

Peasgood & Skeates' Managers recognised for their hard work and dedication to the profession



Our Head of Operations, Sean Martin (pictured above), who joined Peasgood & Skeates 5 years ago, received a lovely surprise when he attended the SAIF (National Society of Allied and Independent Funeral Directors) AGM in March.

Much to his surprise, Sean was awarded a Fellowship in recognition of his distinguished and outstanding service to the UK independent funeral sector.

Sean has served as a member of the SAIF National Executive for seven years, during which time he represented independent funeral businesses and SAIF in Government and was involved in negotiations with both the Competition & Markets Authority and the Financial Conduct Authority. He also overhauled the professional standards procedure and disciplinary systems, bringing them up to date with current legislation. These are just the highlights of his achievements and he has contributed in many other ways, as well as running our very successful business. We are delighted that Sean has received the highest honour that SAIF can bestow on an individual, it is very well deserved.

Peasgood & Skeates' Operations Manager, Lee Wilkins, was awarded the 2023 Matthew Gallagher Award in recognition of his studies with the Independent Funeral Directors (IFD) College. The award is given in memory of Matt Gallagher, an inspirational young Funeral Director who served as an IFD College Governor, Assessor and Verifier. The award is presented annually to a student who has done particularly well in their studies alongside either personal difficulties or the challenges of their day to day work.

We congratulate Lee on his efforts to date and wish him all the best with his future studies.



**Lee Wilkins
proudly
clutching
his IFD
College
Student of
the Year
award**



C.E. FULLER & Co.

THE FAMILY FUNERAL SERVICE



We have some very exciting news to share, having recently merged with another family-owned funeral directors, C.E. Fuller & Co of Soham.

Marie Brown, proprietor of C. E. Fuller & Co (pictured with Sean Martin) is very pleased to have the support of a larger Company, whilst being able to continue the family business she ran with her late husband Tony and her parents in law, Reg & Anita Brown. The business was inherited from Anita's father in 1964, and the family connection stretches back to 1915.



The C.E. Fuller Team of years past!

Since Marie's husband, Tony, passed away at a young age and, more recently, Anita's husband, Reg, died, Marie and her small team have continued to serve the people of Soham and the surrounding area.



Soham High Street, early 1900's
C.E. Fuller is on the left

Our two businesses have developed a strong bond in recent years, having supported each other through the challenging period of the pandemic and we are all passionate about ensuring local families have the choice of using a family-owned funeral director when the time comes. This merger will enable exactly that.



The original 200 year old family home,
now C. E. Fuller & Co's office

Plans are being made to refurbish the premises and we look forward to sharing the details with you as the site develops. In the meantime, it will be very much "business as usual" and C.E. Fuller & Co will continue to serve families throughout the works.

INTRODUCING OUR NEW COLLEAGUES



Sue Saberton joined our Cambridge Team as a Receptionist, having previously worked in retail. She lives just a stone's throw from our Newmarket Road Branch and had felt drawn to work in the funeral profession for a number of years. She is loving her new role ... and the fact that she can be at home within 5 minutes of leaving the office!

Mark Osborn has quickly established himself as a Funeral Operative within the Saffron Walden team. A former Police Officer and London Air Ambulance support crew, Mark's strength is in keeping everything spotlessly clean and tidy and he takes particular pride in our fleet of vehicles which he ensures are immaculate, inside and out.



Rosann Smith is an experienced Administrator, having worked for many years in Student Registration at Cambridge University. She felt drawn to the funeral profession having arranged funerals for members of her own family and seeing what an important and rewarding job it is. Rosann has been heard saying that her job at Peasgood & Skeates is the best she has ever had.

Anthony (Tony) Phillips recently joined us as a Funeral Manager and is currently working alongside Lee Wilkins at our Shire Hill branch. Tony and his partner, Jennifer, both have many years' previous experience working for a Funeral Director in Rochford. They have had a long commute since they joined us but will be moving to their new home in Weston Colville very soon.



Jennifer (Jen) Livingstone has arranged funerals for over 15 years and is putting her skills and experience to good use at our Duxford branch. Jen is also a keen and talented baker and she made the lovely cake for our stand at the Haverhill Show (see back page).

Funeral Trends - what do they really mean for families?



We are supporting a nationwide campaign to help bereaved families better understand funeral options, amid concerns that families are not receiving the opportunity for adequate farewell and remembrance of the relative whom they have lost. This has often occurred when the person who has died has made all the decisions without prior discussion with their family. We are realising that this is never more relevant than when the deceased person has left instructions or made provision for a direct cremation, which does not provide a funeral or an opportunity to mourn and it greatly restricts the family's ability to grieve and remember as perhaps they would have wished.

The funeral is very often the start of the healing process following bereavement and the "Let's Talk About Direct Cremation" campaign has been launched in response to growing concerns about "no-fuss" funerals, which often prevent mourners from gathering to say goodbye.

The Campaign is led by SAIF (the National Society of Allied and Independent Funeral Directors), the UK's largest trade association representing independent family funeral directors. The objective of the campaign is to raise awareness of the differences between direct cremation and an attended funeral, where families can make a more informed choice including simple, traditional, natural or more modern options.

With many years of providing a service to the bereaved, any local family funeral director would share the following observation if asked for their advice:

"A funeral may be about the person who has died, but it is very much for the family and those left behind, who may seek closure and comfort through proper remembrance and an opportunity to grieve together."

If you are considering pre-arranging your funeral, we would strongly advocate that you have an honest and open discussion with your family as to what their needs may be, rather than making the decision for them.

The increasing number of national online direct cremation companies with slick TV advertising may make you feel that you would be reducing an emotional and financial burden on your family by not having to attend your funeral. This may be the case, however, it could be very different to the expectation and emotional needs of those closest to you.



What the TV ads do not tell you about the online national direct cremation companies is that they do not offer the same level of service to the family left behind or the care standards to the person who has died. The options available from your local Family Funeral Director in your home town, may include full preparation of the person who has died, having the ability to choose and see them in their favourite outfit and enabling friends and relatives to spend time to pay their respects in a local Chapel of Rest, all of which is helpful in overcoming the grief and sense of loss.

What is also not shared is that some online national providers often have a 6-7 week delay before the cremation takes place and the cremation facility may be several hundred miles away from where the family have lived. Care is not local. Whilst these details may seem insignificant when considering our own funeral arrangements, these elements, and others, can bring great comfort to those we leave behind.

At Peasgood & Skeates we have met families who have respected a loved one's wish for a direct cremation, despite their personal reservations about not having a funeral service. In the weeks that followed, they have had regrets about missing the one opportunity to prepare for and attend a funeral service which would have offered them the time to grieve and say goodbye with the unity and support of others. The funeral is, after all, an opportunity for people to be together in their grief to share memories of the person who has died, and perhaps to find out about different aspects of their life that they may otherwise never have known.

Bereavement counsellors and local clergy have advised us that they are seeing increasing numbers of people seeking support where a close family relative opted for a direct cremation. Although the wishes of the deceased were followed, bereaved relatives have expressed feelings of guilt and sadness that they haven't had the opportunity to say a proper goodbye or to provide the send-off they feel the person deserved.

We would encourage those seeking to pre-plan their funeral, to talk to their family about their expectations and emotional needs and to take the time to find out whether a direct cremation does or does not satisfy their needs. If, having considered all the options, a direct cremation is considered to be the most appropriate, we can provide this service; we will offer our full support and the highest standards of care from our local funeral homes. The most important thing is that the family make an informed decision.

Terry Tennens, Chief Executive of SAIF welcomes our involvement in the campaign and says "I defend anyone's right to have a direct cremation but it's important that people know exactly what they are buying and look beyond the 'no-fuss' headlines to ensure that this kind of service is appropriate for them and their families."

Introducing ... "My Funeral Wishes"

We are often asked about funeral pre-planning, as some people wish to make an advance payment towards their funeral costs. However, pre-paid funeral plans are not the only option.

Not everyone can afford to pay for their funeral in advance, particularly in the current economic climate. We have therefore created a no-cost option to enable people to simply record their funeral wishes – this can greatly assist family members, friends or Executors who will be making the difficult decisions at the time.

The benefits of recording your funeral wishes include:

- Making things easier for your family and friends at the time of need.
- You can store as many copies as you wish, with as many people as you wish, including us as your chosen Funeral Director.
- Giving you peace of mind that your wishes will be taken into consideration.
- It can be as simple or detailed as you wish it to be.
- You can review and amend your wishes at any time.
- No upfront costs – there is no charge to register your funeral wishes with us.

To find out more:

Our experienced Funeral Arrangers will be pleased to guide you and answer any questions you may have. Your discussion will be treated in the strictest confidence and there is no charge for this service.

Please contact us to make an appointment.

Should you wish to complete the details yourself, you can do this online or download a copy of the form from our website:

www.peasgoodandskeates.co.uk

Alternatively, a copy of the form can be collected from us or posted to you.



Funeral trends was one of the subjects discussed at a recent Talk & Tour arranged by Lee and Tony at our Shire Hill Branch. They were joined by Ministers and administrative staff from the Saffron Walden and Villages Team Ministry who shared their recent experiences. We are looking to arrange a coffee and chat session together, whereby members of the public will be invited to discuss the subject of funerals in a relaxed and friendly setting. Please contact Lee Wilkins for further details: 01799 523314.

OUR NEW SERVICE SHEET DEPARTMENT



Our Service Sheet Designers:
Sue Amery (left) and Jenna Weeks

All our service sheets are prepared in-house, which enables us to liaise very closely between the family and the funeral celebrant and ensures we can take care of the process from start to finish.

Most of our service sheets include a special photograph or a montage of images which makes each one unique and they very often become a precious keepsake for family and friends.

Each bespoke design takes time to prepare and our designated Service Sheet Department has been set up to enable us to give each one the focus and attention it deserves.

Jenna Weeks, our Service Sheet Designer, heads up the new department which is based at our Haverhill branch and she is ably assisted by Sue Amery. Both ladies have been involved in the preparation of service sheets at Peasgood & Skeates for many years and their combined experience makes them a winning team.

We believe this development will further enhance the service we provide to our clients and wish Jenna and Sue well in their new roles.

STAFF TRAINING

As a progressive Company, the management and staff at Peasgood & Skeates work tirelessly to maintain standards and are continuously reviewing working practices to ensure that the service we offer is the very best possible.

We also need to keep up with new developments and legislations to ensure that we are fully compliant and able to give the highest standard of care to our clients. In February, we held a training workshop for all our office staff. This was an opportunity for us to refresh our knowledge and share our experiences in order to enhance each others' learning. We would like to extend our grateful thanks to the team at Cam Valley Crematorium for allowing us to use the Chapel for the training.



We are pleased to announce two in-house promotions:

Ben Seward, who currently manages our two Cambridge branches and Lee Wilkins who oversees our Saffron Walden and Haverhill funeral homes, have both taken on new roles as Operations Managers. Ben and Lee are experienced funeral directors who will be able to use their skills and knowledge to take on extra responsibilities across the wider company as their roles develop. We are sure you will join us in wishing them well in their new positions.



HAVERHILL SHOW



We received a warm welcome at the Haverhill Show again this year and visitors were keen to have a go at our free competitions.

The lovely cake (pictured on page 8) was made by Jennifer, who recently joined us as a Funeral Administrator and works at our Duxford funeral home.



Tony Phillips and Emma Burdett presented the prize to 8-year-old Jake Nicholas, who was the winner of our 'Guess the number of balloons in the limousine' competition. Jake was very excited to receive his £100 Amazon gift voucher and his mum said that he had already started to write a list!

NEWS IN BRIEF:



Our lovely Cambridge Team receives many letters of thanks, which are proudly displayed on their noticeboard. They were particularly touched to receive this very tasty thank you gift from a company after the team had assisted their delivery driver who needed medical assistance.



In July, Lee Wilkins enjoyed a day away from his desk but he was kept busy at the Haverhill Rovers Football Club Golf Day at Haverhill Golf Club. Peasgood & Skeates organised the putting competition and Lee enjoyed catching up with some of the players from last year as well as seeing some new faces.



We were 'bowled over' when our friends at Cambridge Chesterton Indoor Bowls Club invited us to hold our team meeting at the club so we could have a go at the sport afterwards. We didn't identify any future champions but we enjoyed it none-the-less!



In January, Jenna Weeks endured an icy cold outdoor swim. Jenna's younger brother, Adam, has been battling cancer for the last 2 years and Jenna signed up for the Cold Water Dip to raise awareness and funds for the charity Young Lives vs Cancer. Accompanied by her dad, Jenna managed to brave the chill for this very worthy cause and she has raised an impressive £1,600 to date, for which she is very grateful.

BIRTHDAY WISHES

These 3 young men have all celebrated a special birthday this year. One of them was 40 and the other 2 turned 60 we'll let you work it out for yourself!



David Peasgood
Consultant



Lee Wilkins
Operations Manager



Alan Prior
Funeral Director

And Finally ...

It's all about the cake!



- Left:** A grateful client sent a lovely box containing tea and scones for the staff at Saffron Walden.
- Centre:** The beautiful Peasgood & Skeates Cake was made by Jennifer Livingstone for the "Guess the Weight of the Cake" competition at the Haverhill Show.
- Right:** Ben Seward is pictured receiving a box of lovely homemade cakes from Amber Christou from Cherry Hinton Care Home, as part of the TLC Love and Care Friendship Week in February.