



Welcome to your newsletter

It's been a period of change at the various crematoriums in the region over the last few years. Wakefield, Huddersfield and now Dewsbury Moor have been feeling the benefit of investment, despite the economic challenges that have beset the UK in recent times.

Hopefully the minor disruptions at Dewsbury, outlined in this edition, will be worth it when viewed against the positive improvements that will happen between now and the end of the year.

And are our burial plots fit for purpose? That's the question that many will continue to ask as more and more of the next generation fall into the 'seriously obese' category. A double plot could mean a double charge for families. What do you think? Fair? Tell us!

And just as families of the 'overly large' may have to splash out on double sized plots so others might have to seek the help of local authorities. But is it because

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Dewsbury Crematorium Delays Warning



Dewsbury Moor Crematorium

As Kirklees Council puts the finishing touches to its makeover of Dewsbury Moor Crematorium, families are being warned to expect possible delays ahead of a temporary closure and reduced opening hours.

A mercury abatement plant is being installed to bring the Heckmondwike Road facility up to standard, so that it complies with environmental emissions legislation, and the local authority is also using the opportunity to refurbish other parts of the crematorium at the same time.

At the time of writing scaffolding is due to be in place until July 18 with reduced operating hours from 12.45pm to 3.45pm.

And, as part of the overall 16 week programme, the crematorium will also close from July 19 to August 31 to enable installation

of the mercury abatement plant, and completion of the external improvement works. Further reduced opening hours will then take place from September 1 to October 12 when again, opening hours will be limited to 12.45pm to 3.45pm.

Additional work will include a replacement canopy at the front entrance, installation of a covered flower terrace, renewal of the Book of Remembrance walkway and installation of a new Book of Remembrance cabinet.

New double exit doors are also being installed at the rear and both the facility's CCTV and fire and burglar alarm systems will be upgraded. The main grounds and Book of Remembrance will remain accessible throughout the work.

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Meanwhile Huddersfield Crematorium will provide extra services if needed during the work at Dewsbury Moor, while Kirklees Bereavement Services are liaising with Wakefield, Leeds and Calderdale councils to provide extra services if required.

Andrew Box said: "Huddersfield Crematorium was given a substantial makeover a couple of years back, and completion of this final phase at Dewsbury Moor represents an investment across both sites of somewhere in the region of £2m.

"The facilities will not only be among the best in the country, but they will also be legislation compliant and 100% supportive of political drives to reduce emissions.

"The mercury abatement plant is a huge step in the right direction and a few minor delays is a small price to pay for such a substantial gain in the longer term."

Obesity Challenge For Kirklees Graves

As the problem of obesity continues to dominate UK headlines, funeral directors in Kirklees are already reaping the unjust rewards of a society preoccupied with fast food and a reducing exercise regime.

That is the view of Edward Box as a Lincolnshire council recently announced its intention to make 30 larger sized graves available for the seriously obese.

The super-sized plots, up to 8ft wide rather than the usual 4ft, will be located near the entrance of Sutton Bridge burial ground.

But Edward Box maintains that Dewsbury funeral directors have already been observing changing trends in public health.

"We have buried several obese people at Dewsbury Cemetery and, not only have we had to

commission specially reinforced coffins, but each has had to be wheeled to the graveside on a trolley.

"Obesity is becoming more prevalent as are double sized burial plots. However, lowering something the size of a large wardrobe into the ground is less than elegant, and shouldering such a large coffin is impossible. Nevertheless I fear we will see more such burials in the future," he added.



Local Authority Funerals On The Up

The number of people given a local authority funeral last year rose by 36% when compared with 2009.

The figures became available after 78% of councils challenged under freedom of information legislation responded, enabling a picture to be drawn about so-called 'pauper funerals'.



But Richard Box maintains that the word 'pauper' is both misleading and outmoded.

"There was a time when local authorities stepped into the breach if relatives of the deceased were unable to pay, hence the words 'pauper funeral'.

"Now, however, some people die but have no surviving relatives, meaning the local authority may simply be a funeral facilitator. We had one such case where a deceased man – buried by the local authority – left £100,000 in his will. He certainly was no pauper."

Where money is an issue, such funerals are usually 'basic' with the deceased sometimes cremated anonymously or buried in mass graves. Most buried in such a way last year were either elderly or the middle aged who had lost touch with their relatives.

Iconic Funerals: General Francisco Franco (1892-1975)

Francisco Franco Bahamonde – better known as Spain's fascist leader General Franco – was as controversial in life as he was in death.

Not only was he the youngest general in Europe by the 1920's but, within a decade, Spain's right-wing military dictator was left reeling when the monarchy was removed and replaced with a democratic republic in 1931.

At the 1936 elections the conservatives fell and the leftist Popular Front came to power. Looking to overthrow the republic Franco and other generals staged a partially successful coup, which started the Spanish Civil War, Franco quickly becoming his faction's only leader.



Francoist casualties of the Spanish Civil War. Franco is the only person interred in the Valley who did not die in the Civil War.

Unlike the fallen of the Civil War who were laid to rest in the valley exterior to the basilica, Franco was buried inside the church. His grave is marked by a simple tombstone engraved with just his Christian name and first surname.

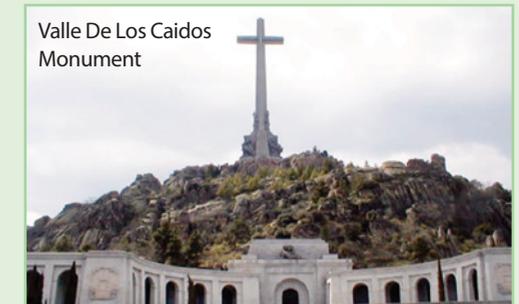
Franco's funeral was attended by the Chilean dictator General Augusto Pinochet, Bolivia's dictator General Hugo Banzer, Jordan's King Hussein and US Vice President Nelson Rockefeller.

Leaving half a million dead, the war was eventually won by Franco in 1939. He established an autocratic dictatorship, Francoist Spain, which he defined as a totalitarian state, installing himself as head of state and government.

Franco established a repression which was characterized by concentration camps, forced labour and executions, mostly against political and ideological enemies.

After ruling for nearly 40 years, he died, aged 82, in 1975 after falling into a coma, but having first restored the monarchy naming King Juan Carlos I as his successor. Juan Carlos led Spain's transition to democracy.

After Franco's death he was controversially buried at Valle de los Caídos, a colossal memorial built by the forced labour of political prisoners to honour the





Burials Through Time... MEXICANS

Mexico's Day of the Dead is one of the country's most popular holidays and is the time of year when people remember dead family members by building special altars that include sugar skulls, Marigold flowers, food and those drinks the deceased used to love.

The holiday is part of a two day celebration. November 1st is the Day of the Little Angels when Mexicans celebrate babies and children, and, 24 hours later, is the Day of the Dead when people honour deceased grown-ups, visiting cemeteries to pray for their deceased loved ones.

The origins of the holiday are some 2500-3000 years ago in rituals commemorating the death of ancestors by numerous nations indigenous to Mexico including the Olmec, Zapotec, Mixtec and Aztec.

Skulls were kept as trophies which owners presented as symbols of death and rebirth. There was one ancient Aztec festival which honoured the goddess Michtecacihuatl or Lady of the Dead.



She was the Queen of "mictalan", or the Underworld, who ruled together with her husband Mictlantecuhtli. Her duty was to take care of bones of deceased people.

For most Mexicans the Day of the Dead is a good day for communication between the living and the dead, explaining why all Mexican cemeteries are full of people on this day. Graves have special decorations with people building mini 'altars' featuring food, beverage and other objects dearest to the deceased person.

Different generations of the deceased get different presents - dead children ("los angelitos" or "angels") get toys, whilst famous Mexican beverages like tequila, mezcal, pulque and atole are left on adult 'altars'.

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they're so-called 'paupers' or just lonely people? You decide.

Enjoy the read and, as always, 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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