



# Welcome to your newsletter

We were puzzled to read that the average cost of a funeral in Britain is supposedly over £7,000! However, we don't concur with the GMB union's thinking, and it is certainly not indicative of what's happening in West Yorkshire. Read and enjoy the front page article in this edition, but remember, funerals are like houses – costs are invariably distorted by what's happening in the south of the country. Locally the reality is often very different.

As for death and bereavement, six generations of the Box family have been 'talking' about them since 1853. Now, however, it looks as though we have been ahead of our time according to a new survey which you can peruse on this page!

And, never a month seems to pass without us hearing about all things digital. Even Peterborough Cathedral is getting in on the act. Century old records are slowly being digitised with the internet in mind and genealogists should be interested by these latest developments.

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## Dying matters – so let's talk!

Dying Matters

Let's talk about it



Historically the British have been notoriously shy when it comes to talking about death. However, a new survey by the Dying Matters Coalition (DMC), has highlighted a contradictory trend emerging in Britain.

The DMC was set up in 2009 by the National Council for Palliative Care, to promote public awareness of dying, death and bereavement.

And, according to a recent survey of 2145 British adults, their four year crusade appears to be working, with 70% of people questioned saying they felt comfortable talking about death, with just 13% holding an opposite view.

"That's a big shift in public attitudes," said Richard Box.

"The Victorians were incredibly open about death, however, over the decades people began to use words like 'taboo' as society shifted away from talking about the most natural phenomenon in the world."

However, the survey, conducted by NatCen Social Research, Britain's largest independent social research organisation, also concluded that people were less willing to part with their cash when it came to planning a funeral.

Only 5% said they had a living will or advanced care plan, and only 11% had written plans for their funeral. It also revealed that less than half had discussed their wishes if they did not have long to live.

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“People need to translate this renewed communication into care plans, wills, and ensure that they take practical steps to avoid heartache or financial embarrassment for surviving family members,” added Richard.

Meanwhile, a controversial survey carried out by the GMB general workers’ union claims that Leeds City Council’s area is now the dearest in Yorkshire and Humber in which to be either buried or cremated.

Edward Box commented: “This survey has sought to produce ‘UK average’ funeral and cremation costs, but West Yorkshire is not London so to talk about the ‘average cost of dying’ in the UK being £7,000 – as the GMB survey does - is ludicrous. Such an approach can never truly compare apples with apples.”

*Source: Funeral Service Journal*

## Digital revolution continues

Future genealogists will have a much easier time than their modern counterparts as the digital revolution spreads its tentacles into the ever changing funerals industry.

One of the UK’s top 10 historic landmarks, Peterborough Cathedral, along with Brompton Cemetery in South West London, have now taken major steps to digitise key death records for upload to the specialist family history website [www.deceasedonline.com](http://www.deceasedonline.com).

All of the Cathedral’s available records from the mid 16th century onwards – and some records from the 12th Century – have been included, and Peterborough is believed to be the first cathedral to digitise its burial records for use online.

Meanwhile Brompton Cemetery has also had all its burial register and a range of other records



Peterborough Cathedral

digitised for the website. The cemetery is the first of the capital’s key seven cemeteries, constructed during the 1830’s and 1840’s, to join the rapidly expanding website database.

It was consecrated by the Bishop of London in June 1840 and records available online will include those of suffragette pioneer Emmeline Pankhurst, shipping owner Sir Samuel Cunard, auctioneer Samuel Leigh Sotheby and John Wisden, who founded the famous cricketing almanack.

## Iconic Funerals: Mother Teresa of Calcutta (1910-1997)



For all her good work, The Blessed Teresa of Calcutta, commonly known as Mother Teresa, had attracted her fair share of controversy by the time she was granted an Indian state funeral in September 1997.

To some people she was the mother of all mercy, whilst others accused her of failing to provide medical care or painkillers, misusing charitable money, and maintaining positive relationships with dictators.

Nevertheless, as well as being awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1979, this Albanian born Indian Roman Catholic Religious Sister, was given the ultimate honour – a state funeral – when she died aged 87.

And in late 2003 she was beatified by the Roman Catholic church, the third step towards possible sainthood, giving her the title “Blessed Teresa of Calcutta”.

In early life Mother Teresa founded the Missionaries of Charity, a Roman Catholic religious congregation, which in 2012 consisted of more than 4,500 sisters and was active in 133 countries, running, among other things, hospices and homes for people with HIV/AIDS, leprosy and tuberculosis.

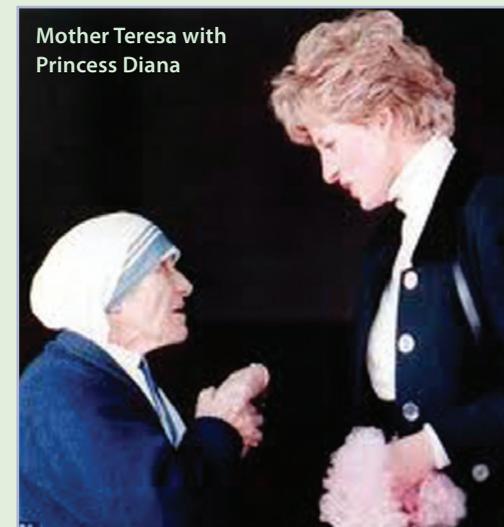
However, following a heart attack in Rome in 1983, while visiting Pope John Paul II, her health began to deteriorate. She had a second attack and, several years later, caught pneumonia.

In August 1996 she suffered from malaria and failure of the left heart ventricle, had heart surgery, but it was soon clear that her health was declining.

On 13 March 1997, she stepped down from the head of Missionaries of Charity and died six months later on 5 September 1997.

Mother Teresa lay in repose in St Thomas’ Church, Kolkata for one week prior to her funeral, and her death was mourned in both secular and religious communities.

She was buried on the ground floor of the Mother House on 13th September, 1997, and her tomb has become a place of pilgrimage and quiet meditation to people of all creeds.



Mother Teresa with Princess Diana



Mother Teresa in her coffin

## Respect for the dead or shampoo?

If you ever find yourself in The Cementerio del Norte, the Philippines’ largest public graveyard in Manila, you could be forgiven for thinking that you had just popped into the local supermarket!

That’s because hundreds of families have now turned the capital’s sprawling 54 hectare green space into their home, due to a chronic shortage of housing.

Not only has it become a normal neighbourhood, but century old tombs have been converted into stalls selling sachets of shampoo and instant noodles, clothes lines are strung between crosses and car batteries power radios and TV sets.

Mausoleum Inhabitants include some of Manila’s poorest people. Approximately 43% of the city’s 13 million residents live in informal settlements according to a 2011 Asian Development Bank Report.



Manila’s Cementerio de Norte

The country has one of Asia’s fastest growing populations - and a huge housing shortage – so the urban poor often have to find, build or cobble together housing anywhere there is space. Robberies and muggings are now said to be commonplace in the cemetery.

*Source: The Guardian*



## Burials Through Time... JAZZ

The Jazz Funeral is a tradition that has its roots in both Europe and Africa but is closely associated with the music traditions of New Orleans in Louisiana.

The result of numerous European and African influences, it established itself in the US where Louisiana was originally known for its brass bands which performed at funerals and other events.

Local African Americans began to combine their music with West African influences to produce what we now know as the Jazz Funeral.



seeks to represent a celebration of the deceased's life.

The words 'Jazz Funeral' are now quite generic, however, in the past the words were mainly used by observers of funerals whilst people who actually participated in the tradition referred to it as a 'funeral with music'.

Jazz Funerals are usually held for dead musicians, however, in recent years, more people have opted for them in light of their celebratory message. Popular songs performed at the jazz funeral are "Nearer My God to Thee" and "Just a Closer Walk With Thee".

Source: [http://traditionscustoms.com / Funeral Service Journal](http://traditionscustoms.com/FuneralServiceJournal)



Catholicism, Protestant Christianity, Mardi Gras Indians and Voodoo beliefs also influenced the Jazz Funeral which



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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](mailto:philh@theh2.co.uk), or even go onto the Eric F. Box website ([www.efbox.co.uk](http://www.efbox.co.uk)) and make your thoughts known to us there.

*Edward*  
*Richard*  
*Ande*

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

Eric F. Box Funeral Directors Ltd,  
Bradford Road, 7 Kingsway,  
Dewsbury, Ossett,  
WF13 2EW WF5 8AB  
T: (01924) 465402 T: (01924) 271612

E: [funerals@efbox.co.uk](mailto:funerals@efbox.co.uk)  
W: [www.efbox.co.uk](http://www.efbox.co.uk)

