



**Internet Lodge 9659**  
**United Grand Lodge of England**  
**Province of East Lancashire**  
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**Short Papers Competition 2007**

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**Paper 24/2007**

**Title**  
**Author**

**The Masonic Cemetery**  
**Bro Terry Staley – Canada**

The Masonic Cemetery in Burnaby is believed to be the only Cemetery in the world owned and operated exclusively for the use of Freemasons. Located in the City of Burnaby, and dedicated to the memory of thousands who will sleep within its borders, is a permanent and visible monument to the Craft of Freemasonry.

In 1902, a two and one half acre section of the brand new Mountain View Cemetery in Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada, was set aside for the exclusive use of Freemasons and their families. While ownership rested with the City, a Board of Trustees was appointed by the member Lodges to administer the area. For many years, until well in the 1960's, the Masonic section of Mountain View was administered and maintained by a Masonic Board of Trustees, representing the local lodges. Eventually, control of the section was transferred back to the City of Vancouver.

In 1922, this area appears to have become insufficient for the estimated needs of the Freemasons, and thus was born the concept of an entire Cemetery set aside and administered by Freemasons for themselves, their wives and immediate families.

Land in the Municipality of Burnaby was selected and purchased – an area of some thirty-five acres. A complete overall plan for the Cemetery was surveyed and published, a plan that has been followed and maintained with only minor adjustments to the present day. One small area was sold to provide for the Beth Israel Cemetery, and in 1966 a further portion was sold to Webb & Knapp for the construction of an apartment complex, resulting in the current area of 22.1 acres. To date, there have been over eleven thousand interments in our Cemetery, including a World War I Victoria Cross winner, a Gold Medalist from the 1928 Amsterdam Olympics, and a Department Store founder. Several past Grand Masters of the Grand Lodge of British Columbia have also been interred in our Cemetery. Annual tours of the Cemetery pointing out people of interest to the Craft, the City and the Province take place. Since the overall plans allowed for further detailed definition within sections as they were opened, changes in interment practices have been easily incorporated. The cemetery now contains large areas for cremation interments, which were almost unknown when the Dedication service was held in May of 1924.

Privately built, the Woodward Mausoleum (the only such structure on the grounds) is the final resting place for the founder of the Department store and his family. The Mausoleum was apparently completed as soon as the property was obtained and built in accordance with Masonic tradition. Built in the Druid fashion, according to the records, the walls lean away from the sun, and only the north wall is plumb. The rear wall of the Mausoleum frames a magnificent stained glass window.

I shall leave you with the informal motto of the Cemetery – “We promise to be the last people to let you down.....”

*Short papers are intended to be read aloud in lodge meetings as a form of Masonic Education.  
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