Once again we hear a story of yet another Cemetery suffering from a problem that plagues many other similar facilities – bad data and lack of an efficient cemetery management system.

Challenges faced by cemeteries worldwide today includes proper record and data management of historical information, environmental compliance of cemeteries and landscaping designs i.e. space planning of burial grounds. New Technologies in Cemetery Management and Operations 2016 Master class, allows the platform for sector professionals, from across all service providers to the industry, to come together and discuss key issues relating to:

- Electronic record keeping and computerised management methods as far as municipal cemeteries are concerned
- New Technologies shaping cemeteries
- Previous technological innovations for cemeteries
- The key issues relating to designing future cemeteries

Presentations from experts and practitioners will up skill participants on issues common to all and will provide insights that will better enable the management and operations of cemeteries; and engagement with communities throughout the country.

Delegates will hear about how new technology is being embraced to better engage internally with the business, and externally with communities. There will be plenty of workshopping and Q&A time where solutions to everyday issues will be found.

Delegates will leave the event better equipped both technically and personally, and with a growing network of colleagues providing ongoing support.

The course format is highly interactive and focuses on delivering hands-on, practical information based on experiences gained through many years of working together on practical solutions together with the Cemeteries.
Ancunel Steyn
Landscape Architect
(Designer: Designboom Design for Death)

Working in the field of landscape architecture, She holds a Masters degree in landscape architecture for UCT with the thesis title “Sepulchre landscape: Design for death and living”. Ancunel Steyn has presented at the IERM conference SA, National Funeral Directors International Expo 2013 together with the Asia Funeral and Cemetery (AFE) Conference Macau on design for death and living and Exhibition work for Designboom Design for death competition. The second prize winner in the “Eco” category of the International Design for Death competition by Designboom in collaboration with the LIEN Foundation and ACM Foundation 2013. Ancunel has featured in trailer for Death Matters: a thought provoking local documentary about dying by Lucienne Kelkens.

Day 1

Record Keeping in Cemetery Management Africa

09:00 - 16:30
Session one
Technology Helping Managers Create the Paperless Cemetery Management System
Workshop leader: Thomas Burckardt CEO of Synapsis Software (Pty) Ltd
Objective:
Historically, the administration of municipal cemeteries relies predominantly on hand-written burial records often contained in anything from rather orderly burial registers, over scrolls of loose papers to boxes with bits and pieces of severely deteriorated burial registers. This comes with a number of significant short comings with regards to the legally obligatory safe keeping of irrecoverable historical records, customer service, administrative and financial oversight as well as decision making on executive level.
This course will enable participants to understand the benefits of electronic record keeping and computerised management methods as far as municipal cemeteries are concerned.
The course format is highly interactive and focused on delivering hands-on, practical information based
on experiences gained through many years of working together on practical solutions together with the Cemeteries department at the Nelson Mandela Bay Municipality (NMBM), which is currently responsible for the administration of 13 active and 30 historical cemeteries.

- Historically grown, traditional, paper based record keeping methods and the short-comings thereof
- Electronic record keeping (burial records, cremation records, historical burial records, survey records)
- The burial application process – challenges experienced, work flow, best practices
- How to find burial records
- Management of cemetery capacities, projection of remaining life-spans of cemeteries grave recycling scenarios
- Conversion of paper-based historical burial records into electronic format: why it matters & methodology
- On-site grave surveys: why it matters & methodology
- Detection of fraud & corruption with regards to the management of municipal cemeteries: a case study based on a real-life example
- What is e-government all about? and how it can be put to use in the context of the management of municipal cemeteries

Day 2

09:00-11:00
Session Two
New Technologies in Death Design: Burials and Cremations- Africa’s Perspective

Workshop Leader: Ancunel Steyn, Landscape Architect

11:00-13:00
Session Three:
GIS Tools for Cemetery Management

Workshop leader: James Stein- Geographer and GIS Specialist with the United States Department of the Interior’s National Park Service

To provide an overview of the use of Geographic Information Systems (GIS) in the management and interpretation of the cemetery landscape and the individual interments. GIS is a dynamic tool that allows for the integration of spatial and tabular data, documents and photographs as well as links to external databases and web pages. The ability to update information, the analysis capabilities and the flexibility of display platforms allows both managers and the general public the opportunity to interact with a data rich environment.

We will be showing work at cemeteries located in the United States; these include Alexandria National Cemetery (Virginia), Chalmette National Cemetery (Louisiana), Custer National Cemetery (Montana), Congressional Cemetery (Washington, DC).

Introduction

General Discussion of Rational
- Need of cultural resource management of cemeteries
- Commercially available tools for cemetery management
- Development of custom GIS tools to meet the needs of individual sites

Overview of Project Development
- Needs assessment for individual site
- Different platforms (GIS software, web based GIS applications, etc)

Broad Overview of GIS
- What it is
- What it can do
- How it facilitates cemetery management

General Discussion of Data
- Types of data
- Historic maps and plans
- Remotely sensed data (LiDAR, aerial photography, conventional satellite imagery)
- GPS
- Linked databases
- Documents and photographs

Use of the data in populating the GIS
- Background
- Feature extraction

GIS Analysis
- General discussion of types of analysis
- Live demonstration of GIS analysis
- Analysis of the extant landscape (searching and categorizing interments and features)
- Analysis of the historic landscape
- How the extant and historic interact

Custom GIS Applications
Examples of custom applications from work CRGIS has completed at individual sites. These sites, located in the United States, include Alexandria National Cemetery (Virginia), Chalmette National Cemetery (Louisiana), Custer National Cemetery (Montana), Congressional Cemetery (Washington, DC).
- Within the GIS software
- Web based applications

Conclusion

Q and A session

Session Four:
Monitoring and compliance for our cemeteries operations

Workshop Leader: Likopo Mashego- Environmental Specialist -City Parks Johannesburg

organised by
Cemeteries are managed together with crematoria to cater for alternatives to the usual burying, if so I would like to include the relevant examples pertaining to that

- Overview on Environmental legislation applicable to cemetery management;
- Factors to consider when planning and managing a cemetery (environmental screening process);
- Legal requirements applicable to the management of cemeteries and trends of noncompliance;
- Legal reporting (to different spheres of government);
- Tools used for the monitoring and measurement (audits & inspections) benefits & risks associated with cemeteries.

13:00-14:00
Lunch

14:00-16:00
Session Five
Environmental and urban design of cemeteries
Workshop Leader: Ancunel Steyn

- Composition of the human body and impact of the deteriorating body on the receiving environment especially water quality
- Compare the environmental impacts of in-ground burial, cremation and less traditional methods like promession
- Population growth and competition for land: the cost of in ground burial
- Using cemeteries for more than burial. Integration of burial space in urban environment.
- Green burial’ - what this is and some options

Day 3

09:00-12:00
Session 6
The Right to be Dead: Designing Future Cemeteries
Workshop leader: John Troyer – the Director of the Centre for Death and Society at the University of Bath, United Kingdom

- Case study project: That is the central design ethos for the Future Cemetery project in Bristol, England. Based at Arnos Vale Cemetery, the Future Cemetery is a partnership between the Centre for Death and Society at the University of Bath, In over 175-years of operation, Bristol’s Arnos Vale Cemetery has handled approximately 300,000 deceased individuals (roughly 1/3 the population of Bristol city), either through burial or cremation. It remains a working cemetery that covers 45 acres near the city centre and in June 2012 the Arnos Vale Cemetery Trust signed a new 125-year lease with the city of Bristol.

Since its founding, the Future Cemetery has explicitly explored and complicated the concept of ‘designing for death’ by following one simple principle: Never attempt to control death through design. Death will win. Death always wins. More importantly design with time in mind, e.g., designing 125-year technology and sustainability plans that outlive the creators.

- The Future Cemetery explicitly embraces death as the singular human experience that is paradoxically both universal and radically individualised. Such an approach creates opportunities for addressing how the human mortality ‘experience’ was transformed during the twentieth-century by specific kinds of First World infrastructure designs: public health campaigns, improved access to medical care, and increased food safety.

Yet the prolongation of first world human mortality also means the accumulation of individuals that will still die and require the final disposition of their bodily remains alongside the post-mortem handling of their exponentially increased digital data. The European Union Court of Justice ruled that a person has a Right to be Forgotten on the world wide web. The Future Cemetery asks: Does a person have the Right to be Dead on this information superhighway?

- Our essay pursues these specific lines of argument by simultaneously examining how dead body disposal and digital data disposal increasingly overlaps. In November 2015 the Future Cemetery announced its first international design competition: Future Dead: Designing Disposal for Both Dead Bodies and Digital Data (www.futurecemetery.org) and we illustrate our essay design arguments through the competition’s history and results.

- In our paper we argue that designing future cemeteries should focus on how spaces such as Arnos Vale represent a transitional hybrid space. A merger of the Victorian past with the digital present, in order to create a new kind of archival future.

Future Cemeteries will ultimately become spaces where both dead humans and dead data are stored. The irony, of course, is that given current design conditions and limitations in thinking, Arnos Vale’s granite headstones will remain in situ long after today’s ‘internet’ has turned to dust.
New Technologies in Cemetery Management / Operations Master class 2016

12th - 14th JULY 2016 - Amabhubesi Training Center, Randburg, Johannesburg

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