

It's death without killing the planet

by TOM FOOT

ECO-HEARSES and biodegradable coffins are part of an award-winning funeral director's carbon-cutting response to the climate crisis.

Leverton and Sons which has a history dating back several generations in Camden, said it is focused on making send-offs and its own company practices more sustainable.

The family-run business, which has national recognition for organising many high-profile funerals over the year, has won a "gold" industry accolade for its eco-conscious approach to burials in what is typically a very traditional sector.

Hannah Leverton, a spokeswoman for the company with offices in Mornington Crescent, said: "We've been committed to green funeral practices for many years. For example, we were the first funeral director in the UK to offer an electric hearse to bereaved families. So, it's fantastic to receive recognition for our

Famous funeral directors get award for green approach

work in this area. But the journey doesn't end here. We'll be building on this award with additional environmental initiatives, such as more zero-emission vehicles, sustainable coffin types and reductions in energy and water consumption."

Sustainable coffins are made out of biodegradable materials – cardboard, bamboo, willow and sea grass. The company has said carbon-zero funerals "do not exist" but it was possible to make greener choices.

Cremations are often thought of as less environmentally friendly than burials, but do "quickly

achieve a process that takes many years to achieve" and do not "use up precious urban or agricultural space.

The Eco-Hearse is capable of making a 200 mile journey to woodland burial site on a single charge.

Ms Leverton added: "With demand for greener funerals growing, it's vital that funeral directors not only offer eco-friendly options but can also demonstrate broader sustainable practices in the running of their businesses."

The Greener Globe Funeral Standard initiative was launched by a former crematorium manager Brendan Day, who said: "We're pleased to see such a renowned funeral director as Leverton & Sons receive our Gold award. It's very well deserved."

Leverton & Sons was established in 1789 by John Leverton and runs offices in Camden Town, Golders Green, Belsize Park, Kentish Town and Muswell Hill.

The company was among the first to allow women to become funeral directors.



Andrew and Pippa Leverton, directors at Leverton & Sons, with their Greener Globe Funeral Standard Gold certificate

Murder jury told of NYE park clash

THE trial of a 17-year-old accused of murdering another teenager in the park at Primrose Hill on New Year's Eve is continuing at the Old Bailey.

The jury has been watching mobile phone footage and listening to accounts of an altercation which developed before Harry Pitman, 16, died from a stab wound to the neck shortly before midnight.

The defendant, who cannot be named for legal reasons, has denied murder and possessing an offensive weapon.

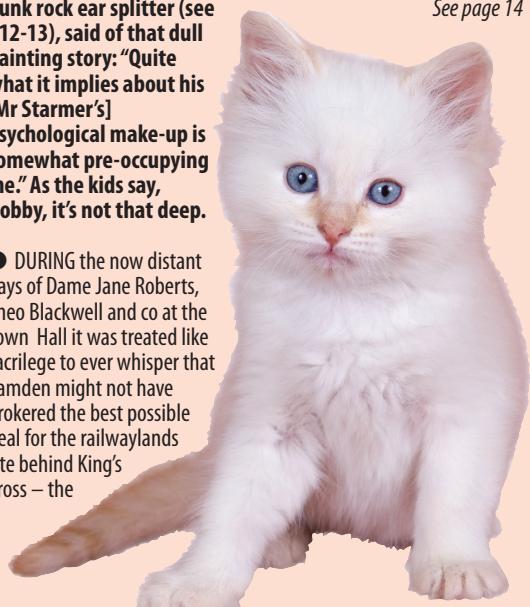
peeps

The week in local politics

● ONE of the most famous dark arts of political media management is the "dead cat strategy"— often credited to Boris Johnson's former adviser Lynton Crosby. The idea is to distract attention away from a difficult story by throwing in a surprise – like tossing a dead cat on the table at a dinner party. It would, of course, take a rascal cynic to suggest Labour's spin doctors have adopted... well, an alive kitten strategy. But in a difficult week for Sir Keir Starmer, which has seen his government repeatedly called cruel for axing winter fuel payments to the elderly, out came the news that his family have acquired a cute new kitten. Suddenly, all the reporters down Downing Street way got excited. What breed is it? Does he get on with Larry? What's he called? The name reveal – it's been christened Prince, btw, maybe because Mr Starmer thinks Purple Rain is a banger – became a news story in itself.

Pictures have not yet been released – they are possibly for another awkward day – but it's a white Siberian kitten like the model below. At other times when things have been a little sticky for the new new Labour government, the media has been fed other distractions. We can only dream of a time when our metronomic press pack may stop talking about that other very pressing issue: whether Mr Starmer has taken down a portrait of Margaret Thatcher from the Downing Street walls or not? Robert Peston, ITV News' political editor and punk rock ear splitter (see p12-13), said of that dull painting story: "Quite what it implies about his [Mr Starmer's] psychological make-up is somewhat pre-occupying me." As the kids say, Bobby, it's not that deep.

See page 14



● DURING the now distant days of Dame Jane Roberts, Theo Blackwell and co at the Town Hall it was treated like sacrilege to ever whisper that Camden might not have brokered the best possible deal for the railwaylands site behind King's Cross – the



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