



April 2018

FOR YOUR DIARY

Saturday 28 April – District AGM at Highland Place Church, Aberdare at 11am. Light lunch 12:15 to 1pm.

From 1pm to 2:30pm there will be a sponsored **'Hymnathon'** attempting to sing 1st verse of 50 hymns. Proceeds in aid of the Pituitary Foundation, a charity chosen by the District President.

Saturday 26 May – Copy deadline for the next issue of the District News.

INDUCTION OF STEPHEN LINGWOOD



Photots by

Rory
Castle
Jones

The Induction of Stephen Lingwood into Pioneer Ministry with Undodiaid Caerdydd / Cardiff Unitarians took place on Saturday, 10 February in a service at the Friends' Meeting House, Cardiff. The service was conducted by members of the Cardiff congregation, with piano accompaniment provided by Eiluned Davies.

The Ceremony of Induction was led by Lis Dyson-Jones, Chair of Cardiff Unitarians, with Cardiff members making a pledge of commitment to support Stephen's ministry, to which Stephen responded in like manner.

The occasion marked the beginning of a new chapter in the history of Cardiff Unitarians and we wish Stephen and congregation every success in their newly formed partnership.

[See more about the Induction Service in the 'Cardiff News' below.]

FROM THE DISTRICT PRESIDENT

January saw the inauguration of Stephen Lingwood as Pioneer Minister of Cardiff Unitarians / Undodiaid Caerdydd. This was a very special occasion for the Congregation at Cardiff as well as for the District because the inauguration of a new minister, at what is a difficult time for the movement in general, gives one a glimmer of hope for the future of Unitarianism here in the South East. Therefore, on behalf of the District, I would like to wish Stephen and the Congregation at Cardiff all the best for the future.

We may be still shivering under patches of snow and ice but this week (*as I write*) actually marks the astronomical beginning of Spring, heralding the start of longer days, new blooms and warmer weather. Officially called the Vernal Equinox, Spring begins on Tuesday March 20th in the Northern hemisphere (which is where we are) and will continue until Thursday June 21st – the Summer Solstice.

Well, Tuesday March 20th has arrived and I have woken up to a sunny but very bitterly cold morning. Let us hope that Mother Nature has finally had enough of this winter herself and gives us hope that there are better days ahead. The only thing I will miss when the snow finally clears altogether is tobogganing with the grandchildren—which was great fun. However, it will be good to get back to *'normal'*. I am itching to get out to the garden and allotment to do some planting. My seed potatoes are sprouting like mad in the broom cupboard so, hopefully, I can get them into the ground quite soon.

Last week my grandson Cai, who likes gardening, sowed some tomato and courgette seeds in the propagator and he checks every day to see if they are growing. The other day he said to me, "*What do you call a long green thing with yellow at the top?*" I said, "*I don't know.*" To which he replied, "*A daffodil Mamgu. You are silly Mamgu not knowing that.*" Well, I agree with him. I am often a silly Mamgu, especially on those occasions when I have locked myself out of the house and have had to climb over my neighbour's garden wall to get in through my backdoor—which I normally forget to lock. I have recently installed a key-safe outside the front door which works fine in the daytime but not at night when it's pitch black and I can't read the code numbers because I don't have a torch...because I have left my mobile phone inside. That is the ultimate silliness. Wouldn't you agree?

Although the weather has been miserable since January this hasn't stopped me attending some interesting events over the past month or so. The first was "*Still we rise*" which was sponsored by Jane Hutt, Assembly Member and first coordinator of Welsh Women's Aid (1978-89). In 2018 Welsh Women's Aid turned 40. To mark this, Welsh Women's Aid launched "*#Future 40*," a campaign that looks at how to end violence against women in Wales over the next forty years. Throughout 2018 they are running a project "*Forty Voices, Forty Years.*" This is a heritage project being led by Welsh Women's Aid in collaboration with George Ewart Evans Centre for Storytelling at the University of South Wales. In recognition that women's voices and lives are often written out of our national heritage, the project aims to capture the history of Welsh Women's Aid in its 40th year, and in doing so commemorate the work of the organisation to end violence against women, with a collection of oral histories, digital stories, exhibition and archive materials from women and services who have been instrumental to the movement in Wales. It was a very informative and enjoyable evening and made even more enjoyable when I had the company of two fellow Unitarian friends, Joy and Tony Foster who had also come to the event.

On March 8th it was Women's International Day and as this year we are celebrating the centenary of Women's Suffrage there have been (and there are still) a number of events to commemorate the occasion. I went to one such event at the Pierhead in Cardiff Bay on March 8th. This event was to celebrate the life of Ursula Masson (1945-2008) and mark twenty years of Archif Menywod Cymru / Women's Archive Wales and the centenary of the granting of partial Women's Suffrage.

Perhaps it is fitting here to mention the sad fact that almost a 100 years on from winning the vote a recent poll study carried out by the Labour party reveals that there is a "widening gender and turnout gap" in general with fewer women voting than men. In the last General Election nine million women did not vote.

Incidentally Ursula Masson was a Welsh academic and writer who worked closely with 'HONNO', the Welsh Women's Press, on the imprint of Welsh Women's Classics – to bring back into print the works of forgotten women writers of the 19th and 20th centuries. Sadly I was unable to attend the evening event organised by the 'Senedd' (tickets were all sold out) to listen to a lecture by Dr Ryland Wallace on "The women's suffrage movement in Wales", together with WNO's performance of "*Rhondda Rips it up.*" Never mind, there are plenty more things organised for 2018 by the Women's Archive. I am looking forward to attending an event organised by them at the National Eisteddfod this year at Cardiff when five eminent historians will champion five women who should be commemorated by statues in our capital city.

Another event I am looking forward to attending is the GA. I hope it is as enjoyable as last year's GA Meeting when the Welsh Unitarians stole the scene with their contribution to the Opening Ceremony. I am also looking forward to the SEWUS AGM on April 28th when something different will take place after the business and lunch. All I will disclose at this stage is "HYMNATHON". All will be revealed very soon when our SEWUS Secretary, Lis Dyson-Jones will send out the Agenda and information.

In the meantime...Keep Warm and Keep Safe.
Hwyl for now,

Diana Bianchi

FROM THE SECRETARY OF THE UNITARIAN WELSH DEPARTMENT

Despite the recent snow, Spring is definitely approaching and with it a new sense of purpose and a determination to make this the best year ever for Unitarians in Wales. Last weekend saw congregations in both districts showing their support for mental health charities, which is the cause that Unitarians Wales have chosen to support for the coming year. One in four of us will suffer from some sort of mental health problem during our lifetime, and this is our opportunity to raise awareness, to get people talking and hopefully to raise some much needed funds to support the fantastic work of organisations such as Mind Cymru, or other organisations which are local to your congregation. So, if you were involved in organising any of these events, or went along or contributed in any way – thank you! The total raised so far is an amazing £1,186.44 and is still going up by the hour. If you didn't manage to go along this time, don't worry – there will be other opportunities during the coming year.

The next big event for Unitarians is the GA of course, which will be held this year in Staverton, Northamptonshire between the 4th and the 7th April. I hope to see many of you there, and if you do happen to be about on Saturday, then please come along to the main plenary room at 9.15 as I will be leading the opening devotions, and could really do with seeing as many friendly faces as possible!

Other exciting events already planned for 2018 are the National Eisteddfod and Pride Cymru, both of which will be held in Cardiff. The Eisteddfod takes place between the 4th and the 11th August, and I can confirm that we will be hosting a lecture by Dr Prys Morgan in Pabell y Cymdeithasau, which will be in Y Senedd, at 13.30 on Thursday, August 9th. We will also, for the first time, be attending Pride Cymru on Saturday August 25th and will be taking part in the march through the streets of Cardiff. Places are limited, so if you are able to join us, please let me, Rory Castle-Jones or Rev Wyn Thomas know as soon as possible.

Also in the planning stages are two events to be held at Capel Penrhiw. The first will take place on June 10th when we hope to hold an event which will include a presentation by Dylan Iorwerth on the General Election of 1868 and its importance to us as Unitarians; the second on September 10th will include a talk by Rev Cen Llwyd on Frank Lloyd Wright. More details regarding times etc will follow.

In the last newsletter I was able to congratulate our chair Rev Wyn Thomas on his marriage – this time I'm delighted to offer our congratulations to Megan Jones, who was our chair for many years, on her marriage, which took place on March 8th. We send our very best wishes to her and Peter. The question now is who is it going to be in the next issue? I'm keeping a very close eye on all of you.....

Melda Grantham

THOUGHT FOR NOW

(We are indebted to Anne Jones for bringing the following to our attention)

If the world seems cold to you, kindle fires to warm it.

Lucy Larcom.

ABERDARE

Women's League

Dear All,

I hope you have all survived the severe snowy conditions unscathed and managed to stay warm in such extremely cold temperatures. March certainly has come in, roaring like a lion!

I am pleased to report that Mrs Celia Evans' recovery is progressing and that Christine Roberts has recovered from her illness and is back within our ranks, again. Betty Evans is still having mobility problems and is awaiting results of a scan.

We have enjoyed a busy programme. We were treated to a film of Western Canada, where Barbara Hughes enjoyed a marvellous holiday with her sister, Sandra. There were interesting responses to the idea of being 'Invisible for the Day' and an invaluable talk on 'Fraud' delivered by Julie Lipscombe, reinforcing the moral that, 'If it is too good to be true, then it probably is.'

We all enjoyed a quiz supplied by Anne Jones on February 7th. The League then had a fascinating talk on 'Lovespoons' by John,(Siôn), Llewellyn on 14th February. St Valentine's Day was a fitting day to be introduced to 'the language of love.' The craftsmanship, engineering and artistic design input into his wonderful array of lovespoons displayed his genius and ingenuity. It was a thoroughly informative and enjoyable afternoon!

An outing to Llancaiach Fawr Manor was arranged for 21st February and members enjoyed lunch there, followed by a very entertaining tour of this historic house.

28th February was earmarked to celebrate St David's Day with our usual tea, but, as it was a special occasion, members intended to mark Dorothy Jones' 90th Birthday. Dorothy is a valued member, who despite illness, remains cheerful and uncomplaining. A really inspirational lady! Unfortunately, the inclement weather intervened and the event had to be cancelled.

Nevertheless, the League was determined to mark Dorothy's special milestone. Therefore, on 14th March 2018, we had a lovely tea, with a birthday cake for Dorothy, which was enjoyed by all! Anne Jones tested us with a 10 minute St David's Day quiz and I am sure we all learnt some new facts!

Now, we are looking forward to our S.E. Wales District Women's League Meeting on 21st March at Hen Dŷ Cwrdd Chapel in Cefn Coed. As it will be the end of my term as President of District Women's League, I will be passing the baton to Joan Harlow, who I am sure will do us proud!

Thank you all for the support, which I have received during my term as District President!

Best Wishes to all

Anne Watts

Members of Highland Place joined with friends from across the District at the Friends Meeting House in Cardiff in January. The occasion was the Welcome Service for Cardiff Unitarians' new Minister, Stephen Lingwood. It was good to come together again for this special occasion and meeting friends from Bank Street Chapel, Bolton. Our thanks to Cardiff for the refreshments, and we at Aberdare wish Stephen every success in his new ministry.

It was disappointing however, that the heavy snow at the beginning of March meant the cancellation of the joint service with Cefncoed, Aberdare and Cardiff at Hen Dŷ Cwrdd, as well as our Community Coffee Morning and Meditation Group meeting. The AGM at Highland Place was another casualty with more snow on 18th March. On a positive note, morning services throughout January and February have been very well attended at Highland Place.

The Charity Coffee Morning held on Saturday 10th March was very successful. The event was held to raise awareness of mental health issues. A short, very informative talk, followed by Q&A's was given by Nicola Jones of New Horizons, a mental health charity which has premises in Aberdare town centre. Nicola said that the main contributory factor to mental health problems in our area was poverty. £178 was raised on the morning with further contributions expected. All proceeds will be donated to New Horizons.

Tony Foster



Nicola Jones of New Horizons Photo: Joy Foster

CARDIFF UNITARIANS / UNDOIDIAID CAERDYDD

The Induction Service of our new Minister, Stephen Lingwood was a happy occasion, despite appalling weather and it was a joy to welcome Stephen's parents and members of his former congregation from Bolton Bank Street Church, along with member representatives from five South East Wales District congregations. Parch Cen Llwyd (Minister from Ceredigion and member of the Welsh Department) and Diana Bianchi brought greetings from the South Wales and South East Wales Districts respectively and Robin Atfield gave warm greetings from the Cardiff Quakers. The Rev Lewis Rees (Nottage Unitarian and General Baptist Church) delivered a reading from the Gospel of John and the Address was given by Rev Mike Walsh, United Reformed Church Pioneer Minister in Lancashire. Members of the Cardiff congregation led the service and, during the ceremony of Induction, Stephen received a candle which was

lit from the Chalice and a map of Cardiff to assist him on his pioneering journey. Stephen's response warmly set out his intention and mission in the City.

During the Welsh tea that followed, Stephen took ownership of a lolo Morganwg tee shirt before he cut a splendid cake to round off his official welcome to our Unitarian family. We all wish him well as he embarks on a brave and unique ministry.

Stephen's services continue to inspire all who attend on Sunday afternoons and we have been happy to welcome a few new faces to share worship with us.

The Welsh Language Services, held on the second Sunday each month at 4pm, have a programme for the next twelve months which has been drawn up by Rev Eric Jones. This includes a variety of talks, some more traditional services and hymn singing. There will also be services at Penrhiw Chapel, St Fagans in June and September which have been organised by the Welsh department.

The Cardiff Branch of the United Nations will host a talk on Wednesday 21st March at the Temple of Peace given by Abubaka Ali, a doctoral student at the Cardiff School of Politics, on 'Should Nigeria join the UN security Council as a permanent member?' Future meetings are planned on Eritrea, the Middle East and a joint meeting with UNA and Cardiff Quakers on 'Sanctuary for asylum seekers in Cardiff'. The dates for these meetings will be published and it is important that we develop our knowledge of the significant number of asylum seekers now living in the capital city.

News of Members: Marjorie Collins has been quite poorly and has had several stays in hospital in January, February and early March. She has now returned to her own home and is cheerfully looking forward to some warmer weather and brighter days. We send fondest wishes to her and to Sally and Gareth Evans during challenging times.

Something to inspire

'Remember to look up at the stars and not down at your feet and try to make sense of what you see..... Be curious, and however difficult life may seem, there is always something you can do and succeed at. It matters that you don't just give up'. (Stephen Hawking 1942–2018).

Lis Dyson-Jones

CEFNCOED

Women's League

On the morning of 14 February a party of League members, together with a few friends, boarded a minibus and set off for Cardiff. We were on a Valentine's Day trip to take in a matinée performance of a stage production of Rodgers and Hammerstein's world-famous musical The Sound of Music. We arrived at Cardiff in good time and stopped off for lunch prior to making our way to the New Theatre for the Show.

The lavish staging – set in the von Trapp Family home with its spiral staircase, or amid the tall pillars of the abbey – was stunning and the show itself was outstanding with top class performances from all members of the cast. We were soon humming along to the show's much-loved songs, made so familiar to us by the film. A thoroughly enjoyable and memorable afternoon.

The journey home will also linger in the memory—but not with pleasure. The weather was bad, and the traffic was dense. Our return to the foothills of the Beacons seemed interminable—so much so that it had us wondering whether it might be quicker for us to set off on foot, spurred on by Mother Abbess, Megan Llewellyn's powerful operatic rendition of Climb Ev'ry Mountain still ringing in our ears.

We look forward to hosting the District League Meeting at Hen Dŷ Cwrdd on 21 March.

Tŷ Hafan

As usual we placed a collection box in the chapel over December–January for donations to Tŷ Hafan. A cheque for £70 has now been sent to the charity.

Induction and Ordination

We were pleased to be represented at the Friends' Meeting House Cardiff on Saturday, 10 February, for the induction of Stephen Lingwood as Minister of Undodiaid Caerdydd / Cardiff Unitarians. We wish Stephen and the Cardiff congregation every success in this venture.

Four weeks later a gathering with a somewhat similar purpose took place at Hen Dŷ Cwrdd. This, however, was not an Unitarian event. It arose from an approach by an independent (*with a small 'i'*) minister who lives in the village. He is not currently attached to a place of worship and so wondered whether it was possible to hire the chapel as the venue for an ordination service which he was due to conduct. The

congregation agreed to his request and the service took place on Saturday, 10 March. The newly ordained minister is based in Pontypool.

Condolences

Sadly, we report the death of Mrs Vera Thomas, aged 92. Rev Eric Jones officiated at her funeral which was held at the chapel on 13 February, followed by cremation at Llwydcoed Crematorium. We extend our sympathy to the family and express our thanks for donations received by the chapel in lieu of flowers. Our condolences also to Gaynor and Wayne Harman and family on the death of Wayne's father Cyril.

Best Wishes

Since the last newsletter Iris Morris has undergone further treatment at Prince Charles Hospital, Merthyr. We are pleased to report that she is now at home and making progress. Ninety-three-year-old Margaret Edwards has been rather poorly recently, but is now 'on the mend'. We send them both our very best wishes.

Congratulations

We send best wishes to Emily Farmer (granddaughter of Vera and Paddy Tomsett) who celebrated her 21st birthday on 17 March. Former Sunday-school pupil Emily is currently in her third year studying law at Swansea University. She continues to impress—gaining two 'Firsts' and an 'Upper Second' in a recent departmental grading.

Disruption to Services

The nicknamed 'Beast from the East' brought snow and freezing weather causing the cancellation of our joint service with friends from Highland Place Church on 4 March. More snow resulted in another closure on 18 March. Sunday 11 March (Mothers' Day) was free of snow but as so many ladies were being 'wined and dined', and so not able to attend chapel, it was decided to cancel our service.

Ken Morgan

NOTTAGE

Well the 'Beast of the East' was not nearly as beastly to us in Porthcawl as was forecast, but there is a nasty flu bug which is going around and has greatly reduced our congregation since Christmas. Jonathan was off work for 4 weeks, David has never had such a fierce bout of chest problems, June was housebound for some weeks, Lewis, Cheryl and Liela have all been laid low, and now it is visiting our house.....roll on May!

We *do* have good news: Jeanie Monks has been presented with her 6th grandchild, a healthy little boy named Elliot Gabriel! We send the whole family our love and Best Wishes.

In February we held a coffee morning in aid of Churches on Action for Poverty, and raised £46.

On Friday we held another charity coffee morning. This time MIND were the recipients and £86 was raised. Melda Grantham and Rev Wyn Thomas supported the event which was a wonderful surprise and support. Diolch Melda a Wyn.

Jonathan presented the congregation with a bunch of daffodils on Mothering Sunday, and Lewis conducted the service.

Lewis has been asked to conduct the funeral service of Gwyneth Lloyd. Gwyneth was an active and popular member with us during Dr Beverly Littlepage's ministry with us. She was happy to join us for all sorts of outings and events. Sadly we have not had the pleasure of her company for many years, and she has lived in a care home for a lengthy period. We send our love and condolences to her daughter, June, and her granddaughter, Joanne and family. God Bless.

Avril Protheroe

SWANSEA

This winter has seen the coldest weather for a number of years. Swansea has suffered the cold biting wind and frozen pipes but NO SNOW!! The youngsters and the young in heart have been denied the fun part of winter with no opportunity to throw snowballs or go sledging! However our thoughts were with the rest of our churches in the district who have been forced to cancel services on several occasions due to the snow.

On the 25th February we handed over a cheque to Matthew's House for £1245.93 as a result of our crib collection. A fantastic sum of money. Thanks to the very kind donations of people who supported us after the theft from our collecting box. Matthew's House is situated at the top of High Street and has been helping the homeless and the most vulnerable people for just over a year. We hope that our crib money will help towards equipping showers and laundry facilities which is their next phase of development. The Swansea Congregation are planning a visit to see their current facilities and partake of some refreshment in Matt's Cafe.

The building work we have had done on the roof on the front of our building appears to have been successful. However we are now trying to sort the damp coming from the church roof. This is a big project which necessitates much scaffolding. Our church roof is rather high!

As well as trying to improve the building we are working on modernising our church documentation. We have applied for a licence to hold single sex marriages and are now considering our constitution. We are using internet banking which we hope will lessen the problems we have had with cheques.

Five of our congregation have signed up for the Unitarian Trip to Winchester in November. We are looking forward to a fun Christmas Trip!

We send our best wishes to all fellow Unitarians.

Hilda Dumpleton

TREBANOS

GELLIONNEN

Our graveyard cleanup took place on a dreary Saturday morning. This was to ensure that we could visit the Rees family grave when a service celebrating the life of Mary Rees Bevan, 1718 – 1818, would take place. Rory Castle Jones has researched the life of Mary Rees Bevan, mother of the Rev Josiah Rees and even obtained a portrait of the lady who died ten days short of her hundredth birthday. Mary's first husband was the Rev Owen Rees, minister of Hen Dŷ Cwrdd, Trecynon. She subsequently married a surgeon, but when widowed for the second time came to live with her son Josiah Rees, minister at Gellionnen. She was known to be a woman of learning and an avid reader. When her sight failed she took to composing poems. Descendants of her family have made contact with Rory and visited the chapel on our open day last year.



At the Rees family grave

Photo: Rory Castle Jones

Earlier this year we had a different sort of visitor – an owl. All efforts to get it to leave were fruitless until it became tired and overbalanced from the handrail of the gallery. Martyn Edwards picked it up and carried it outside. But that is not the end of the story, the owl had left evidence of its visit and the pulpit fall was badly damaged. The pulpit fall had been lovingly restored some years earlier by Delores Morgan and she was so pleased with the results that she had signed and dated it. Julie Nedin took the fall to the dry cleaners who did not hold out much hope but said they would do their best to clean it up. Their efforts were totally successful, and when asked how they'd managed they said they had washed it!

We now have a number of green hymn books as well as the Welsh and the purple books, visiting speakers please note. Lawrence Bowen has taken us through a number of the less familiar songs.

Our Traidcraft service concluded with soup and rolls. The bread was freely given by the Clydach Co-op Store who were keen to encourage us in our activities. Fifty pounds raised at the lunch is to be donated to Traidcraft.

Mind Awareness was celebrated on Saturday 10th March with about thirty present. We were led through an hour of restful meditation by a member of the Swansea Buddhist Centre and Mind Cymru provided us with written information. We concluded with tea and a gorgeous array of cakes. Our thanks go to Gwynn Williams who is always a willing tea lady and to our cake cooks whose ranks have now been joined by fourteen-year-old Gwennan Evans. A collection of £118 was donated to Mind Cymru.

There are primroses and daffodils blooming around the chapel and things should be looking good for the marriage of James Kolasinski and Paul Wilson on Easter Saturday. We are aware that at least one person visits the graveyard daily.

Our pub club had to be put off for a week due to weather conditions and we have missed a couple of services.

Plans are moving towards a visit by a local junior school. Health and Safety regulations do not make it easy nor do transport costs.

Marian Littlepage

WICK

Sadly, our first service in March had to be cancelled. The Vale of Glamorgan was badly hit by the snow with St Athans suffering the deepest snow in the country! Some of our members were completely snowed in.

Then, we were hit by bad news. The thaw brought burst pipes and a flood in our toilet. Luckily one of the villagers was placing flowers on a family grave and noticed this. He contacted Mansel and repairs are now in process—hopefully they will be completed by our next service.

We are all looking forward to some lovely Spring weather.

Our best wishes to all our friends in the District.

Julianne Morgan

MEN'S GROUP

Our first meeting of 2018 was held in Penarth in February, at the home of Gwynn Pritchard. We were joined by Stephen Lingwood, who gave us a very interesting talk on his vision for pioneering ministry at Cardiff. Lunch was enjoyed at a nearby hostelry. Our thanks to Stephen for giving us his time, also to Gwynn for his hospitality and refreshments. Our next meeting is a visit to Nantgarw Pottery.

Tony Foster

ABOUT THIS PUBLICATION

Copy-deadline for the next issue of the South East Wales Unitarian News: **Saturday, 26 May 2018.**

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