

FUNERARY PRACTICES IN ENGLAND AND WALES

Funerary International Series

Series Editor: Julie Rugg, University of York, UK

The study of mortality is now an established academic endeavour which is rapidly expanding in scale and in disciplinary reach. One missing element is a repository of basic facts about funerary practice in each country and the broader legal, governance and denominational frameworks for those practices which might serve to set more detailed research in context.

This book series remedies this absence by producing country-specific monographs, with texts providing a standard framework of questions, which ensures even coverage; aids international comparison; fosters international linkages across the academic community; and inspires new research directions. These texts will be a valuable resource for researchers across the humanities and social sciences concerned with death and funerary customs.

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FUNERARY PRACTICES IN ENGLAND AND WALES

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FOREWORD

Funerary practice is so broad a topic it is unlikely that any one individual can easily encompass all its facets. This collaboration reflects the combined expertise of two historians who are both heavily involved in current policy and practice. Dr Parsons researches and publishes on the history of cremation, burial and funeral directing, and for the past 30 years has worked as a training consultant and funeral director in London. Dr Rugg has written extensively on the history of burial practice, but also has an involvement and interest in policy and practice in contemporary cemetery and crematorium management.

Funerary Practices in England and Wales addresses a very basic gap: the lack of readily accessible contextual information and detail about funerary arrangements in England and Wales. The fact that the book has taken over a year to collate indicates just how widely spread is much of the information the text contains. The book has a number of additional aims. It hopes to be an essential reference text for practitioners, policy makers, students and academic scholars in a complex field that covers a whole range of activities and practices. As part of an international series, the book also aims to contribute to the task of understanding the varied contexts that configure funerary practices in different countries. The text presents information in as clear and as unvarnished a way as

possible. There is no commentary on the information presented: this book has no agenda beyond the desire to inform.

However, it is hoped that the text will be a baseline for future editions that will help us pinpoint shifting contexts, new trends, and obsolescences. Funerary practice mutates continually, but establishing practice at one single moment in time will be of value in years to come. We are both historians, and know that this text will at some juncture constitute a primary document: a robust narrative of funerary practice that we would have been delighted to encounter if it had been written in 1818 or 1918.

Information is correct as the text goes to press. We have been grateful for input from a wide range of experts, but any errors are our own.

Julie Rugg and Brian Parsons

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Finally, our deep gratitude is extended to Philippa Grand at Emerald Publishing, who immediately understood the need for this book and for the associated international series. Philippa and her team have steered the text through with grace and efficiency.

MAP OF ENGLAND AND WALES

