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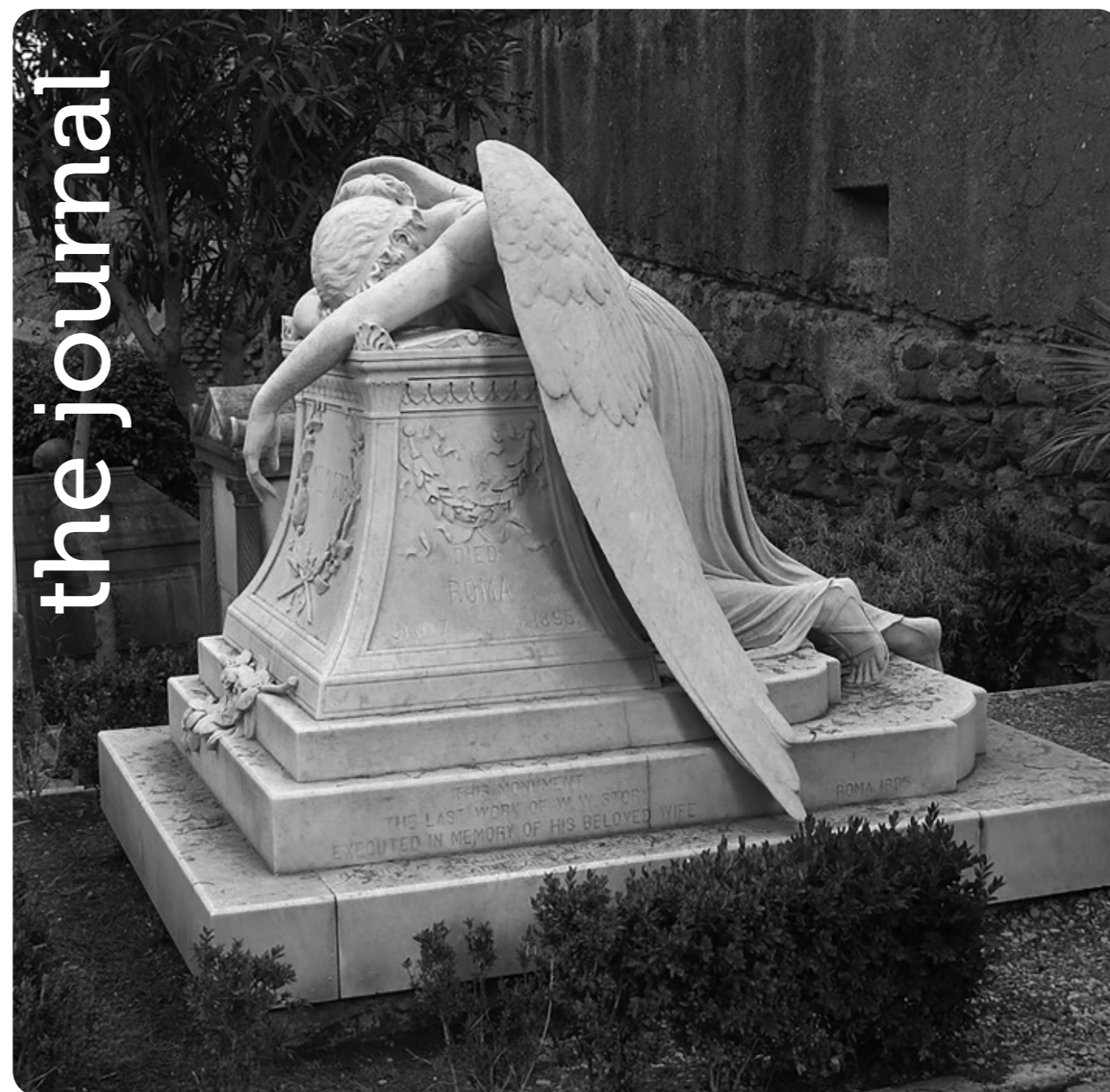
The Journal Autumn 2021

2021

Autumn

Public health funerals: a relative solution
New law book for cemetery and crematorium managers
Apprenticeships at Nene Valley Crematorium
Recompose - is it the way forward?

How technology is driving a bereavement revolution
Foam free future
Pulpit: Glad that I live am I
Teen bereavement and how we can help



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editorial

Can you teach an old dog new tricks?

Welcome to the Autumn edition of the Journal.

This expression, alluding to the difficulty of changing one's habits and mindset the older a person gets, must be one of the oldest proverbial sayings in our language. It was first recorded in 1523 in a book of husbandry, where it was used literally. By 1546 a version of it appeared in John Heywood's proverb collection.

But is it really true? Do people simply lack the ability to stop learning the older they get? Talking from experience, I certainly know I can't do now what I did 30 years ago, as a sprightly 20-year-old, or even 10 years ago for that matter! There is definitely a lack of coordination between my brain and my body! I may not be able to run 5 miles a day anymore, and it takes me a week to recover if I stay out late two consecutive nights in a row (even more daring if it is on a "school night") but I try to, at least, keep my mind active.

Like a lot of you, I have been working in this sector for many years. As it stands some 20 years or so which is still relatively short compared to some of you! I have always been an advocate of training, but as a manager I was always faced with some staff that felt that longevity in a role is training enough and there isn't anything else you can teach them about the job. However, no industry stays still, and it is important to realise that times do change, as does customer expectations, with each generation.

During this last 18 months or so we have had to find different ways of working and find alternative ways to deliver our services. People generally don't like change, but the pandemic left us no choice. We were no different.

One of the things we did was change the way we delivered our training courses. Having done face to face training for years this was the first time we had used a virtual platform. All us old dogs had to learn quickly and adapt! We embraced our virtual world (unstable internet connection and all!), and phrases such as "can you hear me?" or "you are on mute" became a universal language.

During the pandemic we have run nearly 100 courses delivering training to over 560 people. Suddenly the world of learning became accessible to everyone, no matter where in the country you were based. Having helped facilitate a lot of these, the attendees varied from those with none or very little experience, to those that have worked in their jobs for years. It wasn't just the younger, more "tech savvy" people that attended but those of all ages, considering there are still a lot of organisations that still do not have any computerised systems at all (the age-old tradition of writing in the registers (using an actual pen!) is still very much alive). It was great to see that even those of us that struggle with technology on a daily basis, got on board.

It is always interesting to speak to different training groups and share experiences. There are a few consistent themes that I have noticed that came out during and after the course. One is that those attendees that have been doing their job for years discover they don't actually know it all, and sometimes realise that their historical practices are not always correct. The other is that there is no "one size fits all" approach and most people take away, at the very least, one new thing that they have learned. If nothing else, we could all use a refresher every now and then, especially if you don't carry out tasks on a regular basis.

From a personal perspective I am still learning. There will always be a question or scenario that I haven't come across before, which will inevitably end up with a discussion amongst the officers. I am continuously researching information. I have never read the Local Authorities' Cemeteries Order 1977 (LACO) as many times before as I have since I started with the ICCM!

We have also hosted regular webinars which have included many different speakers and topics. There is always something new to discover and I hope that this has given you some useful information and you have learnt a few new things along the way. The most interesting for me are the interactive question and answer sessions that we have done. The participant must select the answer they think is correct from a range of multiple choices. The range of answers has clearly demonstrated that there is still a lot of misconceptions out there that people believe to be true. The aim of these (apart from a bit of fun) is to help educate and inform our colleagues.

I am delighted to say that the desire to keep learning has not waned and our training courses continue to be booked up – if you want any further information on the training courses we offer please contact Julie Callender (Julie.callender@iccm-uk.com)

So – can you teach an old dog new tricks? Absolutely YES!

I will leave you with this piece I found on a Petplan website about training older dogs – I thought there were a lot of similarities!

How to train a senior dog

Although older dogs may not be quite as alert as they used to be, your dog is always learning. So you can teach an old dog new tricks! You'll need kindness and consistency from everyone in the household, as positive reinforcement is essential. Bear in mind that an older dog may take longer to learn, and find it a little harder to readjust to new routines. Work gradually, using plenty of patience and repetition. Too much change, too quickly, can be stressful for older dogs, so use age-appropriate training techniques.

Sofia Allana
Editor



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president's page

Hello again everyone

I hope you are all keeping well and continuing to stay safe whilst enjoying this mini heatwave.

The 19th July arrived "Freedom Day" as it is being called, when we saw the remaining coronavirus restrictions eased across England. Both Wales and Scotland have their own rules and it is important to remember that when visiting other parts of Great Britain, we follow the current guidance that applies there.



So what does that mean for funerals; bearing again in mind that Scotland has its own regulations, the government website tells us we will not need to stay 2 metres apart, venues are not required to follow social distancing rules, although "keeping your distance and limiting close contact can help reduce the risk of catching or passing on COVID-19" Then again people who are self-isolating or who are in quarantine following international travel may be present at a funeral and it is therefore recommended those people should remain 2 metres apart I do hope you are all keeping up!!! 😊

There are no legal limits on the number of people who can attend funerals or commemorative events. 'Venue operators' may choose to set their own limits, and I am sure up and down the country, we will see that each crematorium or cemetery will have completely differing restrictions depending on the size of their venue. This could possibly result in complaints, with "they allow x number of people, why can't you?", however we need to ensure the safety of our staff as well as the visitors.

At Southampton in our East Chapel, we had removed a lot of our seating and used occasional tables to make it look less 'empty', it received so many compliments that we have continued with this layout, which fortunately for us, is large enough to accommodate more chairs and tables, let's just hope we are not taking them out again with any further waves!

Numbers of deaths are still not stable, and we all need to ensure that we continue to stay safe, the immunisation programme in place is being extended to children under 18. A further change to the current contact tracing rules was announced by Sajid Javid, Health Secretary in the House of Commons, to start from 16th August. Fully vaccinated close contacts of positive cases will not have to isolate "to manage the virus in a way that is proportionate to the pandemic, while maintaining the freedoms that are so important to us all". However, he did advise to take a PCR test as soon as possible "so they can get certainty about their condition". You will still be required to isolate regardless of whether you have had a vaccine or not if you test positive.

The pandemic has restricted movement around the country, but I am happy to say that on the 29th July, myself and Julie will be attending the re-opening of Greenacres Heatherley Wood, long story but it will be our second visit there this month. In my next journal page, I will share how it went and include photos. It will be lovely to have some good news to share with you all and to have been out and about, I am really looking forward to it.

The webinars continue to be extremely popular, they have given members, even in the remoter destinations, the opportunity to be able to participate in discussions around topics such as natural burial, dementia and questions and answers on exhumation and exclusive rights of burial to name but a few; all subjects which are relevant to many of us in the industry.

On a personal note, on the 9th June we reached the end of our 'year of firsts' when we said goodbye to our gorgeous grandson Harlee. What do you do to commemorate this, especially during a pandemic, we decided to have a beautiful Dove release at his graveside, and I sent this poem to my daughter Fern, as I felt it would be something that Harlee would want to say to her. I hope you don't mind me sharing, as I am sure it will also mean something to many of you:-



Crossing Over
(Author unknown)

Oh, please don't feel guilty
It was just my time to go
I see you are still feeling sad
And the tears just seem to flow.
We all come to earth for our lifetime
and for some it's not many years
I don't want you to keep crying
you are shedding so many tears.
I haven't really left you even though it may seem so
I have just gone to my Heavenly home
and I'm closer to you than you know.
Just believe that when you say my name,
I'm standing next to you
I know you long to see me but there's nothing I can do.
But I'll still send you messages and hope you understand
That when your time comes to "cross over,"
I'll be there to take your hand.

As always, I send you all my love and please stay safe.

Heather White
ICCM President

tales of a cemetery registrar

I look down a grave but I don't see grief
I see skill and a grave diggers relief.
I look in a chapel but I don't hear the silence
I smell the polish and check all the guidance.
I look at the board but I don't see names
I check spelling and no times are the same.
I look busy but I see family move slowly
Watching somehow makes me feel quite lowly.
I look to the ground but the feet don't stride
I search the sky and have a sense of pride.

By Anita Fish



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in touch



I'm writing this In Touch on 'Freedom Day' in England – Monday 19th July 2021. Today is the day that all legal limits on the numbers meeting indoors and outdoors have been scrapped. All businesses can reopen. People can attend events such as concerts, plays in theatres, and sporting events. Night clubs can reopen. The social distancing rule has ended, as has the mandatory wearing of face coverings in indoor settings. People are no longer instructed to work from home, and the limit on named visitors to care homes is being lifted.

So, does that mean we are free?

Well, we are definitely not free of the coronavirus that has been a constant in our lives for well over a year now. Case numbers are continuing to rise, especially of the Delta variant, and even those who have been double vaccinated are catching the virus and having symptoms. The number of people being admitted to hospital with Covid-19 and the number of people dying with it are rising. However, the Government seem confident that this is at a much lesser rate than in previous peaks, and that the vaccination rollout has successfully broken the link between infection, serious illness and death. They feel the time is right to remove legal restrictions.

Despite this, many companies, authorities and individuals are choosing to continue to use restrictions to limit the spread of the virus. It still presents a risk, particularly to those who have not been vaccinated, for whatever reason, and to those that have been vaccinated but who have compromised immune systems. Many people will also continue to isolate themselves as best they can. Others will continue to wear face coverings in shops and other settings, and it will remain a requirement to wear such a covering on public transport in many parts of the country.

The situation is similar in Scotland and Wales, and Northern Ireland will no doubt be watching with interest to see what happens in these countries before considering their own easing of restrictions.

So what does this state of 'freedom' mean for funerals? The updated guidance on funerals published by the Department of Health and Social Care and Public Health England enables venue operators to choose to set their own limits. There are no longer any legal restrictions on the limit of attendees at a funeral, or a post-funeral event such as a wake or burial or scattering of ashes. There are also no legal restrictions on singing or chanting, or on the playing of live music at funerals. Social distancing is no longer a legal requirement. In theory, therefore, funerals can go back to 'normal', ie as they were before the pandemic hit in 2020.

This, however, is against a backdrop of increasing infection rates, and record numbers of people being contacted via the NHS Test and Trace programme and told to self isolate because they have been in contact with somebody who has tested positive for Covid-19; 600,000 people in the previous

week have been 'pinged' and told to self-isolate. The press are now calling this a 'pingdemic', and the high number of people having to self-isolate is causing serious concerns in many sectors. It is easy to see how cemetery and crematorium teams could be seriously depleted should they come into contact with somebody with Covid-19, and then being pinged, forcing them to self-isolate. The ICCM, through DMAG, is putting pressure on the Government to allow a concession to those working in the sector who have been doubly vaccinated and who test negative for Covid-19 to continue working. Without this concession, it is a very real possibility that burial and cremation services could be seriously compromised, and may even have to be cancelled in some extreme situations.

Employers continue to have a duty under the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 to ensure the health, safety and welfare at work of their employees. This includes protecting them, as far as is reasonably practicable, from the coronavirus. It is not an easy task to achieve this protection for employees whilst the Government have removed any legal basis for imposing restrictions. At the same time, there is a desire for funerals to return to 'normal'. Grieving families and friends have had so much to put up with since the start of the pandemic that it seems somewhat unfair to continue to impose restrictions when the Government has given everyone their freedom. Similarly, those working in cemeteries and crematoria have been working under intense pressure in situations that cannot be described as normal. However, stopping the virus spreading is a major objective, but how do we do that? There must be a balance within this delicate situation of protecting people whilst allowing them to enjoy their freedom.

So far, most burial and cremation authorities and companies are continuing to set their own restrictions, as they are allowed to do. The restrictions are proportionate, and have been generally well accepted. It would seem that mourners are aware of the need to continue to try to stop the spread of the virus, and are, on the whole, following local restrictions without complaint. Indeed, in the general population, the vast majority of people are continuing to wear masks in indoor settings such as shops, and are still following guidance on increased hand sanitisation. People are choosing to do the right thing.

Earlier on this In Touch I asked so, does that mean we are free? If we use the following quote by American clergyman Peter Marshall to determine what freedom is, I believe it does mean we are free:

May we think of freedom not as the right to do as we please, but as the opportunity to do what is right.

I know that ICCM members will continue to do what is right.

Julie Dunk
ICCM Chief Executive

implantable medical devices and their management for burial and cremation

There can be no doubt that medical science has advanced at a tremendous rate and that technology has evolved to overcome more and more challenges.

As technology has developed, equipment has become smaller and more targeted and this is no more so than in the case of implantable medical devices. These advances place more pressure on funeral and bereavement service professionals, as we have to adapt and react to the problems that these devices create once the patient has died and we prepare for funeral services and final disposal by burial or cremation.

Cremation is a particular area of concern as some of these medical implants pose a risk of explosion when exposed to the high temperatures generated during the process. This potential for explosion risks damaging the internal structures of the cremation equipment generating expensive repair costs and can pose a risk to the safety of the technical staff. Burial however must also be considered. Some of these devices feature materials of a high value and with limited resources is it sensible that these items are buried, when they could be removed and sent for reprocessing, recycling and redeployment?

Some reading this may not be aware of the construction of cremation equipment, or the costs associated with it. The internal refractory brickwork of the cremator makes two or in the case of some older machines three chambers, referred to as the primary, secondary and tertiary combustion chambers. The coffin, containing the deceased is placed or charged into the primary or main chamber where it is burnt and reduced to decalcified bone which is later ground down to become what is known as the ashes or cremated remains. The gasses from this combustion then pass through a port in the primary combustion chamber into the secondary chamber where they are mixed with air and burnt again. This process of secondary combustion helps to reduce emissions from each cremator. Older machines may feature a tertiary combustion chamber, but with advances in combustion engineering and the installation of abatement and filtration equipment there is little need for this set up in newer machines. The internal refractory brickwork of a cremator is very intricate and can take a skilled refractory engineer considerable time to build, inside the shell of the machine. There are estimates that the cost of a 'reline' or replacing all of the refractory inside a cremator can cost between £35,000.00 and £45,000.00, depending on the type, style and size of the cremator.

Understanding the intricate nature of a cremator and the costs associated with its maintenance and repair make it easier to understand why crematorium authorities may ask for potentially damaging medical devices to be removed from the deceased human body prior to its cremation. That having been said, as some of these devices are

developed and refined, they are getting smaller and some medical manufactures state on their paperwork and supporting documents that the devices are safe or compatible with cremation.

If we look at the most up to date cremation regulations, The Cremation (England & Wales) Regulations 2008 (updated March 2020) there is a list of battery powered and other implants that could cause problems during the cremation of human remains. This list includes the following:

Therapeutic Patches
Pacemakers, Defibrillators (ICD's) and Cardiac Resynchronisation Devices (CRTD's)
Implantable Loop Recorders
Ventricular Assist Devices (VAD's) Left Ventricular Assist Devices (LVAD's), Right Ventricular Assist Devices (RVAD's), or Biventricular Assist Devices (BiVAD's)
Implantable Drug Pumps including Intrathecal Pumps
Radioactive Implants (Brachytherapy)
Fixation Nails
Implantable (including for Pain, Bone Growth & Functional Electrical Stimulation) Stimulators
Hydrocephalus Programable Shunts
Micra Transcatheter Pacemakers

Considering these devices, it is important to have some understanding of when and where they are used, what they do, and how they may be removed from the dead human body.

Therapeutic Patches:

Therapeutic patches are a drug delivery system that attach directly to the skin. These patches have been used for a long time and are most commonly associated with

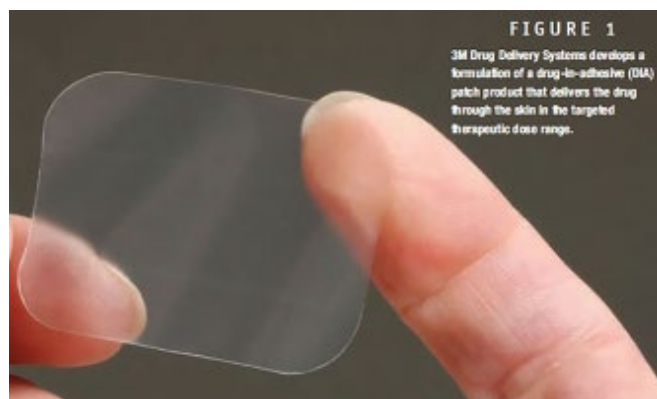


FIGURE 1

3M Drug Delivery Systems develops a formulation of a drug-in-adhesive (DIA) patch product that delivers the drug through the skin in the targeted therapeutic dose range.

Therapeutic Patches can be placed in any location on the body. When carrying out any type of preparation, the operator should make a thorough check for all patches and remove everything present.

treatment of addiction support (Nicotine Patches) but have been developed to deliver hormones and medications into the blood stream. They may now be used for pain relief and also the treatment of Angina. Angina patches are known to contain Nitro Glycerine and this poses a risk when subjected to cremation. Angina Patches should be removed prior to cremation and ideally should be returned to the hospital of issue for proper disposal. The operator can simply remove the patch from the skin of the deceased body using a suitable pair of forceps, while undertaking preparation or embalming of the remains.

In cases where the deceased is to be buried, one must ask the questions as to whether it is correct to bury the body with the patch in question in place and also whether the decomposition of this patch in the ground would have any effect on the soil or on the water table.

Pacemakers and Defibrillators:

A pacemaker is typically used to treat abnormal cardiac rhythms and will shock the heart if it detected an abnormal rhythm. A defibrillator is used to monitor heart rhythms and provide a shock if a dangerous rhythm is detected. Typically, but not always, a pacemaker will have one pacing lead coming from it and running into the heart. The defibrillator will typically have two pacing wires running from the unit to the heart. These units contain a larger battery which poses a risk of explosion when subjected to the intense heat of the cremation process. The unit is relatively simple to remove however in the case of a defibrillator, checks should be made to ensure that the unit has been deactivated prior to removal. If not deactivated prior to removal and the defibrillator detects activity from the removal procedure, it may generate a shock which could physically harm the person trying to remove it. If in any doubt, check, check and check again.

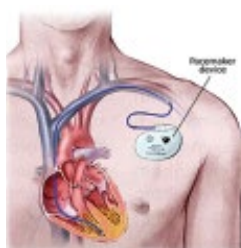


Diagram Showing Pacemaker

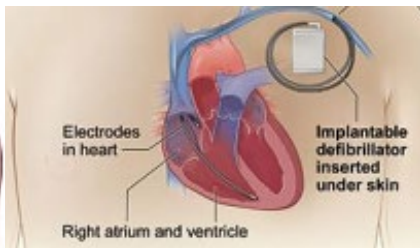


Diagram showing Defibrillator

To remove either a pacemaker or defibrillator, firstly identify what the unit is and ensure it is safe to remove. Make an incision over the device and expose it and the tissue pocket that has been created by the surgical team. Withdraw the device from the body and depending on the device cut one wire at a time. It is best to use a pair of insulated wire cutters for this procedure as these will help to protect the operator. The incision made can be treated with embalming sealing powder and then it is sutured closed with tight sutures, to form a leak proof seal. The

device should then be cleaned and disinfected before being placed in a sealable plastic bag, labelled with the name of the deceased and the date of removal if possible. This should then be returned to the cardiac unit of the hospital that fitted the device. If this is not possible, there are recycling programs that have been rolled out and more information can be found by contacting your local crematorium authority or by contacting the Institute of Cemetery and Crematorium Management or the Federation of Burial and Crematorium Authorities.

Implantable Loop Recorders- AKA Insertable Cardiac Monitors:

These are a small device, about the size of a standard USB stick or packet of chewing gum. They are placed under the skin, in the thoracic or chest region, just like a pacemaker or defibrillator and used to monitor the heart function and record abnormal heart function, high heart rates and abnormal rhythms. They monitor the cardiac activity of the patient who may ultimately need a pacemaker or defibrillator fitting. These devices contain a battery, which poses a risk of exploding when subject to cremation and so need to be removed prior to cremation. They can be removed in the same way as a pacemaker or defibrillator prior to cremation. Once removed, these units should be cleaned, disinfected and placed into a sealable plastic bag with the name of the patient and the date of removal and returned to the hospital who fitted the implant.

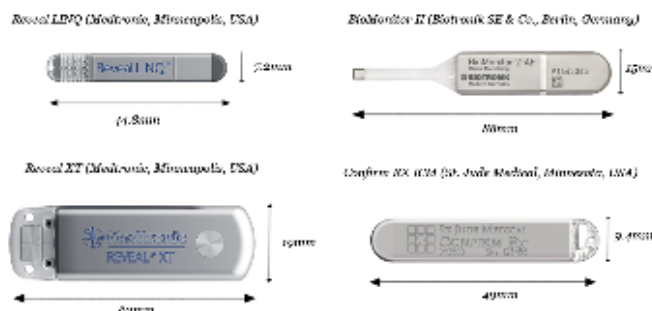


Diagram of different Cardiac Loop Recorders

Ventricular Assist Devices:

The Ventricular Assist Device is a mechanical pump and is fitted to people with weakened hearts to support blood flow. Blood is taken from the left or right ventricle of the heart and pumped either to the lungs or to the body and vital organs. These devices can be referred to as left or right Ventricular Assist Devices (LVAD OR RVAD) or Biventricular Assist Devices (BiVAD). These terms refer to where the pump is located in and on the heart. They are used when transplantation is not an option or when the heart needs additional support before transplantation or event to support the heart following on from surgery to allow it time to repair following surgical intervention or myocardial infarction. The battery packs for VAD's are worn externally by the patient and should be checked and removed when the patient is prepared for burial or

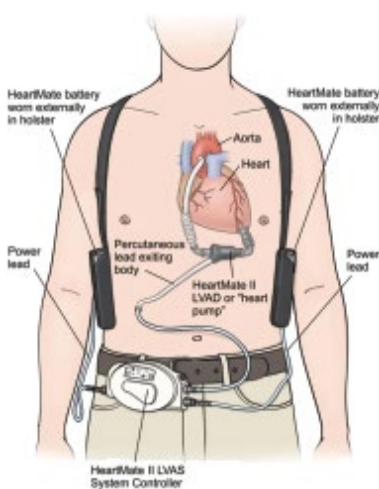


Diagram of Ventricular Assist Device

cremation. The implantable unit may be safe to undergo the cremation process however, this should be checked with the manufacturer and implanting hospital as well as the medical referee of the crematorium authority in question.

If the pump component of the VAD needs to be removed and the deceased person is to be

embalmed, removal is best done after the arterial injection of the deceased is completed, but before cavity aspiration and embalming is carried out. A midline incision is required to expose the sternum, which should be removed as if an autopsy were being performed. The heart can be exposed, once the sternum is removed and the device can be removed before reconstruction takes place. The removed device should be cleaned and disinfected and then placed into a sealable plastic bag, with the name of the deceased, the date of death and date of removal labelled on the bag. Where possible, the VAD should be returned to the hospital where it was implanted. Once removal is completed, the sternum should be replaced and the incision sutured closed with tight sutures, to prevent leakage, prior to cavity aspiration and treatment being performed. The next of kin or person arranging the funeral should be informed if this type of procedure is required and should ideally give their consent in writing prior to removal.

Implantable Drug Pump:

These pumps are typically used for targeted pain management and most frequently are used in cases of Chronic Pain. The unit itself comprises a pump unit with a drugs reservoir and a delivery system. The unit is placed under the skin, usually in the region of the abdomen, although sometimes the gluteal region is favoured. These units contain a battery and there is a risk of explosion when exposed to the temperatures generated during exposure. To remove this device, the same procedure for the removal of a pacemaker or defibrillator is followed. The incision is made over the device, which is then withdrawn, and the delivery leads cut. Once removed, the incision is treated with sealing powder and sutured tightly to form a leak proof seal. The device is then cleaned and disinfected, prior to being sealed in a bag labelled with the patients name and the date of removal. As always, where possible the unit should be returned to the implanting hospital for disposal.

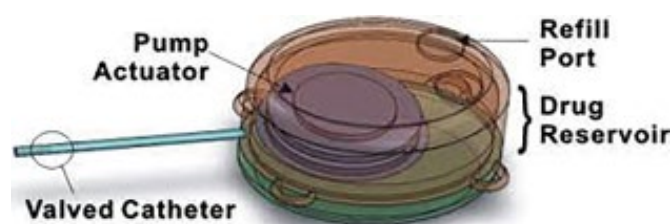


Diagram of Implantable Drug Pump

Radioactive Implants: (Brachytherapy)

Radioactive Iodine 125 seeds are used in the treatment of various types of cancer. These radioactive seeds are usually placed within or next to the area requiring treatment. They offer a continuous low dose of radiation to kill cancerous cells and also help to stop the reproduction of cancerous cells. Brachytherapy has been shown to be effective in the treatment of cervical, prostate, breast and skin cancer and is most commonly used in the treatment of prostate and cervical cancer. The radiation in the seeds typically lasts for up to 12 months and should the patient die within this time, the seeds will need to be removed. Following a period of 12 months, the seeds can remain in place and should pose no problems for anyone handling

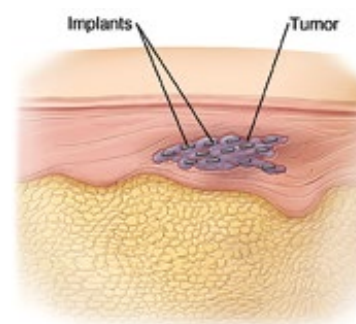


Diagram of Brachytherapy seeds

the deceased or for burial or cremation. Further information on brachytherapy can be obtained from the Department of Nuclear Medicine of the hospital implanting the seeds. Guidance should be sought from this department and the medical referee of the cremation authority concerned. If removal is

required, the implanting hospital will need to be consulted.

Fixion Nails:

These nails are typically made from surgical Titanium and inserted into the medulla or marrow cavity of a long bone, most often the Femur. This is usually done following breakage or loss of bone density owing to conditions such as Osteoporosis. The steel rod or nail is hollow and once inserted into the bone cavity is pressurised by the injection of a sterile saline solution. Owing to the pressure of the saline within the hollow tube, there is a significant risk of explosion when subjected to cremation. The fixation nail should be depressurised by releasing the saline, by drilling or cutting.

There is some debate as to how easy it is to depressurise these nails and some embalmers have developed their own ways of dealing with them. Some have used metal drills

and others have cut through the femur and the nail using a reciprocating or oscillating saw. Another technique is to make an incision into the thigh to allow access to the femur, remove a segment of the upper part of the femur to expose the nail and then remove a two-inch section of the nail. The cut part of the femur is then glued back into place and the incision is treated with sealing powder and sutured tightly closed to prevent leakage. This gives a good cosmetic effect and provides a segment of the nail, which can be cleaned and disinfected and presented to the medical referee if required, to prove depressurisation.

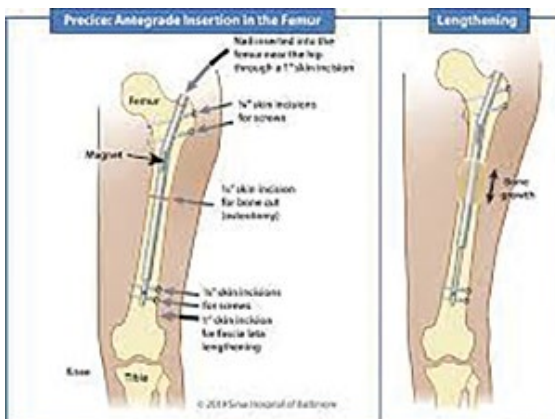


Diagram to show Fixation Nail

Implantable Stimulators:

These devices are used to manage chronic pain and wires from the unit are connected to the epidermal space, near the spine. The device is roughly the size of a pocket watch and is implanted under the skin of the abdomen or in some cases, in the gluteal region. The unit contains a battery, similar to that in a pacemaker and is at risk of explosion when subject to cremation. The removal of this unit is similar to that of a pacemaker and once removed, should be washed, disinfected, labelled with the details of the patient and returned where possible to the implanting hospital.

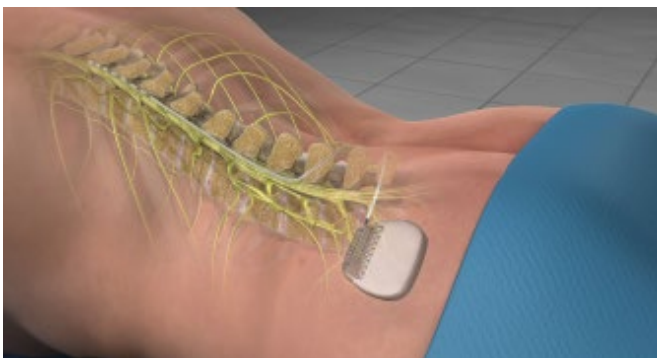


Diagram Showing Implantable Stimulator

Hydrocephalus Programmable/ Non-Programmable Shunts:

These shunts are used to drain an excess of cerebral spinal fluid from the chambers within the brain. The excess CSF is diverted from the brain into the body where it is

reabsorbed to help control the internal pressure within the brain. There are two types of shunts that can be used, programmable and non-programmable shunts. The programmable shunts can be adjusted once they have been implanted into the patient, using a hand-held device, which is held over the unit. The non-programmable shunts cannot be adjusted once they have been implanted. Both types of devices use a valve which is pre set to react to a change in the pressure of the CSF. As the pressure rises, the valve opens and excess CSF is drained. As the pressure falls, the valve closes and fluid stops draining.

Typically, these devices do not contain a battery, however they are detailed in the Ministry of Justice 'The Cremation (England & Wales) Regulations 2008, as being at risk of exploding when subject to cremation. Therefore, they are likely to need to be removed. Guidance should be sought from the Medical Referee of the local crematorium authority.

Should one of these shunts need to be removed, the device can usually be located behind either the left or right ear of the deceased. A small incision can be made over the device, which is then withdrawn and the tubes running from it can be cut. The device is then cleaned, disinfected and placed in a bag labelled with the details of the patient, so that it can be returned to the implanting hospital. The incision is then treated with sealing powder and the sutured closed with tight sutures, to prevent leakage. The hair of the deceased can then be washed, dried and styled to hide the incision.

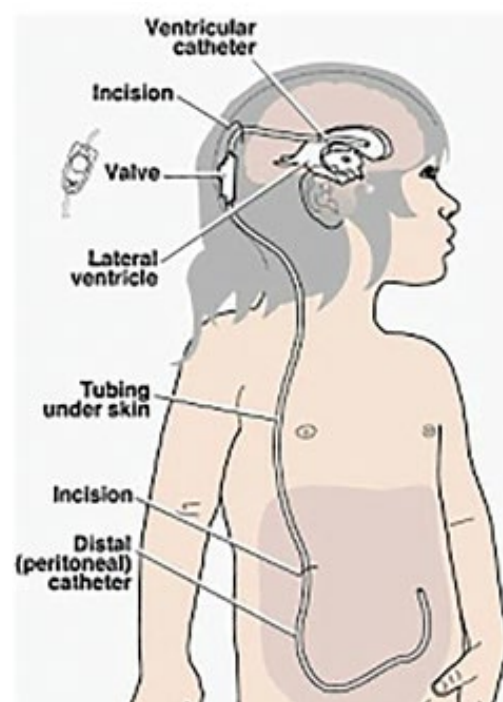


Diagram to show Implant and Use Hydrocephalus Programmable/ Non- Programmable Shunt

Transcatheter Systems:

The latest advance in implantable medical devices is the Micra Transcatheter Pacemaker. The Micra Transcatheter Pacemaker is 93% smaller than a traditional pacemaker and is implanted directly to the wall of the ventricle of the heart and is leadless. The unit features an ultra-low power system which is designed to offer a lifespan of up to 12 years, depending on usage and is fully compatible with MRI Scanning. These pacemakers are minimally invasive to implant and are placed using a venous catheter which is fed up to the heart from either the left or right femoral vein. Following successful implantation, the patient should not require an overnight hospital stay and should fully recover a day or two after the procedure. Should the unit need to be replaced, up to three of the Micra Transcatheter Pacemakers can be sited on the Ventricular Wall of the heart before a redundant unit needs to be removed. These units can also be used in conjunction with traditional pacemakers or defibrillators, meaning that a patient could have a Micra Transcatheter Pacemaker and a more traditional unit in situ.

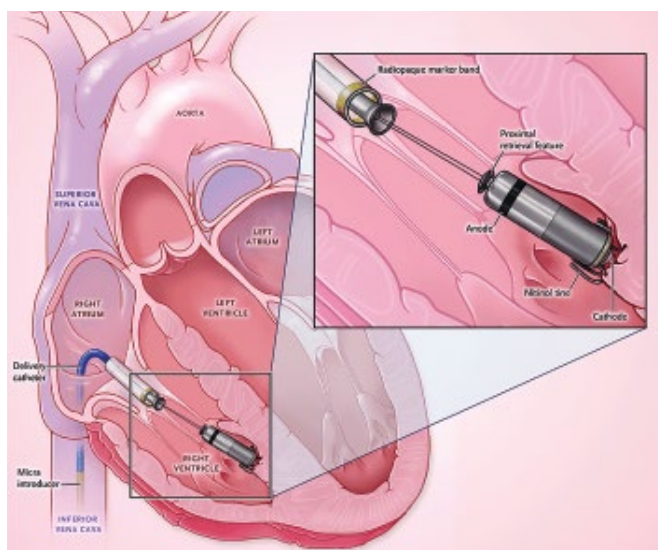


Diagram showing implant of Micra Transcatheter Pacemaker

Documentation from the manufacturers of these devices along with tests from some of the major manufacturers of cremation equipment show these devices to be compatible with cremation. Each individual crematorium authority or company will have their own directions as to whether these newer types of pacemakers need to be removed or not prior to cremation and if in any doubt at all, clarification should always be sought from the manager and medical referee. Those arranging a funeral should satisfy themselves as to what type or number of implants may be in place and seek clarification regarding this as necessary.

There has been much discussion as to how these devices can be removed, given that the device is so small and is

implanted directly into the wall of the heart. One approach is to make a midline incision, similar to that of an autopsy to expose the sternum. The ribs are cut through at the point of the cartilaginous joint to allow removal of the sternum and the operator can access the heart. The left ventricle is palpated to locate the unit, which can then be exposed through an incision into the wall of the heart to allow access. In a case where embalming is to be carried out, this should be done after the arterial injection of the deceased, but before cavity aspiration is performed. There is a risk that aspiration could dislodge the device and make it more difficult to retrieve. For this reason, it is also suggested that vein drainage be performed, instead of atrial drainage, which poses a risk of dislodging the unit. Once removed, the unit can be cleaned, disinfected, bagged and labelled for return to the implanting hospital. The sternum is then replaced, the incision treated with sealing powder and closed with a tight suture to provide a leak proof finish. This procedure is very invasive and may take some time to complete.

An alternative procedure is to make an incision between 2 and 5 inches long, along the underside of the 5th rib. Once incised, the rib can be separated from the sternum by cutting through the cartilaginous joint and then pushed to one side, to allow access to the apex of the heart. The heart is palpated to feel for the device, which is then removed through an incision into the ventricle. The removed device is cleaned, disinfected, bagged and labelled for return to the implanting hospital and the heart and rib replaced in their normal anatomical position. The incision is treated with sealing powder and closed with a tight suture to prevent any leakage. If the deceased is not to be embalmed, this procedure can be carried out at any time, however if embalming is to take place, the procedure should be performed after arterial injection but before cavity aspiration and vein drainage should be used in place of atrial drainage. This is still invasive, but not to the same degree as the first procedure. Whatever procedure is used, the person arranging the funeral should be informed and written consent obtained.

Medical science will continue to advance as newer and better ways are found and developed for overcoming a variety of illness, conditions, and problems. Those of us working in the bereavement services will need to find newer and better ways of meeting the challenges these advancements have on the care and preparation of the deceased as well as care and support that we provide to the bereaved. We all have seen many changes in our work and what we are required to know and do. Professionally speaking, if we have a desire to learn and share the benefits of our experience with our colleagues, there isn't much that we cannot overcome.

Ben Whitworth CFSP, Dip FD, LMBIFD, MBIE, MEAE, MNZEA
The MazWell Group Ltd

public health funerals: a relative solution

Nick Beetham discusses how next of kin enquiries can help those involved in arranging funerals under s.46 of the Public Health (Control of Diseases) Act 1984

What is a funeral? Pre-pandemic, most of us would typically think of an event where we variously celebrate the life and mourn the passing of a relative or old friend while reminiscing and re-connecting with people we perhaps haven't seen for years.

However, based on years of experience working alongside those who organise such occasions, it seems that there are two categories of funeral: those arranged under s.46 of the Public Health Act (PHA) and those that are not.

Anecdotal evidence indicates that many s.46PHA funerals are significantly more transactional in nature than funerals arranged by family members.

That's understandable: if a council is going to pay for a funeral then it's going to be – mostly at least – on the council's terms; a dignified and respectful ceremony, but at limited cost.

Under s.46PHA councils have a statutory duty to "cause to be buried or cremated the body of any person who has died or been found dead in their area, in any case where it appears to the authority that no suitable arrangements for the disposal of the body have been or are being made otherwise than by the authority". The duty stops once the body is buried or cremated.

But should an s.46PHA funeral be merely a transaction?

At the extreme, a s.46PHA funeral could simply involve a bereavement services officer telephoning whichever funeral director submitted the cheapest bid for the business, handling the paperwork and, more or less, leaving it there.

Is that really consistent with a dignified and respectful ceremony, though? Surely a significant component of that dignity and respect is dependent on who knows about and attends the funeral?

Many councils, when arranging s.46PHA funerals, go to considerable lengths to identify and locate next of kin of the deceased so that the family know about the death of their relative before the funeral takes place and have the opportunity to attend.

In such circumstances it's also possible that family members would want to arrange and pay for the funeral themselves, thereby taking it out of s.46PHA and providing self-evident benefits both to the family and the council.

On the other hand, consider the position of a council that is contacted by family members upset not to have known of the death of their relative until after a s.46PHA funeral had taken place.

Not only that... A recent investigation by anti-poverty charity Quaker Social Action (reported extensively in *The Guardian* and elsewhere) found a number of local authorities were "abdicating their duty" on s.46PHA funerals and suggested some were failing to carry out their "legal duty by arranging and paying for a funeral".

One way to avoid scenarios such as these is to take advantage of the highly effective private sector next-of-kin-tracing resources that are available at no cost to councils.

These can swiftly discover if relatives exist, share information with sympathy and, hopefully, ensure that more and more funerals include those elements of celebrating, mourning and re-connecting that most of us would expect.

Nick Beetham is business development manager at probate research firm Fraser and Fraser, a specialist in working with local authorities to trace next of kin.

Nick Beetham
Business Development Manager, Fraser and Fraser



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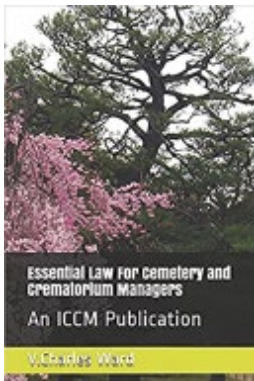
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new law book for cemetery and crematorium managers

Essential Law for Cemetery and Crematorium Managers', published 3 June, 2021, is written for anyone involved in the management of a cemetery or crematorium in England or Wales, whether public, private or not-for-profit.



Commissioned by the Institute of Cemetery and Crematorium Management (ICCM) and authored by its company solicitor, V. Charles Ward, the 245 page 'Essential Law' is the first authoritative book on burial and cremation law since Davies' Law of Burial, Cremation and Exhumation (7th Edition) last appeared in 2002. But even if the 8th edition of Davies appeared tomorrow, there is still arguably room for another authoritative book on the subject, which puts academic law into a practical context. Because burial and cremation law does not exist in isolation but is part of the wider legal framework which governs all business activity in England and Wales.

There is never a 'right time' for publishing a new book on burial and cremation law. Certainly not when the Law Commission has announced a comprehensive review of burial and cremation law. Though, as yet, we have no indication as to when that Law Commission review is likely to be published and how long afterwards it will be before any of its recommendations translate into law. In the meantime, something is needed to fill the gap.

Since the last 2002 edition of Davies, burial and cremation law has moved on. There are the 2008 Cremation Regulations. There are new rules allowing re-use of grave space within London municipal cemeteries. There is the 2009 Coroners and Justice Act. There are medical examiners. There are the 2019 death notification regulations. And there is the case-law.

Subjects covered in 'Essential Law' include: the Local Authorities' Cemeteries Order 1977 (LACO); Victorian burial statutes which are still relevant today; cremation legislation; grants and transfers of burial and cremation rights; registration of deaths; cemetery regulations and byelaws; data protection; procurement of cemetery and crematorium services; competition law; land-issues; faith and equality issues; recent case-law; exhumation; cemetery closure; redevelopment of disused burial grounds. Amongst its appendices are specimen grave and memorial grants and assignments; model cemetery regulations and byelaws; and an example of a business plan.

Essential law can be purchased online for £39.00 as a paperback or £9.99 for the kindle version and the following link is provided. Retailers can access the book through Amazon's expanded distribution network.

www.amazon.co.uk/dp/B096LMV36V/ref=sr_1_1?dchild=1&keywords=essential+law+for+cemetery&qid=1622887019&s=books&sr=1-1

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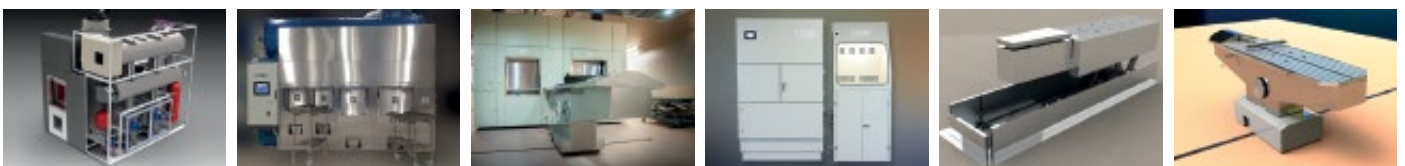
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apprenticeships at nene valley crematorium

The future...passionate about all things CPD (continuing professional development) I am proud to share that we have recruited a further two apprentices as part of succession planning for the administrative and operational sides of the business.

KYLE Colby and SCOTT Jenkins joined my team at the beginning of the year after we said goodbye to our former apprentice, HAYLEY, who successfully achieved a distinction grade Level 2 qualification in customer care. It is so pleasing to know that Hayley has remained in the funeral profession, working for a local funeral director, our best customer, so we still get to hear about how well she continues to progress with her newfound career.

I am beyond pleased with the progression that both Kyle and Scott have made in such a short space of time, and during a pandemic too! Both have taken to our bereavement sector like a 'duck to water', so to speak. Their commitment to learning and integration into the team has evidently been an easy transition from a school to workplace environment.

Our aspiration for Kyle is that he will progress into a first line management role following a firm foundation being laid in office processes for the support of the business manager; and for Scott, to gain horticultural and operational experience to furnish him with knowledge and skills required to be an integral team member.

All of us now look forward to seeing how well Kyle and Scott grow with their predicted achievements over the next 18-months or so - I feel an end of apprenticeship Journal article coming on...

Tracy Lawrence
Manager and Registrar, Nene Valley Crematorium

An opportunity...I joined the Nene Valley Crematorium team back on 1 February 2021 to begin a 2-year Business Administrator Level 3 apprenticeship, which is a 'gateway' to management.

Within the first few weeks of my job, I helped with cremation paperwork and finance. This has included booking services, entering music requests onto our media system and ensuring that the paperwork is prepared for the medical referee to look over and sign before the cremation takes place. I have regular contact with a range of funeral directors and with bereaved people.

I recently left school back in March last year but was unable to pursue my goals due to Covid-19 restrictions. Over the past 12 months I began to show an interest in the bereavement sector due to a loss in the family. When I became aware of an opportunity to work at Nene Valley crematorium, I jumped at this opportunity and was delighted to be selected as the successful candidate. It has given me the opportunity to learn more about the bereavement profession and provided me the chance to support other bereaved people when needed.

In my spare time I enjoy time with my family as well as socialising with friends. During the pandemic I have also spent a lot of time watching Netflix and playing on my Xbox; this was a way for me to keep in contact with friends that I wasn't able to see.

Kyle Colby, Apprentice - Business

Lots to learn...My name is Scott Jenkins, and I am seventeen years old.

I have recently joined the bereavement services care team at Nene Valley Crematorium, which is in Wellingborough Northamptonshire. I am employed as an operations apprentice because I hope to pursue a career in gardening as I like to be outdoors and am fascinated by nature. I saw this job advertised online and it really appealed to me; I did not know much about gardening at the time but in the five months I have worked here I have really learnt a lot about my role and my skills have really progressed.

My typical daily tasks include general maintenance of the grounds doing things like mowing, weeding, watering, edging, turning up beds and pruning; we also have lots of exciting new projects we are working on around the grounds such as preparing the beds for many new plants and laying of shingle over the beds in the Anniversary Memorial Garden to provide a cleaner environment and contemporary feel for visitors. Not only have I learnt a lot about my role I have learnt what other people's roles involve and what goes into running a crematorium. I have also learnt a lot about bereavement culture and the little things we do to show respect - for example stopping working when the hearse comes past and bowing our heads. I also do college work on Mondays where I am learning lots and when on site at the college, I get a chance to use all the new machines they have and work on the gardens there.

I see this apprenticeship as a chance to learn and expand my knowledge and work-based skills and to achieve my qualifications to progress my career further - during my second year I will learn how to cremate and provide cover for the ceremony hall/chapel.

My previous jobs have been working in a kitchen at a pub, McDonald's and I have also done a bit of plastering. I live in a small village in Bedfordshire with my mum and stepdad. In my spare time I enjoy going on nice long walks through the beautiful fields and woodlands near me, going to the gym and driving my motorbike discovering new places.

Scott Jenkins, Apprentice - Operations

new garden of remembrance at lea fields crematorium

Work has started on the creation of a new garden of remembrance at Lea Fields crematorium in West Lindsey.



West Lindsey District Council which runs the award-winning facility in Lea, is continuing to invest in the facility which opened just over a year ago.

Once the work is completed, the garden of remembrance will be filled with young trees and wild flower meadows, creating calm spaces in which to reflect.

Chairman of West Lindsey District Council, Cllr Steve England and Cllr Jessie Milne met Deborah Balsdon, crematorium manager to visit the area, where the work is taking place.

Cllr England said: "Our investment will make sure that Lea Fields continues to provide exceptional funeral services proudly and respectfully to our community. Our aim is to create a memorial garden that meets families' needs and expectations and provides a peaceful and tranquil area to be able to sit and reflect."

Groundwork started this week (May 2021) and it is anticipated that the scattering glades will be ready for July 2021. Cllr Milne, is delighted to see work starting on site. She said: "Since opening, the crematorium has been well received by residents and the local communities. Throughout the Covid-19 pandemic, Lea Fields has remained open and supported the local community with respectful services and excellent customer services. It has also increased the offer to four types of services to meet the differing needs of individuals.

"The garden of remembrance is a welcome addition to the crematorium as it will provide a focal point for people to lay to rest their loved ones and family will be welcome to visit the gardens anytime they wish."

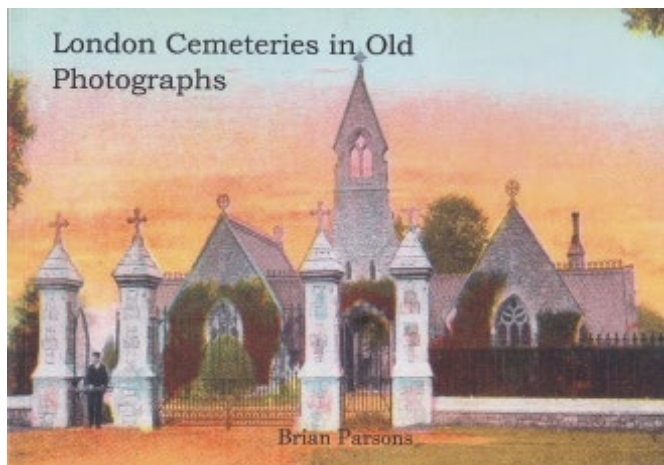
Whilst the work is underway, the crematorium will happily keep ashes in their care until scattering is possible.

Julie Heath,
Communications Manager

book review

London Cemeteries in Old Photographs By Brian Parsons

I was so excited to be asked to review Brian Parsons' latest book, *London Cemeteries in Old Photographs*. For anyone with a love of cemeteries and chapels this is the perfect book for you.



To give you a bit of background on the author, Brian has worked in the funeral industry in London since 1982. After working for JH Kenyon as a funeral director and embalmer he embarked upon a BA degree in Business Studies at the



University of Westminster followed by a PhD which explored change in the British funeral industry during the twentieth century. In 1997 he returned to SCI (Dignity PLC) as a training consultant for the London area until becoming editor in 2005 and then features editor of the *Funeral Service Journal*. He now works freelance providing a training, consultancy and research service under the banner of Funeral Service Training (London). He also

has a long-standing interest in cemeteries and crematoria and is an associate member of the ICCM.

This book is the perfect accompaniment to Brian's publication of the sixth edition of *London Cemeteries: An Illustrated Guide and Gazetteer*. It is a pictorial volume comprising of a collection of photographs which are mainly illustrations of postcards produced during the first two decades of the twentieth century.

The contents of the book are set out in alphabetical order starting with Abney Park cemetery and ending on Windsor

cemetery. The rest of the book does not disappoint with images and narration from various London cemeteries including City of London Cemetery and Crematorium, the famous Highgate cemetery and the first of the 'Magnificent Seven' cemeteries, Kensal Green.

Having been born and raised in London it was even more fascinating to see all the cemeteries I have frequented, and worked at, over the years, and to spot the changes that have taken place. Although a lot of the images show cemetery chapels and lodgings, there are also some that illustrate the landscape, showing the planting and memorials which now no longer exist. The Victorians celebrated death in a grand way. Their graves tended to be more elaborate than modern graves and it was expected that families would spend as much as it could afford on a monument to reflect the family's social status.

I easily got immersed in this book, studying each image with fascination. For example, there is a photograph taken in New Southgate cemetery (formerly the Great Northern cemetery), dating back to 1903, which depicts three visitors posing for the photographer in their Victorian finery, in front of a cluster of memorials located near the chapel. The picture next to it shows the same area. Although the seat has disappeared and metal railings have been erected in front of the row of memorials together with the introduction of a telephone pole, the scene remains largely unchanged.

This book took me back in time and made me think about the history of our cemeteries. It is a book that you can pick up and flick through and read in any order.

It is worthy of a place on your coffee table, set as a piece of décor, setting the tone for many conversations with your visitors.



London Cemeteries in Old Photographs is only available from:

www.brianparsons.org.uk for £12 including UK postage.

Sofia Allana
Technical Services & Journal Officer

how technology is driving a bereavement revolution

Tremayne Carew Pole is the found of Life Ledger. Here he outlines a simple, free-to-use death notification platform. Their mission is to help families to simplify the administrative burden of a death.

Technology has been slow to disrupt the death sector, and bereavement in particular has remained something often best dealt with face-to-face. Many believe it is difficult to convey any form of empathy or compassion through a cold computer interface. So traditional processes and mechanisms to help and support the families after a death are still very much in evidence, but change has been slowly creeping in over the last decade. The pandemic has, of course, expedited this, but the foundations had already been laid much earlier than this.

At the vanguard of this digital revolution has been, surprisingly, the Department of Work & Pensions, whose flagship 'Tell Us Once' scheme started life in 2011. They have taken the best part of a decade to reach fruition and bring all the councils in the United Kingdom together to streamline and simplify the public sector notification process. Tell Us Once is a single platform that tells public sector bodies from local councils and the DWP to the Passport Office and the DVLA of a death, and they work closely with the council registrars who can support the bereaved through the early stages.

During the pandemic the Coronavirus Bill began to change the way deaths were registered with provision being made to allow families to register a death remotely, instead of in person at a council register office. After what was an enforced trial, it seems that many councils prefer the remote registration process, and indeed has been something that government have been keen on transforming.

In the months before the pandemic arrived the first reading of the Registers of Births and Deaths Bill 2019 sought to allow families to register deaths remotely. This is indeed something that is here to stay. The natural next step would be the issuing of digital death certificates, but this is something the government are reluctant to do at present, although it would certainly have a significant impact on what has traditionally been a disjointed and somewhat sclerotic death notification process.

The death notification process has always been fragmented, frustrating and analogue. Families of the deceased have to turn out cupboards and drawers to discover what accounts their loved one had; then research what documentation and information is required (because it's never the same) and then work out which channel to notify them through. Before spending hours filling in the same online forms, or having the same conversations, over and over again. All at a time when they are exhausted, confused and vulnerable.

Astonishingly, the public sector led the charge right up until 2018 when the Death Notification Service launched, looking after just 25 financial services companies. The brainchild of UK Finance (the trade association for the UK's banking and financial services sector) it has been slow to get off the ground and offers only a limited scope even three years after launch. Then in early in 2021, Life Ledger launched to notify multiple companies in multiple sectors, a Tell Us Once for the private sector.

Their intuitive, free-to-use platform sends notifications of death to over 750 companies in the UK that range from banks and insurers to loyalty cards and social media. Users follow a simple sign-up process and identity verification process before adding details of the deceased, which are cross checked with the general register office.

The families can request that household accounts and insurance policies are switched to surviving partners, children or executors to ensure continuity of coverage and service, before the notifications are electronically sent. Confirmation of receipt and action can return in as little as five minutes. The service dramatically simplifies the administrative burden that the bereaved have to shoulder post death and helps them concentrate on grieving for those they have lost.

During the pandemic many bereavement counselling services have struggled to connect those in need with those who can help, and waiting lists to speak to a trained counsellor can stretch into the weeks and months. Coming to the fore in 2020 has been GriefChat, an online grief counselling service that gives the bereaved instant access to a trained grief counsellor. GriefChat has come into its own providing a safe space for people to share their stories and

be supported through a difficult time through an online chat box. While some may prefer the personal nature of face-to-face counselling and support groups, others have found succour in the immediacy and anonymity of chatting through GriefChat.

Set up by Catherine Betley, a seasoned veteran with 20 years' experience in the counselling sector, the service has had a remarkable take up and deals with almost 50,000 sessions a year. The service is free of charge and allows those in need to reach out almost instantaneously receiving support when they most need it.

Sitting within the estate administration sector a new raft of companies has appeared dealing with the tortuous probate process. Simplifying the journey, removing the need for expensive lawyers and providing off-the-shelf packages to allow the more cash-strapped bereaved families to self-serve. At the forefront of this is Trust Inheritance, whose online probate service provides a DIY toolkit for individual users to apply for probate and fully administer the estate. Similarly, Farewill the death-tech juggernaut offering everything from digital probate and will writing to funeral planning and direct cremation, have been making in-roads into making the estate administration and probate process more accessible.

Bereavement after the pandemic is beginning to look very different than it did just two years ago. While technology can lack the personality and intimacy of real-life contact, it can provide an immediacy and simplicity that takes both the strain of administration and the isolation of loss away from families when they are at their most fragile and vulnerable. What is for certain, this is only just the beginning of the digital bereavement revolution, and it will be fascinating to see how it will transform living and dying in the next decade.

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iccm recycling of metals scheme



The Recycling of metals scheme shared out funds totalling £1,230,000 in November 2020. This took the total funds donated by the scheme since its inception to over £10 million.



May 2021 Recycling round up

The first round of nominations for the ICCM/Orthometals recycling of metals scheme closed in May 2021 and a staggering £1,260,000 was donated to good causes via the scheme – the single highest total yet and reflecting on again another very successful round for all parties. A total nicely shown below on one of the presentation cheques ICCM will send you if required.

Awards made and acknowledged are shown elsewhere in the Journal, but the headline stats as it were, are that so far, the scheme's donated over £11.4 million to 551 different charities with a total of 1,915 pay outs. Thank goodness they are now by BACS as I really don't want to have to write another 1,000 cheques - I need an ink stamp!

Due to a decision by Memoria to allow all their crematoria to nominate to the same cause, and with other crematoria's nominations, Macmillan cancer Care received a much needed and vital £160,000 alone for the round. They were not alone in success and being recognised by many crematoria.

Cruse, a long-time partner of the industry was awarded £70,000 and both the Samaritans and Alzheimer's Society each revived £40,000 reflecting on causes being in need during the pandemic.

While established previous nominees have been successful it is always important that new and often local charities also make their voices heard in the need for funding.

The new charities shoutout's as it were on the radio for this round – At a loss.org, Beachy Head Chaplaincy Team, Broughton House, Calvert Trust Exmoor, Carers in Bedfordshire, Children's Air Ambulance, Crossroads Ayrshire - Caring for Carers, Daddy's with Angels, DCH Charity, Doncaster Cancer Detection Trust, East Sussex Healthcare Trust's Charitable Funds, Full Circle Fund Therapies, Havering Street Pastors, Ipswich Dementia Action Alliance (IDAA), Men Unite, Muslim Bereavement Support Service, OG Cancer NI, Our Sam, Over the rainbow children's charity, Priscilla Bacon Norfolk Hospice Care, Queen Elizabeth Hospital Kings Lynn Charitable Fund, South West MS Therapy Centre, Stars Appeal, The BAY Foodbank, Warrington and Halton Hospital Charity, Warwick Myton Hospice, Wellspring Therapy and Training, Wessex Cancer Trust and Willow Wood Hospice – PHEW!

The new causes above add to the fact that over 55% of awards have gone to single cases/charities which shows the length and breadth of awards from Cornwall to the Scottish Highlands.

Every member should feel proud of themselves for their work in helping charities, the bereaved allow the funds to be generated, but by being part of it you are all ensuring the best for good causes.

Like the snake eating itself, it's all happening again at this minute closing in December 2021, so please if you have a form send it back in, if you've got the email link click it and if you have neither of these or a query if the cause can be nominated, then just get in touch – trevor.robson@iccm-uk.com

And finally – WELL DONE, LOTS OF SMALL ACTIONS MAKE A BIG DIFFERENCE



Recycling of Metals

Press releases and information from charities that were nominated in the December – May 2021 round.

Conwy Nomination – Alzheimer's Society

Thank you so much to the ICCM for the amazing donation of £10,000 to Alzheimer's Society. Covid-19 has had a devastating effect on those living with dementia and your kind donation will help Alzheimer's Society continue to offer valuable and much needed support through our services such as 'Companion Calls'.

This service provides regular phone calls to people living with dementia and their carers for a friendly chat in order to reduce loneliness and improve their sense of wellbeing. For some, their companion caller is the only person they speak to that week, and that is why your donation is so important and appreciated.

Thank you.



Mind Mid Kent

Card message from Julie Blackmore the CEO of Mind Mid Kent, thanking the ICCM and Maidstone Borough Council for their donation of £10,000.

Barrow in Furness -Young Lives vs Cancer

Dear ICCM and Thorncliffe Crematorium,

Thank you so much for your incredible donation of £10,000 through the OrthoMetals recycling scheme, and for joining our fight for young lives against cancer. Today, 12 more children and young people will hear the devastating news that they have cancer. From diagnosis, Young Lives vs Cancer's specialist care teams will step in, ready to help, support and guide each young cancer patient and their family.

We know that for young lives, when the doctor says 'cancer', normal life stops. Young Lives vs Cancer care teams will fight tirelessly to limit the damage cancer causes; they will listen, and ask the right questions, so they can provide the right support, tailored to each young person and family.

This might mean arranging a Young Lives vs Cancer grant or helping young people and families get the benefits they are entitled to, coordinating care so some medical procedures can happen at home, arranging free accommodation in a Young Lives vs Cancer home from home, or helping young cancer patients and families keep in touch with school or work to help keep life as normal as possible.

If the worst happens, and a child dies, we are there for the family every step of the way through their bereavement. Your £10,000 donation could cover the cost of bereavement support for 13 families when they lose their child, providing over 300 hours of palliative or bereavement support from our social workers.

Thank you again to the ICCM and Thorncliffe Crematorium for choosing to support Young Lives vs Cancer with such a generous donation, and for joining us in the fight for young lives against cancer.

Best wishes, **Sophie Meadows - Fundraising Engagement Manager**

Coychurch Crematorium - CRUSE

Thank you for your letter on the 2nd of July regarding the ICCM recycling of metals scheme. I'm pleased to confirm that we have received your amazing donation of £10,000 for Cruse Cymru. Thank you so much for once again choosing Cruse Bereavement Care as your charity. We would not be able to continue to support bereaved people locally without donations like these so please accept my grateful thanks.

Cruse Bereavement Care is a charity and whilst there's no charge for our bereavement support - and our volunteers give their time for free – we do need to raise money to cover costs like recruitment, training and telephone costs. It costs an average of £120 per person to provide bereavement support which works out around £20 per session.

I have included a certificate with this letter to say thank you and if you would like to have any of our 'Understanding Bereavement' leaflets then please let me know and I can post some out to you.

Thank you once again for your support and I look forward to working with you in the future.

North East Lincolnshire – Parkinsons UK

Research to find a cure for Parkinson's has received a £10,000 boost thanks to a local metal recycling scheme.

Grimsby crematorium, which is managed by North East Lincolnshire Council, made the donation.

Parkinson's UK is the largest charitable funder of Parkinson's research in Europe, leading the way to better treatments and a cure. An estimated 145,000 people across the UK are living with Parkinson's, including 11,426 people in Yorkshire and the Humber.

Money raised for the donation came from the sale of recyclable materials which are salvaged following cremation. These usually comprise of metal from the coffin and orthopaedic implants like hip and knee replacement joints.

Relatives of the deceased give their consent before the cremation and collection of metals goes ahead.

Jacque McGuire, Regional Fundraiser for Yorkshire and Humber at Parkinson's UK, said:

"We want to say a huge thank you to Councillor Stewart Swinburn, Grimsby crematorium for choosing Parkinson's UK as the beneficiary of these funds.

"Our work in Yorkshire and Humber and across the UK is entirely dependent on donations. Every penny raised helps drive forward ground-breaking research projects supported by the charity, as well as the vital support and information services that people affected by the condition need."

Councillor Stewart Swinburn, portfolio holder for environment and transport at North East Lincolnshire Council, said: "I'm really pleased to be able to sign off this donation to another incredibly worthwhile cause.

"Parkinson's has a profound impact on the lives of so many people. It's the fastest growing neurological condition in the world, but Parkinson's UK is making huge strides in research to find a cure and doing some great work to support families and those affected by the condition."



Proceeds from the sale of recyclable metals have been awarded to charity every year since 2014, with a cheque handover taking place twice a year. Since 2014, more than £75,000 has gone towards supporting local and national worthy causes.



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Support for our users, support for our system - our experienced, helpful, and professional technical staff are available to support you throughout the working day, contactable by phone and by email. Our developers are constantly improving Epilog Sequel and our system is regularly updated and patched.

Backed up and secure - whether you choose to host your system internally or whether you host with us, your data is always backed up and kept secure.

Havering BC – Havering Street Pastors

A specialist metals recycling scheme has enabled staff at South Essex Crematorium to recently present a cheque for £10,000 to Havering Rail Pastors.

They patrol Romford Station in a bid to reach out to people in moments of crisis.

The Mayor of Havering, Cllr. John Mylod presented the cheque to Gary Seithel, Chairman of the Trustees of Havering Street Pastors, an award winning charity whose volunteers have been patrolling Romford and Hornchurch town centres for many years.

Rail Pastors is an initiative of the Ascension Trust, working in partnership with the British Transport Police, train operators, Network Rail and the Samaritans.

Havering is one of nine areas in the UK to benefit from the initiative since the first rail pastor group was set up in Barnet – saving three lives in its first year.



Kings Lynn and West Norfolk – Cancer Care and Treatment Charitable Fund at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital

A cheque for £10,000 towards the Cancer Care and Treatment Charitable Fund at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital was presented on Thursday 1 July 2021 at Mintlyn crematorium.

Pictured Right: Cllr Harry Humphrey, the Mayor of King's Lynn & West Norfolk, and Cllrs Brian Long and Paul Kunes, borough council Cabinet members, presented Professor Steve Barnett, Chairman, and Laurence Morlaas, Fundraising Executive, of the Queen Elizabeth Hospital with the cheque.

Cllr Paul Kunes, Cabinet member for Environment, said: "Over the last ten years Mintlyn crematorium has raised thousands of pounds for many worthy local causes through this scheme. I'm delighted to be presenting this cheque to the Cancer Care and Treatment Charitable Fund at the QEH. It has helped thousands of people affected by cancer."

Cllr Brian Long, Cabinet member for Corporate Services, added: "The work this unit continues to do has supported many local people as they fight cancer. I hope this donation helps the Macmillan Cancer Care and Treatment Centre at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital to continue the vital support they give to our community."

Professor Steve Barnett, QEH Charmain, said: "We're extremely grateful to the borough council of King's Lynn & West Norfolk, the ICCM and to our local community for this donation to our Cancer Care and Treatment Charitable Fund. The funds will help us deliver the highest standard of care and support for our patients living with cancer, and their families."

Mintlyn crematorium is owned and operated by the borough council of King's Lynn & West Norfolk.

Previously, the crematorium used money raised through the Institute of Cemetery and Crematorium Management (ICCM) scheme to support the Big C Cancer Charity, the Central Delivery Bereavement Fund at QEH, The Norfolk Hospice, Tapping House, EACH, Scotty's Little Soldiers, SANDS (Stillborn and Neonatal Death Society), Friends in Bereavement, Nelson's Journey, The Norfolk Hospice, Tapping House, SOBS (Survivors of Bereavement by Suicide), and MNDA (Motor Neurone Disease Association), Theresa's Tiny Treasures, Alzheimer's Society.



Newcastle under Lyme – Men Unite

A growing men's mental health support group based in North Staffordshire has received a major financial boost thanks to bereaved families from Newcastle-under-Lyme.

The Institute of Cemetery and Crematorium Management (ICCM) has donated £10,000 to Men Unite – which provides a range of services encouraging men to talk about their problems and overcome them – after the council nominated it as its chosen beneficiary for funds raised from the ICCM's metal recycling scheme.

Men Unite, set up in April 2019 by electrician Craig Spillane from Talke Pits, started off as a private Facebook group for a small number of close friends as a safe forum to discuss personal issues, but it expanded rapidly and now has 14,000 members, from 80 countries, who have access to support 24 hours a day, seven days a week from trained volunteers.

The community interest company, which is becoming a charity, has since launched a daily hub at Hanley Town FC – where men have access to professional counselling services – a Sunday league football team as well as a well-being league in partnership with Stoke City FC and Staffordshire FA, a food bank and a mental health workshop programme.

The £10,000 donation will be used to fund future counselling services, including specific sessions focusing on bereavement, and enhance the new Daniel Platt memorial lounge at the drop-in hub. The lounge is a place where visitors can sit and reflect and is named in honour of a Men Unite member who sadly took his own life.

Pictured (left to right) is David Banks, from the council's bereavement services, who suggested the nomination to the ICCM and Men Unite founder Craig Spillane.



Craig, 42, said: "I didn't know that metals could be recycled in this way, it's an amazing thing. We're a small charitable organisation so any donations we receive make a huge difference and go straight into helping people. We're just so grateful.

"Men Unite encourages men to speak out about their problems instead of bottling it up and eventually taking their own life. Male suicide is the biggest killer of men under the age of 45, one person loses their life in this way every two hours. They're frightening statistics. I've experienced troubles – and I've got a broad spectrum of friends from different walks of life who have as well for various reasons – so that understanding underpins everything we do. This fantastic donation will help us to continue providing immediate counselling sessions for those who are struggling. This extremely quick service is very important as it can mean the difference between life and death. We're so honoured to be nominated for the donation. I'm really proud that we are able to make such a difference to so many people's lives."

The ICCM donated £10,000 to the Dove Service, a local grief support charity, in January.

Cllr Trevor Johnson, Cabinet member for environment and recycling, is the portfolio holder for bereavement services. Cllr. Johnson said: "We're very pleased that the ICCM has accepted our second nomination and donated another £10,000 to such a great local cause. This is only possible because of the selfless actions of bereaved families who have decided to allow metals remaining following cremation to be recycled in this way.

Men Unite are doing excellent work in the local area to address male mental health, something which has been affected by the pandemic, so this money will have a massive impact. I hope this provides residents who have lost a loved one with some level of comfort."

Stafford Crematorium - A Child Of Mine



Pictured above Councillor Jonathan Price hands over the cheque to Gayle Routledge, founder of A Child Of Mine charity, at the Tixall Road crematorium

Recycled artificial hip and knee joints have helped raise £10,000 for a Stafford charity which supports families who have suffered the bereavement of a child. Stafford crematorium has passed artificial joints, along with nails and screws from the coffins, on to a recycling company in return for money which is then donated to charity.

Once consent from the families has been given, the metal is filtered out as part of the cremation process leaving the ashes to be buried or collected by the deceased's loved ones. Stafford borough council, which runs the crematorium on the town's Tixall Road, has donated more than £80,000 since 2013 through the scheme.

The latest recipient is Stafford-based 'A Child Of Mine' (ACOM) which has received £10,000. The charity offers emotional support, information, and guidance to families suffering the loss of a baby or child.

Gayle Routledge, founder of the charity, said: "We were blown away when we heard we would be receiving an incredible £10,000. It is hard to put into words how much of a difference this will make to bereaved families.

"This amount of money could cover the costs of over 700 hours of one-to-one support for bereaved parents or even run our Sunshine and Rainbows sibling support playgroup for over two whole years.

"Most importantly, it has given us a lifeline to be able to support families when they are ready to be supported and, more importantly, how they want to be supported.

"Every family is different. We make sure we are flexible with our support and what we can offer to ensure it is right for every individual family and donations from the local community are vital in enabling us to do this.

"It is an understatement to say that this will help to change the lives of so many bereaved families but, it truly will. "We have known the team at Stafford crematorium for many years and they are so supportive of everything we do here at ACOM and they continue to surprise us with their support."

Councillor Jonathan Price, Cabinet Member for Environment at the Borough Council, said it was so good to hear that the money would make a significant difference to the charity.

"This is such a worthwhile charity that gives comfort and support to bereaved parents and other family members at an extremely sad time for them. And I hope that those who have had loved ones cremated will draw some comfort from knowing their loss is helping others.

"I'm very proud of how much our crematorium has raised over the years for many good causes and it has been great to hear the feedback from the charities about how this money is helping them with their excellent work."

The Tixall Road site in Stafford, Staffordshire was awarded 'Gold' status by the Institute of Cemetery and Crematorium Management and has retained its 'Green Flag' as one of the best open spaces in the country.

Colwyn Bay – St David's Hospice

Pictured right: (Victoria Currie, Crematorium & Cemetery Manager and Andy Barlow, Senior Crematorium Technician)

The Colwyn Bay crematorium, which is situated in the grounds of Bron y Nant cemetery, Mochdre recently presented a cheque for £10,000 to St David's Hospice, from money received for participating in the Institute of Cemetery and Crematorium Management (ICCM) metals recycling scheme.

Nationally, the ICCM Recycling of metals scheme has raised over £11 million for charities across the UK since it was created.

Staff at the local crematorium chose St David's Hospice to be the recipient charity for the donation this year as they wanted to see that the money remained local, to support local people.



Colwyn Bay's senior crematorium technician Andy Barlow said: "St David's Hospice nurses being on the front line helps to ease the pressure on our NHS. The care the team give is invaluable to us all.

"I would just like to say a big thank you to St David's Hospice for all the hard work they do and also to all the families that have made this type of donation possible."

St David's Hospice is a local charity providing hospice care to adult patients living with life limiting illnesses in Conwy, Gwynedd and Anglesey. Each year the hospice needs to raise £5 million to continue with care and services. The donation will go directly towards patient care which is offered free of charge to the local community.

James Wilde, Conwy Area Fundraiser said: "Thank you so much to everyone involved in raising this incredible amount of money – it really does mean so much to us. This donation will make a huge difference to those who are living with life limiting illnesses in North West Wales during this most difficult of times."

Swansea Crematorium – Marie Cure

I would like to express our profound gratitude for the recent donation of £10,000 to Marie Curie, as part of the ICCM Recycling Metals Scheme. After approaching Lyndon Elsey at Swansea crematorium some time ago and providing some insight into the work of Marie Curie, including our new bereavement service, we were overjoyed to be nominated.

The funds will help Marie Curie provide support for individuals and families across South West Wales, providing care and support through death, dying and bereavement.

This money will help make this possible as it costs:

- £180 to provide a full 9-hour Marie Curie nursing shift
- £20 for one hour of nursing care
- £5 for bereavement booklets to support 20 children
- £1 for a patient information pack, giving practical advice about our services

As you can imagine, £10,000 will ensure that many more people will benefit from the work of Marie Curie, making death and dying a better experience. Your support helps us continue and develop our work - thank you again, we simply couldn't do it without you.

As I mentioned to Lyndon, my mum was cremated at this crematorium after a short battle with cancer, in 2015. At the time, and before working for Marie Curie, we agreed to the recycling of her metal plates but had no comprehension of the difference it would make. Now, having been involved in the scheme, it is humbling to know the impact it has, allowing us to continue offering our end-of-life services.

Ali Discombe, Community Fundraiser, West Wales Alison.Discombe@mariecurie.org.uk

Clyde Coast & Garnock Valley Crematorium Raises Vital Funds for St Vincent's Hospice

Clyde Coast & Garnock Valley Crematorium has today 8th July 2021 made a £10,000 donation towards St Vincent Hospice in Howwood to help support the crucial end of life care that they provide for families from across the local area.

The funds were raised through the crematorium's membership of the Institute of Cemetery and Crematorium Management's national Recycling of Metals Scheme, and the money was officially presented to Carol-Anne Lamont of St Vincent Hospice at the new state of the art crematorium located within the panoramic hills above Dalry.

The Institute's Recycling of Metals Scheme is a national initiative and works by sensitively recovering metals and orthopedic implants following cremation with the consent of bereaved families.

Philip Ewing, Manager of the Clyde Coast & Garnock Valley Crematorium, said:

"As professionals assisting the bereaved, we recognise the financial challenges that organisations supporting families at their most difficult and vulnerable time face."

"Covid has had a devastating impact across society, affecting not just families but also Hospices who have faced more pressure to provide end of life care, whilst simultaneously seeing the ability to raise vital funds in the traditional method curtailed as lockdown was introduced."

"The funds raised through this recycling scheme donation will directly benefit the hospice and the families it supports, when they are facing a difficult time through bereavement."

"Our heart-felt thanks go to each and every family who consented to take part in the national scheme, without whom life-changing donations such as the one we are making today would not be possible."

Carol-Anne Lamont, Income Generation Lead at St Vincent Hospice, said:

"The continued support from Clyde Coast & Garnock Valley Crematorium is greatly appreciated and helps us continue to deliver vital support to patients and their families across our community."

"Throughout this unprecedented and challenging time for all, St. Vincent's Hospice has remained open. The pandemic forced us to alter our ways of working and as well as supporting those with life-limiting conditions in whatever way we can within the hospice itself. Our team have been visiting patients in their own homes, providing telephone consultations or counselling sessions as well as virtual face-to-face support. We have been finding new ways to make sure we are still here for everyone who needs us."

Philip Ewing added:

"Since its inception in 2006, the Institute's national recycling of metals initiative has now raised over £11.4 million, and it gives great comfort for those who have contributed to the scheme to know that the money raised, is used to support charities like St Vincent's Hospice in the delivery of incredibly important and sensitive end of life care."

"Like St Vincent Hospice, we are absolutely committed to providing the very highest levels of care and compassion for families when they need support most, and we are incredibly proud to be in a position to make this donation."



Photograph attached left to right Philip Ewing, Jennifer Hamilton, Carol-Anne Lamont, Sharon Breen, Murray Hamilton.

Sands autumn update



We are incredibly grateful for the continued support of each and every member of the ICCM. Since the last update in Spring 2021, Sands has provided support to over 50,156 bereaved parents, families and health professionals across the UK and via Sands' local groups in your communities. By the end of the year, we expect to reach at least 200,000 people impacted by the loss of a baby. Thank you for helping us to deliver support virtually and through our online Shop which offers free resources.

"The ICCM scheme is such a great one for us to be involved in. It is always lovely to talk to bereaved families about the money we are able to contribute to local bereavement charities as a result of their willingness to sign the paperwork to donate the metal residues from the cremation of their loved one," Jo Walker, Manager Cannock Chase Crematorium.

If you would like support, please visit <https://www.sands.org.uk/support-you>.

Sands Virtual Garden Day Remembrance Event 2021

Each year Sands hosts a memorial service for all babies, helping families and individuals to find hope. This year as we reflect on our shared strengths, nature and resilience was our theme involving readings, music and photos on the theme of nature and how it can help in the journey of living with loss. This year's Garden Event, like the event hosted in 2020, took place online via YouTube and Facebook on Saturday 5 June.

If you missed the event or would like to watch it again please see www.sands.org.uk/gardenday.

Journey Around Grief animation

We all grieve in different ways; many bereaved parents tell us that their grief is a life long journey. This animation

explores this journey and illustrates how with support and understanding from those around them bereaved families will remember their baby in their own way and find their way to live with their grief.

Sands Awareness Month 2021: Always There campaign | Sands - Stillbirth and neonatal death charity

Sands is a national charity, distributing and providing services across the UK through our extensive network of local groups. Many of your teams work closely with our regional volunteers in your local communities to fundraise and raise awareness.

"We are astounded by the incredible and ongoing support of ICCM members as we look to support all local families and health professionals following the death of a baby. As you may know, Sands has seen a sustained 30% increase in demand for bereavement support services since the beginning of the pandemic and we are unable to answer every phone call, email and online message received.

It is vital that everyone has the support they need and which they deserve at any point in their grief journey. We are striving to meet that need and your donations are helping us to do just that. Thank you for helping us to change lives,"

Vicky Luk, Partnerships & Philanthropy Manager.

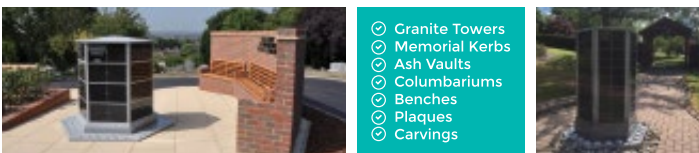
Email: Victoria.luk@sands.org.uk

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SHORING PROTECTS LIVES - BE PREPARED THIS AUTUMN/WINTER



Grave collapse in a UK cemetery

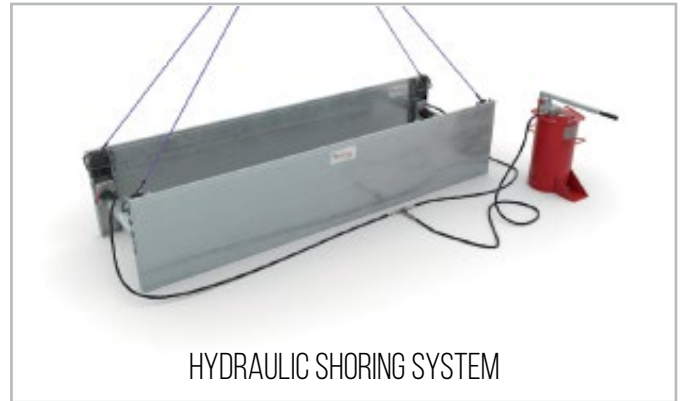
In February 2021, a Long Island cemetery worker tragically lost his life when a grave collapsed on him during an excavation.

Fortunately this is a rare occurrence, especially within the UK, as our attention to health and safety is amongst the most stringent in the world. It does however remind us of how crucial it is to get it right.



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unauthorised ashes scatterings on purchased grave spaces – where do we stand?

On the 29th of April this year, during a series of regular ICCM webinars facilitated by Plotbox, ICCM Officers addressed some of the questions that cemetery and crematorium staff had reported encountering over the preceding few months. ICCM Officers answer many questions every day, but the ones chosen for the webinar required particularly sensitive handling.

One question prompted such a response that a delegate asked if some follow-up advice could appear in the next Journal to explain the options for addressing the problem. The problem in question, is what to do when there has been an unauthorised scattering of ashes on or over a grave space where the exclusive right of burial exists.

From our own first-hand experiences as former cemetery and crematorium managers, in addition to the scenarios described by attendees, this appears to remain a common issue where persons will scatter ashes on purchased grave spaces without having sought the relevant permissions from the authority, or possibly also the grave owner beforehand.



To understand what is legally permitted, the Local Authorities' Cemeteries Order 1977 (as amended), offers in Schedule 2, Part 1 that:

'No burial shall take place, no cremated human remains shall be scattered and no tombstone or other memorial shall be placed in a cemetery, and no additional inscription shall be made on a tombstone or other memorial, without the permission of the officer appointed for that purpose by the burial authority.'

Therefore, the Local Authority should receive an application or request for any scattering, including specifically those which take place over a grave where the exclusive right of burial exists. This will allow cemetery staff to:

- ensure that the grave owner is making the request,
- make the relevant entry in the burial and grave registers,
- charge any relevant fees for the organisation of the scattering service,
- where possible, provide a member of staff to be in attendance.

Should this not have happened, then this can pose a number of issues with regard to the points above that won't have now taken place.

Assuming that we now find ourselves in the above position, with an unauthorised scattering of ashes on a purchased grave, when answering the following questions, we can find that there are several options available to us:

- Could we immediately, legally, remove the ashes or do we need to apply for a Ministry of Justice Licence or a Bishop's Faculty beforehand (as with any other exhumation), to resolve the issue? As the ashes aren't buried or interred, they won't be classed as such and therefore won't require an exhumation licence or faculty in order for them to be removed. In doing so, this would then pose a further question of what to do with the ashes next.
- Should we inform anyone that there has been a scattering of ashes on a grave space that may be unlawful? We would always suggest that the most important person/s to be made aware at this stage is the grave owner. It has been found many times that the grave owner themselves have had no prior knowledge of the scattering taking place, yet similarly, there have been equal instances where the grave owner was aware of the scattering, yet completely unaware of the process that needed to be followed in order to do so.
- What could we do if the grave owner is aware of the scattering taking place? With sensitive discussion, should the grave owner/s wish the ashes to stay in place, then a retrospective entry could be made in the grave register which would complete any missing information of who the scattering relates to and the date that it occurred. Should the grave owner be unable to identify the person who has been scattered and also want the ashes removed, then these could be gathered by the authority as much as they reasonably can, and potentially buried within an unconsecrated, public grave and recorded as an 'unknown person' bearing all details of the situation in the burial register. If someone comes forward at a later date, there is then a record of the initial findings, and a Ministry of Justice licence application could be made in order to facilitate their retrieval.

- What could we do if the grave owner is unaware of the scattering taking place? As above, the relevant details could then be recorded retrospectively in the burial register or removed and buried as required. Further, in both instances, if the ashes are to be removed and are personally identifiable, contact could be made with the crematorium where the original service took place, and consequently contact made with the applicant for cremation to determine if they would like to collect the ashes, prior to them being buried if no response is achieved.
- What could we do if the grave owner is uncontactable? It may be beneficial to try and make contact with any person regularly visiting the grave in question by placing a notice on the grave asking such persons with an interest to the grave to contact the cemetery office within a reasonable period. Should no response be received during such a period, the cemetery can then decide to proceed as suggested above, either with the retrospective details being added to the register, or their collection and burial.
- Does the scattering of ashes on the grave space mean that the grave is 'closed' or cannot be used for further intended burials? Whilst the answer is no and the grave can be opened, again, it would be reasonable to demonstrate care and caution when doing so. One such way may be to remove the turf prior to the new interment, and then to lay the turf on top of the subsequent burial prior to backfilling. If this approach is adopted, the cemetery is able to demonstrate that as far as is reasonably practicable, the integrity of where the original scattering took place has been preserved.

As we can see, there are many options available where the unexpected occurs with regard to unauthorised ashes scatterings on private grave spaces, and hopefully the scenarios above go some way to assist you in deciding how you would cautiously proceed, whilst operating within legal boundaries, in your own cemeteries.

Mat Crawley
ICCM Technical & Member Services Officer

six people make their mark on westerleigh group's covid-19 memorials

Six people have been chosen to make their mark in history after their designs were chosen to be etched onto Covid-19 memorials at crematoria all over the country.

Westerleigh Group, the UK's largest independent owner and operator of cemeteries and crematoria, announced last year it planned to create Covid-19 memorials at most of its sites in England, Scotland and Wales.

An open invitation was issued to people of all ages and backgrounds to submit ideas for a design to be carved onto stone obelisks which will form the centrepiece of each memorial.

Hundreds of creative entries were received. Six winning designs were chosen, one for each 'region' within Westerleigh Group, which meant designers could – if they wished – include local landmarks or something else relevant to their area in their design.

Roger Mclaughlan, Chief Executive Officer of Westerleigh Group, said: "We would like the memorial gardens to provide permanent, tranquil places for people to visit to remember loved ones who lost their lives during the pandemic and also to remember and reflect on those who have sacrificed so much to help others during the coronavirus crisis.

"We decided early on that we wanted local people to help shape how the gardens would look, so that each of them would become something of real significance to our local communities.

"We were overwhelmed by the creativity shown by the many people who submitted their imaginative designs, and the judging process was a moving experience as it was clear that a lot of heartfelt thought had been put into each entry.



"I would like to congratulate all the winners and look forward to seeing how their designs look when the memorial gardens open later this year."

Retired nurse Angela Moran-Sharpness, aged 70, was the South region winner, with a design which featured a pair of forget-me-nots with foliage.

She said: "Nature was my inspiration and I thought flowers would be suitable and look good on a black granite background."

Art graduate Camilla Fitzjohn, aged 52, will see her design on the memorial stones at several crematoria around London and the east of England.

Her image features a round white globe which represents the world, surrounded by a rainbow, with hands reaching up into the centre and releasing three birds of paradise.

She said: "It feels great and wonderful that some of my art will be looked at by people from the future, there is no prize bigger than that."



Rachel Almond, a 39-year-old part-time teacher and part-time budding artist, was the north regional winner, also used forget-me-nots as the basis of her design, with simple edges and petals which would stand out and looked like stained-glass panels.

She said: "I hope the design is meaningful and evokes emotion, not forgetting loved ones and acting as a symbol of remembrance, love and growth."

Schoolgirl Faith Williams, aged 11, was the Welsh regional winner with her design which included the Welsh dragon, a rainbow and a heart.

She said: "I was inspired by all the good coming from this panic, like all the NHS and key workers who have been helping us all."



Scotland winner Poppy Lunn, aged 12, also used some traditional imagery, drawing three thistles.

She said: "The middle one has a rainbow which represents the NHS and all they have done for us. The other thistles on each side are protecting the NHS, just like we have tried to do."



The youngest winner was 10-year-old Somerset schoolboy Jake Insall, whose design will be appearing at several South West crematoria.

He said: "My design has a rainbow, clouds at the end of the rainbow, and two hands reaching through and over the rainbow, holding hands."



Westerleigh Group installed the Covid-19 memorials at all its sites during June and July, ready to open for the public to visit.



Development in Progress – March 2021

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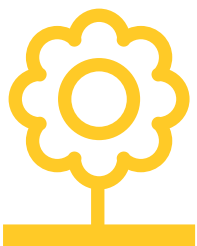
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Everything ICT is OJEU pre-tendered which removes the need for lengthy competitions and instead provides a fully compliant route to make a direct award to Everything ICT for our Epitaph cemetery and crematoria solution.

The framework specialises in cloud products and related services, and has spent 5 years developing and refining a service that allows public sector organisations to save time and money on tendering.

EDGE underwent a rigorous application and vetting process, modelled on public procurement best practice which covered all the usual questions concerning mandatory and discretionary exclusion from public contracts. Our application was reviewed independently by a committee of Everything ICT Directors and the CEO

of E2BN (the framework contracting authority). Having successfully passed the application, EDGE are bound to supply in accordance with the full terms and conditions of the Everything ICT framework.

As EDGE is now the frameworks recommended partner for cemetery and crematoria management software, we are committed to providing cutting edge solutions in order to push innovation and maintain our approved status on the framework.

Full details can be downloaded from **www.edgeITsystems.com/procurement-framework**

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recompose – is it the way forward?

Ken West discusses alternate methods of body disposal

As the global crisis worsens, the way we dispose of bodies remains an ongoing challenge. Over the past few decades, new processes have failed to become viable choices. Now, we have Recompose, amongst others, intending to compost bodies. All these processes promise, or promised, a reduction in fuel use and carbon when compared to gas cremation. Allied to them, we might also assume a reduction in air pollution.

My major quibble is that often these processes measure themselves against gas cremation figures but never disclose what these were and where they came from. Anybody involved with cremation will understand that a single cremation has a vastly higher consumption than if six cremations have taken place.

Where a crematorium utilises holding over and operates for a minimum 12 hour period, it displays far lower gas consumption figures as well as much reduced emissions. The Burial and Cremation Education Trust were way ahead in researching and promoting this approach even though it remains little used. Few crematoria are transparent on such issues, not least the private sector.

As for the release of carbon, this is 100% with cremation. This is why I devised natural burial in order to lock up the carbon in the body and coffin for an indefinite period. Without doubt, the most environmental course is to inter the body in the smallest grave possible, at the least depth.

I also think it essential to consider whether each method is a complete or partial process. For instance, when cremation began the body was burnt and that was it. The ashes had no legal status and were effectively discounted. We changed this over time and the actual cremation is now the first part and the disposal and memorialisation of the ashes the second. The ashes, we must remind ourselves, are quite small at around 5 – 6 pounds in weight. Yet, in our lifetime, this ash has filled our Gardens of Remembrance with an alien, toxic, substance. That is an environmental issue in itself. More recently, such ashes have been prohibited from scattering on mountains owned by the National Trust. Even such a small quantity slowly changes the ecology on the mountain top, and then inexorably creeps down the hillside.

I had this history in mind as I read the website for Recompose in the US. They offer a human composting process which takes 30 days. They lay the body in a metal cradle surrounded by wood chips, alfalfa and straw. More plant material is put over the body when the cradle is pushed into its container. They state that this process uses only 12% of the energy used for a conventional burial or cremation. However, no factual data on where those energy figures were obtained is given. Cremation apart, they are also measuring themselves against US burial and its reliance on carbon hungry concrete chambers. Burial directly in the earth is not typical in the US. To their credit they suggest Recompose as an urban solution and consider natural burial as a green option out in the countryside.

However, Recompose has the same problem as the other new proposals, that it is not a complete process. Unlike cremation, which usually ends with the cremated remains going into the Garden of Remembrance, the disposal of the 'remains' is not included. Having utilised Recompose, the applicant is the owner of one cubic yard of compost. The website simply records that this can be returned to the bereaved family or deposited on Bells Mountain, a protected natural wilderness.

The gardeners amongst you will know that this amount of compost is not to be taken lightly (note, that I use the Imperial measurements they quote). Google will tell you that this amount of compost weighs 1000 – 1600lbs and will cover an area 10' square at 3" depth. Also, the website claims that they 'gently transfer human remains into soil'. If they are creating soil rather than compost then this can be much heavier. Clearly, this can be placed in somebody's garden but it has to be trucked, and then wheel barrowed to the spot. We can readily assume that the majority of urban people in the US will live in a condominium or not have a garden. So, their solution is to shift the compost to Bells Mountain.

I don't know Bells Mountain. But, this image of trucks of compost being transported to a natural wilderness is hardly inspiring. The trucks have to be mechanically loaded, then unloaded and taken out into the wilderness using a dumper. All this work has a high carbon footprint. The soil compaction involved cannot be ideal in a natural

wilderness. Although no expert on soils, I am aware that nutrient rich compost is fine for growing vegetables in a garden. However, is it suitable on a mountain? Typically, the reason why such natural wildernesses still survive is because the poor soil did not attract any rapacious farmers. The flora and fauna of a natural wilderness is usually specific to a nutrient poor soil. A mass of compost will entirely change this ecology.

What I have not stated above is that Recompose claim the process will save one metric ton of carbon per body. That, of course, does not include the disposal of the compost, the missing part of the process. I cannot estimate how much carbon will be generated moving this bulk. This is the deceit implicit in such schemes, that they are not a complete process. Neither have I considered how much carbon will be released through oxidation when this compost is spread over the ground.

However, natural burial is a complete process. Moving a body, with an average weight of 190 pounds, is far more carbon efficient than moving compost weighing perhaps seven times more. I am also aware that the compost has to be cured. That must entail some time and would need extensive storage space in order to keep the material separately identified. Then, it requires blending and screening. This is all work requiring mechanical equipment and has a high carbon cost. They say the screening is to remove non-organics. It may well be that it is to remove any teeth or bone fragments that remain.

Transparency is also a problem. Recompose will not allow the process to be viewed. I think that is a severe weakness and I do hope they will change this. Far from being opposed to these new processes, I welcome them but only when valid data is given and the final disposition of the 'remains' is included.

Ken West

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teen bereavement and how we can help

Teenagers are often overlooked when grieving. Something I really should have realised from my own experience of navigating my teenage years after the loss of both my brother and grandfather within a year of each other. However, it isn't something I'd seriously reflected on until recently. Maybe due to burying my own feelings and pretending for so long that everything was ok. Perhaps somewhere in me I believed everything was ok. That being a teenager meant you were invincible, and I'd dealt with it well. I was being truly 'teenage' about the whole thing. By behaving in such a stereotypical, teenage way instead of dealing with things back then, I have lived with mental health struggles throughout my adult life.

I've had a number of 'breakdowns' which have led me to see a therapist. The last one was almost three years ago, and we talked a lot about my grief and the lack of support that I received at the time; about how I kept all my feelings inside to try to appear strong to those around me and about how I never cried.

So, some twenty-eight years after he died, I finally grieved for my brother. I feel so much better and stronger for having done so. I only wish I had done it years ago.

From researching and writing *Love Will Never Die* (a book to help younger children through bereavement published in 2017), I knew many stats around bereavement. For example:

- A parent dies every 22 minutes in the UK
- 1 in 29 children experience the death of a parent or sibling
- 41% of young offenders were bereaved as a child

Despite learning these, I had always associated them with younger children as they were my target audience. I had almost blocked the idea that any of this related to teenagers – even though it so obviously did. Looking back, maybe that was all part of my youth and how I had dealt with it. I was still burying things.

Until recently, I had never considered writing for teens – in fact, the idea scared me!

However, hearing there were few resources out there for teenagers; knowing that these kids needed help; knowing how not dealing with grief as a teen had affected me, I started to do further research. I read so much and wrote so many notes, there came a point that I just had to go for it...

On Wednesday 9th June, *A Mind Full of Grief* was published. A bereavement guide for teenagers and young adults.

At time of writing, the book has yet to be published. During the last phases of editing, the book was sent to several people for comment and edits. As part of the process, the book went to a few focus groups via bereavement charities that I had worked with previously. This was a wonderful exercise as the feedback that came was completely anonymous and therefore honest. Here are a couple of examples:

"Having two teenagers, finding something that talks to them at their level (not a child, not an adult) is very refreshing."

"I liked the general format of the book because it was interactive as well as informative."

"I really like it; it is a good summary of all the things to be ready for and ways of coping. I think it is good that it tells teens about grief without sugar coating it too much."

The Blurb:

When someone you love dies, what happens next? As a teenager or young adult, this can be such a confusing time. So many emotions you may not have felt before.



So much confusion.

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For some, one of the hardest things when someone has died is telling other people. Inside the back cover is a flap containing a few leaflets to help the reader explain to teachers, colleagues and friends what has happened. It reads:

“Use these leaflets, if you need to, to let people know what has happened and guide those around you in how best to support you.

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The book is available at www.cskidsbooks.com/shop with 40% off rrp as an introductory offer if you use the code DDA25 at checkout.

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Claire Shaw

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- Deceased Online handles the complete service of scanning, digitisation, indexing, uploading, and hosting of cremation and burial records on its own website.
- Our website has registered users in 95 countries in all 7 continents, and revenue is generated 24 hours per day, 7 days per week.
- Deceased Online works with data from any information management system.
- All bereavement services staff for each of the contributing authorities/data owners are able to access records on the DOL website free of charge 24/7, making it convenient and easy to access your historic records.
- All website hosting, development, updates, regulation compliance, enquiries, payment and refunds management are managed by Deceased Online.

Hosting your records in Deceased Online is beneficial in a number of ways. You'll generate revenue from your records. Your records are digitised and therefore preserved. The data we provide from your records is suitable for use in any management system, or even just in spreadsheet format. Providing 24/7 online access for your records to the public will save your staff time. We have unrivalled specialist knowledge and experience to sensitively interpret burial and cremation records, including all aspects of data protection compliance.

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in touch - up north



I'd started to write this edition's 'In Touch' and I was thinking about data and statistics, how I really should write something about that. My previous life as a statistician and all the lovely data due to Covid, and how it isn't always read properly, was really pinging my interest.

Then naturally the thoughts turned to multi-tasking, how well we can't do it – honestly, we can't, and when you try, it ends up making things much, much worse. So, that's two things I'm thinking about (look multi-tasking going wrong) that I must flesh out one day into something useful.

Then my slightly scrambled brain, fell back on what it's been doing most these last 15ish months, thinking about things from school, home schooling and this week's topic – the butterfly.



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The life cycle of a butterfly's stages are –

**The egg laid on a leaf
A caterpillar hatches**

**The caterpillar feeds up and
cocoon**

**The butterfly hatches and spreads
its wings**

There are a lot of very helpful online tutorials on a very popular video sharing site, that teach you how to draw a monarch butterfly and other animals.

Rather than this being totally random to anything it ties into two trains of thought –

Firstly, **bigbutterflycount.butterfly-conservation.org** – advertised the Big Butterfly count when I wrote this article. It details – “The Big Butterfly Count is a nationwide citizen science survey aimed at helping us assess the health of our environment. It was launched in 2010 and has rapidly become the world's biggest survey of butterflies. Over 111,500 citizen scientists took part in 2020, submitting 145,249 counts of butterflies and day-flying moths from across the UK.”

Far more importantly - **Why count butterflies?**

“We count butterflies because not only are they beautiful creatures to be around, but they are also extremely important. They are vital parts of the ecosystem as both pollinators and components of the food chain. However, they are under threat. Numbers of butterflies and moths in the UK have decreased significantly since the 1970s. This is a warning that cannot be ignored.”

Butterfly declines are also an early warning for other wildlife losses. Butterflies are key biodiversity indicators for scientists as they react very quickly to changes in their environment. Therefore, if their numbers are falling, then nature is in trouble. So, tracking numbers of butterflies is crucial in the fight to conserve our natural world. That's why taking part in this massive citizen science enterprise is of great importance not just for our butterflies but for the wider environment and biodiversity in general.”

A butterfly census helps to work out what is happening in nature. As cemeteries and natural burial grounds are useful places for wildlife then thinking about nature goes together with

helping the environment. Reducing waste, recycling and saving energy all help save money and help the overall environment, and while we always think a little won't do anything, a lot of little things will. If 100 people just recycled one more bottle, then that would be 100 extra recycled bottles and it may just help our little butterflies.

Having an excited little one who loves butterflies, I'm going to have taken part in the survey this year and it all helps us think about nature a little bit more.

Secondary and more relevant perhaps to our situation -the last 2 stages are eerily representative of something else at the moment....

Since Covid-19 struck we've all been in stages of a cocoon, and even today the 22nd July whilst “freedom day” has passed it sure doesn't feel like we have freedom out there or want it.

We've been locked-down, slightly less locked-down, then tiered, then back to a lockdown, then back to tier's, then the third lockdown and finally the roadmap to freedom. Now that seems to me, a whole lot like being cocooned and then hatching like a butterfly and just like the butterflies, we came out and didn't quite know what the world would hold for us.

Even more importantly we've all changed since this started in March 2020. To all the home-schooling parents, we've learnt a lot haven't we! My wife has done more than I have of the learning due to work, but it's still been a learning curve and I've learnt a lot of things I thought I knew already.

Everyone that has a teacher or teaching assistant in the family – you do a difficult job well done you! 😊

Aside from that aspect, we shouldn't be thinking of just rolling back to whatever we did pre-covid. We've all found new ways of working, ICCM included, and as has been mentioned before, that worked, so those new practices have not been discarded. For people generally though, maybe some wise words help –

“Life can only be understood backwards; but it must be lived forwards.” - Søren Kierkegaard

We've all had a lot of time to think about life, work, family, look back on what's happened and then we're going sort of forwards as Kierkegaard says – so what things that were not done or lost, do we need to do, now that we can?

Do we need to spend all day running around to do meetings in person? – well probably not as we can do video calls.

Do we need to put off that visit to a friend or family because we think we're too busy and will see them later anyway? – well experience suggests no, as we might get locked down again.

Maybe to ponder I'll leave you with wiser words then I can think of “Make room for the real important stuff.”

“Tigger” - Disney Book Group, Christopher Robin: The Little Book of Pooh-isms: With help from Piglet, Eeyore, Rabbit, Owl, and Tigger, too!

Trevor Robson
ICCM Finance and IT Manager

water cremation – a credible end of life alternative fit for the future of the environment

How focus from within the industry and demand from the public will determine the future success of water cremation

The penny seems to have dropped for most of us at least that, as individuals we need to make greener choices in our everyday lives to reduce our carbon footprint. These choices might include how we insulate our homes, switching to renewable energy, avoiding single-use plastic or cycling to work. And whilst some of these decisions may seem relatively small or insignificant, the cumulative effect of everyone making small adjustments will drive us forward on the path to the emission reduction targets by 2030 and net zero by 2050, set for the bereavement sector by the Environmental Stewardship Group (ESG).

But how many of us have considered the environmental impact of their end-of-life choices? Could our desire to reduce our own carbon footprint now extend to our death and the disposal of our body?

The case for water cremation



The number of funerals in the UK is now around 600,000 each year and this figure continues to rise. Land for burials is reducing in some areas and flame cremation is the only current alternative – but the harmful emissions it produces has led to the funeral industry becoming a significant polluter. Around 80% of British people are cremated. The processes and emissions of traditional burial and cremation are acutely damaging to the environment.

Over 135 years ago flame cremation offered fundamental change in the way we approached human disposition and some serious convincing was required before it was fully accepted. Resomation or water cremation is the next phase in this evolution offering an innovative yet dignified approach, which uses significantly less energy and emits significantly fewer greenhouse gases than

flame cremation. It can significantly help the industry improve its carbon credentials and meet the capacity challenges of a growing population. A recent study proved that water cremation has a significantly smaller (7 times smaller!) carbon footprint than flame cremation; and over 3 times smaller than burial. Furthermore, there is no airborne release of harmful emissions such as nitrous oxide or mercury.

The funeral industry must continue to evolve and modernise as people look for more choice.

Professor Douglas Davies (Director of Centre for Death and Life Studies, Durham University) frames it perfectly in his quote:

“Just as British inventive engineering helped ‘save the land for the living’ in the 20th century UK through flame cremation so, in the 21st century, this innovative water-based process of accommodating human bodies offers new opportunities for an age framed by ecological concerns of land use and air quality.”

The drivers for change

Our objective at Resomation is to introduce water cremation as a credible alternative for end of life. It is far more than just another process or choice, it is a much-needed progression from traditional fossil fuel-based cremation, fit for the future of our environment. Fulfilling this need is our main objective.

We believe there are two key drivers that will determine the future of Resomation.

1. Change from within the industry – councils and funeral directors

Consider this fact – By February 2021, 74% of councils had declared a climate emergency. The statistics on cremation

paint a shocking picture - 1000 cremations equate to 1.2 million car kilometres! You may think crematoria would be one of the first things they prioritise for cutting carbon emissions, but that's not the case. Funerals and their environmental impact are not on their agenda and their focus lies elsewhere.

When compounded with a historical lack of demand for innovation in the funeral industry, it's clear why change is slow in coming. Perhaps the fact that people generally don't like talking about or planning for their own death and arranging a funeral can be a difficult experience at a sensitive time, explain why the industry has been slow to change.

But there is a growing responsibility on the funeral sector to change, regardless of how difficult that may be. It will be conspicuous the longer they are not doing anything.

We have definitely seen more openness in the last few years to consider alternatives and we've also seen the trade associations becoming more active in this regard with the formation of the ESG, formed to provide a focal point for collaboration across the sector and a vehicle to move forward with purpose.

There is also clearly growing interest from the public, so the sector has to do something about it. By engaging with Resomation, funeral directors are sending out a very strong message about reducing their impact on the environment.

2. Public demand for a greener choice

The role of the consumer in funeral choices is, by its very nature, a slightly difficult concept. Knowledge of the sector is generally low and currently only around 10% of people plan their own funeral, which has meant there hasn't been a lot of consumer pressure on the industry to change.

We now have evidence though that the tide is turning. Research suggests that 30% of the public are saying they want a greener choice. We also see this anecdotally as we regularly receive emails from people expressing interest in water cremation and asking how and where it is available.

The environmental argument is so strong now that the public is expecting and deserves an alternative funeral choice. Providing this choice will drive demand. People should be able to express their care for the planet and reflect their living values at their time of death and we believe this demand will grow quickly over the next decade.

"In a sector with a great degree of sensitivity around cultural change, the court of public opinion is changing fast, sustainability and environmental issues are at the forefront of market change, those who rise to this challenge will be at the forefront of market advantage, those who lag behind will be at a significant disadvantage." (Richard Macdonald, Deputy Chair, The Environment Agency speaking at the launch of the ESG)

Now is the time for the industry to come together and address the climate change.

Engagement with the industry

Here at Resomation Ltd we are doing our best to lead the narrative on resomation and engage positively with the media and with representatives of the funeral sector. We welcome the opportunity to meet with ICCM members to share more about sustainable choices and to support them in introducing the process when it becomes available in the UK.

We are holding some open days at our premises in Leeds in the Autumn, during which we will share the latest information on resomation in the UK. If you are interested in attending, please get in touch with us via email info@resomation.com or phone 0113 205 7422.



Kirsty Oliver

Previous Open Day

cannock chase crematorium opens its doors!

Design and Service at Cannock Chase Crematorium



On a bright morning in April, an immaculate horse drawn hearse led a dignified funeral cortege for the first service at the new Cannock Chase crematorium.

For the crematorium manager, Jo Walker, it was the culmination of months of hard work and the long-awaited chance to deliver on the Horizon philosophy of providing an exceptional experience for bereaved families in the area.

Cannock Chase is the second crematorium operated by Horizon Cremation following the opening of the first, award winning facility, at the Clyde Coast in 2019. A third, at the Hurlet in East Renfrewshire will open towards the end of this year.

The crematorium's design has been driven by a belief that the way we say goodbye has a significant impact on our ability to move on and live with grief. Much of that experience comes down to having caring and thoughtful staff who deliver exceptional service to the bereaved. However, the company's philosophy is that the funeral experience begins with the design of the building and its grounds.

Cannock Chase crematorium is situated on a 12-acre, former open cast coal mine site on the edge of Cannock. When mining ceased in the 1980s, the site was left to nature and so the Horizon team inherited a wilderness of wildlife and semi mature self-planted trees and grassland. Their approach was to disturb only where they had to, and the result is a crematorium, with its car park and formal gardens, that is set against the backdrop of nature. Now the construction workers have departed, herds of deer are regular visitors to the site providing a special moment for mourners looking out of the ceremony hall's large picture window.

The building was designed by architect Ken Robertson of Robertson Design Practise who brought with him experience of Horizon's facility on the Clyde Coast. He knew that the basic footprint of the building would be the same – a tripartite structure with a ceremony hall in the middle flanked by a large waiting room on one side and a cremator room and office block on the other.

This is different from the traditional crematorium design. The coffin sits at the front and centre of a light, spacious ceremony hall which accommodates 140 mourners, behind the coffin is a large picture window framing a view across the site - the window through which the site's deer are now frequently spotted. This arrangement means that



once each service is over, staff must move the coffin by hand from the catafalque to the cremator room, but Jo and her team believe that the improvement in the experience for the mourners is worth the additional effort.

The other major difference is the provision of a large and comfortable waiting room capable of taking 90 people that allows those waiting for a funeral to sit down with a cup of coffee or freshen up in the ladies and gents' toilets. The waiting room is equipped with TV screens and a sound system so it can also act as an overflow area for particularly large funerals. In recognition of the site's mining heritage the waiting room at Cannock features a display depicting the mining history of the area.

Ken Robertson's brief was shaped by Horizon's desire to have their crematoria draw from and fit into their local communities and he was tasked with designing a building and using materials that reflected the best of the architectural vernacular in the area. The practise of some other companies of having a 'one size fits all' design on sites up and down the country regardless of context is something Horizon does not wish to replicate.

The design of Cannock Chase echoes the shape of the factories found in the Cannock area before and after the war. They were oriented so that glazing in a vertical plane of the roof would face north and illuminate rooms with a constant flat light. The resulting 'shark's tooth' roof shape is redolent of industrial architecture of the time and still does its job, filling the ceremony hall with light and nowadays also providing a south facing pitched roof on which solar panels can be fixed.

The building is clad in larch with sharp edges emphasising the roof shape. Corten is used around the ceremony hall window and the entrance to the offices. Corten is a type of steel that 'rusts' down to a pleasing bronze colour and was, again, chosen to echo the area's industrial heritage.

The memorial gardens have been designed by Robinson Landscape Design. Named The Fair Lady Memorial Gardens after the name locals use to refer to the adjacent Coppice Colliery which closed in 1964, the gardens set planting in a series of concentric rings that break up pathways through the site. Memorials, and space for future memorials are set within planting and there are plenty of spots for quiet contemplation and remembering.

A separate, dedicated space called Charley's Garden has been created for those who have lost children and young people. Approached through a pergola of rose trees it is secluded from the rest of the gardens by banks of planting.

The memorial tree at the centre of Charley's Garden is made from Corten to tie the gardens into the architectural language of the building. A range of other Corten memorials have been specially designed for the site and were inspired by the 'Top Hat' pipe caps used underground.

Summarising the philosophy of the team, Crematorium Manager Jo Walker said: "We offer a refreshingly different experience.

Working within this unique building, we offer funerals that are a celebration of life, giving families the comfort, space, time and technology to bring a service to life. This is all delivered with the detailed attention of a dedicated team who care".

In the few months since opening, the horses that drew the first hearse to the site have been followed by many other funeral corteges. Families and funeral directors in and around Cannock have reacted well to the new crematorium and the service that they are getting from Jo and her team. Cannock Chase crematorium looks set to be a success and to play an important role at the heart of its community for years to come.



company news

welters® organisation worldwide

Emerging from the 'cloud', we all now attempt to harness the implications and guidelines that are placed before us. We thank our customers who have supported us through testing times and appreciate the thanks we have and are receiving for our dedication.

We continue to produce bespoke memorial and interment systems and emphasise our existing 30 plus years' service of active support, from manufactured single units to multiple large-scale provision.

The pandemic has emphasised the importance of the welters® Partnership Programme which ensures that our proven track record is readily available for Cemetery Authorities, in any location, which require funding support and additional professional input.

Please visit our website (www.welters-worldwide.com) for further information on our products and services and request the specific philosophy and conceptual structure in relation to our Partnership Programme opportunities.



welters®
ORGANISATION
WORLDWIDE

Teleshore Group

In response to increasing demand for the service, Teleshore Group has expanded its technical services team through the appointment of a number of new Field Service Technicians.

The new appointments have filled roles within Scotland, Northern Ireland and the North of England, enhancing the Group's nationwide cover commitment.

Regularly servicing shoring equipment is an important part of ensuring its longevity of service and safe functionality.

Managing Director of Teleshore, Peter Smith, comments:

"We are very pleased to welcome the new members of our Field Servicing team into the Teleshore family. We have seen increasing demand for our technical services, with our existing team travelling throughout the UK to support our customers. Through the addition of new technicians in wider geographical locations, our service availability level has increased.

These technicians will be available to service, inspect and repair shoring products of any make, on site at location and able to work around the cemeteries' schedules.

Through this service we can ensure that equipment is operating safely and also increase the lifespan of machinery, which is good for both the environment and our clients' budgets."



company news

Columbaria Co.

We are pleased to announce that since the summer of 2020 we have been working with four local companies within a quarter of a mile radius from our premises here in Hull to produce a comprehensive range of UK manufactured memorials to complement our granite products.

We are now in a position to offer a wide range of bespoke memorials and features, which will enhance crematoria, cemeteries, parks, open spaces and other venues looking for revenue streams to bring in much needed income. We can now manufacture new concepts and innovations for both inside and outside crematoria including book of remembrance and flower rooms.

A number of local authorities and some private sector companies have been installing our UK manufactured cor-ten steel memorial trees with coloured green glass memorial leaves as well as our new stainless steel water lily feature with blue glass teardrops or butterflies that can be inscribed.

Our new 'Wall of Hearts' feature is already installed in the Midlands both inside the book of remembrance room and outside on a brick wall. Once again all manufactured locally.

Biodiversity is important to us and we have worked tirelessly with our clients to help promote the fact that some butterfly and bee species are on the verge of extinction in the UK.

We have developed a new concept that encompasses all types of bereavement including the unprecedented Covid – 19 cases where families couldn't say "goodbye" properly.

The objective of the "Forget you not" garden is for anyone who wasn't able to say goodbye to their loved ones. With restrictions in place regarding funerals, the "forget you not" concept gives society a way to say goodbye whilst also looking forward into the future with hope through wildlife preservation.

This is a peaceful setting where thoughts and memories can be put to paper to share with loved ones lost and begin the "healing" process. Wildlife, in particular bees and butterflies are rapidly declining therefore it is imperative to support a natural and wild habitat growth to support preservation of these endangered species.

The "Forget you not" garden would be strategically placed within the grounds with a special post box and will be situated where family and friends can post their own letter made from 100% recyclable biodegradable seeded paper. The envelope can be printed with bespoke artwork tailored to geographical areas, points of interest.

The posted letters are collected at regular intervals and prepared for germination into wildflowers which will attract the endangered species. Birdfeeders, insect homes and tree logs can be placed inside the garden.

Anything that can be done to reverse this situation, however small, will help and whilst loved ones are remembered. You are also helping to reverse this sad trend towards decline of our precious wildlife.

Our new look website will show the different "Forget you not" gardens that are already installed around the UK and if you require further details please contact our team.



friends of philips park cemetery

Children Grieve Too

A unique project has been created by the Friends of Philips Park Cemetery group, with support from staff in the bereavement services team. This has seen a new feature installed at Philips Park cemetery, designed to support families – especially children – experiencing grief.

The initiative, jointly funded by the Friends group and bereavement services, incorporates educational activities, community working and signposting to support services. A new 'Teddy Paws' nature hunt trail features four animal-themed rubbing posts and 12 wooden animal carvings hidden in the trees, created by local sculptor Mike Burgess.

Activity sheets have been created to help children follow the trail, and signs created by local businesses also display useful information about available support for grieving families and children.

Rachel Kuehl, bereavement services manager, said: "I'm so proud of the hard work put in by the team to make this happen. It is a fantastic example of our staff working in partnership with the community to develop and create a bespoke way to offer targeted support to our residents".



The Friends group have been running since 2008 and have managed to raise over £150,000 for Philips Park Cemetery.

The latest project, "Children Grieve Too" brings children's activities in the cemetery for bereaved children. They can often be overlooked during hard or sad times for families. This is believed to be the first of its kind in all cemeteries across the UK and has been achieved with the support of Manchester City Council.

The project aim is to help young people accept and learn that grieving is a natural part of bereavement. As well as providing a physical space where they can go to, it also offers guidance and direction to young people and their families signposting them to appropriate support should they need it. It provides information about how to contact local support groups and charities that specialise in bereavement support.

The "Teddy Paws Trail" features a nature hunt of hidden animal carvings and animal themed rubbing posts, with an activity pack available for children to complete along the way.

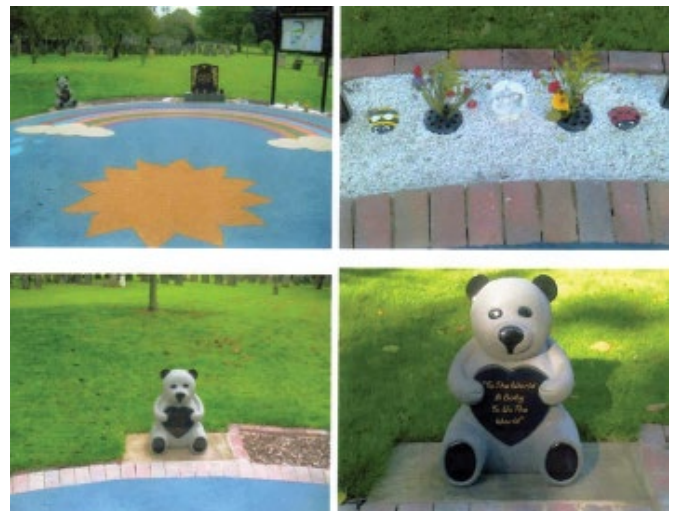


There is also a brightly coloured Teddy Paws children's bench and a display tree where children can have their artwork on display in the cemetery. It is hoped these activities will also provide an opportunity for young people to learn about biodiversity and reconnect with nature whilst at the same time giving them some much needed respite.

In addition to the project this year the Friends group were successful in applying for funding to buy children's bereavement leaflets and have them on display to take.

There is a large banner on the gate advertising the project, traffic calming signs along the route and teddy Paw prints in the tarmac on the ground which the children follow.

This is one of many projects the Friends group have undertaken within the cemetery. There are colourful birdhouses, painted by children from a local school and a beautiful wooden sculpture of a butterfly with a poem underneath to mark a crossing. They have also created a garden for parents who are mourning the loss of stillborn children and babies that didn't get a chance to grow up. The garden is designed with children in mind. It has a sculpture of a teddy bear and a rainbow painted on the ground. For a small fee of £20 an artist will paint a pebble with the name of the child to be placed in the garden.



By Gail Spelman, Chair, Friends of Philips Park Cemetery

second quarter accredited COTS & CTTS candidates

Cemetery Operatives Training Scheme Courses April 2021 – June 2021

A - COTS 1 Health and Safety and the Burial Process **B - COTS 2 Excavator Operation**

C – COTS 3 Controlling Risks to Health & Safety in Cemeteries **F – Safe Use of Dumpers**

Iain Adshead A	Peter Heathcote A
Steve Barnes A	Derrick Hooper A B
Lee Barrett A	Gary Jones A
Damian Baxter B	Alan Keeley A
Kerim Budev B	Michael Lanchester A B
Michael Bungay A	Anthony Luxton A
Paul Collins A	Tony Manser A
Wayne Coupe A	Neil Maylott A
Mark Davis A	Alil Meteveliev B
Rowan Dennis A B F	Ravi Mistry A
Paul Doran B	Martin Moyse A B F
John Earthrowl B F	Mark Murphy A
Gareth Edwards A B F	Chris Percival A
Ali Fateh A B	Pedro Pinto A B F
Andrew Foxall A B	Darren Prettejohn A
Lance Francis A	Lee Randle A
Michael Guilbert A	Sonnie Ranger A B F

Crematorium Technicians Training Scheme - April – June 2021

Sean Brooks	Paul Riley
Adam Byrom	Emma Smith
Daniel Harraway	Billy Spencer-Kidd
Keith Love	Mark Stroud
Brian Phillips	Neil Thomas
Matthew Priestley	Hazel Woolven

Congratulations to everyone who achieved COTS and CTTS qualifications in the last quarter.

With acknowledgement to all the local authorities and companies, listed below, who ensured that their employees, listed above, achieved recognised industry specific qualifications.

Amey, Ashfield District Council, Aylesbury Town Council, Barnsley Council, Bedford Borough Council, Belfast City Council, Brighton & Hove Council, Brookwood Park Ltd, Cambridge City Council, Cornwall Council, Coventry City Council, Dorchester Town Council, Gardens of Peace, Halton Borough Council, Hull City Council, Huntingdon Town Council, Ideverde Biggin Hill, Mid Devon District Council, Mortlake Crematorium Board, Oadby and Wigston Council, Veolia, Warwick District Council, Wealdon District Council, Weymouth Town Council, Wigan Council, Worcester City Council



The Institute provides training and qualifications that are fully accredited by recognised accreditation bodies. Both CTTS and COTS training and qualifications receive outside scrutiny and quality assurance verification by City & Guilds, Pearson and SBS. Such training and qualifications are available to all staff at all levels.



Go to <http://www.iccm-uk.com/iccm> and click on 'Training' for further information or contact Julie Callender at the ICCM national office – email: julie.callender@iccm-uk.com or tel: 020 8989 4661

the funeral market investigation order 2021

The Funeral Market Investigation Order 2021, published by the Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) on 16th June 2021, has implications for everyone operating a crematorium in the United Kingdom, both public and private. Unusually the order also extends to the devolved administrations of Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.

The making of the Order follows a CMA investigation into the funerals industry, which reported in December 2020 with a recommendation that measures be put into place to ensure greater price-transparency amongst funeral directors as well as crematoria. It is to make it easier for bereaved families to compare prices when they are at their most vulnerable.

The Order achieves its primary purpose by requiring funeral directors to display detailed price-information in a similar way to a pub or petrol station. As well as price information, funeral directors must also display their terms of business, including the amount of any deposit required and when any final balance must be paid.

To assist price comparison, that information must be populated within a prescribed template. Price-information must also distinguish between 'attended' and 'unattended' funerals as well as between a standard funeral director's service and additional bespoke items. An 'attended' funeral is one which includes a funeral service and where mourners may attend.

As well as displaying price information, funeral directors must also periodically feedback financial information to the CMA. The order also prohibits funeral directors from entering into any referral-arrangement with a hospice, hospital, care home or other provider of palliative care. This includes a prohibition on funeral directors donating money or offering other gifts to those institutions.

Of particular importance to bereavement service managers are articles 8 and 10 of the Order.

Article 8 requires a crematorium operator to supply local funeral directors with the following price-information relating to the cost of cremations:

- A cremation standard fee attended service.
- A cremation unattended service, if offered by that operator.
- A crematorium reduced fee attended service, if offered. This refers to off-peak cremation-services taking place before 10am or after 4pm, when a reduced fee may be charged.

A crematorium operator is also required to include within that price information:

- A description of what is included in and excluded from the cremation services provided.
- The length of time permitted for a cremation service and whether this includes time allowed for mourners to gather and leave the crematorium.
- Any additional charges for a cremation service taking place on particular days or at a particular time, such as at a weekend.
- Any charge made for exceeding the permitted time or late arrival and/or departure of the cortege; and
- Where possible, a breakdown of the headline price into the total price for all core services, such as the processing of cremation forms; environmental levies and any other elements that are necessary for the cremation service. This must also include the individual prices for any optional services including, but not limited to, the purchase of additional cremation service time; use of music facilities; webcasting; organists; visual tributes; memorials; a container for ashes; scattering of ashes; storage of ashes; collection or delivery of ashes.

A funeral director is to be regarded as 'local' if it is within a 30 minute 'cortege-speed' driving distance from the crematorium. How fast is 'cortege-speed'? The Order doesn't say. Where there is no funeral director within the

30-minute radius, the duty is to supply that price information to the nearest funeral director.

As well as providing price information to local funeral directors, a crematorium-operator must also display that information in a clear and prominent manner at each crematorium and on any website owned by the crematorium operator. Where a crematorium operator displays price information on its website, it must do so in a pdf and titled 'Price Information'. It must be displayed on a page no more than one click away from the home page, with any link to that page prominently labelled so the nature of the information to which it leads is clear.

Article 10 states that on 1 October 2021, the crematorium operator must supply the CMA with the total number of cremations it has carried out and the total revenue it has gained from cremation services in the period from 16th June 2021, when this order was made, and 31 August, 2021.

At the beginning of April 2022, a crematorium operator must supply the CMA with the total number of cremations it has carried out and the total revenue received from crematoria services in each of the two preceding three-month periods and, going forward, provide that financial information to the CMA at three monthly intervals. Each crematorium operator must supply the required information in an aggregate form as well as in a disaggregated form showing the totals for:

- Crematorium standard-fee attended services.
- Crematorium reduced fee attended services, if offered.
- Crematorium unattended services, if offered.
- Any other services provided by the crematorium operator that are not listed above. That might include the provision of memorials or the interment of cremated remains within the grounds of the crematorium.

Article 11(4) of the Order states that by the end of April 2022, a crematorium operator must supply the CMA, preferably by e-mail, with a Compliance Statement confirming that it has complied with the pricing requirements of Article 8 and the information requirements of Article 10 during the preceding reporting year from 1 April to the following 31 March.

Schedule 2 Part C of the Order provides a template for crematorium operators to populate their figures for the several different types of cremation listed above.

Section 167 of the Enterprise Act 2002 places a duty on anyone to whom the Order relates, to comply with it. That duty is owed to any person who may be affected by any contravention of the Order, such as local funeral directors who are entitled to receive crematorium pricing information, as well as bereaved families. Any person who sustains loss or damage that is caused by a breach of this duty may bring a civil claim before the courts. The CMA also has power to enforce compliance by bringing civil proceedings for an injunction or other appropriate relief or remedy.

For the time being, the requirement to provide pricing information does not apply to burials (save perhaps those interments of cremated remains taking place within the grounds of a crematorium) and there is no obligation on cemetery owners to publish that information or provide returns to the CMA. However funeral directors will, as a matter of practice, need information about burial fees to comply with their own obligations under the Order to provide information about the wider funeral costs.

V. Charles Ward

V. Charles Ward is the Company Solicitor with the Institute of Cemetery and Crematorium Management and is the author of *Essential Law for Cemetery and Crematorium Managers*, published in June 2021, which was commissioned by the Institute and can be purchased through Amazon.

<https://www.iccm-uk.com/iccm/essential-law-for-cemetery-and-crematorium-managers-an-iccm-publication/>

pulpit: glad that I live am I

An Introduction to Lizette Woodworth Reese (1856-1935)

When I was at St. Mary's Road Secondary Modern School, in the 1950s, we had a very special book which we used at our daily assemblies, or acts of collective worship, as they are now known. The book was "The Daily Service Book-Prayers and Hymns for Schools" and it was a real treasury of words and music. I still have a copy on my book shelf! Such luminaries as Percy Dearmer, Ralph Vaughan Williams, Martin Shaw and Geoffrey Shaw, Martin's brother, were represented in the book as well as several less-well known but excellent writers and composers including Lizette Woodworth Reese! I am always surprised to read the words of now forgotten writers, and one of them is Lizette, a native of Baltimore, Maryland. I really enjoyed singing her words "Glad that I live am I" set to music by Geoffrey Shaw (1879-1943).

Glad that I live am I;
That the sky is blue;
Glad for the country lanes
And the fall of dew.

After the sun the rain,
After the rain the sun;
This is the way of life,
Till the work be done.

All that we need to do,
Be we low or high,
Is to see that we grow,
Nearer the sky.



*A portrait of Lizette by her friend
Emily Spencer Hayden*

At St. Mary's Road Secondary Modern School in Manchester, we sang these words to the tune "Water-End" by Geoffrey Shaw (1879-1943). The sheer uncomplicated simplicity of the words and music was remarkable to me, and I still hear them in my head from time to time. It is so deeply embedded.

I did some research about the poet recently and was delighted by what I discovered and below you will find excerpts from a biographical article written by Lara Westwood.

"Lizette Woodworth Reese was one of the most beloved poets to live and write in Baltimore. Her crisp but lyrical poems captured the beauty of the city and her beloved Waverly neighbourhood. Her work was deep and insightful but never overwrought or overly sentimental. It frequently drew comparison to the simple but elegant work of Emily Dickinson. She adored Maryland in springtime, and her anthologies are dominated by imagery of the countryside just outside the city coming into bloom. Her mother, Louisa was a vivacious person. She loved the spring and passed that affection along to her daughter. Reese wrote of her mother, "There was always the twist and turn of spring weather about her, expectancy, eagerness, an airy moodiness; she moved in a mist of adventure."

The hardships of losing children and fighting poverty did not destroy her spirit: "And some of these experiences would have trampled down to the clods a more trivial, less opulent creature. But her gaiety survived, being bone of her bone and nothing else." Reese's poetry often conveys similar sentiments. The subjects of her poems could be sombre, but she could always tease out the beauty from them.

After completing high school, Reese remained in Waverly and began teaching at St. John's Parish School in 1873, a school she had attended as a child. She spent two years working with the young children of the parish. Reese later reflected that she knew her inexperience would hinder her first years as a teacher, but her enthusiasm made up for it: "I was seventeen years of age, my frocks just lengthened, my blonde hair just put up, raw, eager, dreamy, fond of young people, and with the gift of authority. The last two were my chief and best assets, for, of the theory of teaching, or whether there were any, or the necessity of such a thing, I knew nothing at all." The following year, Southern Magazine published her poem "The Deserted House." The poem was inspired by an empty looking house in her neighbourhood on York Road that she would pass on her way to and from work. She continued to publish sporadically in various magazines until 1887, when she self-published her first anthology of poems, A Branch of May. Reese's poetry gained

her acclaim, but it took a backseat to teaching. Her next book of poems would not be published until 1891. In 1897 Reese took a position teaching English literature at the city high school on Saratoga Street. The school was exclusively for African-American students. Reese taught at the school for four years and was continually surprised by the hardships her students faced. She recognised that their families often scraped by to keep their children in school and appreciated the efforts that her own students put in to stay enrolled: girls took on seamstress work, boys worked as watchmen. In 1901, Reese was forced to leave the school after the city decided white teachers should no longer teach in black schools. She was transferred to Western High School, where she taught English literature and composition until her retirement in 1921.



Reese's alma mater and where she taught for 20 years, the Western High School. (Baltimore City Buildings Collection)

During her time as a teacher, Reese continued to publish new work at irregular intervals. After publishing *A Branch of May* in 1887, she submitted individual pieces to various magazines, and in 1891, she released a book, *A Handful of Lavender*. This book expanded upon *A Branch of May*, including original poems and some new works, but this time around, Houghton Mifflin Company produced the volume and her 1896 follow-up *A Quiet Road*.

The years of 1896 to 1909 were quiet ones for Reese. She wrote infrequently, because, "she had nothing to say, except at long intervals, and therefore did not try to say it. She found writing to be a tremendously laboured and difficult process. She carefully weighed every word and phrase in her works: "My thought was quick, the picture in my mind clear, but the expression slow in coming; it was always a hard process to make my words as vital and as distinct as my thoughts and my pictures were." This even carried over into her work as a teacher where writing reports filled her with dread, because, "I knew it would take me a day to do the work for which my comrades took only an hour or two." Despite her struggles, her best known sonnet, "Tears," came out of this period, which was published in *Scribner's Magazine* in November, 1899. Her work garnered her high praise and was complimented by Baltimore's tastemakers. H. L. Mencken pronounced her work "one of the imperishable glories of American literature" and was an ardent supporter throughout her career. She was often surprised by the accolades she received. When positive reviews came in, she would "run with the notices to my mother, and read them aloud to her, and her cool acceptance of them did much to keep me from growing heady." Reese published fifteen volumes of her work in total, including two memoirs and one novel. In 1931 she was named poet laureate of Maryland by the General Federation of Women's Clubs.



"The Good Shepherd," memorial to Lizette Woodworth Reese by Grace Turnbull on 33rd Street in Baltimore.

and read them aloud to her, and her cool acceptance of them did much to keep me from growing heady." Reese published fifteen volumes of her work in total, including two memoirs and one novel. In 1931 she was named poet laureate of Maryland by the General Federation of Women's Clubs.

Reese was also active in the city's literary and arts scene. A quiet person by nature, the small, somewhat frail woman could cut an imposing figure, when she wanted to. She captivated her audiences with her witty banter delivered "with a touch of staccato in her voice and sometimes a lively lisp and lilt." She was honorary president of the Poetry Society of Maryland and was a co-founder of the Women's Literary Club of Baltimore. She also called several of the city's artists as friends. She spent considerable time with amateur photographer and fellow Western High School alumna and Waverly neighbour, Emily Spencer Hayden. Reese enjoyed passing her time in Hayden's orchard at her home, Nancy's Fancy, while Hayden documented their time together on film. Another such friend was sculptor Grace Turnbull, who was commissioned after Reese's death to create a monument to her work. The hand-sculpted marble statue, entitled "The Good Shepherd," stands on 33rd Street, the site of her alma mater. It depicts a shepherd

tending to his flock referencing the shepherd metaphor often seen in her poems, as well as her role as a teacher. The statue also includes the inscription of her best known work, "Tears."

Reese never gained international fame, but the town she loved does keep her memory alive. When she died in 1935, she was widely mourned in Waverly and Maryland at large. Her friends and admirers made great efforts to properly eulogize the woman whose life had impacted so many others. Along with the Turnbull sculpture, traces of Reese can be seen around the city. A memorial foundation donated a brass plaque cast by Beatrice Fenton to the Enoch Pratt Free Library in 1944. It hangs in the central branch on the second floor. A tablet bearing the words of "Tears" was also placed by the main office of the new Western High School to honour her commitment to the school. Reese is buried at the St. John's Episcopal Church in her beloved Waverly."

(Quotations are selected from the original biographical article written by Lara Westwood.)

Tears

When I consider Life and its few years --
A wisp of fog betwixt us and the sun;
A call to battle, and the battle done
Ere the last echo dies within our ears;
A rose choked in the grass; an hour of fears;
The gusts that past a darkening shore do beat;
The burst of music down an unlistening street,--
I wonder at the idleness of tears.

Ye old, old dead, and ye of yesternight
Chieftains, and bards, and keepers of the sheep
By every cup of sorrow that you had,
Loose me from tears, and make me see aright
How each hath back at once he stayed to weep:
Homer his sight, David his little lad!

1891

The Fog

What grave has cracked and let this frail thing out,
To press its poor face to the window-pane;
Or, head hidden in frayed cloak, to drift about
The mallow bush, then out to the wet lane?
Long-closeted scents across the drippings break,
Of violet petunias blowing there,
A shred of mint, mixed with whatever ache
Old springs have left behind wedged tight in air.
Small, aged things peer in, ready to slip
Into the chairs, and watch and stare apace;
The house has loosened from its grasp of yore
Dark-hoarded tales. Were I, finger on lip,
To climb the stair, might I not find the place
Turned all to huddled shape, white on the floor?

1922



The memorial plaque by Beatrice Fenton which hangs in the Enoch Pratt Free Library in Baltimore



Lizette's grave in St. John's Churchyard.

Trust

I am thy grass, O Lord!
I grow up sweet and tall
But for a day; beneath
Thy sword To lie at evenfall.

Yet have I not enough
In that brief day of mine?
The wind, the bees, the wholesome stuff
The sun pours out like wine.

Behold, this is my crown;
Love will not let me be;
Love holds me here; Love cuts me down;
And it is well with me.

Lord, Love, keep it but so;
Thy purpose is full plain;
I die that after I may grow
As tall, as sweet again.

Lizette Woodworth Reese 1856-1935



Lizette in her friend Emily Spencer Hayden's garden



A Portrait of a young Lizette

Neil Richardson

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Obitus

considering the environmental impact natural burial and green funeral choices have on people and the planet.

We recently came across a post that got people talking about death. Someone mentioned it would be better if everyone had a cremation with ashes scattered at sea. This would then save space on the land. Understandably this raised quite a few opinions and debates. This included conversations about what was best for the environment. There were discussions about the materials we should use for coffins. There was mention of scattering ashes and natural burial. Others shared their wishes and why this would or would not be something they would want.



Eco friendly coffin

Something we discovered was there isn't always a clear understanding of the environmental impact. It was clear some were not aware land can have other uses, especially with natural burial. Those scattering ashes had not always been advised about the negative impact this can have on fragile ecosystems. In fact, it brought to mind these few words we once heard. "It seems such a shame when people use real wood coffins, I want a cheap

chipboard coffin. It's only going to be burnt anyway".

What they may not have realised was by using a natural wood coffin we release fewer toxins and chemicals. This applies to both cremation and burial. It's a much better choice for our planet than chipboard reducing air and ground pollution. Using natural materials can also help save on fossil fuels because they burn faster. While the wood itself may have been reclaimed or sustainably sourced. It makes you wonder if we would have had a very different response, had they been aware of this.

The simple way of thinking about this is to put back into nature what you take out of it. Using natural materials and sustainable practices can have a significant impact. If we all took a green approach to the materials we use in cremation and burial we would see a positive change. As they say, 'little by little a little becomes a lot'. The comments highlighted the need to educate people about the environmental impact. They also highlighted that people want to know this information.

As a natural burial provider, we are always on the lookout for more sustainable, eco-friendly practices. We want to make sure that we are providing the best we can for the people who use us and for the planet. We are also aware funeral practices are changing and people's needs are evolving. This is why we have recently gained permission to include pets' ashes in our natural burial grounds.

In 2020 we were honoured to receive a green apple award for our environmental practices and sustainable development. We also understand these practices need to move with the times and there is always room for improvement. The mycelium coffin that was recently used in Norway has shown a new concept we may be able to offer in the future. We know there is sometimes a concern being eco-friendly means no longer being traditional. There is no reason we can't approach traditional funeral practices in an environmentally friendly way.

The past year has brought a better understanding of how we need to live sustainably. It has allowed us to revisit topics like eco-friendly coffins, cut flowers and ashes scattering. What we found is it's only when you delve deeper into these practices that you see there is so much more we could be doing. We thought it might be helpful to share some of our environmentally friendly practices. After all, it's only through sharing our ideas that we grow and learn.

We have 10 natural burial grounds across the UK. Every natural burial ground is unique, but they follow the same ethos. Behind each one is someone who is passionate about offering natural, meaningful funerals.

Our natural burial grounds work with our beautiful countryside and native habitats. This allows our wonderful wildlife to thrive and remain in their native homes. We do not have memorial woodlands or remembrance gardens. This is because we want everything to remain as natural as possible. A natural burial to us means working with what nature has given us.

We still offer memorials but these are in a memorial shelter or frame. They are not placed on graves because it's important to us that we managed our burial grounds sustainably. This means we can use sustainable practices like grazing. They can be mowed for hay and can support local farming.

Another benefit is that we can approach mowing and grazing more gently. This allows wildflowers to flourish and benefits the native flora and fauna. It also benefits those who visit because walking through a wildflower meadow can be very therapeutic.



Memorial Frame

Our natural burial grounds have allowed us to restore and conserve native habitats. This includes the orchard at Bath,



pond at Aylesbury and native woodland at Henley. Dorset Downs is restoring the wildflower-rich pasture that once existed. While we will soon be restoring the wetland at Pembrokeshire.

They have allowed us to protect areas of historical importance. This includes the standing stones at Cothiemuir Hill and the Folly at Hundy Mundy. While somewhere hidden in the woodland at Usk Castle Chase you may come across the restored WW2 Foxhole. Some also protect areas of importance and natural beauty. This allows these areas to be sustainably used and remain protected and includes Delliefure which forms part of the Cairngorms National Park. While Cardiff and the Vale is part of a grade II listed historic designed landscape. In addition, we have been able to open up permissive walks. They are a much-loved part of our countryside where all are welcome.

We understand to get the most out of it we must combine natural burial with green, sustainable practices. This is why we support local businesses wherever we can. We use natural materials sourced in the UK for our simple memorial plaques. We ask that eco-friendly coffins are used. If they are from locally sourced materials then even better. We do not allow toxic processes like embalming which harm our environment. We recommend eco-friendly and locally grown floral tributes. We also encourage families to find their own unique way of paying tribute.

We have found on occasion people need to know it's ok to use their own flowers or veg. We have found by sharing ideas



The folly and woodland burial ground at Hundy Mundy

people find meaningful tributes that are carbon-friendly and don't have to cost a lot. This includes things like bringing the surfboard, garden spade, cricket bat, or even the dog and a flask of coffee. Families can use naturally collected materials like herbs, petals or seashells. While those who do not want a tribute at all are always welcome to enjoy our wildflowers.

We know that not all these practices can be applied to traditional graveyards or crematoria. However, some of the green practices we follow can be. It's great to see the funeral industry is moving towards promoting affordable eco-friendly options. It would be wonderful if these became the general day-to-day practices. We would love to see green funeral choices incorporated as the norm alongside all types of burial and cremation.

In life, we are considering how we can live sustainably and the impact our choices have on the environment. This includes the benefits of choosing locally sourced food, eco-friendly materials and carbon-friendly services. It even extends to the environmental impact our appliances have. This sustainable living should be the same for death. People are starting to talk



about death more, it's becoming less of a taboo and we should advocate this. Why shouldn't the environmental impact be part of our decisions when planning a funeral?

Families need to be aware of the impact of their funeral choices when choosing them. If it was a simple part of the funeral process they could make fully informed choices. After all, living sustainably includes the impact we have on the world when we are gone. It seems that when the comment about cremation and scattering in the sea was made there was not enough awareness of other choices. There was not an awareness that land remains useful with natural burial. There would also be a significant environmental impact on carbon and toxins released if we were all cremated. We also don't know how the ashes would affect our marine life if they were scattered on this scale. But if it is getting people to talk about it and think about their choices then this is good. They just need the correct information from the funeral professionals.

Sarah Wickham

foam free future



The floristry world is changing - a number of florists are working, without the use of floral foam and plastics. These florists should be highly commended - for their forward thinking, and care for our planet.

Oasis as it is generically known, (much like a vacuum cleaner is generally known as a Hoover) is actually the name of the company that invented floral foam - over 70 years ago.

Floral foam transformed the floristry industry back then. It enabled florists to work much quicker.

HOWEVER, at this time no research existed regarding the long term damage that floral foam could do. Micro plastics had not been brought to the attention of the world.



In the last few years; much has been discovered, about the harm that plastics and micro plastics are causing our environment. Floral foam is non recyclable - the majority of it ends up in landfill. Here in landfill, is where it starts to degrade - leaching micro plastics into the earth that we live on.

By way of the product function - florists soak floral foam in water. The waste water, complete with microscopic and tiny particles, now contained within it - heads into our waterways and oceans.

How big is the problem?

It remains a difficult figure to pin down, very few statistics exist regarding plastic waste and floral foam from crematoriums. What we do know is - there are currently 308 crematoriums in the UK (data from Pharos Statistics) and we are averaging around half a million cremations a year now.

If each of those funerals, had just one floral foam tribute - that would be a vast amount of discarded foam in landfill. We've all seen the foam and plastic letters spelling out 'MUM' and 'DAD' etc, these all end in landfill - nothing is recyclable or compostable.

It doesn't have to be this way.

So what can be done?

Educate and Empower.

We need to educate everyone.

There is a huge list of places to start from florists to undertakers, crematoriums to churches and cemeteries. In turn the public: irreversible damage is being done, which is quite likely unknown at the time to the purchaser.

The answer?

The isn't a perfect one yet. But; we created Foam Free Future, because we want to engage with anyone, who is willing to 'promote sustainable practice' within the floristry and funeral industries.

- Crematoriums can consider phasing out floral foam and implementing a ban by the end of 2022. Our local crematorium is very open to this idea.
- Funeral Directors can seek your local eco-florist; or see what eco alternatives can be offered by your usual florist. Then promote this to your families.

We want to empower florists to experiment and try different resources, instead of using floral foam.

Please have a look at our website www.foamfreefuture.org. We are just two ladies in Cornwall, on a mission to help do our bit for this planet and help to work towards Carbon Net Zero by 2050*, as set out by our current UK government.



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the journal

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