

replacing, abating and refurbishing at Ipswich

National legislation decreed that by the end of 2012 crematoria should have mercury abatement plant fitted to their cremators to ensure emissions were abated by a minimum of 50%. Ipswich Borough Council decided to replace, in full, their cremators – with 100% abatement – and to upgrade the current building and facilities.

Following the relevant tender process the contract was awarded to ATI Environment, a French company with fully trained UK-based refractory and electrical service personnel. They have an extensive portfolio of cremators in France and elsewhere but at the time of awarding the contract no installations in the UK. Below are the views of three people involved in the project; the first from Mark Hunter, the Project and Building and Design Manager at Ipswich Borough Council (IBC), my own view as the then client and Bereavement Services Manager and Nabil Laqtaibi, ATI UK's Sales Manager.

Mark Hunter states, "After a long project programme Ipswich has finally got two new fully abated ATI cremators. In addition to replacing the cremators the authority took the decision to take the opportunity to refurbish the 'back of house' facilities to improve staff working conditions.

"The project ran for over three years (with the first 18 months for the project inception phase) following feasibility studies into the pros and cons of building a new crematorium through to staying unabated. IBC decided to proceed with a design and build project utilising one of the existing chapels to house the new crematory.

"After the appointment of a client side design team (who weren't novated to the main contractor but stayed with the client to provided project management and assurance roles) a tender exercise was carried out with disappointing results; only two of the five suppliers decided to tender. However, following the tender appraisal and a review of the equipment provided by ATI, the client project team decided to appoint the company to provide the new cremators. This would be a first installation for ATI in the UK market.

"The project progressed well delivering the abated equipment slightly ahead of schedule with the minimum of fuss. The crematorium remained open throughout the life of the build. The finished product seems to be working well and ATI (as part of the tender process) are providing Ipswich with a ten year maintenance contract based on a per-cremation cost.

"On the whole the project was well delivered, on time and to budget. The main lesson learnt was to appoint an experienced employer's agent from Allman Woodcock Ltd who was able to deal effectively with all contractual and design matters ensuring that the project ran smoothly."

My own brief was to ensure continued service delivery to the public with the minimum of disruption resulting in upgraded welfare facilities, new cremators and 100% mercury abatement. To be honest the success of achieving this, in my opinion, was the robust management of the entire project team and the leadership of Mark Hunter.

ATI were an unknown, and to be totally honest we had in place an effective and efficient maintenance contractor who looked after our previous cremators. However, the tender process dictated the result and ATI were awarded the contract. I have to concur with Mark that the project went exceptionally smoothly and ATI were very responsive, collaborative and willing to work with the Council to ensure a high quality of service remained.

In the main this was achieved by handing the site over to ATI and Needham Builders, their building contractor, every morning of the week and they handed it back to us to enable services to be run each afternoon. This was made slightly easier as we had capacity to install the new cremators and plant, and commission them, before needing to de-commission the old machines and strip them out. The 'considerate contractor' scheme was in place ensuring all areas were fenced in when any works were being undertaken and no noise made, even during a morning, if a burial was taking place close by.

The cremators can be described as industrial looking, no frills, no sparkles but, in all honesty, what more do we need other than cremators that cleanly cremate and abate emissions – and we certainly got what was needed. It is still early days and we continue to work closely with ATI who remain responsive to our requests and continue to provide a good level of support to our operators. As they obtain more contracts the maintenance and shared experience will develop more and ATI have certainly established themselves in the UK market.

Nabil Laqtaibi added, "Established in 1960 in France, ATI is involved in the design and manufacturing of cremators and mercury abatement equipment on the global scene but as a new entrant into the UK market with no previous references in the country, we have encountered many challenges in order to demonstrate that we were not only the best choice for Ipswich but the right choice. Subsequently, we have been awarded many more contracts which has put ATI on the path to growth and now a firm player in the UK market. ►



"Ipswich was our opportunity to prove ourselves a first class manufacturer with a worldwide presence, experience and an excellent understanding of UK legislation. This contract gave us the chance to demonstrate our capabilities in managing a project as the main contractor, and oversee a large proportion of construction work.

"Our policy is to exceed customer requirements and ensure that the job not only meets expectations but exceeds them.



"Our main goal at Ipswich Crematorium was to provide excellent quality works to meet the council's expectations, together with excellent health and safety, consideration of environmental impact and comply with deadlines all under the customer's budget! And we did!!

"The communication and coordination with Ipswich Borough Council and site personnel was the key to the overall success and ensured business continuity. It was an honour and a privilege for ATI to work for Ipswich Borough Council and to serve experienced managers like Mark Hunter, Mike Grimwood and their staff."

After 10 years as BSM I now have a new role at IBC. I thoroughly enjoyed my time at the front line of this emotive public service and have overseen many projects relating to cemeteries and crematoria, not the least of which was the process described above.



I'd like to express my thanks to all the cemetery and crematorium staff who supported me, and colleagues from around the UK whom I've met at conferences, seminars and branch meetings. I've made some good friends along the way and will always appreciate the wealth of knowledge and commitment shown by all of you involved in bereavement services throughout the UK. There are far too many special people to mention but each of them know who they are.

Mike Grimwood
Community Safety and Licensing Operations Manager

