

## DEAD INTERESTING PEOPLE TRANSCRIPT.

Settled peacefully around this graveyard should you care to look are a cross section of society, people who came and went and whose names ring no bells at all. The only clues to their existence are the inscriptions on their graves or maybe a line or two in a cremation register, but those clues hold the key to some incredible stories, stories that until now have remained untold these are "Dead Interesting People".

Each week on "Dead Interesting People" we will be visiting graveyards across the country to reveal untold stories of people who have been buried or cremated there. Obviously we are not looking for famous names; we are looking for ordinary people with great and as yet hidden personal stories.

We are in Cardiff: the city whose docks exported the raw material of the Industrial Revolution around the world. While coal poured out of Cardiff Docks to every part of the British Empire, what poured in was people from over seventy countries. They came in search of work and a new life and when that work and that life was over some would have been laid to rest here.

Today we are at Cathays Cemetery in the heart of Cardiff and we have three experts on the case who have taken up the challenge to investigate the history of one person associated with this place.

Those experts are:

Juliet Wood, professor of Welsh history from Cardiff University.

"Graveyards to me are a symbol of all the ways that we maintain contact with the people that go before us. We don't just put them in the ground we put memorials up, we put things on the memorials. They are a way to remind us of the people who went before".

Doctor Martin Jones, a specialist in modern history from Swansea

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University .

"Whenever I am in a graveyard it always reminds me of how little we know about the past, they are full of names and dates and behind everyone is a story that we simply do not know. Some will be heroic, some will be tragic, and some will be very ordinary. Graveyards are full of people from all walks of life.

Cat Whiteaway, an archivist with close knowledge of the burial records.

"I find it really fascinating that there are so many different occupations inscribed on the various headstones. It seems that a lot of people choose to use their headstone as a kind of advertising board and that they are advertising from beyond the grave. You know, come to my shop, and stay in my Hotel. Very strange".

The first task for our experts is to find a story.

"Lost off the coast of Japan on August 26th 1908 aged 50 years".

"This one looks really interesting and this laurel tree that is here looks as if it might actually have been self seeded from a laurel wreath that was left"

"The late John Ings, a local preacher and temperance advocate".

"So here we are. We know it is sacred to Margaret but interestingly she was not buried here, this was a memorial to her".

And while the experts go off on the trail of today's mystery subject let me fill you in on some of the people already interred here. People whose stories have been documented, whose lives took them to the other side of the world or in this case up, up and away.

This is the Grave of Ernest T. Willows. As a dentist and a businessman he was not a success but as a pilot and a designer he really excelled. In

1910 Willows became the first man to fly from England to France. Not in an aeroplane but in one of these.

Airships were the great travel hope of the early twentieth century, a source of fascination and mystique. For Willows, pictured here, it was a chance to make his name in aviation history and to make some money. At 7 o'clock of the morning of the 4th of June 1910, 20,000 people gathered to watch his first flight over Cardiff City Hall. But it was in his airship Willows 3 or City of Cardiff that Ernest made his historic cross channel flight. With no navigational equipment, Willows set out on his perilous journey on August 18th 1910.

Perilous but successful, although the French were not quite as excited as Willows by his remarkable achievement. Shortly after landing he fled to avoid paying customs duty on his fuel. Willows was a true pioneer, with the First World War looming he could see the danger that Britain was faced from the skies. His solution, a steel roof over London. A steel roof over London! You cannot be serious. But

he was, in 1913 Willows joined the Royal Flying Corps and designed a steel curtain to protect London.

The curtain was to be supported above the ground by his beloved airships. His invention was so effective that it was used again in World War 2.

Ironically like so many heroes and pioneers Willows had a tragic end. The gondolier of his airship became detached and he fell to the ground breaking his neck.

Of course not everyone had the luxury of a gravestone. Some were buried in unmarked graves, others cremated. But in the burial archive our experts will be able to research their story.

"Here we have William Simmons of Roath who died in 1883 at the age of 81, the oldest solicitor in the kingdom apparently."

The team also enlist the help of Sandra Evans the curator.

"Well there are just so many names. I am not really sure where to start"

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"I know this chap it was mentioned that he was a war hero when his widow went to the funeral".

"A war hero?"

"Yes."

"That sounds interesting and you don't know anything else?"

"No I am afraid not, he was not buried he was scattered in the gardens of remembrance so there won't be a memorial or headstone."

"Right, Margaret Mills, widow and Royal Nurse. So, Royal Nurse that one should be interesting."

"This is brilliant James Hann a nail inspector who died on the 6th January 1900. I want to know how you become a nail inspector."

After an exhausting search the experts now have to choose just one person to investigate.

"Well I really think we should do John Percival Morgan. John Percival Morgan is a great Welsh name and he is a war hero. I mean, imagine all those documents. We have the Imperial War Museum, you have the National Archives, and you have got Service Records. I mean he only died in 1968 so we have got a good chance of finding a living relative. What exactly does war hero mean? Don't you want to know?"

"Yes it is a good question but I am intrigued by Samuel Sheldrick the fifty year old who died off the coast of Japan at the start of the twentieth century. Was he the only one who died or did his whole ship go down? And Sheldrick is I think an East Anglian surname so he may have been part of a family that moved to South Wales to work in the coal boom or the shipping boom at the end of the nineteenth century."

"Well I think Margaret Mills is very interesting because here she is. We know her husband was buried elsewhere so she is on her own and according to the burial register she is not just a widow but A Royal Nurse. So what is a Royal Nurse? Is she associated with the Royal Family?"

"Is she from Wales though?"

"We don't know that."

"Is yours from Wales?"

"He certainly....."

"He died here but we don't know whether he was from here."

So who are our experts going to choose?

"I think John Morgan without a doubt. So much information to be had. Nice and recent, chance of a living relative. Welsh!"

"The other ones are probably just as interesting but it may be difficult to go much beyond the name and basic story, but with a recent one there is probably real potential to get into what made him a hero."

The team are finally agreed.

"John Morgan it is ..... good!"

Cathays cemetery is the final resting place of somebody's leg. A leg belonging to one Samuel Chivers. It was buried here in April 1983 after he had been run over by a horse and cart. The rest of Chivers died some years later but for some reason he was never reunited with his leg! That really is a case of having one foot in the grave.

But how are our experts progressing with the story of the unknown John Morgan? Juliet is tracking down John Morgan's death certificate whilst Cat and Martin busy themselves with further research in the archive.

"So we know that John Morgan died in 1968 at the age of 51. Presumably that means that he fought in the Second World War? I know nothing about the Second World War so you are going to have to help me out here."

"Well he would have been one of many thousands of Welshmen who would have been in scripted or enlisted. There was none of the wild enthusiasm for war than there had been in 1914, but there was a kind of grim determination to do your bit and help to defeat fascism. For some people from South Wales it was also a chance to escape the dole queue and see a bit of the world."

From John Morgan's death certificate Juliet has an address for his widow Barbara.

"Right, I have the death certificate and it shows the address of John Percival Morgan's widow and this is the house so I am going to see what I can find out."

"Hullo, is that the Army Records Office?"

Meanwhile Martin tracks down John Morgan's army record but there is a problem.

"No, as I expected they can only release the Service Record to a next of kin."

"Well let's hope Juliet is having more luck at the house with the details of the death certificate then."

"Well I have spoken to the people in the house and sadly Barbara Morgan died just a few months ago. So we have to go back to the drawing board and try another line of enquiry."

But as one door shuts another opens and our experts head back to the archives in search of an obituary or any records that might tell them there is a next of kin alive and hopefully nearby.

So John Morgan is still something of a mystery and so is our next character who has taken at least some of his secrets to the grave.

This is the final resting place of William Llewellyn Rhys an accountant from Cardiff Born in 1830 he reputedly not only served in the American Civil War but according to these lines from Tennyson he also took part in the Charge of the Light Brigade in the Crimea.

Could he have really have taken part in both Campaigns? The Charge of the Light Brigade place in 1854 and the American Civil War began in 1861 so in fact he could have fought in both wars.

Records show that Llewellyn Rhys was on the muster role of the 11 th Hussars. Joining up at the age of 19 he is recorded as riding in the Charge of the Light Brigade as a private soldier. Re came through unscathed.

Surprisingly further research reveals a second William Llewellyn Rhys with a different regimental number. Re has a Service Record peppered with illness and disgraceful conduct. At the time of the Charge of the Light Brigade medical records have him in hospital with a chronic leg ulcer and an enlarged testicle.

Even this photograph of the survivors of The Charge of the Light Brigade offers no answer. Rhys was described as five foot eight tall with blue eyes. Impossible to pin point in this picture.

So was William Llewellyn Rhys the brave soldier who fought in the American Civil War and the Charge of the Light Brigade or the other William Llewellyn Rhys whose tales of his exploits in the Crimea allowed this inscription to be placed on his grave? I am afraid we are

never going to know the answer.

"Hello I am looking for Keith Morgan."

"Whose father was John Percival Morgan. .. .... No, not you"

Our experts have tracked down an obituary for John Morgan which mentions his son Keith who lives in the area. Its time to hit the phone books.

"Keith Morgan, who might be the son of John Percival Morgan. Not you? Alright, thank you."

Without access to John Morgan's military record finding his son is the only hope of unlocking his story.

"No. Oh well I will try the next one. Thanks."

"I am sorry to disturb you but I am looking for Keith Morgan."

It's tantalising stuff and all from a few lines in a cremation memorial book. Mind you when it comes to cremation South Wales has a most unusual claim to fame. William Price was a familiar figure not far from Pontypridd. Dressed in a white tunic, scarlet waistcoat, green trousers and a fox skin hat he would perform Druidic Rights on the rocking stone on the Common. He won a wider reputation as a physician and surgeon. He had several scrapes with the Authorities but his 1884 trial at Cardiff Assizes was to prove his lasting legacy.

He was accused of trying to burn the corpse of his infant son. Price's acquittal was to establish the legality of Cremation in British Law and paved the way for the comprehensive Cremation Act in 1902. Hugh crowds attended the Doctor's funeral, when, in accordance with his detailed instructions his body was reduced to ashes. William Price was in his way a leader of men but what about our main character John Morgan?



"Was your father John Percival Morgan by any chance? Oh it was! Brilliant! We have found him! Oh thank you, yes, I need to speak to you. I am doing some research for a television program."

At last a real breakthrough. Tomorrow I will finally get the chance to meet John Morgan's son Keith.

Can I see a picture of your father?

"Yes of course you can. This is a picture taken of him in Italy outside his tent when he became an Officer and this is another photograph of him, I believe before he became an Officer."

You know we have been researching your father's story. What did he tell you about what happened to him during the War?

"Well it all unravelled for me back in 1966. My father had decided that he wanted to take us on a three week holiday to Italy and my Mother hadn't told him but she had already been in touch with the Italian Tourist Board to see if she could find this little village called Civitella not far from Florence in "Chianti Land". My father had spoken to her about Civitella and the time he spent there during the War. He had quite an emotional time there and she thought it would be nice for him to go back.

We arrived in Civitella on a Sunday morning and my father said we should go inside the church, which we did.

On the left hand side of the main altar was a side chapel and there was an old gilt frame and an old black and white photograph in it with an everlasting flame burning just to one side. Amazingly it was a photograph of my father and his army mates. I was shocked, I was only sixteen years old at the time, and so I said to Dad." you really ought to say hullo to someone." But he said "no it's time to go" and we just drove away and that was the end. Two years later he died."

Tell us what you found out about you father's war times.

"He was in the Royal Army Service Corps and his main responsibility was to move ammunition up to the fronts, all the way through North Africa. El Alemein and then up through Scilly, Monte Casino and eventually arrived in this village, Civitella."

"What happened was, as the British were moving forward the Italian partisans were doing their best to support us at that time and one day in June three partisans fell out with four German soldiers in the café in the village and things went from bad to worse and these partisans shot these Germans. So then unfortunately Nazis and fascists, German fascists, got involved and they arrived in the village on the feast of Saint Peter and Saint Paul in June 1944. They took out of the Church over 160 men over the age of sixteen and proceeded to annihilate them one by one over a period of several hours in front of their families, and my father arrived in this village very closely afterwards."

"Well as soon as they heard of this awful massacre they decide that they had to do something so they got together and asked the soldiers to contribute their Red Cross parcels."

"The buildings were smashed to pieces, there were bodies inside the buildings that had been burnt in the fires, and even the well had been polluted by people being thrown into the well."

"There were only women and young children left, so they spent a lot of time trying to get the well to work again, trying to give them some form of electricity and just helping them to bury people because there was so many of them."

"Seven months went by until Christmas time and they kept going up and down taking supplies whenever they possibly could."

And after all this and everything that he had seen he came out of the Army after the War and returned to a normal mundane life?"

"He did, he came back and went back to the same Branch of the same Bank that he had been a cashier in all those years ago, as if nothing had happened!"

It is an amazing story of an unremarkable bank clerk who far away from home helped to get an entire village back on their feet. John Morgan was helped by all the men under his command, but where are they now?

Men such as Pop O'Shea, and Donald Birkmire, one of John's closest friends.

"Is that the Royal Army Service Corps museum? Oh Hullo I wonder if you can help me."

Well Keith has done a massive amount of research on his father's story but he has drawn a blank in tracing anyone from his father's Regiment or finding any records of the Civitella massacre.

"It's 498 Company, whether they might be any members on your list, or whether you have got a membership list perhaps?"

Armed with the names of the Regiment the team are determined to find out more.

"Lance Corporal Abrahams, Private Taylor, Private Harding, Private Pilkington. "

So what have the team discovered about Civitella?

"Well in the Imperial War Museum they have actually got a short film of the aftermath of the massacre and with it a description of what happened.

A hundred German soldiers arrived at 7am, grabbed everyone on the streets, threw them into the houses and closed the doors. Following this an organised massacre followed, grenades and mines were thrown through the windows after which many of the old buildings were set on fire. Women and children in the houses were either blown to bits or burnt alive. Villagers sheltering in the Church were dragged out and murdered together with the three Priests whose bodies lie burnt to a cinder in the street."

"It's an awful, awful, massacre."

"But what I don't understand, is this is the service record for John Percival Morgan that Keith Morgan got supplied, every date and name and place where he was posted is all in there and yet there is not a single thing about Civitella, not a single thing. And also when I rang the Royal Logistic Corps Museum and also the Royal Army Service Corps nobody knew anything about it and yet all these documents exist."

"This really is an amazing untold story."

"It deserves to be told."

"It does, it does."

So there is no official army record of the actions of John Morgan and his Regiment in Civitella.

Well we are coming to the end of our time in Cardiff so what we need now is to check what we have all been up to. And Ca, what is the story so far of your search for old comrades of John Morgan?

"Going through all the details from the Public Record Office in Kew we were able to identify many members of the Battalion and then locate some of their deaths and also some of the people that were related to them but we haven't been able to find anyone living who was able to give us their story."

But generally speaking it has been a successful exercise?

"Yes it has; I mean we have found the relatives of the person involved."

"What it shows for me as an historian is how big stories and big incident shave a really human face. We have been able to look at the story of one individual but involved in a terrible event makes it more real and brings the past to life."

The team traced over twenty members of the Regiment but sadly they found no surviving members. The last recorded member of the Regiment died in October 2004. With no official army record and no surviving member of the Regiment, Keith Morgan, it seems is the only living person left to recount his father's story. Well not quite!

For the first time since the death of his mother Keith returns to Civitella. The village has hardly changed but since Keith's last visit, the Mayor has opened a very special Memorial Room.

"How are you? It's good to see you again."

"Welcome. "

"Thank you very much."

"I have to show you something we have built. Salle De Memoria De Civitella. To remember the massacre and your father. We can go now to look at it?"

"Yes please. Thank you very much."

"Bloodstained handkerchief with a bullet hole and a packet of cigarettes found on one of these poor men's bodies."

"The picture up there is almost identical to a picture my father took, and I am sure that picture is one of the photographs that he took inside the Church. They have done it really beautifully."

"This is the photograph of the Priest who was with the parishioners inside the Church when the Nazis arrived. He could have escaped but he never did, he could have got out of the back of the Church but he stayed with his people and was executed with them as well."

"My father Captain John Percival Morgan helped the people of Civitella after the terrible murders. I am so happy to have seen this beautiful Memorial. With my best wishes to the people of Civitella."

"Our village, our community is really grateful to Captain Morgan and all his family. The Captain was an example for everybody, to help the people who need help."

Not far from Civitella, Keith travels to meet a survivor of the massacre, Lara Lucarelli. Even today she is unable to return to the village where she witnessed the murder of her father and uncle.

"We see people coming from Civitella, women, and we said what has happened and they said, all dead, all killed, all of them. And so, well you can imagine our pain."

Like other villagers Lara is full of praise for Keith's father.  
"But anyway the name of your father is always living in Civitella. It will be forever."

"Thank you so much Lara. Thank you."

"Thank you, for your father."

Sixty years ago the villagers put on a concert for the soldiers to thank them for every thing they had done.

"There were almost, I believe, fifty soldiers here and I know from what people in the village have told me, that Pop O'Shea the Padre had to keep the troops in order, because some of the young girls who were singing were teenagers, and of course our troops had been away from home for a long time and Pop O'Shea went around with his swagger stick to keep them all quiet and to stop the wolf whistles."

Two of the young girls who performed in that concert were Mathalda Caldetti and Alba Mirabello. Sixty years later they perform the same song for John Morgan's son Keith.



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It is a remarkable story, an unsung hero whose life we have been able to piece together from a single line in a Cremation Register. In Cardiff there is no statue, no head stone, and no plaque, to commemorate John Morgan. In his own country his story was unknown but 1100 miles away in a small corner of Italy his life is still remembered and celebrated. Back in May 2001 Keith, his mother Barbara and the people of Civitella witnessed a moving ceremony, the naming of a street. Costa Captain John Percival Morgan.

"It's just so nice; I mean what a wonderful thing for a son to see."

"It's a beautiful, beautiful day."

It's been quite a journey of discovery but John Morgan's story is just one of many waiting patiently to be revealed, we look forward to uncovering those stories and to meeting "Dead Interesting People."



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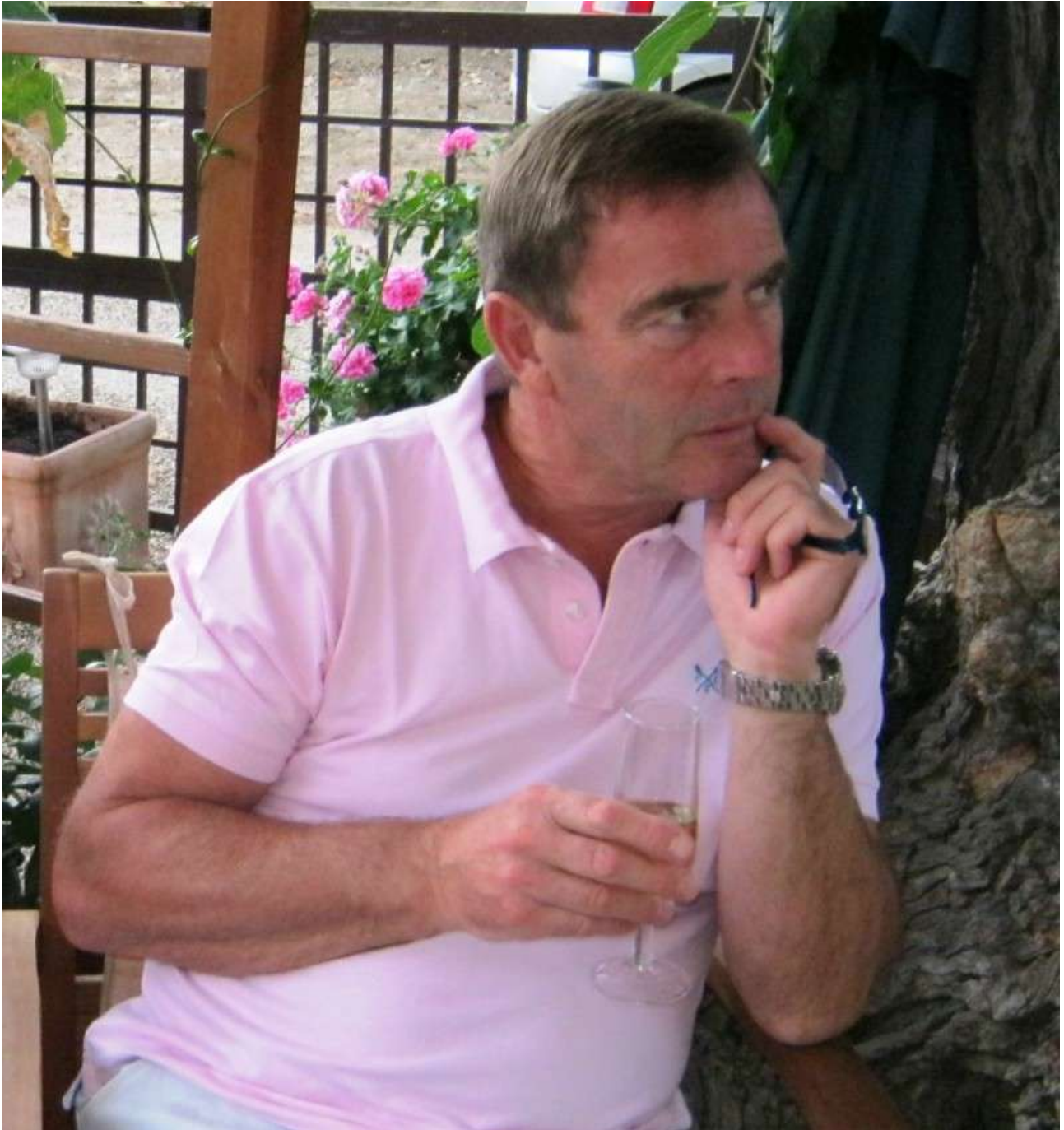








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Keith Morgan