



Welcome to your newsletter

Many people mistakenly believe that the business of funerals is a one dimensional profession concerned only with the ceremony of burial and cremation.

However, whilst this could be viewed largely as true, there is also a peripheral world that exists alongside the 'core' profession. You only have to watch the news or surf the 'Net' to observe that bereavement in all its forms abounds.

Society's problem with obesity impacts crematoriums and, indeed, the manufacturers of embalming equipment and, as you will see from this edition, the transient society in which we now live is impacting the way families collect – or do not collect – the remains of their cremated relatives.

Some clerics bemoan the fact that parishioners no longer take pride in the parish church graveyard, as they once did, whilst lonely soldiers with no family see huge congregations at their funerals thanks to social media. As always we try to keep you abreast of what

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Cremated Ashes Gather Dust



Unclaimed cremated remains

Around 100 urns containing the ashes of cremated relatives and dating back to the 1980's, are still sitting on the shelves at Eric F. Box's Dewsbury funeral home.

That's according to Richard Box who explained the situation following revelations by the National Association of Funeral Directors that as many as 250,000 urns across the UK may remain uncollected with little prospect of them being disposed off.

"This has been a recurring problem for many years," said Richard. "There are many reasons why people fail to return for ashes and explanations can be as varied as a family rift to failing to move on from someone's death.

"In a strange sort of way whilst ever ashes remain on our shelves it means someone can avoid 'closure'. By not saying goodbye some people believe their loved one still remains with them. More to the point if they put off scattering the ashes for long

enough, someone else may have to make the decision, which means they don't."

One Scottish firm decided to take positive action. "They took out a large advert in the city's evening paper, naming the deceased for whom they were holding ashes. Some were collected by family members but those that weren't were scattered in a dignified ceremony along the River Clyde."

Richard said this situation was the exception rather than the norm.

"Our urns date back to the 1980's and, officially, we are not allowed to scatter them ourselves without the express permission of a relative. But what if there is no relative around or no family member has been in touch

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for years? It is not an ideal situation and, truthfully, we probably need a change in the law that allows funeral directors to formally scatter ashes within a pre agreed period if no one has been to collect them."

Alan Slater, Chief Executive of The National Association of Funeral Directors said: "It is our suggestion funeral directors retain cremated remains for a minimum of five years, after which they can dispose of them in an appropriate manner, providing they have made every effort to trace the next of kin."

Background Source: Daily Mirror

Below: Some urns remain uncollected for years



Cremations On The Rise

When the Catholic church lifted its ban on cremation in the early 1960's another of society's taboos was consigned to the history books.

Thousands of people began to view cremation in an entirely different light accounting, perhaps, for the Cremation Society of Great Britain's latest statistics which indicate that the number of funerals resulting in cremations rather than burial, has more than doubled in the last 53 years.

Around 588,000 deaths were recorded in 1960, 34.7% of them resulting in cremations. However, whilst the number of deaths had fallen to 580,000 last year (provisional figures), the number of people being cremated had risen to 75%.

The statistics, compiled in association with the Federation

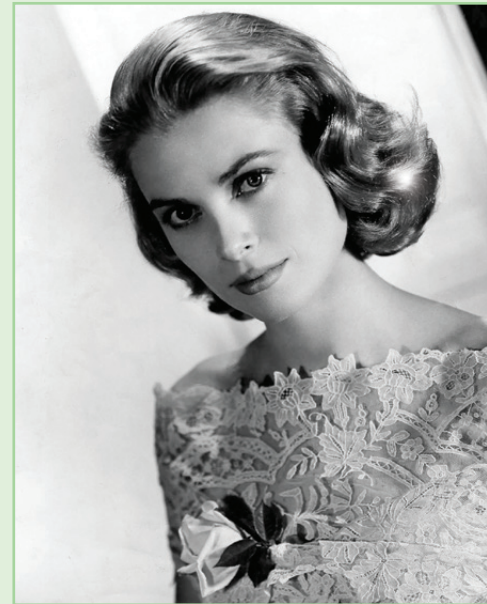


of Burial & Cremation Authorities, also indicated that West Yorkshire's 11 crematoria carried out 15,909 cremations, among the highest figures in the country.

Richard Box said: "On the one hand cremations have become more acceptable. However, on a more practical note the number of crematoria has increased dramatically over the last half century, rising from 148 in 1960 to 270 in 2013."

Source: Funeral Services Journal

Iconic Funerals: Grace Patricia Kelly (1929-1982)



She was the American girl who had it all - first as Hollywood royalty then as Princess Grace of Monaco.

Grace Patricia Kelly may have become the toast of Europe after marrying Prince Rainier III, but, before they met, she had already won an Oscar and carved a reputation for herself as a Tinsel town icon and a public favourite.



The marriage of Grace Kelly and Prince Rainier III

But her time on this planet wasn't to last long. Retiring from movies and TV at the age of 26 Kelly walked up the aisle to wed her prince in April 1956. Twenty five years and three children later she was dead.

On September 13, 1982, Princess Grace was driving back to Monaco from her country home in Roc Agel when she had a stroke, lost control of her car and plummeted down a 120ft mountainside.

Her daughter Stéphanie, who was in the passenger seat, unsuccessfully tried to regain control of the vehicle and, when paramedics arrived at the crash site, her mother was alive but unconscious. Both were transported to the Monaco Hospital where doctors tried to stop Grace's internal bleeding during surgery whilst performing CAT scans to diagnose her brain damage.

Despite their efforts, her head injuries – in addition to her fractured ribs, collarbone, and thigh – were irreparable. Doctors believed that she had suffered a minor stroke prior to the crash and, the following night, at 10:55pm, Princess Grace died at the age of 52 after Prince Rainier decided to take her off life support.



Kelly died in 1982

Princess Grace's funeral was held at the Saint Nicholas Cathedral, Monaco on September 18, 1982 and, following a Requiem Mass, she was buried in the Grimaldi family vault. Over 400 guests attended the funeral, including US First Lady Nancy Reagan, Diana, Princess of Wales, and Cary Grant. The eulogy was delivered by James Stewart.

Prince Rainier, who did not remarry, was buried alongside her following his death in 2005.

Ghost Bike Legacy Of Le Tour

The 'ghost bike' phenomena, which appeared to start following last July's hugely successful Tour De France, has made another appearance, this time on Huddersfield Road in New Mill.

That was where 70 year old cycling champion John Radford was severely injured after being struck by a car. He died at home later after sustaining severe brain damage from which he never recovered.

Now, several months on since his death, a poignant white bike has appeared on the roadside where he was injured, but no one seems to know who left it there.

It isn't the first time that such a tribute has appeared on a UK roadside and many people, using the inspiration of the Tour De France, have been leaving their own tributes to loved ones and friends.

"These white ghost bikes are a very moving tribute to the people they purport to 'remember'."

said Edward Box. "What began as a 'yellow bike' promotion for the 'Tour' has evolved into a more permanent but equally positive legacy," he added.



Above: Wellwishers prepare to install a ghost bike



John Radford (inset) and the ghost bike memorial

Photo: Courtesy of the Huddersfield Examiner



Burials Through Time... Yahrzeit & REMEMBERING THE BEREAVED

According to the Hebrew calendar Yahrzeit (in Yiddish "time (of) year") is a tradition during which family members remember their dead relatives. It is observed as a solemn day of remembrance when the main expression of the Yahrzeit is reciting the Mourner's Kaddish Prayer and lighting a Yahrzeit candle for 24 hours.



Yahrzeit candle

The candle is lit on the eve of that date and burns for 24 hours, symbolically representing the soul and spirit of the deceased, whilst the mourner's Kaddish prayer is recited three times a day as part of morning prayer (Shacharit), afternoon prayer (Mincha) and evening prayer (Maariv).

Traditionally people fast on the Yahrzeit of their parents, avoiding wine and meat, whilst many synagogues record the names of their dead members on one of the building's walls, turning on special lights on the Yahrzeit of each person. All the lights are then simultaneously lit during the Yizkor ("remembrance") service.

Invariably synagogues read the name of the deceased at Friday evening

and Shabbat morning services and, in the Jewish tradition, mourners visit the graves of the deceased, fast and/or make a charitable donation.

Upon lighting the Yahrzeit candle, relatives are invited to say:

"We give thanks for the blessing of life, of companionship, and of memory. Though our loved one is beyond our sight, we do not despair, for we sense our beloved in our hearts as a living presence. I light this Yahrzeit candle in loving memory of _____ who has gone to his/her eternal resting place. May his/her soul be given life everlasting and may his/her memory always remain a comfort and source of inspiration."



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is happening in the world of funeral direction.

Enjoy the read and we welcome your comments be they in writing, verbally or by email. You can always drop our editor, Phil Hopkins a line on philh@theh2.co.uk, or even go onto the Eric F. Box website (www.efbox.co.uk) and make your thoughts known to us there.

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