

# H.M. CORONER

There are a number of reasons why a death may have to be referred to the Coroner and under such circumstances, special procedures may be necessary. However, these should not give cause for any undue alarm.

The Coroner is a judicial officer, quite independent of local and central government, who is required to act in accordance with certain laws. Any sudden or unexplained death must be reported to the Coroner whose duty it is to ascertain the cause of death and to investigate any unusual circumstance.

Sometimes the Coroner may be able to ascertain by simple enquiry whether the death was due to natural causes and that there is a Doctor able to issue a death certificate. The death is then registered adopting the procedures shown under 'Registering a Death Guidance'. If this is not the case, the Coroner may require a post mortem examination.

This will usually indicate that the death was due to natural causes and in such cases there is no inquest. The Coroner sends a certificate to the Registrar so that the death can be registered. If cremation has been selected the Coroner will issue an additional certificate to the Funeral Director.

If the death is not due to natural causes (for example, a traffic accident) the Coroner is obliged to hold an INQUEST. This is an enquiry and its purpose is to determine:

- 1. The identity of the deceased**
- 2. When, where and how the death occurred**
- 3. The cause of death**

Following the Inquest, the Coroner will issue a certificate for burial or cremation. In certain cases, he/she may adjourn the inquest after having established the above mentioned facts. A certificate will then be issued to enable the funeral to take place and Inquest re-opened, sometimes after several weeks, in order to gather relevant information relating to the death.

Funeral Directors are fully conversant with the likely causes for referral to the Coroner and will be able to advise on any action that may be necessary.