

New Revenue from Old Records

Get your burial and cremation records to generate income automatically and effortlessly for you — while increasing service to the public, improving efficiency, and reducing health and safety risks.



Historically there has been no central facility for searching UK burial and cremation registers. Enquirers have to approach up to 3000 burial authorities and nearly 250 crematoria individually. With genealogy becoming one of the most common uses of the Internet, this is a very unsatisfactory situation and a missed opportunity.

Deceased Online has been created to fill this gap by providing a central web search facility for UK burial and cremation records.

Gower Consultants and Manuscripti, highly respected suppliers of software systems and scanning services to the Bereavement Services industry, have joined forces to create a team perfectly equipped to create and manage this significant national project.

A new and unique Internet based central search facility for UK burial and cremation records

HOW DOES IT WORK?

The screenshot shows the Deceased Online website. At the top, it says 'deceased online' and 'a gower consultants and manuscript joint enterprise'. The navigation menu includes 'home', 'search', 'my account', 'help', and 'about deceased online'. The user is logged in as 'William John Reynolds' with a credits balance of 490 and an expiry date of 1 Jan 2009. The main content area shows a 'burial register summary' for a person with the last name 'Smith' and first name 'Eliza', born on 12 Sep 1907 at Haywards Heath Cemetery. Below this is a table of 'further information available' with columns for descriptions, credits required, and results. The table lists: further register details (20 credits), burial register scan (20 credits), grave details with other occupants (25 credits), picture of grave (30 credits), and map(s) to locate grave position (50 credits). A 'free search' form is visible on the left, and a 'Buy credits to spend when you need to. pay-per-view' button is at the bottom.

Deceased Online works by holding copies of participants' historical register data, and any available register scans, maps, and grave and other memorial pictures on its secure high capacity web servers, and regularly updating them automatically via the Internet. This is the first ever national database of its kind.

As with other genealogy websites, an initial search on name and date is free. This can be limited to an area of the country, a county or district, or an individual burial authority or crematorium. Credits can be purchased on the website to access further information such as:

- additional register details
- particulars of other grave occupants
- scans of register pages
- pictures of graves and other memorials
- maps to locate graves and other memorials in cemeteries and memorial gardens
- scans of books of remembrance pages.

A feature that will excite family researchers, and which is missing from other types of genealogy web site, is the ability to list all other interments in a located grave, enabling key family connections to be made.

An on-line shop will provide such things as high quality printouts of register pages, and formal certificates showing grave and cremation details.

Users of Deceased Online can perform searches free of charge, but will then purchase credits to spend on further information according to their requirements. This revenue is shared between Deceased Online and the burial or cremation authority.

A close-up view of the search form on the website. It features a 'free search' button with a magnifying glass icon. The form has fields for 'last name' (Smith), 'first name' (Eliza), 'from year' (1900), and 'to year' (1910). There are 'search' and 'advanced search' buttons. At the bottom, there is a 'Buy credits to spend when you need to. pay-per-view' button.

THE GOOD NEWS

Income from searches and shop sales is divided between the authority supplying the records and Deceased Online, providing the authority with a continuous income stream with no staff involvement. Office staff can also use the system for searches, considerably improving their work experience.

Internet users from around the world can make searches and shop for information on the Deceased Online website.



ENORMOUS BENEFITS

- Service to the public is improved.
- Revenue from searches is increased considerably.
- **Staffing** requirements for searches is reduced dramatically.
- **Access** to physical registers is no longer required, so office space can be liberated by moving registers off-site.
- **Health & Safety** risks from handling heavy registers are eliminated.
- **There is no need** to develop and maintain your own Internet search facility.
- **If you already have** an Internet search facility, Deceased Online can either work in parallel with it, or save you money by replacing it.
- **At a stroke** Local Authority participants can fulfil Government requirements to open their data to public Internet access, while making 'cashable' efficiency improvements in line with current policy initiatives.



*At a stroke Local Authority
Government requirements to open
public Internet access can be
efficiently achieved.*

CAN I PARTICIPATE?

Whether or not your administration is computerised, and if it is, whichever computer system you have, and regardless of how many or how few records you have – computerised, scanned or neither – Deceased Online can help you. We can offer all the scanning, indexing, digitising and hosting services required to enable you to put your register data and associated information on-line in an efficient and cost-effective way. **And many smaller authorities may be able to join with no initial costs.** Furthermore, we can provide complete project management to make the task worry free.

If you already have a web search facility, Deceased Online will work alongside it; however, using Deceased Online instead of your own facility, and simply linking to it from your web site, will save you development, maintenance and update costs, and will almost certainly generate more income from the increase in UK and worldwide enquiries.



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HELLO WORLD

Our international publicity campaign is designed to maximise awareness of the service, and includes: information packs to cemetery and crematorium managers; press releases to national and local news channels; advertisements and articles in local government, bereavement services and genealogy publications; exhibition stands at conferences; on-line advertising and sponsorship of related genealogy and historical research web sites.



BIG JOB, HEAVY MACHINERY

The majority of historical records nationally are still in paper form, so the task of getting all the information on-line is not a trivial one. However, the extensive combined experience and expertise of Gower Consultants and Manuscripti equip us uniquely for the task. Gower Consultants has been supplying computerised administration systems for cemeteries and crematoria since 1985, and has successfully implemented register web searching facilities for many individual councils and organisations. Manuscripti has been specialising in high quality scanning and restoration of archive material, including cemetery maps and burial and cremation registers, for over 5 years. And we have attracted significant financial backing for the task.

Deceased Online has generated tremendous interest among the bereavement services managers with whom we have discussed it, and we are confident it will be a success.



Deceased Online Ltd is a joint enterprise between Gower Consultants Ltd, supplier of the UK's leading computerised administration system for cemeteries and crematoria, and Manuscripti Ltd, a leading provider of archival scanning services.

FAQS

Answers to frequently asked questions....

1. Surely Deceased Online will only be effective if a large proportion of authorities participate?

The effectiveness will increase as more authorities join. However, we anticipate that the service will be extremely popular, and that the number of participants will grow rapidly. For the benefit of enquirers, the website will display a list of currently participating burial authorities and crematoria.

2. None of our registers is on computer – how can we participate?

Ideally participants will have computerised registers or index information which will be used to perform initial name searches. If not, then there are two preferred ways forward: a computerised administration system, or a simple computerised index system. In both cases the register index data will have to be entered into the system to enable searches to be performed. The quickest way to achieve this is to have your registers scanned, and the index information transcribed into computer readable records. This is a service Deceased Online can provide, to a high degree of accuracy.

With the simple computerised index option, once an index entry has been found, the scan of the register page on which the full entry was made can be displayed. A full computerised administration system can do the same of course, but then you have the option to store the full register information on the computer, as well as having all the extra functionality such a system would provide.

3. Our computerised registers are not completely back-fed – how will this affect our participation?

You could just put the currently computerised data on-line, but this is not ideal: enquirers tend to take absence of evidence as evidence of absence. In other words, there is a danger that, in spite of any warnings about incomplete data, if a record is not found when searching an authority's available register entries, the burial or cremation may be assumed not to have taken place there.

The preferable alternative would be to back-feed the computerised registers first. See question 2 for the scanning and index extraction solution. Deceased Online can also provide a full register back-feeding service, with or without register scans.

4. We have only scans of our registers, and no indexes – can we still participate?

The scans can be put online, but they would only be browsable in the way you would browse the physical register, page by page; register pages would not be retrievable by name of deceased and date. The preferable alternative -- to be able to display the required page directly -- would require the scans to be indexed (see question 2).

5. How is the data on Deceased Online kept up-to-date?

This is only possible automatically if you have computerised registers which are kept up-to-date. Our Harvester program would then sit on your system, extract information from the latest records from your registers, and transmit it over the Internet to Deceased Online on a regular basis. Otherwise, batch scanning and indexing can be performed from time to time.

6. Does it matter which computer administration system we are using?

Deceased Online is intended to be able to work with all the major administration systems, and even the one-off systems produced by individual authorities. The Harvester program just reads information from the database, and does not interfere with it in any way. Where the co-operation of the system's supplier is needed, we see no reason why this should be refused. The answer to question 7 is relevant however.

7. What sort of information from our computerised administration system could be made available online?

With any administration system we anticipate being able to show computerised register information, including other occupants of a grave. If you are using Epilog or Epilog Sequel from Gower Consultants, then potentially you can also make available register scans, pictures of graves, book of remembrance scans, and maps showing the locations of graves. Exactly how much will depend on the modules installed in your system. Some of these additional items may also be available with other administration systems, depending on individual circumstances.

[more questions on next page](#) ➤



8. How does Deceased Online deal with the requirements of the Data Protection Act?

From computerised registers, only information not subject to the Data Protection Act will be kept by Deceased Online. This generally means information about the deceased, who have no rights under the Act; applicant and grave owner information is excluded. Register scans are masked to prevent the same information being read from the original entries. The preferences of individual authorities about information to be withheld are also respected.

9. Is the data safe and secure on the web servers?

The Internet service provider hosting the Deceased Online servers is fully ISO 27002 compliant. The relevant areas covered by ISO 27002 are the prevention of unauthorised access to information; the protection of the integrity of software and information; and the protection of critical business processes from the effects of major failures or disasters.

10. We already have a search facility on our own website – how will Deceased Online work with it?

Deceased Online can work independently of your own search facility. You may prefer however to replace your website's search facility with a link to Deceased Online. Then enquirers would not only be able to search initially for records from just your registers -- they would also have the option to broaden their search to all participating authorities.

11. What proportion of the search fee is retained by Deceased Online?

A flexible remuneration package is offered. Some authorities already have a budget for making their information available on-line, while others do not. The revenue to the authority from the sale of credits will depend on the amount, if any, of the annual payment, a higher payment giving a higher return per search. Also, we may be able to offer certain initial data preparation services without any immediate payment, the cost being treated like an advance on royalties, and recovered over a number of years from search income. The percentage of the search fee paid to the authority will therefore depend on all these factors, and will be adjusted for each individual case.

12. How will participating authorities get paid?

Deceased Online has its own credit purchase facility, in conjunction with a major on-line secure payment system provider. Payments due will be transferred into the authorities' bank accounts on a regular basis, normally monthly.

Talk to us

If you have any further questions, please contact us on 01273 207203 or email us at info@deceasedonline.co.uk for more information, or to arrange for a visit to discuss the service and its benefits with you and your I.T. advisers.

