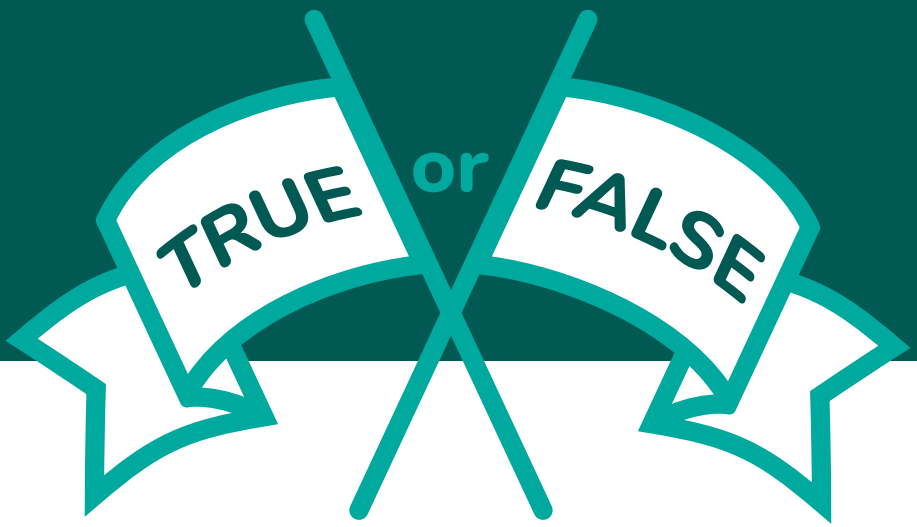
EXPERIENCE

Glasnevin

IRELAND'S NATIONAL CEMETERY

Activity Pack 04



Read the facts below and decide if you think they are true or if they are false?

Place your answers in the flags below.

1

Glasnevin Cemetery is home to many different types of wildlife including: squirrels, foxes, birds of prey, and parrots.

2

The high stone walls and watchtowers that surround Glasnevin Cemetery were built for decoration.

3

Poisonous yew trees are often planted in cemeteries.

4

Glasnevin Cemetery is 20 acres in size.

To find out if you were correct, turn to the next page!

How did you do?

Check Your Answers and Learn More

1

True - (well apart from the parrot!) There is amazing wildlife to be seen throughout the cemetery including foxes, different types of birds, and lots of squirrels. But a parrot has only been spotted in Glasnevin Cemetery once! In 1911, late one night, a guard in the watchtower heard a strange noise. He fired a shot into the darkness and a colourful parrot fell from the trees! Later, a local man came looking for his rare, expensive pet that had escaped. The staff had to inform him of the sad fate of the parrot.

2

False - The high stone walls and watchtowers of Glasnevin Cemetery may look very impressive, but they were not built for decoration. They were built to protect the bodies inside the cemetery from grave-robbers who tried to dig them up. Bodies were dissected by doctors and scientists so that they could improve their knowledge of the human body and grave-robbers profited from this need. A law was passed in the 1830s to allow colleges to legally investigate anatomy (knowledge of how the human body works) further and the threat of grave-robbers eventually disappeared.

Turn over to the next page to see if the rest of your answers are right!

3

True - Yew trees are associated with cemeteries for many reasons. Druids planted yews in sacred spaces and this continued with the spread of Christianity. Another reason is that yew trees are poisonous, so if planted in a cemetery, would be out of the way of farm animals.

4

False - Glasnevin Cemetery is actually 124 acres in size!

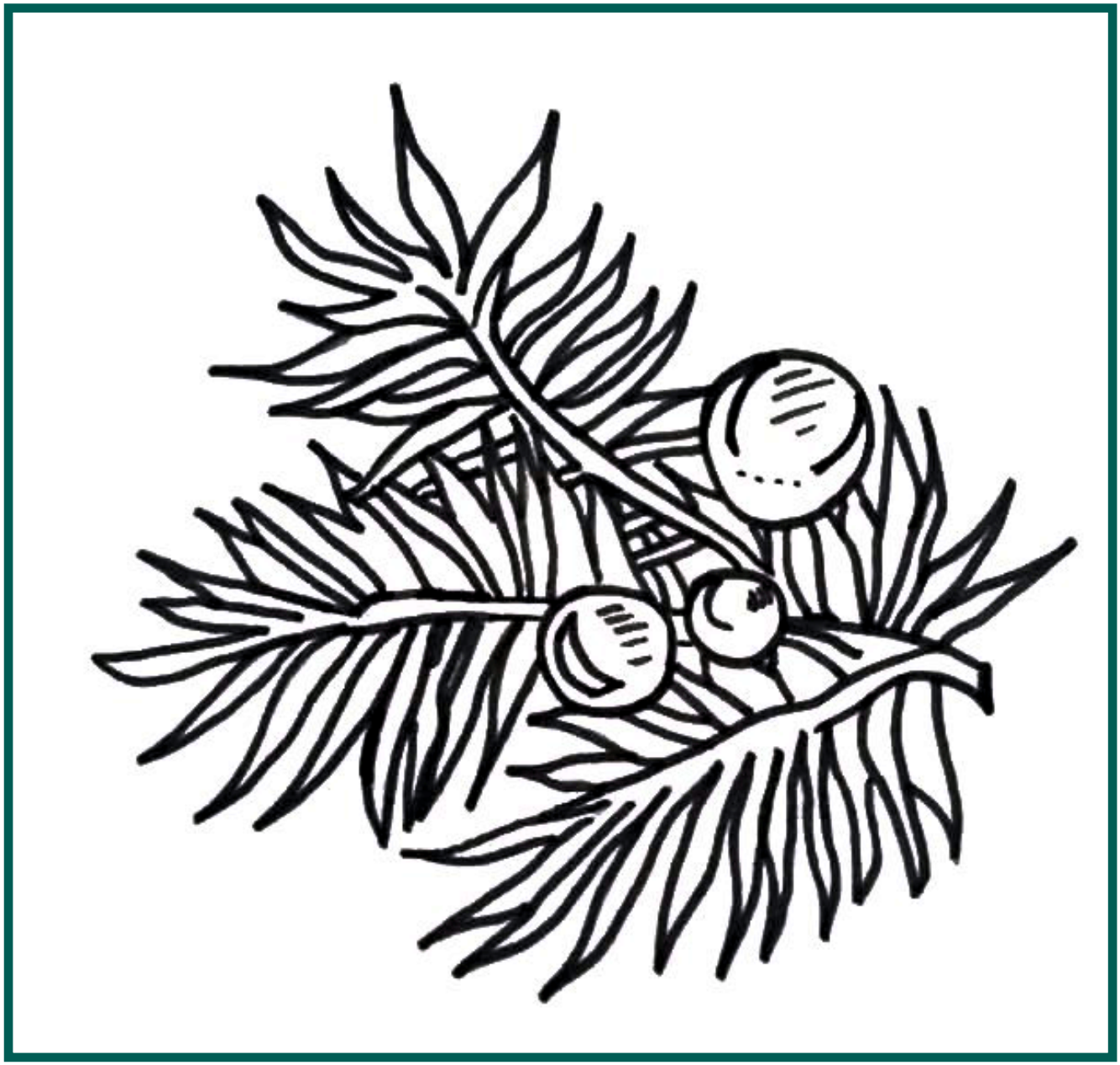
This is the Yew Walk in Glasnevin Cemetery. The trees have grown together to form an arch!

Yew Tree Facts

1. In general they have a very long life and can grow for hundreds of years. In Scotland there is a yew tree that is thought to be over 2,000 years old!
2. Both the Common and the Irish variety of yew tree grow in Glasnevin Cemetery.
3. Yews are evergreen trees (this means they keep their leaves throughout the year).
4. The wood of the yew tree is very strong and lightweight. Throughout history it was widely used to make longbows.
5. The Irish for County Mayo is Maigh Eo which means ‘plain of the yew-trees’.

Get Creative

Colour in the yew tree branch below or take inspiration from nature and draw a flower, tree, or plant.



If you have a printer you can colour this in many times, experiment with different colours and materials or share them with your friends.

Sir. John Gray's headstone is made of Sicilian marble. The sculptures underneath represent his life, one represents water and his work with the Vartry Scheme.

Historical Figure in Focus

Fill in the blank spaces to discover the life of Sir. John Gray.

The River Tolka flows past _____ Cemetery. The canals and rivers within Dublin city were once the main source of_____. However, as the population grew there was a need for greater amounts of _____ water. Deadly diseases such as _____ and cholera spread quickly in contaminated water.

John Gray was born in Co._____ in 1815. He studied _____ in Trinity College and worked as a doctor in Dublin. Later, he became involved in journalism and was a newspaper owner. He was a very strong _____ of Daniel _____ and the Repeal Movement (they wanted to remove laws that had made Ireland part of the United Kingdom). Gray collected _____ to build the statue of Daniel O'Connell that stands in O'Connell Street, Dublin.

Gray was elected as a _____ for Dublin city and was head of a committee to organise a new water supply. The result was the Vartry Scheme. A section of the River Vartry in Co. Wicklow was redirected and a dam was built. Water was collected in a reservoir. _____ and pipes carried the fresh supply into the city. This was a huge project and much of the work was done by hand with shovels, horses and carts. The Vartry scheme opened in _____, it brought a supply of clean water into the city and Gray was knighted for his efforts.

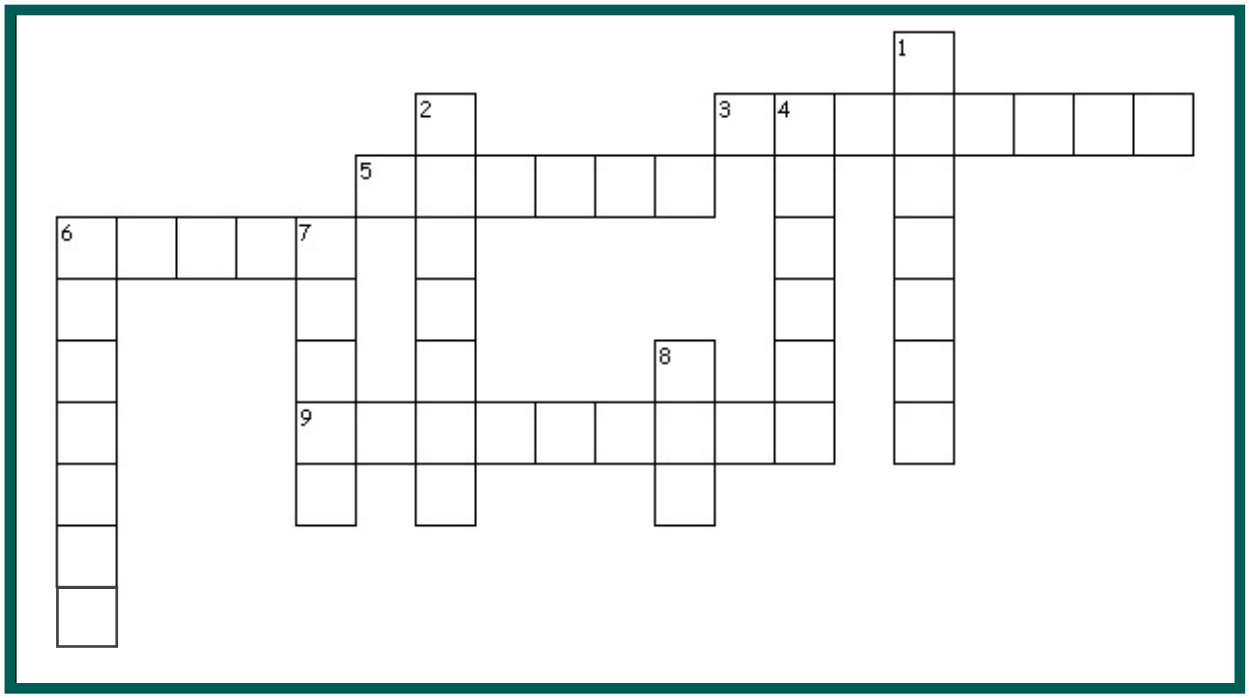
Sir. John Gray died in England in 1875. He is buried very near to Daniel O'Connell in Glasnevin Cemetery. Soon after he died, a statue of Sir. John Gray was built on O'Connell St. The statue thanks Gray for "the splendid supply of pure water which he secured for Dublin".

Tip - Check the word bank on the next page.

Prospect Puzzle

Solve the clues to complete this crossword

(When it first opened Glasnevin Cemetery was known as Prospect Cemetery.)



{medicine, clean, Mayo, O'Connell, councillor, money, Glasnevin, typhoid, water, 1863, supporter, tunnels} The Vartry Water Supply has been expanded throughout the years. It supplies water to over 200,000 people!

Vartry Reservoir

Across

3. Name the street where you would find a statue of Sir. John Gray. (8)

5. A new water system that opened in Dublin in 1863. (6)

6. Name the river that passes Glasnevin Cemetery. (5)

9. Trees that do not lose their leaves are known as? (9)

Down

1. What is the term for the study of how the human body works? (7)

2. Name of Co. Mayo in Irish. (7)

4. The _____ variety of Yew Tree is grown in Glasnevin Cemetery. (6)

6. A disease spread by contaminated water. (7)

7. Glasnevin Cemetery is 124 _____. (5)

8. This tree is commonly found growing in cemeteries. (3)

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