

A way of life.....and death



Lynda, 63



James, 33



Sarah, 43



Julie, 39

In 1948, when Walter John Farrier started a business in the front room of a modest terraced house in Dover, he probably had no idea that one day his business would be one of the largest independent funeral directors in Kent.

It was post WW2 and Dover was still recovering from the aftermath of the war, when Walter or Jack as he was popularly known, established the funeral business with his wife Olive.

At their home on London Road, Dover they converted a back room into a chapel of rest to enable families to visit their loved ones and the funeral arrangements were made in their front room. Jack would make the coffins by hand in a workshop above Wellsted's coal merchants, which was opposite their home.

Jack gradually became a well-known local figure and was regularly seen paging funerals through the streets of Dover whilst also continuing his work as a skilled carpenter. Olive kept an eye on the books and ensured everything ran smoothly.

In the late 1950's Jack and Olive's only child, Derek, joined the business and set about learning the trade from his father.

The business grew from strength to strength and outgrew the terraced house. Eventually, a decision was made to expand the business and move to a suitable premises. By chance, a former chemist shop became available directly opposite the family home and was swiftly purchased. This was converted into a funeral parlour and consisted of an office, chapel of rest, mortuary, workshop, coffin store and a flat on the first and second floors.

As the years passed, Jack and Derek decided to purchase their very own fleet of funeral vehicles; having previously hired in from a local carriage master.

They took delivery of an Austin Princess hearse and two matching limousines. These were some of the finest funeral vehicles available at that time.

In the 1970's Derek and his wife Lynda moved into the flat above the premises and Derek took the reins of the business from his father, although Jack remained at work and kept a close eye on things!

Jack retired in the late 1980's after almost 40 years service to the local community. He and Olive enjoyed their retirement and went on many cruises, however Jack always popped into work when they were home to see how things were going.

The business was further expanded when they purchased the adjacent property, a former bakery and this was converted into further offices and another chapel of rest.

In the late 1990's, Derek and Lynda's son James joined the business and, like his father, set about learning the trade. Derek and Lynda's daughters, Sarah and Julie also joined the business a few years later.

After the death of Jack and Olive, Derek continued to run the business, assisted by Lynda and their children.

During the early 2000's the business outgrew the current premises, however finding a suitable property proved very difficult so they eventually purchased Wellsted's warehouse, which was directly behind the current property. This was to be a major re-development and took over 18 months to complete.

It gave the business a modern mortuary and embalming theatre as well as a comprehensive workshop and coffin store. It also enabled two of the funeral vehicles to be garaged on site and added a much needed car park to the rear of the building.



The Farrier family can confidently say that they have some of the best facilities in Kent.

They also purchased Thomas Family Undertakers in Folkestone after the proprietor sadly passed away. This enabled the business to expand into the Shepway area and serve the local communities there too.

Derek Farrier sadly passed away in 2013 at the age of 70 and the impact was greatly felt by the Farrier family.

James said: "Dad had been in charge for such a long time, so when he passed away the responsibility of the family business fell to Mum, Sarah, Julie and myself. I will admit, the first 18 months was extremely tough but we managed to keep going and continued to serve the people of Dover and Folkestone to a very high level."

"We have all worked exceptionally hard to improve and update the business over the last few years, whilst also retaining the traditional values handed to us by Nan, Grandad and Dad. We have also invested a lot of money in the business by refurbishing both premises in Dover and Folkestone and also updating the vehicle fleet."

"Personally, I think the main reason we are firmly established is because of the solid foundations and consistency set by Nan, Granddad and Dad. They put their all into the business and now it is down to us to carry on the Farrier tradition."

Lynda, said "Our number one priority will always be our families (clients) and providing them with a personal and professional service of the highest level."

She added "With regards to the funerals, there is no limit to what people can have nowadays. Funerals have changed a lot over the years and many people choose to celebrate the life rather than to mourn the loss."

"You can also have all sorts of weird and wonderful choices such as, bespoke colourful coffins or eco-friendly coffins. You can even have different types of hearses such as horse drawn, motorcycle, Land Rover and even a Hummer hearse."

Today the business boasts an extensive fleet of Jaguar hearses and limousines, which add a touch of class to any funeral and also a fleet of first-call vehicles, which are equipped to

deal with any situation.

The Farrier family conduct over 600 funerals each year and although most are carried out in the Dover and Folkestone areas, they also conduct funerals in Ashford, Canterbury, London and even further afield.

Next year will mark the 70th anniversary of when the family business started and it will also coincide with Lynda's retirement. Lynda has been an influential part of W. J. Farrier & Son ever since meeting Derek all them years ago. From manning the reception during the early days to becoming the senior funeral arranger and helping hundreds of families through the funeral process, she has become an icon for care and support for the recently bereaved.

With James at the helm and with Lynda, Sarah and Julie's support, the business continues to grow.

James said "Our job is a way of life for us and we will continue to serve all those who come to us with the highest level of care, respect, dignity and professionalism."



James added "Death and funerals are no longer a taboo subject and many people wish to find out more about what sort of funeral they can have before they pass on, whether it's a very simple affair or something more elaborate."

"For this reason we are opening our doors to give the public a chance to find out who we are as a family and what goes into running an independent family funeral directors. It will also give people a chance to see what goes on behind the scenes and find out more about the different options available."

"People often believe that funerals are very expensive but we want to prove that they don't have to be at all. You can have a very dignified send off at a reasonable cost."

The Farrier family will be hosting their first open day on Saturday 22nd July 2017 at the Dover premises on London Road and then the following week, Saturday 29th July 2017 at the Folkestone premises on Bouverie Road West.

For more information please contact: W J Farrier & Son, on 01304 201665 (Dover) or on 01303 245500 (Folkestone) or visit their website www.wjfarrierandson.co.uk.



W. J. Farrier & Son Ltd

Independent Family Funeral Directors
Since 1948

Golden Charter
Funeral Plans



We welcome you to our newly refurbished premises to meet the family and staff, see the cars and find out about what we do, with light refreshments.

Open days are:

Dover
Sat 22nd July - 10am to 3pm
161 London Road,
Dover, Kent CT17 0TG
Tel: 01304 201665

Folkestone
Sat 29th July - 10am to 3pm
37 Bouverie Road West,
Folkestone, Kent CT20 2SZ
Tel: 01303 245500

www.wjfarrierandson.co.uk

