—Derek Nuttall writes



CEREMONIES ON REMEMBRANCE DAY this year had extra significance. Not only were we remembering those who died many years ago but more recent deaths in Northern Ireland and the South Atlantic.

How should we remember our dead? How can the bereaved best be helped by memorials? Is a grave that can be visited more comforting than ashes which, once scattered, leave no focus for memory? How important is it for children and grandchildren to have kept alive for them memories of someone they barely or never knew? What about siblings born after a child has died? And is it more helpful to a bereaved sibling to know that his parents committed one of his number to the flames or the earth?

Cremations have increased by one per cent every year during the past decade. Last year the number of deaths was 640,927; with cremations totalling 421,597; that is 65.78 per cent of remains were cremated not buried.

Yet scarcely any thought has been spared and certainly I know of no research that seeks to guage the effects of cremation or burial on the memories of the bereaved.

Among many memories I brought away from seven years in Aberfan were two of particular relevance - the first is of long discussions over how best to use the community service on the anniversary of the disaster to prevent it becoming only a looking backwards; the second is of the response of the wider community to the deaths of so many children in one day in 1966. Each year on October 21, for the rest of the sixties, BBC Wales noted the significance of the date. Then the year arrived when October 21 came and went without comment. The people of Aberfan felt neglected. The world had forgotten.

It is not enough for the bereaved to remember. They want others to remember too. Those who die are part of us forever and good memories when they come, are signs of healthy recovery and a foundation for future living. Memories, however, can be stores of bitterness and reproach, shackles that bind.

Coming to terms with memory is part of the process of grief. Bereavement counsellors, and Cruse as a whole, may be the only contact that allows the bereaved person the time needed to deal well with memory. We readily appreciate the pain and significance of the first wedding anniversary, the first Christmas, the anniversary of the death. They are crucial milestones. The bereaved need to know and be shown that others remember these days.

Do we need, beyond these memories, to give more attention to those which come later? A silver wedding, an 18th birthday of a dead son or daughter? Or the wedding of a son or daughter whose mother or father has died. I remember saying at our wedding that my only regret was that my father had not lived long enough to meet my wife.

A morbid memory or attempts to hold someone back because we feel they should remember is unhelpful, but could it be that the feelings of isolation often experienced by the bereaved have some connection with the rest of us forgetting too soon?

WELSH SUCCESS After winning first prize in a Community Award Scheme, Carmarthen Cruse is to go forward to sectional heats at Bristol. The competition is organised by Co-operative Retail Services Ltd. The branch opened in September and publishes details of its services in Welsh and English.

BEREAVEMENT CARE is published for all Cruse workers and others who wish to deepen their understanding of bereavement. It is sold subject to the condition that it shall not be lent, re-sold, reproduced in part or in entirety, hired out or otherwise circulated without the publisher's consent.

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OUR NEW LOGO

After months of searching and helpful stimulation of discussion from members and workers who sent in their designs, the Cruse Council has now agreed on our new logo.
We are grateful to **Mr. Brian Tattersfield** for the design. Its symbolism is obvious and we hope it will quickly become identified as the Cruse symbol. Although appearing on our front page in black and white it will be used in colour for future purposes. Mr. Tattersfield is a graphic design consultant with Minale, Tattersfield and Partners

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