



IN THE EVENT OF A DEATH
AT ANY TIME OF THE DAY
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NEWS

Welcome to your newsletter

Welcome to the 18th edition of Eric F. Box News, compiled by some of the country's leading experts from the UK funeral industry. In this edition we bring you up to date with the changing face of bereavement services in Kirklees and continue our 'History of Cremation' series.

There is our regular feature, "Burials from around the world", and this month we explore some of China's traditions, whilst our Royal funerals section highlights the life and death of Queen Elizabeth I.

If you haven't already seen our new website, then click on to www.efbox.co.uk because there's lots of new information there. We've also taken the look of the site as the basis for our newly designed newsletter which will be launched in the next edition.

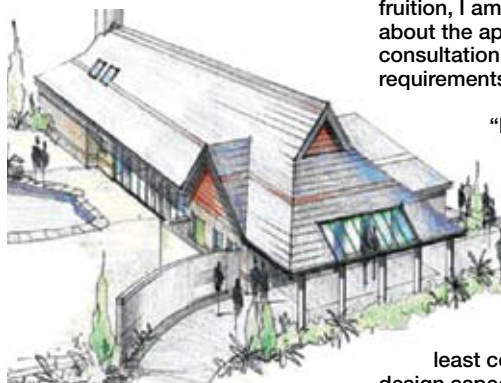
Remember, if you have any questions or issues you would like us to include in future editions, please let us know.

Edward
Richard
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If you would like to receive a PDF version of this newsletter, please visit our website. www.efbox.co.uk

£8.2m Bereavement Facelift For Kirklees

Edward Box has given a cautious welcome to the news that Kirklees Council has approved an £8.2m budget that will see the area's bereavement service facilities undergo a major facelift over the next three years.



Artist's Impression of Dewsbury Crematorium

As part of the investment, a new crematorium will be built at Dewsbury, the existing cemeteries at Batley and Slaithwaite will be extended, there will be a new cemetery at Fenay Bridge and Huddersfield's crematorium will also be refurbished.

Eric F. Box's General Manager, Edward Box, said: "For some considerable time the local authority has been debating whether to keep the bereavement service in-house, or outsource it to a private contractor.

"They took the decision to keep everything under their own roof so now it's time to turn words into actions. I welcome this long awaited investment decision and, whilst I look forward to seeing the promised changes come to fruition, I am a little concerned about the apparent lack of consultation on specific design requirements of the new facilities.

"Funeral directors and clergy know and understand the practical workings of crematoria so I hope that planners have the foresight to take advantage of this knowledge and at least consult us about key design aspects."

The existing crematorium at Dewsbury will continue operating while the new facility is built – work starts in 2009/10 with a completion date of 2010/11. It will feature mercury abatement equipment – as required by new Euro legislation - and a facility to accommodate over sized bodies.

Improvement work at Batley and Slaithwaite cemeteries have also been pencilled in to start in 2009/10, and work in Batley will include improved infrastructure, a new woodland burials area,

better grave management, an extension to the Muslim burial area and upgrading of the memorial gardens.

Work at Huddersfield Crematorium starts slightly later – 2010 – with a finish date of 2011/12 and, like Dewsbury, will see the introduction of mercury abatement facilities as well as a new cremator.

The new cemetery at Fenay Bridge will have similar facilities to those at Batley and, overall, Kirklees Bereavement Services Manager, Richard Forster said there will be generic improvements in general infrastructure including paths, trees, boundary walls and grounds maintenance.

Mr Box added: "The changes cannot come soon enough and, whilst I reserve final judgement on what the authorities eventually deliver, I hope it will mean a better service for both industry professionals and local families."



Batley Cemetery

The History of Cremation - Part 3

As we explained in Part 2, the Cremation Society pledged to the Home Secretary, Sir William Harcourt in 1878 not to cremate any bodies until the legal position had been clarified.

Four events between 1879 and 1885 led to this clarification, and we look at two of them in this article.

The first came in 1880 when Sir Thomas Spencer Wells made a case for cremation and collected signatures of British Medical Association members who supported his views.

Their declaration read: "(We) disapprove of the present custom of burying the dead, and we desire to substitute some mode which shall rapidly resolve the body... Until some better method

is devised we desire to adopt that usually known as cremation."

In 1884 an addition was made to the Cremation Society Declaration, stating that cause of death had to be documented before cremation could take place.

The second milestone involved a Captain Thomas Hanham, who was determined to have both his wife and mother cremated six years after their deaths, at Manston, Dorset in 1882.

He contacted The Cremation Society but, due to their 1878 pledge to the Home Secretary, they did not offer him use of their Woking cremation facility.

So Captain Hanham had his own cremator built in the grounds

of Manston House where both cremations took place.

Then following the Captain's death in 1883 a full Masonic funeral ritual was held before his cremation at Manston. Significantly the Home Office took no action.

In our next newsletter we will look at the two further events that led to the changing perspective on cremation.



The mausoleum at Manston House, Dorset

Please turn over for more articles.

ROYAL BURIALS: QUEEN ELIZABETH I (1533 - 1603)

The famous 'Virgin Queen' - Elizabeth I - may well have beheaded her make-up advisors had she lived long enough to wreak revenge!



That's because Elizabeth was believed to have died of blood poisoning caused by the application of her white make-up called ceruse, a deadly combination of white lead and vinegar. There was never a post mortem to confirm the theory!

Queen Elizabeth I, whose name has become a synonym for the era in which she dominated - 1558-1603 - was born in 1533 to Henry VIII and Anne Boleyn.

She inherited a tattered realm: dissension between Catholics and Protestants tore at the very foundation of society and the royal treasury had been bled dry by her half-sister, Mary I (Bloody Mary).

But under her rule, England prospered. It was indeed the 'Golden Age' and Elizabeth is now considered in the top rank of British monarchs.

Never married and without children, Queen Elizabeth I died on 24 March 1603 aged 70 but with no heir to the throne. She therefore named James VI of Scotland to succeed her.

In the days before her death she appeared unwell and seemed depressed. Elizabeth retired to one of her favourite homes, Richmond Palace, where she refused to rest in bed or allow doctors to examine her.

Her condition became worse and her ladies-in-waiting spread cushions across the floor - where she would eventually lay for nearly four days! She fell into a deep sleep and never woke up.

Elizabeth I's funeral procession consisted of over 1000 mourners, as well as many onlookers paying their last respects. The coffin, drawn by four horses, was draped in purple velvet and covered by a large canopy that was held by six Knights of the Realm. The effigy of Elizabeth that lay on top of the coffin was so life-like it made the people of London gasp!

Queen Elizabeth I was laid to rest at Westminster next to Mary - who had always disliked Elizabeth and had even imprisoned her during her reign! One can imagine what she would have said had she known that she would share her resting place with Bloody Mary for all eternity!



BURIALS FROM AROUND THE WORLD BEREAVEMENT IN CHINA

As in many cultures, burials are taken very seriously in Chinese society, because improper funeral arrangements are perceived to wreak ill fortune and disaster on the deceased's family.



The funeral ceremony traditionally lasts over 49 days, with prayer services held every seven or ten days until the final burial.

The wake must last at least one day to allow for the offering of prayers and a monk chants at night to ease the passage of the deceased's soul into heaven.

The corpse is cleaned and dressed in his/her best clothes - but never in red, the colour of happiness. All other clothing of the deceased is burned and the face and body are covered with cloth before being placed in the coffin.

Mourners are positioned around the coffin according to their rank in the family. Children and daughters-in-law wear black as they are considered to grieve the most, whilst grandchildren wear blue and great grandchildren, light blue. It is also customary for blood relatives and daughters-in-law to wail and cry as a sign of respect for the deceased. Any late arrivals must crawl towards the coffin!

The coffin is nailed shut, "holy" paper is pasted on it to protect the body from malignant spirits, and it is then carried to the hearse. Driving very slowly for one mile, relatives follow with their heads touching the hearse, or with a white piece of cloth linking them to it.

After the funeral all clothes worn by the mourners are burned to avoid bad luck associated with the death. The mourning period, symbolised by a piece of coloured cloth worn on the sleeve continues for a further 100 days.

ONLINE FUNERALS - WAY OF THE FUTURE?

A crematorium in Cambridgeshire has begun showing funerals, held there, as Internet webcasts.

Mourners can pay a one-off fee of £67.50 to access a live broadcast of the Cambridge Crematorium service, or buy a DVD or audio CD.

It is all part of an initiative to involve people who are unable to attend ceremonies in person.

The filming of services is done with a small, discreet camera at the back of the room and is streamed online with a 20-second delay.

Up to 3,000 cremations are carried out every year at the East and West chapels of the council-run establishment.

Alan Jeffrey, a director of Wesley Music, which provides the webcast service, said: "The feedback we are getting from families that use the service is incredibly positive. It is paramount in our minds, as a supply company, that there is a need for maintaining the proper element of dignity and respect to the point where if we ever felt the system was being abused in any way, we would simply withdraw it."

Richard Box of Eric F. Box said: "There is no denying where new technology is taking us and this is another example of the way the Internet is revolutionising our lives.

"Currently I am not aware of anything happening like this locally, however, if the Cambridge experiment - which has been running since the beginning of the year -



proves successful, I have no doubt that we will begin to see webcasts being offered at other crematoria around the country."