

In 1993 William Hershaw, a local poet was commissioned by a dance group to compose a poem to mark the 900th Anniversary of Saint Margaret's death. Hershaw composed a piece entitled: 'Voices 900', which imagined a conversation with famous ghosts from Dunfermline's past within the Abbey walls.

In one conversation a guilt-ridden Andrew Carnegie bemoans to the other ghosts that he was hated even though his success in business meant that many benefited from his philanthropy. This proclamation is answered by a miner, killed in the Valleyfield mining disaster of 1939 when 35 men perished in an explosion. The miner accuses Carnegie of hypocrisy by posing as an enlightened employer, when in fact he exploited his poor fellow Scots in his steel mills where they worked in hellish conditions and when they organised for better conditions he had them jailed.

The poem was withdrawn from the Voices 900 programme because of objections made by the Carnegie Dunfermline Trust to references in the poem about Andrew Carnegie's hypocrisy and mistreatment of his workforce.

So it seems that even 73 years after Carnegie's death his reputation is not to be questioned.

The offending passage of the poem is as follows:

Carnegie: ...maist conscience-wracked o aw, hear me,  
born and weel-kent in this auld grey toun,  
wee Aund Carnegie, wi nae erse ti his breeks,  
wha left for the steel toun hells,  
wha cam hame happit wi gowd  
and gied it awa maist prodigal-like.  
I made masel: libraries, education, books.  
I got things duin. Ithers did weel aff me  
like the fish and shells that live aff the back  
o the muckle whale. Why dae they hate me?  
Why dae they mak a gowk o a muckle darg?

**Miner:** O ye did weel, Carnegie, I ken your kind  
awricht.  
You were the parasite that fed aff your ain  
immigrant clan.  
Ye'll no ken me, a miner, killed in  
Valleyfield.  
Yer hypocrisy and lees are ill ti thole.  
Ye tell the workin man ti educate hisel,  
tell him he can be free o the furnace hell,  
syne clap him in jile when he sterts up a  
Union!  
Deed me tae, like you noo - though anither  
Canker  
burns me like wersh ghaist coals below the  
Forth.  
Whit guid aw yer siller noo?