



FOR YOUR DIARY

15-18 April – ANNUAL MEETINGS IN CHESTER

Friday, 17 April - 'Growth Day'

Honorary Membership of the GA given to Rev Eric Jones in recognition of his service to The British Unitarian Movement

Anniversary Service conducted by Rev Margaret Kirk

(Special conference rate for those attending for the day - £41 or with meals included - £68 – no charge for late booking)

Friday, 1 May – 7.00pm at Nottage Chapel – meeting of fm Cluster representatives

Sunday, 17 May – South East Wales District AGM at Nottage Chapel

Service at 11am conducted by Lewis Rees (District President)

Shared lunch at 12 noon

AGM at 1.00pm – *Including the installation of new District President – Mrs Sarah Boyce.*

2.00 – 3.00pm Guest Speaker – Dr. Tom Cheesman (Swansea-based Asylum Seekers).

Please come. It's your District!

Sunday, 7 June – Joint Service for Aberdare, Cardiff and Cefncoed congregations at the Society of Friends Meeting House, Cardiff. Service at 5pm (Light refreshments will be served from 4pm)

Saturday, 20 June – '**A Gathering**' - hosted by the Welsh Department at Tabernacle Chapel, Carmarthen (11am – 3.30pm).

Please come and enjoy a day of learning and fun. Meet old and new friends, hear about a new Fellowship, see what our young people are doing, what the Welsh Department can do for you and bring a packed lunch to contribute to a shared table. (Tea & coffee provided.)

27 & 28 June – **General Assembly Weekend** – would your chapel/Congregation like to hold a fund raising event for the GA? (see your Church Secretary for details)

Sunday, 5 July – **South East Wales District Rally – Day trip to the Cotswolds**

Including a 3pm service with the Cheltenham Congregation conducted by Rev. Don Phillips (Minister of the Cotswold Group of Churches). A coach will pick up at various points in the district – details later.

Lis Dyson-Jones

'future ministry' INITIATIVE

Following two consultative meetings at Cardiff in January and March, we have been informed that the South East Wales 'cluster' of churches is one of the two that will progress into the next round of the 'future ministry' process. Each congregation will need to submit a 'Cluster Vision Statement' and a statement of commitment (including finance) prior to a meeting of fm representatives at Nottage on 1 May.

SOUTH EAST WALES WEBSITE

The District now has its own website at www.sewus.org.uk, thanks to the expertise of Helen Bhanaut, Wick. The home page leads to 'Places of Worship', 'Services', 'Officers', 'News', 'Events', and 'History'.

HYMNS AND LULLABIES

According to Napoleon, every corporal carries a marshal's baton in his knapsack. It might be said of Rev Eric Jones that he carries a conductor's baton in his cassock (if he wore one). An article by District President Lewis Rees about our Cymanfa Ganu (November Newsletter and also *The Inquirer*) in which he praised Eric's skill as a conductor, led to Eric receiving an invitation to take charge of the singing at the Portsmouth and District Welsh Society Cymanfa Ganu in mid-March. We understand the event was quite a happy occasion with around 150 people gathered at the URC Church in Gosport. There were also six Mayors from the area present at the event. The Organist was Iestyn Harcombe, originally from Tonyrefail.

As this newsletter was being put together there came news of a third grandchild for Anne and Eric. Now, as we go to press, there comes news of a *fourth* grandchild. The four are: Dafydd, Mali, Menna Angharad and Math.

NOW AVAILABLE

CAR STICKERS: If your congregation has paid £5.00 for Car Stickers, you may claim some more free of charge from the Rev Eric Jones and distribute them among your car owners. Contact him on 01685 873440.

CERTIFICATES for Baptism, Weddings and Church Membership are also available from him at 50p each (in either Welsh or English).

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

The interview in this edition is with Ken Morgan. Ken is currently Chapel Secretary and Treasurer of Hen Dŷ Cwrdd, Cefn Coed. A position which he has held for many years. He is also Editor of this Newsletter. Ken informs me that his name has been 'on the books' at Hen Dŷ Cwrdd since his enrolment in the Babies section of the Sunday School. Ken's Family, on his mother's side, having been associated with Hen Dŷ Cwrdd for a number of generations. It is no exaggeration to say that Ken has devoted his life to the cause.

In his working life Ken was a mathematics teacher (Head of Department for most of that time). Ken devoted a great deal of time, and no small amount of energy to this interview. The result, as you would expect, is considered, reflective and totally genuine. This is yet another person to whom I owe a debt of gratitude.

Ella Lewis-Jones

What is your greatest fear?

I have no problem in admitting to a lack of knowledge and ability on a number of fronts. What I *fear* is that, on some public occasion, I may venture outside my 'comfort-zone' and the *scale* of these inadequacies is made humiliatingly obvious, setting me up as a figure of ridicule.

When you were growing up, who or what influenced your life?

My childhood and teenage years were very rich – not in monetary terms (far from it), but in encouragement given and opportunities available. So many people and activities played a part... Parents, grandparents, and 'family' in general; School – the teachers, societies, cultural and sporting activities; Hen Dŷ Cwrdd – the YPL and the Scouts; the village Youth Club... I could go on and on, I had a 'full' life, and a happy one.

I also got caned at school (primary and secondary) – sometimes for misbehaving, but mostly for being 'late'. This may have turned me into a 'better person' – but I doubt it. I don't believe the canings did me any lasting harm – but I'm hardly the best person to judge whether I've been left with any deep-rooted psychological scars. However, I *do* know that they haven't turned me into a *punctual* person – I still have difficulty arriving for appointments at a specified time, and am usually in a mad rush.

Which living person do you most admire?

It has to be Nelson Mandela. After all the deprivation he suffered I find it amazing that he can be so forgiving and completely free of any vindictiveness.

What do you consider your greatest achievement?

As I think about this the Bafta and Oscar awards ceremonies have just taken place, with stars and wannabes parading on the red carpet. It reminds me that I, too, was once the 'star of the show' and given a Lifetime Achievement award. I have to admit that my 'life-time' hadn't amounted to very much when I received it – not quite a-year-and-a-half – but, hey, an *award's* an *award!* The 'show' in question was the Cefn Baby Show and a write-up of the event appeared in the *Merthyr Express*. The report doesn't record whether I cried, as some of the Oscar winners have done, but I'm sure I didn't make much of an acceptance speech. (If anyone doubts the veracity of the above claim I can produce the page from the newspaper *and* the 'silver-ware' – a mug, bowl, and spoon.)

Some might say that it's been all downhill since then. However, if you really press me for a more recent achievement, I will just mention that Phil and I took on the task of producing the District Newsletter in 1999 and the April 2009 edition will mark the tenth anniversary.

What trait do you most deplore in others?

The unwillingness, prevalent among politicians (but by no means exclusive to them), to '*hear the other person out*' and to accept that their opponent's 'take' on a situation might sometimes be the better one.

Does anything make you depressed?

Not to any marked degree, though I am concerned about our dwindling congregations, Hen Dŷ Cwrdd in particular.

Are you happy?

Yes, most of the time.

What, in your life, gives you the greatest satisfaction?

I certainly don't live my life looking for challenges – but I am reluctant to admit failure when confronted with a problem, or if a new situation crops up. My years of involvement with mathematics have left me with a determination to *solve* a problem – to 'get to the end' – so I am usually willing to put time and effort into completing a task, whatever it may be. (Even an interrogation such as this!)

If I am fortunate enough to eventually succeed in overcoming the difficulty it does give me a feeling of satisfaction.

What is your most unappealing habit?

The Psalmist of old had a point when he wrote, '*Who is aware of his unwitting sins?*' (Psalm 19 v12), and I, too, would claim an *unawareness* of causing others displeasure. I accept that I do tend to leave things until the last minute – so this could well be a contender – but there may be something that others find even more annoying. Psalm 19 continues with the prayer, '*Cleanse me of any secret fault.*' – I make the same plea.

What is your guiltiest pleasure?

Years ago, when Hen Dŷ Cwrdd had a pipe-organ in the gallery, I was one of two (sometimes three) teenage boys who, each Sunday, and for special services, acted as Organ Blowers. As Mrs Edwards, the organist, played the closing voluntary at an evening service we boys would be the only others left on the gallery and we'd occasionally play a trick on her. As the piece neared its final bars we'd pump madly to fill the bellows with air right up to the maximum and then mischievously desert our post and emerge from behind the organ. Glancing anxiously in our direction as we disappeared down the stairs, Mrs Edwards would continue to play, no doubt offering up a silent prayer that she'd get to the end of the voluntary before the instrument 'died' on her. We didn't always gauge it accurately – but Mrs Edwards never complained. Looking back I must admit to a feeling of guilt about the anxiety we caused her – she must have been very relieved when we were made redundant by the installation of an electric blower.

That particular opportunity is no longer available, but I still get pleasure in playing harmless 'tricks' on people. As for any other pleasures that I may have, I don't feel the least bit guilty about any of them – at any rate, none that I'm prepared to admit to.

What do you owe your parents?

Life was not easy for them. They each lost a young sibling when they themselves were children and a daughter (Eira, aged 8) two years before I was born. Later, after my father's death, my mother lost a second daughter, Hazel. My parents taught me, by example, that you have to accept what life brings to you, even though it can sometimes be very tough and you have to struggle hard to keep going. Hazel and I appreciated the sacrifices they made to provide us with an education.

Are you healthy?

I take a couple of tablets daily, and I would undoubtedly benefit if I lost a stone or two in weight (or even more), but I believe I'm fairly healthy. (I have an annual medical review coming up soon - I trust the doctor will also have that opinion.)

What has been your biggest disappointment?

Being unable to attract/trap a woman and convince her I'm the man she's been looking for.

How do you relax?

Listening to music (on *Classic FM* and CDs); surfing the net; watching television (rugby and 'thrillers'); solving Sudoku and crossword puzzles; going for walks (when I can summon up the energy!)

Is there anything that would improve your life?

Bearing in mind my answer to an earlier question I suppose I have to say, 'a Wife'. (Failing that, a live-in maid.)

How would you like to be remembered?

Part of the inscription on Hazel's headstone reads 'Yr hyn a allodd hon, hi a'i gwnaeth' (*Whatever she was able to do, she did.*) My final resting place is destined to be under that same headstone so, although I don't deserve such an epitaph, it would be nice if it was thought that I had gone a little of the way towards it.

What is the best piece of advice you have been given that you would pass on to others?

Even though I cannot claim to have always succeeded in following them I believe these words of Marcus Aurelius offer sound advice on how one should conduct one's life, – '*If it is not right do not do it; if it is not true do not say it.*'

THANKS

May I take this opportunity to suggest that we are very fortunate in South East Wales to have a team of people (Ken and Philip) to produce our newsletter. I know, from my own limited experience, that this a considerable piece of work (several times per year). Given human nature, it must be less than easy to obtain copy from every congregation on a fairly frequent basis. The copy, on arrival, has to be edited and put into reasonable shape and then printed. Printing alone, even when you know what you are doing, and have mastery over the technology, is, in itself, a challenge. Finally, but by no means least, there is the distribution! Sincere thanks to Ken and Philip.

Ella Lewis-Jones

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.

THOUGHT FOR NOW

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

We receive fragments of holiness, glimpses of eternity, brief moments of insight. Let us gather them up for the precious gifts that they are and, renewed by their grace, move boldly into the unknown.

Sara Moores Campbell

SAINT DAVID'S DAY CELEBRATION

St David's Day was celebrated in great style this year, when Hen Dŷ Cwrdd, Cefn Coed opened its doors to members of Highland Place Church, Aberdare and Cardiff Church.

It was a sunny day and Ken Morgan gave us a warm welcome which helped the spirit of well-being and put a smile on all our faces.

The service, taken by Reverend Eric Jones, was a delight and an inspiration, speaking, as he did, about the importance of communication.

The Beatitudes were then read, in English, by Ella Lewis-Jones, of Aberdare; in Latin and French, by Dr Marjorie Collins, of Cardiff; in Spanish, by Marlene Chambers, of Cefn Coed; in German, by Dilys Evans, of Aberdare and in Welsh by Sally Evans of Cardiff.

All were beautifully read and I felt a great pride in being a member of such an intelligent congregation!!

Reverend Jones told us of the origins of St David and the rock which (supposedly) rose beneath his feet when he spoke to the crowd at Llanddewi Brefi in the 6th century – thus giving birth to the legend.

Four children took part in the Service – Emily from Hen Dŷ Cwrdd read to us about taking care of the little things in life; Sophie, also from Hen Dŷ Cwrdd, told us about the St David's story. Dafydd from Highland Place, Aberdare spoke about Wales's famous writers and also of Evan James who composed our National Anthem. Emily, from Highland Place, was a quiet but attractive supporter and we must remember that silence is golden.

The four children were a pleasure to look at and to listen to.



(l-r) Sophie Davies, Emily Farmer, Rev Eric Jones Dafydd Jones and Emily Moran

Photo: Keith Lewis-Jones

It goes without saying that the singing of the congregation soared with the birds and was pure magic. Eric, on the guitar, also encouraged us to sing "One more step along the world I go" – not that encouragement was necessary as it was sung with such gusto! The chorus "Keep me travelling along with you" I felt was a good slogan as I definitely felt that we were travelling forward and in such good company.

Thanks go to Diana Bianchi who sang two hymns the music of which she had composed herself. Such a glorious and unique voice – how privileged are we?

A short address by Reverend Jones followed, in which he said that David probably would not have approved of our Service but that we must use his name to remind us of who we are and why it is so important for his day to always be celebrated.

Ken Morgan, Arthur Saunders and Eric Jones sang the hymn *Cofia'n gwlad, Benllywydd tirion* (Three Tenors? – eat your hearts out!) I wondered if we could enter them in Britain's Got Talent. I concede that the Three Tenors are good, but The Cefn Coed Three also have personality, charisma and good looks —and no, I am not prejudiced!!

The service was an outstanding success and our thanks to everyone who helped to organise it and took part in it.

The afternoon ended with refreshments and, as always, they were delicious and plentiful.

As I said at the beginning, the sun was shining that day and we entered the Chapel with spring in our step and left with Spring in our hearts.

Marian Whippey, Highland Place, Aberdare

ABERDARE

During the early months of 2009 the Aberdare Branch of Women's League has once again enjoyed a full programme. Some of the activities which have taken place include a storytelling session facilitated by our members, Marian, Jan and Dorothy. A third visit by Tom Phelps, A presentation on Family Law by Melanie Hamer and her colleague Dianne Evans on Wills and Powers of Attorney. An illustrated talk on Aberdare Trams by Keith Lewis-Jones, A Musical afternoon facilitated by Phyllis Brace and Hat Making for Easter by member Joy .

The repairs and improvements continue apace. The kitchen is a joy to work in, with pucker units and a brand spanking new window. Our housekeeper, Barbara Hughes, has gone to a great deal of trouble to put clear labels on all the drawers and cupboards indicating their contents, so there are no excuses for not putting things away in the proper place. There are also New Windows being fitted to the Schoolroom, Toilet and Organ Loft. In addition there are plans afoot to establish a Disabled Access and toilet facilities. Other more complex work will eventually have to be done to remedy the damp problems in the south and west walls of the Church. We are grateful for the advice given by Philip Griffiths of Cefn Coed on these matters. Our particular thanks to Paul David for all his efforts on our behalf. Paul's contribution has been greatly appreciated

At the GA in Chester in April Highland Place Aberdare will have due cause to be proud. Rev Eric Jones will be made an Honorary Life Member of the General Assembly. Dilys Evans becomes President Elect of National Women's League. There will also be a PowerPoint presentation, designed by Keith Lewis-Jones, which features the Highland Place congregation.

The joint service conducted by the Rev Eric Jones at Cefn on St David's Day was very successful. Members of all ages took part. There were readings of The Beatitudes in no less than six different Languages. These included Welsh, Spanish, French, German, Latin and English. There were also readings by two young ladies and a young gentleman. The collection was also taken by another young lady. The Welsh tea which followed the service was lovely, much too tempting, for those, like myself who have a weakness for homemade cake.

No sooner had we congratulated Anne and Eric Jones on the birth of their third grandchild, Menna Angharad - a handsome small person with dark curly hair and lovely dimples, when a fourth grandchild arrived, a little boy named Math – once again a very smart little fellow. Our best wishes to all, may they live in eternal sunshine.

Ella Lewis-Jones

CARDIFF UNITARIANS / UNDOIDIAID CAERDYDD

On the 14th February Gwyneth (daughter of Sally and Gareth Evans) and Ross Adkin were married at Manor Parc Hotel, Cardiff. We wish them every happiness in the future.

Several members of the congregation were pleased to be able to join friends from Aberdare and Cefncoed at Hen Dŷ Cwrdd on March 1st for a St David's Day service, conducted by our former Minister, Rev Eric Jones. We were also delighted to share the delicious tea provided by the ladies of the chapel.

Diana Bianchi will attend the Annual Meetings in Chester, as our delegate and Margaret Evans will also attend the meetings with some members hoping to visit for the Growth Day on Friday 17th April. This will also enable them to see Rev. Eric Jones receive Honorary membership of the General Assembly and attend the Anniversary Service, conducted this year by Rev. Margaret Kirk. Lis Dyson-Jones will second the proposal for Eric's honour.

The Women's League members attended the District Annual meeting held at Cefncoed on 25th March. As the league membership is small, Cardiff members have recently attended several meetings in Aberdare.

We send good wishes to all our members who have suffered from heavy colds, viruses and sore throats recently and special good wishes are extended to Clifford Bunford, husband of Anne, who has recovered from a successful hip replacement operation.

We continue to be grateful to all who give up their time to conduct services and to Lyn Davies, our pianist, for her loyalty and talent.

Future Dates

Sunday 19th April – Congregational meeting to discuss fm issues

Friday 24th April – Evening at the home of Mrs Margaret Evans to raise money for the Khasi Hills Orphanage project

Sunday 3rd May – AGM of Cardiff Unitarians to be held prior to the evening service

Sunday 7th June – Joint service of the Aberdare, Cardiff and Cefncoed congregations, at the Friend's Meeting House, Charles Street (Meet for tea at 4pm – Service 5pm)

Thought for Now

Life's a jigsaw.

We can get so wrapped up in trying to make the little pieces fit, that we miss the whole picture!

Lis Dyson-Jones

CEFNCOED

WOMEN'S LEAGUE

We were pleased to host the District AGM at Hen Dŷ Cwrdd. It was good to meet with our friends from Aberdare and Cardiff but we do miss the Swansea and Trebanos ladies. Perhaps they might join us sometime in the future.

Some serious matters were raised and decisions were made, but we also had some fun and games.

Money was raised for the Project and for District funds.

We look forward to the Summer Rally.

Gwen Everrit

CHILDREN TOGETHER

Sophie Davies and Emily Farmer presented Readings at the Joint Service held at Hen Dŷ Cwrdd on St David's Day.

On Sunday 22 March they took part in the service for Mother's Day, telling us about the tradition and reading suitable poems. They ended with a distribution of gifts of a daffodil and cup-cake for each lady in the congregation and, seeing how disappointed they were at being left out, for each gentleman also.

VISITORS

We were pleased to welcome friends from Aberdare and Cardiff on 1 March for a Joint Service. We express our thanks to Rev Eric Jones for coordinating a most successful event.

NITA JONES

Sadly, after a prolonged illness, Miss Nita Jones has died. Her funeral took place on 6 March, with Rev Eric Jones officiating at Hen Dŷ Cwrdd and at Llwydcoed Crematorium. We extend our sympathy to Nita's family and express our thanks for donations to the chapel in lieu of flowers.

BAPTISM

Over fifty adults and children were first-time-visitors to the chapel in March for the Naming Ceremony of baby Ella Dawn conducted by Rev Eric Jones.

Ken Morgan

SWANSEA

The months since Christmas have been quiet ones for the church. We have survived the cold wintry weather and enjoyed services on various subjects, from making the most of our time — some advocate that we should take more time to 'stand and stare', and others that we should be making the most of every minute. We all have our own views on this. The Good Samaritan is a favourite topic and of course this year the service on Darwin was in keeping with his 200th birthday. As usual Julianne prepared a lovely Mother's Day service with some very good readings on Grandmothers, illustrating how they have changed over the years. We had sprays of silk flowers as a keepsake.

Mr Paul David always manages to make us laugh and his friend's 'mystical experience' on a mountaintop did just that. We are grateful to all those who take the time to prepare services and to travel. I agree with the 'Bird's Eye View' by *The Golden Eagle* in the last newsletter that they should be recognised for the work they do.

We are very grateful to David and Rhian for attending the meetings on the future of ministry. They are very good at reporting back and keeping us well informed. We all hope that our churches will survive into the future and we wait to see which cluster will be chosen for special guidance.

The wonderful displays of daffodils everywhere around Swansea have brightened us all and the prospect of lighter evenings and longer warmer days is uplifting.
Welcome, O long awaited Spring!

Pamela Taylor

TREBANOS

GRAIG

The congregation has suffered a sad loss due to the death of Mrs Gwen Bowen. An attender at the Graig, she also attended Gellionnen when it was possible to do so. Gwen was intelligent, perceptive, supportive and open minded. She was an exceptionally good listener and I wonder if this was partly due to her blindness. She also had great humour and I remember her telling me of the day she changed her bed using a very posh tablecloth instead of a sheet.

Gwen was the widow of the late Ogwen Bowen, a blacksmith who made the fine gates of the Graig Chapel. Mother of the late Rev Lyn Bowen, Mrs Tegwen Taylor and Mr Roy Bowen, she spoke always of her family with pride and love. All of my memories of Gwen are good ones.

Her funeral service was conducted by the Rev Eirion Phillips.

GELLIONNEN

The icy weather caused us to miss out on one service, approach roads were very slippery. Nevertheless we now have daffodils blooming in the graveyard. Our expectations of spring must be more eager than most. As the weather improves we expect to see the building become more whole again.

We have had another Gellionnen Benefit, this time put on by Graham Larkbey from London with the support of our three local harp players Rhiannon, Hafwen and Branwen. Graham sings songs – often his own – which are socially observant and caring. He is a super guitar player and offered very readily to put on this gig for us. Once again the publican of the Ivy Bush gave us our room free and the night's takings added up to £275 with donated raffle prizes. Gareth Evans our treasurer won the guitar and promptly sold it to his brother-in-law for £25, thereby bringing us up to £300!

Many thanks once again to those who have taken or contributed to Gellionnen's Sunday morning services.

We are proud and happy to announce that Lewis Rees has been accepted into full ministerial training. "May the wind always be at your back" Lewis.

Marian Littlepage

WICK

We have been experiencing problems this year with very muddy access to our chapel. Large wheeled vehicles have been churning up the grass verges each side of the road leaving a wide expanse of mud. Our officers have sent a letter about this to the local community council and we await more news.

The mud did not prevent access for the wedding between Michael Davies and Lorraine Phillips. Carpet was laid across the gateway and the beautiful dresses of Bride and bridesmaids were protected. It was a lovely occasion and everyone thoroughly enjoyed themselves. Our very best wishes to Michael and Lorraine.

The village is sponsoring a local calendar for 2010 and our chapel will be taking part. Helen Bhanaut will take some photos of the chapel and they will then be used to illustrate a month in 2010. Each organisation will be able to sell calendars for funds, so members of family and friends of our chapel will be receiving calendars as Christmas presents!

Congratulations to Julie and Rob Ball on the birth of their daughter Olivia, a sister for Sam.

Instead of a Mothering Sunday Service this year we are holding a 'Mothers and Family Celebration' on March 29th when all ages will make it a very special occasion. Our Easter Service will be on April 12th at 3.00pm. If anyone is in the Vale of Glamorgan on these days – a warm welcome awaits you.

As this is the start of spring I thought we could share these thoughts:-

"We have not inherited the earth from our parents, we are borrowing it from our children," and, as Gerald Durrell wrote – "There is no Third World, there is only one world and we all have to live in it."

Our very best wishes to all our District friends.

Julianne Morgan

QUOTATIONS TO PONDER

(We are indebted to Ella Lewis-Jones for bringing the following to our attention.)

On Suffering

"Suffering confers neither privileges nor rights; it all depends on how one uses it. If you use it to increase the anguish of others, you are degrading, even betraying it. And yet the day will come when we shall understand that suffering can elevate human beings.....God help us to bear our suffering well"

Elie Wiesel

On seeing the goodness in others

"It never hurts to think too highly of a person; often they become ennobled and act better because of it"

Nelson Mandela

STORY OVERHEARD AT A MINISTERS' MEETING

(Submitted by Lis Dyson-Jones)

Working By Results

A minister died and whilst waiting in a short queue at the Pearly Gates noticed, ahead of him, a slovenly chap wearing sunglasses, a loud shirt, leather jacket and jeans.

Saint Peter addressed him saying, "Who are you, so that I may know whether to admit you to the Kingdom of Heaven?"

The man replied, "I'm Jim Thomas, taxi driver from Barry."

Saint Peter consulted his list, smiled and said to the taxi driver, "Take this silken robe and golden staff and enter the Kingdom of Heaven."

The taxi driver went into heaven with his robe and staff and then it was the minister's turn. He stood erect and boomed out, "I am Joseph Evans, minister of four Unitarian congregations for over forty years."

Saint Peter consulted his list and then said to the minister, "Take this cotton robe and wooden staff and enter the Kingdom of Heaven."

“Just a minute,” said the minister, “that man was a taxi driver and he got a silken robe and a golden staff. How can this be?”

“Up here we work by results,” said Saint Peter. “While you preached, people slept; while *he* drove, people prayed.”

A BIRD'S EYE VIEW

It seems that not everyone has such excellent eyesight as yours truly – there's not much that I don't spot! I *hear* lots of things too. I recently heard that an employee of the postal service (undoubtedly a fellow 'eagle-eye') spotted that a letter containing copy for this edition of the District News bore the incorrect postage. The error came about through the sender having misread 1^P as 1ST on the stamp she affixed. (I've heard of people having to mind 'their Ps and Qs', but never 'their Ps and STs'.) It wasn't until after a visit to the main sorting office, where payment of the correct postage, together with a handling fee, was made, that the letter was released from the clutches of the system.

The incident reminds me that it was a Unitarian, Sir Rowland Hill who, in 1840, introduced the famous **Penny Post**. Sir Rowland, (1797-1879), was born in Kidderminster; he was a teacher and social reformer. He campaigned for a comprehensive reform of the postal system, and later served as a government postal official. He is usually credited with originating the basic concepts of the modern postal service, including the invention of the postage stamp. Rowland's father, Thomas Wright Hill, included Joseph Priestley, Tom Paine and Richard Price among his circle of friends.

The Golden Eagle

ABOUT THIS PUBLICATION

Copy for the **South East Wales Unitarian News** should be sent by to:-

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The deadline for the next edition is **Saturday 30th May 2009.**

South East Wales Unitarian Society members receive a copy free of charge.

The annual SEWUS membership fee remains at **£5**.
