

The Final Journey

We all have to return to stardust at some time. It is how we make that journey that can cause



problems for those left behind.

Do we take up scarce space in a formal burial ground or choose a more basic and natural form of burial? If we opt for cremation, what is our family to do with our ashes; surreptitiously strew them in a suitable place, hoping that nobody will notice or mind that we do not have permission?

Pressure on our Burial Ground

The burial ground in Shipton has been extended once and is now fast filling up again. It is estimated that there are only about eighty plots left and nobody knows what the effect of the opening of care homes in the village will do to the length of time before even the new burial ground must be declared full. Perhaps, if you are reading this article and you have a suitable parcel of land in your remit, you might consider making it available. I would be delighted to discuss it with you. In the meantime there are two developments, which may take some of the pressure off the existing burial ground. Firstly we have been granted a faculty by the Diocese to permit the placing of loose ashes in the walled bank at the end of the old or closed Churchyard. This will be done naturally and with the oversight of St Mary's

Church. There will be no memorials or plaques and the bank will be left in a wild state along with the rest of

the closed Churchyard. An entry may be made in a book of remembrance held by the Church. Applications for this service should be made to the Church Wardens.

Another Natural Burial Site

Secondly, most people are probably unaware that there is already a natural burial site occupying a peaceful and very rural location within a seven and a half acre field on a hill just outside Leafield, overlooking the Wychwoods and the Evenlode Valley. There is no danger of this site filling up in the immediate future. Both family-organised funerals and those arranged by funeral directors are accepted. Ashes may also be interred on this site. All types of coffin are allowed provided they are biodegradable. Wooden plaques can be placed on or close to graves to identify their location. For further information, contact Helen Pearson on: 01993 878387.

I sincerely hope you do not need to call on any of these services in the near future but you may wish to consider this inevitable problem and perhaps adjust your will or instructions to your family in due course, before you set off on your own final journey.

Alan Vickers