



## FOR YOUR DIARY

**Sunday, 20<sup>th</sup> September** – Aberdare, Cardiff and Cefncoed Congregations meet at Highland Place for a Harvest Service at 3pm conducted by Danny Crosby, a student at Unitarian College, Manchester. All friends in the District are welcome to join on this occasion.

**Monday, 28<sup>th</sup> September** – Worship Leaders Gathering – at Highland Place, Aberdare at 7pm

**Saturday, 24<sup>th</sup> October** – Visit of both the President of the General Assembly and the National President of the Women's League to Highland Place. Rev Bob Wightman and his wife Mary hold the Presidency of the respective organisations this year. Both will address a meeting in the afternoon, followed by a Tea and an opportunity to talk to both Presidents. Details of times will be sent to each church in September.

**Sunday, 6 December** – District Service of Readings and Carols – hosted by Cardiff Unitarians at the Friends' Meeting House, Charles Street, Cardiff at 3pm.

## DISTRICT RALLY 2009

It was disappointing that only three of our congregations were represented on the trip to Bayshill Unitarian Church, Cheltenham on Sunday, 5<sup>th</sup> July.

The coach left The Stocks at Cefncoed at 9.30am and we made our way to the next pick-up at Aberdare. We thought at first that the local police had got wind of our visit, as they were out in force (forgive the pun). It turned out that our arrival coincided with (what seemed to be) an endless stream of runners taking part in a Charity Run for Macmillan Nurses. We were held up for a while as the runners were given priority – but we didn't mind too much as it was for such a good cause. In any case, we soon made up the lost time on the next leg of our journey, to Tongwynlais where the Cardiff contingent had gathered. Then... Next Stop Cheltenham!

On nearing our destination, we picked up Robert Alwyn Hughes who was to be our guide for a mini-tour of the spa-town. Alwyn, a retired lecturer in Art at Cheltenham College, hails originally from Dowlais. (Incidentally, Alwyn held a one-man-exhibition at Aberdare Museum in 2008.)



South East Wales trippers with some Cotswold friends before the service at Bayshill Unitarian Church

Photo – Keith Lewis-Jones

Our sight-seeing took us past many imposing buildings – churches, colleges, houses of historic and architectural interest – then an overview of the Racecourse, where, on the day, steeple-chasing had given way to bargain-hunting, courtesy of the many car-boot vendors. Moving on to Pittville Park and the Pump Room our arrival was most opportune — it was interval-time at a concert arranged as part of Cheltenham Music Festival : as the concert-goers popped out for their coffee-break we popped in for a quick look-around. Outside, too, there was much to see, including *The Furies* and *Women in their own Company* – collections of life-size bronze sculptures of the female form, elegantly displayed under the wonderful colonnade. (I wonder... would The Golden Eagle know whether any of the Cardiff ladies posed for these?)

By now we were experiencing pangs of hunger, so we made our way to 'The Beehive' where we had booked lunch. We were shown upstairs to the dining room, but weren't shown any food for quite some time – sadly, things weren't buzzing in the Beehive.

Arriving at Bayshill Unitarian Church to join the congregation for the afternoon service, we received a warm, friendly welcome. Services are now held in the old Church Hall, the former Church is now a Sales Room. The pleasant service was conducted by the Rev Don Phillips, with one of our number – the Rev Eric Jones– acting as guest organist. Eric may have been in charge of the stops during the service but afterwards our hosts pulled out all the stops – their efforts to provide hospitality knew no bounds and we were kept supplied with all the tasty cakes, tea or coffee we could (safely) consume – bearing in mind that we had the return journey ahead of us. We enjoyed the refreshments and the conversations as we mingled together — we were reluctant to leave!

## **GWERSYLL CWMWRDU**

A successful and enjoyable afternoon was held at Gwersyll Cwmwrdu on Saturday, 11<sup>th</sup> July when our Annual Auction was held at the centre.

Although it was raining outside, the atmosphere indoors was sunny and enthusiastic. It was good to meet with people who believe that Cwmwrdu can still provide a useful service to the community.

We were once again indebted to Mr Morgan Chambers, our by now expert Auctioneer, for keeping the money rolling in! We were pleased to welcome two ladies from Cardiganshire who paid us a short visit during the afternoon. We are also grateful to friends from Cefncoed and Aberdare for all their support. Special thanks are due to Mrs Vera Tomsett and Mrs Betty Williams, who organised a bumper raffle, which brought in £100. This, together with the auction takings, the sale of greeting cards, payment for teas and donations, realised the sum of £342.50, a much needed boost for funds.



Auctioneer par excellence – Mog in full flow  
Photo – Keith Lewis-Jones

Many thanks to all concerned. This event gave everyone present some hope for the future of Cwmwrdu.

## **'future ministry' INITIATIVE**

Our bid to be selected as the 'pilot cluster' for the *fm* initiative was unsuccessful. For information and comment see below – *Highlights of July EC Meeting*, and *From the President*.

## **HIGHLIGHTS OF JULY EC MEETING**

The second full meeting of the new GA Executive Committee (EC) was held at Luther King House in Manchester on 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> July 2009.

Reports from Commissions and Panels were reviewed, and the good work being done commended. A major focus here was on the full final report from the *future ministry* Panel – which recommended that Scotland be chosen as the 'cluster' to develop a future ministry model over the next few years. (The Panel had investigated four areas as potential clusters). The EC endorsed this recommendation but deferred any decision on funding until its next meeting in September. This was for two main reasons:

a) it would then have a clearer idea of the effects of the recession on GA funds; and b) at this meeting the focus would be on key objectives, with tough decisions expected on funding. The *fm* Panel was warmly thanked for its excellent work over five years.

Finances were reviewed, with income and expenditure figures provided by Karen Mallik in her capacity as financial consultant. The Treasurer Derek McAuley again emphasised the need for restraint. Congratulations went to (past GA president) Joyce Ashworth for raising £1,700 on her 'walk for growth' – noted this would total over £4,000 when Gift Aid and a matching Bowland Trust donation were added.

On staffing, a (slightly revised) timetable for appointing a Chief Officer was agreed, and an interview panel was chosen. Karen Mallik was confirmed in her position of interim chief officer. We decided to defer a full review of staffing (which will involve addressing Annual Meetings Resolutions) until a new Chief Officer is in place.

We turned to Action Plans, which record all current (and proposed) work of the EC, Commissions and Panels. Rather than discuss these point-by-point, we listed key priorities agreed at our last full meeting, and divided the plans among these (where possible). EC members each volunteered to take a category away, and to bring proposals to our September meeting when decisions on priorities and funding would be made.

Other points included:

- Plans approved for an Annual Meetings Panel, which would have decision-making authority. David Usher to be EC rep on this Panel.
- It was reported there was not enough time for a nominating group to be appointed and for it to make recommendations on membership of Commissions and Panels for the new Triennium (next year). Agreed that Dot Hewerdine and Andy Pakula bring recommendations on procedures for this process to the next meeting.
- A working group was approved to support the work of BUYAN, with the recommendation that this body change its name to Young Peoples Group.
- Arrangements for a third EC-Ministers 'meeting day' were discussed; agreed Dot Hewerdine and Ann Peart continue with arrangements.
- On the 'Heads of Agreement' with the Non-Subscribing Presbyterian Church of Ireland, adopted at our Annual Meetings, noted they have requested one relatively-minor clause (6.6) be dropped from the document. Agreed to recommend this change to 2010 Annual Meetings.
- Congratulations went to the newly-elected President of the Unitarian Universalists in America, Peter Morales.

OTHER KEY MESSAGES FROM THE MEETING:

- Excellent and colourful new GA leaflets, bookmarks and a poster are available from Essex Hall.
- GA grants of up to £250 are still available for new congregational notice-boards which display GA consistent identity.
- The annual membership quota from congregations to the GA is to rise by £1 (to £24).
- Invitations for nominations for new Vice-President to go out shortly.
- The following recommendations for the Ministerial Roll were approved: that Patrick Timperley be admitted to the GA Roll of Ministers with probationary status; that the Rev Linda Hart and the Rev David Shaw be granted full status on the Roll of Ministers, having satisfactorily completed their probation.

*Jim Corrigan*  
(GA Executive Committee member)

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

The interview in this edition is with Helen Bhanaut

Helen grew up in Swansea and was introduced to Unitarianism by her father, who started the inter-faith Harmony Group there. Helen's mother was a Baptist and Helen joined the Sunday school there. When she got older, for a while, she also attended Gellionnen Chapel; she is now a member of our Wick congregation.

Helen is probably best known for her IT expertise. She designed and developed the website for the South East Wales Unitarian Society. Helen has an MSc in Technology for Teaching and Learning (Multimedia) and is currently involved in research into E-learning and Virtual Learning Environments.

Helen is a qualified teacher and has had experience at both Primary and Secondary levels. She has been active in various roles within the Unitarian movement and occasionally takes services. Helen met her husband, who is a Hindu, when she lived in the Midlands and they were married "in a quite unusual service" at New Meeting Unitarian Church in Birmingham.

*Ella Lewis-Jones*

***What is your earliest Memory?***

I have a very poor long term memory. I remember, after a family outing saying to my Mum that I wanted to remember it because I'd had such a great time. Unfortunately, I can't! I suppose what really matters is that I was happy.

***What living person do you most admire and why?***

I don't really go in for the celebrity thing. Often, I think the people that influence us most are those that we meet in chance encounters and never see again.

***What is your most treasured possession?***

I don't know that I've got any object that's that valuable to me but I would be a bit lost these days without a computer to hand.

***What has been the proudest moment of your life?***

I think that this has to be when I got my MSc and my daughter said that she was proud of me.

***Sum yourself up in five words***

Content, creative, determined, sentimental and a bit crazy.

***What single thing would improve the quality of your life?***

Being more confident at driving – I'm getting there but it's been a struggle.

***How do you relax?***

Yoga...I should do it more.

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

Not a lot. I'd like to have been more confident at a younger age but then you can only gain confidence through experience can't you?

***What is the best advice you have been given?***

At one of those chance encounters I spoke of, someone said 'you've got to learn to blow your own trumpet before someone else uses it as a funnel'. It's taken me years to take that on board.

***What did you learn from your parents?***

My Dad has always been very interested in theology and never thought me too young to discuss the fundamental questions of life. My mother has always been interested in people and was always willing to sit down after school and listen to the questions that arose from the occurrences of the day.

***What is your favourite book?***

I very much enjoyed the Cadfael books and collected the whole series. I liked Ellis Peters' description of the countryside and the character of the worldly Welsh monk. He always sought to resolve situations with sympathy towards the frailty of human nature.

***What is the most important lesson life has taught you?***

That nothing's worth worrying about ...most of the time!

***How would you like to be remembered?***

I hope that people won't have to remember me any time soon.

## **THOUGHT FOR NOW**

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

In addition to figuring out what your priorities are, it is also helpful to figure out what you don't want in your life anymore. This is a subtle distinction, but it's an important one to make. We allow a lot of mental, emotional and psychological clutter to accumulate in our minds and our lives, blocking our access to inner peace.

*Elaine St. James*

## FROM THE PRESIDENT

It is hard to believe but it is a full five years ago since the Rev Eric Jones retired, followed by a short interim ministry from the Rev John Clifford which finished in 2004. Since this time, discussion has been ongoing on the subject of ministry in the district including at one point seeking for a minister through the Ministerial Vacancies list.

As members of congregations have heard, South East Wales Unitarian Society/District was unsuccessful in our recent bid to become a cluster for a pilot collaborative ministry model. At an initial meeting in October 2008 organised by the GA *future ministry* Panel it was explained that South East Wales had been selected as one of four clusters throughout the Unitarian denomination (as having no full time Ministry) to be considered for a pilot scheme. Further meetings were held with our cluster consultants in January and March 2009 with Eileen Wield from Kent and Joan Cook from Edinburgh and all chapels in the district sent representatives to the meetings. This culminated in chapels giving a commitment statement and financial commitment for 3-5 years as part of our 'cluster' or district bid for the pilot scheme which was submitted in May 2009 to the future ministry panel.

A considerable amount of time and effort has been put in by chapel representatives on future ministry and what this process did help our district achieve was that chapels made a financial commitment and a commitment to collaborative ministry. The model of collaborative ministry recognises the importance of a qualified minister but is a model that would include the strengths that our district already possesses such as the existing structure provided by lay pastors, lay leaders, congregational leaders and worship leaders as well as the contribution by church officers and members of the congregations. It is a model of a team of people working together, ministers and lay people, paid and volunteer.

Our bid brought about ideas for growth and renewal. It included aims such as provision of:

- Spiritual leadership by leading and developing worship and religious education
- Training of congregations in leading worship, pastoral care and rites of passage.
- Being open to change and risk
- Improvement of hospitality and the welcome to visitors. Ensure that buildings are well maintained and welcoming.
- Provision of social and educational events
- Organisation of financial reserves to be made available for growth and ministry.
- A strategy for regeneration and growth including publicity and marketing (prioritisation of the use of updated websites and notice-boards).
- Development of programmes for youth
- Organisation of pastoral care networks with congregations
- Support congregations to enable effective management of churches/chapels
- Raise the profile of Unitarianism locally and throughout the district on social responsibility and other relevant issues.

It was envisaged that the district would seek to appoint a paid minister or leader to lead the collaborative model. We meet as a district executive on September 10<sup>th</sup> 2009 to take ministry forward and chapel representatives who attended the district future ministry meetings will also be invited. It is suggested that those attending prepare themselves with background knowledge on Guidelines for Partnership between Congregations and Ministers. This document of September 2008 has been sent to all chapel secretaries so is available for each chapel.

We are fortunate that we have members in our district that have served on the Ministry Commission and the future ministry panel who are able to share their expertise with us. Other members have experience of recruitment and appointment of staff through their work which will also be invaluable in regards to the appointment of a paid minister.

One of the Cardiff members on hearing of our unsuccessful bid said that as one door closes another one opens. We need to keep moving with ministry and draw together a plan of action with a time frame, hopefully using the ideas for growth and renewal and the financial commitment set out in our cluster bid. We now need to take this through an open door of our own making.

In Peace,  
*Sarah Boyce*

## ABERDARE

Nine Members of Highland Place Church arrived, on a dark, wet Saturday for the Annual Fund Raising Auction at Cwmwrdu. More than £300 was raised which was due in no small part to the Raffle which the Cefn ladies had organised over the previous few weeks, with lots of good prizes. Morgan Chambers was the auctioneer who kept us entertained, as he did his best to make the most of those items which were up for sale. Let us hope that the development plans, which are in preparation, meet with success.

Highland Place Church now has its own website. The site is still being added to and can be accessed by visiting [www.ukunitarians.org.uk/aberdare/](http://www.ukunitarians.org.uk/aberdare/) Keith Lewis-Jones did much of the input, under the supervision of John Wilkinson from the DUWIT Team at Essex Hall. This facility is freely available to all Unitarian groups who wish to develop their own website. Naturally, the priority will be to keep the Highland Place website regularly updated.

The General tidying and improvements to Highland Place continues. The Schoolroom floor has been recently sanded and varnished, the Kitchen now has more hygienic cushion flooring and lots of rubbish has been removed.

The Flower Service, taken by the Rev Eric Jones, was a really friendly and enjoyable occasion. There were a goodly number in the congregation including family, friends and members who took the opportunity to sign the membership sheet. Everyone went home with a small bunch of flowers donated by someone else. The new Hymnbook was used on the occasion.

The District Women's League Rally took place in June, with league members from Cardiff, Cefncoed and Aberdare congregating at Crickhowell in Powys. As keen bargain-hunters we much enjoyed a shopping spree before taking afternoon tea at the Gliffaes Country House Hotel.

Women's League, as per usual, in July has had a number of afternoon outings and teas. This year, for the fourth time, we visited Savannah, where Lynn Davies and her family had put on a splendid tea. Funds were raised in favour of MS. We have also visited the Dare Country Park and sampled their new Tea Room. We finished off our Summer Programme with afternoon tea at Myra Gordon's. As usual there was a splendid tea, a raffle with numerous prizes and an interesting range of goods for sale on the Bring and Buy. Everyone joined in to help but special thanks are due to Myra who has a talent for providing such warm hospitality, and Jean Thomas, Joy Foster and Marian Whippey for helping in lots of ways.

Highland Place was comfortably full on 19<sup>th</sup> July for the Naming Ceremony of Morgan Kelso who had travelled all the way from the Republic of Ireland for the occasion. Mum and Dad, Archie and Laura also came, as well as a host of family and friends from all over Britain, Ireland and abroad. Morgan's grandparents, Gwyn and Marlene Morgan from Glannant St were especially proud of the occasion as their daughters, Laura (Morgan's mother) and Ruth had attended Sunday School at Highland Place. The Service was conducted by the Rev Eric Jones with Dyfan Jones as organist. There was also some fine singing.

The date of our Autumn Fair is Saturday 17<sup>th</sup> October at 2pm. All our friends from the other Churches in South East Wales will be most welcome to attend. There are usually goods for sale which are suitable for Christmas presents with lots of homemade items available at reasonable prices.

Next year, it will be one hundred and fifty years since the Unitarian Church was opened at Highland Place, Aberdare. We plan to celebrate this occasion with a series of events which will take place at various times during 2010. More news of this will be in the next edition of South East Wales Unitarian News.

Wise Comments - Taken from **The Power Of One** By Bryce Courtney

'Ruthless logic is the sign of a limited mind. A harmless mystery, left unexplored, often adds to the meaning of life' (p325)

'Cleverness is the shadow, whereas intelligence is the substance' (p331)

*Ella Lewis-Jones*

## CARDIFF UNITARIANS / UNODIAID CAERDYDD

We were delighted to welcome friends from Aberdare and Cefncoed to share joint worship on Sunday 7<sup>th</sup> June. The service, which was conducted by Lis Dyson-Jones, Sheila Cousins, Sarah Boyce, Pat Simpson and Betty Evans, focused on the theme of summer. We enjoyed tea before the service to enable several of our members to attend the Cardiff Singer of the World Competition and although we were unable to sit out in the garden at the Friend's Meeting House there was plenty of room for everyone to share a happy time together. We sang two new hymns and thanks must go to Lyn for playing the piano and to Rev Eric Jones for leading us in the Vesper hymn, 'Go Now In peace'.

Several Cardiff members attended the Welsh Department Gathering held on 21<sup>st</sup> June at the Tabernacle Chapel premises, Carmarthen. For some time, the Welsh Department Committee has wanted to communicate with the wider congregation of both District Associations and it was felt that a gathering together would enable that. The guest speaker was Rev Elizabeth Birtles, one of the founder members of the new Unitarian group meeting in Bangor, North Wales. She spoke movingly about the formation of the group and of some of the issues involved in joining together in meaningful worship. The day offered the opportunity for those attending to share and explore issues relevant to all of us and feedback from the day has been positive. The Cardiff Church Committee will discuss how we can help in the process of moving the issue of a replacement Welsh Department Secretary forward, following the retirement of the Rev Eric Jones, in 2011.

The service held on General Assembly Sunday, June 28<sup>th</sup>, enabled the congregation to look at the message illustrated on the new GA poster and this served to remind all of us what we stand for. We continue to be indebted to those in the District who regularly conduct services and the variety of themes help to broaden our Unitarian perspective. It is gratifying that so many members of our own congregation are prepared to conduct worship.

We look forward to welcoming our friends from Bristol Unitarians on Sunday 18<sup>th</sup> October 2009 when we will share worship at 3pm and tea at 4pm.

The first meeting of the newly formed congregational Book Club will take place on Thursday 17<sup>th</sup> September when we will discuss 'The Alchemist' by Paul Coehlo.

Our next charity will be to support BOBATH, the organization doing so much for Cerebral Palsy and Margaret Evans will hold a Cheese and Wine evening at her home on the evening of 25<sup>th</sup> September 2009.

### Personal News

We offer sincere sympathy to our Secretary, Sarah at the recent loss of two close family members. Our thoughts are with her and her family at this sad time.

Dr Marjorie Collins is now recovering, following a serious operation to remove a tumour from her lung. She is still in the High Dependency Unit at the University Hospital of Wales but our thoughts are with her and we wish her a full recovery.

We are again delighted to report that Lyn Davies enjoyed her time at the National Eisteddfod singing with the Hamdden Choir, televised with a lovely shot of Lyn, during the broadcast. Congratulations Lyn!

### Thought for Now

*'Ideas by themselves cannot produce change of being;  
Your effort must go in the right direction.  
And one must correspond to the other'*  
G I Guirdjieff

*Lis Dyson-Jones*

## **CEFNCOED**

### **WOMEN'S LEAGUE**

We continue to hold our fortnightly League meetings through the summer months.

We were pleased to have a return visit from one of our special guests, Mr Tom Phelps. Mr Phelps never fails to make us laugh with his reading of his poems. We were also pleased to welcome Mrs Phelps and to have the added pleasure of meeting their granddaughter.

Another special guest was Mrs Anne Jones from Aberdare. We enjoyed her interesting talk entitled 'Colour Me Beautiful' and were very pleased to welcome several Aberdare ladies who accompanied Anne as 'supporters'. A game of Bingo rounded off the meeting which raised £18 for District funds.

*Gwen Everrit*

### **OUT AND ABOUT**

We seemed to be here, there and everywhere during June and July. There was the Joint Service with Aberdare and Cardiff Congregations at the Friends' Meeting House on 7<sup>th</sup> June, the Welsh Department 'Gathering' at Tabernacle Chapel in Carmarthen on 21<sup>st</sup> June, the District Rally to Cheltenham on 5<sup>th</sup> July, and the Auction at Gwersyll Cwmwrd on 11<sup>th</sup> July. All events were enjoyable and successful in different ways and we were represented by different combinations of members – some attending all four: Well Done! The ladies of the Women's League also managed to find the stamina to attend the League's District Outing to Crickhowell.

### **GREEN FOOTPRINT**

The travelling reported above can't have done our carbon-footprint much good, so it was pleasing to hear that Shirley Douglas and Ann Lewis can claim to have left a trail of environmentally greener footprints when they took part in the 'Forget-me-not Walk' in aid of Leukaemia Research. The 6-mile sponsored walk was along the Taff Trail between Merthyr Tydfil and Troedyrhiw. The final figure raised has yet to be announced.

### **CONDOLENCES**

We send our heartfelt sympathy to the following who have recently suffered a bereavement:

Susan Hudson (née Owen) and family, on the death of Susan's husband, Alan;

Pauline Kendrick and family, on the death of Pauline's stepfather, John;

Lyn Dunley and family, on the death of Lyn's wife, Judith (née Bow).

### **NAMING CEREMONY**

There were over sixty first-time-visitors to Hen Dŷ Cwrdd on Sunday, 2<sup>nd</sup> August for the baptism of baby Micca. The Naming Ceremony was conducted by Rev Eric Jones and it was a pleasure to have the chapel so full with a crowd of happy adults and children. This is the second such ceremony in recent months and, as a result, there are well over a hundred former strangers who now know we exist, and where we are.

*Ken Morgan*

## **NOTTAGE**

Rev Eric Jones conducted the funeral of Barry Pattimore at the beginning of June and as part of the service read a poem "We need more men like him" which was especially appropriate to Barry's life. Barry was a lovely man, quiet and unassuming, with a sense of humour to match. Ill health had prevented Barry from attending regularly at services, yet he was always with us. He carved a wooden platter for the chapel, and presented it, as always, in a quiet way. We are very proud of that platter, and have used it to serve bread for the communion service ever since. Annette assisted in a very moving service witnessed by a full chapel. He is gone, but won't be forgotten, God Bless.

The chapel was once again filled for the christening service of Samuel and his baby brother Harrison. We were very pleased when Jo and Chris – the proud parents – started attending services because they wished their children to be christened at Nottage. Annette conducted a lively service, which was also attended by many Teddy Bears and soft toys. Her theme was *The Teddy Bears' Picnic*, I can't remember when I last went to chapel clutching a Teddy Bear! The christening party left us for a celebration lunch, but very kindly left us a special cake to go with our tea after the service: Thank You!

Helen Steele and her family went on holiday to Ibiza in June. Not news, you may think! but the purpose of this holiday was to scatter her mother's ashes at a place she had found and loved. Doreen

and Derek Ogden loved their holidays, and would often while away the winter in warmer places. A small island off the coast of Ibiza was one of these, and her final wish was granted.

We are really pleased that Glenys Rosenfield is conducting services for us again, Thank you Glenys.

I have a new hero, Ghandi and Nelson Mandela have to move over! It is my son-in-law, Jon Crocombe. Last Sunday he took part in the Iron Man Triathlon in Bolton. He was one of 14,000 entrants who began their mammoth task at 6am with a 2.4 mile swim in open water, and then went on to a bike ride for 112 miles, and finished up by running a marathon, 26 miles. He completed all of that in 12 hr 42 min. He did it for charity, and the Swansea Bay Asylum Seekers Support Group are now about £600 better off! Well done Jon. If anyone would like to boost that total ALL donations will be gratefully received.

*Avril Protheroe*

## **SWANSEA**

Skies may be overcast but walking into our forecourt is an uplifting experience. Mr Brad Williams has done a brilliant job with beautiful hanging baskets covering our gate archway and walls and ground troughs.

Services, as usual, have been varied and interesting covering the value of neighbours, the importance of our attitude, keeping our faith in human beings and a lovely flower service taken by Julianne in which all members brought flowers and took different ones home. There was a tinge of sadness when we were reminded that the founder of this delightful service – Dr Norbert Čapek, minister at the Unitarian Church in Prague – died as a result of cruel experiments by the Nazis. Although we no longer have a Women's League, we celebrated League Sunday with varied readings and lighting candles in memory of happy hours spent in league in the company of ladies no longer with us.

We have enjoyed celebrating the birthdays of Jack Merrell and Rhian Evans with delicious cakes and savouries.

After service on August 2<sup>nd</sup> a letter was read out which informed us that our application for support for the *future ministry* had failed in favour of Scotland. We offer good wishes to the winners whilst feeling disappointed that we had failed.

Several points were discussed, e.g. we noted no funding was granted – why then did we all spend time working out how much money we could afford towards it? Also, some indication of why we had failed would be appreciated and what criteria were used to determine who warranted support. We shall endeavour to keep our Unitarian witness alive in Swansea and hope to see more people coming to join us.

May you all have a chance to enjoy some sunshine.

*Pamela Taylor*

## **TREBANOS GELLIONNEN**

Our Gellionnen and Graig News-sheet is now well established, if you are not at service then it will be posted to you. The news-sheet is the work of Julie Nedin who intends bringing out quarterly publications with details of forthcoming services and service takers.

By now we have seen the Gellionnen foxgloves come and go, though I've not noticed any heather yet.

The Gellionnen Picnic took place on a wet Saturday afternoon, but never-the-less things went well. Numbers were much reduced compared with last year's sun-drenched day but lots of song and music were made and the atmosphere was great. A few of the participants attending that day had spent a previous Saturday afternoon busking in Neath and brought their takings to the chapel for the Gellionnen

Fund. Thank you folk.

We have recently welcomed John Carter to our pulpit. John is American, a minister in training here. He took a lovely service – we wish him well in his studies and hope for a return visit.

To everyone who has taken or been involved in our services recently, thank you very much. Our most recent visitor was Rev Eric Jones, it was good to see him and he makes such a difference to the singing!

Eirion and Norma Phillips recently walked into Gellionnen to see Arthur Grist touching up small differences of colour on our beautifully restored pulpit with a child's painting brush! Arthur is a perfectionist who has passed his standards on to son Andrew.

These 'Choir Bloomers', collected from the internet, were passed on to me by a friend. They are all (allegedly!) genuine, taken from church newsletters, notices and announcements.

Miss Charlene Mason sang '*I will not pass this way again*', giving obvious pleasure to the congregation.

Next Thursday there will be tryouts for the choir. They need all the help they can get.

At the evening service the sermon topic will be 'What Is Hell?' Come early and listen to our choir practice.

Eight new choir robes are currently needed due to the addition of several new members and to the deterioration of some older ones.

This evening at 7 pm there will be hymn-singing in the park across from the church. Bring a blanket and come prepared to sin.

*Marian Littlepage*

## WICK

Greetings to all our friends in the District.

Our Flower Communion Service was very well attended as usual. Then we said Bon Voyage to our organist for her 4-week holiday in South Africa. Of course it coincided with the Lions' Tour and even with her hectic schedule she managed to fit in all of the Tests. We are very pleased she has returned safely to us.

Earlier this year Julianne conducted the graveside funeral service for a former Wick villager, David Carter. He played rugby and cricket for the village but had moved away to Llanelli. It was his wish to be buried in our chapel graveyard, and a large contingent from the village attended the service. His family were unable to attend the flower service but joined us at the service on 28<sup>th</sup> June, when we sang a Welsh hymn – words brought by his daughter, and his father-in-law read for us in Welsh. A lovely service which we all enjoyed and, as you can see, all posed for our 'Guest Professional' photographer - several were taken so we could all be in the picture in turn.



Helen our organist returned in time for our last service before our August break and to find a flood outside our chapel door. Luckily we could enter through the vestry door. The rain did not dampen our spirits and a larger than usual congregation celebrated a special service of thanksgiving for past members, appreciation of present members, and hopefulness for our future. Candles were lit for our chapel, its musicians and worship leaders and for past, present, and future members. Our youngest present was 11 months and our most senior worshipper celebrated her 91<sup>st</sup> birthday with us. After service over our tea and cakes we sang *Happy Birthday* to her. Sadly we had to say goodbye for a few months to Ryan and Tamsin who have been worshipping regularly with us. They will be staying with relations in Birmingham while Ryan attends hospital there. We hope to welcome them back before Christmas.

Our next service will be on September 13<sup>th</sup>, with our Harvest Thanksgiving on September 27<sup>th</sup> which will include the dedication of our memorial seat.

We hope that our drainage problems will be cured during August, together with a new sink unit to be installed.

I don't know if you have read this before:-

*Learning is finding out what we already know.*

*Doing is demonstrating that we know it.*

*Teaching is reminding others that they know it as well as we do.*

*We are all learners, doers and teachers.*

*Julianne Morgan*

## **A BIRD'S EYE VIEW**

Flying around from place to place as I do, I have noticed that a few feathers are being ruffled as well as mine these days. The Editor informs me that the snippet of overheard conversation I included in my last article – *'all the best looking women were in the Cardiff congregation'* – caused some controversy. One Cardiff lady said she wished to be valued for her intellect. Others weren't sure. I assumed that all the ladies in the Cardiff Congregation are of the highest intelligence anyway, so don't start being paranoid about it all.

As I flew over Cwmwrdu the other day for the Open Day, through the mists and the drizzle I missed the intelligent ladies of Cardiff but noticed some wonderful money raisers and practical helpers and muscled gentlemen from Aberdare and Cefncoed, as well as a solitary soul from the Rhondda Fach - and I'm sure that they are highly intelligent too. I value the intelligence but tend to prefer and admire the way that individuals use their intelligence.

We will need quite a bit of the intelligence directed into practical support as we face the autumn months and plan the future of Unitarianism in our area in view of the failure of the future ministry bid. Should we continue to think in terms of the whole District, or look closer at the needs of each congregation? Should we be looking for a person to conduct traditional Ministry, development Ministry, financial and administrative guidance or look at the prospect of a part time appointment to tackle one or more of the needs of the District at a time?

In order to come to some conclusion, we will need to be both intelligent, good looking, sensitive and diplomatic, take a long term view and more..... but the longer the list, the fewer there are who can qualify - or am I in danger of being ruffled again?

*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.

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### **ABOUT THIS PUBLICATION**

The copy-deadline for the next edition of the *South East Wales Unitarian News* is **Saturday 24<sup>th</sup> October.**

Items for publication should be sent by to:-

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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 is **£5**.

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## THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY ANNUAL MEETINGS 2009 'GROWTH DAY'

(Held over from previous issue due to lack of space.)

The second 'Growth & Renewal Day' was held on Friday, 17<sup>th</sup> April. Following on from the first G&R day (at Hatfield) 300 of us explored what does, and what does not, work for us as a denomination, and how best to use what we have learnt.

Several people who had made pledges at the Hatfield meetings shared with us what they had done since that time. Representatives from Golders Green in London, Cardiff, Midland Union and Stockton spoke about welcoming new members to their congregations, holding lunchtime meditation services and 'freedom in fellowship' suppers, improving gardens, becoming involved in local outreach and community groups, creating exciting websites in all district congregations and creating leaflets for newcomers at Unitarian services, which included stories of 'why I became a Unitarian'. Jim Corrigan reflected on twelve 'top tips' for growth, gathered during his visits to congregations.

This set the scene for the Rev Jane Dwinell, UUA Minister and author of 'Big Ideas for Small congregations'.

Jane began by suggesting that we should all ask ourselves 'Why do we want to grow?' This fundamental question focused on the point that in order to grow, congregations must *want* to grow. They must decide on how large they want to be and not be unrealistic in that decision. She suggested that a 10-15% annual growth wish is the ideal.

Preparation in congregations is vital and being able to build on its foundations is important to the success of any growth plan. At this point, several key issues were raised as needing consideration by a congregation when planning for growth:-

- How are we (the congregation) together? Consider tensions and points of connection. Look within and create a covenant together. Centre and become grounded and realistic.
- How do we communicate with each other?
- How do we deal with money?
- Do we create a welcoming space/
- How easy are we to find? We may all know where we are, but if our notice board is old, faded and neglected; if it is obscured by over hanging trees or if we don't even have a notice board, how are people going to find us?
- How do we spend our social time, celebrate and care for each other?

Many of our congregations are willing to step out and find out the needs of the local community. There is much that we can all do to share concerns for local justice and social welfare and do something. We could all use our buildings to create safe spaces for the vulnerable in society and such small steps automatically create change.

Using the local press and Yellow Pages as a means of increasing our publicity might sound obvious, but it is amazing that some don't think of using such outsiders to assist. Good websites are essential for publicizing our faith and our location and making sure that the mailing of newsletters isn't just aimed at members whose attendance is infrequent, but at potential newcomers. Where there is a local college or University, community centre, library, hospital or young mothers group, send them information too. Take every opportunity to shout from the rooftops who we are, where we are and why we are different.

Before newcomers arrive consider the impression they will have of us. Is our entrance welcoming and do we treat them as we would treat visitors to our own homes? What about the times of Services? Are they consistent and how can we improve in explaining how the service will proceed? Look at the type and style of worship? Is it creative and do we take advantage of the numbers and space?

When visitors return, do we consider them as we should? We must think about why they came in the first place and why they have returned and recognize that they need depth. They need to understand us and feel safe to explore with us their need. Starting a small engagement group is a good way for new people to feel welcomed and accepted and will enable all to grow together.

So, the message from Jane was to begin with *wanting* to change and be willing to take risks. Visit other churches and communities and share worship leaders, working together on a mission project. Make small changes and be patient. Celebrate success, do not be afraid to fail and above all, *keep it simple*, aiming always to offer a quality experience for all.

Jane didn't tell us anything we didn't know but she reminded us of the importance of the obvious and she raised our spirits and woke the sleeping giants. She set the scene for the afternoon session where local perspectives were explored and good practice was highlighted.

Before the closing session which was conducted by Mel Prideaux and Rev Ant Howe, we were all asked to write and share individual statements about what our identification chalice symbol means to

us. We were invited to state what we would say to someone, should we be asked 'What's that badge?' 'A flaming what?'

Just a few of the 200 responses received:-

- 'The living flame of my religious belief''
- 'A symbol of my Church and religion that welcomes all regardless of their personal belief''
- 'My personal guiding light that connects me to like minded people'
- 'It says I am a Unitarian and represents the loving community to which I belong'
- 'A chalice. The symbol of my faith – Unitarianism – the one God in my head that controls my actions'
- 'The badge of open-minded people, respecting all faiths and we seek the light of reasoned faith to develop our understanding of life'
- 'The symbol of my religious faith, simple –and enlightening'
- 'The symbol of a warm, inspiring, loving community. Come and find out more on Sunday...'

Can't wait for Growth and Renewal 3! Try to attend the next Annual meetings in 2010 in Nottingham and you too can share in it.

*Lis Dyson-Jones*