

Eco-friendly funerals step up a gear

Pedal power and coffins made of willow, wool, bamboo or cardboard are gaining popularity for families planning eco-friendly funerals as fitting tributes to their loved ones.

Environment conscious customers who want to reduce the carbon footprint of a funeral can now choose a bicycle hearse to carry the coffin to its resting place.

Funeral director Ian Hazel reflected on the changing face of the business as his company's office at Great Barr, Birmingham, marked its 10th anniversary.

Ian, owner of Ian Hazel Funerals, said: "There have certainly been a lot of developments and changes within the profession over the last 10 years.

"It would even be possible these days to have a coffin produced with the England football emblem on it, for really dedicated fans. This style of coffin is also proving very popular with the eco minded clients as they are produced from recycled timber or cardboard."

Families often wish to personalize a funeral for a loved one by having something different or unique, in addition to using a personalised coffin.

Ian added: "We have seen an increase in the use of horse drawn hearses, particularly in the Great Barr area. We were recently asked by a family who required a very unique send off for their loved one to use an ex-Midland Red double-decker bus so all the mourners could travel together with the uniquely designed coffin.

"The family even produced a special bus stop sign and issued customised tickets for everyone. We also get requests for funeral vehicles that are not black and motor cycle hearses are also an option."

Eco-friendly funerals are becoming increasingly popular. "There is more concern about the environment these days and people often ask how eco-friendly are our coffins. Although our standard range of coffins use recycled timber and hardwood veneers from F.S.C. managed forests, people are now asking for wicker or bamboo coffins in increasing numbers.

"Clients also ask about cardboard coffins. These are available but are not a cheap option as a lot of time and effort has to go into a cardboard coffin to ensure it has the strength and rigidity to carry a deceased person. To reduce the funeral carbon footprint still further, we can now provide a bicycle hearse to deliver the eco-coffin to the cemetery or crematorium."

10 years ago Ian Hazel Funerals opened its second branch office at 2 Beacon Road, Great Barr. The Hazel family has been carrying out funerals in the region for 110 years. Ian's great-grandfather Arthur Hazel started a funeral directing business in Erdington, Birmingham, in 1901. Ian is the fourth generation of the family to enter the profession, now joined by Amy (His daughter) as the 5th generation of the family.

He started his own business in Belwell Lane, Four Oaks, Sutton Coldfield, in 1987, and is very proud to have been able to serve the local community of Great Barr over the last 10 years. Ian added: "I have a wonderful team based at my Great Barr office headed by Tim Bartlett and Kate Bouckley, both fully trained and highly experienced members of the profession with nearly 40 years of experience between them."

For more information contact Ian Hazel Funerals on **0121 308 2288** or visit **www.ianhazelfunerals.co.uk**.



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