

Title: OLD GRAVESTONES SMASHED TO BITS

Source: *South Wales Echo (Cardiff, Wales)*. (Apr. 30, 2003): News: p10.

Byline: Gemma Williams

VANDALS have trashed one of Cardiff's most historic graveyards after more than pounds 100,000 was spent to clean it up.

Graves were dug up, headstones smashed and flowers trampled at St Mary's Church, Ely, just a year after the council completed renovation work at the church and tidied up the graveyard.

Now they are increasing security watches at the church, which is a listed building, in a bid to stop youths gathering in the isolated graveyard and replacing the damaged headstones.

But for pensioner, **John Smith**, whose parents, grandparents and brothers are buried at St Mary's the measures have come too late. "As soon as I saw the state of the graveyard, I was devastated," said John, 76, from Riverside, Cardiff, whose parent's headstone was amongst those smashed.

"It was an evil thing to do. I idolised my mum, Gladys - she brought us children up alone after my father died and she did so much for the community. It has really upset me that someone should ruin her grave."

The church is at the end of an isolated lane off Church Road, Ely. According to many local people, it has become a place where many youths gather and often take drugs.

One Ely resident, who did not want to be named, said: "They all sit up there doing drugs - you can smell the drugs whenever you go to the church. Something needs to be done to stop them going there."

A council spokesman said the police had been contacted about the incident and they were doing all they could to prevent the vandalism happening there.

"We strongly condemn those responsible for this appalling act and fully appreciate the stress it must have caused to people visiting the graves at St Mary's Church," he said.

"We will increase inspections to the church, but if someone is going to vandalise it, it will be difficult to stop."

Gemma Williams

Source Citation

"OLD GRAVESTONES SMASHED TO BITS." *South Wales Echo* [Cardiff, Wales] 30 Apr. 2003: 10. *Newspapers Available to Cardiff Library*.

Document URL

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Gale Document Number: GALE|A100902274

Title: **PAIN OF CHURCH DAMAGE**

Source: *South Wales Echo (Cardiff, Wales)*. (Oct. 5, 2001): News: p20.

PENSIONER **John Smith** has spoken of his heartache at the damage caused to one of Cardiff's oldest churches by vandals.

The mother and father of Mr Smith, 74, who lives in South Morgan Place, Riverside, are buried at the graveyard at St Mary's Church in Caerau.

Mr Smith, who visited the graveyard last Sunday - the anniversary of his mother's birth - contacted the Echo after reading about plans to preserve the church.

He said: "I am heartbroken every time I visit the graveyard and see the church.

"The graves are covered with brambles. It looks like a wilderness and surely something should be done to tidy it up."

Mr Smith's mother Gladys, who died in 1979, father Henry, who died in 1939, a brother and two grandparents are all buried in the graveyard.

He blames a lack of action over many years for the deterioration of the Grade II listed structure.

A planning application has been made by Cardiff County Council to preserve the ruins of the church.

Source Citation

"Pain of church damage." *South Wales Echo*[Cardiff, Wales] 5 Oct. 2001: 20.*Newspapers Available to Cardiff Library*.

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Gale Document Number: GALE|A78939894