



'Newport Funeral Home'

Newport Funeral Home
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Dock Street, Central Mews, circa 1890



Golden Charter
Funeral Plans



RESPECT AND COMPASSION

FOR NEARLY A CENTURY AND A HALF.

In Llanarth Street, Newport, during the mid-19th century, there was an undertaker, and next door a bootmaker. Both were well-established family businesses; the undertaker was Mr Palmer, whilst the bootmakers was run by Daniel Tovey. Daniel Tovey's involvement in funeral directing came about almost by chance:

Mr Palmer fell ill, and Mrs Palmer asked their neighbour the bootmaker, to assist her. Daniel obliged, and his care and assiduity in carrying out the duties brought an increasing number of requests for him to attend to funeral arrangements personally.

The logical consequence was that he should take over the running of the business; and in 1860 he founded Tovey Bros, as a successor to Palmers Undertakers, setting up in premises at nearby Dock Street.

With his reputation already established, the business soon enjoyed considerable success. His brother Isaac assisted and in due course the founder's sons George and James joined their father in the business. Tovey's in Dock Street grew, and before long they acquired Central Mews, at number 67 Dock Street, a few hundred yards along from the offices. There, spacious carriage rooms housed a fleet of carriages for all occasions; many of which were built and maintained on the premises. In 1893 it is recorded that there was stabling for over 30 horses, including a valuable stud of Belgian black horses for funeral work.



A cortège led through Commercial Street, Newport by Messrs George and Humphrey Tovey in 1907.

Around the turn of the 20th century James Tovey, Daniel's younger son, retired; but George's son Humphrey had by this time come into the business. George's death in 1908 left Tovey's in the hands of the third generation. Humphrey was soon joined by his younger brother

Percy, and between them they guided the firm through the first world war. During these traumatic years they rendered every possible assistance to the community; one very practical and very welcome way in which they helped was by taking injured

soldiers from St Woolos Hospital for

trips to the seaside or out to the countryside in the firm's brakes.

The years between the war saw a number of changes. Humphrey died suddenly in 1929 at the age of only 47, and two of his sons, Arthur and Leslie, joined Percy in the business. The firm stopped using horses in 1933; Central Mews was sold, and garaging for the new motor vehicles was created behind the offices, in Union Street. The offices by this time extended across numbers 41, 42 and 43 Dock Street, and following Arthur's marriage in 1934 the Dock Street branch was run by Percy and Leslie whilst Arthur established another successful funeral business in Barry.

During World War II, both the Newport and the Barry branches of the firm were called upon to deal with the repatriation of American soldiers who had died in Wales. Repatriation is an aspect of the firm's business for which there is considerable demand today, and Tovey's offer a service both to and from anywhere in the world.

The Newport business remained in Dock Street until the 1950s, when plans for the new Kingsway Centre development resulted in a compulsory purchase order being issued. It was at this point that numbers 9 and 11 Cardiff Road became

As readers who have visited Tovey's will know, it is a fine funeral home, becoming a Grade II listed building in 1997. It is described as a well-preserved example of a 19th century villa in the Greek revival style. The decorative plaster ceilings and the panelled doors, with classical figures and cresting above are particularly worthy of note.

Nineteen ninety-seven marked Arthur Tovey's 75th year of active involvement in the business, and was also the year in which his grandson James Tovey joined the family firm. Thus for the first time in this business three generations were working together. This is a remarkable achievement, perhaps unique

TOVEY FAMILY TREE OF FUNERAL DIRECTORS

| First Generation | Second Generation | Third Generation | Fourth Generation | Fifth Generation | Sixth Generation |
|------------------|-------------------|------------------|-------------------|------------------|------------------|
| Daniel Tovey | George C Tovey | G Humphrey Tovey | Arthur H Tovey | Humphrey P Tovey | James FP Tovey |
| Isaac Tovey | James Tovey | Percy J Tovey | Leslie C Tovey | | |

(when there were two brothers, each generation was succeeded by the son(s) of the elder brother).

Tovey's funeral home, subsequently No.7 was acquired and demolished to create extensive car parking facilities. A major refurbishment and extension programme in the 1990s resulted in the spacious and tastefully appointed premises where today's clients find comfort and consolation at their time of sorrow. Refinements include a new roomy, air-conditioned service chapel with an organ and music system, private chapels and family rooms. This was further improved by the extension and refurbishment of the garages where the prestigious Daimler fleet is kept, and the construction of a new carpenter's workshop and storage facilities. Tovey's are in fact unique in the area in that they employ their own carpenter to make, by hand, solid wood coffins.

Humphrey Tovey, the fifth generation, entered the business in 1964, the year after Percy's death and Leslie's retirement. It subsequently became impractical to operate two branches; Newport has always been the heart of the business, so the Barry office was closed in 1970.

'Three Generations' of the Tovey family.
The late Arthur Tovey (1906-2005) with his son Humphrey and grandson James

among funeral businesses; and indeed Tovey's is a remarkable business. Sadly, Arthur passed away in 2005 at the age of nearly 99. However, progress continued with Tovey's being Wales' first funeral business to attain the prestigious 'Investors in People' status, and in addition an innovative website will be launched in 2007, proving a useful resource not only for the bereaved but also for fellow care professionals. Humphrey, James and the experienced team remain committed to providing a personal service of the highest standard, particular to the needs of the individual family and at a reasonable charge. Tovey's continue to offer the people of Newport a family owned funeral service in an age where the trend is for large corporations to purchase and operate funeral homes. Many generations of local families have been well served by Tovey's, and it is comforting to know that future generations can count on the same compassionate, attentive and high-quality service.

