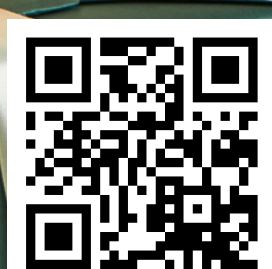




BRITISH INSTITUTE OF FUNERAL DIRECTORS

THE JOURNAL

ISSUE 12



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IN THIS ISSUE...

05 A LETTER FROM AMANDA PINK

Amanda Reflects On This Month As National President

06 INTERVIEW WITH DR PHILIP GORE AND CLIVE PEARSON

By Kayleigh Ingham on changes in funerals throughout history

11 REFLECTION DURING A TIME OF REMEMBRANCE

By Phil Perry from Obitus

13 A SPECIAL SEND OFF FOR MELODY

Hayley Owen-Barker talks about a recent funeral she conducted on Remembrance Day

26 MERRY CHRISTMAS MESSAGE



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Letter from the National President

Amanda Pink

Dear Members, Associates, Students, and Supporters.

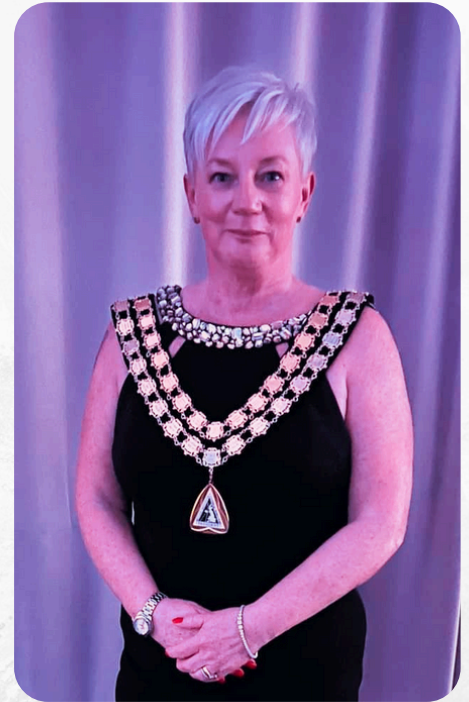
Can't believe its December already where has that time gone, so just a short letter from me this month keeping you up to date on my travels as President.

I have been out and about over various part of the country these last few weeks, I was in Nottingham at Westerleigh's Gedling Crematorium for the unveiling of their interactive wall that is a beautiful way to celebrate a loved one's life, the wall was created by Obitus, the picture quality, graphics and movement were amazing.

AI headed off to Birmingham for the Federation of Burial and Cremation Authorities Centenary Banquet that was a spectacular venue in the Library of Birmingham, from there up to Edinburgh to attend the funeral of Past President and National General Secretary Audrey Antoniuk,

In between traveling round the country, I have managed to get some down time to do my Christmas shopping and put up the Christmas trees at work and home. It will be hopefully a quiet Christmas at home this year for Adrian and myself.

Hope you all I have a lovely Christmas and a Happy New year, let's see what 2025 brings.



Remember to save the date for next year's conference 24th – 26th October 2025 at the Copthorne Hotel Slough- Windsor, which we hope to be an excellent weekend of education fun and food.

Best Wishes to you all, have a wonderful Christmas.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Amanda".

**Amanda Pink, Dip. FS, LMBIFD
National President, Region G**



Kayleigh Ingham

Editor, Region C

Wow, what a month it has been! From Deputy Editor to Editor in that time. It is not something I was planning on nor was ready for, but with a supportive team around me, let's give it a go.

In the meantime, I decided to write a piece on things that have changed in the world of funerals. As we all know, things are continuously changing, and although still offered, the "traditional funeral" is not the only option that families can choose, thanks to mostly technology, meaning families can make services personalised to them, rather than having a standard, set for all, service. To compare how things have changed, I recently caught up with Clive Pearson and Phil Gore, our 1st and 2nd Vice Presidents. Both are running companies who have been going for over one hundred years each. I asked each of them six questions about their company when they first started, and how they are now.

At this point, I would like to note that due to the age of Phil Gore's company, he can only answer so much, and his words are.

"I spoke to my father's generation between 1989 and 1992 about their early years, when engaged in a master's degree by research at the university of Kent at Canterbury, and a good deal of my comments here are based around this. Our family have an extremely long heritage within the funeral world, and I have tailored my answers to that part of the fairly recent history of Gore Brothers Ltd that I know about. I get the impression that there are plenty of folk who don't seem to know about the immense heritage behind many family companies that have not, as yet, disappeared into the corporate world. I can only tell you about my personal knowledge and any details before that in the near-three hundred years history of our company that I have discovered or known about from other sources."



1. Tell me about your business. When did it start, who started it, and if known, how did they become a funeral director?

Clive: The business started in 1920 by Alfred Bagley who was the son of the station master at the local station. He was a joiner, and, in those days, joiners were also undertakers. His son Peter Bagley took over the running of the business and still made his own coffins until retirement. I took over the business in the early 2003.

Phil: Gore Brothers Ltd became a limited company in 1927, but its funereal roots date back to 1736, nine generations before me. John Gore (b circa 1701), working from the shop his father Robert Gore (b circa 1670) had in King St Margate announced in the local paper on 14th April 1736 that he: 'undertakes to furnish Funerals with all sorts of Funeral furniture at reasonable rates' as the local trader, Mr William Laming, who used to do this had just died. You'll need to know a little about funeral history to know what this was all about, and in the Eighteenth century the styles in which funerals were furnished was a vital part of the whole process. So whether you had handles (of varying styles) in brass, silver or base metal and whether you had a linen pall, lace pall, velvet pall, or clothing in a stunning variety materials such as Norwich crape, Bombazeen, Poplins, Damask, broad Ducapes, dy'd (sic) linens, Cambricks, Muslins or anything else were only a few of the determining factors in how stylish the funeral was to become. For contemporary Eighteenth society, this was a vital part of the social process, and you could find your status severely damaged if the funeral didn't match your apparent place in society. How things have changed...! Of course to a very great degree this sort of practice is now redundant, but in these early days, the lowly sexton or opportunistic, optimistic 'hopeful funeral guy' would go to what was referred to as a furnishing undertaker, known in the early Twentieth century as 'funeral furnishers', to get what was needed. We have surviving letterheads from these latter days that proclaimed that our family firm could do this. The company title of 'Gore Brothers' dates back to a pair of brothers named Thomas (1825 – 1894) and Job in the mid eighteenth century, who both entered the family firm, which is where our trading name originates. I am part of Thomas' line and Job's line finally finished in 1968 when George B. Gore died. Prior to that it appears that only one representative from each generation got involved locally, as far as I could see. I have an article for the BIFD in the offing about 'casual undertaking', so I can speculate that my grandfather, Thomas Gore (1881 – 1955) was probably the first of our family to style himself as a funeral director, some eight or so generations after John Gore entered the complex world of funeral furnishing.

2. What were funerals like when the company first started?

Clive: Funerals were local to the village as every village had their own undertakers. The company would make a coffin specific to the person who had passed away. The deceased was laid out in their own home. Often in the front room. The village had many joiners and undertakers. Many of the joiners and undertakers stopped being undertakers as they didn't evolve by making a funeral home which was a modern thing to do in the 50's.

Phil: Well, it's difficult to answer this question with any degree of accuracy, since there hasn't been anyone about for me to ask about anything from more than seventy years ago, apart from my dad, Thomas James Gore (1915 – 2015). But I can tell you that stuck out at the back of nowhere, where Margate is, everything was very local. Six generations ago, when James Gore was a ships master in 1793, the sea was a vital trade route, as roads were very basic. I know that from our Nineteenth century records the average time to travel to London and back for a funeral was seven days (compared to a couple of hours today, when the M2 isn't too busy) so I imagine that a great deal or what my forbears did was home grown.

3. What was the average cost of a funeral?

Clive: Around £20

Phil: Again, there is too wide a timescale to give you any meaningful idea, but when I asked my father's advice in 1989 about breaking into the £1000 a funeral territory (and asking him if he thought the general public would be ok with this) he countered with the comment that in the nineteen sixties his board of directors had a similar conversation about breaching the £100 mark for a funeral. Times change, but the value doesn't. Only the number of noughts.

4. What are the main differences between your company from then to now?

Clive: Over the years the company has evolved being the first in the area to build a chapel of rest. Work doesn't just come from the village we now go everywhere. No longer a one-man band as we have 4 permanent staff along with casuals. Use to hire vehicles in, now own the vehicles. Larger up to date mortuary facilities. More equipment for carrying out removals helping to make it easier – we used to have to carry a first call stretcher all the way – now we have stretchers with wheels.

Phil: Margate has been a reasonably small town until the last thirty years, when urban sprawl has made our quiet corner of the world part of the district of Thanet, which seems to be lurching towards being nothing, but houses built upon arable land. What I can tell you is that when I became a director in 1984, I felt that we had to grow into our locality, to retain our influence and enhance our family company. Our one office in Addington Rd had been the office from which timber was sold (between 1870 and the second world war) and in these cramped surroundings my father and his business partners had worked, sometimes in very crowded conditions. My father started work in 1932 and in his early tenure, it was almost unheard of for families to visit a 'funeral office' because things didn't really work that way. So, when I became the youngest member of our board, this seemed a sensible (and primary) task to bring us more up to date. In addition, I was certain (with the next youngest member of the board) that we had to grow into our suburbs, something that my father's generation had stoutly resisted, with excuses of varying subtlety. So now we operate over six sites, and our five branches are in Cliftonville, Westgate, Birchington, Broadstairs and Ramsgate. We moved about 400 yards from our outdated premises in Addington Rd in 2000, and we work in the luxury of having central premises that are both almost free from steps and more easily heated. Previous generations of my family liked living and working in the stone age, in difficult and cold conditions, I have often thought. My father (and previous generations) employed craftsmen, who could make anything out of wood. The last of these retired when I became a director, and it was only at that point that I realised how very gifted they had been. Now we employ individuals who have no craft skills, are paid a small fortune and essentially are really good at visiting hospitals and nursing homes, cleaning and driving cars and producing what I could call a 'good funeral performance.' We also have an army of forward-facing women who spend their entire working days administering the process of 'funeralising.' I mention this because in the decades up to the second world war, burial in cemetery or church yard was by far the most common event, and the admin for this was microscopic, compared to the complexities of cremation processes.



5. Are there any differences you would like to see for funerals in the future? Either for your company or in general.

Clive: I don't anticipate significant changes to the traditional structure of funerals in the future however, it is likely that innovative methods of body disposal will emerge. I am optimistic that legislation will be enacted to prevent unqualified funeral directors from establishing operations and to ensure that they operate from appropriate facilities. No doubt we will lose the traditional petrol/diesel vehicles in the future to some more modern ones – whether battery operated ones will take over, or another new fuel will be used we shall wait and see.

Phil: I have come to the conclusion that it is unwise to speculate about the future, as we can only think about this in terms of what we know in the present. I think that it is a reasonable development for misguided families to contract out of a funeral into the direct cremation route, but at least this gives families an alternative, however misguided these choices might be. I think that the issue of 'water cremation' or resomation may become a more popular option, since this is far more environmentally sensitive than the current 'energy-expensive' and wasteful process of cremation. My father thought decades ago that eventually burial would become too expensive for anyone apart from the well off. This now seems to be the case.



6. What advice would you give to other companies, to stay in business through things changing?

Clive: Make sure you evolve with the times. Always re-invest in the company when you can. Have a good working relationship with other funeral directors where you can help each other out when required.

Phil: Well, I have a whole process to deliver around this topic, but I could summarise this as being more responsive to the needs of families, which involves careful listening and tailoring what you can do to fit the needs of families. This is more complex than it appears and whilst there is a ton of technology to help any funeral company, I don't think that you can replace good old fashioned personal service with a laptop or digital processes.

As you can see from their answers, their companies have had to adapt to a lot of changes in order to keep going as long as they have. I agree with the advice that they have given, to keep up with changes. All of us are serving in a country with a variety of different cultures and religions, which have their own funeral rites and customs, and we need to listen to each one of them to understand everyone's needs when it comes to funerals. We are not providing a one size fits all service anymore. With the advancement of technology, vehicles and hopefully regulation on the horizon, just to name a few of the changes that can affect us, we all need to be prepared for any changes and keep up to date with them, so we don't get left behind and can keep serving our families to the best of our abilities.

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Phil Perry
Obitus

Tuesday 24th March 2020 will always be etched into our memories as the day our nation shut down.

On the government's instructions, almost everything stopped; we were told to stay indoors and isolate ourselves from the world. Face masks became commonplace and when we had to venture out, it was only for essential products. Social distancing was introduced to try and reduce the spread of what was the deadly Coronavirus. Not everything stopped, however. Food retailers continued to keep our nation fed. The NHS continued to keep our nation well and treat those who had contracted the virus. The emergency services continued to keep our nation safe and secure. And funeral professionals continued to serve, and to give those who had passed the best possible funeral, in the most challenging of times.

Often overlooked, and perhaps underappreciated, funeral professionals across the nation worked tirelessly to take the increasing number of deceased into their care, often risking their own safety in this unprecedented time.

Just like everyone else, they too lost loved ones during the pandemic, and yet, they put their own grieving on hold to fulfil the greater need of coping with the volume of deaths that were occurring. They cared as best as they could for the bereaved, reassuring families that the final journey of their loved one would still be dignified and would not be taken alone.

As a business that supports funeral services, we desperately wanted to help play our part in supporting everyone affected by the pandemic. We quickly recognised the critical role that live streaming was likely to play in helping families say goodbye to their loved ones.

Live streams of services became an increasingly popular option for families – being more than just a way to include long-distance relatives. Streaming during the pandemic allowed even the closest family members to feel comfort in being a part of the service. Whilst government restrictions prevented many people from physically being at the venue, streaming allowed family members to feel comfort in being a part of the service, and meant that it could be shared with those close to the deceased.

As the demand for streaming at Obitus-served venues increased rapidly, our team knew we needed to be as prompt as possible to provide this important line of support for families. To ensure that as many families as possible had the option of remotely viewing a service, our engineering team focused on making sure that every crematorium under our care had everything they were asked for by families. Most of them even lived out of motor homes, isolating together to make sure we could deliver the work needed during this difficult time. They were away from their own families for prolonged periods, installing new technology, replacing old kit, and dealing with issues whenever and wherever they arose.

We understood the vital importance of providing and maintaining our equipment at the venues and what it meant to grieving families to be able to have the best service possible.

During this period, Obitus managed to support 526,000 funeral services and enable 215,000 webcasts. We are proud to have been able to support so many families during this period, even though we do appreciate our role ultimately was only a small one, compared to others in the bereavement industry.

Thanks to crematorium staff, funeral directors, officiants and everybody else that contributes even a small part of what makes a funeral, families were able to see and feel part of their loved ones' funeral, ensuring deceased received a dignified send-off in the most difficult of times and through the amazing efforts of so many people, we survived Covid-19 as a nation.



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Ticket Price: £120 In-Person (including refreshments and lunch), £60 Online

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A special send off for Melody on Remembrance day 2024

Hayley Owen-Barker

MBIE Dip.f.d LMBIFD CTLLS



What is a Melody? It is a sequence of single notes that are musically pleasing to the listener. Melody certainly lived up to her name. She was always a happy Melody who spread love in her words. She was a woman full of compassion for others, always trying to be a peacekeeper. Her children were brought up with sayings of 'if you haven't got anything nice to say, don't say anything, and 'walk a mile in his moccasins before you criticise and accuse', or 'cast your bread upon the water in many days it will return' and she often quoted the story of the good Samaritan too.

When Melody was aged 6, the second world war broke out. Her mother worked in a munitions factory, and children were being evacuated to the countryside or camps. 2664 British children were sent abroad to Canada, Australia, New Zealand and South Africa. Melody's mum had already lost a child and feared losing another. Melody escaped the bombing in Birmingham on 5th August 1940 at the age of 7 to embark upon an arduous, dangerous journey to the safety of Australia. She went aboard one of two ships carrying 100s of children, known as The Singing Ships. Her ship was called the MS Batory, which was filled with 500 children. Melody was there with her mother, but many of the children on the ship to Australia were unaccompanied by parents who were simply desperate to get their children to safety. They began the six week journey, but a few weeks in, tragically, the other ship was torpedoed, with loss of all lives. The Batory continued but of course everyone feared for the lives of those children too. Thankfully Melody and her mother were safe on the sister ship, and Melody always said Australia was her happy place where she had a carefree childhood.



Melody's mother contracted TB when they were in Australia, and she couldn't work to support them, so they returned to the UK, Melody's mother fearing, she might be orphaned.

Upon their return, on 19th July 1942, the war was in full flight, and the journey was dangerous, on a grain ship, inevitably a target bringing supplies to the UK. They sailed 6 weeks on the Corneville and reached Belfast, stopping there as it was too dangerous to continue on to Liverpool. Melody recalled seeing the grave yards of ships masts in the sea from sunken ships. Birmingham had been flattened by bombing, as had Bristol and other places too. Another three years of her childhood Melody lived through the war, until she was 12. She recalled the worry of waving her half brother Barry off to war at the railway, wondering and worrying if she would ever see him again, and hearing bombs overhead and going off when inside the air raid shelters. She recalled having a box with a gas mask with her at all times, blacking out the windows and cars with no headlights. She remembered hearing planes overhead dropping bombs like it was all she knew for three years, as well as listening to the radio about the battles of Britain, Dunkirk and Monte Cassino.

Melody's teenage years to her early 20s were filled with war heroes and bomb sites, war veterans with shell shock and terrible injuries. Unknown to her, her future husband was fighting in Italy and had been badly injured.



Melody passed away peacefully on October 22nd aged 91 years at home with her loving family at her side. Making funeral arrangements with Melody's family was a privilege to take care of a loving lady whose life had been so full of energy, interests and family.

Discussions had already been in place about Melody's funeral and her details were on file in the office a few weeks previous to her death. Hopefully making this easier for her family when the time came to call us at the time of need.

It seemed very significant that Melody's funeral was arranged to take place on November 11th, 2024, being Remembrance Day as her whole life from being a young child was involved in war, Melody would always wear her poppy and have a great respect for remembrance day and what it meant to so many other people. Her late husband surviving being badly injured and Melody's very lucky escape as a child moving from one place to another lived with her throughout her life.

choices made for her special sendoff were truly fitting, her daughters had seen a D-day coffin that we had purchased from Steve Soult a few months before that was to be used in our November window display marking Remembrance Day.

Melody's order of service was designed with poppies on the front to also continue the significance of her special send off.

On the day of melody's funeral, her family gathered at our premises to follow the hearse to melody's home address and then onto Colton Methodist Church, Leeds we paused in silence at 11am to remember all those who have fought and died in conflicts past and present.

Guidance from the funeral director creates the most suitable send off for every individual. Clients sometimes depend on our knowledge and trust us to make suggestions to make a funeral especially special, Melody's funeral was this as the choice of a bespoke coffin and order of service were significant to her life and to have a service on Remembrance Day was truly fitting.

Words from the poem 'Judge softly'- Melody often quoted 'walk a mile in his moccasins', and perhaps these few verses from the poem give us a little summary of Melody's attitude to life.

Don't be too harsh with the man that sins.
Or pelt him with words, or stone, or disdain.
Unless you are sure you have no sins of your own,
And it's only wisdom and love that your heart contains.
For you know if the tempter's voice
Should whisper as soft to you,
As it did to him when he went astray,
It might cause you to falter, too.
Just walk a mile in his moccasins
Before you abuse, criticize and accuse.
If just for one hour, you could find a way
To see through his eyes, instead of your own muse.



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Christmas is a time for family, joy, and togetherness. But for families like Anthony's, facing the loss of a loved one, they can also bring profound sadness.

Karlet, Anthony's sister, shares her heartfelt story about how, even in his final days, her brother's love for life and family never wavered.

Affectionately known as her "BFG" by his sister, Anthony was a larger-than-life character, known for his deep, booming voice and passion for music. His love of fast cars, his Mum's Jamaican food and walks in the Peak District came second to just one thing: the love for his family.

Anthony developed diabetes in his early 30s, but despite his declining health, his spirit remained strong – he was still just Anthony.



“He was that big brother that I could speak to about anything. We would talk about life and could be on the phone for hours. He was ever so caring and wanted to make sure everyone was well.”

After receiving a heart breaking diagnosis from the hospital, it was time for the hospice to step in. But Anthony didn't go to the hospice alone – the whole family came too. They had heard the news, and were coming down, en masse, to the hospice to see him.

“Wherever we go, we are a big family. And we like to do things as a family. We have Christmas parties. We like to eat food. We like to be together. We have a lot of nieces and nephews and some of them have their own kids as well.”



It was early autumn, and the family knew that they might not get Christmas together. So, with the help of St Ann's Hospice in Manchester, they came up with a plan.

They brought Christmas Day forward – to October.

“He didn't know it was a surprise. He didn't know so many people were going to be there. He adored his family and loved seeing everyone in his space, just for him.”



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FUNERAL BUSINESS WITH EXCEPTIONAL REPUTATION RUN BY DAUGHTERS OF FOUNDER JOINS FUNERAL PARTNERS

Sisters behind a true family run Funeral Directors set up more than 70 years ago say protecting their father's legacy was a key reason for choosing to join Funeral Partners.

George Brooke Funeral Directors was formed in 1952, initially offering joinery and building services, but later specialising solely in funerals.

Founder George was hands on in the business until he passed away in 2008, working alongside his wife Audrey who provided back of house support.

Their children Neil, Helen and Judith have all worked for the company, with Neil retiring three years ago from his role which mainly focused on masonry.



*George Brooke Funeral Directors Business Principals
Helen and Judith Brooke*

The two sisters, who have been working in funerals for close to 80 years combined, remain in charge of the day-to-day operations at their two funeral homes in West Yorkshire having grown up around the business.

Helen said: "It is still such a fulfilling job, and the business has supported generations of different families.

"We both think it is an honour to look after people and truly believe it is a privileged position for us to be in."

Speaking about joining Funeral Partners, she added: "We have spoken to other Funeral Directors who have joined, and they were all very pleased with their decision, talked us through their experience and encouraged us to go for it.

"Protecting the employment of our team was also very important to us because without them we would not be able to run the business. Funeral Partners guaranteed job security for our team, plus the opportunity for them to access excellent training and additional support.

"The first few weeks have been a whirlwind, there has been a lot of emotion, the integration process was so thorough, and the Acquisition Team were all very helpful."

She added: "Another reason for joining Funeral Partners was that we were determined to keep our dad's name as a legacy for our family business – we felt it deserved to live on in our community,

"He was a wonderful man and ahead of his time in a lot of ways.

"For example, I remember more than twenty years ago, he wanted to do something about teaching children about death, which has been the subject of a recent campaign supported by the NAFD.

"I'm sure that, if he had lived longer, he would have put a lot of energy and effort into helping with that initiative'

"I am confident with the support of the Funeral Partners experienced management team, investment in our teams, new processes and procedures to benefit our clients, our new website and marketing support will stand us in good stead for the future success of our business."

Funeral Partners CEO Sam Kershaw said: "I am proud that another business with a reputation for exemplary care, respect and understanding has chosen Funeral Partners as their acquisition partner.

"I am delighted that both Helen and Judith will continue to run the business, with both of them having had exceptional careers in the funeral industry in their own right, we welcome their wealth of experience to the Funeral Partners family."

For more information about the business, visit <https://georgebrooke.co.uk/>

For more information about Funeral Partners and the acquisition process, visit

<https://corporate.funeralpartners.co.uk/>

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Your reputation is our reputation



FUNERAL DIRECTORS RAISE £8,000 FOR LOCAL CHARITY IN SUPPORT OF MUCH-LOVED COLLEAGUE

A Funeral Directors got back in the saddle for their annual race night to raise vital funds in honour of a colleague who is battling Motor Neurone Disease (MND).

The thoughtful team at WH Putnam Funeral Directors, which has branches in Harrow and Edgware, raised £1,500 at the special event for the North London Branch of the Motor Neurone Disease Association.

This makes a total of £8,000 raised for the cause, chosen because Jerry Bentley, the Hub Manager for WH Putnam and other Funeral Partners brands in East London, is living with MND.

Senior Funeral Director Lee Dimmock organised the night where supporters tried to back their winners and work out who would be first past the winning post.



Senior Funeral Director Lee Dimmock with a cheque for the North London Branch of the Motor Neurone Disease Association

“It was another brilliant event, and we are delighted to have raised another £1,500,” Lee said. “When you’re supporting a cause which is close to everyone’s hearts, it makes a real difference. “We are always keen to back the North London branch because we know how much they directly help Jerry, and other people who are in similar positions.”

For more information about WH Putnam Funeral Directors, and their community work visit <https://www.whputnam.co.uk/>

Details about the work of the North London branch of the MNDA can be found at <https://www.mndnorthlondon.org/>

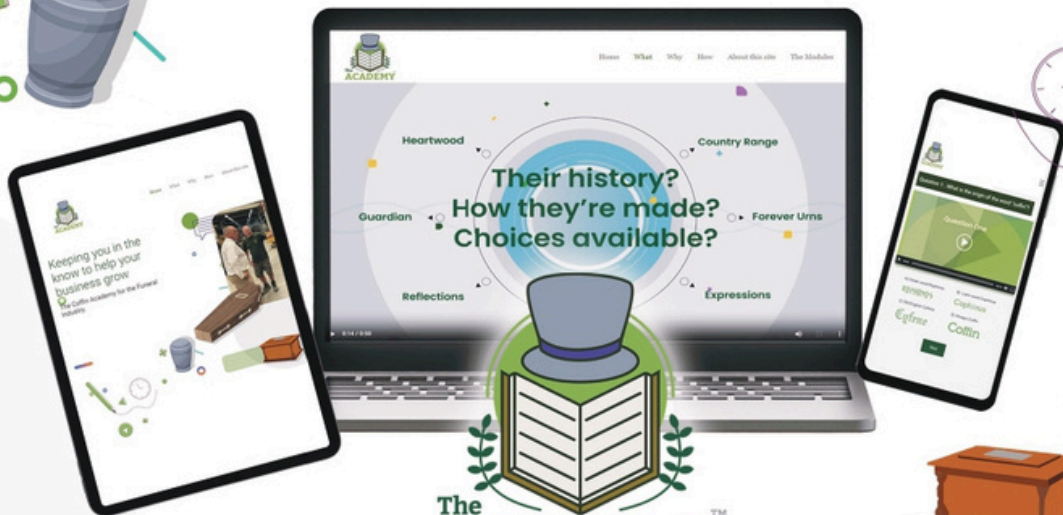


Funeral Partners is the UK's third-largest funeral business, with more than 230 funeral homes staffed by over 1000 dedicated funeral professionals serving communities across England, Scotland and Northern Ireland.

Chief Executive Sam Kershaw has over 40 years of experience in the funeral profession, joining the business back in 2016 as Chief Operating Officer. Funeral Partners, which celebrated its 15-year anniversary in 2022, has grown rapidly, building a strong reputation as a well-run, high-quality funeral services business overseeing more than 25,000 funerals each year.

It now includes more than 130 family businesses, which have entrusted their reputation and heritage to Funeral Partners.

Where can I learn about coffins? | 🔍



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Save THE Date



We are pleased to be working with our FBCA colleagues in delivering next year's joint conference which will be held at:

**Hilton Southampton
Utilita Bowl**

JUNE | 23-25 | 2025

Our conference programme will provide essential updates and topical papers to ensure delegates are fully updated and ready to address the many changes facing the sector.

Please do follow CBCE on LinkedIn or X to receive further updates and announcements.



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Laurelo Manifesto: Putting Families First, Always

Why work with us?:

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Clear Communication: Legal jargon and hidden fees have no place here. We promise transparent costs and clear processes, guiding families through each step with understanding and empathy. Our aim is to demystify probate, making it as straightforward and stress-free as possible.

A Personal Touch: For us, it's about building relationships, not billable hours. We meet clients where they feel most comfortable – in their homes. We listen, we understand, and we provide the tailored support.



We're more than a business – we're a family. But not all of us are bound by blood. Instead, we're bonded by something even stronger: a shared love and a commitment to looking after families the way they deserve.

Founded from a place of personal experience and a heartfelt desire to make a difference, we've made it our mission to challenge the traditional approach to probate.

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*Merry Christmas
and a
Happy New Year*

From all
at the
BIFD Team

SAVE THE DATE
43rd Annual Conference



October | 24~26 | 2025

ADVERTORIAL

This year, MuchLoved tribute pages have collectively raised a wonderful £30 million in donations for UK based charities, hospices and good causes. Each donation represents the power of remembrance to connect people as they share memories and celebrate the life of a special person. This milestone isn't just about a number; it's about the lives that our tribute pages have touched, the communities brought closer together, and the vital causes supported in memory of loved ones. It shows how meaningful online memorialisation can be. We know that for some it has the power to transform grief into something positive. Equally important is for tribute pages to be a space to remember, in the hope that they offer some comfort and solace for the bereaved. Many families revisit their tribute pages in years to come, sometimes adding a new thought or candle, as a way of continuing their bond with the person that has died.

Our tribute pages also provide a way for a wider community to come together. As funeral directors, you sit at the heart of your communities, connected to the families you look after and the local charities and causes that they support. By creating tribute pages for your families, you are doing so much more than collecting in-memory donations. You enable them to receive messages of condolence and provide a place to share lasting memories.

As we celebrate this achievement, we continue to look forward. Every tribute shared, candle lit, and story told teaches us something about how we, as a society, remember, grieve, and connect.

much loved

Neil Davis, MuchLoved CEO, commented on the milestone:

“Reaching £30 million in donations this year is a testament to the incredible generosity of families and friends coming together to remember their special persons. It's about so much more than fundraising—it's about creating meaningful spaces where people can remember, connect, and find comfort in sharing memories.

This milestone inspires us to keep innovating and sharing insights that help make it easier to talk about death and bereavement. By fostering these conversations and connections, we're not just supporting charities; we're helping to shape how we, as a society, navigate loss and remembrance.”

Through thoughtful innovation and a commitment to supporting families, we hope to keep building spaces where memories are shared, and love endures. Together, we're creating a future where talking about death and dying is easier and remembering is a shared, healing experience, that is as unique as the person remembered. Thank you, from everyone at MuchLoved, for working with us this year to support bereaved families around the country.





much  loved

Your place to share cherished memories

funeral notices • online donations
independent reviews • website services

We now work with Funeral Director Websites to deliver your online growth.
For more information: 01494 722818 • support@muchloved.com • muchloved.com



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And we will for the next 30 years.

FSA/FFMA CALLS ON PROFESSION TO VERIFY QUALITY OF PRODUCTS OFFERED TO BEREAVED FAMILIES

Laws around product labelling are very straightforward. Labels must not be misleading about things such as: quantity or size, price, what it's made of, how, where and when it was made, what you say it can do and the people or organisations that endorse it.

This means that if you describe a coffin as sustainable, made of a particular material or suitable for cremation, for example, you need to be able to evidence that this is the case. Recent issues, that have come to light have related to issues such as describing a coffin as solid wood when the bottom is made of plywood, or describing a casket as sustainable, without the proper accreditation to support this assertion, risks falling foul of Trading Standards.

One topic right at the heart of this issue is the manufacture of high quality coffins. After a number of issues were raised by crematoria, where coffins had damaged cremators by leaving sticky residue on surfaces - and by funeral directors, who had the distressing experience of carrying a coffin that proved not to be robust enough, the Funeral Furnishing Manufacturers' Association (FFMA) launched the Coffin & Casket Testing Protocol.

Since launching in 2016, the Protocol has been deployed to test close 200 products made by the Association's 50 plus members, who comprise a high percentage of the British coffin making sector. Coffin materials checked under the Protocol range from oak veneer and wicker to picture coffins and cardboard.

The aim of the testing scheme is to ensure coffins, caskets and even shrouds are safe for use in both cremation and burial settings, bringing peace of mind to bereaved families, crematoria and burial ground operators and funeral directors.

And with the rise of online coffin sales on e-marketplaces, the need to uphold quality standards has never been greater.

FFMA Chief Executive Alun Tucker said the Protocol had become the universal kitemark for quality in coffins. "We're incredibly pleased with how the scheme has embedded itself within the sector as the standard for quality assurance in just a few short years. And with over 180 products tested so far, we can be confident that the majority of coffin and casket ranges presented for funerals are of exceptionally good build quality.

"This is essential to families, who need to know that the products supplied for a loved one's final journey will perform as intended. It's also a vital health and safety issue for funeral directors and employees at crematoria, cemeteries and burial grounds. The last thing anyone wants is a coffin or casket igniting too soon during charging at a crematorium, or the base collapsing whilst lowering into a grave."



FSA

Funeral Suppliers' Association

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Question: What do these coffins have in common?

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Answer: It's the Symbol of Approval

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The Wilcox team wish you a
Merry Christmas



As the festive season approaches, we would like to extend our warmest wishes to our valued customers and partners. We are incredibly grateful for your continued trust and support throughout the year. We hope this holiday season brings you joy, peace, and cherished moments with loved ones.

Photo taken by CJ Williams Funeral Service

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