



## South East Wales Unitarian News

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April 2013

### FOR YOUR DIARY

**Sunday 12<sup>th</sup> May** – SEWUS Annual General Meeting at Gellionnen. Service at 10.30am with AGM to follow. Julie Nedin will be installed as District President for 2013-15; congregations are invited to put forward a nomination for Vice-President.

**Saturday 25<sup>th</sup> May** – Copy deadline for the next issue of South East Wales Unitarian News

### REVEREND LEWIS REES

Most of you know Lewis from his time as President of SEWUS between 2007- 2009 and as the Lay Pastor of Trebanos congregation who was also their representative to attend SEWUS meetings.

After Lewis became a member of the Trebanos congregation he began taking services, Rev Eirion Phillips saw something in Lewis and began to 'mentor' him into taking services, this led to Lewis becoming Congregational Leader/Lay Pastor with the Trebanos congregation in 2004, only a few short years after his first visit to the chapel. He applied to the GA to train formally as a Lay Pastor, but something had been seen in Lewis by others as when he returned from his interview he had been accepted for Ministerial training!

Lewis studied tirelessly and continued to be Lay Pastor at Trebanos for over 8 years whilst still working full-time as a Fire-fighter (Control).

His studies were put on hold in 2011 as he was struck by an illness which led to him having a full year off work as brain surgery was a strong possibility – thankfully that was avoided.

Last year he took up his studies again and I am so proud that these were all completed in November 2012. Lewis was interviewed by the GA panel in January 2013 and has been accepted on the Roll of Ministers and Lay Pastors. He will be formally recognised at the Service of Thanksgiving which will be held within the GA Anniversary Service on Friday 12<sup>th</sup> April 2013.

As Lewis's wife I would like to take this opportunity to tell him how immensely proud I am of his achievement and of the commitment and effort that he put into his studies, the tireless service he gave to the Trebanos congregation during his time as Lay Pastor, how he has dealt with trials and tribulations along the way – the biggest of which was the vandalism at Gellionnen Chapel – but he never tired or gave up.

We now have an exciting new future awaiting us. Where that will be is yet to be decided – Lewis is now on the search for a full time ministerial position which will suit us as a family. We have a wonderful new daughter who is a joy to us and we are looking forward to the future. Congratulations to my wonderful husband. Llongyfarchiadau i fy ngwr... cariad mawr am byth.

*Love always your wife Cheryl*

### CONGRATULATIONS TO LEWIS

Many congratulations to the Rev Lewis Rees who has now passed his ministerial studies and training at Harris Manchester College, University of Oxford. We appreciate very much as a district the time that Lewis has served as District President for South East Wales Unitarian Society from 2007-2009 and also his service as Lay Pastor of Graig and Gellionnen chapels although he has now finished in this position. He led the chapel at a difficult time when the chapel was severely vandalised and needed restoration. Lewis has also risen to the challenge of pursuing his ministerial training with full time work as a Firefighter. He and Cheryl are embarking on a new chapter of life, becoming parents to a little daughter.

We wish Lewis and his family every success and those of us from the district at the GA Assembly meeting Anniversary Service on Friday 12<sup>th</sup> April will be there to support him when he is accepted onto the GA Roll of Ministers with probationary status.

*Philip Griffiths (District President), Sarah Boyce (District Secretary)*

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

The interview in this issue is with Mrs Vera Tomsett. Vera is a member of Hen Dŷ Cwrdd in Cefn Coed, the Treasurer for their branch of Women's League, and a reliable worker and organiser for the church.

Vera has lived all her life in Cefn Coed and has never considered moving away. She attended Vaynor and Penderyn Grammar School in the nineteen-forties and recalls that her mother was required, at that time, to pay fees of five shillings a term. On the day that Vera left school the chemistry teacher, Mr Davies, said, "Vera Williams, I hear that you are going to be Secretary to Danny Kaye." "I've never forgotten that," she told me.

In her youth Vera joined the Youth Club Drama Group and acted in a few plays. Also, when Rev Marles Thomas was the Minister at Hen Dŷ Cwrdd she took part in almost everything that was going on, and there are many photographs of these events in the School Room.

Vera worked in an office until she retired, and feels "glad to be out of the rat race, and appreciating a quiet life."

Vera's mother was born in Cefn Coed and was one of seven sisters, she never went out to work and was always at home. Sadly she died on New Year's Eve in 1969, when she was only 59 and is still missed by Vera.

Her father was from Dowlais and she describes him as an 'entertainer'. "Everyone knew him. He was a comedian and was often asked to compère shows. During the war he was with ENSA for a while; later on he had his own concert party called the 'Carlton Show'." He passed away in 1989.

Vera has one younger brother, Eiddil and they are very close.

Vera married Patrick 58 years ago in February. Patrick came to Wales as an evacuee from Folkestone, early in 1940, aged 9, with his three brothers and one sister. After the war the family settled locally. Vera disclosed how she and Patrick had their first date on a Sunday after Sunday school when she was 20. Vera describes Patrick as 'very serious' and that he likes classical music, history, archaeology and is an avid reader.

Vera has a daughter Janice, who lives opposite the Hen Dŷ Cwrdd Schoolroom. Janice is a Nurse, based in the Outpatients Department at Prince Charles Hospital. Vera also has a lovely granddaughter who she describes as '15 years old, going on 45', adding, "She says that I am now 'redundant', as she is a very capable young lady." Vera concluded with, "Also, I must not leave out my son-in-law who is a pharmacist. In contrast to the jokes about the relationship between sons-in-law and their wife's mother, I think he likes me."

*Ella Lewis-Jones*

### ***Were you always a Unitarian?***

Yes always. All my mother's family were Unitarians. However I lapsed for a while but started back in 1986.

### ***Who or what has influenced your life?***

Getting married and having a daughter. It changes your life completely. I worried that I would do it all wrong, but Janice has turned out to be a caring, lovely daughter.

### ***What takes up most of your time?***

I seem to be more involved in Chapel than I used to be. Since Women's League started back in 1986, it has been a big part of my life.

### ***What is your most unappealing habit?***

My husband says, nagging him. I am not proud of the fact that I bite my nails.

### ***What would make the world a better place?***

If I knew the answer to that, I would win the Nobel Prize. I find it sad that in the countries where we are trying to help people to have a better life, our soldiers are getting killed. It seems that not everyone wants peace.

***If you could go back in time, where would you go and why?***

I would go back to my childhood when things were simpler. During the war everyone pulled together and looked out for each other.

***What qualities do you most admire in others?***

Loyalty, Friendship and Trust. Trust is very important to me. I learned the hard way, when I was let down. I would not betray a trust.

***Have you ever made any important decisions you regret?***

Some I choose not to share, safe to say that in my case everything worked out for the best. I am a great believer that good comes out of bad. Life would be so boring if everything was a bed of roses.

***As someone who tends to speak her mind, do you think that it is more acceptable to be tactful or honest?***

I'm not sure how to take your opinion of me, Ella. But yes, people do know where they are with me. I think it is a good thing to be honest when you feel strongly about something, although I recognise that this is not always appreciated. Tactful – well I try to be, I tell people I'm a better actress than Bette Davies. I cannot change myself, but I never set out to deliberately hurt anyone.

***What is the 'lesson' life has taught you?***

I take one day at a time, you never know what is round the corner. I was always a worrier, but as I got older I realised that worrying got me nowhere. Life is too short, so I try to enjoy everyday.

***What do you believe is your most significant achievement?***

That I have lived so long. I cannot believe that I am going to be 80 years old in May. I am so lucky to see my granddaughter grow up.

## **FROM THE SECRETARY'S DESK – O DDESG YR YSGRIFENNYDD**

### **Enough food in the world...IF**

How many of you remember the "Make Poverty History" campaign? A quarter of a million protestors in Edinburgh. The "Live 8" concert in London, opened by U2 and Paul McCartney singing the old Beatles hit, "Sergeant Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band". The flotilla of boats which sailed back and forth across the Channel to pick up campaigners in France.

The Make Poverty History campaign was centred around the G8 summit at Gleneagles in 2005. The G8 is a meeting of the heads of state of eight of the world's largest economies. Between them, the eight members of the G8 comprise around 51% of the world's GDP. This year, the G8 returns to the UK. The summit will be held at Enniskillen in Northern Ireland. As in 2005, there will be a prominent campaign led by the world's main aid agencies. The big campaign dates are June 8<sup>th</sup> (London) and June 15/16 (Northern Ireland). The campaign is called "IF", based on the argument that there is enough food for all in the world, IF the following "Four big IFs" are tackled:

#### **TAX**

"IF we stop big companies dodging taxes in poor countries, so that millions of people can free themselves from hunger."

#### **AID**

"IF we make the right investments to stop people dying from hunger, and help the poorest people feed themselves."

(Already, the campaign for the UK to spend 0.7% of GDP on aid has been a success – George Osborne's recent budget delivered this outcome).

#### **LAND**

"IF we stop poor farmers being forced off their land, and use crops to feed people, not fuel cars."

#### **TRANSPARENCY**

"IF we force governments and big corporations to be honest and open about their actions that stop people getting enough food."

#### **What can we do?**

Did you know that the Unitarians are already formally part of the "IF" campaign? This is because we are one of the members of Christian Aid, who are one of the most prominent members of the wider "IF" campaign. As Welsh Department Secretary, I attend the twice-yearly meeting of the Christian Aid Committee in Wales, and the most recent meeting (on March 20<sup>th</sup>) focused on the "IF" campaign.

I am very keen that we do whatever we can as Unitarian individuals and congregations for the "IF" campaign. I think the "IF" campaign can strengthen us, by helping us for once to look outwards, out of

our congregations and districts, and to focus on the needy world around us. There are plenty of resources associated with IF, to help plan a Sunday Service or a discussion group. (On a further point: Christian Aid Week is May 12-18 this year, which may be a good time for interested congregations to focus their own "IF" campaigns).

I am also keen to invite Cathrin Daniel, the new Head of Christian Aid in Wales, to come and speak to both Unitarian districts in Wales. She has worked directly in such places as Lesotho, Burundi and Sierra Leone, and has produced real results in all of those places. I think there is a good discussion to be had with Cathrin about our involvement with Christian Aid, and how we can get the best use of our involvement with that organisation. If anyone wishes to work with me to help facilitate this, I would be very grateful.

I am keenly aware that involvement in a "Christian" organisation raises issues for some Unitarians. However, I firmly believe that Christian Aid is a special exception. I think active involvement with their campaigns can strengthen us. And, as the one organisation on Christian Aid that is semi-detached from Christianity, we are able to offer Christian Aid a unique, Unitarian perspective and critique in their internal discussions.

Within our denomination, we sometimes hear of the splits between regular "Unitarians" and "Christian Unitarians". As Department Secretary in the outside world, I have also been on the receiving end of some unkind behaviour and comments from Christians. I remember one lady saying "*Ych a fi!*" to me when I mentioned my Unitarianism at one of my harp performances last year.

As Department Secretary, I demand that our denomination is allowed to rise above all of this. Seeing as we are members of Christian Aid, let us work wholeheartedly alongside our Christian colleagues, and with other agencies of other faiths and none, towards a far greater humanitarian good. I look forward to your responses on these points.

#### **"Our Faith" booklet**

I would like to thank all of you who took the time to contribute a statement of faith towards the "Our Faith" booklet. The booklet, which contains statements of faith from 28 individuals, simply would not have been possible without the strong response from South East Wales District. I will make copies of the booklet available in due course.

The booklet has now been printed, and it is my intention to launch it at the Welsh Department session of the GA in Nottingham. After the GA, it is my intention to use the booklet as the basis for a national media campaign for the Unitarians in Wales. *Diolch yn fawr i chi gyd.*

#### **Welsh Department: renewal and communication**

Over the last few months, I have been coming to terms with various internal discussions regarding the Welsh Department, and my position as Welsh Secretary. I therefore spent a lot of time in January and February working on the following matters:

- Contacting each congregation directly, asking for their views on my role as Welsh Department Secretary, and inviting suggestions on how I can contribute meaningfully to their development. I am grateful to Cardiff Unitarians for their positive response, and I look forward to hearing from others.
- Co-ordinating the meeting times of the Welsh Department and the two District Committees, so that our work becomes more co-ordinated, and to minimise misunderstandings between the various committees.
- Reviewing the Terms of Reference of the Welsh Department. This includes making the election of officers, and their terms of office explicitly transparent. This work is in progress and subject to ratification by the General Assembly.
- I was pleased to visit Nottage Unitarians and to take part in a service on March 17<sup>th</sup>. After the service, we had a very constructive discussion about chapel governance, and I look forward to continuing this discussion and being of assistance to Nottage, if and when I am requested to do so. I also look forward to visiting Swansea Unitarians with Julie Nedin for our rearranged service.

I welcome any comments or correspondence at the following addresses:

[ctywyn@unitarian.org.uk](mailto:ctywyn@unitarian.org.uk)

Carwyn Tywyn, 16 Heol Gwendraeth, Porth Tywyn / Burry Port, Sir Gaerfyrddin / Carmarthenshire, SA16 0AN

*Carwyn Tywyn*

## EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE KEY MESSAGES 22/23 FEBRUARY 2013

### 1 Ministerial Roll and Ministerial Students

The Executive Committee approved the inclusion of Rev Daniel Costley, Rev Danny Crosby and Rev Bob Pounder on the Roll of Ministers with full status. Rev Lewis Rees was added to the Roll of Ministers with probationary status.

The following were offered training to become a minister; Kate Buchanan and Kate McKenna at Oxford and Phil Waldron at Manchester.

### 2 Local Leadership Strategy Group

The work of the Local Leadership Strategy Group was explored with Margaret Robinson, co-chair. Margaret outlined the progress to date following the results of the "Big Red Telephone" survey of congregations. Three safeguarding awareness and volunteering events had taken place. Three Worship Studies courses had been arranged for 2013. Workshops would be held at the Annual Meetings and a Prospectus of courses published. Arrangements for worship packs were in place. The Group were thanked for their contribution and were asked to look at how they might work more closely with the Ministry Strategy Group and how they saw effective local leadership developing in future.

### 3 Annual Meetings 2013 and 2014

An update was presented on the arrangements for the Annual Meetings in Nottingham. The details of the Executive Committee's report as Trustees were finalised along with those of the three Strategy Groups. The Youth Panel would also be asked to report on its activities. Attendance appeared to be good and we looked forward to an exciting gathering.

The Annual Meetings in 2014 will take place 13 – 16 April at Whittlebury Hall in Northamptonshire.

### 4 2020 Congregational Development Programme

The Executive Committee approved the appointment of Jane Couper to the 2020 Board.

A major goal of raising £50,000 has been agreed to enable at least one project to be fully funded.

The aim is to achieve this milestone in time for a call for applications in May 2013. Significant steps have been taken to use a range of communications tools to improve awareness and involvement in 2020.

### 5 Financial Development

A monitoring report on quota numbers for the previous year was considered; including the implications of further falls in financial contributions. Fewer quota paying members had a direct impact on the amount to be claimed from matched Bowland Trust funding. It was agreed that, as we were over one third of the way through the period of the support of the Bowland Trust, a review of the financial development of the General Assembly was required and the Acting Treasurer would progress.

### 6 Stipend Review Committee

The report of the Stipend Review Committee was presented and approved with minor amendment for presentation to the Annual Meetings. It was recognised that the proposals for an increase in stipend of 3.5% represented a challenge to the wider Unitarian Movement.

### 7 Information Technology Development

The Executive Committee gave the go ahead to an improvement of IT within the General Assembly. Recognising the importance of this technology to the future of our movement, the EC aims to implement the changes within the next 12 months.

After taking specialist external advice, this initiative will see a new IT platform for financial transactions, a database of records and contacts to improve accessibility, a new website incorporating the latest ideas and functionality and improved IT services for staff. The new website, in particular, will seek to provide an easy interface with individuals, congregations and districts, allowing a greater involvement for the Unitarian movement at large.

### 8 EC Induction

Arrangements for the transition to a new Executive Committee after the Annual Meetings were considered including a review of the Code of Conduct.

## THOUGHT FOR NOW

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

Every moment is a gem in time, enjoy it, you will never see it sparkle again – a lost moment is a lost opportunity.

*Author Unknown.*

## **ABERDARE**

### **Weekly Activities**

The weekly events of the church continue to develop. Joy and Joan now run the Sunday Uni'Club for children and have been joined by Sarah who is a young volunteer from the area. They have numerous activities every week and arranged an impressive service for the Mothers' Sunday Service. The children had been busy planting bulbs for the occasion and every window sill is full of colour at present.

Every Monday morning between 15 and 20 people turn in for tea/coffee and toast and have a general chat, putting the world aright. Some more adventurous individuals try their luck at Scrabble. This is an effort to attract members of the community into the church.

The Women's League also has twenty five members and meets every week. There is a separate report from the League below.

The Tuesday morning Craft Club will be starting at Easter time with some of our more "crafty" members working for the Autumn Sale in November.

### **Visitors at Church**

We were very pleased recently to welcome Caroline Morgan and her friend, Kevin from London. Caroline is the daughter of Graham Morgan and granddaughter of a faithful member at Highland Place, Clifford Morgan. They were pleased to visit the church and take photographs.

### **Annual Lecture**

This year's Annual lecture is now fixed for Thursday, September 10<sup>th</sup> with Huw Williams from Dowlais speaking on the history leading up to the Chartist Movement. Some of us have seen the play "Rape of the Fair Country" performed during March – a story related to the Chartist Movement around Blaenafon and Nantyglo. The music for the play was composed by Dyfan Jones and he also directed the music for the show. Dyfan also created the music and technical effects for the show "Dyled Eileen" performed by the Welsh National Theatre Company around Wales, relating the story of the sacrifice of Eileen and Trefor Beasley of Llangennech who refused to pay their rates to Llanelli Council unless they received a Welsh bill. All their furniture was taken from them.

### **People**

Mary Sly is recovering from an operation at Neath-Port Talbot Infirmary and we were pleased to see her at our service recently. Anne Jones and Mike Cole have both received a replacement knee operation and they are both getting on well. Iris Davies is back home after a short respite at a Care Home.

### **General Assembly Meetings**

Joy Foster, Dilys Evans, Anne and Eric Jones will attend the General Assembly Meeting at Nottingham after Easter.

### **AGM**

The Annual General Meeting of the congregation was held on March 24<sup>th</sup> when officers were appointed and a church committee and support committee membership were approved. Plans for events during the year as well as financial needs were discussed. The Minutes of the Church committee as well as District and Welsh Department committees are now displayed on a newly placed Notice Board in the hall.

*Rev Eric Jones*

### **Women's League**



Highland Place Women's League celebrate Myra Gordon's ninetieth birthday

Photo: Dilys Evans

On the 6<sup>th</sup> February, Myra Gordon invited sixty members of Highland Place Church, Women's League and friends to celebrate her 90<sup>th</sup> birthday at Aberdare Golf Club.

During a very enjoyable afternoon of pleasant conversation and fellowship, Myra was presented with a hamper by Women's League, and everyone tucked in to a superb buffet.

Myra, a native of Aberaman, Aberdare, met her late husband Jim, a Scotsman, when he travelled up to Aberdare on a hospital train soon after Dunkerque. (This event was included in the Cynon Valley Millennium tapestries, to which Myra contributed.)

Jim's family were in hospitality in Scotland, and he and Myra managed hotels in Aberdeen, Edinburgh and Wales. This accounts for Myra's love of Scotland, her fund of amusing anecdotes, and her special cooking and organisational skills.

Until recently, Myra hosted extravagant lunches and afternoon teas each year at her home, raising money for the Church and various charities.

Jim always played a full part, even making a special wine in aid of the Church - Hiplunch, i.e. Highland Place Unitarian Church!!!

After a fall in her home, Myra was forbidden by friends and neighbours to cater the birthday celebration herself. She therefore chose the next best option. Once again Myra displayed the generosity for which she is known. One thinks back to the time when she and Jim invited the whole church to a three course meal at a country house hotel on the occasion of their golden wedding anniversary.

We look forward to Myra's 100<sup>th</sup> birthday !!!!

*Dilys Evans*



Ann Watts, Myra Gordon, Rev Eric Jones

Photo: Dilys Evans

## **Highland Place Uni'Club**

2012 ended with the children taking part in the well attended Christmas service. They put on a nativity play, read Christmas poems and sung Christmas songs in English and Welsh accompanied by Rev Eric Jones.

2013 began with the cancellation of our first session because of the 'snow'. The children have been busy so far this year working on their own Uni'Club banner, which will be hung in the church along with the Church and Women's League banners.

Personal projects being undertaken are Joseph's Medieval Castle, Ben's Pirate Ship, Morgan's Circus and Chloe's Coral Reef. These projects will be put on display in the schoolroom for all to see in the near future. The materials for these personal projects were kindly donated by Betty Evans of Women's League.

Lis Dyson-Jones, President of the General Assembly has recently returned from a trip to the Margaret Barr Children's Village in the Khasi Hills, Shillong, Northern India. Many of you will know that (Annie) Margaret Barr set up an orphanage, school and hospital for the children of the Khasi Hills. We are very excited to learn that Lis has brought greeting cards from the children (which they made and coloured themselves) to the children of our Sunday schools here in Aberdare and Cardiff, asking for pen friends. We at Uni'Club will be writing to the children and sending news of our country of Wales, which they will be so delighted to hear about, and to send each other drawings and stories.

The Uni'Club children have adopted 'Zisize' as their charity, and will donate money to this 'inspiring' work when funds allow, e.g. from some of the proceeds of our stall at Church Fayres, etc. The children have already donated £10.

We have just published the first of our quarterly newsletters. The main purpose of this newsletter is to keep the congregation, parents and Uni'Club members informed of what goes on in Uni'Club and to strengthen links between the children and the congregation. The contents of the newsletter will be put on the Highland Place website by Keith Lewis-Jones when I get around to supplying him with photos and info in the near future.

The children participated in the Mother's Day service taken by Ken Morgan. Mothers and grandmothers of the children also joined the congregation. The children displayed collages of spring flowers, read poems, presented posies of flowers to their mothers and chocolate tokens to members of the congregation as a symbol of the sweetness of a mother's love. Our thanks go to Ken.

Best wishes to everyone.

*Joy Foster, Highland Place Children's Co-ordinator.*

## **CARDIFF UNITARIANS / UNDOIDIAID CAERDYDD**

Sarah and Dewi attended a Safeguarding Training Day in Bristol held by the Local Leadership Strategy Group on Saturday 26<sup>th</sup> January. The church has now created a policy document on safeguarding children. A Safeguarding Officer will be appointed in due course on behalf of the Church.

Dewi attended the SE Wales District Executive meeting held in Cardiff on 20<sup>th</sup> January with representatives from Cardiff, Aberdare, Gellionnen, Cefncoed, Nottage and Swansea. The Away Day was planned, with other subjects, such as publicity, discussed in detail. Dewi and Carwyn Tywyn (Welsh Department Secretary) both agreed to work more closely with each other.

A joint service was held at Hen Dŷ Cwrdd Cefncoed y Cymer on 3<sup>rd</sup> March where the Cardiff and Aberdare congregations were warmly welcomed. Tea and cakes after the service were much enjoyed.

Sarah Boyce attended the training on Assisted Dying on behalf of Cardiff Unitarians on 9<sup>th</sup> March. She found it to be very informative and moving. She was able to utilise what she learned on this day to share with us the following week at the 12 Steps on a Compassionate Life when we explored the subject in depth.

The Welsh service was held on 10<sup>th</sup> March by Rhian Dafydd who took us towards Easter discussing in her address the Cross and its symbolism. She admitted it was a tricky subject for her as a Unitarian to approach.

With the Christmas service of 23<sup>rd</sup> December 2012 having worked so well, plans are underway for the Cardiff Congregation to invite members, friends of the church, and those from other faiths to another service – a multi-faith service on 23<sup>rd</sup> June, when we will attempt something similar, but 'different'. Dewi has met members of the Jewish Community and Diana has been in negotiation with the Muslim Council for Wales to attend and speak also. There will be a few words said about Unitarianism. It is hoped the Aberdare and Cefncoed congregations will join us on this day.

It has been good to see Lis Dyson-Jones the GA President, back from visiting an orphanage and other Unitarians in India. She found the trip to be inspirational, seeing those who have very little making the most of what they have. She informed us of the trip in February. Through our contact with Lis the children at our Sunday Club have made new pen-friends among the orphans in India. They will now write to each other on a regular basis.

Lis was able to lead the congregation in March through a moving meditation as part of the 12 Steps to Compassionate Life discussion group. There we examined the subject of Assisted Dying. Sarah Boyce led us into the discussion. Diana will represent the Cardiff Congregation when the motion is discussed at the General Assembly. It was a subject that no one took lightly and some raw emotions were expressed.

Diana, Dewi, Sarah and Margaret will travel up to the Annual General meeting in April.

*Dewi Owen, Cardiff Development Officer*

## **CEFNCOED**

### **Women's League**

We restarted Women's League in February this year as usual. Our meetings are well attended in spite of the dreadful weather.

Gwynfa and I are sharing this newsletter as Elizabeth her daughter has made two visits to us.

The Women's League arranged the Tea after the joint service on 3<sup>rd</sup> March. We thank all the chapel members for their lovely plates of food.

On 20<sup>th</sup> February Liz Bowen came to our Women's League to give us a Welsh Quiz and a raffle to thank us for entertaining a group of teachers from Coleg Gwent in April last year.

On 6<sup>th</sup> March Liz, who is a development officer for the Sabbatical Scheme for teachers and assistant teachers at Coleg Gwent, brought another group of teachers to our Women's League for refreshments after visiting historical places in Merthyr Tydfil. The teachers were very impressed with our culinary expertise.

On both occasions Ken took the group to our chapel and entertained them, the group were impressed with his knowledge of the history of Hen Dŷ Cwrdd.

On 23<sup>rd</sup> March we visited Tŷ Newydd in Penderyn for a meal and a Mystery & Murder night.

Lastly, we are off to Highland Place, Aberdare for the Annual General Meeting of the District League on Wednesday 27<sup>th</sup> March.

*Vera Tomsett and Gwynfa Bowen*

### **Safeguarding Co-ordinator,**

We are very pleased to report that Ann Lewis has agreed to become our Safeguarding Co-ordinator with responsibility for the well-being of children and vulnerable adults – so important in modern day society.

### **Maiden Service**

On Sunday 10<sup>th</sup> February our service was conducted by Mr Peter Powell. Though he has taken part in a number of services at Hen Dŷ Cwrdd this was the first occasion on which Peter was 'going solo'. We congratulate him and look forward to the next occasion.

### **Joint Service**

On Sunday 3<sup>rd</sup> March, we were pleased to welcome friends from our congregations at Aberdare and Cardiff. The theme of the service was *Spring—a season of hope*.

### **Visitors**

On Sunday, 17<sup>th</sup> February we were pleased to welcome Rev John Clifford and Mrs Barbara Clifford to our service – it was good to refresh old friendships. On Wednesday, 6<sup>th</sup> March (as reported above) a thirteen-strong group of teachers from Coleg Gwent visited the chapel.

### **Mrs Shirley Powell**

Sadly, Mrs Shirley Powell died on 12<sup>th</sup> March. Her funeral took place at Hen Dŷ Cwrdd and Llwydcoed Crematorium on 22<sup>nd</sup> March, with Rev Eric Jones officiating. We send our condolences to Shirley's family.

### **Thinking of you**

We send our best wishes to members who are unable to attend services, especially to Mrs Nancy England who is recovering after a recent fall.

*Ken Morgan*

## **NOTTAGE**

Weekly services continue and a yoga group is now a 'hall-user' for 3 sessions a week.

*Marie Rosenberg*

## **SWANSEA**

Since our last newsletter our congregation has suffered the loss of our most senior member, Mrs Mollie Jones at the age of ninety-five. Mollie first attended church at the age of five and so had been a loyal and devoted member for ninety years. She had experienced the 'good old days' when the church had a large congregation and varied activities on many week days. For many years she was responsible for visiting members who were unable to attend church. She was a true Unitarian – applying reason to all things; loving the natural world; was kind and compassionate to animals. She was very proud of her family. Her funeral was taken by Julianne and was well attended. Members paid their tributes at a memorial service the following Sunday. We all felt her loss but are grateful to have known her and we will treasure our memories of her.

We are grateful to the people who have filled our pulpit. They have provided varied and interesting services and one is mindful of the time they spend looking for suitable readings to match their themes.

Our Mother's Day Service was taken by Mrs Hilda Dumbleton who introduced an innovation by asking everyone to say a few words about their mothers. This provided some interesting listening.

*Pamela Taylor*

## **TREBANOS**

### **GRAIG**

#### **National Holocaust Day at the Graig Chapel**

*The only thing necessary for the triumph of evil is for good people to do nothing.*

Graig and Gellionen worshipers met at the Graig on 27<sup>th</sup> January, National Holocaust Memorial Day, and prayed for the 6 million people and their families who had been murdered during the last world war.

Mr Colin Morgan who had worked in Poland for six years led the service and spoke movingly about his Polish friends who had lost members of their families because of the anti-Jewish Campaign which engulfed the whole of Europe for many years up to, and during, the last world war.

*(His work in Poland was mainly based in Katowice which was only 30 minutes away by car from the notorious concentration camp Auschwitz where some of his colleagues had survived and had witnessed*

*the tragic deaths of so many of their fellow countrymen. Some of Colin's friends still bore the Camp's Identification number which had been tattooed on their arms.)*

The service began with a prayer written by Rabbi Lionel Blue, 'The Just Society', which reminded us that we were created to need each other's love and understanding, and concluded with "Blessed are you Lord who teaches us to serve each other."

The reading, which was dedicated to the memory of the millions who had been murdered, was written by Felicite Robert DeLamennais and taken from his book, *Words of a Believer*, and titled 'Love.' In closing, Colin said that his Polish friends, despite their terrible ordeal in having to witness the death and abuse of their countrymen on such a large scale, still believed in the power of love, the sanctity of family life and the inherent goodness of man. They believed in Forgiveness.

*Colin Morgan*

## **GELLIONNEN**

How did we manage before thermal socks and fleece jackets became available?

On Sunday 13<sup>th</sup> January (the actual Celtic New Year's Day) we were visited by the Mari Lwyd, or Grey Mare. Beforehand we had a short service then a loud knock at the door announced the arrival of Mari with her ostler, and a whole company of other characters. Mari, despite the name, is a strong young man carrying a horse's skull on a pole. He is hidden under a large white sheet and roams around snapping at unsuspecting celebrants. We sang many carols, shared refreshments and afterwards discovered that one man had travelled from London for the occasion. The whole company of revellers has promised to return in a year's time.

A report appeared in the South Wales Evening Post, with a good-sized photograph.

Our Fairtrade Service was informative and very interesting with many Fairtrade things put on display, including a recipe book borrowed from the display of our local library and on loan just for the weekend.

Our thanks go to Jane Carpenter who attended the Unitarian 'Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults' training day. With her help we have put together a policy statement and Jane has accepted our request that she become our Policy Co-ordinator. Our Policy Statement is now on public view on notice boards in Gellionnen and Graig chapels.

*Marian Littlepage*

## **UNITARIAN DISCOVERY HOLIDAY, HUCKLOW, DERBYSHIRE**

Nightingale Centre in Great Hucklow Derbyshire is the Unitarian Mecca. Since our children were young we have been every year to what used to be called the Family Holiday Conference. In those days there were children galore, from babies to teenagers. When we no longer attracted children the programme became a bit different and the name changed to Unitarian Experience Week, crammed as ever with exciting talks, workshops, music singing and dancing, and uplifting services morning and evening. The food and the Fellowship were wonderful and this has not changed even if we no longer play wild games of netball or run a marathon around the triangle.

Once again the name has changed but we look forward to just the same kind of wonderful experiences. This year we shall have the joy of hearing Bill Darlinson and John Hewerdine and experience the Fellowship where we meet old friends and make new ones, often for life. For 5 days the cost is £270 depending on requirements.

So, join me on Monday, 8<sup>th</sup> July to Friday, 12<sup>th</sup> July to experience the MAGIC OF HUCKLOW.. Ring Marjorie Walker on 07718 106732 for details of how to apply (leave a message if Marjorie is not available) or see [www.unitariandiscoveryholiday.org.uk](http://www.unitariandiscoveryholiday.org.uk)

*Brenda Knopf, 4 Church Lane, Highfield, Southampton*

## **ABOUT THIS PUBLICATION**

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Items for publication should be sent by to:-

Ken Morgan, 25c Holford Street, Cefn Coed y Cymer, Merthyr Tydfil, CF48 2RW. Tel: 01685 379016.

Copy may also be e-mailed to [kenneth.morgan25@tesco.net](mailto:kenneth.morgan25@tesco.net) or to [Philip@philipgriffiths.co.uk](mailto:Philip@philipgriffiths.co.uk)

South East Wales Unitarian Society members receive the Newsletter free of charge.

The annual SEWUS membership fee for 2013 is **£5**.