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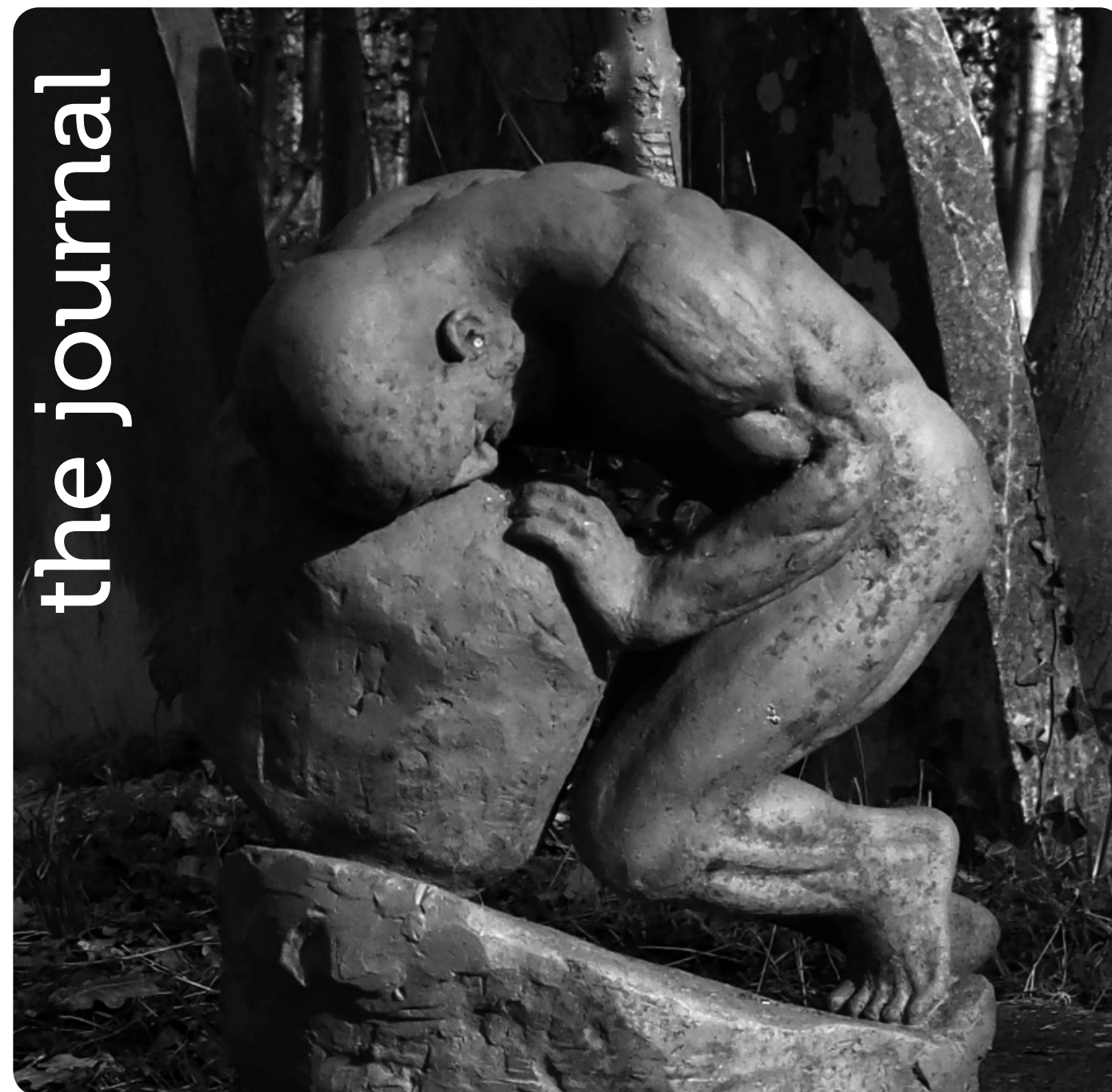
The Journal Winter 2020

2020

Winter

Under the Spotlight
ICCM Diploma Recipients
Cemetery of the Year Award Winners 2020
A Little Slice of Heaven

Bee Positive
Take a Look at us Now
Pulpit: The Big Tent in Chelmer Valley Park & Ride
Vintage Visits: Goodbye and Thank you



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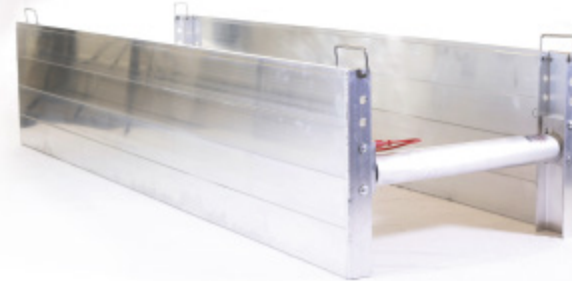
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editorial

Are we doomed with Zoom or is Skype all the hype.

Welcome to the Winter edition of the Journal. Winter? Where has the year gone? This has been a strange introduction to my role at the ICCM which I started in October 2019. Who could have predicted a pandemic to this scale and think it would last this long? With Christmas around the corner and many parts of the country in regional lockdowns, there doesn't seem to be an end in sight... yet. I hope by the next edition it will be a different story.

As the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic drags on, there have been many questions about what (or even where) the workplace will be in the future. For our sector that has been steeped in tradition for many years and where the administration has been very paper based, we found ourselves suddenly having to catch up with the digital world.

As a sector we have had to adapt to using electronic forms and upgrading, not only our technology, but also our own personal technical know-how. We are creatures of habit, and with any change comes a degree of trepidation and sometimes anxiety. We have had to face these head on, without the luxury of time to ease into the new ways of working. From the discussions I have had with members, for the most part, this has been achieved successfully.

Video-based conference calls on platforms like Zoom, Skype and Microsoft Teams, are – like it or not – with us to stay. Virtual meetings have become the “norm”. It's an approach that literally overnight went from something unusual to completely mainstream, and the remote workplace has created habits that we're not going to be able to simply walk away from.

Whilst I'm the first to embrace technology, in fact the ICCM Officers connect more now than we did in pre-pandemic days, I can't help feel that the face to face, human contact is being lost, or at least watered down. This industry, for me, has always been about people first. During this time, we have had to limit social contact with our colleagues, our customers and the bereaved. We have become isolated to a degree, and the days of workplace banter is disappearing. It is too early to tell what long-term impact this may have on our mental health, our confidence, and our ability to learn and progress if we feel unsupported and are distanced from our teams.

How easy and effective is it to manage a remote team? Where interaction becomes mostly through virtual means, the manager may not know how to support employees working from home or identify if one of their team is struggling in the same way they would normally if they were office based. Equally it also requires a change in assessing work performance, both good and bad, and may

lead to some employees feeling their efforts have not been recognised.

There is also a different quality to our attention when we are online. We are hyper-focused on the few available visual cues that we normally gather from a range of body language. Or perhaps, we are totally distracted and checking email while we are supposed to be conversing or listening intently to a colleague's detailed presentation. If we are with several people online at the same time, we are simultaneously processing visual cues from all of those people and perhaps their pets and children too, in a way we never have to do in a work place. We can end up feeling both connected and disconnected at the same time.

In our sector there will always be functions that simply cannot be done from home. Operational roles such as cremator technicians, gravediggers, chapel attendants and grounds staff have no choice but to go to the workplace. However, there is a danger that the teams become disjointed and divided as the physical presence of the office disappears. The workspace is more than just a place to go to carry out a job. It helps nurture friendships and camaraderie between colleagues, provides support and creates a learning environment, and even, for some, an escape from things that may be happening at home. So, whilst I recognise that things change, including how we work, there is a part of me that would hate to see the workplace and all that it has to offer, disappear altogether.

So, what will life look like for the funeral sector in the future? Are we ready for digital disruption or do you wish things could go back to how they used to be? Even in this profession, where there will always be a need for a face to face, caring service, there is a generation growing up using technology as an extension of themselves. There is already an expectation to be able to manage nearly every aspect of life, and death, digitally. Technology is in place that will, one day, allow a bereaved family to arrange an entire funeral online or by downloading an app, without leaving their home.

We need to be ready for a shift in culture and learn how to use technology to improve the services we can offer to the bereaved. This pandemic has shown us that we can adapt.

That being said, there are some things in life that can't be replaced with technology. The power of human contact, the feeling of an embrace, your hand being held or the comfort of being surrounded by family and friends.

So, is it doomed Zoom or Skype hype? I think a bit of both.

Sofia Allana
Editor

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president's page

I am back again for another year; normally, as President I would be able to write about the Learning Convention and how lovely it was to see everyone. I could talk about how fantastic it was to watch everyone receive their awards however, it's not to be. Covid continues to rule our lives. But I can take this opportunity to congratulate everyone who has done so well in achieving their certificates throughout the year, and I personally want to say a massive well done to two of my own bereavement services officers, Ellie Johnston and Kat Raffo, who have both achieved their CTTS award here at Southampton Crematorium, and to their mentors Lee Stickland and Dave Rees and to Mat Crawley for his support whilst they trained. Below is a picture of me presenting their certificates. I am so proud of them both they worked really hard to achieve this, whilst still undertaking their essential duties within the office dealing with the statutory paperwork and chapel duties, as I am sure many of you have also done.

At the time of writing this, Wales is in lockdown and England has split into the "three tier lockdown system" to try and help control the increase of COVID with a medium, high and very high rating. Each tier has very different restrictions which can cause so much confusion for everyone. However, when it comes to attending a funeral, you can attend, even if you have had a negative test result - the mind boggles I hear you all say! Scotland and Ireland all have their own restrictions, very strange if you need to travel across the country to see family and friends knowing which areas are following which restrictions.

It was absolutely lovely that ICCM Director and Board Member Mohamed Omer, was awarded an MBE in this year's Queen's Birthday Honours. The award was given to Mohamed in recognition of his services to the British Muslim community during COVID-19 and it was certainly well deserved. I am sure you will all join me in congratulating Mohamed.

The ICCM Officers have worked really hard to introduce, alongside Cruse, a new online Loss and Bereavement Awareness Training course. This course is suitable for everyone, so I would encourage as many as possible to sign up. I am sure you will learn something new and it will give



you the confidence to use your own knowledge and skills to do what you all do best in helping and supporting the bereaved.

I am sure I don't have to remind you, but please keep on nominating those charities to receive

the recycling money, which I know is especially needed during COVID when they are unable to raise funds in other ways.

In the last journal I shared my own personal story of bereavement. I want to thank every single one of you for your kind comments. My dear grandson Harlee may have passed but he will certainly never be forgotten. I know that several of my friends and colleagues have also lost loved ones, and we have to remember how difficult it is for everyone during this difficult time, as we still see reduced numbers of mourners, the introduction of the wearing of masks and the scanning of the track and trace checking in at services, not something that grieving families really want to think about, but it is essential to keep us all safe.



We would also be thinking about and organising our Christmas services now. Even if we are able to hold any, they certainly will not be the same. Both my grandsons, Harlee and Louie have stood up and read at our Christmas services here at Southampton, and in memory of Harlee I would like to share with you his reading:-

Missing you at Christmas

*Every day without you, since you had to go,
Is like summer without sunshine and winter without snow.*

*I wish that I could talk to you, there's so much I would say,
Life has changed so very much, since you went away.*

*I miss the bond between us, I miss your kind support,
You're in my mind and in my heart and every Christmas thought.*

I'll always feel you close to me, and though you're far from sight,

I'll search for you among the stars that shine on Christmas night.

Christmas this year is going to be one of the hardest ever for so many of us, and I personally appreciate the importance of being able to support my own family during the festive period. I do hope that we can all manage to spend time with our family, friends and loved ones as 2020 comes to an end.

I wish you all a good Christmas and let's hope 2021 brings each and every one of us a better year.

With much love to you all.

Heather White xx

Heather White
ICCM President

in touch

Winter 2020

Christmas is coming. But are the geese getting fat? Does anybody now have any pennies or ha'pennies to put in an old man's hat?

What will Christmas bring for us this year?

As I write this England has been divided into different Covid-19 categories: medium, high and very high. There are different measures that accompany each classification, with stricter controls in the high and very high categories. Wales has announced a two week 'firebreak lockdown' to try and stop the spread of the virus. Northern Ireland is probably about to follow suit. Scotland has introduced stricter measures across many areas. By the time you read this, things will no doubt have changed again, and we could be faced with another complete lockdown across the whole of the UK, just in time for Christmas. Let's hope not, but in reality, the virus isn't going to go away quickly, and we as a society are not yet competent at controlling it through existing measures. We may have to be prepared to be Lonely This Christmas, rather than Rocking Around the Christmas Tree with family and friends.

The summer months saw some successes in controlling the spread of the virus, but as the country opened up, children returned to school and students returned to university, cases have increased once again and the NHS is in danger of being overwhelmed. The daily death rate from Covid-19 has increased significantly in the last few weeks, and although it is not currently at the extremely high level that we experienced in March, April and May, it is feared that a second wave will see such levels return over the winter months.

These are therefore worrying times. The situation is not helped by frequently changing legislation and guidance. We continue to try and communicate changes relating to our sector to members as soon as they happen, and to interpret the sometimes-confusing messages. One of the most concerning changes in recent weeks was the coming into force in England on 28th September of the Health Protection (Coronavirus, Restrictions) (Self-Isolation) (England) Regulations 2020. Under these Regulations, people who have tested positive for Coronavirus, or have been in close contact with somebody who tested positive and should be self-isolating, are allowed to leave their self-isolation for specific purposes. One of those specific purposes is to attend the funeral of a close family member (see 2(3)(b)(v)). The Regulations apply equally to those that are symptomatic or asymptomatic, whereas previous guidance stated that those showing symptoms should not attend a funeral. Although the sector has coped very well by putting all the necessary measures in place to make their venues Covid-secure, allowing Covid positive people to attend a funeral introduces a new level of risk. Other funeral attendees, funeral directors and cemetery and crematorium staff all risk being exposed through such attendance. If a member of a team is infected, others within that team would need to self-isolate, possibly forcing the closure of the venue and therefore impacting on the availability of funeral services in that area.

In response to the introduction of the Regulations, the Deceased Management Advisory Group (DMAG), of which the ICCM is a part, wrote to relevant Government Ministers to express our concern and ask for the Regulations to be reversed. We also expressed concern that over three weeks have passed since the coming into force of the Regulations, with no revised guidance yet

published to inform us how best to protect those involved in funerals. As yet no response has been received. Hopefully by the time you are reading this, the situation will have been resolved.

I am pleased to be able to report some good news from this difficult period. In June, the ICCM restarted delivering training courses after several months of not being able to due to the pandemic. Most of our training courses are now delivered online, and the response has been fantastic. Feedback shows that there is no loss of learning from digital delivery rather from attendance in person. There are other benefits too – no travel is involved, saving time, money and environmental damage; people from all over the UK can attend, enabling good mixing and sharing of knowledge; nobody is hostage to suspect catering as each provides their own!

In August the ICCM was assessed for and was awarded ISO 9001:2015 certification. The award is an internationally recognised quality management standard developed and published by the International Organisation for Standardisation (ISO). Achieving the certification demonstrates a commitment to meeting the needs of our members through an effective quality management system, with an ongoing commitment to continuous improvement. The ICCM team worked alongside QMS International Ltd to build the quality management system and gain the certification. The certification was awarded after an organisation audit, documentation review, initial assessment, clearance of non-conformance, and final assessment. Gaining the certification means that members can be assured of the ICCM's commitment to quality.

In September the ICCM introduced a new online training course in association with Cruse. The Loss and Bereavement Awareness Training has been designed for anyone working with bereaved people, whether new to the sector or long serving and in any capacity. The course was piloted by a small group of ICCM Officers and Directors with over 100 years of combined experience, and each learnt something new from it. The course provides an understanding of how grief can affect people and teaches skills that can be used in our interactions to provide better support and services. The knowledge and skills gained from the course are invaluable in giving confidence to talk to and help bereaved people. Further details can be found on the ICCM website at www.iccm-uk.com, or by contacting the National Office.

The ICCM webinars have continued on a fortnightly basis and have covered many different subjects that affect bereavement services. They are a great opportunity to not only learn, but also to connect with others and share experiences. It can feel very lonely sometimes, especially as we have not been able to meet at events and branch meetings this year, so to 'meet' with fellow professionals for an hour every other Thursday afternoon allows us to feel connected. If you haven't been able to join them live don't worry, you can view them using links on the ICCM website. The winter period is no doubt going to present ongoing and possibly new challenges for us all. It is important that you look after yourselves – you won't be able to look after others if you don't. The ICCM is here to support you – please use us. Season's greetings to all.

Julie Dunk
ICCM Chief Executive



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Routine Preventative Maintenance

What should it mean to you and what it means to us?

By now, in the current climate (and many other words beginning with "C") you will have ensured that your cremators are working at 100%, your groundworks machinery is fully serviced, your chapels are disinfected and regularly cleaned, and your staff are cared for appropriately.

But, (isn't there always a "but") have you struggled to find an appropriate technical service provider for an incredibly important aspect of your service to the bereaved?

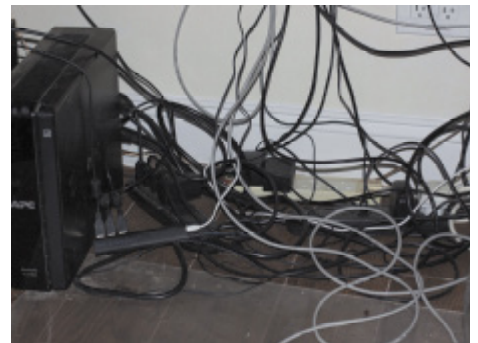
What about your audio-visual installations? Music and sometimes visual tributes form a huge part of what people expect at a funeral; the consequence of a system failure impacts on families and on your service in equal measure.



Routine maintenance is a critical part of maintaining your level of service quality and your reputation. Finding that sound and vision are not working just before a service is due to arrive is the panic situation everyone dreads. Doing everything reasonably possible to ensure this does not happen should be part of your management plan, especially when service delivery is at its critically highest level.

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- ✓ We will consult with your Chapel Attendants to evaluate any issues they may have and find economic solutions thus making staff part of the solution not just the recipients of the problem. Should any aspect of your installation require attention, we will immediately inform you and provide you with a solution that is both economic and technically appropriate.
- ✓ We will attend to any wiring and cabling that is either unsafe or installed in a way that is colloquially described as a "rat's nest". Badly installed interconnecting wiring can be a source of interference that can be heard in the chapel.
- ✓ We will strip and clean electrical devices which, in order to function, use air draft as a cooling mechanism (check the vents of devices in the installation front and back and see what debris may be blocking a device that relies on air as its cooling medium). Blocked vents can lead to thermal cut out, rendering the equipment temporarily inoperable.



For a reasonable annual sum, we can visit your chapels, attend to all the issues we find and provide you with a management tool which will provide you with a complete record of your entire installation.

Let us help you to maintain your high standards. For further information contact me, Blue Donnebaer, at blue@blueav.com or on 07976937666 anytime. Check out our website to see what other services we offer – www.blueav.com.



iccm diploma recipients 2020

The gaining of the Diploma is a huge achievement and is the culmination of several years of hard work. The Diploma is made up of several different units, reflecting the work that we do as cemetery and crematorium professionals. Each unit is an accredited qualification in its own right, and the whole Diploma is accredited to BTEC HNC standard. Holding an ICCM Diploma demonstrates not only the possession of a recognised academic qualification, but also recognises an individual's character and commitment to developing their own competencies in a specialised and sensitive field of work.

In normal circumstances we would present the certificates at the Learning Convention, but as this is not possible this year, we thought it was important to acknowledge all those that completed their Diploma in some way. Please know there is a virtual round of applause for each one of you!

This year the ICCM Diploma was achieved by the following people:

Sharon Smith - Maidstone Borough Council, Diploma

Tracy Morris – Hereford Council, Diploma with Honours

Deborah Balsdon - West Lindsey Town Council, Diploma with Honours

Yvonne Scott - Shetland Islands Council, Diploma with Honours

Catherine Linfield - Westerleigh Group, Diploma with Honours

Peter Haley - Allerdale Borough Council, Diploma with Honours

Catherine Averill- Respects Bereavement, Diploma with Honours and the Eickhoff Medal

Not only did Catherine complete her Diploma, but she also did it within 3 years, earning her the Eickhoff medal. This award is named after George Eickhoff who was the Institute's President in 1921, where the theme of his term of office was "Power of Knowledge".

Catherine says "when Stafford Borough Council Bereavement Services asked me to complete the ICCM Diploma within three years, I didn't fully anticipate what it was they were asking me to achieve, and what an honour to be awarded the Eickhoff Medal for outstanding achievement.

I would like to give a special thanks to the ICCM and Stratford Business School for all their help and support, especially Sue Gull and Julie Dunk. I would also like to thank my colleagues at Stafford BC and at Respects Bereavement Services for their help and support."

Mathew Crawley ICCM, Honours Diploma

Mathew had already completed his Diploma in 2014 but decided this wasn't enough. He has gone on to complete his thesis and in doing so achieved an honours.

Well done to all those who achieved their Diploma this year, and thanks to our education partners, Stratford Business School for their continued work in supporting the Diploma.

In the words of George Eickhoff

"Let our slogan for the new year be "opportunity always awaits the eager".



Catherine Averill, Diploma and Eickhoff Medal winner



Deborah Balsdon, Lea Fields Crematorium



Sharon Smith, Maidstone Borough Council



Mathew Crawley, ICCM



Yvonne Scott, Shetland Islands Council



Catherine Linfield, Westerleigh Group



Tracy Morris, Herefordshire Council



Peter Haley, Allerdale Borough Council

third quarter accredited COTS & CTTS candidates

Cemetery Operatives Training Scheme Courses July - September 2020

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**

John Anderson A B F	Michael Jukes A B F
John Armstrong A B F	Aron Lines A
Dean Boyer A	Adam Miller A
David Brown A	Christopher Powell A
Stephen Carr A	Julie Rolf B
Matthew Chaston B	Scott Russell A B F
Neil Cheshire A B F	Alexander Saunders A B
Adrian Dobie A B F	Gregg Skilling A B
Kevin Fleck A B F	Shane Stewart A B F

Crematorium Technicians Training Scheme July - September 2020

Sam Blevins	Robin Jones	Lorna Standen
Samual Calder	Anthony Kirkham	Drew Talbot
Richard Cupid	Jonathan Mitchell	Maria Tovey
Louise Ellison	Kevin O'Rourke	Clark Tully
Orrin Fairhead	Katherine Raffo	Paul Urquhart
Christopher Fawcett	Steven Round	Richard Waine
Tony Fear	Abigail Scotton	Alastair Williamson
Darren James	Mark Shanks	
Eleanor Johnston	Seamus Smyth	

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.

Barrow Borough Council, Bridgend County Borough Council, Bromsgrove and Redditch Borough Councils, Cheltenham Borough Council, City of York Council, Eastbourne Borough Council, Enable Leisure and Culture, Gainsborough Town Council, GreenAcres Group Ltd, Gwynedd Council, Herefordshire Council, Nene Valley Crematorium, Newcastle Borough Council, Newcastle City Council, North Lincolnshire Council, Perth & Kinross Council, Serco Ltd, South Ayrshire Council, Southampton City Council, Sunderland City Council, Thorne-Moorends Town Council, Tunbridge Wells Borough Council, Warwick District Council, West Lindsey District Council



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



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

cemetery of the year award winners 2020



Despite the coronavirus restrictions and in a year which has seen burial authorities under a lot of pressure and many cemetery managers working from home, the Cemetery of the Year Awards received more entries than ever in this year's competition, with a marked improvement in the scores which again confirms that the competition is having a positive effect promoting best practice.

The Parish, Town and Community Council category attracted the largest number of entries and we have received many examples in all categories of how the questions and feedback have prompted positive changes to be made which will benefit everyone involved in the industry and most importantly the bereaved.

We are very pleased to announce the winners of the Cemetery of the Year 2020

Large Burial Ground Category

Gold – Thornhill Cemetery

Silver – Fallings Heath Cemetery

Silver – St Helens Cemetery

Small/Medium Burial Ground Category

Gold – Tipton Cemetery

Silver – Memoria Cardiff & Glamorgan Memorial Park

Silver – Castleside Cemetery

Parish, Town and Community Council Burial Ground Category

Gold – Forest Row Cemetery

Silver – Chesham Bois Cemetery

Silver – Fleet Cemetery

Natural Burial Ground Category

Gold – Clandon Wood Nature Reserve and NBG

Silver – Old Park Meadow NBG

Silver – Hay Meadow BG

The Gold Awards winners in each category have received the following –

£1000 cash prize for their Cemetery.

Cemetery of the Year 2020 Gold Engraved Plaque.

Cemetery of the Year 2020 Gold Certificate

CYA Press release that can be used to promote their work and achievements.

The Silver Awards winners in each category have received the following –

Cemetery of the Year 2020 Silver Certificate.

CYA Press release that can be used to promote their work and achievements.

The awards are an excellent opportunity to reward hard-working staff and demonstrate the central role cemeteries and church yards can play in the community. It is both encouraging and reassuring that CYA is having a positive effect by creating an information source of best practice in burial grounds from leading industry organisations, allowing entrants to develop their cemeteries, improve standards and create environments and services that are safer, more user friendly and compliant with current legislation'.

Many thanks to everyone who entered the competition and also to the supporting organisations.

- Memorial Awareness Board (MAB)
- Institute of Cemetery and Crematorium Management (ICCM)
- The Federation of Burial and Cremation Authorities (FBCA)
- The Society of Local Council Clerks (SLCC)
- British Register of Accredited Memorial Masons (BRAMM)



A little slice of heaven

The conservation of graveyards by Adur & Worthing Councils.

As an eight-year old me and my best friend loved to explore our neighbourhood and the more secret the better.



Our favourite was St Mary's churchyard in Perivale, a real hidden gem. The church was established in the 12th century and served its community for 800 years before being made redundant in the 70s and this is when I

discovered it, derelict and overgrown.

These are enduring and precious memories for me and I don't think the eight year old me would have even considered that the childhood interest in churchyards could have developed into part of my day job.

It is common to find many councils now looking after churchyards that have been closed and where the management is transferred from the church to the council by a standing order signed by the secretary of state for the monarch, the Head of the Church of England.

At Adur & Worthing Councils there are 10 churchyards in our care, equally balanced between Adur District and Worthing Borough. The oldest churchyard in our care is St Nicolas in Old Shoreham, an 11th century Norman churchyard.



The care of the churchyards has been very minimal for a number of years, strictly just down to grass cutting, footpath and boundary maintenance. Money is always a concern when you work for a council and I think it also stems from the day job of looking after a crematorium and several active cemeteries. It takes up so much mental load that the churchyards take a back seat considered only when the church warden or incumbent has a problem with a branch that's fallen from a tree, a leaky tap, or a complaint that the grass has not been cut for a while.

This was brought into clear focus for me when I had a call from one of the grounds maintenance team who had almost fallen into a vault that collapsed while he was

cutting the grass nearby. The ground looked safe enough, but it opened up into an enormous deep and wide hole, the memorial disappearing down there too. Whose responsibility was it to sort it out? To make it safe and repair it?



The first task was to make the site safe, the next task was to ensure the dignity of the deceased was maintained. Thankfully the earth that had fallen in had covered the coffins. We were also concerned about the integrity of the adjacent graves. We had our surveyor team bring heras fencing and make a wooden grave cover to secure it, while I worked out what to do next.

I was advised to get in touch with the Registry at the local Diocese to discuss what to do next. I was told that I had to start off by requesting an interim faculty, a licence from a church authority, for the work already done. Then I would have to get authorisation to make repairs and conserve the grave. I would have to appeal for a descendant of the grave owner to come forward to see if they would take responsibility for the grave and if not we would have to make the grave safe.

The whole process is arcane and very long winded. I had to seek out a number of stakeholders that had previously been unknown to me and to work out how the works were going to be paid for. I felt totally out of my depth. I knew nothing about the workings of the church and now I was expected to have an assumed understanding of it all.

At the time I had to do some wrangling with my conscience about the fairness of using taxpayer's money to restore, what is in effect, private property. The Chancellor had specified that the fallen memorials were reinstated as they were before the collapse.

Church of England churchyards that have been closed must be kept in decent order, and their walls and fences in good repair (Local Government Act 1972, s.215). I felt that the



extent of the works the council paid for should cover making the churchyard and memorial safe and not reinstating the memorial. The Local Government Act doesn't mention anything about memorial management in closed churchyards, but is responsible for health and safety of the grounds.

Time passed, no one came forward to claim the grave, the works were carried out at a cost of approximately £2400 for the contractor, the cost of a faculty was approximately £295 and my time was not included, but I spent a fair amount of time on this work.

The contractors were unable to safely remove all the memorial from the bottom of the grave. The grave was filled with Type 1 hard-core to ensure the walls of the neighbouring graves were not at risk, this was compacted down and covered in topsoil and re-seeded. Unfortunately no one had a record or could not remember how the memorial looked before the incident, so the stones were laid flat.

On reflection this left me feeling like I had somehow not done a good enough job. This got me wondering about why that was and the only connection I could think of was that connection to churchyards as a child. This started my journey seeking out how to do better next time.

In my research to do churchyards better I came across Caring for God's Acre (<https://www.caringforgodsacre.org.uk/>). On their website they explain how they support groups and individuals to investigate, care for, and enjoy burial grounds.

They get to the heart of why these spaces are important and should be looked after and conserved. There is a substantial breadth of burial grounds throughout England and Wales, ranging from small rural medieval churchyards to large victorian city cemeteries, spanning different

cultures, religions and centuries. These churchyards hold great appeal for many varied interests, such as local history, social history, veteran trees and biodiversity.

Caring for God's Acre says 'for many people burial grounds are the only locally accessible green space. However their heritage value, and even their continuing presence, cannot be taken for granted. They are under threat from development, closure, under management and mismanagement'.

Fast forward to May this year and mid pandemic. I had a call from one of our local reverend's about several unsafe table top chest style tombs in the churchyard at St Mary De Haura in Shoreham-by-Sea. I contacted the diocesan architect and a conservation stone mason to assess the requirements for the work. The three memorials in question are circa 18th century or earlier. The church does not have any records detailing ownership of the tombs, though inscriptions are legible on two of them. A lot of the information about the deceased on the stonework has deteriorated.



The church and churchyard are grade one listed and in a conservation area.

The churchyard is crossed frequently linking parts of the town on opposite sides of the church. It is very well used. While I was there, most of the benches were being used by the public. There are many interesting memorials, a war memorial in the southeast corner, and the churchyard contains the ruin of the nave which





collapsed around 1700 and there are many fine specimen trees. This is a particularly important local heritage site and has six pages dedicated to it in the Pevsner architectural guides.

Unfortunately we are in a situation where these sites have been neglected for so long and many of the burial vaults and memorials have deteriorated to such an extent that it will take a large scale effort and money to get them back to a decent state.

The stonemason drew up a schedule of works but I have no budget for this work. The conservation work needs to be carried out, but where do you get the money from to do this?

A few months down the road, I am standing in a churchyard in Southwick early morning, it's a damp, grey September morning and the grass is heavy with dew. I am meeting Harriet Carty, the Director of Caring for God's Acre. She is coming to recce all of the churchyards in my care and discuss what will be achievable for each.

One of the things I had never considered is the grass and Harriet is very enthusiastic about it. She explains "the turf of a burial ground is the flowery, meadow turf of our history. In the past this area of open grassland was managed as a hay crop with the hay making up part of the vicar's stipend. Following the hay cut, a sheep or a pony would have grazed it down". She says "Most burial grounds are now managed by mechanical cutting, as long as the grass cuttings are collected and removed, the species that have thrived for centuries will persist".

The end game will be that each churchyard in our care will have its own management plan, which will be developed with the council and the churchyard communities. This will be a springboard for grant bids to the Heritage Fund to pay for much needed conservation work, better

sympathetic management and more community engagement within these spaces.

This journey is very much still at the start. I am excited to see how it goes and I am feeling optimistic that I will be able to pay the debt I owe to the pleasure and joy I had spending time in my own local churchyard as a girl.

Incidentally, St Mary's in Perivale is now deconsecrated and used for concerts. The churchyard no longer looks like the photos at the start of this article and is well maintained and cared for. A special thanks to the Friends of St Mary in Perivale for the use of their photographs. <https://www.st-marys-perivale.org.uk/>

Trying to source information about the churchyards has been difficult and slow. These are some resources and references that I have found helpful.



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- The Institute of Cemetery and Crematorium Management

Kate Greening
Bereavement Services Manager,
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lea fields crematorium congratulates Tony

Working in a crematorium is a specialised and sensitive role. At West Lindsey District Council we pride ourselves on offering the best training to staff.

Lea Fields crematorium, which is run by the local authority, opened its doors in February this year following a £6 million investment. As well as investing in the service with it is equally important to the council that it invests in its staff.

We are delighted to announce that our first trainee crematorium officer, Tony Kirkham has successfully completed his Crematorium Technicians Training Scheme (CTTS), with the Institute of Cemetery and Crematorium Management (ICCM).

Tony (59) joined the council in January, just a month before the new crematorium opened its doors. Following a rigorous training programme over the last 8 months, 18 assignments and a video examination, Tony is now qualified.

He said: "I have been very fortunate to have had Karen Smith who is our senior crematorium officer as my mentor, as the amount of work involved in the assignments is quiet mind blowing and her support and encouragement has been invaluable."

It has been a little more unusual for Tony, who has had to complete his training during the current COVID-19 pandemic. Like all crematoria nationally the team have had to respond to changes in guidance in order to keep grieving families safe at what is one of the most difficult times of their lives.

In addition to the assignments, Tony had to learn how to operate the cremator and all the tasks involved in performing cremations, of which there are far more than he could ever have imagined when he first started the role.

Tony said: "It has been challenging, fitting the assignments in around learning how to cremate was a balancing act, but I had great support and help from Deborah Balsdon, crematorium manager, for her constant encouragement, Celia Chapman and Trudi Hayes who while on secondment to the crematorium have also given me great support."

Tony, was a funeral arranger prior to starting at the crematorium and has a strong background in customer services, which is a key element to his current role.



He said: "I am always honoured to be a part of a family's grieving process.

My aim is always to ensure families get to say the final goodbye that they want. And, as daft as it may sound, if they don't notice that I'm there (especially when doing chapel duty) then I've done a good job.



"I never take anything for granted, and I always treat the deceased with the same respect and care as I would any of my own family. I hope families take away a sense of knowing their loved one is being well looked after on the final journey."

Tony said that now he has passed his qualification, he will be taking a much deserved break from studying. "The last time I had to do so much course work and revision was way back in the 1970s! On this course, I was supported absolutely brilliantly by Karen, Deborah and Alan Robinson, director of corporate services. I've been very lucky to have had such support. It was very strange being assessed by video, as before it started I was informed I couldn't say anything about what I was doing, also I never got to see my examiner," explained Tony.

Prior to Covid-19, the practical exam and multiple choice questions were carried out on site by an examiner from the ICCM. However, under the current circumstances this was done via a video call. Lea Fields Crematorium has continued to operate during the pandemic, providing a vital service to the local community during a difficult time. This has not been easy with social distancing rules limiting the amount of people who can attend funerals and now with the latest guidance on families wearing face coverings when attending.

However, it was recognised early on that this was a vital service that needed extra support to make sure it was resilient. The council is currently putting two more members of staff through the training.

Karen Smith senior cremation officer at the crematorium said: "Tony is a valued member of our small team and has really embraced the role and all the training involved, especially considering the demands and rapidly changing guidelines involved during the current situation.

"He has dealt with everything we've asked of him in a professional and empathetic manner. The Crematorium Technicians Training Scheme is an intense and time-consuming course, which Tony has successfully completed alongside learning about all the other aspects his role entails.

"Mentoring three trainees at the same time was always going to be a challenge but their enthusiasm and professionalism has been outstanding and made my role a pleasure. They are all a credit to Lea Fields crematorium and West Lindsey District Council."

To find out more about the crematorium you can email: crematorium@west-lindsey.gov.uk or visit: leafIELDScrematorium.co.uk or call: 01427 67650

Julie Heath
Senior Communications Officer



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under the spotlight....

Welcome to “Under the Spotlight” – asking 20 questions for 2020! Throughout the year we will be getting to know the people that have been elected to sit on the ICCM Board of Directors. This edition features Martin Birch, Chair of the Board. Martin is the Operational Manager for Bereavement & Registration Services for the City of Cardiff.

1. Can you tell us how you started working within bereavement?

I was living in sunny Blackpool at the time and I had recently been made redundant whilst working as a debt collector. A friend of mine mentioned that they were taking on seasonal staff at the Parks department and I applied and started the next day. I undertook work all over the area and one day was asked to assist at the cemetery and just ended up staying there! I worked on the grounds and later moved into the crematorium and worked in the chapels and crematory.

2. Can you give us a brief outline on what you do in your role?

I work for Cardiff Council managing Bereavement Services, Registration of Births Deaths and Marriages and Cardiff Dogs Home. My days are made up mostly of meetings, developing and improving my services and making sure everything operates as it should.

3. What do you find the most challenging?

Staying on top of things and prioritising my workload if I'm honest, I want to do everything and can be very impatient!

4. As a past President of the Institute what would you say to members that may be considering applying?

Do it! It is such a great experience. I have been lucky enough to twice be President and have met lots of fantastic and interesting people all over the UK.

5. What would you say the role of the Board is?

The Board of Directors are in place to develop the strategic direction of the Institute and work with officers to ensure those aims are met. It is good to be involved in discussing and setting policy and best practice that can benefit so many of our members and the bereaved public who they serve.

6. What is the most interesting thing you are working on now?

I am currently working on developing a new cemetery in north Cardiff which has been in the planning stages for a number of years, so it is extremely satisfying to finally see the work going ahead on the ground.

7. If there is one thing you could change within the bereavement sector what would it be?

That's a tricky one. I think I would like to see a national funeral payment for everyone covered by income tax to ensure that everyone, no matter what their financial status, can always have a dignified funeral.

8. Do you want to be cremated or buried and why?

Cremated. It's always been a preferred choice of mine and my family.

9. Who would you most like to swap places for a day with? It can be anyone.

The Prime Minister, there is so much I would like to sort out, I'm not sure a day would be long enough though!

10. What was the best thing that happened to you last week?

I managed to get through the whole week without killing anyone!

11. What is the one question you get asked the most at work?

Do we have a budget for Or can we afford

12. What are you most looking forward to in the next 5 years?

Obviously getting past Covid and the world getting back to some sort of normality again and getting to do all the things that we had to cancel this year.

13. What would be your first question if you woke up after being cryogenically frozen for 100 years?

Have England won the World Cup yet?



14. Who inspires you to be better?

My wonderful wife, Denise.

15. What is one interesting fact about you that nobody could guess?

I have lost count of the number of times that I have seen The Stranglers live and I'm just a bit of an old Punk still. Or that my second cousin is former Nottingham Forest and England Goalkeeper Peter Shilton.

16. If you had 24 hours left to live what would you do?

Spend the time with my family and max out the credit cards on things for them!

17. What do you wish you could tell yourself 10 years ago?

Don't waste your time with people who just want to waste your time and make sure you get enough proper rest.

18. In the past people were buried with the items they would need in the afterlife, what would you want buried with you so you could use it in the afterlife?

My music first and foremost followed by my laptop so I can play Football Manager and my XBOX, oh and a Greggs steak bake!

19. What topic could you give a 20-minute presentation on with no preparation?

Is it too obvious to say Bereavement Services?? Probably my love of music from the late 70's and early 80's.

20. What would you want your epitaph to be?

'No More Heroes'. This is the title of one of my favourite songs and is also my funeral song by the Stranglers. I've always joked that once I've gone there will be No More Heroes!!

Thank You.

the history of sisyphus, the statue on the front of this issue of the journal

Dorothea Gage

Political activist, 1912 - 2000

John Gage

Research biochemist, 1906 - 1993

This unusual monument depicts the mythological Sisyphus, condemned to push a boulder uphill which then cruelly slips from his grasp to roll back down; the task must endlessly begin again. The philosopher Camus found a positive in Sisyphus's fate: as he retraces his steps, he recognises the absurdity of his condition and is thereby liberated. As the future holds nothing, life must be lived for the instant and the beauty of existence itself.

John Gage was a research chemist at ICI. Cultured and intellectual, he was a relentless achiever who mastered seven languages and for who no moment should be wasted. Also buried here is Dorothea, his wife, who was born in Berlin 1912 and witnessed as a child the collapse of Germany following the First World War. As a left-wing political activist, she was forced to flee Germany in 1933 under threat of arrest by the Nazis. In Britain, her talents were turned to the theatre. It was a career that would extend into her eighties and include work in television and film.

In his retirement John Gage took up sculpture, principally in clay, and mainly portrait busts. Sisyphus was of interest as it allowed him to study musculature. It is Gage's own sculpture that marks the grave, appropriately enough as a symbol of a life lived for the enjoyment of life itself.

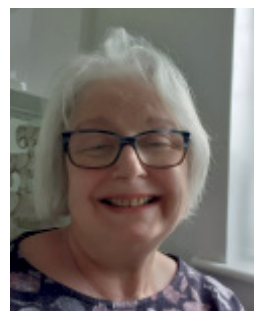
By Andrew Yeo
Volunteer at Highgate Cemetery

Obituary: Sally Curtis

In our Industry over the years many people's names have become synonymous with the crematorium or cemetery at which they worked and this was certainly the case with Sally Curtis, just about anyone in our profession knew Sally from Mansfield crematorium even if they had not actually met her!

It was with great sadness that I learned that Sally had died at the beginning of August, losing her bravely fought battle against cancer, the battle that she and her family hoped and prayed had been won twice before, it came back earlier this year and sadly took her from us.

Sally was born on 4th December 1964 and she lived and grew up with her parents John and Dorothy Marsh in Mansfield Woodhouse where she went to school where she did well, learned to dance in the strictly style which she loved and became a member of the Mansfield Choral Society.



On leaving school Sally enrolled on a secretarial and admin course at West Nottinghamshire College and on successful completion she joined the staff at Mansfield crematorium as an administrative assistant and secretary to the director. Sally realised that she had found her vocation and she excelled in the different roles that she undertook over the years.

Sally enrolled as a student with the IBCA in 1984 becoming an associate member in 1988 and on completion of her diploma, a full member in 1994. Sally was dedicated to her job and was in due time appointed crematorium director and registrar of cemeteries for Mansfield district council. In her role Sally undertook many challenges and oversaw large projects such as the extension to the Thorsby chapel and the new car park and was working on plans for a new cemetery and a children's area within the new cemetery grounds before she died.

Sally had many interests and it was while involved in scoring games at the Mansfield basketball club that she met Ian who was to become her husband, becoming engaged in 1995 and they were married in 1997. Sally and Ian's son, Matthew, was born in 2001.

Sally was always busy and she and Ian transformed the shell of a house into a wonderful home and developed the garden in which Sally loved to potter, where tomatoes and soft fruits shared space with orchids that Sally said bloomed due to her structured neglect!

Whilst looking after a busy crematorium, Sally was for many years a technical officer for the Federation of Burial and Cremation Authorities and she managed meetings and tasks on their behalf working as always in the best interests of the bereaved. Sally was a regular attendee at industry conferences, seminars and other events where she was widely known.

We will miss her.

A Tribute by Alan José FICCM

Member interaction is the Institute's lifeblood. Why not facilitate a branch meeting?

iccm branch secretaries, contact details

Northern: Graham Harrison

Email: Graham.Harrison@durham.gov.uk T: 03000 265 606

Eastern: Tracy Lawrence

Email: TLawrence@nenevalleycrematorium.co.uk T: 01933 229 660 or 07904 457 372

South East: Heather White

Email: heather.white@southampton.gov.uk T: 023 8076 6405

Midlands and Mid Wales: Michael Birkinshaw

Email: bereavement@bromsgroveandredditch.gov.uk T: 01527 62174

North West and North Wales: Dave Jennings

Email: Dave.jennings@trafford.gov.uk T: 0161 912 1515

state of the art Memorial Park and Crematorium to offer the UK's first green electric cremators



On 19th October 2020, Oxfordshire's 4th crematorium opened its doors for the first time. Located off the A4260 near Tackley, North Oxfordshire Crematorium and Memorial Park, will provide a much needed and more accessible cremation service for Kidlington, Bicester, Witney and North Oxford.

The site will feature a brand-new state of the art chapel with seating for over 130 people with capabilities to offer web casting, mood lighting, visual tributes and a choice of thousands of song choices through the innovative Obitus music library. One-hour service times will be offered as standard and the option to have an extended visit in the adjacent Churchill Pavilion (with the option of tea, coffee, or even a glass of prosecco) giving an opportunity for the congregation to offer their condolences to the family in person in comfortable surroundings. It is this attention to detail which will ensure that all families will be able to remember their loved one in the way that suits them best.

Business Development Director, Jamieson Hodgson said, "North Oxfordshire Memorial Park will be introducing significant new innovations to respond to the latest requirements that bereaved families are requesting. The modern funeral is all about providing families with choice whether that means a direct cremation or a 2-hour celebration of life."

This development will also benefit from the UK's first state of the art electric cremator. This new cremator will be powered by renewable energy resources, which means that it will produce 95% less carbon dioxide emissions than a gas cremator. The memorial park will also offer Natural Burial options. Hodgson added, "There is an increasing importance for crematoria to be greener. This facility will offer the first new-age electric cremator and reduce emissions by 95%. We are very proud to be the first UK operator to bring this innovation to the market."



This new Memorial Park will be operated by Memoria Ltd – a family-run business with 10 other crematoria across the UK. Based in Bicester since 2003, this will be Memoria's second new-build Memorial Park in Oxfordshire after launching South Oxfordshire Memorial Park near Abingdon in 2015.

All information can be found at www.memoria.org.uk



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ICCM would like to thank all scheme members and shown below are some responses and testimonies from the early 2020 round.

Durham Crematorium

I am writing on behalf of the Trustees of the Friends of Durham Woodland Cemetery (DWC) to express our sincere gratitude for the generous donation awarded to us from the ICCM metals recycling scheme.

As you know, Durham Woodland Cemetery is a relatively new type of provision offered by Durham County Council to those bereaved families that prefer a natural setting for the burial of their loved ones or their ashes. Often, the choice of DWC is deeply personal, and reflects a commitment to nature and the environment, with many people having booked plots years in advance. Our Friends group was set up with the aim of enhancing these personal connections, providing help and advice to those who are exploring a Woodland burial, and providing a route for volunteers to engage with the care and maintenance of the site. Our membership is open to anyone who wishes to maintain a link with this special place.

Recently we have been exploring ways to provide a more tangible way for members to get involved, with the idea of fundraising for a specific project. We are exploring ideas for a more permanent memorial bearing the names of loved ones, that could also provide a focal point for the woodland, or a place for visitors to rest and shelter from the weather. This incredibly generous donation will enable us to make huge strides to making these ideas a reality.

We will never forget that this contribution is made possible by relatives who are mourning the loss of their loved ones, and who have to make difficult decisions about the conduct of a funeral at a very emotional and stressful time. We intend to ensure that their generosity, and that of your committee is commemorated in all that we do with this donation.

With sincere thanks, on behalf of all the Trustees
Matthew Jones

Breckland Crematorium

Breckland Crematorium directors Nathan and Rachel Rollings present a donation to Sarah Green, chairman of Norfolk Sands. Picture: Supplied by Breckland Crematorium

Recycling metal that has been left behind following cremations has led to a £10,000 boost for charity that helps people who have suffered from the death of a baby.

Breckland Crematorium in Scoulton made the donation to Norwich-based Norfolk Sands.

Nathan Rollings, who manages the crematorium along with his wife, Rachel, said: 'We are delighted to be able to make this donation which is only possible by the generosity of bereaved families who have consented to the recycling of metals after the cremation of their loved one.'



"We strive to support bereaved families in the local area with the best service possible and we know what a brilliant job Norfolk Sands do locally in supporting parents of babies who die before, during or shortly after birth so we are confident this donation will benefit many people in Norfolk."

Mr and Mrs Rollings presented the donation to the charity's chairman Sarah Green and vice-chairman Carly Walters in the crematorium's memorial gardens. They also talked about the crematorium's plans to create an area in the gardens which will be dedicated to the memory of stillborn babies.

Daniel Brett-Schneider, Norfolk Sands' director of income and engagement, said: "We are delighted by the wonderful support of Breckland Crematorium and all the teams and communities across the ICCM network.

"Thanks to your ongoing commitment to Sands, we are able to continue working with and supporting anyone affected by the death of a baby, improve bereavement care and fund research to save babies' lives.

"Right now, your support is more invaluable than ever as we adapt and accelerate delivery of our support services to families and NHS staff during uniquely harsh challenges."

Norfolk Sands runs bi-monthly support meetings for anyone affected by the death of a baby and works with hospitals to improve bereavement and maternity care for those families whose baby has died.

North Devon Crematorium

Councillors Tony Inch and Mel Lovering and crematorium manager Mark Drummond present Ladywell Unit staff and Over and Above's Julie Whitton with a cheque for £10,000.

North Devon's hospital charity has been given a £10,000 boost from North Devon Crematorium.

The donation to Over and Above comes from the proceeds of the crematorium's recycling scheme, which enables metals from cremated remains to be safely recycled.

The money will be put towards a new maternity bereavement suite in North Devon District Hospital's maternity unit.

Crematorium committee chairman, Councillor Tony Inch, said: "This is a brilliant amount of money and I'm really pleased we are presenting it to a charity that provides such vital support to local families during what can be a very difficult and upsetting time in their lives. I'm sure the money will be very well spent."

The maternity bereavement suite is a dedicated room to care for parents who have suffered the loss of their baby and gives them the chance to say goodbye in their own time.

The room has been soundproofed and furnished in a way that is comfortable for women and their families to spend time in. It has been made possible thanks to donations from the crematorium, SANDS, The Last Kiss Foundation and Over and Above.

Over and Above fundraising officer Julie Whitton added: "We would like to thank North Devon Crematorium from the bottom of our hearts for their generous donation to the Maternity Bereavement Suite – it means we can now offer a dedicated room to care for those parents who sadly suffer the loss of their baby."



Clyde Coast and Garnock Valley Crematorium

This is the fourth significant donation that the crematorium has made to local community-based charities since opening only two years ago – bringing the total now donated to local good causes to £38,000.00.

The funds have been raised through the award-winning facility's membership of the Institute of Cemetery and Crematorium Management National Recycling of Metals Scheme, with the £10,000.00 donation officially presented to Clive Jay from North Ayrshire Cancer Care.

Philip Ewing, Manager of the Clyde Coast & Garnock Valley Crematorium, said: "We are so delighted to be able to make this £10,000.00 donation to such an important and valued local charity.

"Cancer touches every family in some way, and North Ayrshire Cancer Care is always there to provide practical support and transportation for people who are undergoing chemotherapy and radiotherapy, and this donation will help them to continue to support many local people and families at a time when such important help is most needed.

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

Clive Jay of North Ayrshire Cancer Care said, "This is such an important donation at this time to maintain our services, particularly the transportation of cancer patients to and from treatments and consultations.

"Six local charity shops which normally provide regular income have been closed since the middle of March. We will be reopening all of them as soon as possible, however as an organisation entirely run by volunteers, many of whom are elderly, we will not be rushing this."



Harrogate

Dementia Forward was presented with a cheque for £10,000 from Harrogate Borough Council.

The charity chosen for the last six-months is Dementia Forward. The charity provides a local service for people living with dementia and their family carers and support them from pre-diagnosis to end of life. Services include a local helpline, a team of trained dementia support advisors and a dementia specialist nurse who carry out home visits and weekly wellbeing groups.

Councillor Andy Paraskos, Harrogate Borough Council's cabinet member for environment, waste reduction and recycling, said: "I'd like to thank those families who, during a difficult time, have consented to us recycling metals recovered. By raising this money, everyone involved has done their bit to helping local charities such as Dementia Forward."

Jillian Quinn, CEO of Dementia Forward, said: "We would like to thank Harrogate Borough Council for this very generous donation, which has come at a really important time. Our services are needed more than ever and many of our fund-raising events are on hold at the moment. We have extended our help line team, and this will keep the service going strong. We rely heavily on local support and we are very grateful."



Harrogate Borough Mayor and Mayoress Councillor Stuart Martin MBE and April Martin with Bereavement Services Manager Stephen Hemsworth and Jillian Quinn from Dementia Forward

Peterborough

We would like to say a huge thank you to the ICCM and Peterborough Crematorium for their generous donation. By supporting Alzheimer's Research UK through the Metal Recycling Scheme, you'll help bring us one step closer to finding a cure for dementia.

"Your support for dementia research is more important now than ever before, particularly as people with dementia have been some of the hardest hit by COVID-19. But by funding ground-breaking dementia research, we can transform the lives of everyone affected by dementia.

Alzheimer's Research UK's mission is to bring about the first life-changing dementia treatment by 2025. Research has overcome diseases in the past, and that is exactly what we intend to do for dementia and why your support is so incredible. Thank you again for your support and helping us to make breakthroughs possible." Danny Corr



Herefordshire

Hereford Crematorium has handed over a cheque for £10,000 to Alzheimer's Research UK.

The crematorium has been part of a national metal recycling scheme since 2011 and has so far donated over £94,000 to various local charities.

Bernie Carranza, Alzheimer's Research UK Regional Fundraising Officer for the West Midlands, said:

"We are hugely grateful for this generous donation from Hereford Crematorium through the metals recycling scheme, it will make a huge difference to our work, particularly as we are predicting up to a 45% decrease in funds this year as a result of COVID-19.

"One in two people know someone who is affected by dementia and one in three people born today will go on to develop dementia, unless we find new ways to treat and prevent the condition. It is, therefore, vitally important that we can continue our work to raise awareness about and fund research into the diseases that cause dementia. Our mission is to bring about the first life-changing dementia treatment by 2025, and this donation will be a huge boost to this.

"The COVID-19 pandemic has had a huge impact across all walks of life in the UK, including scientific research. Many dementia research labs had to temporarily close and, while some studies had to stop, dementia scientists continued to work from home. As restrictions have eased, many labs have started to slowly reopen and research that your support helps to fund is restarting in a COVID-19 secure way."

Tracy Morris, Bereavement Service Supervisor at Hereford Cemetery, said: "We're very proud to be part of the scheme. This is our largest cheque to date and with over 3,300 people in Herefordshire living with dementia, we're pleased that it is going to such a worthy cause that will benefit so many people locally.



Bernie Carranza and Tracy Morris



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

recycling of metals - ~~business as usual~~, business as unusual

Normally after we launch and then close a round of recycling donations, we have a big newsletter showing the totals, thanking members and updating the world at large.

2020 has however shown that normal is a bad word and plans change very quickly and you either sink or manage to float along until you remember to swim.

ICCM would like to thank all the scheme members and everyone that managed to send a nomination form in before we had no time to think about charities, or anything else, due to Covid-19.

As you read this article hopefully every scheme member will have received their new form to make a donation for the rearranged round for 2020 – this one shouldn't close early this time and we know charities need money, and every scheme member is doing their part to help the bereaved, the environment and charities.

The headline of importance is that £8.9 million has now been donated to good causes from what would have been waste and everyone should be proud of their part in that.

Below are press releases from members that managed to benefit before the world turned on its head.

The Grimsby, Cleethorpes and District Samaritans have received a £10,000 donation from North East Lincolnshire Council.



The Samaritans offer a free listening service to people across the UK. The telephone number is 116123.

Councillor Stewart Swinburn, portfolio holder for environment and transport at North East Lincolnshire Council, said: "Every 90 minutes, someone in the UK and Ireland takes their own life, and that is a tragedy.

"Worse still, this pandemic has thrown a lot of things into uncertainty for people, so there are likely to be more people in need of a listening ear now more than ever.

"The Samaritans offer that listening ear. They are on hand throughout the year to listen and help people to talk through their problems.

"I'm really pleased that we are able to make this donation. Each year the proceeds from the scheme are donated to lots of worthy local causes."

Carmen from Grimsby, Cleethorpes and District Samaritans, said: "The donation will make a massive difference to us this year. "We fundraise to keep our branch running and we are currently unable to fundraise in our usual ways due to the pandemic. The money will help us continue to provide our service to those in need."

The Samaritans are always looking for new listening and support volunteers. To find out more, email grimsby@samaritans.org.

Bath & North East Somerset Council

Have donated £10,000 raised from the recycling of metals reclaimed from Haycombe Crematorium to local counselling charity The Harbour.

The Harbour provides counselling support for adults facing death, dying, or bereavement.

Fundraising officer, Catherine Bowen, said: "The advent of Covid-19 has changed the experience of all deaths, sadly making losing a loved one so much more painful, with the added difficulty of keeping family and friends close at the time when you need them most.

"At the Harbour, we support people facing death, dying and bereavement and the generous donation we've received will go a long way to helping people cope better with the difficulties they face and move on with their lives."

Councillor Paul Crossley, cabinet member for Community Services, said: "I'm pleased we've been able to support the essential work of The Harbour. Perhaps now more than ever, when so many of us are distanced from loved ones, its really important people feel they can talk to someone about their feelings and try to make sense of what is happening.

"The Harbour has continued to provide support during COVID-19 over the phone and via zoom and I know many of their clients have been extremely grateful for the support offered during these incredibly difficult times.

"We always respectfully retrieve the cremated remains of a loved one, but metal items used as part of surgery are often recovered from the cremator.

"The most responsible way to dispose of them is to recycle them. We feel it's only right the money raised goes to support bereavement charities and I hope people who are bereaved take comfort from that."

Over the past year, £26,000 has been donated to charities across the region by Haycombe Cemetery and Crematorium.

Hither Green Crematorium - Widowed and Young (WAY)

Dear Alison,

I would like to pass on our sincere thanks to you and everyone at Hither Green Crematorium for the incredibly generous £10,000 donation made to WAY Widowed and Young.

Our charity relies upon donations from our members and the generosity of supporters like yourselves to help us provide a lifeline to widows and widowers up and down the country.

WAY is the only UK charity providing peer to peer support for those who've been widowed at a young age and the funds you have helped to raise will allow us to provide vital services for our members – including access to our secure members only website and to a 24-hour confidential telephone helpline offering bereavement support and practical advice.

Any additional funding also helps us to reach out to newly bereaved widows and widowers who could benefit so much from our charity's peer to peer support – through our media work and outreach to GP surgeries, hospitals and funeral directors.

As one of our members told us: "I made contact with WAY at a time when I was desperate. I was so reassured by my first contact with someone from WAY and realised that what I was going through was normal... Time has passed and the fog is clearing and I now have a group of friends who understand what I have been through without having to explain."

Thank you for choosing to support WAY – and for helping our members to find the support they so desperately need.

Kind Regards,
Rebecca Cooper
Chief Executive, WAY Widowed and Young

Bradford Council - Bradford Hospice

Thank you so much for your very generous donation of £10,000 received with gratitude from our Bradford Hospice. We were overwhelmed to have received such a huge donation and support from yourselves means so much right now to patients and families living with a terminal illness.

Over the last 12 months we have supported and cared for 592 In patients within our Bradford Hospice. At the hospice we listen, support and give high-quality care during what can be a difficult, challenging and distressing time and even more so right now but we have responded quickly to keeping everyone safe and well. We get to know people as individuals, find out what makes them happy and help to make those things happen.

As we start to progress to some form of 'normal' we wish we could put normal life back on for dying people, and those left behind. But we can't. Life may be beginning to start up again. But for people with a terminal diagnosis, and families devastated by loss, there's no going back. Freedoms are still restricted, fears still rife. Grief doesn't go away overnight. The hardships of life with a terminal illness like cancer, dementia, MND or Parkinson's won't go away with the lifting of lockdown.

Marie Curie Nurses, hospices and bereavement services have been here through it all, day and night, seven days a week, caring for people with and without the virus. Our Support Line has been here, listening. We never stopped. And we adapted at speed, launching a bereavement support service for those in desperate need of a listening ear. Right now, more people need us than ever before.

That's why your support makes all the difference, to enable us to continue to be there for those that need us at what is a difficult time and I can only imagine how difficult it has been for everyone working at the Crematoriums too, so hope everyone is safe and well.

If you would like any further information, please visit www.mariecurie.org.uk or contact myself on 07798 638122 or amanda.warrent@mariecurie.org.uk

Thank you so much for supporting our Bradford Hospice.
Amanda Warrent Community Fundraiser

Mortlake Nomination – Remember My Baby

Have created such precious photographic memories for many families, some who have had funerals at Mortlake Crematorium. It has been a privilege to see the photos of the much loved and beautiful babies. Mortlake Crematorium were delighted to nominate this charity. Huge thanks to all the very talented photographers who give them time so generously.

RMB are very pleased to have received a donation of £10,000 from the Institute of Cemetery and Crematorium Management (ICCM).

Pictured are Cheryl Johnson BEM, co-founder and trustee of RMB, (left) and Natasha Bradshaw FICCM, Superintendent and Registrar of Mortlake Crematorium in Richmond, Surrey.

Natasha nominated RMB as a recipient for funds raised from the ICCM Metals Recycling Scheme. Metals from such as replacement hip and knee joints are reclaimed following the cremation with the written consent of each bereaved family. This is a little known scheme but it has raised over a million pounds for charities since its inception fifteen years ago.

The presentation took place in the Waterbugs & Dragonflies Garden at Mortlake.



Swansea Crematorium – CLIC Sargent

Thank you so much for your incredible donation of £10,000 through the OrthoMetals recycling scheme, and for joining our fight for young lives against cancer.

Today, 12 more children and young people will hear the devastating news that they have cancer. From diagnosis, CLIC Sargent's specialist care teams will step in, ready to help, support and guide each young cancer patient and their family.

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

This might mean arranging a CLIC Sargent grant or helping young people and families get the benefits they are entitled to, coordinating care so some medical procedures can happen at home, arranging free accommodation in a CLIC Sargent Home from Home, or helping young cancer patients and families keep in touch with school or work to help keep life as normal as possible. If the worst happens, and a child dies, we are there for the family every step of the way through their bereavement.

Thank you again to the ICCM and Swansea Crematorium for choosing to support CLIC Sargent with such a generous donation, and for joining us to fight for young lives against cancer.

Best wishes,

Sophie Meadows

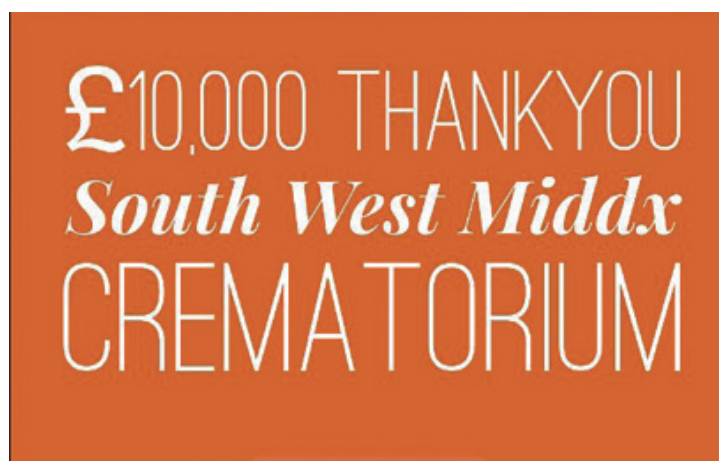
Fundraising Engagement Manager

Good Grief Trust – South West Middlesex Crematorium

Wonderful news!

We have been awarded a donation of £10,000 from the South West Crematorium @InstituteCCM recycling scheme!!

This lovely Crematorium stocks our Good Grief cards and provides their bereaved families with our card when they collect their ashes. Thank you.



**SOUTH WEST MIDDLESEX
CREMATORIUM**

bereavement and cemeteries: the benefits of nature

A follow up from an article written last year by Mollie Taylor, Wellbeing and Engagement Ranger

Last year, we shared with you an article reporting on a project being carried out at Hengistbury Head by Bournemouth Christchurch and Poole (BCP) Council, running a nature-focused bereavement group.

One year on, and the project has made great strides, as well as facing major pushbacks, most notably, the Covid-19 outbreak. Currently, we are still trying to create new ways to get the group together, virtually and physically, ensuring everyone's safety.

A report created around our project, showed an increase in mood from the participants following attendance of the nature-focused bereavement session. To measure relative mood levels, member's responses to open-questionnaires were collected both before their first session, and after their last. A total of 12 participants took part in the sessions, providing answers to the questionnaires. The answers given were then analysed for their "sentiment"; calculated using a lexicon from RStudio, giving scores between -4 and +4 for a library of words. These scores were totalled for each word used in an answer, to investigate whether there was a difference between average scores between the two questionnaires.



This positive effect came from a combination of the social aspects, and the nature immersion; with greater use of nature-related words (4% increase) in the "after session" questionnaires. The most frequently used words were: "people" and "nature" showing the impact these had. The results of this project were impacted by the Covid-19 outbreak, leading to an abrupt end in collection of data, with the sessions moving online.



"I felt the sessions were so much more helpful to me than anything else I had tried since my bereavement" Alongside this, relative "nature-levels" were calculated for sites situated in the BCP conurbation, comparing cemetery/graveyard sites with nearby greenspaces. This showed higher "nature-levels" in cemeteries over greenspaces in general. Information was also gathered from the general public investigating their opinions on the relationship between nature and cemeteries; out of 65 participants, 57 strongly agreed with the statement that they find wildlife relaxing. Nature was also one of the most reported themes when asked what should be present in nature, with "trees", "flowers", "graves" and "wildlife" the top four answers given. When given the option of four photos of different levels of nature in a cemetery, the option with the most wildlife was the most popular with 46 votes.

These results show an importance on cemeteries and graveyards for wildlife, along with public preference weighted towards a more natural setting; indicating that cemeteries could provide a therapeutic resource in the form of nature, to those suffering from bereavement. It is hoped this project will inform local councils and mental-health organisations, outlining the importance of nature and its potential benefits for bereavement services.

This project also resulted in the creation of habitat at both North Cemetery and Poole Crematorium, with the group creating bird boxes and bug hotels for both sites. We are eagerly awaiting the wildlife to move in and are keeping members of the group updated with the latest wildlife news.

Due to the Covid-19 outbreak, we decided to keep the group members connected virtually via email. This meant creation of online resources such as at home nature activities, and species identification sheets provided each week encouraging them to keep in touch with me and each other. We would share photos of what wildlife we had seen in our gardens during lockdown, shared stories of what we had been up to, and gave one another advice on gardening tips, wildlife identification and what services to reach out to if they were feeling lonely.

This also allowed for the creation of online resources to be utilised elsewhere, with creation of an activity booklet for care homes and videos to be placed on social media and the council's website.

We hope to be able to welcome everyone back soon, and carry on with these sessions, following successful funding bid applications!

If you would like anymore information about these sessions, please contact us at mollie.taylor@bcpcouncil.gov.uk.

Mollie Taylor
Wellbeing and Engagement Ranger, Hengistbury Head
Environment / Parks and Bereavement Services



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Reflections by members of staff from Nene Valley Crematorium.

Wow, haven't we grown. Due to the success of the company the team has over doubled in numbers since the opening of Wellingborough Bereavement Services Limited (Nene Valley Crematorium) in 2016. The company has gone from strength to strength, year on year, with a percentage of recent profits having been reinvested into the company to enhance service provision for communities within the Borough of Wellingborough, and beyond. Those profits have and will continue to enhance the Garden of Remembrance and memorial offering, along with improving wider facilities. A significant amount of that profit was invested into a staffing levels review that resulted in pay awards for existing staff and in terms of team members, newly created posts to build upon the firm foundation laid.

This leads me nicely onto the following. But before I do, I would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge the complimentary words (what a lovely surprise) from my team in the most recent Journal – Summer 2020 at the foot of page 63 refers. These words personally meant a lot to me, and in brief, my response is that I am nothing without the team who is with me – I am proud of each and every one of them, particularly for how they embrace mentoring and training to be the best they can be – the commitment and flexibility to ensure that we meet our USP of 365 days (24/7) availability for bereaved people is second to none. It's a huge well done from me, especially so given the current Covid-19 situation – not phased them at all! Next steps once suppliers are out of furlough, is for all the team to be in uniform – "standards".

Tracy Lawrence
Manager and Registrar

Just the thicket!

In January 2020 I attended my uncle's funeral in Langstone Vale crematorium in Newport, South Wales. I was impressed at the aesthetically pleasing standards and how peaceful the wonderfully maintained grounds were kept. I distinctly remember mentioning to my sister how I would love to work somewhere like that. Within a fortnight I saw an advert for the position of Head Gardener at Nene Valley crematorium in Wellingborough and the rest, as they say, is history.

Up until that point my career had been entirely in the sports turf industry. I have experience as a groundsman at football stadiums and as a factory site maintenance worker, but most of my 30 years of experience was gained as a golf greenkeeper. I had been in employment for the last 15 years at a local golf club and began to feel like it was time for a change. When I was offered the opportunity at Nene Valley crematorium I was absolutely thrilled and agreed without any hesitation.

This is my first managers position and I am thoroughly enjoying the challenges that are coming my way. Managers meetings, procurement, work planning, risk assessments and computer work etc....is all new to me but I like to think my "can-do" attitude is helping me to succeed. I am also thankful for the support that I have received from all the staff, fellow managers, and the manager/registrar (Tracy Lawrence). The faith that Tracy has shown in me has been very encouraging and in only 7 months I have already completed some management training and gained my ICCM Cremator Technician Training Scheme Certification (CTTS).

The best part of the job for me though is the way we can help in the grieving process of bereaved people that visit us on site. We receive regular feedback that the beautiful and serene surroundings that we are beginning to create are giving some comfort at what is obviously an extremely difficult time for them. The growth and development of this relatively new site would not be possible without the support from my assistant, Gardener Seamus, who I have already forged a great working relationship with. Seamus has a wonderful knowledge of plants having previously worked for the Shakespeare Trust.

Going forward, I am thoroughly enjoying working in the bereavement sector and look forward to gaining as much information, knowledge and experience as possible from sources such as the ICCM and colleagues alike.

In my spare time I love to cook. My wife is Malawian and she has introduced me to some fabulous Southern African recipes which probably explains why I carry a few extra pounds around the middle! I am an avid reader, enjoy listening to jazz music and like to travel as often as possible. I have been fortunate to have been to many countries in Europe and had hoped to take in Montenegro this year, before covid struck. Most Saturdays though I can be found at St. Andrews watching the mighty Birmingham City FC struggle to play football!

Jonathan Mitchell
Head Gardener

Putting down roots...

My name is Séamus Smyth and I am 26 years old. I am originally from County Monaghan in Ireland where my family and I live at the bottom of the Sleigh Beagh mountains. I grew up in a farming background where my family raised numerous varieties of animals which are mostly cattle and horses. We have sheep, pigs and chickens running around also. Although it hard to leave my loved ones, I moved to England looking for new opportunities and a search to find my own path in life as they say. Now I've been living here for 5 years.

I moved to Birmingham so I could commence employment as a gardener focusing on plant maintenance and soft landscaping. When I finished working there, I then got a job working for the Shakespeare Birthplace Trust. I was responsible for plant maintenance, interacting with visitors and aided in planning works. My most enjoyable time there was working in the vegetable gardens. At this time, I grew what can be described as monster sized parsnips! I will never forget the faces of the visitors when I was digging them out. The interesting thing about working there is that during the opening hours, we could only use manual tools. We worked in the traditional Victorian method of gardening and we only grew vegetables from the Tudor period.

After meeting my partner, I decided that it was time to move to Northampton so I could be with her. I had been doing agency work for a few weeks before I saw the post of relief cremator technician/ gardener being advertised at Nene Valley crematorium. I accepted the job when it was offered and commenced my new role in February 2020. When I heard that I got the role, I could not wait to start.

My main roles here are assisting in the crematory as required and helping to turn the gardens into a standard we can be proud of. Since I started, I have gained my CTTTS Certification in cremating, having passed back in June. I feel proud of the job we are doing on the grounds here. The main aspects of the job I like are improving the soil and maintaining the roses. We have plans to refurbish some beds.

When I work as a cremator technician, I am aware that I am doing an important job. I love the fact that the tasks are carried out in the most professional and respectful way. I am happy that my confidence in cremating is growing daily. This is thanks to the team here at Nene Valley crematorium in particular Jon the head gardener, Harrison the operations assistant and Tracy the manager and registrar. I could not have gotten my certification nor my confidence to carry out the job without their amazing guidance, assistance and enthusiasm.

In the future, I hope to play a big part with the site development here at Nene Valley crematorium. There are plans in place to build new gardens, path infrastructures, woodlands, memorials and I cannot wait to utilise my skills on those ideas.

In my spare time I like to watch football. I am a Birmingham City supporter and I also like to look after my garden at home. I am a massive fan of Trojan Records and enjoy listening to reggae and ska music. Before covid struck, I liked to go to the local and socialise with my friends. I am a member of the RSPB and my interests includes fishing and all things wildlife. Back in Ireland the only place you would find me would be in one of the farm sheds where I would be working at the wood lath or carving Celtic Harps.

Seamus Smyth



Jon - Head Gardner and Seamus, Gardner and Relief Cremator Technician





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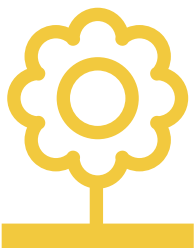
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For more information on how The CDS Group can help, phone us on +44 (0)1525 864387 or visit our website.



Set in stone...

I began my career at Nene Valley crematorium as an events and commemorations assistant earlier this year and recently took on the role as a memorial consultant after previously spending 7 years working for Wesley Media in their visual tributes department. My experience there dealing with people throughout the bereavement sector I believe has helped me in adapting to working at the crematorium.

I have learnt a lot over the six months, especially with the Covid-19 pandemic meaning we, as a team, were often being utilised in different roles to best suit the business needs for what was a very busy time for us all.

I am looking forward to helping raise the profile of the crematorium through new marketing and social media involvement, as well as meeting more families to help find the right memorial choices that suit them and their loved ones.

In my free time I enjoy spending time with my family, and I am a retro video game enthusiast. My son and daughter will have over 40 years of video gaming systems and games to play with when they are a little older.



Kevin Tasker, Memorial Consultant

Going in the right direction...

The Chinese have a saying, "May you live in interesting times". I think that no one could argue about this year being one of those interesting times.

My role at Nene Valley crematorium is as the operations manager. I have held management roles in the past, but this is the most challenging. The job is interesting and calls upon a wide range of skills and experience from all of my working career as well as aspects of my personal life. I like the mix of making sure the side that the public see goes as smoothly as possible for them. After all, it is about making sure that we help them say goodbye to their loved ones in the most meaningful manner for them - and then there is all the behind the scenes tasks that allow us to do that in the first place. I came from a background in customer services, my previous job was in security, controlling 300 odd security officers in and around the London area, making sure that their shift was covered and that they themselves were kept as safe as possible. My current role is more considered.



What led to this role? I have always been keen to give back to my community. I spent many years taking part in community education projects in my home city of Leicester, and the loss of my mother to cancer last year left me feeling that I wanted to do more to help others come to terms with the loss of a loved one.

I saw my current role advertised online and thought 'I could do that, what have I got to lose by applying' and the rest, as they say, is history.

What can I say about the role? My first surprise was all the reading I knew I needed to do, the first week (awareness week) on the job that is almost all I did, (aside from settling in and getting to know my 'work family' and bonding with my new environment). It is amazing how much there is to learn.

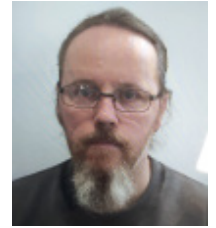
At the start of the year the focus has become more service and standard oriented towards our clients and visitors to site, with clear outcomes and expectations. The goal is to provide an environment that is welcoming and peaceful for all who come here, working towards delivering a level of service that is compliant with the law and applying best practice in providing a sympathetic, dignified and meaningful experience to those who come to say farewell to their loved ones.

I am looking forward to gaining my ICCM Crematorium Technician Certification as soon as possible. It has been a steep learning curve in the past few months, and I will be honest in that there is still a lot to learn. However, I have found that, although a young team in respect of length of service has been introduced into the business, there is a willingness to work together and learn from experienced and knowledgeable team members to provide a high quality level of service without the community at large being aware of the effort that goes into it.

Phillip Castree, Operations Manager

It's a clean sweep...

I am one of the cleaners/caretakers at Nene Valley crematorium, responsible to act as custodian, general housekeeping and maintenance. I have been with the crematorium for just over seven months now, and everyone has been very welcoming. My position is a part time job share with my colleague Ian. One of us comes in first thing to clean up before anyone comes into the office, then the other one comes in the afternoon, and does minor repairs and maintenance type jobs, and any tasks rolled over from the morning shift. We use an outcome-based system to maintain our standards, and we strive to always make the crematorium look it's best for customers.



I had worked in the funeral trade previously, having been a mortuary manager for a local funeral directors for some years, so I was used to the subject matter and knew the best approaches when speaking to the families. But, as anyone who has worked in the funeral trade can attest, the hours are very long, and I reluctantly decided I couldn't keep them up. After a couple of years working as a maintenance technician for the University of Northampton, I came to the crematorium, as my situation allowed me to cut back my hours. I don't have a huge amount of contact with the customers, but it's very rewarding when I do, and they tell me the crematorium looks nice, and is clean and tidy - in our small way we endeavour to make their situation a little less awful.

Outside of work, I have been married for almost 15 years, and live with my wife in nearby Northampton. I am a member of a local wargaming group, we collect model armies and fight grand historical battles on a miniature scale. It is a very sociable hobby, my group is the largest group of its kind in the country, but also helps me fill my evenings with the model making. I have been involved in the hobby for over 30 years. I also enjoy the historical research, whether it is Roman Centurions or the French Resistance. Sadly, the recent pandemic has put paid to our gatherings, but we are now slowly starting to meet again, but of course, on a much smaller scale. I have had many other hobbies, I've been an actor, scenic artist, singer in a rock band, and a professional wrestler. But that's a story for another time...

Allen Kitching, Caretaker/Cleaner

Workshop / Offices:
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Showroom:
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Have You Got Something Interesting to Share?

Are you involved with an innovative project?

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Have you introduced any environmental initiatives?

Have you introduced a new service or new ways of working?

Have you held any virtual events?

Are you doing something that others should know about?

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

keep on course

Following a temporary suspension in the delivery of face to face training courses due to the coronavirus, we have started to offer live, interactive, online training courses.

With the ongoing situation and parts of the country in regional lockdown, we wanted to find a way to continue to deliver the much-needed training that was being requested by members. The use of media platforms such as Zoom, Microsoft Teams and Skype have kept us all connected since the start of this pandemic, and we have all started to become familiar and more comfortable communicating in a virtual world.

The course trainers and ICCM Officers have worked hard in putting together the course material to ensure that the level of training is to the same high standard that would normally have been delivered face to face, on sites. In fact, with many people working from home or having limited contact with bereaved families and not carrying out the full range of normal services, there has been more time and opportunity to attend training without the need to travel or wait for a course to be held at a venue in a local area.

Overall, the training has been very successful – albeit with a few technical errors with the internet! I think we can all agree technology is great when its working, but it is prone to problems beyond anyone’s control. Any hiccups have been dealt with professionally and with no impact to the courses. We now start every meeting with “can you hear me?” or “can you see me?” followed by “turn your camera on” or “you need to unmute yourself”. It has taken some getting used to! We have limited the numbers on each course so it can be more interactive and allow time for attendees to ask questions and for discussions to take place.

The ICCM and Cruse have developed a new online training course for those working with bereaved people. The course is suitable for anyone who works with bereaved people, even those who have many years’ experience. ICCM Officers and Directors took part in a pilot for the course and found that although they had a combined experience of over 100 years working in bereavement services, each learnt something new. The new knowledge and skills have proven invaluable in giving confidence to talk to and help bereaved people.

Since the beginning of lockdown, we have continued to carry out assessments for those undertaking the Crematorium Technicians Training Scheme (CTTS). Email and video calls have facilitated the streamlining of the overall CTTS process and provide uninterrupted provision of practical assessments. This has not only been successful but also enabled crematoria to train up additional staff which has been essential during this time to ensure resilience.

Courses containing a practical element that can’t be delivered online such as COTS (Cemetery Operative Training Scheme) and Management of Memorials have now recommenced in sites where respecting current regulations and guidance on distancing and other methods to control the coronavirus are in place.

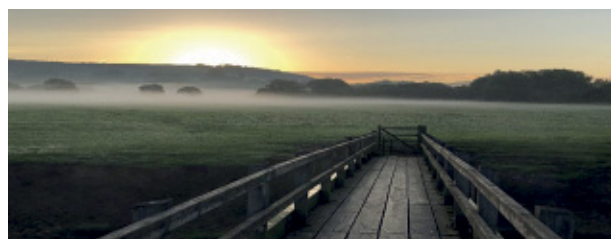
The following courses are being run online and anyone wishing to attend should email julie.callender@iccm-uk.com and register your interest. There are some dates listed on the website but if we get a high demand for a particular course we will endeavour to put on some additional dates.

LOSS AND BEREAVEMENT AWARENESS

The ICCM and Cruse have developed this training course specifically for everyone involved in working with bereaved people. The course provides an invaluable introduction to how grief can effect people and how you can use that understanding to better help them.

Course overview

- Understanding loss and its impact
- Grief – understanding theories of grief
- Communication
- Complicated grief
- Putting it all into practice
- Applying to situations
- Self-care and supporting the team
- Agencies who can help
- Covid-19 – understanding our responses





No More Need for Tenders

EDGE are delighted to have been awarded a place on the Everything ICT procurement framework to supply Epitaph to the public sector.

The Everything ICT framework is focused towards providing public sector organisations with innovative, future proofed solutions which synergises perfectly with the core values of EDGE.

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

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

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

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

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

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

Please do not hesitate to contact us to arrange an online demonstration and a proposal to migrate you to Epitaph with the security of the Everything ICT framework.



GRANTING, EXERCISING AND TRANSFERRING EXCLUSIVE RIGHTS OF BURIAL (EROB)

Learn about the benefits of having a proper, legally compliant EROB system.

Suitable for anyone involved in cemetery administration.

Course overview

- Putting things in context
- Benefits of having a proper system
- Does the funeral director need to be involved?
- Background and research findings
- Legal documents – wills, grant of probate, letters of administration
- Memorial rights
- Statutory declarations – how to gain information and draft the declaration
- Questions and answers



CEMETERY MANAGEMENT AND COMPLIANCE

Learn about the legal and practical aspects of cemetery management.

Suitable for cemetery staff at all levels, and those with a responsibility for cemeteries but who are not involved in their day-to-day management.

Course overview

- Local Authorities' Cemeteries Order 1977 (LACO)
- General powers of management
- Compliance
- Registers and records
- Granting and extending exclusive rights of burial
- Consent
- Avoiding disputes
- Burials; depth, shallow graves
- Administration processes
- Grave digging – procedures, preparations, backfilling
- Memorials
- Creating burial space
- Exhumation
- Transfer of exclusive rights of burial



EXHUMATION OF HUMAN REMAINS

Learn about the legal and practical aspects of exhumation.

Suitable for: anyone involved in planning for or undertaking exhumations of human remains (full body and ashes).

Course overview

- Legal background
- Preparing for the exhumation
- Health and safety and risk assessments
- Risk of infection
- Safe working practices
- Sensitivities of handling human remains
- Post exhumation registration
- Questions and answers



PUBLIC HEALTH ACT FUNERALS

Learn about the legal and practical aspects of public health act funerals.

Suitable for anyone involved in making arrangements for public health act funerals under S46 of the Public Health (Control of Disease) Act 1984

Course overview

- Legal and ethical framework
- Referral of cases
- Conducting a search
- Tracing next of kin
- Registration
- The funeral service
- Dealing with the estate
- Record keeping
- Questions and answers



SEXTON DUTIES

Learn about the benefits of having legally compliant systems and procedures.

Suitable for anyone involved in managing or working in a cemetery.

Course overview

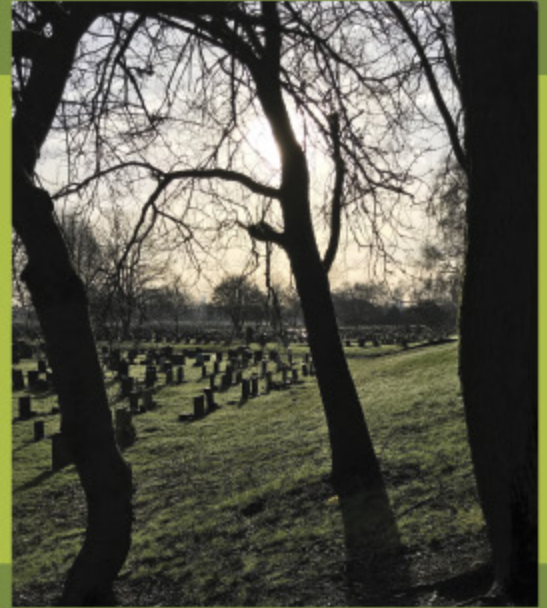
- Grave identification and cemetery plans
- Instructions to gravediggers
- Checking procedures -verification of location, depth, size
- Memorials removed from graves
- Preparation for interment
- Legal requirements and implications
- Adjacent unstable memorials
- Dealing with families, funeral directors and officiants
- The funeral service
- Identification of the coffin
- Backfilling
- Inclement weather
- Health and safety
- Customer care
- Problem solving
- Questions and answers



**Details of all our courses can be found on our website
www.iccm-uk.com**

The First Online Database for UK Burial and Cremation Records

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- Details of the grave occupants
- Cemetery maps with grave locations
- Headstone and memorial photographs and inscriptions



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Fully compatible with
existing cemetery and
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The logo for Deceased Online features a stylized graphic of three overlapping arches in shades of green and grey above the text 'deceased|online'. The word 'deceased' is in a bold, lowercase sans-serif font, followed by a vertical bar and the word 'online' in a regular weight of the same font.

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DESIGNS

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test your knowledge



This edition of Test Your Knowledge is a bit of a pick 'n mix to get you thinking!

Question 1

How long do you need to retain statutory cremation forms for if not in electronic format?

Answer

- A – 2 years
- B – 15 years
- C – Other

Question 2

How long do you need to retain burial forms for?

Answer

- A – 2 years
- B – 15 years
- C – Other

Question 3

What statutory registers must a burial authority keep?

Question 4

Is it a legal requirement for a burial authority to keep maps of their cemeteries?

Answer

- A – Yes
- B – No

Question 5

In England, how does consecrated ground in a cemetery differ from non-consecrated ground?

Question 6

What lawful authority would you need if you were going to carry out an exhumation from consecrated ground to non-consecrated ground?

Answer:

- A – Licence from Ministry of Justice
- B – Faculty
- C – Both a licence and a faculty

Question 7

Can you bury ashes in a grave before any full burials have taken place?

Answer

A – Yes

B – No

Question 8

What would you need to do if you come across ashes in a grave whilst digging to a greater depth for a full burial?

Answer

A – Move them to another location within the grave space, making sure they do not go above ground.

B – Take them completely out of the grave and reinter them above the coffin that is being buried.

Question 9

A family want to put a memorial on the grave of their relative who is buried in the grave and is still the registered grave owner. The person who is entitled to the rights is untraceable. Can you allow the memorial to be placed on the grave without a transfer taking place?

Answer

A – Yes

B – No

Question 10

Can a coffin be taken out of a crematorium chapel after it has been placed on the catafalque?

Answer

A – Yes

B – No

Answers to all the questions
are given on page 69
(no cheating!)



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Should you eat your 5-a day with or without yellow snow?

There isn't a law or a regulation that says - don't eat yellow snow (apart from a Frank Zappa song apparently) and yet it turns up in films, cartoons and its one of those urban myths or idioms that it's a really bad thing to do. So, we know not to do it because we are brought up being taught it's a bad idea, if we're lucky. What does that have anything to do with cemeteries and crematoria?

Well, lets take a little look at why things have been a little difficult this year shall we? It is all to do with guidance, laws and best practice or common sense. Sadly as we're aware, assuming we are still in Tier's 1,2 or 3 when this comes out, that we haven't had a circuit breaker lockdown or that Covid-19's somehow been stalled, it's been a bit of an awkward year.

The problems we are all faced with in and out of the industry have come from laws and guidance. We have some laws passed, and originally when we all went into lockdown, it was nice and straight forward – stay home - don't go out unless you have to and you couldn't do lots of things. Yes, people said it was Draconian – which is interesting as the more you looked at it, it was sensible rather than excessive, as people were dying in their thousands.

Then things calmed down a bit and restrictions were relaxed. The messaging was still confusing and mixed as we weren't told everything was bad. In fact, we were actively encouraged to go to the pubs and restaurants – eat out to help out.

And this ladies and gentlemen is where it all got difficult. ICCM and our kindred organisations formed DMAG to have one joint voice and line of communication between our industry and the government, and to better manage our approach to the pandemic. Streamlined, simple and direct – a response to a crisis to make it easier.

Unfortunately, over time if you've been following the advice coming out of the UK, you would have seen the messages not only get mixed, but there were lots of them, for different areas, at different times, from different people and then to add to it all, a lot of these were just guidance or ideas, not actual law.

DMAG and ICCM have to try and make sense of it all and help pass it on to you, when sometimes we find out the same time as the rest of the country.

Lets make this easier, take the 5 a day message from the NHS - The 5 A Day campaign is based on advice from the World Health Organization (WHO), which recommends eating a minimum of 400g of fruit and vegetables a day to lower the risk of serious health problems, such as heart disease, stroke and some types of cancer.

So, it's fairly simple and says why it's a good idea. Do we all manage to do it? Probably not, we know we should, as its good and simple advice. However, once again let's make this more complicated with more guidance from April 2014 and the Independent - Eating seven or more portions of fruit and vegetables a day gives people a far greater chance of staving off an early death, according to a study published on Tuesday, which suggests that the Government's official "five a day" recommendation should be doubled to 10.

So, we should eat 5 a day, which we're all not doing, but really, we should eat 7 for it to be better and then really, really it should be 10

to be much better for us! In 2 steps we have gone from knowing how to eat healthy to being confused and not knowing what the best advice is.

Let's take a good Covid-19 one - Scattering of Ashes
First of all, we were told that we couldn't do them – straight forward no is no.

Then, when we started to emerge from lockdown, we were told maybe we could do them, but it wasn't the same as a funeral so different rules apply. Was it the rules on social gatherings? Staying safe and alert guidance? Or the rule of 6? How many people could attend? Was it 6, 20, or 30?

Finally, when we got some definite guidance on post funeral events which said 30, they bought in the Tier system and changed it again to 15!

It's the same boat as the 5 a day, it was one thing, then its' another, and now its possibly a different one, as it's likely that someone else (and pick a department to publish the information) has written another set of guidance for us to interpret.

Unfortunately human nature is at a point where we know better, but we don't do it – we know smoking is bad for us, but people still do it, the same with drinking too much alcohol.

Its perhaps no wonder we have issues with guidance when we have to have a month sponsored by staying sober for October to raise funds and awareness, and tell people – don't drink as much – but we should already know that. Then there's also Stoptober for stopping smoking – we are a bit self-defeating to need to be almost bullied into common sense.

So, what do we do then? It seems we know a lot as human beings to be able to make sensible choices don't we? Well, no that's the issue isn't it! We have freedom and so when we're guided to do something rather than told to it, we have a habit of not knowing what to do. But if we are told to do things really strongly, we might do them, but then complain.

Maybe it would be easier if we were robots and followed Asimov's 3 laws of robotics (rules were introduced in his 1942 short story "Runaround")

First Law

A robot may not injure a human being or, through inaction, allow a human being to come to harm.

Second Law

A robot must obey the orders given it by human beings except where such orders would conflict with the First Law.

Third Law

A robot must protect its own existence as long as such protection does not conflict with the First or Second Law.

Draconian, simple, not guidance and not open to revision - the opposite of how we want to be.

Trevor Robson
ICCM Finance and IT Manager

congratulations Mohamed Omer MBE

Special honours such as the MBE (Member of the Order of the British Empire) are awarded to people who have made significant contributions to their local communities. ICCM Director and Board Member, Mohamed Omer, has been awarded an MBE in the Queen's Birthday Honours 2020. The award for Mohamed is in recognition of his services to the British Muslim community during Covid-19. We wanted to know more about Mohamed and his work and put some questions to him:

1. Can you tell us a bit about yourself, your background and what your current role is?

I was born in Zambia and moved to the UK in 1988 with my family. I am an accountant by profession but mainly worked as a trader and a consultant to a few pharmaceutical companies. My current role is a Board Member – External Affairs for Gardens of Peace Muslim Cemetery. It is the largest dedicated Muslim Cemetery in the country.



2. How has COVID impacted on your community?

As has been reported the BAME community were adversely affected by this virus both in terms of infection as well as deaths. Our community is a very closely knit one and where extended families is the norm. Because of the restrictions that were imposed and closure of the places of worship, people were affected both physically and mentally.

3. What other projects and initiatives have you been involved with that have helped the community?

I have been a governor of a local secondary school for over 18 years and currently a Chair, I am a trustee of Haven House Children's Hospice, Trustee and Chair of Redbridge Faith Forum, Trustee of Big Issue Invest (Social funding for enterprises that do not meet normal lending criteria), APPG on Baby Loss and Bereavement. Chair of the National Burial Council (an umbrella organisation for the Muslim Community that are involved with end of life and burials) and finally a member of the Burial and Cremation Advisory Group at the Ministry of Justice.

4. What have you found the most challenging aspects during this time?

The various restrictions that had to be applied and by that, I mean the numbers that can attend funerals, participation in the various religious requirements and closure of the places of worship. This meant that we had to deal with families' emotions and mental anguish.

5. What additional help or support do you feel is needed that would benefit the community?

Better access to bereavement support, more funding for community-based organisations and better protection for vulnerable people.

6. Is there anyone that you have met that has truly inspired you?

My late Father. He would do anything to help people and he was actively involved with any community deaths. If my father used to see a stranger in the local place of worship, he would approach them and bring them home for lunch or dinner or even give them a place to stay.



7. What has surprised you the most since the start of the pandemic?

It is people's reactions and, in some cases, not wanting to believe. Lack of clarity from the different organisations that were involved in providing guidance and the delay in testing.

8. How have you taken care of your own physical and mental health and that of your teams during the pandemic?

We ensured that all our staff were properly kitted out and did not compromise on their safety at any stage. In so far as my own physical and mental health was concerned, I really did not think too much about it and simply concentrated on ensuring that that families were supported during these very tough times.

9. How do you feel about receiving this honour?

I am really humbled by the MBE award in the Queen's Birthday Honours List. In reality this is an award for the management and staff of Gardens of Peace. Our purpose is to serve the community in the best manner possible and to ensure that all the authorities recognise the requirements of our faith in respect of death and end of life .

I am truly grateful to her Majesty for recognising that faith plays a vital role in society and the need to facilitate and respect their needs.

10. What is the one message that you would like to share with readers of the Journal about the pandemic?

That it is real, and people should follow the guidelines set by the government and together we will overcome the virus. Stay safe and look out for those who are vulnerable within our community.



THE ETERNAL LIGHT

The Fuego urns are the newest addition to the Funeral Products Originals collection. Memorial items that are part of this exclusive collection are designed and produced by Funeral Products themselves. Designs that translate the wishes of families into a loving, tangible memory.

A lasting memory of a loved one; this perspective was the source of inspiration for the Fuego collection. Memorial items handmade from clay with elegant shapes, a representation of the eternal flame which is inextricably linked to numerous cultures and religions. Each urn has its own specific symbolism, which makes every Fuego urn a piece of art, with different special meanings based on religion, tradition, and spirituality.



ICCM charter silver for East Suffolk Norse Group

East Suffolk Norse manages 14 cemeteries on behalf of East Suffolk council, divided into 2 areas - north & south.

The north, where I am based, is made up of Lowestoft cemetery, which has a chapel, Kirkley cemetery which has a chapel and includes a dedicated green burial area, Wrentham Old & New cemeteries, Southwold cemetery, Halesworth cemetery, Bungay cemetery, Beccles cemetery which has a chapel, and lastly, but definitely not least – Belle Vue cemetery which has ash plots only.

The south, where my colleague, Natalie Bailey, and the person I go to for a moan and back up advice, is based. Natalie carries out all the administration for the 5 southern cemeteries, as well as being part of the customer service team there too. In the south there is Saxmundham cemetery, Leiston, that has a chapel, Aldeburgh cemetery where composer Benjamin Britten is buried, and Woodbridge Old & New cemeteries – this cemetery has a wall and Garden of Remembrance.

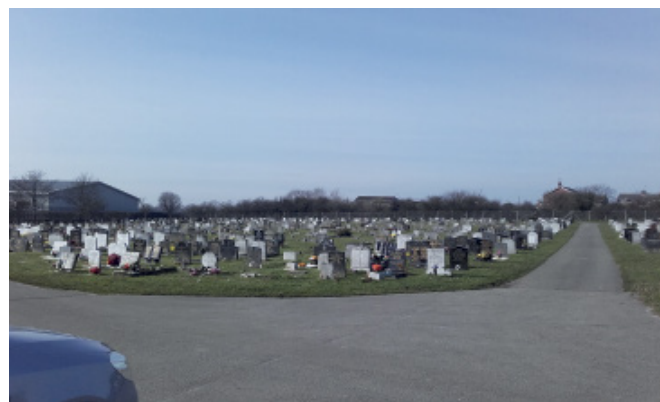
There is an operational team at either end of the district. Jon Blake, who has been with us for 1 year and Adam Burwood who has got 15 years + service is in the north. In the south we have John Pallant, who has been here 4 years and Matt Baltzer who has done 2 years' service. All these guys had a grounds maintenance background with the council before moving onto being part of our cemetery team. As well as carrying out all the grounds maintenance of the cemeteries, they are also responsible for all the digging, whether that is a full burial or ashes. They continued to carry out all the grass cutting, small tree maintenance etc, just to make sure that once lockdown ended, those visiting our cemeteries still had somewhere clean and tidy to go to for their quiet reflection.

Senior managers and the council are delighted with achieving the ICCM charter silver award for our burial service this year. It has been an unprecedented year for us all and at times we have been extremely stretched and busy. Both teams have risen to the challenge, without any grumbling or fear of their safety over this awful virus. I personally would like to say a big thank you to all, especially as we have 2 fairly new members of staff in Jon & Matt. I have promised them cake and coffee when we can get together!!

Simone Gallant
Cemeteries Manager



Kirkley Cemetery



Lowestoft Cemetery



Woodbridge Old Cemetery



Aldeburgh Cemetery showing Benjamin Britten's grave

bee positive..

This year a report by the German Centre for Interrogative Biodiversity Research in Leipzig conducted the largest ever study on insects and confirmed that insect populations on land are declining by about 0.92% per year globally. This translates to approximately 24% of the population over the last 30 years. However, freshwater insects have shown an increase of 1.08% in the same period. Although some people may not view an increase in midges as good news.

It is estimated that in 2015 insects contributed over £600 million to the UK economy (€14.2 billion across the EU in 2012), so quite rightfully, they should expect some recognition for the unstinting effort they put in from Spring through to early Autumn. These figures do not include their pollination of wildflowers whose beauty might be considered priceless.

Insect decline happens in a quiet way and we don't notice until we think back and remember how many butterflies we used to see on the Buddleia bush. The survey also identified that insects which live on the ground or in the grass have declined, while insects in the tree canopy have largely remained the same. Freshwater insects have increased, and the most likely cause is the environmental measures which have cleaned up our rivers and lakes. The increase in freshwater insects shows that with good land management we can stop and hopefully reverse the decline in land insects.

Habitat destruction is the most likely cause of insect decline and although there is no simple solution any place that can offer a refuge and allow wildlife to thrive will eventually, like the freshwater insects, allow land insects to recover. What is needed is a replacement for the hay meadows, clover fields and hedgerows that have been lost since WW II.

Last year I visited Old Park Meadow Burial Ground in July and was astonished at the resurgence in the number of butterflies, bees, and dragonflies. It was a delight to walk through the cemetery and this resurgence happened in a single year which shows what cemeteries and crematoria can achieve in providing sanctuaries.

The primary purpose of this article is to provide information that will assist in creating habitats for bumblebees, and hopefully this will inspire cemetery and crematorium managers to provide areas that can act as sanctuaries for these hardworking creatures.

As a child I was always scared of bees and wasps, but I have now come to understand, that on the whole, they will generally ignore you as long as you respect them. In the spring I frequently have to move sunbathing bumble bees to ensure their safety. It always surprises me how amiable they are sitting quietly on your hand while you move them to a safer location.

This article deals with the humble bumblebee. Two species of bumblebee became extinct in the UK last century and eight (roughly a third) are listed on the priority species list. The main reason for the decline is the huge reduction in the density of

flowering plants which they feed on, as well as sheltered corners where they can nest and over winter. Bumblebees only feed on flowers and require enough to sustain a colony of 40 – 400 worker bees from March – October. Many of the bumblebee species don't forage further than 1km from the nest so their habitat must be both diverse and flower rich. A variety of flowers are needed because bumblebees have different tongue lengths. Some species will prefer long fluted flowers while others need an open flat flower.



Bumblebees are social insects and live in a colony with one queen and fellow worker daughters. Bumblebees do not live in hives and cannot make honey, so the workers do not normally survive the winter. In spring the queen emerges from hibernation to feed on pollen and nectar and find a nest site. The queen lays eggs that develop into female worker bees that will be busy foraging on flowers and caring for the eggs. A female worker will live for up to 3 weeks. In late summer some of the eggs will develop into males and new queens who will leave the nest. The following spring the queens will emerge from hibernation to start this process all over again.

Cemetery and crematorium grounds are ideal sanctuaries for bumblebees because they are quiet and well protected. Bumblebees and most insects do not need extravagant landscaping. They just require tailoring of a cemetery or crematorium grounds with practices to accommodate their needs. The paragraphs below will hopefully give you the information required to create these habitats.

Ecology

Bumblebees need access to good nesting and hibernation sites. Undisturbed habitats of tussocky grass around the boundaries of an area are very important and provide sheltered locations that are free from trampling or mechanical operations. Fruit and nut trees provide a good source of early pollen each year and attract mammals such as mice and bank voles that create nests that are often used by bumblebees. An undisturbed peat free compost heap, leaf litter or old nesting material also make good nesting areas. Take care to leave these areas undisturbed because these normally amiable creatures become aggressive if their nest is threatened. Sites that flood or, are heavily contaminated are not suitable.

Wildflower rich grassland is the most important habitat for bumblebees providing pollen and nectar rich plants throughout the summer. These meadows frequently contain up to 40 plant species per square meter but over 97% of our wildflower rich grassland has been lost since 1937. A bee friendly area will ideally contain pollen and nectar rich

flowers from March to late September. 15 -20 plant species per square metre is an ideal concentration. This may require adding grassland species if there is not an available source nearby. Sow a mixture of at least four suitable plants with no single species making up more than 50% of the mix.

Leaving an uncut strip on one edge provides flowers for bumblebees later in the season. It is also helpful to try and link uncut areas together to provide corridors for the bees. Rotating these areas on an annual basis is also useful. Key species like woundwort, dead-nettles, knapweed and foxgloves may require re-introduction.

It is important to cut meadows in late summer, but not before mid-July. It is important to remove the clippings to retain low nutrient levels and maintain a neutral pH in the soil to suppress coarse grass that would otherwise out compete the wildflowers. Cutting meadows late will mean bumblebees can forage later in the season while allowing late flowering plants to seed. Harrowing or rolling should be completed by the end of March to avoid destroying the nests of bumblebees and ground nesting birds. Application of chemical fertilisers or muck spreading should be avoided.

Brown field sites can also provide a good habitat. "Ruderal Plants" are the first plants to colonise bare ground and flower late into the summer. Many of these plants are ideal for bumblebees. These sites should be cleared back to bare ground every few years and ridges constructed to create a mosaic of habitats. These habitats can support populations of rare plants such as Deptford Pink, Wormwood and Bee Orchid and it is advisable to undertake a botanical survey before doing any work.

Water Mint, Purple Loosestrife, Forget Me Not, Iris and Meadowsweet thrive around ponds and are ideal food sources for bumblebees. Hedges such as Willow, Cherry, Hawthorn and Blackthorn provide important food sources for emerging bumblebee queens in the spring. Leaving some hedges uncut each year will encourage a greater range of wildlife. Preferably hedges should be cut between October and February.

Between March and September dredging of ditches should be avoided and some uncut vegetation allowed to remain because this is the bumblebee nesting season. Allow some deadwood to provide nest sites for solitary bumble bees as well as habitat for a variety of insects.

Itemised below is a list of some of the favoured bumblebee plants.

Herbs

- Rosemary
- Chives
- Sage
- Common Vetch

- Hedge Woundworts
- Chamomile
- Borage
- Thyme
- Common Knapweed

Fruit and Vegetables

- Raspberries
- Blackcurrant
- Red Currants
- Strawberries
- Peas
- Beans
- Tomatoes
- Courgettes
- Cucumbers



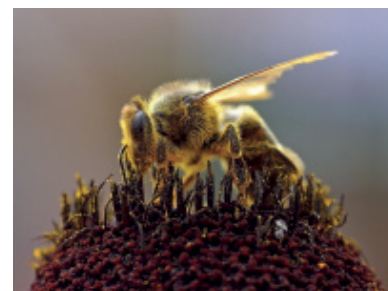
Shrubs

- Hazel
- Elder
- Blackthorn
- Winter Heather
- Dog Rose
- Flowering Currant
- Californian Lilac
- Mahonia
- Escallonia
- Willow
- Hawthorn
- Blackthorn
- Lavender



Trees

- Crab Apple
- Apples
- Pears
- Plums
- Cherries



Herbaceous Perennials

- Bird's Foot Trefoil
- Red Clover
- Yellow Rattle
- Foxglove
- Hedge Woundworts
- Self Heat (Prunella Vulgaris)
- Comfrey

If you need more information please email the Bumblebee Conservation Trust at enquiries@bumblebeeconservation.org.

Potential Funding

Kew Gardens – Project Grow Wild offers funding and free seeds.

company news

Blue Audio Visual Ltd

If you ever wondered what some Audio-Visual Companies do when there's a pandemic, so do we but, our answer to that question is:..... we work.

Our repairs, installation and manufacturing divisions, and our routine maintenance programmes have been the salvation of our business. We have designed and built, travelled, installed, tested, and attenuated nationwide, and succeeded at every opportunity.

The other thing we do is design, create and produce new and exciting solutions to the problems you are experiencing. Keep your eyes open for the announcement of our latest additions to the range of bereavement service products that will assist and support you in your delivery of exemplary services to an ever more demanding public.

The two products especially developed with the bereavement service during a pandemic in mind are currently under trials in our technical centre. Thus far we are pleased and proud to see the results of our labours fulfilling the roles and the needs they were perceived for.

What are they?? Once the exhaustive testing programme is completed, we will reveal all, let us just say, the worlds of burial and anti-virus disinfection may never be quite the same again!

WATCH THIS SPACE FOR FURTHER NEWS

www.blueav.com blue@blueav.com 07976 937666

CCB Supplies

CCB Supplies provides a wide range of products to the cemetery, crematorium and bereavement industry.

We are primarily an engineering company, therefore we offer improved design and bespoke solutions as we manufacture many of our products in house. This has allowed us the opportunity to modify and improve the current design on a number of products. For example, our Hydraulic Cylinders are more robust and utilise an environmentally friendly hydraulic oil which will not freeze or damage the seals.

Our skilled engineers offer clients the opportunity to have their equipment serviced and repaired, ultimately increasing the longevity of such products.

Being a manufacturer has given us the freedom to work directly with clients. We are able to find the best solution for you whether that be through innovation, enhancing existing product, improving Health & Safety for your staff whilst guaranteeing competitive pricing and good customer service.

We are adapting to the current COVID-19 pandemic by offering Zoom calls to all potential and existing clients. This allows us the chance to introduce our team, showcase our products and find out how we can best serve each customer individually. Meeting in person will resume when it is safe to do so under government guidelines as the wellbeing of our staff and customers is of the upmost importance.

Tel: 01294 216821 sales@ccbsupplies.co.uk www.ccbsupplies.co.uk



EDGE IT Systems Limited

EDGE IT Systems Limited, suppliers of the Epitaph software suite are delighted to welcome Dawn Loudfoot into our team. Dawn has worked in Bereavement Services for 25 years, the last 15 of which saw her working at New Southgate Cemetery and Crematorium and then Parndon Wood Cemetery and Crematorium. She was an Epitaph client for much of that time so has first-hand knowledge of the product. Her wealth of experience is already benefitting our clients and further demonstrates our philosophy that there's no substitute to having experienced professionals at the forefront of customer service.



Our other exciting development is our acceptance onto the Everything ICT procurement platform. This allows clients to avoid lengthy and expensive procurement exercises that do not always identify the best solution. They can be safe in knowledge that Epitaph has been thoroughly analysed and is continually monitored to ensure the highest quality of service by an independent third party. Please see our advert in this edition for full details.

company news

Greenbridge Designs

Greenbridge Designs are passionate about developing innovative solutions to improve cemeteries, crematoria & public spaces.

Our core business remains in the design, manufacture and installation of mausolea, burial vaults and cremation memorials with a high quality range of designs that are functional, beautifully designed and affordable.



Greenbridge Designs' parent company have been supporting the bereavement sector for over 45 years. Their skills in developing IT solutions for the wider funeral industry have now been harnessed to create 'SAMM Safety', a software application developed to assess and manage the risks found in a cemetery, particularly those relating to memorials. The simple intuitive interfaces belie the wealth of functionality that exists at its core. Whether it's the feature rich mobile app that provides the outcomes of inspections in real-time or the central management system with its wealth of administration tools for maintaining grave records, diary scheduling and cemetery mapping, 'SAMM Safety' offers an affordable solution, no matter how small or large your operation. Early 2021 will see the addition of a feature rich communications hub and a second module designed to manage risk across your entire cemetery estate.

Whatever your needs 'SAMM Safety' will ensure you're in total control.

Greenbridge Designs are pleased to bring 'SAMM Safety' to cemeteries and crematoria and would welcome the opportunity to discuss and demonstrate its impressive capabilities.

Feel free to call us to discuss SAMM or to find out more about our traditional range of cemetery and crematorium products, we will do all we can to help.

For more information please visit www.greenbridgedesigns.com and www.sammsafety.co.uk

Telephone: 01386 848908 or email dennis@greenbridgedesigns.com

Obitus

Here at Obitus, we've been making a lot of changes to help us keep pace with the increased demand for funeral webcasting over the last few months, with a focus on improving customer experience.



We've been lucky enough to welcome 30 brand new members of staff. Here's music specialist Louise Perkins with some insights on life as a new member of the Obitus team.

What does a typical working day look like for you?

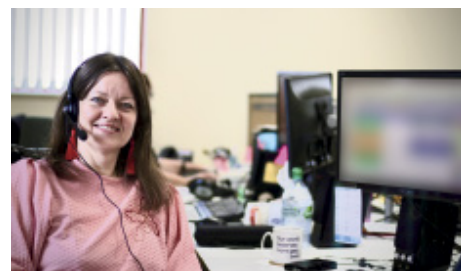
I'm part of the music team, which makes me the first point of contact for funeral directors and crematoria. I answer their queries as they call in and update them on service status. I work closely with the music team, passing on song requests and helping to source music for funeral services.

What's the workplace culture like?

It's great. We have a young and vibrant team here. Pretty much everyone seems to have an interest in music and media in their personal lives, as well as in a professional capacity. The music team, in particular, has a lot of creative people (I do not include myself in this!), many of whom are talented musicians in their own right.

What's your favourite part of the job?

I enjoy all aspects of it, really, but my favourite things to do are supporting the music team and sourcing songs for funerals – I find it varied and interesting, and I've learned a lot about music since I started.



And finally – the weirdest music request you've had?

We get a lot of unusual requests – but I think the famous 30-second clock from Countdown was probably the strangest!

For more information, call Jo Muscroft on 07983 134063 or email jo.muscroft@obitus.com

company news

welters® organisation worldwide

Throughout the hard and stressful times of these last few months and against all odds, welters® organisation are continuing to support our customers throughout the country, providing necessary support services and of course, installing our interments systems and associated memorial stonework.

Our renowned Cemetery Village® schemes are tailor-made to fit each client's specific requirements, working together from initial site survey to final design and implementation, to resolve land use issues as well as providing new cemeteries and cemetery extensions.



welters®
ORGANISATION
WORLDWIDE

Westerleigh Group Rollout Webcasting Upgrade

Westerleigh Group, which operates cemeteries and crematoria throughout the UK, has invested in new webcasting services for all of its 34 sites as restrictions on funeral services due to coronavirus continue.

The roll-out has been achieved in partnership with Obitus, the leading supplier of bereavement technology in the UK following a review of all sites. It is part of a complete upgrade of audio-visual equipment at each location, supporting funeral directors and families with the music, hymns and visual tributes they require at ceremonies.

Kate Davidson, Commercial Director of Westerleigh Group said: "Sadly we believe that restrictions on the number of people attending funerals will be with us for many more months.

"In the past there would be a handful of mourners choosing to watch a service online we are now experiencing hundreds of mourners sometimes logging on for individual services.

"We have offered webcasting from our sites for many years to support people unable to attend funerals but this increased demand in recent months prompted us to take steps to make them more robust and reliable.

"Obitus have worked with us since 2011 supporting 15 sites and we are now pleased to have completed a roll-out on our remaining 19 sites so that there is a consistency of quality and resilience. Almost all funerals are now being webcast online as the restriction to 30 people attending means many friends and family have to attend online.

"We spoke to funeral arrangers and celebrants and they overwhelmingly supported the look and feel of the online system offered by Obitus as they provide comfort to those who have to use the system."

James Crossland, Managing Director of Obitus said: "We share the same core values as Westerleigh in providing a first-class service to the bereaved. From our bases in Sheffield and Henley we have been able to carry out this major installation programme throughout England, Scotland and Wales and ensure the system operates well in each location.

"At the forefront of everything we do is to ensure that in these difficult times people can say goodbye to their loved ones in a dignified way with a seamless webcasting service."

loss and bereavement awareness course review

Ian Dungavell attended the first ICCM and Cruse Loss and Bereavement Course

There is no bright side to bereavement. And there is nothing you can do to make it better.

We are all used to the idea that there is something we can do to fix a problem. But death and bereavement are final. There is no solution. Bereavement is one of those life-changing experiences from which it is impossible to return to an earlier state.

Understanding the variety of ways in which people respond to bereavement is hugely important if we are to help them as we deal with them in our work. It can help us tailor our services better and can also help us deal with our own responses to the stories they share with us. That is why I thought I should sign up for the new loss and bereavement course. But I would say that even the most seasoned professional (which I'm not) could benefit from a period of reflection about this, and from hearing other colleagues' thoughts and experiences.



I like to think that I can deal with people empathetically, but people's responses to loss and bereavement can vary so dramatically that it can be confusing to know at any moment what it's best to say or do. I have seen people so exhausted by the sheer weight and physical pain of their emotions that they seem in slow motion. I have seen people so mentally exhausted as they struggle to untangle the complexity of grief that they can barely think; a sort of bereavement brain fog. So, while it's annoying that they turn up without an appointment, I have to think that this might be the only time they have felt together enough to be able to cope.

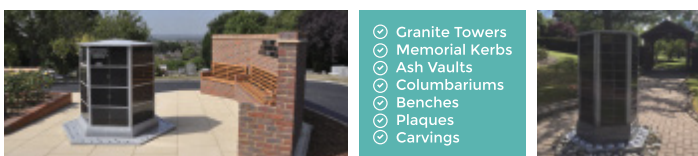
For some people, it seems to me, grief can be manifested in a similar way to those with depression or anxiety. This explained the boiling red face of a grave owner one day as he shouted abuse at me over something seemingly inconsequential: if grief has left you tired and numb, anger can make you feel alive once again. I can deal with that better if I understand where it's coming from.

Some people can be like that one day and then completely calm the next. Their focus can switch from thinking only about their loss and the past, to the present, when they start to find a new way of living their life without the person who has died. And then it can switch back again. It is not a linear process. We might meet them in our work at any stage.

It would be nice to be able to tell a bereaved person that 'Time heals all wounds'. But we know it doesn't, because the grief doesn't shrink or disappear; it just gets reframed by the ongoing business of life. Thinking about grief in that way can be comforting because it acknowledges that the dead person will not disappear from our thoughts, and that we will take them with us as we go through the rest of our life. From a feeling that grief is all encompassing, a bereaved person can come to understand that it can be integrated in their life and that they can move on without forgetting.

Though we cannot undo the death, a better understanding of loss and bereavement can help us communicate more sensitively with our clients and hopefully even help them manage their grief. We should all do this course!

Ian Dungavell
Chief Executive at
Friends of Highgate Cemetery Trust



- ⊙ Granite Towers
- ⊙ Memorial Kerbs
- ⊙ Ash Vaults
- ⊙ Columbariums
- ⊙ Benches
- ⊙ Plaques
- ⊙ Carvings



"Granart have been creating bespoke memorialisation schemes for more than 30 years."

deputy president Marian Webb visits North Oxfordshire crematorium open day



A year of change, doing things differently, finding a new 'normal'. These are the phrases that have dominated 2020. We have all had to adapt the way we live, and a way we work. A year for all in bereavement to find a way to continue to look after all in our care but continue to ensure everyone is safe.

One of the hardest changes in 2020 has been the limited social gatherings. Something we all take for granted. The ability to meet with family, friends and colleagues and just talk, relax and share experiences. The year with no festivals, events or conferences.

With all this in mind, it was refreshing to be invited to the opening of Memoria's new crematorium in North Oxfordshire. A chance to see how this could be done in our new world.

I arrived on site at a pre agreed time slot, to be met by members of the team ensuring names and numbers were taken. Masks on and socially distanced we started our tour in a small group.

The first thing that grabbed me was the stunning landscape and beauty of the site. The 30 acres of grounds and the peaceful tranquillity that oozes as you drive in. The buildings that seem to fit seamlessly into its environment.

We were led into an open lobby area giving extra room for larger services, a window that would ensure that everyone attending would still feel part of the service. The chapel itself thought out with the needs of families in the forefront of their minds. Comfy sofas for the main mourners an additional touch.

No less impressive, was the installation of the new electric cremator. The first I have personally seen. The electric technologies we were told would emit 95% less emissions than a standard gas cremator.

From there we were led to the new Church Pavilion a new addition. An impressive open space with floor to ceiling windows looking out on to the grounds. A place that families can choose to extend their goodbyes, a space for them to raise a glass to their loved ones. Here, we were offered refreshments and lunch served in individual lunch boxes. A chance to talk and relax with the Memoria team.

The Memoria team have worked hard to ensure the event was a success, as groups were led round you never felt rushed and they all took their time to answer questions and made everyone feel welcome. As new groups arrived the team continued to ensure that safety was at the forefront of their minds. A wonderful day, a big thank you for your hospitality!

Marian Webb

pulpit: the big tent at Chelmer Valley park & ride

Preparation for the worst.



The entrance to the Chelmer Valley Park & Ride when it opened in April, 2011



The same during the recent lock-down with the ominous tent visible

It was a few weeks into lock-down, at the end of April, and I drove my car past the Chelmer Valley Park and Ride facility near Little Waltham just north of Chelmsford. I had used it before several times in order to facilitate travel into London from Chelmsford Railway Station (only 30 minutes, but expensive!).

On this occasion, as I drove close to the park and ride, I saw a foreboding sight. A huge tent covered a large part of the site, and I deduced that this must be a sudden temporary provision of a make-shift mortuary, just in case the number of deaths from the coronavirus overwhelmed the present provision in our area.

The site in Chelmsford would help the NHS "cope with the rise in deaths in the county" Essex County Council said. It was chosen because its location on the A130 near Little Waltham and its access to the main roads and the ease with which it can be secured. Essex County council leader David Finch had said it was "a stark indicator of the difficult times we are facing."



A closer view of the tent

We now have learned that the temporary provision remained unused until it was just as suddenly removed at the end of June. Everyone (I expect) gave a sigh of relief.

Driving past this huge tent, potentially filled with many dead bodies awaiting burial or cremation, was a deeply troubling experience for me. The size of the tent indicated that perhaps hundreds of bodies would need this temporary provision and the spectre of so many people dying, and their families and friends trying to deal with the various complex emotions of grief, on top of which was this temporary mortuary, all seemed very difficult to contemplate.

One of the things that went through my mind, looking at it from the vantage point of 39 years of full-time ministry and then 7 more recent years of busy retirement ministry, there was a full memory and a current experience of how responsible, dedicated and sympathetic are all the

various sections of the funeral "business." I have known this since I conducted my first funeral which was in July, 1974, some 6 weeks after leaving my Theological College and until the 30th July, this year when I buried ashes and the funeral director's member of staff warmly made the experience dignified and respectful. At every place where I have been involved with funerals, I have seen and deeply respected the funeral directors, their staff, the cemetery and crematorium staff and so many people who help mourners to come through and bear the pain of bereavement. The same may be said (if I may) about the clergy and other celebrants who put themselves at the same risk as others by talking to mourners and leading funeral services at cemeteries and crematoria. They have been so constantly excellent, and we are so lucky to have a great service in every town and village throughout the land. In fact, (again, if I may) I believe that celebrants of any persuasion and clergy of any religion as well as all staff of funeral directors are very much on the "front line" of the coronavirus pandemic emergency and deserve to be considered in the same category as NHS medical staff and many others who are at risk now doing jobs which bring them into possible contact with those who are infected with the virus. They all deserve a clap!

The initial impact of the virus in Essex in 2020 was not as bad as anticipated but let us remember that it is not yet over (As I write in August, 2020). By the time you will be reading this article, things may have had a turn for the worse or in fact, hopefully, become much better than we feared.

I remember, back in my curacy days at Oldham Parish Church (*pictured right*) from 1974 to 1977, I spent some time skulking around the dusty and rarely used cupboards and drawers in the church vestry. One day I found a parish magazine dating back to 1919. In it, there was an article written by the then vicar apologising to the congregation for being absent every day for several weeks. The reason? He spent all day conducting funerals in the local cemetery and then came home tired out and needing to rest. The reason for this was the world-wide flu pandemic.



Oldham Parish Church

Yes, we have been here before.



The worst influenza pandemic in history (so far!) was the Spanish flu pandemic of 1918-1919. (*see left*) It infected an estimated 500 million people (about one-third of the world's population) and killed an estimated 50 million—more than the death toll arising from the battles of the grotesque Great War. Astonishing as it may sound! Mortality was high in people younger than 5 years old, 20-40 years old, and 65 years and older. The high mortality in healthy people, including those in the 20-40-year age group, was a unique feature of this pandemic. While the 1918 H1N1 virus has been synthesized and evaluated, the properties

that made it so devastating are still not well understood. With no vaccine to protect against influenza infection and no antibiotics to treat secondary bacterial infections that can be associated with influenza infections, control efforts worldwide were limited to non-pharmaceutical interventions such as isolation, quarantine, good personal hygiene, use of disinfectants, and limitations of public gatherings, which were applied unevenly.



Women wearing surgical masks in Brisbane in 1919. (National Museum of Brisbane)

We have heard this story more recently, have we not?

We are not in a new and unique situation, although circumstances may yet prove it to become so.



One of the sad side-effects of Covid 19 was the manner in which it almost wiped out the many plans and preparations for celebrating the 75th anniversary of VE Day (8th May) and then, some three months later, the lesser celebrated VJ Day (15th August) which marked the end of an horrendous six years of warfare, right across the world. The desire for public expressions of joy which reached the hearts of millions of people in 1945 was very visible and rejoicing was everywhere. However, in 2020, the sense of joy felt diminished and left rather threadbare as people struggled with the reality of the Covid 19 pandemic.

threat of pandemics will, by then, have been brought more under control or even better, eradicated from the human experience and a smaller global population will be a much healthier one!

The next significant anniversary of peace will be in the year 2045, and I don't expect that I will be here to see it, but I hope that the

That would be a time for real rejoicing, right around the world.

vintage visits: goodbye and thank you

In October 2019 I sold the Leyland Beaver to A.W.Lymn Funeral Directors in Nottingham, enabling me to spend more time with my family. In the past 10 years more and more families, taking out pre-paid funeral plans, have asked the same question, 'What's the plan Dave?' My family have always been interested in what I did, however, no one was able to take over the business. My son owns a music PR business in Nashville and my daughter helps to run an autism base in a South Wales school, so the offer from A.W.Lymn was timely and welcomed.

The purpose of this article is to thank all the people in crematoria who have helped me by measuring the clearance under the porte cochere, some using a tape measure with varying levels of accuracy and others using innovative measuring sticks like fluorescent light tubes. However, the help that I most appreciated was from Paul Edwards from Blue Bell Hill crematorium where the physical restrictions, both in height and width, caused me to re-evaluate my procedure for off-loading the coffin. The reduced headroom meant that no one could work alongside me on the deck. So, with necessity being the mother of invention, I developed a strategy so that I could turn the coffin through 90 degrees unassisted on the deck. Paul was brilliant, not only did he provide precise measurements, site plans and pictures, he also arranged to be available on the day to watch me enact the plan that I have since used on every funeral.

I have also received a lot of help from cemetery staff who have cut back trees to enable the Leyland Beaver to get to a grave. When I was in the Havant & Waterlooville area, John Becket, cemetery supervisor, was always there to help me. His ability to take a family to a specific grave appears to be unbelievable to grieving people, however, John is always quick to say how help from the central office is paramount in relaying the information.



John Becket

One day I was in Warblington cemetery, where a lot of seafarers are laid to rest, from pirates through to Sir Peter Blake the New Zealand yachtsman. As I was about to off-load the coffin, at the Thomas A Beckett church, in front of the family, a group of well-to-do hikers arrived and apparently oblivious to all that was going on, shouted, 'We are from New Zealand and we are looking for the grave of one of our ancestors'. John Becket stepped forward, ushered the group around the back of the Leyland Beaver, explained that they had interrupted a funeral and led them to Sir Peter Blake's grave.



Kingsdown Crematorium

In the past 18 years I was involved in over 400 funerals. I have visited some interesting places such as Cefu Coed cemetery in Merthyr Tydfil, in which the older part of the site is atmospheric with ancient trees and undergrowth which provides a unique local climate and has interesting people buried there including Adrian Stephens, inventor of the steam whistle in 1835. It is the only cemetery I have been to with a cattle grid. Some places may have changed but not more, I would suggest, than Kingsdown crematorium, Swindon where the installation of a coloured glass wall has transformed the appearance of the site. In fact, when I went there for the second time, I couldn't believe it was the same place. I have always marketed my services as bringing some colour to a dark day but Kingsdown have taken this to another level.

I have been involved in many memorable funerals carrying over 140 wired framed floral tributes in Walton-on-the-Naze and many traveller funerals throughout Britain. Some final journeys can be a celebration of the life of a loved one and I will never forget the sound of sleigh bells as I pulled up beneath the porte cochere in South Bristol crematorium for the funeral of Santa Claus. Gerald Sleith had been a Lorry Driver; however, he had a rotund physique and a long white beard which secured him a key role at Christmas. His talents were not confined to The Mall, Cribbs Causeway Bristol, he was also invited to attend Christmas celebrations at a hotel in Spain.



Some final journeys, however, were very sad, like the funeral of Angus Jones who lost his life in an accident aged 17 walking alongside the busy A27 dual carriageway near Chichester. A unique display was built for the young man with two designer boards carried back to back, and I created an appropriate background for a 'single note' depicting it was an 'A' note, 'A' for Angus.

Angus' Mum created the 'guitar' floral tribute, and his younger sister made a cushion in memory of her beloved brother. I'll always remember the amazing send off Angus received at the village hall with over 100 people clapping for two minutes as I pulled away heading for Chichester crematorium.



Blue Bell Hill



A funeral for Santa



A travellers funeral at St Marys Cray



Funeral at Walton-on-the Naze

lifeart scoops global accolade for sustainable coffin innovation

LifeArt has won global recognition for its personalisable, low emission coffins and caskets in a prestigious international awards scheme.

The business, which has operations in the UK, Hong Kong and Australia, scooped Silver in the FESPA Awards 2020's Packaging on Paper and Board category for an entry titled Final Delivery, which showcased its Heritage Timber and Collections range.



LifeArt's products are described on the FESPA Awards website as a "perfect sustainable alternative" to wood that "can be printed to almost any finish and design".

Heritage Timber is a traditional timber effect coffin and casket range, described as so convincing only the environment can tell the difference, whilst the Collections range offers a wide variety of images and colours in order to reflect the diversity of life.

Attracting entries from across the globe, the annual awards are organised by FESPA (Federation of European Screen Printing Associations), the printing industry's umbrella body.

The winners, who were announced in a virtual ceremony in September, are selected for their hard work, creativity and production expertise.

Kevin Crute, CEO of LifeArt UK & Ireland, said: "We're thoroughly honoured to achieve recognition in this year's FESPA Awards and it's a real testament to the collective hard work and innovative approach by our teams across the world.

"It's also great to see groundbreaking work within the funeral profession attracting attention outside of our sector. Indeed, this accolade very much fits with LifeArt's mission to develop new technology and deliver a sustainable generation of traditional and personalisable coffins and caskets that meet the needs of today's environmentally-aware consumers."

FESPA's panel of expert judges reviews hundreds of entries from printers and sign-makers and selects only the best for the honour of a FESPA Award.

It's FESPA's mission to champion print excellence and promote the unique power of print. The Awards are just one element of its Profit for Purpose programme, which exists to educate and inspire, encouraging the printing community to connect, share ideas and best practice.



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BRAMM

IMPROVING STANDARDS

Benefits of the BRAMM Registration Scheme.

In taking responsibility for Health and Safety and upholding a duty-of-care for the general public, many local authorities administer their own registration scheme to monitor memorial masons who work in their burial grounds.

However, ensuring masons and their fixers are properly trained, insured and following current industry standards is a time consuming and costly administration. Policing and addressing discipline where standards fall short can be challenging.

Thankfully there is an alternative that removes the need for individual registration schemes and much of the associated work, saving local authorities significant time and money. Simply adopt BRAMM, the British Register for Accredited Memorial Masons, completely **free-of-charge** and experience the benefits of an administered national registration scheme.

By adopting the BRAMM scheme and only allowing registered masons to work in your burial ground(s), local authorities can ensure a higher standard of workmanship and improved safety.

BRAMM is the original scheme set up in 2004 and is supported and endorsed by the following organisations –

- The Institute of Cemetery and Crematorium Management (ICCM)
- Federation of Burial and Cremation Authorities (FBCA)
- Society of Local Council Clerks (SLCC)

Benefits include –

- Instantly check online to ensure masons/fixers entering your burial grounds are BRAMM registered (this is a very quick process with no account log in required)
- Assurance that the BRAMM registered mason businesses are insured, have a risk assessment and a current health and safety policy.
- Confidence that the BRAMM registered masons will give a guarantee for the stability of the memorial.
- Certainty that those carrying a BRAMM Fixer Licence have achieved a recognised qualification in the safe fixing of memorials and will work in compliance with BS8415.
- Knowledge that those carrying a BRAMM Fixer Licence regularly engage in Continuous Professional Development to ensure skills are kept up to date and a culture of learning is maintained.
- Free access to the BRAMM Blue Book – a guide to the installation of memorials in accordance with BS8415. You can reference this guide in your regulations.
- Access to a dedicated liaison officer to provide support and guidance in monitoring and disciplining masons. BRAMM takes action when instances of non-compliance are reported by you. An equally represented appeals panel (as and when required) ensures your voice is heard, aiming for fairness and consistency throughout the UK.
- 50% local authority representation on the BRAMM Board to ensure your interests are protected in a fair and democratic manner.
- BRAMM has representation on the British Standards Committee – revisions to BS8415 are clearly communicated to burial authorities and registered masons, helping to remove any ambiguity and saving you time checking with British Standards.
- Regularly printed newsletters to keep the industry connected and up-to-date.
- Experience a huge saving in time and expense as you no longer need to run your own registration scheme.
- There is **no charge** for a burial authority to adopt the BRAMM Scheme.
- BRAMM has no commercial interests, only a desire for improved standards in the memorial masonry industry.

Burial Authority Requirements when joining the BRAMM Registration Scheme.

1. Monitoring of Memorial Masons – random checking of installations.
2. Compliance with British Standards 8415 on any foundations, repairs etc.
3. Compliance with ICCM Code of Safe Working Practice on burial procedures, particularly on backfilling of graves.
4. Responsibility for local disciplinary process and informing BRAMM Head Office.
5. Commitment to providing virgin ground or concrete plinths for all new memorials, where this is possible.
6. Have a commitment to training.

For further information or to register with the BRAMM Scheme please contact –

Email: bramm@bramm-uk.org Telephone: 01452 346741

BRAMM, Room F17, Kestrel Court, Waterwells Business Park, Gloucester GL2 2AT

answers to test your knowledge

Question 1

Answer: B – 15 years

The cremation (England & Wales) regulations 2008 states

Retention of documents relating to cremation

34.—(1) A cremation authority must keep the application for cremation and any certificates or other documents relating to a cremation, or an electronic copy of such documents, for a period of 15 years from the date of the cremation to which they relate. (2) Where an electronic copy is kept by a cremation authority under paragraph (1), the cremation authority must keep any document from which the electronic copy was made for a period of 2 years from the date of the cremation.

However, the Cremation (England and Wales) (Amendment) Regulations 2016 came into force on 1st October 2017 and removed the need to keep original cremation paperwork for 2 years once it has been scanned. The current requirements are that the application, certificates and other documents relating to a cremation must be kept for 15 years from the date of the cremation, whether that is in paper or electronic format. There is no requirement to keep the paper records once they have been converted to an electronic format.

Question 2

Answer: C - other

With regards to burials, there is no legal specification on keeping interment forms. A risk-based approach is recommended, i.e. how often are they referred to and for what? If space allows, they can be kept by choice. If they have been scanned and the scanned copies are of good enough quality there is no reason to keep the originals. This applies to forms only – registers must be kept so as to preserve them from loss or damage.

Question 3

Answer: A burial authority must keep and maintain a register of all burials and a register of all disinterments (exhumations).

Article 11 in the Local Authorities' Cemeteries Order 1977 (LACO) states:

Registration of burials and disinterments

(Article 11 was amended by The Local Authorities' Cemeteries (Amendment) Order 1986 to allow the maintenance of registers on computer.

11.-(1) A burial authority shall maintain a register of all burials in a cemetery in a book or books provided for the purpose, or in a computer.

The registers should record specific information as outlined in LACO

A burial authority must also keep a register of all burial and memorial rights, and should record any transfers for such rights. Part II of Schedule 2 of LACO states:

2. A burial authority shall—

(a) maintain a register of all rights granted by them or any predecessor of theirs under article 10(1) or under article 9(1) of the order of 1974, which shall show as respects each such right the date on which it was granted, the name and address of the grantee, the consideration for the grant, the place in which it is exercisable and its duration; and

4. A burial authority shall, subject to such investigation as they think proper, record particulars of any assignment or transmission of any such right notified to them in the register maintained or preserved under paragraph 2.

Question 4

Answer: A - Yes

All burial authorities should keep plans of graves in their cemeteries.

Article 9 of LACO states:

9.-(1) A burial authority shall maintain a plan showing and allocating distinctive numbers to—

(a) all graves or vaults in which burials are made after the coming into operation of this order or are known to have been made before that event; and

(b) the grave spaces subject to the specified rights.

(2) A burial authority shall also maintain records, by reference to the numbers in the plan, of—

(a) the burials made after the coming into operation of this order in any graves or vaults; and

(b) the specified rights existing in any graves or vaults, or grave spaces, and the names of the grantees thereof as recorded in the register maintained under Part 11 of Schedule 2 or in the registers described in paragraph 2(b) of the Part.

Question 5

Answer: 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 during a consecration ceremony.

When a church or burial ground has been consecrated, it becomes subject to the Bishop's jurisdiction (called a faculty jurisdiction) and therefore a different set of processes and regulations will apply to those in non-consecrated ground. As well as consecrating churches and churchyards in the diocese, the Bishop consecrates parts of cemeteries owned by burial authorities. LACO gives burial authorities the right to apply to have parts of their cemetery consecrated, or to set them aside for use by a particular denomination. In doing so, however, they must ensure that enough of the cemetery remains for use by those of other or no denominations. It is important to note that only the Church of England can consecrate land in burial grounds in England that then affects its status. The Church in Wales and the Church of Scotland do not have the same powers.

LACO states:

Consecration, and setting apart for particular denominations

5.—(1) Subject to paragraphs (2) and (3), a burial authority may if they think fit—

(a) apply to the bishop of the diocese in which a cemetery is situated for the consecration of any part thereof;

(b) set apart for the use of a particular denomination or religious body any part of a cemetery which has not been consecrated.

(2) A burial authority in exercising the powers conferred by paragraph (1) shall satisfy themselves that a sufficient part of the cemetery remains unconsecrated and not set apart for the use of particular denominations or religious bodies.

Non-consecrated ground comes under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Justice. The main difference for burial authorities relates to exhumations: in non-consecrated ground the person applying for an exhumation would seek an exhumation licence from the Ministry of Justice, whereas in consecrated ground they would seek a Faculty from the local Diocese.

Question 6

Answer: B - Faculty

You would need a faculty only to exhume from consecrated ground. On 1 January 2015, section 25 of the Burial Act 1857 was amended by the Church of England (Miscellaneous Provisions) Measure 2014 to simplify exhumation procedures in a small number of cases involving consecrated ground. From this date, approval is required from either the Secretary of State or the Church of England, depending on the current location of the remains, not both as was the case previously.

Question 7

Answer: A - Yes

You can bury ashes in a grave before a full burial, but you must ensure that the ashes are buried at full depth and this information is recorded. If the ashes burial is to be followed at some point by a full coffin burial, the ashes cannot be disturbed without lawful authority, which would be an exhumation licence from the Ministry of Justice or a Faculty from the local Diocese if the grave is consecrated. All burials, whether full body or ashes, are protected against disturbance under Section 25 of the Burial Act 1857.

Question 8

Answer: C - Stop and get lawful authority to exhume them

All burials, whether full body or ashes, are protected against disturbance under Section 25 of the Burial Act 1857 and therefore you would require the appropriate lawful authority to disturb them. You would also need to investigate why the ashes have been buried there, especially if there is no record of them being buried in the grave.

Question 9

Answer: A - Yes

Yes, you can but only if the owner is untraceable.

Article 10 of LACO states:

b) to the owner of a right described in (a)(i) or (ii) (or to any person who satisfies them that he is a relative of a person buried in the grave or vault, or is acting at the request of such a relative and that it is impractical for him, or such relative, to trace the owner of the right so described), the right to place and maintain, or to put any additional inscription on, a tombstone or other memorial on the grave space, grave or vault in respect of which the right so described subsists;

This does NOT however apply for the transfer of rights, and no burial could take place in the grave until a transfer of ownership has taken place.

Question 10

Answer: A - Yes

There is no law that says a coffin cannot be removed from the catafalque either pre or post committal. However, there is guidance on this matter in the ICCM Guiding Principles and the FBCA Code of Cremation Practice. The first states that a coffin should not be removed unless ordered by a Coroner or for some other valid reason, the second states it should not be removed except for a lawful purpose. Removing the coffin for a burial, for example, would satisfy both.

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the journal

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The ICCM Directors and Officers would like to
wish you all Season's Greetings and best wishes



for a happy and healthy 2021.

