

Awards ceremonies herald autumn round of business

The best in our business are recognised for their success and achievements

The summer break is over and the regional meetings, AGMs and travelling around the country will be starting again. Davina and I were invited to the Good Funeral Awards in London on 7 September at Porchester Hall. The awards have categories such as Funeral Caterer of the Year, Crematorium Attendant of the Year and Florist of the Year.

I was really pleased to see that the Lifetime Achievement Award went to Clive Leverton of Leverton & Sons.

Leverton & Sons Ltd has been a family-owned company of funeral directors, based within the St Pancras area of London, for 220 years and Clive is the seventh generation.

Today the company is run by cousins Pippa and Andrew. Both worked and studied in other fields



before deciding to join the family business. Levertons recently pioneered the first all-electric hearse in this country. Well done to you Clive, and all your staff.

SAIFCharter

On Saturday 9 September, we attended the SAIFCharter AGM at the Park Plaza London Riverbank Hotel. The AGM itself was informative and very lively, but it was disappointing that out of some 740 SAIFCharter members, fewer than 15% turned up. During my trips going around the country to regional meetings and listening to the membership on pre-paid plans I was very surprised there was such a small attendance. In the evening we went to the Funeral Planner of the Year Awards, hosted by Dan Walker who presents the BBC's Breakfast News and Football Focus.

Winners included Baglan Funeral Home who won South Wales 250+, and Abbey Funeral Services who won South East England <250, while National Winners were Tony Fagan Independent Funeral Directors <250 and Hammertons Funeral Directors, East Midlands 250+.

Education Day

Education Day 2017 will soon be upon us. The annual event brings together funeral professionals and specialists, allowing SAIF members to keep up to date with issues and gain ideas for best practice for their own funeral business. The main speakers will be Cheryl Paris from the Scottish Government's Burial and Cremation team, who will talk about the regulation of funeral directors, and the new Inspector of Funeral Directors, Natalie McKail.

Other speakers include:

- Kevin Sinclair who will be giving an update on the latest embalming techniques and challenges
- Gavin Faber, from Irwin Mitchell, who will give an overview of how to handle conflict with families
- Brian Hart will provide a session on cyber fraud
- Fatima Uzzaman from the Department for Work and Pensions will be providing information on social fund payments and Robert Roundtree will be discussing International Disaster Recovery.

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SAIF CHARITY OF THE YEAR: BRITISH HEART FOUNDATION

This year, SAIF will be supporting British Heart Foundation (BHF) as President Paul Bowley's charity. There are many different ways to bank the funds you raise.

Donate to Paul's JustGiving or Virgin Money accounts:

- www.justgiving.com/fundraising/Paul-Bowley
- <http://uk.virginmoneygiving.com/team/saifpresidentcharity>

To support Paul's charity:

- Visit Paul's VirginGiveMoney webpage to donate directly at

<http://bit.ly/2rktQwr>

- Contact SAIF Business Centre on 0345 230 6777
- Make a cheque payable to SAIF Charity Account
- Donate electronically, using account number 10224793 and sort code 60 04 24