



Welcome to your newsletter

Welcome to the 19th edition of Eric F. Box News, compiled by some of the country's leading experts from the UK funeral industry. In this edition we look at the controversial subject of organ donation, whilst also including the penultimate part of our series on the 'History of Cremation'.

There are our regular features, "Burials from around the world" - this edition exploring the Muslim tradition - and our "Royal Burials" section about the life and death of King George VI.

We hope you enjoy reading our new-look Summer newsletter and, if we can assist you in any way, please get in touch. We always welcome feedback and, remember, if you have any questions or issues you would like us to include in future editions, please let us know.

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

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, Dewsbury, WF13 2EW
Tel: (01924) 465402
E: funerals@efbox.co.uk
www.efbox.co.uk



THE GROWING MORAL MAZE

Whilst organ donation has always been an important public health issue presenting a sensitive legal and moral maze, the gap between intention and reality among the UK public still seems extremely wide.



Despite the fact that, in surveys, 90% of British people say they want to donate their organs after death, only 24% of the population are registered.

There are currently more than 8,000 people in the UK who need an organ donation but only 3,000 transplants are carried out each year. It is estimated that one person dies each day waiting for an organ transplant.

To try and remedy this situation, and to increase the number of

organ donors in the UK, a system of 'presumed consent' was put forward but later rejected by Parliament.

Under such a system all UK citizens would automatically be listed on the organ donor register. If you did not want to donate your organs after death, then the onus would be upon the individual to remove their details from the register and 'opt out'.

DEBATE

Prime Minister, Gordon Brown supports the proposal, saying "A system of this kind seems to have the potential to close the aching gap between the potential benefits of transplant surgery in the UK and the limits imposed by our current system of consent."

However, Joyce Robins from Patient Concern sums up the argument against the proposals: "Presumed consent is no consent at all. We've worked for years to get a system of proper, informed consent in the health service in this country and Gordon Brown is willing to throw it all out of the window," she said.

In 2007, Chief Medical Officer for England, Sir Liam Donaldson

asked for the 'opt out' scheme to be reconsidered and 'presumed consent' is now under review by an Organ Donation Taskforce which comprises 20 experts - including transplant surgeons, anaesthetists and transplant co-ordinators. It has been reviewing all the practical, legal and ethical issues.

NEW INITIATIVES

The Taskforce has already proposed a range of initiatives to the Government as alternative options to 'presumed consent', including strengthening the network of dedicated organ retrieval teams to provide 24 hour cover and improving donor coordination services.

It is due to report its findings on presumed consent imminently and we will feature the results on the introduction of the 'opt out' scheme in a future edition.



THE HISTORY OF CREMATION - PART 4

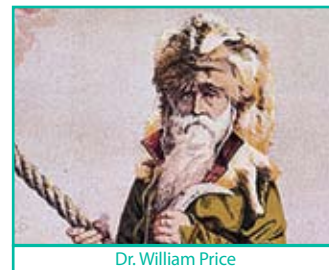
In our last edition, we looked at the first two events that led to the legal clarification of cremation - The Cremation Society Declaration and the cremations of Captain Thomas Hanham and family at Manston, Dorset.

In this penultimate editorial, we look at the third and fourth events that eventually led to the first official cremations at the UK's first crematorium in Woking in 1885.

The third had no connection to the Cremation Society but was instrumental in clarifying the legal position on cremation.

Healer, Dr. William Price, cremated the body of his five-month-old son in 1884. An inquest later determined that death was due to natural causes and not foul play as rumoured.

Mr. Justice Stephen said: "I am of opinion that a person who burns instead of burying a dead body does not commit a criminal act, unless in such a manner as to cause public nuisance."



Dr. William Price

The final event was in April 1884 when Dr Charles Cameron introduced the Disposal of the Dead (Regulations) Bill in Parliament to legalise cremation.

Despite the result of 79 votes for and 149 votes against the Bill, the Society - encouraged by the decision in the Price case - conducted their first cremation at Woking in March 1885.

The Times carried the following announcement: "CREMATION - Arrangements are now completed for the use of the CREMATORIUM of the CREMATION SOCIETY of ENGLAND." The Society had finally achieved its goal of having an alternative mode of disposal, to burial, of the deceased.

In our next edition we shall feature our concluding article, exploring the issues of suitable coffins, transport and ash disposal from the early cremations.

ROYAL BURIALS: KING GEORGE VI (1895-1952)

When George VI was buried on 15th February 1952 it was a funeral with a difference because, for the first time, millions of people were able to witness the dignity of a Royal funeral for the first time via television.



The monarch, who had reigned for 16 years died peacefully in his sleep at Sandringham House on 6th February 1952, aged just 56, after suffering from a worsening lung condition.

The House of Commons was suspended as a mark of respect, with Prime Minister Winston Churchill saying, "We cannot at this moment do more than record the spontaneous expression of grief."

The day following her father's death, Princess Elizabeth immediately became Queen aged 25.

As the news of the King's death spread, flags in every town were set at half-mast, sports fixtures were cancelled, cinemas and theatres closed and BBC programmes were cancelled except for news bulletins.

A crowd began to gather outside Buckingham Palace during the afternoon, and by 2100 GMT the police had to press the growing number of mourners back from the gates and on to the pavement.

A popular monarch after 16 years on the throne, the news of George's death was

greeted with shock and grief throughout the world. In the United States, President Truman paid tribute to the King.

He said, "He shared to the end of his reign all the hardships and austerities which evil days imposed on the brave British people.

"In return, he received from the people of the whole Commonwealth a love and devotion which went beyond the usual relationship of a King and his subjects."

The funeral took place on 15th February and, dressed in black, the new Queen, Queen Mother, Princess Margaret and the Princess Royal rode in the first carriage, followed on foot by the Dukes of Edinburgh, Gloucester, Windsor and Kent.

The cortege of foreign royalty, heads of state and the armed forces began its dignified progress through London at 0930 GMT as the first of Big Ben's 56 chimes began.

The Imperial State Crown, the Gold Orb, the Sceptre, the insignia of the Order of the Garter and a white wreath from the Queen Mother were placed on top.



The funeral party arrived at Paddington to the refrain of Chopin's Funeral March and the royal train left for Windsor at 1220 GMT. After a brief service the United Kingdom and Commonwealth observed two minutes' silence at 1400 GMT to mark the final passing of their wartime monarch. King George VI was buried at St George's Chapel on his Windsor Castle estate.

Burials From Around the World ISLAM

The preparation and burial of a deceased Muslim occurs according to Islamic law and custom, with both the deceased's family and wider Muslim community actively involved.

When it becomes known that a Muslim is dying, family members can often be found at his or her side, helping their dying relative to think about their transgressions and praying for Allah's forgiveness and mercy.

Upon death, those present normally close the eyes of the deceased, bind the lower jaw to the head and cover the body with a clean sheet. The family then wash the body in accordance with Islamic rites and, unless a spouse is present, males must wash males and females must wash females.

This usually takes place privately three or five times using water, soap and a cloth and, after washing, the body is shrouded with white material. Embalming is prohibited, as is an autopsy, unless required by law.

The local community joins the deceased's family for funeral prayers (Salat-ul-Janazah), a collective obligation for Muslims.

Often taking place outside the Mosque, at certain times of the day according to the sun's progression, the purpose of the funeral prayers is to request pardons for all deceased Muslims. The most closely related male leads these silent prayers, though the Imam, or another knowledgeable Muslim, may do so.

Only men attend Muslim burials, and only Muslim men should lay the deceased's body in the grave. This male should be a relative if the deceased is female.

The burial should take place as soon as possible after death, however cremation is prohibited for Muslims, even if it is requested.



A FINAL MARK OF RESPECT

As 'lack of respect' seems to be on the increase in modern Britain, the Society of Allied & Independent Funeral Directors (SAIF) now claims there is an increasing lack of respect for funeral corteges.



Richard Box, who is the 5th generation of the Box family to work in the firm, and a senior figure in the UK industry, said: "There was a time when it was unheard of to pass a funeral cortege because there was an unwritten code of respect.

"However, we now live in a fast moving society that invariably wants things 'now'. It's not that people are being intentionally disrespectful; they are simply in a rush. Sadly, it's a reality of living and working in 2008."

Another product of modern motoring are 'road humps'. Mourners attending a funeral in Preston, Lancashire recently, had to get out of the limousine on the way to the church and walk so that the vehicle could clear the humps!

DUG BROTHERS - FUNERAL DIRECTORS

HE WAS A VERY
CLAUSTROPHOBIC
PERSON!

