP Certificate. Once we have checked these we will provide you with our bank details for you to send payment prior to us issuing your membership certificate.

Are you or your company a member of NAFD or SAIF **Yes/No**

I Declare that the information furnished by me as part of this Application is correct and I agree to comply with the Rules of the Institute including the Code of Ethics.

I Acknowledge that any Membership Certificate issued to me will remain the property of the Institute

I Confirm that on termination of my Membership of the Institute, for any reason, I will return my Membership Certificate and cease using the logo or any advertisement containing reference to the Institute.

I Agree to my details being shared with Institute members

Signature:	Date:
-------------------	--------------

Please forward the completed application form to:
British Institute of Funeral Directors
BIFD National Office 7-9 station Street Meltham Holmfirth HD9 5NX
Tel: 0800 032 2733 Email: admin@bifd.org.uk Web: www.bifd.org.uk



BRITISH INSTITUTE OF FUNERAL DIRECTORS

APPLICATION FOR ASSOCIATE MEMBERSHIP - 2026/27

FULL NAME or COMPANY NAME		
Address:		
		Post Code:
Telephone:	Home:	Business:
Mobile:		
Email:		
Website: www.		

Involvement with the funeral/bereavement sector :

Please complete and return this form to National Office.

Once the Board of Directors have approved your application, we will provide you with our bank details for you to send payment prior to us issuing your membership certificate.

I Declare that the information furnished by me as part of this Application is correct and I agree to comply with the Rules of the Institute including the Code of Ethics.

I Acknowledge that any Membership Certificate issued to me will remain the property of the Institute

I Confirm that on termination of my Membership of the Institute, for any reason, I will return my Membership Certificate and cease using the logo or any advertisement containing reference to the Institute.

I Agree to my details being shared with Institute members

Signature:	Date:
-------------------	--------------

Please forward the completed application form to:

British Institute of Funeral Directors
BIFD National Office 7-9 station Street Meltham Holmfirth HD9 5NX
Tel: 0800 032 2733 Email: admin@bifd.org.uk Web: www.bifd.org.uk

Including a Child in Funeral Arrangements

The UK's leading bereavement charity for young people and parents grieving a child, Child Bereavement UK, is highlighting the importance of including young people in funeral arrangements.

When a child is bereaved of somebody important to them or when someone is expected to die, it can be difficult for a family, and those supporting the family, to know how to involve the young person throughout the process.

Admittedly, some families may wish to try to shelter their child or young person however, Child Bereavement UK highlights that it is important for a child to be given choices in how they might like to remember their special person during arrangements.

Many families wonder whether it is damaging for a child to attend the funeral or feel unsure about how to talk to a young person about death and dying.

Child Bereavement UK advises that it is always best to use age-appropriate but clear, direct language, as often, especially younger, children can try to fill in the gaps of what is happening. They may understand that something serious has happened but may feel confused by less clear adult language which can sometimes cause extra uncertainty.

Paul Parsons, Head of Clinical Services at Child Bereavement UK explains how important it is for children and young people to be given the option to choose for themselves.

He comments, "It is vital that children and young people are remembered when it comes to arranging or attending a funeral. Post-bereavement can be an especially confusing time, in particular for young children who may be struggling to comprehend what is happening."

Paul explains, "It's important to remember the so-called 'forgotten mourners', when somebody dies, it's natural and appropriate to look to the older grievors but there are often children and young adults who are also mourning their loved one and who need the support too.

"In the aftermath of a bereavement, the world around these young people changes in a significant way, and it's beneficial to help them to view their own emotions as normal and relevant when they feel included in a funeral, service or some other commemoration."

Just as it is best to be open and honest about what is happening, it is often best to allow a child and young person an age-appropriate choice in proceedings and to include them as much as possible. This helps them to realise that their feelings are valid and that they have a place in remembering their important person.

The time after a death and before a funeral can be an especially difficult time for the adults around a young person as they may also be coping with feelings of grief, struggling with lots of choices and decisions themselves and feel unsure about how to explain what has happened to a child.

To assist a young person in deciding how involved they want to be in a funeral, it's helpful for the young person to be fully aware of what will be involved in a funeral or other remembrance activities, such as viewing a body, including things like explaining that the body will look different and be cold to the touch.

Parents may ask funeral directors or others within the profession to explain what happens at a funeral.

“Expect pertinent or even blunt questions,” Paul advises. “Young people can sometimes take adults by surprise by their sudden maturity one moment and by asking questions that make us feel uncomfortable. Our own sympathy for the circumstance the young person is facing can cloud our clarity of communication but a good way to be reassuring and be practically supportive is to give age-appropriate but concise answers.”

It is important too for older children such as teenagers or young adults to have the option to be included in funeral arrangements and whether or not to attend.

For some, they might want to help make decisions such as regarding flowers or music played during the service, others may wish to read a poem or share a memory of the person who died.

Siblings within the same family may react very differently to the information they are receiving and the decision they have to make. This is normal and it's important that each child feels that their feelings are valid.

For further information regarding how to support bereaved families with children and young people, please review the dedicated resources on the Child Bereavement UK website.

Child Bereavement UK helps families to rebuild their lives when a child grieves or when a child dies. We offer free, UK-wide, accessible online grief support to children and young people (up to 25) who are bereaved or facing the death of someone important, and the parents and carers of babies and children who are dying or have died.

Our trained bereavement specialists are available to speak with Monday to Friday, 8am–8pm (excluding bank holidays) by phone, email, text and WhatsApp, or via our website - childbereavementuk.org

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Save The Date

Suicide Bereavement UK's
15th International Conference

**September
16
2026**

Venue: **Titanic hotel,
Liverpool**

Time: **9am - 4.30**
More info to follow

Different city, same light that unites us

Suicide Bereavement UK's 15th international hybrid conference is going to be our biggest and boldest yet.

🎤 Theme: Suicide Bereavement: Silence Isn't Always Golden

📅 Date: 16th September 2026

📍 Venue: Titanic Hotel, Liverpool (and online)

🕒 Time: 9:00am – 4:30pm

Join us for an inspiring and thought-provoking day where new research findings will be presented for the first time.

To view our interactive flyer and to register visit https://suicidebereavementuk.com/wp-content/uploads/2026/03/4049_SBUK_Conference_2026_flyer_online_v2.pdf

Growing International Interest

This year we're excited to host the conference in Liverpool—our first time outside Manchester! There's already a great buzz, and we're thrilled to see even more international delegates signing up. So far, we have attendees from 17 countries, including Australia, the USA, Ghana, Botswana and many more.

Pre-Conference Get-Together

We're thinking about organising an informal get-together the night before the conference. If that's something you'd enjoy, please drop a quick email to debbie.wilson@suicidebereavementuk.com. If enough people are interested, we'll make it happen 😊

Early-Bird Extension

Good news! Following several requests, we've extended the **early bird registration deadline to 30th April**.

Exhibition Tables

We have space for **2I exhibition tables** in our Support Services Exhibition. These are *free for charities*, as long as they purchase two delegate places.

👉 **For more information and to register CLICK HERE**
Hope to see you in September!

Programme

Registration		8.00 am - 8.55am
Chair: Angela Samata	Welcome to the conference	9.00am
Dr Nikki Jamieson	Moral Injury and Suicide Prevention: Conceptual Foundations and Practice Implications	
Nicole Cool	From Small Beginnings to a National Suicide Bereavement Model: StandBy's Evolution	
Coffee break		
Pete Johnson	Community as a Response to Suicide	
Dr Sharon McDonnell	Unheard, Unseen, Unspoken: The Silent Struggles of Older Adults Bereaved by Suicide	
Lunch/networking		
Chair: Barry McGale		
Workshops – Delegates must CHOOSE ONLY ONE WORKSHOP		
Those attending the LIVESTREAM , will only be able to attend Workshop 1		
Click here to see Workshops 1-4 📄		
1. Geoff McDonald	Addressing the Stigma of Mental Ill Health – First Step to Preventing Suicide	
2. Lisa Bourne	How Employers Can Best Support Employees Bereaved by Suicide	
3. Allison Furlong	Holding the Pieces Together: A Whole Family Peer Support Model After Suicide	
4. Madeleine Moon	How Politics Works and How to Make It Work for You	
Coffee Break		
Dr Kathryn Gardner	Strengthening Postvention: The Impact of "PABBS" Training on Professionals Supporting Those Bereaved by Suicide	
Amber Williams	Minority Suicide Loss Survivors: Interpersonal Factors, Mental Health, and Post-Traumatic Growth	
Claire McNamey	How Are You Really Though?	



REGION C WELCOMES



ORTHO METALS

To provide an educational talk about metal recycling that is provided at local crematoriums



Parkwood Crematorium, Park Road,
Elland, HX5 9HZ



Wednesday 18th November



6.30pm



Zoom

Meeting ID: 870 0563 1159

Passcode: 907544



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Japanese Culture Surrounding Funerals.

By Beth Harron Dip.FS



I recently spent 5 weeks in Japan on holiday and one of the first things I came across was a Buddhist Temple which was home to a cemetery. This sparked my interest into the difference in culture and ceremony surrounding funerals.

Funerals in Japan are a very spiritual, highly structured events and are predominantly rooted in Buddhist traditions. Their culture combines an overnight wake, Otsuy.

The wake will be held the night before the funeral; the family and close friends will gather to hold a vigil and pay their respects. The Buddhist priest will chant sutras which is to guide the deceased spirit and attendees will offer incense. A formal funeral service, Kokubetsushiki occurs the following day. The guests will offer incense and place flowers on the casket before it is sealed and taken to the crematorium. Following the cremation a unique, communal ritual will take place called Kotsuage. This translates to Bone – Picking. In Japan the cremation rate is nearly 99.9%, this is a vital and deeply symbolic custom. The deceased family will use large ceremonial chopsticks to pick the remaining bones from the ashes and carefully transfer them into an urn.

The mourning period in Japan is marked by a series of memorial events. The 49th Day, Shijūkunichi holds significance. The reason for this is that it is believed the deceased's spirit completes its journey to the afterlife. A memorial service will be held, and the urn is interred during this time. An annual even will also take place called Obon Festival. This event is where the familied will honour their ancestors, believing that the spirits return to the earthly realm. The traditions include cleaning graves, offering food and preforming dances.



The History of Cremation in Japan

People believed that death created pollution, and the ritual disposal of bodies was supposed to be cleansing. Until the last few years of the 19th century, cremation was very controversial in Japan. A portion of Japan's population, Confucians, believed that the burning of a deceased to be morally indefensible and more polluting than a full burial. In the present day, Japan has the highest cremation rate in the world.

Two important deaths occurred in quick succession which launched Japan's cremation movement: that of Dosho, a Buddhist priest passed in 700 AD and Emperor Joto passed in 703 AD. The emperor's cremation was particularly influential, and it set precedent Japanese aristocracy would follow for centuries. It was not until the end of the Heian period (794 – 1185), which cremation closely became associated with Buddhism in Japan.

Buddhist philosophy teaches that everything, including life and the body is impermanent, and that the cleansing fire of cremation is transformative. The Confucians viewed cremation as disrespectful and the fact that it was a Buddhist practice didn't help. Buddhist temples owned and ran most of the crematoria throughout Japan and China, and as a result, it was only seen as something you could do if you were a Buddhist. A Confucian Scholar in the 17th century demeaned cremation's use throughout more than 60 of Japan's provinces.

In the late 1860's, government officials made several attempts to ban cremation. They found their first opportunity in early 1873, when Tokyo's police requested that the government order crematoria to move outside "the red line" surrounding the city, calling the smoke from cremation was damaging the public's health. On 18th July 1973, despite public opposition, Japan banned cremation, to justify this, the government claimed it was disrespectful to the deceased's and a public concern. In May 1875, less than 2 years after it passed, the ban was reversed due to people refusing to believe that cremation created more pollution than burial. In the minds of the government they separated the cremation from the religion and viewed cremation more sanitary. Two decades later, in 1897, the Japanese government ruled that anyone who passed of a communicable disease had to be cremated.



What are Japanese Gravestones?

Gravestones in Japan are very different compared to gravestones in England. The gravestone represents the whole family as one burial plot is for the families cremated remains. Behind the concrete gravestone, there are wooden grave markers called Itatoba.

According to tradition, the deceased receives a Buddhist name after they have passed. This name prevents them from entering the mortal world if their worldly name is uttered. In front of each gravestone there is space for floral decorations, incense and water. Water is offered to prevent the deceased from getting thirsty, you can also offer Sake (rice wine) if their ancestors liked it.



The traditional shape of a gravestone is a pagoda made of five stone blocks called Gorin-tō. Each block represents the five elements of Buddhist philosophy – earth, water, fire, air and space.

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How Funeral Directors Can Help New Celebrants Feel Welcomed into the Profession

Most celebrants remember their first funeral, not so much as a sequence of events, but as a bodily experience. A sense of responsibility sitting heavily in the chest. An awareness of being new. A quiet internal question about whether they are equal to what is being asked of them.

When I speak to celebrants about their early days, they rarely talk in detail about training materials or assessments. They talk about people. They talk about who greeted them, who explained what would happen, who made eye contact, and who treated them as though they belonged.

Those early encounters matter more than we sometimes realise.

Becoming a celebrant involves stepping into a role that is both visible and deeply vulnerable. New celebrants are often carrying a complex mix of excitement, purpose, self-doubt, and fear of getting something wrong. They may have completed training, practised writing, and even rehearsed delivery, yet still feel unsure about how funerals operate in real, working environments.

For many of them, the first established professionals they encounter are funeral directors.

That places funeral directors in a quietly influential position, whether they seek that influence or not.

I do not mean influence in terms of authority. I mean influence in terms of tone-setting. The way a new celebrant is met can shape how safe they feel, how confident they become, and how quickly they are able to settle into their role.



Something as simple as a warm greeting, an introduction by name, and a brief explanation of what will happen during the day can significantly reduce anxiety. When people are less preoccupied with trying to work out where they should be standing, who they should speak to, or what is expected of them, they have more internal space to focus on the family and the ceremony.

I have met many new celebrants who were thoughtful, capable, and well-prepared, yet appeared hesitant or uncertain simply because they did not understand local procedures. They did not know who cues the music, where they should position themselves, or how tightly timings are usually held. None of this reflects a lack of ability. It reflects a lack of orientation.

When no one explains the environment, people are forced to guess. Guessing breeds anxiety. Anxiety can easily be misread as incompetence, when in reality it is simply the natural response of someone trying to navigate an unfamiliar system.

Offering basic practical information is not indulgent. It is professional kindness. It also supports standards, because a new celebrant who feels grounded in the practicalities is far more likely to present as calm and capable, even if they are internally nervous.

There is also something powerful about normalising those nerves.

Many new celebrants assume that experienced professionals never feel anxious. They imagine that confidence arrives fully formed and remains permanently intact. A gentle comment such as, “Most people feel nervous in their first few funerals,” can be profoundly reassuring. It tells someone that they are not uniquely inadequate. It tells them that what they are experiencing is human.

Feedback is another area where early experiences leave a lasting imprint.

If something needs to be corrected or improved, it is important that this happens. Families deserve high standards. However, how feedback is delivered shapes whether it becomes a source of learning or a source of shame.

Public correction, even when well-intentioned, tends to close people down. Quiet, private feedback offered with respect tends to open people up. The difference is not about avoiding difficult conversations. It is about choosing to have those conversations in a way that preserves dignity.

Over time, I have noticed that some funeral directors instinctively invest more energy in celebrants who already appear confident and capable. This is understandable.

Working with people who feel easy is, quite simply, easier.

But this can create an unintended pattern.

Those who receive early support improve quickly. Those who do not receive early support may take longer to find their feet. Taking longer can then be interpreted as a lack of suitability, rather than a lack of scaffolding.

Small amounts of support at the beginning can significantly alter this trajectory.

A new celebrant who feels welcomed is more likely to ask questions. Someone who feels safe asking questions learns faster. Someone who learns faster becomes a better colleague. This benefits everyone.

There is also a wider, longer-term perspective to consider.

Celebrancy is still a developing profession. Local professional cultures are being shaped every day by ordinary interactions. How newcomers are treated contributes to whether that culture becomes cautious and closed, or generous and collaborative.

Welcoming new celebrants does not mean lowering standards. It means recognising that standards are grown through guidance, feedback, and experience. No one arrives fully formed.

It also means remembering that today's new celebrant may become tomorrow's most reliable partner. People tend to remember who was kind to them at the start of their career. They remember who took time to explain something. They remember who treated them as a colleague rather than a burden.

Those memories influence how people behave in future professional relationships. They influence loyalty. They influence reputation. They influence the tone of collaboration.

I am not suggesting that funeral directors take responsibility for training celebrants. That is not your role.

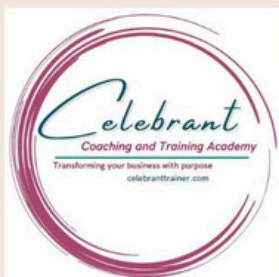
I am suggesting something simpler and more human.

That the way you meet new celebrants matters.

That professionalism includes kindness.

That a few minutes of patience and warmth at the beginning of someone's journey can have effects that ripple outward in ways you may never see.

Most people who enter celebrancy do so because they care deeply about supporting families. Meeting that care with care sets a tone. Not just for one working relationship. But for the profession as a whole.



A Visit to Hansons Carriage Masters

Members of the British Institute of Funeral Directors recently had the privilege of visiting Hansons Carriage Masters, gaining valuable insight into the meticulous care and dedication required to maintain one of the country's premier horse-drawn funeral carriage services.

The visit revealed the extraordinary commitment involved in preparing horses for funeral work. It takes a full year to train each horse to the exacting standards required for such sensitive duties. Throughout this training period and beyond, the horses receive 100 percent dedication from their handlers, with care and attention given at all times.

Understanding the demanding nature of the work, Hansons operates a careful rotation system to ensure that horses receive adequate rest periods. This approach not only maintains the wellbeing of the animals but ensures they are always in peak condition when called upon for service.

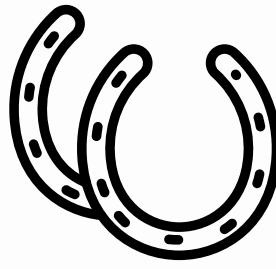
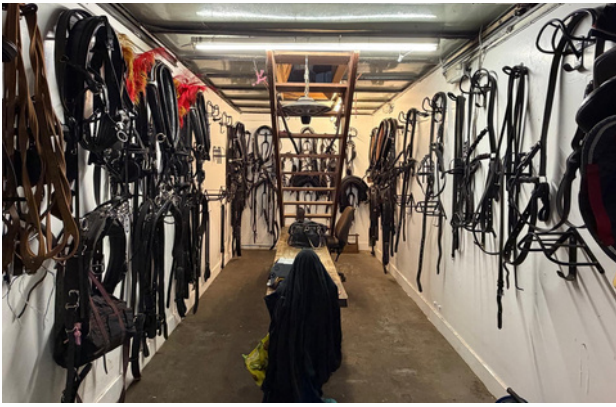


The procurement of traditional hearses presents its own challenges in the modern era. With authentic horse-drawn hearses becoming increasingly difficult to source in the UK, Hansons has turned to Poland to acquire new vehicles that meet their exacting standards.

Once acquired, all servicing and maintenance of the carriages is carried out in house by skilled craftsmen, ensuring that every vehicle remains in immaculate condition and ready for service.

The preparation process for each funeral is remarkably thorough. Horses are brought in a full day before any service, allowing ample time for all necessary preparations.

Bathing alone takes an hour per horse, followed by additional grooming and preparation to ensure each animal looks its absolute best.



When not working, the horses enjoy an enviable lifestyle, living on 250 acres of land where they can roam and rest in comfort. This spacious environment contributes significantly to their physical and mental wellbeing.

The logistics of transporting both horses and hearses are equally impressive. Purpose-built horse boxes are designed to carry both the hearse and horses when travelling to funerals. These trucks undergo rigorous inspection every ten weeks to ensure full compliance with operator licensing requirements.

When not working, the horses enjoy an enviable lifestyle, living on 250 acres of land where they can roam and rest in comfort. This spacious environment contributes significantly to their physical and mental wellbeing.



The visit provided members of the British Institute of Funeral Directors with a deeper appreciation of the skill, dedication, and attention to detail that goes into maintaining traditional horse drawn funeral services in the modern age. Hansons Carriage Masters stands as a testament to the enduring value of these time-honoured practices and the commitment required to preserve them.



East Belfast grief awareness project awarded £10,000 Community Impact Grant



East Belfast Community Development Agency board members Karen Purdy and Bernie McConnell together with staff receiving the £10,000 James Brown & Sons Community Impact Grant from Beverley Brown and James Brown of James Brown & Sons.

A community project supporting people affected by grief and bereavement in East Belfast has been awarded the first £10,000 Community Impact Grant from James Brown & Sons Funeral Directors.

East Belfast Community Development Agency (EBCDA) received the funding for its 'East Belfast – Let's Support Grief Awareness' project, which aims to provide practical and emotional support for local people navigating loss and bereavement.

The award was presented at a special presentation event hosted by James Brown & Sons at East Belfast Network Centre.

The project will deliver a programme of grief awareness workshops, bi-monthly support cafés, creative remembrance activities and one-to-one counselling support across East Belfast over the next 12 months.

EBCDA developed the initiative following strong community demand for more accessible grief support services. Pilot workshops held during Grief Awareness Week were oversubscribed and highlighted the need for safe, community-based spaces where people could share experiences, receive support and feel less isolated.

The £10,000 Community Impact Grant was launched earlier this year as part of the wider James Brown & Sons Community Fund, which supports grassroots charities and community organisations across Belfast and surrounding areas.

Marie Anne Templeman, Health Development Director at EBCDA, said: "We are absolutely delighted to receive this support from James Brown & Sons. Through our work with local people, we hear first-hand how important it is to have spaces where people can come together, share their experiences and feel understood.

This funding will allow us to expand our grief support work, offering workshops, peer support and access to counselling for those who need it. It will make a real difference to people across East Belfast, helping them feel less alone and better supported."

Advertorial

Beverley Brown, of James Brown & Sons, said: “Supporting initiatives like this is incredibly important to us. We see every day the impact that loss can have on individuals and families, so to be able to support a project that offers understanding, connection and a safe space for people in East Belfast really matters. We were very moved by the application from East Belfast Community Development Agency and the difference this project will make locally. We’re proud to play a small part in helping it come to life and supporting the community in such a meaningful way.”

As part of the programme, EBCDA will work alongside organisations including CRUSE NI and Uhub Counselling to deliver specialist support and signposting services.

James Brown & Sons launched the Community Impact Grant to support one major community project each year that demonstrates strong local involvement and the ability to create lasting benefit.

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Help Tackle Loneliness In Your Community



Loneliness and isolation can have a significant impact on emotional wellbeing, particularly after bereavement. When someone loses a partner, relative, or close friend, they can suddenly find themselves without the daily conversations and social connections that once gave structure to their life.

As funeral directors, you are often among the first professionals to see the effects of grief and isolation firsthand. Because your businesses are deeply rooted in your local communities and built on trust and reputation, you are uniquely placed to offer support not just for your clients, but also other local people experiencing loneliness.

Loneliness Awareness Week and practical ideas for community engagement

Loneliness Awareness Week takes place in June and is the world's largest campaign to inspire conversations about loneliness and promote connection. It encourages us all to think about how we can support people in our local communities who are lonely either due to bereavement or for other reasons. Awareness initiatives like this help shine a spotlight on the issue, but the need for connection exists all year round. Funeral directors can make a meaningful difference by supporting people in their communities throughout the year.

Activities such as death cafés, walking groups and coffee mornings can all help people feel more connected with others. They can benefit not only bereaved families but also help others in your community who need support. For further inspiration, explore [MuchLoved's Ideas for Community Engagement Activities](#).

Why supporting local people will boost your business reputation

By taking action to support bereaved and lonely people, you can make a genuine difference whilst at the same time strengthening the visibility and reputation of your business.

Community initiatives position funeral directors as caring, approachable, and community focused. Bringing people together will help you build relationships and create positive awareness of your funeral home. You can build trust, increase word-of-mouth recommendations, and strengthen your reputation for providing a compassionate and supportive service.

Help families to connect with others online

As well as physically bringing people together, funeral directors can help bereaved people feel more connected online through their tribute pages. Encouraging families to share tribute pages with relatives, friends, colleagues, and wider social networks can have a powerful emotional impact. Messages of support, shared memories, photographs, and donations can all help bereaved people feel less alone. In an increasingly connected world, helping families share and engage with tribute pages is another meaningful way to offer support while boosting your reputation for embracing the latest trends in memorialisation.

Four practical steps to get you started

- 1. Plan a simple community** - Start with an activity that is easy to organise, such as a coffee morning.
- 2. Create a calendar of events** - Build regular community activities into your business throughout the year.
- 3. Promote your community activities** - Share your events and community initiatives on your website, social media, and in local press.
- 4. Show families how to share their tribute pages** – Ensure each tribute has an owner and show families how easy it is to share pages with relatives and friends.

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