



Plan for your Memorial Options *After Cremation.*

It's important not to think of this as the last thing that you will do for your loved one. Many people feel it's a final step to scatter or bury cremated remains, or to erect a head-stone – perhaps because in the funeral sequence of events, the memorial inevitably comes last. If it occupies this 'last thing' place in your mind, it can easily become a stumbling block, so it's important to see beyond it and start to think about how the scattering place, burial place or other keeping options might become just as intrinsic a part of life as the living, growing, evolving memory of your loved one. Significantly, if you can't envisage how your chosen place/method of disposal/keeping could signify in this way, then maybe a pause for thought regarding the choice is called for, before it's too late and the deed is irrevocably done.

The choice isn't just about you and other chief mourners: it's also about your loved one, what they might have wanted and how they would have marked their journey and legacy for future generations. It's easy when this is known or documented – but usually we have to go on what we think we knew about them, and what we think they would want to give and share of themselves to comfort the individuals who meant so much to them.

So far from the last thing, the choice is the beginning – the launch-point – in marking a beloved name and life in a way that resonates appropriately with the family today and in the future when the circumstances and geography of individual lives might be very different and when generations yet unborn might also have a stake in honouring and discovering someone significant, who bore their genes and shaped their relatives' lives. The memorial choice should be a positive turning point, an admission and a comfort – the acknowledgement that life has changed irrevocably; that what was will always be part of what is; and that what will be will embrace and include many needs in an ever-evolving new relationship. Those needs might involve the expression of intensely personal grief and remembrance and the need for space and solitude and vigil; they might include the need to keep alive through public actions and events the ongoing positive influence of a life; they almost always encompass the family's need for shared family ritual that is of comfort and consolation – particularly on anniversaries and significant family public holidays; often individuals have a longing for something tangible, visible, touchable that might be enshrined in a personalised space; the symbolism of freedom of spirit through return to earth, the air, water or the elements is also important to many people and satisfies a primitive need when disposal of the physical marked the transition of on-going life into the spiritual. If belief in the after-life and the spirit is not the driving force behind this choice, then care needs to be taken where scattering at sea or on land are the options chosen – as there will be no resulting visual reminder or focal point of comfort afterwards, other than the chosen place and its memories, which then has a tall order to follow.

The decision is momentous in that it is a decision on behalf of a person who loved so many people – all of whom have different needs and are at different stages of grief. There is no rush – and the best and most satisfying outcomes are almost always the ones where time is taken for tender and compassionate planning.

We will deal with each of the Memorial Options and the options within them separately.

Options after Cremation.

More than one option may be your choice and this is possible as cremated remains may be divided. Some people don't like to do this and others feel that just as there was more than one facet to a life and more than one mourner to consider, it is sometimes the option that best fulfils all needs. Burial plots may be purchased to bury all of or part of the cremated remains – and the amount of remains required for keeping for other purposes can be very small indeed - little more than a dessertspoonful for keepsakes and literally a few granules for memorial jewellery.

What are Cremated Remains?

Your decision should be an informed one and the euphemisms, or misnomers that are applied to the cremated remains of a loved one do tend to suggest that many people believe the actual substance in the box to be of little value and in fact little more than coffin dust. In fact in the north of England people regularly refer to the remains as “ashes” and in times gone by, urns and caskets bearing these remains were kept in the back of wardrobes or on a shelf in some embarrassment, as no-one knew what to do with them. Cremated remains are in fact the human remains – the bones - of your loved one whilst the coffin itself will disintegrate into dust. Every cremation is completely individual, with careful identification following the remains at every stage. If you need to know more for your own peace of mind, please do ask us.

Memorial options following Cremation. (Further details follow the bullet point list).

- **Burial** of cremated remains allows you to honour a name, create a place to share on anniversaries, provide a place to go for very personal and private visits and can provide a place for family members to be buried in the future.
- **Scattering** symbolises the joy of the free spirit, designates a place of special memory, marks a letting go of the physical and creates somewhere to return and share special times.
- **Keepsakes** hold a portion of the remains and allow family members to create a personal corner of dedication.
- **Memorial Jewellery** holds a few granules from the remains, is personal and allows family members to retain a feeling of closeness,
- **Statement Events** create a memorable occasion that honours particular personalities and lives.
- **Repatriation** allows cremated remains to cross borders to be buried or scattered abroad.

Ceremony to mark your choice of occasion

If you feel that it would be helpful to plan the occasion with the help of a Celebrant, Rose Kane is available to work with families to help to plan the ceremony, participation, words and event with you – or just to act as a sounding board for your own ideas.

BURIAL OF CREMATED REMAINS

Bury in an existing grave

If you have a family grave that is full (i.e. no further space for burial) you can use the grave to bury up to 12 sets of cremated remains beneath the surface – thus making a family plot for later generations. The local Council does charge a fee for opening and digging the plot and we would advise you regarding this. Additional inscription to an existing stone, or an additional memorial may be added, subject to memorial Rights which we would advise on.

Bury in a new plot

Give careful thought to the type of plot you might purchase as the options are varied. Also some options are only available in some cemeteries so do talk to us before you set your heart on a particular place. By no means do you have to use the same cemetery where cremation took place – and indeed burial options may not always be available in that same place. Once you have the facts, we would always advise you to spend some time looking at the space and at similar plots to make sure the ‘feel’ is right and then we would arrange for an officer from the cemetery office to meet you and show you the specific available land options for your plot.

Plot Types

A single plot for cremated remains is normally provided within a cluster of similar plots and houses one casket or box. A small stone or plaque, varying with cemetery regulations, and subject to memorial Rights may be erected – and there is no waiting time in the case of cremated remains as there is little land to settle. You can go ahead with a stone memorial almost straight away – but remember there will still be a lead time for the stone to be supplied, cut, engraved and fitted.

A double plot is also provided within the cluster of cremated remains plots and consists of two plots side by side to allow the remains of a further family member to be buried with the first family member. Small stones subject to regulations and Memorial Rights – may be erected to commemorate both persons E.g. open books/double hearts.

A half grave is literally half the size of a grave and is provided within the grave space of the cemeteries where these are available. Up to 4-6 sets of cremated remains may be buried within the space over time, creating a shared family plot for cremated remains. A stone subject to cemetery regulations and Memorial Rights may be erected. Please seek advice from us in the first instance as space for this type of plot is restricted to certain cemeteries.

A grave dedicated to cremated remains Some cemeteries will allow a full grave-sized plot to be purchased solely for the burial of up to 12 sets of cremated remains, creating a family cremation plot. It is necessary to give your authority to state that the grave will never be used for the burial of a body, as once one set of cremated remains is buried there, the grave per se cannot be opened for full burial. A full headstone may be erected, subject to cemetery regulation and memorial Rights. Please seek advice from us in the first instance as space for new graves is now restricted within the Bradford area to certain cemeteries and graves for this purpose are further restricted.

Woodland

Woodland Burial Grounds do offer plots for the burial of cremated remains so please do ask us about our nearest West Yorkshire grounds if this option appeals to you as a final resting place.

Private Burial

It is possible to bury your loved one's cremated remains within a domestic garden, or with the permission of the landowner, in a favourite place.

There are areas to consider particularly where a garden at home is used – and one major question is what you might do if you were to move house. We would advise that remains are placed within a plastic covering (cellophane) to prevent dispersal and then in a plastic, sealed container such as a tuppaware container sealed with silicone. This may be placed within the chosen casket or container and will allow the remains to be re-located in the future should this be necessary.

SCATTERING

Cemeteries scatter freely for you if you opt to leave the remains with the local council after Cremation – and we will ask you this when we arrange the funeral. Normally family are not present and the scattering takes place a month after the Cremation. For a small fee, you can opt to be present and agree a date. Otherwise, we collect the remains and keep them safe for you until you feel ready to take them and choose your own option.

With written permission of the land-owner scattering may be carried out in any favourite place. Private scattering within cemeteries also requires permission from the local council. You can also scatter in domestic gardens, around trees or bushes or into the sea. Permission should be sought if scattering from a ship or boat as care needs to be taken and in brisk and windy conditions, you ought to be aware that the remains will blow back and could catch people in the eyes or face – and can do damage.

Cremated remains are presented in a cardboard dark green, rectangular box (Bradford) and the box contains an inner box which holds the white paper bag of remains. Leeds present the remains within a plastic upright screw-top jar in burgundy or brown.

We supply the full range of caskets, urns etc plus colourful cardboard scatter tubes in a variety of attractive designs as well as wood veneer and wood traditional caskets and metal urns. We also hire out our professional copper scattering can if desired which minimises blow-back and allows better control. Remains can be scattered from the council supplied box – and it is not essential to purchase a bespoke container. You can of course make and trim your own box and sometimes there is nothing more touching and personal than a box that family members have created together, with fabric scraps, photos, drawings, postcards and objects that tell a life story with love.

KEEPSAKES

Keepsakes are mini versions of the traditional urn or casket so that cremated remains may be divided. Additionally keepsakes for modern homes are also available in small ornamental shapes such as hearts, stars, vases, clocks that may sit discretely on a bedside table, coffee table, window sill or hearth and hold a portion of cremated remains literally 'at the heart of the home.' Cremated remains may also be incorporated into photo frames and bespoke designed items in glass or even diamonds.

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MEMORIAL JEWELLERY

Memorial jewellery is designed to hold a tiny portion of cremated remains (or lock of hair), or sacred soil from a grave within a sealed cylinder, allowing the remains to be kept close to you. Designs are widely varied, from glass and steel framed tear-drops, crosses and heart pendants to intricate designs in sterling silver, gold and platinum pieces in pendants, bracelets, medallions, key-rings.

Additionally cremated remains may be incorporated into diamonds to create bespoke pieces of jewellery.

REPATRIATION

Certificates of packing, sealing and a Cremation Certificate are required if you plan to transport cremated remains abroad either for scattering or burial. We will supply all legal forms that comply with border agency requirements and allow the remains to travel with you as hand luggage, rather than separately.

STATEMENT EVENTS

More unusual options such as incorporation of remains into fireworks or space travel are available. Please ask us if a more unusual option feels right for you and we would research it for you.

MIXING THE OPTIONS

Careful thought needs to be given to ensure that all participants are ready at the same time to let go in the same way and that all participants feel the chosen method has the same degree of rightness both for the person who has passed away and for the bereaved family members. It isn't an easy option to satisfy everyone and the compromise of dividing the remains to allow multiple expressions of love and memory can sometimes be the answer that not only fulfils all needs but allows individuals to participate and take comfort in each other's chosen option – each reflecting multiple facets of a precious life.