Funerary International Series

Series Editor: Julie Rugg, University of York, UK

The study of mortality is now an established academic endeavour which is rapidly expanding in scale and in disciplinary reach. One missing element is a repository of basic facts about funerary practice in each country and the broader legal, governance and denominational frameworks for those practices which might serve to set more detailed research in context.

This book series remedies this absence by producing country-specific monographs, with texts providing a standard framework of questions, which ensures even coverage; aids international comparison; fosters international linkages across the academic community; and inspires new research directions. These texts will be a valuable resource for researchers across the humanities and social sciences concerned with death and funerary customs.

Forthcoming in this series

Brenda Mathijssen and Claudia Venhorst, Funerary Practices in the Netherlands
Olga Nešporová, Funerary Practices in the Czech Republic
Christoph Streb, Funerary Practices in Germany
Aleksandra Pavićević, Funerary Practices in Serbia
Maija Butters and Ilona Pajari, Funerary Practices in Finland
FUNERARY PRACTICES IN ENGLAND AND WALES

BY

JULIE RUGG
University of York, UK

BRIAN PARSONS
Training Consultant and Researcher, UK

emerald PUBLISHING

United Kingdom – North America – Japan
India – Malaysia – China
CONTENTS

List of Images ix
List of Charts xi
List of Tables xiii
List of Boxes xv
Foreword xvii
Acknowledgements xix
Map of England and Wales xxii

1. England and Wales: An Introduction 1

2. History 5
   2.1. The Eighteenth Century 5
   2.2. The Nineteenth Century 7
   2.3. The First World War and the Interwar Period 14
   2.4. The Second World War and the Post-war Period to c.1990 17

3. Demographic and Legal Frameworks 23
   3.1. Mortality in England and Wales 23
   3.2. The Role of the State: Legislative Frameworks 26
      3.2.1. Death Registration 27
      3.2.2. Transportation of Bodies and Repatriation 30
      3.2.3. Law Relating to Disposal of the Dead 32
      3.2.4. Planning and the Environment 36
      3.2.5. Health and Safety 38
3.3. Accommodating Religious Diversity
3.3.1. The Church of England
3.3.2. The Church in Wales
3.3.3. Meeting the Needs of Minority Groups: The Legalities

4. Cemeteries and Crematoria: Governance and Management
4.1. Local Government Ownership
4.2. Professional Management

5. The Funeral Directing Industry
5.1. Historic Development
5.2. Current Structure
5.3. Typical Premises
5.4. Professional Organisation
5.4.1. Trade Associations
5.4.2. Training and Qualifications
5.4.3. Codes of Practice
5.5. The Work of the Funeral Director
5.6. ‘Do-it-yourself’ Funerals

6. Religious Belief and Funerary Practice
6.1. Christian Funerals
6.1.1. Context
6.1.2. Funerary Practice
6.2. Muslim Funerals
6.2.1. Context
6.2.2. Funerary Practice
6.3. Hindu Funerals
6.3.1. Context
6.3.2. Funerary Practice
6.4. Sikh Funerals
6.4.1. Context
6.4.2. Funerary Practice
6.5. Jewish Funerals
6.5.1. Context
6.5.2. Funerary Practice
7. A Typical Funeral  
7.1. Immediately Following the Death  
7.2. Making Funeral Arrangements  
7.3. Care of the Deceased  
7.4. Between the Death and the Funeral  
7.5. The Day of the Funeral  
7.5.1. Dress  
7.5.2. Travel to the Funeral Service  
7.5.3. The Place of the Funeral  
7.5.4. ‘Dressing’ the Funeral  
7.5.5. Attending the Funeral  
7.5.6. The Funeral Service  
7.5.7. Digital Recording  
7.5.8. Committal  
7.5.9. After the Funeral Service  

8. Paying for Funerals  
8.1. Average Funeral Costs  
8.2. Cost Breakdown  
8.2.1. Funeral Directors’ Fixed Costs  
8.2.2. Funeral Directors’ Variable Costs  
8.3. The Pre-payment Funeral Plan Industry  
8.4. Lower Cost Options  
8.4.1. Direct Cremation  
8.4.2. Municipal Funeral Services  
8.5. State Help with Funeral Costs  
8.6. Public Health Funerals  
8.7. Children’s Funerals  

9. Burial  
9.1. Burial Sites Historically  
9.2. Contemporary Burial Sites  
9.2.1. Number of Sites  
9.2.2. Layout  
9.3. Graves  
9.3.1. Technicalities  
9.3.2. Legalities
9.4. Disused Burial Space 142
9.5. Natural or Green Burial 146

10. Cremation 149
  10.1. Historic Development 149
  10.2. Current Crematoria Provision 152
  10.3. Crematoria Design 154
  10.4. Cremation Certification and the Law 156
  10.5. Services in the Crematorium Chapel 159
  10.6. The Process of Cremation 161
  10.7. The Disposal of Ashes 162
  10.8. ‘Green’ Cremation 163

11. Commemoration 167
  11.1. Monumental Masons 167
  11.2. Commemoration within the Crematorium Grounds or Cemetery 168
    11.2.1. Cremated Remains 168
    11.2.2. Full Body Interment 171
  11.3. Commemoration in the Churchyard 174
  11.4. Commemoration in the Domestic Sphere 174
  11.5. Commemoration in the Wider Landscape 175
  11.6. Virtual Commemoration 176

12. Conservation 179
  12.1. National Pantheon 179
  12.2. The Need for Protection 180
  12.3. The Management of Conservation in England and Wales 182
  12.4. Community Initiatives 184

Bibliography 185

Index 187
# LIST OF IMAGES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Image</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Image 2.1.</td>
<td>Willesden New Cemetery (1891)</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Image 2.2.</td>
<td>Visiting the grave, late 1930s.</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Image 2.3.</td>
<td>Salisbury Crematorium (1960)</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Image 3.1.</td>
<td>Harlow Hill Cemetery, Harrogate.</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Image 4.1.</td>
<td>Thornton-le-Dale Cemetery.</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Image 5.1.</td>
<td>Co-operative Funeralcare premises, in a suburban location: a typical, strongly-branded shopfront</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Image 7.1.</td>
<td>Bearers shouldering the coffin from the hearse to the chapel.</td>
<td>102</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Image 7.2.</td>
<td>Floral tribute area at a typical crematorium (2015).</td>
<td>104</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Image 9.1.</td>
<td>Technical drawing of a plot, demonstrating the relationship between the plot and the grave.</td>
<td>136</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Image 9.2.</td>
<td>Typical local authority burial register page.</td>
<td>139</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Image 9.3</td>
<td>Churchyard of St Peter and St Paul, Cromer, viewed from the church tower.</td>
<td>145</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Image 9.4.</td>
<td>Woodland burial section at Carlisle Cemetery.</td>
<td>147</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Image 10.1.</td>
<td>The Oaks, Havant, opened in 2013.</td>
<td>154</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Image 11.1.</td>
<td>Garden of Remembrance, City of London Cemetery, part of the rose garden with dedication plaques.</td>
<td>169</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Image 11.2.</td>
<td>Christmas decoration on a grave.</td>
<td>173</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Image 12.1.</td>
<td>St George’s Chapel, Windsor Castle.</td>
<td>181</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
LIST OF CHARTS

Chart 2.1. Number of Crematoria and Cremation Rate. . 19
Chart 10.1. Crematorium opening: number, date range and ownership type: cumulative totals. . . . . . . 155
This page intentionally left blank
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>English and Welsh Population Growth, 1801–1851.</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>Deaths in England and Wales, Cremation Rates and Crematoria in Operation, 2008–2016.</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>Answers to Question ‘What is Your Religion’ on the 2011 Census, England and Wales.</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.1</td>
<td>Church Membership in England and Wales, Selected Years from 1985.</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.2</td>
<td>UK Jewish Population by Congregation: Percentages.</td>
<td>89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.1</td>
<td>Average Funeral Cost by Area, 2017.</td>
<td>112</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.2</td>
<td>Cremation Fees, by Region, in 2013 and 2017.</td>
<td>116</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.3</td>
<td>Funeral Expenses Payments.</td>
<td>123</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.1</td>
<td>Number of Burial Grounds in England and Wales Identified by the Ministry of Justice 2007 Survey.</td>
<td>130</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.1</td>
<td>Progress of Cremation in Selected Years.</td>
<td>153</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.2</td>
<td>Mode of Committal, 1995.</td>
<td>160</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.3</td>
<td>Ashes Disposal Practices: Percentages in Selected Years.</td>
<td>164</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
This page intentionally left blank
LIST OF BOXES

Box 3.1. Circumstances in Which a Death Must be Reported to the Coroner: ........................................ 28
Box 3.2. Information that is Required in Order to Register a Death .......................................................... 31
Box 3.3. Local Authorities’ Cemeteries
Order 1977 s5 .......................................................... 47
Box 4.1. Local Authority Governance and Burial Provision ............................................................... 50
Box 5.1. Usual Tasks Carried Out by the Funeral Director ................................................................. 65
Box 5.2. Occasional Tasks Carried Out by a Funeral Director .............................................................. 67
Box 8.1. Funeral Costs .................................................. 114
Box 9.1. Burial Site Types in England
(from Twelfth Century) ........................................ 128
Box 11.1. Typical Plaque Inscription ........................................ 170
This page intentionally left blank
FOREWORD

Funerary practice is so broad a topic it is unlikely that any one individual can easily encompass all its facets. This collaboration reflects the combined expertise of two historians who are both heavily involved in current policy and practice. Dr Parsons researches and publishes on the history of cremation, burial and funeral directing, and for the past 30 years has worked as a training consultant and funeral director in London. Dr Rugg has written extensively on the history of burial practice, but also has an involvement and interest in policy and practice in contemporary cemetery and crematorium management.

Funerary Practices in England and Wales addresses a very basic gap: the lack of readily accessible contextual information and detail about funerary arrangements in England and Wales. The fact that the book has taken over a year to collate indicates just how widely spread is much of the information the text contains. The book has a number of additional aims. It hopes to be an essential reference text for practitioners, policy makers, students and academic scholars in a complex field that covers a whole range of activities and practices. As part of an international series, the book also aims to contribute to the task of understanding the varied contexts that configure funerary practices in different countries. The text presents information in as clear and as unvarnished a way as
possible. There is no commentary on the information presented: this book has no agenda beyond the desire to inform.

However, it is hoped that the text will be a baseline for future editions that will help us pinpoint shifting contexts, new trends, and obsolescences. Funerary practice mutates continually, but establishing practice at one single moment in time will be of value in years to come. We are both historians, and know that this text will at some juncture constitute a primary document: a robust narrative of funerary practice that we would have been delighted to encounter if it had been written in 1818 or 1918.

Information is correct as the text goes to press. We have been grateful for input from a wide range of experts, but any errors are our own.

Julie Rugg and Brian Parsons
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This text could not have been prepared without substantial guidance from people throughout the funerary industry and within academia: Andy Clayden, University of Sheffield; Emerson Memorials, York; Gary Burks, City of London Cemetery; Julie Dunk, Institute of Cemetery and Crematorium Management; Alan Fairchild, Society of Local Council Clerks; Gary Fewkes at York Crematorium; Sarah Jones, Full Circle Funerals; Revd Dr Peter Jupp; David Lambert, The Parks Agency; Mohamed Omer, the Muslim Gardens of Peace; and Chandu Tailor of Chandu Tailor and Sons, funeral directors. Thanks are also due to Neil Gevaux for producing a superb technical drawing and, as ever, to Christopher Shires in assisting with photography.

We are indebted to Pharos International and the Cremation Society of Great Britain for permission to reproduce cremation statistics.

Finally, our deep gratitude is extended to Philippa Grand at Emerald Publishing, who immediately understood the need for this book and for the associated international series. Philippa and her team have steered the text through with grace and efficiency.
This page intentionally left blank
This page intentionally left blank
CHAPTER 1

ENGLAND AND WALES: AN INTRODUCTION

England and Wales are part of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, commonly known as the UK, which is a densely populated island nation situated off the north-west coast of Europe with overseas territories including Bermuda, the Cayman Islands and Gibraltar. The Channel Islands and the Isle of Man are also Crown dependencies. The UK comprises England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland, which shares a land border with the Republic of Ireland. At the end of the 1990s, legislative enactment created separate, devolved, administrations for Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland. Difference in burial and cremation law, religious history and funerary practice mean that Scotland and Northern Ireland will be dealt with in separate volumes of this series. The Channel Islands and the Isle of Man are also excluded from this volume.

England and Wales are highly developed, industrialised nations: the UK is currently the ninth largest economy in the world. At the 2011 census, the population of England and
Wales stood at 53m and 3.1m, respectively, with 81 per cent and 67 per cent, respectively, living in areas defined as urban.\(^1\) Outside London – population 9.78m – there are 10 conurbations or cities that each has a population of over 500,000. The UK was the first nation to become industrialised in the modern sense, and massive increases in urban population in the nineteenth century constitute an essential context for the chronology of change in funerary practice. Nevertheless, rurality and images of rurality continue to feature as defining national characteristics and in many rural settlements the use of local churchyards continues as it has done for centuries.

The UK is stable, politically, relative to many other countries in Europe. For many centuries, London has been the seat of government. Legislation passes through an elected House of Commons and unelected House of Lords. MPs from all parts of the UK vote in the House of Commons. The Welsh Assembly, established in 1999, sits in Cardiff and is an elected body with devolved authority to create laws in a number of policy areas.\(^2\) The UK is a sovereign state and Queen Elizabeth II has been head of state since 1952. The civilian population has not been subject to sustained military attack since the Second World War, although there have been periods of more or less intensive terrorist activity. This stability means that the UK has no legacies of recent military action or atrocity likely to have a substantive impact on funerary practice. Where change in practice is taking place, it is largely reflective of both an increased understanding of choice

---

mediated by an increasingly sophisticated and responsive market in funerary service, and growing cultural diversity following as a consequence of migrants settling in the UK from other parts of the world. English remains the principal language in England. Welsh and English are spoken in Wales, where all statutory documents are produced in both languages.

England and Wales are largely Protestant countries. From the period of the Reformation until the nineteenth century, the Catholic community was persecuted and denied a range of civil liberties which included the freedom to establish separate burial space. From the sixteenth century, a number of Protestant denominations – including Baptists, Quakers and Independents or Congregationalists – refused to worship according to the tenets of the Church of England. These groups were also denied certain civil liberties, but legal inequalities were largely resolved by the start of the First World War. Nevertheless, the Church of England remains the Established Church or state church in England; the Church in Wales – a related, but separate establishment – is the state church in Wales. Non-Christian religions in the UK remain a minority; after Christians (59 per cent), the largest group is Muslims, who comprise fewer than 5 per cent of the population. The centrality of the Church of England to national governance means that England and Wales cannot be defined as ‘secular’ countries, although religious tolerance is enshrined in many aspects of social life.