

WILLOWBANK CEMETERY

4714 County Road #2 - PO Box 123 - Gananoque ON K7G 2T7 www.willowbankcemetery.ca

Newsletter Spring/Summer 2026



Vice-President's Message

Hello to all! My name is Victoria (Tori) Maitland. I am a volunteer VP and Director of the Willowbank Cemetery in Gananoque, Ontario living in Smiths Falls, Ontario in the heart of Rideau Lakes with my daughter and 3-year-old grandson nearby. We recently moved into this area from the Kingston/Napanee area and before that, living in Toronto.

My father Peter J. Maitland, an only child, was born in Bowmanville, Ontario and my mother Elinor B. Murray, one of three, born in Toronto. Peter's father was a traveling salesman for GM and Peter was in many schools including Gan High School. They owned a red bricked house on Highway 2 going into Gananoque that still is occupied to the current day. Peter attended Ryerson Polytechnic for journalism that took him to NYC then settling in Toronto. He wrote Queen Elizabeth II's speech opening the St. Lawrence seaway in 1959 and proceeded to be a ghost writer for the Chairman of Ontario Hydro for many years.

I am the oldest of 3 children in our family. My grandparents Mildred and Frank Maitland owned

the St. Lawrence beach resort in Gananoque, and my father was given land next to the resort nestled between the Grice cottages and 'the beach'. The family spent time in Toronto and enjoyed the summers in Gananoque.

Eventually Peter and Elinor moved to Howe Island (1987) from Toronto then my husband Gordon Turner and I (1988) moved to Kingston. My father put up the Maitland monument in Willowbank cemetery when his father passed and now it has many family members resting there. He became involved with the Willowbank cemetery as soon as they moved out of Toronto



working closely with Lorna Whyte writing the newsletter then became Chair for a few years.

As young adults, we went to the spring cleanup, and my children have fond memories of the Willowbank cemetery.

I will proudly continue to be part of the Willowbank Board of Directors looking after the cemetery. Please reach out to us anytime with any questions/concerns.

Trees For the Future



The care of our beautiful "Garden Style" Cemetery requires regular service from licensed arborists who annually assess tree health and maintenance. Thanks to your generous donations we are able to defray the significant costs. Our goal is to be proactive and do the work before natural disaster strikes such as ice storms, wind damage or disease. Please go to our website: www.willowbankcemetery.ca click on **Donate** link or mail to:

Tree Fund

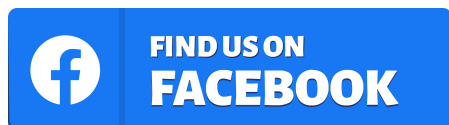
Willowbank Cemetery

PO Box 123 Gananoque ON K7G 2T7

Thank You



Speaking of trees for a new generation, it would be preferable to have the majority of our newsletters sent digitally by email or read/download from our website. If you are currently receiving this newsletter by Canada Post won't you please consider this option? It would be a significant saving in costs for paper and postage. If you have not already done so, please email our secretary Robert Burtch at burtchrobert1@gmail.com and he will add your email address to our database.



Did you know you can now follow us on FaceBook ? Check out our page and keep in touch at facebook.com/willowbankcemetery

Willow bank Cemetery Heritage Walking Tours **Saturday, June 27 at 2PM and** **Sunday, September 27, 2026 at 2PM**

Step Back in Time at Willowbank Cemetery

Discover the fascinating stories carved in stone.

Join us for a guided tour by our secretary, Robert Burtch of Ontario's smallest "Garden Cemetery".

A place of rest and memory for generations, this tranquil property will provide a hidden window into the history of this part of Upper Canada from the late 18th Century to today.

Stroll beneath the towering trees and explore the lives of early settlers, veterans, merchants and prominent local families

whose monuments tell the story of a growing community along the St.Lawrence River. Learn about Victorian burial

practices, styles of monuments and the meaning of the symbols carved upon them.

Whether you are a history enthusiast, genealogical researcher, landscape lover, or simply just curious about the past, this memorable walking tour offers a unique glimpse into the people who shaped the region.

There is no charge but donations to our Trees for the Future Fund would be appreciated and can be made by going to our website: www.willowbankcemetery.ca and clicking on the **Donate** link.

OR by cheque to Tree Fund, Willowbank Cemetery, P.O. Box 123, Gananoque ON K7G 2T7

Approximately **60- 90 minutes**. Wear comfortable footwear. Feel free to bring a lawn chair if standing is a problem.

Location: **4714 County Road 2, Gananoque ON**



To register for either date, email : burtchrobert1@gmail.com



The Skinner Mausoleum

When you enter Willowbank Cemetery from you will see the only mausoleum on the property. A mausoleum is a structure designed to hold human remains above ground. It is usually intended as a memorial and often has architectural or decorative significance. The word comes from the tomb of Mausolus, whose monumental tomb at Halicarnassus became one of the Seven Wonders of the Ancient World.

The Skinner Family Mausoleum at Willowbank has an interesting story. Frederick James Skinner was one of the most important industrial figures in the history of Gananoque during the late 19th and early 20th centuries. He was born on April 8, 1867, the son of industrialist Sylvester Case Skinner. He took over the leadership of the family firm, Skinner Company Ltd. after his father's death

in 1903. Under his direction the company evolved from manufacturing agricultural tools, carriage hardware, and later components of automobile assembly. The Skinner Works along the Gananoque River became one of the town's major employers. During the First World War, production shifted to military hardware. After the war, the firm manufactured chrome automobile bumpers for companies connected with General Motors. In 1929 after the company was sold, production moved to Oshawa, Ontario which marked the gradual decline of Gananoque as a major industrial centre. F.J. Skinner also served as Conservative MPP for Leeds from 1926 until his death in 1933. Socially and architecturally, he left a large mark on Gananoque. He built a large factory on the Gananoque River as well as the impressive Skinner House at 95 King Street West in 1905, now designated as a heritage property. F.J. Skinner was very active in the community, supporting such causes as better Trunk roads for automobiles, conservation of fish and game, Public School improvements and the Board of Trade.

The erection of the large granite mausoleum in a neoclassic style with art deco elements at the junction of the oval roadway at the entrance, created a great deal of concern at the Annual General Meeting of Willowbank Cemetery in 1935. At this meeting, some interment rights holders requested by letter, "Who sold the land for the Skinner mausoleum?", "Who gave the deed?", "Who signed it?" and ... "Where did the authority come from to do so?" The erection of the mausoleum seems to be shrouded in mystery.

The triangular piece of land used was not actually part of the original survey for plots but rather part of a road allowance. It was at the height of the Great Depression and perhaps the Cemetery Board at that time had more pressing concerns and were not as vigilant as they should have been. A motion was passed by the directors to form a committee to go to Kingston and obtain legal advice regarding the removal of the Skinner Mausoleum. In the proceeding Minute Books following this meeting there is no evidence to show that any legal advice was given or

whether there was any sort of compromise or agreement between the Skinner family and the Board of Directors. The Skinner Family Mausoleum has had a number of interments over the intervening years and presently there are about two spaces left.





Willowbank Cemetery Spring Clean Up Day (April 25, 2026)

About 15 board members and volunteers showed up on this sunny, cool morning to help with our annual tidy up of the grounds at the cemetery. Not only were we able to clear the grass of any impediments to our landscape team from Pleasant View but we also pruned and removed overgrown brush around monuments and the columbaria. It was a delight to have our longtime friend and former board member Gary Bullock join us. Special thanks to John Brophy of Spaces Storage Group who provided a truck and trailer to haul away brush. We really appreciate everyone's help as this means our grass cutters can get straight to work in May.

Autumn Clean Up Day : October 24 at 9:30 AM.

This year we are adding an autumn clean up day at the Willowbank Cemetery. This addition to our calendar will alleviate some of the work that needs to be carried out in spring. The kind of tasks would be similar, dealing with leaves and fallen branches, trimming and pruning and so on. We invite you to join us as we get Willowbank ready for winter. We hope to see you there.



Care and Planting of Burial Plots

No perennial plants, shrubs or trees may be planted without the authorization of the cemetery operator.

The placement of stone or granular material on plots is not permitted.

Flower beds not exceeding 18" in width shall be permitted around the bases of monuments. Where there is no upright monument, planting must have prior permission. Planting borders or installing stone edging or fencing around plots is not permitted.

Flower beds are required to be cleared of tender plants after the first frost in the autumn.

Unused or untended or broken vases, urns or pots will be removed.

Artificial wreaths and arrangements must be removed by April 1.

Due to safety for landscaping maintenance, please do not leave glass or ceramic items on burial plots.

Willowbank Family Histories

Willowbank Cemetery appreciates any family histories. If you would like to share a short history of your family connection please feel free to contact us at burtchrobert1@gmail.com

The Maxwell Family

Willowbank Family History: The Maxwells
A small section of St. Lawrence River shoreline, extending from Trident Yacht Club to Firman's (Fairman's) Point, is situated just west of Willowbank in the former Pittsburg Township and bears the name Campbell Maxwell Front. This designation remains visible on navigation charts, Google Maps, and weather applications. The McAlpine Subdivision occupies the western section, while the eastern section, comprising over 90 acres, currently for sale. This property was once the farm of Thomas Maxwell (1827-1899), an immigrant from Northern Ireland, and his wife Sarah McCracken (1834-1892).

Their son, Thomas Alexander Maxwell (1866-1926), married Margaret "Minnie" Maxwell (1877-1956) of Sunbury. Thomas took over the farm, and they had two children: Thomas Campbell Maxwell (1906-1973) and Doris Alexandra Maxwell Schwabe (1909-1970).

After Thomas A. Maxwell's death in 1926, Campbell Maxwell, then 20 years old, assumed control of the farm, working alongside his widowed mother. Campbell remained unmarried, while his sister Doris married and started a family.

At some point after Thomas Sr.'s passing, the family decided to lease riverfront cottage lots. Approximately 10 modest cottages were constructed, including one at the eastern end, which my grandparents, Hugh and Kay Brennan, occupied and referred to family and friends as Brennan's Point. The annual income generated from these leases provided a degree of financial stability, supplementing their modest mixed farming income.

My mother's family enjoyed this property from about 1930 to 1968 at which point the old rickety cottage was demolished and a younger family member took on the lease from my grandparents and placed a camper there. I remember stopping to visit Campbell Maxwell sometime around the late 60s with my mother in his barn on Highway 2 which is now gone but the silo remains. He still had some cattle then and I was fascinated by all the animals. He was a real character that



is



seemed to step out of a different world and time. Our family lost touch as we no longer went to the cottage and recently through some investigations online, I found out about his tragic death. Although I have not been able to locate an inscription for him, he and his family are buried in Willowbank Cemetery just on the western boundary in the Private Lloyd Burial Ground area.



Willowbank Cemetery Memorials

In remembrance of your loved ones, please keep our beloved Willowbank Cemetery, a charitable organisation in mind.



We would appreciate anyone making a donation in memory of loved ones as an option in your choice of charitable giving.

Please go to our website at www.willowbankcemetery.ca and go to the Donate link. OR you can reach us at our mailing address: PO Box 123-Gananoque, ON-K7G 2T7

We would also ask you to consider us in your estate planning by remembering us in your

Will. There can be considerable tax advantages to charitable giving with careful estate planning. Imagine the comfort of knowing that this special place of remembrance will continue to be administered in a sustainable manner for years to come. You are invited to connect with board member Tom Shillington for a confidential discussion about your legacy options. You can reach him at: 613 849-6091 or by email at tom@limestonefinancial.ca

Man dies of injuries from crash

GANANOQUE — Funeral services will be held his afternoon for a widely known area farmer who died Friday from injuries he received in a car accident in Baltimore, Maryland.

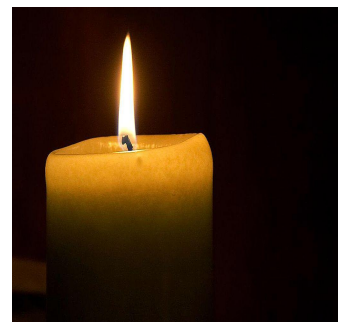
Thomas Campbell Maxwell, 66, of RR 3, Gananoque, died in St. Agnes Hospital in Baltimore from injuries he received in a freeway accident while he and three other Gananoque residents were returning from a Florida vacation.

Mr. Maxwell was a rear seat passenger in a car driven by Howard McLean, of RR 3, Gananoque. The McLean car was struck broadside by a car which skidded 385 feet across a median into the northbound McLean vehicle.

Mr. McLean received a broken arm while two other passengers Percy Millious and Meville Teausaw also of RR 3, Gananoque, were treated for cuts and bruises.

Mr. Maxwell, who was not married, is survived by a niece Mrs. Graham (Dorothy) Houze, of Morrisburg.

The funeral service will be held at 2 p.m. from the Bradley Funeral Home. Interment will be at Willowbank Cemetery in the spring.



Willowbank Cemetery Board of Directors

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The Old Cemetery

*I love to walk the cemetery
In the shafts of golden daylight
I feel a sense of comfort there
No sense of any fright.*

*There are only singing spirits there
Of those who've gone ahead-
Someone loved these people
And grieved them when they were dead.*

*I like to read the cold, grey stones
Engraved with loving care;
As for the very old ones-
Who puts the flowers there?*

*I have at times cleaned off a grave
And left a flower behind;
And once I'm gone
Perhaps someone
Will take such care of mine.*



Christina Phillips Ream Sharik - 1997

