



## Welcome to your newsletter

It's been a summer to remember, with the Queen's Diamond Jubilee setting the tone for a season of celebration – culminating in the tremendous London 2012 Olympic Games and Paralympics.

What a spectacle and what an achievement! The last few months have made many of us intensely proud of our small island.

You may have noticed that the newsletter you are holding is in a new format (it won't be quite as obvious to those of you reading this on the website). We chose the smaller size as it is easier to handle and find your way around. But that's just our view. Let us know what you think.

Recycling is an important issue for all of us, and opposite we've highlighted how the funeral industry is playing its part.

A warm welcome to our new Coroner for West Yorkshire Peter Straker.

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## Life goes on



Our Swaledale coffin made using sheep's wool

### Individuals and businesses are becoming more in tune with their surroundings

We live in a world where the words 'sustainable' and 'recycling' are all around us.

From getting extra life from bottles and cans to handing over the London 2012 Olympic site to be used by the community, we now have a keen eye on what we're leaving for future generations.

The funeral industry is no different and has very strong 'green' credentials stretching back years.

At Eric F Box we do all we can to operate responsibly and support new developments to protect the planet.

We were very interested to hear that a number of crematoria in this country are now recovering

metallic artificial joints for recycling, following a lead from mainland Europe.

The latest issue of The Funeral Director told how there is a growing industry in recycling everything from steel pins to titanium hips and cobalt-chrome knees that previously were left for interment.

Obviously there are ethical issues to be addressed, namely having respect for human life. We have no doubt that this will be a growing area in future.

In our business we take care to use only those coffins made from wood taken from Forestry Stewardship Council (FSC) sources.

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**LIFE GOES ON**

This means that for every tree used to make a coffin, another is planted in its place.

Our coffin covers are made from cardboard, another recyclable material.

A more recent development has been the use of woollen coffins, with the wool from three sheep wrapped around a rigid frame. A firm near us in Pudsey, Leeds, makes these coffins.

Since they were featured in the local media we have noticed a steady increase in enquiries and have used them in around a dozen eco-funerals so far.

As Richard Box says: "Concern for the environment is going to increase, particularly with the next generation. I can see the funeral industry having to market itself very differently in the future."

## Coroner takes post

West Yorkshire has a new coroner following the retirement of Roger Whitaker.

Peter Straker took up his post in July to serve the districts of Huddersfield, Bradford and Halifax. He was born in Northumberland and trained as a surgeon.

Mr Whitaker had served for 15 years in more than 7,500 inquests and dealt with between 75,000 and 80,000 deaths.

Nationally, the Lord Chief Justice in consultation with the Lord Chancellor has appointed His Honour Judge Peter Thornton QC as the first chief coroner of England and Wales.

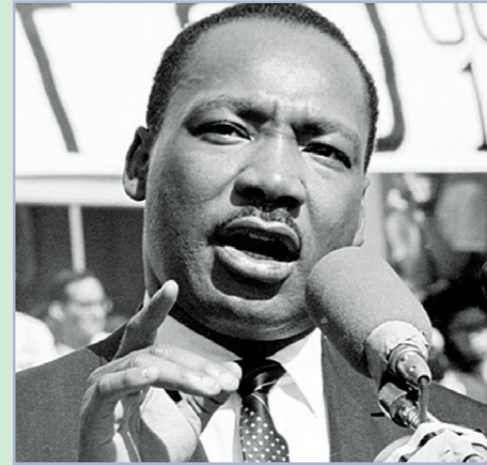
HHJ Thornton is currently a Senior Circuit Judge at the Central Criminal Court. He also has experience of the coronial

system, having conducted the inquest in 2011 into the death of Ian Tomlinson during the G20 protests.

He starts his duties next month and will continue to sit in the administrative court to hear judicial reviews.



## Iconic Funerals: Martin Luther King Jr (1929-1968)



Martin Luther King Jr's funeral was "one of the darkest hours of mankind" mourners heard.

Some 1,300 people gathered in the Ebenezer Baptist Church in Atlanta, Georgia, where the civil rights activist and his father had both served as pastors.

King had been assassinated earlier that week in April 1968 by a gunshot wound to the shoulder as he led strikers in Memphis, Tennessee.

President Lyndon B Johnson declared a national day of mourning but it didn't stop deadly riots in a number of American cities between King's death and the day of his funeral.

Labour leaders, foreign dignitaries, entertainment and sports figures and religious representatives attended the private service. President Johnson stayed away over fears he may face protests and Vice President Hubert Humphrey attended instead.

His widow requested that King eulogize himself and his last sermon at the church was played, during which he said that he tried to "feed the hungry", "clothe the naked", and "love and serve humanity".

King's casket was loaded onto a wooden farm wagon pulled by two donkeys and took a three-and-a-half mile journey from the church to

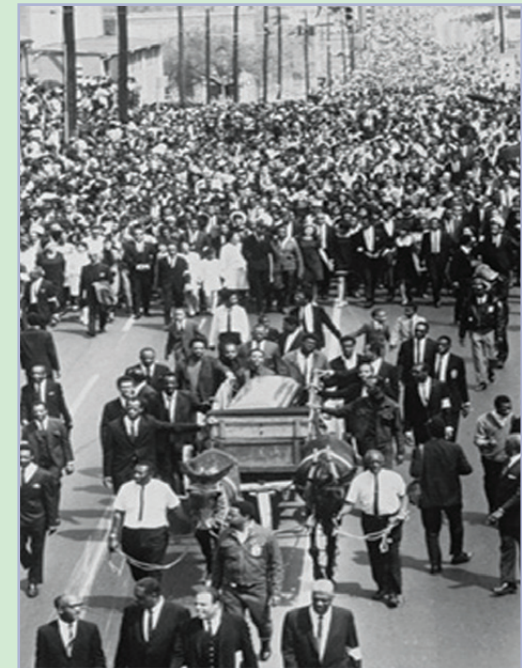
Morehouse College, seen by up to 100,000 people.

The procession was silent though accompanied on occasion by the singing of freedom songs, as had many of the marches in which King played a part. Jesse Jackson led the procession beside the family.

At the public and final service, college president Benjamin Mays, who had given the benediction after King's "I Have a Dream" speech, eulogized King.

Following the funeral, King's casket was placed onto a hearse for his final trip to South View Cemetery, a burial ground reserved mainly for African Americans.

His remains were exhumed in 1977 and reburied at what is now the Martin Luther King Jr National Historic Site in Atlanta.



His tombstone is engraved with the words: "Free at last, free at last, thank God Almighty, I'm free at last".

## Crematorium work begins

Eric F Box has welcomed improvements to Dewsbury Crematorium.

The series of replacements and facelifts will include providing a better car park, a new cremator and a canopy to protect mourners from the weather.

The staged upgrade is in place of a new crematorium that had to be scrapped due to spending cutbacks.

The crematorium stages 1,200-1,300 services a year and needs major work, said Edward Box.

He added: "The crematorium was built in the 1960s and wasn't suitable for the 21st century.

"These changes will certainly make the whole experience better for everyone who uses the crematorium.

"But it will take time; people can't expect 30 years of non-investment to be changed overnight."





## Burials Through Time... CHINESE DYNASTIES

The ancient Chinese believed that when a person died, he or she entered into the after life. As an ancient Chinese philosopher said: "Treat death as life."

Death was understood to be a prolongation of life and an emperor's mausoleum was his after-life palace, full of the regal trappings he enjoyed on earth.

All daily comforts, such as servants, attendants, objects, pets, wives, guardians, concubines, food and drink, were to be provided in the after life.

This meant burying all these things with the deceased and it was not uncommon to kill people in order that they were buried with their master! As dynasties evolved, clay replicas replaced the real thing.

The tombs of ancient emperors and other nobles were often very elaborate. The Chinese began to build large mounds over the

tombs, erecting small temples next to the mounds so family could leave offerings. These temples were also used for rituals to honour the deceased who was believed to have influence over the fortunes and well being of the living.

The path leading to the tombs were called "spirit paths" and were guarded by carved figures of soldiers, animals, or imaginary creatures called chimeras which came in pairs.

A handful of extraordinary tombs still exist and are visited by millions each year. One of the most famous is near the city of Xi'an where in 1974 farmers found the fragment of a warrior figure. This turned out to be part of the terracotta army of Qin Shihuangdi who ruled the Qin dynasty in 200 BC. An astonishing 6,000 life-sized soldiers, horses and chariots were created to protect him in the next world.

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And finally, we are delighted that improvements are starting at Dewsbury Crematorium. Like many people we are looking forward to using the new facilities.

Enjoy what's left of our Great British Summer!

In the event of a death at any time of the day or night, contact us at:

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