



FOR YOUR DIARY

Sunday, 21 March – District Cymanfa Ganu at Swansea, 11am.

Thurs 8 – Sun 11 April – Annual Meeting of the General Assembly at Nottingham

Sunday, 9th May – District AGM at Highland Place Aberdare – 11am Service followed by Shared Lunch meeting and Speaker

DISTRICT SERVICE OF READINGS AND CAROLS

The 2009 District Service of Readings and Carols was hosted by Cardiff Unitarians at the Friends Meeting House, Charles Street, Cardiff at 3pm on Sunday, 6th December.

Following a welcome from District President Sarah Boyce the chalice flame was lit and supplemented during the service as Readers lit a candle on behalf of their congregation.

The Readings were varied and interesting, especially one by Colin Morgan, Trebanos in which he related the story of a personal experience. In addition to our singing of the usual mix of English and Welsh carols, Diana Bianchi, Eric Jones and Arthur Saunders sang a traditional Welsh Plygain carol. (Though not, thank goodness, at the original traditional early-morning hour!)

Our spiritual and cultural needs having been taken care of, the afternoon was rounded off by a most welcome shared buffet tea and the opportunity to have a good chat.

We express our thanks to Eiluned Davies who provided the piano accompaniment to our singing, and to the Cardiff congregation for hosting this successful event.



These seats were soon taken – as were all the others at the Friends Meeting Hose

Photo by Keith Lewis-Jones

GETTING TO KNOW YOU ...Informal interviews with local Unitarians

The interview for this issue is with Mrs Margaret Evans who is a member of the Cardiff congregation and well known in Unitarian circles throughout the United Kingdom. Margaret's father was a Unitarian Minister and there were no less than six generations of Unitarians on both the paternal and maternal sides of her family. Margaret came to live in Wales (Cardiganshire) when she was ten. Margaret is possibly best known for her considerable contribution to Women's League at Local, District and National level. Margaret's life has not been without its frustrations and challenges and there are many who greatly admire her determination to live her life to the full, playing her part wherever she can, whilst never giving way to gloomy introspection. On the 3rd of September 2010 Margaret will be 90.

Ella Lewis-Jones



Photo by Keith Lewis-Jones

What is your earliest memory?

Living in a lovely Manse in Crumlin, Co. Antrim, where we had a large garden and orchard and kept dogs, cats, rabbits and chicken. Also in the field a donkey called Dick, who belonged to my brother. We also had a pony and trap but my father always used the car for his work

What effect did being the daughter of a Unitarian Minister have on your life?

It made me value being a Unitarian, being encouraged and able to think for myself.

When were you happiest?

When I married Len in 1950. We were married for 47 years.

What is your guiltiest pleasure?

Drinking Sherry and Wine. I enjoy it, so why should I feel guilty? There was always a decanter of Port and Madera around when I was a child. If you are brought up with it you don't over do it.

If you could edit your past, what would you change?

To have completed my nurse training which I started in Gloucester during the War. I completed two years but unfortunately my mother became ill and I had to go home to nurse her.

How do you relax?

Reading, listening to music, concerts and the Theatre. I also like to travel; I've been to New Zealand twice.

What single thing would improve the quality of your life?

The ability to speak French and German. My mother went to a finishing school in France and could speak French fluently and often spoke French at home. Otherwise I am very healthy, I don't take any tablets.

What do you consider your greatest achievement?

Being elected Women's League President in Cardiganshire in 1948, South East Wales in 1965, and National President in 1975. I was also National Secretary of Women's League for 19 years. I am now an honorary Vice President of Women's League.

Which living person do you most admire?

The Queen. She has been a marvellous Queen and has not put a foot wrong. She has had a lot of trouble within her family. Hopefully her grandsons will make up for a lot.

Do you have any regrets?

Only that I had to give up a career – at the same time I am glad that I was able to help my family. My father lived with Len and I for the last 15 years of his life, for the last two confined to his room. I also nursed Len for eight years after he developed Parkinson's disease. No, I have no regrets.

What living person do you most despise?

No one

What words or phrases do you most overuse?

Don't be silly!

What keeps you awake at night?

Nothing. I am very lucky I sleep very well.

What is the most important lesson life has taught you?

To love my neighbours and to be tolerant. Also to do all I can to help friends and family.

What has been your biggest disappointment?

As I said before not being able to continue my nursing career. Also it was such a pity that Len didn't live longer to enjoy his retirement. We had a good life together and enjoyed many mutual interests e.g. Cricket.

What does leadership mean to you?

Someone who conducts him or herself well and lives an orderly life. Leadership means a great deal to me provided it is "good".

How would you like to be remembered?

As someone who cared for family and friends. I also did 25 years voluntary work with the League of Friends at the Heath Hospital. I started in 1972, when the Hospital opened, as an escort in the Outpatient's Department. There were three of us doing this, one of the ladies was a Catholic and the other was Jewish and we got on like a house on fire. I learned that you have to be kind and lend a sympathetic ear to people when they are attending hospital for an appointment. Most of all I want to be remembered as someone who was useful and kind.

UNITARIAN MUSIC SOCIETY

Isabelle and Elizabeth Rosenberg (plus parents Marie and Alastair) of Nottage, attended the UMS conference at The Nightingale Centre, Great Hucklow on 28th-31st August. This account was held over from the November issue due to lack of space.

On arrival we sorted out our rooms and then had dinner. We have recently started to have a main piece to perform. On this occasion it was Haydn's Little Organ Mass and after dinner we had a singing session to introduce us to the Latin words. We had a little orchestra to play and quite a big choir! But the orchestra was loud so it all balanced out.

Next morning we had breakfast (at the obscene time of 8:15am!) then practiced for Haydn in two groups, the instrumentalists and the choir. After coffee you could either participate in recorders, or Community Singing—we did recorders which was a lot of fun.

After lunch there were three hours of free time during which Isabelle and I, and three others, had a music session. We played some swing music and then this amazing piece called Serenade, which we played in the concert on the Sunday. After free time it was a choice between the Men's Choir and the Ladies Choir. I went to the Ladies Choir which was very good: Isabelle on the other hand fell asleep in the lounge!

After the Choir practice there was a rehearsal of Haydn with both the orchestra and the Choir, it sounded very good by the end of it. After rehearsal was dinner and the first concert, at which Dad was compère. He was also the fire warden and was in charge of the bar. So his first joke of the night was, "I see why you made me fire warden because this lot are red hot!" We were cringing and everyone else was laughing! They need to be taught what a good joke is. The concert was fabulous with a great range of performances, the last of which was a very jazzy number and it was great! The Epilogue at the end of the day was taken by our mother, Marie Rosenberg. It was lovely, a great winding down session. I nearly fell asleep because it wound me down so much!

On Sunday we had breakfast and then a rehearsal for chapel. At 10.30 was the actual service which was such a good service, probably one of the best services ever. After the service there was some coffee and then the AGM, which we did not attend. Then came lunch followed by free time. In free time we had a practice of the recorders because we were playing in the concert that night. Following the free time we had a choice of three things: an illustrated talk on Sir Adrian Boult; Orchestra practice with the soloist (Helen Merritt); or choir practice, if anyone wanted it. We went to the orchestra rehearsal, but we hear that the talk was very enjoyable. There was then the Haydn performance with our grand total of 4 people for the audience! It sounded fantastic though. Next, the recorder group performed and the little group that had practised the Serenade. It was a great concert.

First thing on Monday was an improvisation session. We both missed out on that and played *Monopoly*, we did go for the ending though to hear what they had come up with. After was the new hymn book singing session – it was only about 15 minutes as the improvisation had gone on longer than expected. It was really good though, it gave you a great insight into the hymns in the book and we both like it better than both the Dark and Light green hymn books. The new one *Sing Your Faith* is purple and seems to be more twenty-first century. The very last session of the weekend was the brainstorm which we both missed again. Isabelle will have to go next year because she will be an adult, lucky her! Hope *you* can come next year!

Elizabeth Rosenberg

EIRION'S ROLE IN MOVIE STAR'S SPECIAL DAY

Oscar winning actress Jennifer Jones, one of Hollywood's biggest stars in the 1940s and '50s, died on 17 December aged 90. Her obituary notice in *The Telegraph* carried the story of her romance with the multimillionaire philanthropist and art collector Norton Simon. The article added that their wedding in 1971 –when she was 52 and he was 64– took place five miles off the coast of Dover, with a Unitarian minister officiating.

Following-up on the story the *South Wales Evening Post* published an article on 28 December revealing that the 'Unitarian minister' was the Rev Eirion Phillips and included the photograph shown alongside.

It was an occasion that he remembers well...

At the time, he was a minister at Essex Church, in



This photograph of Eirion holding a copy of *The Telegraph* appeared in the *South Wales Evening Post*

Kensington and he recalls the unusual circumstances which saw him head to a location five miles off Dover at very short notice. He was at home on a Saturday night when Jennifer phoned to see if he could marry them. Eirion explains, "She was staying in the Dorchester Hotel, or the Grosvenor, and must have got my number from a book. Even though she had been married twice before, she said they would not sleep together until they were married. She was only in the country for a week, and could not legally get married in this country. But I said I could marry them up in the air or at sea."

The couple were delighted at Eirion's willingness and called for him in a limousine. The plan was to get married out at sea in a ceremony which would be followed by an official one when they were back in America. It was getting late, but they headed for Dover where hasty arrangements had been made to acquire a tug for the occasion.

On board, five miles out to sea, the happy couple and Eirion were joined by a scratch congregation — the chauffeur, a secretary, a seasick hair-dresser, the skipper and a bewildered Customs official. The 45-minute ceremony was more humanist than religious, with readings from Shakespeare, helped along by sips of wine.

It was gone midnight when they got back to London —having had the 'wedding breakfast' at a motorway service station on the way— and Eirion had services to take later that day. But prior to that there was another duty for him to perform first thing in the morning. A legal document had been hastily drawn up by a solicitor and he needed to get the couple to sign it. When he arrived at their hotel suite he was asked to wait while Jennifer got ready to receive him. About 15 minutes later he was called in and was surprised to find her in bed. Eirion assures us, "I averted my eyes as she signed the document."

Years later Eirion found out the couple were running a clinic for the elderly in the States. He wrote to them asking how they were getting on, and was delighted to get a reply.

Looking back at the bizarre episode with affection, he says, "I felt quite pleased that I could help them,"

KEY MESSAGES FROM EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Meeting in Manchester on 6/7 November 2009

In regard to the 2010 Annual Meetings, it was decided that:

- The Meetings should be organised in such a way that affiliated organisations, Commissions and Panels are enabled to participate in a similar way to previous years.
- That a detailed programme of the Business Sessions be subject to further discussion and approval by the Executive Committee.
- That the successful "Celebrating our Congregation" slots are facilitated at the Meetings.
- That we as an Executive Committee ensure there is an opportunity at the 2010 Annual Meetings for wide-ranging discussions on the changes suggested by the Annual Meetings Panel for future Annual Meetings.

Other key points:

1. The EC has nominated the Rev Dr Ann Peart to be the next GA Vice-President (to go for approval to the 2010 Annual Meetings).
2. The theme of the 2011 Annual Meetings will be: "Valuing and supporting our volunteers".
3. The General Assembly accounts project an overall loss for this last financial year (till end September) of £20,000, as predicted.
4. £1,800 was granted to the Youth Programme from the Millennium Fund for a pre-Annual Meetings preparation weekend.
5. £5,000 was granted to the Annual Meetings Panel from the Millennium Fund to enable young adults (18-35 age group) to attend the 2010 Annual Meetings.
6. The process of awarding Honorary Membership to be reviewed.
7. The proposal to have a "Change of Gear" regarding fundraising will be discussed further and put to the 2010 Annual Meetings.

Meeting at Essex Hall, London on 8/9 January 2010

The Executive Committee is pleased to announce that it will ask the Annual Meeting in April 2010 to

award Honorary Membership of the General Assembly to David Dawson.

- Following the resignation of Derek McAuley as GA Hon Treasurer upon his appointment as Chief Officer, the Executive Committee has co-opted Huw Thomas as Hon Treasurer until the Annual Meeting in April 2010. Huw is a qualified Accountant and currently employed as Head of Financial Services at the Royal United Hospital Bath NHS Trust. He is a member of Pantydefaid Unitarian Chapel, near Llandysul in the South Wales District. Thanks was given to Ann Peart for serving as Acting Hon Treasurer from November 2009 until January 2010.
- The Annual Accounts were approved for presentation to the Annual Meeting. Following discussion with the auditors the actual deficit on unrestricted funds will be £28,000.
- The Executive Committee has initiated a review of expenditure in order to release funds for priority initiatives.
- The Executive Committee also agreed to look at its expenditure and ways of working to reduce costs.
- Staff will be appointed to support Ministry and IT and Communication activities at Essex Hall.
- A Growth Sub-committee has been established to develop specific growth initiatives.
- Nominations will be sought for a co-opted member on to the Executive Committee (to serve until April 2011) as Ann Peart has been nominated as GA Vice-President from April 2010.
- The Annual Meeting will be held in Swansea in 2011.
- Arrangements for the 2010 Annual Meeting in Nottingham are going well. We would like to encourage attendance by day delegates, particularly on the Saturday (10th April), if people cannot come for the full four days.
- Derek McAuley was welcomed to his first meeting as Chief Officer. Derek is looking at ways to ensure that the work of staff at Essex Hall and of the various volunteers is effectively co-ordinated and supported.

Jim Corrigan

THOUGHT FOR NOW

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

Some words of Robert Louis Stevenson to keep in mind:

Anyone can carry his burden, however hard, until nightfall.

Anyone can do his work, however hard, for one day.

Anyone can live sweetly, patiently, lovingly, purely, 'til the sun goes down.

And this is all that life really means.

FROM THE PRESIDENT

Greetings to all members and friends of our congregations in the South East Wales district at the start of a new decade.

It was very enjoyable to meet with all our congregations at the District Christmas Service on Sunday 6th December 2009 and many thanks to those who represented every congregation in South East Wales in either a reading or carol. Thank you also to the Cardiff congregation for hosting the tea afterwards and for the shared platters from all the congregations. For me this service opened up the Christmas period in a really good way.

Before Christmas, Worship Leaders in the district met together in Cardiff on 30th November 2009 to share ideas on issues such as rites of passage and a 'readings' workshop. This group will be continued as those present felt that it provided good support to worship leaders. Thank you to Eric, Lis, Lewis and Annette for their contributions to this meeting.

On the east side of the district the Three Churches Collaborative Partnership group has met in November and December 2009 to take forward collaborative ministry by planning finance and the structure for this. Thank you to Ella Lewis-Jones for preparation of a job description and job specification which provided the basis for discussion and the drawing up of final drafts of these in the group. It has also been really useful to discuss our expectations of a minister. The next tasks for this group to carry out (before we are able to advertise for a minister) will be to discuss options for provision of services, to carry out a SWOT analysis between the churches and to prepare a profile for each of the three congregations. Thank you to the three representatives who have attended meetings from each of

the three congregations.

The west side of the district also met together in October 2009 to discuss ministry and lay leadership, Julianne, Annette and Lewis will be working together for the next Pulpit Plan to fill as many slots as they can in the rota of the four congregations between themselves and to seek greater cooperation between Nottage, Swansea, Trebanos and Wick in areas such as adult R.E. and Sunday schools.

The weather has been disruptive recently and many of us have stayed at home as the roads and pavements are so slippery which has meant services have been cancelled but roll on the Spring and I look forward to seeing everybody again!

Sarah Boyce

ABERDARE

During December the Highland Place congregation were involved in a number of events in celebration of Christmas. Early in December the church and schoolroom were decorated by the members of Women's League. Some of the members had brought a quantity of greenery from their gardens and, combined with the silvers, gold and reds of the contemporary decorations, the overall effect was really pleasing.

The morning service taken by Lis Dyson-Jones on the theme of "A Christmas Carol" was much enjoyed. There were nine readers in total. Although the text chosen had, by necessity, been considerably abridged, nothing of the real message of the book was lost and everyone present appreciated its meaning.

For their last meeting before Christmas the members of Women's League sang carols by candle light. Carol sheets had been produced by Joy and everyone sang of their best. A short rendering of Away in a Manger was given by Nina Lloyd. The presents, which were distributed amongst the members, demonstrated considerable ingenuity in providing, for the limit of £5, a gift which was suitable for anyone and everyone. The tea provided with a contribution from all the members was appreciated. This event was something new for Women's League and will be repeated again at Christmas, 2010.

In May, the lady who had for many years, cleaned the church, resigned due to family commitments. Fortunately, Joy Foster agreed to take on the role of caretaker. Joy along with her husband Tony, have transformed the place. The audio speakers, which had not worked properly for some time, have been repaired and there have been so many unique "touches" of colour and comfort. One example being the brass flower containers which had lain unused, these were resurrected, repaired, polished and put on display for all to enjoy.

The Service on the last Sunday before Christmas and the service on Christmas Eve contained contributions from different members of the congregation. These included readings taken from many sources and the lighting of candles to highlight the importance of various human aspirations and virtues.

At this time, one hundred and forty nine years ago, an English Unitarian Church opened its door for worship for the first time at Highland Place (there being a Welsh Unitarian Church already opened in Trecynon). Throughout 2010, particularly in December, the date on which the church opened, we will be celebrating this event and we hope that members of other Unitarian churches in South East Wales will join with us in doing so.

Ella Lewis-Jones

CARDIFF UNITARIANS / UNDO DIAID CAERDYDD

We send greetings and very warm wishes to all our District colleagues, for a happy and peaceful 2010.

Despite the challenges of the severe weather we have maintained many of our activities and commitments, although the Welsh Service in January had to be cancelled. The Church Committee has met with Trustees to discuss further investment of the monies from the sale of West Grove.

In early December some members attended a talk given by John Cox, at the Welsh Peace Institute and the Women's League hosted an afternoon tea at the home of Margaret Evans for members of the Highland Place League.

We were delighted to host the District Christmas Rally at the Friend's Meeting House and to welcome so many members to the Service of Seven Carols and Readings led by Sarah Boyce, District President. It was good to share fellowship during tea following the service.

Most members of the congregation were able to join the Welsh Service on 13th December, led by Diana Bianchi and to share in afternoon tea after the service.

On Sunday 20th December, nine members of the congregation enjoyed a Christmas lunch together, at the Café Rouge in Cardiff Bay. The venue, quality of food and service and the companionship helped to make this a very happy occasion, although some members were unable to attend due to illness and other family commitments. A service, led by Lis, was held in the afternoon, when most people present contributed their personal choice of seasonal readings. It was good to welcome Marjorie Collins and Tim and Gwenda Collier on this occasion.

Congratulations to Dianna Bianchi on the birth of her fifth granddaughter, Soffia Morwena, at Bronglais Hospital Aberystwyth. Soffia and her mother, Heledd are healthy and happy. Mamgu is overjoyed!

Despite busy lives, several members try to meet up to discuss the book choices of those involved and we hope to be able to continue this in the coming months.

We extend good wishes to those members who have been ill during the past few weeks and wish them a speedy return to good health.

Prayer for the New Year (Judith Urquhart – Adapted)

*May the power and the mystery go before us to show us the way.
May it shine above us to lighten our world,
Lie beneath us to bear us up,
Walk with us and give us companionship.
And may it glow and flow with us to bring us joy.*

Lis Dyson-Jones

CEFNCOED

WOMEN'S LEAGUE

Over the last few years the display of trees featured by the Christmas Tree Festival began to lose favour with the public – with fewer visitors attending, so it has been discontinued. However, the concert held in conjunction with the festival was retained and the fourth annual concert was held on 13th December. The audience was disappointing in number, but those present enjoyed the entertainment provided by the group of pupils from Ysgol Y Graig Primary School, the Lifeguards - a male quartet singing in the lighter vein, and Rhondda-poet Mr Tom Phelps (shown alongside) who read a selection of his humorous verses.



Photo by Keith Lewis-Jones

A pleasing total of £280, as a result of the concert and from donations, has been raised in support of the chosen charities - Latch and Tŷ Hafan.

Gwen Everrit

REMEMBRANCE SUNDAY

On 8th November, the ceremony at the village War Memorial and the public Remembrance Service at Hen Dŷ Cwrdd were conducted by Ken Morgan. Readings were given by Major Stephen Price, MBE and by Emily, Megan and Sophie.

VISITORS

Pupils from Ysgol Y Graig Primary School, accompanied by three members of staff, visited the chapel on a morning in November as part of their programme of studies. They were welcomed by Ken Morgan who explained briefly what goes on in a 'normal' service. The children responded well with questions relating to this and also about various objects in the chapel. Each child received a visitors' pamphlet on leaving.

On 9th December we were visited by Mr Richard Brown, Regional Supervisor of the Commonwealth War Graves Commission. There are two War Graves in the graveyard and we will now receive a small annual payment for their upkeep.

THREE WISE MEN ON CHRISTMAS MORNING

On Christmas Morning the service was conducted by – Morgan, Philip and Ken.

A SAD LOSS

Sadly, Hen Dŷ Cwrdd has been the venue for three funerals over the span of four weeks. The funeral of Betty Williams took place on 19th December. Betty, who was life-long faithful member of Hen Dŷ Cwrdd, was buried in the chapel graveyard, the final resting-place of son Derek and husband Max. The funeral of John Morris, husband of chapel member Iris, took place on 12th January, followed by cremation at Llwydcoed Crematorium. The funeral of Peggy Powell, who had a family connection with several chapel members, took place on 15th January, followed by interment at Pontycapel Cemetery.

They will all be missed and we extend our sympathy to their families.

We are grateful to Rev Eirion Phillips and Rev Eric Jones who, between them, officiated at the funerals.

Ken Morgan

NOTTAGE

We were honoured with the presence of our District President in November, and she conducted a very moving and thought provoking Remembrance service for us. It was the first time Sarah had conducted a service at Nottage, and we really enjoyed her visit and her company for tea after the service, thank you Sarah.

In November also we were treated to a lovely service conducted by Glenys Rosenfield. It had been some time since her previous service and we had missed her; welcome back Glen!

Our premises were in need of a touch of TLC, so before our Christmas services began we formed a 'cleaning brigade' again and six of us tackled the dust and new carpet fluff! Jennifer Evans hoovered for 2 hours, bless her, and we did, at least, move the dust around, thank you all who helped.

Julianne Morgan conducted our service on the first Sunday of Advent, and presented us all with a little gift. She really does go the extra mile, thank you Julianne. She went on to play the organ for us at our congregation Christmas Service, which was followed by lunch together, and our first service of the New Year, which was followed by lunch together! There is a recurring theme here – wish I could work out what it is!

Twenty-two of us braved the ice and cold to attend an 8.30am Christmas morning service, beautifully conducted by Annette Marsh. Thank you Annette for all of your hard work on our behalf in 2009.

We wish to thank Helen and Alan Steele for delivering Xmas donations to needy people in our area.

Harry Hales is progressing well after his knee replacement operation, we look forward to his company in chapel once again when he is able to drive.

Best wishes for 2010, and keep warm.

Avril Protheroe

SWANSEA

Christmas has come and gone. The iced cake is down to the last slice or two and the poultry has ended up in a tasty soup. I hope the memories are warmer than the weather because this will be remembered as a white Christmas, so often dreamt about and wished for but causing chaos when it happens. I look back with fondness to our delightful Advent services.

Mr Humphrey Evans gave a good service emphasising the difference between professing to be religious but not living up to it and those who don't profess to be so yet their lives are full of good deeds and true love towards mankind, naming Ludovic Kennedy as an example.

Julianne took the other Advent services giving out pretty decorations. For the last service we were joined by Angela who had returned to Swansea with Cameron and Charlotte. Angela sang as did Rhiannon whilst her daughter Rebecca played her cornet solo beautifully. They all contributed to make this a particularly lovely family service with readings by members and the singing of favourite carols. We enjoyed cake and mince pies after service.

The South East Wales District Christmas service held in the Friends Meeting House, Cardiff was the usual friendly, happy service that these get-togethers have become. The candles and decorations added to the atmosphere and we enjoyed a lovely tea afterwards. Thank you Cardiff members for being the host this year. In many ways Christmas has become stressful but the winter would seem longer and darker without it. The world seems a kinder place over Christmas -- if only the feeling would last longer.

We sympathise with Julianne who was badly bruised after slipping on the ice whilst doing her good

deed, feeding the birds.

If the weather thaws we are hoping that services will be back to normal soon and that Julianne will be too.

We wish you all a Healthy, Happy 2010.

Pamela Taylor

TREBANOS

GELLIONNEN

For the second year Pontardawe has held a Winterfest with singing and dancing in the main street and all sorts of events in our Arts Centre. Many thanks go to Sheila and Gareth Evans and Julie Nedin and Martin Edwards who ran a tea, coffee and cake stall at this event with the proceeds going to the Gellionnen Restoration Fund.

Due to the snow and very icy road conditions we have missed a number of Sunday services but about fifty made it on Christmas Eve.

Our music section consisted of Jamie Nemeth, Julie Nedin, Martin Edwards, Aneurin Jones (on violin); Pepe Lukas, Hywel Jones (on euphonium); Caradog Jones (flute); Josie Nemeth (trumpet and baritone horn). Aneurin, Hywel and Caradog are brothers. Jamie and Josie of course are brother and sister.

Thank you everyone for making *my* Christmas very special.

The service was conducted by Lewis Rees and we sang Silent Night in Welsh, English and German. Now Pepe Lukas is a first language German speaker who pronounced Lewis' reading of the German version, "Not bad at all." Hopefully next Christmas Pepe will announce the carol himself.

We welcomed Catrin Beynon to service. She had travelled from Singapore to be with her mother Sandra. On their way home that night (actually about 1.30 in the morning) they picked up a lady who was walking along the road wearing a thin T-shirt and a blanket around her shoulders. They then delivered her safely to her house some distance away.

Eileen James, mother of Angela Nemeth took quite seriously ill recently but has since shown remarkable powers of recovery. Well done Eileen.

Yet more 'Gone Wrong' chapel notices...

"Ladies, don't forget the Rummage Sale. It's a chance to get rid of those things not worth keeping around the house. Bring your husbands."

"The ladies of the church have cast off clothing of every kind. They may be seen in the basement on Friday afternoon."

We send our very best wishes to our friends in the South East Wales District.

Marian Littlepage

WICK

The start of a New Year is always a hopeful event and we look forward to what it may bring. We have had a memorable past year at Wick with both sad and happy occasions. A very special service was held on November 15th, the culmination of two year's interviews, visits and correspondence between Julianne and Stanley Hayward of Cardiff and the War Graves Commission for Western Europe. It appears that an uncle of Mr Hayward died during the First World War and had been buried in Wick graveyard. Our Wick graveyard is now an official War Grave site, a plaque has been placed to this effect on the chapel wall, and the Standard Bearer of Llantwit Major British Legion with many members of Stoker Ben Hayward's family and the British Legion attended the Dedication Service conducted by Julianne.

Another Special Family Occasion was celebrated in November, the dedication of Olivia Jean Ball. Her parents had been married at our chapel and her elder brother Sam for many years has held the record of the youngest attender at service. It was a very happy occasion and Olivia thoroughly enjoyed it accepting her flower like a star.

Our Christmas Service was well attended, with a record number of young children present. Children make any service special and it is always a pleasure to welcome them. Readings were distributed and thoroughly enjoyed, especially Tanya's wonderful pieces. It was difficult to believe that she had not rehearsed them with Julianne. Sam and Tanya then distributed the Christmas gifts to the congregation.

Several of our members have been ill these past months. Eva Mason has been in hospital – but we were so pleased to welcome her back for the Christmas Service.

Similarly, Joyce Davies has had two short visits to hospital but was able to be with us.

Phyllis Rose our oldest member had a brief hospital visit but with her wonderful spirit she is back home — What would her cat do without her? she told staff.

To all our members and our friends in the district, we wish a Happy New Year.

The past is history, the future is a mystery, but now is a gift—that's why it's called 'the present'

Julianne Morgan



Wick chapel Dec 2009

Photo by Helen Bhanaut

A BIRD'S EYE VIEW

Went to a funeral last week. The deceased was a relative of my husband but I knew him quite well. I hardly recognised poor Wayne from the tribute the minister gave on that day. Panic set in as I thought I could have been in the wrong funeral. Wayne must have been one of the best people to have walked on this earth within living memory. Why had I not realised that earlier? The minister went on and on and obviously enjoyed holding forth to his captive audience. At one point, I felt that there was little point in going home. Might as well stay there to see what he had to say about me. I needed a bit of a lift but my husband reminded me I would have to be dead before he would speak in those terms about me.

After hearing about all of Wayne's wonderful life, I wondered why his betting habits were not mentioned, and what about that time he cheated in the school exam?

It didn't end there either. He went on at length to describe the wonderful comforts of where Wayne had gone and, for a fleeting moment, I thought it was better for all of us to be *there* than where we were then. I soon came down to earth.

I hasten to add that this was not a Unitarian funeral service - Unitarians do not take advantage of the event to make an impression or to preach to those who did not want to know. At least, they don't make a habit of it. I think that I'll have to stick to Unitarian funerals from now on. You ministers had better be careful of what you say though.

The Golden Eagle

BOOKS THAT MAKE YOU THINK

Many of our members are devoted readers and from time to time encounter books which can only be described as 'thought provoking' or even 'inspirational'. We invite anyone who would like to share their experience of reading such a book to write a short review of no more than 200 words that could be printed, if space allows, in future editions of South East Wales Unitarian News. Ella Lewis Jones has a book review ready for our next issue. What about yours for the following issue?

ABOUT THIS PUBLICATION

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Items for publication should be sent by to:-

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