

A little piece of our **HISTORY**

Our history is something to celebrate, it has formed the quality of the business today, and we'd like to share it with you... Daniel Robinson, founded the business in 1892. He was born in Elsenham near Stansted Mountfitchet. When the business was first established it was the custom in country areas for the local builder to undertake the arrangement of funerals and make coffins.

In the early years, Daniel Robinson's business developed rapidly; timber was obtained from 80 acres of local woodland, Alsa Wood near Elsenham; the oak and elm were converted into coffin boards which were sold to undertakers over a wide area. Time doesn't stand still and in 1912, our first funeral home was opened in The Causeway, Bishop's Stortford, the town where we still have our head office today.

By the early 1930s Daniel's son, one of his seven sons, Laurence, took over the administration of the business. Daniel continued to keep a keen eye on affairs until his death in 1939.

In 1948 Doug Parkin became manager of the business in Bishop's Stortford, Fred Robinson, the eldest son of Daniel, was working arranging and conducting funerals until his death in 1963. Also in the 1960s, the cousin of the Directors, George Robinson had joined the business and, working together, he and Doug were dedicated to the development of the funeral business. Both Doug Parkin and George Robinson were recognised for their contributions and made Directors in 1958 and 1965, respectively. In 1966 a leasehold site at Wych Elm, Harlow, was acquired and we opened our funeral home there, with Fred Donaldson being appointed as Senior Manager in 1970, he would become a driving force in the development of that home, firmly establishing himself and the business in the growing New Town.

In 1975, our Bishop's Stortford Funeral home moved to its current premises in South Street, where it was purchased freehold for the grand sum of £22,000. Bartram Robinson, a grandson of Daniel, was appointed as a Director in 1982 (as featured on pg 7). By 1987 we had opened our premises in Haslers Lane, Great Dunmow and it was clear that a new Managing Director should be sought to continue to grow and develop the business. A very young and enthusiastic Gary Neill was appointed. In 1989, Horace Moss of Moss Funeral Services in Sawbridgeworth, sold his business to us and major reconstruction of the premises, which had been a former telephone exchange, commenced.

Daniel Robinson





Until early in 1989, following cars for mourners had been hired-in, as space wasn't available at any of our premises at that time to garage them, now with the availability of extra space at Sawbridgeworth and Gt Dunmow, we were able to purchase and operate our own three six-seater limousines in addition to our existing three hearses and two removal ambulances. In 1998 a new funeral home was opened in the High Street, Epping and in 2000 Daniel Robinson & Sons purchased the old-established firm of funeral directors, W C Brown & Sons, in Manor Street, Braintree. Ivan Brown is still affiliated to us and takes a keen interest in the business.

In 2007 we opened our original office in Halstead, which has since moved into the old NatWest Bank premises in the High Street, beginning our long association with Derek Holmes, who remains a Consultant with us today. 2011 was the year that we renovated the historic Bosworth Butchers building in Church Hill, Loughton, creating a unique funeral home with a pretty, stone flagged, rear courtyard. Waltham Abbey was our next 'port of call', where we have had a funeral home discreetly tucked away in Market Square since 2016. Following discussions with the family of the late Jerome Masterson in 2021, who were seeking to retire, we started to trade from their premises in Station Road, Old Harlow.

It has certainly been a busy 130 years and one that we are very proud of. Today, Grahame Smith is Chairman, and Gary Neill continues in his successful role as Managing Director joined by fellow Board Members John Parkin, Alan Akers, Mark Robinson, Nigel Appleby and most recently, Will Robinson. We are proud of our 'tradition of care', and we will continue to work hard, providing the very best funeral services for bereaved families in the local community.

Gary Neill, MBIE, F.SAIF
Managing Director



Photographs from the AGM 2023



Grahame Smith, with retiring Director and Chairman, Robert Robinson.



Directors, left to right: John Parkin (Company Secretary) with Grahame Smith (Chairman), pictured with Gary Neill (Managing Director).



Former Chairman, Robert Robinson, congratulates his brother Will Robinson, following the announcement that he is joining the Board of Directors