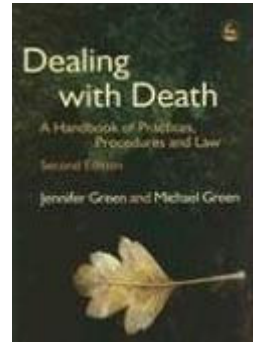


## Dealing with Death:

A Handbook of Practices, Procedures and Law (second edition) by Jennifer Green and Michael Green, May 2006, 352 pages Paperback £40.00 ISBN 1-84310-381-8,



We all find ourselves engaged in some degree of social commentary, perhaps particularly in relation to our perceptions of change. Things change and continue to change, sometimes too quickly for us to fully comprehend. Nothing demonstrates this reality more than our “modern” way of death. The authors of this book point out that at the beginning of the 20th century, the population of the United Kingdom was almost entirely white, Anglo-Saxon and Christian. Medicine and surgery were relatively primitive; 90% of deaths occurred at home, many in young people usually and earth burial was the rule. Our grandparents were usually close, both geographically and socially; dying, death, disposal and bereavement were part of everyday life.

Today, we are a long-lived, multi-ethnic society; a substantial majority of deaths occur in institutions; cremation is by far the commonest method of disposal and generations often live far apart. As a result the average adult has little personal experience of the social, legal and technical aspects of death.

Amidst these changes, this book is one of the most comprehensive, well researched and practical guides through the difficult and complex geography of death. It provides a brief but comprehensive guide to the current laws controlling, and the customs surrounding, the disposal of the dead. The book intelligently summarises a vast body of knowledge to a manageable size, and provides access to organisations and further sources of information.

Part One deals with historical background and current legal and medical practice. Part Two gives a brief overview of the current medico-legal issues surrounding death and dying, modern palliative care, Last Offices, bereavement and infection control. Part Three considers practical aspects of dying and death in the major Christian denominations and other religious groups in the U.K. There are comprehensive appendices offering pointers for further support and help, together with a full reading list and excellent index. The Greens are to be congratulated in providing such an excellent book. It deserves to be widely used and the user should be confident in its skill and helpfulness.

James Woodward