

THE

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# BEECHWOOD WAY

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# LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

**BEECHWOOD CEMETERY** is truly a special place. Yes, it has beautiful gardens, historical trees, monuments, and more history than most places in Ottawa. However, what makes Beechwood Cemetery so special are the people.

We are home to many communities and groups, each saying that it is “my Beechwood”. Each community has a different view of what Beechwood Cemetery is to them. The beautiful pagoda, the bison head and cenotaph, the rows of grey headstones each identifying a member of the Canadian Armed Forces and the monuments sharing their story. Each community brings something special to the grounds, generation over generation; they leave their mark and strengthen the ties between us all. Each community is proud to share their story with us and about us.

Beechwood Cemetery is always looking to celebrate these ties and share the story. This issue talks about our legacy with the Parliament of Canada, the importance of the CSIS national memorial cemetery, the unique beauty of staff-made religious icons, and a community coming together to build a section and a monument.

As always readers, I hope you enjoy this issue and maybe discover something new to ignite your passion for Beechwood on these (hopefully) last weeks of winter.

Make sure you stay connected between issues by following up for Beechwood Cemetery social media pages:

- Facebook (@BeechwoodCemetery, @NMCBeechwood, @cimetiereBeechwood),
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- Instagram (@beechwoodcemetery)
- Youtube (Beechwood Cemetery)

**Nicolas McCarthy**

*Director of Marketing, Communications and Community Outreach*



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Visit us online to learn more about Beechwood, the National Cemetery of Canada and read back issues of at: [www.beechwoodottawa.ca](http://www.beechwoodottawa.ca)

We want your feedback on how we are doing! Contact: Erika Wagner at [foundation@beechwoodottawa.ca](mailto:foundation@beechwoodottawa.ca)

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# THE TIES THAT BIND

## Beechwood's long, shared history with the Parliament of Canada

by Brian McCullough  
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**WHEN THE STONEMASONS** and other contractors take up their tools early in the new year to begin the decade-long renovation of the Centre Block on Parliament Hill, they will not only be tapping into the inspired creation of the architects and artisans who went before them, they will also be channelling a long and sacred history that is shared between the Parliament of Canada and Beechwood Cemetery.

The two old Ottawa institutions, which share a national memorial responsibility dating back to around the time of Confederation, are within direct line of sight of one another — the one situated on a majestic limestone bluff overlooking the Ottawa River, the other nestled a few kilometres to the east in a rolling sanctuary of well-manicured grounds in Vanier North. The original Parliament Buildings opened in 1866, and were still under construction when Beechwood Cemetery was established in 1873.

Many of the people who figured prominently in the construction and political workings of Parliament over the years today lie buried at Beechwood Cemetery: People such as architect Thomas Fuller who designed the original Gothic-style Parliament Buildings that were consumed by flames in the Great Fire of Feb. 3, 1916; John Booth who provided the lumber for that construction; and artist Alan Beddoe who created the beautiful Books of Remembrance commemorating Canada's war dead that rest in the Peace Tower's Memorial Chamber.

The political roll of politicians interred at Beechwood includes Sir Robert Borden — Canada's eighth Prime Minister, Governor General Ramon Hnatyshyn, federal NDP leader Tommy Douglas and Liberal Ottawa-Vanier MP Mauril Bélanger, who was the driving force behind the designation of the National Cemetery of Canada at Beechwood in 2007. Bélanger died in 2016.

"Many of the influential people who worked at Parliament chose Beechwood as their final resting place," says Beechwood communications director Nick McCarthy. "We even have the early militias here who were buried on what was known as Barrack Hill before it became Parliament Hill. We keep watch over them alongside the National Military Cemetery, along with many others from the federal protective services whose duty it was to watch over Parliament and the country."

One of the poignant ties that connects Parliament Hill to Beechwood is the Nurses' Memorial that was installed in the Centre Block's Hall of Honour in 1926. It is believed to have







Photos: Gilles Gervais and Beechwood Cemetery Foundation.

been inspired in part by Minnie Katherine Gallaher, one of 14 nursing sisters lost in action during the unlawful sinking of the Canadian hospital ship *Llandovery Castle* by a German U-boat on June 27, 1918. The atrocity became a rallying cry for victory during the final push to end the First World War. Gallaher’s body was never recovered, but a small monument placed in her family’s plot at Beechwood Cemetery honours her memory.

Perhaps an even more sacred connection is the one that still deeply moves someone who has been exploring the hallways of Parliament for 34 years. Gilles Gervais, the Assistant Deputy Sergeant-at-Arms for the House of Commons, said he finds the artistry of architect John Pearson, who spearheaded the redesign of the Centre Block following the 1916 fire, “incredible” in all its detail.

Pearson, who died in 1940 and is buried in Toronto, honoured architect Fuller’s original vision with the Gothic Revival magnificence we see today. He also designed the Peace Tower Memorial Chamber — a chapel, really — that contains artist Beddoe’s Books of Remembrance that rest on individual altars. The floor tiles, laid out in the design of the Memorial (Silver) Cross, are made of stones collected from the First World War battlefields of France and Belgium, and inlaid with brass tallies made from battlefield shell casings melted down for the purpose. Simply standing inside the space is a powerful emotional experience.

“Pearson wanted us to walk on the same ground the soldiers walked on,” Gervais explained. “What Beechwood is doing with the National Military Cemetery is an extension of what we’re doing here, and having the direct connection with Alan Beddoe who produced the Books of Remembrance for this Chamber is very beautiful.”

Gervais said that the daily 11 a.m. ceremony of turning the page of each book will continue even after they are moved to a temporary chamber for the duration of the renovations.

For McCarthy, this sense of continuity is the essence of the 145-year shared history of respectful memorial preservation between Beechwood and Parliament Hill. “Even though the Centre Block will be closing for a decade, there’s still a sense of eternity about it,” he said. “As eternal as this building is for Canada, so is Beechwood’s responsibility of watching over the people who are buried here.”

For more information, visit [www.beechwoodottawa.ca](http://www.beechwoodottawa.ca) and [www.ourcommons.ca](http://www.ourcommons.ca)

*This content was produced by Content Works, Postmedia’s custom content studio.*

# A MEMORIAL TO THOSE WHO SERVED COURAGEOUSLY IN THE SHADOWS

by Donald G. Mahar

*National President of The Pillar Society*



**WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 14, 2018** was a cold and windy, late autumn day in Ottawa. But, in spite of the weather, the date represents a very proud moment for the Canadian Security Intelligence Service (CSIS), the Pillar Society (the retirement / alumni organization for CSIS and the former RCMP Security Service) and the Beechwood Foundation. At 2:00 PM on this chilly day, the CSIS National Memorial Cemetery was dedicated during a ceremony attended by CSIS Director, David Vigneault, CSIS Deputy Director, Operations, Jeff Yaworski, Pillar Society National President, Donald G. Mahar and Beechwood representative, James Paterson. A small group of CSIS employees and Beechwood representatives also attended. Following the dedication, the group gathered inside the Beechwood National Memorial Centre where a special window display, depicting historical CSIS and Pillar Society artifacts was unveiled. A small reception followed.



The development of a CSIS National Memorial Cemetery, adjacent to the RCMP and Ottawa Police Service cemeteries and across the road from the Canadian Forces National Military Cemetery, had been in the planning and initial fundraising stage for three years. As was the case with the other noted cemeteries, a Tripartite Agreement was established between CSIS, the Pillar Society and Beechwood Foundation.

CSIS and the Pillar Society is deeply proud that the CSIS National Memorial Cemetery is situated within the beautiful grounds of Beechwood Cemetery. The men and women of CSIS, like their predecessors in the RCMP Security Service, have served Canada, the Canadian people and Canadian interests overseas, since the mid 1940's. They have gone about their work quietly, without public recognition and expecting none.

The men and women of CSIS and the Pillar Society now have a final, dignified resting place, hallowed ground where family, friends and other Canadians may pay their respects, within the shadow of the Peace Tower. They are honoured to rest in the company of the Canadian Forces, RCMP and Ottawa Police Service. For they have all dedicated their lives to Canada and the Canadian people and have contributed greatly to making Canada the wonderful country that it is.



To my knowledge, no other Western intelligence service has a national memorial cemetery dedicated to its employees. There are of course magnificent military cemeteries situated throughout the world. Arlington National Cemetery in Arlington, Virginia is one of the finest. Although former U.S., intelligence personnel are interned there, many, if not most, had previously served in the United States military. As the planners of the Canadian Forces, RCMP, CSIS, the Pillar Society and the Beechwood Foundation look forward towards the next fifty to one hundred years, they can be forgiven for thinking that our hallowed ground will one day be seen by Canadians as being our 'Arlington'.

Further construction and ground maintenance of the CSIS National Memorial Cemetery will take place in the summer of 2019. Why not consider taking some time to visit the cemetery. You should also drop in to the Beechwood National Memorial Centre and take a look at the CSIS / Pillar Society display window. It is after all, Canadian history!

Photos: CSIS National Memorial Cemetery



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# BEECHWOOD CEMETERY ICONS

## A brief history

by Benoit Bazinet

### About Icons — a brief history

An icon (from Greek εἰκών eikōn “image”) was a religious work of art, most commonly a painting, in the cultures of the Eastern Orthodox Church, Oriental Orthodoxy, the Roman Catholic, and certain Eastern Catholic churches. Objects of veneration (not to be confused with idols and idolatry), icons are visual tools that can bring peace and consolation, but most importantly inspire the faithful’s prayers, thus bringing them closer to the Lord, the angels and archangels or members of the sainthood community.

### Why “Beechwood” icons?

Beechwood serves many religious families, from St-Elias Antiochian Orthodox, Saints Peter and Paul Greek Melkite Catholic or Saint Charbel Maronite churches. If you have ever visited these churches you will immediately notice, once inside, that the walls are fully and majestically adorned by hand painted icons. Throughout the wake/visitation periods at the Beechwood, the families and the clergy like to display icons, by placing them on each side of the casket of the deceased in the Sacred Space.

Beechwood had used commercially purchased icons, and Benoit Bazinet, funeral director, believed that these were not reflective of Beechwood. He believed that traditional hand painted matching icons would be better suited to inspire prayer and consolation to the grieving families we serve.

### The first five Beechwood icons

The preliminary plan is to produce five icons; the first two “The Good Shepherd” and, “Mary and Child — The Most Holy Theotokos”, are now completed. Three other icons are in progress; Saint Elias, Saints Peter and Paul and St. Charbel.

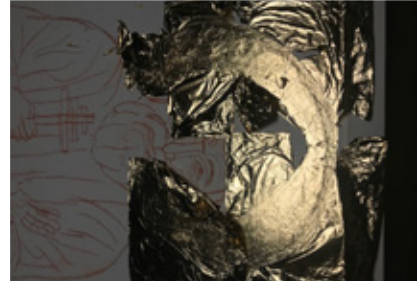
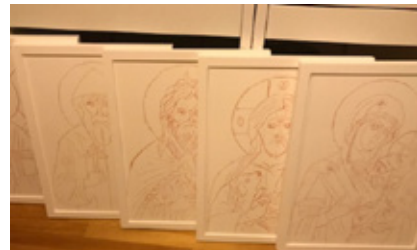
### Making the icons

The preparation starts by applying a narrow wooden frame to the wooden artist board, commercially available. A thin slice of wood is carved between the frame and the board — this will act as a “glue well” once covered with canvas. The boards are then primed with two coats of fresh hot rabbit skin glue, as used traditionally. Then natural cotton canvas, cut to size, is soaked in more rabbit skin glue, applied, and stretched over the wooden board. As the glue dries, it will further stretch the canvas over the wooden boards.

Once completely dry, excess canvas on the sides is trimmed and sanded, then primed again with a mix of rabbit skin glue and gesso, several coats (8 to 12 coats) and sanding session between each coat are required to attain a perfectly smooth ivory-like surface to start gold gilding and painting.

A basic sketch of the icon is drawn on the panel as a guide to gilding the gold leaf. Gold gilding is a delicate operation; two coats of slow drying glue are applied only in the areas to be gilded. The fragile and thin gold leaf is then applied, and ever so gently patted down with a brush.

Once dry, the excess gold leaf is brushed off, and the remainder clear coated to prevent oxidization and tarnishing of the gold leaf. The backgrounds of the icons are covered in copper paint and oxidized with a special acid to add an authentic verdigris look reminiscent of the Sacred Space’s architectural copper roofing. After all this preparation, only then does the exciting painting of the figures start. Several thin



Photos: Benoit Bazinet

# SPRING EVENTS AT BEECHWOOD

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» SATURDAY, APRIL 13 2019 || 7:00 PM

## Rotary Club of West Ottawa presents Music For Humanity

Rotary Club of West Ottawa presents Music For Humanity together with the Beechwood Cemetery Foundation. Join us for the amazing concert with all proceeds going to End Polio Now. Purchase tickets from any member of the Rotary Club of West Ottawa.

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» TUESDAY, MAY 14 2019 || 10:00 AM - 2:00 PM

## Beechwood Cemetery presents the Canadian Tulip Festival's Veterans Day

The Canadian Tulip Festival was established in 1953 to preserve the heritage of Canada's role in liberating the Dutch during the Second World War. The tulip remains a valuable symbol of friendship and of spring, with special meaning to the people of Canada.

Join us for a military themed tour and a formal event honouring and commemorating the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of D-Day. Beechwood will proudly unveil two Great Canadian Plaques for General Charles Foulkes and General Henry Crerar.

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» SUNDAY, MAY 19 2019 || 10:00 AM - 2:00 PM

## Beechwood Cemetery and the Jewel FM present the 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Vintage Car Show

Join us for Beechwood Cemetery 2nd Annual Vintage Car Show. Beechwood Cemetery historical grounds welcome for the first time a dozen pre-1950's cars. These beautifully restored vehicles will be parked around the cemetery grounds. This show and shine brings together Ottawa History like never before. Please note this event is weather permitting.

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» THURSDAY, MAY 23 2019 || 6:00 AM - 12:00

## RCMP National Memorial Cemetery Vigil

Reveille at 6:00 on May 23, 2019 starts the day with the bugler's call. With the rising of the sun, serving members and Veterans start the vigil. Every thirty minutes, a piper leads the changing of the sentries and a call is sounded by a bugler.

At 11:00, all will gather for the Vigil ceremony to remember the RCMP Members. Wreaths will be placed to remember those who have served Canada so diligently and honour their families who support them.

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coats of modern acrylic paints are applied to obtain the depth and semi-transparency desired, reminiscent of the old style Byzantine icons.

Two coats of high-gloss varnish are applied to the entire board, and a thick crackling medium is applied to the figures and gold gilded areas. This final process adds an overall shiny finish and an original antiqued look to the figures. A final overall high-gloss varnish is then applied to protect the finished artwork.

Benoit is working on five icons and once completed, the clergy and the church leaders will be invited to a "Blessing of the icons" ceremony hosted in our Sacred Space. Once blessed these icons can be considered and recognized as true Holy Icons.

These icons are on display in the Beechwood National Memorial Centre and represent Beechwood's commitment to the communities we serve.

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# TULIP BETWEEN FRIENDS

by Trevor Davidson

*Chief Horticulturist*

AS I'M WRITING this article, it has been snowing for many hours, and looks as though it will be for many more. This seems like a good time to turn our thoughts to the coming spring, when the flower beds at Beechwood will be teeming with thousands of brightly colored tulip bulbs.

The tulip is Ottawa's official flower and an international symbol of friendship and peace. This year's Ottawa Tulip Festival's featured tulip, China-Canada friendship tulip, will be displayed throughout the city, as well as at Beechwood, as part of the 2019 Tulip Festival. The tulip is in celebration of the 20th anniversary of the Ottawa and Beijing sister cities twinning agreement.

This year's tulip is a Triumph tulip, 30–60cm high. It is a bi-colored tulip that matches our countries' colours, red and yellow in one beautiful flower. The red of our Canadian Maple Leaf, twinned with the red of the Chinese Flag, paired with golden yellow represents a global bond.

Triumph tulips are the result of crossing long-stemmed Darwin Tulips, and varieties of the short-stemmed Early Tulips. Their strong stems, large flowers and medium heights are among the most popular mid-season blooms.

Beechwood Cemetery will be one of many China-Canada Friendship Tulip Gardens on display around the city. Our bed of friendship tulips will be located across from our main entrance, in the Dr. Rogers memorial garden. While visiting our featured tulip bed, take a moment to marvel in the splendor of our thirty-five thousand other spring blooms.





# ÉLISABETH BRUYÈRE

## A lasting legacy

by Erika Wagner

*Program and Fundraising Coordinator*

**THROUGHOUT THE GROUNDS** of Beechwood, one can find statues paying homage to some of the great figures in Canadian history. For Cemetery Councillor Francois Chartrand, one of the most memorable and influential stories is about the statues of Mother Élisabeth Bruyère and St. Marguerite d'Youville, along with the passion and drive of Anita Bourdeau.

A few years before the project for the statues began, Anita Bourdeau approached her archdiocese to inquire if she could be buried at Beechwood. At the time, Notre Dame was the main Catholic Cemetery and Anita wanted to be sure the Beechwood ground had been consecrated. It had, and thus she made an appointment to view the grounds with Francois Chartrand. She settled upon Section 100 as it was a new section and nothing had been built yet. Choosing a Lot along the road, Anita called her friends and one after another bought up the edge of the road, roughly about 5 families.

A few months later Anita returned to Beechwood to speak with Francois about something she had noticed. There was only one statue of a woman while the others represented men. She brought forth the idea to build one dedicated to famous Francophone women.

Francois brought this idea up with then President Timothy Graham and Roger Boulton. They explained that during the planning stages of creating the Stations of the Cross they saved an area in the middle to put a central feature. They agreed that erecting a statue of a famous Canadian woman would be well suited to the area.

Anita was excited, and being such a large figure in the Francophone community immediately went to work phoning friends and connections. The Beechwood Foundation created a subcommittee comprised of historians, artists, writers, and those who were passionate about the project. All agreed that Mother Élisabeth Bruyère, founder of the Sisters of Charity of Ottawa, and St. Marguerite d'Youville, founder of the Grey Nuns of Montreal, were the right choices.

For Grete Hale, then President of The Beechwood Cemetery Foundation, Bruyère is more than a founder of the Sisters of Charity of Ottawa. "She is a founder of many of Ottawa's key institutions: a bilingual school, a hospital, night classes for young women, social services and charities to help the sick, the dying and orphans." Her impact is far reaching on our community.

To build something of such beauty and substance, the price tag was of course just as grand. With Anita spearheading the fundraising campaign, many well-known Franco-Ontarians showed their support: Allan Rock, former Federal Cabinet Minister, Ronald Caza, the lawyer behind saving the Montfort Hospital, Gisèle Lalonde, former Mayor of Vanier, the Sisters of Charity and the Grey Nuns.

If it was not for the passion of Anita Bourdeau and Francois Chartrand, Beechwood would be missing a beautiful and important part of Canadian history.

