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### Publication & Advertising

Julie Darroux  
T: 020 8989 4661  
Email: julie.darroux@iccm-uk.com

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## editorial

### *The importance of connection*

Welcome to the Winter Journal. I can't believe another year has gone! It is true what they say – the older you get the faster it goes!

Having spent the last few years distancing ourselves from each other, it is easy to fall into this pattern and making it our "new normal". Made even easier by the shift in working patterns where many people work from home on a permanent basis, are we in danger of losing our connections with others? Gone are the "water cooler" chats with our colleagues, or the polite chit chat with the local café owner on the way to work. For those of you that are not familiar with the term, if you look up "water cooler chat" you get explanations like

***"Water cooler chat, or water cooler talk, or water cooler conversation (whatever you want to call it), is what happens when colleagues take a break from work and socialise with each other. It's a chance to let everyone reset by talking about less stressful things, like hobbies and personal interests—fun topics not associated with work"***

With a vast majority of people switching to a virtual existence, these connections are lost. Often when you have a virtual meeting, you log on at the allotted time, discuss what is on the agenda and leave. No water cooler chat.

For me, there were a couple of events this year which really highlighted the importance of human contact. One was the Queen's funeral, the other was our first Learning Convention held in person after 3 years.

With a rise in popularity for direct cremations, it always worries me if families realise the potential long-term impact on opting not to have a funeral. Marketing slogans encourage the public not to "burden" your family with having to arrange a funeral or make a "fuss", not forgetting the significant expense. However, for many of us this is not actually a burden but the one last thing we can do for that person.

It was with great sadness that we saw the death of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II in September. However, what struck me was the visible outpouring of grief and the need for people to feel "part" of her funeral. It is estimated that over 250,000 people queued to see her coffin lying in state not to mention the millions of people who watched the funeral itself, either physically or virtually. The funeral inspired a sense of community, a shared experience, bringing together people of different backgrounds supporting each other. I believe this is true of most funeral experiences.

In September we held our first physical Learning Convention for 3 years. I can't express enough how good it was to reconnect with colleagues and friends – old and new (some of us just "older"! ) Of course, the papers and learning experience was a key part of convention but equally as important was the feeling of connecting with others again. Conversations over dinner or at the bar, or arguing over the answer to Blue's quiz questions, is how you really get to know a person, who they are, what is important to them, their sense of humour. Personally, some of my lifelong friendships have been made at events like these which have been invaluable. Also, I caught up with 3 years' worth of hugs which I truly missed!

Our day-to-day lives are busy. We spend our days balancing between endless meetings, school activities, and family responsibilities. On top of that, we try to squeeze in exercise and running errands.

This leaves us with no time to connect. Where we are raising awareness to take care of our mental health and living in a world of more virtual interactions than physical, human connection is now more important than ever.

I would like to take this opportunity to wish you all a happy Christmas and a happy New Year.

**Sofia Allana**  
Editor





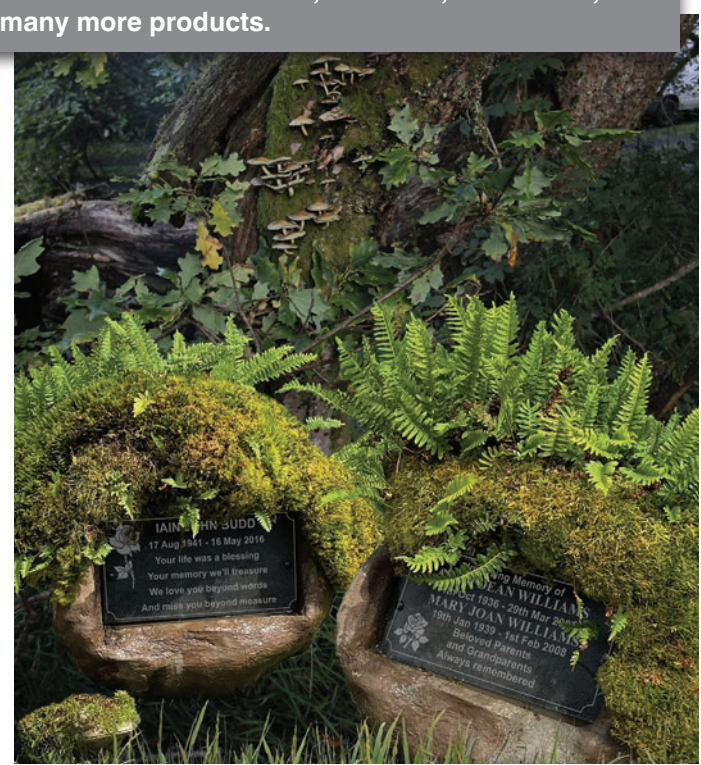
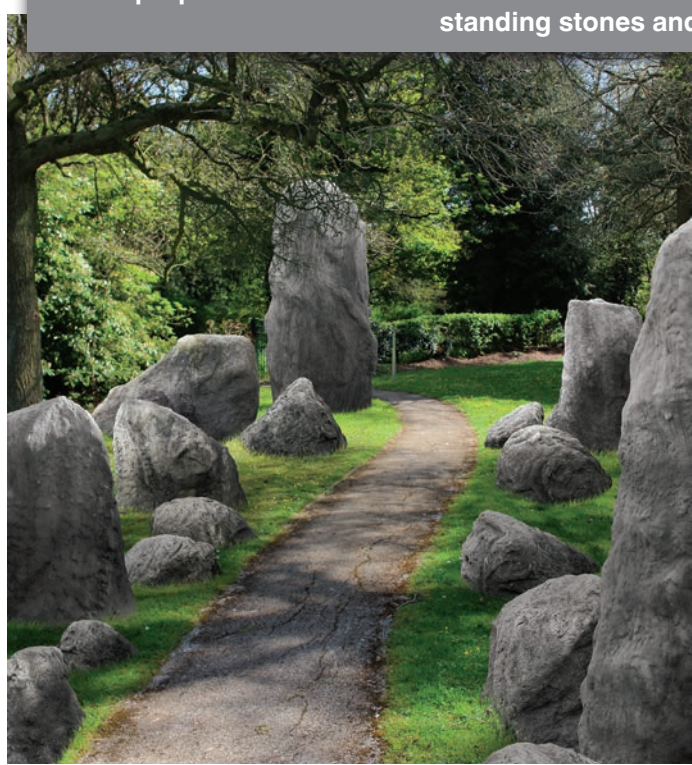
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## president's page

As I write this we head towards winter. So, I will take this opportunity to wish you a peaceful Christmas and New Year!! or as you are probably reading this in 2023, I hope you had a peaceful Christmas and New Year 😊

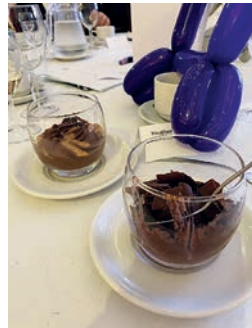
The cost-of-living crisis continues and as the colder weather approaches, it is very worrying for everyone, and I hope that you are all managing to cope during this difficult time. That lovely hot sunny weather back in the summer seems so long ago, let's hope it returns in summer 2023!

I have some lovely events coming up soon which I look forward to sharing my experience with you in my next page.



It was lovely to see so many of you at the Learning Convention at the end of September. I know how difficult it was for many of you to get away with most authorities in budgetary restrictions and only allowing essential spend. The Chesford Grange Hotel was a lovely venue, and we certainly received a wonderful service including plenty of delicious 'puddings'!!!

Oh okay, if you insist, let's take a look 😊



Ooops!! Is that two!!!

Well, we did have a spare seat at our table, and it would have been such a shame to waste it.

Here is another:-

Now this was really yummy!

I wanted to thank personally once again all those that took part in the "Charity Raffle" for my chosen charity Harlee's Angels. It is a charity very close to my heart, recently been set up by my daughter Fern and her husband Ryan in memory of my gorgeous grandson Harlee who passed away unexpectedly in June 2020.

They have started the charity after realising how difficult it is financially for families to cope following the sudden death of a child, and how lucky they were to have the support financially and emotionally from their family and wide circle of friends which others may not have. The charity offers assistance to the parents/guardians of a child up to the age of 17 who has died due to sudden death, accident or unexpected/undiagnosed illness. They can provide financial assistance to families including helping with household bills and groceries and assisting with providing counselling. It was lovely that the raffle raised a huge £1,315, with many attendees at the dinner winning some lovely prizes kindly donated by many of the wonderful suppliers who support our events.

I have the following statement to share with you:-

*Dear ICCM members and supporters,*

*We would like to express our sincere gratitude for the incredible donations to Harlee's Angels received from the raffle that you supported at your convention this year.*

*As a new charity looking to support as many families as possible your support is very much appreciated.*

*Thank you.*

*With our best wishes*

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





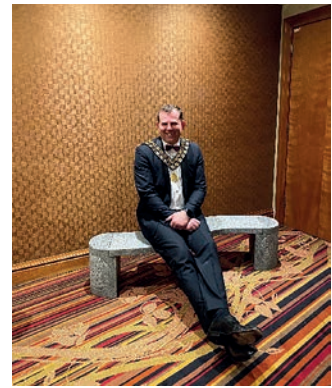
I think everyone had a good evening and Paul Stibbards, President of the British Institute of Funeral Directors (BIFD) was well excited to win first prize, a wonderful granite bench kindly donated by Anton Matthews, Stone Safe. Amazingly he managed to load it into his car and said he will be donating it on. I will keep you posted on its final destination as soon as I know where that is.

Here is Paul having a well-earned rest on his bench.

I could not believe the number of awards that were presented this year and I would once again like to congratulate everyone. It is a shame that Pearson have withdrawn their accreditation due to the relatively low numbers of students signing up for the HNC, however we are still actively considering other accreditation options and existing students are still able to continue to study until August 2023, so let's see more awards being presented at the 2023 Learning Convention! It would be lovely if every student left completed theirs to receive those much-deserved certificates.

At convention we each received a little ICCM "Forget-me-not" pot. I planted my seeds, and I was pleased to see that a couple of little tiny shoots had appeared. I found this little poem to share: -

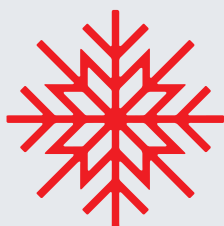
*Forget me not when I am gone  
Remember me but let life go on  
Life is a circle that we all must do  
It ends for us all it has to  
Remember me with laughter and love  
Be sure I will look down from above  
I will be there with you when life is tough  
I would not desert you when things are rough  
So forget me not because I love you so  
But be sure that I will never let you go  
I will be here forever just look and you will find  
I am everywhere in your heart and in your mind*



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

**Heather White,  
ICCM President**

**The ICCM Directors and Officers  
would like to  
wish you all Season's Greetings  
and best wishes  
for a happy and healthy 2023**



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## in touch



*Despite the shorter days, and darker mornings and evenings, things are looking pretty bright at the moment.*

After two years of lockdowns and restricted movements, it was great to be able to hold a physical Learning Convention and Exhibition in September this year. It was particularly good to be able to celebrate with those who won awards. The Cemetery of the Year Awards were held at the Learning Convention, and representatives from the authorities and companies that won or were highly commended were present to receive their much-deserved awards and their moment in the spotlight. Delegates were able to share in their delight in winning their awards. The ICCM Awards were held as part of the Learning Convention dinner, at which we welcomed guests from fraternal organisations. Awards from the last three years were presented, as it had not been possible to do this during the Covid-19 pandemic. Even when those who had won awards were not able to be present, their names were read out, a slide showing their achievement was projected on the large screen, and attendees gave a rousing round of applause.

I'd like to give my personal congratulations to everyone who was presented with an award at the Convention. It is so important to celebrate achievements and successes. Of course, all those involved in bereavement services deserve to be congratulated thoroughly and regularly, as they are unsung heroes (a phrase borrowed from Carole Henderson who gave one of the papers at the Learning Convention). Ours is generally a quiet profession, and those who choose to work in it don't do it for the praise. It is always good, however, to receive some positive feedback and to know that your work has helped to make dark times just that little bit brighter.

In the past two years I have attended the funerals of several ex-colleagues, friends, and family members. Some of the funerals were attended online, and some in person. Some were burials, some were cremations. All involved some form of ceremony, but each one was very different to the others, and very personal to the person who had died, and their family.

It is always difficult at a funeral to detach completely from professional mode. Even though I was there as a mourner, I couldn't help looking around at the premises; are they clean and tidy, do they need decorating, are the grounds well kept, are the staff suitably dressed and approachable, did the funeral go according to plan? I'm pleased to say that at the physical funerals I attended, everything was to a high standard with really good facilities and helpful staff. It was not quite as easy to tell this with the on-line funerals, but as far as I could tell everything was in order, and the funerals certainly went well.

Attending the funerals as a mourner rather than in a professional capacity was a useful reminder of the need to look at things from the other side. It is too easy to become overly familiar with our sites and get somewhat blind to things that may need improving. It is also easy to forget just how meaningful a funeral can be, especially when it is driven by the beliefs and desires of the deceased and their family rather than following a set formula. I recall when I first started working in bereavement services some 25 years ago that most of the funerals I was overseeing on a daily basis followed exactly the same pattern, often with the same favoured hymns of The Lord's My Shepherd and Abide With Me. I also remember attending the funeral of a close friend, of a similar age to me, and gaining no comfort from it as the service seemed so detached from who she was and didn't reflect her life or personality at all.

Fortunately, things have changed over the last 25 years, both technologically and within society. New technology has opened up a whole world of music, with systems now able to play just about any piece of music that is commercially available, or even something that has been home recorded by the deceased or their family or friends. Music can be really important within a funeral, as was evidenced at all of the physical funerals I have attended recently where each song was carefully chosen as it had particular relevance to the person being remembered. The personal nature of the songs provoked emotions amongst the mourners and helped curate a shared sense of mourning and remembering. Some of the songs made us cry, others made us laugh, but all made us think of the person we were there for.

Technology has also been useful in helping to inform people about their choices when it comes to a funeral. The internet contains a vast amount of information about the different options that people can choose. Those faced with arranging a funeral are therefore armed with more knowledge than was previously the case, and they are empowered to ask for what they want. My philosophy when I was running cemeteries and crematoria was to say yes to any requests, unless there was a legal, moral or health and safety reason not to. Holding a ceremony outdoors at the crematorium rather than in a chapel, having a string quartet play live at the funeral, having a bubble machine blow bubbles at the exit because the little girl whose funeral it was loved bubbles, were all perfectly reasonable requests to me. Ok, it may take a bit of effort to organise such things, but it was always well worth it to ensure that the funerals were personal and meaningful.

The same was true of the funerals I attended recently. All contained some elements that were 'out of the ordinary', but which were an essential part of making that funeral meaningful and special. In turn this has helped me, and hopefully the other mourners, to deal with our grief, knowing that the goodbye was a fitting tribute to the person we loved and cared about.

So, thank you to everyone who makes this happen for families on a daily basis. Never forget how important your work is.

**Julie Dunk**  
ICCM Chief Executive

# iccm learning convention and exhibition 2022



It was a pleasure to welcome our speakers to the first learning convention for 3 years. The speakers and their topics were:



*Heather White, ICCM President opened the convention and delivered the President's address.*



*Hidde Verberne & Trevor Robson - ICCM Orthometals Recycling Scheme*



*Richard Martin talked about The Lost Generation*



*Tremayne Carew- Pole spoke about simplifying the administrative burden after death*



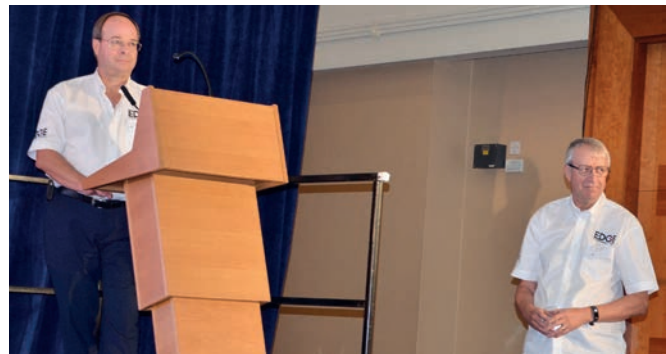
*Mohamed Omer MBE – talked about how the Muslim community coped during the pandemic*



*Sophie Scott's paper covered mental health & bereavement care*



*Vikki Entwistle spoke about The Care in Funerals Project which investigated experiences of funeral provision during the COVID-19 pandemic.*



*Chris Edge & Peter Linsell spoke about going paperless for future resilience*





*Carole Henderson – Harnessing Hidden Heroes covers the interactions and our connection to the bereaved*



*Simon Ferrar - Founder of Clandon Wood Nature Reserve talks about A New Landscape 10 years on*



*Yvonne Colverson of BRAMM*



*Phillip Potts & Brent Stevenson – Memorial Awareness Board and presentation of the Cemetery of the Year Awards*



*Anna-Louise Stubbings gave a moving talk on Believe organ donor support*



*Tim Viney talked about the Church of England project to survey and map every churchyard in England.*



*James Crossland explained why Australian crematoria are winning*



*Ian Hussein – To be or not to be in the disposal of the dead*

## Presidential address delivered by ICCM president to the ICCM Learning Convention and Exhibition 2022



*Back Together, Moving Forward.*

Good afternoon everyone and welcome to the 10th physical annual ICCM Learning Convention and Exhibition. Because of COVID we held our events in 2020 and 2021 virtually, and although not quite the same it was still lovely that so many of you could join us on-line. This year we have returned here to the lovely Chesford Grange Hotel, and I am sure you will all agree that this is a fantastic venue, and we have Julie Dunk, ICCM CEO and event organiser to thank for all her hard work in ensuring that all the delegates and exhibitors are able to get together in person once again.

As you are all aware we had the sad news of the death of Queen Elizabeth II on the afternoon of Thursday 8 September, Britain's longest serving monarch. Queen Elizabeth died peacefully at Balmoral in Scotland after 70 years on the throne outlasting all her predecessors. Two days before her death she welcomed in her 15th prime minister Liz Truss.

Our monarch is now King Charles III with the Queen Consort Camilla by his side, and I believe it is appropriate for me to say now - God Save the King. We will have a 1-minute silence in her memory during the AGM.

I have been able to attend a few more events this past year, I have tried to include photos in the Journal (usually pudding related).

In March me and my husband Codge were honoured to attend the SAIF (National Society of Allied & Independent Funeral Directors) Annual Banquet at the Dalmahoy Hotel and Country Club in Kirknewton in beautiful Edinburgh. The weekend marked the conclusion of Mark Porteous's presidential year, and he handed over the chain to Jo Parker in the induction ceremony on the Sunday morning. They always have a hilarious induction ceremony with a video of tasks and games they set up and commentary which made everyone laugh and obviously there was the delicious meal with chocolate and clementine tart, which, can you believe this ..... was way too sweet for me!!!

Later in the month I attended the joint one-day seminar run by the the Association of Private Crematoria and Cemeteries, the Cremation Society of Great Britain, the Federation of Burial and Cremation Authorities and obviously the ICCM held at the Stratford Manor Hotel. I arrived the afternoon before the seminar, and it was also lovely to meet up with old friends and colleagues again in person and to meet new associates and listen to their interesting stories. I again thank everyone for their valued company and to Peter Roper and Steve Telford for ensuring that our table had a lovely evening meal; although we had a very strange table service, with very weird portions, and I am not sure if we ever worked out what Blue had in his bowl!!

The seminar focused on environmental issues affecting the bereavement sector. I chaired the first session introducing Jon Cross, who is the managing director of Essenjay Associates and he spoke to us about the bereavement sector and climate change. It was very interesting, unfortunately Simon Holbrook had succumbed to Covid so was unable to provide the update to the crematoria guidance review, but the rest of the seminar went well with everyone getting involved in the round table discussions and further sessions with papers on changing fuel sources. Changing technologies covered the water cremation and precision organic dispersal, both very different methods of 'cremation' for the future. The seminar definitely gave everyone food for thought.

Because we have a very lively 2-year-old golden retriever called Barney it has meant that Codge has had to stay at home more to look after him, "father" and son bonding time and all that ..... so I have been taking my work colleague Claire and friend Mandy with me as my plus 1s.

So just after Easter I had the great pleasure of attending the British Institute of Embalmers Banquet with Claire. We went by several eventful train rides to Durham, catch up with me during your stay here and I can tell you how not to travel by underground!! The beautiful Ramside Hall Hotel was our final destination to welcome the new president Richard Van Nes and say goodbye to Bobby Hopkin-Hoggarth after she had completed her 2nd year as president. The banquet was wonderful, and I have to say that we had the most delicious pudding 😊 with three different yummy items on one plate – and obviously I ate as much as I could, be rude not to!! The charity raffle was a great success, and I actually won a prize! The following Sunday morning we attended an absolutely beautiful service where we listened to a wonderful singer and we had the opportunity to light a candle in memory of a loved one. As I am sure you can imagine it was very emotional for everyone who attended, and I have to say thank you to Claire for her quick-thinking trip to find tissues.

It was just two weeks later and there I was off again to attend the National Association of Funeral Directors president's banquet with my friend Mandy at the gorgeous Celtic Manor Resort in South Wales with its stunning views of the Usk Valley. We welcomed John Adams as the new president and said a fond farewell to Kate Edwards. Again, another great evening with delicious food and we danced to a fabulous live band called Soul Lotta Funk. We didn't win anything on the raffle this time, however I wasn't that concerned as one of the prizes was a large case of make-up ..... for the deceased!! But they did raise a huge amount of money for a worthy cause.



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Unfortunately, I was unable to attend the Cremation Society and FBCA annual banquet. It was at the Ageas Bowl in Southampton, a stone's throw from my home as well, but I know that Marian attended and had a wonderful time on my behalf, whilst I sat with my feet up recovering from my hip replacement, which as you can see, went well and I am hoping to be up on the dance floor later with you all 😊

I want to thank my husband Codge and my daughter Fern for looking after me since my op; without their support and Fern taking me out for some fresh-air I would not have been able to cope. It goes without saying that I want to add a huge thank you to my wonderful team at Southampton for keeping the service going whilst I have been away, well I did still dip in and out by email and phone, like you do!!!! Thank you again Julie for answering another one of my queries during that time.

It was wonderful for the board to be able to announce the latest round of the ICCM / OrthoMetals recycling of Metals Scheme for December 21 to July 22, which raised a huge £1,007,760 which went to 152 separate charities. Which has meant that a massive £15,026,200 has been donated to good causes since the scheme started which I am sure you will agree is amazing and I would like to thank you and all the families who have participated to make this happen. And just think I will be able to donate my replacement hip one day!!

Our ICCM officers continue to work extremely hard, especially over these past two-year answering all our questions, not only COVID related but keeping us up to date with the latest regulations and training opportunities and I am sure you will want to join me in thanking them for all their hard work and much valued support.

We have had a very challenging year so far, with the cost-of-living crisis and the growing pressures on families and businesses to pay ever increasing fuel bills which has had an impact on a rise in funeral poverty. Climate change has seen shifts in temperatures and weather patterns producing extreme weather conditions with high winds, causing trees to come down and taking roofs of houses, heatwaves bringing the introduction of hosepipe bans and flash flooding bringing devastation to many homes, it is something that effects each one of us.

This year's theme is Back Together, Moving Forward. This reflects on the fact that this is the first time we have met physically for an ICCM convention since COVID, and that we want to encourage everyone to keep improving the services we offer for the benefit of bereaved people.

As usual we have an excellent range of papers and presentations for you all to attend with Q & A sessions which I encourage you all to join in with as no question is a stupid one and you can bet that someone else wants to know the same answer. If you see anyone new or anyone sat on their own, invite them to join you as we are all a

friendly bunch aren't we 😊

Don't forget to visit all the exhibition stands whilst you are here, the exhibitors attendance ensures that the convention continues to be a great success, they have some really great ideas to help our services and I would like to thank each of them for their valued support. And let's be honest who doesn't love a freebee pen!!

We have our dinner and quiz tonight. It's always a great evening and a good opportunity to meet up socially with old and new colleagues. But no cheating please!!

Tomorrow evening is the ICCM Awards, dinner and disco. During the evening we will be holding a raffle for the President's chosen charity, which is Harlee's Angels, a charity very close to my heart. Many of you will know that we lost my gorgeous grandson Harlee unexpectedly in June 2020 and my daughter and son-in-law have started this charity to help families financially who have lost a child due to a sudden death. We have lots of lovely prizes, most donated very generously by our exhibitors, for which I would like to take this opportunity once again to thank them. There will be an envelope on your table if you wish to take part and donate to this good cause. We will be joined by the presidents and representatives from kindred organisations, so please make them welcome, they are a wonderful group and are always happy to discuss their different associations and I would like to thank them for the hospitality and friendship they have shown to me when I have attended their dinners. I am personally looking forward, as you know, to the pudding .... Seriously though, it will be an absolutely brilliant evening. But be careful as the camera is always there to catch your every move!!

Please remember that this is your event, and any feedback is greatly appreciated and is essential to ensure that we continue to deliver consistently high standards to you, our members. Please complete any feedback forms and let us know what you have enjoyed and what else you think we can do to make the event even better.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the ICCM officers and my fellow Directors for all their help and support over these past years. My employer Southampton City Council, including my service lead and team leaders, and all the staff at Southampton's bereavement services who have supported and encouraged me throughout the year. I would also like to say a huge thank you to my husband Codge and again Claire, with me again at this convention and my friend Mandy who have accompanied me to events, and lastly to you, the members, for allowing me the privilege of being your president for the past 3 years! I hope that I haven't bored you rigid with my president's page in the Journals.

As normal I would like to leave you with this poem, you may have already heard it, but I thought it would be fitting to read it to you, as any many of the words are very poignant for anyone who has lost a loved one: -



**It's called Together again:**

Phillip came to me today,  
and said it was time to go.  
I looked at him and smiled,  
as I whispered that "I know"

I then turned and looked behind me,  
and seen I was asleep.  
All my Family were around me,  
and I could hear them weep.

I gently touched each shoulder,  
with Phillip by my side.  
Then I turned away and walked,  
with My Angel guide.

Phillip held my hand,  
as he led the way,  
to a world where Kings and Queens,  
are Monarch's every day.

I was given a crown to wear  
or a Halo known by some.  
The difference is up here,  
they are worn by everyone.

I felt a sense of peace,  
my reign had seen its end.  
70 years I had served my Country,  
as the people's friend.

Thank you for the years,  
for all your time and love.  
Now I am one of two again,  
in our Palace up above.

Thank you everyone for listening and please enjoy the  
convention.

**Heather White**  
**ICCM President**

## tales of a cemetery registrar

### Inspiration

Who is it that inspires you?  
Is it the great explorers of the world?  
the athletes conquering the Olympics  
those artists that display in the museums  
or maybe the medics pioneering new treatments.  
When you take a minute to look a little closer – Just maybe it is  
The widow in mourning yet managed a smile  
a relative that braved the crowd to speak at a funeral  
The parent that loved you through all ups and downs  
A child that raises money for charity, or just  
The postman who braves the weather in shorts  
The friend that calls for a brew and a chat  
The colleague that stayed working though feeling down.  
Be inspired in your every day, for there is a little bit of them in you.  
You are inspiring to others. Others see it - so should you.

**By Anita Fish**

## iccm awards 2022



At the ICCM award ceremony held at the Learning Convention and Exhibition 2022 at the Chesford Grange Hotel, the following awards were presented:

### Fellowships

At the AGM it was announced that the Board had awarded a Fellowship to a very worthy recipient. Fellowships are awarded by the Board of Directors to those members who have performed any service which, in the opinion of the Board, has been of outstanding importance to the Institute.

This person was nominated by his former boss and seconded by our own Chair of the Board of Directors for his outstanding work in South Wales. His list of achievements is very long, but a few highlights are that he won employee of the year for Customer Care at his employing authority; he personally mentored and got through their Cremator Technician's Training Scheme 7 members of his team to provide resilience during the pandemic; and he is an active member of the ICCM South West and South Wales Branch where he goes out of his way to help newly appointed people to the profession. I'm delighted to announce that the Board of Directors has awarded a Fellowship to Lyndon Elsey of Swansea Council. Unfortunately, Lyndon couldn't be there in person to receive his award, but Martin Birch collected it on his behalf.

The Board awarded Fellowships in 2020 and 2021, but the recipients were unable to receive their awards in person at that time. These were presented to them at the Learning Convention this year.

In 2021, Dave Jennings of Trafford Council was awarded a Fellowship for his services to the Association of Greater Manchester Authorities and to the ICCM North West Branch, particularly in supporting his colleagues during the pandemic.

In 2020, Mat Crawley was awarded a Fellowship for his services to the ICCM, particularly for his work on the Crematorium Technician's Training Scheme during the pandemic.



*David Jennings collecting his fellowship*



*Mathew Crawley collecting his fellowship*



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### Significant Contribution Award

This year the Board decided to make awards to two people for significant contributions they had made within their bereavement services role.

The first person has worked in bereavement services for over 30 years, during which time he has put bereaved people at the heart of taking the service forward. He has appeared in documentaries about how he and his team manage public health funerals, and also appeared on television to explain how bereaved parents can trace babies that were lost many years ago and were buried in public graves. Despite this media interest he is very modest but epitomises what a good bereavement services manager should be – kind, caring and determined to help bereaved families. The first significant contribution award was presented to Mike Gurney of Tameside Metropolitan Borough Council.



The second person to receive a significant contribution award showed great innovation and care during the pandemic. She introduced outside services at her crematorium, which was praised by the Inspector of Crematoria for Scotland as contributing to saving many lives. She defended crematoria when the Archbishop of Canterbury criticised them in the press in the early days of the pandemic. She has won businessperson of the year in her local area, and her crematorium is considered to be a centre of excellence, having scored 100% compliance at her FBCA inspection. The second significant contribution was awarded to Ruth Jardine of Roucan Loch Crematorium and Woodland Burial Site.



### Blue Audio Visual Best Exhibition Stand Award

The Blue Audio Visual Best Exhibition Stand Award 2022, as voted for by the Convention delegates was awarded to the Columbaria Company.

*Pictured – Blue Donnebaer with Peter Roper*



### The Columbaria Fortnum & Mason Hamper Prize

The Columbaria Company kindly held a prize draw for an opportunity for delegates to win a fantastic Fortnum & Mason Hamper. All delegates had to do was to write their mobile number on a piece of paper and place it in the prize draw box. The only condition was they must be present at the announcement at the closing of Convention to receive their prize. At the end of the Learning Convention Blue picked a random number from the draw and, over the loudspeakers, dialled the number to see whose mobile would ring. The lucky winner was Kevin Watkins.





Cremation & Incineration Equipment



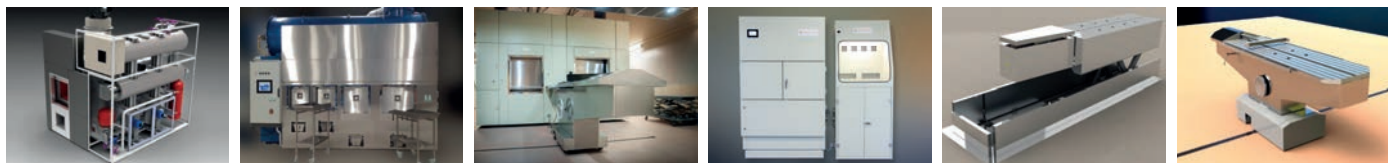
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## Stage 3

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## Stage 4

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## Jon Patrick Luby : an obituary

Born 21st January 1946. Died 27th August 2022. A much-loved husband, father, grandfather, cousin, brother, colleague and friend.

Jon was always great company, a true character. A man who loved life and lived it to the full. His laughter and good humour will be remembered by everyone who ever met him but he also had a more serious side and a career of which he was rightfully proud.

Jon started work at Shrewsbury cemetery and crematorium in 1963 where his qualities were soon recognised, and he was encouraged to join the Institute of Burial and Cremation Administration. Jon enjoyed meeting fellow cemetery and crematorium colleagues at branch meetings, and he had soon built up a network of friends within the region and beyond. Jon studied hard and gained his IBCA Diploma which enabled him to successfully apply for more senior positions and his career saw him take on the roles of superintendent and registrar of cemeteries and crematoria at Epsom, Altrincham, Stockport and the City of London. Whilst at Stockport Jon worked closely with Leslie Leonard, a talented combustion engineer on the development of the Newton cremator which was in time installed at many crematoria across the UK and abroad.



Jon was closely associated with the development of SANDS – the Stillborn and Neonatal Death charity which continues to support thousands of parents every year on the death of their child. A lasting legacy.

Jon became very involved with the Federation of British Cremation Authorities and was for some years its secretary, a job he took on in addition to his day job with enthusiasm. Jon's knowledge of the sector was widely recognised, and he was over the years invited by a number of international organisations to deliver papers on cemetery and crematoria practice in many parts of the world including Australia and America. Jon was also an IBCA tutor and looked forward to the tutorials held for many years at Pendral Hall where he kept everyone thoroughly entertained after the serious work was over for the day.

In retirement Jon was contacted by a number of fellow professionals on a regular basis seeking his advice and often practical assistance on cemetery and crematoria operation. In particular, Jon was consulted about cremator design and installation. As an examiner for the Cremator Technicians Training Scheme, over the course of many years Jon readily adapted to the computerised operation of cremators but always believed that operators should understand the basic principles of the cremation process and not be solely reliant on technology.

Jon fully understood that cemeteries and crematoria are not just workplaces for the disposal of the dead but an essential part of the grieving process for bereaved parents, families and friends. His great legacy is that both his compassion and professionalism gave comfort and closure to many thousands of people.

**Alan José**

## Nikki Dowsett : an obituary

The ICCM is sad to hear of the death of Nikki Dowsett, Manager and Registrar of Thanet Crematorium.

Nikki died on 7th September 2022 aged 57.

As Nikki was a private person, her family have requested that only minimal details are published.

She will be sadly missed.

# learning convention 2022 - dinner and disco





## iccm diploma recipients 2022



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

The successful Diploma holders were announced at this year's Learning Convention. Unfortunately, not all students were able to attend the presentations in person, but all were given a well-deserved round of applause.

This year the ICCM's Diploma was achieved by 4 people. Congratulations to:

- Andrew Lawson of Hartlepool Borough Council
- Christopher Black of Mintlyn Crematorium
- Claire Freston of Highgate Cemetery
- Oliver Thompson of the Lincolnshire Cooperative Ltd

In 2021, the effects of the Covid pandemic meant many students were unable to carry out their studies. Only one person managed to achieve their Diploma in 2021, and that person was Kevin Watkins of Southend-on-Sea City Council, who was present to receive his certificate.



In 2020, one person managed to complete their Diploma, and 7 completed their Diploma with Honours. One was also awarded a prestigious Eickhoff medal for completing their Diploma in under 3 years and achieving distinctions for each unit – quite an achievement.

The person who achieved their Diploma was Sharon Smith of Maidstone Borough Council.

The person who achieved their Diploma with Honours and to receive the Eickhoff Medal was Catherine Averill of Respects Bereavement Services. The Eickhoff medal, named after ICCM President George Eickhoff, is awarded to those who show exceptional qualities in their studies.

The students who achieved their Diploma with Honours in 2020 were

Yvonne Scott of the Shetland Islands Council, Deborah Balsden of West Lindsey Town Council, Mathew Crawley of the ICCM, Peter Haley of Allerdale Borough Council, Catherine Linfield of the Westerleigh Group (award collected by Alan Jose on her behalf), Tracy Morris of Hereford Council.





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

## "learning never ends"

### My education & progression within the bereavement sector

In 2013 I started working at South Lincolnshire crematorium when I was 19 years old as a crematorium technician. Within a year I had completed my CTTS and then moved onto the CTTS Advanced course. This is what gave me my grounding in other areas of the crematorium, other than the crematory.

In 2020 my role changed to senior cremator technician, where I found myself managing operations in the crematory and becoming responsible for mentoring/training new cremator technicians that came into the role either temporarily or permanently. At this point I started my ICCM Diploma where my knowledge grew, and I learned about legislation and managing both crematoria and cemeteries. This was especially important for me because it gave me the chance to learn about different aspects of working in the bereavement sector and I had the chance to meet some inspiring people who would later go on to provide invaluable knowledge to help me through my units.

I completed my diploma in 2021 where I managed to gain it with honours. 2022 has brought a major change for my working life, when I was lucky enough to be promoted to assistant manager - the work of writing assignments and visiting other local crematoria / cemeteries had paid off. My role now is quite varied, but I am pleased to be able to use my knowledge gained in the Diploma to assist bereaved families in our area and beyond.

I plan to soon start the CMDA (Chartered Manager Degree Apprenticeship) which will hopefully push me further into the unknown and help me develop myself further as a manager.

For me, it was the ICCM Diploma that really inspired me to want to do more and to take my career further within this sector. The tutors on all modules are helpful, understanding, and inspiring – a big thank you to everyone. My advice to anyone who is offered to take the Diploma is to do it. You won't regret it!



**Oliver Thompson**



## iccm recycling of metals scheme



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



*The bereavement services care team of Wellingborough Bereavement Services Ltd, (based at Nene Valley crematorium) are feeling grateful to the ICCM for selecting the following two charities to receive significant monetary donations. It is always overwhelming to hear and see how emotionally appreciative people involved in working with the charities become, when receiving these donations.*

*The team at Nene Valley crematorium serves the community of Wellingborough, and beyond. Manager for the crematorium, Tracy Lawrence, said: "I am old enough to remember a time when this scheme didn't exist, but cannot imagine it not being available now, and note recently how much these donations have increased in value. Therefore, the knowledge of the schemes continued success delights us with how it goes from strength to strength that subsequently provides a feeling of self-worth, for all involved - we feel privileged and extremely proud, for the small part we play with being able to nominate local charities to receive donations that supports a variety of crucial bereavement related work. A huge well deserved 'shout out' to the ICCM for making this happen - **THANK YOU**".*



Tracy Lawrence (left) from the crematorium and Keith Brown, volunteer (right).

### West Northamptonshire Air Ambulance (WNAA)

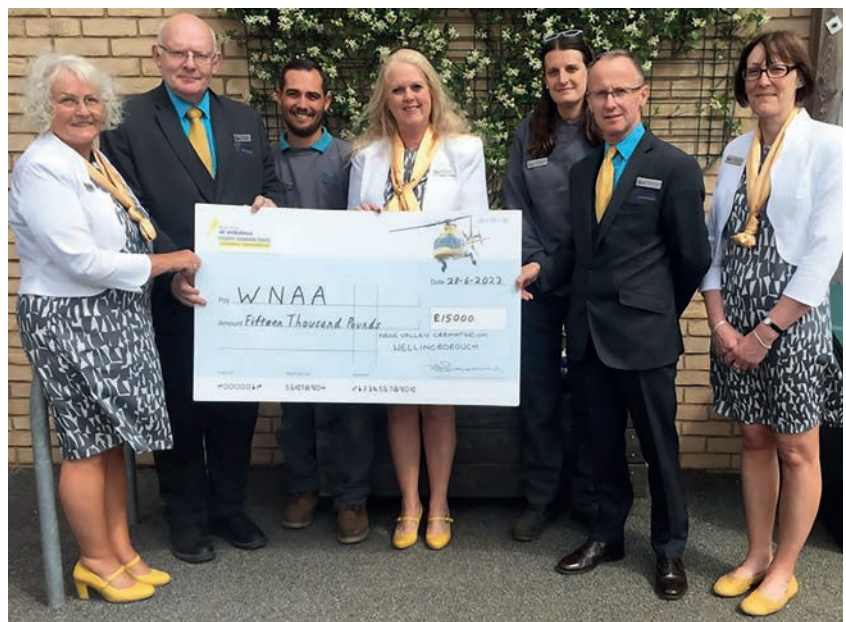
A cheque for £15,000 was presented on Tuesday 28 June 2022, by the manager, Tracy Lawrence, (on behalf of the Company's Chair for the Board of Directors, Councillor Paul Bell) to Keith Brown, a volunteer representing the WNAA, who provide lifesaving services - 'There but for the grace of God, go I'. The raised funds have already supported eight missions for this crucial Air Ambulance service.

Since the opening of the crematorium on 19 September 2016, the team have nominated 5 local charities that have collectively benefitted from £38,000 because of the recycling scheme.

Councillor Paul Bell said: "It's privilege to give this donation on behalf of Nene Valley crematorium to Air Ambulance services, who provide an emergency service to people of Northamptonshire".

WNAA's Fund-raiser Executive, Ethan Hopkinson, commented:

"The support of our local communities is so important to our charity as we receive no government funding and rely solely on generous donations like these to remain operational. Each potentially lifesaving mission costs £1,700. So, on behalf of the charity, I'd like to say a huge thank you to the wonderful Nene Valley crematorium, which has helped fund over eight missions - our crews are available, 24/7, 365 days a year, and vital support like this means we can continue to deliver our lifesaving, frontline critical care to those who need it most across Northamptonshire."



Pictured: Bereavement Services Care Team (Crematorium). Left to right, KATHLEEN Walker, Events and Memorials Assistant, PHILL Castree, Operations Assistant, CAMERON Menzies, Gardener, TRACY Lawrence, Manager, FERN Seagermills, Head Gardener, RICHARD Porter, Operations Manager, and ALISON Hall, Business Assistant.

## We Mind and Kelly Matters

A cheque for £12,000 was presented on Tuesday 11 October 2022 by Councillor Paul Bell, to Katie Macdonald, Community and Engagement Coordinator, representing the 'We Mind and Kelly Matters' charity, who provide a variety of services related to suicide. These funds will support bereavement support for those bereaved by suicide and suffering with their mental health.

*"As Chairman of Nene crematorium, it's honour to present the cheque for £12,000 to 'We mind and Kelly Matters', a local based charity, and in remembering Kelly who lived locally".*

I have a personal interest in mental wellness and support for bereaved people's grief. Therefore, listening with much interest at the ICCM's recent Learning Convention, to the presentations given by Carole Henderson and Sophie Scott, about the amazing work happening in their field of expertise. Myself having just refreshed my own grief specialist qualification via Carole's excellent training programme, which I highly recommend. For those of you that couldn't attend Convention, Carole can be contacted via [www.edu-therapy.uk](http://www.edu-therapy.uk). This website is well worth a look to help us all plan how we can initially ensure that we look after ourselves, before we provide care for those we serve. And once our own wellness is taken care of, a foundation to build upon naturally happens, that we have found at Nene Valley, builds confidence to provide the excellent services we provide when caring for bereaved people. And from Sophie's candid sharing of information, I am also interested to learn more about how The Westerleigh Group plan to roll out the looking after their team members – excellent 'trailblazers'. Alan Jose, we need to talk 😊 We can all make a difference, so from a TEAM approach, I say – Together Everyone Achieves More.

We Mind and Kelly Matters is a new charity, created in 2019 that is based in Wellingborough, Northamptonshire. A legacy for the late Kelly Hewitt who struggled with her mental health, suffering a short period of anxiety and depression – Kelly took her own life on 18 December 2018, with the funeral happening at Nene Valley Crematorium. The charity's mission is to help as many people as possible and particularly children with their mental health, to prevent suicide. Several initiatives have been developed that led to the creation of MASK – Mental-health Awareness Suicide prevention in Kelly's memory. MASK offers hope to others through education, intervention, support, and training.

The message from this charity locally, and nationally more widespread now, is to:

1. Take personal responsibility for looking after family, friends, and colleagues, who may be suffering, (generally in silence) given the known stigma still associated with mental health, particularly with the word **'suicide' – listening, (really listening) and kind words, may be all it takes to save a life!**
2. Utilise a technique of asking, are you ok? And being prepared to ask a second time – are you really, ok? Particularly at the end of the conversation, when the response to the first question is a typical, **'I'm fine'**.
3. Practice the use of this technique with several friends, and from experience it is guaranteed that you will find out something you didn't know from one of those friends **"Be the heroes your friends need" - Roman Kemp 2022.**
4. Be aware that generally those people that appear to be happy, life is being so good for them, and act out as the 'live and soul' of a party, are known to be the ones struggling inside - needing to talk, but that's the last thing they want to do, finding this hard. **They may just be wearing a mask.**

Sherry Adams, CEO of We Mind & Kelly Matters said: "We would like to thank the team at Nene Valley Crematorium, for their significant donation of £12,000 raised in conjunction with the ICCM Recycling of Metals Scheme. It seems appropriate that money which has been raised through the goodwill of bereaved families should be used to support some of those very families. Through this donation, we can continue to provide free bereavement support to those affected by suicide".

We may not know who is suffering, so "In a world where you can be anything, BE KIND" - Caroline Flack December 2019. We know what happened shortly after this comment – the very sad and untimely death of Caroline on 15 February 2020 😊

**Tracy Lawrence**  
**Manager and Registrar for Wellingborough Bereavement Service Limited. (Nene Valley Crematorium)**



*Left to right, Sam Whitlock, Events and Memorials Assistant, Richard Porter, Phill Castree, Business Support, Councillor Paul Bell, Alison Hall, Julie Carter, Assistant Manager, Katie Macdonald, Fern Seagermills, Tracy Lawrence, and Cameron Menzies.*



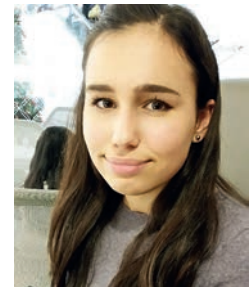
## Mortlake Crematorium - The Natasha Allergy Research Foundation

This year, Mortlake crematorium, run by superintendent Natasha Bradshaw in West London, chose The Natasha Allergy Research Foundation as its 2022 charity of the year and donated a gift of £12,000.

The charity was borne out of tragedy when in 2016 Natasha Ednan-Laperouse, just 15 years old died after eating a baguette sandwich bought from a sandwich chain at Heathrow Terminal 5 before boarding a British Airways plane. Sesame seeds which she was allergic to, had been baked into the dough of the bread and weren't invisible to the naked eye. Neither were they listed on the ingredients label, and she died in a hospital in Nice later that day.

### Natasha Ednan-Laperouse

At the inquest, the coroner's verdict stated the legal loophole in the food-law was being misused by food businesses. It meant that there was no legal requirement for allergen information on the baguette packaging and that Natasha had been reassured by that. Had the ingredient label listed sesame seeds, she would be alive today. Natasha's parents, Nadim and Tanya campaigned tirelessly for full-ingredient labelling and Natasha's Law came into full-force last October 2021. The law provides vital information to help families with food allergies be able to make safe choices when buying pre-packed food; it is life-saving information.



Today the charity, is a voice for people and families who are struggling to navigate their lives around food allergies. There are currently 2 to 3 million people with diagnosed food allergies and at least one food allergic child in every classroom across the UK. The numbers are increasing at an alarming rate and yet science still doesn't understand why. The charity helps families who contact them daily as they struggle with very real dangers to their health and well-being. Natasha's parents from Fulham in SW London felt very isolated as parents to an allergic child and they are determined to change this for families today. They speak at conferences and seminars across the UK, educating and raising allergy awareness for organisations, businesses and employees on the importance of being allergy inclusive and how it is possible to achieve this.

Medical research into food allergies has to date been woefully underfunded and in May this year The Natasha Allergy Research Foundation funded the launch of a ground-breaking clinical trial to focus on children and young people with milk and peanut allergies in a new ground-breaking £2.2m oral immunotherapy trial.

The study aims to plug the current Oral Immunotherapy (OIT) research gap by proving that everyday foods instead of expensive pharmaceutical drugs can be used as a practical treatment. If it's successful, it will empower the NHS to provide cost-effective treatments and the more cost effective they are, the greater opportunity to treat more people in the country with food allergies.

Nadim and Tanya also support bereaved families who have lost children to food allergies. As well as attending inquests, they offer help, whether practical or emotional, wherever and whenever it may be needed. Earlier this year they were awarded OBE's. They said,

"We have dedicated our OBEs to Natasha and every single soul that has been lost to allergies. We also dedicate them to everyone who has this condition and their loved ones who worry for them every single day.

### Tanya and Nadim

If you would like to know more about the work of Natasha's Foundation and how you too can make a positive difference to those living with food allergies, you can sign up to receive a monthly newsletter outlining the work of the foundation here. <https://www.narf.org.uk/natashas-army>. To donate, visit: <https://www.narf.org.uk/donate>. Or to find ways to fundraise for the foundation please visit here <https://www.narf.org.uk/support-us>

If you enjoy learning, sharing and community through social media, the charity has high engagement on its Instagram and Facebook channels and can also be found on twitter and LinkedIn. The Natasha Allergy Research Foundation \*FB, @Natashasfoundation \*Instagram, @Natashaslegacy \*twitter



The £12,000 donation came from a national scheme. Metals that remain after the cremation process are collected and recycled. "With the families' permission, metal supports – such as hip replacements, metal knees, pins that have pieced people back together after an accident – can be recycled; enabling us to donate much-needed funds to charity," explained Natasha. "This is an annual process and we're so glad to be able to share it with many amazing charities."

The Natasha Allergy Research Foundation is humbled and grateful to Mortlake Crematorium for the nomination and gift.

### Milton Keynes Council

Milton Keynes Council has stepped in to ensure a children's hospice for babies and children is receiving a £12,000 boost thanks to a national scheme which recycles metal left behind after cremations.

Oxfordshire-based Helen & Douglas House helps families in Milton Keynes and the surrounding areas cope with the challenges of looking after a terminally ill baby or child. The charity provides round the clock care at their hospice in Oxford and at home for local children and their families.

Only when a bereaved family gives permission, the Council works with the ICCM (The Institute of Cemetery and Cremation Management) to raise funds from the sale of metals recovered after cremations at Crownhill Crematorium. The metals come from items such as medical implants and artificial joints.

MK Council has nominated Helen & Douglas House to be the latest recipient of funding raised through the scheme. It has donated more than £46,000 to local charities through metal recycling since 2014.

"We would like to say a huge thank you the Milton Keynes Council for donation £12,000 to Helen & Douglas House. This money will make a huge difference to the lives of local children like Toby from Milton Keynes, who we care for at the hospice and at home. This donation will enable us to help families like Toby's cope with caring for a child with a life shortening condition and support them when their child has died through this difficult time. This would not be possible without amazing people like Milton Keynes Council."

Clare Periton, CEO at Helen & Douglas House

"The local charities we help have told us how useful these donations have been to their important work. We couldn't participate in the scheme if it wasn't for the kindness of the bereaved families who give us their permission. This funding is shared in the memory of their loved ones, with our heartfelt gratitude."

*Council Leader Pete Marland*

### Redditch Council

A charity that provides support to bereaved children in North Worcestershire received £12,000 after being nominated for funding by Redditch crematorium.

Touchstones Child Bereavement Support was nominated as part of the ICCM's (Institute of Cemetery and Crematorium Management) metal recycling scheme.

The money will be used for Touchstones to support bereaved children in areas such as Redditch, Bromsgrove, Wythall, Rubery and Hagley.

The charity delivers a free support programme for people between five and 21 and their families.

They also advise families and schools on how to support children through bereavement, including pre-schoolers. They also offer advice to schools if there is a sudden death within the community and offer training packages that are tailored to each of their needs.

Touchstone's bereavement support director Vicki Quarton said: "Working with bereaved children and young people is a huge privilege, and we are so grateful for this amazing grant award and will use every penny to continue supporting grieving children and young people across the whole of Redditch and Bromsgrove."

Council leader Coun Matt Dormer added: "Grief is difficult for an adult to process, but for a child, it can have such a significant impact on their mental wellbeing."

"It is comforting to know that Touchstones will be able to continue supporting children and young people as a result of this funding."

### Sefton

A big thank you to Sefton crematorium and cemetery department for their very generous donation of £12,000 from their metal recycling scheme.

Mike Parr, our Chief Executive, was delighted to welcome David Clay to the hospice, and to express our thanks for the donation.





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Technical Support: 01273 204 646  
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# exhibitors 2022 gallery









## iccm learning convention and exhibition 2022 – thanks

Thank you to all attended the Convention and made it such a success. We received some very positive feedback and are grateful to all who supported the event.

Here are some of the comments we received about this year's event:

*Sophie Scott – “I really enjoyed my time at the conference, it was a brilliant opportunity to make new connections from various areas of the industry. The exhibitors did a fantastic job of showcasing their services and products and it was fantastic to see all the new advancements in the sector.”*

*Oliver Hadley – “This being my first ICCM conference I was genuinely pleased to see colleagues within the industry, whilst all in varying levels of their respective businesses/organisations, treated equally with a sense of genuine intrigue of the best way to move forward. It was fantastic to be able to put faces to names that I had not yet met, but to also catch up with people that I already knew to share ideas and experiences with them. The atmosphere was very positive, relaxed and friendly but I always felt the distinct impression that everyone was there for a shared goal – learning and development for not only themselves but to also take the information learned back to their industries for the benefit of the services provided, and therefore the people we serve. It truly had the feeling that the industry serving the bereaved was indeed moving forwards together, something which I feel very proud to be a part of.”*

Particular thanks go to the exhibitors and their much appreciated support and for showcasing their products and services as well as donating prizes for both the quiz and Harlee's Angels raffle: -

Ashes Register/Scattering Ashes, ASSETTRAC Ltd, Canfly Marketing, Clare Shaw Children's Books, Clear Skies/Agile Applications Group, EDGE IT Systems Limited, Estate Research, Facultatieve Technologies Ltd, FG Marshall Ltd, Fibrous Funeral Supplies, Finders International, Gedenk-Bomen VOF, Gem Precast/Greenacre Innovations Ltd, Gower Consultants & Deceased Online, Granart, Greenbridge Designs/SAMM Software Solutions, Hoopers International Genealogists, IFZW Maintenance Ltd, Lyn Oakes Ltd, Matthews Environmental Solutions, Obitus, OpusXenta, OrthoMetals, Pear Technology Services Ltd, PJ Combustion Solutions Ltd, PlotBox, SafeMemorials (Frontline Mobile Solutions Ltd), Stone-Safe Stability System, Teleshore Group, The CDS Group, The Columbaria Company, The MazWell Group Ltd, Welters Organisation Worldwide, Wesley Media.

Thanks too to all the speakers for sharing their knowledge with us and to the session chairs for keeping everything in order and to time – Heather White, Marian Millington, Martin Birch, Kevin Pilkington, Linda Barker, Alan Jose.

Thanks to the guests of the fraternal organisations for joining us at the Convention Dinner and Disco.

Thanks to Julie Dunk, Marian Millington and Sofia Allana for their photographs of the event.

Thanks to the ICCM Officers for their contribution in assisting with organising the event.

## bramm memorial design award 2022/23

# BRAMM

IMPROVING STANDARDS

The **free** to enter National competition gives Memorial Masons the opportunity to showcase their work in this category of the Cemetery of the Year Awards.

The winner of this year's British Register of Accredited Memorial Masons (BRAMM) sponsored 'Memorial Design Award' is Scott Taylor from Wareham, who collected a £1000 cash prize as well as a Gold Winner's Certificate and press release to advertise his achievement.

There were also 2 Highly Commended Silver and 9 Silver award winners in this year's competition.

The winning Memorial was marked on its Innovation, Personalisation and Originality by a team of Memorial Masons and Burial Authority Association representatives from BRAMM and the Cemetery of the Year (CYA) committee.

Scott Taylor has been a mason for over 40 years and specialised in banker work, carving and sculpture. The advent of imported memorials necessitated a switch to building masonry. He still has a love of the craft, but does not enjoy sitting in front of a sandblast cabinet, so has done very little in the way of memorial work in the last 15 years or so. Scott believes the environmental cost of a memorial is worthy of consideration and the use of our native materials can provide alternatives, but this requires encouragement from the Burial Authorities, such as reduced fees for using local materials.

The winning design utilised Purbeck Stone without the constraint of having to adhere to the rigid dimensions of a standard size memorial. The basis of the design was a 'river washed natural boulder' which gives the dimensional freedom to utilise the available material.

BRAMM congratulate Scott and all of the winners of the BRAMM Design 2022/2023



**Stonemasons of Worcester**  
Silver Highly Commended



**Craig Price Monuments**  
Silver Highly Commended





## cemetery of the year award winners 2022-23



CYA is growing every year and this year's competition attracted more entrants than ever before, with improvements in standards and facilities being implemented by many of them. The competition is designed to support compliance with legislation and encourage best practice with information and help from leading Burial Authority Organisations.

The finalists are the highest scoring Cemeteries in their respective categories with Gold Award and Silver Award winners. Each category is sponsored by the Memorial Awareness Board (MAB) with £1000 prize money going to the Gold Award winners. Certificates are awarded to both Gold and Silver Award winners.

This year's CYA presentation was at the Institute of Cemetery and Crematorium Management (ICCM) Conference in September where the following Cemeteries received their prizes.

### Natural Burial Ground:

**Shared/Gold:** Clandon Wood Nature Reserve and Natural Burial Ground.

**Shared/Gold:** Old Park Meadow Natural Burial Ground.

**Silver:** Hay Meadow Burial Ground.

### Parish Town and Community Council Burial Ground:

**Gold:** Forest Row Cemetery.

**Silver:** Syston and District Cemetery.

**Silver:** Cyngor Cymuned Llanrug Cemetery.

### Small/Medium Burial Grounds up to 1000 graves.

**Gold:** Tipton Cemetery.

**Silver:** Memoria North Hertfordshire.

**Silver:** Bluebell Cemetery.

### Large Burial Grounds:

**Gold:** Thornhill Cemetery.

**Silver:** Philips Park Cemetery.

**Silver:** St Helens Cemetery.

### The Cemetery of the Year Awards are 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)



## the columabria company queen's mosaic

The brief from the managers was simple:

"We'd like you to create something really special, something that makes people stop in their tracks and go Wow! Something memorable, that no-one else could do. Okay?", "Err... yeah... okay"

It was early 2022 and we were meeting to discuss upcoming exhibitions. The creative think-tank, two of us, were there to pitch ideas. "Anything else?", "can you make it topical, an anniversary or something "

That was the easy part, the nation was preparing for the Platinum Jubilee, and an extra bank holiday, that's cause for celebration.

After much head-scratching we came up with an idea that had potential. We employ twenty memorial artists in three different departments, and we felt it important that all of them should participate. We'd decided that Cecil Beaton's coronation portrait was an iconic photograph, why not divide it into twenty segments then ask each artist to interpret their assigned square using their own choice of methods to emphasise individuality.



We knew it would be big, 12" squares making it 5' high by 4' wide, but no-one would know what the finished article looked like. It would definitely be interesting, but it could be an embarrassment!

The response from 'the twenty' was excitement mixed with a hint of trepidation. The levels of experience ranged from those with decades to those with a couple of months, but overall, they thought it a great opportunity to be involved in a challenging project which would be a change from their day-to-day work whilst utilising the skills they'd learned (or, in some cases, were about to learn!)



*Each of the twenty squares was painted by a different artist*

There are several ways to make your mark on polished granite. Heavy sandblasting can produce a deep carved effect (this is risky because each tile is only 10mm thick!) whereas light blasting produces a soft shaded finish. Fine detail and texture can be added with engraving tools. Each artist could decide which technique, or combination of techniques, would best suit their section of the image. Finally, various methods of painting could be practiced, and, in some cases, embellishing with gold leaf and diamantés.

The sad news of Her Majesty's death came just days before the big reveal. It left us unsure whether to exhibit the portrait at all, would it be seen as in poor taste? We thought it best to have a look at the result before coming to a decision.

When the time came to view the fruition of the project, everyone involved was utterly transfixed. It was an incredibly emotive moment. All felt a huge swell of pride at being part of a remarkable and fitting tribute to the life of our Queen.

It's since been to three exhibitions, and I'm reliably informed, people stopped in their tracks and went Wow! Others commented that it was really special and memorable. The local BBC news heard about it and came to film and interview at our workshops. They aired an extremely complimentary segment on the evening news programme. This provided a wonderful opportunity for friends and families to see how we'd been busying ourselves.

What next? We don't know yet, but we'll keep you posted.

Thanks to 'The Twenty'

Jonathan Seymour  
Paul Wtorkowski  
Sandra Davison  
Richard Newbould

Gary Bogg  
Megan Clough  
Alison Appleton  
Andrew Cawthorne

Amy Hales  
Ivor Robson  
Alan Clough  
Chris Deeth

James Lamb  
Geoff Millington  
Dan Barker  
Paul Spamer

Luke Kilvington  
Ron Mansell  
Suzanna Biesek  
Darren Brodie

**Alan Clough**  
Creative Designer, The Columabria Company





# CEMETERY SAFETY

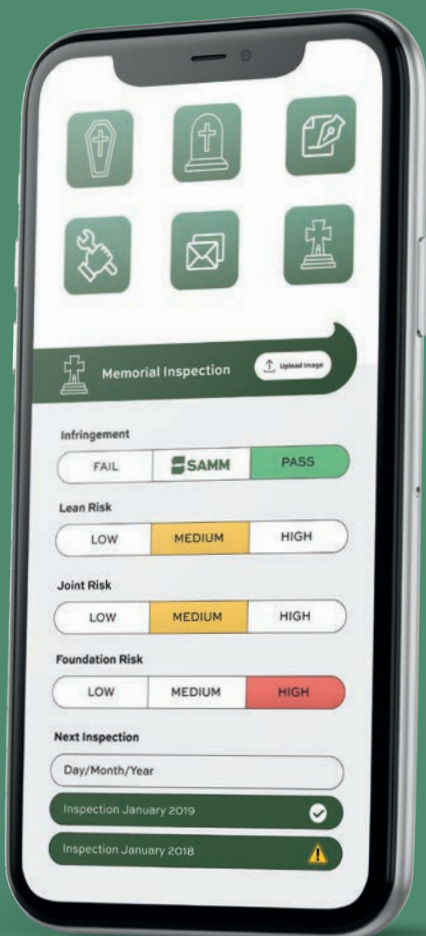
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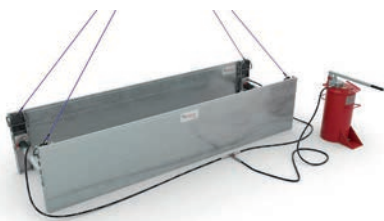
# DON'T LEAVE GRAVE SAFETY TO CHANCE - ACT NOW

Every year people are killed or seriously injured by excavation collapse. The HSE has increased its expectations of safety measures when working in and around excavations - don't let yourself be on the wrong side of the law.

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## new research from funeral solution expert on cremated remains

*Ashes: from changing consumer behaviour to solutions for damaged crematoria grounds*

Cremated ashes have for a century played an important role in the grief, funerary processes and ongoing memorialisation of a loved one. But with so many consumer behaviours and trends changing, we wanted to check in on current views as to how important they still are, what meaning they hold, what families are doing with them, and also how environmental considerations may shape their use.

A recent survey by Funeral Solution Expert (FSE), an independent research and consultancy business, took the views of 1,500 UK adults. Simon Cox, a recognised funeral sector expert and Director of FSE, shares the headlines for us:

Having been researching and working in the end-of-life sector for a little over 35 years now, working for many different companies and also more recently as an independent consultant, it's fair to say that there has been more rapid change in consumer behaviour in the past few years than in much of the previous four decades. Whether that be the rise of 'celebration of life' trends or the rapid ascent of direct cremation fuelled further by the recent pandemic.

Through other FSE insight work we are also aware of just how rapidly consumer attitudes are changing in respect of environmental considerations. Not just wanting to see the industry make positive changes for the greater good but also recognising that they cannot be reliant on others and will make more environmentally conscious choices themselves. The rise of the 'dark green' consumer is not to be under-estimated; those who will put the environment at the heart of all their purchase decisions.

The headlines of our recent ashes research may not be too surprising to many in the industry but none the less are direct from consumers. The findings have potential implications for crematorium owners in respect of sustainable grounds management and also of opportunities to build customer engagement and ongoing revenue streams.

### How meaningful are ashes?

The vast majority of us (over 80%) involved in arranging a cremation say ashes are meaningful in some way or are very important. Less than 20% say ashes are unimportant and "just ashes".

With approximately 2.7kg of ash created from each cremation process and 79% of UK deaths (669,000 in 2021) resulting in cremation, the UK produces around 1.4 million Kilo mountains of ash each year.

The fact that our recent insight tells us 61% have no awareness at all that cremated ashes can be harmful for the environment will lead to future conflict given 79% of consumers also say they'd prefer a more environmentally friendly funeral.

Crematoria owner operators on the other hand will be alive to the issues that come with over-scattering of ashes on grounds that are expensive to maintain.

Also from that insight work we know that more environmentally friendly coffins came top of the positive changes they'd like to see from the funeral sector as well as greener vehicles and more efficient cremation processes.

Consumers also have some emerging awareness and positive reception for more environmentally friendly body disposal methods altogether.

### Ashes are ashes – just scatter or inter

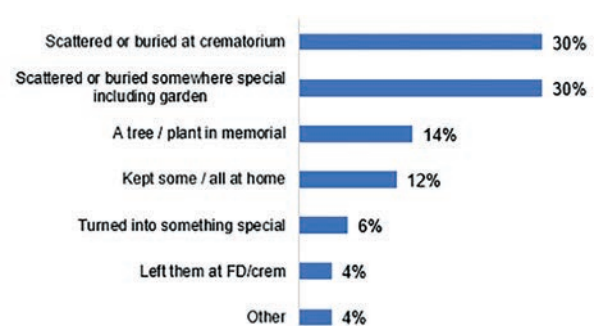
Crematoria owners, along with funeral directors, don't need to be told funerals have evolved, with consumer behaviour changing rapidly in almost every aspect of funerary tradition.

Change is also evident in what we do with mortal remains, with more personal, environmental, and portable solutions increasingly available. Scattering or interring at the crematorium might still be the most popular destination – but perhaps not for much longer.

It's certainly not the most pressing question at the time of arranging a funeral, but there are clear signs consumers want more choice and control over what happens to ashes.

### What are consumers doing now?

The most common outcome for cremated remains is still to bury or scatter at a crematorium with 30% (over 150,000 families) doing this each year, and to a certain extent we expect this is as much to do with Funeral Director routine than consumer choice.





Almost as many survey participants want ashes returned so they can have a final goodbye in a place that was special. Maybe a favourite river, beach or walk. Perhaps linked to greater environmental considerations; burying ashes and planting a living memorial (tree or plant) is growing in popularity with 14% (around 75,000 families) choosing this route.

Just over 1 in 10 (11%) kept ashes at home. Of these most just feel like they want them close for the time being with the remainder aiming to do something with them in the future. With the reality being that many of these may just end up keeping them on the side, in a cupboard or even up in the loft at home.

As we observed at the National Funeral Exhibition this year, an increasing number of firms (such as Hand On Heart Jewellery, Remembrance Glass and Scattering Ashes) offer solutions to convert ashes into 'something special' - which can be personal, portable and permanent. While still at relatively low levels (just over 6%) we expect this upward trend to continue and perhaps accelerate as 'celebration of life' trends overtake more traditional views and practices.

Finally, some 4% still leave ashes uncollected in funeral director homes or crematoria. While this is a small number, we suspect the true volume of unclaimed ashes in the UK is likely to be staggering and perhaps worthy of an 'Ashes Amnesty Day'.

### Consumers are looking for more choice and control

In reality, when grief is at its most raw during the funeral arrangement process, families are mostly focused on the immediate funeral arrangements at hand and likely prefer to make a decision about the ashes after the funeral. Without really understanding available options, the bereaved often default to burial or scattering at the crematorium. While this may be simple and convenient our evidence suggests many of the 150,000+ who do this would consider something more meaningful.

Hence, forward-thinking funeral directors and crematorium owners are giving more choice and control to consumers by suggesting a return of ashes and signposting more meaningful, sustainable options. Whether scattering in a memorable place, planting a living memorial, or turning them into something special.

Planting or scattering ashes at crematoria is also not without environmental issue. Private and local authority crematorium owners realise their grounds and plants often suffer from the long-term negative impacts on root structures caused by high Sodium and pH levels in cremated remains.

This can often be seen in failing areas of grass, trees and shrubs and can be a particular concern when those were 'living memorials' planted by loved ones who expect to return and see them flourishing.

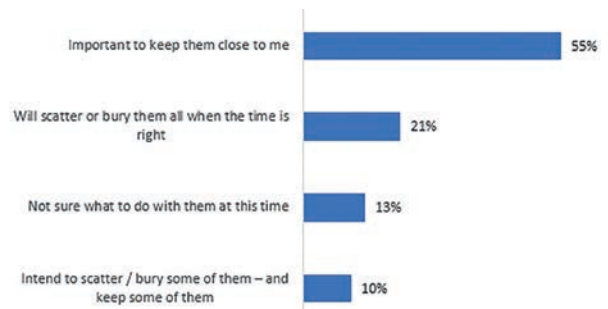
### Environmental considerations of plant memorials

Planted memorials are increasingly popular - but no one wants them to fail whether in a crematorium, a special place or their own garden. Or to feel like they are doing more damage to our fragile environment.

A solution to this issue exists in the form of an organic soil blend which balances the negative effects of cremated remains (high sodium and pH levels) and encourages plant growth. This soil blend, developed by Living Memorial (a Nottinghamshire based company), is gaining popularity amongst increasingly environmentally aware consumers and gaining traction with crematoria owners seeking to mitigate or reinvigorate damaged grounds.

This is just another example of where changing consumer attitudes, allied to greater choice (what is possible with ashes) will lead to dramatic further change in the coming years.

In summary: Changing consumer behaviour provides funeral directors and crematoria owners with many different challenges, and while ashes may be of lower priority - offering more meaningful and sustainable solutions which can be guided and fulfilled means a happier customer and ultimately more reward. There is little doubt that with 80% of us feeling real connection with our departed loved ones through their 'ashes', we will increasingly seek more considered and special use.



**Simon Cox**  
Director, Funeral Solution Expert Ltd



Development in Progress – March 2021

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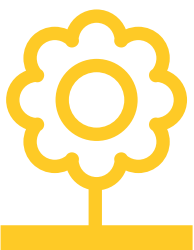
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### Cemetery Technicians Training Scheme January 2022 – March 2022

Alistair Thompson  
Christopher Hutchings  
Jonathan Brush  
Laura Clarehugh  
Nicol Hall  
Philip Haslop  
Scott Clare

### Crematorium Technicians Training Scheme July 2022 – September 2022

Anthony Bent  
Christine Holsgrove  
Clare Browne  
Clinton Sealey  
Dominic Mann  
Jay Lawson  
John Ratcliffe  
Lynsey Finnie  
Paul Evans  
Sharon Breen  
Simon Whitfield  
Carley Brockhurst  
James Thomas  
James Banville

**Congratulations to everyone who achieved CTTS qualifications in the last two quarters.**

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

Adur& Worthing Council, Belfast Council, Buckinghamshire Council, Cheshire West Council, Cornwall Council, Gloucester Council, Hambleton Council, Horizon Cremation, Huntingdon Town Council, North East Surrey Council, Northumbrian Woodland Burial & Cremation, Pure Cremation, Respect Bereavement Services, Rushcliffe Council, Stafford Council, Stoke Council



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



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## my first convention experience



Being relatively new to the cemetery management world (18 months in) I was extremely apprehensive about attending such an event where I would know only a handful of people and most of them only by sight! However I should not have had any such reservations, from the moment I was welcomed by Trevor on the ICCM desk – everyone was more than friendly!

Held at the easily accessible Chesford Grange – not even the early start and long drive detracted from the atmosphere. With a bustling exhibition to explore and a busy programme of papers (as well as social events) the days flew by with opportunities to network engrained within!

Upon arrival a chance to explore the exhibition gave real food for thought about how I could deliver more to those I work with and improve the services we provide already.

Each paper provided insight into working practices, models of working and ideas that until seen may never have been considered. From listening to the success of the ICCM Metal Recycling Scheme to new developments in the recording of where cremated remains have been scattered led to an insightful day one.

Followed up by dinner and Blue's famous quiz rounded off a wonderful evening. And if you haven't been to a Blue quiz before – be prepared for laughs, head scratching, heckles and more laughs. It certainly was memorable and a nice way to top off the evening.

Tuesday began with a wonderful hearty breakfast - followed by one of what I found to be the most interesting talks from Mohamed Omer on how the COVID pandemic hit the Muslim community which he works so hard for. Having recently undertaken a lot of work on this within my own cemeteries it was really interesting to hear his perspective on this and further my own understanding of the requirements and how these can be sensitively handled at such an important time.

Again throughout the day it was an excellent opportunity to network with other local council officers, private sector colleagues as well as the wide range of suppliers at the exhibition! I certainly learnt an awful lot from these informal exchanges and was able to ask those questions that sometimes only someone doing the same job knows what you mean.

The day continued with more papers and a chance to discuss on tables our thoughts on topics and how they all impact our services in different ways. Culminating in an afternoon of Cemetery of the Year awards set the tone for people to freshen up, change and prepare themselves the ICCM awards, dinner and disco!

It was magnificent to see people attending the dinner in a smart but what you feel comfortable in approach. Opting myself for jeans and blazer I was on the more causal end but certainly didn't feel out of place among the dinner jackets and ball gowns which were shown off!

It was heart-warming to watch so many professionals be awarded their qualifications and have their successes celebrated – picturing myself there hopefully when all my studies are completed! Once dinner was out of the way – the disco ensued and people celebrated the night away – I opted for the quieter bar side drinks which was just as enjoyable in my opinion but the night certainly had something for everyone.

As we all awoke on the final morning – some more bleary eyed than others – a final round up of papers kept us all entertained. It was really interesting to hear about Australian Crematoria – the similarities and differences – providing real tangible ideas in how moving forward we could follow in their footsteps of creating lasting natural legacy in the places where we bury or cremate.

Overall the convention was a wonderful learning and networking experience – new to the industry or more seasoned – I would whole heartedly recommend it to anyone. I came away with new insights into the sector, new professional contacts and a sense that in all the struggles I face I certainly wasn't alone!

**Josh McLeod**  
South Lakeland District Council

## the iccm learning convention and exhibition 2022



Well, that was worth waiting for wasn't it? Those of you who were unable to make the Convention this year, you don't know what you missed! I must admit, even before the COVID pandemic stopped the convention from going ahead, it has been a few years that I, and I know many others, have been unable to attend due to the financial situation all our local authorities and organisations are facing. It made me realise just what a privilege it was in being able to network and socialise with peers and exhibitors in person rather than on a laptop screen via Zoom.

I actually thought I had made lots of new friends and contacts during conversations over the few days away..... until it dawned on me that it was the same people I have known for years but they had all just aged throughout the pandemic such was the stress and pressure we were all under. That also includes me too as several people asked me how long I have been retired now!!! Wouldn't mind but I'm only 26!

Thanks have got to go to Julie Dunk for the tireless work she does in ensuring everything goes to perfection. I even saw her putting table cloths out and setting the tables for the wonderful meal we were all served, on top of everything else. Thanks too to all the Board of Directors for their commitment and work in ensuring a professional, well delivered and relevant Convention went ahead. Thanks too go to Blue and his team for ensuring all the technical aspects of the Convention were delivered superbly.... not to mention the brilliant, legendary quiz (we wuz robbed!).

What did I get from the Convention?

- Some fascinating inspirational speakers. I was blown away by the presentation from Simon Ferrar from the Clandon Wood Nature Reserve and Natural Burial Ground. Amazing opportunities and choice being provided for the bereaved and indeed the whole community in that area.
- The thought-provoking talk from Vicki Entwistle of the University of Aberdeen on Considering Care in Funerals.
- The very timely presentation from Sophie Scott of the Westerleigh Group on Supporting mental health, particularly after what we, and the bereaved mainly, have had to cope with during the last 2 years.
- No one could fail to be touched either by the incredible courage of Anna Louise and her moving, eloquent journey of the Believe charity and how that continues to touch lives.
- Ian Hussien never lets us down either and gave us all 'food for thought' with his 'To Be or Not to Be a Business in the Disposal of the Dead.' Controversial as ever, but a great issue for debate and this ignited lots of questions from the floor which is always a good thing. Even after over 40 years in the business, I am still in awe of some of the new ideas from the exhibitors and have made contact, since the Convention, with many of them to look at improving the death management process and the customer journey for those we have the huge responsibility to look after during their time of loss.
- Every single speaker including those not mentioned were first class.



The last evening was superb with the wonderful meal provided for us and dancing the night away until the early hours. For those who saw Peter Roper on the dance floor, who said you're passed it at 70.

Think Pete was last man standing.

A great few days, many new friends made, a shared vision and an understanding of what we all go through every day in our own workplaces, oh..... and that little award I also brought home with me!!

Thank you.

See you all next year hopefully.

**Mike Gurney**  
Head of Service - Tameside Council



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## iccm photographic competition 2022

The ICCM Photographic Competition was kindly sponsored by EDGE IT Systems in memory of our ex-President and much missed friend, Ian Quance. This annual competition is designed to encourage members to take photos of cemeteries and crematoria that can be used on the cover of The Journal. The standard this year was exceptionally high, and the Board of Directors had a really difficult job in choosing their favourite.

The Board of Directors decided that five of the photographs should be awarded a highly commended, but that one was the outright winner.

*The winner of the ICCM Photographic Competition 2022 is David Lodge of Cornwall Council for his photo taken in Talley Cemetery, Cornwall. Unfortunately, David couldn't attend the convention, but his award was collected by his colleague, Graham Broadbent.*



*The first highly commended award went to Helen Touray of Brighton and Hove City Council for her photo taken in Brighton Cemetery.*



*The second highly commended award went to Iain Lynch of Farnham Town Council for his photo taken in West Street Cemetery.*



*The third highly commended award went to John Fletcher of Adur and Worthing Council for his photo of foxes playing.*



*The fourth highly commended award went to Peter Charman of Epping Upland Town Council for his photo taken in Epping Cemetery.*

*The fifth highly commended award went to Anita Fish of Wyre Borough Council for her photo taken in Preesall Cemetery.*



**Congratulations to everyone and thank you to all those who entered.**



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## in touch - up north



*Hello, good day and welcome.*

Occasionally inspirational thought comes along and then turns into something you think, yeah that'll be sensible to write about and then sometimes life just steamrollers in on top of it.

8th September 2022  
25th June 2009  
31st August 1997

Three dates for you and also three deaths that show just how much technology/society and our desire to view/share/associate with deaths have changed in 25 years.



Image: Sky News

The passing of Queen Elizabeth II on the 8th September this year, saw an estimated peak of 37.5 million people (BBC source) watch her funeral over all media platforms. We also know from government data that about 250,000 people saw her physically lying-in state and the BBC suggests that 25 million streams were made by people virtually watching the event. Considering the huge decline in physical viewing of programmes, the choices now available and people's disassociation with engaging on a single thing, the figures are staggering.

It may have been the King crying, it might have been the horse and the corgis or just some other aspect of the day, but many of us felt something as the occasion passed even though we weren't physically there.

So, watching a Royal funeral on TV is part of who we are by those figures and the majority accept or certainly wanted to be involved with it.

It's strange, therefore, to think of the issues with streaming funerals before lockdown.

In our current post/ongoing COVID world the idea of streaming a funeral you cannot get to is accepted, because we want to pay our respects and we've gone through the terrible period when we couldn't all physically go to them.

Virtual engagement, online memorials, books of condolence and posting on people's social media platforms have well and truly come of age for all. Yet, there are probably a lot of technology companies and others out there, that were scratching their heads about the resistance to change when years earlier we'd all sat and watched a funeral on the TV.

Even stranger, it wasn't a loved ones' funeral, or even someone we really knew, but it appeared that a great many of us felt a duty to watch it.

So why did it take a pandemic of being forced from our routine to accept that we can engage differently in our loss and grief for our own benefit, then to make sure we were part of something else?

The third date of 31st August 1997 was the death of Diana the former princess of Wales, which the BFI lists as having had an audience of 32.1 million people.

Over 25 years, Meta, Twitter and social media hadn't been born. Streaming of shows and smart phones, all things that didn't exist in August 1997. On that day, millions watched the event and we engaged remotely. You couldn't stream a funeral in 1997, you probably wouldn't even find that definition to stream in a dictionary then, but we accepted watching the event.

The outpouring of grief and tributes at Buckingham Palace and other residences in 1997 and 2022 was very similar, the



Source Metro news paper

throwing of flowers to the hearse and yet the interaction allowed in 2022 is so much more. We could and did watch the lying-in state of the monarch, there was coverage of all the news that had or hadn't happened on the day and everything afterwards.

We could feel sorry for Liz Truss (*note this piece was written on 19th October 2022*) on having not been in a job for a week and then having to perform Prime Ministers duties that no living Prime Minister had had to – all in the glare of the world of our connected society.

In a generation we've adopted social media grief and mourning, through necessity we allowed our habits to change to things we could accept for the "elite" of funerals and work out that they were for everyone. Had the technology existed 25 years ago, it would beggar belief how the world and media would have covered the events of 1997.

All of which brings me to the second date. 25th June 2009 – now I know what I was doing when the event happened, but couldn't remember exactly the date, before thinking about it, however, it was death that showed the change of technology and our relationship to media. I think it was the first time that a celebrity's passing played out on live TV, a news broadcast of their house, correspondents and experts commentating on the news. The accidentally gloriousness of someone saying – well that's the tour cancelled – an amazingly understatement of the obvious.

It also had people commentating on social media (which did exist then) on the news, grieving expressing feelings and everything playing out in real time, which is I suppose now the accepted normal way for these things.

All personal attitudes and views aside of the individual, it was a turning point in our relationship to technology and how the world views things – everyone has their view, thought the world should hear it and could try and make the world hear it.

The second date was when Michael Jackson died.

**Trevor Robson**  
ICCM Finance and IT Manager

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

iccm branch secretaries, contact details

### **Northern: Graham Harrison**

Email: [Graham.Harrison@durham.gov.uk](mailto:Graham.Harrison@durham.gov.uk)  
T: 03000 265 606

### **Eastern: Tracy Lawrence**

Email: [TLawrence@nenevalleycrematorium.co.uk](mailto:TLawrence@nenevalleycrematorium.co.uk)  
T: 01933 229 660 or 07904 457 372

### **South East: Heather White**

Email: [heather.white@southampton.gov.uk](mailto:heather.white@southampton.gov.uk)  
T: 023 8076 6405

### **Midlands and Mid Wales: Michael Birkinshaw**

Email: [bereavement@bromsgroveandredditch.gov.uk](mailto:bereavement@bromsgroveandredditch.gov.uk)  
T: 01527 62174

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## Have You Got Something Interesting to Share?

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Have you introduced any environmental initiatives?

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

Have you held any virtual events?

Are you doing something that others should know about?

Why not write an article for the journal?

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

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

Please contact Sofia Allana on [sofia.allana@iccm-uk.com](mailto:sofia.allana@iccm-uk.com) or phone 07502 627521

## personal safety training in bereavement services

### *Who would have thought eh?*

Who would have thought back in June when we were celebrating the Platinum Jubilee of HM Queen Elizabeth that three months later we would be saying our final goodbye's at her funeral and welcoming a new King?

Who would have thought that at the start of 2020, we would be going into a pandemic where streets, town and cities would be deserted, and millions of people worldwide would die because of the COVID 19 infection? That people would have to work from home for many months or years, (my wife is still not happy I was working from home and hates the fact we now have 25 people buried in the back garden 😊) and many people having to use Zoom and Teams to communicate.

Who would have thought that in cemeteries and crematoria we would have to put security on our gates and chapels due to the unacceptable behaviour from families when trying to insist and demand that more people than the 10, 20 or whatever figure each site had risk assessed to be safe, should be allowed to attend their relative's funeral.

We all, in the unique service we try to manage, fully understand and empathise with all those families that lost someone, whether through pandemic or otherwise, and particularly whilst the many restrictions were in place. We all know and accept that part of grieving is anger and understand people can be very irrational when going through what is clearly one of the hardest times in their lives. As professionals though, we all allow that 'space' for families to be understandably angry and to be frustrated and we always take their stress and emotional turmoil into account.

At one of our regular Greater Manchester networking meetings (AGMA Cemetery Managers), the topic of violence and aggression within our sector came up in conversation and the stories that then unfolded were frankly shocking and very concerning.

Threats of physical violence being made to both cemetery and crematoria operatives on site, to registrars and office staff, verbal abuse being directed at staff whilst trying to carry out their duties, both in person and on the telephone, and stories of staff being stalked on social media on private accounts with inflammatory comments being made against individuals are not now uncommon.

There were even situations where shootings and stabbings had taken place at some cemeteries amongst mourners, clearly highlighting huge risks for staff in those situations. I also heard that there was an incident where a cemetery officer suffered brain damage because of an attack whilst trying to get mourners to follow the guidelines during COVID.

Whilst many local authorities and organisations have a zero-tolerance policy in place, this does not actually mean anything when the abuse is happening at that moment in time. Yes, we can call the police, but how quick would that response be? Yes, we can give the police the details of the family causing the problem, but we still have to work on site and deal with those families. Many of us live locally to where we work and I, for one, have had people knocking on my door with complaints about the cemetery. Scary and alarming.

Comments like:

- *"I know where you live and you had better watch out"*
- *"You had better not be here in the next hour as I am sending my brothers round to sort you out"*
- *"If you don't move that soil box from where it is, every window in your office will be put through"*
- *"I have told my family not to come round to your house now and batter you but won't hesitate to give them the go ahead if I don't get what I want"*

Not acceptable in anyway and should not be ignored. Must be reported to your health & safety team and to the police as a threat.

Issues like:

- A soil box on a grave being completely dismantled and destroyed by an individual and then the cemetery operatives having road pins thrown at them like javelins during a physical attack.
- A family asking for a waste bin to be emptied from near to their grave and because it wasn't done that day, bringing the bin into the office and tipping all the contents over the office floor whilst giving verbal threats to staff.
- Staff being threatened with their lives when attempting to take unofficial flags and flag poles off graves due to many complaints from other mourners.
- Bricks and bottles being thrown at staff whilst trying to manage numbers at funerals.



Not acceptable in any way and should not be ignored. Must be reported to your health & safety team and to the police as a threat or act of physical violence.

The health & safety team within my borough of Tameside were consulted and they have been very proactive and supportive in gathering information on the statistics around personal safety matters and incidents of violence and aggression. It is also an agenda item at every corporate health and safety meeting. It soon became very clear that the number of incidents was rising drastically and not just in cemeteries and crematoria but in many other areas too. The health & safety team advised everyone to report any incidents, as it was obvious from conversations that there seemed to be more going on than what was being reported. Personally, I think we have all been hesitant or reluctant to report some of the issues as we have just accepted it as 'part of our job'. That is not the solution!

As a result, training was provided for all our cemetery and crematoria operatives. This was Personal Safety Training and Skills Workshops and was delivered by Christine Morrison who is an ex-police officer and now runs CMA Training. Christine combines her practical policing background and Personal Safety and Crime Prevention subject matter expertise with excellent communication skills, energy and warmth.

The training was tailored for bereavement staff and Christine herself was shocked at what many of us have to deal with on a day-to-day basis, none of which is acceptable in her view.

In general the sessions, covered:

- General good practice strategies
- Specific 'hotspots'
- Lone working issues
- Travelling safely
- Staying safer on social media
- Dealing with aggression
- Diffusing situations

Whilst talking through our introductions, Christine was sat on her phone and when we had been round the table she started asking questions about our personal lives based on information she had found via social media. This was followed by some frantic resetting of profiles and access. It showed how it is all too easy for people to find out information they can use against you in their threats.



I have not been on a course where the introductions led to everyone being transfixed and immediately hanging on to every word spoken.

Some of the things were common sense or logical but you don't always think about it and take it on board. Making mental dynamic risk assessments when you go out to meet families so you are aware of escape routes and not get yourself trapped. Letting people know where you are going and when you are done, having safe words so staff can react if you feel in danger.

Not something you necessarily think of but as previously stated, the cases of abuse are rising and people think that by threatening they will get what they want, therefore we need to ensure the safety of ourselves and our staff.

Reducing your profile by removing your name from letterheads and making things more generic so families can't focus on individuals sort of went against the grain when we have always made ourselves available and visible but it does make sense.

The benefits of this training have been excellent and the staff felt much better supported by things we have implemented or highlighted which they all found extremely valuable. Putting safety elements into day to day practice makes them routine but they still need to be reviewed on a regular basis to ensure we do not leave ourselves vulnerable.

We all learnt so many skills, techniques and tips but the one that struck the chord with me was:

*What Are Your Responsibilities as a Manager?* **To ensure you and your staff go home safe! Nothing at all is worth risking your safety for or indeed your life.**

**Michael Gurney**  
Head of Bereavement Services - Tameside Council

## company news

### Plotbox

PlotBox is delighted to announce the appointment of Asim Mirza as its new Director of Operations.

# PLOTBOX

Asim brings 20 years of operational experience in building strong operational teams that embrace the best of technology, process and people, with a focus on the customer experience and digital transformation.

As Director of Operations, Asim will oversee all PlotBox operational functions, from project management to mapping, data migration and training, as well as front-line customer support and customer success - leading the way and setting the strategy for its high performing delivery teams.

Asim said, "I am really pleased to be appointed as the Director of Operations for PlotBox and ensuring that all of our customers have a world-class onboarding relationship and beyond.



It was important for me to join a growing technology company with a highly innovative product and platform whilst being part of an industry which makes a real impact at the human level. I feel that this is so applicable in the deathcare space.

It was also important for me to join an industry where I use my experience to make a difference. Successful digital transformation is where the combination of the human element and the technology really works. This is what we expect for ourselves and this is what we wish to deliver for our customers."

PlotBox CEO, Sean McAllister said, "I am delighted to welcome Asim as part of the PlotBox Senior Leadership team. We pride ourselves on delivering world-class solutions to our clients, and rely on our operational teams to support our global partners in the best way possible. Asim's keen insights, strong leadership and wealth of experience will help us to keep the customer at the heart of everything we do as we scale our operations and move into our next phase of growth."

## welters® organisation worldwide - Nature, Technology, Reuse & Repurpose

welters® are continuing to merge nature and the environment with technology and incorporate repurposed materials within our manufacturing processes. We have extended this thought process into material reuse, creating art through sculpture. The reflection of nature in the art is eye catching and beautiful. The sculptures can enhance any open space, be it within the grounds of a cemetery or crematorium or in a park or garden.

Whilst we stretch our artistic muscle, we sustain and progress the supply and installation of our many varied products and services. From full body to cremated remains requirements, our interment and memorialisation products are all made in Britain from locally sourced materials.



This week alone we have dispatched some 14 full articulated lorry loads of product, keeping us busy at all times of the day and often into the night!



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## company news

### Edge IT Systems - Environment, FARS and Staffing

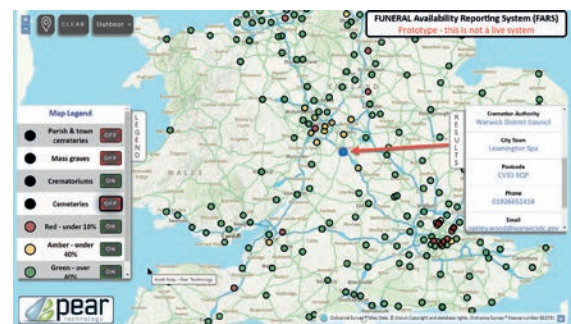
EDGE IT Systems are delighted to announce that we achieved official Carbon Neutral status from Carbon Neutral Britain this summer; <https://bit.ly/3EmvTxv>. This coveted award is a further demonstration of our commitment to protect the environment and save our planet. As a result Epitaph is the first carbon neutral software in the sector.

EDGE took the lead in working with other industry software suppliers in proposing the Funeral Availability Reporting System (FARS) to be activated in an emergency for funeral directors; <https://bit.ly/3MJQahf>

The ICCM and FBCA 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:

- December 2022 FBCA & ICCM will decide whether to proceed with FARS
- FARS Phase 1 July 2023 launch of FARS
- FARS Phase 2 Administration software to automatically update FARS with availability
- FARS Phase 3 LRFs and the Government to automate their data download from FARS

In staffing news, EDGE now have a team of 11 staff equivalent to 8.5 full-time, providing customers with the full range of services and products that they need.



Tracey Ramster joined our Product Support team in June, joining Peter Linsell as one of our crematoria and crematoria specialists, between them having nearly fifty years' experience in the industry. We believe that we are the only industry software provider to have such depth of experience and knowledge from working at the operational end in bereavement services.

More recently, Linda Street extended her hours to full-time and became Software Director, and Angharad Pelchat joined as our new Digital Marketing Executive, focusing on maintaining a high profile for the Epitaph, InspectEDGE and HeritEDGE brands of EDGE IT Systems.



### Finders International

Finders International offer a free next of kin tracing service to the public sector, saving time and money for hard-pressed local authorities, hospitals, coroners, care homes and more.

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A full list and further details of our public-sector services can be found . <https://www.findersinternational.co.uk/our-services/public-sector-services/>



Our research staff have received Cruse Bereavement Care training, Friends Against Scams training and are 'Dementia Friends' and therefore are equipped to liaise sensitively and appropriately with next of kin should this be required. At full list of our credentials can be found <https://www.findersinternational.co.uk/about/accreditations/>

If you would like to get in touch with any further questions, please contact us on Freephone 0800 085 8796, email [public@findersinternational.co.uk](mailto:public@findersinternational.co.uk) or visit our website [www.findersinternational.co.uk](http://www.findersinternational.co.uk)

## company news

### Teleshore

#### A note from Peter Smith, Managing Director of Teleshore.

It was great to see customers old and new at the ICCM Convention. We always find this event to be a great opportunity to discuss the challenges facing the industry, through a good chat with those on the front line. These discussions are quite often the foundation for our product developments, as we try to find solutions for challenges facing our customers.

We had some of our new products on display, including our new 'collection tray trolley,' which was well received and seems to be useful to many of our crematoria customers. The trolley was designed following a chat with a crematoria client and it enabled them to move hot collection trays around much more safely than before. This year, we have also developed a memorial stone protection system that has helped our cemetery clients to prevent any damage to memorials when working near other graves.

We would urge anyone who hasn't yet been able to attend one of the ICCM events to take the time to come, as it can be a great opportunity to learn from each other and even lead to solutions to problems that have been niggling away at us. Sometimes a problem shared is a problem halved!



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## success at the association of green funeral directors good funeral awards

Westerleigh Group is celebrating the success of two of its team who were awarded special accolades at the Association of Green Funeral Directors' Good Funeral Awards. Group Ambassador Alan Jose received a lifetime achievement award after 50 years in the bereavement industry and Lucy Derrick was named 'Most Promising Newcomer to the Trade'.

Hailed for his work as a moderniser, Alan, former president of the Federation of Burial & Cremation Authorities (FBCA), continues to serve on the authorities' executive committee and is also an ICCM Board Director. Debbie Smith, CEO of Westerleigh Group said: "We are delighted Alan has been recognised for his talent and truly exceptional contribution to the funeral industry. No one could be more deserving of this lifetime achievement award.

"Alan has been at the forefront of providing guidance within our profession over his 50-year career that has ultimately benefited so many in their care for the bereaved and is very well known and respected by all our associates across the sector. In recent times, during the height of the Covid-19 pandemic, Alan's knowledge and expertise were really brought to the fore, when he professionally carried on helping and advising his colleagues in Westerleigh and across the sector to ensure we maintained the best service possible during such a difficult time."



Alan began his career in the industry in 1972, when he joined the team at Beckenham Crematorium as office clerk, and in 1977 became one of the youngest superintendents in the industry, appointed to the post of cemeteries and crematorium superintendent and registrar at Parndon Wood.

It was at Parndon Wood that Alan's talent as a moderniser in the industry became apparent, by hosting one of the first crematorium open days in the UK in 1978. The event attracted considerable media attention, which was the catalyst for similar events throughout the UK. He hit the headlines again in 1979 after being appointed cemeteries and crematorium manager for Weymouth and Portland Council, where his modernising approach caused some controversy when, during the renovation of Weymouth Crematorium, he installed an innovative heat recovery system.

Later, in 1982 as superintendent and registrar for the crematorium at Milton Keynes, Alan conducted a review of cemetery safe working practices, resulting in the introduction of hydraulic grave shoring units, replacing the traditional method of shoring graves with timbers and acro props. In 1989, Alan was appointed to the post of crematorium superintendent and registrar for the City of Durham before making the move to the private sector in 2013 when he was appointed as regional manager for Westerleigh Group with responsibility for the southeast region.

Alan is held in high esteem by the funeral industry with Jon Levett, former CEO of the National Association of Funeral Directors, describing him in his testimonial as a 'giant in the funeral sector, widely respected for his knowledge and expertise' and for his 'compassionate and friendly approach'. Alan said: "I feel very proud to have won this prestigious award.

"I have been privileged to serve the bereaved, who have always been at the heart of what I have strived to do over the course of my long and varied career within both the public and private sector, with the support of some exceptional colleagues from areas of the bereavement sector."

Like Alan, fellow award winner Lucy Derrick, a memorial advisor at West Wiltshire Crematorium in Semington, was also praised for her modernising abilities.

Debbie Smith said: "Lucy has only been with us since December but has already made her mark.

"She is always looking at ways we can improve the customer experience – from digitising the memorial maps of 10 acres of West Wiltshire, to offering to meet families at weekends or out of hours at a time that suits them."

Lucy, who previously worked in the care industry supporting adults with autism, says it is rewarding to know she has helped someone through the whole journey and played a part in helping them find the final place for their loved one. She said: "I was so honoured to have been put forward for the Good Funeral Awards. When they called out my name to say I had won, I could hardly believe it. I'm thrilled."



The Association of Green Funeral Directors, which runs the awards, helps people find funeral services that provide more sustainable and eco-friendly options, encourages funeral directors to become more green-minded, and hosts the annual Good Funeral Awards which reward excellence in the industry.

**Darren Bane**  
PR Manager, Empica

## believe

*Anna Louise Bates discusses the work of the charity Believe.*

My name is Anna Louise Bates and I am the founder of the Believe Organ Donor Support charity. (Founded December 2015.)

This charity came about as a result of the sudden passing of my late husband Stuey and my 7-year-old son Fraser ('Bear') under tragic circumstances. Amidst the grief and other overwhelming emotions, I agreed for their organs and tissues to be donated. **As a result of these donations, at least 4 lives were saved.**

My own experience happened just 5 days after the introduction in Wales of the 'Soft Opt-Out Organ Donation policy' ( Believe Organ Donor Support is based in the Welsh capital city of Cardiff).

It became clear that much was needed to assist with education around the processes involved. There was also a noticeable lack of support for the families impacted by these difficult situations. It also became apparent that change was needed around the perceived 'taboo' subject of organ donation in general. I am immensely proud that over the last 7 years, we have already achieved so much towards our objectives.

Supported by a team of trustees and volunteers (and only one permanent paid member of staff), we now work together with the NHS, Welsh and UK Governments, teaching consortiums, local community groups and other charities, to advance our objectives.

The first challenge that I encountered was how to start encouraging people to talk about organ donation. This is understandably such a sensitive subject, and many people think that this is a situation that isn't likely to impact upon their own life - consequently, they avoid having 'the conversation' which would help to make their loved ones aware of their wishes.

Here at 'Team Believe', our intention is not to try to influence people in a 'heavy-handed way' to become potential organ donors, but to encourage them to have a conversation with their loved ones about their wishes, should the unimaginable happen. Just two weeks prior to the tragedy within my own family, we (my family) had undertaken this very conversation.

As a result of this conversation having taken place, I felt equipped to be able to answer the question that now arose regarding organ donation. This was without doubt, THE most difficult and traumatic time of my life, but with the assurance of having recently spoken to my husband about this, I was confident about the way forward around this particular decision.

A big part of my motivation in setting up this charity was that I wanted to help people to become motivated towards having this conversation.

Throughout my work over these last 7 years, it has become clear that it is not the children who are afraid of this subject. (In fact, in my experience, children view organ donation as a gift - specifically 'the gift of life'!) It is we adults who associate this subject with death, and as a result tend to shy away from it.

Fraser, through his donation had blessed others with the 'ULTIMATE GIFT' at Christmas time. So the question was... "How could we start to encourage people to have this conversation"? We called Fraser by his nickname 'Bear'. This was not only after the House of Fraser 'Bear', but also as a result of our family's love of 'Bear Grylls' (the explorer). It therefore seemed obvious that we adopted a bear as our charity mascot, hence 'Fraser Bear' arrived.

The idea to use the bear as the 'softer, cuddly way' of introducing the subject of organ donation to families was born. The House of Fraser kindly donated bears to Fraser's classmates and our family, in memory of this much loved 7-year-old boy. 'Fraser Bear' then started travelling the world! He now boasts his own social media pages and has also found himself many new friends (owners) including 'Princess Charlotte', 'Gregory Porter', 'Ben Shephard', the band 'Coldplay'... and even 'Bear Grylls' himself!

Our original 'Fraser Bear' has now been joined by a smaller mascot, in the shape of 'Hope Bear'. 'Hope' was given her name during the Covid pandemic by a local primary school student. She now also assists in our ongoing objectives.

We were so proud to share our 'Hope Bears' with the members of the Learning Convention in September, in the 'hope' that they will encourage further adventures, and ultimately, vital conversations around organ donation.

With the assistance and encouragement of Mike Young ('SuperTed' animator) and his company 'Splash Productions' I wrote, cast and



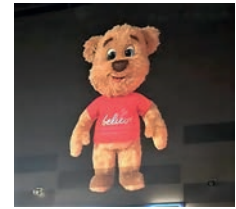


produced an award-winning animation PSA in both English and Welsh. This has now reached over 8.2 million people globally and is part of our NHS education programme.

You can watch this animation here: <https://youtu.be/yGh1Tb1NQZA>

These are some of our other educational achievements and breakthroughs which we are proud to have made:

- With the assistance of the Welsh Education Minister and the WJEC, we now have Believe ODS as part of our 'Welsh Baccaulaureate' charity scheme for 14–16-year-olds
- We have attended schools at all levels and tiers of education and further education
- We have delivered lectures to police, paramedics, and other organisations
- We have sponsored and were fully involved with a collaborative scheme with NHSBT and the students of organ donation from Cardiff University students, educating year 6 and year 8 pupils
- We have undertaken many speaking opportunities, liaising with the Director of Education in Wales, delivered papers to the National Head Teachers Conference, and also have been involved in a national collaborative group, with education being the key focus.
- Regularly undertaking speaking opportunities and providing information to the media. This includes 'The Voice of Islam' radio station, 'Radio Wales', national newspapers and numerous television shows including 'News at 10', 'Good Morning Britain' and most recently... ITV's 'This Morning'.



From my personal perspective, education is of course 'key', but empathic support is needed for those who are approached about or involved within organ donation situations. We have also set up a special 'Fraser Fund' and I am so proud that via this, we now offer assistance to multiple donor families, transplant recipients and their families, and also access to medical professional support throughout a variety of ways such as:

- Mental health support through counselling and EDMR
- Financial support with travel and accommodation costs for hospital visits
- Wellbeing support with family visits, short breaks and 'away days'
- Believe bears and social interaction through our events
- Equipment such as iPads and other learning devices.

Also, with the assistance of grant funding, we were delighted to be able to launch our first 'Teddy Bear's Picnic' with the aim being 'to encourage these vital conversations', as well as raising much needed funds for the Charity, thus enabling us to continue with our work. Although we are so proud to have achieved all of this within such a relatively short timescale, we now look to our future projects and how we can further develop the charity, both internally and externally.

Our main aims for the next two years are as follows:

1. To produce a fully interactive website, informing people about our charity, displaying our animated film and documentary, with case studies, and publicising the support that we are able to offer generally and via the 'Fraser Fund'.
2. To continue expanding our education programme via:
  - (i) A collaboration within primary schools as part of our new curriculum.
  - (ii) Promotion and encouragement within high schools of the Welsh Baccaulaureate program.
  - (iii) Inclusion into the FE nursing studies.
3. To encourage awareness and discussion within the BAME and other communities. (We have also managed to translate our animation into 7 further languages that we wish to launch and promote within those communities).
4. To continue with, and increase the support currently offered. We also are aiming to develop a team to ensure this support can continue to be funded, enabling us to reach as many people as possible who may benefit from our help.
5. Via our work with Cardiff Bereavement Services, we have kindly been offered an area of land in North Cardiff, where we are planning to create the first 'Organ Donation Reflective' garden in Wales. The aim of this garden is to educate and support people across Wales and beyond.

In conclusion, we must express our sincere thanks to all who have generously and willingly supported us so far, and from my personal perspective...my endless gratitude to people for believing in myself, in my family and in our objectives.

I hope that together we can continue to grow the charity and continue to make a positive difference to the lives of those impacted by organ donation.

We would be grateful if you would consider us when you are looking at charities as part of the Metal Recycling Scheme.



**Anna-Louise Bates**

## a look at london's victorian cemeteries

### *Part 1: A Timeline of London's Victorian Cemeteries*

A large proportion of London's 150 plus cemeteries were established by private companies and burial boards between the 1830s and 1900. They are all unique in terms of development, landscape, buildings and memorials. Drawing largely from the sixth edition of *London Cemeteries: An Illustrated Guide and Gazetteer*, this series explores them under the following headings:

Part 1: A Timeline of London's Victorian Cemeteries

Part 2: The Buildings in London's Victorian Cemeteries

Part 3: The Landscapes of London's Victorian Cemeteries

Part 4: The Memorials in London's Victorian Cemeteries

### **Part 1: A Timeline of London's Victorian Cemeteries**

In 1800 the Church of England possessed a virtual monopoly on burial space in London with the exception of a few Jewish and Nonconformist burial grounds such as Bunhill Fields. It was, however, the overuse of churchyards that led to a rebellion against '...the attendant horrors of over-crowded burial grounds, drunken gravediggers, body-snatchers, the ever-present stench of corruption, and the sight of bones carelessly thrown up from yawning graves...' to quote James Steven Curl (1972: 22). Despite recurrent outbreaks of disease and model cemeteries appearing in locations such as Calcutta, the government was loath to act. The first non-denominational cemetery - The Rosary in Norwich - opened in 1821, and Liverpool Necropolis four years later. In London, it would be the early 1830s before a cemetery would open. Between that date and the end of the century seventy-seven opened as table 1 identifies.

**Table 1**

1830-1840	6
1841-1850	2
1851-1860	24
1861-1870	9
1871-1880	13
1881-1890	12

*(Source: Compiled from London Cemeteries: An Illustrated Guide and Gazetteer)*

### **Kensal Green (1833)**

Many people would regard Kensal Green as the most distinguished of London's cemeteries. George Carden, a barrister and burial reformer persuaded a number of architects, aristocrats and businessmen to form a board to acquire 54 acres of land to the west of London costing £9,500. In July 1832, a Bill was obtained 'for establishing a General Cemetery for the interment of the Dead in the Neighbourhood of the Metropolis'. A competition to design cemetery buildings resulted in forty-six entries with those in the neo-Gothic style being submitted by Henry Kendall, only to be rejected in favour of a more austere Greek style provided by John Griffith. Both Anglican and the smaller Nonconformist chapels with catacombs were provided. The main entrance comprises a triumphal arch containing the cemetery office and residential accommodation.

The cemetery attracted many notable interments, including royalty, and it boasts a unique array of impressive memorials and mausolea.

The West London Crematorium was opened in 1939, and the cemetery continues to be owned by the General Cemetery Company.



*A view of Kensal Green Cemetery looking towards the Anglican chapel, from The Mirror of Literature, Amusement and Instruction (1838)*



### West Norwood (1836)

Occupying 40 acres of land formerly owned by Lord Thurlow's trustees, the South Metropolitan Cemetery Company opened their cemetery in 1836. Entrance is gained through an arch bearing the company's name and date. The architect William Tite was responsible for the buildings and landscape. Two gothic-style chapels once stood on the summit of the hill; the Church of England chapel with its turrets resembled King's College Chapel, Cambridge. Beneath, catacombs had room for some 4,000 coffins. It was demolished in 1960. In 1915 the Nonconformist chapel was converted into a crematorium. Bomb damaged in 1944, it was demolished and replaced in 1956 by a new facility.

The cemetery possesses a section for the burial of the Brotherhood of the Greek Community in London containing many outstanding memorials and mausolea. The company was compulsorily purchased by the London Borough of Lambeth in 1965.



### Highgate (1839)

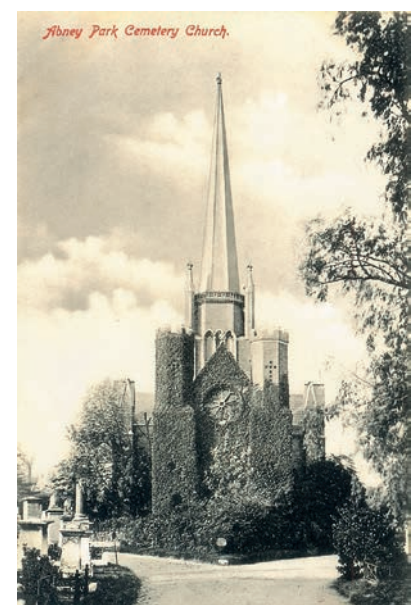
Although not the oldest or the biggest of London's cemeteries it is by far the best known and probably the most visited. In 1836 an Act of Parliament was passed 'for establishing cemeteries for the Interment of the Dead, Northward, Southward and Eastward of the Metropolis by a Company to be called The London Cemetery Company'. Inspired by its architect, Stephen Geary, the company founded the eighteen-acre Highgate cemetery to the north and Nunhead to the south. On either side of the arched entrance on Swain's Lane Geary built two brick chapels in a mock Tudor-Gothic style. One was equipped with a hydraulic bier which silently lowered coffins from the chancel to a tunnel communicating with the east cemetery's 19-acre extension on east side of Swain's Lane. Beyond the chapels and an 80-yard-long colonnade the cemetery rises up to the Egyptian Avenue and an inner circle of catacombs in the Egyptian style. Karl Marx is probably the most famous occupant in the cemetery's east side.



After 1945 the fortunes of the London Cemetery Company began to decline. The west cemetery was closed in 1975 and the Friends of Highgate Cemetery was launched the same year. The chapels along with the magnificent Beer Mausoleum and other memorials have been restored while work has been completed on the terrace catacombs, the colonnade, the Egyptian Avenue and Lebanon Circle.

### Abney Park (1840)

At thirty-two-acres, Abney Park - described as the 'Campo Santo of the English Nonconformists' - is the largest unconsecrated Victorian cemetery in London. Opened in 1840 by the Abney Park Cemetery Company, the Egyptian-style entrance leads to a main avenue terminating in a substantial gothic-style chapel designed by William Hosking. Plans for a further chapel never came to fruition. The grounds were planted out as an arboretum by a local nurseryman, George Loddiges. Over 5,000 burials were recorded in the first decade after opening. William Booth, the founder of the Salvation Army, is buried at Abney Park. In the post-WWII years maintenance declined and the cemetery was acquired by the London Borough of Hackney in 1974. The entrance has been restored and work carried out on stabilising the chapel.



### Brompton (1840)

Founded by the West London and Westminster Cemetery, 39 acres were acquired from Lord Kensington and the company appointed the architect Benjamin Baud to design the buildings. The central avenue is reached by passing through a triumphal arch on the Old Brompton Road which terminates at a circular colonnade and the domed Anglican chapel. Inspiration for the scheme was drawn from St Peter's in Rome. Beneath the colonnades, catacombs are accessed through cast iron doors decorated with various symbols of death, particularly the snake. The scheme originally included Roman Catholic and Nonconformist chapels on either side of the Great Circle, but this was never achieved.



In 1896, Mrs Holmes, the author of *The London Burial Grounds. Notes on their History from the Earliest times to the Present Day* described the cemetery as crowded, containing 155,000 bodies. A total of over 206,000 burials have now taken place and the cemetery continues to accept interments in new graves.

### Nunhead (1840)

The London Cemetery Company's sister enterprise south of the Thames was their fifty-two acre All Saints' Cemetery at Nunhead. The architect James Bunstone Bunning was appointed surveyor who provided two neo-classical lodges. The Anglican and Nonconformist chapels, both having subterranean provision for coffins, were designed by Thomas Little. The paths circulated around these buildings. A notable feature are the gate piers with upturned torch symbols indicating life extinct. The company prospered despite the fraudulent activities of its first superintendent. By the interwar years, however, the fortunes of the company started to wane, vandalism increased as did the unchecked rampage of nature. The cemetery was acquired by the London Borough of Southwark in 1975.



### Tower Hamlets (1841)

The board of the City of London and Tower Hamlets Cemetery Company was incorporated by Act of Parliament in 1841 with members comprising a local timber merchant, John Hammack and John Pirie, a ship owner who was Lord Mayor of London. The company's capital was limited by the Act to £20,000. The thirty-three acres were consecrated by the bishop of London on 4 September 1841 and the cemetery proved to be very popular with approximately 250,000 interments having taken place by 1899.

When Mrs Holmes inspected the cemetery three years later, it was, however, already getting out of hand:

...a regular ocean of tombstones many of which are lying about apparently uncared for and unclaimed; in fact most of the graves, except those at the edges of the walks look utterly neglected...

The cemetery remained in private ownership until 1966 when it was acquired by the Greater London Council. It has since been renamed Tower Hamlets Cemetery Park.



*The funeral of Sargent William Dransfield in Tower Hamlets Cemetery in 1865.*



**Victoria Park (1845)**

This eleven-acre Victoria Park Cemetery at Bethnal Green was opened in 1845 by a private company with Charles Salisbury Butler, the Liberal party MP for Tower Hamlets 1852-1870, as a director then chairman. Two separate chapels were provided by Arthur Ashpitel, a hackney-based architect. The cemetery's location in a very poor area of London meant that many burials were in deep pauper graves. Like most proprietary cemeteries it advertised in local newspapers. Problems concerning maintenance were highlighted within ten years of opening along with claims in newspapers that as many as 130 interments took place on a Sunday. Continued poor management and over-use resulted in closure of the site. It was eventually acquired by the Metropolitan Gardens Association (MGA) and landscaped as a public park under the direction of Fanny Wilkinson. It reopened as Meath Gardens in 1894, named after Lord Meath, chairman of the MGA.



Collectively, these eight private cemeteries provided around 384 acres of burial space. Incidentally, there were other joint-stock companies intending to open cemeteries in the London areas. These include: the London and Western District Cemetery Company, the Great Extramural Cemetery Association, the North-East London Cemetery Company, the National Freehold Cemetery and the Woodford Metropolitan Cemetery. None of these schemes came to fruition.

**The Burial Act 1852 and Burial Board Cemetery**

Not all were happy with the commercial sector making money from burials. The social and public health reformer Sir Edwin Chadwick wanted cemeteries in state ownership through management vested in the hands of the Board of Health. His 1850 Metropolitan Interments Act nationalised Brompton before the financial implications of this legislation were realised and this attempt to curb the free-market was curtailed. The cemetery was compulsorily purchased for £74,921.14s, considerably less than the £168,762.12s. 8d asked for by the company.



Tottenham Cemetery (1856)



The City of London Cemetery (1856)



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**Alison Beck**, Bereavement Services manager,  
Hither Green Crematorium

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The subsequent Burial Act 1852 permitted the creation of local burial boards to establish cemeteries. The legislation was widened in 1853 to give the same provision to enable authorities outside London. Between 1853 and the end of the nineteenth century the following Burial Board cemeteries opened in the area that is now covered by the London boroughs: Acton (1895); Barnes (1854); Battersea St Mary's (1860); Battersea (1891, now Morden); Beckenham (1877); Bexleyheath (1876) Charlton (1856); Deptford (1852, now Ladywell & Brockley); Camberwell Old (1856); City of London (1856); Chiswick (1888); Croydon (1897); Ealing and Old Brentford (1861, now South Ealing); Edmonton (1884); Edmonton and Southgate (1880); Fulham Palace Road (1865); Greenwich (1857); Harrow (1888); Hertford Road (1881); Hammersmith (1869, now Margravine); Hampstead (1876); Hillingdon (1855); Islington (1854, now Islington St Pancras); Kensington (1855); Kingston (1855); Lambeth (1854); Lee (1873 now Hither Green); Lewisham (1858, now Ladywell & Brockley); Lavender Hill (1870); Mitcham (1883); Mortlake (1854); Paddington (1855); Paines Lane (1860); Plaistow (1892); Plumstead (1890); Putney Lower Common (1855); Putney Vale (1891); Queen's Road Croydon (1861); Richmond (1853); Rippleside (1886); St Marylebone (1855); St George's Hanover Square (1854, now Westminster Hanwell); St Mary's Battersea (1860); St Pancras (1854); Streatham (1892); Sutton (1889); Teddington (1879); Tottenham (1856); Twickenham (1868); Walthamstow (1872); Wandsworth (1878); West Ham (1857); Westminster (1854); Willesden (1890); Wimbledon (1877) and Woolwich (1856).

Collectively, these cemeteries provided around 1,360 acres of burial space. Despite this competition, private enterprise and religious organisations were not deterred from opening further cemeteries. In 1854, the 400-acre Brookwood cemetery was opened near Woking by the London Necropolis and National Mausoleum Company. With the intention of providing burial space for Londoners forever, coffins were conveyed from a private station adjacent to Waterloo to the cemetery. Further private companies that opened in London between 1858 and 1899 were: Chingford Mount (1884); Crystal Palace District Cemetery (1876, now Beckenham Cemetery and Crematorium); East London Cemetery (1872); Great Northern (1861, now New Southgate Cemetery and Crematorium); Hendon Park Cemetery (1899, now Hendon Cemetery and Crematorium); Manor Park (1874); Mortlake Roman Catholic (1852); St Mary's Roman Catholic Cemetery, Kensal Green (1858); St Patrick's Roman Catholic, Leytonstone (1868); St Thomas's Roman Catholic (1849) and Woodgrange Park (1888).

Together with Brookwood, these private cemeteries added a further 760 acres of burial space. All were established under their own Act of Parliament or the Cemeteries Clauses Act 1847. A few points about these private and burial board cemeteries:

First, unlike the churchyards, these cemeteries could sell the exclusive right of burial of a grave space and permit memorials and all grave purchasers were issued with a deed of grant. A variety of types of grave were usually available including earth, brick, vaults and catacombs.

Secondly, boards could charge a parishioner and non-parishioner rate depending on whether the deceased lived in the board's catchment area. Private companies charged the same regardless of residency.

Thirdly, there was no overall planning as to location or size of the cemetery. All providers had problems securing sites often due to local opposition or unsuitable soil. Many burial boards had to settle for land outside the catchment area of their ratepayers. For example, St Pancras and the St Marylebone cemeteries can both be found in Finchley. This means that today the London Borough of Barnet accommodates not only its deceased residents in Hendon Cemetery, but also has cemeteries run by Westminster, Islington and Camden along with synagogue burial societies. Similarly, the City of London Cemetery at Ilford is within the Borough of Newham, where you can also find several private and Jewish cemeteries along with the home borough's one cemetery.

Fourthly, the first raft of joint-stock companies required income to pay their way and give a return for investors. Sources of revenue were from the purchase and interment in different types of graves along with fees for permits for memorials and also the maintenance and/or planting of grave spaces.

Fifthly, to encourage their usage particularly after 1852 when burial board cemeteries opened, the private cemeteries advertised in national but more usually the local newspapers. Brookwood Cemetery advertised in *The Times*. Commission to undertakers was usually paid by the companies to recommend a particular cemetery.

Sixthly, all cemeteries required efficient management. They were and continue to be labour-intensive sites to run and with the constant requirement for new graves or to open existing ones, along with grass cutting and other landscape and maintenance work. A whole army of staff needed to be engaged along with animate power to move equipment and soil, etc. A superintendent was appointed to be in day-to-day charge of operations and administration and this occupation became a specialism with individuals working through the ranks from gravedigger to foreman then to the key position.

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*An advertisement for the Great Northern Cemetery (now New Southgate Cemetery) from the Holborn Journal 10 May 1862*



**Table 2: Burials in selected London cemeteries in 1897**

Interments	Total Burials	Private graves	Common graves
Abney Park Cemetery	1,571	1,014	557
City of London and Tower Hamlets Cemetery	2,835	370	2,465
City of London Cemetery	4,759	749	4,010
East London Cemetery	4,678	224	4,454
Manor Park Cemetery	5,700	200	5,500
Camberwell Cemetery	3,598	477	3,121
Kensal Green Cemetery	2,049	1,089	960
Nunhead Cemetery	5,334	931	4,403
Islington Cemetery	4,242	336	3,906
St Pancras Cemetery	5,572	300	5,272

As mentioned above, there was no overall planning of cemeteries for London or elsewhere. It was not known how much burial space existed in London or future demands until 1899 when the London County Council's (LCC) assistant Medical Officer of Health Dr CWF Young published *Sanitary Condition of Cemeteries and Burial Grounds*. This was a comprehensive survey of eighteen cemeteries in the LCC area plus Brookwood and it detailed the acreage, soil conditions and number of burials in private and common graves. Its data indicated how busy some cemeteries were as table 2 reveals. Islington and St Pancras cemeteries effectively share the same site and nearly 10,000 funerals came through their gates in 1897. The vast majority of interments were in public or common graves and this would remain so until the 1950s when there was a shift towards cremation. This means that new burial space was always required, and this would continue to be the case in the following century.

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For copies of Victorian burial legislation see: [https://www.john-clarke.co.uk/burial\\_acts.html](https://www.john-clarke.co.uk/burial_acts.html)

All images from the author's collection

[www.brianparsons.org.uk](http://www.brianparsons.org.uk).

**Brian Parsons**

## prestigious award for vital service

A prestigious award has been given to Distington Hall Crematorium grounds and bereavement services. The crematorium, run by Copeland Council, has received the annual Green Flag Award – meaning it's among the very best in the country.

The award 'celebrates amazing spaces' and is the benchmark standard for publicly accessible parks and green spaces in the United Kingdom and around the world. The Green Flag Award report states: 'The crematorium and its grounds clearly deserve a Green Flag Award, being a high-quality service for the local community.'

'The bereavement services staff provide a sensitive and imaginative range of services and memorial options, and continually strive to improve the facilities and expand on what they are offering and are to be commended for this. The grounds around the crematorium are attractive and well managed, sensitive both to the needs of those using the crematorium, sustainability, and the biodiversity of the area.'

Andy Pratt, Portfolio Holder for Bereavement Services, said: "I'm delighted the award recognises the hard work and dedication of our fantastic Bereavement Services team.

"Our employees provide a vital service to the community, and their passion, empathy and commitment shine through in everything they do. I'd also like to thank colleagues and volunteers who make sure the grounds are so well maintained, it truly is a beautiful place for our residents to reflect and remember lost loved ones."



*Sue Pringle, Emanuel Flecken,  
Sarah Pemberton*

**Copeland Borough Council**

## golders green crematorium open day

On Saturday 1st October Golders Green Crematorium opened their doors to the general public for a Community Open Day from 10am to 3pm.

The last couple of years have been very challenging for everyone and many families have lost their loved ones whilst not being able to witness the cremations or visit their dedicated memorials in the gardens. The occasion was created to give something back to the community and all the families who have used our facilities over the years, by inviting them to visit our Golders Green Crematorium along with their families and have a general insight into what we do.

The line-up on the day included guided tours of the beautiful gardens and our historical chapels, food & drink available for purchase, children's activities with prizes to win, exhibitors on site, showcasing of hearses from our local funeral directors, an educational session by Hendon fire brigade, and much more.

Essentially, this day was to show the wider community what we do and our passion and dedication to all the families we see. Our unsurpassable commitment allows for us to give our customers memorable and long-lasting experiences.

Stephen Wright, Managing Director of The London Cremation Company Plc said: 'We are delighted to have had such a positive open day with the support of the local community. The day gave us the opportunity to reach out to the public and for them to gain an awareness into what we do here at Golders Green Crematorium. We have spectacularly well-maintained gardens and famous chapels dating back to 1902 which we are proud of. So please come and visit, we are open all year round.'

The day was a success with over 750 attendees on the day. It meant that the community came together, interacted and were able to look around in a relaxed and informal way and were able to ask our friendly team any questions they may have had.

Any further enquiries please contact Golders Green Crematorium on 0208 455 8590 or email [info@thelcc.co.uk](mailto:info@thelcc.co.uk)

**Lawdin Saldanha**





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President	Heather White, MICCM (Dip), Southampton City Council Tel: 023 8076 6405 Email: heather.white@southampton.gov.uk
Deputy President	Marian Millington, AICCM Email: marianw69@gmail.com
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	Mohamed Omer, Gardens of Peace Muslim Cemetery Tel: 020 8502 6000 Email: mohamed.omer@gardens-of-peace.org.uk
	Linda Barker, FICCM (Dip) Email: barkerlinda1@aol.com

## iccm officers

Chief Executive	Julie Dunk, BA (Hons), FICCM (Dip) Mob: 07976 939 585 Email: julie.dunk@iccm-uk.com
Technical & Member Services Officer	Mathew Crawley, PGDip FCMI FICCM(DipHons) Mob: 07581 006 035 Email: mathew.crawley@iccm-uk.com
Technical Services and Journal Officer	Sofia Allana, FICCM (Dip) Tel: 07502 627521 Email: sofia.allana@iccm-uk.com
COTS Manager	Martin Clark, FICCM Mob: 07940 032 035 Email: martin.clark@iccm-uk.com
Finance & IT Manager	Trevor Robson, Bsc (Hons) BSIT, AICCM, MAAT 1 Colbeck Avenue, Swalwell, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE16 3EB Tel: 0191 452 5958 Email: trevor.robson@iccm-uk.com
Administration Officer	Julie Darroux, AICCM, ICCM National Office City of London Cemetery, Aldersbrook Road, Manor Park, London, E12 5DQ Tel: 020 8989 4661 Email: julie.darroux@iccm-uk.com

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## the journal

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