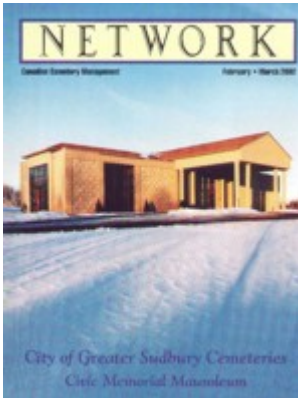


## City of Greater Sudbury Cemeteries



In 1883, Dr. William Howey was sent by the CPR to its temporary townsite just north of a small lake in northern Ontario. When the local magistrate, Andrew McNaughton became lost in the bush in a heavy fog, Dr. Howey was among the searchers who found the lost magistrate. On the spot where they found McNaughton, the searchers picked up some copper-stained rocks, and Dr. Howey sent samples to Alfred Selwyn, director of the Geological Survey of Canada. Selwyn pronounced the samples worthless, and Dr. Howey threw them away.

By February of 1884, the same spot had been staked by a local contractor and friends, and became the site of the Murray Mine of the International Nickel Company, producing ore worth millions. Dr. Howey developed an understandable contempt for geological experts.

Dr. Howey and his wife, Florence, were sent on a work train to the temporary townsite by the management of the CPR as it built the first line west from North Bay, eventually to link the entire country by rail. These temporary townsites were exactly that - they served as depots for men and supplies, until the line was extended another hundred miles or so, and then the town would be abandoned, and all the materials and personnel moved forward. Such had been the destiny of Sudbury, until this discovery of several of the world's largest deposits of copper.

Florence and William Howey never moved on. They established the first hospital in Sudbury, and before it was completed, arranged for the first interment in what was to become one of Sudbury's earliest cemeteries. "...which was not a cemetery at all, but just a small spot cleared for the grave, but no loved one ever had a more beautiful wreath than the one I laid on his rough board coffin made of water lilies ..... A lonely grave it was among blackened stumps and low underbrush. I suppose I am the only one who knows it was ever there ...."

The spot in which this interment took place was set aside by Mr. Frederick Eyre for a public cemetery. Eventually, the cemetery grew in area, and encompassed spaces for all religions represented locally. The Eyre Cemetery was eventually deeded to the city in 1934, and closed for new site sales many years ago. As such, the Eyre cemetery is believed to be one of the oldest cemeteries in the former City of Sudbury, now part of the City of Greater Sudbury.



The new City of Greater Sudbury came into existence on Jan 1, 2001, forming a single entity from the seven former municipalities in the area along with the Regional government. Under the new structure, there is a combined total of 24 cemeteries! The organization suddenly has to deal with being the largest municipal area in Ontario, covering 3,628 sq. km. This new City of Greater Sudbury is two-thirds the size of the province of Prince Edward Island.

It is indicative of the attitude in Sudbury that in a single year, they have become a city studied by others, for they have implemented 'Citizen Service Centres' offering a unique service delivery model in Canada. In the words of Jim Gordon, Mayor of the City of Greater Sudbury:

"Citizen Service Centres have been established across the Greater Sudbury area, making access to municipal services close and convenient. Information about cemetery services is available at these Centres, including cemetery locations, costs, interment options and rules and regulations. The Mayor and Council are committed to meeting these very important needs of our citizens in a responsive and caring fashion."

"Citizens can purchase interment rights at any of the Citizen Service Centres," added Mayor Gordon. "New software being installed this spring will allow these transactions to be completed in real time."



Six Service Centres have been opened in the outlying areas of the municipality, combining municipal and library services. Staff of the centres have all been trained in delivery of the services offered, which include: payments of taxes, water bills, parking tickets; purchase of bus passes and dog tags; registrations for leisure programs; booking ice time, ball fields, etc; as well as information about cemeteries. There is also a Citizen Service Centre at City Hall in downtown Sudbury.

According to Bruno Mangiardi, Director of Information Technology, Sudbury has a state-of-the-art telecommunications infrastructure with approximately 2,400 kilometers of fibre optic cable, making the city the most connected in the North. It is this infrastructure, running smoothly and reliably, which makes possible the operation of these Citizen Service Centres.

In fact, with the Citizen Service Centres linked together with Stone Orchard's Estates Edition of Cemetery Software, citizens from any part of Sudbury will be able to go to any one of the Service Centres to research family burial records in any of the 24 current cemeteries, or purchase sites in any of the cemeteries serviced by the city. All this without driving long distances to the single cemetery office that the city maintains!

Plans are underway to incorporate all the information found in previous paper systems for some cemeteries, as well as to import data contained in previously computerized cemetery systems.

Over the years, the entire area, its residents and its industries have worked hard to eradicate the negative images of the countryside typified by the famous 'Astronaut on the Moon' photos of the 1970's. INCO has been committed to reversing the damage done to the environment by local mining, since it first established Nickel Park on the site of a former "roast bed" in Copper Cliff.

Falconbridge has also done its part to reclaim Sudbury's landscape along with other community partners who have, in total, planted more than 12 million trees. Since the greening of Sudbury began some 25 years ago, nature is now taking over the restorative process and Sudbury has garnered significant awards for its environmental efforts.

Here, nestled within the city, lie the 24 cemetery sites, and among them, the jewel in the crown of Sudbury's cemeteries, Civic Memorial Cemetery. And here, the Cemetery Secretary, Lynne Heikkila, has been quietly encouraging and supervising the promotion of a memorial tree planting program for several years. The results of Lynne's efforts are startling. We last visited Civic Memorial about 5 years ago, and were struck by how open and smooth the area appeared. On our latest visit, the views had changed completely, broken and enhanced in every direction by plantings of memorial trees and gardens, thriving in an area once believed almost void of vegetation. In some areas, rows of trees shade driveways and paths. In others, individual specimens rise to enhance a closer field of view. The entire cemetery has been tremendously enhanced, through the dedicated efforts of staff, who have made it their mission to promote the program.



Opened in 1986, Civic Memorial is the administrative centre for all Sudbury cemeteries, as well as a modern, model cemetery in its own right, evolving and adapting to current interment practices.

When Civic Memorial was first opened, a dramatic pair of buildings was erected, with one for Cemetery Administration, and the other, immediately across the road, originally designed as a chapel for services. The two buildings are joined by a high 'breezeway', intended to provide shelter for arriving processions and families. Inside the chapel, it was possible to hold complete interment services, especially in the winter, with the deceased being 'lowered' into the lower crypt of the chapel, from where they could be discreetly removed via a below ground passage to the facilities underneath the office building, for final disposition.

As times and public attitudes change, the Chapel was no longer required for services, and has been completely redesigned inside, as Interior Chapel Niches. Faced with glass, marble, and bronze niche fronts, the available space is being well utilized by residents. Visitors' first view as they enter the building is of two large stained glass windows, which are being completed by donations. There is ample comfortable seating, and visitors are welcome to bring flowers and other memorials to remain in the area. During our recent visit, a beautiful wooden sleigh, apparently home-made, and filled with Poinsettias rested on a low table in the room. There was no indication of who had provided the sleigh, but it was obviously a very personal tribute to someone resting in the Chapel. The feeling that this was a 'family' place was only enhanced by the many arrangements of flowers and other objects left behind. Indeed, visiting in this room felt very much like being in a well-appointed living room, where long discussions could be held about the families and individuals represented here. One niche will probably never be occupied - instead, it contains a bronze marker commemorating a local citizen, and the message that he is interred with his family in Italy. But this location has obviously been chosen as a place to remember the life lived in the area.



The Chapel has continued to be used for special occasions. After the tragic events of last September 11th, Mayor Jim Gordon and City Council invited the citizens of Greater Sudbury to sign a Book of Remembrance for those affected by the tragedy in the United States. The book was available at various locations throughout the city as well as the Interior Chapel Niche Room. The book was forwarded to President Bush and the citizens of the United States.

On a hill overlooking the cemetery, reached by a scenic winding roadway, is the Civic Memorial Mausoleum. If Civic Memorial Cemetery is the jewel in the cemetery collection of the city, surely the Mausoleum is the cemetery's crowning achievement.

With 288 crypts, the Civic Mausoleum is of moderate size compared to some. However, the emphasis here is again on local residents and their contributions to the lives lived. Visible as soon as visitors enter the mausoleum, is the central chapel area, surrounded by crypts in various styles, and embraced by a large series of bay windows at the far end. In place of stained glass, the series of windows is executed in Bronze glass, and depicts the continuance of life, from birth through aging, death, and starting again. The work is entitled 'The Continuance' and was designed by Dan Lamarche of Classic Creations, and made by The Sign Shop. Both are firms located in Greater Sudbury. Several parallel stories are depicted in the windows, which are still clear, and surmounted by clear panels to allow the sunlight and changing views to spill into the room. On the snowy day, with sub-zero temperatures that we visited, there was nothing cold about this view.

At the entrance to the Mausoleum the carpet is designed in the shape of a Starburst inlay. The colours effectively tie the themes and colours of the building together, as it repeats colours from the walls, fixtures, and areas within the building.

Crypts in the Mausoleum are five levels high and one row of "Westminster" units is included below the floor. Crypt plates are white marble with dark green trim, and the floor is carpeted, inset with unique marble tiled areas to accent the skylights above. In addition, the mausoleum is furnished with sitting areas including fruitwood & cream coloured highback chairs, parson's chairs, a variety of olive and jasmine trees, a walnut and oak altar, a built in sound system, keyless entry system, air conditioning, chandeliers and valance lighting as well as washroom facilities. The vaulted ceilings and natural lighting create an atmosphere of warmth and peacefulness, respectful of the needs of the visitors.

The Mausoleum was begun as a project by Al Sizer, when he was Manager of the Civic Cemetery several years ago. It is with obvious pride that he guides visitors through the Mausoleum, now that he has returned under the new City Administration as Co-ordinator of Cemetery Services for the City of Greater Sudbury. Al was pleased to show how well received the facility has been by city residents, and mentioned that the second phase of the Mausoleum is now in the design stages, in order to meet the increased demand from local citizens.



With its well-chosen appointments and prominent setting, the Mausoleum shares in the sense of family evident throughout Civic Cemetery. This is reflected over and over again - in the adjacent crypts occupied by a long-time resident and her young great granddaughter namesake, and in the decorations chosen for some of the crypts depicting the occupations of the deceased. The Mausoleum is a large building, but with an intimacy and warmth that belies its size.

There are many stories to be told in the history of Sudbury's Cemeteries - of cemeteries being moved - in one case three times before finally settling at its current location. There are stories of cemeteries lost, and in at least one case, resurrected. The Sudbury branch of the Finnish Canadian Historical Society has led the move to restore a long-abandoned cemetery - the Long Lake Finnish Cemetery - as a suitable resting place for many of the early settlers and pioneers who built the original society of the area.

There are many individuals who have worked, developed, and preserved the cemeteries of Sudbury over the years. Ed Charette of Civic Cemetery, is the third generation of his family to have care of the LaSalle Cemetery. Originally a Catholic Cemetery, LaSalle was deeded to the city in 1981. Ed's family have a particular pride and commitment to the cemetery long after active sales have ceased.

The entire Sudbury basin was formed millions of years ago by the cataclysmic impact of a huge asteroid on earth's surface. The force of the collision heated the surrounding rock to the melting point, and the slow cooling that took place afterwards allowed minerals to coalesce into the rich vein deposits for which the area is now famous. The impact of organizational decisions may seem almost as cataclysmic to the residents. But if the cemeteries are the jewels that make the history of Sudbury shine, they are also blending into a single solid entity that families will be proud of as they move into the years to come.

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Much of the material contained in this article came from other interested and fascinating sources, to whom sincere thanks are offered:

Pierre Berton, in 'The Last Spike' for the story of Dr. Howey and the Murray Mine.  
Florence Howey, wife of Dr. Howey, first nurse and physician in Sudbury.  
Al Sizer, Manager of Cemetery Services, City of Greater Sudbury  
Lynne Heikkila, Cemetery Services, City of Greater Sudbury  
Nicole Charette, Corporate Communication