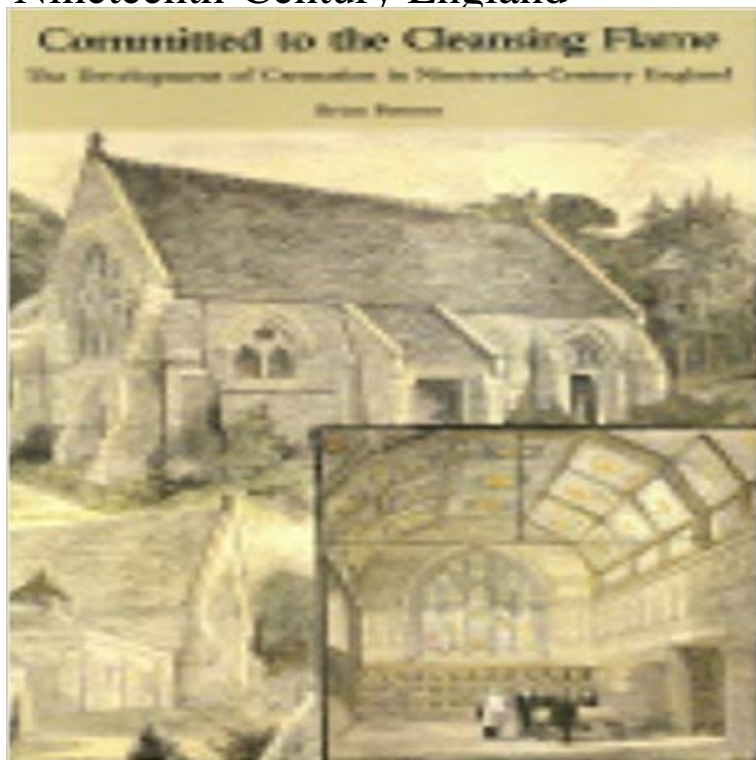


# Committed to the Cleansing Flame: The Development of Cremation in Nineteenth-Century England



Overcrowded churchyards, shortage of land and rapidly increasing population how could the late Victorians dispose of their dead? Cremation was the only answer. But today, with over two-thirds of all deaths being followed by cremation, it is hard to appreciate the massive struggles faced by the Cremation Society after its foundation in 1874. Religious bigotry, legal obstacles and sheer moral outrage all stood in the way. But interest grew, and aided by the work of others, including the acts of a flamboyant Welsh Druid, the first cremator was available for public use in 1885 at Woking. This book is the first full-length study of these events and how cremation developed into an acceptable and dignified way to dispose of the dead. It tells of the arrangements for early cremations and the progress of the movement down to the passing of the first Cremation Act in 1902 when London finally received its first crematorium. It is extensively illustrated including many rarely seen images.

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