



Hope for the best – plan for the worst

ESTIMATES from The Health Protection Agency of a fifty per cent increase in new cases of swine flu in England for the last week in September – 14,000 new cases compared with 9,000 the previous week – highlight the importance of the release of a checklist now available from the Federation of Burial & Cremation Authorities (FBCA).

Intended as an aid to burial authorities wishing to review their readiness to respond to dealing with additional deaths during a pandemic, it is anticipated that this will be used in conjunction with other local material.

Can you cope?

Despite the additional workload and possibility that there will be increased staff absences, will your authority have sufficient capacity and suitable arrangements in place to carry out the activities listed below?

The information given in this article is based on national figures and will vary greatly from area to area and is intended as starting values to assist self-assessment of your service.

ABAinfo here outlines the elements of this very comprehensive document relating to burials. The full checklist which also includes guidance for cremation authorities can be downloaded from: www.fbca.org.uk

Burials

Normally about 28% of deaths in the UK result in a burial. As the age distribution of deaths during a pandemic may be different from normal, the proportion of burials may also be different. Until reliable data is available on

this, it is recommended that local authorities assume that up to 50% of all deaths will result in burials.

- Arrangements for opening graves should consider how the desire to use existing family plots will be accommodated, so as to avoid the need for later disinterment.
- Installing headstones and “monumental sculpture” may need to be deferred. It is anticipated that additional staff and equipment will be needed, the associated training requirement for staff and sourcing of equipment should be considered.
- Engage in talks with grounds maintenance contractors and civil engineering contractors about the possibilities of supporting your cemetery service with experienced machine/excavator operators during an influenza pandemic.
- During times of heightened number of deaths, consider what type of interment provision will be available, individual graves, single depth or trench.
- How will you mark all interments for continual identification? Use of grave plans, temporary/permanent markers, micro-chips etc.

Training

The availability of sufficient staff of the correct skill-mix will be important and preparations should include training for additional staff.

- Training requirements to ensure flexible staff working should be identified and appropriate training programmes devised. In addition to operational staff, consider training and ‘back

up’ for management and administration staff.

- Have a fully workable paper system for bookings and recording burials which are due to take place, in case of power failure.
- *Buddying* should also be considered e.g. where a qualified and skilled member of staff is teamed up with an unskilled one to enable shift working to be properly manned.
- Consider extending working hours.

Coffins Shortage

The FBCA recognises that there will be a shortage of coffins for cremation/burial and recommends that there should be no deviation from the minimum standard, as anything less, for instance the use of ‘body bags’ is unsafe. The Ministry of Justice and the

Home Office have met with coffin manufacturers and the funeral industry about the potential to increase production of coffins in the event of exceptionally high demand. They have concluded that existing manufacturers could increase production by between 50% (were there to be no limitations on choice of coffin) and 150% if the range of coffins offered were curtailed.

National Emergency Plan for Fuel

The plan has the effect of restricting the supply of fuel – petrol/diesel to only those essential services that appear on the ‘Critical List’ of the ‘Local Emergency Plan’.

- Drawing fuel from the petrol station in jerry cans during a National Emergency will not be allowed.

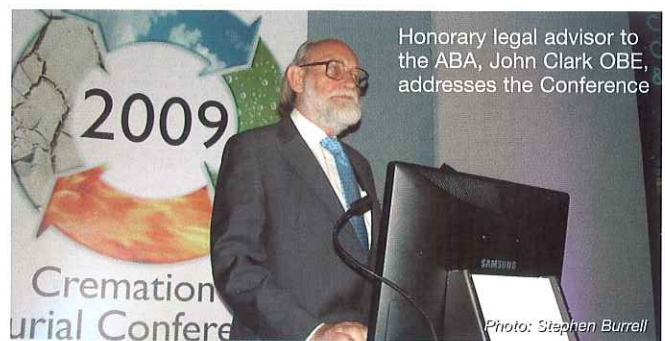
(continued on page 2)

Conference 2009

FOLLOWING the overwhelming success of the last year’s joint Cremation & Burial Conference & Exhibition 2008 major sponsors The Cremation Society of Great Britain, The Federation of Burial and Cremation Authorities, The Association of Private Crematoria and The Association of Burial Authorities joined forces to hold the 2009 Joint Conference at The Royal Bath Hotel, Bournemouth, in early July.

The annual conference and exhibition was in response to requests from delegates and exhibitors alike and was deemed to be a great success. Extracts from Conference papers will be published in future issues of *ABAinfo*.

Next year’s joint event with the same sponsors will take place in Stratford upon Avon in July 2010.



Honorary legal advisor to the ABA, John Clark OBE, addresses the Conference

Photo: Stephen Burrell

VISIT THE ABA WEBSITE

www.burials.org.uk

The Association of Burial Authorities aims to:

Raise awareness

and appreciation of our burial grounds (cemeteries and churchyards) as places of commemoration, heritage and amenity value

Promote the importance

of burial grounds for the long-term care of the bereaved and as places of remembrance for our communities

Monitor and improve

legislation and regulations affecting burial grounds on National and European Union levels

Protect and promote

the interests of organisations engaged in management and operation of burial grounds.

As a member

you can help support these objectives. You also have access to benefits which include the helpline for advice on all matters concerning the management and operation of burial grounds; publications including this newsletter, conference papers and guidance fact sheets; reduced rates for ABA events and seminars.

For joining information visit

www.burials.org.uk
E aba@burials.org.uk T 020 7288 2522

The Association of Burial Authorities
Waterloo House, 155 Upper Street, London N1 1RA

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(continued from page 1)

- Fuel stores must be licensed – now – not when a second wave of swine flu strikes. Diggers, dumpers and generators all require fuel. Your service should be registered as an essential user – check this out with your emergency planner.
- Put all staff on the Critical List with emergency planners so they can obtain fuel to get to work. This may also make provision for staff to receive any anti-virals, but this will be a local decision.

Communications with local faith and cultural groups

Be aware of possible alternative service formats and what capacity is available locally amongst particular faith and cultural groups. Despite the increased numbers of deaths, it is clearly important to make every effort to accommodate important religious and cultural requirements of the deceased and the bereaved.

Discussions should take place between representatives of faith groups to assist with this by considering alternative formats and schedules for services that are consistent with particular belief systems.

It should be acknowledged that under some of the more extreme planning assumptions, it may not be possible to maintain all of the traditional customs in all areas. Where this is anticipated, all those in contact with the bereaved should be aware of the need to avoid reinforcing unrealistic expectations.

Consideration should be given to:

- staffing and venues.
- modifying the scheduling of religious services and commemorations.
- any optional content of services and commemorations. This is to allow the burial/cremation to take place at a different time/location from the principal commemoration or service; to avoid delays in completing funeral arrangement, and to fulfil the needs of the bereaved and the faith or cultural group to which they belong.
- Identifying, training and deploying additional staff in relevant areas, particularly mortuaries and burial grounds.
- Consideration should be given both to the necessary qualifications and skills, and to staff numbers bearing in mind potential absences during a pandemic period.

Having available sufficient suitable land for burials during the pandemic, and for normal mortality rates over the following year

The total number of deaths (all causes) indicated by current planning assumptions, for the pandemic period, are very much less than the normal total annual mortality. Therefore, although these deaths are in addition to the annual expected deaths in a given period, it is not anticipated that there will be a shortage of grave space during the pandemic period.

(continued on page 3)

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Welcome to new members

The following have joined the ABA:

Bainbridge PC, Bardney Group PC, Bembridge PC,
Colburn, Hipswell & Scotton JBA,
Curbar PC, Deanshanger PC

Did you know ... there are around 70,000 war memorials in England and Wales? Many are publicly recognised and in a good state of repair, but concern has been expressed in recent years that a lack of awareness and regard for certain war memorials has resulted in their neglect, inappropriate disposal or destruction.

A booklet is available for those concerned with war memorials. Included are sections on cleaning, repairs and maintenance, inscriptions and grants available.

To download *Guidance for Custodians of War Memorials in England and Wales*, visit: www.justice.gov.uk/guidance/burials.htm

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(continued from page 2)

- Planning for subsequent months and years should consider the reduction of available space in burial grounds, due to the temporary increase in the number of deaths.
- It is estimated that ground equivalent to 24 months supply will be required during the pandemic period.

Business management arrangements for:

- Staff absences.
- Equipment – this is likely to include consideration of maintenance arrangement, stocks of spare parts and consumables, preventative maintenance, and clarity about urgent arrangement for repairs.

The NHS have also issued a more general booklet *Pandemic Flu – Guidance for Businesses* which can be downloaded from: www.direct.gov.uk/en/swineflu/DG_177831

**Earliest British
burial dates back
to 27,000 BC**

WHEN do you think the earliest recorded burial took place in Britain? Around 100 AD in Roman times? About 2500 BC when they were building Stonehenge? Try harder!

The 'Red Lady' – actually a young man – who was found in the Gower in 1823 by Oxford University's Professor of Geology, was eventually thought to have been interred in a burial cave about 16,000 BC according to radio carbon dating techniques. This year experts from the British Museum and Oxford's Radiocarbon Unit, using refined methods which penetrated the preservatives applied in the nineteenth century, have produced a date around 27,000 BC!

Even more interesting, this was no unusual once-off: this man's burial was one of a group of elaborate interments found across Europe from Russia to Portugal.

Perhaps the most noteworthy feature of this story is not even the extreme age but the fact that similar burial practices were in use throughout the Continent whereas today Britain is often reluctant to consider adopting practices which have been in use abroad for many years.

Ministry of Justice has published planning guidance for coroners, planners and justice system agencies for a flu pandemic in England and Wales. www.justice.gov.uk/guidance/pandemic-flu.htm

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Did you know ...

A comprehensive document *Managing the safety of burial ground memorials*, published by the Ministry of Justice, can be found by visiting www.justice.gov.uk/guidance/docs/safety-burial-grounds.pdf An accompanying Frequently Asked Questions document is also available on www.justice.gov.uk/guidance/docs/memorial-safety-guidance-faqs.doc.pdf

Did you know ...

Guidance for burial grounds managers booklet can be downloaded from www.justice.gov.uk/guidance/docs/burial-ground-managers.pdf



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Want a company that can provide all of your training and consultancy needs? Ron Dunn, who has over twenty years experience in cemeteries and crematoria management, was a former Director of Training and Development with the ICCM, is now able to serve you direct at a significant saving compared to other providers.

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Give us a Call and ... Consider it Dunn!

Joint Cremation and Burial Conference and Exhibition 2009

Royal Bath Hotel, Bournemouth



Photo: Stephen Burrell



Photos: Gwynne Stock

A selection of stands from the Exhibition

Cremation and Burial Conference and Exhibition 2010 5-7 July 2010
Holiday Inn, Stratford-upon-Avon, Warwickshire Full details will be in the next issue of ABA Info.

Letters ... You write ... right?

Email abainfo@swa-pr.co.uk or write to ABA info,
155 Upper Street, London N1 1RA

Using self-employed contractors

Q: Can a self employed contractor (handyman) be present (in the background) at the cemetery to check that the burial is taking place? Our contract handyman is presently given a slip detailing the time of burial, who it is for, and who the undertakers are. He then meets them at the cemetery to open the gates and waits until after the burial has taken place.

A: Yes. A funeral is a public service and so anyone can be present, regardless of their status. Anyone with local knowledge and a good understanding of the process would be suitable. Check for any Union agreements to the contrary. Liaise with all parties, sensitively. The Council should arrange training whenever appropriate.

Q: Can a self employed contractor mark out the grave plot – burial or ashes plots? Or should a member of employed Council staff do this, or at least oversee the process? He is currently given details of the number of the plot to be marked, he marks it out ready for the grave digger (he is self employed but is contracted to dig the plots by most of the individual funeral directors).

A: We would suggest that the presence of a council employee during this process would be prudent for all parties. Yes, a competent person could mark out a grave if all information was to hand, but, all that *needs* to be done is to drive in a (say) reusable 2in x 2in 2ft stake with a surname, at the head-end, centre-line of the plot. This could perhaps be verified by A N Other.

The gravedigger would mark out and dig the grave using the coffin size and depth data provided by the funeral director.

A re-opening of a grave may need a mason to remove a gravestone. The 'handyman' would liaise with all parties.

It would be reasonable for an able-bodied handyman, with a little training, to dig a hole for a container (urn) of cremated remains, knowing the dimensions (from the funeral director).

When it comes to re-filling the grave, special attention should be given to the void *around* the coffin, which should be well filled and tamped down (the end of a plank makes a good tamper). That process minimises lateral collapse of the coffin, and slumping of the grave fill.

It has become increasingly common to instruct the gravedigger to remove the surplus grave spoil from the site. The surplus comprises the volume of the coffin space and the reduced compaction of the remainder of the grave fill – which can approach a tonne in weight. Ecclesiastical Law dictates that consecrated soil, in most cases, should not be removed from the site.

Any spoil that is removed (should) end in land fill, where there is a levy. The weight is likely to exceed the capacity of a typical gravediggers' transport, involving two journeys, two queues and two levies. Routine topping up grave settlement together with on-site landscaping are two ways of mitigating land fill and fly-tipping problems.

Subsiding grave problem

Q: At our cemetery, one of the graves is suffering from subsidence. The relatives of the deceased have moved away from the village and although we have written twice to them to ask that they attend the grave, they have not replied and indeed, I am not sure that we have the correct address. One of the Parish Councillors has advised that I would be breaking the law if I arranged for the Parish Warden to "top up" the subsidence – only a relative can do this. Advice, please.

A: Under the general powers of management of its cemetery conferred by Article 3(1) of the Local Authorities Cemeteries Order 1977 and under the duty imposed by Article 4(1) to keep the cemetery in good order the council may "top up" a grave which has subsided.

It should do this only after making reasonable efforts to get the work done by the family which has interests in the grave.

The Councillor who has suggested that there would be a breach of the law if the council filled up the grave is, we suspect, misapplying a relevant principle. In filling up the grave the council must not disturb or damage any memorial and must do no more than restore the grave to its original state. Anything done in excess of such basic repair would be an interference with the rights of the grave owners and in theory they could take legal action about it. In practice we cannot see anyone spending money to object to a reasonable restoration of a grave's surface.

Did you know ... In the light of a further review of the burial legislation in relation to the archaeological excavation of human remains, a Statement on burial law and archaeology has been issued by the Ministry of Justice. Visit www.justice.gov.uk/guidance/docs/burial-law-archaeology-statementii.pdf

Ernie is honoured



A NEW building in the grounds of the City of London Cemetery, east London, The Ernie Turner Training Centre, was officially opened in the summer.

The Centre has been named after former Superintendent and Registrar Ernie Turner in recognition of his 33 years service to the burials and cremation industry and, in particular, his contribution towards the training, development and encouragement of others.

Industry representatives, colleagues, family and friends were all present for the official opening ceremony when Ernie unveiled a commemorative plaque after an address by Robert Duffield CC, chairman of the Port Health and Environmental Services Committee of the Corporation of London.

The Centre has superb audio-visual equipment, Wi-Fi broadband access, in-house catering and can be hired for training sessions. Contact Gary Burks, Superintendent and Registrar at the City of London Cemetery on 020 8530 2151 or e-mail: gary.burks@cityoflondon.gov.uk for details.

Parochial Church Fees 2010

Proposed TABLE OF PAROCHIAL FEES From 1 January 2010 As approved by the General Synod July 2009. The Fees Order has not yet been made by the Archbishops' Council, and it would then be subject to confirmation by Parliament	Fee payable Towards Stipend of Incumbent (See Note 2)	Fee Payable To Parochial Church Council	Total Fee Payable	NOTES:
BAPTISMS Certificate issued at time of baptism Short certificate of baptism given under section 2, Baptismal Registers Measure 1961	£ 12.00 9.00	£ - -	£ 12.00 9.00	<p>1. DEFINITIONS 'Burial' includes deposit in a vault or brick grave and the interment or deposit of cremated remains. 'Churchyard' includes the curtilage of a church and a burial ground of a church whether or not immediately adjoining such church. (NOTE: This includes any area used for the interment of cremated remains within such a curtilage or burial ground, whether consecrated or not.) 'Cemetery' means a burial ground maintained by a burial authority. 'Monument' includes headstone, cross, kerb, border, vase, chain, railing, label, plaque, marker, flatstone, tombstone or monument or tomb of any other kind.</p> <p>2. INCUMBENT'S FEE Incumbents declare their fees to the Diocese, which takes them into account in determining the stipend paid to the incumbent.</p> <p>3. FUNERALS & BURIALS i) No fee is payable in respect of a burial of a still-born infant, or for the funeral or burial of an infant dying within one year after birth. ii) The fees prescribed by this table for a funeral service in any cemetery or crematorium are mandatory except where a cemetery or crematorium authority has itself fixed different charges for these services, in which case the authority's charges apply. iii) The fee for a burial in a churchyard on a separate occasion applies when burial does not follow on from a service in church. iv) If a full funeral service is held at the graveside in a churchyard, the incumbent's fee is increased to that payable where the service is held in church. v) The certificate issued at the time of burial is a copy of the entry in the register of burials kept under the Parochial Registers and Records Measure 1978.</p> <p>4. MONUMENTS IN CHURCHYARDS The fee for an additional inscription on a small cross of wood, or a small vase, shall not exceed the current fee payable to the incumbent for the erection of such a monument.</p> <p>5. SEARCHES IN CHURCH REGISTERS The search fee relates to a particular search where the approximate date of the baptism, marriage or burial is known. The fee for a more general search of a church register would be negotiable.</p> <p>6. FEE FOR MARRIAGE CERTIFICATE The following fees are currently payable to the incumbent under the Registration of Births, Deaths and Marriages (Fees) Order 2002: certificate of marriage at registration £3.50; subsequently £7.00. These fees may be increased from 1 April 2010.</p>
MARRIAGES Publication of banns of marriage Certificate of banns issued at time of publication Marriage Service (Marriage certificate – See Note 6)	15.00 12.00 126.00	7.00 - 134.00	22.00 12.00 260.00	
FUNERALS AND BURIALS Service in Church Funeral service in church Burial in churchyard following on from service in church Burial in cemetery or cremation following on from service in church (See Note 3(ii)) Burial of body in churchyard on separate occasion (See Note 3(iii)) Burial of cremated remains in churchyard on separate occasion Burial in cemetery on separate occasion (See Note 3(ii))	54.00 - - 36.00 36.00 36.00	45.00 194.00 - 194.00 78.00 -	99.00 194.00 NIL 230.00 114.00 36.00	
No Service in Church Service in crematorium or cemetery (See Note 3(ii)) Burial of body in churchyard (See Note 3(iv)) Burial of cremated remains in churchyard (See Note 3(iv)) Certificate issued at time of burial (See Note 3(v))	99.00 36.00 36.00 12.00	- 194.00 78.00 -	99.00 230.00 114.00 12.00	
MONUMENTS IN CHURCHYARDS Permitted in accordance with rules, regulations or directions made by the Chancellor of the diocese, including those relating to a particular churchyard or part of a churchyard (but excluding a monument authorized by a particular faculty, the fee for which is set by the Chancellor) Small cross of wood Small vase not exceeding 305mm x 203mm x 203mm (12" x 8" x 8") Tablet, plaque or other marker commemorating a person whose remains have been cremated Any other monument (the above fees to include the original inscription) Additional inscription on existing monument (See Note 4)	9.00 36.00 36.00 54.00 36.00	12.00 45.00 45.00 103.00 -	21.00 81.00 81.00 157.00 36.00	
SEARCHES IN CHURCH REGISTERS Searching registers of marriages for period before 1 July 1837 (See Note 5) (for up to one hour) (for each subsequent hour or part of an hour) Searching registers of baptism or burials (See Note 5) (including the provision of one copy of any entry therein) (for up to one hour) (for each subsequent hour or part of an hour) Each additional copy of an entry in a register of baptism or burials Inspection of instrument of apportionment or agreement for exchange of land for tithes deposited under the Tithe Act 1836 Furnishing copies of above (for every 72 words)	12.00 9.00 12.00 9.00 12.00 9.00 9.00	7.00 7.00 7.00 7.00 7.00 - -	19.00 16.00 19.00 16.00 19.00 9.00 9.00	
EXTRAS The fees shown in this table are the statutory fees payable. It is stressed that the figures do not include any charges for extras such as music (e.g. organist, choir), bells, and flowers, which are fixed by the Parochial Church Council.				
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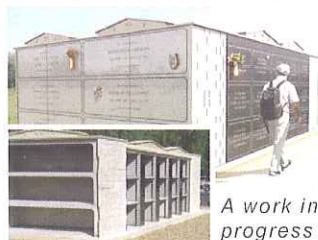
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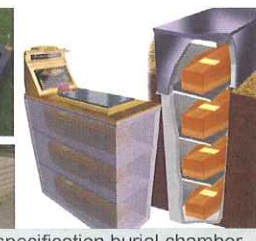
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Weller Headstone Stands Firm

THE MONUMENT for the late Sam Weller, founder and chairman of the Association of Burial Authorities, has been erected at Kensal Green Cemetery in West London.

The stone, as those who knew Sam would expect, is of a sturdy nature. The structure, a rectangular arch, stands 2000mm high x 1100mm wide, (approx. 7'6" high x 3' 6" wide) and was created by Charles Smith FRSA, a stone carver of over forty years experience. The material is Ringby Stone coming from the Northowram Hills above Halifax,

Yorkshire. It was created in 1998 and was seen first as an exhibit at the Memorials by Artists' Exhibition at Blickling Hall in Norfolk and featured in the accompanying book *The Art of Remembrance*.

Sam first spotted the memorial at Blickling Hall all those years ago and remarked on its originality and craftsmanship. The inscription on the face of the arch is a quote from Shakespeare's *Hamlet*: 'Passing through nature to eternity' and is carved in lettering of the artist's own design. Indeed the arch is so

made for those visiting to pass through it. A degree of interaction of which Sam would certainly have approved.

"I am pleased it has a good home," said Charles Smith. "I had wanted to make such a memorial for at least two years and had the idea constantly turning around in my head. Then the opportunity came via the Art of Remembrance show. It was a pleasure to make it and it's an even greater pleasure now to see it standing and doing what it was designed for, commemorating someone's life."

The memorial was erected by Peter Plews, owner of Abbotts Memorial Company, Knaresborough, and his skilful team.

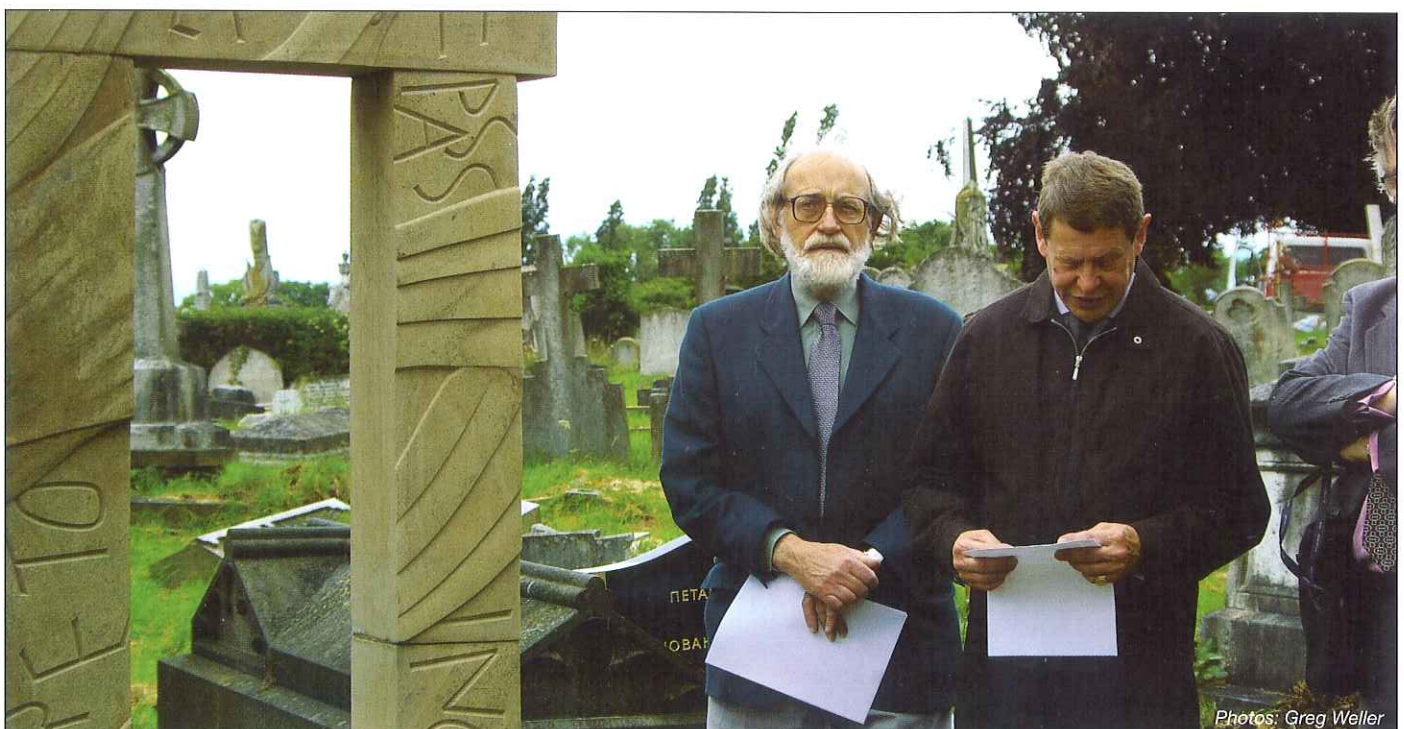
A small ceremony was held at the graveside in honour of Sam and was attended by family, loved ones, the artist, friends and colleagues. A moving tribute to Sam was read by Dr Julian Litten and an extract from *Lord of the Rings* was read by John Clark OBE, both of whom are members of the ABA Executive.



Above: Sculptor, Charles Smith FRSA



Below: John Clark OBE and Dr Julian Litten



Photos: Greg Weller