



IN THE EVENT OF A DEATH
AT ANY TIME OF THE DAY
OR NIGHT, CONTACT US AT:

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NEWS

Welcome to your newsletter

Welcome to the sixteenth edition of Eric F. Box News, the newsletter compiled by some of the country's leading experts from the UK funeral industry.

In this edition we take a look at the introduction of the LifeGem diamond, a revolutionary concept that enables your loved one's ashes to be turned into a precious stone.

Also, in our Industry Focus feature, we take a look at mercury emissions and how they are affecting the environment. There is also our 'Burials from around the world' section and, in this edition, we explore Aboriginal funeral rites. However, if your tastes are more 'Western', then perhaps our 'Royal Funerals' feature will be of more interest; this time we look at the life and death of The Empress of India, Queen Victoria herself.

We hope you enjoy reading this Autumn newsletter and if we can assist you in any way, please contact us. Remember, if you have any questions or subjects you would like us to include in future editions, please let us know.

Edward
Andie Richard

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www.efbox.co.uk

The History of Cremation: Part 1

Here we start a new series, which will take an in-depth look at the history of cremation from its early controversial origins to its modern day evolution.

Nowadays around 80% of deaths in West Yorkshire are followed by cremation and the popularity of this death rite has grown over the decades. However, before cremation was accepted in England, supporters had to struggle against religious outcry and embedded social attitudes before they eventually triumphed. This first extract adapted from the British Institute of Funeral Directors

magazine, The Journal, focuses on the founding of the Cremation Society.

The story begins in the late nineteenth century when supporters of cremation, keen to see an alternative to burials, began to come to the fore; a key figure was Sir Henry Thompson who lived between 1820 and 1904. He had visited the Great Exhibition in Vienna in 1873, where Professor Brunetti - Professor of Pathological Anatomy in the University of Padua - exhibited a model of a furnace he had used to perform a cremation. Encouraged by this alternative method of disposal, and by Brunetti's

reference to graveyard pollution of air and water caused by the traditional burial, Thompson set up a meeting in Marylebone on 13th January 1874 with fellow supporters of cremation. A declaration was prepared and signed by all those present, claiming that they disapproved of burying the dead and, until a better method was devised, they would use cremation.

Four months later, the Cremation Society of England was founded. Amongst the 10 members were an author, surgeon, the political cartoonist of 'Punch', the editor of the British Medical Journal, a women's rights campaigner and a businessman. There was a price to join the Society, annual membership was set at one guinea (one pound and one shilling) and lifetime membership could be bought for a few guineas. The 'battle' for the right to be cremated had begun. Members knew they still had a long way to go to change modern social beliefs of the time about cremation, but at least they had taken a stand.

In our next instalment we will look at what struggles the Cremation Society faced over the coming months and years.



Diamonds are Forever...

Alternative ideas to burying or cremating a loved one are always hitting the headlines. Innovative methods of saying goodbye to a close friend or family member vary tremendously, one of the most recent - and more unusual - being LifeGem.

A LifeGem is a certified diamond that is created via a special process that extracts carbon from a person's cremated remains, and uses it to create a precious stone. Many people are now opting for the LifeGem concept following a cremation, as they want

stones that they can set into jewellery and treasure forever.

Diamonds can take millions of years to occur naturally and decades to discover, mine, cut, dress, export and sell. However, the makers of LifeGem guarantee their 'personal' diamonds in just 24 weeks using a four-step process of carbon capturing, purification, creation and certification.

Edward Box said: "The LifeGem is a unique keepsake alternative and is becoming increasingly popular. Deciding what to do with a loved one's remains is an



important decision for a family member and LifeGem is proving very popular with many."

LifeGems are available in a variety of colours including blue, green and clear crystal and carat sizes .20 to .99, depending on the individual's requirements.

For more information on the LifeGem service please Eric F. Box.

ROYAL BURIALS: QUEEN VICTORIA (1819-1901)

Queen Victoria became one of the youngest heirs to the British throne at the tender age of 18 following the death of King William IV in 1837. She was also Britain's longest-reigning monarch.

A characteristically warm hearted and lively Victoria was born in Kensington Palace on 24th May 1819. She clearly had a forceful personality and was often at odds with her prime ministers, particularly Gladstone. However, by the end of her reign she had raised the monarchy to new heights of affection with the public and Britain 'ruled the waves'...

Over six decades later and after 64 years as Queen, Victoria passed away on the 22nd January 1901 at Osborne House on the Isle of Wight. The state funeral was held on the 2nd February 1901 ten days after her death at St George's Chapel in the precincts of Windsor Castle. It consisted of a long procession by the funeral cortège through London's packed streets as thousands crowded to pay their last respects.

Historical documentation from the time suggests that the Royal Horse Artillery were unable to draw the gun carriage, and sailors of the

Royal Navy had to take over at the last minute to assist the funeral procession through the streets of London as it headed to its final destination at St George's chapel.



After the funeral, Queen Victoria's coffin lay-in-state for two days, guarded around the clock by Grenadier Guards in The Albert Memorial Chapel. The Queen was then taken to The Mausoleum, Frogmore, Windsor on the 4th February, where she was laid to rest next to her husband, Prince

Albert, who died forty years prior to her death in 1861.



BURIALS FROM AROUND THE WORLD THE ABORIGINES

In traditional Aboriginal society death is not feared, but is regarded as the time when an individual's spirit is released and returns to its sacred totem site. The totem pole is a recognised sacred aboriginal symbol where they believe reincarnation occurs. Traditional burial practice varies between language groups although there are key similarities.

Aborigines believe that mourning and burial acts must be carried out in a certain way in order to assist the spirit to the totem site, but if the funeral is not fully completed they believe spirits can become trapped between death and future life, preventing reincarnation from taking place.

Like most western funerals, Aboriginal ceremonies can also be upsetting occasions. After the funeral, the deceased's body may be left in a cave, the hollow of a tree or on a rock face, on a platform covered with smoke or simply buried in a woven branch coffin. Burial sites are regarded as dangerous places where spirits gather, and often families move away from the area after a funeral.

Following death the name of the deceased person also becomes taboo. To speak or use the name is classed as a lack of respect, not only to the deceased, but also their surviving family. Even words which sound similar to the dead person's name can be classed as taboo, which is why many surviving members often change their names as a sign of respect.



INDUSTRY FOCUS: CREMATIONS UNDER FIRE

As the eco debate comes more and more to the fore and the effects of global warming appear to manifest themselves on a weekly basis, the funeral industry is having to look inward.

A main contributor to global warming is mercury emissions. Mercury is toxic and accumulates in the air and water, and over exposure to this highly poisonous substance can harm the brain, kidneys, nervous system and unborn children.

However, whilst it is found in the air as a result of natural occurrences like volcanic eruptions and emissions from

the sea, the funeral industry also plays its part because 16% of all mercury emissions in the UK are the result of cremations.

This is caused by the breaking down of fillings in teeth and, because more and more of us are heading for the dental chair, this percentage is expected to rise to a whopping 25% by 2020 if no action is taken.

To combat this problem the Crematoria Abatement of Mercury Emissions Organisation (CAMEO) has created a 'burden sharing scheme', in which

crematoria operators can choose to either fit mercury abatement equipment, which can cost around £400,000, or contribute to the cost of other crematoria users doing so. CAMEO aims to halve UK mercury emissions from crematoria by 2012.

Andrew Box said: "It is very important that the funeral industry works together to try and reduce such mercury emissions. It is something that needs to be tackled head on before more damage is done to the environment. Everyone has their part to play."

For more information on mercury emissions, please contact us.