



## South East Wales Unitarian News

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August 2012

### FOR YOUR DIARY

**Thursday, 4<sup>th</sup> October** – Dinner at Aberdare Golf Club (6.30 for 7pm) to honour Rev Eric Jones. Booking essential. Cost £12.50 payable to Keith Lewis-Jones, 20, Grover's Field, Abercynon, CF45 4PP

**Saturday, 20<sup>th</sup> October** – Visit by President of the General Assembly, Lis Dyson-Jones. Dinner at the Ivy Bush, Carmarthen. This is a joint-event with the South Wales District Association.

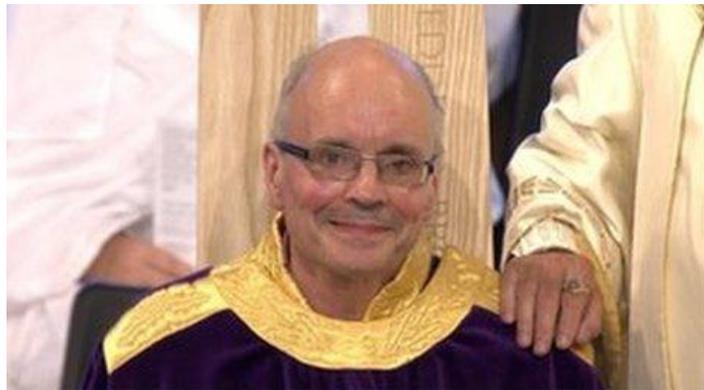
**Sunday, 2<sup>nd</sup> December** – District Christmas Service at Hen Dŷ Cwrdd, Cefncoedycymer

### EISTEDDFOD GENEDLAETHOL

As in previous years, there was a Unitarian tent on the Maes of the National Eisteddfod, which is fitting as the National Eisteddfod was the brain-child of Unitarian hymn-writer and thinker Edward Williams – better known as Iolo Morganwg. Iolo's home was at Flemingston in the Vale of Glamorgan so the Eisteddfod's venue this year –on the site of the old airfield at Llandow– meant it was 'coming home'.

The tent was staffed by volunteers from Ceredigion and South East Wales who were on hand to provide visitors with literature and information about the denomination, together with a welcome cup of tea. (Also on hand and overseeing matters was *Iolo* himself—see Cardiff news below.)

At the Charing of the Bard ceremony it was very pleasing when it was revealed that the competition had been won by a Unitarian, and we congratulate Dylan Iorwerth on his success. He joins the tiny group of individuals who have won *all three* of the Chair, the Crown and the Prose Medal competitions.



Dylan Iorwerth, winner of the 2012 Eisteddfod Chair

Photo: BBC

Dylan is a native of North Wales and was brought up as a Presbyterian. He now lives in Llanwnnen, near Lampeter and is married to Elaine Davies, who is currently the President of the South Wales Unitarian District. They have a daughter Luned who is a student at Cambridge University she also being a prolific writer. Dylan himself established the Welsh Language weekly Magazine "Golwg" and writes a weekly column in the Western Mail. More importantly, he is now the Editor of the Unitarian periodical "Yr Ymofynnydd". A member at Capelygroes Unitarian Chapel, he helps to run the Sunday School there.

The winner of the Crown competition at the Eisteddfod, Gwyneth Lewis from Cardiff has her roots in Unitarianism and Bwlchfadfa Chapel in Talgarreg. She is a well known poet, writing in both languages and received a Doctorate from Cambridge University based on the works of the well known founder of the South Wales District, Iolo Morganwg.

### HONOUR FOR THE REV J ERIC JONES

We are very pleased to announce that the congregation at Highland Place Unitarian Church, Aberdare have decided to confer the honour of 'Minister Emeritus' on the Rev J Eric Jones.

Eric has served the congregation at Highland Place for fifty years.

He served as Minister from 1962 until his 'retirement' in 2003. Until 1995, when it closed, Eric was also the Minister of Hen Dŷ Cwrdd, Trecynon. Along with his responsibilities in Aberdare, from 1971 to 2003 he was the Minister at West Grove, Cardiff and between 1999 and 2003 was the Minister at Hen Dŷ Cwrdd, Cefn Coed.

From 1965 until April 2011, Eric was the Secretary of the Unitarian Welsh Department of the General Assembly and a Trustee of the Pantyfedwen Fund established by Sir David James at Aberystwyth. A Past President of the South East Wales District, he also held office on the Cwmwrdu Centre, District Sunday School Association and organised the Llanmadog Youth Holiday for 25 years.

Eric served on various committees of the General Assembly in London and became the President of the Ministers' Fellowship in 1986, President of the General Assembly itself in 1989. He was made an Honorary Member of the South East Wales Unitarian Society in 2008 and of the General Assembly in 2010. In 2005, he was invited to conduct the Assembly's Annual Service, held at Chester Cathedral. Also in 2005, he was admitted to the Gorsedd of Bards at the National Eisteddfod held at Caernarfon.

The honour will be officially conferred at a dinner to be held at Aberdare Golf Club on 4<sup>th</sup> October.

*Keith Lewis-Jones*

## **DISTRICT RALLY 2012**



A 'panoramic' view showing some of the congregation awaiting the start of the joint service with Ross on Wye Unitarians

Photo: Keith Lewis-Jones

The 2012 South East Wales District Rally was held on Sunday, 17<sup>th</sup> June when we travelled to Ross on Wye. About 30 members from Aberdare, Cardiff, Cefncoed and Nottage made the journey by car and gathered at the Royal Hotel for lunch. The rally is normally held on the first Sunday in July but was brought forward by two weeks so as to fall in line with the service arrangements of Ross on Wye Unitarian Fellowship.

Following lunch we made our way to the Friends' Meeting House where we were greeted by the Ross on Wye Fellowship who gave us a very warm reception. The service was conducted by the Rev Don Phillips, with contributions by Kath Forder, Lay Pastor at Kidderminster Unitarians, and the Leader of the Ross on Wye Fellowship. Accompaniment for the hymns was provided on an electronic keyboard by Margaret Griffiths, wife of our SE Wales President, Phil. After the service we enjoyed a lovely tea prepared by the Fellowship members and had time to peruse the Meeting House Library and to visit the scented garden. All in all a very enjoyable day thanks to the efforts of Ross on Wye Unitarian Fellowship and the Rev Don Phillips.

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

The Interview in this issue is with Diana Bianchi. Diana is currently Secretary of Cardiff Unitarians and a life-long Unitarian. As an introduction to the interview I asked Diana a number of questions about her family, professional background and life experience. I received the interesting response which follows below.

*Ella Lewis-Jones*

I was born at Aberystwyth General Hospital and I was raised in Lampeter. My sister and I had a very happy childhood. Our father and mother were popular and well known in the community. They both came from old Lampeter families and were all Unitarians. Our house was always open to visitors and everyone who came had a warm welcome. Both of my parents had a talent for treating sick animals especially birds. So if anyone came across an injured bird they would bring it to them. Amongst those

birds that were brought I remember a buzzard, a magpie and a jackdaw. The magpie and jackdaw never left. The magpie used to fly around the garden all day and hop into his cage in the shed at night. The jackdaw was never happier than when he was perching on a broom as my mother brushed around the kitchen.

I was educated at Lampeter primary school and Lampeter County School. After leaving Lampeter County school I went to work as a library assistant at St David's University College Lampeter. My intention at the time was to earn and save some money to continue having voice training with Mr Ted Morgan who was a well known musician in the area, and then go on to the Royal College of Music and Drama at Cardiff. That did not happen because I met my future husband who was a student at Lampeter University. After his graduation we got married and a year later our daughter Rhiannon was born. We then moved to Shotton where my husband had his first job as a lecturer at a further education college. A year later our daughter Heledd was born. During our time at Shotton my husband was awarded a Fellowship at Aberystwyth University so we gladly packed our belongings and moved back to Cardiganshire. I loved living at Aberystwyth. However two years later my husband was offered a post with the Welsh Arts Council and we moved to Cardiff.

Whilst the children were still quite young I enrolled at Cardiff University and graduated with a joint honours in History and Psychology.

After graduation I worked for a short while as a Welsh Language Tutor for Cardiff University. I have spent the rest of my working life in television as a writer, director and producer. This career path has given me a lot of satisfaction and enjoyment. I have loved every minute of it.

I don't regret not pursuing a career in music. I enjoy singing. As for where my "voice" comes from – perhaps it's because all my family were good musicians. My mother was a good pianist. She was also an organist at Brondeifi Unitarian Chapel. My grandfather had a good voice and conducted a local choir. Both grandmothers were excellent singers. My two daughters and their father are good pianists. However only one family member has managed to achieve international fame as a musician. His name was Ivor Novello. And so it goes on—my grandchildren love music: Lili who is six is keen on singing and Hannah who is 10 has just been accepted as a violinist in the Junior Orchestra here at Cardiff. As for the other younger members of the Tylwyth (clan) we shall have to wait and see.

## **The Interview**

### ***What is your earliest memory?***

Busking in a pub with my friend Elisabeth (her mother was the Publican) and getting paid for it. We were both four years old at the time. My parents knew nothing about it until one of the 'regulars' informed them. Luckily my parents were amused.

### ***Where did your Unitarianism start?***

I suppose you can say it started from the minute I was born. Both my parents came from a Unitarian background. Records show that the family were members of Caeronnen chapel which was built in 1846 although the roots of Unitarianism in that area can be traced as far back as 1662. In 1874 my family were amongst the 19 members of the congregation who left Caeronnen to form Brondeifi.

### ***Would you agree that you have an intuitive understanding of small children?***

Hmm... All I can say is that I feel privileged when they let me into their world which is far more interesting than the world we adults exist in. I only wish I was as wise as them.

### ***I gather that you have worked in the voluntary sector, what drew you into this?***

I have never done paid work in the Voluntary Sector but I have done voluntary work as a Spiritual Healer in a Cancer clinic. I have spent most of my life working in television making documentary programmes for S4C and Channel 4 UK. What drew me into this was my thirst for exploring the world around me; being a documentary film maker allows you to do this in many different forms.

### ***Music clearly plays a big part in your life. Have you ever taken part in any of the big folk festivals in this country i.e. Llangollen or the Edinburgh Fringe?***

No I have never taken part in big festivals such as Llangollen. When I was younger I used to compete in the local Eisteddfodau around Cardiganshire and Carmarthenshire. As for the Edinburgh Fringe, I was there a few years ago to support my daughter Heledd's one woman show. I spent the week scuttling around Edinburgh with my shocking pink trolley and a bucket and brush; pasting posters to advertise the show.

### ***What do you consider your greatest achievement?***

I worked as a Writer and Director on a Documentary Series which won a B.A.F.T.A. award.

### ***Would you describe yourself as passionate about the Welsh language?***

Very Passionate.

***Do you have any weaknesses?***

Yes. I have many. However my biggest weakness is the inability to say 'No' to my grandchildren when they insist that I cook them pancakes for breakfast every time they have a sleepover. That's a lot of pancakes. I'm thinking of having a pancake conveyor belt installed!!

***What has been your biggest disappointment?***

Like every other living soul, I have encountered many disappointments in life. But being the eternal optimist I remind myself that when one door closes another opens, but sometimes it's cold in the hallway; but not for long.

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

That life itself is a precious present and I am privileged to have been given it.

**FDA – FIVE DAYS AWAY**

The last week of July or first week in August is always one of my favourite times of the year. This is because I get to spend a whole week at Great Hucklow at 'Five Days Away', a youth event for 12-17 year olds.

Not going to lie, this year was one of the best ever. The range of activities we had was excellent, we made friendship bracelets, tie-dyed t-shirts, we learnt dances, and we even made a dubstep (electronic) song!

Rob Oldman came to Great Hucklow on the Thursday with lots of technical devices for making electronic songs, he had chaos pads and the like.... I hope I sound like I know what these things are, because in reality I am completely in the dark! Some people stayed with Rob and composed the music, while a separate group wrote sentences on the theme 'things we want to celebrate in our lives.' We recorded these sentences which were then interwoven through the music.

Wednesday is always our outdoor activities day and this year we went abseiling and weaselling. Abseiling was... an experience! They always make it sound so easy don't they? 'Just walk down the cliff!' They don't tell you that—I don't know...— a force of nature will try and push you over and you have to push back against it, and if you *don't* you will fall over and nearly hang upside down. Yep, it's happened people. I enjoyed it though; pushing your boundaries is what FDA is all about. Weaselling was traumatic however. This is when you have to go through weasel-sized holes and squirm your way through until you see sunlight again. It was a laugh, but something I'm happy to do once and put behind me.

The theme of this year's FDA was 'making a me manual.' We had a session taken by the fabulous Jen Hazel where we were each given a 'me manual' – sort of a user-guide to yourself. Here you wrote about what made you happy/sad/angry and what you needed when you felt these emotions. It was strange, we expected it to be really easy but it really helped us to realise more about ourselves and our emotions. One FDAer said, "It was weird, when I was writing about being happy I felt happy! But when it got to angry I got really angry and emotional."

Throughout the whole of FDA I delved deeper into finding myself. Partly through credo groups, when we go into small groups and talk about our problems/things going on in the world/anything in particular. I also always find inner calm, for which I owe entirely to circle time. A quiet time at the end of the day where we can reflect on the day's events, or anything that we want to.

I always come back from FDA and feel very appreciative of everything I have, the world always seems shinier. I want to say a massive thank you to our youth leaders: John Harley, Sarah Atkinson, Jen Hazel, Andrew Rosser, James Barry, Lorna Hill, Emmi Lowe and Claire Maddocks. Without your support of the youth program (and your awesomeness) we wouldn't have the paradise of youth events that we do.

Well, the only thing left to say is, Who's game for next year?!

*Elizabeth Rosenberg (16)*

*Nottage Chapel (Wales, land of sheep)*

**CONGRATULATIONS - LLONGYFARCHIADAU**

We congratulate Carwyn (Unitarian Welsh Department Secretary) and his wife Catherine on the birth of their second child Gwyn – a brother for Heledd.

# **KEY MESSAGES FROM EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY**

## **Executive Committee Key Messages 6 & 7 July 2012**

### **1. Meeting with District Representatives**

At the last Executive Committee meeting as part of the discussions on how to improve EC communications, it was agreed that a meeting with District Representatives be arranged. This will take place from 1.00pm to 4.00pm on Saturday 17 November 2012 at Cross Street Chapel, Manchester. Formal letters of invitation will be issued shortly. The objectives of the meeting will be to involve District Representatives in discussion on key issues affecting the Denomination.

### **2. Financial Support for Unitarian College Manchester**

The Executive Committee considered a request from Unitarian College Manchester for a grant of £10,000 from the Unitarian Ministerial Students Fund towards the cost of tuition fees. The College has projected a deficit for the forthcoming year and is facing a number of challenges arising from the changes in higher education. It was agreed to provide UCM with a grant of £10,000 from the general funds of the General Assembly, not the USMF which it was agreed should be targeted at support for individual students. This has been possible as a result of the large legacy received this year. It has been emphasised that this was a decision for one year and that the College must not assume that a precedent of ongoing financial support has been established. The College was urged to work with the Ministry Strategy Group to address the wider issues raised and how future provision of training might be structured and funded.

### **3. Risk Management Progress Report**

A progress report on risks and issues facing the General Assembly was considered. Actions were being taken to reduce or mitigate significant risk areas and address key issues and these had been considered by the Executive Committee at its meetings. The risks to the reputation of all congregations and the Unitarian Movement as a whole if one congregation had problems, for example, in relation to safeguarding or fraud, was highlighted. The financial viability of the General Assembly is a major risk when income is falling yet demands for spending are rising.

### **4. Annual Meetings 2013**

The Annual Meetings will take place from Thursday 11 to Sunday 14 April 2013 at the Jubilee Campus, University of Nottingham. The Rev Feargus O'Connor has agreed to be the Anniversary Service Preacher. It was agreed to appoint Penny Quest to the Annual Meetings Group to lead on marketing. The Group is busy developing the programme.

### **5. Ministry**

The following have now been approved for admission to the Ministerial Roll with probationary status: Sue Woolley, Jim Corrigan, Nicky Jenkins and Sheena Gabriel subject to completion of her academic requirements.

The Executive Committee congratulated the four individuals and welcomed them to the Unitarian and Free Christian Ministry.

The Executive Committee confirmed that there should be no limit on the number of people to be accepted for training during the forthcoming selection process and that the only criteria should be the quality of the applicant.

Rev David Shaw had agreed to join the Interview Panel and Rev Sarah Tinker to act as its Chair.

### **6. Executive Committee Elections**

An election for five places on the Executive Committee would take place in the latter half of 2012 with the new Executive Committee to take up office at the close of the Annual Meetings in April 2013.

### **7. 2020 Congregational Development Programme**

The 2020 Board were working hard to prepare for the formal launch and should be open for applications in early 2013. This should enable work on the ground to commence in late 2013. It was agreed to appoint Indra Sikdar, a member of Golders Green Unitarians, to the 2020 Board with a focus on fund-raising.

### **8. Nightingale Centre**

It was agreed to appoint Colin Partington as Treasurer of the Nightingale Centre. Gordon Lowthian was thanked for all his hard work as Treasurer.

The minutes of the previous EC meeting can be found on the GA website.

*Derek McAuley, Chief Officer*

## THOUGHT FOR NOW

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

The Sufis advise us to speak only after our words have managed to pass through three gates.

At the first gate, we ask ourselves, "Are these words true? If so, we let them pass on; if not, back they go.

At the second gate, we ask, "Are they necessary?"

At the last gate, we ask "Are they kind?"

*Eknath Easwaran (1911 - 1999)*

How different the world would be if we all took this advice.

*Anne*

## FROM THE PRESIDENT

This month there are a few column-inches going spare in the District News. Consequently, as joint-editor and president, I feel compelled to put finger to keyboard in order to fill a little of the surplus space. However, writing this piece is not an easy task as most of the functions I have attended as president have already been covered by others.

The Summer Rally to join with the Cotswold Unitarians in a joint service was excellent and hopefully it gave a boost to the morale of the small Unitarian fellowship that gathers at the Quaker Meeting House in Ross on Wye. Prior to 'Sunday-Opening' Ross on Wye figured as a seventh day drinking venue for the miners of the Welsh Valleys and many of us had our first pint, and a chicken-in-the-basket, in the hostelrys of the Welsh Marches with English licensing laws. Whether Raglan Castle (see Cefncoed News) was included on the itineraries of those early excursions is unclear, but eventually, with all present, we enjoyed a convivial lunch seated like King Arthur's knights – but gathered around a huge square table. We express our thanks to Sarah Boyce for arranging the Rally which is never an easy event to organise – to quote the late Paul David, '*organising Unitarians is like herding chickens with a sheep dog!*' Thanks also to the Ross Fellowship for inviting us, or rather our thanks to them for accepting our calling card, as we do tend to be cuckoos and foist ourselves onto places and people for the Summer Rally.

Although not infrequent visitors to the National Eisteddfod, Margaret and I have previously only attended the evening concerts and have never been early enough to visit Pabell yr Undodiaid. This year we arrived early enough to combine an evening visit to the W Towyn Roberts singing competition with an afternoon call at the Unitarian Tent.

Superbly organised by the Welsh Department Secretary Dr Carwyn Tywyn, and staffed on rota by members from Cardiff, Aberdare and the Ceredigion chapels the tent provided a welcome tea and coffee stop for tired Unitarians and others. Although discussed at Welsh Department meetings perhaps the time is right for a Danny-Boyle-type bilingual face-lift to maximise the stand's marketing potential, with perhaps an annual presence both north and south, and at events such as the Royal Welsh Agricultural Show.

As president I am looking forward to the two forthcoming dinners. The first is to mark the 50 years of ministry by the Rev J Eric Jones. We wish Eric a speedy recovery from his nasty fall. The second dinner, at the Ivy Bush Carmarthen, is to welcome Lis Dyson-Jones back to South Wales as President of the General Assembly. I trust that members can negate the trend of falling attendances at District events and that, despite advancing years or other commitments, we will all make that special effort to attend both these unique events.

*Phil Griffiths*

## ABERDARE

Occasionally we have times in our lives when we seem to be very busy but have little to show for our efforts. For the past couple of months it has been a bit like this at Highland Place with several initiatives in the planned and preparation stage, all to reach completion in the months of September, October and November of this year.

There is however one piece of work which has been on the "redrafting board" for almost two years which has now been officially completed. A discussion, at the first District "Time out" in November 2010, on Church Constitutions prompted us to review our constitution. In 2011 we produced a draft which was discussed by the congregation but, because of proposed changes to the management of the church's administration, additional amendments were required. Very recently at a special, after service,

meeting a new constitution was agreed by the congregation. Apart from some minor alterations, the two most significant changes are that the Support Groups which take forward many of the activities of the church eg Finance, Care of Buildings, Outreach and IT, Worship, Social and In-touch, will nominate a representative to report to the Management committee on their behalf. Also to comply with current constitutional legislation elections will be held at the next AGM in 2013.

It is very sad to have to report that Mike Jones, the husband of our Treasurer, Merrilee, died very suddenly at the early age of 57. Mike's death came as a shock to us all particularly as he was such a fit man, an enthusiastic runner and cyclist. The whole congregation is united in sympathy with Merrilee and her family.

Mike followed his father and trained as a carpenter. Last year, just before Christmas, the company that Mike had worked for for many years encountered some difficulties and Mike was made redundant. Not one to be got down he began working for The Groundwork Trust in a voluntary capacity and found his forte. Very recently he had been offered fixed-term paid employment. He died on the evening of the first day.

Mike's funeral took place at Highland Place and was conducted by Rev Eric Jones, with Dyfan Jones as organist. The church was full to capacity and overflowing, with many people anxious to show their respect for Mike and his family. The Funeral Tea, prepared by the Highland Place Congregation, was served in the Schoolroom following the interment.

The information pack on "Assisted Dying", which was being compiled on behalf of The Unitarian Movement by Robert Ince, is now completed. Copies of the pack will be sent to all Ministers, Church Secretaries, and District Secretaries, to enable all Unitarian congregants to have an informed discussion on this important issue and help them to decide how they will vote on the resolution on Assisted Dying which will be considered at next year's GA Meetings in Nottingham. Here in South East Wales, there will be a workshop which will be facilitated by Rev Professor Paul Badham. Anyone from any of our congregations who is interested in this issue is welcome to attend. The workshop will take place at Highland Place on Saturday 24<sup>th</sup> November between 10.30 am and 12.30, followed by a shared lunch. There is no charge for the workshop. Fellow Unitarians from both South Wales and the West Country have also been invited to join us.

*Ella Lewis-Jones*

### **Women's League**

Our present session has been tinged with great sadness, occasioned by the death of Jean Thomas towards the end of June. Jean, the sister of Marian Whippey, was a very popular, enthusiastic member of League. She contributed greatly to our sales of work. Her presence and participation will be sorely missed.

On a happier note, we have also enjoyed some very pleasant meetings. A perennial favourite was the choice of music by members and also their own writings.

We have been fortunate to have some excellent talks. David James, a well-travelled, retired teacher, gave a very interesting, positive talk on the British Empire and its legacy. Nikki Lee spoke about the progress of the Zisise Heaton Lee Project. This project, which Highland Place has supported for many years, has progressed from one school building to several schools of different levels. Pupils are now being prepared for university and there is also a very strong social element.

On 4<sup>th</sup> July Polly Davies, an American married to a Welshman, spoke about the American War of Independence and what had led up to it. Polly supported her very interesting talk with piles of hand-outs.

To end our session before the Summer break we travelled to Brecon Canal Basin. There we boarded a canal boat and spent a very leisurely couple of hours on the canal, watched by a stately heron and numerous ducks. In glorious weather we then headed for Brecon Cathedral, where we enjoyed a delicious lunch in the tea rooms.

*Dilys Evans*

### **CARDIFF UNITARIANS / UNODIAID CAERDYDD**

Members from Cardiff were glad to join Unitarians from South East Wales at the District Rally in Ross on Wye on June 17<sup>th</sup> 2012. The service was slow at the Royal Hotel for lunch but this did give us time to talk to fellow Unitarians from other chapels. We were given a friendly welcome from Herefordshire Unitarians and were given a lovely tea after the service. The service was given by the Rev Don Phillips and thanks are extended to him and the congregation.

Many thanks to those on the pulpit plan who have taken services with us over the last few months. We have had uplifting and inspiring services from the Rev Eric Jones, Ella Lewis-Jones, Alastair Rosenberg and Dewi Owen. We also had a Congregational service with a difference on the 29<sup>th</sup> July where we discussed Assisted Dying. Dewi Owen kindly led the service with prayers and an introduction to set the scene for varying viewpoints on this difficult issue. Some points that were made were that Assisted Dying is an active way of hastening death such as the administering of medication to bring about death and should be done with the request of the patient. This differs from the situation whereby medication or medical intervention is withheld from a patient e.g. where a patient has asked not to be resuscitated. We agreed that cases may need to be judged in an individual way and also the motion at the GA required that Unitarians agreed on one specific viewpoint whereas it appeared that there was a variety of perspectives between different Unitarian members. It may be better not to have to issue 'one party line' on the subject. We were happy to be joined at this service by Lis Dyson-Jones who was between visits in her role as National President of the General Assembly. Lis was also able to visit the Unitarian tent at the National Eisteddfod.

Cardiff Unitarians/Undodiaid Caerdydd Children's Club has had a break over the Summer but will be starting up again on Sunday 26<sup>th</sup> August. The children helped make a life-size model of Iolo Morganwg which was displayed in the Unitarian tent at the Eisteddfod complete with period costume, lace cravat and a bible, all provided by Diana Bianchi.

Members from Cardiff helped staff the Unitarian tent at the Eisteddfod. Many thanks to Dewi Owen, Development Officer and Cardiff members Diana Bianchi, Gwynn Pritchard and Anne Bunford for their work. Also thanks to Dewi and Gwynn for their organisation of t-shirts and leaflets. Diana and Lyn Davies have taken an active part at the Eisteddfod singing in choirs. Other Cardiff members and their families visited the Unitarian tent and had a cup of tea and refreshments. There was also the opportunity to meet Unitarians from other chapels and newcomers with an interest in Unitarianism.

We extend our best wishes to those from other churches and the wider community who are experiencing ill health or bereavement at present but are gladdened by the birth of a son to Carwyn (Welsh Secretary) and Catherine to complete the circle of life.

*Sarah Boyce*

## **CEFNCOED**

### **Women's League**

The month of June started with the League taking the service on Sunday, 3<sup>rd</sup> June. We should have held the service on the *following* Sunday as that was 'Women's League Sunday', but when this was realised it was too late to do anything about it. Next year we will hold the service on the *second* Sunday in June.

Over the last few weeks we have had two very interesting talks.

The first was a visit by a lady from the recycling department at Merthyr Tydfil council. She explained what items we *can* and can *not* recycle – it was most informative.

More recently we had a gentleman from 'Safer Merthyr Tydfil', an organisation that aims to enhance the quality of life by reducing crime and the fear of crime. He told us of some of the things that go on in the Merthyr area—What an eye-opener!—and advised us to keep our doors locked at all times.

As a follow-up to his talk we are all to receive a visit from a representative of 'Safer Merthyr Tydfil' to check our fire alarms and to put chains on the door for us.

We are thinking about going on a (late) Summer Trip soon.

*Vera Tomsett*

### **District Rally**

A number of members joined other South East Wales Unitarians at the District Rally at Ross on Wye on 17<sup>th</sup> June. The group set off as a three-car-convoy but soon split up. (This could be interpreted as a graphic illustration that Unitarians are not easily led –preferring to find their own way– but, to tell the truth, it was really a case of losing one's way rather than finding it!) Happily, all three cars arrived safely at the Royal Hotel in time for the Cefn contingent to join the rest of the SE Wales party for lunch prior to the service with the Ross on Wye Fellowship. All the travellers enjoyed the rally – though the occupants of one car saw rather more of the countryside than did the others, including a 'tour' of Raglan Castle!

## **Visitors**

We were pleased to have the company of Susan Hudson (née Owen) and Marilyn Murray (née Bann) at our service on Sunday, 24<sup>th</sup> June. Marilyn now lives at Heolgerrig and Susan lives at Penperlleni.

## **Mrs Trixie Snead**

After spending some time in hospital at Merthyr and then at Mountain Ash, Mrs Trixie Snead (Martin's mother) has now taken up residence at Avenue Road Nursing Home, Abergavenny. We send her our best wishes and hope she will soon settle-in to her new surroundings and find the accommodation pleasant and comfortable.

## **Unitarian Heritage**

The recently published volume (N<sup>o</sup> 24) of the *Merthyr Historian* contains a number of references to Unitarianism in the Merthyr area.

Included is mention of the Rev David John, minister of the Unitarian Chapel at Twynrodyn for thirty years. Rev David John and his eldest son Matthew were active in the Chartist movement: both are buried at Hen Dŷ Cwrdd.

In a much longer section (30 pages) tribute is made to Gomer Thomas (1863 – 1935) – 'A Merthyr Townsman'. This is written jointly by Wilf and Mary Owen. (Readers will recall that Wilf Owen was the guest speaker at the SE Wales District Rally at Aberdare in 2011.) Gomer had a fine Unitarian pedigree and the authors trace the family story from the meeting house at Blaengwrach in the upper Neath Valley to the Unitarian chapel at Twynrodyn, Merthyr Tydfil. Gomer's father, Thomas Thomas was the second president of the SEWUS (1893-4). Gomer also served as president of the Society, from 1908 to 1910, and was its treasurer at his death in 1935 aged 72 years. Gomer was a founder member of the Unitarian Chapel at Thomastown, Merthyr Tydfil.

## **Graveyard**

The flourishing growth of the grass and an assortment of weeds in the graveyard is a perennial problem, and the closeness of the graves to each other on the uneven ground makes the task of clearing the vegetation a difficult and arduous one. A first cut has recently been made – but regrowth shows nature is quickly recovering from this onslaught. In addition many headstones are being swallowed up by an ever-growing covering of ivy.

A further problem has now emerged with a section of the graveyard wall showing signs of collapse.

## **Open Doors Weekend**

As part of the European Heritage Open Doors initiative Hen Dŷ Cwrdd will be open to visitors on Saturday, 9 September between 2 pm and 4pm. It will also be open on Sunday, 10 September between 2:30pm and 6pm, with a Service of Celebration at 6pm which will mark the chapel's 265<sup>th</sup> Anniversary.

*Ken Morgan*

## **SWANSEA**

Normally at this time of year, our forecourt is a mass of colour with our troughs full of flowers. Plants were bought this year and were being grown in the yard at the back of the church, ready for planting out, when, unfortunately, they were stolen. Being churchgoers we try to forgive those who trespass against us but it isn't easy.

Thank you to all the people who travel to take our Sunday evening service. We enjoy the variety they bring and appreciate how much thought and effort goes into deciding on a theme and finding suitable readings. For the first time we welcomed into our pulpit our own organist Stephen Wilson who gave a good first service. We hope to hear him again.

One favourite service is our annual flower service which was taken, as usual, by Julianne. We all brought flowers and went home with flowers brought by someone else.

On a recent Sunday Mr Ken Morgan travelled safely from Merthyr to take our service. His theme was 'choosing the right path'. He illustrated it by describing how he ended up travelling from Cefn Coed y Cymer to the Summer Rally at Ross-on-Wye via RAGLAN CASTLE!! We enjoyed the adventure.

*Pamela Taylor*

## **TREBANOS**

### **GELLIONNEN**

A sad time of late I'm afraid. First there was the death of Muriel Edwards, mother of Martyn and then of Eileen James, mother of Angela Nemeth. Our thoughts are with both families and we feel for their sadness.

We have cut the grass immediately in front of the chapel but the rest has been left long and lovely – it is truly gorgeous at the moment – there to welcome butterfly and bee. One of our Sunday mornings has been used as a graveyard “tidy up”. We were joined at our work by a passing walker who obviously enjoyed being part of the group and was very helpful.

Lewis has stood down from lay charge of Gellionnen and Graig chapels and will resume his studies for the ministry in September. He will remain a member with us and we wish him well.

*Marian Littlepage*

## **WICK**

We were all saddened to hear of the death of Lucy Macdonald. She was one of our oldest members and although she had moved to Cardiff to be near her daughter, she and her family used to attend our special services. She was particularly fond of our Flower Communion Service and so it was lovely to welcome three generations of Lucy’s family to our Flower Service this year, especially as it was the twentieth we had celebrated at Wick. The sun actually shone for the day and our flowers and congregation shone as well, with everyone taking part. Our love and sympathy are sent to Sally (Lucy’s daughter) and family.

It seems like only yesterday (a sure sign of old age) that Rachel Board was a young girl attending services when home with her family from many, many different countries. Then she attended Swansea University obtaining her Masters degree, and moved to Australia with a most interesting environmental job. Now, we extend our warmest congratulations to Rachel and Eugene Dodd on their marriage. They have returned to their important jobs in Australia, and we look forward to seeing them sometime in the future, we know they never forget us.

Wick Chapel has always been in the midst of a farming community so August being a harvest season sees a break in services. Our next worship service will be at 3.00pm on Sunday, September 9<sup>th</sup>, with our Harvest Thanksgiving Service on September 23<sup>rd</sup>.

Three of our members are in hospital at present, Eva Morgan, Margaret Escott and Glenys Pugh. They are sadly missed and we send them our love and wishes for speedy recoveries. We may be a small chapel but we have a large heart and plenty of warmth. Our best wishes to everyone.

*Julianne Morgan*

## **UNITARIAN WEEKEND GATHERING BY THE SEA**

**Chat, ‘energy Boosters’, Singing, Meditation, Painting, Dozing By The Sea**  
Friday 14<sup>th</sup> Sept - Sunday 16<sup>th</sup> Sept, or come for the Saturday only

**The Old School Room, Nottage, Porthcawl CF36 3SY**

Saturday                      Guest Speaker—Douglas McGlashan  
£5 session.                      Qi Gong & Energy Instructor  
contact [kathybeckett@kathybeckett.plus.com](mailto:kathybeckett@kathybeckett.plus.com) tel: 02380273420  
Marie Rosenberg Tel: 01656 772088

B&B accommodation available at [www.Blueseas.bnb.co.uk](http://www.Blueseas.bnb.co.uk) from £27 pp pn  
Quote Marie Rosenberg when booking to claim your discount.

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## **ABOUT THIS PUBLICATION**

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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 for 2012 remains at **£5**.

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