

Centre for
Death & Society
(CDAS)



UNIVERSITY OF
BATH

Centre for Death & Society

April 2026 Newsletter

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Director's Note

In this global moment, the community and solidarity that we experience in CDAS is particularly important, powerful and precious. Thank you all for continuing to be a community around the study of death.

A particular highlight of this community at the moment is seeing people working together across Africa, Europe and the Middle East, even when their governments continue to fight each other and cause extreme civilian harm. This community despite conflict is visible in CDAS in the ongoing writing of a special issue for *Death Studies* on 'death during armed conflict', with authors from France, Palestine, Lebanon, the UK, Israel, Nigeria, Sudan and South Sudan. Members of CDAS living in countries continue to constructively support each others' academic work, and walk with people through these difficult months, even when facing regular bombing raids or violence. This is overwhelmingly impressive. A panel at the forthcoming CDAS conference also reflects solidarity built through CDAS with researchers from Iran, Sudan and Somalia comparing their work on martyrdom. CDAS must be incredibly proud of the community it builds that allows relationships to be resilient through the toughest times.

There are various events and opportunities in the coming months to participate further in with CDAS. The CDAS conference programme on 'Death and Power' theme will be released any day now. We will send a separate email about this and advertise it on social media. There will be 40+ talks, three keynotes including one from Prof Sarah Wagner on US military deaths, and one (mentioned above) on martyrdom by scholars from Sudan, Iran and Somalia. Our two conference evening events are organised, which are open to non-participants, and advertised in this newsletter.

The Beatrice Godwin Memorial Lecture will be part of the Dying Matters Week. Dr Natashe Lemos Dekker (University of Amsterdam) will speak on "Aspiring a good death with dementia". Further details are below. This will be on 6th May 6pm – 7pm BST, online, sign up [here](#)

Members of CDAS have also had some publishing triumphs. See below for further details, but highlights include two timely publications - Tal Morse (Visiting Fellow) has published an article '[Witnessing Carnage](#)', plus Erica Borgstrom, Bethan Micheal-Fox (CDAS Visiting Fellow) and Arnar Arnason have edited a book titled [Palliative Care and Hospice](#). CDAS Visiting Fellow Dr Nicholas Taylor-Collins has also inaugurated a new book series at Anthem Press on [Studies in Death and Literature](#).

We look forward to keeping building community around the study of death.

Until next time

Kate and Naomi



Visit to Woodland Memorial

Following the publication of their co-authored paper '[Is Human Body Disposal Issue an Environmental Issue?](#)' co-director Kate Woodthorpe and UWE Associate Professor Katie McClymont were invited for a recent spring tour of the Memorial Woodland site in Bristol.



Diana Teggi and Kate Woodthorpe deliver seminar

Diana Teggi and Kate Woodthorpe delivered a seminar for the [NIHR Palliative Research Incubator](#) in February on the Value of the Sociological Perspective on Palliative Care, from which the following summary was [generated](#).



Visiting Fellow Edward Kirton-Darling publishes research on homelessness and precarious housing

This research analyses 8 years of reports by Coroners (2017-21 & 2023-25) to identify concerns raised by Coroners relating to the deaths of people experiencing homelessness. It identifies a sharp increase in the number of cases in which housing and homelessness is a specific concern for Coroners, but also notes significant regional variation between different Coroner Areas. It concludes by setting out some recommendations for improvements aimed at central Government, individual Coroners, and the Chief Coroner.

You can read the full report [here](#).

Safa Suliman spoke to the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office about death in Sudan

In March, Aroob Alfaki and Naomi Pendle hosted a two-day workshop on Sudan for twenty UK civil servants whose work focuses on Sudan. We also invited ten Sudanese scholars or Sudan-focused academics. During this workshop, Safa presented on death in Sudan, based on her research funded by the British Academy project *Death during Famine*. Her presentation sparked lots of questions and ongoing conversations into the evening.



Safa Suliman (Bath), with Aroob Alfaki (Bath) and Mohamed Abdelsalam Babiker (founder of the Human Rights Centre, University of Khartoum, and UN Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Eritrea).

New Podcast episodes

A new episode of the Pure Podcast is live with Kate Woodthorpe

Funerals are changing. For some families, the traditional service remains an important moment of witness and togetherness. For others, the cremation happens quietly, with a gathering held later — or in a different way entirely. Drawing on more than two decades of research, Kate reflects on how conversations around death have shifted from something once seen as niche or uncomfortable to a subject people are increasingly willing to approach openly. They discuss the rise of direct cremation, the growing influence of digital memorials, and the reality that today's families are more used to questioning tradition and making choices that reflect their own values. In the interview, Kate mentions two research papers:

[‘My Memories of the Time We Had Together Are More Important’: Direct Cremation and the Privatisation of UK Funerals](#)

and [Bodies and ceremonies: is the UK funeral industry still fit for purpose?](#).

Dr Dan O’Brian Appears on Death at the Table Podcast

What do we eat around death? What has food meant at funerals in the past? And why does something as small as a biscuit carry so much emotional and symbolic weight?

In this episode of A Curious Appetite, death historian and CDAS Visiting Fellow Dr Dan O’Brien explores funerary food, mourning rituals, and the deeply human ways food helps us navigate loss. Dan’s research focuses on the undertaking trade in eighteenth century England, and together we uncover how food has shaped grief, memory, and remembrance.

We discuss the fragile afterlife of the funeral biscuit wrapper, a small piece of paper that outlives the food it once held. Funeral biscuits themselves were more than simple refreshments. They were portable, symbolic, and quietly powerful, creating a tangible connection between the dead and the living.

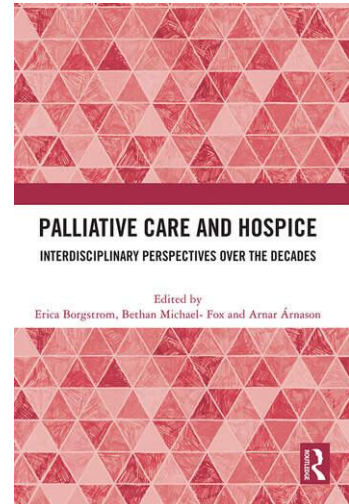
We also explore:

- The ritual role of food and drink at funerals
- Black sealing wax and the symbolism of opening and closing
- Women’s often overlooked role in funerary hospitality
- Mulled wine, alcohol, and the balance between mourning and release
- Hymn texts, memory, and echoes of the Eucharist

At the heart of the episode is a simple but profound idea: food becomes a carrier of memory. It moves between bodies, between people, and between the living and the dead. And, in true A Curious Appetite fashion, the conversation takes an unexpected turn. Dan reveals his favourite childhood food and let’s just say, it might surprise you. You can listen to the full episode [here](#).

New book: Palliative Care and Hospice: interdisciplinary perspectives over the decades

Edited by Erica Borgstrom, Bethan Micheal-Fox (CDAS Visiting Fellow) and Arnar Arnason, this edited compilation book offers a comprehensive collection of seminal research into palliative care and hospice, providing an invaluable resource for anyone seeking to deepen their understanding of end-of-life care, hospice practices, and the care of the dying. Drawing on articles published in *Mortality*, an academic journal dedicated to the study of death, dying, grief, bereavement, and memorialization, the chapters span a wide range of international and institutional contexts. Together, they demonstrate the breadth and depth of research into end-of-life care practices, experiences, and settings, offering insights into the evolving field of palliative care. To access the book click [here](#).



Mortal Films Review are now live

Taking inspiration from the Death Positive Movement, artists Ben Faircloth, Eilidh Nicoll, and Mariana Leal have made films reflecting on processing death anxiety, voicing personal grief communally, and queering funerary practice. The films have been developed through discussions with social anthropologist and CDAS Visiting Fellow Dr Hannah Rumble.

You can watch all the films [here](#). You can find a review of the three animated shorts on the theme 'Mortal' [here](#).

New book series: Studies in Death and Literature

Under the editorship of CDAS Visiting Fellow Dr Nicholas Taylor-Collins, Anthem Press are pleased to announce the inauguration of a new book series, [Studies in Death and Literature](#).

The international editorial board invites proposals on a range of intersecting topics, and generously welcomes literary-critical approaches, creative-critical writing, and narrative nonfiction.

Proposals can be for a monograph (mid- and full-length), edited collection, handbook, course book or essential introductions written by scholars for a general audience.

Tal Morse co-publishes new article

Tal and Doron Altaratz have recently published in *New Media & Society*, which may be of interest to colleagues working on death, dying, and mediated violence.

The article is titled “Witnessing carnage: Self-documented terrorism and the moral challenges of decentralized digital platforms”

It examines how the self-documentation of lethal violence transforms the social experience of death. Focusing on the events of October 7, 2023, we show how first-person recordings of killing circulated through digital platforms allow violent death to intrude into everyday life, collapsing the distance between sites of violence and spaces of ordinary living.

The article also reflects on how viewers, exposed to such imagery through digital platforms, become implicated in new forms of mediated witnessing, raising urgent questions about responsibility, care, and the ethics of encountering violent death in contemporary digital societies.

The article appears in a special issue on violence on digital platforms and is available [here](#):

Beatrice Godwin Memorial Lecture

Aspiring a good death with dementia: on experiences of loss, connection and future-making

Dr Natashe Lemos Dekker (University of Amsterdam)

6th May 6pm – 7pm BST, online, sign up [here](#)

In this Beatrice Godwin memorial lecture I will draw from my ethnographic research on the end of life with dementia in the Netherlands and discuss how people with dementia, their family members, and professional caregivers sought to achieve a good death. I will highlight the importance of future-making, since much anticipatory work is done in aspiration of a good death. Managing the end of life became a matter of producing and acting upon possible, alternative, and sometimes unwanted futures. Moreover, while preparing for future losses and the expected end of life, my interlocutors also adapted to changing circumstances as the disease progressed. In so doing, they found new ways to relate. I thus draw attention to the co-existence of experiences of anticipatory grief and manifestations of care to maintain meaningful relations; a continuous negotiation between experiences of loss, the continuing relationship and the prospect of a good end of life.

Dr Natashe Lemos Dekker is a cultural anthropologist at the University of Amsterdam, whose work is situated at the intersection of medical and psychological anthropology. Her research focuses on ageing, death and dying, palliative care, and grief. Herein she is interested in the temporal orientations and moral values through which death and dying are managed. In her ethnographic research in Brazil and the Netherlands, she explores how people live towards the end of life and recreate their world in the face of loss and grief. She is the PI of Dutch Research Council Veni project ‘Grief Politics’, which focuses on the politicization of grief in post-covid-19 Brazil. She obtained her PhD from de University of Amsterdam in 2020 for her research on end-of-life care for people with dementia. Her work has been published in the Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute, Culture, Medicine and Psychiatry, and Death Studies, among others. She is co-editor of the Palgrave-Macmillan book series ‘Transformations in Medical Anthropology’ and a board member of the Futures Reframed journal.

<https://www.bath.ac.uk/campaigns/beatrice-godwin-memorial-lecture/>

CDAS Conference Evening Events: open to all

Power in health and care research: a case of epistemic injustice

Amanda Roberts

17th June 7pm - 8pm BST, online, sign up [here](#)

The first of our two evening sessions as part of our CDAS Annual Conference, this workshop is open to both conference participants and external attendees.

Patient involvement in research is often constrained to the role of data provider or advisor on pre-set agendas (Mader et al., 2018). Although collaborative approaches to health research challenge this restricted view of patients' worth in knowledge creation (Beresford, 2013), patients living with a life-limiting illness are rarely involved. It is suggested this results from low confidence in how such involvement would benefit individual or research team (Johnson et al., 2021). However, it could be argued that individual patients are denied the opportunity to contribute effectively to an understanding of end of life by a failure to recognise the legitimacy of their lived experience (Barker et al., 2020). This workshop will explore the proposition that in some health and care research teams, some forms of knowledge are valued more than others, making the research less effective.

Graphic medicine uses comics to communicate the experiences of multiple actors - patients, carers, families and healthcare providers (Wombles, 2021) – including issues of power imbalance (Glazer, 2015). Taking the comic book 'Anyone can co-produce health and care research ... A little book about knowledge and justice' (Roberts, 2025) as an example, this workshop will explore how comics can be used to challenge the belief that one person's way of understanding and talking about a subject is more valid or worth more someone else's. The workshop will also support participants to create their own short comic to illustrate their beliefs and experience around power and death in their particular context.

The Facilitator

Amanda Roberts is director of BEING MORTAL, a campaign which encourages us to celebrate life and acknowledge, talk about and plan for death, dying and grieving. Doing this helps to reduce fear, promotes wellbeing and empowers us to engage in end-of-life decision-making which fully reflects what matters to us as individuals.

Agency and empowerment through embodied grief companionship

Eleanora Ramsby Herrera

18th June 7pm – 8pm, online, sign up [here](#)

An interactive event exploring agency and empowerment through embodied grief companionship. This is the second evening workshop in the 2026 CDAS Annual Conference. It is open to both conference participants and external attendees.

Join Dr Eleonora Ramsby Herrera for this 60-minute session that will include:

- A short movement exercise
- Presentation of our film "What Lies Beyond"
- Reference to our published work
- Time for reflection on the experience of doing, watching and making sense

Background

It is pithily said that 'power corrupts, and absolute power corrupts absolutely'. Perhaps this maxim is incomplete and needs a suffix, such as 'abuse of power', or 'unconscious use of power'.

Power is also a neutral concept; it just is, power is power. In human communication, however, it can be problematic, and this difficulty is compounded when there is a meeting between one who is thought to be in need and one designated as a care provider. In my work as a grief companion, published in both print and moving images, I have been guided by the foundational qualities of attunement and trust. These qualities enabled me, using my own autonomy and authority, to first explore and then express the impact of grief on my inner and outer self.

Thus, the power I brought to my collaboration with others was both invisible and apparent. The strength of this power manifested as an expanded version of each of us, one neither could have created alone. It was a classic case of the sum of the parts being greater than the individual components.

The Facilitator

Dr Eleonora Ramsby Herrera is a collaborator exploring loss and grief through embodied, relational practice. Drawing on dance movement, reflective dialogue, and writing, her work attends to attunement, trust, and companionship, offering practice-based insights into grief as a lived, shared human experience.

CDAS COMMUNITY NEWS

New book by Simon Allen

Simon is a Humanist Celebrant specialising in funerals. In May this year he marks 35 years in this field. He has given illustrated talks to CDAS on three occasions, starting in 2007 at DDD8. He has also addressed conferences in Durham for DORS, ASA and the 2025 Closure conference. He participated in the Melbourne University DeathTech research and has also spoken at trade conferences. He has assisted families across a very wide range of circumstances, from the expected death at the end of a full life, to the most tragic of events. Yet, there is often humour to be found in the lives that he celebrates.

A newspaper article, read in a lunch break at his desk in the City changed the rest of his working life – indeed it changed his whole life.

In this book Simon sets out his part in the changes that have taken place in British funerals since 1991, and describes the traditions that still hold fast. The many questions that people ask are answered honestly, and illustrated with stories and photographs. Finally, he looks at the changes happening now, and the future of funerals in Britain.

You can access the book on his website: www.SimonAllen.uk

Philip Stone has published a New Book and Keynote Address

Routledge Handbook of Dark Events: Celebrations, Heritage, and Customs of Death and the Macabre explores and critically evaluates key debates and controversies in the emerging field of Dark Events. It brings together leading specialists from a range of disciplinary backgrounds and geographical regions to provide state-of-the-art theoretical reflection and empirical research on celebrations, heritage and customs of death (events) and the macabre.

Philip also gave a keynote address on ‘Ghosts in the Machine’: Digital Immortality and Dark Tourism in the Age of Vertopias. The abstract for this event was:

“In this keynote presentation, I advance a theoretical framework for understanding the future of dark tourism within emerging virtual and AI environments, conceptualised as vertopias. Drawing upon Foucault’s ‘heterotopology’, Soja’s ‘Thirdspace’, and contemporary virtuality studies, I argue that technological convergence will radically transform the spatial, social, and existential dimensions of future (dark) tourism. As digital and physical worlds increasingly fuse, new forms of emplacement will emerge in which embodied avatars mediate human participation, presence, and meaning making. These vertopias—envisioned as a digitally constructed ‘Fourthspace’—will function as immersive, co-created environments where the boundaries between reality and hyperreality collapse. In such spaces, dark tourism will evolve into orchestrated spectacles of crime, punishment, memory, and mortality; allowing users to encounter digitised ‘ghosts’ of the dead and engage in surreal performances of difficult heritage. I situate this transformation within broader discussions of placemaking, commodification, and the semiotics of fatality, arguing that virtual worlds will reconfigure

how cybernetic societies negotiate trauma, justice, and collective memory. By blending futurology, spatial philosophy, and technological speculation, I provide an original conceptual blueprint for analysing virtual dark tourism futures, while acknowledging the ethical, political, and existential challenges posed by immersive virtualisation, avatar embodiment, and potential forms of digital immortality.”

New Research Seeking Participants

Researchers from **La Trobe University** (Kerrie Noonan, **Niki Read**) and **UNSW** (**Jane Mowll**) are inviting people in Australia over the age of 18 to take part in a survey about funerals and bereavement.

The survey takes 15 - 20 minutes, is voluntary and completely anonymous, and will help us understand how funeral practices shape people’s experiences of grief and bereavement.

To take part, [click here](#).

You are also welcome to share this with family or friends who were involved in organising the funeral.

This study has been approved by the Human Research Ethics Committee of La Trobe University (Approval number HEC25463).

Udi Lebel edits a Journal Special Edition

The issue has just been published in *Israel Affairs* and is dedicated to the emerging field of political victimology — both in terms of its theoretical consolidation and its empirical grounding across a range of phenomena. While the cases examined are drawn largely from the Israeli context, many of the contributions carry significant comparative potential and speak to broader questions likely to resonate with a wide scholarly audience.

Topics include potential victimhood, institutional victimhood, and the relationship between victimhood and health communities — the latter being a more universally framed contribution — among others. The volume as a whole intersects closely with research on loss, death, and bereavement, and I believe it may offer a useful analytical lens for colleagues working in those areas.

The issue can be accessed [here](#).

CDAS COMMUNITY EVENTS

Good Grief Festival

17th-19th April

We're delighted to announce the Good Grief Spring Festival (17–19 April), a series of conversations exploring grief, resilience and hope.

Across the weekend we'll bring together a remarkable group of speakers, including Julia Samuel MBE, [David Kessler, FACHE](#), Joseph Coelho OBE, [Dr Lucy Hone](#), Prof [Mary-Frances O'Connor](#), [Camille Sapara Barton](#), Dr [Frank Anderson](#), and [Liz Gleeson](#).

The programme will explore topics such as:

- 🌿 The science of resilience
- 🌿 The stories and rituals that help us through loss
- 🌿 Trauma and intergenerational grief
- 🌿 The role of nature and landscape in healing
- 🌿 Life-limiting illness

The festival includes 10 online events (free to attend) and a special in-person performance in Birmingham.

Our speakers draw on both professional expertise and personal experience of grief, offering thoughtful, honest perspectives on living with loss.

If you work in healthcare, education, research, the arts, or community support — or if grief has touched your life — we'd love you to join us.

✨ Registration is now [open](#).

Grief ritual one-day event- 2nd May

This profound Grief Ritual works not only on the level of psychological and emotional need, but also engages deeply with the world of Spirit – the flow of natural energies of which we are a part. This gives it profound healing power beyond the mundane. The effects can flow beyond us as individuals, as we honour our ancestors and help to put old ghosts to rest. By bringing us into greater harmony and balance, and restoring connection and flow within our ancestral lines, it brings healing to our whole world.

More information and booking can be found [here](#).

27th Cemeteries Colloquium- 8th May

The 27th Cemeteries Colloquium will take place on **Friday 8th May**, 8:45 to 17:15 GMT.

This in-person, day event comprises a meeting of academic researchers in all disciplines with an interest in burial places.

Information about the event can be found [here](#).

For more information please email: julierugg36@gmail.com

Our Dead Good Day Jobs Online Event- 12th May 19:00-20:00

Life, death & everything in between - Join funeral experts Evie King & Sophie Clarke as they share real insights from the world of funerals.

Join funeral experts, Evie King and Sophie Clarke, hosted by Delberth Hemley for a lively and honest conversation about their day-to-day work, offering a fascinating, behind-the-scenes insight into their roles and experiences - and the realities of working in their field.

Hear about their work, ask questions in a live Q&A, and hear some awesome stories from behind the scenes.

This is a conversation about death that you'll actually want to hear!

Don't miss out on this fun and relaxed event full of humour, humanity and practical wisdom. Book your free space today.

More information and signup can be found [here](#).

Death and politics in Latin America- 18th May 1pm CST / 8PM BST

This international event, involving researchers from various Latin American universities, aims to gather research that can be categorized under the heading of "Latin American Studies of Death." To this end, two panels are proposed: one focused on the relationship between death and politics in Latin America, and the other centered on the link between death and culture in Latin America. The intertwining of death with community life is a distinctive aspect of our Latin American history, but the concept of "death studies" has, so far, mainly originated from the North. The question of how much this multidisciplinary field belongs to us, or whether it can offer insights into our Latin American specificity, is only one of the issues that guide the direction for these two panels.

More information about the event can be found [here](#).

The Open University Inaugural Lectures- Including Fellow Professor Erica Borgstrom

Wednesday 3 June 2026

16:30-18:00 UK/GMT

Berrill Theatre, The Open University, Walton Hall, Milton Keynes, MK7 6AA

We invite you to join Professors Rebecca L. Jones and Erica Borgstrom for two inaugural lectures exploring how we understand sexuality and ageing, death and grief. Through research, personal experience and creative reimagining, they challenge taken for granted assumptions and invite new ways of thinking about queer joy, academic life, inclusive futures and end-of-life care.

About Professor Rebecca L. Jones

Rebecca L. Jones is Professor of Sociology, Sexuality and Ageing. Her research and teaching interests centre on sociological approaches to later life, sexuality and especially sexuality in later life, often using creative methods.

[Read more about Professor Rebecca L. Jones](#)

About Professor Erica Borgstrom

Erica Borgstrom is Professor of Medical Anthropology. She is internationally renowned for her research and teaching on palliative and end-of-life care and her leadership in death studies, showcasing the value of social science perspectives and contributions in this field.

[Read more about Professor Erica Borgstrom](#)

To read the abstracts of their lectures and to register please click [here](#).

Event programme:

16:00 Registration opens

16:35 Inaugural Lecture: Moments of queer joy: Reimagining sexuality, ageing and being an academic

17:13: Inaugural Lecture: Learning from Death: lessons for how we make sense of the end of life

17:48 Q&A

18:00 Networking over refreshments

This event will also be recorded and livestreamed.

We very much hope you will attend what promises to be an inspiring event and have your say and join us to celebrate Professors Jones and Borgstrom.

Palliative Care Research Conference- 4th June

Thursday 4th June | Dorothy House Hospice, Winsley | 09:30 – 16:00

We're delighted to invite you to our second collaborative Palliative Care Research Conference, hosted at Dorothy House Hospice in Winsley. This event brings together leading researchers and practitioners to share the latest insights, innovations, and best practices in residential and community settings within palliative care.

Why attend?

- Keynote talks from experts in the field
- Poster presentations and oral abstracts
- Interactive Q&A panels
- Networking opportunities
- Free parking & lunch provided!

Tickets: Early Bird: £70 (limited time)

General Admission: £85

[Reserve Your Spot Now](#)

Cremation and Burial Communication and Education Conference and Exhibition- 23rd-25th June

Join us for the Cremation & Burial Communication & Education Conference and Exhibition which is returning to the Hilton Southampton - Utilita Bowl 2026. Be sure to mark your calendars and join us for this important event!

The Cremation Society and the Federation of Burial and Cremation Authorities are delighted to be working together again to bring you this year's CBCE.

2025 sees another year of challenge for the burial and cremation sector, as the ever increasing complexity and diversity of death care requires innovation from all involved in funerals. CBCE covers the main topics relevant to all professionals within the sector and as the only CPD accredited educational event in the calendar this is a must attend for those wishing to stay ahead in their respective field.

Keynote topics include Law Commission updates, Environmental Permitting changes, technological innovation, and educational updates to help meet your continuing professional development objectives. There is also an opportunity to grow your network and visit the exhibition to discuss the latest products and services with all the leading sector providers.

More information can be found [here](#).

Wolfson Palliative Care Research Centre Biennial Conference

Meeting the Challenges in Palliative Care: Data, Delivery and Diversity

8th July 2026, 9:30am-16:00pm

Hear about new and engaging evidence to support your practice and research

Registration is now open. More information can be found [here](#).

Online workshop: The Ethics of Body Disposal- 9th July

Following the success of last year's event, IDEA The Ethics Centre at the University of Leeds is pleased to announce the return of the online workshop event: The Ethics of Body Disposal. This event will be held online on Thursday 9th July 2026 (timings tbc but last year the event ran 10am-3:15pm UK time).

Deciding what should be done with our own bodies or those of a loved one after death can be difficult decisions with sometimes significant ethical implications. Deciding what to do, what you would like to be done, and what others should be permitted to do, raises a number of ethical questions – at this workshop, we would like to offer a space to explore and discuss some of these.

Such questions might include:

What responsibilities do we have to the dead and to the living in making body disposal decisions? How might any such moral obligations differ when we are making decisions for ourselves or others? Would ignoring the wishes of the deceased be morally wrong? Should their wishes be honoured even if it might offend others in society? Should laws restrict what we can and cannot have done with our own bodies after death and if so, how? Should body disposal decisions be made with the interests of others still living, even those unknown to the deceased, in mind? In disagreements over arrangement for disposal of a loved one's body, what principles should guide how to move forwards?

This list is not exhaustive but is meant to be indicative of some of the issues and questions that can be raised by this topic.

You can [register to attend this workshop through this link](#); this will be a free event.

If you have a paper or idea that you feel would fit this theme and would like to present at this online workshop, please submit the title and an abstract [via this link as well](#). IDEA is committed to interdisciplinary applied ethics and so academics and professionals from other disciplines and related industries are encouraged to submit relevant abstracts for this event.

The deadline for abstracts is 9am Friday 1st May 2026.

If you have any questions, you can reach the event organiser Dr Sarah Carter-Walshaw at this address: s.carter-walshaw@leeds.ac.uk

The conference on Death, Greif and Belief presents: Spiritual Bypassing: Counseling and Support Perspectives- 25th July- Online

Religious belief as a strategy for coping with painful life events can be both helpful and harmful; positive religious coping has generally been found to support healthful outcomes, while the negative form has been linked to increased distress.

Spiritual bypassing is described as a form of negative religious coping in which religion or spirituality is used as a psychological defense mechanism to avoid facing painful situations. The term was coined in the mid-1980s by John Welwood, a Buddhist teacher and psychotherapist who described it as a coping device through which people use spirituality as a defense mechanism.

DETAILS AND REGISTRATION HERE:

<https://deathgriefandbelief.com/2026-symposium-on-spiritual-bypassing/>

Contact:

office@deathgriefandbelief.com

Suicide Bereavement UK's 15th international hybrid conference in Liverpool: 16th September

Suicide Bereavement UK's 15th international hybrid conference is going to be our biggest and boldest yet.

Theme: Suicide Bereavement: Silence Isn't Always Golden

Date: 16th September 2026

Venue: Titanic Hotel, Liverpool (and online)

Time: 9:00am – 4:30pm

To view our interactive flyer and to register [Click here.](#)

Special Edition of The Philosopher Call Now Open

Speaking of the agency of nature is now common practice. The biosphere is recognised as being life sustaining and its vitality essential to human existence. Following thinkers such as Felix Guattari, nature has also been recognised as having subjective qualities, inseparable from the meaning and values humans attribute to life and the visions we conjure of what constitutes a just and habitable future. The philosophical legacy of Immanuel Kant looms large over this aesthetic terrain, notably his work on the beautiful and the sublime, which still compels us to consider the complex relationship between humans and life-world systems.

Yet if we accept the planetary biosphere is life giving and sustaining, might it also be life taking? We only have to think of the way oceans and deserts have been consciously weaponised to bring about the death and disappearance of precarious human bodies. Nature is capable of revealing back “signs of life”; unusual flora and fauna grow where bodies are decomposing which suggests a kind of witnessing by nature. Does this complicity and witnessing in acts of killing point to a different kind of agency? What does that mean for how space is lived and imagined? And does it require us to speak to a more than human relationality?

This special edition of *The Philosopher* invites contributions dealing in a broad sense with the weaponisation of the earth. We encourage submissions that specifically question the violent agency of nature; the conscious weaponisation of the elements (earth, air, fire and water); the terror of the sublime; and how the planetary biosphere is witness to human atrocities, thereby challenging our understanding of forensic, aesthetic, and ontological awareness. Contributions that address the interplay between visibility and disappearance in acts of killing that require a rethinking of ecologies of belonging and thought are also encouraged. The volume will complement the *A Natural History of Violence* exhibition to be held in Puebla, Mexico in 2027 by the acclaimed Mexican painter Chantal Meza, whose art will feature throughout the edition. A series of events and masterclasses will be held (physically and virtually) in association with this that will draw from the volumes contributions.

Deadlines

Submission of Proposed Abstracts: May 1st 2026

Submission of 1st Drafts: September 1st 2026

Submission of final drafts: December 1st 2026

Editors will consider the following submissions: -

Essays: 3000 word limit addressing the key themes

Creative Interventions: 1500 word limit, which can be in a poetic or literary style

Interviews: 2000 word limit with leading authorities from academic, policy, activist or cultural spheres.

To submit an abstract for our consideration please follow [The Philosopher submission form here](#).

Call for papers ‘Death Down Under: Toward an Australian Death Studies’

The Australian Death Studies Society is inviting abstracts for this day-long symposium, the ultimate goal of which is to identify and elaborate on a collective project that is a uniquely Australian death studies. Abstracts are invited from any discipline and all career stages. Potential topics include (but are not limited to) the idea of an ‘Australian way of death’ and the values and perceptions embedded within this concept, the introduction of VAD legislation across Australia, Indigenous experiences of death and dying, systematic disadvantages in Australian death care, and methodological approaches to doing death studies in Australia.

Abstracts should be submitted using [this form](#) by **10th May 2026**, with acceptance to be announced in mid-May. Presenters will be required to be members of the Australian Death Studies Society. Presentations will be 20 minutes long. Whilst online presentation can be facilitated, strong preference will be given to in person presentation. Please indicate your preference for online or in person presentation when submitting your abstract. The ADSS is in a position to offer some financial support to facilitate in person attendance, with preference being given to PhD researchers, early career researchers, and those in precarious employment.

For any questions, please contact the event organisers at info@deathstudies.org.

More information can be found on their website:

<https://www.deathstudies.org/events/ddu2026>

DDD18 Host Call Now Open

The Association for the Study of Death and Society (ASDS) warmly invites proposals to host the 18th Death, Dying and Disposal (DDD18) Conference, to be held in September 2027. We are seeking hosts who can offer a compelling academic theme, a vibrant and inclusive environment, and strong administrative foundations in line with the criteria set out in the Proposal Form.

We particularly encourage prospective hosts to view this not as a fixed or fully formed submission, but as the beginning of a collaborative process with ASDS Council. We very much welcome informal conversations in advance of submission and would be delighted to discuss early ideas, practical questions, or developing concepts. Please feel free to contact the ASDS Secretary at deathandsociety@gmail.com to arrange an informal discussion. Completed proposals must be submitted by Friday 1st May 2026 at 17:00 (GMT).

Please follow this link for more information:

<https://deathandsociety.org/death-dying-and-disposal-conferences/>

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Invitation to contribute: Thanatos special issue 2026

Every year Thanatos launches a special issue in the field of thanatology on a timely theme that calls for attention. This year, we welcome scholars from diverse disciplines to collaborate on the 2026 special issue, which focuses on “death and ecology”.

There are two possible categories of articles to which authors can contribute. Peer-reviewed original research articles (max. 8000 words) and discussion papers (3000 words) that comment on or elaborate on some aspects of the special issue theme in an academic or societal manner.

The research articles are sent to two external reviewers, the discussion papers are reviewed by the editorial board. For this special issue, we welcome papers from both scientific and artistic research perspectives that touch upon death, grief, and ecology. The theme of ecology can be broadly interpreted as relating to questions of sustainability in social and/or “natural” environments. Here, ecological crisis can refer to different aspects of the contemporary polycrisis, which tend to be entangled in multiple ways with death and destruction.

Submission deadline for full articles to be considered for the special issue is the 10th of May.

More information about the journal and the submission guidelines can be found at <https://journal.fi/thanatos/information/authors>.

Papers in English and Finnish languages are welcome! Any questions about the issue, please get in touch via thanatos.fdsa@gmail.com.

Call for speakers at Arnos Vale Cemetery Trust

Arnos Vale Cemetery Trust runs a regular talk series for the public online and sometimes in person and we have a wide range of talks that are broadly on the themes of death, dying, interment, bereavement, human remains, and cemeteries (and anything else we think fits). As a charity, it is a way for us to make a small income for the continuing care of the site, spread the word about Arnos Vale Cemetery and share research and knowledge to a non-academic audience. We welcome the suggestions for presentations of around 45-50 mins from a wide range of speakers and disciplines. We are creating the 2026 programme at the moment and would love to hear from any researchers who'd like to share what they are interested in or working on. A number of previous talks have been delivered by CDAS staff, visiting fellows, and students but we are interested in presentations from all sorts of disciplines, research areas and levels of study.

If you are keen to support us then contact janine.marriott@arnosvale.org.uk

Check out the programme of events at arnosvale.org.uk

Unsung Heroes in Death Care, A Global Analysis

Editors: Drs. Kami Fletcher & Bulelwa Maphela

During the COVID-19 outbreak and its immediate aftermath, we saw death care professionals thrust from the margins to the center. In Ghana, pall bearers went viral for showing how significant ornate last rites are to guiding loved ones to the ancestral plane. In the United States, death doulas made TIME's "Top 100 Photos of 2022" as well as received a featured article. Even still, they were positioned as last responders, appropriately titled since they were last to receive PPE. The social and cultural value of their work to our communities, our nations, our world went unnoticed. These professionals play a critical role in our communities and do not appear in the developmental agenda. They remain as unsung heroes.

There is an urgent need to start appreciating the work done by these unsung heroes in the death care sector - globally. This volume aims to highlight the contributions of death care professionals - the funeral directors, the embalmers, the mortuary workers, the death doulas; and others death care workers - who all play a critical role in supporting bereaved families and communities during the period of losing a loved one. These death care laborers, as individuals and as group, play vital roles in the care and support of the deceased and their families, yet often go unnoticed or underappreciated in broader narratives about death and dying. This international call aims to attract scholars, researchers, and practitioners from around the world to submit abstracts that explore the experiences, challenges, and contributions of death care professionals.

Suggested themes

- The role of death care professionals in supporting bereaved communities.
- The role of government in supporting the death care professionals.
- The impact of death care work on the mental state of the professionals in the death care industries.
- Societal and cultural perceptions of death care professionals across time and space
- Historical and contemporary perspectives on death care practices.
- Comparative country practices in the death care activities. Innovative and best practices in death care work.
- Challenges affecting sustainability of the death work and within the death care professional circles.
- The role of death care workers in removing trauma in communities and treating the unbereaved.

Editors are asking all interested to please send in a 300-word abstract as well as a working bibliography (primary and secondary sources), no later than August 1, 2026 to kamif2311@gmail.com and bmaphela@uj.ac.za.

For all other queries concerning our volume, please do not hesitate to reach out through the same channels.

The 300-word abstract must include:

- Perspective contributors' name, affiliation, job title
- Essay's (working) title
- Clear argument/thesis statement

Funded PhD opportunity at King's College London

This role is part of an NIHR funded programme - Improving Care for children with life-limiting Conditions: developing, adapting, implementing and Evaluating interventions (ICICLE)

Topic: The economic impact of care and support of children and young people with life limiting conditions and their families.

Funding includes a stipend at UKRI rates, a training budget and fees fully covered for Home students

Deadline: 30th April 2026

More information about the role can be found [here](#).

Research Fellow Opportunity

Pleased to share an exciting opportunity for a Research Fellow for the next stage of our "Intimacy Project" in palliative and end-of-life care.

You will be working closely with my colleagues Alison Llewellyn, Kate Sugar, and the fantastic team at the 'Outstanding' CQC-rated Dorothy House Hospice Care.

A brilliant opportunity to do meaningful, co-produced research that directly impacts patient and partner care.

- ◆ Role: Research Fellow (FT, fixed-term until Apr 2028)
- ◆ Location: Dorothy House, Winsley, Wiltshire

Looking for: skilled researcher with a PhD in health, social care, psychology, or a related field. You should have strong experience in qualitative and quantitative data collection, and a deep commitment to Patient and Public Involvement (PPI) and co-production principles. Experience in palliative care research is highly desirable.

More information can be found [here](#).

Contact Us

Email: cdas@bath.ac.uk

Web: www.bath.ac.uk/cdas

Facebook: www.facebook.com/centrefordeath

Linkedin: <https://www.linkedin.com/groups/13222099/>

Twitter: [@cendeathsociety](https://twitter.com/cendeathsociety)

CDAS Videos:

The History of CDAS: <https://vimeo.com/1092402543>

The CDAS Community: <https://vimeo.com/1092402369>

Doing a PhD with CDAS: <https://vimeo.com/1092402245>

The future: <https://vimeo.com/1092402630>

To unsubscribe, please email cdas@bath.ac.uk

