



Welcome to your newsletter

The entire bereavement 'process' never stops evolving.

In this edition we focus on 'natural' funerals and the drive by industry professionals to standardise levels of customer care with the introduction of a Charter.

And you may also be interested to read about 'digital' memories, those memories that continue beyond the grave on our laptops, Facebook and in blog posts. The 'way' we remember people is changing.

Emmeline Pankhurst was hugely controversial in her lifetime and equally controversial when she died, largely the result of her daughter's scandalous 'out of wedlock' pregnancy. Nevertheless Emmeline was a woman who shaped history and, in this edition, you can catch the flavour of her fascinating life.

And we hope you are interested to read about the Norfolk Coroner's work in the area of suicides. Meanwhile, as we go to press, Kirklees planners have passed our application for a

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'Natural' burial consultation ends



As interest grows in the concept of 'natural' burials, a major consultation which has just finished, could see the introduction of a UK wide Charter for natural burial grounds.

The Institute of Cemetery and Crematorium Management (ICCM) represents companies and local authorities that own more than 160 of the country's 260 sites.

And, last October, it set out to boost standards of customer care by drafting its Charter for the Bereaved and Natural Burial Grounds, which enshrines 10 rights and aims to develop a consistent level of service in both the public and private sectors.

Consultation on the document ended on January 10th and, over the coming weeks, feedback will be evaluated to determine the best way forward.

Richard Box said: "In recent years people have become more aware of the different aspects of bereavement, and 'natural' burials have gained more prominence since the early 90's. However, they are not for everyone although, where desired, I agree that there needs to be consistent levels of service and, I appreciate, that's what the Charter is seeking to standardise."

A natural burial is defined as one where the burial area creates or preserves an ecologically rich habitat, whether in the form of a woodland, wildflower meadow or farmland.

As well as focusing on ensuring consistent customer service, the draft Charter aims to allay any concerns the public may have over the future of any natural burial ground they select.

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People would have the right to receive transparent information from site operators on the future plans for the ground, as well as its ownership, operation and burial options.

Richard Box added: "There are mixed views about natural burial sites because there's been suggestions that local authorities should provide them adjacent to existing cemeteries, like at Lawnswood in Leeds.

"However, I dispute whether or not there is the uptake at such facilities because there are issues of both price and how 'natural' such public sector facilities are. They certainly aren't wild meadows in a rural setting that some people might be expecting. Nevertheless I await the outcome of the Charter consultation with interest."

Funeral Services Journal

When the deceased leave a digital memory

When people died in the past their memory extended to a photograph or fireside chats between surviving members of the family. Now, however, with the Internet there is the arrival of 'digital memories'.

Last year's Digital Death Day Conference in London highlighted how photographs of the deceased still proliferate the internet, whilst friends blog and upload information which keep memories fresh.

Newsletter editor, Phil Hopkins commented: "There's no better example than the sad demise of West Yorkshire motivational speaker, Clive Gott who died, suddenly in February 2011.

"He was very high profile and, even now, you can see the York Press' tribute to him. His

business and life partner, Elaine Hanzak blogged about him months after his death and other speaker colleagues, too, have made reference to the positive contribution he made to people's lives. Clive Gott is very much alive in 2013!"

Facebook has reported receiving hundreds of friend requests even after someone has died and, in the words of one surviving relative: "...his computer was just as personal and intimate and private as his bedroom."



Iconic Funerals: Emmeline Pankhurst (1858-1928)



She was jailed several times and participated in hunger strikes while in prison and, ironically, died a few weeks after British women were granted equal voting rights in 1928.

But it was a death racked by scandal. Emmeline's campaign for Parliament was pre-empted by her ill health and a final scandal involving her daughter Sylvia who 'proudly' gave birth out of wedlock, devastating her mother and tarnishing her other sister's reputation when the media referred to her as Miss Pankhurst, a title usually reserved for sister, Christabel.

News of Emmeline Pankhurst's death in 1928 was announced around the country, and extensively in North America. Her funeral service on 18 June was filled with her former WSPU colleagues and those who had worked beside her in various capacities. The Daily Mail described the procession as "like a dead general in the midst of a mourning army."

Women wore WSPU sashes and ribbons, and the organisation's flag was carried alongside the Union Flag. Christabel and Sylvia appeared together at the service, the latter with her child.

Press coverage around the world recognised her tireless work on behalf of women's right to vote— even if they didn't agree on the value of her contributions. The New York Herald Tribune called her "the most remarkable political and social agitator of the early part of the twentieth century and the supreme protagonist of the campaign for the electoral enfranchisement of women."

In presenting Emmeline Pankhurst's memorial to the public this is what former Prime Minister, Stanley Baldwin had to say: "Whatever view posterity may take, Mrs. Pankhurst has won for herself a niche in the Temple of Fame which will last for all time."

Born in 1858, Emmeline Goulden Pankhurst started the Women's Social and Political Union (WSPU) in 1903, and spent the next 25 years fighting for women's suffrage in England, sometimes using militant tactics like arson.



Coroner seeks to help family victims of suicide

A coroner who was having to deal with an increasing number of suicides, has introduced an initiative that he hopes will cascade across the UK and begin to provide assistance to the real victims of suicide – families.

Norfolk Coroner, William Armstrong, convened a conference so that bereavement experts, together with clergy, medical, nursing and social work professionals, could discuss the topic: 'Responding to Suicide: Exploring the effects and supporting the survivors.'

Now his aim is for the Norfolk Coroner's office to provide greater support for surviving families, and Mr Armstrong has urged other coroners to follow his lead.

Edward Box said: "Bereavement is a devastating emotion, however, if someone has been ill or simply died of old age, then families have usually prepared themselves for the inevitable.

"But, in the case of suicide, such deaths are usually unexpected leaving people with unanswered questions, feelings of guilt and other negative emotions. Mr Armstrong's initiative makes a lot of sense and a similar service would be welcome in West Yorkshire."





Burials Through Time... PARSEE CUSTOMS

A Parsi or Parsee is a member of the larger of the two Zoroastrian communities in the Indian subcontinent.

According to tradition, the present-day Parsis descend from a group of Zoroastrians from Iran who immigrated to India during the 10th century AD.

In Parsi Zoroastrian tradition, exposure of the dead is considered to be an individual's final act of charity, providing vultures with what would otherwise be destroyed.

Zoroastrian tradition also considers a dead body to be unclean and the Venidad (an ecclesiastical code "given against the demons") has rules for disposing of the dead as "safely" as possible.

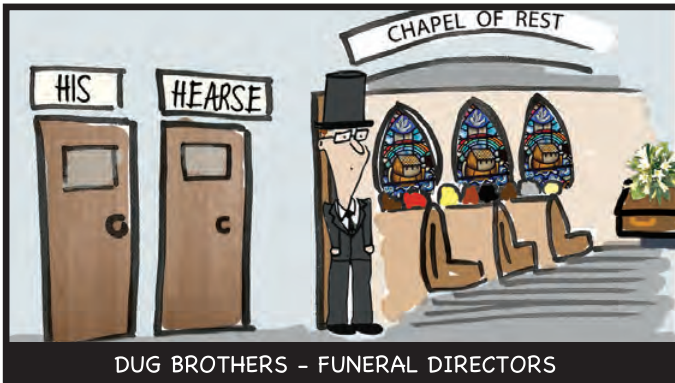
To preclude the pollution of earth, or fire, bodies of the dead are placed atop a 'tower of silence' and exposed to the sun and scavenging birds.



Zoroastrian Tower Of Silence

The towers have an almost flat roof, with the perimeter being slightly higher than the centre. The roof is divided into three concentric rings. The bodies of men are arranged around the outer ring, women in the second circle, and children in the innermost ring.

Once the bones have been bleached by the sun and wind, they are collected in an ossuary pit at the centre of the tower, where—assisted by lime—they gradually disintegrate and the remaining material—with run-off rainwater—runs through multiple coal and sand filters before being eventually washed out to sea.



DUG BROTHERS - FUNERAL DIRECTORS

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single storey extension to Box's Dewsbury bereavement home. Watch this space!

Enjoy the read and, as always, we welcome your comments be they in writing 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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