

Guidelines for scattering and interring the ashes



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for south and central Devon

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Before interring D's ashes in a woodland burial site, his urn was passed from person to person and each either said something privately or out loud. Some took off the lid so they could see and touch them.

The number of people collecting ashes from the crematoria has more than quadrupled over the last thirty-five years. In order to dispose of these ashes, at least two hundred thousand private rituals of some sort are conducted every year in the UK. These largely private, informal, family-led ceremonies offer another opportunity to say goodbye in your own way and to create a place of remembrance.

The good thing about ashes is the ease with which you can scatter or inter them, at a place which has happy memories and which you can visit in the future. Remember to be considerate in terms of where you choose to scatter ashes. The National Parks are expressing concern at the amount of ashes scattered on popular summits. A large volume of ashes has the ability to change the existing delicate ecosystem. The Environment Agency is also considering prohibiting the strewing of ashes in popular stretches of river and their guidelines should be followed.

There do not appear to be any laws or national regulations to stop you scattering or interring ashes, except that you should gain the permission of the owner of the land. If you want to open an existing grave in order to inter ashes, you need permission to do so from the church or cemetery authorities. You should not scatter them in a churchyard, from a harbour wall or pier without permission of the vicar, harbour master or pier master.

You do not need a licence to scatter ashes at sea offshore. You could hire a self-drive boat or there are skippered boats that will take you.

Local authorities often give local guidelines about scattering ashes, including advice on times of day – early in the morning or towards dusk – and to be sensitive to passers-by.

An adult's ashes amount to around a two-litre volume of gritty dust, which easily billows up so be aware of the wind direction! You can buy a special scattering tube. For ashes on water, we have special biodegradable urns that sit on the water for a short while before sinking to the bottom. If you want to keep the ashes at home, you can simply keep them in a beautiful urn, box or lidded jar.

Environment Agency guidelines concerning the spreading of ashes on water.

- don't spread ashes within 1 km upstream of any drinking-water supply
- don't use a bridge over a river used by boaters and canoeists
- don't use a marina or anywhere close to anglers
- don't hold ceremonies in very windy weather or close to buildings. Spread the ashes as close to the surface of the water as possible
- don't allow other objects containing metal and plastic to enter the water
- don't use busy spots or where the water is obviously used for commercial, agricultural, or recreational purposes or for drinking

Turn the ashes into an object

For an unusual, permanent and dazzling memento, you can have the ashes turned into a gem stone like a diamond. Or you can have some of the ashes incorporated into a glass vase or paper weight. Please contact us for more details. You can also mix ashes with clay or concrete to make something that includes the ashes in its fabric. In Buddhist tradition, a figure of a Buddha is made by combining the ashes of a devotee with clay.



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