

Welcome to your newsletter

Welcome to the twenty-first 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 some of the varying technological advances in society, and the benefits they bring to both the funeral industry and wider community.

Our 'Royal Burials' section concluded in our last newsletter, so in this edition, we launch our 'Iconic Funerals' feature, which will explore the lives and deaths of some of our biggest icons. To bridge the gap between Royalty and Icons, we begin with the King of rock 'n' roll, Elvis Presley.

Also, in our regular 'Burials Through Time' feature, we take a look at the funeral tradition of the Saxons, whilst our Industry Focus looks at the new Cremation Regulations legislation that is currently passing through Parliament and is due to take effect from the New Year. You can also take to heady heights as you read about the hanging coffins of China!

We hope you enjoy reading this winter 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.

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

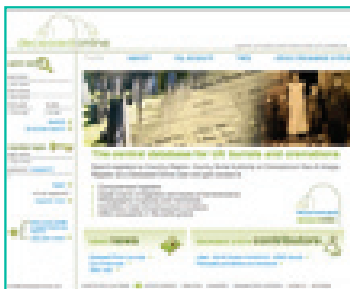
Eric F. Box Funeral Directors Ltd,
Bradford Road, 3 Station Road,
Dewsbury, Ossett,
WF13 2EW, WF5 8AB
Tel: (01924) 465402 Tel: (01924) 271612
E: funerals@efbox.co.uk W: www.efbox.co.uk

The funeral industry goes high tech

There was a time when the Mormon church in America's Salt Lake City had the exclusive reputation of managing one of the most comprehensive 'people' databases in the world.

However, with the advent of the internet and the hyper growth of social networking sites, it was only a matter of time before greater access to this technology was to follow.

Nowadays most cemeteries and crematoria have progressed from manual to computerised archive systems and, this summer, a new, national database – www.deceasedonline.com – launched to compile the many separate UK records into one place.



It will enable individuals to search, free of charge, the names of the deceased and when they died. Deceased Online will also help genealogists to research the records of many cemeteries and crematoria in one go, as opposed to accessing each one individually.

Alongside these advances, people are also utilising the Internet's unique spin on social networking.

Individual Web users have been creating virtual tributes to their friends and relatives, and social networking sites, such as Facebook and Myspace, are filled with profiles specifically created in loving memory of different people.

Consequently websites such as www.lastingtribute.co.uk have been developed to enable bereaved families to leave tributes, or spread the word about funeral arrangements. It used to be a classified ad in the local paper!

You may also remember our recent feature about funeral streaming across the internet, whereby people unable to attend a funeral – maybe



they are in another country - can now watch the service via a webcam.

Despite the funeral industry's relatively slow uptake on these advances – many firms now have web sites - this new technology should be embraced, as it can still provide a way of expressing our grief, whilst giving us comfort and greater freedom at a difficult time.

See the Eric F Box website at www.efbox.co.uk

New cremation regulations

Serial killers like Dr Harold Shipman would find it far harder to engage in their activities under new Cremation Regulations, which have just been published in the UK and take effect from January.

The Regulations will allow bereaved families to inspect the medical forms of a deceased family member before a cremation takes place.

The existing Cremation Regulations date back to 1930, and although they have already been amended six times in 1952, 1965, 1979, 1985, 2000 and 2006, they are still widely regarded as old-fashioned and confusing.

The majority of the new Regulations repeat long-established policy, but modernise the wording and re-order the regulations into what is arguably a

more logical sequence. New forms have not been introduced, nor has the role of the doctor changed in completing the medical forms.

However, once both Doctors' forms have been completed and sent to the medical referee (the doctor attached to the crematorium), under the new Regulations, families will be able to draw the medical referee's attention to any concerns about unexpected symptoms or discrepancies in the case.

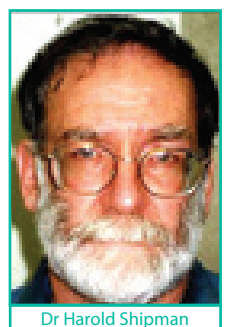
It is hoped that these measures will help prevent another Harold Shipman-type murder, as the medical checks performed before cremation under the new Regulations will be far more stringent.

The notorious GP is said to be the most prolific known serial killer

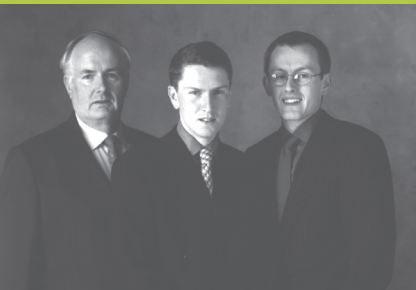
in British history and possibly the world with 215 murders ascribed to him.

The new Regulations are an interim measure and will precede longer-term Department of Health plans to create the role of a Medical Examiner, who will deal with all deaths.

If you require any further information regarding the new cremation regulations, please feel free to contact us on 01924 465402.



Dr Harold Shipman

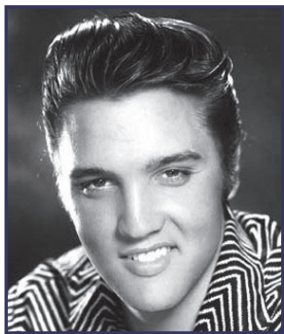


Iconic Funerals - The King is Dead

Lying face down and unconscious on the floor of his Graceland bathroom, Elvis Presley's lifeless body was discovered by his fiancée, Ginger Alden, at 2pm on August 16th 1977.

An unprecedented number of specialists battled to revive him at the Baptist Memorial Hospital in Memphis, but at 4pm, on the steps of Graceland, grief stricken Father, Vernon Presley, announced to the world: "My son, Elvis, is dead."

The coroner recorded the cause of death as cardiac arrhythmia. While true in the strictest sense (cardiac arrhythmia basically means that the heart was beating irregularly and in this case, finally stopped), the attending physicians deliberately omitted the fact that what had apparently caused Elvis' heart to beat irregularly and then stop was an overdose of prescription drugs. These drugs included codeine, Valium, morphine, and Demorol, to name a few. After this information was revealed, Vernon Presley had the complete autopsy report sealed. It will remain sealed until 2027, fifty years after The King's death.



Over the two days that followed Elvis' death, it is estimated that around 100,000 fans arrived in Memphis to pay their last respects to The King. An astonishing

array of wreaths included a \$200 design of a hound dog, sent by an anonymous mourner.

The crowds were slightly smaller on August 18th - the day of the funeral. Perhaps fans had been deterred by the incident at dawn, when a drunken teenager drove a car into a group of fans and killed two of them. Several helicopters flew low over the cemetery as



Elvis' funeral rapidly spiralled into a media circus.

A motorcade of 14 white Cadillacs lined the streets from Graceland to Forest Hill Cemetery, followed by Elvis' hearse. Those attending the funeral included Priscilla, Lisa Marie, Vernon and Minnie Mae Presley, Ginger Alden, guitarists Chet Atkins and Charlie Hodge, James Brown, and daughter of JFK, Caroline Kennedy.

Elvis Presley was buried at Forest Hill Cemetery in Memphis, next to his mother, Gladys. After an attempt to steal the body on August 28, his - and his mother's - remains were moved to the Meditation Garden at Graceland in the October. His father and grandmother's remains have since been buried alongside them.

On each anniversary of The King's death, thousands of fans from around the world continue to visit him in his final resting place, making the Graceland Mansion the second most-visited house in America. The first is the White House.

And, in case you're interested, our very own Andrew Box was born the day Elvis died!

Burials Through Time... The Saxons

The term Anglo-Saxon is a relatively modern one. It refers to settlers from the German regions of Angeln and Saxony, who made their way over to Britain after the fall of the Roman Empire around AD 410.

The Anglo-Saxon settlers were effectively their own masters in a new land and did little to keep the legacy of the Romans alive, bringing their own religious beliefs, although the arrival of Saint Augustine in 597 converted most of the country to Christianity.

Early Saxon burial rites included both cremation and inhumation cemeteries, featuring a large number of grave goods. Cremation cemeteries were common in the first two centuries of Saxon settlement, although archaeologists use the inhumation sites as the major source of historical evidence.

Early Saxon graves were sometimes too big or too small for the individual, suggesting they were not custom dug, and there was no consistency with the alignment of graves with some lying North-South as well as East-West. East-West burials were common in pre-Christian cemeteries and may simply have been adopted because it was the same orientation of the church.

The body positions of the deceased were mainly supine (lying on one's back) although flexed (crouched) and prone (face down) have also been discovered.

Dress fittings were a common accompaniment, suggesting individuals were fully clothed on interment. Women generally had two matching brooches at the shoulder, glass beads across the chest and a buckle at the waist.

By the middle Saxon period, c. 600AD, Christianity had largely overcome pagan religion in England, although changes in burial custom could not necessarily be attributed to this change in religious beliefs. Wealth, which was previously placed in the grave, may instead have been given to the church.

Anglo-Saxon rule came to an end in 1066, soon after the death of Edward the Confessor, who had no heir.

Bereaved With a Head for Heights!



In some countries it pays to have a head for heights, especially if you have joined the ranks of the deceased!

Mysterious hanging coffins - sometimes as high as 130 metres off the ground - exist in various locations across the world, including the Philippines and China.

Suspending coffins on a cliff face was an ancient funeral custom of some minority groups, one

such being the Bo people, who lived along the borders of today's Sichuan in southwest China's Yunnan Province.

Estimated figures from the early 1990s show Gongxian County as having a total of 280 hanging coffins, however nearly twenty have fallen since then.

Some date back around 1,000 years to the Song Dynasty, but the most recent in Gongxian County were made 400 to 500 years ago, during the Ming dynasty (1368-1644).

The Imperial Army cruelly oppressed ethnic minorities of Sichuan and Yunnan during the later years of the Ming Dynasty, and many of the Bo people fell victim to massacre, leading to the sudden disappearance of the group.

DUG BROTHERS - FUNERAL DIRECTORS

You're not my regular tailor, are you?

