

Whatever happened to happy endings?

When we were young, we could be sure that everything had a happy ending: the goodies would beat the baddies, the guy would get the gal, justice would be done and everybody would live happily ever after. Unfortunately, as we grew older we realised life was not always like that and in our profession we are acutely aware that the story almost always ends in tears.

We know of many ways to comfort those who have suffered a recent bereavement and also that time is the best healer. We encourage our clients to remember the wonderful times spent together; but this is done in and around services, burial or ashes dispersal which tend to be conducted in anything but a happy environment, no matter how we and others try.

Whilst most people still see a religious service as a key part of the process at the time of death, subsequent disposal of ashes is being considered in more imaginative ways by a number of families and friends. Some non-religious groups are looking for alternatives. Many people want to make the event a happier one.

One way to leave people feeling really good is dispersal of the cremation ashes within a spectacular fireworks display.

Fireworks are synonymous with celebrations. Most of us fondly remember the joy and excitement of bonfire nights and watch in awe the wonderful displays put on today. Last year a woman wrote to Radio 4, saying she wanted to go out in a fireworks display. This was the idea that started Heavens Above Fireworks Limited, the only company we know of dedicated to dispersal of ashes with fireworks displays.

Recently the company celebrated Ron Cooke's life in a spectacular display in Harlow, Essex. The event was captured by the London Evening Standard, whose coverage prompted responses in the national daily press and other media. The publicity has generated enquiries to funeral directors. Some people have already registered their request for this farewell in their wills or pre-payment plans.

These encouraging views have been reinforced by other reactions. One woman wrote to Heavens Above Fireworks that she had always wanted to 'go out in a fireworks display' as it would remind her



Fergus Jamieson of Heavens Above Fireworks Limited



family and friends of all the colour, fun and noise she had generated around them during her life. The company offers a display and event tailored to each individual's wishes. Three basic fireworks packages are proposed:

- 'Go out in spectacular style' – a balanced display appealing to most people
- 'Go out with a bang' – an emphasis on the dramatic, with lots of noise
- 'Say goodbye gracefully' – a gentle, colourful, low-noise display.

Prices start from £1500 and include a site visit and survey to assess risk and safety implications, delivery and set-up of the fireworks display and firing by fully trained staff, reasonable clearing away and associated insurances. The company will liaise with local councils and interested parties on behalf of the client in obtaining permission for the display.

These displays last four to five minutes. All include dramatic category 4 fireworks not available to members of the public. Displays can be extended in duration or enhanced to meet special requests.

Heavens Above Fireworks will happily arrange for other features or services requested by the client, such as a farewell champagne toast, name or message in fireworks, personal 'start' button, blessing, photography, synchronised music and marquees.

So whatever happened to happy endings? This exciting, colourful conclusion, to celebrate someone's life, will undoubtedly bring back that 'happy ending' for a number of our clients and, as they say in their material, what a spectacular way to say goodbye!



The company provides free promotional materials for funeral directors. Fergus Jamieson can be contacted through the Heavens Above Fireworks Limited web site:

www.heavensabovefireworks.com

or by phone on;

01992 578993 or 0771 9816313