



Funerals - Christian Robin

Voice-over by Rawdon O'Connor

- Jon So Christian, a word, first of all about the legal side of things. Under French law what must happen when someone dies?
- Christian It's the relatives who take care of the proceedings. It's rare that there has been much of a discussion with the person beforehand, but the relatives are usually around to tell us what the deceased wanted. The most important decision comes from this: whether the person wanted cremation or burial. It is vital that the person stated their preference - whether they wanted to be laid to rest here, where they spent their last years, or in their home country if they are from abroad.
- In the past, many people chose to return to the UK to lie near their relatives. Nowadays, more people prefer to remain here, especially if the surviving partner continues to live in Brittany. The law is more or less identical on both sides of the channel. The way that the body is prepared is the same; France has adopted the same ways as the UK.
- Jon If somebody dies at home, what is different about that?
- Christian If someone dies at home, a doctor has to be contacted to write a death certificate, which enables the procedure to be undertaken. There is a bit of a problem at night but in the daytime, between 8am and 8pm, the GP should be available. If at night there's a bit of an emergency, the hospital should be contacted by dialling 15. A team which includes a doctor will then come out and a death certificate can be written.
- Jon For anyone who is listening who is not a Christian, if they are Humanist, is it possible, under French law, to have a Humanist burial, maybe with the, the body being buried in a woodland for example, rather than a cemetery?
- Christian In France, there has to be a coffin for either ceremony (cremation or burial). It can be in soft wood, such as pine, if there is to be a cremation. Or a hardwood coffin if it's to be a burial. This will then be oak. As far as the urn is concerned different materials are available. What becomes of the urn is regulated by French law. It is illegal to keep the urn at one's home. The ashes can be scattered in the open air, in the country or in the garden, or the urn can be

kept in a garden of remembrance.

Jon What about costs if somebody is short of money. Is it possible to get State help, for example?

Christian There is some state aid available for people of limited means. This covers the cost of the coffin, the ceremony itself and can reduce the overall costs by up to €2500.

Jon Christian, it's been a pleasure meeting you but, don't take offence, I hope we don't meet again too soon. Thank you very much.

