

# Making A VERY PERSONAL CHOICE

*Colourful Coffins pioneered bespoke and customised picture coffins in the UK. Managing director Mary Tomes explains what makes them special.*

**T**he ability to offer families a very personal choice when it comes to choosing a coffin for their loved one is what drives Mary Tomes, managing director of Colourful Coffins.

The Oxford-based company, which was launched in 2005, pioneered bespoke and customised picture coffins in the UK market and today it has built an enviable reputation for quality and service, both within the funeral industry and with bereaved families.

Its coffins are sold exclusively through funeral directors and each month more and more families are choosing to mark the loss of a special individual by requesting a Colourful Coffin.

Some 90% of coffin requests are customised, with family photographs, holiday pictures and favourite hobbies or sports often integrated into bespoke designs.

"Many people tell us that having a Colourful Coffin is seen as celebrating the life of the person they have

lost. Our service is about people – it's providing those who are left behind with the comfort that they have marked the life of their loved one with a unique and distinctive tribute," said Mary.

"We're often told that having a Colourful Coffin helped bring a smile to a very sad occasion and if we can play a very small part in that day, then we're proud to do so."

Continuing to bring innovation into the industry, last year the company launched a new service, giving people the chance to pre-design their own Colourful Coffin.

"Customers often asked us if it's possible to order a design in advance and, although no-one really likes to have to think about these things, it's a very practical approach," continued Mary. "In many ways, it's a very special gift to leave behind for your family because they know they are fulfilling your last wishes."

The pre-design package costs just £99 and enables people to send through

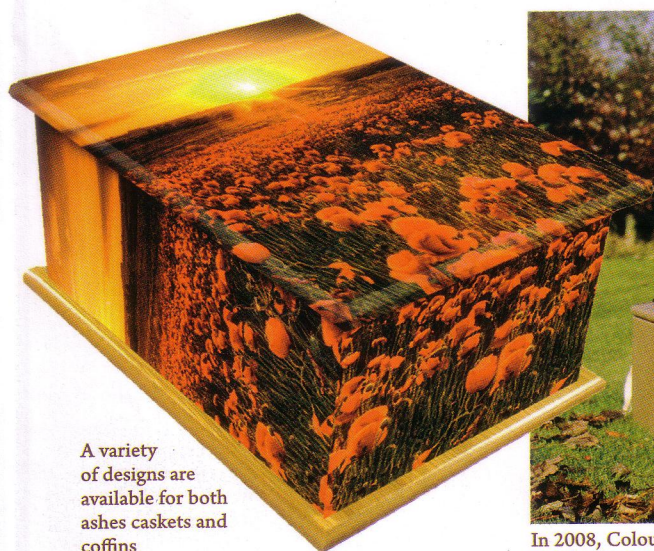
ideas and themes and to work with one of the company's designers to agree their design. This is supplied on an encrypted CD for safe keeping.

The growing trend towards more environmentally-friendly funerals is also supported by Colourful Coffins, which already uses biodegradable paper or cotton wraps and environmentally friendly inks.

In 2008, it launched the UK's first 100% recycled cardboard picture coffins and, in the first six months, saw sales rise by around 400% as increasing numbers of people chose cardboard as a more sustainable option.

In addition, thanks to an agreement with carbon offsetting organisation Climate Care, greenhouse gases are offset each time one of its coffins is cremated. And, when a Colourful Coffin is buried, a tree is planted in the company's own six acre memorial woodland.

For more details, please visit [www.colourfulcoffins.com](http://www.colourfulcoffins.com) or telephone 01865 779172. ↗



A variety of designs are available for both ashes caskets and coffins



In 2008, Colourful Coffins launched its range of 100% recycled cardboard coffins