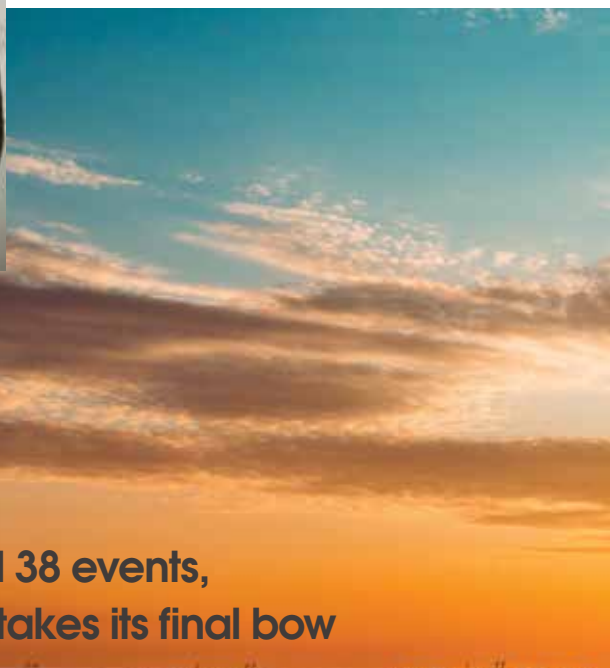




Gervase Phinn with Alastair Huteson (left) and Clive Kirk (right)



After 43 years and 38 events, the YES Weekend takes its final bow



Richard Venables QPM (left) with Clive Kirk

The month of March entered like a lion, with many parts of the country being covered in snow. This did not bode well for the 38th Yorkshire Educational & Social Weekend. Fifty hardy souls, however, braved the weather and travelled to the East Coast where they enjoyed one of the best events in recent years – and helped to mark the end of a well-respected and much enjoyed NAFD tradition.

The event was held over the weekend of 2 - 4 March 2018 and began, as always, with a relaxing Friday evening dinner followed by entertainment which, this year, was provided by Ross Cole, a singer and entertainer by night and employed by Co-operative Funeralcare in Scarborough during the day.

Saturday morning saw the official opening of the weekend by the NAFD Yorkshire Area Federation President Danny Doherty who, along with his family, is a regular attendee at the Yorkshire Educational & Social Weekend.

The first education session was entitled *The Positives and Negatives of Electric Funeral Vehicles* and was presented by Eddie Marsden from Coleman Milne. Eddie gave an in-depth researched report on the different types of new eco models available, including fully electric, hybrid electric and plug-in hybrid electric vehicles. He gave the positives and negatives of each model, adding that there will certainly be greater availability of electric funeral vehicles available to everyone in the near future. There was much discussion and many questions at the end of the session, including questions on insurance, government involvement and the availability of charging points.

Following a relaxing lunch, the second seminar was presented by Richard Venables QPM and entitled the *The Disaster Detective*.



Andrew Lever (centre) receiving a cheque from Alastair Huteson (left) and Clive Kirk (right)

The sun sets on the Yorkshire Educational & Social Weekend



Richard gave a full overview of his career in the South Yorkshire Police force, starting as a young police officer and working up to the post of Detective Inspector, specialising in the recovery and identification of deceased in mass disasters and emergency mortuary management, for which he was awarded the honour of the Queen's Police Medal. He became the main advisor for many major disasters in the United Kingdom as well as other countries. On leaving the police force he turned his hand to writing and was the winner of the People's Book Prize, in 2017, for his book *A Life In Death*, which is based on the story of his career and his achievements in the field of mass disasters.

The third educational session, entitled *The School Inspector Calls*, was held on the Sunday morning and presented by Dr Gervase Phinn, a well-known author who has written many novels and poetry books as well as lecturing at universities and conferences all over the world. Delegates enjoyed a very pleasant, informative and somewhat funny insight into the work and personal experiences he encountered as a school inspector.

The Yorkshire Educational & Social Weekend has been a highlight in the funeral profession's calendar since its inception, in 1975, when the whole weekend cost the exorbitant figure of £13.50 per person.

It was started by a group of like-minded funeral directors in the Yorkshire Area to promote education and fellowship within the profession. The original committee was formed by Arthur Hey (Bradford), Norman Hickling (Doncaster), Basil Walsh (Bradford) and Len Waite (Leeds), all now sadly passed away, but over the years the organising committee has also included Brian Thornton (Silsden), Alf Bollons (Thorne) and Paul Owsram (Sheffield). In 1991 a new committee was formed comprising Andrew Waite, Richard Binks and Alastair Huteson. Richard retired from

the committee some years ago and, after the sad loss of Andrew, the committee continued with the addition of Alison Turnbull (nee Waite) and Clive Kirk.

The weekend has always been very sociable, as well as educational and, although it has never been the intention of running the event for charity, a raffle and charity auction has always been held during the Saturday night dinner dance. In the last ten years over £12,000 has been raised for good causes thanks to the generosity of all those attending. The 2018 event has been no exception, and a cheque for £1,000 was presented to Andrew Lever, of W Lever in Bradford, for Cancer Research UK in memory of his late father, George, who was a staunch supporter of the YES Weekend and brought all his family to Scarborough with him every year.

At the opening of every 'Scarborough weekend' the late Len Waite always used to say that "the sun is shining, the donkeys are on the beach, lets enjoy the weekend", and this saying has continued throughout the years.

Sadly, at the close of the 2018 weekend the committee chairman, Alastair Huteson, informed everyone that this year the sun has finally set on this prestigious weekend and the committee had taken the difficult decision to call an end to the annual event.

Alastair gave thanks to all who had supported the weekend, both now and over past years, especially the exhibitors and sponsors for their commitment and support and, most especially, to everyone who had ever attended and made the Yorkshire Educational & Social Weekend such a great success and one that will be forever remembered in the funeral profession.