

## Burial

### Why are graves dug so deep?

Graves have to be dug to a sufficient depth to allow for future burials to take place. Therefore the grave needs to be deep enough to allow not only for the depth of coffins/caskets that will be buried but also to accommodate legal requirements of undisturbed earth to be between each coffin and the amount of earth that must cover the last interment.

### I have a lawn grave. Why can't I put a full memorial over the surface of the grave?

The lawn grave was designed on the war grave principle (to have only a memorial of limited size at the head of the grave with the rest of the grave laid to lawn). In this manner the limited area available for burial is best utilised. In addition maintenance is easier to accomplish to keep the area in a neat condition.

### Are graves filled in straight after a funeral or are they left to the next day?

Graves are prepared for burial at least one full day before the funeral and are covered overnight. The Guiding Principles for Burial Services states that immediately after the mourners have departed the graveside, the grave shall be entirely backfilled and made tidy. This work is completed on the day of the burial and coffins should not be left uncovered overnight.

### I've got a lawn grave. When will I be able to put a memorial onto it?

There is a period stipulated in the cemetery regulations which gives the ground time to settle and consolidate. During this period the cemetery staff will monitor any sinkage that becomes apparent and top up periodically with topsoil until settlement ceases.

### Why have I only been sold the grave for a set period of time? - I want the grave forever!

The law stipulates that graves cannot be sold for more than 100 years and authorities cannot go against that law. However, the law does permit grant of ownership to be extended and some accordingly write to owners every five years offering the opportunity to 'top-up' their lease. In this manner, the grave can stay in the family for as long as they wish, though ownership will never be issued for more than 99 years at any one time. Even where this topping up option is not offered then you (or your family) can renew the right at the end of the current lease.

### I own the grave - can anyone else be buried in it if I don't want them to?

No. Graves cannot be opened without the permission in writing of the registered owner of the grave. The only exception to this is where the burial is to be that of the registered owner in which case no written authority is required. The law protects your rights as registered owner of the grave.

### Who is responsible for the memorial?

Whilst the burial authority is responsible for maintaining the cemetery in a safe condition you have a responsibility to maintain your memorial in a safe condition throughout the period of the Right to Erect and Maintain a Memorial. If you fail to do this the cemetery staff may take action to make the memorial safe.

### Why can't I have what I want on the grave?

When a new grave is purchased it is not the ownership of the land itself that is purchased, but the rights to have burials take place in that grave. These rights are 'granted' together with the rights to erect a memorial on the grave in accordance with the rules and regulations of the cemetery.

## Questions People Ask about Burial and Cremation



### Groby Parish Council

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## Cremation

### Is cremation more expensive than burial?

No. Generally the cost of a grave is much higher than the fee charged for cremation although the funeral charges are similar for both services. The only additional charge for cremation arises when the death has not been referred to a coroner and two doctors need to be paid for the necessary certificates. This does not apply to burial.

### What ceremony can I have with cremation?

The service for burial and cremation is the same apart from the form of committal sentences. The service may take place at your own place of worship with a short committal service in the crematorium chapel, or you may have the whole service at the crematorium chapel. Alternatively, you may prefer a civil ceremony be conducted, or even no service at all.

### How is a cremation arranged?

The Cremation Regulations are complex and many people approach a funeral director immediately death occurs, and advise him that they wish to arrange a cremation. The funeral director will ensure that all the necessary statutory forms for cremation are obtained and presented to the Crematorium.

### A cremation without the services of a funeral director?

Yes. The Executor or nearest surviving relative may arrange the cremation service themselves. Cremation authorities that are members of the Institute of Cemetery & Crematorium Management's (ICCM) Charter for the Bereaved will provide advice to persons arranging a cremation without the use of a funeral director.

### Is the coffin cremated with the body?

Yes. The ICCM Guiding Principles state that the container and the body shall be placed in a cremator and cremation commenced. The coffin or container with the body inside shall not be opened or otherwise disturbed, other than in exceptional circumstances, and then only with the express permission and in the presence of the Applicant for Cremation (usually the executor or next of kin).

### How soon after the service will the cremation take place?

The ICCM Guiding Principles state that the container and the body shall be placed in a cremator and cremation commenced no later than 72 hours after the service of committal. Where cremation may not be carried out on the same day, the Applicant for Cremation shall be notified.

### How are cremated remains kept separate?

A cremator can only accept one coffin at a time and all the remains are removed from the cremator before the next cremation. An identity card is used throughout the whole process until the final disposal, thereby ensuring correct identification.

### What happens to the cremated remains after cremation?

The law relating to cremation requires that cremated remains are disposed of in accordance with the written instructions of the applicant (usually the executor or nearest surviving relative). Most crematoria have a range of options which might include scattering or burying in the garden of remembrance, placing in a columbarium, interring in a small family vault or niche. Options for memorials are also available which might include plaques, beneath rose bushes, trees or shrubs and memorial benches with plaques.

Cremated remains may also be buried in family graves that are full for confined burials. Alternatively you may be able to purchase a new cremated remains grave in a cemetery.

There is no need to make a hurried decision with regard the final resting place of the remains with most crematoria having a facility to hold the remains until a decision is made. Should a crematorium not be contacted with a decision after a period of time has elapsed you may receive a letter asking if you are ready to go ahead. If you are not, simply tell the crematorium that you need more time (a fee may be applicable). Should a crematorium receive no reply to their letter they may legally scatter or bury the cremated remains within their grounds after giving 2 weeks written notice.

### Can more than one body be cremated at a time?

No, each cremation is carried out separately. The aperture through which the coffin passes in the cremator and the cremation chamber are of dimensions that will only safely accept one coffin. However, exceptions can be made in the case of a mother and baby or small twin children, so long as the next of kin or executor has made this specific request.

Most crematoria will allow public inspection of the 'behind the scenes' procedures in an attempt to enlighten the public on all aspects of the cremation process.

### Where can I find out more information about cremation?

The ICCM Charter for the bereaved gives detailed information about all aspects of the cremation process and encompasses environmental and social aspects.



