

Summer Scrapbook

With a combination of short hot spells and some very changeable and wet periods, the summer has proved good for vegetation growth, no more evident than in Section B, in the Conservation Area. With no cutting or strimming during the Spring and Summer, grass and other plants are typically up to head height. Showing clearly above this general level are numerous self-seeded ash saplings, while among the other plants are plenty of brambles. The autumn strim will be a bigger job than usual!

But we must remember that the maintenance regime of the Conservation Area has a purpose, We would not have seen the usually shy green woodpecker confident enough to pose on a headstone in the middle of Section B, as shown below.



Also in Section B, we have again seen the Cinnabar caterpillars gorging on the ragwort, followed a few weeks later by the adult moths. In the same section, we have found a patch of hemp agrimony, a tall plant which favours marshes, fens, riverbanks and wet woodlands but, occasionally, grows in a contrary habitat such as this. The frothy, pinkish flower clusters, sometimes known as 'raspberries and cream', appear from July to September and are very attractive to all kinds of insects, including

butterflies, while later, the seeds are enjoyed by birds. It fits well with the objectives of the Conservation Area. While its common name comes from the resemblance of its leaves to those of hemp or cannabis, it is not related to this. In the past, it was used as a medicinal herb, but current advice is that all parts of the plant are poisonous and carcinogenic if ingested.



Hemp agrimony

Elsewhere in the Cemetery, nature has provided pleasures. Just behind the library, in Section S, there has been a beautiful display of roses, blooming about ten feet above the ground, forced to this height by the need to climb through dense shrubbery.



Roses reaching new heights

The monkey puzzle by the main entrance is again bearing a few cones. The last time they were seen, they failed to develop a crop of nuts, presumably because they were not fertilised, a

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process dependent upon cross pollination from a male tree. The whole process can take about two years, so we must be patient.



Cones on the monkey puzzle tree

The yucca in the lower part of Section L goes from strength to strength and provided a magnificent display of flowers this year.



Yucca in flower

Although the wild plum trees were covered in blossom, the amount of fruit produced was disappointing and what little there was taken by the birds before it was properly ripe. But some compensation for this was a small crop of wild damsons close to the Fair oak Road boundary.



Wild damsons

The scarlet pimpernel may be well known and common on a national basis, but it is not so easy to find in the Cemetery: it is, indeed, the illusive pimpernel. It doesn't like heavily grassed or overgrown areas, so it is most likely to be found in sparsely vegetated, but trafficked, spots. So look for it along the stone drives, between the wheel tracks.



Scarlet pimpernel

While some plants find their own way into the Cemetery, others almost certainly are imported when people place remembrance flowers on graves. This is probably the case with the patch of cranesbill geranium spotted in Section G.



Cranesbill geranium

Of course, we know that the flowers in the wild flower garden are imported, but it looks different every year - this year with yellow the dominant colour, as shown on the next page.



Cat, deer and teddy bear

A more surprising find was the boat hook, hanging in a yew tree. The picture below only shows the working end, but it was complete with a long pole and in good condition.



Summer Miscellany

On 30th May, Radio Cardiff devoted their 'Chronicle' programme to Cathays Cemetery. Taking part in the discussion were Roger Swan from Bereavement Services and Gordon Hindess from the Friends. The programme is done live to air and, as it happens, the host of the show was also doing it for his first time, so it was quite a stressful experience ... and the tension shows at times! It is likely that few of our members are regular listeners to this channel, but the programme can be heard at:

<https://www.mixcloud.com/the-cardiff-chronicle/cardiff-chronicle-20-beyond-the-grave-cathays-cemetery/>

The Friends were pleased to host two groups of visitors, Canton & Riverside Local History Society and the Victorian Society. Taking advantage of the lighter summer evenings, each group was taken on a guided walk targeted at their particular area of interest. Both evenings were blessed with fine weather and went very well.

Mention of the Cemetery's resident pig in our last issue has prompted keen eyes to look out for other unusual residents. To date, we have a second pig, a cat, a deer and a teddy bear.

Cathays Cemetery has received the Green Flag Award for the ninth year running. The formal raising ceremony, conducted by Councillor Michael Michael, was held on Tuesday 25th July, with the Tuesday walkers in attendance. It was particularly nice that Denise Rogers, Grave digger/Gardener with Bereavement Services, was given the honour of hauling up the flag, as well as being presented with a certificate confirming her success for being a finalist in the Keep Wales Tidy Employee of the Year Awards for Green Flag.



Denise raising the flag and receiving her certificate

At the beginning of August, some of you may have seen the item on 'Wales on The One Show' about Jim Driscoll, which was presented from the graveside by Ade Adepitan.

We were fortunate to get a peep at the inside of the bell tower. While cleared of rubbish and now glazed and waterproof, lots more needs to be done to make it habitable ... and it still needs a function or purpose. The ground floor comprises small rooms, none big enough to hold a party. A narrow stone spiral staircase provides access to the first floor of the tower, which has the benefit of morning sunshine and fine views over the main entrance area of the Cemetery and the Cedar of Lebanon. This belvedere or solar would be a lovely spot for elevenses!



View from the bell tower

The temporary doors to the central passage of the tower have now been replaced by wrought iron gates, which match the other iron work of the Cemetery gates and fencing. This may seem like a minor cosmetic change, but it has made a distinct difference to the character of the building, clearly distinguishing the separate roles of the side rooms. The walls of the passage can now be seen and the framed view through it is worth a look, when you next get the chance.



The gated central passage

All of this work on the bell tower is thanks to a grant from the Cymric Historic Preservation Trust and a discrete plaque has been put on the wall to commemorate this.



Commemoration plaque

The Day the Music Died

Our interest began with a simple request to find and photograph a grave. The initial quest had a disappointing end at a clump of dense shrubs and trees ... and, if there was a memorial on the grave, it was not visible.



First view of the grave site

But, in the associated correspondence, a tragic story evolved and we are grateful to Gwen Johnson, in Minerva, Ohio, for sharing it with us and for her painstaking research through census returns, archive newspaper reports and advertisements, and extended family liaison.

Our story begins in Ystalyfera on August 17th 1863 with the birth of Margaret Ann, the third child of David and Sarah Jones. David worked at the Llanelli tinsplate works of Messrs. E. Morewood and Co. While the 1871 census lists him as a "rollerman", he clearly had the confidence of the owners and a high level of management responsibility. This is confirmed in 1882 when David is appointed to the management of the Cwmbwrla Tinsplate Works in Swansea, to which town the whole family moved.

The Morewood company was at the forefront of development in the tin industry and 1866 had witnessed the introduction of what was familiarly known as the 'Morewood pot'. The move to Swansea came at the time when it became the foremost tin production location in the world. But it is ironic that, in 1890, this company opened what was claimed to be largest tinsplate factory in the world in Gas City,

Indiana. America had been one of the main markets for tinsplate and the loss of the American market was a major factor in the rapid decline in the fortunes of Swansea. By the end of the century, E. Morewood and Co., in its home country, was facing bankruptcy.

But we must get back to our story ...

By the age of ten, Margaret was already singing locally and being reported as having a singularly sweet soprano voice, which was to serve her in such good stead years later. Indeed, soon her services as a vocalist were in demand at small concerts in Llanelli. This early success encouraged Margaret to pursue a career in the music profession. But this meant that she had to hire a singing coach and needed money to travel to and participate in Welsh singing exhibitions. Money was raised through benefit concerts, which proved exceedingly popular in the town and were particularly well supported by Morewood's employees, who took a deep interest in the daughter of their colleague.

At the age of 13, and while still an amateur, she took part in the Cardiff Singing Exhibition and made a favourable impression. Two years later, she began 18 months of voice training with R. C. Jenkins, of Llanelli and Swansea, who was himself a talented vocalist and conductor. At 17 years of age, she entered the Royal Academy of Music, in London. When she arrived at the academy there were several other artists with the surname Jones, so R. C. Jenkins suggested she take the name of Morewood. From about this time, she also adopted the more affectionate version of her first name, Maggie. Her stage name of Miss Maggie Jones-Morewood was born. After studying under Mr. William Shakespeare, she graduated from the Royal Academy of Music, having earned the distinction of medallist.

There followed several years of successful performing. She often sang with her sister Sarah, four years her junior and a contralto. Although Sarah was also a music graduate (from

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the Musical College of Wales, in Swansea), she does not appear to have pursued a career as a singer. But the sisters were clearly in demand around south Wales. One of the leading Welsh tenors at this time was Robert Rees, who used the stage name Eos Morlais (the first name, the Welsh for nightingale, the second after the river near his childhood home). Although more than twenty years her senior, Eos recognised Maggie's talent and became both her friend and mentor and the pair often performed together. At the evening concert of the National Eisteddfod, in 1890 Maggie and Eos Morlais sang the duet 'Hywel a Blodwen'.

Many of Maggie's appearances were at specially arranged concerts, often commissioned to raise funds for worthy causes, and these allowed her to demonstrate her prowess as a soloist. On a number of occasions, she appeared on the same bill as Adelina Patti, who had settled into Craig-y-nos Castle in 1878. However, she also played leading parts in productions of the Turner Opera Company which, of course, required acting skills to be blended with singing, something she achieved well.



Maggie Jones-Morewood courtesy of Gwen Johnson

In May 1890, Maggie married John Jones, the manager of Walker and Hall, silversmiths, in St Mary Street, Cardiff. Leaving her family home in Swansea, she made Cardiff her new home. The couple had a daughter, Irene Morewood Jones, born in June 1891, and a son, Archibald Morewood Jones, born in July 1893. But all was not well. When three months pregnant with Archibald, Maggie filed for divorce, on the grounds of cruelty and adultery on the part of her husband. For some reason, she did not pursue the proceedings to a conclusion. On October 8th 1894, Maggie gave birth prematurely to a stillborn baby and, on the following day, was found dead at her home, 5 Coldstream Terrace, Riverside.



5 Coldstream Terrace today

Maggie had continued to perform until 1893, although her last major performance was in January 1892, when she took the lead part of Arline in the opera, *The Bohemian Girl*, where her rendition of the song 'I Dreamt I Dwelt in Marble Halls' was awarded an encore by the audience.

Her family's fortunes had also suffered during this period, her father had died just three months after her marriage to John Jones and, a year later, her mother is listed in the census as the proprietor of the Ship & Castle Hotel, in Oystermouth, while her sister, Sarah, is working there as an hotel assistant.

Maggie's death was followed by a Coroner's inquest after her family had questioned whether she had died of natural causes or as a result of physical abuse at the hand of her husband. This was not without good reason: when her mother arrived at Maggie's home, she looked into the coffin and saw that her daughter had two black eyes and other bruises.

Other witnesses at the inquest confirmed that John Jones had physically abused his wife, possibly after drinking to excess. The jury were given graphic accounts of him throwing or knocking her down six weeks earlier and, just a fortnight before her death, throwing her down and kneeling on her stomach. The coroner was sufficiently concerned about the possible causal link to Maggie's death, that he adjourned the inquest for an independent post mortem.

Both the doctor who originally certified the death and the one who undertook the post mortem were questioned, but the conclusion was that the last known assault would not have been responsible for Maggie's death. The death certificate had said that she had died from syncope following upon childbirth. The combined medical evidence saw no reason to change this. Syncope is, perhaps, not commonly known today, but would probably be described non-medically as fainting. Today, this partial or complete loss of consciousness is usually temporary and there is spontaneous recovery. Only rarely would it lead to death, particularly with a doctor present. It is completely consistent with the loss of blood during a difficult childbirth, coupled with the ensuing fatigue, leading to a temporary reduction in blood flow and, therefore, a shortage of oxygen to the brain.

John Jones was also called upon to give evidence and, while he admitted to 'slapping' his wife, denied the severity of the assaults or that he could lose control through excessive drinking. He countered that Maggie also drank to excess and could be violent towards him.

There was little doubt who the jury and the coroner believed but, after the evidence of the doctors, they could not return a verdict of manslaughter. The jury's verdict was "That deceased died from natural causes, but the jury requests the coroner to severely censure the husband for his inhuman conduct towards the deceased, considering the condition which she was in."

At the coroner's suggestion a slight alteration in the wording, to make it consistent with the terms of the medical testimony, was agreed. The Coroner, then addressed John Jones, "That is the verdict, and with the jury I cordially agree. I can't understand any man ill-treating his wife the same way as you have ill-treated your wife, and it is fortunate for you that this premature birth did not come on a day or two after this last assault, for then it would have been difficult for anybody to have believed that it was not caused by your violence."

The death and inquest received wide publicity, so it seems surprising that few attended the funeral, fairly early on Saturday 13th October, with the cortège consisting of a car and one coach. According to a newspaper report, the coffin bore the inscription - "Margaret Ann Jones, died Sept. 9th, 1894, aged 27 years". The month should, of course, have been October and simple arithmetic tells us that her age was 31. While the first error might be the newspaper's, her age was consistently given as 28 at the inquest and in the papers. Even her husband, in evidence to the inquest, said that she was 27 or 28 years old. However, the family's research has revealed that manipulation of their ages was not uncommon amongst the ladies of the Jones family, extending even to the completion of census

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returns!

Four weeks later, a memorial service was held in Gomer Chapel, Swansea, where most of her family and supporting friends lived, and this seems to have been a better attended and more worthy commemoration of her life.

However, the biggest crowds assembled very shortly after the funeral, when all of the furniture and effects at No. 5 Coldstream Terrace were auctioned. All the rooms were crowded and the street in front of the house was blocked. The auctioneers had so much difficulty that the sale had to be extended for an extra day. Maggie's husband quickly emigrated to America and, after two years, sent for his two children. He legally changed his and his children's surnames to Seymour, but the children did maintain the middle name of Morewood.

But perhaps the music did not die entirely on 9th October 1894. We understand that her daughter, Irene, became a church singer and, later, appeared in the Burlesque or Vaudeville circuit. Also, her great-great grandson, who grew up in California, is a singer and actor, who attended the London Academy of Music and Dramatic Arts (LAMDA), for classical training.

Some two years after the initial enquiry, on a Friends' workday, an exploratory expedition fought its way into the undergrowth and found a black marble memorial to Maggie, in surprisingly good condition. In keeping with Welsh mining tradition, the approach at that stage was through tunnels of diminishing size! Since then, further workday attention has fully opened up the area of the headstone, allowing daylight and visitors to reach the final resting place of this important character in Cardiff's history.



Maggie's memorial

The inscription on the memorial is simple enough, but still makes some interesting statements. Unusually for the period, her husband doesn't get a mention, which suggests that it was her parents who ensured that the grave was properly marked. Also the name is given as Morewood Jones (which seems to have been the adopted by the entire family at some point), rather than Jones-Morewood, her stage name. And, of course, her age is given as 27, perpetuating the feminine subterfuge of the family.

When the headstone was eventually opened to daylight, its first visitor, a robin, arrived within minutes. Given that some people believe in reincarnation and that we return, after death, in a new animal form, it would be fitting for Maggie to come back as a songbird. Or maybe it's just a happy coincidence.



Recent Events

Walks

On **Tuesday June 6th**, **Gordon Hindess** of the Friends led a **Midsummer Walk**, aiming to showcase the findings of more recent research. A diverse range of stories included a music hall musician, an astronomer, a lady whose life and death were mysterious, the search for Sir John Franklin who was lost seeking the North-west Passage, a Chinese burial and a tugboat explosion. On a fine evening, the walk was enjoyed by about 20 visitors, most experiencing the Cemetery for the first time.

Once again, the University of South Wales and Roger Swann of Bereavement Services combined to deliver "**Trails and Tales**", on successive **Tuesday evenings, 13th and 20th June**. While the event name stays the same, the route and characters portrayed are varied. So this year we met with a missionary who worked on Robben Island, a very credible drunken sailor, the bobby who had helped deal with Cardiff race riots and a ghost begging to be released from purgatory. Add to this the musical accompaniment of a small brass ensemble, Wonderbrass, and the whole evening proved thoroughly entertaining for around 30 people on each occasion.

On all of the walks, it is now an added bonus to be able to finish at the chapels, to chat over tea or coffee and biscuits and answer any questions, as well as display items of interest.



Wonderbrass at the Irish Famine memorial and the tormented ghost

Our Regular Events

Monthly Workdays

With the usual summer break, we have only had two workdays since our last issue. These have concentrated in the area around the chapels, to keep them at their best for weddings, etc. Shrubs which had invaded some prestigious graves in Section J were targeted, while time was taken to find and clear the grave of Maggie Jones-Morewood, who we feature in this issue.



Trimming the lawn around the chapels

If you want to help, put the last Saturday of the month in your diary. The next dates are **30th September, 28th October and 25th November** -but don't come at the end of December, as we will all be indulging in festive activities. **We meet by the chapels at 10 am** and work until noon, with a break for elevenses. You can work at your own pace and tools and gloves are provided. Why not join us for some gentle exercise in sociable company?

Weekly Health Walks

Our weekly health walks continue to be well supported (but that is not to say that we won't welcome new walkers) and take place regardless of the weather, although it should be emphasized that, more often than not, mother nature smiles on us. Our walks are punctuated by anecdotes about the Cemetery, which often

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reflect new research discoveries. Our sociable and leisurely walks last for about an hour and we meet just inside the **gates adjacent to Cathays Library at 10.30 am every Tuesday morning**. All are welcome on these walks and afterwards, when we adjourn to a local hostelry for a chat over tea or coffee.

Future Events

Walks

Both of the following events are free.

On **Sunday September 17th at 2.30pm**, as a contribution to **Open Doors**, the Friends will lead a **Guided Walk in the New Cemetery**. Please **note especially** that the **starting point** for this walk is just inside the **main entrance off Allensbank Road, north of Eastern Avenue** and almost opposite the back entrance to the University of Cardiff Hospital.

On **Sunday October 22nd at 2pm**, the autumn walk led by **Bereavement Services** is taking a new format and is titled **"A Brief History of the Victorian Cemetery"**. The informative commentary will be delivered both around the cemetery and in the chapels. This walk will **start from the chapels, just inside the main entrance in Fair oak Road**.

Talks

On Tuesday September 12th at 7 pm, Dr Ian Beech will give an illustrated talk on "Whitchurch Hospital's Role in WWI". There is a poignant link between the hospital and Cathays Cemetery, with most of our war graves from this era being of patients who did not survive their injuries. As a contribution to Open Doors, this will be a free event. The venue for this talk will be Room 2.03 in the John Percival Building, Cardiff University, in Colum Drive (behind Colum Road).

The Bill Mosley Memorial Lecture will take place on Tuesday November 15th at 7 pm, Steve Mills, Paul Nicholson and Hilary Rees will present "Views from an Antique Land: Egypt and Palestine in First World War Photographs".

Entry is free to students and members of the Friends, but there is a £5 entry charge to non-members. This talk will also be in the John Percival Building, Cardiff University. The room number is still to be confirmed, but it will be signed from the main entrance to the building on the day.

Publications

Books (about 100 pages, full colour):

Cathays Cemetery on its 150th Anniversary - £5
Hidden Histories: Tales from Cathays Cemetery - £10

Themed guides (12 - 20 pages):

Shipowners (black and white) - £1
Memorial symbolism (black and white) - £1
Tree Tale Trail (colour) - £2
Murders (black and white) - £1

The books are also available by post, with an additional shipping cost of £3: in the UK, by sending your name & address and a cheque payable to "Friends of Cathays Cemetery" for the book price plus postage and packing to:-

Friends of Cathays Cemetery
c/o Bereavement Services
Thornhill Cemetery
Cardiff CF14 9UA

For orders from outside the UK please email us for a costing.

There are also several free publications which can be downloaded from our website in pdf format.

And finally...

Don't forget to let us have your bits of news or other items for future issues!

Contact the editorial team on 2061 2164
or email <gordon.hindess@uwclub.net>

You can find past Newsletters, the latest news of events and lots of other information about the Cemetery on our website at www.friendsofcathayscemetery.co.uk