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The Journal Summer 2023

2023

Summer

ICCM education seminar 2023  
Hindu & Sikh ritual  
Harnessing the benefits of social media for cemeteries  
Going paperless for future resilience

What next for crematoria  
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### Publication & Advertising

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### Subscription Rates

£50 per annum (4 issues)

Payment to 'ICCM', or an official order sent to;

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Newcastle upon Tyne

NE16 3EB

Cover image

Photo taken at Highgate Cemetery by the Friends of Highgate Cemetery Trust

2023

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The Journal is published quarterly in March, June, September and December. Copy dates: 15 Jan, 15 Apr, 15 July, 15 Oct.

ISSN 1747-129X

### Published by

The Institute of Cemetery  
& Crematorium Management (Inc)  
City of London Cemetery  
Aldersbrook Road  
London E12 5DQ

### Printed and distributed by

Sudbury Print Group  
Ballingdon Hill Industrial Estate  
Sudbury, Suffolk  
CO10 2DX

T: 01787 373421

## editorial

### *Time for change ahead.*

Welcome to the Summer edition of the Journal! It only seems like yesterday that I was opening my Christmas presents!

Whilst time seems to be flying by, the wheels of change for our sector seem to be moving slowly...although they are moving nonetheless!

Firstly, we are still waiting for the full implementation of the medical examiner system in England and Wales that will replace the current Form 4 and medical referee that is in place. This has rumbled on for several years now, but we do seem to be edging a bit closer to something tangible.

The Ministry of Justice has confirmed that it is the Government's intention to work towards implementing the statutory medical examiner system from April 2023. That doesn't mean the current system ceases to exist from this date. Until the new system has been finalised, it is business as usual. The Ministry of Justice has also confirmed that it will keep the current medical referee role for a transitional period following the implementation of the statutory medical examiner system, in order to ensure continuity and provide the opportunity for any necessary consequential changes to be identified. They will provide further clarity on when the transitional period will begin and its duration as soon as possible.

After the statutory medical examiner system has been introduced, all non-coronial deaths will be scrutinised by a medical examiner, for both burials and cremations. They have advised that there will be no sudden cliff edge and that they will continue to work with the sector on the implementation of the reforms to the death certification process.

A bill to reform data protection and digital information has been introduced but is currently delayed. Should it go through it will mean that electronic paperwork will be legislated for, and also that births and deaths can be registered electronically (as it was temporarily allowed during the pandemic).

The next most significant change for our sector in England and Wales is the Law Commission review. After being delayed due to Brexit and the Covid-19 pandemic, the Law Commission project on A Modern Framework for the Disposal of the Dead has now commenced. Their aim is to bring the law governing how we dispose of the bodies of our loved ones when they die into line with modern needs.

They say  
"The law governing how we dispose of the bodies of our loved ones when they die is unfit for modern needs.

While we often think of the choice as being between burial and cremation, new methods of disposal are being developed and used in other countries which are completely unregulated here.

Further, the legislation governing more traditional methods of

disposal is outdated, piecemeal and complex.

The law does not ensure that a person's own wishes as to the disposal of their remains are carried out, leading to disputes where family members disagree. Disputes also arise as to entitlement to a person's remains".

While its scope is being agreed, the Law Commission does expect its project to consider a new, "future-proofed" set of laws governing the disposal of the dead. The review will also consider the laws governing burials and cremation but will not consider the regulation of funeral directors, death certification, preservation of bodies (such as by cryopreservation), or the criminal law relating to the desecration of a body.

This review is long overdue. We are still adhering to laws as far back as the 19th century in some cases, and whilst times and the way we live (and die) have changed, the law does not reflect this. It will be interesting to see what is proposed and subsequently implemented and how that will affect those that work in the sector.

Scotland has already seen significant change in death registration, the medical examiner system, and burial and cremation law. Hopefully England and Wales will learn from their experiences and we will see a legislative framework around the disposal of the dead that will be fit for now and the future.

The effectiveness of The Children's Funeral Fund for England (CFF) scheme is also being reviewed. It has now been in operation for nearly four years and continues to see an increase in the number of claims year on year. Since the scheme was launched, the fund has paid out more than £7 million.

DFFERA also published its findings on their consultation on groundwater and surface water discharge activities and are working with the environment agency to update the legislation for permit requirements in cemeteries for new sites and cemetery extensions.

The ICCM was also a signatory of an open letter to the DWP Secretary of State calling for the Funeral Expenses Payment to be increased immediately from £1000.00 to at least £1725.00 and linked to inflation going forward. The Government needs to act now to help people grieve without the worry of taking on a large debt to pay for a funeral.

So, as you can see, there are several significant reviews going on in the background that you should be aware of. We will of course keep all our members updated as these progress.

In the meantime, carry on with the good work that you all do – not often said or acknowledged but thank you.

**Sofia Allana**  
Editor



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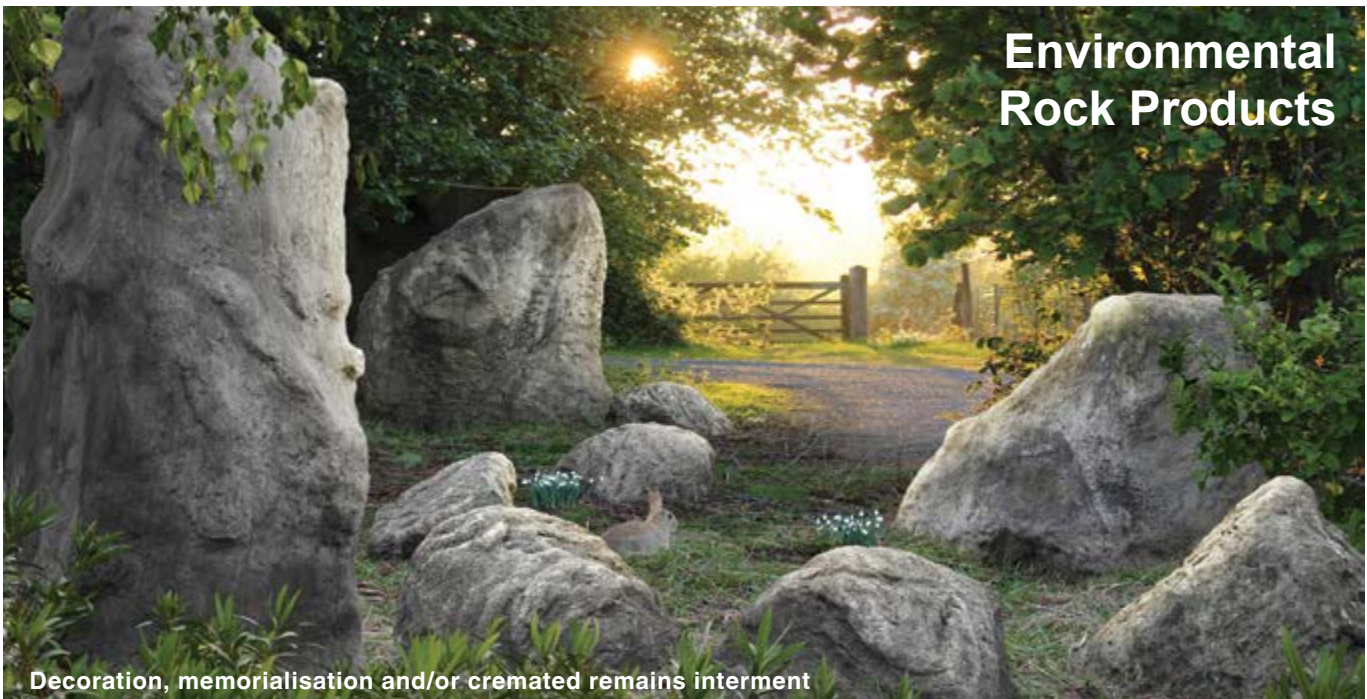
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## president's page

Hello Everyone

I hope you are all well.



On Saturday the 4th of March, I drove to The Spa Hotel, Royal Tunbridge Wells, Kent with my friend and work colleague Claire Hodges, to attend the National Society of Allied & Independent Funeral Directors (SAIF) Annual Banquet where we said farewell to Jo Parker. The evening was wonderful, while we waited to be called in for the dinner we were entertained by an amazing magician, and I have to say I had absolutely no idea how he did his brilliant card tricks.



Although I may not look impressed in this photo I was!! I was keeping a close eye on the cards to see if I could work out how he did the trick.

Jo's charity was Papyrus Prevention of Young Suicide, and the evening raised a huge amount of money for this wonderful charity who are dedicated to the prevention of suicide and the promotion of positive mental and emotional wellbeing in young people.

The meal was delicious, and you know that my page would not be complete without the 'photo of the pudding' and I did promise to keep you updated in the previous Journal!!!

So here you are 😊

We danced the evening away to the brilliant live entertainment from The Big Kahuna Band, who had the dance floor continuously full, our feet were aching by the time we went to bed, but as usual we had a lovely time.



On Sunday morning, after breakfast we all met up once again for the induction ceremony. This was full of fun videos and a few tears from the incoming president Mark Horton.



*Outgoing 'Chain Gang Photo'*



*Incoming 'Chain Gang Photo'*



*Enjoying the evening with Clare*

Isn't it absolutely brilliant that at the end of another successful round of nominations in March we were able to announce that the ICCM/OrthoMetals Recycling of Metals Scheme donated a massive £17,040.00 to bereavement related charities. Thank you to everyone for all their hard work in making this happen.

I was able to nominate Harlee's Angels to receive my Presidential donation this year. As most of you know Harlee's Angels is a charity really close to my heart, set up by my daughter Fern and son-in-law Ryan in memory of my dear grandson Harlee.

Harlee's Angels sent this letter of thanks to everyone involved.

Dear ICCM Board of Directors and Members

On behalf of Harlee's Angels, we would like to express our deepest appreciation to have received the Presidential donation from the Recycling of Metals scheme. This contribution will go a long way in helping us achieve our mission of helping families who have suffered the bereavement of a child through sudden or unexpected death.

This donation will make a significant difference, and we are very grateful for your support.

Once again thank you.

Kind Regards

Fern and Ryan Steele  
Founders/CEO's Harlee's Angels

So, what is happening to the implementation of the medical examiners system in England? Previous government communication seemed to imply that it would be introduced on 1st April 2023. Well, you will be reading this well past that date!! There is apparently still a long way to go before any changes will be implemented and affect burial or cremation, the date of the 1st of April was just where it would start to be implemented. The ICCM is continuing to work with related organisations and advising the MOJ about the impacts it will have for both burial and cremation and will keep everyone updated accordingly.

On Saturday 22nd April I had the pleasure in representing the ICCM as President once again for the British Institute of Embalmers (BIE) Annual Banquet, the National President Richard Van Nes MBIE remained in post for a further year, and he treated us to some lovely gifts many with a patriotic theme commemorating King Charles III forthcoming Coronation, including flags, chocolates, and a commemorative keepsake coin.



We stayed at The Old Swan Hotel in Harrogate and had a wonderful dinner including dessert 😊 which was a delicious sticky toffee pudding with butterscotch sauce and vanilla ice cream. Oh, go on then ... a yummy pic, note the size of it in comparison to the coffee cup, yes it really was a large slice and it would have been really rude to not have finished it ..... So I did!!



Linda Barker, fellow director accompanied me, and we had a wonderful time meeting old acquaintances and new. The raffle raised £950 for the well-deserved charity PhysioNet who help people with disabilities overseas.

The Old Swan Hotel was beautiful with its revolving doors. We later found out there was another more accessible door we could have used to drag our cases through! However, it was to this hotel that Agatha Christie famously disappeared in 1926, resulting in a public furore over the 11 days that she could not be traced.

For those who may be interested, apparently in late 1926, Agatha's husband Archie revealed that he was in love with another woman, Nancy Neele, and wanted a divorce. On 3rd December 1926, the couple quarrelled, and Archie left their house in Berkshire to spend the weekend with his mistress. That same evening, Agatha disappeared. Around 9.45pm, without warning, she drove away from the house, having first gone upstairs to kiss her sleeping daughter, Rosalind, not quite sure how they would know this, anyway, her abandoned Morris Cowley was later found down a slope at Newlands Corner near Guildford. There was no sign of her, and the only clue was a letter for her secretary saying that she was going to Yorkshire. Her disappearance caused an outcry from the public, many of whom were admirers of Agatha Christie's novels. Despite a massive manhunt, there were no results at all!

Such was the speculation that the home secretary of the day, William Joynson-Hicks, put pressure on the police to make faster progress. Even the celebrated crime writers Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, creator of Sherlock Holmes, and Dorothy L Sayers, author of the Lord Peter Wimsey series, were drawn into the puzzle. Conan Doyle, who was interested in the occult, took a discarded glove of Christie's to a medium, while Sayers visited the scene of the disappearance, later using it in the novel Unnatural Death.





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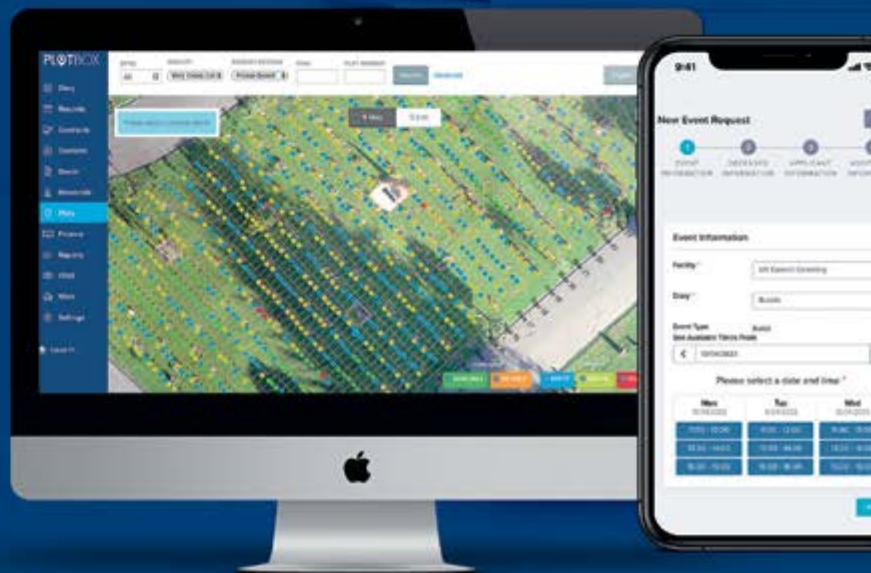
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Eleven days after her disappearance, Agatha was identified as a guest at the Swan Hydropathic Hotel (as the Old Swan was then called) in Harrogate, where she was registered (strangely!) as 'Mrs Teresa Neele' from Cape Town.

Agatha gave no explanation for her disappearance. Although two doctors had diagnosed her as suffering from amnesia, opinion remains divided as to the reasons for her disappearance. One suggestion is that she had suffered a nervous breakdown brought about by a natural propensity for depression, exacerbated by her mother's death earlier that year, and the discovery of her husband's infidelity. Public reaction at the time was largely negative with many believing it was all just a publicity stunt, whilst others speculated she was trying to make the police think her husband killed her as revenge for his affair – nice one!!!

Whatever the reasons, imagine what other guests would have made of a woman dining alone in the Wedgwood Restaurant, unaware they were in the same room as one of the biggest selling authors of all time.



Before we drove home, we visited the famous Betty's Tea Rooms, as we couldn't leave without buying something to take home with us. We both decided it would be lovely to spend a weekend in Harrogate with all its fascinating buildings and history. It was a long drive there and back, but well worth the visit and we chatted nonstop and had some great laughs along the way. Maybe when you next see Linda at convention ask her about her runaway bottle of Harrogate water!! Or whether you would walk around the supermarket with a pineapple in your trolley. Stories for another day 😊

I am so grateful to be part of the ICCM and to also be able to spend time with friends and colleagues that I call my "work family", learning from their experiences and expertise, helping me to improve my own skills and knowledge for an industry I really enjoy working in.

I found this poem by Michelle Flores, entitled "The Cake of Friendship," which I think sums up friendships like these and my love of cakes and puddings!

Preheat the oven of love  
 With plenty of secrets and hugs  
 Mix in giggles and laughs  
 That make your sides split in half  
 Bake with love and care  
 And all the things you both should share  
 This is really a must  
 Enjoy the cake, do not eat it fast  
 Like your friendships, make it last.

As always, I send you all my love and thank you for your valued support and friendship.

## in touch



### *Reasons to be cheerful*

I recently signed up to an online newsletter called Reasons to be Cheerful. There were several reasons for this:

1. I was getting disgruntled at being constantly fed newsfeeds through social media and the internet that were designed to outrage or appal me.
2. I wanted to find out about the good things that are going on in the world - not easy using the usual media routes.
3. The Reasons to be Cheerful initiative was started by one of my favourite artistes (David Byrne of Talking Heads fame) and featured the lyrics from another of my favourite artistes (the late, great Ian Dury). What's not to love?

As well as a regular e-newsletter, there is a website on which positive news stories can be viewed. The website describes Reasons to be Cheerful as a 'nonprofit online magazine that is a tonic for tumultuous times'. The website address is [www.reasonstobecheerful.world](http://www.reasonstobecheerful.world) in case you want to take that tonic.

Their explanation of what they are about continues:

'We tell stories that reveal that there are, in fact, a surprising number of reasons to feel cheerful. Many of these reasons come in the form of smart, proven, replicable solutions to the world's most pressing problems. Through sharp reporting, our stories balance a sense of healthy optimism with journalistic rigor, and find cause for hope. We are part magazine, part therapy session, part blueprint for a better world.'

The topics covered in the newsletter and on the website are far ranging, both in terms of subject and geographical location. For my liking, there are a healthy number of death related ones, including plummeting cancer deaths in the US due to improved screening and early treatment; black churches in California leading the way to quality end-of-life care, and the composting or natural organic reduction of bodies becoming legal in some US states. All good stuff, and not something we tend to see in the mainstream media unless it is to express sentiments designed to cause outrage in their readers.

This reminded me of when the ICCM first introduced the recycling of metals following cremation scheme. There was nothing in that scheme that could be criticised:

- it stemmed from a strong ethical belief that recycling was environmentally far better than burying harmful metals in the ground – it would prevent heavy metal contamination and would also reduce the amount of ore being mined around the world.
- the metals would only be recycled with the consent of the Applicant for the cremation; the Applicant could have the metals returned to them should they wish.
- No crematorium authority or company would benefit financially from the recycling of metals.
- All monies raised across the scheme would be donated to bereavement related charities nominated by the participating crematoria.

- All charities nominated by the participating crematoria would receive an equal share of the money raised each collection irrespective of individual volumes of metals recycled, ensuring an equitable amount for the charities.
- The scheme would be run by a well-established and well-respected professional organisation – the ICCM.
- The scheme would be open, accountable and auditable with records relating to each crematorium available on request.
- The recycling partner would be one that already had experience in this particular specialist area of medical metals recycling – Orthometals.
- The scheme would be fully legally compliant, and would in fact provide a lawful alternative to the illegal process of burying waste in the ground.
- A leaflet explaining the benefits of the scheme would be made available to members of the public.

Again, what's not to love? Unfortunately several of the UK tabloids found reasons to be critical of the scheme, and tried to inflame public opinion against it. Headlines suggesting that 'Grandma will be turned into a road sign' were designed to cause outrage and upset, which could potentially have scuppered the scheme and prevented the environmental and charitable benefits from being realised. Luckily, enough families were swayed by the clear and logical reasoning on the benefits of the scheme to choose to have the metals recycled when arranging a cremation, and the scheme took off to become the success it is today - £17,000,000 raised so far, and counting. The press occasionally try and slip in the odd disparaging comment, but the vast majority of press releases now report on large cheque handovers to the chosen charities and the good that this money will do.

The above example demonstrates the power of positivity, and for finding reasons to be cheerful instead of reasons to be critical. I know it is not always easy, particularly on those days where everything seems to go wrong (we all have them). Sometimes it helps to take a few minutes out and think about the positives:

1. You're still here – many are not so lucky.
2. You are making a difference – it may not always seem like it, but the work you do is so important and there will be families who are travelling the grief journey better equipped because of you.
3. You are not alone, even if you are the only one doing your job; the ICCM is here to guide and support you. The ICCM Officers have been in your shoes, and have real-life experience, skills and knowledge that they can use to empower you to do your job well.

That's just three example reasons to be cheerful – I'm sure there are many more that you can find and think about when things seem a bit much. If you need a guide, have a listen to Ian Dury's fantastic list of his Reasons to be Cheerful. Never fails to make me smile.

**Julie Dunk**  
ICCM Chief Executive



## education seminar 2023 student reports

*The Education Seminar 2023 was held at HillsCourt, Rose Hill, Lickey, Birmingham, from Thursday 23rd to Saturday 25th February 2023. This is the first seminar since Covid, and it was great to see so many students in attendance.*

*The seminar is extremely valuable for anybody undertaking the Education modules. It can really help to get a deeper understanding of each subject through sharing knowledge and experience with colleagues from around the UK. It also gives uninterrupted time to devote to study and the completion of assignments - something that is very difficult to achieve at work or at home.*

*If you're studying a module or working towards the Diploma but are not sure whether the Seminar is for you, read the feedback comments below from students who attended this year – they should help convince you of the value of the event:*

### **"My first experience at an ICCM Education Seminar 2020"**

Vicky Waters, Eastbourne Crematorium.

I have worked at Eastbourne Crematorium for over 8 years. I started as a bereavement officer and 2 years ago during the pandemic I was promoted to senior bereavement officer and registrar with an opportunity to study the ICCM Diploma in 'Cemetery & Crematorium Management'. I was very excited but also had more than a hint of trepidation as to whether I would be up to the task of returning to study in my 50's!

I embarked on my first module, Crematorium Management and I was signed up and very much looking forward to attending the Education Seminar in 2022, after hearing and reading about the positive experiences others had enjoyed in the Journal. Unfortunately, it was not to be as it was cancelled because of the restrictions still imposed due to the Covid-19 pandemic. However, I continued to work independently with the support of my brilliant tutor, Linda Barker and completed the module attaining a distinction overall which I was really pleased about and gave me a boost in confidence.

I allowed myself a month off and planned to start the Cemetery Management module. Due to staff sickness and increased work commitments, I was unable to start until December, (6 months later than planned) but made a good start determined to complete the module so I could focus on the Law module at the rapidly approaching Education Seminar in February 2023, and I was exceptionally pleased that this time it was going to go ahead!

Despite my hard work it was obvious by the beginning of February that I wasn't going to get the module finished in time for the seminar and I resigned myself to completing Cemetery



Management at the seminar. I didn't want to rush it to the point of not absorbing the information as the content I was learning was so relevant to my day-to-day work. I could already recognise the benefits of the information I was learning was helping me to be more proactive in my role as I felt confident and secure in the knowledge and advice I was giving to people, not only the bereaved but colleagues in my place of work.

I arrived at HillsCourt just before 12.30pm a little nervous of what lay ahead but also very excited to finally be there and embark on the learning experience I had been looking forward to for quite some time. I knew Tracy from Adur and Worthing was attending and we arranged to meet in the bar area. It was much easier to approach the conference and seminar rooms together and we were welcomed at the door by Julie and Blue, who just put everyone at ease straightway. Blue was keen to tell us about the quiz he would be putting on in the evenings and told us not to worry, it wasn't too 'high brow'!

There was a help yourself supply of hot drinks together with a delicious buffet, so we got stuck in and mingled with a few people. We had a really interesting conversation with one of the exhibitors, a lovely lady from Obitus called Antonia, who we later learned had a concise knowledge of penguins!!!

Following the first round of food and lots of chatting, learning where people were from, we were split into our relevant class groups. I naturally went to the Cemetery Management class where Mat, which I thank for his forethought, informed me that as I was already halfway through the unit, I would gain much more from the weekend by joining the Law classroom. I headed back downstairs and entered the classroom feeling like a naughty school child late for class, I could feel all eyes on me as I found a seat next to a tall gentleman with a goatee beard and apologised to Martin Birch (the tutor) for disrupting his introduction.

There were 12 of us in the group, so logic was to split into four groups of 3 students. There were 3 students in the class who didn't have a cemetery under their control so it was decided they should be split across the groups. Tall goatee beard man, who I soon learned was David McNaughton from Glasgow was one of them and before long we were paired with the lovely Nikki (Nicola Lynch) from Bournemouth, the dream team were formed!



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The three of us hit it off really quickly learning we were all starting at the very beginning of the module. David felt slightly disadvantaged as Scottish Law in terms of bereavement varies considerably from English law. Martin came over to speak to us and offered some guidance explaining with hard work and commitment it would be possible to complete the module during the weekend. That was it, we were sold, even if it meant working into the evening, we were all committed to finishing the module. Task one involved the most work and reading through the requirements we realised this wasn't going to be an easy ride. We decided we would take turns in typing while the other two gathered the information and the relevant regulations. Nikki was our first scribe and David and I began putting bits together from both LACO 1977 and Essential Law for Cemetery and Crematorium Managers by V.Charles Ward, which has become a bit of a bible! We felt we were doing really well as when we decided to pack up for the evening we were up to and had completed task 5. We submitted it to Martin for marking planning to finish task 6 and Assignment 1 first thing the next morning. It was gone 5.30pm by the time we stopped and needed to check into our rooms before dinner.

The accommodation was excellent for the purpose of our stay, I was very impressed. The rooms, all very clean and equipped with towels all had a single bed, en-suite shower room, tea and coffee making facilities a comfy chair, I couldn't fault it.

A quick freshen up and down to the bar for a pre-dinner drink, where I bumped into Peter Roper from The Columbaria Company who insisted, very kindly, on buying drinks for all the ladies our end of the bar, a little bribe to convince us that we should all be on his team for the approaching quiz.

Dinner, which consisted of 3 courses and lived up to everything I had heard about the food did not disappoint and was an opportunity to speak with people I hadn't already had the pleasure of meeting. Food was delicious and it was very sociable, sharing details of what we had been doing during the afternoon and what we were hoping to achieve the next day.

Then the quiz, what can I say, like no other quiz I have ever partaken in before but a true ice-breaker and so much fun. It started with 10 whole questions on penguin trivia. Thankfully we had Antonia in our team and I think she may have visited the Antarctic before she joined Obitus! Her knowledge of penguins was exemplary, and we won the first round with 8 out of 10! We were on a role. Unfortunately, it didn't last and the following 3 rounds it was all downhill for our team, The Southern Softies, but nobody could deny the fun it brought.

Nikki, David and I decided we wanted to make an early start on Friday morning to get a full day of work in, so we met at the breakfast room when it opened at 7.30am, to be met by a full English breakfast spread, together with toast, fresh fruit, yoghurt, pastries and cereal.

With full bellies we made our way to the classroom to embark on task 6 which we hoped to finish mid-morning so as we could move on to assignment 2. Our plan backfired on us as when we received our feedback from Martin on tasks 1 – 5,

although he said we were on the right tracks it required some filling out. He spent over half an hour with us discussing how we could develop areas of our assignment to increase our grade. We all felt deflated at this point but encouraged each other to keep going. David was doing the typing as he is an expert at moving around a computer quickly and finding the information required, while Nikki and I referred to the information in the study guide and books we had at our disposal. We added the extra information and resubmitted to Martin just before lunchtime along with task 6.

I expected lunch to consist of sandwiches similar to the buffet from the day before. Wrong! Being a Friday there was fish and chips, sausage and chips, chicken curry and rice, variety of salad items followed by various cakes. We were all rather full and couldn't manage dessert so took a slice of cake back to the classroom to go with a cup of tea in case we had an afternoon dip in energy levels!!!!

An hour was allocated for lunch but aware of how quickly the time was racing away we were back in the classroom after half an hour to start working on assignment 2. This covered scenarios which we had all dealt with first hand in our working lives, so it was good to be able to draw on our own experiences and we found we were working through the assignment well. However, we were all very aware we had thought the same with the first assignment, only to fall flat on our faces. Martin had also returned from his lunch break and was sat marking assignments. We could hear him regularly sighing and making a noise similar to a groan. His mouse was moving so rapidly and frequently on his mouse mat it reminded me of a child playing with a toy car, rewing it up ready to go. I expected to see smoke rising from the friction!

He came over to us and we all held our breaths ready for him to advise us we needed to make further adjustments, but no, he smiled (obviously sensing our apprehension) and said 'Well done. Very good piece of work' I have graded it a 'DISTINCTION'. We looked at each other and then to him before breaking into euphoric high fives and celebratory hugs, our confidence and mood immediately restored. David, in his full Scottish accent said, 'I am taking you ladies to the bar tonight and show you how to drink whisky'. It was a date.



The rest of the afternoon flew by, but we continued to work until past 6.00pm and completed assignment 2 which we submitted to Martin for early marking the next day. We headed over to the bar which was deserted as most students were in their rooms freshening up for dinner. Not us, we didn't change for dinner, just straight to the bar with a selection of 3 single shots of different whiskies in front of each of us. David gave us a run down on each of the whiskies, where they came from, the flavours we should be able to pick out, and the burn we could feel in the back of our throats.

Whisky derives from the Gaelic term usquebaugh which translates as 'water of life'. Uisge means water. Beatha means life. It's a term used for many types of invigorating spirits over time, for example, Eau de Vie. In modern usage, whisky is from Scotland and whiskey is from Ireland. (as quoted by David McNaughton)

We were on a serious high that evening and although we hadn't achieved our goal, we still had Saturday morning to do so.

Part 2 of Blue's quiz didn't disappoint, full marks for entertainment value, and everybody present had a great time and lots of laughs. Our team didn't win much to Peter Roper's disappointment. He attends the seminar every year and my theory is he watches people arrive and sums up who he wants for his team. He certainly didn't choose the winning team this year, but we did have plenty of laughs along the way. Who knew woodlice have 14 legs, 7 each side!!!

Saturday morning flew by following another full cooked breakfast, I was going to miss that once I returned home. We

completed our Assignment 3 by 10.30am submitted it to Martin who awarded us a Distinction for assignment 2 and Merit (highest mark possible for this assignment) for assignment 3. Giving us a completed Cemetery and Crematorium Law with overall grade, Distinction. The dream team were elated, it was such a fabulous achievement and all our hard work and dedication had paid off. We were able to return to our places of work and our colleagues feeling tall and proud. During the course of the morning as various groups had achieved their goal, they had drifted off to embark on their journeys home. There was lots of hugging and wishes of good luck and hope that we may meet at a future Education Seminar. Although I was on cloud 9 from our brilliant achievement, I also felt really sad as our experience had come to end. David, Nikki and I have pledged to keep in touch and have a monthly study meeting on 'Teams'.

If you work within the bereavement sector and you have the opportunity to attend the Education Seminar, I can't recommend it enough. Apart from the benefits of the supported learning it is also an opportunity to meet people and share experiences with others doing the same very difficult and emotionally challenging job we do every day. It was a privilege to meet people who share the same ethos of supporting the bereaved and putting them first at their time of need.

Thank you to everyone involved in the organisation of the Education Seminar, especially Julie Dunk who worked incredibly hard to make it a success and put everyone at ease, providing a warm welcome and maintaining a relaxed atmosphere especially those attending on their own.

### ***"Stepping out of my comfort zone"***

Karen Smith, Senior Crematorium Officer, Lea Fields Crematorium.

I don't know a single person that sat in their careers meeting towards the end of secondary school and said "I want to work with the bereaved." Maybe that's why so many of us in bereavement carry on quietly, suffering from imposter syndrome, just waiting to be called out. "Who is this person dealing with these grieving people, what makes you think you know what you're doing?"

The thing is though, If I am going to do something, I want to do it well. I want to know why it's done that way, if there's a way to improve it but mostly so I know the information I'm giving is correct and I can explain why. I'd already done the ICCM CTTS intermediate + as it was known just after the baby section was added, and my mentor Paul encouraged me to do the Advanced certificate which, like the Diploma the SBS stopped accrediting just after I completed it. After taking a post at a brand-new crematorium I knew it was time to start the learning process again and so began my first module towards the Crematorium Management Certificate.



Like all of us in bereavement the last 3 years have been different to say the least. I know my ICCM coursework has often seen the back burner as new guidance and regulations were navigated and colleagues got split into smaller teams



to protect the service. I can only thank Kate Davidson and Liz Pallister for their unwavering patience during this time.

When my manager Deb Balsdon suggested the Education Seminar would be the way to go to get my next module, Crematorium Management done, she knew that it would be right out of my comfort zone and she'd have her work cut out persuading me. I'm not a natural social butterfly, I'm apprehensive about walking into a room full of people I don't know, nor did I relish the drive down to Birmingham in late February. The last time I'd done that it was 2018, I was on my way to New Zealand via Birmingham airport and the Beast from the East arrived. Anyway, a whole module in a couple of days? Was she mad? She must be remembering her own experience wrong, no-one can achieve that amount of work from mid-afternoon Thursday to Saturday lunchtime. However, sometimes you have to step right out of your comfort zone, so finally I agreed.

After a week of wondering what on earth to pack, discussing the best route and remembering all the notes and equipment I'd need, I put my big girl pants on, said goodbye to hubby and the dog and set off at 9:30 on the Thursday morning.

Hillscourt was really easy to find. The timetable we'd had been sent said we would not be able to check in until later so I left everything except my coursework stuff in the car and headed to reception. A lovely lady from the venue showed me where I needed to be and the very first face I saw was the lovely Julie Dunk with a big welcoming smile, as always.

Name badge on, deep breath and into the refreshments room where everyone was gathering. It's incredible how you soon get chatting to people over a cup of tea and a bite to eat.

As we moved upstairs to the meeting room it was time to make a start, split into module groups and meet our tutor the absolutely lovely Linda Barker. There were quite a number of us doing the Crematorium Management module and I was lucky enough to get paired with Kate, I couldn't have wished for a better person, we hit it off straight away.

I must say, having a new crematorium as your workplace made this module a whole lot easier. I'd looked into much of the consultation work as part of my studying before I'd applied for the job. We decided on who was going to tackle what and then brought our work together and discussed it before submitting it to Linda to look through and give us pointers. What a difference it makes having your tutor sitting across the table from you, to be able to look up and just ask for pointers and guidance. We worked from 15:00 to 17:30 with a few refreshment breaks and a chance to check in and rescue bags from

cars. At 5:27pm we submitted the completed tasks 1&2 of assignment 1 for marking.

By this time, we were all frazzled, but knew we still had dinner and most importantly Blue's quiz to come. 5.30pm and it was time to pack up, get to the room, shower and check in with home before meeting in the bar before dinner. Wow! The food did not disappoint, another bonus to this event, someone else cooks the food and does it rather well.

The quiz, what can I say? This is not dependant on intelligence nor general knowledge, it's good guesswork and "what is Blue most likely to have a picture of as the correct answer, 1,2,or 3?" Our team were fabulous, Donna and the Kebabs, Donna was not for losing 😊 every seminar should have a Donna, no one would feel awkward, she was fabulous and the evening was filled with laughter, just what we all needed.

Friday. The big day dawned, I was up early, knowing I was going to be sat in front of a computer all day and blessed with a ground floor bedroom I managed a workout, breakfast at 7:30am and in the meeting room for 8. The day wasn't scheduled to begin until 8:30 but the room was peaceful with just a few of us there making a start. I was able to check through Linda's pointers so Kate and I could discuss them, amend and resubmit our work.

Kate and I worked hard, stopping only for drinks, comfort breaks and a somewhat fantastic lunch. We stomped our way through the course work, by the end of assignment 2 I'll admit I was flagging. If I'd been doing the coursework at home this is where I'd definitely have thrown in the towel but Kate was like a machine and spurred me on. By the end of play on Friday we'd completed and submitted everything except task four of the very last module and Linda had marked everything as we'd gone along.

Quiz night part 2 was as rowdy as night one with everything to play for, what can I say? We were robbed, even with Mat Crawley joining our team we still lost by 1 point.

Kate and I had decided to start at 7:30am on Saturday, we needed to get this thing finished. Linda had left on Friday but Julie was there to have a read through before we submitted it via email to Linda at 10:30am.

The best thing was the round up, hearing the fantastic achievements and just how much work had got done in those few days.

So, Deb was correct (she'll like seeing that in print 😊) a whole module in such a short time. Kate and I managed a distinction, a merit (highest grade achievable) and another distinction, just going to show the power of team work and sharing the knowledge.



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## Why do that?

Jason Downing , Nethercott Funeral Directors

I am a serving funeral director who has cared for the bereaved and their loved ones for nearly 40 years.

In 1986 I studied for and passed the National Association of Funeral Directors Diploma in Funeral Directing. However, I have always believed learning is a journey and that to serve our clients well we need to stay up to date with trends and legislation.

It was with this in mind and following a recommendation from Dr Brian Parsons, I applied for associate membership of the Institute.

The Institute's Journal provides an interesting insight for those of us who work alongside you to better understand the issues you face.

In common with the funeral directors' trade associations, the value and importance placed by the Institute on high quality training is clear for me to see.

So, it was my desire to learn coupled with the open approach to education that I found myself signing up to study the Cemetery and Crematorium Law unit.

Admittedly I started with the best of intention, but the pandemic blew my studies off course and the learning materials stayed

under the bed until the autumn of last year - I needed a reason to restart my studies.

It was therefore with relief that I read of the forthcoming learning seminar at Hillscourt Education Centre, Birmingham. This is what I needed! I signed up not knowing quite what to expect but I needn't have worried.

After an awful journey I was greeted on arrival with a smile by Julie Dunk. From that moment on I felt very much at home.

After the introductory session we split into our various working groups, where I had the good fortune to meet our tutor Martin Birch, and my study partners Emma Scantlebury and Robyn Lambert.

After two very full days of learning through sharing (and two quiz nights!) I am pleased to say I passed and I now have a better understanding of the Local Authorities' Cemeteries Order (LACO) 1977 and cremation law. Not only that, I made some good friends in the process.

So, in answer to the question: Why do that? I would have to respond: Why wouldn't you?

With thanks to all who made me feel so welcome, in particular Emma and Robyn.

## ICCM education seminar - the class of 2023



## and last but not least

The ICCM would like to acknowledge and thank the Education Seminar 2023 sponsors and exhibitors, who also kindly donated prizes for the quiz, Blue Audio Visual Ltd, Obitus, Welters Organisation Worldwide and The Columbaria Company.

The ICCM would also like to acknowledge and thank SBS tutors for their hard work and invaluable input: Linda Barker, Martin Birch, Mat Crawley, Sue Gull and Marc Gisborne.  
Thanks also to ICCM Administration Officer, Julie Darroux, and ICCM Chief Executive, Julie Dunk, for arranging the Seminar and dealing with all the details.



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# education seminar 2023 gallery



# ICCM Learning Convention and Exhibition 2023

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### Crematorium Technicians Training Scheme - January 2023 – March 2023

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**Congratulations to everyone who achieved COTS and CTTS qualifications.**

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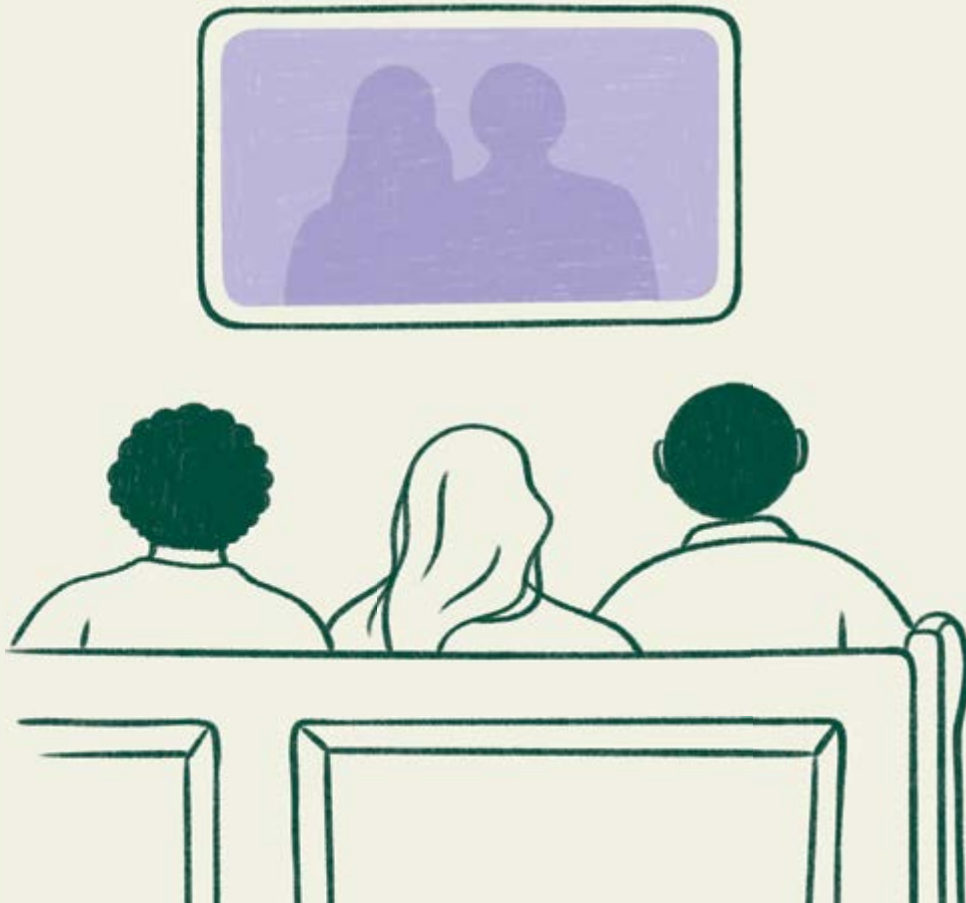


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## iccm recycling of metals scheme

March 2023 saw the end of yet another round of metals donations – starting in October 2022 with requests and rounding off with another frantic last-minute check and working out which midnight we were talking about. Unlike football deals we don't use faxes -why on earth do they still do that?

The headlines as ever make very positive reading –

Since the last round in 2022, members have ensured that an extra **£1,709,000** will be donated to good causes. **161** separate nominations have been processed to good causes taking the total number of awards to **2,372** since the scheme started.



The partnership has now donated a total of **£17,040,000** since it started – handily shown above with help from team Panda. 647 different charities have been funded by the scheme.

We also now have 2 members of the millionaire's charity club - both CRUSE and now Macmillan Cancer Care having passed that fantastic total since we started sending cheques and BACS's out, with no need for Jeremy Clarkson.

648 different charities have been funded by the scheme and over £1 million has been paid out to both CRUSE and Macmillan Cancer Care just by the work of members and the bereaved. This round saw the start of allowing multiple donations from crematorium members to split the award to more causes. As I mentioned at the Learning Convention 2022 - members had asked for this change and we happily obliged – it is the members and the deceased's scheme so they should have the input to make sure it helps where it's needed.

In my finest TOTP style again – he's the new top 10

Charity	Amount donated	Number of donations
CRUSE	£1,184,078	170
Macmillan cancer care	£1,027,962	135
SANDS	£ 563,383	104
Marie Curie	£ 363,068	58
Alzheimer's Research UK	£ 236,000	20
Samaritans	£ 228,628	31
Mayor's Appeals	£ 226,228	39
Alzheimer's society	£ 211,630	31
Young lives Vs Cancer	£ 204,000	21
Air Ambulance services England	£ 196,145	22

While there's no change at the top, Alzheimer's research made a big push up the chart from outside the top 10. While the big numbers as ever can grab headlines, the Journal has full details of all the awards and causes that we have press releases for, and we know the smaller causes still feel the biggest impact of funds. It's still the case that 55% of all awards have only gone to a single charity.

Many new charities have been successful this time round and received funds. In alphabetical order they are: **Cancer Connections, Candlelighters, Cannock Chase Shed, Chestnut Tree House Children's Hospice, Children's Bereavement Centre, Childrens Bereavement charity (no relation to the previous one), Create Hope, Cuddles ( my favourite name of the lot), Friends of Harrogate Hospital, Hampshire and Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust, Harlee's Angels, Hemsby Inshore Rescue, Kingston Voluntary Action CIO, Leeds Bereavement Forum, Man health, Ostley House Residential Home, Vision Support Centre, Our Jay Foundation, Red Sky Foundation, Royal Air Force Benevolent Fund, Shirley Horse and Pony Rescue, Sickle Cell Society, space2grieve, Springhill Hospice, Stars Bereavement Services Ormiston Families, Swansea Bay Health Charity - South west Wales cancer fund, Target Ovarian Cancer, Team Charlie, Tendring Community Voluntary Services, The Bastion Baton Trust, The Never Alone Project, Time Norfolk, Unmasked Mental Health, Willowbrook Hospice,**

Rather good isn't it? This is the easy bit. The hard part is the bereaved understanding and agreeing and then you the professionals managing it and seeing the big picture. Yes, some awards are more than others, yes, some charities benefit more than others and nationally funds may go to more deprived areas than others.

As ICCM and Orthometals have said – it's a collective arrangement with you, the deceased and all the charities to ensure that only charities get the funds, and it works by everyone buying into the one idea and seeing where it goes. £17 million has gone a long way – we've seen and heard the proof.

So collectively we're going for it again either right now or you'll hear from me shortly and the next round kicks off and more funds will be awarded.

Let's keep on helping all the causes we can. Thank you and remember the difference each and every one of you is making – proudly looking after the best interests of bereaved people.

**Trevor Robson, ICCM Finance and IT Manager**

## iccm recycling of metals scheme



**Press releases and statements for awards made in March 2023 for the October – March 2023 donations. Each nominated crematorium was awarded £12,000 to their cause(s).**



### Luton Council - CHUMS

I just thought you might like to know about how the ICCM metal recycling scheme has helped our local charity CHUMS. This is a small charity that works primarily with children who have lost a parent. It also has a counselling service for families that have lost someone to suicide.

We have been supporting Chums through the Metal Recycling Scheme since October 2017. Last year we were presented with a thank you plaque thanking us for our support. Since 2017 we have been fortunate enough to be able to donate over £100,000, to this wonderful charity, and by their own admission we were one of the reasons they were able to keep going during the pandemic. Being a small charity, like a lot of charities they have struggled to raise funds. The ICCM is now one of their biggest donors, and on their behalf I would like to thank you so much.

– Cliff Anderson BSM



### Peterborough - Young lives Vs Cancer

Thank you so much to Peterborough Crematorium for your incredible donation of £12,000 through the ICCM Recycling of Metals Scheme. Your donation will allow us to continue supporting children, young people and their families with a cancer diagnosis to receive financial grants, emotional support, practical support as well as specialist bereavement support through our social care teams.

This donation could be used to fund 256 hours of emotional, educational and employment support to our children and young people. It could even be used for 34 Emergency Crisis Grants which are issued out to families struggling financially to pay for electricity, food, gas and even petrol to be able to get their child to hospital for life saving treatment.

At Young Lives vs Cancer, we help families find the strength to face whatever cancer throws at them. Powered by the kindness of our supporters, we'll face it all together.

Best wishes, Elena Green - Fundraising Engagement Manager - East Anglia, Hertfordshire & Bedfordshire



### Gilroes Crematorium – Rainbows

Dear ICCM,

"Rainbows is my reminder that no matter what storm we all go through; the rainbow will always be there to shine a light on us all. That we are not alone. We are not just another diagnosis on paper, we are real people with real feelings that deserve love and care. To Rainbows, I am forever grateful." - Kane's mum.

Your recent wonderful donation of £12,000, which we received as part of the ICCM scheme through Gilroes Crematorium, means we can be here for babies, children and young people, like Kane, living with a serious or terminal condition in the East Midlands. Your support really does make a difference, and from everyone here at Rainbows I'd like to say a huge THANK YOU for arranging this donation and for your continued support.

Since accessing Rainbows, Kane and his family have seen Outreach Therapy, home sitting, Music Therapy and a Family Support Nurse who all support Kane, his mum and brother at home - as well as in the Hospice.

We're only able to continue providing these services thanks to you, and hundreds of other supporters across the region. Once again, a huge thank you for your donation. With very best wishes

Gary Farnfield - Community Fundraiser

## Rochdale – Springhill Hospice

Local charity Springhill Hospice has been chosen to receive a £12,000 cash boost thanks to a national scheme that recycles metals left over from cremations.

The scheme, supported by Rochdale Borough Council, is managed by the Institute of Cemetery and Crematorium Management (ICCM) and OrthoMetals and allows metals such as artificial joints and coffin fittings to be recycled into new products, following a prior agreement by the family of loved ones.

The £12,000 donation raised from cremations held at Rochdale's crematoria will be paid in May 2023 to the hospice, which first opened its doors in 1989, helping patients and their families to cherish every moment, even at end of life.

The donation is earmarked to help significantly towards the work in supporting these families with adults living with life-limiting illnesses within the borough of Rochdale who needs palliative care.

Councillor Liam O'Rourke, cabinet member for climate change and environment, said: "We are pleased to have played our part once again in the donation of this substantial sum of money, this time gifted to Springhill Hospice who work wonders to help support residents across the borough to make every moment count.

"70 per cent of their running costs need to come from fundraising, so this boost will play a significant part in helping our residents and their families in their time of need.

"This money can only be raised thanks to the local families who give us express consent to collect metals at both Rochdale and Middleton crematoriums to enable us to continue to support this vital scheme."

Jo Ali, community engagement officer at Springhill Hospice, said: "We are thrilled and grateful to receive this funding and our thanks to Rochdale Borough Council for their support in making the application.

"Springhill Hospice needs to raise over £8000 per day from fundraising within our local community to fund all our services, and as we face a large deficit going into the new financial year, raising money is more vital than ever.

"This £12,000 donation will provide a huge boost and allow us to continue to provide care to so many people in the borough when they need us most, from the inpatient unit to bereavement services."

The scheme has now raised over £17 million since 2006. This round has made 158 separate donations, totalling £1.68 million to good causes across the UK.

If you are a local charity offering bereavement services to borough residents, you can apply to receive a donation in the next round, which will be available later this summer.



*£12,000 donation to Springhill Hospice, presented by the Mayor of Rochdale, Councillor Ali Ahmed to Joanne Ali.*

## Maidstone – Marie Curie

The Marie Curie End of life charity, has received a £12,000 donation thanks to Maidstone Borough Council's (MBC) Crematorium Metal Recycling Scheme.

The money has been raised by retrieving metals from cremations. The MBC Bereavement Services Team at Vinters Park Crematorium first gain written consent from bereaved families, then following a cremation any metals from knees and hips retrieved are stored safely. They are then taken to Sheffield for separation, sorting and smelting and a high percentage of the higher-grade cobalt steel is sent to two companies that manufacture new orthopaedic implants. Any lower graded metal is traditionally recycled. Funds raised are regularly distributed by MBC to charities.

Marie Curie provides frontline nursing and hospice care, a free support line and a wealth of information and support on all aspects of dying, death and bereavement. Their current campaign, the Great Daffodil Appeal, is trying to raise awareness that every five minutes someone in the UK dies without the care and support they need.

Cllr Lottie Parfitt-Reid, Lead Member for Communities and Public Engagement at Maidstone Borough Council said: "To lose a loved one is just so sad and stressful. Marie Curie provides a service that helps so many people and supports them at what can be a very difficult time.

"It is heart-warming to know that so many local charities have been helped through this scheme. It really is down to the generosity of bereaved families who make the difficult decision to consent to orthopaedic implants such as knee and hip replacement joints being removed from the ashes. We can't thank them enough."

The scheme is run by the Institute of Cemetery and Crematorium Management (ICCM) and since joining MBC has donated £147,076 to bereavement related charities. The donations started out as £5,000 and have steadily grown over the past few years.

MBC joined the scheme in 2012, prior to this, implants from loved ones used to be stored at the crematorium until there was a sufficient amount and would then be buried within the Gardens of Remembrance.

As this method of disposal has become less acceptable and like many other crematoriums in the UK and the continent, any metal residue found will be recycled unless the family wish to make alternative arrangements.

## Bramcote Crematorium

Bramcote Crematorium has donated £12,000 to Nottinghamshire Hospice, which was raised last year through the recycling of metal recovered during the cremation process. Each year the crematorium chooses a charity to benefit from a scheme in which artificial joints, dental implants, brass coffin handles and other metal recovered from cremations is recycled.

Bereavement Assistant Clare Harlow nominated Nottinghamshire Hospice as the Crematorium's chosen charity for 2022 because the hospice cared for her Grandad Jim before he passed away in January last year, providing overnight and daytime care which enabled Jim to stay at home with family members around him at the end of his life.

Clare said: "The hospice support was amazing. My Mum and my aunty were caring for Grandad at home, and they say they wouldn't have been able to get through without the hospice. It was so reassuring to know he was being looked after. "Nottinghamshire Hospice is a charity close to our heart and always will be, so when we were looking for a charity to support, you were the perfect choice."

The Crematorium asks bereaved families if they want the metal returned to them or if they prefer it to be donated to the scheme. Most people choose to donate the metal for recycling and take comfort in knowing that metal recovered from their loved one has benefited a charity.

Claire Herrick, Head of Fundraising at Nottinghamshire Hospice, said: "We're so grateful to Bramcote Crematorium for selecting us as their charity of the year in 2022. "The money raised from the metal recycling scheme will help us to provide crucial palliative care for more patients like Jim at the end of their lives."

For more info about Nottinghamshire Hospice visit: [www.nottshospice.org](http://www.nottshospice.org)



Photo from left to right: Clare Harlow from Bramcote Crematorium, Rachel Hucknall, the CEO Notts Hospice and Andy Hands from Bramcote Crematorium.



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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.

## Hurlet Crematorium

A HOSPICE has been handed a welcome cash boost from caring staff at a crematorium.

The £12,000 windfall for Accord Hospice, in Paisley, was delivered by The Hurlet Crematorium, in Barrhead.

Funds were raised through the business' membership of the Institute of Cemetery and Crematorium Management National Recycling of Metals Scheme, which sensitively recovers metals and orthopaedic implants following cremation with the consent of bereaved families.

The donation was presented to Jacki Smart, CEO of Accord Hospice, at the new state-of-the-art crematorium located within the Hurlet Hills.

David McNaughton, manager of the Hurlet Crematorium, said: "As professionals assisting the bereaved, we recognise the financial challenges that organisations supporting families at their most difficult and vulnerable time face.

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

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

Jacki Smart added: "Thank you so much to everyone at The Hurlet Crematorium for supporting the hospice.

"This donation will make a huge difference to Accord in what has been a very challenging few years for everyone.

"At Accord we understand the enormous emotional impact of the loss of a loved one. Many thanks to the generous individuals who consented to participate in the scheme and thought of others and of course to the staff at the crematorium for thinking of Accord.

"We are very much looking forward to working in partnership in the coming months and years, with many potential ways we can support the families before and after the death of a loved one."

David went on to reveal that since its inception in 2006, the Institute's national recycling of metals initiative has raised over £17.4 million.

He added: "It gives great comfort for those who have contributed to the scheme to know that the money raised is used to support charities like ACCORD Hospice in the delivery of incredibly important and sensitive end-of-life care.

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



(Left to Right) Angela Johnstone, Jacki Smart, David McFadden and David McNaughton (Image: Accord Hospice and The Hurlet Crematorium)



## ICCM board of directors set strategic direction

In February 2023 the ICCM Board of Directors held a planning meeting to discuss and agree the strategic direction of the Institute. The meeting followed on from a couple of unsettled years due to the Covid-19 pandemic, when the ICCM Management Plan had to be suspended to cope with changing priorities. Now that we are entering more settled times, the Board took the opportunity to reaffirm what the Institute is and the strategic direction it will travel in the coming years.

The Board agreed that the Institute will continue to focus on the following key areas:

- Set standards and best practice
- Represent the sector at a national level
- Provide accredited training and education
- Care for, support and assist our members
- Reduce the sector's impact on the environment

Under these strategic headings the Board has committed to the following projects in the next three years:

### **Set standards and best practice:**

- Review of the Charter for the Bereaved
- Review of all ICCM policies
- Production of a position statement on direct cremation and low-cost funerals
- Revive the Burial and Cremation Education Trust
- Build awareness of new methods of disposal

### **Represent the sector at a national level:**

- Review ICCM membership of all national and international groups and organisations
- Review of fraternal relationships
- Improve social media activity

### **Provide accredited training and education:**

- Attain accreditation for ICCM Diploma modules once Pearson accreditation ends
- Review ICCM Diploma modules
- Review ICCM Training courses
- Attain accreditation for ICCM Training courses
- Review Learning Convention and Education Seminar

### **Care for, support and assist our members:**

- Conduct membership survey
- Review member benefits
- Update and improve website
- Review use of social media

### **Reduce the sector's impact on the environment:**

- Production of an environmental statement
- Support research into reducing the environmental impact of funerals

The projects listed above will run alongside our 'normal' day to day services that we offer to members. They will ensure that the ICCM remains at the forefront of the sector and provides up to date and relevant services to members.

The Board of Directors consists of 8 representatives, who are elected by the membership. Their role is to oversee the strategic direction of the Institute. Two of the elected representatives serve as President and Deputy President, who have the additional role of representing the Institute at sector events.

The Officer team consists of 6 full-time officers and an Honorary Solicitor, supported by ICCM accredited consultants, CTTs examiners and Diploma tutors. The Officer team role is to provide member services, and to turn the Board's strategic aims into action.

Directors and Officers work closely together to ensure that the Institute is run by its members, for its members so that those working in cemeteries and crematoria can offer the best possible services to bereaved people.



## meet the board



**Martin Birch FICCM (Dip)**  
**Operational Manager for Bereavement & Registration Services for the City of Cardiff.**  
**Chair of the Board of Directors**

To me, the ICCM is the leading organisation providing training, advice and best practice in the UK. The ICCM has enabled me to have a career and progress from working as a Gravedigger/Gardener, to Cremator Technician, Administrator and subsequently Management Roles. I will always be grateful for everything the ICCM has done to help me and will continue to support the organisation for as long as I am able.



**Kevin Pilkington**  
**Head of Bereavement & Registration Services – London Borough of Croydon**  
**Vice Chair of the Board of Directors**

I have been a member of the Institute since joining Bereavement Services from an unrelated sector in 2000. The institute has supported me throughout my career in various ways, including diploma studies, branch meetings, seminars etc helping me to develop both personally and professionally. I have also met some wonderful individuals with whom I feel comfortable to share ideas and advice. I am proud to play my part in giving back something to an organisation that has given me so much and will continue to do so.



**Heather White MICCM(Dip)(Hon)**  
**Service Manager/Registrar – Bereavement for Southampton City Council.**  
**ICCM President**

Being part of the ICCM has enabled me to gain valuable experience and support that has helped me to become a more effective manager in the cemetery and crematorium industry, I have enjoyed my time as President which has given me greater confidence and I will always be grateful to be part of a wonderful organisation.



**Marian Millington**  
**Independent Consultant, Bereavement Sector**  
**ICCM Deputy President**

The ICCM has been a large part of my journey within the bereavement sector. During my 15 + years I have managed both crematoria and cemeteries and have undertaken all the varied roles.

In that time the ICCM has been there to assist with technical queries, training and sometimes just for some emotional support and guidance. The ICCM has always played a pivotal role within the industry, it has been at the forefront of governmental changes, always ensuring our voices are heard.

I am grateful for the help and assistance the ICCM has given to me over the years and will do what I can to continue to help grow and ensure the ICCM continues to be the organisation for bereavement professionals.



**Linda Barker**  
**Retired**  
**ICCM Director**

The ICCM provides exceptional training and education that enabled me to progress in my career. In any difficult situation or just when you need to check a point of law, officers are at the end of the phone to listen and assist. Although I have now retired from my role as Head of Bereavement Services for BCP Council I am pleased to continue as a tutor for Stratford Business School. As a tutor for Crematorium Management, I feel that I am continuing to support the organisation that has helped me so much over the last 40 years.



**Alan José**  
**Group Ambassador – The Westerleigh Group**  
**ICCM Director**

The ICCM – and formally as it was known – the IBCA – has played an important role throughout my professional life working in Crematoria and Cemeteries and indeed it continues to be a big part of my working life today. The ICCM has provided education and countless opportunities to meet colleagues across the UK and visit their sites which has been invaluable over the years as have the many friendships made. The ICCM is unique in providing accurate and reliable advice to its members, provides the only comprehensive Professional Qualifications within our sector and runs a wide range of Educational Seminars relating to the specialist nature of the work we do.



**Tim Morris**  
**Retired**  
**ICCM Director**

I found my way into our services by accident just like many other members. I took on a temporary summer job with the local council while I looked for something permanent. I became interested in horticulture which must have been noticed as I was offered a full-time post and day release to horticultural college. A short time later I was asked if I could supervise the cemetery and crematorium grounds staff as the foreman was retiring and a tidy up was needed. My reaction was "yes, but I don't want to be involved with funerals". After 2 hours of arriving at the cemetery I was operating the digging machine!!

After a year, and no appearance of a new foreman, the superintendent and his deputy retired in quick succession. I was asked if I could help the two ladies in the crematorium office during the afternoons. My answer was "yes, but I don't want to be involved in cremations". Famous last words as a year later a new superintendent were appointed who taught me how to operate cremators plus all the statutory requirement of the service. I was appointed his deputy sometime after, joined the Institute and commenced the Diploma and CTS. I owe a lot to Brian Veal for this. He moved on to better things after a couple of years and I was successful in taking over.

I moved jobs a couple in the next 10 years and was approached by the Institute to establish COTS. After this I applied for and was successful in becoming the Institute's first full time officer. The rest is newer history than the above. I owe a lot to the Institute and those members that helped me during my early days. I would encourage all members to use Institute services as there are none better.



**Mohamed Omer MBE**  
**ICCM Director**  
**Chair of the National Burial Council**

I lead for the Muslim Community nationwide on all matters relating to end of life, death and burials.

I joined ICCM to ensure that it was representative of the views of faith communities so that they can provide training and guidance for all the communities.

## meet the officers



**Julie Dunk BA (Hons) FICCM (Dip)**  
**ICCM Chief Executive**

Quite simply, the ICCM has been instrumental in my career, and I wouldn't be where I am today without it. As a research fellow conducting research into the sector, I was welcomed by ICCM members to the extent that I decided to join them. I started at the bottom and worked my way up into management, using the ICCM along the way for training and education.

Throughout my journey I have made many good friends through attending ICCM branch meetings and events and have also learnt from them through sharing ideas and experiences. I was lucky enough to serve on the ICCM Board of Directors, including a term as President, which was a huge privilege. I want to provide the welcome, support and opportunities that the ICCM offered me to everyone working in this sector so they can provide quality services to bereaved people.



**Sofia Allana FICCM (Dip)**  
**ICCM Technical Services and Journal Officer**

I have worked in the bereavement sector for over 20 years where I have managed both cemeteries and crematoria. I have always been an active member of the ICCM and became Chair of the southeast regional branch meetings. I was also fortunate enough to represent the ICCM as their President in 2018 which enabled me to meet other members across the country as well as kindred organisations.

I thoroughly enjoyed my experience and in 2019 I joined the ICCM as a Technical Services and Journal Officer, which has allowed me to use my experience to help other members.



**Martin Clark**  
**ICCM COTS Manager**

I've been associated with the COTS (Cemetery Operatives Training Scheme) courses for over 22 years both working for Berkshire College of Agriculture and the ICCM, firstly as a course technician then progressing to a course Instructor later becoming an NPTC/City and Guild assessor.

This ability to offer high quality accredited training to the membership is what I enjoy most.



**Mathew Crawley FICCM (DipHons)**  
**ICCM Technical & Member Services Officer**

I've been associated with the ICCM for over 20 years as both a private and public cemetery and crematoria provider, and most recently employed as the Technical and Member Services Officer. The ICCM always stood out as an organisation that could provide me with sound statutory advice, reasoned guidance and a real-world approach to making the bereavement journey less painful for those experiencing it by the improvements I could make as an individual in providing those key bereavement services.

I have thoroughly enjoyed paying this forward as an ICCM employee for the last 6 years and trust that there will be plenty of opportunity to build on this as we drive the industry, and our collective services, forward together.



**Julie Darroux**  
**ICCM Administration Officer**

I have been employed by the ICCM as Administration Officer for 20 years, this year – the longest servicing officer to date! In my role I have gained knowledge and experience working alongside professionals within the bereavement services. I particularly enjoy a level of flexibility and autonomy I have in my role.



**Trevor Robson Bsc (Hons), AICCM, MAAT**  
**ICCM Finance and IT Manager**

I came into the industry thinking so what's this going to be about from a very different business background? I can honestly say that every year I learn something new about the industry and I'd been a lot less knowledgeable about death without my role with ICCM.

That has changed from simply trying to manage the accounts and bills, to assisting with online courses and being able to communicate much better with members to help the bereaved.



**Charles Ward**  
**ICCM Honorary Solicitor**

As I was already Clerk to the North East Surrey Crematorium Board and the Bandon Hill Joint Cemetery Committee, becoming company solicitor for ICCM seemed a natural extension to what I was already doing.

Since 2005 I have been providing legal support to ICCM and its Board of Directors. I also wrote 'Essential Law for Cemetery and Crematorium Managers', which was published June 2021 and is the first book on the subject since 'Davies law of Burial and Cremation' was last published almost 20 years before.

## Matilda earns prime minister award after memorial post box success

*A nine-year-old girl whose idea for a 'Letters to Heaven' post box has attracted national and international attention has been honoured by the Prime Minister.*

Matilda Handy was invited to 10 Downing Street to attend a reception to celebrate International Women's Day on 8 March.

While there, she learned she had been recognised as a Point of Light; the Prime Minister's Point of Light award is a daily programme recognising outstanding volunteers, charity leaders and community heroes for the service they give to others.

Matilda became the UK's 2003rd Point of Light and was named the daily award winner for Thursday 9 March in recognition of her role in creating the Letters to Heaven initiative.

She will receive a letter from the Prime Minister in the next few days and has already received a framed certificate, personally thanking her.

Matilda's mother, Leanne, is a Memorial Advisor at Gedling Crematorium. Leanne's father passed away in 2003 and mother passed away in 2017.

Leanne said: "Matilda was always saying she wished we could send Mamma and Grandad Birthday and Christmas cards for them to read. She was four when my mum died, and never met my dad."

That led to the idea of the 'Letters to Heaven' post box, which was unveiled at Gedling Crematorium just before Christmas. Within the first few weeks of it being installed, more than 100 letters, cards and messages had been posted through it.

Gedling Crematorium is part of Westerleigh Group, the UK's largest independent owner and operator of crematoria and cemeteries, with 37 sites in England, Scotland, and Wales, all set within beautifully landscaped gardens of remembrance which provide pleasant, tranquil places for people to visit and reflect.

The response to the memorial post box has been so positive that Westerleigh Group has decided that all of its crematoria will have one and the programme of installation has already started.

Matilda and Leanne are now no strangers to the limelight having been featured on the BBC One Show, BBC Breakfast News, Steph's Packed Lunch on Channel 4, and many newspapers, magazines and websites.

On Saturday 4 March Matilda was surprised when the prime-time Ant and Dec's Saturday Night Takeaway Show suddenly switched to a secret camera in the lounge of her home, where the popular presenters announced she had been given seats on a plane to Universal Studios in Orlando in recognition of the Letters to Heaven project.

Leanne said: "I am incredibly proud of Matilda and all that she has achieved through the Letters to Heaven post box.

"Spending the afternoon at Number 10 and meeting the Prime Minister and his wife is something we will never forget."

Matilda said: "I can't believe that my idea is now helping so



many people across England, Scotland and Wales.

"I feel very proud and loved going to Number 10 to meet the Prime Minister. I loved looking at the photos of all the past Prime Ministers and all the different people from our history that were all around Number 10."

Prime Minister Rishi Sunak said: "I know how writing letters to your much-loved grandma and grandad has brought you comfort. So it is wonderful to hear how you created a special post box where anyone could post a card in memory of a loved one.

"Through your 'post box to Heaven' scheme there are now hundreds of letters being posted in dozens of cemeteries across our United Kingdom."

Debbie Smith, Chief Executive Officer of Westerleigh Group, said: "We're all so proud of Matilda and Leanne and everything they have achieved over the past few months.

"When the positive feedback started coming in, quickly after we unveiled the first memorial post box we realised we had struck a chord with people and knew immediately that we needed to install Letters to Heaven post boxes at all our sites.

"I'm thrilled that Matilda and Leanne have been recognised for creating something which is already bringing comfort to many people, which will only increase as we introduce more of the post boxes across our other 36 crematoria.

"Meeting the Prime Minister in Downing Street, appearing live on national TV and being given a trip to Orlando by Ant and Dec are wonderful and very special memories they will never forget.

"At Westerleigh Group, we are always looking for new ways to support the bereaved and help them remember their loved ones. The Letters to Heaven post boxes epitomise that thinking and is something which we believe people will find beneficial for many years to come."

To find out more about Westerleigh Group, and its memorial post boxes, visit: [www.westerleighgroup.co.uk/letters-to-heaven](http://www.westerleighgroup.co.uk/letters-to-heaven)

**Issued on behalf of Westerleigh Group by Empica**



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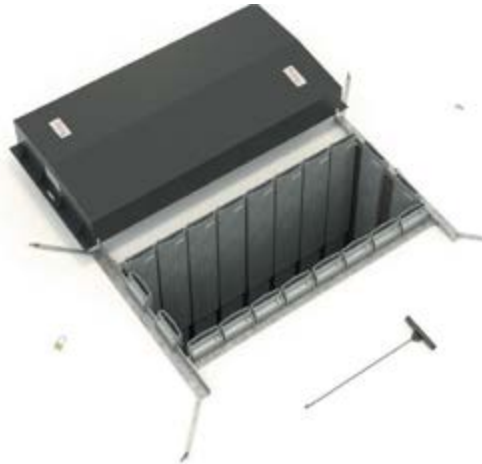
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## Hindu & Sikh death ritual

Hindus and Sikhs cremate their dead. In Hindu scriptures it has been written that once the soul leaves the body, the remains should be cremated in order to be disintegrated back to nature. Our ancestors who envisaged that if the second most populated country, India, buried instead of cremating there would be no land for the living.

The holy scriptures are written in the Bhagavat Gita, Ramayana and Mahabharat and while there has been many a battle been fought in various parts of the Indian sub-continent those who died in battle were cremated in the battle fields and the ashes were scattered in flowing water.

Traditionally in India, largely the Hindu and Sikh population, managed to conclude funerals and cremation ceremony within 24 hrs of death.

Upon death close family members wash the deceased. The final rites are led by the eldest member of the family. Holy water and tulsi herbal leaf are placed in the mouth of the deceased. Prayers are recited and these are a message for the soul to proceed to the next life.



The cremation pyre is lit by the siblings of the deceased. This method of cremation is still in existence and was used for the mother of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's funeral who died on 30th December 2022. The cremation took place twelve hours after her death. She was cremated in Gandhinagar and videos of the lighting of the pyre can be found online if anyone is interested in viewing the ceremony process.

After the cremation there is the cleansing of the house where the deceased lived. There is sprinkling of holy water and any items that are washable will be cleansed.

On the 13th day there is prayers and offerings to the soul that there is no body to come back to. After the cremation ashes are scattered in flowing water. The prayers are to give the soul

a message that it can go on to the next life. This also marks the end of the mourning.

### The modern clinical cremation in the west

In England there are over 12,000 Hindus and Sikh deaths per annum. Whilst most funerals are concluded within the 13 days of mourning period, we in England encounter delays due to certificates that must be cleared by doctors, medical examiners, and the registrar of births and deaths, together with the application for cremation, before the cremation takes place. Where most Hindu and Sikh funerals can be predicted, with the certificates being completed between 5 to 7 day, this is for expected deaths, which is acceptable.

The unexpected death falls under the coroner's jurisdiction. While the coroners teams, mortuary technicians and pathologists work at lightning speed, the bereaved families don't know how much more work is done to see that nothing untoward has happen to their loved ones.

When the bereaved Hindu or Sikh family finds out that the funeral protocol timeline may not be met sometimes, then what I call the "funeral adrenaline" kicks in. It is very important for all concerned that transparency and honesty are followed at all times whilst the need for a conclusion can be achieved as quickly as possible.

For Sikh and Hindu families, closure is to see their loved one in the coffin and perform the last rites. The average attendance at a Hindu funeral is more than 100 mourners. When events like the 7th of July 2005 London bombings took place, I was involved with two of the victims' funerals. Both families



*This is the equivalent to open pyre. It is what the Hindu & Sikh families witness, with the inset showing the scattering of the ashes on the River Thames*



insisted they must see their loved one in the state they died in. This is part of the Hindu bereavement process, to start detaching, by seeing the person dead, and then see the coffin alight (witnessing the charging of the coffin into the cremator) and finally scattering the ashes in flowing water or at sea. Traditionally, this would be in the River Ganges, although more rivers are becoming acceptable substitutes, especially for those Hindus living outside of India.

The Sikh families, in addition to taking the deceased home, also take the deceased to the temple (gurudwara) then to the crematorium. Whereas Hindus believe it inauspicious to go to the temple with the deceased and the family would only go to temple after the 13th day ceremony.

Hindus and Sikhs are open minded about organ donation. In my experience while all involved in the bereavement process maintain a very high duty of care, the issue of organ donation is sometimes not translated into a simple explanation.

Embalming is also permitted, so if there is a delay, my friends in the funeral profession have many a time delivered the best presentation for the family.

One year after the death, the family will observe a memorial event called "sraddha," which pays homage to the deceased. This annual event falls at the end of spring for 14 days when we at Chandu Tailor & Son hold this on Youtube since the pandemic. Prior to pandemic we had venues that seated over 1000 people.

When someone dies in the Hindu religion, white is the colour of mourning and is worn at funerals– the opposite to Western culture. It symbolises the purity of the soul.

The red coloured dot on the forehead, or bindi, serves as an auspicious sign of marriage. As the Hindu bride steps over the threshold of her husband's home, her red bindi is believed to usher in prosperity and grant her a place as the family's newest guardian. In some communities, women may stop donning a bindi after the passing away of their husbands.

**Chandu Tailor**

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Development in Progress – March 2021

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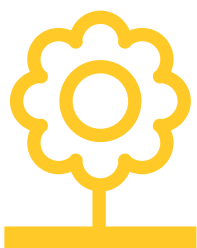
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## new crematorium for the people of the midlands

*A brand new crematorium being built on Broad Lane, Essington in the Midlands, is due to open this summer*

Mercia Forest Crematorium is being developed by Westerleigh Group, the UK's largest independent owner and operator of crematoria and cemeteries, with 37 other sites across England, Scotland and Wales, all set within beautifully-landscaped gardens of remembrance which provide pleasant, peaceful places for people to visit and reflect.



Located within more than 10 acres of beautiful woodland grounds, the new crematorium will be one of the most environmentally-friendly facilities of its kind in the country, serving the communities of Walsall, Wolverhampton and Cannock.

The crematorium will be able to support its diverse communities through suitably personalised service options. The bereaved looking for a full attended service will benefit from a light, airy and welcoming contemporary chapel, able to seat 112 people with significant standing room.

Large chapel windows will provide wide, pleasant views of the surrounding woodland landscape and an exit door will lead mourners to a sheltered floral tribute area.

A dedicated gallery for witnessing the coffin being carefully placed inside the cremator will be available to those who wish to observe this as part of their final farewell traditions.

People seeking a simpler send off for their loved one will be able to take advantage of direct, unattended services provided by the crematorium also.

To personalise services, Mercia Forest Crematorium will be able to offer an almost unlimited choice of music, while two high-resolution screens will allow services to be customised with a slideshow, photographs and suitable written words.

Westerleigh Group is committed to reducing its impact on the environment. It was the first company in the sector to adopt environmental policy issued by the Federation of Burial and Cremation Authorities and is now working towards becoming net-zero business by 2032.

With that ambition in mind, Mercia Forest Crematorium will feature the latest, advanced filtration and abatement technology on its cremator, reducing the pollution as well as a programme of protecting and creating new wildlife habitats, retaining trees and enhancing native planting.

To help reduce the crematorium's dependency on external energy sources, solar photovoltaics are being installed, as well as crematory heat recovery systems and other measures which will make the site as kind to the climate as possible.

Kevin Davies, regional manager for Westerleigh Group, said: "We understand the difficult journeys the bereaved take in saying their final farewell, and that finding a way of remembering their loved one is a very personal process that is deeply emotional.

"We provide the highest levels of exceptional care to the bereaved, ensuring they get an opportunity to create a uniquely personal funeral service to commemorate the life of their loved one.



"We are extremely proud of the new crematorium we are creating for the communities in and around Essington and are looking forward to supporting local families with the Westerleigh exceptional standards of service and care when Mercia Forest Crematorium opens this June."

For more information about Mercia Forest Crematorium on Broad Lane, Essington, WV11 2RJ, please visit: [www.merciaforestcrematorium.co.uk](http://www.merciaforestcrematorium.co.uk)



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## nw branch meeting

*Worsley Court House, Salford on Thursday 2nd February 2023*

The irony of once again hosting the meeting in a court house in Salford was not lost on those attending but it is a fantastic old building with an exemplary catering team so what is not to like?

Sponsored by Secure Haven, the meeting had a diverse agenda which binds the day when actually the networking is just as important.

Starting as we always do, by giving time to our sponsor to promote themselves and give a brief insight to their work/product. This is the least we can do as we think about the lunch to come!

Following a few quick items, the floor was handed to Richard Martin from Scattering Ashes. Having heard him speak at conference I was honest enough to tell him when we spoke a few months later that I did not really understand what he was trying to do. However after a long chat I could see the longer term benefits to families and asked him to present to the group.



There has been an ever changing attitude to the disposal of cremated remains both from a religious perspective and a cultural one. The desire to place remains at sports grounds, mountains and other favourite locations has grown and along with it, the splitting of remains to enable family members to have a share for jewellery or other keepsakes or to be placed in multiple locations. I have always had a bit of an issue with this especially when registering the interment of cremated remains in a grave knowing that there wasn't a full set. What if two people are looking for their grandfather and met up to say they have found him, one in Manchester cemetery and the others says Cheshire cemetery! Both are right but is not an easy for those tracing ancestry and building family trees. So the introduction of a register sounds like the ideal solution. So long as crematoria and funeral directors buy into the scheme then hopefully families will be made aware and records kept for future generations.



Discussion then centred around offering days for people to get together and work on assignments towards the diploma. It is something we have been doing in Greater Manchester with positive results. This is not a joint submission but the chance to discuss ideas and gain support from managers. It has a secondary aim in that it gets the next generation of prospective managers networking and building relationships that will assist them in their careers.

Simon Holden from the Faunus Group was next up. He started by talking about how his company have developed a way to make areas saturated with cremated remains usable again. By adding the right balance of nutrients to the soil it breaks down the remains and enables further interments to take place. This was followed by a talk on their development of composting bodies. Whilst the prospect of reopening areas of the gardens of remembrance garnered a lot of interest, the process of decomposition by composting really grabbed the imagination. I feel there is a lot more to come on

this subject matter over the coming months.

The morning was completed with a discussion on Health and Safety lead by Peter Smith of the Teleshore Group. This focused on the changing level of responsibility on various aspects of cemetery operations. He covered the amount of shoring required depending on the depth of a grave, including the safe installation and removal of the boards. This provided a wakeup call to all of us to check on the how's and why's of our cemetery operations.

The meeting then moved on to lunch and a chance for us to network and discuss the mornings events with the speakers.

Branch meetings are a great way of keeping in touch with your fellow colleagues. A chance to not only network but share experiences and provide communal support to each other.



**David Jennings**  
Bereavement Services Manager,  
Altrincham Crematorium

## announcing the Sheri Coates article of the year 2022

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

Below are those shortlisted last year – but there can only be one winner. The 2022 award goes to “10 practical ways to green up cemeteries”. Congratulations to author James Leedham and to the other nominees Dr Julie Rugg, Ann Lightman, James Norris, Mike Gurney and Brian Parsons. Nominated Articles from 2022 were:



19th Century Burial Science  
Dr Julie Rugg  
(Summer 2022 V90/2)



Our Digital Legacy  
James Norris  
(Autumn 2022 V90/3)



10 Practical Ways to Green Up Cemeteries  
James Leedham  
(Spring 2022 V90/1)



A Woman in a Man's World  
Ann Lightman  
(Autumn 2022 V90/3)



Personal Safety Training  
Mike Gurney  
(Winter 2022 V90/4)



Victorian Cemeteries  
Brian Parsons  
(Winter 2022 V90/4)

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

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

# Pear Technology Cemetery Mapping Services

**Pear Technology have over 15 years' experience creating highly accurate, georeferenced and interactive cemetery maps able to link to burial records, photographs and documents.**

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Every plot on a Pear Technology map is an individual entity that can be selected as required. The maps remain crystal clear even at the largest magnification unlike scanned picture maps. Zoom in and out, print sections and click on individual graves to view the relevant burial records.

We work closely with popular cemetery administration software suppliers including Edge IT Systems Ltd, ClearSkies Software and Rialtas Business Solutions software. When using your burial administration system click the 'show on map' feature to easily identify where a grave is located. Maps can also be linked to an Excel spreadsheet or custom Access Database using Pear's PT-Maplink software.



Before



After



## We can work from various sources including:

- » Scans or photographs of original paper maps
- » Excel or Word Diagrams
- » Aerial imagery from UAVs or other specialist suppliers
- » Surveyors CAD plans
- » GPS Surveys

If you have no usable maps we are able to help you source information we can use. We can also provide our clients with a register and map scanning service, as well as transcription service through our trusted partners.

## Why is a cemetery map essential?

- » It is a legal requirement
- » Identify and/or sell pre-purchased graves
- » Enable the public, contractors, cemetery staff and ground staff to locate graves
- » Identify how much land is available to be used
- » Trees, drains and benches can all be mapped allowing you to manage the land effectively



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## harnessing the benefits of social media for cemeteries

Social media is now a valuable tool for cemeteries. Here are some of the benefits of using social media:

- Raise the visibility of the cemetery locally and worldwide.
- Share service details, special occasions and other information.
- Engage with visitors and participate in online communities while providing support.
- Highlight the backdrop of the cemetery and give visitors a glimpse of what you do and how you can help.

### Useful Content

Publish a wide range of content. For example, tributes, cemetery history, service updates, upcoming events and latest news. In addition to photos and videos of the cemetery, you can highlight your employees. You can interact with your followers by answering questions and doing surveys.

### Helpful Channels

Cemeteries should choose social media channels such as Facebook and Instagram. Also use the free Google Business Platform that should be in every graveyard. This allows you to connect with different people, build your online presence, and increase your visibility.

### Move Forward

Cemeteries are sometimes perceived by the general public as impersonal. Social media can help here. By giving an opportunity to make the cemetery more approachable and accessible. Cemeteries can forge stronger emotional bonds with both local and international communities. In addition, mourners can use the cemetery's social media channels to find comfort and support.

Create an accessible online presence where visitors can discover useful content. A cemetery can provide an online space accessible to everyone, wherever they are.

### To Conclude

As a cemetery, being active on social media is a great way to connect with your community. And make your cemetery more visible to the world. Notify family members and other interested parties about new services and other interesting information. It can also be a great opportunity to support a special initiative. For example, Cemetery Care and Conservation. Cemeteries can benefit from the use of social media and can have a positive impact on both the cemetery and its community.

Want more ideas and tips? Stay ahead with the latest social media and digital marketing tips, updates and more? Everything delivered straight to your inbox every week? Then the link to subscribe is <https://www.subscribepage.com/weeklyupdatesandmore>

You can find me, Elmer Duffy, at [www.fitsocialmedia.ie](http://www.fitsocialmedia.ie) where I have a range of free resources and information. Want some assistance with getting started or building your online presence? Book a free discovery call with me and let's have a chat or if you prefer you can email me at [eimer@fitsocialmedia.ie](mailto:eimer@fitsocialmedia.ie).

Thanks for reading.



## company news

### Teleshore

#### Sharing knowledge within our ICCM community

Teleshore's Managing Director, Peter Smith, travelled to Salford to speak at the North West Regional meeting of ICCM members in March. Peter shared information about the impact of last year's HSE updates on liability surrounding excavations and how it affects risk assessment and planning for grave excavations, along with some of his expert knowledge on assessing ground conditions for appropriate shoring selection.



Peter said: "It was wonderful to have the opportunity to speak with those who attended the Salford meeting, and the feedback I had after my slot was positive – I'm most pleased that members found it informative and useful in practice for their future risk assessing and resource planning.

In turn, I find it very useful to hear about the other challenges – or just little niggles – facing our industry, as it means I can take it back to Teleshore HQ and try to find a solution for you! We have more new products coming this year which aim to provide ever-better options for cemetery and crematoria customers, so keep your eye on our news stream."

The latest new product to hit the Teleshore warehouse is a sustainably sourced, textured hessian effect range of cremated remains boxes, which will appeal to those looking for visibly more natural options. As with the entire range of Teleshore boxes, they are fully biodegradable and made from non-toxic materials.

If you were unable to attend the North West regional meeting, but would benefit from the grave safety update, Teleshore can be contacted on [info@teleshore.com](mailto:info@teleshore.com) for support and advice.

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## in touch - up north



### Legacy and development



Those of you with long enough memories or that have looked through a few older things might remember that before 2003 ICCM was IBCA. We changed from –

The Institute of Burial and Cremation Administration  
To  
The Institute of Cemetery and Crematorium Management

One of the major reasons for this is history (and having been told it correctly) related to the merger of IBCA and the old CBA – the Confederation of Burial Authorities.

Let's just look at the names.

The Institute of Burial and Cremation **Administration** – this conjures up that we had people and were an organisation that dealt with paperwork really – the name implies that strongly.

**Confederation** of Burial Authorities – a group of burial authorities that were allied in a purpose or role.

The Institute of Cemetery and Crematorium **Management** – implies we represent and deal with the management of cemetery and crematoria - much stronger and impressive – still a mouthful to say, but as with so many things it's the acronym that's used ICCM.

Now changes to the backbone of an organisation require either a member ballot or a vote at a meeting (AGM or EGM) to pass this through and members agreeing that changes the Board suggests should go ahead to help the organisation develop in the future and grow or adapt to members' wishes. While some organisations have lots of votes at AGM's we're normally a bit quieter.

The Board are, however, moved to propose changes that will result in a member vote at the AGM hopefully this year. There are 2 distinctively different things that are being raised.

Firstly, the articles haven't been changed since about 2005 and surprisingly things have changed a lot in nearly 20 years, 2020 sort of caused issues with this for ICCM and lots of organisations.

Our current articles don't allow for electronic voting at AGM's or EGM's - not very helpful given the world now and less useful for members that can't travel.

The articles also do not properly reflect other technological changes and video conferencing - and so trying to be forward thinking the Board would like them to do that.

Finally, in this section and not being a daft PC issue – they're all written in the male HE tense. Now, before anyone thinks – well why is that that something that needs a change? Well, we are into year 5 or at least 6 of having a direct run of female Presidents (referred to as he in the articles). In addition, he in the articles for the company secretary, is not he and the fact it says he is kind of silly and dare I use the phrase, old fashioned or archaic??

The Board would, therefore, propose to use they in all cases which is slightly more sensible in 2023 and suggests an organisation and membership that is less bothered by gender and more by actions.

They make up the first block of changes that the membership is being informed about and we would like you the membership to

agree to if you can at the appropriate point. They will make the articles more appropriate for us to function and not sound like a male administration from the 1900's that hasn't developed and modernised.

Now the second batch.

Firstly, thank you istock for the images

What's in a certificate for being a member of an organisation and the importance of it?

Or the importance of a different certificate/membership status but still being a member of it?



At the moment we have – professional members. You can be an associate member, a full member or a Fellow. AICCM, MICCM or FICCM. The full member coming from the diploma showing the work invested. All can vote at AGM/EGM's.

For our corporate side we have – Associate corporate members, Parish and Town Councils and Full corporates. The difference is an Associate corporate member is a business in the industry that doesn't undertake burials/cremations or a burial/crem company that doesn't have a site registered – it is a non-voting member but associated to ICCM for standards and knowledge. Parish and Town Councils are just that -they undertake burials/cremations and can vote.

Full Corporate members are local authorities or private cemeteries/crematoria – they undertake funerals and can also vote. A slight headache for years is that an associate professional member and an associate corporate member are not the same status at all. Furthermore, we can't have an individual that would be an associate corporate member joining as an associate professional one in their own right by the articles as they don't qualify as being in the industry. This could mean there are people that are involved in the industry that may want to undertake our training or know about us and further their development but are restricted by our rules. Also it means we have slightly confusing definitions that we assigned that could be reviewed to help the organisation.

The membership proposals are -

1. To change the individual membership category to a more formal and appropriate designation of Qualified member. So, members that have their diploma are correctly recognised as being qualified in the industry to the best standard – the ICCM diploma. So MICCM becomes QICCM.
2. To reclassify the individual associate members as members in their own right. As a individual that joins up is a member of ICCM In their right and they are not associated to us but are a voting member of ICCM. Therefore, AICCM's become MICCM's.
3. This then leaves the old AICCM bracket free. The biggest proposed change of this package would then be to use this category to allow anyone that is associated to the burial industry, but not directly involved in cemeteries or crematoria to join ICCM as a non-voting member. So, an individual that was a supplier of services to a crematorium could join up. The new AICCM's.

As with the corporate members, this category of people would not be directly in the industry but associated with it to some degree they as non-voting members.

Now the why part which you may be asking?

Firstly fairness – it seems fair to preserve the rules of voting members we already have whilst allowing growth.

Growth – by allowing individuals that were restricted from membership to join we allow ICCM to develop, grow and interact with new individuals that may bring new knowledge and connections to the burial family.

The burial family – The burial family faces new opportunities in the future – Resomation and human composting are ideas that are here now in the world. More may follow and being open to new developments is important for allowing ICCM to keep being the go-to organisation in the sector.

Voice and reach – Several years ago an ex-president wanted us to have 1,000 individual members. This never happened, however, with corporate memberships we passed that. Now we have over 1,500 individual and corporate members more then 50% above the dream figure. The bigger and more represented we are, the better chance we have, not to be ignored and not to be out of date or out of touch.

In a nutshell – we want to tidy the articles, make them relevant for the 21st century and hopefully make them appropriate for ICCM to keep being relevant as we go on.

That's the Board's plan and we want you to help take us there.

**Trevor Robson**  
ICCM Finance and IT Manager

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## tales of a cemetery registrar

### Home working

Sat in my office at home  
A window to the outside  
I tap away to a music beat  
the radio on by my side.

It is too quiet on some days  
everyone has left for work  
others it feels like a revolving door  
and the noise drives me berserk.

I have coffee and tea on tap  
and cupboards full of tasty treats  
Trying to be good is difficult  
I find it hard to resist the sweets.

Try as I might days are still busy  
answering emails and reports to write  
Some days it is short breaks  
but others I see an end in sight.

I like my home comforts  
my own space with time to think  
but I do miss the banter  
that can be spoilt by video link.

**By Anita Fish**

## going paperless for future resilience

### *A Cemeteries & Crematorium Industry Perspective*

*Article developed from transcript of presentation to the ICCM Convention on 27/09/2022 and the presentation slides available online via <http://bit.ly/3CceLZn>.*

This paper explored the meaning of “going paperless” and why it is important for future resilience. We look at where we are now on the mission to becoming paperless, how did we get here and where we are going. Then we look at things from a cemetery and crematorium perspective, acknowledging the challenges and reasons for doing it. To close we present some final thoughts about going paperless and outcomes that could emerge.

When looking for a definition for a paperless organisation, we thought this summed it up:

#### **“A work environment where paper is eliminated or greatly reduced”**

Paper still has a role to play in our working lives because some things are more easily done that way.

So, where are we now in the global mission to save the environment by reducing paper use?

- An office worker is estimated to use 10,000 sheets of copy paper a year which equates to around 27 sheets a day.
- On average every person in the UK consumes 4.5 trees a year.
- Globally we lose over 300 million trees a year.
- Four in ten people describe themselves as ‘paper people’ preferring to use paper than IT. Certainly, some people prefer the comfort of handwritten notes than total reliance on technology.
- Curiously, 76% of workers admit printing nonwork-related documents. The cost of using paper can be 30 times the cost of the paper itself.

So how did we get to this, bearing in mind that the figures show we still have a long way to go?

- 1964 - Computers with VDUs, like the IBM 2260 appeared.
- 1975 - Business Week predicted the paperless office. The prediction that there would be a PC on every desk proved prophetic.
- The market for printers and photocopiers grew, reproducing documents in bulk. Between 1980 and 2020 worldwide use of office paper doubled.
- Since then, office paper use decreased, driven by a younger generation more likely to read everything on screen than print.

It starts to get more interesting when we begin to think about where we are we going. The key will be to ensure all critical requirements are addressed to make the future an improvement on the present. Communication with external businesses and contacts will always depend on the sender and recipient having compatible technology and software. Costs and temporary productivity can be an issue in the development of a sensible IT strategy. Government regulations, industry standards, legal requirements and business policies will have to be balanced with the practicalities of working effectively in the business world.

Technology difficulties will always arise, and the aim should be to ensure these are addressed quickly and decisively.

And then there is the issue of format compatibility. To illustrate, we send a document from our computer and hopefully you, the receiver, gets it and it looks exactly like it should. Sometimes this doesn’t happen. And that can be annoying, frustrating, and slow things down. A part of you thinks “What is this guy doing? Does he even know?” We can reasonably point the finger at the choice of technology, software, and versions available at each end of the send/ receive journey.

Have any of you ever taken grave maps out to the cemetery to find a grave? If you are kind to the dear old map, perhaps even sad about its poor condition, you might have taken a photocopy of the part of the grave map you need and filed the original historic record back in its safe place. Either way, the map has seen better days, hard to read and subject to further deterioration if exposed to the British weather. Digitisation of such documents, including burial and cremation registers, is an investment worth making. Expensive? It can burn a hole in your budget but what value can you place on a statutory, historical record of this kind? Think of it as an insurance against loss and damage if you like.

When we think of something being stable, we generally think of words like consistency, unchanging, predictable, and safe. Which is by and large what we want from computer systems, right? So, does using paper provide the stability we are looking for? Perhaps not. Paper documents vary in quality, both in terms of the material itself and the way it is stored or filed. As we now know, documents can deteriorate over time, and it only takes a fire for everything to be lost. Paper documents remain at the mercy of the care and attention of the user, the reader and the writer.

Computers are very good at making users behave. If an individual wants to do things his or her own way, computers will usually intervene and say “No, you cannot do that”. The user complains and says something like “What the ...! The computer is simply doing its job, making entries predictable and applying principles and conventions agreed during its design. Paper systems do not have this luxury.

When Peter took on his current role with Chris’s company, he was confident that he had little to learn about using computers. After all, he was introduced to computing in the early 80’s, a time of green screens and no mouse. He liked to think he kept up with the advances of technology, even obtaining a qualification at Huddersfield Polytechnic called Certificate in Computing and Management Information Systems. This was abbreviated to the acronym CICMIS, which as a long-suffering Huddersfield Town fan kind of adds up!

However, on joining EDGE IT Systems, he had to reset his understanding of where he stood on the “Absolutely Clueless to Expert Genius Level” spectrum. After the initial “Oh My God!” phase, Peter was soon reminded that if you stick around the right people, miracles can happen. A year on, his colleagues are seeing what a good job they did in bringing Peter up to speed. True,



there is more to it than completing paper forms, posting letters with enclosed grave deeds, and completing written diaries. But the skill sets required in this 21st Century IT Show are highly transferable and surprisingly easy after only a few practice runs.

So how does all this play out in the cemeteries and crematoria industry? Where are we now? How did we get here? Where are we going? How do we go paperless? Are EDGE practising what we preach? We will give you a brief rundown of the Funeral Availability Reporting System, which also lends itself to the paperless environment.

Founded in 1987, Gower Consultants are the oldest specialist cemetery software company in the UK. CAS soon followed around 1990, while EDGE celebrated their 30th anniversary in 2022. Clear Skies with their BACAS system entered the industry in early 2000. Several more have followed in recent times, the latest entry being Cloudy IT. So, it is unsurprising that many cemeteries and crematoria now have IT systems administering their services.

With this has come the opportunity to ditch (well, ok then, archive!) their large, cumbersome registers, which has saved a lot of office space and many a sore back. Some have not gone that far and maintain both the computerised and manual records “just in case”.

Then we have the revolution, the life-changing Internet. In an instant we can move away from landlines, a postal service and driving to the cemetery with gravedigging instructions. Instead, the almost immediate electronic transfer of documents and emails transforms the industry and the workplace.

Digital mapping of grave and site plans has become the norm. Hand-held devices for use by staff working on site allow all this stuff to be read and acted upon in the cemetery or crematorium. Digital photos and video technology can do that “worth a thousand words” thing and provide eyes-on without leaving your desk. And nowadays it is commonplace to have remote access to and electronic transfer of information to/from databases. We now can operate cremators from anywhere in the world, with data logging and environmental performance monitoring and control.

Cloud-based administration software has come to the market, reducing the burden on burial authority systems, and bringing with it the advantages of remote access from anywhere with the necessary equipment and applications. Funeral director online booking means that bookings can be made 24/7/365. Online payment systems remove the need for cash and paper. Admin software can be linked to online music providers and funeral director software to provide an integrated approach.

All this requiring **less paper** as well as saving time by bringing more efficiencies!

It’s worth reminding ourselves of the journey to this magical information technology world we now live in. When Peter entered the industry in 1994, it was still a world of quill pens and bulky registers recording in detail the required burial and cremation information. Then there were those huge paper grave maps of varying quality and legibility.

Paperwork was abundant with desktops, in-trays and filing cabinets drowned in forms, documents, flower cards, labels and digging instructions.

Photocopiers and fax machines were a revolution in their time. Paper-based as they were, they actually increased the number of trees cut down to feed the office animal, sorry processes. Computers in the office were born, at first presenting information blandly in a DOS-based computers before the advent of the more user-friendly Microsoft Windows. DOS is Disk Operating System for the uninitiated.

Then came mobile phones & tablets. And text messaging! Wasn’t it fun navigating the keyboard numbers to message your colleague? Some of you will recall pressing the number 2 three times to show the letter C, as was the case with numbers 3 to 9 and the letters F, I, L, O, S, V, and Y

But the reality is that paper remained the prevalent medium in our industry.

Now for a bit of crystal-ball gazing. The paperless office **can** happen, possibly **will** happen. We think the cashless society will be a thing, certainly in more advanced economies. Artificial intelligence will become a growing influence, with driverless excavators programmed to locate, dig graves, and backfill. We will see robotic charging machines programmed to locate, lift, transport coffins and load cremators with no manual interference. We are already seeing the early phases of this with auto-chargers in crematoria. And just maybe, a complete 24-hour end-to-end self-service for funeral directors, where they can manage the whole process with little interference from the burial or cremation service? You never know! **ULTIMATELY, NO PAPER!**

**How do we go paperless?**

We can upgrade to cloud-based admin software, using web software or hosted Windows software that you access via the internet. Commercial cloud software is known as “software as a service” or SaaS. We can upload and attach PDFs for all paperwork to relevant records, and we can email directly from admin software without using Outlook.

The admin software links with the corporate finance software, and we allow funeral directors to book online and link the booking with an online music provider.

In addition, we can provide online services to the customer via the cemetery or crematorium website, including service times:



and we can provide the public with access to online genealogical maps:



It is also possible for funeral directors to use their administration software to transfer signed forms and the data content of forms to the burial or cremation authority's admin software. And we can use a memorial inspection app on a tablet that is linked to the admin software and maps.

54% of new crematoria built since 2006 are going paperless with the Epitaph administration software from EDGE, who were also certified as carbon neutral in 2022.

Furthermore, EDGE are sponsoring ICCM's environmental initiative including the new ICCM Environmental Toolbox; a new environmental category in the annual ICCM photographic competition, and a new tri-annual "Ian Quance Award for Outstanding Environmental Improvement".

Naturally, we will see the very human condition known as resistance to change. Old habits die hard, and new habits will need to be formed. Fear of technology is a real problem for many people. Security concerns often arise as technology reaches ever further into our lives, particularly when the technology is web based. Also, web connectivity remains a worry in some parts of the UK, but this is improving.

Social contact, as shown by the COVID pandemic, is clearly important for humans. Whilst working from home has its benefits, the very fact that many have struggled with loneliness and then the fear of going back to the workplace demonstrates a need to manage this carefully. Concerns about the cost of moving from paper to technology alternatives are understandable and the cost/benefit equation can only be sensibly measured over a 3 to 5 year period.

Finally, we get the question, "Do we really need to do this?" This must be addressed clearly, logically and with conviction if we are going to get buy-in.

But there are good reasons for going paperless. Technology can create vastly more efficient processes. The environment, Mother Earth, needs everyone to do their bit, and using less paper is something everyone can do. Tasks can be completed in nanoseconds with much less dependence on the user. Space can be saved by doing away with paper filing systems.

Technology offers much more consistency than paper. For example, the presentation of electronic documents can be set up once and that template can be produced repeatedly and only

changed by an authorised user. Cost effectiveness is important and valuable features of technology include less human error, savings in time and expenditure and, of course, office space and paper products. Accessibility globally is a big attraction when considering replacing paper with IT systems. The necessity of having to go to the office to work is removed. Furthermore, accessibility for the disabled is much easier when using IT systems.

Related to the above point, web access provides added agility to the workplace, wherever that may be. We are already seeing the "hybrid" working arrangement emerge, where workers can operate from home some days, in the office on other days.

### Funeral Availability Reporting System (FARS)

So, we should go paperless for future resilience and be ready in case FARS has to be activated. FARS is a service for funeral directors, activated in an emergency as proposed by EDGE in "IT Lessons Learnt from the Pandemic" paper to CBCE 2022, <https://bit.ly/30kkQ9S>. The FBCA and ICCM will jointly own and manage FARS. EDGE are the architects of FARS on a pro bono basis. The timetable for introducing FARS is as follows:

In December 2022, FBCA & ICCM decide whether to proceed with FARS.

**FARS Phase 1** – launch is planned to happen at the end of the second quarter of 2023

**FARS Phase 2** – will enable admin software to automatically update FARS

**FARS Phase 3** – will automate data download from FARS for LRFs and the Government.



We will close with some final thoughts.

Paper has its place, but its use can be reduced considerably. The technology is already here but its application has yet to be fully recognised. Self-service for IT users will shorten the lead time between starting and completing a process. Filing will be automatic and with limited human interference. More floor space should be available. The burden of running paper-based systems should be reduced, providing employees with more time to think things through, reflect and be creative.

And remember this: you are helping to save your planet!

**Peter Linsell and Chris Edge**

## what next for crematoria?

*We look down under to Australia for inspiration.*

When James Crossland, Founder at Obitus, took a trip to Australia, he climbed one mountain, photographed one world-famous opera house, and visited 14 crematoria. In this article, he shares his insights and considers how they could be applied by the UK bereavement industry.

Local crematoria were once the natural place to hold a funeral. But with direct cremation in the UK rising in popularity, the link between disposal method and funeral service venue is eroding - resulting in the potential for lower funeral volumes and reduced income.

This sets a new challenge for crematoria to find ways to differentiate and expand the services on offer.

On a holiday to Australia back in 2019, I saw how the funeral industry does things differently. Here, I share some of my eye-opening findings with you.

### More than a crematorium

Instead of just offering a service space and disposal, Australian crematoria appear to offer a far broader range of services.

Many of the venues have their own vans and refrigerated storage areas so they can arrange for the deceased to be transported and looked after on site. This increases the chance that the funeral comes to them, as well as allowing for new more flexible operating models for local funeral directors and officiants.

Technology and AV equipment form a bigger component for funeral venues in Australia. When people arrive at site, maps and digital screens provide information and guide them to where they need to be.

One big difference between UK and Australian crematoria is that additional on-site amenities like cafes, florists, and even children's play areas are common. These facilities make it easier and a more pleasant experience for people to spend time in the extensive memorial gardens.

They're so successful at this people even come for days out with their grand kids, or to have their wedding photos taken.

Venues are often not branded as the literal 'crematorium' but more likely 'memorial park', reflecting their broader purpose.

### Inviting spaces

The crematoria down under have created functional spaces both indoors and outdoors for their visitors, all of which are bright, light, and airy. Outdoor chapels were a particular favourite of mine, and I'm convinced there is a place for in the UK.

Venues are nicely branded which included staff all having smart uniforms – and not just 'Victorian' black. And some real consideration is put into 'delights' for the customer, including premium teas and coffees, branded packs of tissues and water.





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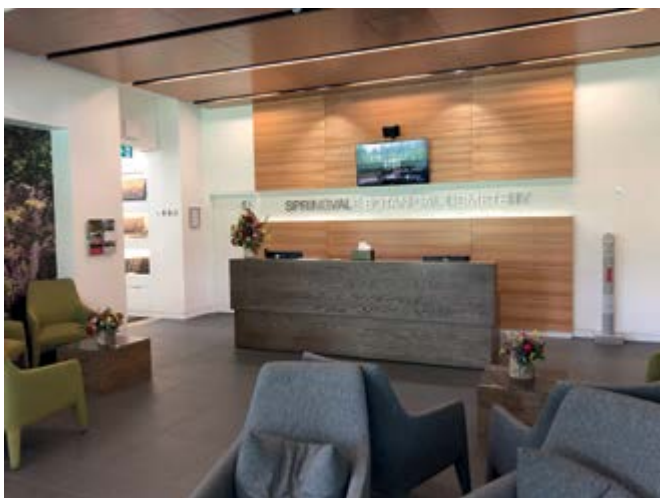


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Reception areas are well designed with a wide range of literature to support customers and visitors. Meanwhile, appointments to plan funerals and memorials are held in purpose-created, well decorated rooms in the venue.

### Small changes, big difference

These are just some of the different approaches that help Australian crematoria deliver a modern, high quality, end-to-end funeral experience. It seems that not only is this approach genuinely helpful for customers, but it provides the chance for venues to be more visible and build stronger relationships with their local community.

### How could you enhance your service?

While it might seem like Australian crematoria were ahead of us when I visited in 2019, many similar ideas are already being implemented by different venues across the UK.

As the way that families choose to grieve continues to change, funeral venues have the opportunity to diversify their own offering – both to meet their customers’ needs and to prosper in this period of unprecedented change.

### Feeling inspired?

Obitus don’t have all the answers, but we want to be part of the conversation. Watch James’s full presentation on this topic at [obitus.com/downunder](https://obitus.com/downunder) and get in touch for more information.

**James Crossland**



## a look at london's victorian cemeteries

### Part 3: The Landscapes of London's Victorian Cemeteries

The first wave of nineteenth century cemeteries presented many challenges to the directors of the companies. Securing a suitable site was a major issue; once acquired it had to be prepared for use, which included landscaping, planting and creating the areas for interments. In the absence of any texts or guidance on such matters, those responsible for the cemeteries neither looked to the English churchyard or to the European cemetery model. Instead, inspiration was drawn from public parks and private gardens.

#### Cemetery location

Finding a suitable location for a new cemetery has always been and remains problematic. Whilst there is the issue of 'nimbyism' despite the fact that cemeteries are incredibly quiet neighbours with almost a guarantee that the ground will not be used for a different purpose in the future, proposals have always met with objections.

When the first wave of cemeteries opened in the 1830s and 1840s, outlying areas of London were comparatively rural. The General Cemetery Company initially acquired around 46 acres of pastureland between the Harrow Road and the Grand Union Canal; in respect of Highgate, a site below St Michael's Church that was once part of the grounds of a property owned by Sir William Ashurst became the western section of their cemetery. Abney Park Cemetery occupied land that was formerly part of the Fleetwood-Abney estate, while the directors of the South Metropolitan Cemetery Company purchased a site from Lord Thurlow's trustees. Although outside the scope of this series of articles, Brookwood Cemetery was situated on 2,200 acres of common land purchased from Lord Onslow with the directors of the London Necropolis Company apportioning around 400 acres for burial purposes.



Highgate: The Egyptian Avenue and Circle of Lebanon

Following the Burial Act 1852, burial board cemeteries similarly acquired out-of-town sites; probably the largest and most notable was the City of London Cemetery at Ilford to the east of the capital which covered 200 acres of pasture and meadow land. Although not equalling the aforementioned locations, some burial board cemeteries were opened in impressive locations. Those in south-east London, such as Greenwich, Woolwich and Plumstead give sweeping vistas around London.



West Norwood landscape (1836)

#### Layout of the site

Both the South Metropolitan Cemetery at West Norwood and Highgate Cemetery occupied undulating hillside sites and were ideal for the construction of winding drives. In contrast, at Nunhead the main avenue leads directly uphill to the chapel. Similarly, at Kensal Green, although the main avenue appeared to lead directly to the Anglican chapel, approaching corteges had to deviate either side to enable the hearse to position itself in front of the chapel doors. The layout of many of the burial board cemeteries had a network of roads and pathways that meandered through the site. Camberwell Old Cemetery (1856) in Forest Hill and the vast Islington St Pancras Cemetery (1854) are good examples, as is the later and more modest Twickenham Cemetery (1868). Few sites had a grid-iron layout of roads and paths.

#### John Claudius Loudon

In 1843, so after the initial seven garden cemeteries had opened, the gardening writer John Claudius Loudon (1783-1843) published his treatise *On the Laying Out, Planting and Managing of Cemeteries*. It was not the first publication dealing with burial matters as Dr George Alfred Walker's *Gatherings from Graveyards* appeared in 1839 and George Collison's *Cemetery Interment* a year later. As a solicitor with a vested interest in Abney Park Cemetery, Collison describes the competing places of burial in London, and elsewhere (such as Liverpool, Gravesend, Mount Auburn, Père Lachaise, etc) before devoting many pages to the cemetery at Stoke Newington with its extensive arboretum and rosarium.

Loudon was not partisan and provided a critical commentary concerning existing cemeteries. He was disapproving of creating a cemetery as a public park or pleasure ground, preferring it to have a distinctive character as a place of repose for the dead

and comfort for mourners. He described the planting of many cemeteries as ‘highly objectionable’. Loudon believed everyone should have access to green ‘breathing spaces’ within towns, and his vision was that well-planned and well-managed cemeteries, once full, could become the public gardens of the future. He wrote:

A general cemetery in the neighbourhood of a town, properly designed, laid out, ornamented with tombs, planted with trees, shrubs and herbaceous plants all named, and the whole properly kept, might become a school of instruction in architecture, sculpture, landscape-gardening, arboriculture, botany, and in those important parts of general gardening, neatness, order and high keeping.

In the preface of the book, Loudon provided the ratio of: ‘1,361 graves to an acre’. He continued:

estimating the deaths in a town population at 3% per annum, this acre would suffice for a population of 1,000 for forty-five years. Taking the population of London to be 1,500,000 this would require thirty-three acres per annum.

Loudon also recommended that:

All burial grounds...when once filled...should be shut up as burying grounds and a few years afterwards opened as public walks or gardens: the gravestones and all architectural or sculptural ornaments being kept in repair at the expense of the town or village; such trees, shrubs or plants being planted among the graves as the town council may determine.

The book contained ideas about drainage, lodges, vaults and memorials along with the siting of the cemetery. He recommended that they should be alongside a railway line so the dead could be transported for burial (an idea that was later adopted at Brookwood and the Great Northern Cemetery). He designed only two small cemeteries: Histon Road Cambridge (1842-43) being a rectangular site with a central drive leading to the chapel, and Bath Abbey Cemetery. He also prepared a scheme for Southampton Cemetery, but this was not adopted.

It is difficult to assess the impact of Loudon’s ideas on the burial board and private cemeteries that opened after the 1852 Burial Act, although some bear hallmarks of his influence, such as the City of London Cemetery. The landscapes of many were designed by the local surveyor and/or the cemetery superintendent and all would have had to operate under financial constraints.

### Planting and Horticulture

London’s new cemeteries all required judicious planting with trees and appropriate shrubs. Comparatively little information exists concerning what was planted and where. Collison, for example, says of West Norwood ‘This cemetery is well planted with shrubs and flowers; but, in common with all the metropolitan cemeteries, except that of Abney Park, is sadly deficient in that most characteristic and appropriate of all sepulchral ornaments – well grown and stately timber’. He describes Brompton Cemetery as ‘Not a tree and scarcely a shrub, adorns the place, and the very turf has to be formed and supplied’.

Photographs taken in the early years of the twentieth century show the maturity of the trees planted from the 1830s and are thus helpful for analysing early planting schemes.

Collinson was right to highlight that that the most ambitious landscaping at any cemetery could be found at Abney Park. The task was assigned to George Loddiges (1784-1846), the gardener and naturalist who was also a shareholder of the company. He embarked on a scheme to create ‘a complete arboretum’ outdoing even Kew Gardens with 2,500 varieties of trees and shrubs and a rosarium with 1,029 species. This had parallels with Derby Arboretum opened in 1840 which was designed by JC Loudon. The other cemeteries planted a large number of trees and shrubs. At Kensal Green, the directors of the General Cemetery Company turned to a local nurseryman, Hugh Reynolds of Brentford for the supply of trees. Trees costing £300 were planted in November 1831, followed by regular consignments over a period of years.



*Abney Park: the planting as depicted in an early twentieth century hand-coloured postcard.*



*A view in an avenue in the City of London Cemetery showing then mature trees probably planted around the time the cemetery opened in 1856.*

Although outside the London area, but nevertheless advertised as 'The London Necropolis', the landscaping of Brookwood Cemetery was carried out by a planting committee. The planting of giant sequoias among avenues of monkey puzzle, cedar, bay, laurel and rhododendron. The local Goldsworthy Nursery supplied the thousands of plants and shrubs used in the 400 acres. Monkey puzzles can be found at Edmonton and also Hillingdon cemeteries.

To some extent the City of London and also the vast Islington St Pancras Cemetery at East Finchley adopted the same ideas. At the former, rhododendrons were planted in abundance particularly around the roads leading to the catacombs. However, as the decades progressed and the scale of burials increased, particularly of London's poor which took place in deep public graves, Loudon's plans, where adopted, became unsustainable and were subject to revision. As cemeteries were costly to run, superintendents were obliged to maximise the ground for burial space. This meant digging deep graves for the low-cost common interments, whilst preserving space for the more lucrative private graves.

In the closing years of the nineteenth century the Abney Park Cemetery Company opened Hendon Cemetery. Like its sister at Stoke Newington it too was planted with thousands of trees but by then, more colourful and exotic, often deciduous species were replacing the sombre monochrome evergreens. A 1903 prospectus issued by the cemetery company provides the following details:

Avenues of Lombardy poplars, oaks, elms, maples, planes, and rose acacias border the roads, and there are footwalks between avenues of common acacias, thorns, limes and laburnums, which before long should have very striking and unusual beauty. Clumps of trees dot the meadows in which contrasts and harmonies have been studied, for in them we see such different forms and colours as are given by wild cherry, copper beech, mespilus, white poplar, Persian plum, ilex, thorn, chestnut maple and yew.

### Staffing and maintenance

All cemeteries employed gardeners along with gravediggers. The horticultural department was responsible for the propagation of plants to adorn the cemetery, which saved on the need to purchase stock from external suppliers. In addition, many cemeteries offered the service of planting out graves as part of a maintenance agreement; this was an important source of revenue. Kensal Green Cemetery possessed extensive greenhouses positioned near the main entrance. When writing the chapter 'Burying London' in the three-volume *Living London*, TW Wilkinson wrote:

Go behind the scenes at Highgate. You are in a maze of beds and glass-houses, working in and about which is a regular staff of twenty-eight gardeners. Merely for bedding-out some 250,000 to 300,000 plants are raised every year.

Nothing has been published about staffing arrangements in nineteenth century cemeteries, although data can be found in burial board or company minutes. One additional source is the material contained in the 1896 Booth notebooks that were compiled from interviews around the time the poverty maps were compiled. They detail that the London Cemetery Company, owning Highgate and Nunhead cemeteries, employed about 20 gravediggers and labourers along with 16 gardeners at each site. At the latter a 'head' man was responsible for digging the graves and was paid one shilling per foot for ordinary graves, rising to 1 shilling 3 pence and 1 shilling 6 pence per foot for the deeper graves. He engaged assistants to help him which he paid direct. [It would appear that the out-sourcing of gravedigging is not new.] At Highgate the operation was in-house as the men were paid 6 pence per hour with overtime at 6½ pence per hour. At Brookwood, between 15-20 employees who lived in the cemetery and locally were engaged to maintain the 400-acre cemetery.

### An Afterword

JC Loudon died in 1843 and was buried in Kensal Green Cemetery. His text



*The planting in Hendon Cemetery which opened in 1899.*



*A horse-drawn lawn mower in Edmonton Cemetery.*



*St Andrew's Avenue in Brookwood Cemetery showing the Wellingtonias (Sequoiadendron giganteum).*



on cemetery layout and management was the only writing on the subject until the series of articles by John Robertson, the superintendent of the City of London Cemetery between 1913 and 1936, founder and first president of the National Association of Cemetery Superintendents (See the author's 'John Robertson: Portrait of the 'founding father'' (2013) ICCM Journal Vol 81 No3)

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**Brian Parsons**

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## what would your obituary look like?

In the finest style of and finally and for the abstract thinkers... Imagine in just over 30 years' time a future where the ICCM comes to a close and an obituary is required...

As you join us in our virtual online news portal, today on the 16th March 2056 we mourn but celebrate the end of the sensitive disposal company, formerly the ICCM.

Before an age of all burials being 100% environmentally friendly via physical vulture destruction and eco-pod technology, the ICCM provided the best and respectable training on burials and the now banned cremation of the dead (the old word for former lifers).

ICCM pioneered recycling of metals from cremation, the Charter for the Bereaved and the education Diploma for cemetery staff. It was the most respected and professional individual and corporate membership organisation serving the United Kingdom.

It set and raised standards for the treatment of employees and the sensitive disposal of the dead via its training for cemetery and crematorium staff.

It highlighted and helped solve problems with the disposal of babies and the cremated remains saga of the 2010's with Mortonhall.

Before its eventual outlawing on environmental grounds, it sought to encourage the reuse of graves, a battle it nearly won with the heavily delayed law review of 2052.

People formerly engaged in crematoria and those that now manage the clean up of cemeteries will now mourn its passing.

It was a company of its time that saw a world change to our new super eco disposal and recycling of the former lifers of the day.

The training it offered improved the physical relationship we used to have for the lifers as we now celebrate their passing to the virtual world where they never die.

Today, the training of disposal of lifers is handled by the ECO POD industry and its British Farmer partners, to help populate our green landscapes, in our new memorial free world.

We end this address and invite you to enter the next portal to see this years Strictly competitors...

**Trevor Robson**



## Cemetery of the Year Awards 2023



The FREE to enter competition will once again be available from 31 March until 31 July 2023 and open to any burial authority (cemetery or churchyard) within the UK.

The categories of cemeteries are –

- A.** Large burial grounds above 10,000 graves      **B.** Small/medium burial grounds up to 10,000 graves  
**C.** Parish, Town and Community councils

The winner will receive a CYA Gold Award Certificate and a CYA Press Release that can be used to promote your work, in your local newspaper. Silver Awards Certificates will be presented to the runners up along with a CYA Press Releases to promote your work.

Note:

*There will be no cash prize this year in categories A, B, and C. Natural Burial Ground Provider category will not take place this year. The competition will also include 2 x New Categories in this year's competition. \*D. The BRAMM Bereaved Community Award*

This is a new category in the Cemetery of the Year Awards 2023 and is open to any burial authority in the UK.

If your cemetery or burial ground has completed any local initiative which has helped the bereaved in any way within the last 5 years you are eligible to enter for this award.

We know there are many enterprising cemeteries that go the extra mile to help bereaved families, for example: this may be simply offering a flower service or café within the cemetery or providing memorials for still born children.

To enter this category, you can write a short account (no more than 250 words) and explain your local enterprise, you can also submit up to three photographs to support your entry.

The winner will receive **£1,000 prize money** along with a BRAMM/CYA Gold Award Certificate and a CYA Press Release that can be used to promote your work, in your local newspaper.

Silver Awards Certificates will be presented to the runners up along with a BRAMM/CYA Press Releases to promote your work.

\*E. Is Your Cemetery up to Standard Quiz.

This is a simple survey for your cemetery, that will allow you to see where you are in providing a modern service for the bereaved. Please answer honestly yes or no, to the whole question. Your individual results will never be published, but the accumulative results will be shared with all participants. You can print your own survey and send it to your elected members, if you wish. The object is to highlight where your cemetery could be improved, and provide some best practice examples of how to achieve this, often at very little expense.

To enter this year CYA competition, simply go to – [www.cemeteryoftheyear.org.uk](http://www.cemeteryoftheyear.org.uk)

The Cemetery of the Year Awards Competition is designed not only to improve standards within Burial Grounds but also to encourage compliance with legislation and encourage best practice with information and support from leading burial authority organisations.



**The Cemetery of the Year Award 2023 has been supported and endorsed by**

- ✓ 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)

## thank you from SANDS



Sands is a national charity, delivering bereavement and wellbeing support, training, and resources directly in the heart of local communities and hospitals around the country.

We are thankful to each of you, as a member of the ICCM, who has supported Sands through the ICCM's Metal Recycling Scheme, and especially the local bereaved families who have made these donations possible.

We would especially like to thank the following teams for their most recent support in 2022:

- Bedford Crematorium
- Aberdeen Crematorium
- Worcester Crematorium
- Colwyn Bay Crematorium

"Members of the ICCM are so incredibly generous and support from you and the families who have made these donations possible means that we can continue investing into grassroot services. Grief following bereavement is a lifelong journey and we are determined that Sands' services remain in place for anyone, wherever they are, for as long as they need. We know that the past few years have been especially challenging, and we know that the increase in demand for mental wellbeing and specialist bereavement support has created additional pressures for our support teams. We are so thankful to you all for supporting Sands during these times and hope that together, we can continue serving our communities for years to come."

**Vicky Luk, Head of Partnerships & Philanthropy at Sands**

### Our Impact:

In 2021-2022, gifts from ICCM members have enabled us to increase our impact and support even more bereaved families:

- 2,043 calls were answered on the Sands National Helpline, a safe and confidential place for anyone who has been affected by the death of a baby, whether recently or long ago.
- 2,693 Memory Boxes were distributed to bereaved families, a special place for families to store meaningful items and helping to forge a parental bond that will endure long after saying goodbye.
- 25 research studies were supported on how the impact of the pandemic and changes to the health system have impacted expectant and bereaved families, supporting decision makers to quickly adapt care when and where needed.

To find out more about the difference you helped to make, read our latest impact report <https://spotlight.sands.org.uk/impact/>

### Spotlight on: Bedfordshire Sands

Bedfordshire Sands is one of Sands' local volunteer-led groups, running monthly support meetings for bereaved parents, working with local healthcare professionals to promote access to Sands' materials and training, and raising awareness in their community to help break the stigma and the silence about baby loss.

Recently, Bedfordshire Sands has been working with Luton & Dunstable University hospital to have soundproofed doors

added to their "Forget Me Not" bereavement suite. This is important as previously the room did not have a soundproof door which resulted in bereaved families using the room being able to hear the sounds from the corridor and adjacent rooms, which could cause further distress. They also built a small kitchenette area to enable families to have access to tea and coffee making facilities without having to leave the room.



There is also a beautiful Sands Memorial Garden within the Bedford Crematorium, opened in October of 2019 during Baby Loss Awareness Week. This is a special place for bereaved parents and families, somewhere they can go to remember and grieve their babies gone too soon. Along the winding path through the garden, trays have been installed where visitors can place pebbles to commemorate their babies.

### Upcoming events:

June is Sands Awareness Month, and each year Sands hosts a memorial service for all babies, helping families and individuals to find hope. We're excited to announce that our Sands Garden Day will be back but this year, we're adding to the event to make it a full day to bring the Sands Community together and to involve all of our supporters. Our 2023 event will take place at the National Memorial Arboretum in Alrewas, Staffordshire on Saturday 3 June. The day will also encompass lots of other workshops, family-friendly activities and a chance to learn a bit more about Sands and our different areas of work. Please join us if you are in the area or alternatively, keep an eye on our social media channels to find out how to get involved!

For support for you or a loved one, please visit <https://www.sands.org.uk/support-you>.

To find out more about how you can contribute to our vital work, please contact Isabella Snyder, Strategic Partnerships Manager.

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Telephone: 07570439018  
Sands: [www.sands.org.uk](http://www.sands.org.uk)

**Vicky Luc**  
Partnerships & Philanthropy Manager



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# ICCM PHOTOGRAPHIC COMPETITION 2023



Sponsored by EDGE IT Systems Ltd



If you have a photograph taken in a cemetery, crematorium, churchyard or natural burial ground you can enter it into the ICCM Photographic Competition 2023 for a chance to win the prestige of having it reproduced on the front cover of the Journal. The winner will also receive a £150.00 gift voucher.

This year there are two categories to enter:

1. *Best photo taken in a cemetery, crematorium, churchyard or natural burial ground.*
2. *Ian Quance best environmental photo, taken in a cemetery, crematorium, churchyard or natural burial ground.*

*The Ian Quance best environmental photo category has been added to honour the memory of our former ICCM President and friend.*

The ICCM Board of Directors will choose the winning entries. A selection of the images submitted will be shown at the ICCM Learning Convention and Exhibition 2023, and the winner will be announced there.

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

To enter please email a maximum of TWO unique, generic images per category (maximum 4 images in total) to Julie Dunk at [julie.dunk@iccm-uk.com](mailto:julie.dunk@iccm-uk.com) in **HIGH RESOLUTION jpeg** format. Please ensure that you specify which category each image is being entered into, and where the photograph was taken. Colour images will be converted by the ICCM to black and white for judging. The judges' decisions will be final.

**The closing date for entries is 30th July 2023.**

Copyright of all images submitted remains with the ICCM, who reserve the right to use them without further compensation, restriction on use, attribution or liability. Please address any enquiries to [enquiries@iccm-uk.com](mailto:enquiries@iccm-uk.com)

## environmental benefits

*In early 2022 the ICCM and affiliated organisations held a joint seminar on environmental matters. The profits for the seminar were shared out with the idea that they would be donated to a suitable environmental charity.*

There is an unfortunate issue with greenwashing (defined by [clientearth.org](https://www.clientearth.org) as - "Greenwashing is where a company uses advertising and public messaging to try to appear to be environmentally sustainable and green – greener than it really is. It's also a technique used by certain companies to distract consumers from the fact that their business model and activities actually do a lot of environmental harm and damage.")

So how do you manage to help organisations without being seen to be greenwashing? Well in some cases companies can make donations but can't discuss them. In other cases you can make awards and mention them to your members if you are a membership body but not attempt further promotion.

The latter directly applies to ICCM. We are a membership body accountable to our members. Therefore, we would want to be able to tell you what we're doing, why and the motivation, without seeming to be "Greenwashing".

### What

After some work to find a suitable cause, we were able to make a donation of £1,315 to the Woodland Trust in February 2023.

### Why

They fight to protect woods and trees, preventing the loss of irreplaceable habitat and carbon stores and preserving our natural heritage for the future.

They restore, bringing damaged ancient woods back to life, increasing landscape resilience for nature and people to thrive.

They create, expanding native woodland and creating tree-rich habitats to benefit nature, climate and people is at the heart of what they do.

They care, their people work every day to ensure the 1,000 woods in their care grow and thrive. They open up access to their woods free of charge and welcome thousands of visitors each year.

A great example of what they do and an environment they can create is at **Hedley Hall, Sunnyside** – handily not too far from my office. They also have a number of local created sculptures around the site to support tourism and local artists, similar to how you can support your sites and local artists.



## Motivation

ICCM has believed in green initiatives for many years - they are written into our management plan

### Environmental Initiatives

- Natural burial
- Recycling Metals
- Recycling Pacemakers
- Recycling of Floral Tributes
- Grave Reuse
- Holding Over Cremations
- Reduced cremator secondary chamber temperature
- Supporting abatement of crematoria
- Watching brief on emerging technologies
- Carbon Footprint Scheme (BCET)



They haven't just sprung up in the last few years but have built up over time to huge effect and at times contentiously being debated. The effects of them have saved money for some sites which has been a driver for change and more importantly have reduced waste, energy usage and therefore helped lessen some of the impact that the industry makes.

We can't change all behaviour overnight and we can't change the whole industry overnight. However, every little action we take helps along the way. If we can use profits to help another environmental aim via a charity then we're trying to help again.

Taking positive action and letting members know what and why we are doing it, backs up our own environmental agendas without simply trying to throw money at causes and saying – we're great aren't we.

- Every little step members do to assist us will in the long term help all of us.
- We're asking you if you want e-Journals to reduce paper - which is your choice.
- We don't send 1000's of paper newsletters out anymore, but emails and electronic postings.
- We encourage you to adopt our initiatives and promise to push them at the highest levels for change.

ICCM aim to make donations to environmental causes every year and all of our actions will speak as loudly as all of our words.

**Trevor Robson**

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

iccm branch secretaries, contact details

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## the journal

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### **Institute of Cemetery & Crematorium Management (Inc.)**

Registered Office:  
City of London Cemetery  
Aldersbrook Road  
London E12 5DQ

A Company Limited by Guarantee  
Founded 1913  
Incorporated 1958  
England & Wales Register Number 610299