

VISIT TO BORRADAILE TRUST, MARONDERA AND RUZAWI SCHOOL ON SUNDAY 14TH SEPTEMBER 2025

(Organised by Robin Taylor, acting Chairman of HSZ, Mashonaland Branch)

At the first stop at Borradaile Trust Cottages Mr. Ian Buckle, the Warden, and Mr. Alan Burl, a former Chairman of the Borradaile Trust and a long-time resident, talked to members on the history and development of the Borradaile Trust since its formation in 1952. Alan Burl's talk was not only informative but extremely witty and had the 50 odd attendees in fits of laughter.

Robin Taylor then gave a talk about the Australian Forces Anglo Boer War Graves dating back to 1900 explaining why they were located in Marondera. (They had travelled to Rhodesia via Beira and had suffered from various illnesses along the way, particularly malaria).

The next stop was Ruzawi School which is situated 5 km from Marondera town on the Ruzawi Rd.

The Headmaster, Mr Brendon Bridger, talked to the group of 33 HSZ members. A long-serving and knowledgeable member of the teaching staff, Mrs Nerys Gray, had organized the programme at the school for the HSZ and gave an excellent talk. Her late father-in-law, Dave Gray, was a well-known member of the History Society of Zimbabwe and past Chairman of the Pioneer Society. Dave's grandfather, Godfrey (Goff) Morris, was a brother of Herbert John Morris who had farmed at Springvale at the site of Springvale House and was involved with the district in its early days (See more below). Goff Morris married Ruby Jakins who is a great aunt of Lesley Castelin, wife of Charles Castelin, a past chairman of the HSZ.

Coincidentally one of the other Morris brothers, Dave, married Ruby's sister Ella Jakins and thus Lesley Castelin is doubly connected to the Morris family.

Tim Broderick's family has strong connections with the school and Tim gave a very short address on this subject.

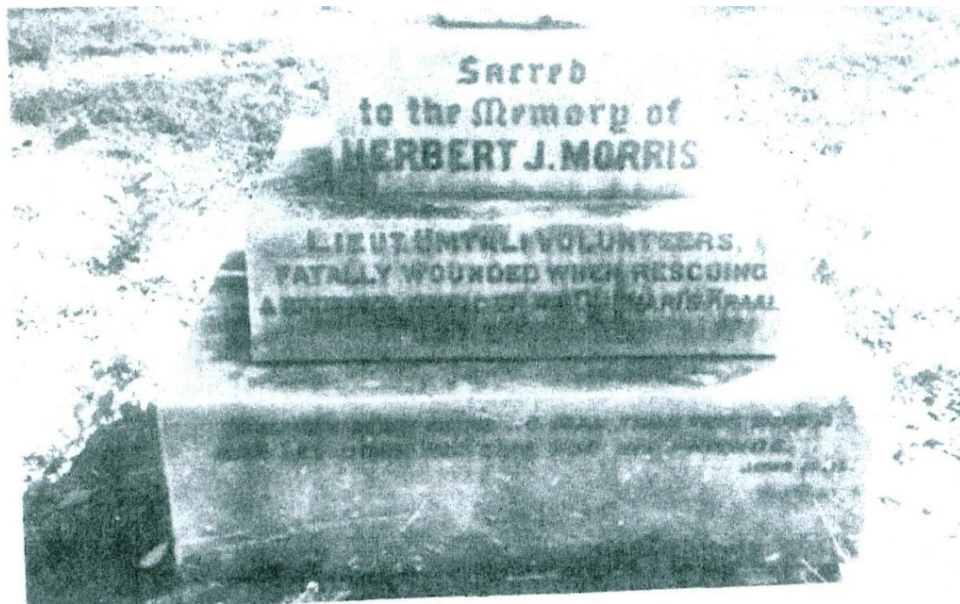
Nerys Gray then led a tour of the school including the chapel, refectory, classrooms, the magnificent museum and the cemetery.

The cemetery is located near the school entrance and is the final resting place for 3 officers and 15 men officers who lost their lives during the First Chimurenga/Shona uprising of 1896. Originally the graves were marked with wooden sticks. The Loyal Women's Guild then arranged for these to be replaced with the current iron crosses.

Engraved white marble memorials were erected for the officers, Major Evans and Lieutenants Barnes and Morris. There are also many memorial stones situated in the cemetery commemorating the staff at Ruzawi since its founding in 1928.

Mike Gray, husband of Nery's, and the son of the late David Gray, gave an impromptu talk on the 1896 graves. Mike's great, grandfather's brother, Herbert John Morris, one of the aforesaid lieutenants, lost his life on the 3rd of October 1896.

Because the BSAP forces were short of food and saw a goat tethered outside a kraal it is said that Major Evans decided to take it despite advice from Lt Morris that it was a trap. Evans was shot and in trying to rescue him Herbert Morris was also shot and died some days later from his wounds. (*see errata and extra information at the end of this article*)



**Lt. Herbert John Morris - Umtali Rifles Volunteers
/Mashonaland Field Force. KIA 3rd October 1896**

PHOTO ABOVE - DETAILS OF THE GRAVE OF LT. HERBERT JOHN MORRIS

At the conclusion of the tour the HSZ members enjoyed a picnic in the cricket pavilion looking over the cricket grounds and beautiful gardens.

Acknowledgements:

Mike Tucker Zim Field Guide, Marandellas Golden Jubilee 1913-1963 Rotary, Rhodesiana 3, 16, 17, 21 Heritage 3, 16, 19 and to all the speakers.

History:

Marondera owes its existence to the road and rail corridor which was developed in the 1890's to connect Beira with Salisbury (Now Harare). Cecil Rhodes saw the need to provide food and shelter to the passengers, as well as the trek oxen and mules, using the road. An offer of 20 acres of land was granted to those providing this outspan service, and three BSA Company Policemen took their discharge and

built the Ruzawi Outspan in 1891.

A police post was established in 1892 followed by the Native Commissioner's office in 1894. By 1896 there were 11 white farmers in the area and the Outspan was used as a laager at the beginning of the Shona uprising (First Chimurenga). The first victim was possibly Bernard Mizeki who was killed on the 17th June. All the white settlers left the area returning around the 27th July 1896 to find their properties had been ransacked. To compound the problem the rinderpest outbreak decimated all the trek oxen leaving one wagon full of ammunition having to be abandoned.

The construction of the rail line on the watershed proved to be the death knell of the Ruzawi Outpost. It closed for a while before opening as Ruzawi Inn at Old Marandellas as a health resort and weekend hotel.



Ruzawi Inn 1896

Rev Robert Grinham and Maurice Carver were looking for premises for a new school and found the Ruzawi Inn most suitable so initially leased it and opened their school in 1928 and Ruzawi School has operated there since that time.



Ruzawi School

Origin of the Name Marondera

There are at least two stories of how the first Chief Marondera received his name, but it is generally agreed that the name of our town is a corruption of the Chief's name, and that this, in turn, derives from the verb "ku rondera (to follow)."

The first story tells how Chief Soswe, of the Vambire, had a son. His name was Mukanganise, "the Deceiver", because he was a noted thief, who by his magic, could change the colour of stolen stock and thus deceive the owners. Among the Mashona tribes the chieftaincy does not pass automatically to the eldest son, and, when Soswe died Mukanganise was a claimant. Soswe's daughter, Chikombo, went on a journey to Dzimbabwe, the royal residence of

Mambo the paramount Chief of the Barozwe, to seek his approval of Mukanganise's appointment, for no chief of a tributary tribe could hold office unless approved and installed by Mambo. Chikombo was absent for so long that her brother, Msora, tracked her footprints in an attempt to discover her fate. He reached Mambo's kraal, and the great Chief, impressed by Msora's skill in tracking, bestowed on him the name "Marondera", "He who followed the spoor".

Mr. Ernest Morris of Springvale was told a different tale of the original "Marondera". The Barozwe, in the 18th century, had their tribal headquarters at Thabas y Mambo in Matabeleland. They preyed on the Shona tribes and, during one of their raids, carried off a young girl, wife of Chimini. Chimini followed the tracks of the raiders, right down to the gates of Thabas y Mambo, and demanded the return of his wife. Mambo said to Chimini "Wa ronda gwara?" "Did you follow the spoor". He returned Chimini's wife to him, and as a reward for his courage and skill as a tracker, bestowed on him the name of "Marondera" ("He who follows the spoor").

It is said that those who came to this country with the Pioneers, substituted "l" for "r" in many Chishona words and were responsible for changing "Marondera's" to

"Marandella's". Mr. John Finch, who until his death, was the "grand old-timer" of Marandellas, regarded this name as "a hideous corruption" and said that the musical "Marondera" had a delightful Native pronunciation, difficult for Europeans to imitate, with the stress almost equally divided between the first three vowels, with the slightest emphasis on the second.

REGARDS

CHARLES CASTELIN

Below are photos taken by Charles Castelin during the Tour of Ruzawi School



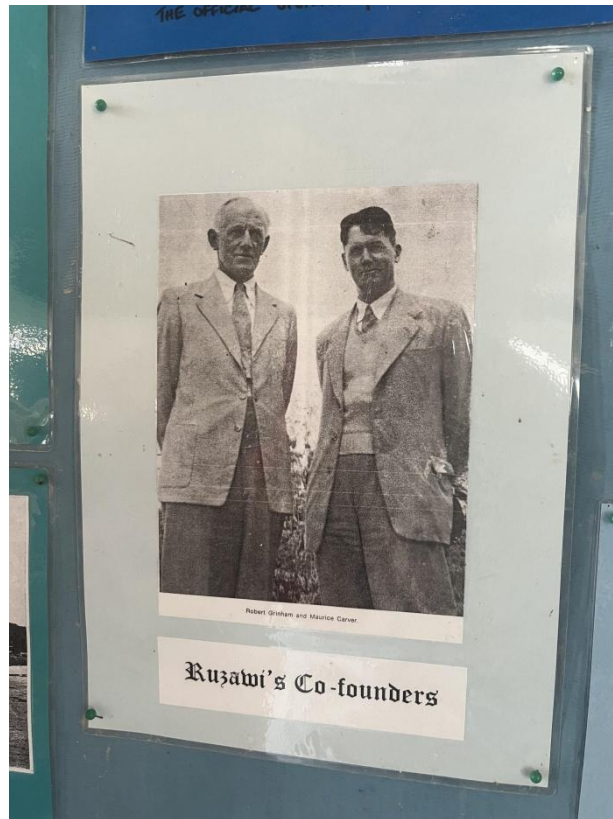
1. Nerys Gray and Kevin Atkinson



2. Robin Taylor and other HSZ Members listening to the speakers



3. Ruzawi School Chapel



4. Ruzawi School Co-Founders



5. Royal Empire Shield



6. Some of Ruzawi School Museum Artefacts



7. Michael Gray with Lt. Herbert John Morris's Grave on his Right

Errata and extra information from Mary Blair

"Morris and Evans were shot and killed in entirely separate contacts. It was Lieut Leigh Lye who went after the animal despite the warning from Morris that it was a trap. Leigh Lye was shot, and in attempting to rescue him Morris was shot. R. Hodder-Williams gives details in his article on the Old Graveyard (Rhodesiana 21, 1969) and an there was an interesting follow up citing articles in NADA in Graveyard at Old Marandellas: Addendum in Rhodesiana 22 1970. Hodder-Williams earlier article on the uprising (also in Rhodesiana) is worth a read."