

## Barbara Holloway Retires after 20 years

A valued employee, Barbara Holloway has 'retired' from the profession after 20 years of service with Ian Hazel Funerals in Aldridge.

Barbara joined Ian Hazel Funerals in 1991 to set up and run their new branch, situated at 23 Anchor Road, Aldridge, Walsall.

Commenting on the changes Barbara has seen over the last 20 years in the funeral profession, she says "We have seen a large increase in people wanting to personalise the send off they give to their loved ones. It is not unusual these days to get a request for a horse drawn hearse to convey the coffin to the crematorium or cemetery. We were once asked by a family who required a very unique send off for their loved one, to provide an ex Midland Red double decker bus, so all mourners could travel together with the coffin. The family even produced a special bus stop sign and issued customised tickets for every mourner. On another occasion we were asked to convey the coffin on top of a narrow boat.

The choice of coffins available to families is much greater these days, so along side the traditional veneered and solid timber coffins families are choosing wicker or bamboo coffins as alternative eco friendly options. For a truly personalised funeral 'illustrated' coffins are very popular. These can range from a coffin in the colours of ones favourite football team with appropriate club logos on, to illustrations of favourite hobbies, to pictures of the deceased with family and friends printed all over the coffin.

Families wanting to give that very personal and unique send off to a loved one these days have endless possibilities to choose from, with jazz bands and pipers being requested."

Ian Hazel provided a surprise farewell party and presentation to Barbara at Fairlawns Hotel, Aldridge on Monday 19th December at which time he presented her with some gold jewellery as a token of his appreciation of all the hard work she has put into the building up the Aldridge branch of Ian Hazel Funerals. Amongst the kind words he used, he shared many quotes taken directly from letters and cards sent in over the years by grateful and satisfied clients who had benefited from Barbara's kindness and caring nature whilst carrying out her professional duties.

Ian Hazel said "She will be a great loss to the profession, and the Aldridge community which she has served so well for the last 20 years. A very hard act to follow."

Barbara commented that " it has been a pleasure working within a family business that has five generations of experience in the funeral profession, and I will miss the day to day contact with the public that have come to rely upon her funeral directing skills in and around Aldridge. She went on to say that "whilst going off to do other work initially, I still intend to come back and help out at Ian Hazel Funerals as and when required on a part time basis."



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