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The Journal Summer 2022

2022

Summer

What we learnt about death care during Covid-19
Every little helps
19th century burial science
The national covid memorial wall

NW branch visit to JCB
The act of consecration
Pulpit: My song
The impact of burial & cremation on the environment



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by Julie Dunk

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editorial

Pause for thought

Welcome to the Summer edition of the Journal. It seems incredible that we are already halfway through 2022!

As we emerge from a global pandemic, slightly battered and bruised, we are once again facing uncertain and scary times. Not only are we in the middle of the most challenging cost of living crisis we have ever faced in recent times, but there is also a war taking place literally on our doorstep.

On 24 February, speaking in a pre-recorded television broadcast, Russian President, Vladimir Putin, authorised, what he is calling, a “special military operation” against Ukraine, claiming his aim was to eliminate what he called a serious threat and “de-nazify” the country. Shortly after, Russian troops entered the country and changed the lives of millions of people. It has all the hallmarks of Hitler like tactics, life will never be the same again.

Like many of you, I have been watching in horror as this war unfolds on a daily basis. I have been deeply affected by the images of the tragic loss of life and human suffering, listening to the horrific stories of everyday civilians suddenly finding themselves in a war zone. The school teacher that now has to learn to fire a weapon and kill another human being, or the shopkeeper that is learning how to properly administer medical care for war wounds – just ordinary people like you and me.

It has sent a wave of more than a million refugees to neighbouring countries, forcing them to leave behind their homes, their lives, and their loved ones. This, of course, is no different to other war-torn countries that we are so familiar with hearing about – Afghanistan, Syria, Iraq to name a few. However, no one thought that this could happen in Europe and somehow, perhaps because of its geography, it feels too close, and has sparked a reaction from the west, that we didn't see to this scale, with other wars.

As I am writing this, we are also marking the 40th anniversary of the Falklands war. On 2 April 1982 the conflict began when Argentina invaded and occupied the Falkland Islands. This was a British overseas territory, and so a ten-week, undeclared war, began between the UK and Argentina.

It is reported that a total of 907 people lost their lives, 255 British, 649 Argentinean and 3 were Falkland Islanders killed by friendly fire. There were many wounded who were left to find a way to cope with the aftermath.

War not only leaves physical scars, but mental ones, and in time we will have to help those that have been affected by what they have lived through and witnessed. We already know the devastation war has on those soldiers and civilians alike, with many suffering from a range of issues which can and has, led to self-harm and suicide.

We all got to know and love the likes of Captain Sir Tom Moore during the pandemic, and now the news of the death of St Austell D-Day war hero, Harry Billinge aged 96 has been reported. Harry was one of Britain's last surviving D-Day heroes and campaigned tirelessly for a memorial that would honour men who died on Gold Beach 1944.

Thankfully he did manage this before he died. They both are the last of this generation that fought in World War 2. It is with great sadness that this edition features several obituaries of those who worked as bereavement colleagues and friends which I wanted to give a mention to – Harvey Thomas, Jack Maher, Gordon Dixon, Ian Quance and our own author who wrote the “pulpit” for the Journal for many years, Prebendary Neil Richardson. Our thoughts go to their families and friends at this sad time.

I think it's important to stop and pause for thought every now and again. These world events and indeed those that occur close to home, can have an effect on us all even if we don't always realise it. Certainly, those directly affected will have to deal with their grief and loss for the rest of their lives.

So be kind, look after each other and look after yourselves.

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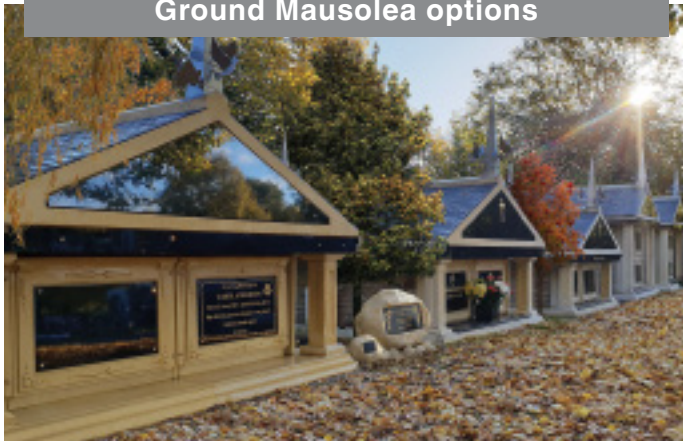
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president's page

Hello all, yes it's me again 😊

I have begun to realise, bit slow I know, that as I write my page months before you read it, in my spring page when I said "I hope you have a good Christmas and New Year" was a little late, however I shall continue with I hope that you are all well and enjoying this much nicer weather as we head towards spring and by the time you read this summer. Looking back to early March we had the dreadful storm Eunice which wreaked havoc on many of us. I am sure like us here in Southampton, you had plenty of trees down in your cemeteries and crematorium grounds which has taken several weeks to sort out.

With Covid restrictions finally lifted we are managing to get out and about a bit more, however with the rising cost of fuel, maybe not that far! I saw a good joke on Facebook; "The man on pump 3 was paying for his £10 worth of petrol Where was he going? Pump 4!!"

On the 24th February, Russia started the war with Ukraine which is devastating and makes me grateful for the freedom that we have and take so much for granted here in the UK, it shows how quickly things can change. Ukraine President Volodymyr Zelensky held talks around Ukraine and its potential NATO membership and although before Putin's invasion he had said he wanted his country to become part of the alliance, he was quoted as saying he had "cooled" on the idea. While the prospects of Ukraine joining NATO have always seemed remote, one of Vladimir Putin's key demands ahead of the invasion was a ban on this ever happening and it was felt that the peace talks were going well, however it remains to be seen if his positivity is misplaced or not. The White House said overnight that it saw "no evidence" of the kind of de-escalation from Mr Putin that it believes is necessary to foster the "good faith" required for peace talks to succeed. Nevertheless, if Ukraine were to entirely rule out ever becoming a NATO member, that would carry considerable symbolism in the continuing negotiations, and this conflict is something that many Russian people do not want either. By the time you read this, I hope that Ukraine can be slowly getting back to normal.

That's enough doom and gloom.



Me and Codge were honoured to attend the SAIF (National Society of Allied & Independent Funeral Directors) annual banquet on 19th March at the Dalmahoy Hotel and Country Club in Kirknewton in beautiful Edinburgh. The weekend marked the conclusion of Mark Porteous's presidential year and he handed over the chain to Jo Parker in the induction ceremony on Sunday morning, and that was very well presented, with videos and commentary that really made us all laugh. Overall it was a wonderful event and I am so glad that we were able to be part of it. We had a warm welcome by Mark and his partner Yvonne and the evening went very well, with yes a delicious meal, although believe it or not the chocolate and clementine tart was just too sweet for me! But I still managed to eat the majority of it, would have been rude not to 😊. Mark's chosen charity was Winston's Wish and throughout the evening a substantial amount of money was raised for this much deserved charity.



The National Day of Reflection organised by Marie Curie took place on 23 March. It was a time to connect with and support the millions of people who are grieving and remembering the family, friends, neighbours and colleagues lost during the pandemic. I think it was important to remember not just those lost from Covid related illnesses but for the families who could not have the funeral that their loved ones deserved. There was a minute's silence at 12 noon and an evening vigil at 8pm. I am sure many of you got involved with this.

The Association of Private Crematoria and Cemeteries, the Cremation Society of Great Britain, the Federation of Burial and Cremation Authorities and the Institute of Cemetery and Crematorium Management held a one-day seminar on Wednesday 30th March at the Stratford Manor Hotel. The Seminar focused on environmental issues affecting the bereavement sector. I chaired the first session introducing Jon Cross, the Managing Director of Essenjay Associates Ltd who spoke to us about the bereavement sector and climate change, it was very interesting. Unfortunately Simon Holbrook had succumbed to Covid so was unable to provide the update to the crematoria guidance review. The rest of the seminar went well with everyone getting involved in the round table discussions and further sessions with papers on changing fuel sources with Joe Hilton talking about the alternatives to diesel, looking at electric and Hydrogen-powered equipment and Dennis Jacobs (DFW) explaining about the electric cremator. Changing technologies was covered by Howard Pickard, Resomation UK, introducing us to water cremation and Simon Holden talking about precision organic dispersal, both very different methods of 'cremation' for the future. The final session was around the impact of existing technologies when we heard from Jason King and how Westerleigh have reduced gas consumption and Steve Telford from FT talking to us about cremator fuel developments since the turn of the century. The seminar gave everyone food for thought.



I arrived the afternoon before the seminar, and it was also lovely to meet up with old friends and colleagues again in person and to meet new associates and listen to their interesting stories. I thank everyone for their valued company and to Peter Roper and Steve Telford for ensuring that our table had a lovely evening meal; strange service strange portions strange food, not sure I ever worked out what Blue had in his dish!! But that's another story, ask me about it when we next meet 😊

I hope that you managed to enter the ICCM Photographic Competition 2022 for your chance to win the prestige of having it reproduced on the front cover of the Journal and the winner also receives a £50 gift voucher. In the past we have had some wonderful photos, so good luck everyone.

Don't forget to also check the ICCM website to keep informed of the changing rules and regulations, which seem to be never ending.

To end, in honour of all those that have lost their lives and homes in the Ukraine War, I would like to share Poet Laureate Simon Armitage's poem entitled "Resistance".

Resistance

It's war again: a family
carries its family out of a pranged house
under a burning thatch.

The next scene smacks
of archive newsreel: platforms and trains
(never again, never again),

toddlers passed
over heads and shoulders, lifetimes stowed
in luggage racks.

It's war again: unmistakable smoke
on the near horizon mistaken
for thick fog. Fingers crossed.

An old blue tractor
tows an armoured tank
into no-man's land.

It's the ceasefire hour: godspeed the columns
of winter coats and fur-lined hoods,
the high-wire walk

over buckled bridges
managing cases and bags,
balancing west and east - godspeed.

It's war again: the woman in black
gives sunflower seeds to the soldier, insists
his marrow will nourish

the national flower. In dreams
burst into flocks.
False news is news
with the pity
edited out. It's war again:

an air-raid siren can't fully mute
the cathedral bells -
let's call that hope.

Please, as always, stay safe and I send you all my love and thank you once again for your valued support and friendship; it means so very much to me.

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Dedicated to our Ukrainian Colleagues

After the last two years, it was difficult to imagine that the world could be in a worse state by Summer 2022. Just as the global pandemic was being brought under control through the mass roll-out of vaccinations against the dreaded Covid-19 virus, Russia, or rather President Putin of Russia, decided to invade their neighbouring country of Ukraine. Putin called this invasion a 'special military operation' against Ukraine to eliminate what he called a serious threat and to 'de-nazify' the country.

Whatever the alleged reason, the invasion has caused untold devastation and destruction of property, and the senseless loss of innocent lives on both sides. It has also brought the spectre of potential war to Europe, and even the possibility of World War 3 and the use of nuclear weapons. Worrying times indeed.

The Ukrainian President, Volodymyr Zelenskiy, estimates that there could be 20,000 civilian deaths so far. It is not known how many Russian deaths there have been. There are reports that as the Russians begin to withdraw from the besieged capital city of Kyiv, bodies carpet the streets. Mass graves have been discovered and are being exhumed to try and identify those killed and provide them with a proper burial. News agencies report many incidents of families having to bury their relatives who have been killed as a result of the invasion in makeshift graves. There are also reports that the Russians have been using mobile cremators to destroy bodies in an attempt to hide war crimes. Families may never know what happened to their loved ones.

During such a terrible time, thoughts are with all those affected, but particularly with those who are responsible for burying and cremating the dead in Ukraine – our Ukrainian colleagues. We know that ours is not an easy job in the best of times, but in the worst of times it is unimaginable what our colleagues and the families they serve are going through.

In the event of a war in the UK, our sector will no doubt be tasked with providing burial and cremation solutions in the event of mass fatalities. It is currently unclear what, if any, plans the military have for such a situation; recent conflicts abroad have seen a heavy reliance on civilian organisations to repatriate the dead in a socially acceptable manner. They have done an incredible job; the flag-draped coffins brought into Royal Wootton Bassett are good evidence of this. But conflict on our own soil will bring a different demand, and one which the Government must plan for. Unfortunate though it is, the experience of those in Ukraine who have been involved in burying and cremating their war dead may prove essential in helping to formulate our own plans.

In recognition of our Ukrainian colleagues, and all that they are currently going through, we offer our support and professional kinship and hope that the conflict will end soon and better times will follow.



Julie Dunk
ICCM Chief Executive

first quarter accredited COTS & CTTS candidates

Cemetery Operatives Training Scheme Courses January 2022 – March 2022

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**

Graham Berry A B F	Steven Graham A
Douglas Blyth A	Paul Hancock A
Tony Bratton A B F	Daniel Hobbs A B F
Dale Bryant F	Glenn Hughes A B F
Michael Thomas Buller A	David Hunt A B F
Owen Burton-Smith A B	Peter Martin A
Andrew Clemett A B F	Luke Nolan A B
Barry Cope B	Kieran O'Donoghue B
Rory Cummings A	Ben Pestell A
James Dennis A B	Matthew Robinson B
Steven Devlin A B	Anthony Smith A B F
Evan Drury A	Henry Snee B
Michael Gayfer A	Simon Tadman A B F
Stanimir Gerogiev A B F	Andrea Trager A
Daniel Gilbert A B	James Weir A B

Crematorium Technicians Training Scheme - January – March 2022

Stuart Alexander	Adrian Mosses
Julie Carter	Howard Nash
Eric Crossley	Richard Porter
Matthew Gaskell	Phillippa Reece
Stephen Harradine	Mark Whittington
Lee Matthews	Jamie Young

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.

Adur & Worthing Council, Belfast City Council, Bracknell Forest Council, Buckinghamshire Council, Cambridge City Council, Carlisle City Council, Continental Landscapes, Doncaster MBC, Dunstable Town Council, Folkstone & Hythe District Council, Hambleton District Council, Idverde Seaford Cemetery, London Borough of Croydon, NE Lincolnshire Council, Nene Valley Crematorium, North Walsham Town Council, Seven Hills Crematorium, St Neots Town Council, Sunderland City Council, Wigan Council.



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Jack Maher : an obituary

John Whitworth Maher was born on 5th July 1935 in Failsworth, Manchester, his dad was Cornelius John and his mum, Ida. Jack, as he was always known, was educated during WW 2 and left school at 15 and began his career at Failsworth cemetery in Manchester which opened in 1887. Jack had a keen interest in horticulture and spent many years at night school obtaining his horticultural qualifications, a subject for which he later in his life was a tutor for the Institute of Burial and Cremation Administration, forerunner of the ICCM.

Jack carried out his national service in Germany in the medical corps returning to Failsworth cemetery. Jack had discovered a real feel for cemetery work and would spend his mornings in the cemetery digging graves and related tasks and enjoying the horticultural elements of the job. In the afternoons he would be found in the office dealing with administrative tasks such as writing up the burial registers. Working in the burial and cremation sector became a vocation and consequently Jack enrolled as a student member of the IBCA in 1958.

Jack met his wife Janet while ice skating at Stretford ice rink and they were married in 1959. Soon after Jack obtained a new job at nearby Rochdale cemetery and crematorium. Jack and Janet's first daughter Debz was born in the cemetery lodge.

Jack was by this time studying for his IBCA examinations and progressing well and was awarded his final diploma in 1965.

In order to progress his career Jack changed his job a number of times: to Liverpool, Toxteth cemetery, to Leeds and in 1966 to Grove Park in South London. Jack and Janet's second daughter Sarah was born in 1969 while the family were living in the cemetery lodge at Grove Park cemetery.

In 1974 Jack became responsible for the parks and cemeteries as well as the crematorium, for the London Borough of Lewisham. This was a big job with acres of cemeteries, wonderful parks, and a golf course at Beckenham Place Park. Huge numbers of plants were grown for the borough as well under Jack's enthusiastic supervision.

I joined Jack's staff at Lewisham crematorium in May 1975 as an assistant superintendent, and this was a wonderful job for me to gain a wide experience with so many burials taking place across four open cemeteries as well as around 1400 cremations. Jack encouraged me from day one to get involved in every aspect of the job. One of Jack's mantras was that he would never ask anyone to do a job that he had not himself done or be prepared to do. This has stood me in good stead over the years. After three years or so, Jack persuaded me that I was quite capable of shouldering the responsibility of management and encouraged me to apply for the superintendent and registrar's job at Parndon Wood crematorium and cemetery, an application that was successful and it was this move that set me off on my career path. Thank you, Jack.

In the mid 1970's common graves were in regular use and the grave giggers at Hither Green cemetery would regularly dig graves sixteen feet deep! This would cause the health and safety officer to pass out these days. Jack was always involved with the IBCA and ensured that he and I at least attended every IBCA branch meeting which were held four times a year. To illustrate Jack's commitment Danny Corr, the manager of Peterborough crematorium has written the following text:

I first met Jack when I was in my 20's, I was a gravedigger when he became the director for cemeteries and crematorium at Peterborough City





Council. Jack told us about his early days and how he progressed from being 'on the tools', as he would say, to gaining his qualifications and progressing through the professional ranks. He always had a great story to tell.

I'd come to a point in my life where I wanted to progress, I plucked up the courage to knock on his office door to ask if I could enrol on the Institute of Burial and Cremation Administration diploma course.

Thinking that he would dismiss it, as I wasn't a part of the office team, I was so relieved when he agreed to it. He started from a similar position and wanted to give me the opportunity to prove myself and progress.

It was as Jack had said 'going to be hard work' but I duly passed the first module, with of course encouragement and advice from Jack.

Jack also gave me my first job in management and encouraged and mentored me until his retirement a few years later.

Unbeknownst to me, Jack kept an eye on my career throughout the years via professional publications and word of mouth, and from what I believe the careers of others that he has also helped and mentored. I remember when I eventually gained my diploma, he called to congratulate me which meant a lot.

I last spoke to Jack just before Christmas 2021 when he saw an article in the ICCM Journal about a branch meeting at Peterborough and we chatted about the old days like it was yesterday. I was so glad to get the opportunity during that call to thank him for giving me a chance all those years ago and for all his guidance and advice over the years.

Jack was a lovely man and will be sorely missed by everyone who knew and loved him.

In 1986 Jack's life took a different turn and after 20 years working in Lewisham and 27 years of marriage to Janet, he moved to Peterborough crematorium and married Pat that same year. This was a very different role to his Lewisham post but still a demanding job covering the period related by Danny above, and he stayed there until his retirement in 1996.

Jack served the Institute as a tutor as I have mentioned, he served as Journal editor between 1987 to 1990 and was President in 1989/1990 and also served the eastern branch as chairman. Jack enjoyed the social side of these positions as he loved to talk to people, on many of the social visits his eldest daughter Debz accompanied him.

Jack enjoyed his retirement in rural Lincolnshire where he enjoyed a number of hobbies including photography, bird watching and of course his garden. Sadly, Jack's second wife Pat died in 2016 after 30 years of marriage but he adapted and adjusted his life, never losing interest in what was going on in our profession. Jack read as many of our industry publications as he could and only a year or so ago phoned me to have a chat about how things were changing and he was interested in my career at Westerleigh. Jack was recently especially interested in mushroom coffins which have featured recently in The Journal.

Jack was a man who was proud of his humble beginnings, his achievements, and his family. To us in the Institute he was a man who dedicated his life to the service of the bereaved and to encouraging many of those who worked for or studied with him to work hard and achieve what he knew they were capable of. That is a legacy of which his family can be very proud.

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Harvey Thomas : an obituary



Harvey Thomas, former chairman of the Cremation Society of Great Britain and well known friend of the burial and cremation sector, died on March 13 2022 aged 82.

Harvey's personality was as big as he was – 6' 5" tall with size 17 feet. If Harvey was in the room, you couldn't miss him, neither because of his sheer physical presence nor his exuberant personality. Coming over as a most humble man, he always gave a genuinely warm greeting and asked how you were, not out of politeness but out of real interest.

Spending time with Harvey was always an education. He had so many stories to tell, which he told, not with any sense of bragging or showing off, but as an illustration of what anybody can achieve in this world.

Central to Harvey's being was his faith; at 11 years old he was 'born again' whilst attending a youth camp on the Isle of Wight run by a Christian organisation. After not particularly excelling at school, Harvey tried his hand at the legal profession, but it wasn't for him. He auditioned for and was accepted at RADA, but instead, inspired by working for the popular American evangelist Billy Graham, he attended the Northwestern Bible College in Minnesota, USA. He also went on to study at the universities of Minnesota and Hawaii. To finance these studies Harvey worked night shifts for the US Mail Service, and also as a dj on a local radio station, playing to his strengths as a born performer.

Between 1960 and 1975, Harvey worked for Billy Graham. During that time he organised Graham's world tours and huge rallies, including one in Wembley Stadium in 1965 that attracted over 100,000 worshipers. Using the skills and experiences he honed under Graham, Harvey first became an international public affairs consultant, then worked for the Conservative Party under the leadership of Margaret Thatcher, helping the party to transform their communications strategy and to win three general election campaigns. It was during this role that Harvey was caught up in the bombing of the Grand Hotel in Brighton by the IRA in October 1984. The huge bomb exploded in the room below Harvey's, resulting in Harvey being blown one floor up before crashing three floors down. He became trapped on a steel girder, topped by tons of debris and with water from burst pipes gushing past him in the total darkness. According to doctors, it was Harvey's bulk that saved him; a smaller and thinner person would not have survived the impact. Such was his irrepressible nature that a major bomb blast couldn't stop him leaving hospital only hours after he was rescued to continue with the party conference he had helped to organise. Many years after the bombing, Harvey contacted the bomber, Patrick Magee, and over time the two became unlikely friends, with Harvey forgiving Magee, as required by his Christian faith.

Following his work with the Conservative Party, Harvey went on to work as an international PR consultant, and was also actively involved in Christian broadcasting ventures around the world. In 1982 he became a non-executive director of the London Cremation Company, and was elected a Member of the Council and a Trustee of the Cremation Society in 1983. He served as the Society's Chairman from 2009 to 2019, during which time he was a regular attendee of sector events.

Despite his many achievements and his international travels, Harvey was very much a family man, loving to spend time with his ever-supportive wife, Marlies, and his two cherished daughters, Leah and Lani. A non-smoker and non-drinker, Harvey's only vices were his love for Arsenal Football Club, and for his model train set, which dominated the garage of his north London home.

Harvey's achievements were recognised through him being awarded the CBE in Margaret Thatcher's resignation honour's list. He was also a Fellow of the Royal Society, the Chartered Institute of Public Relations, and the Chartered Institute of Journalists.

Harvey's death has left a hole befitting of his size in so many lives, and he will be very much missed across the world.

Rest in peace, dear Harvey, and thank you for the stories.

Julie Dunk
Chief Executive, ICCM

Ian Charles William Quance FICCM: an obituary

It is with great sadness that I learned that Ian had lost his long battle with cancer, and I know that I speak for all of his friends and colleagues at the ICCM when I send our sincere condolences to his wife Heather and his children Alys, Jake, Ewan, and Henry.

I think some of the most accurate words I have read about Ian were posted by a friend of his on Facebook which read 'Ian Quance lived a kaleidoscope of a thousand different lives'. Having the pleasure of being able to call Ian a friend and in speaking with him many times over the years I think this sums him up perfectly.

Ian was born in Birmingham in 1958. He grew up on the boundary of Handsworth and the Black Country and within walking distance of his beloved West Bromwich Albion ground, The Hawthorns.

After completing a geography degree at St David's University College, Lampeter, he returned to the Midlands working for a local brewery as a stock taker for four years.

After this ended in 1984, and after two years working in temporary jobs in factories, including in a corrugated steel factory of which he once told me he was lucky he still had all of his fingers intact, he moved to London to study for a Post Graduate Certificate in Education at Goldsmiths college. He then spent three years teaching in a school described at the time as the roughest in England. The school served the mostly, newly arrived, Sylheti Bangladeshi community around Brick Lane and to any of you who knew Ian it would be no surprise to know that he got involved with several campaigns centring on housing and equality issues with the local community.

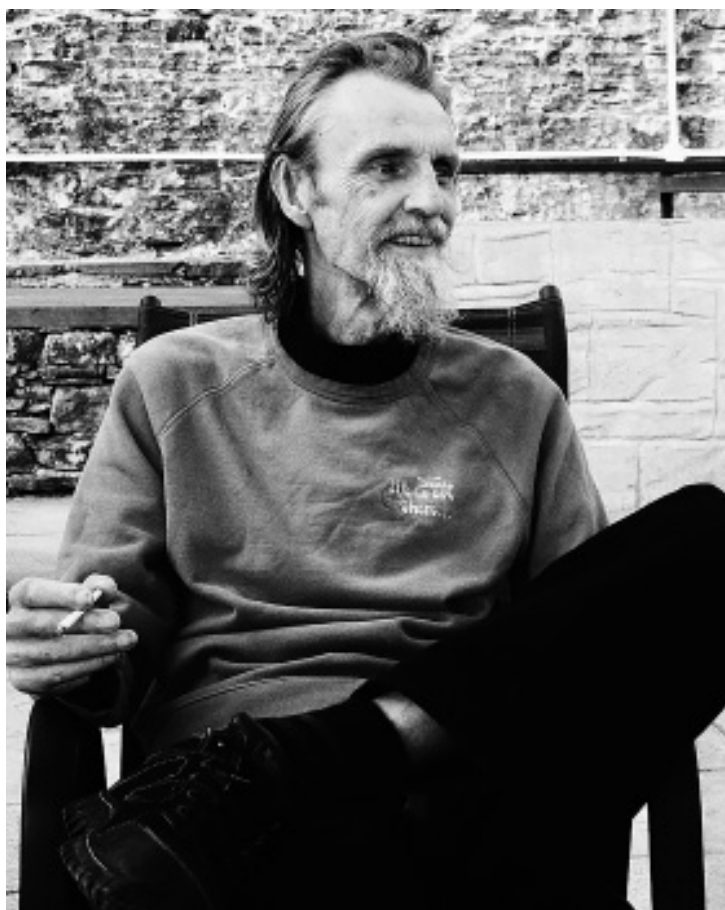
After three years and five headteachers (Ian said it was a tough school), Ian left teaching to become a pioneer as the world's first gardener in the community in the London Borough of Camden. For three years, he drove around the borough in a brightly painted milk float, encouraging community gardening projects, inventing guerrilla gardening and digging wildlife ponds for schools. Ian was at the forefront of environmental issues even during the late 80's and early 90's improving the environment and using an electric vehicle before any climate emergency was declared.

During this time, he married Heather and Alys was born soon after. The prospect of raising a child in a one-bedroom flat in North London was daunting, so when Alys was six weeks old, the family moved to Heather's home in central Alabama, USA.

Ian spent the next five years running English country gardens, growing fruit and vegetables that couldn't be grown in the UK due to our climate. This was supplemented with jobs including counting the contents of supermarket shelves and delivering pizza for Dominos. Family circumstances led to a return to the UK in 1997 and the family, now with their second child, Jake as well and Ian's father, settled in Kentisbeare in Mid Devon.

Ian took a temporary position at Mid Devon district council helping to manage the grounds maintenance contract. Part of this covered the cemeteries in Tiverton and Crediton and Ian quickly saw that the management of these was desperately in need of review. He encountered the Institute of Cemetery and Crematorium Management, an event that changed his career and would lead to my first meeting with him.

In 2004 he moved to Exeter city council where he went on to become bereavement services manager in 2007. I remember visiting the new children's memorial garden that Ian had designed and built at Higher



cemetery in Exeter during my year as President of the ICCM and how proud he was of what he had achieved.

In 2009 he joined the ICCM Board of Directors which was when Ian really did come to the fore, his input at board meetings was always well balanced and productive. He didn't mind ruffling a few feathers either and one of the things that most of us will remember of Ian was that he said it like it was and always spoke with a conviction that he truly believed in.

The following year in 2010 Ian was elected President of the Institute and took on this role with a passion and pride only he could give. He contributed much to the ICCM since joining including rewriting their HNC accredited cemetery management course for students and created a similar course for those managing natural burial grounds. He also worked hard on producing the natural burial ground charter and promoting environmental issues in the bereavement industry as well as being a tutor for the ICCM diploma course and was made a Fellow of the Institute in 2013 in recognition of his contribution to the industry.

In that same year the family moved to Exeter to be closer to work, but Ian was unfortunately made redundant just three weeks later. Not to be deterred by this Ian set himself up as an independent consultant advising cemeteries and crematoria around the UK. Much of his work was with town and district councils who were extremely grateful for the knowledge and support he provided and he assisted many in ensuring services were delivered professionally and correctly.

Ian then went on to join Edge IT to provide the specialist knowledge around cemetery and crematorium services. It was Chris at Edge IT who approached Julie Dunk and myself last year to discuss a legacy for Ian as we knew his condition and all of us wanted to ensure that his memory lives on within an industry that he was so proud to be associated with. It has been decided that Ian's legacy will be recognised through an award in his name that will be given annually as part of the ICCM annual awards ceremony.

As many will know Ian was very politically motivated with strong views so it was no surprise when he became elected to Exeter city council as a Labour candidate in May 2019, Cllr Quance represented the Pennsylvania ward for just over three years and became Deputy Lord Mayor in 2021.

Ian has two more sons, Ewan and Henry who were both born in Exeter and as he lovingly used to tell people 'somewhere close to where Waitrose checkout number eleven now stands', I do hope for all concerned that this is the site of a former maternity hospital.

Ian was a great thinker and a person everyone enjoyed talking to and listening to, he always believed that any problem could be resolved with a face-to-face discussion over a bottle of whisky. He had such great stories from his life experiences and such a fantastic dry sense of humour which appealed to so many people and he will truly be missed by so many in our industry.

I feel very privileged that I was able to meet with Ian in Lampeter in September last year, it was good to meet and reminisce. We talked about so many things in that short time, the changes we had seen in the industry, the different people we had met and built relationships with and our trip to Berlin that was organised by the late Kim Stopher to look at the German cremation process and grave re-use.

I will leave you with the post Ian made on Facebook on 31st December 2021:

'I wish everyone a year that remains happy and one where you achieve what you set out to do. Just don't waste it; squeeze every ounce of juice out of it; be good to yourselves. Love is the answer'.

Ian's very moving funeral service took place in Exeter on 7th April 2022, everything about it was just perfectly Ian, a heartfelt ceremony with wonderful tributes and an eclectic mix of magnificent music.

Rest easy my friend, you will always be missed.

Martin Birch FICCM(Dip)
Chairman of the Board of Directors

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Prebendary Neil Richardson: an obituary

It was with great sadness that I learned of the death of Prebendary Neil Richardson, who died on Sunday 13 March following a short illness. Neil was our resident author of the "Pulpit" and has contributed 63 articles to the Journal since 2006! This achievement gained him an Honorary Vice Presidency in 2016, which was awarded to him for 10 years of quarterly publications at that point. Neil was presented with his award at the Learning Convention at the Oxford Belfry Hotel, which he attended with his wife, Marion. Neil's article in this edition was the last one he sent me shortly before he died.



Neil's family home was in Newton Heath in Manchester where he was the third of four children. He developed asthma as a young child and concerns for his health were so great that the local authorities advised that he should go to a residential open air school. So, at the tender age of five he was taken away from his family, a trauma from which he never fully recovered. When he was ten, he returned home where re-establishing his place in the family was difficult. He attended local schools and he developed a love of music, poetry and literature, particularly Shakespeare and learned to play the recorder. He was fortunate to have some talented teachers who nourished these gifts.

Neil's family were active participants in the local parish church where Neil sang in the choir as a boy chorister and later in the tenor section, further developing his musical skills and his love of church music, especially early music. During his teenage years he became aware of his vocation to the priesthood and was supported in this by his parish priest.



He trained as a teacher, during which time he met and married Marion. After teaching for 2 years in London, during which time Toby was born, they moved to Salisbury for his theological training at Sarum College. Ben was born during this time in Salisbury. Neil always saw himself as a parish priest, working on the "parish floor", as he put it. This he did, as a curate at Oldham Parish Church, then at St Hugh's on Holts Estate in Oldham, where Hannah was born. Then for 31 years as Rector of Holy Cross Church in Greenford. For 16 of those years, he was a local councillor, sitting on the Labour benches. Here he was a member and sometime chair of the education committee. On retirement, Neil and Marion moved to Essex to be near to Hannah and her family and continue their involvement in family life. Here they quickly found a spiritual home at St Johns and many friends in the surrounding villages, including a doppelgänger! Being a "towny" Neil was fascinated by the agricultural

environment and enjoyed watching the changing seasons in the fields around his home.

Neil was a great writer of poetry; it was his way of expressing himself to the world. He also wrote many articles, short stories, and plays as well as music. His head was always full of music and he and Marion attended many concerts, from their first date at a prom concert at the Royal Albert Hall through to retirement and going to Thaxted music festival. He had most of his written work printed but there is still one in progress on his laptop.

As well as his working life Neil's great joy was his family, his wife, his three children and five grandchildren! His family life was a source of pleasure and sustenance to him, and he was so proud of them. They feature in a great deal of his poetry.

Through his work and his warmth and sense of humour, Neil touched many lives in the community. He used to say how he enjoyed taking funerals, talking to the families involved and that a funeral should always contain some humour. So let us all enjoy talking together and bring a smile and a laugh into our loss.



Thank you to Neil's wife of 54 years, Marion, for giving us a snapshot of the man that was the "Pulpit". Neil leaves behind a legacy in his work for us all to enjoy. He will be greatly missed.



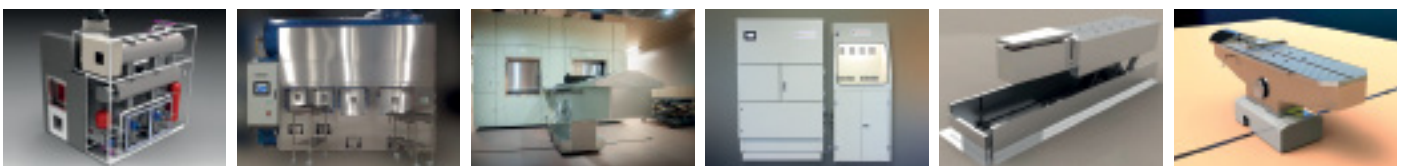
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crematorium technicians training scheme (CTTS)

An update on the accreditation scheme after years of lock down.

It seems like a lifetime ago that I wrote an article in early 2020 addressing our members needs and concerns in making sure that properly trained and assessed staff would be accommodated through our own accredited ICCM Crematorium Technician Training Scheme (CTTS) amidst the backdrop of an ever-evolving, global pandemic.

What a couple of years it has been, with well over 150 brand new, CTTS qualified Crematorium Technicians entering a new chapter of their careers, and member authorities being provided with the assurance that once assessed, their staff have been part of a process which tests them both operationally and academically in order to fulfil this essential aspect of crematorium work.

The response to a move to virtual assessments during this period has been phenomenal with candidates, mentors and managers giving open and positive feedback regarding the altered process. In short, the original process for a candidate involved submitting written assignments on all aspects of Technician operations, followed up by a multiple-choice test and practical assessment on site. Most recently, this has been replaced with the same written assignments, but a virtual assessment including all of the forementioned parts but delivered in a way that is helpful to both the assessor and candidate using video calling and telephone methods.

As things are heading back to some sense of normality, we are now able to offer both on-site and virtual assessments depending on the site's needs in terms of how quickly an assessment is required. Whether a virtual or in-person assessment, our focus on quality and validity of the assessment remains uncompromised.

In the last 2 months alone at the time of writing, examiners have visited sites all over the country where an on-site assessment has been requested or felt appropriate and I'm sure that I speak on behalf of us all where I say it's been good to see people face to face again!

One aspect of the CTTS process that has benefitted significantly from this blended way of working has been the ability for examiners to offer further support should a candidate be unable to pass their assessment first time.

Where areas of improvement have been identified during an assessment, ICCM staff are on hand to be able to offer tips, guidance and advice on improving knowledge and processes to the standard required. This assistance isn't limited to the assessment itself though; should a candidate or mentor require clarification on a range of processes, such as baby and infant cremation or the use of auto shutdown, our officers and examiners are on hand. They will provide support both throughout and beyond the assessment process to provide that help wherever and for as long as it is needed to ensure that ultimately the best possible service can be provided to bereaved people.



It's been quite something to see so many new and enthusiastic candidates over the past 2 years, considering all that has been thrown their way, and it's been similarly satisfying to know that each candidate has received that level of attention through their assessment. This means that there is no follow up assessment required, although they can take any refresher training that is required throughout their ongoing careers within bereavement services.

I would also like to take this opportunity to extend a most sincere 'well done' to all those who have undertaken their assessment, continue to work towards passing and to the examiners that have adapted to ensure that the process is a collaborative one that focuses on each candidate; it's an extremely positive sign for the future of crematoria.

Due to the popularity of the CTTS scheme within UK based crematoria, the ICCM is currently looking to increase its number of examiners throughout the width and breadth of the UK. If you would like to show an expression of interest, in the first instance, please contact Administration Officer Julie Callender at the National Office on 0208 989 4661, or julie.callender@iccm-uk.com.

Mathew Crawley
ICCM Technical and Member Services Officer



ICCM Environmental Pledge

The ICCM has long been concerned with protecting the environment and has developed initiatives such as the recycling of metals following cremation, the holding over of coffins for cremation, and the Charter for the Bereaved to help address these concerns.

Recently, the ICCM Officers committed to an environmental pledge to ensure that all our operations are as environmentally friendly as possible. If everyone takes small steps to protect the environment, huge strides can be made in ensuring the future of the planet.

The ICCM Environmental Pledge is:

The ICCM is committed to reducing our carbon footprint and protecting the planet. We will work internally, and externally with others, to meet environmental targets.

We pledge the following:

Energy efficiency

We will replace light bulbs with LED alternatives.

We will turn lights and electrical equipment off when not needed.

We will not leave electrical equipment on stand-by.

We will use energy efficient technology wherever possible.

Reduce carbon footprint and environmental impact

We will reduce our travel through the use of online technology for as many meetings and training courses as possible.

We will use public transport rather than individual cars wherever possible.

We will email course notes and handouts rather than print them out.

We will make the Journal available digitally and give members the option of how they wish to receive it.

Printed copies of the Journal will be printed on recycled paper.

We will reduce our postage through using email and digital communication wherever possible.

We will make our purchases from local suppliers with good environmental credentials wherever possible.

We will use eco-friendly and sustainable products in all our operations.

We will donate to National Trust schemes to protect and enhance the natural environment to help offset our carbon footprint.

Waste reduction

We will avoid, reduce, reuse, recycle. We will only purchase essential items. We will reuse items whenever possible. We will recycle anything that we no longer need or can't be reused. We will only dispose of anything that can't be recycled.

Plastic reduction

We will stop using single-use plastics such as shopping bags, food containers, and drinks bottles.

Does your workplace have a similar pledge? If not, why not consider starting one. The actions can also transfer into our home lives. We share a collective responsibility to do whatever we can to protect our precious planet.

announcing the Sheri Coates article of the year 2021

Every year we choose a selection of articles across all four editions and put them forward for consideration for the title 'Article of the Year'. Each member of the ICCM Board of Directors votes independently for their favourite and the winner is announced in the Journal, with the winner receiving a prize.

Below are those shortlisted last year – but there can only be one winner.

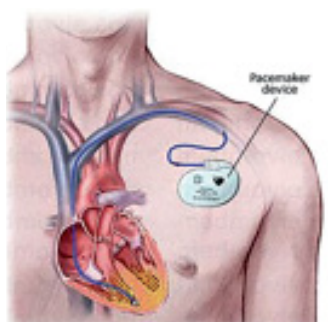
The 2021 award goes to 'It's ok to talk'. Congratulations to author David Jennings, Bereavement Services Manager at Altrincham Crematorium and to the other nominees Mollie Taylor, Justin Smith, Ben Whitworth, Sarah Wickham, Gail Spelman and Brian Parsons. Nominated Articles from 2021 were:



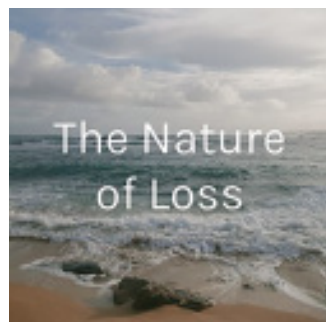
It's ok to talk
David Jennings
(Winter 2021 V89/4)



Grave as a Garden
Brian Parsons
(Winter 2021 V89/4)



Implantable medical devices
and their management for
burial and cremation
Ben Whitworth
(Autumn 2021 V89/3)



Nature of loss podcast
Mollie Taylor
(Spring 2021 V89/1)



Friends of Philips Park
Cemetery
Gail Spelman
(Autumn 2020 V88/3)



Considering the
environmental impact
natural burial and
green funeral choices have
on people and the planet
Sarah Wickham
(Autumn 2021 V89/3)



The carbon crisis and the
bereavement sector
Justin Smith
(Spring 2021 V89/1)

Submit your article and you could win the prize of £100. Please send original copy to the editor at sofia.allana@iccm-uk.com or call **07502 627521** if you would like to discuss an article.

The editor will be delighted to receive copy for publication in The Journal either from members of the ICCM, or from others made aware of 'TJ' - thanks to members suggesting they write an article which may be of interest.



ICCM Photographic Competition 2022

Would you like a photograph taken by you to appear on the front cover of The Journal?



If you have a photograph taken in a cemetery, crematorium, churchyard or natural burial ground you can enter it into the ICCM Photographic Competition 2022 for a chance to win the prestige of having it reproduced on the front cover of the Journal. The winner will also receive a £50.00 gift voucher. The Board of Directors will choose a winning entry. A selection of the images submitted will be shown at the ICCM AGM, and the winner will be announced there.

The image must not identify any individuals and must have been taken by the person submitting it, who must be either an ICCM Professional or Corporate Member.

To enter please email a maximum of TWO unique, generic images to Julie Dunk at julie.dunk@iccm-uk.com in **HIGH RESOLUTION** jpeg format. Colour images will be converted to black and white for judging. The judges' decisions will be final.

The closing date for entries is 30 July 2022

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iccm recycling of metals scheme



Press releases and information from charities that received funds in the December 2021 recycling of metals nominations round



Middlesbrough Council - Teenage Cancer Trust

A charity that supports young cancer sufferers has received a much-needed boost thanks to a unique recycling scheme.

Teesside Crematorium's donation of £15,000 to the Teenage Cancer Trust will help the charity provide specialised nursing care and support.

It's the only charity of its kind in the UK delivering world-class cancer services for young people so they don't have to face cancer alone.

Under the Institute of Cemetery and Crematorium Management's Metal Recycling Scheme, families can give consent for the recycling of metals resulting from cremation.

These include metals used in orthopaedic implants such as hip and knee replacements and in the construction of coffins.

The national scheme enables Middlesbrough Council - which runs the crematorium - to make an annual charitable donation to local good causes.

Councillor Barrie Cooper, Middlesbrough Council's Executive member for Environment, Finance & Governance, visited Teesside Crematorium this week to present a cheque to Donna Bednarek from the Teenage Cancer Trust.

He said: "The Teenage Cancer Trust is a fantastic charity that makes a priceless difference to countless lives.

"They're there to help young people and their families cope with some of the toughest challenges life can throw at them.

"I'm delighted that this innovative scheme can support such great work – the Teenage Cancer Trust is a very worth recipient of this year's charity donation."

The scheme has now donated more than £13.4 million to 583 charities and good causes across the United Kingdom.



L-R Councillor Barrie Cooper, Middlesbrough Council's Executive member for Environment, Finance & Governance, Donna Bednarek of the Teenage Cancer Trust and Middlesbrough Council Operations Manager Joanne Holroyd, with this year's charity donation under the Institute of Cemetery and Crematorium Management's Metal Recycling Scheme

Leicester City Council - Rainbows

Dear ICCM

Due to COVID, we have had to change the way we support many of our families, taking Rainbows outside of the Hospice building and into families' homes. Your support and generous gift of £15,000, which we received from the ICCM scheme via Gilroes Crematorium, has helped us to continue to offer these vital services.

Your donation will help to ensure that local families, like Isla's are able to receive the vital care and support from Rainbows. "Rainbows will always have a special place in our hearts," said Stacey, Isla's mum. "Meeting other families who are in similar situations has made us feel really comfortable. No one asks questions and both our girls are made to feel really special."

Once again, on behalf of everyone at Rainbows Hospice for Children and Young People, thank you for your wonderful support.

With very best wishes

Gary Farnfield

The Oaks Crematorium – Swan Song Project



A donation of £15,000 from a Havant crematorium will help a charity provide its services across the whole country. The donation to The Swan Song Project by The Oaks Crematorium was thanks to the generosity of families who have lost a loved one.

The donation was raised through a national verified scheme that recycles metals which remain after cremation with the express consent of bereaved families, such as items used in the construction of the coffin or orthopaedic implants. The charity, the Swan Song Project, was chosen by colleagues at The Oaks to receive the donation of £15,000 due to the positivity it created around a subject that is often treated as taboo.

It gives people facing end of life and those surrounding them the opportunity to write and record their own original song. Swan Song founder, Ben Buddy Slack, said: "For a charity our size, this donation really does make such a huge difference and we really appreciate the support."

"It is a very exciting time at Swan Song as we aim to make our unique service available across the country. The pandemic forced us to find a way to write songs with people over Zoom which has gone amazingly well. "We want anyone who is facing the end of their life or dealing with a bereavement to have the opportunity and support to write and record their Swan Song and we are excited about being able to offer this service to more and more people."

"This donation will make a huge difference to our ability to expand the service. We are working hard to build new partnerships, raise awareness and recruit and train more songwriters so more people can have the opportunity to leave their legacy in song." Sue Mawson, Crematorium & Natural Burial Ground Team Manager, said: "The funeral service itself is often personalised, with music, pictures and words, but as we all know, a song will last a lifetime."

"To have a song written and sung just for one specific person strikes me as a beautiful gift. Even at the saddest time of facing the inevitable, the photos and stories spark joy and love that is evident, and the time and effort that Ben and his team put into this can never be assumed."

"Lockdown has affected everyone, and especially during funeral when attendance was limited, closeness was avoided and all at a time when this was what was important. The Swan Song Project has enabled a person in end of life to have a voice and to be heard in a way they have chosen for themselves."

The Oaks Crematorium in Havant is part the regional, independent co-operative, Southern Co-op, and is set in 8.5 acres surrounded by ancient semi-natural woodland and a wildflower meadow, providing a picturesque setting and a space for all cultures, ages and beliefs. To find out more about The Oaks Crematorium, visit www.havantcrematorium.co.uk. Or to find out more about The Swan Song Project, visit www.swansongproject.co.uk.



Mintlyn Crematorium - East Anglian Air Ambulance

Mintlyn Crematorium in King's Lynn has raised £15,000 for the East Anglian Air Ambulance by recycling the metal medical implants recovered after cremation. The metal from these implants is recycled after cremation, with consent from the family of the deceased.

The money has been raised through a charitable scheme, operated by the Institute of Cemetery and Crematorium Management, of which Mintlyn is a member.

Twice a year, the institute asks its scheme members to nominate local charities which help to support people to cope with the death of a loved on, to receive a donation.



Councillor Brian Long, Cabinet member for Corporate Services at the Borough Council of King's Lynn & West Norfolk, said: "East Anglian Air Ambulance carry out life-saving work every day and have done an incredible job to continue operating during the difficult conditions of the Covid-19 pandemic. I appreciate the vital work they carry out.

"This donation of £15,000 is the largest one Mintlyn, which is owned and operated by the borough council, has ever made as part of this scheme and I thank the crematorium staff for organising it."

Barbara McGee, Fundraising Manager of East Anglian Air Ambulance, said: "We can't thank Mintlyn Crematorium enough for considering us for the nomination which resulted in such an amazing donation.

Eltham Crematorium - Greenwich and Bexley Community Hospice

Dear Julie

On behalf of all of us at Greenwich and Bexley Community Hospice, I'd like to say a huge thank you to everyone at Eltham Crematorium for donating an incredible £15,000 to the Hospice. The Crematorium Committee over the years have been so supportive of the Hospice and we really appreciate this, particularly over the last few difficult years we have all faced.

While COVID-19 continues to be part of our daily challenge, our team are still working hard to meet demand and ensure those who need our support, get the very best care. The impact of the pandemic will be felt here for a long time to come yet, and has in fact changed the way we work enormously.

Your support means we can continue to be there for people when they need us most.

We wouldn't have been able to get through the last two years without the support of our community and organisations like you being so generous during a tough and uncertain time for everyone.

Thank you once again for supporting members of our local community facing and living with a terminal illness.

Yours sincerely,
Kate Heaps Chief Executive

Walsall Council -Mayor's Appeal

Dear ICCM

I would like to send you my most sincere thanks for your very kind donation of £15,000.00 to the Mayor's Appeal. I am most grateful for your support.

Monies raised will be donated to the Mayor's Charity Appeal 2021/22 for the direct benefit of Alzheimer's Society.

I know that my chosen charity will benefit greatly from your kindness.

Yours sincerely, Councillor Rose Burley Mayor of Walsall 2021-2022

Mortlake Crematorium – London Air Ambulance



James Hamilton and Sacha receiving the cheque from Mortlake Crematorium

Mortlake Crematorium – run by Superintendent Natasha Bradshaw in West London – chose London's Air Ambulance Charity as its 2021 Charity of the Year and donated a gift of £15,000.

Natasha was aware of London's Air Ambulance, however the life-saving work the charity does on a daily basis was more clearly put into focus a few years ago, when her son was on a school trip in Richmond Park.

During the trip, a falling tree branch weighing over 300kg fell, crushing one of the school children, Sacha. Sacha suffered severe head injuries and broke his leg, arms, pelvis, back and five of his ribs. London's Air Ambulance trauma team were dispatched to the scene where they provided critical care, including anaesthetising Sacha. They then flew him to The Royal London Hospital for emergency treatment on his traumatic brain injury. Without the help of London's Air Ambulance, Sacha wouldn't be here today. Thankfully, he is, and he recently visited Mortlake Crematorium to receive the gift with London's Air Ambulance's Pilot, James Hamilton.

"I have followed London's Air Ambulance ever since Sacha's accident. His parents always say how they never imagined needing the helicopter," said Natasha. "When I came across

the amazing Picking up the Pieces podcasts, it really hit home listening to Jakki and Laura."

In our podcast series, Myleene Klass meets those who have been touched by London's Air Ambulance Charity to hear what happens when patients and loved ones have to adjust after their lives have been torn apart. One episode, with a focus on bereavement, featured Jakki and Laura: two mothers of teenage boys – George and Dan – who both died in particularly traumatic circumstances.

What was so key about that podcast was how it highlighted the amazing work London's Air Ambulance Charity does in giving people time to say goodbye. Sacha's story is a great one in the sense that he's lived, sadly not everyone does. But in some of those cases you've been able to give people time to get to hospital, say goodbye and sometimes become donors. That's invaluable to so many people," said Natasha. "London's Air Ambulance makes so much of a difference, and that's why Mortlake Crematorium nominated you to be our Charity of the Year 2021. We also like to work with charities that have a local impact, and you've had a huge impact in our community, especially with Sacha."

Previous bereavement charities that have been nominated include Sands Stillbirth and Neonatal Death Charity, Princess Alice Hospice and Good Grief Trust. "We like to select charities that help people with bereavement in the local community. Here at the crematorium we run pop-up grief cafes, where anyone can come and enjoy some cake, knowing it is a safe space to talk if they want to.

"We're proud to be a key part of the community, and are proud to have London's Air Ambulance Charity in our community too."

The £15,000 donation came from a national scheme in which metals that remain after the cremation process are collected and recycled. "With the families' permission, metal supports – such as hip replacements, metal knees, pins that have pieced people back together after an accident – can be recycled; enabling us to donate much-needed funds to charity," explained Natasha. "This is an annual process and we're so glad to be able to share it with many amazing charities."

London's Air Ambulance Charity is incredibly grateful to Mortlake Crematorium for the nomination and gift. Thanks to organisations like Natasha's, we can continue to provide cutting-edge care at the roadside and save more lives in London.



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Breckland Crematorium – The Norfolk Hospice

A hospice has been given a huge boost thanks to the kindness of a crematorium and the bereaved relatives using its services.

The Norfolk Hospice, Tapping House, has received a donation of £15,000 raised through the recycling of metals by Breckland Crematorium.

Nathan Rollings, a director of the crematorium, told Your Local Paper: “The amount has been raised through a scheme set up by the Institute of Cemetery and Crematorium Management where the residual metals left after cremation has taken place, such as fixings used in the construction of the coffin and medical implants, are collected and recycled with the family's permission.



“All the proceeds which are left after the costs of collecting and recycling the metals are donated to charities.

“This is a much more environmentally sensitive way of dealing with these metals where historically they would have been buried in crematorium gardens.

“Breckland Crematorium nominated The Norfolk Hospice to receive a donation because of the very important work it does within our local communities to support those with life limiting illnesses by providing care both within the hospice and at home.”

The hospice's fundraising manager, Lindsey Atkin, added: “We are thrilled to receive this fantastic donation.

“These funds will not only help provide vital care for people living with life limiting illnesses in the local community, but also provide essential bereavement care for their loved ones too.”

South Essex Crematorium presents £15,000 to WAY, Widowed and Young

A charity helping those who have lost a partner at a young age benefitted from a massive £15,000 presented by South Essex Crematorium.

The Deputy Mayor of Havering, Councillor Christine Vickery, joined staff from the Council's bereavement service, in presenting the cheque to WAY, Widowed and Young, a charity that provides peer to peer support to young widowed people, married or not, with or without children, inclusive of sexual orientation, gender race and religion.

Jo Sedley-Burke, Chair of the Charity's Board, who joined WAY following the death of her wife Paula in 2017 said:



“When you lose your partner you lose your future.....With WAY, there is always someone there for you – no question or statement is too weird.”

“I would like to say a huge thank you to South Essex Crematorium for choosing to support WAY and for helping us to reach out to more young widowed people to show that there is support out there and that you don't have to grieve alone. The donation feels particularly poignant for me because my wife Paula was cremated at this Crematorium.”

WAY is the only national charity in the UK for men and women aged 50 or under when their partner died. Founded 25 years ago this month, WAY now has more than 4,300 members across England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland – with over 220 members in Essex.

WAY membership offers friendship, support and understanding through a secure members' only website that offers a safe place for members to meet and chat online and meet ups both online and in person. Members also have access to a confidential 24-hour telephone helpline that offers free counselling and advice.

Cllr. Christine Vickery said:

“We are enormously grateful to those families who have taken part in this specialist recycling scheme and it is a privilege to support people who are uniquely equipped to help one another as they rebuild their lives.”

For more information on WAY, Widowed and Young please visit: <https://www.widowedandyoung.org.uk>

'the impact of burial and cremation on the environment'

Joint Organisers Seminar in Review



On the 30th of March 2022, around 100 delegates and exhibitors converged on the Stratford Manor Hotel in Stratford-Upon-Avon to attend the latest seminar provided by the joint burial and cremation organisations - the Association of Private Crematoria and Cemeteries (APCC), the Cremation Society of Great Britain (CSGB), The Federation of Burial and Cremation Authorities (FBCA) and the Institute of Cemetery and Crematorium Management (ICCM).

For ourselves and many others in attendance, this marked the first major coming together of all of the forementioned organisations' members and associates in over two years. In the hours leading up to the event, and for those arriving at the venue late into the previous evening, you could sense that there was an atmosphere of excitement and camaraderie as more and more familiar, as well as newer sector faces began to assemble in order to learn and improve their own understanding of the topics to be discussed. Unlike any other previous occasion, you could almost see the relief on people's faces that this seemed to be a step in the right direction towards 'normality' given the nature of the previous two years within the sector.



The Seminar's overarching title of 'The Impact of Burial and Cremation on the Environment' promised a diverse range of speakers and topics, from the manufacturers and representatives of both gas and electric cremators, alkaline hydrolysis (otherwise known as Resomation or water cremation) and Precision Organic Dispersal, through to practical ways of reducing environmental impact currently and historically via alternative operational procedures and the advent of electrification for traditional grounds maintenance equipment. Finally, a snapshot of historical and future environmental considerations was to be provided by speakers from the gas cremation industry and Environmental Stewardship Group respectively, which understandably piqued the interest of many in attendance.



Once all delegates had arrived and settled in, Dr Hilary Grainger of the CSGB extended a warm welcome to all. Unfortunately, the first speaker of the day, Simon Holbrook representing the Environment Agency and Defra, had been affected by COVID just days before the seminar and as such, his update report on the Crematoria Guidance Review was unavailable this time around. Undeterred, chair of the first session of the day, ICCM President Heather White, invited Jon Cross from the Environmental Stewardship Group to

present his paper, 'The Bereavement Sector and Climate Change'.

Jon's paper, with the strapline 'Climate Change, our Legacy', presented findings from the Environmental Stewardship Group (ESG), whose constitution provide over 350 years of collected knowledge within the bereavement services sector. Jon shared that whilst around 95% of Local Authorities have declared a climate emergency within their Councils, there remains a significant gap in where cemetery and crematoria are not included in any environmental declaration. Jon further explained the role of the ESG, the issues that they are focusing on and the how and whys along the road to improvement which are a collective responsibility. In a poignant statement, Jon surmised that 'Offsetting emissions should be the last mile journey' in such



environmental considerations that face us, and that rather there is much to do at every level before emissions are solely identified.

As with the conclusion of each session, delegates were then tasked with presenting their thoughts on flip charts which prompted spontaneous conversation around each topic. The resulting observations are to be distributed by the FBCA in due course and are sure to be interesting in their messages.



In session two, Jon Levett, Chief Executive of the National Association of Funeral Directors (NAFD) introduced Joe Hilton from JCB who took the opportunity to discuss his company's 'Net Zero Strategy', which would see all operations having no carbon footprint. Joe offered that many other industries that he is involved with commercially are ahead of the bereavement sector in terms of reducing Net Zero by 2040 rather than the 2050 target. It was explained that JCB were first to market with their electrified grave excavator with others soon to follow and that their offering was fit for market compared to the larger excavators provided for larger scale digging operations. Benefits of their machinery were seen to be the use of idle modes when the machine is effectively off during grave digging, there are zero emissions at the point of use and all machinery is recorded as 10

decibels quieter than their diesel counterparts with equal performance attained.

Jon Levett then introduced Dennis Jacobs from DFW to present his paper on electric cremators, which it was clear many were interested to hear more about with the recent installations in Oxfordshire and Huntingdon. Dennis confirmed that their single ended electric cremator was introduced in 2018 and since then, 25 have been commissioned throughout Europe. It was explained that the electric model produces no emissions from gas as there are no fossil fuels utilised. There is an evident 50%+ reduction in CO₂ and NO_x units are also fitted to every new installation to also reduce this by a further 50%. The premise of the electric cremator is that it's a self-perpetuating unit which creates energy as its used and cremations are introduced, whilst also being very quiet. Pre-empting any questions, Dennis confirmed that cremation times are now down to between 100-110 mins as purchasers have historically been more concerned over the timings rather than energy consumption. Dennis was finally able to demonstrate that the latter has been proven to be more than favourable with real-time readings and reporting data available any time of day.

Following a welcome lunch break, Alan José of the FBCA and ICCM Introduced Howard Pickard of Resomation to discuss the latest developments in his company's bid to introduce Alkaline Hydrolysis to the UK. No stranger to many, Howard brought delegates up to speed with a brief history of the origins of the parent company of the Resomation brand and the journey to market thus far.

The overall message was positive in that whilst the Ministry of Justice have offered that they're not yet at the stage of introducing the primary legislation surrounding the process, they have maintained water cremation is still not classed as 'unlawful'. Further, Scottish, Yorkshire, Northumbria and Irish Water have all granted water approvals with other applications already submitted and pending. There are also two UK based sites which have commissioned (in principle) this new process being introduced in their locale, and as such, Resomation have drawn together a Code of Practice in partnership with industry professionals so that they may be better enabled to have an agreed set of standards to roll out once the time comes.

Howard finally discussed the new, public facing arm of the company, which sees a partnership with Julian Atkinson,



named 'Kindly'. Kindly aims to inform the public of what exactly is involved with Resomation and promote awareness of the brand and operations to the public in a sensitive manner, proof of which was shared in an animated video for the delegates' consideration.



Alan then introduced Simon Holden to explain and explore Precision Organic Dispersal, a process that has been conceived by an arm of the Faunus Group whose background is in promoting green industry in an environmentally friendly and socially responsible way. In this sector, historically this has been providing a treated soil which uses cultures to help the breakdown of scattered or loosely buried ashes. This has now been extended to full body disposal.

Simon explained how in his process, 'turbo charged' microbial cultures are introduced into pods with the deceased which effectively converts the deceased into its natural base elements and nutrients. Such a body would then be literally consumed by the pod itself and is a low energy process due to the fuel source being provided by the use of solar panels. Eventually, the result provides a

supercharged super-soil that promotes the rapid growth of anything that is grown within it. Extensive studies have shown that this process will therefore remove even more CO₂ as study trees used have been seen to grow at a faster rate than normal. Finally, to boost the potential environmental credentials of the process, Simon concluded by saying that this is ensured as the process doesn't interact with the environment until the process is done as it occurs within the self-contained pod.

For the final sessions of the day, Steve Wright of the APCC introduced Jason King, Head of Quality for the Westerleigh Group, who gave an amusing account of the changes that he has witnessed both personally and corporately over his long career with Westerleigh. Jason offered in his paper 'Reducing Gas Consumption', that far removed from some of the processes he was introduced to in the 90's, which centred on providing cremations with machines that would be unrecognisable to most today, that investment in newer cremators, the holding over and planning of cremations during the operator's working day, the introduction of NO_x machines site wide, no plastics and recycling of metals policies all work towards an environmentally improved service for bereaved people.

Echoing the comments of many during the seminar, Steve Telford from Facultative Technologies (FT) gave the final paper of the day entitled 'Cremator Fuel Developments Since the Turn of the Century'. Steve gave a similar account to that of the previous speaker, in that his observations from a gas cremator point of view have drastically changed over the course of his career. Steve explained the environmental benefits for the use and introduction of NO_x machines that are standard on all newly commissioned FT cremators and drew observations from previous speakers' sentiments that times are indeed changing.



Following Steve's paper, all that remained was for Michael Birkenshaw of the FBCA to draw a close to the days proceedings and wish all in attendance a safe journey home.

As both a delegate and a representative of the ICCM, it was great to see so many sector professionals all in one place again, talking enthusiastically about service and organisational improvements. With bereaved people at the heart of all we do, it's encouraging for attendees both old and new to see how passionate people have remained in providing our services after what has been an unprecedented couple of years. I truly hope that we are able to sit down again, with a new list of topics to discuss, in the not too distant future.

what we learnt about death care during covid-19

Join us for a

National Day of
Reflection
23 March

On 23rd March 2022 a national day of reflection took place. A day when we remember the people who have died from Covid-19 over the last two years.

At Poppy's, we had to adapt rapidly to new Covid-19 restrictions and do things differently without losing sight of our values. We had to support our clients to navigate the changes. We worked alongside celebrants, cemetery workers and healthcare professionals, witnessing the huge impact of the pandemic on them.

It has been difficult, frustrating, frightening, uncertain and exhausting at times over the last two years. But it has also provided a deeper understanding of the importance of good death care and led to changes and innovations that we can all learn from.

The report, 'British Ritual Innovation under Covid-19', chimes with much of our experience. So we spoke to Dr Paulina Kolata, one of the report's authors, to try to understand the bigger picture.



When did you start your research and who did you speak to?

I didn't start the research until October 2020. By then, there was a lot of grief, but people were already starting to take a retrospective view. We had dealt with the crisis moment, now people were consciously adapting. At first, it was all about finding a solution in that moment. There was no time for conversation, except a conversation about how to get something done.

I spoke to celebrants, funeral directors, religious leaders, and bereaved people. There was such a wide spread of world views, beliefs and values. I really appreciated them giving their time to talk to me, sometimes late at night or on the way to a funeral.

I wanted to speak to a lot of people to understand where their context allowed for flexibility and adaptation and when it did not.

In the course of your research people shared some really difficult experiences with you. Can you give any examples of the kind of challenges that people working in death care faced during the pandemic?

I spoke to a small funeral directors, with only two core staff. Both the staff were vulnerable themselves, so could not provide the care that they wanted to during the pandemic. It was heartbreaking for them. They couldn't put themselves at risk, but they felt it almost went against their own values of care.

In Northern Ireland, guidelines were so strict. Cemeteries closed their gates so that people couldn't even gather outside around the grave. People spoke to me of the shock of being made to stand outside the gates, watching the funeral on a tiny TV screen. Crematoria and cemeteries were trying to protect their staff, they knew they didn't have the resources if they all got ill.

The biggest frustration that people had across the board was the vagueness of the government guidelines, the way you were left to interpret them for yourself, with little knowledge or support. People were worried about putting their own families at risk.

One change that's been obvious, in every area of life, has been the increased use of communication technology. How did this influence death care during the pandemic?

In so many ways, not just through the live-streaming of funeral ceremonies. For example, more people started using videographers and photographers for funerals.

One videographer explained to me that often clients don't want to watch the video afterwards — but they do want to capture the moment, and to know that they could revisit it if they wanted to. Death is traumatic and sometimes we don't remember what we did while we were grieving.

I also spoke to humanist celebrants. Technology made it possible for them to watch a recording of themselves conducting a ceremony and to reflect on and improve their practice. Many had never had to do a ceremony online before and it inspired them to be more creative.

The pandemic created a consciousness of the need for flexibility and accommodation. I am not sure it will stick, but I hope that it's started something. Funeral directors who never thought of asking before whether someone would like film or photos at a funeral, or if they would like it live-streamed, now ask as a matter of course.

If we are thinking about sustainability, people not travelling long distances to funerals could be a good thing. Whether this is acceptable will vary between cultures and individuals, depending on how important personal contact is for them.

But this change is not universal. For example, when my partner's grandmother died recently, I couldn't arrange my work to go to the funeral. I asked if there was a live-stream, but that wasn't available. It was upsetting to know that I couldn't participate.

Another, less obvious, impact of the pandemic was that community-based death care networks gained in importance. Can you tell us a bit about that?

In Jewish, Muslim and Hindu communities, a lot of death care happens within the community. Religious leaders — but also funeral directors and community leaders — played a role in translating administrative language into messages that made sense for their communities, often by evoking common values.

During the pandemic, I spoke to Muslim religious and community leaders who communicated with the wider community when someone died. They told people not to visit or bring food to the family as they would normally do, but to pray differently, using the teachings of the Prophet and the Quran to explain to people why they couldn't go to the mosque.

You say in the report that death care is 'ordinarily invisible'. Do you think the pandemic has made death care any more visible?



*Coffins stacked up at the Green Lane Mosque in Birmingham.
Photo Credit: Green Lane Mosque (used with permission).*

During the pandemic, death became a headline. It became numerical. This was hard for those who were bereaved — their mother, sister or friend was more than just a number. Death care remained invisible, hiding behind the graphs.

People are often uncomfortable with the dead, despite our emotional attachment to the person who has died, so we often outsource their care to someone else. It feels too much when we are grieving, everything is in a haze and we don't even see the people involved in the journey.

I'd like to see more visibility and conversation, an understanding that death care is really hard and important work. One thing I have noticed is that the

pandemic has made people think more about what a dignified death is, and what they would or wouldn't want for themselves.

This is a cultural conversation that needs to happen, but the 'getting back to normal' narrative makes this harder. There is no going back, we are in the here and now, but the pandemic has taught us to be open to different ways of doing things.

We need to try and push the conversation open so that we see death care as a normal part of life.

Listen to the podcast <https://www.socialbroadcasts.co.uk/broadcastoverview/bric19>



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Simple and cost-effective, this protector could return your investment as soon as it saves one memorial stone from damage!

COLLECTION TRAY TROLLEY



Our new collection tray trolley has been designed in collaboration with crematoria clients, to improve technician safety when moving hot ash around the facility.

The bespoke metal trolley can transport up to six collection trays at a time, it is lightweight and on castors so it can be easily wheeled out of public gaze.

The trolley is heat resistant and steered at hand height via a short handle to the side.

Barry Ellis, of Agecroft and Peel Green crematoria in Salford and Dave Jennings from Altrincham Crematorium, Trafford have introduced the trolleys into their crematoria and found them to be a useful tool.

Barry's review:

"I think it's brilliant to be honest and a good weight for moving around the crematorium. One of the key things is that it removes the need for the operative to be carrying hot ashes. They can simply place them in the trolley then leave them to cool before placing them in the transfer station."



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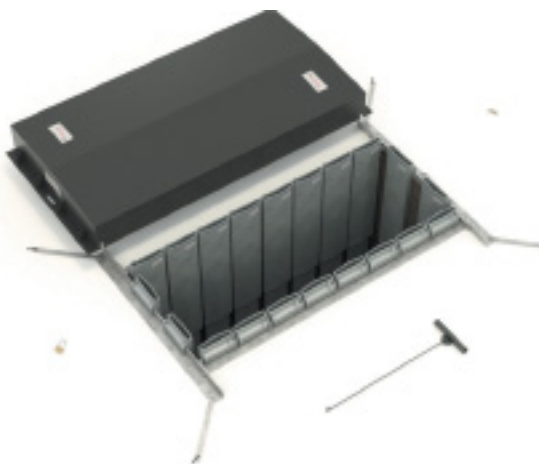
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do you need an online presence as a crematorium or cemetery?

Eimer Duffy discusses the benefits to your organisation of being online.

And the answer is yes. There is an expectation from people more and more that crematoriums and cemeteries have the following:

- Google Business Profile
- Website
- Social Channels

So how can being online help your Crematorium or Cemetery?

Most of us "Google" things each day to search for information, products and services. And as we all know, technology is ever evolving, think of it this way, for example, people picking where they want to be cremated or looking for a burial space online without having to make a trip to the cemetery. And from there look to see what else they can find out about the crematorium or cemetery from the website and social channels.



Google Business Profile

People need to be able to see where you are, how to reach you and what services you provide. This platform is a free marketing tool for you and linked to Google Maps. Apart from adding your information, you can reply to Google Reviews (feedback on the experience - I like to say), post updates, photos and videos like you would on Facebook, answer questions and get messages. And that's not all you even have insights, and you can find out lots of information on what triggered your Google Business Profile to appear on Google. People can call you via this and check out your website too, all within this one platform.

Website

Your website should share with people all the information they need to make a decision, as well as have ways they can contact you. If your website doesn't cover the basic requirements, people who haven't dealt with you before are likely to go elsewhere. Having your website fresh and engaging, as well as mobile friendly is really important. Mobile searches are increasing year on year and so you need to ensure that your website looks good on mobile. Having images or videos of who is representing the crematorium or cemetery will give people a good impression and reassurance. People do business with people they know, like and trust.

Once your website is up to date with all the necessary features, you can turn your attention to its partner and that's social media. I have a little saying "websites and social media are like a married couple, the website is all picture and no sound and your social media is where the conversation path begins"

Social Media

You can see the need for a presence on Google and having a website, but wonder about the place of social media. Social media allows you to notify your network about what's going on.

People use the platforms to share not only the happy news but the sad things too. So it's an appropriate place to post details of a funeral service. It gives the family a way to notify their community of any updates and provides the crematorium or cemetery with online awareness via the family sharing. Social media is a tool focused on engagement, this leads to brand recognition and it helps with being top of mind at a difficult time.

When it comes to other things to post on your social media channels these could be things such as historical information, inspiring quotes, special events such as a ceremony for Easter, blessing of graves and even history tours. Create videos to answer people's questions and even LIVE video streaming. People are curious about what options are out there and this could help them with their pre-planning too.

What impact social media has on our lives today and what the future might be?

Being online is becoming more and more essential. People use the internet for researching, education and even entertainment and that's not going away. Social media with its focus on community is a good place to share and engage with people. Social media has an impact by:

- Increasing Brand Awareness and loyalty.
- Getting more visitors to your website.
- Expanding your audience.
- Generating more footfall to your door.
- Amplifying reach in your local community.
- Gaining you valuable insights and feedback.
- Reducing resources for customer service.
- People getting to know, like and trust you.

In regards to the future and being online, Hootsuite publishes a really insightful report and you can download it from <https://www.hootsuite.com/resources/digital-trends>. It shows the global state of digital in 2022 and how it is evolving.

Social media is here to stay. New channels are coming down the tracks and the latest is TikTok. And as the generations move along:

- The Silent Generation (1925-1945)
- Baby Boomer Generation (1946-1964)
- Generation X (1965-1980)
- Generation Y (1981-1996)
- Generation Z (1997-2012)
- Generation Alpha (2013-2025)

They will adapt and adopt more of these channels and so it is necessary to embrace this fact. Don't worry you don't have to be on all the channels, only the ones that your audience and target market are most interested in. Knowing who you want to attract is key and this allows you to think about their needs and how you can best cater to them.

Your market:

- Are you in a highly traditional one?
- What religious beliefs?
- Do people stay in your area for short periods of time?
- Social demographics?

Once you have figured this out then you can start to use the right channels to stay top of mind and help people gain an insight into who you are, what you do and how you can help them with their final journey.

A bit about the author

Walt Disney Company, Lyreco and St. John of Gods Services. I took a career break to focus on my three little angels, who then headed off to school. I moved into working in website design, digital marketing and social media training.

In 2018, I set up FIT Social Media. Over time I accrued many clients. I noticed a recurring trend with my clients. Businesses who required a more empathic approach in their business got the most out of my work. They required an emotional and compassionate tone of voice for their online presence. I worked with these businesses and helped them develop online strategies. Their tone reflected the nature of their offerings. And from there working more and more with professionals within the funeral industry.

I know how daunting social media and digital marketing can be. Especially when you are trying to run a funeral business. I am a big believer in keeping things simple and getting the foundations right. So you can keep a consistent online presence without spending every minute online.

With over 20 years of professional experience, I know what it takes to look professional, be more approachable and build trust online. I am here to help funeral professionals with their online communities, locally and worldwide.

For more information contact me, Eimer Duffy at www.fitsocialmedia.ie



Development in Progress – March 2021

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Cemeteries
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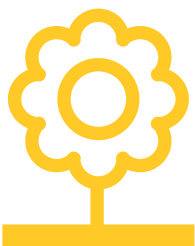
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every little helps

Staff at Distington Hall crematorium in Copeland, Cumbria, are encouraging those placing floral tributes to remove all wrapping from flowers first.

Many tributes are left in the grounds or the chapel of remembrance, and removing the plastic first means the flowers, once past their best, can be easily collected and composted.

Bereavement services manager, Susan Pringle, said: “We have provided an area for people to unwrap their flowers, and a bin in which to place the decaying ones. We’ll use that to make compost that can then be used in the grounds for potting and planting schemes.

“Placing flowers is a lovely way to remember someone, and this scheme means it also becomes a circle of recycling that benefits the earth and reduces the amount of plastic in the environment.”

The ‘reduce, reuse, recycle’ theme is one that’s being fully embraced by the organisation. Any planters and pots that are left behind are washed and used in the newly flourishing walled garden – a neglected Victorian space being brought back to life through regular volunteer events.



Ms Pringle added: “We have members of the public, local school children and community payback members who come to this beautiful garden to help restore it. Instead of throwing away the unwanted pots from tributes, they are used to plant seeds and grow plants that will become part of the garden.”

The team used a growing Christmas tree as a ‘memorial tree’ for the bereaved to hang messages on over the Christmas period. The

tree has now been planted back into the grounds of the crematorium and will be used again next Christmas. It will even be adorned with wooden decorations created from fallen branches from the crematorium’s woodland area.

Ms Pringle’s team have also recently purchased two automated mowers, which should streamline things considerably.



She said: “These quiet, eco-friendly robotic mowers cover 7,000 square metres, and can detect where the grass is growing longer and faster. They mow continually, so the clippings will be minimal and are dispersed, becoming a source of nutrients for the lawns.

“Because they are light, they can access areas that our ride-on mowers can’t – for example wet and heavy ground.

“Depending on the type of mower, ride-ons can cost around £70 per cut, due to labour, transport, and ever-increasing fuel costs. The robotic mower costs under £1 per cut and gives us a higher standard of grass cut, whilst reducing the impact on the environment.

Leila Cox
Senior Communications Officer
Copeland Borough Council



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state-of-the-art crematorium opens in the west midlands

One of the UK's most environmentally-friendly crematoriums has opened its doors to serve the communities of South Birmingham, Bromsgrove and North Worcestershire.

Waseley Hills Crematorium has been developed by Westerleigh Group, the UK's largest independent owner and operator of crematoria and cemeteries.

The Group's portfolio now includes 36 sites across England, Scotland and Wales, all set within beautifully-landscaped gardens of remembrance which provide pleasant, peaceful places for people to visit and reflect.

Its latest crematorium enjoys uninterrupted views of the surrounding rolling hills, hedgerows, pastures and pockets of woodland, providing a picturesque, peaceful and special setting for services.

The purpose-built chapel building features a distinctive living green wildflower roof and the development of the crematorium has included the enhancement of existing wildlife habitats as well as the creation of new ones.

There is parking for 120 cars, with overflow areas available if required, and the contemporary chapel building can seat 105 guests, with significant additional standing room.

There are state-of-the-art media facilities, including a tribute screen and speakers outside the chapel, to enable larger congregations to participate in the service in addition to being able to provide webcasts and an extensive music library. A covered floral tribute area, set away from the chapel, allows families and friends the opportunity to gather in peaceful tranquillity after a service.

Site manager Joy Edgington said: "My team and I are looking forward to providing vital support to the community so that our very uniquely-designed facility will soon become the crematorium of choice for families near and further afield. The crematorium is now open and anyone is welcome to come and visit us"

To compliment the Group's commitment to continually review and improve its activities to reduce the impact on the environment, and in line with Environmental Policy Statement introduced by the Federation of Burial and Cremation Authorities, Waseley Hills Crematorium is the Westerleigh's most environmentally-friendly development to date.

The cremator has been fitted with the very latest advanced filtration and abatement technology, with the new crematorium being one of just a small number of new facilities nationwide to include NOx abatement as part of its fully abated system.

The insulation in the building exceeds the minimum standards required by the building regulations and the chapel features specific environmentally-positive installations such as 100% LED lighting and sub-metering to services.

The crematorium also benefits from a sustainable drainage system and an electric vehicle charging infrastructure. Westerleigh Group's Chief Executive Officer, Debbie Smith said: "We are very proud to have created one of the most environmentally-friendly crematorium facilities in the UK.

"It's been particularly exciting for me that one of my first roles since joining Westerleigh Group earlier this year has been to oversee the opening of this state-of-the-art facility.

"From day one, we have implemented a regime based around minimising energy use, maximising recycling and proactively encouraging biodiversity.

"I am confident that Westerleigh Group has created a crematorium which will be a huge asset to the communities of South Birmingham and Worcestershire, and provide people with a pleasant, peaceful and comforting environment in which to remember their lost loved ones."

For more information about Waseley Hills Crematorium, please visit: www.waseleyhillscrematorium.co.uk



GreenAcres research findings



The bereavement sector has changed!

Managers in businesses all over the country are having similar discussions. What's the direction this sector is moving in? What change has the past couple of years made? Has business gone back to normal now that we are over the worst of the pandemic?

The bereavement sector has changed, because people have changed!

Some of us might not see the change immediately, some of us might not want the change – but the fact is, our customers, people across the UK have different expectations.

The GreenAcres Group are customer centric, which means they like to understand what people really want and need. Over the past months research findings and market analysis concluded in an ICCM online seminar providing an overview of research and market trends, explaining changing consumer attitudes and the need to provide more choice for families dealing with bereavement.

The starting point is to recognise that Covid has changed the world. People are living differently, working differently and thinking differently. Many of the new habits that were adopted through necessity have stuck. Trends that were predicted to come in years, changed in a matter of weeks, or even days.

For example, online deliveries through e-commerce increased to the levels projected to happen in 10 years' time, in just 8 weeks. Significantly, 71% of the population now shop online. And 95% of people say that they made a least one lifestyle change that they expect will now be permanent.

Importantly, people have reevaluated what's important with priorities focused on personal health, the wellbeing of their loved ones and their financial security.

So, what does this mean for the bereavement sector?

People are talking about death and dying more, but maybe it's still not quite enough.

A survey of over 2,000 UK residents has revealed that 29% of the population have discussed death and their funeral preferences more frequently with loved ones compared to before the coronavirus pandemic, demonstrating a shift in attitudes and openness when discussing end of life.

However, the results also highlighted some clear differences across both gender and age. 52% of women said they did discuss death with those closest to them, compared to only 36% of men.

Although 43% of respondents have either discussed some ideas or would like to share their thoughts, only 24% have shared detailed preferences for funeral arrangements with loved ones.

Those aged 35-44 felt most strongly that they didn't know how to approach the topic of death, and one in four people have never discussed death with their loved ones, and don't plan to.

Andy Tait from GreenAcres said:

"After the incredibly tragic experiences that so many people have lived through over the past 2 years, it's perhaps not surprising that more and more of us have started to open up a conversation with our loved ones about death. For so many people it can be an incredibly difficult topic - nothing can prepare you for how you might feel when someone close to you dies, whether it's expected or not. It can feel overwhelming, devastating and strange, all at the same time. There's lots to organise, and it can be difficult to know where to start.

"For many people, talking about death and individual preferences can be a taboo subject, but by sharing our wishes it can take stress and worry away from the people you love the most when it's their turn to make the arrangements.

"Our survey highlights an encouraging shift in behaviour and openness, but also demonstrates that more needs to be done to normalise these important conversations and provide people with the support they need to not only discuss death, but also living with grief."

It appears that people want choice!

Recent data indicates that 57% of people do not regard themselves as belonging to any particular religion. So, what does influence people's decisions about the type of funeral they would want?

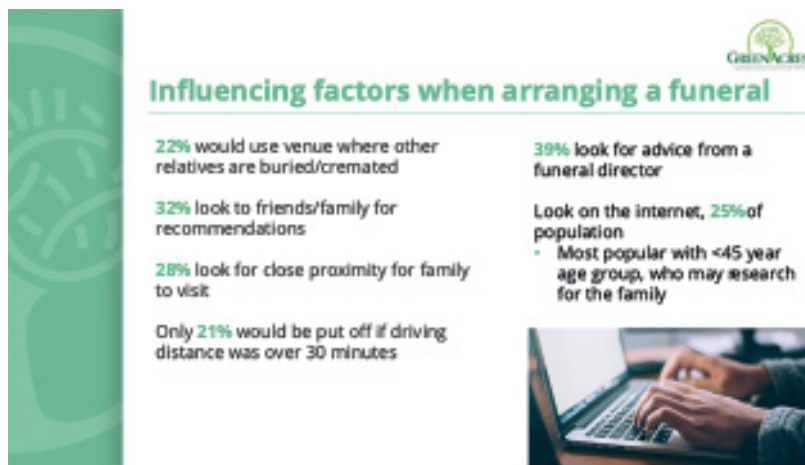
Greenacres recognise that understanding what people think when it comes to talking about death, or planning a funeral is

key to meeting their needs and driving change. One size really doesn't fit all. Offering variety and choice in different ways is essential to providing a customer centric service.

Who and what influences decisions when arranging a funeral?

The fact that 25% of people are now likely to look on the internet is not a surprise, household penetration of internet enabled devices is at saturation point. A funeral is rarely arranged by just one person, so it is likely that one member of the family group is providing the internet research for the decision makers. The surprising statistic is that only 39% claim they would look to a funeral director for advice. It's anticipated that this would have been at least double just 5 years ago.

People don't all want the same thing. For some families, a direct cremation arranged through an online support service is preferable. For these a new way of celebrating the life of their loved one doesn't involve the traditions of previous generations. This method of funeral arrangement is here to stay and appreciated by an estimated 20% of 80% of the population who choose to be cremated, rather than buried.



Environmental consciousness – is this even relevant to the bereavement sector?

Sustainable options are another interesting factor for the bereavement sector to understand more.

53% say it's important to consider the environment

If arranging a funeral for loved one, 26% say they would look for environmentally friendly options

Only 5% are put off if no plastic permitted in park (flowers, balloons)

17% say they want an eco-burial, kind to environment

26% a discrete ash scattering within woodland

One thing that is clear, through research across general attitudes to the topic of sustainability - it's our responsibility to create change and provide the necessary education. People do not expect to pay more or put in more effort for environmentally conscious solutions. This is expected to be solved by the businesses, manufactures and organisations providing the services.



This is from food manufactures developing more recyclable packaging, to partnering with renewable energy suppliers. There is no reason why these expectations will not apply to the bereavement sector. It's on us to take ownership and support the green agenda, so that people have the choice laid out for them.

In summary, let's all recognise that change is already here. People's needs do not all fit into a one size coffin. Ignore these changes at your peril, but the last two years have accelerated general trends in priorities, shopping and decision making. The people arranging funerals today won't necessarily do what they ancestors did.

Jane Kirkup
GreenAcres Group



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nw branch visit to jcb

Ten managers visit the JCB site in Uttoxeter

Uttoxeter, a town in Stoke on Trent, is probably best known for its racetrack and a run of industrial units stretching across the countryside along the A50. These units are branded with three letters and known the world over, JCB. Joseph Cyril Bamford founded the company that took its name from his initials in 1945 building tipper trailers and has gone on to manufacture plant of all shapes and sizes on four continents.

On 15th March, a group of ten managers from across the North West headed down for a day at the factory not quite knowing what to expect.

From the moment you arrive to the minute you leave, you are enveloped into the world of JCB. The customer service is second to none and we were greeted on arrival by a member of staff with tea and coffee to hand, all that was missing was the bacon butties. Our hosts, Andy and Mark, met us and gave us a brief rundown of the day and handed us a menu for lunch to check any allergies etc. Being rather partial to my food and having been told about the reputation of the chefs, the menu certainly didn't disappoint.

We set off to the company cinema, which put our local one to shame, again the addition of some popcorn and a drink was all that was missing (I did say I was food orientated!). A health and safety film and other advisory information digested, we moved into the museum.

Now you think of JCB and diggers and expect a few bits of history etc and the room did not look overly big, so we were a bit taken aback when our hosts said it would take over an hour to go through. Starting with the early life of the founder, Mr JCB as he became known, through to him starting to work for himself making tipping trailers and on through the development of the company with fascinating insights from our hosts, time almost stood still. I could have spent at least double the amount of time in there as we moved from room to room with each stage of the development of the company and the machinery they were producing. Everything was documented and shown in different mediums and retained our interest all the way through.

Amongst the exhibits was a life size model of their largest digger, reconstructed almost like Meccano due to its weight and size, and the car that took the land speed diesel record. Their business model and details of factories across the world and the numbers involved was fascinating. They do not take private sales and work through networks of distributors, so every piece of plant constructed is pre-ordered and paid for on completion. The last part was about their work in alternative fuels and future progress. Throughout the tour, our hosts talked us through the different displays and added their own experiences and whilst it might be a patter to them and done regularly, it came across as personal to our tour and therefore kept the interest of every one of us.

This led on to lunch. When a company has its own farm, which then supplies meat and dairy for the chefs, you know you are on to a good thing. A three course lunch, including braised featherblade of Daylesford organic beef, certainly lived up to the reputation.



Lunch was followed by a tour of the factory floor. Having donned the necessary safety equipment, we headed out into another world. It was like having an ants eye view on the workings of an ants nest. People and forklifts buzzing everywhere. Separate stations for each stage of the process and fully fitted into the term, 'organised chaos'. To the outsider it looked chaotic but every component was pre-designated on a trolley that moved along the production plant so everyone had all the parts to complete their task and then the trolley and unit moved on to the next bay. At the end of the process there should be an empty trolley to return to the start of production and a completed unit sent off to the testing area. To see a digger appear from the first nut and bolt to the finished article and the various processes it goes through on the way to ensure the machine is robust and fit for purpose for a life of graft was almost magical. The provision of on-site doctors and dentists mean staff can get treatment as needed and not be away from the production line for any length of time and therefore keeping disruption to a minimum. The factory produces 45 backhoe diggers a day and the order book is full until at least April next year.

The tour concluded and we took the opportunity for some photographs and thanked our hosts for their hospitality.

Apart from what we learnt on the tour etc, the biggest thing I took away from the day was the level of customer relations and customer service offered to us. We were treated with respect throughout and nothing appeared to be too much trouble. Neither did we feel we were taking up our host's time. Not once were sales or even possible sales raised, no real discussion of the machinery used unless via questions raised by the group. It was purely about the hospitality and making sure we enjoyed the experience because that is what you remember and is what brings their name to the forefront when you next look to purchase any plant.

It is a valuable lesson. Whilst we are seen as a public service and not about making money, we all know the pressures placed on us with income targets etc mean that we run our services in a very business-like way. By concentrating on the customer experience as a whole, we too can generate future income from families taking up different tribute options for the service or affordable memorials that continue to bring in revenue. The pride in the service that every single employee showed was tangible. This is essential for us, as managers and officers in bereavement services, to articulate when dealing with families at what is the most difficult time of their lives.

Whilst everything evolves, customer satisfaction always remains at the centre of our business. As with JCB, if we can keep the customer happy and they take away good memories, we will be at the forefront of their minds should bereavement services be needed in the future.

Dave Jennings (Trafford)
with assistance from **Mike Gurney (Tameside)**

tales of a cemetery registrar

The Final Goodbye

The day arrived for the final goodbye - on approach the building loomed.
It's harsh edges, windows dark, full of hidden gloom.

My heart beating faster with trepidation - the road seemed endless and cold.
I turned the corner and the doors, chilled me to my soul.

These doors built in times gone by – seen many shadows pass through.
Those of faith and those of not I gasp the breath I drew.

Amongst those that hold the dearest of memories, who walked alongside his feet.
I take the walk in, it is like no other, the silent steps to take a seat.

They speak of a life well lived – adventures - many that I shared this person heaven sent.
I no longer feel sadness but hope and love that I see is every present.

The end music starts, I float out the doors full of love - admiration that made him so.
A feeling of peace a place, where sunlight now streams - angelically through the windows.

By Anita Fish



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in touch - up north



2021/22 a load of numbers

Sadly, this column will contain a lack of cat pictures for once. Amazingly my super furry animal is resisting helping with work and instead giving us a scientific breakdown of the local animal population, via what she brings home. Maybe it's the love of cats or the industry, but it's far too easy to just go, oh dear another 3 rabbits.

As all members know, we've passed the lovely point of renewals for the year and into a new financial and membership year. While we do cover a lot of statistics at AGM time, we might not touch on, or bring them to life enough, to really explain what we've done in a year or the last few years.

Being a former statistician, however, (I do love my statistics) they do tell you a lot if you've got the right ones.

For example, we talked before about the value of membership and how growing the ICCM helps the industry as a whole, through better practice being spread, helping fix problems and passing on government guidance and law.

Individual members				Corporate				Totals
Year	No.	% share	Year on year	Year	No.	% share	Year on year	
2022	679	46.8%	-0.15%	2022	771	53%	6.64%	1450
2021	680	48.50%	-3.30%	2021	723	51.50%	7.00%	1402
2020	703	51.00%	2.90%	2020	675	49.00%	8.50%	1378
2019	683	52.30%	2.90%	2019	622	47.70%	5.20%	1305
2018	664	52.90%	3.40%	2018	591	47.10%	4.20%	1255
2017	642	53.10%	1.70%	2017	567	46.90%	2.90%	1209
2016	631	53.40%	4.50%	2016	551	46.60%	2.40%	1182
2015	604	52.90%	*	2015	538	47.10%	*	1142

The very helpful table above shows how we have grown since 2015.

We had 1,142 total members on the 1st April 2015 and by the 31st March 2022, it had grown to 1,450. So, we're now 27% bigger than we were.

We've also changed our dynamic, we had a 53/47 split in memberships to professional in 2015 and now we have a 53/47 split to corporate memberships. Its also meant that the 27% total rise is reflected by a 12% professional growth and a 43% corporate growth rate.

Last year, some councils and organisations joined and some left. We added 7 associate corporate members, 7 authorities/private cemeteries/crematoria and 61 parish and town councils - there are a lot of them out there. Individual membership may have fallen slightly over the last 2 years, however, we added 56 new people in the year and the pandemic seemed to speed up a lot of changes, willingly or unwillingly.

On education/training we can also look at the last few years.

CTTS candidates		Education modules issued	
2021/22	66		75
2020/21	103		104
2019/20	73		164
2018/19	89		166
2017/18	49		142

We can see that education modules have been rather consistent, and people keep learning and amazingly we had a rather busy year for CTTS's in 2020/21.

More importantly for our members is delivering training courses to them. We introduced a feedback system in 2019 – 2020, which has brought very useful comments to assist in the development of our training and from this we've also started to finally accurately count how many people we are training.

	21/22	20/21
Compliance course	78	119
EROB	162	98
CRUSE	105	40
Customer Care	25	0
Exhumation	96	36
Gardens of Rem	87	0
Memorial Management	142	25
Pubic Health	55	31
Sexton Duties	83	60
SLCC / ALC	121	55
	954	464

In 2021/22 we delivered training to nearly double the number of candidates than the year before and the majority of that was online training - nearly 1,000 training places have been taken.

Now what do all these figures mean?

On their own, not much they're just data.

Together and in context it shows the change in the industry and our membership – we reach a far greater audience of communities and councils than ever before.

Professional members are still undertaking education training to develop their skills, individuals are still training in our CTTS schemes and through mainly online training courses, we're reaching and educating as many people in the sector as we can.

Number crunching away, the Institute continues to grow and change to demands, just as our members have. What further changes and developments will be needed we can't know, however, if we don't build and plan for them, then the changes will still come whether we like them or not. Rather than worrying about that today though, you can be assured that we're always thinking of things and just need the time, member support and sometimes government action to get there.

If you're ever in doubt about needing any industry training or advice, just ask and remember that's what we're here for – the members.

Trevor Robson
ICCM Finance and IT Manager

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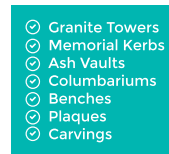
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Why not write an article for the journal?

We would be delighted to include any articles from anyone that would like to share their experiences with other members.

Need help? We are here to offer you any assistance or guidance with putting your article together.

Please contact Sofia Allana on sofia.allana@iccm-uk.com or phone 07502 627521

the act of consecration

With the exception of a new or an extension to a Church of England churchyard, the ceremony of consecration rarely takes place. It's understandable therefore that few images either historical or contemporary appear to exist.

Cemetery managers in England and Wales will be only too aware of the significance of consecration as it is a term that appears in cemetery registers and also needs to be taken into consideration concerning requests for exhumation. Church of England diocesan websites are a good source of information regarding this matter; the extract that follows comes from the Peterborough Diocese:

Consecration is the setting aside of land or buildings for sacred use in perpetuity. The consecration of a church or a burial ground can only be undertaken by a Bishop. It is usual for a written request to be made to the Bishop in the form of a Petition for Consecration. This is usually presented to the Bishop at the beginning of a consecration ceremony. The church or burial ground becomes legally consecrated upon the Bishop signing a document called a Sentence of Consecration, which is usually done in the course of a consecration ceremony.

When a church or burial ground has been consecrated, it becomes subject to the Bishop's jurisdiction. As well as consecrating churches and churchyards in the diocese, the Bishop consecrates cemeteries owned by Parish Councils or other local authorities. Where a burial authority wishes to have all or part of a cemetery consecrated, it should write to the Diocesan Registrar with a request for the land to be consecrated by the Bishop. The request should be accompanied by:

1. A plan of the land on A4 paper.
2. A copy of the Conveyance or Transfer to the burial authority.
3. A copy of the planning permission for change of use of the land to a burial ground.

The Registrar will prepare the necessary Petition for Consecration and Sentence of Consecration and arrange with the Bishop and the burial authority a date for the consecration ceremony.

The service of consecration is short; the ceremony published on the Diocese of Portsmouth website is barely over one page of A4 text.

The images used to illustrate this article were probably taken by a professional photographer and show the ceremony of consecration of Kingsclere Churchyard in Hampshire. The village is situated about 20 miles north of Winchester between Newbury and Basingstoke and is in the Diocese of Winchester. There has been a church on the site for over 1000 years with the present building occupying the location of a former Saxon Minster.

It is presumed that burial space around the church was exhausted so nearby land was acquired as a churchyard extension. The ceremony was performed by the Right Revd Theodore Woods, Bishop of Winchester between 1923 and 1932. He would have been joined by the registrar or chancellor of the diocese, local clergy and the church choir in addition to curious local residents.

As far as can be traced these images were not used to accompany a newspaper feature about the ceremony. They are a rich study in social and ecclesiastical history as they depict a rarely captured event in addition to showing clerical dress of the 1920s.

The bishop (right) arrives dressed in a cassock (which would have been purple) with a cincture around his waist into which his pectoral cross is tucked. He is wearing a Canterbury Cap on his head and carrying his crook, a staff representing the office of bishop as the shepherd of the flock.

The cleric on the left, probably the local incumbent of whose churchyard he is about to consecrate, wears a black cassock and a mortarboard on his head, called so as it has similarities in appearance to the mortarboard used by brick masons to hold mortar.

Walking behind the bishop and wearing a bowler hat is either the registrar or chancellor of the diocese.





Here the bishop is now robed in his white rochet (worn over the cassock) and black tippet (a scarf around the neck) ready to commence the ceremony. The colour of his academic hood can also be glimpsed around his neck. He is also wearing a pectoral cross and holding his crook.

Immediately on his left is the registrar/chancellor robed in a gown, white bands around his neck and a wig, being the court-room dress of a barrister. The registrar/chancellor is carrying a document wallet, probably the consecration deed for the bishop to sign.

The two clerics either side of the bishop are wearing surplices and black scarfs. The one on the left of the registrar/chancellor could well be the bishop's chaplain.

The ceremony seems to have reached the part where the bishop is being invited to consecrate the churchyard; one of the clerics is reading from an order of service. The registrar/chancellor is studying a document which could well be the deed of consecration.

In the picture below, the whole ensemble, including the public, is walking around the boundary of the new churchyard prior to the deed of consecration being signed.

Contained in the instructions for the consecration of a new burial ground issued by the diocese of Peterborough can be found the likely words to be used.

The Bishop processes round the boundary of the ground to be consecrated. The Deed for Consecration is presented to the Bishop.

Reverend Father in God, we request you to consecrate this ground for the burial of our people.

The Bishop shall signify his assent, and bid the Registrar read the Sentence of Consecration, and after it has been read he shall sign it.

Bishop By virtue of our authority in the Church of God we do now consecrate and set apart from all profane and common uses this ground to be a resting-place for the bodies of those who have departed in the Lord: in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. **Amen.**



Brian Parsons

References

<http://www.peterboroughdiocesanregistry.co.uk/consecration.html> (accessed 12 April 2022)
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<https://www.clerewoodlands.org.uk/> (accessed 12 April 2022)

company news

Plotbox

New Technology Solution supporting Bereavement Services in Wirral

Wirral Council Cemeteries and Crematorium Service have implemented the PlotBox Funeral Director Portal in response to what was a business-critical need for digital comms at the height of the pandemic.

The portal provides Funeral Directors with 24/7 online access to view and request booking slots from cemetery and crematorium diaries.

Ian Dallinger, owner of Ian Dallinger Funeral Directors in Wallasey on The Wirral, describes a typical process of booking slots when with the family prior to having access to the portal:

"We'd have to phone the crematorium, then we'd go back to the family, speak to them about the time slots that were available, back on the phone to the crematorium to ask about availability - and you were to and fro between phoning the office and going back to your family."

Ian explains how the process has changed:

"You can literally visit a family at home, bring up the crematorium diary on your phone, and you can talk through the family with what times are available...and they can choose one themselves that suits them best." **To learn more, visit www.plotbox.io**

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tipton cemetery marks centenary of factory explosion

This year marked the 100th anniversary of one of the most tragic events in Tipton and Sandwell's history.

It was made all the more harrowing as it followed the Spanish flu epidemic of 1918 and the unveiling of the Tipton War Memorial in Victoria Park in August 1921.

On March 6, 1922, an explosion in an iron foundry on Groveland Road, just off Dudley Port, killed 19 teenage girls who were employed in dismantling live ammunition for scrap. The youngest was just 13 years old.

A subsequent enquiry and trial found the factory manager, John Knowles, guilty of manslaughter and the owner, his wife, Louisa Knowles, was ordered to pay significant amounts of compensation to survivors of the explosion and the families of those killed.

To commemorate the tragedy, the Friends of Tipton Cemetery organised a commemorative service at the memorial to the girls killed in the explosion in Tipton cemetery.

A full restoration programme of the memorial was undertaken by Teleshore, prior to the event.

The event was well attended by over 100 members of the community as well as the Deputy Mayor of Sandwell, alongside many dignitaries and press, with orchestral contributions provided by Q3 Academy Tipton.



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the national covid memorial wall

Julie Dunk visits the moving national memorial on London's South Bank.



On a recent visit to London, I took the opportunity to visit the National Covid Memorial Wall on the South Bank, opposite the Houses of Parliament. I had seen press articles about the wall, so knew of its existence. But nothing had quite prepared me for the sheer scale of the memorial, nor the heart-rending stories it tells.

As you approach the wall, you are aware of a sea of red and pink. As you get closer, that sea resolves into individual hearts of various sizes and hues. Each heart represents a person who has died with Covid-19 on their death certificate; each heart represents a wave of grief.

The memorial stretches for over a third of a mile, and is right outside St Thomas' Hospital. There are over 180,000 hearts, representing the estimated number of people who have died of Covid during the pandemic. Each heart is hand painted, and is therefore unique, just like the people the hearts represent.

The memorial wall was started in March 2021 by the campaign group Covid-19 Bereaved Families, assisted by fellow campaign group Led by Donkeys. The Covid-19 Bereaved Families group was founded by Matt Fowler and Jo Goodman, who both lost their fathers to Covid during the pandemic. They became concerned that the deaths of people due to Covid were just becoming statistics, reported blankly without any acknowledgment of the humanity behind the figures. Jo Goodman stated in a Guardian interview 'they say grief is love with nowhere to go – the wall is where it goes'.

Despite the threat of arrest for criminal damage, and a potential £10k fine, volunteers from the campaign groups started to draw the hearts on the wall on 29th March 2021.



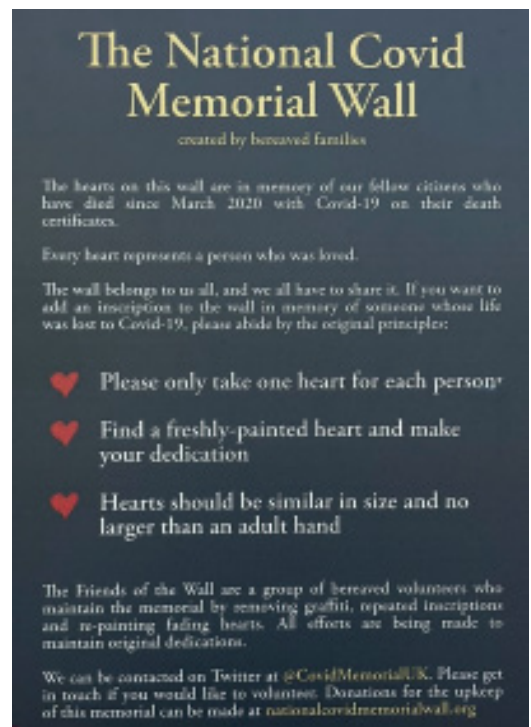
Within a few hours, over 1000 hearts had appeared, and within 10 days there were more than 150,000, reflecting the number of deaths from Covid at that time.

Initially it was envisaged that the memorial wall would be a temporary memorial, and that the area would be cleaned after a period of time. However, campaigners are arguing that the wall should remain as a permanent memorial. A team of volunteers regularly touch up the hearts and messages to ensure they remain legible. Despite the Prime Minister, Boris Johnson, promising a 'fitting and permanent' memorial to those who died from Covid-19, there are as yet no firm plans for this. The Government has declined to grant the wall a permanent status, and it may have to be removed in time.

On the first anniversary of the commencement of the wall, a petition with over 106,000 signatures was presented to 10 Downing Street, calling for the memorial wall to be made permanent. It is understood that the Government will be setting up a commission to look at creating a permanent memorial, so all is not yet lost for the wall. With the strength of public feeling on their side, the campaigners may get the result they are hoping for.

As well as the dedications within the hearts on the wall, there is a website where families can record their losses and leave a photo and a tribute: <https://nationalcovidmemorialwall.dedicationpage.org>. Reading the dedications on both the wall and the website is incredibly moving, and leaves you in no doubt that the scale of the loss to Covid is huge, and has had a massive impact on so many families. The people commemorated here are definitely more than statistics.

The National Covid Memorial Wall may not be fine art, and may not be to everyone's taste. It does, however, capture the tragedy of the pandemic in human terms, and allows for real expressions of grief from those who suffered a loss, and for everyone who was in any way affected by the pandemic. I had my reservations about whether the wall was a suitable national memorial until I visited it; seeing it in person has convinced me that it is the perfect expression of love with nowhere to go.



huntingdon crematorium & cemetery service of dedication

On Saturday 9th April, I had the pleasure of being invited to the official opening of the new site in Huntingdon.

The service was led by The Right revd Dr Dagmar Winter, Bishop of Huntingdon followed by an address by the Mayor of Huntingdon Karl Webb.

The service was followed by a tour of the facilities by the manager Sam Smith and her colleagues, who have done a fabulous job of creating a warm and inviting space.

The site was built with sustainability and the environment in mind. The town council has also taken the opportunity to have a new depot and purpose-built glasshouse constructed at the rear of the site, with the heat recovered from the cremator used to heat the greenhouse, which will be used to propagate and grow plants for the town's flower beds and containers.

A beautiful chapel with a floor to ceiling glass wall built in to allow for the natural beauty of the outside in. The chapel had a unique feature of a secure room that could be utilised for prisoners attending family funerals. It was also nice to see the care taken to decorate the crematory with woodland scene wallpaper, an area that can sometimes be overlooked when new crematoria are built.

Light refreshments and a chance to talk to Sam and all that helped achieve the build in the Sapley Lodge, a hospitality building that will service wakes, was a lovely end to the day.

Thank you to Sam and all the team.



Marian Millington
Deputy President

pulpit: my song

An article on the life of Samuel Crossman who wrote the poem 'My song is love unknown'.

Samuel Crossman (1623 -1683) was a priest of the Church of England and a hymn writer. He was born at Bradfield Monachorum, now known as Bradfield St George, Suffolk, England.

Crossman achieved the degree of Bachelor of Divinity at Pembroke College, University of Cambridge and after serving a term as Vicar of All Saints Church in Sudbury, was appointed as a Prebendary of Bristol Cathedral. After graduation, he ministered to both an Anglican congregation at All Saints, Sudbury, and to a Puritan congregation simultaneously. Crossman sympathised with the Puritan cause, and attended the 1661 Savoy Conference, which attempted to update the Book of Common Prayer so that both Puritans and Anglicans could use it. The conference failed, and the 1662 Act of Uniformity expelled Crossman along with some 2,000 other Puritan-leaning ministers from the Church of England. He renounced his Puritan affiliations shortly afterwards, and was ordained in 1665, becoming a royal chaplain. He received a post at Bristol in 1667, and became Dean of Bristol Cathedral in 1683. He died on 4 February 1683 at Bristol, and lies buried in the south aisle of the cathedral at Bristol.



The sign outside the church in Sudbury, Suffolk

The words of the hymn "My song is love unknown" are overwhelmingly beautiful and fit the Christian view of Jesus to a tee. They attracted the attention of hymnbook compilers including Percy Dearmer, (1867-1936) (pictured right) who championed Samuel Crossman's poems and included them in hymn book collections. He was an English priest and liturgist best known as the author of *The Parson's Handbook* and *The English Hymnal*. He was also the third vicar of the parish of St Mary's, Primrose Hill in north London.



The gravestone of Percy Dearmer in Westminster Abbey.



A photo of Percy Dearmer

A lifelong socialist, he was an early advocate of the public ministry of women and concerned with social justice. Dearmer also had a huge influence on the music of the church and, with Ralph Vaughan Williams and Martin Shaw, is credited with the revival and spread of traditional and medieval English musical forms. He ended life in the beautiful haunts of Westminster Abbey as a resident accepted for his major contribution to church life and church music in particular.

Here are the words of Crossman's major poem:-

My song is love unknown,
my Saviour's love to me;
love to the loveless shown,
That they might lovely be.
O who am I,
that for my sake
my Lord should take
frail flesh and die?

He came from his blest throne
salvation to bestow;
but men made strange, and none
the longed-for Christ would know.
But O, my Friend,
my Friend indeed,
who at my need
his life did spend!

Sometimes they strew His way,
and His sweet praises sing;
resounding all the day
hosannas to their King.
Then 'Crucify!'
is all their breath,
and for His death
they thirst and cry.

Why, what hath my Lord done?
What makes this rage and spite?
He made the lame to run,
He gave the blind their sight.
Sweet injuries!
yet they at these
Themselves displease
And, gainst him rise.

They rise, and needs will have
my dear Lord made away;
a murderer they save,
the Prince of Life they slay.
Yet cheerful He
to suffering goes,
that He His foes
from thence might free.

In life no house, no home
my Lord on earth might have;
in death no friendly tomb
but what a stranger gave.
What may I say?
Heav'n was his home;
but mine the tomb
wherein he lay.

Here might I stay and sing:
no story so divine;
never was love, dear King,
never was grief like Thine!
This is my Friend,
In whose sweet praise
I all my days
Could gladly spend.

As a choir boy, and later a member of several adult choirs and choral societies, I have sung this hymn many times and it has always moved my emotions and I am sorry that there isn't very much about Samuel Crossman in the collective memory of the Church of England.



A close-up photograph of the place where Dean Crossman is buried.

This is a photograph of the south aisle in Bristol Cathedral and it is here that Dean Crossman was interred.

Unfortunately, his stone was damaged at some point and was replaced with a blank stone. Odd that!

He is still listed among all the former Deans so his name is on public display for visitors to see. However, his appointment in 1682 was followed quickly by his death in 1683.

One of the outstanding things about "My song is love unknown" is the music to which the words are sung. There is a lovely story about the tune which is used most today. An organist and fellow composer called Geoffrey Shaw invited the composer John Ireland to lunch in the hope of discussing several publication matters. At some point in the discussions, Geoffrey Shaw pulled out of his bag the words of "My song is love unknown" and asked John Ireland if would write tune for the hymn. Amazingly, John Ireland got his pencil out and started to write tune immediately on the back on either a cigarette package or, some said that he wrote it on the back on the restaurant menu! Whatever the truth, the tune, which is known as "Love Unknown" was a spectacular success and is still being sung with great pleasure today.

John Ireland had a special gift!



John Ireland (1879-1962)



His grave in Sussex

Editor's note: This was the last article Neil wrote before he died. We will miss reading his many stories. Our thoughts are with his family at this sad time.

Neil Richardson

funerals under s.46PHA

Next of kin enquiries? What about the Government Legal Department?!

It's widely accepted that Councils have their own ways of doing things and will approach the same task in their own different fashions. A good example concerns s.46PHA funerals and tracing the deceased's next of kin.

Some Councils refer cases to us for next of kin enquiries as soon as they realise they're going to need help, because at the very least they would like next of kin to be informed of the death, often saying that they wish to avoid risk of criticism from family should the funeral go ahead without them knowing about it.

Other Councils prefer to refer cases to the Bona Vacantia Division of the Government Legal Department because they take the view that the statutory duty under s.46PHA stops with arranging the funeral and anyway there's no time to look for next of kin, even if there are any – and isn't that the Bona Vacantia division's job?

However, the Head of the Division recently went on the record to say:

Our position is that as over 80% of estates referred to the Government Legal Department each year are not Bona Vacantia, we should aim to give up the Crown's interest in such estates as quickly as possible. Ideally, of course, our preference would be that these estates are not referred here in the first place as it is not appropriate that GLD is used as a tracing agency for missing kin or executors. Furthermore, it is our view that before anyone refers an estate to GLD they should be as sure as they can be that the estate is, in fact, Bona Vacantia.

The starting point is that until shown otherwise, any given deceased person will have left surviving next of kin. The generosity of the relevant rules combined with the national demographic make it statistically almost inevitable that relatives do exist and can be found - any genealogist (a) will confirm this point and (b) is an ideal resource to show whether or (more likely) not any estate is, in fact, Bona Vacantia.

So, given that the days of the Bona Vacantia division willingly taking on any and all referrals are behind us, what is a busy Bereavement Services Officer to do? And what about the very many cases where the deceased has left no estate?

The genealogy industry exists to help its public sector clients by identifying and locating the next of kin of deceased persons. Whether any given deceased has left an estate and, if they have, it's value, really should be neither here nor there – a helpful and professional firm will be happy to help in any and all cases. The name of the game is enabling you to conduct s.46PHA funerals without risk of criticism from next of kin who are unaware of them until after the event and, ideally, for next of kin to take on the funeral themselves, taking it out of s.46.

As set out above, different Councils do things in their own ways but a common theme is that Bereavement Services Officers often speak of a pastoral element to their work, whether or not a funeral is to be conducted under s.46, and increasingly want to be sure that next of kin have the opportunity to attend the funeral, regardless of estrangement or perceived distance of relationship.

Nick Beetham

Business Development Manager, Fraser and Fraser Genealogists

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Midlands and Mid Wales: Michael Birkinshaw

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Alison Beck, Bereavement Services manager,
Hither Green Crematorium

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19th century burial science

Dr. Julie Rugg explores the burial procedures in the 1800's.

Thomas Wakley, powerhouse editor of the leading medical journal *The Lancet*, stood at the forefront of new medical and sanitary practice and was a particularly vociferous proponent of burial reform. In 1845, in one of his many editorials on the subject, he claimed 'there is no hygienic question respecting which we are so much behind our continental neighbours as that of burial of the dead'. He was surely right. Cities across Europe had expanded through the course of the eighteenth century and many countries had introduced new laws to tackle the insanitary burial spaces festering in over-populated neighbourhoods.

For example, Joseph II of Austria had forbidden intramural interment by edict in 1784, as had Charles III of Spain in 1787. The UK had no similar legislation. Commercial cemeteries emerged in the second decade of the nineteenth century, but there was no centralised state intervention until the passage of the Burial Laws from 1850. These laws were permissive in that they allowed local people to form burial boards, borrow money and establish cemeteries. Ostensibly, this appeared to comprise very little in the way of intervention and the history of burial reform in England appears to be a history of failure. However, a new interpretation of events reveals burial reform in England as a scientific success story.

The early history of burial reform rested on the miasmatic theory of disease: fevers were carried not through germs, but through bad air that emanated from noxious matter. A link was established between the smell of rotting bodies and the deadly nature of intramural interment. In Wakley's view, 'Cadaveric exhalations destroy life instantly, or give rise to various kinds of disease'. He wrote this as part of his review of a text published by Dr George Alfred Walker in 1839: *Gatherings from Graveyards*. Walker drew on what was by 1839 a well-established scientific understanding of how decomposing bodies impacted on health and what should be done about it. One key document is an essay in the French *Encyclopédie Methodique*. 'Cimetière' reflected the current state of play in the science of burial and contained detail of how graveyard miasmas might be contained. The principal intervention proposed by the essay is perhaps so obvious that it is no longer noticed: the grave plot. In churchyards, there tended to be no sense of a plan. Burials took place wherever the sexton decided that space was available, and he dug a grave that was sufficient size to take the coffin. The *Encyclopédie Methodique* indicated that toxins emanate from decomposing bodies in all directions. If a coffin is placed too close to another coffin, then those emanations would concentrate. If there was insufficient earth between the coffins and the surface, toxins would be emitted in that concentrated form and be fatal. What was needed was to place the coffin so it was completely surrounded by an entire box of earth, separate and to itself. Establishing a grave plot was a new way of thinking: the grave was centrally located in a three-dimensional block of earth below the ground, which was located next to another plot of similar dimensions, and another.

If the grave was then left for a sufficient time to allow for decomposition to be complete then it would be possible – hygienically – to open the plot and use the grave again. The key elements of this scientific approach were:

- Using plots to ensure that each coffin was separated from another; the essay recommended 52.5 square feet;
- Only one coffin should be buried in each grave
- The earth should be friable and light; clay soils should be avoided
- Plots could be re-used after a defined period: scientific experiment indicated that ten years was thought to be sufficient.

These elements constituted an essential science of burial, and it is possible to trace the ways in which these scientific principles were the foundation of burial reform in the 19th century.

The progress of burial reform benefitted from and also hampered by the interest of public health reformer and the father of the environmental health profession: Edwin Chadwick. Chadwick had been commissioned to investigate 'the sanitary conditions of the labouring population of Great Britain' – that report was published in 1842. An associated report on interment in towns was published the following year. The 1843 Supplementary Report on the Results of a Special Inquiry into the Practice of Interment in Towns followed on Walker's heels and was a hit. Both reports were widely reviewed and cited in local newspapers. Chadwick fully embraced and expanded on the notion of miasmatic theory. The reformer's interventions led to the Public Health Act 1848. This legislation allowed communities to secure an inspection of local sanitary conditions and secure funding to introduce public health improvements. The Act permitted the creation of local Boards of Health which benefitted from the direction of a central General Board of Health (GBH) whose three members included Chadwick himself.

The GBH had been tasked with the creation of new burial legislation. Chadwick's view was that all funeral matters should sit under the control of the state, and that the government should create mortuaries, own and control all burial sites and offer funeral services. In 1850 he sent a delegation to the Continent to investigate – in particular – the French *pompes funèbres*. The subsequent Metropolitan Interment Act 1850 encapsulated all his ideas to create a government funeral agency which would offer funerals at a range of fixed price points and start the process of closing churchyards and compulsorily purchasing private cemeteries.

This law was passed during one of the worst cholera epidemics to hit the capital: many people were of the view that overcrowded churchyards had spread infection. Chadwick's legislation appeared to be exactly the right thing to do. However, once the cholera epidemic was passed, the legislation was immediately reviewed. The Treasury made clear that the state would not bear the cost of compulsory purchase and that interference in the market could not be justified. A new and rather less ambitious Metropolitan Interment Act was passed in 1852, entirely repealing the earlier legislation. It borrowed from the Public Health Act in being largely permissive, relying on local communities to take initiative.

At this point, general histories of burial tend to forget how reform then progresses. However, this is the point at which a rather less well-known history of Victorian cemeteries actually starts.

The Act to Amend the Laws Concerning the Burial of Dead in the Metropolis was passed in 1852 and its provisions were extended beyond London in legislation passed in 1853. These were, essentially the first two of what would become a series of over 15 burial acts, the last of which passed in 1906. These Acts were hugely complicated, and here it is necessary simply to concentrate on the sanitary aspects.

The Burial Act 1852 permitted groups of local ratepayers to decide by democratic vote on whether to establish a burial board. The whole system was entirely permissive. Once a burial board was set up, then that decision had to be ratified by the new central Burials Office, which included a burial inspector transferred from the now defunct GBH. On the face of it, it looked like the science of burial had been rather overlooked. Burial boards were made up of local men, not necessarily with any expertise at all. However, the operation of the Burial Acts meant that, through the agency of these boards, new and sanitary cemeteries were established that totally transformed burial provision across much of England and Wales within the space of thirty years.

So how, exactly, did Burial Boards achieve a sanitary revolution? The answer lies with the Burials Office and in particular the intervention of Dr John Sutherland. In the late 1840s and through its brief history, Sutherland acted as a GBH inspector. He was appointed as the first Burials Inspector in 1852 and was tasked with the job of creating a set of burial regulations. His approach was really very different to Chadwick, as revealed in letters between the two men that still exist in the archives at University College London. In 1852, Sutherland was in Liverpool and wrote to Chadwick quite wryly about a new cemetery that was being set up in the city, which was purchasing '25 acres of as wet clay ground as we could get' – the worst possible type of soil for burial. However, during this period in Liverpool, something else happened. Sutherland wrote to Chadwick about a conversation with a local parish guardian on the subject of burial legislation. The parish guardian said:

"You must take one of two courses – either you must make us simply obey the orders of the Board in London or else you must only send us advice and leave us to take it or not as we like" and he explained that advice would almost invariably be followed whereas if the local authority had any room for discussion as to whether they would obey an order, it led to the foundation of two parties, one Liberal and the other Tory, the first of course opposed to obedience"

This observation clearly set Sutherland onto a new way of thinking about how to deliver sanitary burial practice. His decision was to deliver reform through 'soft' coercion using advice, support and negotiation.

The Burials Office became the central but overlooked player in the history of 19th century burial reform. Sutherland was seconded to the Crimea in 1855. Two burial inspectors, one after the other, served out much of the rest of the 19th century: Dr Philip H. Holland and Dr Henry Westwood Hoffman. The inspectors travelled the country, advising boards and undertaking inspections; and the Burials Office in London handled hundreds of queries.

The Burial Acts created a bureaucratic framework for the closure of churchyards and the subsequent opening and management of new cemeteries. A community seeking to close a churchyard made a formal application for an inspection visit. Public notices indicated when the visit would take place. The inspector would come, look at the churchyard, listen to what various people might have to say, and then make a decision. Sometimes just part of the churchyard was closed. The Secretary of State would then issue an Order in Council reflecting that decision.

Local people were by no means always in agreement about whether a closure order was required. Sometimes communities simply ignored a closure order and continued burial anyway. St John's churchyard in Sheffield was partly closed in 1855 but the vestry went on to secure thirteen further extensions over a 20 year period, with the Burials Office becoming increasingly exasperated. But for the most part, the community was involved in decision-making which was inclusive and persuasive. As Holland himself wrote, in 1869, 'the public have always fully and cordially acquiesced in what has been done, which they would not have done if it had been done for them and not by them'.

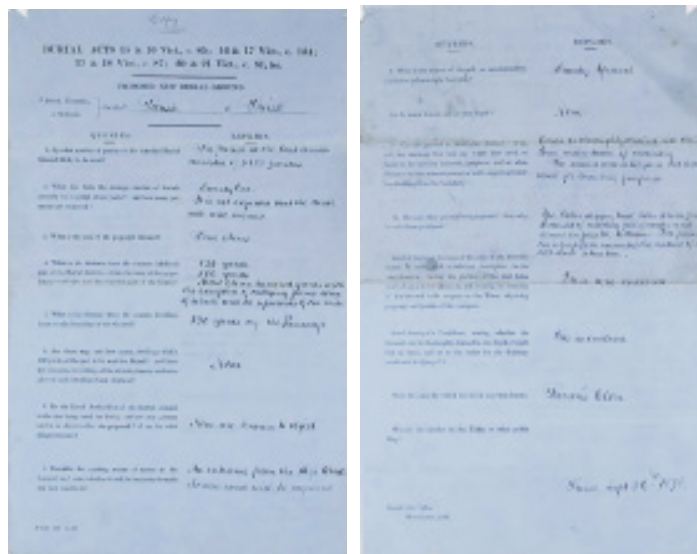


Dr John Sutherland, the first Burials Inspector, authored the initial cemetery regulations attached to the Burial Acts.

The Burials Office played a central role in the opening of new cemeteries. The Burials Office would only grant permission if it could be demonstrated that relevant research had established the scale of demand and that the planned site was big enough, and that the soil conditions were suitable for rapid and safe decomposition. The Burials Office simplified this process by providing a form and requiring the Burial Board to send a technical map. Without formal permission, the Burial Board could not access funds via the Public Works Loan Board, and that was an essential source of finance. An application from the small market town of Thirsk is given in illustrations 1 and 2. The Board had clearly checked multiple sites to find one where the soil was better suited for decomposition.



Burial boards were obliged to send a technical drawing of their proposed site, indicating where holes had been drilled to test drainage and soil composition



Burial Boards were required to complete a detailed proforma in order to secure permission to open a cemetery from the Burials Office.

Dr Sutherland also set out regulations for cemeteries that were issued to burial boards alongside their permission to proceed. The Regulations, in nineteen numbered paragraphs, distilled all the sanitary principles that had been thus far established. The cemetery was to be divided into readily distinguishable grave plots, marked on an associated plan and supported by a burial register; no more than one body should be buried in any grave or vault unless it was purchased for exclusive use by one family; a minimum burial depth was defined; and disturbance of graves was permitted only after the lapse of a defined time period.

The Burial Acts required burial boards to adhere to the regulations, but the Burials Office could offer no sanction for non-compliance. Rather, the law was governed through monitoring, correspondence and localised negotiation. Across the country, burial board minutes often indicated a

letter or a visit from the Burials Inspector advising on aspects of management.

Perhaps the main issue on which there could be non-compliance related to the principle of one body only in common graves. A tour of inspection was undertaken by Holland in 1858 to report on cemetery progress, and he concluded that the larger cemetery companies and almost all London burial boards 'have adopted the plan of burying several bodies in a grave'. Non-compliance reflected the sheer scale of operation of the larger sites, where constructing single graves for each interment was deemed simply impractical. Resistance also reflected the desire of family members to be buried together. The 'one-person' grave plot had been proposed on scientific grounds by public health experts but families favoured grave plots as a means of creating a space that could be leased for their own exclusive use, and where family members could be buried together.

Miasmatic theory was discredited by new germ theory, undermining the requirement for each grave to contain just one body. However, the Burials Office had been correct to ensure that burial took place in the right kind of soil and with due regard to possible contamination of water sources. In 1874, as debate raged on the introduction of cremation, Holland said that 'cemeteries are regarded by those for whom they are provided with just pride and satisfaction, as amongst the most evident sanitary improvements of our time'.

In conclusion, Dr Sutherland was a rather more acute observer of humanity than was ever the case with Chadwick. Sutherland wrote, in 1854, that 'we could not treat the disposal of the last remains of the dead as if they were a mere nuisance to be got rid of in any way'. He understood the need for communities to retain a degree of control, and that people would rather be left to ask for advice than be forced to follow a rigid set of guidelines. The Burial Office left a huge legacy of documentation that helps us to understand our intangible funerary history: the things that are meaningful in funerary practice, and how change could still reflect long-standing principles including a deep desire for families to be reunited at death.

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the journal

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